

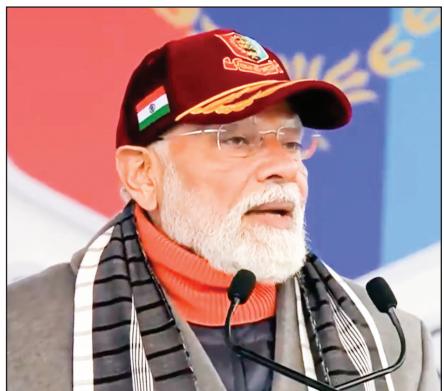
NCC Builds the Backbone of a Strong, Disciplined India: PM Modi

Addresses Annual NCC PM Rally in Delhi, Highlights Youth Power, National Values and Global Opportunities

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 28: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday underlined the crucial role of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) in shaping India's youth into confident, disciplined and nation-oriented citizens while addressing the Annual NCC Prime Minister's Rally at the Cariappa Parade Ground in the national capital.

Greeting NCC and NSS cadets, tableau artists, cultural performers and young participants from across the country and friendly nations, the Prime Minister praised



their discipline and coordinated performances, saying they reflected the spirit and strength of India's youth. He also noted with satisfaction the increasing participation of girl cadets in NCC activities.

At the outset, Modi expressed deep grief over a tragic plane crash reported earlier in the day, stating that the nation stands united with the families affected by the tragedy.

Describing NCC as more than an organisation, the Prime Minister called it a movement that instils confidence, discipline,

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Operation Sindoos Showcased India's Resolve Against Terror: President Murmu

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 28: President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday said the world witnessed the valour, courage and strategic capability of the Indian Armed Forces through Operation Sindoos, asserting that India has made it clear that every act of terror will invite a firm and decisive response.

Addressing a joint sitting of Parliament at the start of the Budget Session, the President said India destroyed terror camps using its own resources, demonstrating that the nation exercises power with "responsibility and wisdom."

"The world has seen the valour and courage of Indian armed forces through Operation Sindoos. Our nation destroyed terror camps on the strength



of our own resources. My government sent a clear message that any act of terror will be responded to with resolute and decisive

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Weather to remain dry till January end, predicts Met

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JAN 28: Meteorological Department has predicted that the weather would remain dry till January end.

According to the forecast accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) light rain and snow are expected at a few places on January 28, while the period from January 29 to 31 is likely to remain generally dry with cloudy skies towards the evening of the January 31.

The forecast states: "The weather from February 1 to 2 is expected to be generally cloudy with light to moderate rain or snow at scattered to fairly widespread places. From

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J&K districts excel in Financial Inclusion, Social Security initiatives

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 28: The districts of Jammu, Pulwama and Baramulla have emerged as top performers in various financial inclusion and social security schemes being implemented by the Jammu and Kashmir government, showcasing significant progress in expanding the financial access and social security coverage.

The Chief Minister has commended the efforts of district administrations for notable improvement in coverage and year-on-year progress under these schemes during the financial year 2025-26.

The PM Jandhan Yojana, PM Suraksha Bima Yojana, PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Atal Pension Yojana are implemented through banks, promoting financial inclusion and providing accidental and life insurance cover, as well as pension benefits, to people from weaker and deprived sections of the society.

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Nation Mourns as Tragedy Claims Life of Maharashtra Dy CM Ajit Pawar

PM Modi, LG Manoj Sinha, Omar Abdullah, Farooq Abdullah Lead Tributes to Maharashtra Deputy CM Killed in Plane Crash

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JAN 28: The Country was enveloped in shock and sorrow on Wednesday following the tragic and untimely death of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Ajit Pawar, who was killed in a plane crash near Baramati in Pune district. Pawar, 66, was among five persons who lost their lives when a private aircraft crashed while attempting an emergency landing on Wednesday morning.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi described Pawar's demise as "very shocking and saddening," saying the country had lost a leader deeply rooted at the grassroots. In a post on X, Modi said Ajit Pawar was widely respected as a hardworking public figure who remained at



the forefront of serving the people of Maharashtra. He also praised Pawar's understanding of administrative affairs and his commitment to empowering the poor and downtrodden.

● Turn on Page 2

J&K's mission-mode push towards a 'Nasha Mukt' future

An Abhiyan powered by data and driven by people on ground

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 28: At a time when drug addiction is posing a serious social and public health challenge across the country and when enforcement-heavy approaches have often struggled to deliver sustained results Jammu & Kashmir has scripted a fundamentally different narrative. Anchored in data, transparency, institutional convergence and sustained community engagement, the Union Territory's approach marks a decisive shift in how substance abuse is being addressed in India.

Launched on April 5, 2025, the NashaMukt Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan spearheaded by the Department of Infor-

mation & Public Relations (DIPR) with other government departments has emerged as one of the most comprehensive, technology-driven and publicly verifiable de-addiction campaigns in the country. Aligned with the national vision of the NashaMukt Bharat Abhiyan, the J&K initiative introduces governance innovations that distinguish it from similar efforts elsewhere.

Meticulously Designed, Mission-Mode Execution

From the outset, the campaign has been designed with exceptional institutional rigour, combining strategic planning at the highest administrative levels with disciplined execution on the ground. Outreach

activities are conducted across three clearly defined levels—Panchayats, Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and educational institutions—ensuring complete rural and urban coverage across Jammu & Kashmir.

District administrations operate on a structured and pre-approved weekly calendar, with specific days earmarked for activities at Panchayat, ULB and institutional levels. This approach has transformed awareness generation from isolated or symbolic events into a continuous, predictable and sustained process. Special emphasis on schools and colleges reflects a conscious strategy to prioritise early intervention, prevention and behavioural

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'Vande Mataram' to Resound at Beating Retreat as Republic Day Celebrations Draw to a Majestic Close

Iconic Ceremony at Vijay Chowk Marks 150 Years of The National Song With Stirring Military Band Performances

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 28: The historic Vijay Chowk will reverberate with patriotic melodies on January 29 as the Beating Retreat ceremony, the grand finale of the 77th Republic Day celebrations, unfolds with evocative tunes such as 'Vande Mataram', 'Anand Math' and 'Atulya Bharat'.

This year's ceremony holds special significance as it celebrates the sesquicentenary of 'Vande Mataram', the national song composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. Reflecting the theme, official

invitation cards for the Republic Day parade and the Beating Retreat carried the commemorative logo along with the author's silhouette.

Bands of the Indian Army, Indian Navy, Indian Air Force and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) will present a vibrant mix of martial and melodic compositions. The ceremony will commence with the massed bands playing 'Kadam Kadamb Badhay Ja', followed by soulful performances by the pipes and drums band featuring 'Atulya Bharat', 'Veer Sainik' and 'Jhelum'.

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CS reviews yatra preparedness in 15th HLC of SASB

■ MK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 28: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today chaired the 15th High-Level Committee (HLC) meeting of the Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board (SASB) and impressed upon all line departments and stakeholders to ensure that comprehensive arrangements for the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY)-2026 are put in place well ahead of its commencement.

Besides the DG Police the meeting was attended by the Administrative Secretaries of all the Departments, Senior officers from the civil adminis-



tration, police, and other concerned departments.

Deputy Commissioners attended the meeting through video conferencing. Emphasising advance planning and timely execution, the Chief Secretary directed departments including Tourism, PWD, PDD, Jal Shakti, RDD, H&UDD, Animal & Sheep Husbandry, BRO, Telecommunication and others to complete all tendering, procurement and contract-related processes within the coming month. He stressed that early finalisation of works is critical to ensure seamless arrangements before the onset of the yatra.

Highlighting safety as the top priority, the Chief Secretary instructed the Divisional Administrations and Deputy Commissioners of Anantnag and Ganderbal to identify and mark all disaster-prone and vulnerable areas along both the Baltal and Pahalgam routes. He categorically directed that no utilities, including tents and temporary structures, be installed

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

NCC Builds.....

sensitivity and dedication among young citizens. He noted that the strength of NCC cadets has grown significantly from 14 lakh to around 20 lakh in recent years, particularly in border and coastal areas.

Highlighting NCC's role in connecting youth with India's heritage, Modi referred to initiatives such as the Paramveer Sagar Yatra, cultural celebrations in Lakshadweep, and activities in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands that honour national heroes and promote unity. He also lauded NCC cycle rallies that brought the stories of historical figures like Bajirao Peshwa, Lachit Borphukan and Bhagwan Birsa Munda to the public.

The Prime Minister said the present era offers unprecedented opportunities for Indian youth and stressed that the government is working to ensure they benefit the most from global engagement, reforms and innovation. He noted that Indian youth are respected worldwide for their skills, professionalism and values, and are contributing significantly in sectors such as information technology, healthcare, startups, space and digital technology.

Touching upon national security, Modi said modern warfare increasingly depends on technology and innovation, and urged young people to explore opportunities in defence startups, artificial intelligence and indigenous manufacturing. He praised NCC cadets for their support during critical national moments, including blood donation drives and first-aid services, saying such efforts reflect the spirit of "Nation First."

Emphasising civic responsibility, the Prime Minister called on youth to actively participate in cleanliness drives, environmental conservation and fitness initiatives. He appreciated NCC's contribution to the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign and urged cadets to ensure the saplings planted grow into healthy trees.

Raising concern over rising obesity among young people, Modi stressed the importance of a disciplined lifestyle, balanced diet and regular physical activity, reiterating his appeal to reduce oil consumption in daily food.

Concluding his address, the Prime Minister expressed confidence that NCC cadets would continue to excel in every sphere of life and play a decisive role in building a developed and responsible India.

Union Ministers Rajnath Singh, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya and Sanjay Seth, along with senior officials and dignitaries, were present at the rally. (AGENCIES)

Nation Mourns.....

and extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and admirers.

Expressing grief, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said the late leader served Maharashtra with distinction and was committed to the welfare of the people. "It is with shock and deep sadness that I learnt about the untimely demise of Shri Ajit Pawar Ji," Sinha said in his condolence message.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah termed Pawar an able administrator and a consummate political organiser, recalling his close personal association with him since college days in Mumbai, when he stayed with Sharad Pawar and his family. Saying that Pawar's loss would be deeply felt, Abdullah conveyed condolences to NCP president Sharad Pawar, Supriya Sule and other family members.

National Conference president Farooq Abdullah said the country had lost one of its great sons. Describing Pawar as a towering leader who sincerely worked to change the destiny of Maharashtra, Abdullah said his death was not only a personal loss to the Pawar family but an irreparable loss to the nation. He prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and strength to the family to bear the tragedy.

According to officials, Ajit Pawar was travelling from Mumbai to Baramati, where he was scheduled to address public meetings and election-related programmes ahead of the February 5 zilla parishad polls. The aircraft crashed near Baramati while attempting an emergency landing, bringing a sudden end to the political journey of a leader known for his administrative acumen, organisational skills and strong mass connect.

As tributes poured in from across the political spectrum, the tragic death of Ajit Pawar has cast a pall of gloom over Maharashtra and left the nation mourning the loss of a seasoned leader.

Operation Sindo.....

action," she said, amid loud desk-thumping by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and treasury bench members.

Murmu said the suspension of the Indus Water Treaty formed part of India's broader strategy in its fight against terrorism. She also highlighted the launch of Mission Sudarshan Chakra,

aimed at further strengthening national security, and said decisive action had also been taken against Maoist violence.

Following Operation Sindo, the President noted, global trust in Indian defence platforms has increased, reflecting the country's growing defence capabilities.

Turning to governance and welfare, Murmu said her government remained committed to true social justice, adding that nearly 95 crore citizens are now covered under social security schemes. She said 25 crore people have moved out of poverty over the past decade due to sustained policy interventions.

"The government has also succeeded in curbing corruption and scams while ensuring proper utilisation of public funds," she said, adding that India's first 25 years of the 21st century have been marked by "proud achievements and extraordinary experiences."

The President also recalled major national commemorations, including the 350th martyrdom anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the 150th birth anniversary of Birsa Munda, celebrations linked to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Bhupen Hazarika, saying these events strengthened national unity and inspired the younger generation towards the goal of Vicksit Bharat.

However, Murmu's reference to the Vicksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) [VB-G RAM-G] triggered loud protests from Opposition members. She said the scheme guarantees 125 days of employment, aims to curb corruption and leakages, and will give a fresh push to rural development.

Opposition MPs raised slogans demanding rollback of the Act, forcing the President to briefly pause her address. The Opposition has sought restoration of MGNREGA in its original rights-based form, while the government maintains that the new legislation strengthens the rural employment guarantee framework. (Agencies)

J&K's mission.....

change among young populations. A Campaign That Can Be Seen, Measured and Verified

One of the most path-breaking features of the Abhiyan is the NashaMukt Jammu & Kashmir public dashboard updated on real-time basis placing transparency at the heart of governance. Unlike conventional campaigns where progress remains confined to internal files, every outreach event under this initiative is digitally logged, monitored and made publicly accessible.

As reflected on the dashboard as of January 2026, a total of 5,736 Panchayat-level events have been conducted out of 7,193 scheduled, while Urban Local Bodies have completed 630 events against a target of 853. Educational institutions have held 2,319 programmes out of 2,513 planned. Collectively, these activities have directly engaged over 4.35 lakh participants across the Union Territory. This level of real-time, district-wise transparency depicting schedule, execution and even participation sets a new benchmark in public accountability.

Whole-of-Government Convergence for a Unified Response

Recognising that substance abuse is a multi-dimensional challenge, the administration has adopted a whole-of-government approach, bringing Health, Home/Police, Education, Social Welfare, Rural Development, Urban Development, Youth Services & Sports and Information Departments under a single unified framework. Each department has been assigned clearly defined responsibilities to ensure that prevention, enforcement, counselling, awareness and rehabilitation efforts function in a coordinated manner.

To overcome the long-standing problem of fragmented reporting, eight key departments have been onboarded onto a common digital platform, enabling real-time uploading of activity data onto the Nasha Mukt Jammu & Kashmir portal. This institutional convergence has reduced duplication, bridged data gaps and ensured a cohesive and synchronised response to substance abuse across sectors.

Engrossing Outreach Through Visual Storytelling

To ensure that awareness activities remain engaging and impactful, the campaign has made extensive use of short, theme-based video films during outreach programmes. Screened at Panchayat halls, ULB venues, schools and colleges, these films portray real-life situations involving family distress, peer pressure, addiction cycles and recovery journeys.

By blending compelling visual narratives with expert messaging, the films have transformed routine awareness sessions into immersive community experiences. This audio-visual approach

has proven particularly effective in overcoming barriers of literacy and attention span, while generating deeper emotional engagement especially among youth and students.

From One-Time Awareness to Sustained Citizen Engagement

A defining innovation of the programme lies in its structured post-event engagement mechanism. After every outreach activity, participant details including contact numbers are uploaded to the portal. By the same evening, participants receive personalised acknowledgement messages reinforcing the campaign's core message and reconnecting them with available support systems.

So far, over 1.12 lakh SMS messages have been sent under this mechanism. In addition, the portal prominently displays district-wise helpline numbers for all 20 districts and enables district administrations to upload grievance summaries, ensuring responsiveness, follow-up and institutional accountability beyond the event stage.

Human Capacity Building for Sustained De-Addiction Efforts

Beyond awareness generation, the administration has placed strong emphasis on strengthening human capacity at the grassroots. District administrations have initiated fresh rounds of training for resource persons, identified dedicated counsellors for schools and colleges, and mobilised ASHA workers and paramedics to reach vulnerable populations at the community level.

Self-Help Groups have also been actively engaged to deepen community participation and ownership of the campaign. Together, these measures are creating a trained and locally rooted support system capable of sustained intervention, counselling and rehabilitation well beyond the formal campaign phase.

Media, Cultural and Youth-Centric Engagement

The campaign's reach has been significantly amplified through a strategic mix of print, electronic and digital media, supported by radio jingles and television commercials. A dedicated 'Inspire' podcast series, aired on DD Jammu and DD Kashmir, has featured mental health experts, doctors and eminent personalities, generating over one lakh views and impressions, particularly among Gen-Z audiences.

Cultural interventions such as street plays, folk performances and nukkad nataks have added a powerful local dimension, enabling messages to resonate in familiar cultural idioms and local languages, and extending the campaign's influence beyond formal institutional settings.

A Governance Modelsetting new benchmarks

By combining data transparency, institutional convergence, immersive communication and citizen-level follow-up, the Nasha Mukt Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan has evolved beyond the idea of a conventional campaign. It now stands as a replicable governance model, demonstrating how complex public health challenges can be addressed through planning, participation and public accountability.

