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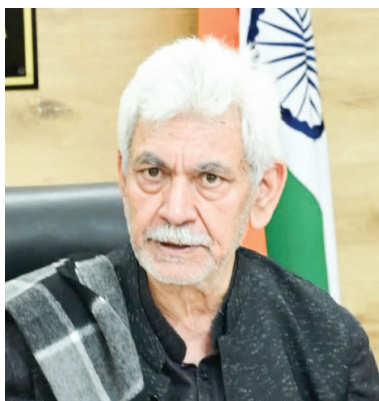
Strengthening Internal Security Is Our Top Priority : LG Manoj Sinha

Chaired a High-Level Review Meet of the Subordinate Departments of Home Department at Lok Bhavan

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, DEC 20: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Friday chaired a high-level review meeting of the Subordinate Departments of the Home Department at Lok Bhavan, Jammu, and stressed the need for faster execution of key security-related projects and coordinated efforts to further strengthen internal security mechanisms in Jammu and Kashmir. "Strengthening internal security

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LG Sinha Pushes for Faster TB Elimination, Calls for Door-to-Door Awareness Across J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, DEC 20: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Saturday reviewed the progress of the Pradhan Mantri TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan

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CHILLAI KALAN Dawns Across Kashmir Snow and Rain Set to Shape Kashmir's Harshest Winter Phase

HT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, DEC 20: Jammu and Kashmir is poised to enter Chillai Kalan, the Valley's most severe winter phase, under the influence of an active western disturbance that is expected to bring rain to the plains and snowfall across higher reaches over the next few days. The 40-day period, beginning December 21, marks the coldest stretch of the winter season and traditionally defines life, travel and economic activity across the region.

Ahead of the onset of Chillai Kalan, minimum temperatures across both Kashmir and Jammu regions showed a slight improvement on Saturday compared to the previous day, offering brief relief from intense cold conditions. Despite this marginal rise, sub-zero temperatures continued to prevail at several places in the Valley, underscoring the deepening winter grip.

Fresh snowfall was reported late Saturday



evening from high-altitude areas including Warwan Valley, Sinthan Top, Razdan Pass and Sadhna Top in north Kashmir, while the Zojila Pass on the Srinagar-Ladakh highway also

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EOW files chargesheet in Rs 50 lakh land fraud case in Srinagar

MK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, DEC 20: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Crime Branch Kashmir has filed a chargesheet in a ₹50 lakh land fraud case against four persons, officials said on Saturday. The chargesheet in FIR No. 02/2025 has been filed before the court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Srinagar, under Sections 420 and 471

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Snow on the Horizon, Administration on Alert: CM Omar Abdullah Reviews J&K's Winter Readiness

Roads, Power and Water Declared Top Priorities as Government Gears up For Impending Snowfall and Rain

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, DEC 20: With a fresh spell of snowfall and precipitation predicted over the coming weekend, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday chaired a high-level meeting to review the preparedness of the administration across Jammu and Kashmir to ensure minimal disruption to public life during inclement weather.

The meeting assessed the readiness of departments in both Kashmir and Jammu divisions, focusing on response mechanisms, inter-departmental coordination and ground-level implementation of winter preparedness plans. The Chief Minister observed that while preparations are largely on track, their effectiveness will ultimately be judged by execution on the ground.



"This expected weather spell gives us a valuable opportunity to test and refine our preparations before harsher winter conditions set in," CM Omar Abdullah said, adding that timely action during the initial snowfall is crucial for an effective winter response.

Underscoring the government's core responsibilities during winter, the Chief Minister identified

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Dense Fog Disrupts Travel, Flights Cancelled Across J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, DEC 20: Dense fog covered large parts of Kashmir on Saturday, severely reducing visibility and disrupting road and air travel as cold conditions persisted.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) in Srinagar, visibility dropped to just a few metres in several areas, prompting traffic authorities to urge motorists to

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J&K admin alerts public ahead of heavy snowfall prediction

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, DEC 20: Administration on Saturday issued a series of weather and snowfall advisories for several districts across Kashmir in view of predicted heavy snowfall over upper reaches.

The Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Kokernag, according to the

news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) advised commuters to avoid non-essential travel on the Daksum-Sinthan Top-Chhatroo Road and the Gowran-Margan Top-Warwan Road during snowfall and warned that vehicles must carry anti-skid or snow chains.

Police have been directed to

close roads if they are deemed unsafe for vehicular movement.

Similarly, the District Police Kupwara issued an advisory. It urged residents, tourists, and trekkers to avoid unnecessary travel, exercise caution on snow-bound roads, and follow directions from administration and police authorities.

In Gurez, the SDM ordered suspension of vehicular traffic from 4 PM on Friday as a precautionary measure. Police were directed not to allow vehicles to move between Gurez and Bandipora beyond the cutoff timing, and the order will remain in force until further instructions.

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FSSAI declares eggs safe, dismisses cancer risk claims

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, DEC 20: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on Saturday categorically dismissed claims linking eggs to cancer, stating that eggs available in the country are safe for human consumption and scientifically sound. The food safety body added that recent alarmist reports lack credible evidence.

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Anti-Terror Ops Intensified Along IB Over Inputs On Possible Infiltration In Jammu

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, DEC 20: Security forces have intensified anti-terror operations across the Jammu region following intelligence inputs about a possible infiltration attempt by terrorists from across the border amid dense fog, officials said on Saturday.

Search operations by police, Border Security

Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Army personnel are underway at various locations near the International Border (IB) in Kathua, Samba, Jammu and Rajouri districts, besides the Chatroo forest belt in Kishtwar, they said.

According to intelligence inputs, movement of suspected terrorists has been

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Water Tankers Ensured Supply During Prolonged Dry Spell In Kashmir: Jal Shakti Dept

Chief Engineer says 101 water lorries served over 330 calls per month

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, DEC 20: As Jammu and Kashmir prepares for the first significant rainfall and snowfall in over a month, water delivery services have played a vital role in ensuring

an uninterrupted water supply across the Valley amid a prolonged dry spell.

With groundwater sources depleted and water demand rising, the Jal Shakti Department said it has been actively managing water tanker operations to meet the needs of residents

during this period of scarcity.

Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti Kashmir, Er Rakesh Kumar Gupta, told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the department operates 101 water lorries

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Two Drops of Hope: Let us Protect Every Child from Polio Today

HT EDITORIAL DESK

In a renewed push to secure a healthy future for its youngest citizens, the Union Territory Administration today rolled out the Pulse Polio Immunization Drive, urging parents to ensure that no child is left unprotected.

The administration has undertaken a vigorous public outreach and awareness campaign, spreading the message far and wide about the life-saving importance of polio vaccination. Health teams have been mobilised across the UT to reach every doorstep and vaccination booth.

This newspaper adds its voice to the campaign, appealing to parents and guardians to step forward and participate actively in the drive, because a child's future begins with protection today. The Pulse Polio programme once again underlines a simple truth a few drops now can save a lifetime of dreams.



Speaker LA inaugurates Water Supply Schemes worth ₹20 cr in Zaloosa Charar-e-Sharief

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, DEC 20: In a major boost to rural infrastructure and public health, Speaker Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, today inaugurated a series of vital Water Supply Schemes across the Charar-e-Sharief constituency. Developed under the flagship Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), these projects worth ₹20 crore will benefit about 21000 souls. They have been designed to provide sustainable Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs) to hundreds of fam-

ilies, ensuring that the vision of "Har Ghar Jal" (Water in Every Home) becomes a reality for the region's rural population. The newly commissioned schemes will provide clean, piped water to several key areas within the constituency that have previously faced water scarcity. The beneficiary areas included Kaisermulla, Kadipora, Kulmach Objipathri, Hakhpora Haptnar and Sheer Check. Addressing the residents from Zaloosa, Haptnar, Kadipora, Hakhpora and adjacent localities, the Speaker emphasised that the



Jal Jeevan Mission is more than just a series of engineering projects; it is aimed at transforming the quality of life in rural Kashmir. "These schemes will not only save time and reduce the drudgery of fetching water from distant sources, a burden often borne by our women and children, but will also significantly improve public health by preventing water-borne diseases," stated Abdul Rahim Rather. During the tour, the Speaker was accompanied by SE PHE, Executive Engineer and other officials of PHE.

Operation Foils Walnut Tree Felling in Handwara

Seized Timber Confirms Illegal Felling on State Land

DR. AB QAYOOM

HANDWARA, DEC 20: The Revenue Department Handwara, with the immediate support of Handwara Police, has taken swift action against the illegal felling of protected walnut trees on State land in the



Haran area of Handwara. Acting on specific information, the Revenue team conducted a night operation and found nearly six walnut trees illegally cut. During verification, part of the felled wood was recovered from the spot, while the remaining timber, which had been transported and concealed in the Chowgal area, was later seized with police assistance. The seized material has been taken into custody and legal proceedings have been initiated against the violators under relevant laws. The administration reiterated that walnut trees are protected under law and any unauthorized felling will attract strict legal action. While talking to HEADLINES TODAY Tehsildar Handwara, Zeeshan Khan (JKAS), said that more than five illegally felled walnut trees have been confiscated during the past three weeks, underscoring the administration's zero-tolerance policy towards environmental violations. He said "Illegal felling of walnut trees is a serious offence under government rules, as walnut trees are protected by law in Jammu & Kashmir. Such acts cause irreversible environmental damage and disturb ecological balance, as these trees take decades to mature. Unauthorized cutting, whether on private or State land, invites strict legal action, including seizure of timber, heavy fines, and prosecution. The government has adopted a zero-tolerance policy against such environmental violations." The action has been appreciated by local residents, who welcomed the firm steps taken to protect public property and preserve ecological balance.

Dr. Shabnam Rafiq Bereaved

ICF Expresses Condolences

GULFAM BARJI

SRINAGAR, DEC 20: The father of Dr. Shabnam Rafiq, Senior Officer at the Cultural Academy, Head of the Sqafti Markaz Budgam, and a well-known cultural figure, passed away after a brief illness. On this sad occasion, several prominent personalities and literary organizations of the Valley expressed their heartfelt condolences and solidarity with the bereaved family, especially Dr. Shabnam Rafiq. In this connection, a condolence meeting of the renowned literary organization Inder Cultural Forum, Sumbal was held under the chairmanship of Forum President Saleem Yousuf. During the meeting, profound grief was expressed over the demise of Dr. Shabnam Rafiq's father, and prayers were offered for the eternal peace of the departed soul. The meeting reiterated that all members associated with the Inder Cultural Forum stand shoulder to shoulder with Dr. Shabnam Rafiq in this hour of grief. At the conclusion of the meeting, prayers were offered that Almighty Allah grant the departed soul a high place in Jannat-ul-Firdous and bestow patience and strength upon the bereaved family, especially Dr. Shabnam Rafiq, to bear this irreparable loss. Meanwhile, several noted literary figures of the Valley, along with various literary organizations, have also expressed their condolences to Dr. Shabnam Rafiq.

Revenue Grievances Redressal Camp Held at Townhall Devsar under "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore"

FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, DEC 20: As part of the nationwide outreach campaign "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore", the Tehsil Administration Devsar on Saturday organized a Revenue-Related Grievances Redressal Camp at Townhall Devsar in South Kashmir's Kulgam district. The initiative aimed at strengthening last-mile governance by addressing public grievances at the grassroots level and ensuring effective delivery of essential government services. The camp witnessed enthusiastic participation from residents of Devsar and adjoining villages, including senior citizens, who raised a range of revenue-related issues. Officials from the concerned departments patiently listened to the grievances and provided on-the-spot clarifications and resolutions wherever possible. Several cases were disposed of immediately during the camp. Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Kulgam, Riyaz Ahmad Shah (JKAS), along with Tehsildar Devsar, Rakib Ahmad Ganie (JKAS), supervised the proceedings. They resolved



many issues on the spot and directed the concerned officials to expedite the redressal of remaining grievances within stipulated timelines. A major highlight of the programme was the on-the-spot issuance of certificates, including OBC, RBA, Legal Heir, Income, Character, and Blood Relation Certificates, providing immediate relief to beneficiaries. The camp was appreciated by the public for bringing the administration closer to the people and effectively addressing long-pending revenue issues, in line with the objectives of the "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore" campaign.

G-RAM-G 'Centre to fund 90% of rural employment costs in J&K'

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, DEC 20: The central government will provide 90 per cent of funding for rural employment programmes in Jammu and Kashmir under the newly enacted Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025 (G-RAM-G), with the remaining 10 per cent contributed by the Union Territory. The law replaces the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and increases the statutory entitlement of wage employment from 100 to 125 days. As per the details, the Centre's funding share remains the largest for Himalayan states and Union Territories with legislatures, including Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. For other states and UTs without legislatures, the Centre will fund 60 per cent of costs and the states 40 per cent, while Union Territories without legislatures will be fully funded by the Centre. It said that the revised funding structure allows the central government to provide predictable allocations for rural employment and related infrastructure projects across the country. The G-RAM-G Bill will take effect after Presidential assent. (KNS)

Sat Sharma, Ashok Koul inaugurate Swadeshi Mela at Srinagar, reaffirm commitment to Aatmanirbhar Bharat

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, DEC 20: Sat Sharma, President, J&K BJP and Rajya Sabha MP, accompanied by Ashok Koul, J&K BJP General Secretary (Organization) and other senior party leaders inaugurated the Swadeshi Mela at Polo View, Srinagar. J&K BJP General Secretaries Sanjita Dogra, Anwar Khan, Secretaries Mudassir Wani and Arif Raja, District President Srinagar Salman Sheikh, Bilal Parray, and other party leaders were present on the occasion. Thousands of enthusiastic people from all walks of life thronged the venue, showcasing overwhelming public support and appreciation for the initiative. In a strong push towards real-

izing the vision of a self-reliant India, the two-day Swadeshi Mela is being organized on December 20 and 21 with the objective of promoting indigenous products, local artisans, traditional skills, and cultural heritage. The Swadeshi Mela featured an impressive display of Kashmiri handicrafts, artworks, Pashmina products, dry fruits, spices, pherans, carpets, silver jewelry, local cuisine, and vibrant folk music. The event aims to promote local culture, boost indigenous industries, and pave the way for an economically sustainable and self-reliant local society. Addressing the gathering, while inaugurating the Mela, Sat Sharma said that the Swadeshi Mela is a living example of Prime



Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, where local production, local markets, and local talent are strengthened to build a robust national economy. He said that Jammu and Kashmir has immense potential in

handicrafts, handloom, agriculture-based products, and traditional arts, and such platforms provide much-needed market exposure to local artisans and entrepreneurs. When we buy local, we empower families, pre-

serve our culture, and contribute to the economic growth of our society, he emphasized, urging people to actively support Swadeshi products. Ashok Koul, speaking on the occasion, said that Swadeshi Melas play a crucial role in connecting artisans directly with consumers, eliminating middlemen, and ensuring fair returns for their hard work. He highlighted that the BJP remains committed to strengthening grassroots economy and promoting traditional skills, especially among youth and women. He said that cultural and economic revival go hand in hand, and initiatives like these help in preserving Jammu and Kashmir's rich heritage while generating sustainable livelihoods.