As Phase-II of the campaign gains momentum following high-level administrative reviews by the Chief Secretary himself, Jammu & Kashmir's fight against drugs is no longer merely being waged, it is being tracked, tested and trusted by the public itself, setting a new national standard in the pursuit of a drug-free India.

Weather to.....

February 3 to 6, skies are expected to be partly cloudy across the region."

Meanwhile, authorities have issued several advisories in view of the inclement weather prediction.

Travelers and transporters have been urged to confirm road and highway status from the concerned traffic departments and follow official instructions.

Farmers have been advised to suspend farm operations and the general public has been cautioned against venturing into snowbound and avalanche-prone higher reaches.

The Jammu and Kashmir UT Disaster Management Authority (JKUTDMA) has issued a high-level avalanche warning for areas above 2,000 metres in Bandipora, Ganderbal, and Kupwara over the next 24 hours.

Residents and visitors have been asked to avoid risky areas and strictly follow official advisories. In case of emergencies, people are advised to dial 112.

The Meteorological Department also warned that the weather could impact transport and daily activities, particularly in higher altitudes, and requested the public to exercise caution.

SNOW AVALANCHE IN SONAMARG

Meanwhile, Ganderbal Police in a statement said that an avalanche occurred last night at around 10:15 pm near New Truck Yard, Sonamarg. "Fortunately, the impact was minimal and no loss of life or property has been reported. Police team along with SDRF timely reported in said area to assess the situation," it said.

"Concerned agencies are closely monitoring the situation, and precautionary measures have been put in place to ensure public safety in the region," it said, adding that in view of the prevailing conditions, Ganderbal Police adhere to the general public, tourists, and transporters to strictly avoid visiting or halting in avalanche-prone areas.

The chances of avalanches, it said, remain very high, and unnecessary movement in vulnerable zones can pose serious risks. "People are advised to follow official advisories, cooperate with local authorities, and prioritize safety while traveling through the Sonamarg axis and adjoining areas," it added.

"J&K Police remains committed to the safety and well-being of the public and requests everyone to stay alert and act responsibly," the police added—(KNO)

J&K districts.....

Under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), zero balance accounts of financially excluded poor people are opened in banks with facilities of RuPay debit card and overdraft limit of Rs 10,000. In the first three quarters of 2025-26, 1,26,803 new PMJDY accounts were opened, increasing total PMJDY accounts in Jammu & Kashmir from 23,66,953 on March 31, 2025, to 24,93,756 on December 31, 2025. Jammu, Samba and Reasi are the top performing districts.

The Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) offers accidental insurance cover of up to Rs 2 lakh at an annual premium of just Rs 20. In 2025-26, approximately 5,42,675 additional individuals were covered, boosting total subscribers from 23,56,858 (March 31, 2025) to 29,12,830 (December 31, 2025). Pulwama district led the initiative, followed by Samba and Jammu.

The Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) provides life insurance cover up to Rs 2 lakh on annual premium of Rs 436. There were 2,20,660 additional subscribers in 2025-26 as the total subscription rose from 9,66,887 in March 31, 2025, to 11,87,547 in December 31, 2025. Baramulla has achieved the best results, followed by Jammu and Ganderbal.

The Atal Pension Yojana (APY) offers a fixed monthly pension after the age of 60 years to people aged 18-40 years not covered under any other pension scheme on annual subscription ranging from Rs 42 to Rs 200 based on their age. Nearly, 40,582 new subscribers were enrolled under the scheme, increasing the total subscribers from 2,48,020 in March 31, 2025, to 2,88,602 in December 31, 2025. Jammu registered the highest subscription, followed by Samba and Pulwama.

The Digital Life Certificate (Jeevan Praman) campaign, aimed at encouraging the pensioners to submit life certificates digitally, saw significant success. Digital certifications surged from 4,000 to 11,151 in 2025-26. Of 2,49 lakh pensioners, 2,37 lakh have completed life certification, with 1.16 lakh (49%) opting for digital submission. Rajouri district led the campaign, followed by Kulgam and Udhampur.

The Chief Minister appreciated the efforts put in by the Deputy Commissioners, banking institutions/ correspondents, whose field-level coordination and outreach have played a key role in ensuring that social security benefits reach people in a seamless and transparent manner. Top three performing districts under each scheme have been awarded with a certificate of appreciation by the Chief Minister.

'Vande Mataram'.....

The CAPFs bands will render 'Vijay Bharat', 'Jai Ho' and 'Veer Sipahi', while the Indian Air Force band will play 'Brave Warrior', 'Flying Star' and 'Alert'. The Indian Navy band will add maritime flavour with tunes such as 'Sagar Pawan', 'Matribhumi' and 'Jai Bharat'.

The Indian Army band will later perform stirring compositions including 'Vijayee Bharat', 'Aye Watan, Aye Watan', 'Anand Math' and 'Sitare Hind'. The massed bands will then come together for 'Bharat Ke Shaan' and 'Vande Mataram', before the ceremony concludes with the timeless 'Sare Jahan Se Acha'.

Adding a cultural dimension, seating enclosures at Vijay Chowk have been named after traditional Indian musical instruments such as bansuri, sitar, veena, tabla and shehnai. The event will be witnessed by President Droupadi Murmu, Vice President C P Radhakrishnan, Prime

Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Union ministers and other dignitaries.

CS reviews.....

in such high-risk zones.

The Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRR&R) was asked to coordinate closely with district administrations to frame and implement robust Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) to ensure the safety of pilgrims. He also called for an assessment and augmentation of holding capacities at camps and transit points both within and outside the yatra area.

The Chief Secretary asked the Deputy Commissioners to facilitate all service providers and ensure that facilities created at every location are adequate, appropriate and sufficient for pilgrims as well as service personnel. He urged inter-departmental coordination and optimal utilisation of the available work window so that all infrastructure and services are fully ready well before the scheduled yatra dates.

Dulloo reviewed the specific roles and responsibilities assigned to each department and district administration, and took note of the budgetary requirements for execution of various works and procurements. He laid special emphasis on the Power Development Department for timely maintenance of HT/LT power lines and on the Jal Shakti Department for completing the requisite works along the yatra routes.

Traffic management also came under detailed discussion, with the Chief Secretary directing preparation of comprehensive traffic plans to avoid congestion and ensure smooth movement of pilgrims and locals alike. The Police Department was asked to ensure deployment of adequate manpower to facilitate a safe, secure and hassle-free yatra.

Health preparedness formed another key focus area, with directions issued to ensure adequate deployment of medical manpower and functionality of base hospitals at Chandanwari and Baltal, besides strengthening health facilities enroute. The Health Department was asked to initiate the process of engaging additional medical staff from outside, as per established practice.

The meeting also deliberated on ensuring that only RFID-registered pilgrims possessing valid health certificates are allowed to undertake the pilgrimage. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) was enjoined to provide daily weather updates to registered pilgrims to enable informed movement decisions.

Sanitation and cleanliness arrangements were reviewed in detail. The RDD and H&UDD were directed to ensure installation of adequate toilets and bathing facilities along the yatra track and near the cave shrine, uninterrupted water supply, placement of dustbins and deployment of sufficient sanitation staff across transit camps, holding areas and routes.

Departments including FCS&CA, Transport, Information, IT, Forest, BSNL and others were advised to carry out their routine responsibilities as per past practice, while enhancing capacity wherever required and ensuring proper backup plans. The Chief Secretary described their role as crucial for smooth conduct of the yatra and urged them to function with a strong sense of purpose and urgency.

He further directed that all essential infrastructure such as lighting, water tanks, toilets, backup generators, public address systems and communication towers must be fully installed and functional at each camp location before the commencement of the pilgrimage.

During the meeting, CEO, SASB, Dr. Mandeep Kumar Bhandari presented a detailed overview of arrangements made during the previous year and outlined requirements for the upcoming yatra. He highlighted improvements achieved after the conclusion of Yatra-2025, ongoing works and those proposed to be completed ahead of Yatra-2026.

He also briefed the meeting on BRO-related works for track upgradation, measures to ensure reliable power and water supply, disaster mitigation initiatives, prepaid hiring systems, camp holding capacities, registration of labour and pony services.

The Divisional Administrations assured the Chief Secretary that fool-proof arrangements would be made at all identified locations. They informed that power supply, water, health facilities, toilets, communication services, ration supply, fire fighting equipment, shelter sheds, helipads, mobile connectivity, langars, tents, and deployment of SDRF/NDRF personnel would be ensured as per standard operating procedures and the directions issued during the meeting.



Deputy CM inspects snow hit areas of Pulwama, Shopian; reviews relief measures, development works

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, JAN 28: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today undertook an extensive tour of the snow-bound areas of Pulwama and Shopian districts to assess the post-snowfall situation besides reviewing progress on ongoing development works.

During the tour, the Deputy Chief Minister held a series of review meetings with the heads of concerned departments in both Pulwama and Shopian districts. He reviewed the snow clearance operations, restoration efforts and progress on ongoing development works.

The Deputy Chief Minister was accompanied by legislators including Shabir Ahmad Kullay, Zainapora Showkat Hussain, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Mir and Vice Chairman DDC Pulwama and Mukhtar Ahmad Bandh.

Deputy Commissioner Shopian Shishir Gupta, Chief Engineer PMGSY/MED/R&B South Kashmir, ADC Pulwama, ADC Shopian and other concerned officers also



attended the meetings.

The Deputy Chief Minister visited several snow-affected areas including Pulwama, Rajpora, Kashbazar, Chek-Badrinath, Shajimarg and other adjoining localities to assess the ground condition and restoration efforts.

He also toured snow-bound areas of Shopian, Imam Sahab, Mimandar and surrounding parts, taking firsthand appraisal of snow clearance operations and essential service restoration.

During the visit, the Deputy Chief Minister held comprehen-

sive review meetings on the status of ongoing PWD works in both the districts.

He issued strict directions to the concerned departments to ensure prompt restoration of road connectivity, uninterrupted essential services and timely completion

of all developmental works.

Emphasising public convenience, the Deputy Chief Minister directed the officers to work in close coordination and adopt a time-bound approach to mitigate hardships faced by the residents due to snowfall. He further instructed that all available machinery be pressed into service to ensure effective and swift restoration works.

The Deputy Chief Minister stressed that all necessary measures must be taken on priority to ensure safety, accessibility, and seamless service delivery across the affected areas.

While reviewing the progress of works in both the districts, the Deputy Chief Minister called for expediting the pace of execution and ensuring timely completion of all the projects.

During the tour, the Deputy Chief Minister also met various public delegations, patiently heard their grievances. He assured them that all their genuine issues would be taken up with the concerned departments for early redressal.

Dr. Rattan Lal Sharma Conferred UT Award on Republic Day

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 28: Dr. Rattan Lal Sharma, a renowned Dogri scholar and Editor (Dogri Language) at the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, has been conferred the UT Award on the occasion of the 76th Republic Day celebrations in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the Dogri language, literature, translation, and linguistic research.

Dr. Sharma, popularly known by his pen name Dr. Rattan Basotra, has played a significant role in promoting and enriching the Dogri language through his scholarly writings, translations, editorial work, and research. A Gold Medalist in M.A. Dogri and a PhD holder in Dogri Linguistics, he has authored, edited, and translated numerous important literary works, including dictionaries, research publications, and creative translations from Hindi, Marathi, and



Dogri.

His translation of "Satisare Di Kahani" into Dogri was awarded by the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, highlighting his excellence in the field of literary translation.

Dr. Sharma has edited 108 books under various prestigious publications of the Cultural Academy, including Sheeraza Dogri, Sheeraza Hindi, Dogri Folk Songs, and Dogri Lok Kathane. He has also served as an editorial advisor to reputed Dogri research magazines.

On the occasion, employees of the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages extended their congratulations to Dr. Rattan Lal Sharma and wished him continued success in his literary and academic pursuits. They expressed hope that his scholarship and dedication would continue to inspire young writers and researchers while strengthening Dogri language and literature. —(JKNS)

Spiritual Gathering Held at Imam Bargah Barji SGR, on the Occasion of Sha'ban al-Mu'azzam

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JAN 28: On the occasion of Sha'ban al-Mu'azzam, a spiritually uplifting gathering was organized at Imam Bargah Barji Harwan in Srinagar. During the program, speakers shed light on the virtues and significance of the holy month of Sha'ban and elaborated on the pure life and teachings of the revered Imams (peace be upon them) in connection with the celebration of their birth anniversaries.

Students from Darsgha Ma'arif Uloom Islami Barji Bala and Payeen, as well as Maktab Imamia Barji Bala and Payeen, along with a large number of local residents, participated in the gathering. The event was organized by Hazrat Shah Muslim (A.S.) Khidmatgar Committee (Karwan-e-Mehdi A.S.) Barji Harwan.



Addressing the gathering, Aga Syed Mudassir Hussain Rizvi spoke in detail about the blessed life of Imam Hussain (A.S.), describing his teachings as a guiding light for the Muslim Ummah. He emphasized the need for the Muslim community to follow these teachings in their daily lives.

During the program, children from the religious institutions presented Naat and Mawqabat in praise of the Ahlul Bayt (A.S.), expressing their deep devotion and adding to the spiritual atmosphere of the gathering.

Yashpaul Nirmal Conferred "J&K Government Award 2026" for Contribution to Dogri Literature

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 28: Renowned writer, children's author, translator, and cultural activist Yashpaul Nirmal has been awarded the prestigious "J&K Government Award 2026" in recognition of his outstanding contribution to Dogri literature, an official press release said.

A prominent literary figure from Jammu & Kashmir, Yashpaul Nirmal is widely regarded as a strong advocate of the Dogri language and has played a pivotal role in giving a new dimension to regional languages through his writings, translations, and socio-literary activism. He has authored and published over 90 books in Dogri and other languages, including poetry, children's literature, and translated works, which have received appreciation at both local and national levels.

Apart from his literary contribu-



tions, Nirmal has actively worked towards language promotion and cultural preservation through various initiatives. He has participated in and contributed to numerous literary festivals, book launches, poetry readings, storytelling sessions, conferences, and language preservation programmes across the country. He is also the founder of the Dogri Bha-

sha Academy, Jammu-Kashmir Hindi Akademi, and Nat Manch.

Yashpaul Nirmal's accolades include the National Translation Prize by the Sahitya Akademi in 2014 for his work "Mian Dido". In 2018, he received the Pyari Devi Ghasi Ram Sihag Children's Literature Award for his children's novel "Chhuttiyan", which has been translated into 27 Indian languages. He was awarded the Pt. Harprasad Pathak Children's Award in 2023 for his book "Diary", followed by the Bal Batik Award in 2024. Additionally, he received the Siya Ram Sehgal Award in 2020 for "1008 Dogri Haiku" and the Dr. Gar-gi Gupta Dwivagish Award for overall contribution to translation by the Indian Translation Council, New Delhi, for the year 2023-24.

The award recognises his lifelong dedication to the promotion, preservation, and enrichment of Dogri language and literature. —(JKNS)

Abdul Razzaq Kumar Honoured by District Administration Kulgam for Exemplary Public Service

■ FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, JAN 26: Abdul Razzaq Kumar, Reader to the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) at DH Pora, Kulgam, was felicitated by the District Administration Kulgam in recognition of his exemplary dedication, sincerity, and outstanding public service.

The award was presented on the occasion of the 77th Republic Day, reflecting Kumar's unwavering commitment to delivering efficient, timely, and citizen-centric services. His tireless efforts in the prompt redressal of public grievances, effective implementation of government schemes, and maintenance of

law and order earned him this prestigious recognition.

The District Administration Kulgam appreciated Kumar's exceptional services and congratulated him on receiving the honour, stating that his dedication to public service stands as a shining example for other government employees. The administration also

extended best wishes for his continued success in serving the people.

The felicitation ceremony was attended by senior officials, dignitaries, and staff members, who lauded Abdul Razzaq Kumar's valuable contribution towards the development and progress of the district.

Notably, Abdul Razzaq Kumar has been continuously serving as the In-charge of Independence Day and Republic Day celebrations since 2010. Owing to his excellent organizational skills, discipline, and responsible conduct, he has earned a distinguished and respected place among both the general public and officials alike.

BMO Chenani Dr Ashrat Bukhari Felicitated on Republic Day

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR, JAN 26: Dr Ashrat Bukhari, Block Medical Officer (BMO) Chenani, was felicitated on the occasion of Republic Day celebrations in recognition of her outstanding contribution to public healthcare in the area.

Dr Bukhari was honoured for her dedicated services and effective leadership in successfully running the Medical Block Chenani, ensuring improved healthcare delivery and patient care across the block. Her efforts have played a significant role in strengthening primary health services and implementing various health programmes at the grassroots level.