Ramzaan Nursing College Hosts Staff Training Program

WANI ARFAT

PAMPORE, DEC 20: Ramzaan College of Nursing, Galandar, Pampore, successfully conducted a Staff Development Program on "Anaphylactic Reactions and Standing Orders for Nurses", which was held on 18th December 2025, from 2:00 to 3:00 pm. The one-hour program, organized as part of the college's ongoing staff development and quality improvement initiatives, aimed to enhance the knowledge, clinical competence, and

emergency preparedness of nursing faculty members and students in managing life-threatening allergic reactions. The session was led by Mr. Aabid Rashid, a faculty member of Ramzaan College of Nursing, who explained the topic with clarity using PowerPoint presentations and case-based discussions, while Professor Jamsheeda Zaroo, Principal of the college, delivered an informative lecture highlighting the early recognition, prompt management, and the critical role of nurses

during anaphylactic emergencies. Her lecture was practical, insightful, and greatly enhanced the professional knowledge and confidence of all participants. The program focused on understanding the concept and causes of anaphylactic reactions, identifying early signs and symptoms, learning emergency management protocols, familiarizing nurses with standing orders, and enhancing prompt decision-making to ensure patient safety. The content covered



the definition and causes of anaphylaxis, pathophysiology, signs and symptoms, immediate management, role of adrenaline and other emergency medications, standing orders for nurses, documentation, and post-emergency care. Various teaching methods, such as lectures, PowerPoint presentations, interactive discussions, and question-and-answer sessions, were used to ensure active participation. The program proved highly informative and effective, improving participants' con-

fidence and readiness to respond promptly to anaphylactic emergencies while following established protocols for safe patient care. The session concluded with a vote of thanks to the management, resource person, organizing committee, and all participants for their active involvement and cooperation, marking the program as a significant contribution to enhancing the clinical skills and emergency preparedness of nursing professionals at Ramzaan College of Nursing.



Div Com Kashmir Inaugurates Pheran Day, Jashn-e-Chilai-Kalan at Kashmir Haat

Advises public to adhere to Fire Prevention Advisory issued by Administration for Winters

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 20: To mark the commencement of Chilai-e-Kalan, the Handicrafts & Handloom Department organized Pheran Day with much fanfare at Kashmir Haat, Srinagar, celebrating the traditional winter attire of Kashmir.

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, inaugurated the Pheran Day and Jashn-e-Chilai-Kalan, symbolizing the beginning of the forty-day cold winter period in the Valley.

On the occasion, the Divisional Commissioner visited various stalls set up by local artisans showcasing traditional winter wear, including pherans and blankets, aimed at promoting indigenous handicrafts and handloom products.

Speaking at the event, the Div Com said that the celebration of

Pheran Day reflects the cultural significance of Chilai-e-Kalan, during which people make special preparations to cope with the extreme cold. He informed that the exhibition will continue for two days and has already witnessed a large public turnout at Kashmir Haat.

He emphasized that the pheran is a symbol of Kashmir's rich cultural heritage and the craftsmanship of local artisans. He congratulated the Handicrafts & Handloom Department for organizing the event and appreciated the artisans for showcasing their skills and products.

Garg also expressed satisfaction over the growing participation of youth in the handicrafts and handloom sector.

Highlighting ongoing initiatives, he noted that the department has



been regularly organizing events such as Know Your Artisan and skill development programs to

promote local crafts and artisans.

Regarding the forecast of snowfall, he assured that the

administration is fully prepared to handle any challenges. He expressed hope that snowfall would enhance tourist footfall during the winter festival.

In view of the increasing fire incidents during winters,

The Div Com advised general public to adhere to Fire Prevention Advisory issued by the Divisional Administration for Winters and instructed to conduct audit of heating and winter appliances to prevent such incidents.

The event was attended by Director Handicrafts & Handloom, Mussarat Zia, senior departmental officers, artisans, and people from different walks of life.

To add cultural vibrancy to Jashn-e-Chilai-Kalan, the department also organized musical performances at the Exhibition Ground, Kashmir Haat.

Citizen-Centric Outreach Continues in Shopian under "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore" Campaign.

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

SHOPIAN, DECEMBER 20: On the second day of the 'Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore' campaign, district administration Shopian intensified its citizen-centric outreach with a series of public grievance redressal and awareness camps held across multiple panchayats of the district.

Under the campaign, a major public outreach programme was organised today at Keller, where a large number of citizens participated and raised various demands and grievances related to public services and developmental issues.

A mutation camp was also organised at Keller during which 17 mutations were attested on the spot,



providing immediate relief to the beneficiaries and ensuring hassle-free delivery of revenue-related services at the grassroots level.

Similar outreach and grievance redressal activities were conducted in other panchayats, including Heff, Chotigam, KM Gund, Kanjullar, Bemnipora, Zampathri, Mastpora, Amshipora, Aglar, etc. These camps witnessed active public participation, with officials directly engaging with citizens to address their concerns.

The focus of the day remained on effective grievance redressal, awareness generation and citizen-centric delivery of services.

Officers interacted with the people, apprised them of various government schemes and welfare initiatives, and guided them on availing benefits in a transparent and time-bound manner.

Issues requiring immediate action were resolved on the spot, while those needing further examination were recorded for follow-up.

The 'Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore-2025' campaign, being observed from December 19 to December 25 as part of Good Governance Week-2025, continues to bridge the gap between the administration and the people by taking governance to the doorsteps of citizens across the district.

District Admin Bandipora Organises Grievance Redressal, Awareness programmes across District

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

BANDIPORA, DECEMBER 20:

As part of Day-2 of Good Governance Week "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore", the District Administration Bandipora today continued its outreach, grievance redressal and awareness programmes across the district, reinforcing its commitment to transparent, responsive and people-centric governance.

On the occasion, the Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Bandipora, along with the Assistant Commissioner Panchayat (ACP), visited Panchayat Halqa Asham-A and interacted with local residents. Public grievances were noted and the officers assured that all genuine issues would be addressed in a time-bound manner, while informing that desilting works in the area would be initiated shortly.

In the educational institutions, the Chief Education Officer Bandipora, Altaf Hussain Tara, along with Dy CEO and Zonal Education Officer Bandipora, organized Good Governance Week programmes across various educational institutions of Cluster HSS Aragam. These programmes witnessed participation from Village Education Committee members, parents, general public and staff, focusing on collaborative governance and stakeholder involvement.

Similar celebrations were held at



Government High School Gundjehangir (Zone Hajin), High School Chanpal Chattibandi, Government High School Banyari Sharki (Zone Hajin) along with affiliated cluster schools, Primary School Mir Mohalla CB Payeen, UPS GP Aragam, Middle School Bazipora (Zone Hajin) and Government High School Ajas (Zone Hajin). At GMS Aragam, students and parents jointly participated, reinforcing community-led governance.

The Horticulture Department organized grievance redressal camps at Shilwat (Zone Sumbal) and Aloosa, including field-level interactions

with farmers to address horticulture-related issues on the spot.

Similarly, the Agriculture Department Bandipora conducted a grievance redressal camp at the Zonal Office Aloosa, providing farmers an opportunity to raise concerns and receive guidance regarding departmental schemes and services.

The activities on Day-2 of "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore" witnessed wide public participation and strengthened grassroots engagement, reflecting the district administration's resolve to take governance closer to the people.

Special Grievance Redressal Camps Held Across Tehsils of Kupwara

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

KUPWARA, DECEMBER 20: In continuation of the ongoing "Sushasan Saptah - Prashashan Gaon Ki Ore 2025" campaign, Special Grievance Redressal and Service Delivery Camps were successfully organized on Day 2 across all tehsils of district Kupwara.

The initiative aims to strengthen good governance by taking administration to the doorsteps of citizens and ensuring timely resolution of public grievances.

The camps witnessed active participation from residents across rural and urban pockets, who availed themselves of a wide range of government services under one roof.

During the camps, public grievances

related to revenue records, pensions, ration cards, electricity and water supply, roads, healthcare services, employment schemes, land issues, and welfare benefits were registered. Several cases were resolved on the spot, while others were forwarded to the concerned departments with strict timelines for disposal.

Special focus was laid on senior citizens, women, persons with disabilities, and beneficiaries of flagship government schemes.

Speaking on the occasion, Officers emphasized that the Sushasan Saptah campaign is a people-centric initiative designed to enhance transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in governance.

DC Budgam Chairs Meeting on Youth Engagement & Empowerment Plan

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

BUDGAM, DECEMBER 20: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, today convened a comprehensive meeting to review and strategize the Youth Engagement and Empowerment Plan in the district.

The meeting focused on channelising youth energy towards recreational, sports, skill-based and constructive activities, besides intensifying awareness against drug abuse. Addressing the officers, the DC stressed the need for coordinated and proactive efforts by all departments to meaningfully engage youth and safeguard them from social evils, particularly drugs. He advised the Police Department to strengthen drug

awareness campaigns, counselling initiatives and community outreach programmes, especially at the grassroots level.

The DC directed all concerned officers to come up with concrete, innovative and future-oriented action plans for youth engagement, ensuring maximum participation across urban and rural areas. He underlined that sports, cultural activities, vocational training, awareness drives and employment-oriented programmes should be prioritised to positively shape the future of young generation.

The DC reiterated that youth empowerment remains a top priority of the district administration and called for inter-departmental synergy to translate plans into impactful outcomes on the ground.

Day 02: Good Governance Week Observed Across Baramulla District with Extensive Public Outreach Initiatives

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

BARAMULLA, DECEMBER 20: The Good Governance Week, being observed from 19th to 25th December, is being marked across Baramulla district with a series of programmes and activities aimed at strengthening transparent, accountable, and citizen-centric governance.



The main aim of observing Good Governance Week is to improve public service delivery, ensure effective grievance redressal, enhance awareness about government schemes, and bring the administration closer to the people, particularly at the grassroots level.

As part of the week-long programme, the District Administration Baramulla organized grievance redressal camps, service delivery camps, and awareness programmes at district, sub-division, tehsil, and block levels. These initiatives are focused on providing prompt and hassle-free access to government services while addressing public issues in a time-bound manner.

During the grievance redressal camps, numerous grievances were received from the public, many of which were resolved on the spot, while others were forwarded to the concerned departments for early disposal. Service delivery camps facilitated issuance of various certificates, approvals, and benefits related to revenue, social welfare, and other line departments, thereby ensuring ease of access and improved service delivery.

Awareness camps were also conducted to inform citizens about various government schemes, welfare programmes, and their rights and entitlements. Officials interacted directly with the public, providing guidance and clarifications to promote greater awareness and participation.

The activities under Good Governance Week witnessed active participation from officers, officials, students, and the general public, reflecting the administration's commitment to responsive, transparent, and people-friendly governance.

The District Administration Baramulla reiterated its resolve to carry forward the spirit of Good Governance Week beyond the stipulated period by continuously strengthening service delivery mechanisms, grievance redressal systems, and public outreach initiatives.

DM Baramulla Chairs 23rd NCORD Meeting, Issues Key Directions to Curb Drug Abuse

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

BARAMULLA, DECEMBER 20: District Magistrate Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, chaired the 23rd meeting of the District Level Committee under the Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) today at the Meeting Hall of the DC's office Baramulla. SSP Baramulla, Gurinderpal Singh; SSP Sopore, Iftakhar Talib; ADC Sopore, S.A. Raina; ADC Baramulla, Syed Altaf Hussain; ACD,

Mudasir Hussain Chaudhary along with other concerned district and sectoral officers, were present during the meeting. During the meeting, the District Social Welfare Officer, Sajad Ahmad Bhat gave a detailed presentation, highlighting ongoing awareness, preventive and rehabilitation initiatives being implemented under various anti-drug programmes in the district.

The District Magistrate reviewed the overall anti-drug strategy and

issued several important directions. He directed the launch of IEC Phase-II from 1st January, along with necessary training for resource persons, to strengthen public awareness and community outreach. Minga Sherpa further directed the Municipal Committees and the Rural Development Department to ensure the installation of street lights and CCTV cameras at identified drug hotspots to enhance surveillance and safety.

Social Audit of ICDS underway in Kupwara district to bring accountability and transparency

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

KUPWARA, DECEMBER 20: Social Audit of ICDS projects is underway across Kupwara district to bring accountability and transparency in poshan schemes.

The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kupwara, Shrikant Suse has instructed that every Anganwadi centre and Panchayat in the district undergo a comprehensive

social audit.

During the social audit, beneficiaries including pregnant and lactating mothers community members, former Panchayat representatives and volunteers in far-flung areas of Machill and in other areas of Kupwara gathered in Aganwadi Centres, participated in lively discussions about the daily realities of child nutrition and education under the "Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi" programme.