The felicitation was part of the Republic Day समारोह, where officials lauded her commitment, professionalism and tireless work in serving the community. The occasion highlighted



the vital role of healthcare profes-

ionals in building a healthier society.

Ashok Koul addresses VB-GRAM G workshop, reviews relief measures, highlights 1430 crore relief package

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, JAN 28: Jammu & Kashmir BJP General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul today addressed a Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-GRAM G) Workshop and later an organizational meeting with the Kupwara district team at the BJP office in Kupwara, aimed at strengthening grassroots-level organizational functioning and ensuring effective outreach of government initiatives.

He was accompanied by BJP General Secretary Anwar Khan, BJP Secretary Mudassir Wani, District President Kupwara Syed Mohd Rafiq Shah, and other senior party leaders and office bearers.

Addressing party leaders and workers, Ashok Koul elaborated on the VB GRAM G Bill, describing it as a landmark initiative focused

on employment generation, rural empowerment, and inclusive development. He urged party leaders to actively convey the benefits of the Bill to the people, especially in rural and far-flung areas, so that maximum citizens can take advantage of the schemes aimed at strengthening village economies and creating sustainable livelihoods.

Koul further stressed the responsibility of party leaders to stand firmly with the people during the current harsh winter conditions, particularly when snowfall has led to road closures, disrupting daily life. He called upon BJP workers to ensure timely assistance, coordination with the administration, and on-ground support so that essential relief reaches the affected population without delay.

Highlighting the proactive role of the Narendra Modi-led Govern-

ment, Ashok Koul spoke about the 1430 crore rupees relief and compensation provided to people who suffered losses during last year's heavy flash floods. He said that the central government has shown deep sensitivity towards the hardships of the people of Jammu & Kashmir and has taken concrete steps to provide financial assistance, rehabilitation, and long-term safeguards against such natural calamities.

Speaking on the occasion, Anwar Khan said that the workshop and meetings reflect the party's strong commitment to grassroots governance and public welfare, adding that BJP workers in Kupwara will ensure that government schemes and relief measures reach every deserving household. He asked for the resolve to further strengthen the party organization and intensify people-centric outreach across Kupwara district.

CS assesses roadmap to strengthen disaster preparedness across J&K

Stresses on mandatory pre-monsoon preparedness and district-level readiness

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JANUARY 28: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo while reviewing the measures undertaken by the Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRR&R) to strengthen the Union Territory's disaster preparedness, response and mitigation framework emphasises on anticipatory action, technology-enabled early warning systems, and seamless inter-agency coordination.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary was apprised of a comprehensive roadmap for strengthening disaster management across Jammu and Kashmir, which has been developed by incorporating lessons learnt from recent extreme weather events, post-disaster reviews and national-level consultations with agencies such as the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The meeting was attended by the Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department; Principal Secretary, DMRR&R; Commissioner Secretary, Forests; Commissioner Secretary, General Administration Department; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir; Secretary, Rural Development Department; Director General, Budget; Chief Executive Officer, Economic Reconstruction Agency, and other senior officers.

Deputy Commissioners from all districts participated virtually.

The Chief Secretary urged the department to take steps for implementation of the disaster mitigation framework without further delay, stressing the need for strong inter-departmental coordination to ensure effective execution of the roadmap on the ground.

He also called for regular monitoring and close supervision at senior levels to track progress



and ensure accountability.

He directed the Divisional and District Administrations to ensure timely up-gradation of their respective District Disaster Management Plans (DDMPs) and to periodically review the status of preparedness and mitigation measures undertaken at their level.

Emphasizing preparedness as the cornerstone of disaster management, the Chief Secretary underscored the mandatory conduct of pre-monsoon preparedness measures by all districts, particularly for floods and other weather-induced disasters during the April to September period, which has historically witnessed a higher frequency of such events in the UT. The Chief Secretary called for RFID-based management of pilgrimages, particularly the Machail Mata Yatra, along with creation of the requisite supporting infrastructure along the yatra route.

He also stressed the importance of conducting shrine-specific mock exercises, including at the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, to ensure coordinated and timely response during emergencies.

He further enjoined upon the Deputy Commissioners to remain vigilant in view of the risk of avalanches following recent snowfall and directed them to ensure the prompt restoration of

road connectivity, drinking water supply and electricity to all affected habitations in their respective districts.

Speaking on the occasion, Principal Secretary, DMRR&R, Chandraker Bharti, highlighted the critical importance of strengthening last-mile dissemination of weather warnings, enhancing public awareness and promoting the adoption of digital platforms such as the SACHET App. He emphasized that District and Sub-Divisional Emergency Operation Centres (EOCs) must be made functional with redundant communication systems, particularly in remote and border areas. The review highlighted a clear strategic shift from reactive disaster response to a more anticipatory disaster management approach, supported by improved early warning systems, preparedness planning and the integration of modern technology.

The presentation also captured key operational insights from recent incidents, including the Chasoti flash flood during the Machail Mata Yatra in Kishtwar, cloudburst impacts in Doda, and floods in parts of the Jammu region including Kathua and other areas. These experiences have informed a series of targeted improvements in planning, response and coordination mechanisms.

To enhance safety during major pilgrimages and other high-footfall events, the roadmap envisages systematic pilgrim registration and RFID-based monitoring, regular pre-monsoon coordination meetings at the UT and Corps levels, and the conduct of table-top exercises and mock drills at the district level. It also provides for clearly defined Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to regulate movement during adverse weather conditions and the establishment of Joint Control Rooms involving the Civil Administration, Army, CAPFs and SDRF.

Infrastructure-related measures include the construction of Yatri Niwas, comprehensive mapping of permanent and temporary helipads, pre-positioning of medical and engineering resources, and integration of civil helicopters into the overall disaster response planning framework.

The review emphasized the need for localized and valley-specific weather forecasting, deployment of Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) and Doppler Radars in high-risk areas, and the use of drones for delivery of essential supplies and medicines to cut-off regions.

Moreover, operational gaps identified during recent flood events, such as communication

shortfalls, absence of sub-divisional EOCs and limited availability of satellite phones, are being systematically addressed.

Additionally, it was highlighted to expedite the key strategic infrastructure projects including the Indri Bridge over River Chenab at Pargwal, river training works on Chenab and Tawi, and targeted mitigation measures to reduce flood susceptibility of River Mannawar Tawi, noting its strategic significance.

The roadmap clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of the UT Government, District Administrations, IMD, NDMA, Armed Forces, CAPFs, BRO, NDRF and SDRF, and provides for strengthened inter-agency coordination.

Major initiatives include the conduct of an annual state-level mock exercise every June (pre-monsoon), organization of one-day IDRN workshops for Himalayan states, finalization of SOPs for drone usage in disaster response in coordination with the DGCA and Indian Air Force, pre-positioning of HADR equipment and bridging resources, and strengthening of 'Aapda Mitras', including engagement of trained local divers in vulnerable districts.

Sector-specific preparedness measures were also reviewed, including shrine-specific mock exercises for the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, tunnel contingency drills by the Railways, and regional forest fire mock exercises by the Forest Department.

The Chief Secretary directed time-bound implementation of all agreed action points and reiterated that disaster management in Jammu and Kashmir must remain people-centric, technology-enabled and coordination-driven, with preparedness, rather than response alone, forming the cornerstone of the Union Territory's disaster risk reduction strategy.

Forest Dept Kathua foils illicit Khair Wood transportation bid

■ HT NEWS NEWWORK

KATHUA, JANUARY 28: The Forest Department foiled an attempt to smuggle Khair wood (Acacia catechu) during a late-night enforcement operation in the district.

During the operation conducted on January 27, 2026, at about 11:55 PM, a Tata Yodha Load Carrier bearing Registration No. JK08L-1637 was intercepted near village Rouri, Sahar Panchayat, by the Block Officer, Budhi Block, along with field staff. On inspection, the vehicle was found carrying 15 bales of Khair Wood (Acacia catechu) being transported in violation of forest laws.

The vehicle was seized under Sections 52(1) and 52(2) of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 for violation of Sections 41, 41-A and 42 of the Act, besides violation of SRO 111 of 2016.



The seizure was carried out under the close supervision of the Range Officer, Kathua, Neetan Khajuria and under the overall guidance of Divisional Forest Officer, Ankit Sinha.

The seized vehicle along with the illicit forest produce was taken into custody at the Forest Complex, Kathua and further legal action is being initiated as per the provisions of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and other relevant laws.

Meanwhile, the Forest Department lauded the proactive and coordinated role of the Revenue Department, Police Department and Forest Protection Force, whose joint efforts have significantly strengthened forest protection measures and curbed the menace of smuggling of Khair wood and other forest produce in Kathua district.

The Forest Department Kathua has appealed to the general public to cooperate by promptly reporting any instances of illegal felling, smuggling or transportation of forest produce.

GLDM-GDC Hiranagar holds workshop on students' mental well-being

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA, JANUARY 28: Girdhari Lal Dogra Memorial Government Degree College (GLDM-GDC) Hiranagar on Wednesday organized a one-day sensitization and awareness workshop on the mental well-being of students through its Psychological Counselling Cell.

The programme was held under the patronage of the Principal, Prof. (Dr) Pragya Khanna, who highlighted the growing academic and social pressures faced by students in the contemporary environment. She emphasized the importance of mental well-being and shared preventive measures and coping strategies to help students manage stress and maintain emotional balance.

Medical Officer, Government Hospital Hiranagar Dr. Neha Sharma was the resource person. She delivered an informative lecture on stress management and mental health. She underscored the significance of self-care, emotional awareness and timely support. The interactive mode of the session enabled the resource person to address academic, social and personal concerns raised by the students.

Members of the Psychological Counselling Cell, Prof. Bharat Bhushan from the Department of Music and Prof. Namrata from the Department of Geography, highlighted the role of counselling initiatives in fostering a supportive and healthy academic environment. Dr. Rakesh Sharma, Assistant Professor, Hindi, also addressed the students and encouraged them to build mental resilience and positive thinking.

DC reviews multi-departmental district taskforce measures to curb illegal mining in Udhampur

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR, JANUARY 28: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Saloni Rai, today chaired a meeting of the multi-departmental District-Level Task Force Cell to review enforcement measures in place to curb illegal mining in the district.

During the meeting, the DC reviewed enforcement challenges and discussed strategies for effective monitoring and control. Emphasis was laid on strengthening regulatory mechanisms to ensure strict compliance with mining laws and environmental norms.

The DC urged officers to adopt a vigilant



and proactive approach in identifying and curbing illegal mineral extraction. Stressing a policy of zero tolerance, she called for stringent legal and punitive action against violators to deter future infractions.

To further tighten surveillance, the DC directed to install GPS devices in all vehicles transporting minerals to enable real-time tracking and prevent unauthorized transportation.

SDM inspects snow clearance works in Sub Division Paddar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KISHTWAR, JANUARY 28: Under the directions of Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Pankaj Kumar Sharma, the Sub-Divisional Magistrate Paddar Dr. Amit Kumar conducted an extensive inspection of snow clearance operations in the areas of the Sub-Division including Gulabgarh, Atholi, Kundal, Karthie and Tatapani.

The inspection aimed to assess the progress of snow clearance work and ensure restoration of connectivity in the region.

During the visit, the SDM Paddar was

accompanied by Executive Engineer PWD Paddar, Gurjeet Singh, Tehsildar, Vijay Gupta, NT, Sushil Kumar and concerned Junior Engineers.

The officers reviewed the ongoing works and issued necessary directions to expedite the clearance operations in the affected areas.

The SDM Paddar also inspected government offices in the Sub-Division, including the Tehsil Office Paddar and Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Atholi. The inspection focused on assessing the functioning of offices and availability of essential public services.

interacted with orchardists.

He appreciated their efforts and emphasized the importance of adopting modern horticultural practices to enhance productivity and income.

The visit aimed to assess the field-level implementation of horticulture schemes and to encourage farmers to adopt high-value crops under government-supported programmes.

DHJ inspects horticulture development activities in Marh Block

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU JANUARY 28: The Director Horticulture Jammu (DHJ), Gul Sayed today visited the Marh area to review horticultural activities and ongoing initiatives in the region.

He was accompanied by the Assistant Director Horticulture, Sunil Gupta and Horticulture Department Officer, Dr. Nazrwan

Khan. Later, the Director inspected the Government Fruit Plants Nursery, Raipur, where he reviewed the orchards of Dragon fruit. He also visited the Dragon Fruit Mother Block established under the HADP (P-21) scheme by beneficiary, Sidharth Daluwa.

Afterward, the Director inspected different horticulture orchards in the Marh area and



Lower-B, besides projecting other civic and developmental issues.

The District Development Commissioner listened patiently to the grievances and issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned departments for timely redressal. Emphasising efficient service delivery, the DC directed the concerned authorities to commission the Panjgiran Water Supply Scheme functional before 15th February 2026.

In addition, the DDC inspected the infrastructure of High School Gambhir Brahman and directed the AEE, PWD to take up the pending construction works at the earliest to ensure improved facilities for students.

The Block Diwas witnessed active participation from residents, who appreciated the district administration for bringing governance to their doorstep and addressing their concerns in a transparent and

DDC Rajouri chairs Block Diwas program at Gambhir Brahman; Listens to Public Grievances

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI, JANUARY 28: District Development Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, today chaired a Block Diwas program (Public Grievance Redressal and Service Delivery Camp) at Gambhir Brahman, aimed to address the issues and demands of the local populace in a participatory manner.

During the Block Diwas, the general public raised several

demands and grievances, seeking maintenance of the PMGSY road Tundi Trar, renovation of the building of Middle School Tundi Trar, installation of an ATM, construction of bunkers, especially near educational institutions, up-gradation of Thandikassi to Patrara road, Gambhir-Khankari road, blacktopping of the road from Irwan Khater to Tundi Trar and establishment of a health centre at Panjgiran Upper-A and



Lower-B, besides projecting other civic and developmental issues. The District Development Commissioner listened patiently to the grievances and issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned departments for timely redressal. Emphasising efficient service delivery, the DC directed the concerned authorities to commission the Panjgiran Water Supply Scheme functional before 15th February 2026.

Senior officers present on the occasion included ADDC, Malikzada Sheraz ul Haq; PO ICDS, Harpal Singh; ACR, Mohd Jahangir Khan; CPO, Maqsood Ahmed; Deputy Director Employment, Mohd Nawaz; ACD, Auqil Naveed; CMO, Dr. M. L. Rana; DSWO, Abdul Raheem; Tehsildar Manjakote, Jazia Kazmi; Ex-En PHE, Sudesh Kumar; DFO, Naveed Mughal along with other district and sectoral officers.

Secretary RDD assesses performance of PIAs under Himayat 2.0

Skill training, employment for youth at core of Himayat: Aijaz Asad

■ **HT NEWS NETWORK**

JAMMU, JANUARY 28: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Ajaz Asad, today reviewed the performance of Project Implementation Agencies (PIAs) under the Himayat 2.0 programme and emphasized expediting skill training and employment opportunities for the youth.

Chairing a review meeting at Panchayat Bhawan, here, the Secretary directed PIAs to enhance their performance and ensure timely achievement of targets. While appreciating agencies that have shown commendable results, he issued a stern warning to non-performing PIAs, asserting that no compromise would be made when it comes to the future of the youth.

He informed that under the Action Plan for FY 2025-26, the Apex Committee has approved 13 projects with a training target of 2,248 candidates, against which 1,365 candidates have already been enrolled so far.



SDM reviews restoration works in Mahore-Dharmari Subdivision

■ **HT NEWS NETWORK**

REASI, JANUARY 28: Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Mahore, Shafqat Majeed Bhat convened a review meeting of concerned officers to assess the progress of restoration works following the recent snowfall and rainfall in Mahore/Dharmari Subdivision.

The meeting was attended by Tehsildar Mahore, Tehsildar Chassana, Tehsildar Thuroo, Executive Engineer PWD, Executive Engineer PMGSY, AEE Power Development Department (PPD), AEE Jal Shakti Department, Medical Officer CHC Mahore and Officer In-Charge GREF (BRO).

During the meeting, ongoing restoration activities related to roads, electricity, water supply and other essential services were reviewed in detail. The SDM issued clear directions to ensure immediate restoration of all affected services to minimize inconvenience to the public.

The Executive Engineer PMGSY informed that restoration work on affected roads is progressing at a satisfactory pace and approximately 90% of the roads are expected to be restored within the next 24 hours. The Executive Engineer PWD also assured that most of the remaining roads would be restored by tomorrow evening.

The BRO GREF authorities reported that all roads in Mahore Subdivision have already been opened for traffic.

Regarding electricity restoration, the AEE PWD apprised the meeting that extensive damage to electric poles and transmission lines has occurred, particularly in far-flung areas, which is posing challenges. However, it was assured that electricity supply would be restored in most areas by tomorrow evening, while a few locations may require an additional 2-3 days for complete restoration.

The SDM instructed the Health Department to ensure the presence of medical staff in all health centres of the region.

The Tehsildars informed that essential commodities including ration are available in all villages and that water supply remains normal.

Later, the SDM, along with concerned officers, conducted a field inspection in different areas of Mahore Subdivision, including Gulabgarh Road, to assess the ground status of road restoration, electricity supply and other essential services.

DC Kishtwar chairs District Telecom Committee meeting

■ **HT NEWS NETWORK**

KISHTWAR, JANUARY 28: A meeting of the District Telecom Committee (DTC) was held today under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner, Pankaj Kumar Sharma, (Chairman DTC) to review the implementation of the District Action Plan.

The DC expressed concern over the non-functioning of VSATs installed in Gram Panchayats. "Although VSATs were installed way back (some during 2019), several sites are presently non-functional, particularly due to issues related to vendor change, maintenance gaps and infrastructure deficiencies," he noted. He stressed ensuring proper functioning and optimal utilization of all VSATs, especially in remote and far-flung Panchayats. He asked the ACD, BSNL Authorities and other stakeholders to take immediate

corrective measures.

The concerned departments were directed to ensure availability of power supply, physical security, space and effective network utilization in GP Bhawans and to extend full cooperation to PMA/PIAs for timely implementation of BharatNet works.

The meeting also reviewed the status of joint inspections under BharatNet. The DC directed concerned departments to take necessary action on inspection findings, including handover details, verification of missing assets and proper documentation of equipment handed over to the IT Department. Emphasis was laid on regular monitoring, maintenance and upkeep of BharatNet infrastructure at the GP level and timely resolution of any infrastructural deficiencies to ensure uninterrupted services.

Regarding the security of IT and

BharatNet infrastructure, directions were issued to submit updated security status reports of GP Bhawans, installed VSATs, functioning CSCs and overall IT infrastructure, keeping in view past incidents and vulnerabilities.

The Deputy Commissioner reiterated the importance of strict usage of the "Call Before You Dig (CBuD)" App to prevent damage to underground telecom infrastructure and directed SE PWD R&B Circle Doda Kishtwar and concerned Executive Engineers of the PWD R&B and PMGSY Departments to ensure its mandatory and effective implementation during excavation and infrastructure works.

The promotion of the Sanchar Saathi Portal/App was reviewed and directions were issued to enhance public awareness regarding citizen-centric telecom services, security features and subscriber empowerment initiatives.

MLA Jammu East, Div Com inaugurate Tawi boating Festival

■ **HT NEWS NETWORK**

JAMMU, JANUARY 28: In a major initiative to promote tourism and reconnect people with the Tawi riverfront, the first-ever Tawi Boating Festival was inaugurated on Wednesday at the Artificial Lake developed under the Jammu Smart City project.

The festival was inaugurated by Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar and MLA Jammu East, Yudhvir Sethi in the presence of Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Dr Rakesh Minhas, Jammu Municipal Corporation Commissioner and CEO, Jammu Smart City Limited, Dr Devansh Yadav and officials of Jammu Smart City Limited (JSCL) and the Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC).

The two-day festival, being held on Wednesday and Thursday, marks the formal beginning of boating activities in the heart of

Jammu city. The event is open to the public free of cost from 3:30 pm to 6:30 pm, allowing residents to experience the newly developed riverfront up close.

Residents turned up in large numbers on the opening day, describing the initiative as a historic moment for Jammu and a long-awaited recreational attraction for both locals and visitors.

Addressing the gathering, MLA Jammu East, Yudhvir Sethi, termed the initiative a historic step for Jammu, saying the boating facility would emerge as a major attraction and significantly boost tourism and economic activity in the region.

Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar, said the riverfront development under the Smart City initiative would provide a new recreational space for residents and help attract tourists to the city.



Speaking on the occasion, Jammu Municipal Corporation Commissioner and CEO, Jammu Smart City Limited, Dr Devansh Yadav, said the festival is aimed to introduce residents to the newly developed artificial lake and assess the feasibility of regular boating

operations.

"Suryaputra Tawi has been the centre of Jammu's devotion and with this project it will become the centre of tourism also in Jammu city," Dr Yadav said.

He added that State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) teams have

been deployed with life jackets, rescue boats along the stretch to ensure safety of the visitors and as per the standard operating procedures. Jammu Municipal Corporation will invite tenders to engage local tourism entrepreneurs for running boating & other water sports activities at river front from March, 2026 onwards, he added.

To enhance the festive ambience, the riverbank has been illuminated with decorative lighting. Local bands and stalls offering traditional Dogra cuisine are other major attractions of the event.

The riverfront project, developed under the Smart Cities Mission on the lines of the Sabarmati Riverfront in Gujarat has been executed at a cost of around 180 crore.

Additional CEO, Jammu Smart City Limited, Subha Mehta and other officials from JSCL and JMC were also present on the occasion.

Gulmarg fully booked, Sonamarg at 70% occupancy as tourists flock to Kashmir snow

■ **HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO**

SRINAGAR, JAN 28: Fresh snowfall has sent occupancy rates soaring at Kashmir's top winter destinations, with Gulmarg hotels jammed at 100% while Sonamarg reaches 70%, as tourists from across India and beyond swarm the snow-blanketed valley.

Declaring "no place like Valley snow," exhilarated visitors hailed destinations as unmatched, even surpassing international spots.

Gujarat skier Khusboo, a regular visitor, speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said they have invited adventure seekers to experience winter thrills. He confirmed hotels at 100% occupancy post-snowfall.

"It's truly heaven on earth," she said.

Similarly, a group of Punjab

residents, concluding a six-day skiing adventure in Gulmarg urged natives to visit and witness the snow-covered mountains.

"There's no match to Gulmarg," they declared.

"It has been an unexpected joy and happiness. We enjoyed skiing and Gondola ride. The people here are awesome, and the weather has no comparison," first-timer Sania Mirza beamed.

CEO Gulmarg Development Authority (GDA) Tariq Hussain, said they have invited adventure seekers to experience winter thrills. He confirmed hotels at 100% occupancy post-snowfall.

"Visit Gulmarg and feel the thrill of winter adventure activities. Gulmarg

belongs to every tourist for whom it is the first choice for skiing and other



snow activities," he said.

Stressing safety, the CEO advised

visitors to ensure cooperation with authorities and use only the specified

ski tracks for skiing.

Meanwhile, Sonamarg saw a similar post-snowfall surge, with hotels at over 70% occupancy. From January 1 to 27, the destination welcomed 87,693 visitors, with 77,200 domestic tourists, 1,225 foreigners and 9,268 locals.

Tourist flow picked up pace amid the white carpet; however, the unscheduled power cuts have surfaced. The stakeholders have urged the administration to ensure uninterrupted facilities to enhance tourist comfort.

On Tuesday night, a minor avalanche occurred with minimal impact and no loss of life, according to officials.

Police reiterated warnings for the public and tourists to strictly avoid avalanche-prone areas—(KNO)

Sixth batch of students flagged off for Bharat Darshan tour

■ **HT NEWS NETWORK**

JAMMU, JANUARY 28: With the objective of promoting national integration, cultural exposure and the holistic development of youth, Zonal Police Headquarters (ZPHQ) Jammu, under the Civic Action Programme of Jammu and Kashmir Police today flagged off the sixth batch of the Bharat Darshan tour for students from District Kishtwar. Similar tours will be organised in the coming days for students from the remaining four districts.



The initiative organised by ZPHQ Jammu saw a group of 90 participants including students and caretakers depart from Saraswati Dham, Rail Head Complex, Jammu, for a tour covering major destinations such as Delhi and Kolkata, offering them an opportunity to experience India's rich heritage and cultural diversity.

The flag-off ceremony was conducted by Shamsher Hussain, Staff Officer to IGP Jammu along with members of the Bharat Darshan team of ZPHQ Jammu. Prior to departure, the students were briefed by the Staff Officer to IGP Jammu on the objectives of the programme, safety guidelines and the broader vision of the Jammu and Kashmir Police in empowering youth through educational exposure. Narinder Singh, ADO ZPHQ Jammu, along with other staff members of ZPHQ Jammu were also present on the occasion.

The Civic Action Programme plays a vital role in strengthening the relationship between the police and the community. Through initiatives like Bharat Darshan tours, the Jammu and Kashmir Police remains committed to nurturing young talent and guiding youth towards a brighter and more informed future.

Addressing the gathering, Shamsher Hussain emphasised that Bharat Darshan tours go beyond sightseeing and serve as a bridge connecting young minds with India's history, institutions and diverse cultures. He highlighted that such initiatives help build confidence, broaden perspectives and strengthen the spirit of unity and national integration.

He further reminded the students that they would act as cultural ambassadors of Jammu and Kashmir during the journey and should spread the message of peace, harmony and brotherhood. He encouraged them to imbibe positive values and meaningful lessons from their experiences and strive to become responsible citizens contributing to the nation's progress.

HT EDITORIAL

For proper safety kindly take all precautions

A person lost his life due to suffocation outside a hospital in South Kashmir's Kulgam district during the intervening night of January 27 and 28. The person died during sleep after he switched on the heater of his car as his wife was admitted in the hospital and he could not get any place to sleep. People came to know about the incident in the morning and they were in a state of shock.

Every now and then the people are made aware about the precautions that need to be taken while using various heating gadgets and other heating appliances. However, there are people who are not ready to listen and give a damn to the directions aimed at proper usage of the different electric gadgets and heating appliances. It is due to this sheer negligence that mishaps occur and people tend to lose their precious lives.

One must understand that suggestions and recommendations given out by the experts need to be taken seriously. Since an expert in a particular field has vast experience, it is quite natural that he or she will share the same with the common masses. At the end of the day the motive of the expert is that the people get benefitted and no harm whatsoever is caused to them. It must be understood by all that life is precious and every step should be taken to protect the same.

Given the fact that Kashmir is passing through the grueling phase of the winter season people use different means so as to keep themselves warm. But at the same time, it is essential that the necessary precautions are taken by the people so that there is no harm to their life and property. It is imperative that people have access to fresh air whenever people put on a Bukhari (wood or coal) and a gas heater. It must be ensured that a person going to bed or leaving a particular room puts out the bukhari or a gas heater.

In the similar manner people should only purchase standard electric appliances or an electric blanket from the market as various fake brands are available. A fake brand might be cheaper but nobody can guarantee the safety standards of such products. Once quality products are bought there are minimum chances of an accident and as such lives of common people would be saved.

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From Silence to Hope: ReT Teachers Finally See a Road to Justice

Two decades of sacrifice and the long wait for a fair transfer policy



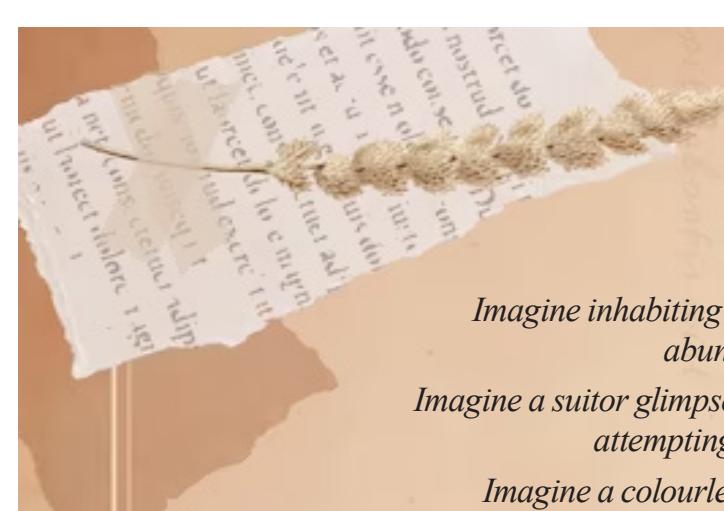
■ **ASIF ALI BHAT**

For more than two decades now, the story of Rehbar-e-Taleem teachers in Jammu and Kashmir has been a story of sacrifice without relief, of service without mobility, of promises half-fulfilled. In almost every village, every far-flung mohalla, there is at least one such teacher whose entire youth has been spent walking the same muddy path to the same school, through snow, through shutdowns, through fear and uncertainty. These are the faces that generations of children recognise; the "Master Sahib" who opened the school gate long before any policy document remembered their name. And yet, while the entire education system rests quietly on their shoulders, they themselves have remained stuck, officially invisible in every transfer list, left out of every mass reshuffle, watching others move while they stand rooted to the same spot. The recent decision of the Jammu and Kashmir government to finally constitute a six-member committee to frame a uniform transfer policy for regularised ReT teachers has therefore not come a day too soon. For many, it feels less like an office order and more like the first ray of sunlight after a very long winter. At last, there is a formal, time-bound process that admits what ReT teachers have been saying for years: that a teacher is not a tree, and no one should be forced to spend an entire life in one school just because that is where they were first engaged as ReTs twenty years ago. The committee, headed by senior officers of the School Education Department and given two months to submit its report, has been asked to examine all issues related to transfers, postings and adjustments of regularised ReTs and to recommend a transparent, student-centric policy that includes periodic transfers, hardship postings and tenure-based placements. For thousands of teachers who had almost given up hope of ever finding their name in an official transfer order, this is nothing short of historic. To understand why this move carries such emotional weight, one has to step out of conference halls and walk into the lives of these teachers. Imagine a young graduate from a remote village in the early 2000s, who chose the Rehbar-e-Taleem scheme over more secure options because it meant serving the children of their own area. On a small honorarium, they taught in crumbling buildings, sometimes without electricity, sometimes without proper textbooks, but with a burning belief that education was the only real weapon against poverty and violence. Year after year, they watched children who once herded cattle now reading, writing and dreaming of college. Many postponed marriage, or stayed away from their families for months together, because the school needed them. When regularisation finally came, it felt like justice. What did not come, however, was a simple right that every other regular teacher quietly enjoyed: the right to be considered for transfer. Since the very beginning of the scheme, most ReT teachers have remained tied to the school of their first posting. Even when some were shifted to other institutions on academic arrangement, on paper their lien never moved. So when the department

issued transfer orders for general line teachers, their names were never there. When rationalisation drives took place, they were left out. When colleagues discussed "choice postings" and "tenure completion", they could only listen in silence. Over time, that silence turned heavy. Teachers who had spent half their lives in remote, snowbound, or disturbed areas were told, directly or indirectly, that they did not "fall under transfer policy". The message was clear: you are good enough to run the school, but not important enough to be counted in the system's calculations. The human cost of this arrangement has been painful. There are ReT teachers who have walked hours every day across riverbeds and mountain tracks, who have missed their children growing up because the journey from school to home was simply too long to make every evening. Some have spent winters in rented rooms near their schools, sending their families to safer or more accessible places, just to ensure the school bell kept ringing in a half-buried village. Women teachers have braved dark, lonely roads at dawn, ignored taunts and social pressure, and kept going because the girls in their class waited for them. Yet, when health problems emerged, when ageing parents needed care, when personal lives demanded even a small adjustment, there was no policy window to knock on. "You are ReT," was the unspoken answer, "you have no transfer." That is why the news of the committee has stirred such deep emotions. For the first time, there is an official acknowledgement that the old arrangement was unfair, that keeping ReT teachers outside the transfer framework was not just a technicality but a real wound on their dignity. The government order explicitly speaks of a comprehensive and uniform transfer policy for regularised ReTs, one that will ensure rationalisation of staff, transparency and administrative efficiency. It mandates the committee to examine periodic transfers, hardship postings and tenure-based placements, and to submit a detailed draft policy within two months. Between the lines, what teachers hear is something even more powerful: "We see you now. We know you have been waiting. We are ready to correct this." The teaching fraternity has reacted with a mixture of relief and cautious hope. Many ReT teachers say that more than a "fancy" posting, they want recognition that they are not second-class employees. Regular reshuffle, they argue, will bring new energy into the system. A teacher who has spent years in a tiny hillside school carries a wealth of experience in managing different classrooms, dealing with trauma, motivating children who walk kilometres to study and working with almost no infrastructure. If such a teacher is shifted to another needy school, or to an area where student numbers are rising but staff is thin, that experience travels with them. At the same time, someone else can come in with fresh ideas for the village they leave behind. Classroom walls change, but the system as a whole becomes richer. It would be a mistake, however, to see this only as a "benefit" for teachers. A fair transfer policy for ReT teachers is also a question of justice for students and parents. Today, there are schools with surplus staff where multiple teachers share light loads, and others where one teacher runs the entire show. As long as a large segment of teachers is treated as immovable, the department's hands remain tied. Including regularised ReTs in a uniform transfer framework will allow the administration, for the first time, to look at the entire teaching force as one pool and send human resources where children need them most. If done honestly, it will mean that