The audit is being framed as a fact finding dialogue as the auditors are inspecting kitchen equipment, the freshness of supplementary nutrition and attendance records, while Panchayat elders and youth review financial statements to compare allocated funds with actual outcomes.

Findings are read aloud in public meetings and entered into resolution registers and questionnaires, ensuring full transparency.



Div Com Kashmir Inspects Ongoing Works at SMC, SSCL Office Karanagar

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 20: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, today visited the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) office at Karanagar to review the progress of ongoing construction works of SMC and Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL) buildings being executed under SSCL projects.

During the visit, the Divisional Commissioner was briefed by CEO SSCL, Faz Lul Haseeb, on the status of the G+3 storey building being constructed at an estimated cost



of 14.7 crore. He was informed about the overall progress of the

project and the tentative timeline for its completion.

The Divisional Commissioner also inspected other offices within the premises, including the SMC corporate office.

Expressing satisfaction over the pace and quality of the ongoing works, the Divisional Commissioner directed the executing agency to ensure adherence to the stipulated timelines for timely completion of the project.

Chief Engineer SSCL and other concerned officers were present during the inspection.

J&K Judicial Academy organises workshop on Enhancing Judicial Sensitivity in Civil Suits

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

JAMMU, DECEMBER 20: Under the patronage of Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (Patron-in-Chief, J&K Judicial Academy), Arun Palli and guidance of Chairperson and Members of Governing Committee for J&K Judicial Academy, the Jammu & Kashmir Judicial Academy today organised a one-day workshop on "Enhancing Judicial Sensitivity in the Conduct of Civil Suits" for Civil Judges (Junior Division) of Jammu Province at the J&K Judicial Academy premises, Janipur, Jammu.

The inaugural address was delivered by Justice Rahul Bharti, Judge, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, and Member, Governing Committee of the J&K Judicial Academy. Justice Bharti expressed concern over the practice of repeated adjournments in civil cases, observing that courts often grant time for years together at the request of both parties, resulting in enormous wastage of judicial time. He remarked that this concern formed the basis for conceptualizing the present programme.

Emphasizing that every case requires 100 percent mental and physical commitment, he cautioned against passing the burden of pending cases to successors and observed that habits formed at the entry level shape efficiency at higher judicial positions.

The first technical session was conducted by Justice Janak Raj Kotwal, Former Judge, High Court of J&K, who deliberated on judicial sensitivity in pleadings, framing of issues and early-stage case management. He emphasized understanding pleadings beyond technicalities, identifying the real issues in dispute, effective application of Order X of the Code of Civil Procedure and the need to avoid unnecessary adjournments at the initial stages of civil suits.

The second session was addressed by Justice Bansil Lal Bhat, Former Judge, High Court of J&K, who focused on recording and appreciation of evidence while avoiding procedural rigidity. The session highlighted the sensitivity during examination and cross-examination of witnesses, maintaining dignity of litigants, appreciating evidence in the light of ground realities and exercising judicial discretion meaningfully to prevent delays caused by non-cooperation of counsel or witnesses.

The third session was conducted by Naseer Ahmad Dar, Director, J&K Judicial Academy, who through a PowerPoint Presentation discussed on balancing the urgency and fairness while deciding interim applications and final adjudication. He emphasized proportionality, equity, sensitivity in socially and emotionally charged disputes, the importance of hearing all parties effectively, delivering reasoned and concise judgments and ensuring timely pronouncement of judgments in accordance with the Code of Civil Procedure.

The sessions were highly interactive and evoked active participation from the judicial officers.

Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore' Campaign Continues in Kulgam on Day-2

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

KULGAM, DECEMBER 20: As part of Good Governance Week 2025 and under the Sushasan Saptah initiative, the "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore" campaign continued across District Kulgam with the objective of taking governance to the doorsteps of the people.

Grievance redressal camps were organised at the block, tehsil and panchayat levels, where district and sectoral officers listened to public grievances and ensured their prompt redressal.

The camps witnessed active public participation, with people raising issues related to various departments.

The Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, also visited several areas of the district, interacted with the public, and personally listened to their demands and concerns. He directed the concerned officers to ensure timely and effective resolution of the grievances.

During the day, various certificates, including Domicile, OBC, RBA, Legal Heir, Income, Character and Blood Relation Certificates, were issued to eligible beneficiaries.

Additionally, awareness and registration camps were organised to educate citizens about various government schemes and facilitate on-the-spot registrations.

Mandeep Kaur inaugurates JMC's Health Club for Municipal employees at Jammu

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

JAMMU, DECEMBER 20: In a significant step towards promoting health, fitness, and overall well-being of municipal employees, Commissioner Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD), Mandeep Kaur inaugurated newly constructed Health Club developed by Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) at Gandhi Nagar here today.

Commissioner, JMC, Dr. Devansh Yadav and senior officers of the Corporation were present during the inaugural ceremony.

Addressing the gathering, Mandeep Kaur emphasized on the importance of physical fitness for government employees, stating that a healthy workforce is vital for efficient and effective public service delivery. She informed that the health club would initially be available exclusively for JMC officials to help them manage work-related stress and maintain physical fitness. She further added that, in the coming time, the membership would be extended to other sections of society so that the larger public could also benefit from the facility.

The Commissioner Secretary appreciated the efforts of the Jammu



Municipal Corporation in creating infrastructure focusing on employee welfare. She urged officials to make optimal use of the facility while ensuring discipline and hygiene within the premises.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Devansh Yadav described the health club as an important addition to the Corporation's employee welfare initiatives. He encouraged officers and staff to regularly utilize the gym and adopt healthy lifestyle.

The Commissioner stressed on the importance of proper maintenance and responsible use of the facility to ensure its long-term utility. He

reaffirmed JMC's commitment to strengthening employee welfare measures alongside developmental and civic works across the city.

The inauguration of the Health Club reflects JMC's continued focus on employee well-being and its holistic approach towards strengthening both civic infrastructure and human resource welfare in Jammu city, the Commissioner maintained.

Pertinently, the state-of-the-art health club is equipped with a well-furnished gymnasium featuring modern fitness equipment, aimed at encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle among JMC officials.

Among others, Joint Commissioner Health and Sanitation Abdul Sattar, Deputy Commissioner North Sanjay Badial, Deputy Commissioner South, Lal Chand, Joint Commissioner Works Firdaus Ahmed Qazi, Health Officer Dr. Vinod Sharma, Municipal Veterinary Officer, Dr. Jaswant Singh, Animal Welfare Officer Dr. Gaurav Chaudhary, Veterinary Assistant Surgeon Dr. Priyanka Malhotra, Executive Engineer, Lokesh Gupta, Executive Engineer (Electrical) Simar Pal Singh, Executive Engineer Division-5 Yasir Kichloo, besides Enforcement Officers and officials were present on the occasion.

Prashashan Gaon Ki Ore: Grievance Redressal Camps continue across Pulwama on Day-2

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

PULWAMA, DECEMBER 20: As part of the week-long celebrations of Sushasan Saptah under the nationwide campaign "Prashashan Gaon Ki Ore", the District Administration Pulwama today organised a series of grievance redressal camps at multiple locations across the district to strengthen citizen-centric governance and ensure prompt delivery of public services.

A mega grievance redressal camp was organised at the Headquarters of Sub-Division Awantipora, where a large number of people participated and raised their concerns related to various government departments.

On the occasion, multiple departments set up help desks to facilitate on-the-spot grievance redressal, beneficiary registration and service delivery under flagship welfare schemes. Officers from Revenue, Health, Rural Development, Agriculture, Horticulture, Social Welfare, Employment, Labour, Animal Husbandry, NRLM, J&K Bank and other departments were present to address public grievances and provide necessary assistance.

Meanwhile, multi-departmental grievance redressal camps at Panchayat level were organised at Aripal, Noorpora, Kakapora, Sangerwani, Ladermar, Wagam, Konibal Gangoo, Nikas and Lalpora.

These camps aimed at taking governance to the doorstep of the people by ensuring accessibility of government services, resolving local issues in a time-bound manner, and spreading awareness about ongoing welfare schemes. The camps witnessed active participation from line departments and locals, who benefitted from on-the-spot facilitation and grievance resolution.

Further, the Labour Department, in collaboration with the Health Department, organised a special Grievance Redressal-



cum-Medical Camp for workers at IGC Lassipora. The camp facilitated on-the-spot redressal of labour-related grievances and educated workers about labour rights and various assistance schemes of the department. On-the-spot enrolment under different social security schemes was also carried out.

In addition, workers were provided free medical check-ups, ensuring both administrative and health-related support under one platform.

The activities under the "Prashashan Gaon Ki Ore" campaign will continue across the district in the coming days with similar programmes planned across District.

Good Governance Week: Reasi Admin intensifies grassroots outreach on Day-2 of "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore" Campaign

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

REASI, DECEMBER 20: On the second day of the week-long Good Governance Week campaign "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore", the District Administration Reasi continued its extensive outreach activities under the overall supervision of Deputy Commissioner, Nidhi Malik. The initiative focused on strengthening grassroots governance and ensuring efficient delivery of public services to the people.

The line departments conducted awareness programmes, public interaction sessions, grievance redressal camps and service delivery activities at the village, panchayat and block levels across the district.

The Rural Development Department organised grievance redressal camps and cleanliness drives at Panchayats Arbais and Shadole in Block Gulabgarh, encouraging community participation and promoting sanitation and responsive governance at the grassroots level. The District Nodal Officer AYUSH conducted medical camps to provide healthcare services and spread awareness about preventive and alternative medicine.

The Sheep Husbandry Department organized a vaccination drive for livestock, focusing on animal health and disease prevention as part of the Good



Governance Week activities.

The Sericulture Department, under the ATMA programme, organized a demonstration programme at Sungri, highlighting modern sericulture practices and government interventions aimed at enhancing farmers' income and livelihood opportunities.

Additionally, awareness camps were held at Aghar Jitto and Marhi Panchayats, where beneficiaries were informed about the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), a flagship scheme providing financial assistance to pregnant and lactating mothers. The camps aimed to enhance awareness, address grievances and facilitate access to benefits under the scheme. Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) from all centres actively participated and registered eligible beneficiaries under PMMVY on the spot.

The Department of Agriculture organized farmers' awareness camps at more than 20 locations across panchayats, Kisan Kendra Groups (KKGs), blocks and sub-divisions. The farmers were sensitized about key schemes including the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), JKICP, Soil Health Card Scheme (SHC), with special emphasis on the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). Farmers were advised to take advantage and register for the Crop Insurance scheme to overcome losses due to natural calamities.

DLRC meeting for quarter ended September 2025 held at Poonch

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

POONCH, DECEMBER 20: The District Level Review Committee (DLRC) meeting for the quarter ended September 2025 of FY 2025-26 was convened by the Lead Bank Office Poonch under the chairmanship of the District Development Commissioner, Ashok Kumar Sharma.

The meeting reviewed the performance of banks under the Annual Credit Plan (ACP) and the progress of the Government-sponsored schemes in the district.

At the outset, Lead District Manager (LDM) Sanjeev Rasotra presented a comprehensive overview of the banking performance. He informed that banks in Poonch district have achieved a total business of 6,623.03 crore as on 30 September 2025.

He highlighted that deposits increased from 4,029.26 crore (30.09.2024) to 4,310.99 crore (30.09.2025), registering a YOY growth of 6.9%, while advances rose from 2,100.20 crore to 2,312.04 crore, showing a YOY growth of 10.1%. The Credit-Deposit



(CD) ratio stood at 53.63%.

Under the Annual Credit Plan for FY 2025-26 (up to 30.09.2025), the banks disbursed 713.51 crore against an annual target of 905.60 crore, achieving 79% of the annual target. Priority Sector lending stood

at 282.49 crore against a target of 702.31 crore (40%), while Non-Priority Sector lending achieved 431.02 crore against a target of 203.29 crore (212%).

Speaking at the meeting, the Chairman DLRC directed banks

and sponsoring agencies to significantly improve Priority Sector lending, especially under Mission Yuva, to promote self-employment among unemployed youth. He also emphasized scaling up lending under PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana to promote renewable energy.

The Chairman further stressed vigorous implementation of Social Security Schemes—PMJJBY, PMSBY and APY to ensure maximum coverage.

Special emphasis was also laid on Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), urging banks and line departments to enhance farmer awareness and enrolment to mitigate agricultural risks.

The meeting also reviewed the status of unclaimed deposits, and banks were directed to intensify awareness campaigns and settlement drives so that rightful beneficiaries can claim pending amounts at the earliest.

Unbanked Rural Centres (URCs) were discussed in detail, with strong emphasis on improving banking outreach, service delivery and financial inclusion in these areas through coordinated efforts

of banks, BCs, CFLs, and district administration.

The meeting was attended by Naima Bhatti, GM DIC Poonch; Abdul Majeed Tantray, Deputy Director Employment; Anil Kumar, LDO RBI Jammu; Chander, DDM NABARD; Ritesh Sharma, Cluster Head J&K Bank Poonch; Amarjeet Singh, Regional Manager Grameen Bank; Radhey Sham, Director RSETI J&K Bank Poonch along with senior officers from Agriculture, Animal & Sheep Husbandry, Fisheries, JPDCL, DUDA, NRLM, KVIB, Handicrafts & Handloom Departments and other district offices.

District Coordinators of all banks, officers from various Government departments, and representatives from FLCC and CFL also actively participated in the meeting.

The DLRC concluded with a collective resolve to strengthen credit flow, enhance priority sector lending, expand insurance and social security coverage, address unclaimed deposits and deepen financial inclusion particularly in URC areas for the overall economic development of Poonch district.