a child in a remote hamlet and a child in a semi-urban slum both have an equal chance of finding a qualified teacher in their classroom. There is also a deep emotional bond between ReT teachers and their communities that the new policy must handle gently. In many villages, these teachers are more than government employees; they are mentors, counsellors, even informal social workers. Parents trust them with their children and consult them on matters far beyond homework. Some villagers are understandably nervous at the thought that such a familiar figure might be transferred. It is important, therefore, that the coming policy balances continuity with change. Minimum tenures, advance posting of replacement teachers and consultation with local stakeholders can all help ensure that schools do not feel abandoned when a long-serving teacher finally moves on. After all, a teacher who has given twenty years to one school does not "leave" it in spirit; they carry its stories and struggles wherever they go. At its heart, this moment is about respect. For too long, ReT teachers have felt like the system's forgotten backbone: holding everything up, but never really being seen. They entered schools when militants roamed roads, when snow cut off villages, when government presence in some pockets was little more than a flag on a building. They taught in classrooms with broken windows, in rented rooms, under tin roofs that rattled in every storm. They stayed when others refused to come. Today, when that same system finally says, "Your stagnation will end; your service will be acknowledged; your name will also appear in the transfer lists," it is not doing charity. It is simply keeping an old promise. In the coming weeks, much will depend on how the committee listens and how honestly it works. Will it talk to teachers in remote belts, to women who have silently borne the double burden of school and home, to those who are struggling with illness or family responsibilities? Will it frame rules that are clear enough to prevent favouritism, but flexible enough to accommodate real hardship? Will it ensure that "uniform policy" does not become another slogan, but a living shield of fairness for those who stood firm when the system was at its weakest? These are questions every ReT teacher is asking. For now, though, there is something in the air that has been missing for years: hope. Hope that the next time transfer orders are issued, ReT teachers will not scroll through them like invisible citizens. Hope that a teacher who has served twenty winters in the same snow-covered village might finally get a chance to work nearer home, without having to knock at every door or file endless petitions. Hope that the word "Rehbar" in Rehbar-e-Taleem, one who shows the way, will be honoured not only in speeches but in service rules. This policy is framed with heart as well as mind, it will not only change the lives of thousands of ReT teachers but also send a message to every young person who joins public service in Jammu and Kashmir: your sacrifice will be seen, your rights will be respected, and this system will stand by those who stand by its children. And perhaps, years from now, when a former ReT teacher sits in a different staff room, in a different school, and hears children ring the bell for recess, they will think back to that first snow-covered path they walked as a young "Rehbar", and feel that the journey, with all its pain, was finally met with justice.

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Imagine

Imagine inhabiting a deserted palace—dark and silent—endowed with abundance, yet devoid of true possession.

Imagine a suitor glimpsed through a weathered window, shivering and parched, attempting to comfort a persistent, unrelenting ache.

Imagine a colourless butterfly gradually adorning its wings with hues borrowed from the depth of your dark eyes.

Imagine a bird born for flight—autonomous by nature—yet paradoxically yearning to remain confined within your embrace.

Imagine the moment when language proves insufficient to articulate the condition of the heart, when despair and ecstasy merge into an indistinguishable state.

Imagine encountering the word "beauty" and witnessing it assume bodily form—revitalizing the inert and rendering death itself imperishable.

Imagine composing a poem for those who imparted nothing but poetry, whom we encountered only in dreams, only through verse.

By Nisar Ahmad Baba

Padma Shri Prof. Shafi Shauq: A Living Legend of Kashmiri Language and Literature



■ DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

In January 2026, the Government of India conferred the Padma Shri, one of the nation's highest civilian honours, upon Prof. Mohammad Shafi Shauq, a towering figure in Kashmiri literature, linguistics, and cultural scholarship. For decades, Shauq has been a guiding light in the preservation, enrichment, and modernization of Kashmiri language and literature. His recognition with the Padma Shri is not merely a personal accolade but a celebration of Kashmiri identity, resilience, and creativity. His life journey, literary achievements, academic contributions, and cultural impact, weave together the story of a man whose work has shaped Kashmiri letters for more than half a century.

Born in Kashmir in the mid-20th century, Shafi Shauq grew up in a region where language and culture were deeply intertwined with identity. Shauq's academic journey began with a Bachelor's degree in Science, but his passion for literature led him to pursue a Master's and PhD in English Literature at the University of Kashmir. His scientific background gave him a structured approach to research, while his literary training opened avenues for creative and critical exploration. His early appointment at the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) allowed him to work on the monumental project of developing a Kashmiri dictionary, a task that would define much of his career. From an early age, he displayed a keen interest in literature, poetry, and the nuances of language. His education was marked by a dual pursuit: mastering classical Kashmiri and Urdu traditions while also engaging with modern literary theories and linguistics. He pursued higher studies in linguistics and literature, eventually becoming a professor and mentor to generations of students. His academic grounding gave him the tools to approach Kashmiri literature not only as a creative writer but also as a scholar and critic, capable of analyzing its structures, themes, and evolution. Prof. Shauq's literary output is vast, spanning poetry, fiction, criticism, translation, and linguistic studies. He has authored more than 100 books across Kashmiri, Urdu, and English, making him one of the most prolific Kashmiri writers of his time. His poetry blends classical Kashmiri sensibilities with modernist themes. He often explores identity, exile, memory, and resilience, reflecting the lived experiences of Kashmiris in times of both peace and turmoil.

Prof. Shauq's verses are known for their

lyrical beauty and intellectual depth, appealing to both lay readers and scholars. His short stories and novels capture the social and cultural fabric of Kashmiri life. He portrays ordinary people caught in extraordinary circumstances, often highlighting the tensions between tradition and modernity. His fiction is marked by empathy, realism, and a deep understanding of Kashmiri society. As a critic, Shauq has written extensively on Kashmiri poetics, aesthetics, and literary history. His works provide frameworks for understanding Kashmiri literature in relation to global literary movements. He has been instrumental in codifying Kashmiri literary criticism, ensuring that the language has a robust intellectual tradition. As a translator he played a very significant role in rendering Kashmiri into Urdu and English. Shauq has translated Kashmiri works into Urdu and English, and vice versa, thereby bridging linguistic divides.

His translations have introduced Kashmiri literature to wider audiences, both within India and internationally. Beyond creative writing, Prof. Shauq has made significant contributions to the study and preservation of Kashmiri language. He has worked on lexicography, compiling dictionaries and glossaries that help standardize Kashmiri vocabulary. His research in linguistics has explored the phonetics, syntax, and semantics of Kashmiri, situating it within the broader Indo-Aryan language family. He has advocated for the teaching of Kashmiri in schools and universities, emphasizing its role in cultural identity. As a professor, he has mentored countless students, many of whom have gone on to become writers, scholars, and cultural activists. Prof. Shauq's work extends beyond literature into the realm of cultural advocacy. He has consistently argued that language is central to identity, and that preserving Kashmiri is essential for maintaining the region's cultural heritage. He has participated in seminars, conferences, and cultural forums, both in India and abroad, where he has spoken about the importance of Kashmiri language and literature. He has been a voice of moderation and dialogue, using literature as a means to foster understanding and peace. His writings often emphasize the pluralistic traditions of Kashmir, celebrating its syncretic culture that blends Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist influences.

The Padma Shri in 2026 is the culmination of decades of service to literature and culture. But it is not his first recognition. He has previously received the Sahitya Akademi Award, India's highest literary honour, for his contributions to Kashmiri literature.

He has been honoured by various literary and cultural organizations for his scholarship and creative writing. His recognition with the Padma Shri places him alongside other luminaries who have shaped Indian literature and culture. Prof. Shauq's impact on Kashmiri literature can

be understood in several dimensions: He has worked tirelessly to preserve Kashmiri language through dictionaries, grammars, and teaching materials. His creative works bring Kashmiri literature into dialogue with modern themes and global literary movements. Through translations, he has made Kashmiri literature accessible to non-Kashmiri readers. His role as a teacher has ensured that new generations of writers and scholars continue the tradition. Working in Kashmir has never been easy. The region's political turmoil, social upheavals, and cultural tensions have posed challenges for writers and scholars.

Prof. Shauq has faced these challenges with resilience, continuing to write, teach, and advocate for Kashmiri language even in difficult times. His commitment reflects a belief that literature is not a luxury but a necessity—an essential means of preserving identity, fostering dialogue, and imagining a better future. Prof. Shafi Shauq's legacy will be defined by his vast body of work, which will continue to be studied and celebrated. His role in institutionalizing Kashmiri literary criticism and linguistics. His influence on students and younger writers, who carry forward his vision. His advocacy for Kashmiri language, which has ensured its survival and growth in the modern era. The conferring of the Padma Shri in 2026 upon Prof. Shafi Shauq is a recognition not only of his personal achievements but also of the richness of Kashmiri language and literature. His lifetime of work—spanning poetry, fiction, criticism, translation, linguistics, and cultural advocacy—has shaped the contours of Kashmiri identity in profound ways. In celebrating him, the nation celebrates the resilience of Kashmiri culture, the power of literature to transcend boundaries, and the enduring importance of language in shaping who we are. Prof. Shauq's story is one of dedication, creativity, and vision—a story that will inspire generations to come.

One of Shouq's most enduring legacies is his work in Kashmiri lexicography. At a time when Kashmiri was marginalized in official and educational contexts, Shouq's dictionary project sought to standardize vocabulary, preserve idioms, and provide a scholarly foundation for future generations. His linguistic studies emphasized Kashmiri's unique position as a Dardic language within the Indo-Aryan family, highlighting its phonetic richness and cultural depth. By documenting oral traditions and folk expressions, Shouq ensured that Kashmiri would not be relegated to obscurity but would thrive as a language of literature, philosophy, and scholarship.

Shouq's poetry is deeply rooted in Kashmiri mysticism. His collections such as Nund, Lal, and Kashmiri Sufi Poetry reinterpret the voices of Sheikh-ul-Aalam (Nund Rishi) and Lal Ded, two towering figures in Kashmiri spiritual and literary history. In Nund, Shouq celebrates the Rishi tradition, emphasizing themes of simplicity, ecological harmony, and divine love.

Lal revisits Lal Ded's mystical verses, blending Shaivite philosophy with universal human longing. His anthology Kashmiri Sufi Poetry documents centuries of spiritual verse, situating Kashmiri mysticism within the broader currents of Islamic and Indic traditions.

Shouq's style fuses classical Kashmiri poetic forms with modern sensibilities. His verses often carry the cadence of shruks (short mystical poems), yet they engage contemporary themes such as exile, identity, and cultural survival. His poetry is not merely aesthetic—it is a cultural act of preservation, ensuring that the voices of Kashmiri's mystics remain alive in modern consciousness. Shouq's translations are another cornerstone of his work. Fluent in Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit, Arabic, and English, he has translated Kashmiri mystical poetry into English, making it accessible to global audiences. His translations of Sheikh-ul-Aalam's verses, for instance, retain the spiritual intensity of the original while rendering them in a lyrical English idiom. This multilingual mastery allows Shouq to act as a cultural bridge, situating Kashmiri literature within world traditions and ensuring its resonance beyond regional boundaries.

Beyond poetry and translation, Shouq has authored critical essays on Kashmiri literature, linguistics, and cultural identity. His scholarship often emphasizes the interplay between tradition and modernity. He argues that Kashmiri literature cannot be understood in isolation but must be situated within the historical realities of migration, conflict, and adaptation. His essays highlight how Kashmiri writers negotiate identity in the face of political upheaval, and how literature becomes a repository of collective memory. Shouq's academic rigor is evident in his ability to synthesize cultural, linguistic, and philosophical analysis. His essays often weave historical references with contemporary realities, making them valuable not only to literary scholars but also to sociologists, historians, and cultural theorists.

Prof. Shouq's works consistently return to the mystical voices of Lal Ded and Nund Rishi, emphasizing spiritual introspection and ecological harmony and thus carrying the mystic and cultural heritage of Kashmir. His lexicographic and linguistic projects underscore the importance of Kashmiri as a marker of cultural identity. By documenting oral traditions and folk idioms, Shouq acts as a custodian of Kashmiri heritage. His poetry and essays engage contemporary themes such as exile, conflict, and globalization, situating Kashmiri literature within modern discourse. Through translation and multilingual scholarship, Shouq connects Kashmiri literature to global audiences.

He has published over 45 to 100+ books in Kashmiri, English, Urdu, and Hindi. He is renowned for his significant contributions to the preservation and modernization of the Kashmiri language and for

introducing Kashmiri literature to global audiences. His major works span various fields. Yaad Aasman Hinz (Remembering the Skies) is a widely acclaimed collection of poems noted for its modern sensibility and existential themes. The Best of Kashmiri Literature (Series) is a monumental project to compile the poetry, prose, and philosophical writings of Kashmiri's literary giants. Nund, Lal, and Kashmiri Sufi Poetry is a set of books released in 2024 focusing on the region's spiritual and literary heritage. Contemporary Kashmiri Poetry (1947-2010) is an anthology of poetry. Kasur Afsanah A2Z is a work on Kashmiri short stories.

Shouq's contributions have been recognized nationally and internationally. His awards from the Sahitya Akademi and other literary institutions, culminating in the Padma Shri in 2026. This recognition places him among the foremost custodians of Kashmiri literature and language, affirming his role in shaping India's cultural landscape. Prof. Shouq's impact extends beyond his writings. As a professor at the University of Kashmir, he mentored generations of students, instilling in them a respect for Kashmiri language and literature. His work at JKAACL laid the foundation for institutional support of Kashmiri studies. His dictionaries and anthologies remain reference points for scholars, while his poetry continues to inspire readers. In a region often defined by conflict, Shouq's work offers a vision of resilience and continuity. By foregrounding Kashmiri mysticism and language, he asserts the enduring relevance of cultural heritage in shaping identity and fostering unity.

Professor Shafi Shouq's oeuvre represents a remarkable synthesis of poetry, scholarship, translation, and linguistic preservation. His devotion to Kashmiri language and literature has ensured that the voices of mystics like Lal Ded and Nund Rishi remain alive, while his lexicographic projects safeguard the language for future generations. His translations and essays situate Kashmiri literature within global contexts, making it accessible and relevant beyond regional boundaries. Honestly speaking he stands as a custodian of Kashmiri identity, a bridge between tradition and modernity, and a scholar whose work embodies the resilience of culture in the face of adversity. His legacy is not merely literary—it is civilizational, reminding us that language and poetry are the soul of a people, and that preserving them is an act of profound service.

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Aye Musht-e-Khaak by Sheeba Ashraf

■ RAYEES AHMAD KUMAR

South Kashmir's Anantnag district is renowned for its mesmerizing natural beauty and its half a dozen enchanting health resorts. Over the years, it has produced scores of litterateurs, politicians, authors, poets, administrators, and philosophers. A few weeks ago, Kandiwar Sagam village of the Kokernag subdivision remained in the limelight owing to a young and emerging literary voice—Sheeba Ashraf, who achieved a remarkable milestone by authoring a book at the tender age of just fourteen. Her significant feat created quite a buzz across social media platforms, where her story trended widely. A couple of Facebook pages also interviewed her, focusing on her literary journey and the challenges she encountered while compiling the book. At an age when most students particularly female students struggle to cope with the six core academic subjects taught in schools, this promising and aspiring girl has carved a niche for herself by emerging as the youngest author of the Valley. Aye Musht-e-Khaak is a collection of essays spanning 112 pages and has been published by the renowned GNK Publications. Dedicating the book to her parents, Sheeba Ashraf writes in its preface that it gives voice to silent cries and offers answers to age-old questions buried deep within the heart. The book is for those who smile in the company of others, yet converse with their tears in profound silence and solitude. According to her, this book is not merely a book. It is neither a story-

book nor a romantic tale. It does not seek to instruct, rather, it is written through breath and lived experience, not merely with ink on paper. To delve into its meaning, a reader must possess not only eyes to read, but a heart to feel. Insaan ka Wajood, comprising eighteen meticulously composed chapters, opens with this maiden chapter. It vividly portrays the sovereignty and almighty of the One God, who has created all living beings on this planet, as well as other planets, stars, galaxies, and animals. It is He who sends down rain from the skies and ensures the availability of sustenance for us. He is the Most Forgiving, granting us pardon despite our disloyalty. If we truly introspect upon our creation, we would emerge as firm believers, remembering Him at all times. Aye inaan kis baat ka guroor? Pride is strongly discouraged in Islam. In fact, it is clearly stated that a person who harbours even the slightest trace of arrogance in the heart will not be admitted to Jannah. Pride may arise from wealth, intelligence, beauty, or power, yet one must remember that all these attributes are temporary and mortal. They neither define true worth nor endure beyond time. The author aptly points out that all major religions of the world reject the notion of pride, affirming that absolute greatness and supremacy belong exclusively to Allah alone. Khuda aur mohabbat, ishq-e-haqeeqi dispels the deepest darkness of the heart and illuminates the mind, body, and soul. One who selflessly loves his Lord is the most fortunate of all, for he is bestowed with divine grace beyond measure.

In this boundless mercy, even a sinner is forgiven and granted a place in Jannah. Khak ki Sada, this world is short-lived and mortal. People relentlessly chase fame and wealth, forgetting that both are fleeting and perishable. Man is created from soil, and to soil he ultimately returns. History bears silent witness, Pharaoh, Nimrod, Qarun, Alexander the Great, and Genghis Khan once the mightiest of the mighty now exist only in the pages of history. Those who burned in worldly love Farhad of Shirin, Majnun of Laila, and Heer of Ranjha too lie buried beneath the same earth. Yet saints, philosophers, and poets are shaped from a different, blessed soil one that carries fragrance. Their bodies may return to dust, but their thoughts, words, and light render them immortal long after their passing. Ishq-e-Haqeeqi (Real or True Love), the ninth chapter of the book, has been artistically woven by the author, encapsulating the essence and supremacy of divine love. When a believer holds Allah dearer than all worldly possessions even more than his own life his worship attains true depth and sincerity. Such a soul remains perpetually immersed in His remembrance, finding purpose, peace, and fulfillment in devotion to the Almighty. Ru ki Azan, the eleventh chapter of the book, seeks to make readers understand that the soul and conscience reprimand a person for illicit and unlawful acts, while guiding and encouraging them towards righteous deeds. It is this inner moral compass that awakens the sense of right and wrong. Had the human body

been devoid of a soul, the very concept of humanity would have remained unknown and meaningless. Taqdeer ki Thakan, it reflects the profound truth that God has already written our fate. No matter how intensely we strive for goodness or struggle to attain our cherished goals, success ultimately depends on what has been decreed by the Divine. If something is destined for us, we will surely attain it, even through unforeseen paths and if it is not written in our fate, even the most tireless efforts may end in failure. In this chapter, the author beautifully unfolds the concept of destiny, inviting the reader to reflect on the delicate balance between human effort and divine will. From the write-ups included in this book, it is evident that Sheeba Ashraf is an extraordinary girl who has grasped, at such a tender age, truths that many people fail to understand even in their forties. She is blessed with remarkable wisdom, clearly reflected in her articles. Her ability to convey profound and long-lasting lessons through her writing is truly praiseworthy. Man has evolved from soil and is destined to return to it, therefore, there is no room for pride, unlawful actions, or unfaithfulness to one's Creator. This book invites readers to introspect, reform, and reconnect with higher moral values. I strongly recommend readers to go through it I hope they will not only enjoy it, but also feel enlightened.

Writer is a columnist based in Qazigund Kashmir

Gym Centres May Help the Administration to Eradicate Drug Addiction Among Youth



■ **SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI**

As per biological science, our life cycle undergoes various stages and processes. Adolescence is one of the most important stages during which many biological changes take place naturally. Hormonal changes occur, due to which the whole body structure gets a new shape in both females and males. This stage is considered a very crucial period in a person's life.

Adolescence usually starts from the age of 9 years among females and from 11 years among males. During this period, teenagers experience physical, emotional, and psychological changes. These changes are natural and unavoidable, but they need proper guidance. Unfortunately, during this crucial stage, many teenagers get involved in different kinds of evils, such as drug addiction, wayward activities, arrogant behavior, stubbornness, rudeness, and lack of patience.

Teenagers need proper counselling, motivation, and moral support for their upliftment. Our society is full of great and renowned personalities who have done miracles for the nation and are still doing their best to serve humanity. We must utilize every available facility for the betterment of our young generation and teach them what is suitable and beneficial for them.

Government administration, from lower to higher levels, has left no stone unturned to minimize crimes and drug addiction among teenagers and youth.

However, it is very unfortunate that we are still far from achieving this goal completely. Drug addiction continues to ruin many young lives and destroy families. Therefore, we must explore more practical and effective ways to engage youth in positive activities.

One thing is quite clear: with the passage of time, we experience many happenings in society, including both negative and positive events. This world is full of mysteries, and every event has its own story. In this article, let us try to motivate people of all age groups, especially youth, towards bodybuilding and fitness activities.

Today, bodybuilding is becoming popular throughout the country. India is listed among the countries that have good sports infrastructure and actively participate at the international level. Sports and fitness activities not only improve physical health but also strengthen mental well-being.

From my personal experience, bodybuilding is one of the best and most engaging activities in which a person can involve himself. Bodybuilding gives an attractive shape to the body and keeps a person fit and healthy. There are many benefits of bodybuilding:

Bodybuilding keeps the body disease-free and boosts immunity.

It keeps the body warm during winters and relaxed during summers.

It reduces the risk of obesity and helps burn excess fat.

It reduces belly fat and improves body posture.

It increases stamina, strength, and energy levels.

It keeps the mind fresh, reduces stress, and helps fight depression.

All these points are based on my own experience. First of all, we must make a firm decision: "I want to look good, stay disease-free, and never get involved in drug addiction. I will moti-

vate my friends towards sports and fitness activities and remain fit and healthy all the time."

Nowadays, gym centres are available almost everywhere and are equipped with advanced machines. Trained and experienced trainers are also present to guide beginners. This provides a great opportunity for youth to utilize their free time in a productive way.

After joining a gym, one must follow a proper exercise routine and a balanced diet. Diet plays a vital role for those who are involved in bodybuilding activities. A healthy diet consisting of fruits, vegetables, proteins, and sufficient water is essential for good results.

Gym centres provide facilities such as music, modern equipment, a hygienic environment, and professional trainers. One should always follow the trainer's instructions to avoid muscle cramps, bone injuries, and other health issues.

I strongly suggest everyone join gym centres and make fitness a part of daily life. You will surely feel good, relaxed, and confident. Government administration at the district level should establish gym centres at the Panchayat level so that everyone, including people from rural areas, can benefit.

One more important point is to focus on machine exercises for about six months to develop proper body shape and muscle tone. Believe in a natural and healthy diet and avoid unnecessary supplements. Natural fitness is always better and safer.

In conclusion, gym centres can play a significant role in keeping youth away from drug addiction. By engaging young people in positive and healthy activities, we can build a stronger, healthier, and drug-free society.

sahilmanzoor411990@gmail.com

Turmeric in Beauty Care



■ **SHAHNAZ HUSAIN**



minutes.

A turmeric face mask will be helpful if you are facing the problem of scars and marks on your skin. Mix one teaspoon of turmeric with half a teaspoon of honey. Apply this thick paste on the affected area and leave it on for 15 minutes. Rinse with water and follow it up with a mild face wash or cleanser. Honey and turmeric together will not only heal pimple marks but also hydrate and nourish your skin.

If you are facing the problem of dark circles, mix two teaspoons of turmeric powder, one tablespoon of curd and a few drops of lemon juice. Apply the paste on the affected area and let it sit for about 15 to 20 minutes. Rinse with lukewarm water.

To remove tan: Add a pinch of turmeric to yoghurt and apply daily on the face. Wash it off after 20 minutes.

Turmeric can also be mixed with Aloe Vera Gel to soothe and moisturise the skin. In fact, it helps to heal sunburn.

As a body pack: Mix besan (gram flour) with yoghurt and a pinch of turmeric into a paste. Apply it to the arms and legs three times a week. Wash it off after half an hour.

For facial hair: Apply a paste of turmeric powder and milk, and rub this on the skin with a circular motion. It is said to discourage facial hair over a period of time, but it may leave a slight yellowish colour on the skin.

Turmeric Scalp Massage

Massage Turmeric into your scalp with olive oil. Turmeric's anti-inflammatory properties soothe the scalp, while the oil nourishes the hair, preventing winter dryness.

Make a whipped paste of turmeric, honey, and milk to exfoliate dead skin. Apply this paste to your face, neck, hands, and other parts of the body, and you rehydrate your skin simultaneously. Alternatively, blend a quarter of a teaspoon of turmeric powder into a tablespoon of fresh aloe vera gel, and apply that paste to your face. Wash off after 15

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

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SMTVP Delegation Meets Director Archives, Archaeology & Museums J&K, Appreciates Efforts for Preservation of Martand Heritage

■ JAVID SAGAR

JAMMU, JAN 28: A delegation of Shri Martand Tirath Virsa Pratishthan (SMTVP), led by senior Kashmiri Pandit leader and Chairman Shri M. K. Yogi, today called on Shri Kuldeep K. Sidha (JKAS), Director, Archives, Archaeology & Museums, Jammu & Kashmir, at his office in Jammu and expressed heartfelt gratitude for his dedicated efforts towards the preservation and restoration of religious and heritage sites across the Union Territory.

The delegation particularly appreciated the facelift and renovation works undertaken at the sacred Mattan Shrine and

lauded the timely submission of the Ground Reality Report on fish mortality at the Holy Martand Spring. The Pratishthan placed on record its sincere appreciation for the Director's factual and on-ground assessment submitted vide letter No. DAA&M/Ad/74/2022/3350-52 dated December 29, 2025, to the Hon'ble Chief Secretary, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, which brought much-needed administrative attention to the sensitive issue in a short span of time.

Chairman Shri M. K. Yogi, along with Founder Members Shri Surinder Mohan Tickoo and Shri Gopi Krishan Khar, and members including Shri Veer

Pandita and others associated with Martand Tirath Raj, thanked the Director for his personal intervention and transparent handling of the matter.

Addressing the gathering, Shri M. K. Yogi stated that Martand is not merely an archaeological monument but a living spiritual and cultural landscape, where the holy spring and its aquatic life form an integral part of its sacred identity. He said that the transparent report has helped draw focused attention to the environmental concerns affecting the site.

Correspondence Specialist Shri Veer Ji Pandita thanked Shri K. K. Sidha for supporting long-



pending developmental initiatives, including the sanctioning of funds for the approach road, stairs, and improved facilities

for devotees near Mata Bhargashikha Bhawan, which will greatly benefit pilgrims and visitors.

Shri Gopi Krishan Khar expressed confidence that such principled and transparent reporting would pave the way for corrective measures, improved inter-departmental coordination, and long-term sustainable management of the Martand heritage complex. He added that the Director's efforts have strengthened public faith in institutional accountability and heritage governance.

Shri Surinder Mohan Tickoo emphasized the need for scientific and technical interventions to safeguard the Tirath. He highlighted key measures including the deployment of Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs) and robotic crawlers for eco-

logical monitoring, installation of solar- or wind-powered aeration systems to enhance oxygen levels, and scientific studies on temperature stratification in the spring ecosystem to guide future conservation strategies. The Pratishthan also expressed hope that the Geology and Mining Department and allied agencies would study the natural water channels feeding the holy spring.

Responding to the delegation, Director Shri K. K. Sidha assured them that all possible steps would be taken to preserve the religious sanctity, cultural heritage, and ecological balance of Tirath Raj Martand as and when required.

J&K Republic Day Tableau Secures Second Position at National Level

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JAN 28: The Jammu and Kashmir Republic Day Tableau has secured an impressive Second Position at the national level at the Republic Day Parade 2026, marking a significant milestone and a proud moment for the Union Territory.

The recognition underscores Jammu and Kashmir's rich cultural heritage, artistic excellence, and its vibrant traditions showcased on one of the country's most prestigious platforms.

The Jammu and Kashmir tableau, themed as a "living canvas", presented a visually compelling and culturally immersive narrative, celebrating the region's centuries-old arts, handicrafts, and folk traditions. The tableau offered a seamless fusion of craftsmanship, performance, and storytelling, reflecting the timeless creative spirit of the Union Territory.

The tableau prominently showcased iconic handicrafts synonymous with Jammu and Kashmir's cultural identity, including Pashmina weaving, walnut wood carving, carpet weaving, papier-mâché, copperware, and Basohli miniature paintings—each representing generations of refined skill and artistic mastery.

The visual narrative opened with a grand engraved Samovar, symbolising Kashmiri hospitality and warmth, flowing through imagery of traditional wooden architecture and houseboats, evoking the unique cultural landscape of the region. At the heart of the tableau, a Dogra Chhajja performance staged on a traditional village Thadda highlighted community life, social harmony, and cultural continuity.

Adding rhythm, colour, and movement were vibrant folk dance performances, including Rouf, Kud, Jagarna, Pahari, Gojri, and Dumhal, which together reflected the diverse ethnic and cultural fabric of Jammu and Kashmir. The tableau concluded with a striking display of colourful papier-mâché artefacts arranged in a willow basket, symbolically presenting Jammu and Kashmir as a dynamic, living canvas of art, tradition, and creativity.

This acclaimed appearance marks a major comeback of the Jammu and Kashmir tableau at the Republic Day Parade, reaffirming the Union Territory's renewed cultural presence on the national stage and its commitment to preserving and promoting its rich intangible heritage.

The idea, design, and conceptualisation of the tableau were led by renowned artist Shri Balwant Thakur, a distinguished recipient of the Padma Shri and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. Shri Thakur has also served as the Secretary of the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages for eight years and brings with him vast experience in cultural leadership. He has further represented India internationally as Regional Director of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and headed Indian Cultural Centres in South Africa and Mauritius.

The national recognition of the Jammu and Kashmir tableau stands as a testament to the Union Territory's artistic vibrancy, cultural resilience, and its enduring legacy of creativity that continues to inspire audiences across the country and beyond.

A Tribute to Literary Excellence: Heartfelt Congratulations from Wani Arfat to Parvez Manoos on the Prestigious 'State Award 2025'

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JAN 28: The literary world witnesses a moment of profound pride, joy, and honor as the distinguished Urdu and Pahari writer, accomplished poet, and eminent dramatist Parvez Manoos (Parvez Ahmad Bhat) is conferred with the 'State Award 2025' by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir. This prestigious honor is far more than a formal accolade; it stands as a luminous acknowledgment of decades of intellectual rigor, creative sincerity, and unwavering

ing dedication to the preservation and enrichment of language and culture.

Parvez Manoos bhat sahab, son of the late Ghulam Rasool Bhat, belongs to that rare lineage of literary figures for whom words transcend mere expression and emerge as vessels of thought, emotion, and civilizational memory. Through his writings, he has not only broadened the expressive horizons of Urdu but has also revitalized the Pahari language, restoring its voice, dignity, and cultural resonance. His literary journey reflects a harmonious



synthesis of tradition and modern sensibility, where truth, empathy, and aesthetic grace converge with remarkable clarity.

Across literary and intellectual circles, there is a unanimous recognition that this award is a well-deserved testament to Parvez Manoos Sahab's tireless perseverance, quiet resilience, and unwavering commitment to authentic literary creation. This achievement is not confined to an individual alone; it is a collective triumph for all those who cherish the sanctity of language, the continuity of

culture, and the transformative power of literature.

I, Wani Arfat, extend my deepest and most heartfelt congratulations to Parvez Manoos Sahab on this historic and well-merited honor. I sincerely pray that his pen continues to illuminate minds, inspire generations, and stand as a guiding beacon of knowledge, consciousness, and literary excellence for years to come. Indeed, this distinction not only elevates his esteemed personality but also reinforces the enduring dignity and brilliance of our literary heritage.

SDM Khansahib reviews Restoration of Essential Services in Snowfall-Affected areas

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, JAN 28: Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Khansahib, Jahangir Ahmad Giri, today visited the snowfall-affected areas of Gurwathia and Lanilab to assess the ground situation and review issues faced by the local population in the aftermath



Public Notice

I Ab Hameed Sheikh wants to mention that my son's name spelling and DOB in this aadhar card bearing no. 5811 5556 7577 has been wrongly mentioned as Abrar Hamid DOB 15/05/2012 instead of Abrar Hameed Sheikh DOB 30/07/2012 S/O Ab Hameed Sheikh Now i have applying for it's correction of the same if any person have any objection in this regards may file the same to the Block Development Office Magam within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice After that no objection shall be entertained

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Notification

Subject: Provisional Selection list for the Batch -II, January, 2026.

The selection list of candidates provisionally selected in the trades of Data Entry Operator and Driver Cum Mechanic of six months SCVT courses has been issued and the selection is subject to the verification of following documents in original:

- (1) Qualification certificate
- (2) Date of Birth certificate.
- (3) Discharge Certificate from the institution last attended.
- (4) Category Certificate if any.
- (5) Domicile certificate.