HT EDITORIAL

Oilseed production, latest buzzword in agriculture sector

The oilseed production in the Kashmir valley has tripled over the past three years or so and the basic reason for the same has been the proper usage of land by the farmers. The proper usage of land has resulted in economic progress for the farmers since they are able to earn more out of their produce. In 2020-21 the oilseeds were sown on 40,000 hectares of land in Kashmir and the same reached 1, 40,000 hectares during 2023-24.

At the same time the production has registered a staggering increase of over 250 percent. The increase in the oilseed production has transformed livelihoods, fostered economic growth and reduced dependency on imports. All this is due to the implementation of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) launched in 2020-21. The programme was implemented following the feedback from farmers and the unique thing about the HADP is that it is specific for the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

Statistics point out that production of over 1, 33,000 metric tons of oilseeds have translated to 44,000 metric tons of edible oils. It signifies a monumental leap towards self-reliance. With the value of oil estimated at over 770 crores a future of prosperity is being nurtured. The production and productivity through the oilseeds mission have also helped in enhancing additional coverage of bee-keeping in the valley with an average three colonies per hectare of area. This intervention has resulted in production of 6,000 quintals of honey with a value of Rs. 42.0 lakhs.

Through meticulous planning and strategic interventions, the National Oilseeds Mission is revolutionizing agricultural practices in the region. By incentivizing farmers to shift to oilseeds during the Rabi season a vista of opportunities has come up for farmers and the same has led to transformation of landscapes. But this isn't just a government initiative; it's a collective endeavor. The success of the HADP with respect to increase in the oilseed production is visible on the ground.

Under the HADP 29 programmes are being carried out by the Department of Agriculture and the allied departments. On its own 17 programmes are being taken up by the agriculture department itself. Since the whole industry is a cottage industry it does not require any huge investment. The research and development aspect of the programme is being looked after by the agriculture universities of Kashmir and Jammu. Fields of activity like mushroom cultivation, bee-keeping, fisheries, aromatic plants and others fall under the ambit of HADP and progress has been achieved in such fields of activity as well.

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THREATS TO THE COPPER INDUSTRY IN KASHMIR



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

With every passing day, Kashmir faces growing challenges in various business sectors. Recently, the exposure of rotten meat was a tragedy for hoteliers and their associates—such incidents never bode well for trade. A stable life in the valley is possible only when every sector functions smoothly, whether it be tourism, horticulture, agriculture, pisciculture, transport, or traditional crafts.

The government has indeed introduced initiatives like smart buses and battery-powered rickshaws, but such steps also bring unintended consequences. Smart buses often cause traffic jams on narrow roads, while free bus services have directly impacted the livelihood of auto-rickshaw drivers. Development should never mean creating a mess in cities—it should balance environmental issues, employment, and sustainability.

We also face serious environmental threats. Deforestation in the upper reaches leads to storms and property damage, while floods in cities create uncertainty. Being in seismic zone 5, the valley is highly vulnerable to earthquakes, yet giant constructions are being permitted without considering safety. Illegal encroachments, such as hoteliers narrowing flood canals, only increase flood risks. Development must not come at the cost of society's future.

Scams and Loss of Trust

Why are scams common in medicine, horticulture, copper, tourism, and handicrafts? Why do Kashmiri traders lack customer trust? Why do buyers hesitate before purchasing our world-famous handmade embroidery, carpets, papier-mâché, or copperware?

The answer lies in quality assurance. Customers—both domestic and foreign—fear adulteration and fake products. To restore trust, the government should introduce special authenticity tags and scanning applications for Kashmiri handmade items.



This will ensure buyers receive genuine products, boosting tourism, exports, and ultimately our economy.

The Copper Industry: A Heritage Under Threat

The copper industry, introduced in the 14th century by Shah Hamdaan (RA), has historically provided employment to thousands and remains one of the valley's cultural treasures. But today, it faces serious threats:

Major Threats:

Machine-made products flooding markets, undermining handmade authenticity.

Cheap imitations sold at lower prices, deceiving customers.

Adulteration in copperware, leading to loss of trust.

Lack of financial support and recognition from the government.

Declining youth interest due to lack of incentives and innovation.

Competition is healthy, but it must never mean cheating customers. Instead, traders should embrace professionalism, uphold authenticity, and adapt to modern trends.

Way Forward

Government Support: Provide financial aid, training workshops, and incentives for copper artisans.

Authenticity Certification: Introduce scannable tags and official seals to ensure originality.

Product Innovation: Expand into new items like copper flower pots, wall clocks, trophies, and modern décor—similar to the trending samovar trophies gifted at local cricket events.

Tourism Integration: Position copperware as signature souvenirs of Kashmir, strengthening cultural identity.

Awareness & Planning: Ensure development projects safeguard against environmental threats like floods, earthquakes, and deforestation.

Conclusion

Kashmir can become a model for sustainable development and cultural preservation if we act with foresight. The copper industry, once a symbol of our heritage and employment, must be revived with authenticity, innovation, and proper government support. By safeguarding our crafts, environment, and trust, we can make our valley truly unique—like no place else in the world.

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Winter Journey Of Kashmir



■ MOOL RAJ

Kashmir, often celebrated as Paradise on Earth, undergoes a magical transformation with the arrival of winter. When snow blankets its valleys, mountains and lakes, the region turns into a spectacular destination for travelers who seek both adventure and serenity.

Over the years, this season has become an important pillar of the Valley's economy, drawing visitors from across India and abroad to witness its enchanting landscapes and unique culture.

Far from being a dormant time of the year, winter opens doors to exploration, leisure and the rediscovery of Kashmir's timeless charm, blending natural grandeur with traditional hospitality.

The season paints the Valley with breathtaking beauty between December and February. Srinagar with its partly frozen Dal Lake, houseboats and snow-laden Mughal gardens welcomes thousands of tourists who marvel at the stillness and purity of nature.

The crisp mountain breeze, towering pines draped in white and the Himalayan peaks glistening in snow create scenes unmatched anywhere else in the country. Destinations like Gulmarg and Pahalgam add to this allure, each offering distinct experiences. Gulmarg stands as the heart of winter sports, providing opportunities for skiing, snowboarding, sledging and heli-skiing. The famous Gulmarg Gondola, among the highest cable cars in



the world, carries travelers to Apharwat Peak where endless slopes and pristine powder snow await adventure seekers. Cultural festivities such as the Gulmarg Snow Festival further enrich the experience by blending sporting activities with exhibitions of Kashmiri crafts, cuisine and performances.

While Gulmarg shines with thrill and energy, Pahalgam provides a peaceful retreat for families and groups. Known as a summer base for the Amarnath Yatra, in winter it transforms into a calm wonderland with the Lidder River flowing through snow-covered valleys and pine forests. Activities like sledging, ice skating, and trekking bring visitors closer to nature, while pony rides and scenic trails through Aru and Betaab Valley add charm to the stay. Beyond these popular destinations, places like Sonamarg, Gurez and Yusmarg attract travelers who seek a more intimate connection with Kashmiri life away from large crowds. Bungus Valley, in particular, is emerging as a hidden treasure. Located in Kupwara district, this untouched landscape with its vast snow-clad meadows offers skiing, camping and trekking. Its remoteness and calm surroundings provide visi-

tors with a sense of peace that makes it one of North Kashmir's most promising tourism destinations. With improved infrastructure and thoughtful promotion, such lesser-explored places are steadily gaining recognition and adding to the Valley's diverse winter appeal.

The winter journey through Kashmir is about landscapes and adventure and about culture, heritage and cuisine. Visitors experience the warmth of local traditions such as the kangri, an earthen pot used to keep warm during the coldest months. Food holds a special place in this season, with delicacies like harissa and the royal multi-course wazwan delighting every guest. The aromatic saffron-flavored kahwa served with almonds reflects the essence of Kashmiri hospitality. Markets showcase intricate handicrafts, from the world-famous Pashmina shawls and delicately painted papier-mâché items to hand-woven carpets, each piece carrying generations of skill and artistry. These cultural treasures not only enrich the memories of tourists but also sustain the livelihoods of local artisans, making winter tourism a celebration of community as much as it is of nature.

The significance of winter tourism

in Kashmir extends beyond leisure. It provides income to thousands of families, including hoteliers, ski instructors, pony owners, craftsmen and transport operators. Enhanced road networks, better accommodation and improved facilities have made the region more accessible and comfortable for visitors. The role of security agencies has also been vital in ensuring safe and smooth travel, assisting tourists in remote areas and building confidence in Kashmir as a peaceful and welcoming destination. This harmony of adventure and serenity is what sets the Valley apart from other winter resorts. Whether skiing down Gulmarg's slopes, trekking through Bungus Valley, or spending a quiet evening on a snow-covered houseboat in Srinagar, Kashmir offers something unique for every traveler. With sustained promotion, infrastructural development and active involvement of the local community, winter tourism will continue to flourish, ensuring that Kashmir remains India's ultimate winter paradise for generations to come.

THE AUTHOR IS A
REGULAR COLUMNIST AND
FREELANCE WRITER

Basheer Asrar: The Unfading Flame of Kashmiri and Urdu Literature



■ SHAHNAWAZ NAZIR

In the vast and soulful landscape of Kashmiri and Urdu literature, there are some names that rise beyond the confines of time—names that become eternal through their unwavering passion, artistic brilliance, and unshakable commitment to truth. Among these luminous figures stands Basheer Asrar (1954 – 3 January 2021), a poet, thinker, Sufi, linguist, editor, and healer whose journey was carved not from luxury, but from relentless struggle, humility, and divine inspiration. His life is a testament to how a single individual, even while born into poverty, can elevate the literary consciousness of an entire region and leave behind a legacy unmatched in depth and devotion.

A Life Born in Hardship, Raised by Courage

Basheer Asrar's early life was marked by hardship. Poverty was his constant companion since childhood, yet it never dimmed the light within him. Instead of breaking under the weight of adversity, he transformed suffering into wisdom, turning his wounds into words and his struggles into verses. He believed in simple living and high thinking—a philosophy that shaped both his art and his character.

He carried within him the rare combination of humility and genius. Even after achieving mastery in several literary forms and earning respect across Kashmir, he never allowed pride to overshadow his humanity. His words were powerful, but his heart was gentle.

The Dawn of a Poet

His literary journey began in 1967 when his first poem, "Baji Watth," was published in the magazine Swarg Mounue Watan by the J&K Cultural Academy. The poem became an

instant success, revealing to him his God-given gift. At that time, he wrote under the pen name Basheer Ahmed Hayaat. The popularity of "Baji Watth" ignited a fire within him—a fire that would continue to burn for the next five decades without fading.

His poetry carried the fragrance of the Kashmiri soul, the rhythm of its rivers, the anguish of its tragedies, and the beauty of its mysticism. He had the extraordinary ability to explore different genres—Sufi poetry, humorous poetry, patriotic songs, revolutionary verses, sentimental poems, rubai, and even parodies—with equal mastery.

A Sufi Heart with a Literary Mission

At his core, Basheer Asrar was a Sufi. His love for divine truths permeated every line he composed. His poems were not just expressions—they were spiritual mirrors reflecting his inner world. His search for truth, his devotion to God, and his compassion for humanity made him a unique voice in Kashmiri literature.

His autobiography, written entirely in poetry and containing around 700 verses, was included in his book "Karvan-e-Sukhan." In it, he unveiled the struggles, truths, and revelations of his life with profound honesty. It is one of the rare autobiographical works written in verse in Kashmiri history.

The Scholar Who Served Language Like an Ascetic

Basheer Asrar was not only a poet but also a scholar who dedicated his entire life to the preservation and development of Kashmiri and Urdu. His achievements were unparalleled:

Main Books by Basheer Asrar

MIZRAAB, MODURAY MODUR, TRAISHI KUL, JAMAY SHAHADAT, NORAY NOOR, KATI YUITH LOL.

Each of these works reflects a different hue of his literary brilliance—Sufi depth, emotional intensity, cultural echoes, and philosophical insight.

In addition to these, he authored and published numerous other books, compiled poetic collections of deceased poets, and prepared literary contributions of active contemporary poets. His works are preserved in cassettes and CDs, still found in music shops across Kashmir.



A Pioneer in Literary Education

Basheer Asrar achieved something extraordinary: he became the first poet to compose a Kashmiri grammar book entirely in poetic form. This book includes letters, essays, stories, and complete grammatical rules, all beautifully woven into verse. It remains a masterpiece of linguistic creativity and a testament to his dedication to education.

A Voice of the Nation

His patriotic songs, sung on Republic Day and Independence Day, stirred hearts and inspired unity. His verses were frequently broadcast on Radio Kashmir and Doordarshan Kendra. He understood that poetry could serve not only as emotional nourishment but also as a guiding force for society, an eye-opener for those wandering in the dark.

A Man Who Wore Many Crowns, Yet Remained Humble

Despite being a literary titan, Basheer Asrar lived a humble, modest life. Alongside his literary work, he was a well-known Unani physician (Hakeem), renowned for his mastery in treating kidney stones. Patients from far-off villages sought his healing touch and compassionate care.

His devotion to his community extended into his editorial career. From 1986 to 1991, he published the weekly Urdu newspaper Anantnag Times and served as its editor, printer, and publisher. He also published two important magazines, "Sat Sang" and "Shaan."

In 1985, he founded the District Cultural Association Anantnag, a haven for poets and writers, and also established Bazm-e-Khadim, strengthening the cultural roots of Kashmir.

Recognized Across India

His participation in the World Urdu Conference (Golden Jubilee) at Lucknow in 1986 earned him national recognition. Esteemed literary legends like Sardar Jaffery, Kaifi Azmi, Ghulam Rabani Taban, and Sibte Hassan Rizvi praised his inclusion.

In 1995, the Jammu & Kashmir Cultural Academy inaugurated a Kashmiri Adabi Conference with one of his patriotic songs—an honor that reflects the magnitude of his contribution.

A Legacy That Lives Beyond Death

Basheer Asrar's passing on 3 January 2021 marked the end of a physical life, but his spiritual and literary presence remains alive in every Kashmiri household. He was more than a poet; he was an institution, a movement, a guiding star whose brilliance continues to illuminate the path of young writers.

His life teaches us that art does not require wealth—only sincerity. Literature does not demand comfort—only courage. And greatness does not come from recognition—only from truth.

Basheer Asrar was, and remains, one of Kashmir's most precious jewels. His words continue to breathe, his verses continue to guide, and his legacy continues to inspire generations.

May Allah grant him the highest station in Jannah. Aameen.

The author is a Columnist | Author

Environmental crisis: Nature will be saved not by policies but by civic consciousness



■ DR. PRIYANKA SAURABH

Along with the failure of governments, our lifestyle is also the biggest culprit for environmental destruction. When it comes to planting trees, enthusiasm is limited to government campaigns and photo opportunities. Saplings are planted on Tree Planting Day and forgotten the next day. No one takes responsibility for their conservation. This is why millions of trees are planted in statistics, but on the ground, forests continue to dwindle. There is an old saying: If a person takes nine maunds of wood with him throughout his life, he should leave behind at least nine maunds of trees. This saying is even more relevant today. Do we strive to give back something equal to the resources we consume in our lives?

The debate on environmental protection is often steered in a convenient direction—governments don't formulate policies, ministries are inactive, and laws remain confined to paper. This criticism isn't entirely misplaced. Looking at the record of environmental ministries at the central and state levels, nature often becomes the first casualty of development projects. Deforestation, river pollution, toxic air, and groundwater scarcity—all of these are attributed to policy failure. But this is an incomplete truth. The full truth is that the environmental crisis is deeply rooted in our own lifestyles.

We have treated the environment as a government subject, as if it were a departmental file separate from civic life. This mindset is the biggest crisis. Air, water, soil, and forests are not the property of any ministry, but a collective responsibility. When citizens distance themselves from this responsibility, no policy remains



effective.

Today, the bulk of pollution isn't generated by factories, but by everyday household behavior—excessive private vehicles, countless plastics, uncontrolled waste, and wasteful water and electricity consumption. We consider conveniences a right and their consequences a problem of governance. This very thinking is slowly pushing the environment toward destruction.

In a developing country like India, environmental protection is often dismissed as anti-development. This is an artificial and misleading argument. The truth is that the destruction of nature is itself antithetical to development. Floods, droughts, extreme heat waves, water scarcity, and diseases—these are all the products of "development" that ignores the balance of nature.

But even in this debate, the role of the citizen is relegated to a secondary role. We don't ask how much our individual habits contribute to our development model. Is it necessary to take out a car for every short distance? Is unnecessary ostentation necessary at every wedding, ceremony, and festival? Is life impossible without single-use plastic? We avoid these questions because the answers make us uncomfortable.

Environmental protection isn't possible through laws and regulations alone. It's a question of civic character and social values. Countries that demonstrate environmental discipline are not just driven by strict

laws, but also by disciplined citizens' habits. The problem in India is that we are extremely conscious of our rights, yet almost indifferent to our duties.

We don't hesitate to litter outside our homes, yet we expect the government to ensure cleanliness. We pollute rivers in the name of worship, then protest for their cleanup. This contradiction exposes our social mindset.

When it comes to tree planting, enthusiasm is limited to government campaigns and photo opportunities. Trees are planted on Tree Planting Day and forgotten the next day. No one takes responsibility for their conservation. This is why millions of trees are planted in statistics, but on the ground, forests continue to dwindle.

There's an old saying: "If a man carries nine maunds of wood throughout his life, he should leave behind at least nine maunds of trees." This saying is even more relevant today. Do we strive to give back something equal to the resources we consume in our lives?

Today, planting trees is no longer a noble deed, but rather a minimal moral obligation. Yet, we avoid it. Space, time, water, and care—we have excuses for everything. The truth is, we've prioritized convenience and considered responsibility a burden.

Not planting trees is not just environmental negligence, but an injustice to the lives of future generations.

It's a crime our children will pay for—in the form of dirty air, toxic water, and an insecure future.

It's also not correct to say that governments have no role to play. Strict enforcement of environmental laws, honest environmental assessments of projects, stringent penalties for polluters, and empowerment of local bodies are all essential. But history shows that when society is inactive, even the best laws become ineffective.

The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is an example of this. Where citizens participated, results were seen. Where it was considered merely a government scheme, the situation remained the same. Environmental protection will also work on this principle.

The solution to the environmental crisis lies not in one big decision, but in millions of small citizen decisions. Household waste segregation, rainwater harvesting, using public transportation, energy-efficient appliances, local tree planting—these steps are all simple yet impactful.

Environmental education in schools and universities must not be limited to curriculum, but must be translated into practice. Children must be connected to nature, so that they develop not only information but also sensitivity. The role of the media and social organizations is also crucial. The environment must be presented not only as a disaster or a day-to-day issue, but as an everyday concern.

Ultimately, the most honest answer to the environmental crisis is to ask ourselves—what are we giving to nature? Until this question arises in the minds of every citizen, policies will continue to come and go, and nature will continue to be quietly destroyed.

Nature is not the responsibility of any ministry; it is a test of our collective character. And so far, we have failed this test. There is still time—if we truly want development, it must be built in harmony with nature, or future generations will never forgive us.

The Author is a Research Scholar in Political Science, Poet, freelance journalist and columnist, Ubba Bhawan, Aryanagar, Hisar (Haryana)-127045

The Harmful Effects of DRUGS



There have been many such incidents in our valley even before, as mentioned earlier, and in most cases, those involved were young people addicted to drugs. There are many reasons for the lack of tolerance among our youth, but the most important reason is drug addiction. Unless we ourselves step forward to eradicate this drug epidemic, such incidents will continue to occur and will even increase



■ GULFAM BARJI

We proudly call the Kashmir Valley the “Valley of Flowers,” but have we ever stopped to think why, in this very Valley of Flowers, new and different kinds of crimes are emerging day by day? The people who once hesitated even to hold a knife to slaughter a chicken are today committing such horrific crimes that we had never even imagined before. Now, when we hear or see news of such crimes, the human soul trembles.

Crimes that we used to hear about or read from other states of the country are now being reported from the Valley of Flowers itself. In fact, along with those, even more horrifying and painful crimes are now emerging from our beloved homeland, the Valley of Flowers, on a daily basis.

I still remember that just a few years ago, a monthly magazine titled “Bhayanak Apradh” (Horrific Crimes) used to be published from Delhi—perhaps it is still published today. That magazine

carried news and stories of brutal and painful crimes committed in different states of the country. Reading those stories would make one’s soul shudder. Yet, after reading that magazine, there was a sense of relief that no such horrifying news or story related to the Valley of Flowers was ever found in its pages. I still have a few copies of that magazine preserved.

But with the passage of time, human thinking has changed. People’s habits have altered, and lifestyles have transformed. Fear and awe have vanished from human hearts. In short, people have become masters of their own will, doing whatever they desire. The distinction between young and old has disappeared. Especially among today’s youth, there is a severe lack of tolerance. Who should be spared and who should be killed—humans have taken even this decision into their own hands. We have seen clear examples of this in our beloved Valley of Flowers over the past few years.

Although even earlier there were painful and horrifying crimes—where a son killed his mother, a brother-in-law killed a sister-in-law like a mother, a husband killed his wife or a wife killed her husband, or a father killed his own daughter—today every kind of crime is being committed in the Valley of Flowers.

Over the last two or three years,

criminals have adopted a new method of committing brutal crimes: attacks with knives and daggers. Nowadays, we hear daily from every corner of the Valley of Flowers that a young man attacked another young man with a knife. About a year and a half ago, in the Dalgate area of Srinagar, in an area called Chaharbagh, a friend stabbed and killed his own innocent and underage friend. Similarly, last year in Hadipora village of Rafiabad, a beastly son brutally murdered his own mother—the mother whose greatness has been described in the Holy Qur’an.

There have been many such incidents in our valley even before, as mentioned earlier, and in most cases, those involved were young people addicted to drugs. There are many reasons for the lack of tolerance among our youth, but the most important reason is drug addiction. Unless we ourselves step forward to eradicate this drug epidemic, such incidents will continue to occur and will even increase.

The police are making every possible effort to eliminate this drug menace. Now, parents also bear the responsibility of keeping an eye on their children, observing their activities, and discreetly investigating the kind of friends they keep. In addition, religious scholars who address large congregations during daily and Friday prayers should use their

sermons to advise the youth to stay away from such evils, so that some positive impact may be created and the younger generation may be saved from this curse. Perhaps such measures can prevent incidents like the one in Rafiabad from happening again.

It is also worth pondering whether a valley where such incidents occur daily truly deserves to be called the “Valley of Flowers.” Where are we taking our society? Are parents not paying attention to their children or monitoring them? There is still time. If you notice such unruly and wayward youths in your village, city, colony, or neighborhood, immediately inform the local police so that our brave police can prevent any horrific and painful crime before it happens.

At the government level, under the ongoing “Drug-Free Campaign,” anti-drug awareness programs are being organized across the valley, especially in schools, colleges, and universities, to educate the public—particularly the youth—about drugs and their harmful effects. Such initiatives are an urgent need of the hour. We are all well aware that the Jammu and Kashmir Police are continuously carrying out operations against various types of crimes. As a result, many notorious drug dealers and professional thieves have been arrested, several prostitution dens have been exposed, and properties of many drug

traffickers have been seized—all of which have helped in providing a cleaner and healthier social environment. This was possible only because the public cooperated with the police in a timely manner.

Now the question arises: who are these knife attackers? Have they remained in the company of criminals from other states where such brutal crimes are common? How has the influence of such criminals reached the youth of our society? Do we realize what impact the daily emergence of new crimes in the Valley of Flowers will have on our society? It cannot be denied that the misuse of smartphones by underage and immature children is also giving rise to new and horrific crimes. Perhaps this is why knife attacks have become a new method of committing crimes.

Let it not happen that, like drug addiction, our greatest asset—our youth—falls victim to negligence and dedicates itself to committing brutal crimes. Finding a solution to this problem must be among our top priorities. After all, the one who wields the knife is also one of us, and the one who is stabbed is also one of us.

Let us all unite, raise our voices together to uproot the curse of drugs from its roots, fulfill our social responsibility, and support the brave Jammu and Kashmir Police in eliminating drug traffickers.

The author from Harwan Srinagar

IRCS J&K Conducts First Aid Training for Employees

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SAMBA: The Indian Red Cross Society, Jammu & Kashmir—UT successfully conducted an intensive three-day First Aid Training Programme for the employees of MMG Beverages Private Ltd. Samba, Versatile polytech, Samba, BR Agrotech Ltd, Kathua and Nichino India Pvt. Ltd. aimed at strengthening workplace safety preparedness and equipping participants with essential life-saving skills.

The training covered a comprehensive range of First Aid procedures including CPR (Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation), management of bleeding, fractures, burns, choking, shock, and various medical emergencies. The sessions were designed with a strong focus on practical demonstrations and hands-on learning to ensure participants could confidently respond during real-life situations.

The training was imparted by Dr. Rita Kumari and Dr. Manpreet Kour, Medical Officers, IRCS J&K, who delivered detailed demonstrations and interactive learning sessions. They were assisted by Sh. Joginder Kumar, Pharmacist, Smt. Mohana Devi, FMPHW and Sh. Manjeet Singh supported by Ms. Veronica Marwah,



Field Officer, who coordinated, assisted, and facilitated the overall training programme.

On the concluding day, Sh. Rohit Khajuria, General Secretary, IRCS J&K, personally interacted with all participants

in a one-on-one conversation, reviewed their feedback, and appreciated their enthusiastic involvement throughout the three days. He also distributed provisional certificates to the trainees as a recognition of their successful completion of the course.

In his message, he highlighted the importance of First Aid training in every sector and stated, “Being prepared to respond in an emergency is not just a skill, but a responsibility. I congratulate all participants for taking this initiative and encourage them to continue spreading awareness and extending help whenever needed. IRCS J&K remains committed to building a trained and responsible community.”

Participants from all three organizations expressed their gratitude to the Indian Red Cross Society for providing such valuable training and shared that the skills learned would prove crucial in enhancing safety measures within their workplace.

The IRCS J&K reiterated its dedication to enhancing First Aid awareness and empowering individuals with the confidence to act promptly during emergencies.



“Swadeshi Mela” at Bahu Plaza on 24th Dec 2025 to boost local economy, empower artisans: BJP

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, DEC 20: A grand “Swadeshi Mela” will be held on December 24, 2025, at Bahu Plaza, Jammu. This was announced by J&K BJP Vice-President Priya Sethi and General Secretary Gopal Mahajan, during a press conference at the J&K BJP headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

J&K BJP Media Incharge Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, Spokesperson Balbir Ram Rattan, Convenor Department of Publicity and Literature S. Varinderjit Singh, and Convenor Department for Party Journals and Publications Rajnish Jain were especially present during the press meet and release of concerned poster.

Addressing the media, Priya Sethi said that the Swadeshi Mela is being organized with the objective of promoting local products and empowering artisans, craftsmen, and traders associated with indigenous industries. She emphasized that the initiative aims to strengthen the local



socio-economic ecosystem while encouraging self-employment and entrepreneurship at the grassroots level.

Sethi further appealed to the people of Jammu to participate in large numbers and extend their support to local artisans and producers, stating that public participation will play a vital role in boosting their morale and sustaining traditional livelihoods.

Linking the initiative with

the broader national vision, Priya Sethi said the Swadeshi Mela aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for “Viksit Bharat Sankalp”, highlighting the resolve to preserve and revive India's rich culture, traditions, and local economies. She added that contributors to this national mission, including those showcasing local cuisines and traditional crafts, will be a major attraction at the Mela.