The detailed selection list is available on our official Facebook page Govt. ITI Anantnag (<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1HvVjdhv55/>) and also available on office Notice Board.

Accordingly the candidates are required to complete their admission formalities by or before 31st January 2026 and candidates falling under waiting category can be considered for admission against left over or vacant seat if any, on 01-02-2026 on first come first serve and merit basis.

No: ITI/Ang/Trgs/2122-24

Dated: 24/01/2026

DIPK: 10410/25 | Dated: 28-01-2026

Sd/- Principal

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD(R&B) DIVISION ANANTNAG

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CORRIGENDUM

Subject: Extension in Critical Dates.

Ref: NIT NO 141 OF R&B/Anantnag/2025-26 /E-TENDERING/ 11640-49, DATED 21-01-2026.

Kindly find below the updated Critical Dates for the above referred NIT.

Please Read	Instead of
Bid Submission End Date: 02.02.2026 (04:00PM)	Bid Submission End Date: 28.01.2026 (04:00PM)
Date and time of Opening of bid (online): 03.02.2026 Time 11:00 AM	Date and time of Opening of bid (online): 29.01.2026 Time 11:00 AM

All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged.

No: 11750-55 | Dated: 28-01-2026

DIPK: 10434/25 | Dated: 28-01-2026

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of the recent snowfall.

During the visit, the SDM took stock of the major damage to the PHE water supply pipeline in the area, which had disrupted drinking water supply.

Acting promptly on his directions, engineers and field staff of the Jai Shakti Department worked relentlessly and repaired the damaged pipeline within hours, ensuring swift restoration of water supply to the affected localities.

The SDM also inspected the Health Sub-Centre at Lanilab, where a doctor and one paramedical staff member were found absent from duty. The matter was immediately brought to the notice of the concerned authorities for necessary action, underscoring the administration's commitment to accountability and efficient public service delivery.

The visit reflects the proactive approach of the district administration in ensuring timely restoration of essential services and maintaining accountability in public institutions, particularly during adverse weather conditions.

All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged.

No: 11750-55 | Dated: 28-01-2026

DIPK: 10434/25 | Dated: 28-01-2026

BHASHINI Rajyam workshop to strengthen multilingual digital governance in J&K: Satish Sharma

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JANUARY 28: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Youth Services & Sports and Information Technology, Satish Sharma, today said that the BHASHINI Rajyam workshop marks a major step towards building an inclusive, citizen-centric digital ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister was addressing the BHASHINI Rajyam workshop (Jammu & Kashmir Chapter), organised by the Information Technology Department in collaboration with the Digital India BHASHINI Division, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), at the Convention Centre, Jammu.

Highlighting the importance of linguistic inclusion in digital governance, Satish Sharma said that technology must empower every citizen irrespective of language, literacy level or geographical location. He stated that BHASHINI represents the true spirit of Digital India by enabling AI-driven multilingual solutions across governance, education, startups and entrepreneurship.

"It is a matter of great pride for Jammu and Kashmir to host the



BHASHINI Rajyam Workshop, a forward-looking initiative that places inclusion at the core of technological transformation," the Minister said.

The Minister said that under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, the government of Jammu and Kashmir is committed towards ensuring that digital services remain accessible, inclusive and citizen-centric. He added that adoption of BHASHINI will significantly enhance service delivery while creating new opportunities for local developers, researchers and startups working in Indian language technologies.

The Minister congratulated the Information Technology Department and the Digital India BHASHINI team for organising the workshop. He expressed confidence that the initiative would accelerate

multilingual digital transformation in the Union Territory.

"Let us work together to ensure that language never becomes a barrier, but a path towards opportunity and empowerment," the Minister said.

The Minister assured full support of the J&K government to the BHASHINI mission, including piloting innovative use cases, sharing language datasets and promoting multilingual digital governance across departments.

Secretary Information Technology Department, Dr. Piyush Singla highlighted the increasing importance of information technology in day-to-day governance. He emphasized that digital platforms are playing a crucial role in improving transparency, efficiency and citizen engagement across departments.

The event witnessed participation of senior government officers, technology experts, developers, startups, academicians and students from across Jammu and Kashmir.

Chief Executive Officer, BHASHINI Rajyam, Amitabh Garg delivered a detailed presentation. He gave a brief overview of the BHASHINI programme, its architecture, key components and practical use cases. He elaborated on the applications of multilingual AI tools in governance, education, public service delivery and entrepreneurship, underlining their significance in bridging the language divide.

Chief Executive Officer, JAKEGA, Mahima Madan was also present on the occasion.

During the workshop, technical sessions were held on BHASHINI Udyat, ARPAN services and the National Hub for Language Technology (NHLT), along with live demonstrations of translation, transcription, speech-to-text, video translation and language model APIs. Sessions also showcased BHASHINI-powered applications, inter-ministerial use cases, startup engagement initiatives and upcoming hackathons aimed at promoting innovation among youth.

The event witnessed participation of senior government officers, technology experts, developers, startups, academicians and students from across Jammu and Kashmir.

Javed Rana visits border villages of Mendhar; reviews development works

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

MENDHAR, JANUARY 28: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today undertook an extensive tour of various border villages of Mendhar Sub Division and Mankote area, where he interacted with the local residents and reviewed the status of development works being executed under different sectors.

During the visit, the Minister held on-the-spot interactions with the public. He listened to their grievances, particularly regarding drinking water supply, power supply, road connectivity and the functioning of health and educational institutions in the border and far-flung areas.

He assured the people that all their genuine issues would be addressed on priority to ensure improved basic amenities and quality public services.

The Minister also took stock of ongoing developmental works under various schemes. He stressed the need for timely completion of these vital projects with due focus on quality, transparency and accountability, keeping in view the strategic importance of the border belt.

Senior officers of the Sub Divisional Administration including SDM Mendhar, Tehsildar Mankote and BDO Mankote besides officers from Jal Shakti (PHE), Public Works Department (PWD), Health,



Education and other concerned departments, accompanied the Minister. They briefed him on sector-wise progress and issues on the ground.

The areas visited during the tour included Upper Mankote, Basni, Sakrote, Choi, Tain, Changri, Dharana, and Gohlad besides other locations in Mendhar and Mankote.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to inclusive development, the Minister directed the concerned departments to remain proactive and responsive so that the benefits of development reach people living in border and remote areas in a time-bound manner.

DC Baramulla chairs preparedness meeting for Sampoornataa 2.0

Directs departments to ensure saturation of KPIs under ADP & ABP

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, JANUARY 28: In view of the launch of Sampoornataa Abhiyan 2.0, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa today chaired a review meeting at the main meeting hall of DC office Baramulla to assess preparedness and ensure saturation of key performance indicators (KPIs) under the Aspirational District Programme (ADP) and Aspirational Block Programme (ABP).

During the meeting, the DC reviewed sector-wise performance on critical indicators related to health, nutrition, sanitation,



education and livestock vaccination.

Detailed deliberations were held on indicators including Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Days, functionality of girl's toilets in schools, supplementary nutrition coverage under ICDS, operational efficiency of Anganwadi Centres, availability of drinking water and sanitation facilities, and vaccination of bovine animals.

The DC issued clear directions to all the concerned departments to ensure saturation of 5 KPIs under ADP and 6 KPIs under ABP during the campaign period ending on 14th April 2026, stressing that the

Abhiyan must translate into tangible improvements at the grassroots level.

Minga Sherpa specifically directed departments to submit a detailed, time-bound action programme outlining activities to be undertaken during the three-month period aimed at achieving saturation of each indicator.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Chief Medical Officer, SDM Patti sectoral officers from Health, Education, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Rural Development and other concerned departments.

DLSA Srinagar conducts Awareness Program at Central Jail

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 28: An awareness programme was conducted today at Central Jail Srinagar by the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar under the guidance of Haq Nawaz Zargar Chairman DLSA (Pr. Distt. & Sessions Judge), Srinagar and overall supervision of Secretary DLSA, Srinagar to sensitize inmates about the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for premature release, parole and furlough, and the legal rights of prisoners.

During the programme, Jahan Ara, Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel elaborated in detail on the procedures, eligibility criteria and documentation required for seeking premature release, parole and furlough, enabling the inmates to better understand the legal remedies available to them.



Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel highlighted the constitutional and legal rights of prisoners, including access to legal aid, humane treatment, and the right to seek redressal through appropriate legal forums.

The inmates were encouraged to avail free legal services provided by DLSA Srinagar.

The interactive session witnessed active participation from the inmates, who raised queries related to their cases, which were duly addressed by the resource persons.

SMC executes City-Wide De-Watering drive

Clears Hotspots, activates 24x7 Monitoring after Snowfall

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 28: On the directions of the Commissioner, Fazlul Haseeb, the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) launched an intensive, city-wide de-watering operation to mitigate waterlogging triggered by recent snowfall and subsequent snowmelt.

SMC deployed men and machinery round the clock, leveraging modern high-capacity de-watering pumps and field teams to ensure swift drainage.

All identified waterlogging hotspots have been cleared, with focused interventions in low-lying pockets, major corridors, traffic-prone stretches,



and residential-commercial clusters.

To ensure seamless coordination and rapid response, a dedicated 24x7 Control Room has been activated for grievance redressal, while the SCADA-enabled monitoring system is being used to track drainage performance and pump operations in real time.

Senior officers conducted on-ground

supervision to guarantee timely execution and inter-departmental coordination.

The prompt and coordinated measures restored normalcy across affected areas, significantly easing inconvenience to residents and commuters. SMC reiterates its commitment to proactive civic management during adverse weather and urges citizens to report any residual waterlogging through the helpline for immediate action.

SMC remains fully geared to respond swiftly to weather-related challenges, prioritising public safety and uninterrupted civic services across Srinagar.

DC Srinagar reviews progress of key health sector schemes in district

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 28: In order to ensure timely and effective delivery of benefits under key health sector flagship schemes to citizens in district, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today convened a meeting with senior health functionaries here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner undertook a comprehensive Medical Zone/Block wise review of citizen centric health schemes, focusing on the progress of enrolment under the Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA), the status of coverage of eligible beneficiaries under the Ayushman Vay Vandana Card and the implementation of Tuberculosis (TB) control and surveillance measures in the district.

While reviewing the status of enrolment of eligible senior

citizens under the Ayushman Vay Vandana Yojana, the Deputy Commissioner called for mass awareness about the scheme and swift enrolment to enable senior citizens to avail the benefits of free and cashless healthcare services.

He emphasized that all eligible individuals aged 70 years and above must be covered under the scheme.

The DC directed Zonal/Block Medical Officers and other concerned officials to work with added zeal to ensure that no eligible beneficiary is left out.

On the occasion, it was informed that over 12,000 senior citizens in the district have been provided Ayushman Vay Vandana (AVV) cards, enabling them to avail additional free health coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per year.

The DC also reviewed zone-wise progress of the enrolment under the Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA), the DC stressed the need to accelerate



registration drives to achieve comprehensive coverage target under the initiatives across the district.

Additionally, the DC also took stock of the progress under Tuberculosis (TB) control programme. He appreciated the District TB Control Team for achieving good progress and directed them to accomplish the remaining targets at the earliest.

Meanwhile, the DC emphasized the need to ensure better patient care facilities to patients in all health institutions across the district, keeping in view the prevailing weather conditions.

The meeting was among others attended by Chief Planning Officer Fayaz Ahmad Dar; Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Tahir Sajad, Medical Superintendents of JLNM, SMHS and CD Hospitals, District Tuberculosis Officer, all Zonal Medical Officers and Block Medical Officer of Srinagar district.

BCIC's Ravi expects union Budget relief on TDS to boost startup survival

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

BENGALURU, JAN 28: Startup survival in Karnataka is increasingly under strain due to complex taxation and compliance norms, particularly those related to Tax Deducted at Source (TDS), industry leaders said. They noted that many founders are being forced to exhaust personal savings, with little or no safety net if their ventures fail.

BCIC Chairman (International Business Expert Committee) K Ravi said early-stage startups face severe financial pressure as compliance costs rise even before revenues stabilise.

He said the complicated tax structure and frequent TDS obligations drain cash flow and distract entrepreneurs from building their businesses.

Ravi said he expects the union Budget to focus on simplifying TDS norms, easing compliance for early-stage startups, and introducing limited safety-net measures to reduce the personal financial risks faced by entrepreneurs.

Ravi said early-stage startups are facing severe financial pressure as compliance costs rise even before revenues stabilise. "Most startups operate on thin margins in their initial years. Complicated tax structures and frequent TDS obligations drain cash flow and distract founders from building the business," he told UNI in an interview here on Wednesday.

He noted that a majority of first-time entrepreneurs remain unaware of available incentives and support mechanisms, worsening their vulnerability. "When a startup fails, founders are often left with personal financial losses and no formal safety net, unlike salaried employees. This discourages risk-taking and innovation," Ravi added.



Ravi pointed out that while the Centre and the State have announced multiple startup-friendly policies, ground-level implementation and awareness remain weak. "Compliance requirements, filings and audits continue to be heavy, especially for MSMEs and young startups. Simplification and clarity are urgently needed," he said.

The situation is further compounded by rising operational costs in cities like Bengaluru, including office rentals, logistics and employee expectations. Ravi warned that without timely reforms in taxation and compliance, the startup ecosystem could see a slowdown in new venture creation.

He urged policymakers to adopt a more humane approach towards entrepreneurship. "Failure should not permanently penalise founders. Transitional support mechanisms are needed so that innovation is encouraged rather than feared," Ravi said.

The concerns come at a time when Karnataka remains one of the

country's leading startup hubs, but founders caution that sustained growth will depend on reducing regulatory friction and providing a more supportive environment for innovation.

Beyond taxation, Ravi highlighted skill mismatch as a persistent problem. Despite Karnataka's strong engineering education base, graduates often lack practical, industry-ready skills. "There is a clear gap between academic output and real-world requirements. Internships and industry-linked training must be strengthened to address this," he said.

Infrastructure bottlenecks were cited as another major concern. Inefficient road, rail and port connectivity, high logistics costs and congestion in Bengaluru continue to impact business operations. Ravi warned that inadequate housing, healthcare, quality schools and urban amenities in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities make decentralisation difficult, pushing companies to consider cities such as Pune, Hyderabad and Chennai instead.

Ravi also pointed to weak manufacturing clusters outside Bengaluru and limited R&D funding as constraints on long-term growth. While Karnataka has made progress in high-tech sectors such as IT, artificial intelligence, robotics and deep-tech startups, the absence of strong industrial ecosystems beyond the capital remains a challenge.

On global engagement, Ravi said collaborations with countries like Japan, particularly through MoUs with the Kansai and Osaka regions, have helped in skill training and technology exchange. However, he cautioned that delays in land acquisition, clearances and inadequate follow-up on MoUs reduce their effectiveness.

Addressing concerns around automation, Ravi said artificial intelligence is likely to replace repetitive tasks but not human judgement and creativity. "AI will change the nature of work, not eliminate jobs entirely. The challenge lies in reskilling the workforce to adapt to new roles," he said.

Talent retention has also emerged as a concern, with startups struggling to meet rising employee expectations amid limited financial cushioning. "Founders face pressure from high salary demands and frequent job switches, while investors expect rapid scale-up.

The absence of a safety net makes failure extremely costly for entrepreneurs," industry experts said.

The concerns come even as Karnataka remains one of India's leading startup and technology hubs, with industry leaders warning that sustaining this position will depend on reducing regulatory friction, improving infrastructure and ensuring startups can survive beyond the initial years. UNI

India-EU FTA deal transformational for India's textile industry

BY SOURAV SHEKHAR

NEW DELHI, JAN 28: India's textile and apparel sector is set for a major expansion following the successful conclusion of the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement. The agreement provides zero-duty access for Indian textiles and garments to the European Union, removing tariffs of up to 12 per cent and opening access to a market that imports textiles and apparel worth about USD 263.5 billion annually.

Sharing his perspective on the historical deal, Dr. A Sakthivel, Chairman of Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEP) said, "The industry sentiments are upbeat after the successful conclusion of the India-EU deal. It will establish a long-term business relationship with the world's biggest trading block. It is a landmark moment for the Indian apparel industry. This deal will provide a significant boost to apparel exports which is expected to double in next three years.

"This marks a giant leap in India's journey towards Vixit Bharat. The zero-duty access of Indian garments and clothing to the EU market will not only turn the tables decisively in India's favour enhancing our competitiveness in the European market but will also create new avenues of investment and job opportunities" Sakthivel added.

According to the Ministry of Textiles statement, the European Union is the world's largest importer of textiles and apparel, accounting for nearly one-third of global imports in the sector.