Speaking on the occasion, Gopal Mahajan said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has consistently advocated the use of Swadeshi and locally manufactured products since the very beginning, with a clear vision of achieving a Viksit Bharat by 2047. He noted that the BJP has launched a dedicated Abhiyan on the birth anniversary of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay, which will culminate on De-

cember 25, the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, observed as Good Governance Day (Sushasan Diwas).

Later, the senior BJP leaders jointly released the official poster of the “Swadeshi Mela evam Pari-Samvaad”, formally announcing that the event will be held on December 24, 2025, from 10:00 am onwards at Bahu Plaza, Jammu.

Public Notice

It is for information of general public that i am Abid ahmad kaboo ,s/o mohammad Ramzaan kaboo, R/o laway pora sgr that i have change my bank passbook name as per adhaar .The public notice is issued with the intrest that if anybody has any objection same may be brought to Jammu and Kashmir bank branch gund hassi bhat within period of 7 days of issuance of this notice after which no objection will be accepted

Abid Ahmad Kaboo
Mohammad Ramzaan Kaboo, Lawaypora Sgr

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that I want to transfer my RC to Nawaz Hussain S/O- Iqbal Ali R/O- Latoo of the vehicle i Ignis bearing registration number LA01 1393. Anybody having any objections may contact ARTO Kargil with in the period of seven days.

Manzoor Hussain, S/o: Mohd, R/o: Latoo

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Wholesale Dealer Of New And Pre Used Laptops

DEALS IN ALL KINDS OF LAPTOPS AND ACCESSORIES

REPAIRING OF: ALL TYPES OF LAPTOPS & DESKTOPS



BJP Mahila Morcha Organises Mahila Sammelan at Samba, Reiterates Commitment to Atmanirbhar Bharat

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SAMBA, DEC 20: A Mahila Sammelan was organised at the BJP Party Headquarters, Samba, under the leadership of Adv. Neha Mahajan, President BJP Mahila Morcha, Jammu & Kashmir. J&K BJP Vice-President Rashpal Verma, DDCC Chairperson Keshav Sharma, MLA Vijaypur Chander Prakash Ganga, MLA Samba Surjit Singh Slathia, BJP Secretaries Arti Jasrotia and Arun Sharma, District President BJP Samba Asha Rani, Sangathan Mantri (Jammu-Reasi Constituency) Inderjit Sharma and Mahila Morcha State General Secretaries Er. Urvashi Gupta, Poonam Gupta and Geeta Bhagat, and Secretary Sonia Thakur, besides other also joined the programme.



The programme was organized by District President BJP Mahila Morcha Samba, Indu Wazir, and saw active participation of women workers and senior party leaders. Addressing the gathering, Adv. Neha Mahajan highlighted the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for women-led development and stressed the impor-

tance of Atmanirbhar Bharat. She urged Mahila Morcha workers to promote self-reliance, women entrepreneurship and to take forward the pledge of Swadeshi Sankalp by supporting indigenous products.

Chander Prakash Ganga, while addressing the Sammelan, appreciated the organizational strength of BJP Mahila Morcha and stated that women have

emerged as a strong pillar of the party. He lauded the Central Government's women-centric initiatives and called upon women workers to strengthen BJP's outreach at the grassroots level.

Surjit Singh Slathia, in his address, emphasized the decisive role of women in shaping a strong and developed nation. He encouraged Mahila Morcha activists to spread awareness about government welfare schemes and actively connect with women at the booth and mandal levels.

The programme concluded with a collective pledge of Swadeshi Sankalp, reaffirming the commitment towards women empowerment, self-reliance and a Viksit Bharat.

Office of the Executive Engineer Public Works (R&B) Division Awantipora

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir

No: T-1/EEA/8333-37 | Dated: 20 /12/2025

Extension Notice

Subject: Integrated Civic Infrastructure and Public Space Up-gradation Including Development of Lanes, Drains, Footpaths, Parks, Roads, and Graveyard Fencing etc within the limits of Municipal Committee Pampore.

Reference:

1. This office e-NIT No. 135/EEA/RNB of 2025-26/7240-50 Dated 28-11-2025

The critical dates for the above noted Work is hereby extended as under:

1	Bid Submission End Date	23-12-2025 upto 04:00 PM
2	Date & Time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	24-12-2025 upto 12:00 PM

All other terms & Conditions shall remain same as per above mentioned NIT.

Sd/- Executive Engineer
R&B Division Awantipora

DIPK: 9205/25 | Dated: 20-12-2025

Office of the Executive Engineer (R&B) Division Uri NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir

eNIT No: 88 of 2025-26/7563-71/R&B Uri e-tendering | Dated: 19-12-2025

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:

S.No	Name of work	Adv. Cost (in lacs)	T.D Cost	E/M	Time	Class	MHA
01	Repair and Renovation of R&B Divisional Office at Uri	2.49	200/-	5000/-	20 days	DEE	2059 M&R

Time & Date of Opening of Bid: 26-12-2025

Project Authority: Chief Engineer PW (R&B) Department North Kashmir

Position of AA/TS: Accorded/Sanctioned

1. The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	19-12-2025
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	19.12.2025 from (12:00 PM) to 26.12.2025 (02:00 PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	19.12.2025 from (12:00 PM)
4	Bid Submission End Date	26.12.2025 (02:00 PM)
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	26.12.2025 (03:00 PM) in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Uri

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan debited under M.H-0059 in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Uri (tender inviting authority) (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date).

3. At the time of tendering, all the bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to the tender receiving authority i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Uri (The date of Earnest money should be between Date of Start of bid and bid submission End date). The successful (1st lowest) bidder will have to provide Performance security @ 5% of Allotted cost in shape of CDR/FDR/BG at the time of contract award. The earnest money/bid security of 2% will be released to the successful bidder only ,after the submission of performance security of 5% of the total allotted cost which will be released after successful completion of the DLP.

3 (a) Failure to produce Performance Security shall render the L1 as non-responsive and case for debarring of the Contractor for a period of 01 Year be forwarded to Higher Authorities.

3. (c) The Earnest Money/Performance Security shall be forfeited If:

(i) Any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modification in the terms and conditions of the bid.
(ii) Failure of successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within specified time period before issue of letter of intent.

(iii) Successful Bidder fails to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

(iv) If at any stage of work, the Bidder back up from the contract, again the Performance security/EMD as well as work done claim will be forfeited.

4. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Uri (tender receiving authority).

5. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids

6. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

6.1. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.

6.2. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act 2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved Vendor.

6.3. The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No bid will be accepted in physical form.

6.4. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.

6.5. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the technical bid.

Note: Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.

No: 2025-26/7563-71 | Dated: 19-12-2025

Sd/- (Er. Imran Ali)
Executive Engineer, R&B Division, Uri

DIPK: 9181/25 | Dated: 20-12-2025

Arvind Gupta holds Public Darbar, listens to public issues of Jammu West

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, DEC 20: MLA Jammu West, Arvind Gupta, is regularly holding Public Darbar at his office from Monday to Saturday to address the issues and concerns of the people of Jammu West.

The initiative aims to provide a direct platform for residents to interact with their elected representative and seek timely redressal of their grievances.

During the Public Darbar today, people from different parts of the constituency raised matters related to civic amenities, development works, infrastructure, electricity, water supply, sanitation, roads and other day-to-day problems.

Arvind Gupta listened patiently to the grievances of the public and issues on-the-spot directions to the concerned departments for prompt action.

Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said that Public Darbar is an effective medium to strengthen the bond between the public and their representative and ensures transparent and responsive governance. He emphasized that the welfare of Jammu West remains his top priority and assured that genuine issues would be resolved in a time-bound



manner. The regular Public Darbar has been appreciated by local residents, who expressed satisfaction over the accessibility of the MLA and his proactive approach towards addressing public issues.

Arvind Gupta reiterated his commitment to continue holding Public Darbar sessions to ensure effective public service delivery and overall development of Jammu West.

Mehbooba Mufti's Opposition to Land Allotment for Security Forces is Treasonous: BJP

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, DEC 20: Girdhari Lal Raina, former MLC and BJP spokesperson, has strongly condemned former Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti for opposing the allotment of land to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in Pulwama district. He termed her stance as irresponsible, politically reckless, treasonous and driven solely by narrow political compulsions to remain relevant after repeated rejection by the electorate. "In a constitutional democracy, dissent and criticism of government policies are legitimate rights. However, these rights are not absolute," Raina stated. "They are subject to reasonable restrictions under law, particularly where public order, national security, and the safety of citizens are concerned." He cautioned that any attempt to undermine the morale, legitimacy, or operational effectiveness of security forces tasked with protecting civilians from internal and external threats crosses a clear legal, ethical, and constitutional red line.

Raina emphasised that the allotment of land for security forces is a core responsibility and essential administrative function of the government. Such decisions are guided by operational requirements, strategic imperatives, and the need to provide secure bases and even housing for personnel deployed in highly sensitive and terrorism-affected areas. "Projecting this routine and necessary process as illegitimate or malicious is factually incorrect and deliberately misleading," he asserted. He pointed out the glaring hypocrisy in Ms. Mufti's opposition to the land allotment at Puchal village in Pulwama district. "While she enjoys round-the-clock security provided by the same forces for herself, her residence, and her party leadership, she seeks to deny these forces the basic infrastructure required to effectively perform their duties, including the protection of innocent citizens of Kashmir," Raina remarked.

The BJP spokesperson also expressed serious concern over the PDP leadership's repeated use of provocative and divisive rhetoric that risks inciting public sentiment against security institutions. "Such irresponsible conduct erodes public trust and can directly endanger lives on the ground," he warned. Raina further criticised Ms. Mufti's selective and opportunistic interpretation of secularism, calling it a reflection of her political double standards. "While she frames certain issues as matters of personal choice, she has maintained a studied silence when radical elements curtailed those very freedoms—particularly of women—as seen in the forced disbanding of the all-girls band 'Pragaash'," he noted, questioning the sincerity of her advocacy.

DRSC meeting reviews winter preparedness, road safety measures in Doda

Action plan for snow clearance, commuter safety finalized

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

DODA, DECEMBER 20: The 4th District Road Safety Committee (DRSC) meeting was chaired today by the Deputy Commissioner Doda, Harvinder Singh to review road safety measures, winter preparedness and ongoing infrastructure works across the district.

The DC directed the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) to ensure regular maintenance and uninterrupted road connectivity during snowfall, with special focus on the Paddri road and other snow-prone stretches. Emphasis was laid on maintaining smooth traffic flow during adverse weather conditions amid the ongoing winter season.

The DC instructed the General Manager, NHIDCL, to ensure immediate removal and proper disposal of dumped construction material from roadsides to enhance commuter safety and prevent accidents.

Directions were also issued for installing crash barriers at vulnerable locations, improving road geometry, ensuring proper gradients at critical points such as Raggi Nallah and Khellani Nallah and undertaking works to mitigate landslide risks in sensitive areas.

The installation of reflective studs, traffic signboards and safety signage on all major and accident-prone roads was also stressed.

The DC further directed the



XENs of PWD (R&B) to ensure proper drainage systems along roads to prevent water-logging and road damage especially during

winter.

Maintenance of link roads across the district was reviewed and instructions were issued to

prioritize winter preparedness.

The removal of large boulders from vulnerable locations was assessed, with directions to

coordinate with the Fire and Emergency Services and ensure the availability of hydra vehicles during critical situations.

Passenger amenities along roadsides were also reviewed, with instructions to improve hygiene and toilet facilities.

Issues related to traffic regulation were discussed in detail. The DC directed the Traffic Police, ARTO and concerned officers to take strict action against unauthorized parking, rash and drunken driving and illegal dumping of material on roads, including registration of FIRs where required.

Night-time disposal of construction material was advised to avoid disruption to daytime traffic. The movement and regulation of electric auto-rickshaws were reviewed, with directions to fix proper operational limits and ensure uninterrupted but regulated movement.

The meeting was attended by ADC Bhaderwah Sunil Bhutyal, ASP Headquarters Mohammad Aslam, SDMs, XENs, CMO and representatives from BRO, Education Department, Fire and Emergency Services and other concerned departments.

The GM NHIDCL attended the meeting virtually, while stakeholders highlighted the present status and execution of ongoing works and urged enhanced inter-departmental coordination for improved road safety across the district.

SDH Bhaderwah gets Patient Transport Ambulance under CSR initiative

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

DODA, DECEMBER 20: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda, Harvinder Singh today flagged off a Patient Transport Ambulance for Sub District Hospital (SDH) Bhaderwah provided by the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.

The flag-off ceremony was held in the presence of Independent Director Steel Authority of India, Advocate Manjeet Razdan; Additional Deputy Commissioner Bhaderwah, Sunil Kumar Bhutyal; Chief Planning Officer, Manesh Kumar Manhas; Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Tanvir Ahmed; Block Medical Officer Bhaderwah, Dr. Varsha Sharma and other senior health department officials.



The Deputy Commissioner welcomed the Steel Authority of India for its valuable contribution towards strengthening healthcare infrastructure in the district. He said that the addition of the patient transport ambulance would significantly enhance emergency medical response and improve patient referral services, especially for residents of Bhaderwah and adjoining remote areas.

He further emphasized that such CSR initiatives play a vital role in supplementing government efforts to provide accessible, timely and quality healthcare services to the people. The DC expressed hope that the ambulance would be optimally utilized to ensure prompt transportation of patients, particularly during medical emergencies, thereby reducing response time and improving overall healthcare delivery in the sub-division.

Mission Director reviews progress of HADP, JKCIIP projects in Doda

Emphasises farmers' empowerment through sustained Agriculture sector growth

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

DODA, DECEMBER 20: Mission Director, Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Sandeep Kumar today reviewed the progress and impact of the developmental projects of the HADP and Jammu & Kashmir Climate Innovation Programme (JKCIIP) in the District Doda here at a meeting cum training programme.

The review-cum one-day training and awareness programme focused on exploring opportunities, benefits and future prospects for farmers, youth, Krishi Udyamis and agri-business entrepreneurs in the district.

The Mission Director interacted with farmers and highlighted the government's sustained efforts to double farmers' income through innovation, diversification and value addition.

The programme was attended by Deputy Commissioner, Harvinder Singh; Director Horticulture, Gul Sayed; Director Animal Husbandry, Dr. Sanjay Gupta; ADDC, Roshan Lal; CPO, Manesh Kumar Manhas and Chief Agriculture Officer, Amjad Hussain Malik along with officers from the Horticulture and Animal Husbandry Departments, progressive farmers, youth and other stakeholders.

The Chief Agriculture Officer informed the meeting that around 2,500 applications have been received under JKCIIP so far and appreciated the significant contribution of Krishi



Udyamis in strengthening and modernising the agriculture sector. Detailed presentations were delivered on various schemes including grants under the Agro-Ecological Programme (GAP), highlighting funding patterns, eligibility criteria and implementation strategies.

Addressing the gathering, the Mission Director stressed the need for proper planning, sustained handholding and inter-departmental convergence to boost local agricultural production and promote agri-entrepreneurship. He assured farmers of adequate financial support for viable and innovative projects and encouraged stakeholders to focus on market linkages, branding,

value addition and export potential of local produce such as black zeera, rajmash and other niche crops. He also reviewed agriculture losses caused by recent floods and assured that issues related to Kisan Credit Card (KCC) loans, approvals and credit flow would be taken up with the concerned authorities for early resolution.

During the interactive session, Deputy Commissioner, Harvinder Singh emphasised grassroots implementation of HADP and JKCIIP. He directed the Krishi Gram Guides (KGGs) to ensure maximum registration of farmers and work in close coordination with later within their respective jurisdictions.

The DC further directed Krishi

Udyamis to actively facilitate farmers' registrations and ensure adoption of HADP units for tangible on-ground benefits. He informed that each Krishi Udyami has been provided with one dedicated officer for effective coordination, monitoring and smooth implementation of projects. Farmers, youth and agri-business communities raised their genuine issues regarding inclusion under JKCIIP, marketing support and infrastructure gaps.

Subsequently, the Mission Director asked the Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Husbandry Officers to ensure focused facilitation of applications within the prescribed five-year period, when the probability of approval remains high. He further underscored the importance of enhancing the youth club ratio in the district and urged Krishi Udyamis to actively become part of such youth-led agricultural clubs to promote innovation, peer learning and entrepreneurship.

Director Horticulture and Director Animal Husbandry highlighted various government-sponsored schemes under their respective departments and encouraged Krishi Udyamis, farmers and agri-business entrepreneurs to actively participate and avail the benefits.

The programme concluded with a collective resolve to further strengthen farmer-centric policies, youth engagement, institutional support and sustainable agri-led growth in Doda district.

Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore Campaign: Intensified Grievances Redressal, Public Outreach marks Day 2 in Doda District

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

DODA, DECEMBER 20: On the second day of the "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore" campaign, the district administration Doda further intensified grievances redressal, public outreach and awareness activities across urban and rural areas. The initiative continued to focus on responsive, transparent and citizen-centric governance, with officers and departments reaching out to people at the grassroots to address their concerns and ensure effective delivery of government services. As part of the second-day activities, ACD Din Mohammad Afaqi held a Grievances Redressal Camp at Zila Gramin Vikas Bhawan.

The officials listened to issues related to rural development, welfare schemes, essential services and local matters and resolved many on the spot. Grievances related to power supply were also resolved. The Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department conducted inspections of the water filtration plants including third-party machinery checks to ensure uninterrupted and quality drinking water supply.

Outreach activities were conducted in Chiralla, Ghat and Kastigarh Blocks, including Panchayat Gagla (Pyt Gagla and Lower Mundhar-B). PWD organised grievances redressal and awareness camp at Gandoh, addressing key road infrastructure issues.

The Social Welfare Department, under the guidance of the District Social Welfare Officer, organized a Grievances Redressal Camp at Khakhhal Mohallah.

Tehsil Social Welfare Officer briefed participants about the social welfare schemes, while grievances were recorded and several resolved on the spot.

Meanwhile, the PHE Department



organized a grievances and awareness camp at Neeli Halore. The official team sensitised daily-rated workers about financial and welfare schemes and certified "Har Ghar Jal" status of Village Halore under Water Supply Scheme Gowari (JJM), reinforcing the district's commitment to universal drinking water coverage.

Meanwhile, DDC Chairman, Dhananther Singh led grievances redressal and review of development activities across several panchayats, including MS Doki (Panchayat Chiralla, Block Chiralla), Panchayat Kandote (Block Thathari) and Dharyouth Panchayat, Block Kahara, with active participation from PWD (R&B) Division Gandoh and I&FC Division Bhaderwah.

Adding to the activities, the Department of Handloom and Handicrafts organized Artisans Sensitization Programmes at Doda, Seri Bhaderwah, Malwas and Arnora, creating awareness about training programmes, financial support schemes, Karkhandar Scheme, Credit Card Scheme, PMJJBY, PMSBY and education scholarships for children of artisans and weavers.

Meditation Sessions held at GDC Marh to Mark World Meditation Day

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

JAMMU, DECEMBER 20: To celebrate World Meditation Day, Government Degree College (GDC), Marh organized two meditation sessions for faculty members and Semester-I students under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan.

The sessions were conducted by Sonakshi, Abhishek and Sushil- volunteers from the Isha Foundation. They guided participants through meditation practices, including elements of the Miracle of Mind initiative.

The programme aimed at reducing stress, improving focus and promoting mental well-being and an addiction-free lifestyle. The programme was organized by Prof Malti Rajput, Nodal Officer NMBA under the guidance of Prof. Ramneek Kaur, Principal of the college.

Faculty and students participated enthusiastically and appreciated the initiative.

Citizen-Centric Governance in Action: Day-2 of "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore" in District Kishtwar

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

KISHTWAR, DEC 20: The Day-2 of the "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore" – 5th Good Governance Week campaign was successfully conducted across all 13 blocks of District Kishtwar. The programme is observed every year around December 25, the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, to bring government services closer to the people.

The main aim of the campaign is to solve public problems, improve services and ensure people-friendly governance at the village level.

Under the directions of Deputy Commissioner, Pankaj Kumar Sharma, officers from different

departments like RDD, Revenue, Health, AYUSH, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Forest and Horticulture visited all blocks according to the schedule issued by the District Administration.

During the programme, officers listened to people's issues and resolved many grievances on the spot. People were also informed about important government schemes such as PM Jan Dhan Yojana, PM Shram Yogi Maandhan, PM Kisan Maandhan, Mission YUVA, HADP, PM Awas Yojana (PMAY) and other welfare schemes.

Several on-the-spot services were provided to the public, including Ayushman Cards, Distribution of Marriage



Certificates, Domicile Certificates and other revenue-related services.

The Forest Department also carried out plant distribution and plantation drives in different blocks including Atholi Block (Paddar),

Nagni Block (Kishtwar) across the District.

An awareness-cum-free medicine distribution camp was organized by the Animal Husbandry Department Kishtwar at Village Karthie, Panchayat Jar, where farmers were informed about welfare schemes of the Animal Husbandry Department.

During the "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore" programme at Nagseni Block, an applicant raised a grievance regarding the non-availability of 200 mushroom cultivation bags for livelihood support. The issue was immediately taken up by the Chief Agriculture Officer, Kishtwar (nominated Nodal Officer by the District

Administration) and after verification, the grievance was resolved on the spot, with the assurance to supply required mushroom bags.

The programmes were presided over by DFO Marwah, Vishal Chaudhary at the Tehsil Office Marwah, Ex En PWD (R&B) Kishtwar, Ravinder Verma at HSS Bounjwah, BDO Palmar, Rajesh Padha at the Block Headquarters Palmar, I/C CMO Kishtwar, Dr. Yudhvir Singh Kotwal at Panchayat Office Dharbadan, Thakrie, Functional Manager DIC at Panchayat Bhatan, Nagseni and other nominated officers at remaining block headquarters across the district.



War against pollution: Delhi govt to implement new EV policy in next financial yr

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, DEC 20: The Delhi government has prepared a comprehensive framework for the Electric Vehicles (EV) policy, with an aim to reduce pollution levels in the city, and also to modernise the transport system.

The government's primary objective is to make the adoption of electric vehicles seamless to an extent that they become the first choice of every resident of Delhi.

The policy is likely to be implemented from the next financial year, and Chief Minister Rekha Gupta stated that it will play an effective role in controlling pollution across the city.

According to the CM, emissions from vehicles are a major contributor to air pollution.

Throwing light on the policy, she emphasised, is not merely about providing financial incentives, but about securing a clean future for Delhi. "When every citizen adopts EVs, there will be a direct reduction in PM 2.5 and PM 10 levels," Gupta added.

She said that the government is integrating charging infrastructure and subsidies in a manner that enables Delhi to emerge not only as the country's, but also the world's, 'EV capital'.

CM clarified that under the forthcoming policy, the



government's primary focus will be on financial incentives, and to reduce the significant price difference between petrol-diesel (ICE) vehicles and electric vehicles, adequate subsidies will be provided, she added.

In addition, the Delhi government has already abolished road tax and registration fees on the purchase of EVs, making new vehicles significantly more affordable.

The CM also said that people

often express concern about what will happen to their old vehicles if they purchase an EV, and to address this, the government has formulated a 'scrapping' plan for old vehicles.

A 'scrapping incentive' scheme is being introduced to remove highly polluting vehicles from the roads, and if a citizen scraps an old petrol or diesel vehicle, they will receive additional financial benefits while purchasing a new EV, CM added.

Gupta said that the government has instructed vehicle manufacturers (OEMs) to ensure coordination in line with demand, and they have been asked to ensure the timely supply of vehicles as per market requirements and to keep prices reasonable.

Notably, before finalising the policy, extensive consultations are underway with power distribution companies (Discoms), vehicle manufacturers and scrap dealers, and the draft policy will be made

public to invite suggestions from citizens.

The CM also stated that the emphasis is on a 'single-window' system and network expansion for EV infrastructure, and apart from major public locations, public charging points will now also be installed near residential colonies.

Facilities for the scientific disposal of old batteries and battery swapping will be developed so that users do not have to wait for long charging times.

She added that vehicle owners will be given sufficient and reasonable time to transition to electric mobility.

CM said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has repeatedly reiterated on global platforms, country's commitment to achieving the target of 'Net Zero' emissions by 2070. She said that PM believes that EVs are not merely a means of curbing pollution, but a symbol of a progressive 'New India'.

Gupta said that she firmly believes that given Delhi's geography and climate, there is no viable alternative to zero-emission vehicles.

The government considers EVs not a luxury, but a necessity, and the objective is to ensure that EVs are affordable for every middle-class family in the national capital, and that charging them is as easy as charging a mobile phone. UNI

Delhi continues to battle toxic air without any respite amid biting cold

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, DEC 20 : A dense layer of toxic smog engulfed the national capital on Saturday morning, while the city's average Air Quality Index (AQI) level was in the very poor zone, just two points short from 'severe' category.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board's daily AQI bulleting released at around 4 pm, the city's index value was 398, with PM 2.5 particulate matter being the primary pollutant in the city's air.

The readings released at 4 pm on Saturday, were based on the observations from the total 40 AQI monitoring stations across the city, and the readings were the average of past 24 hours.

Meanwhile, Commission for Air Quality Management's (CAQM), Graded Response Action Plan's (GRAP) stage IV anti pollution measures are being implemented by the government, as



the AQI was in severe zone earlier.

According to the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) on Saturday, "The air quality is likely to be in the Severe category from 20.12.2025 to 22.12.2025. The air quality is likely to be in the Very Poor category on 23.12.2025."

"The outlook for the subsequent 6 Days: The air quality is likely to be in the Very Poor to Severe category," the IITM bulletin said.

Meanwhile, according to the weather agency India Meteorological Department (IMD), Delhi's maximum temperature on Saturday was 16.9°C, which was 5.3 points below season's average, while as per the weather department, the city reeled under Cold Day conditions at a few places.

Moderate to dense fog was reported at Palam and Safdarjung during past 24 hour, as per the IMD, with Palam reporting lowest visibility at 350 meters from 0400 onwards, while Safdarjung reported lowest visibility at 200 meter from 0300 onwards.

According to the weatherman, the sky is likely to remain partly cloudy during next three days, and mainly clear thereafter.

Cold day conditions at a few places are likely during next two days, IMD said, adding that there is a likelihood of Dense to very dense fog at a few places during morning hours on Sunday, and moderate fog at many places, with dense fog at isolated places during morning hours on Monday. UNI

Dense fog affects visibilty, 138 flights cancelled at Delhi airport

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, DEC 20 : As dense fog covered the national capital and several other northern cities today morning, the reduced visibility resulted in cancellations of at least 138 flights at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport.

The central government has issued clear instructions to air carriers to inform passengers concerned about the actual status of the flights.

The government has also asked the airlines to ensure the comfort of the passengers in case of flight delays.

Around 69 arrivals and 69 departures were cancelled for the day, according to information available so far. It is noteworthy that dense fog conditions prevailing in the early mornings across Delhi and several parts of the northern region are impacting flight operations.

Ministry of Civil Aviation has said that in view of prevailing fog and low-visibility conditions impacting flight operations, airlines have been directed to strictly comply with passenger facilitation norms, in the interest of passenger safety and convenience, which include timely and accurate flight information.

The Ministry said there should be arrangement of meals and refreshments for extended delays, rebooking, or refunds in case of cancellations and there should not be denial of boarding after timely check-in, provide assistance during diversions, and assistance for persons with disabilities (PWDs).

There should be timely refunds, baggage facilitation, and effective grievance redressal.