India's textile and apparel exports to the EU are currently valued at around USD 7.2 billion and span a wide range of products, including ready-made garments, cotton textiles, man-made fibre products, carpets, handicrafts, jute goods, woollen items, silk and handloom products.

With the elimination of duties across all tariff lines, Indian exporters are expected to gain a clear pricing advantage in the European market.

The ministry noted that the removal of tariffs will address a long-standing disadvantage faced by Indian exporters compared to competing countries that enjoyed preferential access to the EU.

Even marginal duty differences, the statement said, had earlier impacted order

flows and sourcing decisions by European buyers, particularly in the apparel segment. The zero-duty regime is expected to enhance demand for Indian garments and enable exporters to expand volumes and deepen market penetration across EU member states.

The agreement is also expected to have a strong employment impact in the sector in India. The textile and apparel sector is among India's largest employment generators, supporting millions of workers across the value chain—from fibre and yarn production to weaving, processing and garment manufacturing.

Coming on the tariff factor in textile industry, Dr. Sakthivel noted that FTA eliminates tariff on 100 per cent of apparel tariff lines which will enhance market access to all member countries of the EU.

He said that the EU is the world's largest apparel importer with total apparel import worth USD 202.8 billion in FY 2024-25.

Once implemented, the India-EU Free Trade Agreement is expected to significantly reshape India's textile and apparel trade with Europe.

By unlocking duty-free access to the world's largest import market and improving competitiveness across product categories, the deal is seen as a crucial step in strengthening export growth, employment generation and India's broader manufacturing ambitions under the vision of Vixit Bharat. UNI

TVS Motor records highest ever sales, revenue, profits in Q3FY26

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHENNAI, JAN 28: Two and three-wheeler makers TVS Motor Company's operating revenue grew by 37% at Rs. 12,476 Crores

for the quarter ended December 2025 as against Rs. 9,097 Crores reported in the quarter ended December 2024.

The Operating EBITDA grew by 51% at Rs. 1,634 Crores for the third quarter of 2025-26 as against EBITDA of Rs. 1,081 Crores in

third quarter of 2024-25. The Operating EBITDA margin for the quarter is highest at 13.1% as against normalised 12.4% in the third quarter of 2024-25.

The PBT before exceptional items grew by 57% at Rs. 1,315 Crores for the third quarter as against PBT of Rs. 837 Crores.

The overall two-wheeler and three-wheeler sales including international business grew by 27% registering highest ever quarterly sales

of 15.44 Lakh units in the quarter as against 12.12 Lakh units.

Motorcycle sales grew by 31% registering 7.26 Lakh units as against 5.56 Lakh, while the Scooter sales grew by 25% registering

6.14 Lakh units as against 4.93 Lakh units.

The two-wheeler sales in international business grew by 35% at 3.66 Lakh units as against 2.72 Lakh units and the total three-wheeler sales for the quarter under review grew by 106% at 0.60 Lakh units as against 0.29 Lakh units during third quarter of 2024-25. The EV sales grew by 40% achieving highest ever quarterly sales of 1.06 Lakh units in the quarter as against 0.76 Lakh units during corresponding quarter last year.

On the cumulative nine months results, the company's operating revenue grew by 29% at Rs. 34,463 Crores for the period ended December 2025 as against Rs. 26,701 Crores for the nine months ended December 2024.

The Operating EBITDA grew by 41% at Rs. 4,406 Crores as against Rs. 3,121 Crores and the PBT before exceptional items grew by

43% at Rs. 3,594 Crores as against Rs. 2,517 Crores, while the PAT is at Rs. 2,625 Crores as against Rs. 1,858 Crores.

The two-wheeler and three-wheeler sales including international business grew by 23% registering 43.28 Lakh units in the nine months

as against 35.27 Lakh units.

Motorcycle sales grew by 24% registering 20.19 Lakh units as against 16.31 Lakh units, Scooter sales grew by 25% registering

17.52 Lakh units as against 14.02 Lakh units.

The two-wheeler sales in international business grew by 35% at 10.47 Lakh units as against 7.78 Lakh units and three-wheeler sales

is at 1.59 Lakh units as against 0.98 Lakh units.

EV sales grew by 26% registering 2.56 Lakh units as against 2.03 Lakh units. UNI

Yamaha Motor undertakes strategic restructuring for long term growth

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHENNAI, JAN 28: Two-wheeler makers India Yamaha Motor (IYM) today announced a strategic restructuring initiative aimed at strengthening its corporate structure, governance, enhancing operational efficiency, and accelerating innovation for future growth.

In India the company currently operates through four distinct entities—India Yamaha Motor (IYM), Yamaha Motor India Sales (YMS), Yamaha Motor Research & Development India (YMRI), and Yamaha Motor India (YMI).

To create a leaner and more agile organizational framework, the company will reorganize its structure into two focused entities.

As part of this transition, YMS and YMI will be seamlessly consolidated into IYM, bringing sales, marketing, finance, corporate and administrative functions, and the entire manufacturing capabilities under one unified structure. YMRI will continue to serve as a dedicated, independent innovation powerhouse, working closely with IYM to drive advanced engineering and develop future-ready mobility solutions, a company release said. This consolidation aims to simplify operations, strengthen governance, eliminate structural redundancies, and

enable improved collaboration across the value chain.

Mr. Hajime Aota, Chairman of YMIC Group will also be Managing Director of IYM.

Commenting on this restructuring exercise, Mr. Aota said, "This transition reflects our strong commitment to sustainable growth and value creation. By aligning our structure with our long-term vision, we are empowering our teams to innovate faster and respond to market needs with greater agility. India is a key pillar in Yamaha Motor's global strategy, and this initiative will help us strengthen our brand further, deepen market penetration, and reach a wider customer base."

Mr. Inagaki Junpei who is currently heading the YMRI will continue to lead the company in the role of Managing Director, spearheading the company's innovation agenda and strengthen its competitive edge in engineering and technology.

The restructuring reinforces Yamaha's ambition to deliver world-class mobility solutions while fostering a stronger and more collaborative workforce. With unified manufacturing and corporate operations and a focused R&D engine, Yamaha is confident of driving enhanced customer satisfaction and expanding its presence in the rapidly evolving mobility ecosystem.

India's IIP growth in December 2025 stood at 7.8 pc led by manufacturing

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JAN 28: India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) growth rate for the month of December 2025 stood at 7.8% against 6.7% in the month of November 2025, data released by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) said on Wednesday.

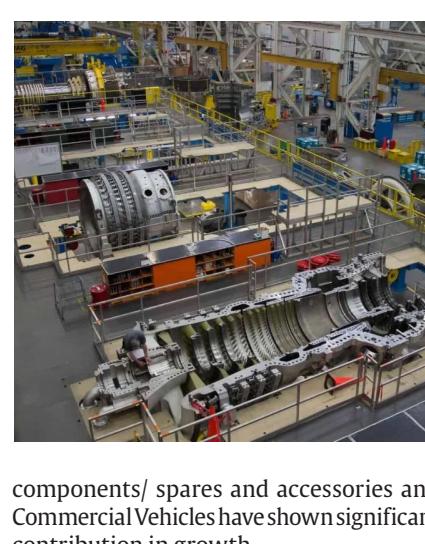
The growth rates of the three sectors, Mining, Manufacturing and Electricity for the month of December 2025 are 6.8%, 8.1% and 6.3% respectively.

Within the manufacturing sector, 16 out of 23 industry groups at NIC 2 digit-level have recorded a positive growth in December 2025 over December 2024.

As per the MoSPI data, the top three positive contributors for the month of December 2025 are Manufacture of basic metals (12.7%), Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers (33.5%) and Manufacture of pharmaceuticals, medicinal chemical and botanical products (10.2%).

In the industry group Manufacture of basic metals, item groups Flat products of Alloy Steel, MS slabs and Pipes and tubes of Steel have shown significant contribution in growth.

Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers item groups Axle, Auto



components/ spares and accessories and Commercial Vehicles have shown significant contribution in growth.

Further, in the Manufacture of pharmaceuticals, medicinal chemical and botanical products, item groups Vaccine for veterinary medicine, Digestive enzymes and antacids (incl. PPI drugs), and API & formulations of vitamins have shown significant contribution in growth.

The corresponding growth rates of IIP in Primary goods is 4.4%, 8.1% in Capital goods, 7.5% in Intermediate goods, 12.1% in Infrastructure/Construction Goods, 12.3% in Consumer durables and 8.3% in Consumer non-durables. UNI

Indian general insurance industry to log 8-11pc premium growth in medium term

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHENNAI, JAN 28: Credit rating agency CARE Ratings said the medium-term outlook for India's non-life insurance industry remains stable, supported by regulatory reforms, improving underwriting discipline, and steady economic momentum. Growth, however, is expected to moderate from recent peaks, partly reflecting a higher base in FY25 and normalisation across select segments.

Accordingly, based on nominal GDP growth trends, historical premium growth patterns, segment-wise outlook, and industry interactions, CareEdge Ratings estimates premiums will grow at 8-11% over the medium term.

Meanwhile, unforeseen market disruptions could weigh on this growth. Health insurance (including personal accident) would continue



to remain the largest segment, reaching Rs 1.40 lakh crore by FY27. In comparison, motor insurance is projected to cross Rs 1.06 lakh crore, aided by improving vehicle sales, digitisation, and deeper penetration in tier 2-3 cities.

The recent reductions in Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates on insurance products are likely to further support premium growth across segments by lowering overall policy costs, improving affordability, and stimulating greater retail participation, CARE Ratings said.

Meanwhile the Indian non-life insurance gross domestic premium grew from Rs 1.69 lakh crore in FY19 to Rs 3.07 lakh crore in FY25, registering a healthy Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 10.4%, broadly tracking nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, which rose by 9.8% over the same period, said credit rating agency CARE Ratings in a report.

In FY25, growth moderated to 6.2% from 12.8% in FY24 due to the implementation of the 1/n rule (recognition of the premium daily) and the loss of 2.2% due to the decline in the value of the rupee. The rupee's depreciation has led to a significant increase in the cost of imported insurance products, particularly for non-life insurance. The rupee's depreciation has led to a significant increase in the cost of imported insurance products, particularly for non-life insurance.

weak crop performance, and slower commercial activity, while health insurance remained a key growth driver. The change in premium recognition under the 1/n framework, led to an estimated about 2-3% moderation in reported industry growth in FY25, a trend consistently visible across leading insurers, as reflected in deferred gross written premiums (GWP).

According to CARE Ratings, the loss ratio across segments is expected to remain broadly aligned with historical trends. In contrast, the overall loss ratio for FY26 is projected to decline slightly to around 78-82% as underwriting practices and price discipline improve. Expense of Management (EoM) rose in absolute terms by FY25, but efficiency improved materially, with opex as a percentage of Net Earned Premium (NEP) declining from 27.0% in FY19 to 16.6% in FY25.

The distribution costs have risen structurally, as the net commission ratio for the industry increased to 24.9% in FY25 from 22.5% in FY19. The distribution costs have risen structurally, as the net commission ratio for the industry increased to 24.9% in FY25 from 22.5% in FY19. The distribution costs have risen structurally, as the net commission ratio for the industry increased to 24.9% in FY25 from 22.5% in FY19.

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The distribution costs have risen structurally, as the net commission

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MELBOURNE: Glenn Maxwell will remain with Melbourne Stars in the BBL for at least another two years after signing a new contract just hours before the contracting embargo starts.

It means that Maxwell, who is the third-highest run-scorer in BBL history, will continue in the competition beyond the age of 39 as Stars continue to search for an elusive maiden title. Having fallen at the Knockout stage this year they remain the only club to not have won the title.

Maxwell endured a poor season where he made just 76 runs in eight innings and claimed two wickets. He had received a lucrative offer from Sydney Thunder to make a move.

"The Melbourne Stars have been a massive part of my cricket career and I'm really passionate about this team having success," Maxwell said. "I think this current group is building towards something special and I'm confident we're in a place to contend for the title in the next two seasons."

Clint McKay, Stars' high performance manager, said: "Glenn has obviously been one of the best T20 players in the world for a long period of time and his commitment to the Stars is really valuable to us."

Stars have also extended Campbell Kellaway's deal for another two years. The left hander made 172 runs at 21.50 this season.

"Signing Campbell was just as important as he adds some great stability to our top order," McKay said. "He proved himself at the level this season and I've got no doubt he will make a lot of runs for us for many years to come."

Once the contracting embargo starts at 5pm AEDT on Tuesday a player movement window begins from January 28 to February 5 which allows clubs to sign off-contract players or make trades.

Maxwell signs new two year deal with Melbourne Stars

Left hander Campbell Kellaway has also extended for two more seasons



Football, Cricket Super Leagues set for launch in Jammu

■ HT SPORTS DESK

SRINAGAR, JAN 28: Jammu, the City of Temples, is gearing up for a high-octane sporting season as the Department of Youth Services and Sports (YSS), in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council (JKSC), prepares to roll out two marquee events – the YSS-JKSC Football Premier League and the YSS-JKSC Cricket League – promising double the thrill, double the crowds, and a renewed buzz around grassroots sport in the winter capital.

Set across two iconic venues, the leagues will bring together the roar of football fans at the Synthetic Turf Football Ground, Parade, and the unmistakable sound of the willow at the M A Stadium, as Jammu readies itself for weeks of competitive action. The YSS-JKSC Cricket and Football Premier League Tournaments 2025-26 are a much-needed initiative to significantly contribute towards the revival of Jammu's professional cricket and football tournaments," a spokesperson of the J&K Sports Council said. The YSS-JKSC Football Premier League, slated for the Synthetic Turf at Parade, marks the return of the beautiful game to the heart of the city. With the turf primed and floodlights waiting, the league is expected to showcase sharp tackles, long-range screamers, and an atmosphere that only football in Jammu can generate. According to the JKSC spokesperson, organising committees and additional sub-committees comprising former national and international players, referees, umpires, coaches, club owners, and JKSC officials have been constituted to ensure that the matches are conducted professionally. Running parallel will be the YSS-JKSC Cricket League at the historic M A Stadium, signalling the comeback of big-league cricket at one of Jammu's most cherished sporting venues.

As the pitch is curated and teams begin their preparations, anticipation is building over who will lift the cup when the league gets underway. "The competition will consist of a total of 41 matches in football and 39 matches in cricket, with the final format and match composition to be framed after the finalisation of the participating teams," the spokesperson said, adding that every match would be played strictly in accordance with FIFA and AIFF rules in football and ICC and BCCI regulations in cricket. Emphasising the focus on local talent, the spokesperson said that, after scrutiny by the Technical and Registration Committees, only permanent resident players from the Jammu Division would be permitted to participate in the tournaments. "However, in cricket, there will be a cap of five out-stationed players per team. The objective is to give players from the Jammu Division ample opportunities to participate in a competitive competition," he said. The spokesperson said that the Mini Stadium Parade had been made available for football matches, while the M A Stadium would host the cricket league. "To give the event more significance, grand opening and closing ceremonies will be arranged. Matches will also be conducted under floodlights to attract maximum sports enthusiasts, and these matches will be telecast live on social media platforms," he said.

Rafiabad Youth Welfare Felicitates Medal-Winning Taekwondo Players



■ HT SPORTS DESK

SRINAGAR, JAN 28: Rafiabad Youth Welfare has expressed pride and appreciation for the outstanding performance of students from Warrior Taekwondo Academy, Dangiwacha, who recently clinched gold, silver and bronze medals in various competitions.

A felicitation programme was

organised by the academy under the leadership of Head Coach Mohsin Ali to honour the young achievers for their remarkable success. Er. Aamir War, Chairman of Rafiabad Youth Welfare, attended the event as a special guest and lauded the dedication and discipline of the players. Congratulating the medal winners, he said it was a moment of immense honour and happiness

to witness such talented youth bringing pride to the Rafiabad region.

Er. War praised Coach Mohsin Ali for his vital role in mentoring and guiding the youth towards positive and productive pursuits. He noted that such sporting initiatives not only promote physical fitness but also help steer young people away from social evils and negative influences.

Reaffirming the organisation's commitment, Er. War said that Rafiabad Youth Welfare remains fully dedicated to the promotion of sports activities in the region. He emphasized that sports play a crucial role in building confidence, leadership qualities and unity among the youth, and assured full support to individuals and institutions working to nurture sporting talent in Rafiabad.

He further highlighted that the organisation continues to work actively for sports development, education, a drug-free society and overall social progress of the area.

Rafiabad Youth Welfare extended its best wishes to all the players for a bright future and expressed hope that they would continue to achieve greater milestones in the years ahead.



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