MoCA has also stated that the DGCA has been tasked with ensuring uniform implementation and close monitoring of compliance by all airlines.

"Passenger safety and convenience remain the priority," MoCA stated.

Meanwhile, amid affected visibility, the airport have switched operations to CAT-III.

Airlines have been informing passengers to keep themselves updated with the current flight status. UNI

Court frames attempt to murder, conspiracy charges in Rekha Gupta attack case

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, DEC 20: A Delhi court on Saturday framed charges against Sakariya Rajeshbhai Khimjibhai and Tehsin Raza for attacking Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and conspiring to kill her.

The court charged both accused with attempt to murder, obstruction of a public servant, assault to deter a public servant from duty, and criminal conspiracy. An additional charge of voluntarily causing hurt was framed specifically against accused Sakariya Rajeshbhai Khimjibhai.

The order was passed on Saturday after lengthy arguments advanced on

December 15 by Advocate Pradeep Rana, Special Public Prosecutor for the State, and Advocate Kartik Gadi.

Defense counsel argued that the charge of attempt to murder did not apply in this case, and that a criminal conspiracy between the accused had not been proven.

However, the Special Public Prosecutor Pradeep Rana demonstrated the accused's intent to eliminate the Chief Minister, showing how they planned to use a knife and had conducted reconnaissance at the CM's residence just prior to the assault.

Rana also highlighted the accused's alleged criminal mindset, noting their involvement in approximately 13 other

cases, and pointed out that they had initially planned to cause a major incident at the Supreme Court.

After reviewing all evidence on record, the Sessions Judge ordered the framing of all charges mentioned in the prosecution's chargesheet.

The matter is now listed for December 26.

Gupta was attacked on August 20 during a "Jan Sunwai" (public hearing) at her official residence in Civil Lines. The accused are currently in judicial custody.

According to the chargesheet, Rajeshbhai initially tried to mislead police by fabricating a story about a dream involving a dog. UNI

Malayalam actor, screenwriter and filmmaker Sreenivasan passes away

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DEC 20 : Renowned Malayalam actor, scriptwriter and filmmaker Sreenivasan passed away on Saturday morning at the Tripunithura Taluk Hospital in Kochi. He was 72 years old.

Sreenivasan, who redefined Malayalam cinema through his unique acting and compelling stories, had been ailing for some time owing to cardiac and other ailments. He was travelling for dialysis to Amrita hospital in Kochi on Saturday morning when he developed breathing difficulties and was shifted to the Government

Taluk Hospital, Tripunithura, where he breathed his last.

Described as Malayalam cinema's 'sakalakalavallabhan' (man of many talents), Sreenivasan, during his career as an actor, screenwriter, producer and director, left an indelible mark on Malayalam cinema. Over a career spanning nearly 50 years, he emerged as one of the most influential creative voices in the film industry, shaping popular cinema through sharp satire, humane storytelling, and socially rooted humour.

Born in Patyam near Thalassery in Kerala's Kannur district, Sreenivasan grew up in a modest

household. His father was a school teacher, and his mother was a homemaker. He graduated in economics from PRNSS College, Mattanur.

He made his acting debut in Manimuzhakkam (1976), directed by PA Backer, and went on to play his first lead role in Sanghaganam (1979). However, it was as a writer that he truly left his mark. His first screenplay, Odaruthammava Aalariyam (1984), announced a new voice in Malayalam cinema.

Sreenivasan was often referred to as a comedian but he had played a wide range of roles in his films, ranging from the hero's side-kick to characters that could move the

audience to tears. Often, he could make you laugh and cry in the same film, as in 'Vadakku Nokki Yanthram' in which he played the role of a man with a severe inferiority complex about his looks.

His writing blended humour with political and social critique, most powerfully seen in Sandesam (1991), a biting satire on political opportunism that earned him a Kerala State Film Award.

Noted for his sharp social satire and deeply humane storytelling, Sreenivasan's contributions as both a performer and writer shaped several phases of modern Malayalam cinema.

As a screenwriter, Sreenivasan

was known for several notable Malayalam films, including 'Sannanassullavarkku Samadhanam', 'TP Balagopalan MA', 'Gandhinagar Second Street', 'Nadodikattu', 'Thalayana Manthram', 'Golanthara Vartha', 'Champakulam Thachan', 'Varavelpu', 'Udayananu Tharam', 'Mazhayethum Munpe', 'Azhakiya Ravanam', 'Oru Maravathoor Kanavu', 'Ayal Kadha Ezhuthukayanu', 'Kadha Parayumbo' and 'Njan Prakashan'.

Sreenivasan is survived by his wife, Vimala, sons Vineeth Sreenivasan and Dhyansreenivasan, both established figures in the Malayalam film industry. UNI

Delhi Assembly Speaker pushes for coordinated civic action to improve AQI

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, DEC 20 : Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta on Saturday reviewed the air pollution hotspots across his constituency Rohini.

He observed that air pollution caused by road dust and unfinished civic work is not an inescapable reality, but a preventable governance challenge, one that calls for time-bound action, coordinated administration and firm accountability.

The inspection was conducted by the speaker after recent assessments had identified several locations in the area as dust-pollution hotspots, where roads remained dug up, or covered with loose soil.

It was observed that vehicular movement on these exposed stretches repeatedly re-suspends dust.

At the same time, the suspension

of infrastructure work, including drainage-related projects under pollution-control measures, has left road surfaces untreated for extended periods, he said.

Residents in the area have reported sustained exposure to dust over several months, raising serious public health concerns.

Gupta noted that scientific assessments consistently identify road dust as one of the most significant contributors to particulate pollution in the national capital, that account for a substantial share of PM10 and a meaningful portion of PM2.5, during winters when stagnant atmospheric conditions aggravate pollution levels.

Gupta observed that the issue gets compounded by incomplete restoration after utility works, gaps in mechanised sweeping and dust-suppression

measures, fragmented coordination among civic agencies, and traffic-induced re-suspension of dust on the damaged pavements.

Taking note of the findings, the Speaker directed immediate and visible remedial measures across the identified hotspots in the area.

These include a time-bound dust-suppression mandate through daily mechanised sweeping and regular sprinkling of water or approved dust suppressants.

The legislator emphasises that wherever full-scale work cannot resume due to regulatory restrictions, exposed road stretches must be temporarily paved or compacted to prevent dust generation.

Special priority was directed towards school zones and market areas for dust-control measures during peak hours. UNI

Caution Order Location Under Scanner After Assam Rajdhani-Elephant Collision

■ PARWINDER SANDHU

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 20: After seven elephants were killed following a collision with Sairang-New Delhi Rajdhani Express causing derailment of five coaches in Assam's Hojai on Saturday morning, questions are being raised over the information passed by the office of the Range Forest officer of Lumding Range regarding the movement of the elephant herd.

In a statement, Northeast Frontier Railway spokesperson Kapinjal Kishore Sharma said that the accident took place at 2:17 am in the Jamunamukh-Kampur section under Lumding Division of Northeast Frontier Railway, when the Sairang to New Delhi Rajdhani Express collided with elephants. The site of the accident is located at Railway KM post 126/1. However, a caution order issued earlier by the Lumding Range

Forest Officer appears to indicate a different location. In a letter dated December 19, Lumding Range Forest Officer Jekolin Teronpi stated that a herd of elephants had been sighted near Railway KM posts 166/8-171/3 and 174/4-6 at around 5:08 pm between Lamsakhang (LKG) and Habaipur (HWX). The letter requested the railway authorities to impose a caution order and restrict train speeds due to the possible movement of wild elephants in the specified stretches. The apparent mismatch between the locations mentioned in the forest department's caution order and the actual accident site has raised concerns over coordination and communication between forest and railway authorities.

According to the Ministry of Railways on receiving information about the movement of elephants, caution orders are issued to loco pilots

advising them to proceed with vigilance and remain prepared to stop in the event of elephant presence on the tracks. In addition, temporary speed restrictions are imposed, which are revised from time to time based on inputs and advisories received from the forest departments of the respective states. In a statement, Sharma said that the incident took place at a location which is not a designated elephant corridor. "The loco pilot on observing the herd of elephants applied emergency brakes. However, elephants dashed with the train. There were no casualties or injuries to any passenger." The area is about 126 km away from Guwahati. Accident Relief trains along with officials from the divisional HQ is already at site. Senior railway officers including the General Manager of N.F. Railway and Divisional Railway Manager of Lumding also rushed to the site. UNI



Pant Leads Delhi, Kohli Plays Two Hazare Games

■ **UNITE NEWS OF INDIA**

AHMEDABAD: Rishabh Pant has been named captain of Delhi's squad for the upcoming Vijay Hazare Trophy that starts on December 24. Virat Kohli, as reported earlier, has also been selected in the 20-man squad which was named for the first two games.

According to a statement from the Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA), seamers Ishant Sharma and Navdeep Saini have also confirmed their availability, while Harshit Rana will join the team when available. Rana was part of India's T20I squad for the series against South Africa that will end on Friday.

Delhi are scheduled to play seven games from December 24 to January 8, in Group D. Whether Pant and Kohli will be available for all games

is not yet established, with India also playing three ODIs starting January 11 in Vadodara. Delhi's first two games are against Andhra and Gujarat, both to be played at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru.

Ayush Badoni has been named Delhi's vice-captain, while Tejasvi Dahiya is the second wicketkeeper behind Pant. Anuj Rawat has been included as a standby wicketkeeper in case Pant is unavailable.

The other batters in the squad are Yash Dhull, Priyansh Arya, Arpit Rana, Nitish Rana, Sarthak Ranjan, Divij Mehra and Ayush Doseja.

The bowling line-up includes Simarjeet Singh and Prince Yadav in the pace attack, while Hrithik Shokeen, Harsh Tyagi and Vaibhav Kandpal provide spin options. Allrounder Rohan Rana has also been named in the squad.



BNI Jammu Kashmir Milap Season 4- Day 2 concludes

■ **HT SPORTS DESK**

GANDHINAGAR, JAMMU: Day 2 of BNI Milap Season 4 concluded successfully today at Greenfields Ground, Gandhinagar, featuring four competitive matches (4th, 5th, 6th & 7th) and high-energy performances from all teams.

The tournament continues to gain momentum as teams displayed exceptional sportsmanship and competitive spirit.

Day 2 Match Results – 19 December
4th Match: Abundance vs Inspire – Abundance won

Man of the Match: Ajay Kumar
5th Match: Kubri vs Oscar – Kubri won
Man of the Match: Mohd Irfan Ganie
6th Match: Abundance vs Ace – Abundance won

Man of the Match: Jagbir Singh
7th Match: Oscar vs Inspire – Oscar won
Man of the Match: Anil Gupta
Day 2 Special Achievements
Orange Cap Holder: Ajay Kumar
Purple Cap Holder: Sugam Dogra

With consistent performances, Team Abundance and Team Kubri continue to make a strong impact



in the league phase of the tournament.

Matches Scheduled for Tomorrow – 20 December

Three exciting matches are lined up for Friday:
8th Match: Abundance vs Kubri
9th Match: Oscar vs Ace
10th Match: Kubri vs Inspire

BNI Milap Season 4 stands as a celebration of unity beyond business, bringing together entrepreneurs from across Jammu & Kashmir through cricket, teamwork, and shared passion.

BNI has been recognized globally for its impact on small and medium businesses. As

highlighted by Forbes, "BNI ranked in the Top 3 of Forbes' '6 Essential Local Small Business Associations You Should Belong To.'" This recognition underscores BNI's credibility as a powerful engine for relationship-driven business growth.

Head's hometown century floors England after brief hopes of fightback

■ **UNITED NEWS OF INDIA**

OVERALL: es during the first half of the third day at Adelaide Oval, England threatened to keep their Ashes hopes alive, but on his home ground Travis Head's second century of the series as an opening batter carried Australia to a 356-run lead which will surely be turned into a 3-0 Ashes retention at some point over the weekend.

For Head, who was dropped on 99 by Harry Brook at gully, it was the continuation of a magnificent run in Adelaide which has brought four of his 11 Test centuries, all of them coming in

his last six innings at the ground in four consecutive matches. Head joined Don Bradman (Headingley and Melbourne), Michael Clarke (Adelaide) and Steven Smith (Melbourne) as Australians with centuries in four consecutive Test matches at the same venue.

This one could also have gone a long way towards cementing him as an opener following his hasty promotion in Perth and the blazing hundred which followed. Overall it was Head's fourth hundred against England and by the close his career-best 175, which also came in Adelaide, was looming into view.

Initially, at least, the wheels did not come off for England as they had threatened to do on the second day at 168 for 8. But any hopes of the type of run chase that has characterized the Bazball era appeared forlorn during a desperate final session that saw Australia pile up 152 in 35 overs as Head combined with fellow South Australian Alex Carey in an unbroken 122-run stand.

That Australia only led on 85 after the first innings was down to a resilient 106-run stand between Ben Stokes and Jofra Archer as England showed impressive character during the first

session, and for a time it was far from a foregone conclusion that Australia would dominate.

Having been forced to take the second new ball to wrap up England's innings, where Stokes threatened to play one of his game-changing innings before falling to Mitchell Starc for the 12th time in Tests, Australia then lost Jake Weatherald before lunch. He was lbw to Brydon Carse, who produced his best spell since the first day in Perth either side of the break, although Weatherald would have been saved with a review as the ball pitched outside leg.

But after Josh Tongue removed

an out-of-sorts Marnus Labuschagne England were unable to apply any pressure on Head and Usman Khawaja as the pair added 86 in 113 balls. Though Khawaja and Cameron Green fell in quick succession any sense of vulnerability soon vanished as Head and Carey set about their partnership. Carey continued his outstanding match with a half-century to follow the first-innings hundred.

Head was able to freely collect runs square of the wicket throughout his innings as England fed him outside off while they also tried the short-ball play with well-spread fields.

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