

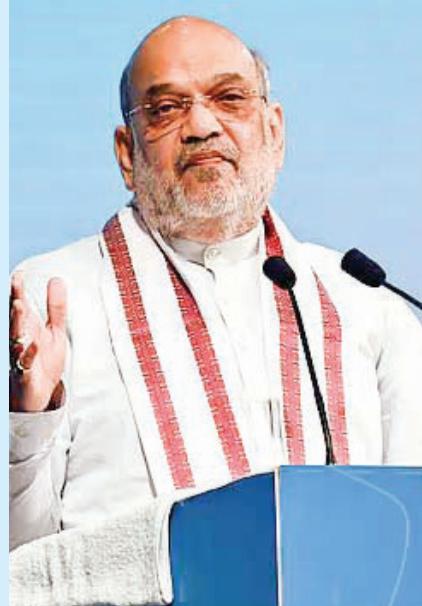
Cyber Crime Poses Rising Threat to Nation: Amit Shah

Unveils CBI Cyber Branch, Says ₹8,189 Cr Recovered; Cyber Security Now Equals to National Security'

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 10: Sounding a strong warning over the fast-growing menace of cybercrime, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said that cyber security has become an inseparable part of national security, as the government has already saved Rs. 8,189 crore from cyber frauds and arrested 20,853 accused persons till December 2025.

Addressing the National Conference on "Tackling Cyber-Enabled Frauds & Dismantling the Ecosystem" in New Delhi, Shah inaugurated the new Cyber-crime Branch of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and launched the State Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (S4C) dashboard of the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C). He also presided over the Investiture Ceremony of



CBI officers.

Highlighting India's rapid digital transformation, Shah said the country has crossed one billion internet users, while broadband connections have increased nearly 16 times in the past 11 years. The cost of mobile data has declined by 97 percent, triggering massive growth in digital adoption across urban and rural areas.

"In 2024 alone, India recorded more than 181 billion digital transactions worth over Rs. 233 trillion. Today, every second digital transaction in the world takes place in India. This places an enormous responsibility on us to build a secure, resilient and trusted digital ecosystem," Shah said.

He said that cybercrime, which earlier operated at an individual level, has now become highly organised and

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LG's Sainik Sahayta Kendra Emerges as The Lifeline For Soldiers

Ensures Rapid Redressal of Grievances, Single-window Initiative Delivers Swift Relief

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 10: The Lieutenant Governor's Sainik Sahayta Kendra (LGSSK) has firmly established itself as a dependable lifeline for serving soldiers and their families, delivering swift, sensitive and time-bound resolution of grievances through proactive intervention and close coordination with multiple authorities.

Reinforcing the administration's unwavering commitment to the welfare of the Armed Forces and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), the LGSSK has successfully resolved several urgent representations, providing timely assistance and tangible relief to beneficiaries across Jammu and Kashmir.

In a case marked by empathy and urgency, the Kendra promptly intervened in a plea concerning the release of martyr's emoluments. The matter was taken up on priority and coordinated with the concerned departments, ensuring early disbursement and much-needed financial support to the bereaved family.

In another instance, following a representation routed through a Commanding Officer, the LGSSK facilitated the issuance of a migrant certificate



for a serving soldier. The case was handled on priority, leading to swift coordination with relevant authorities and early resolution of the grievance.

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SKIMS Soura retains autonomy

Govt clarifies administrative changes

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, FEB 10: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday clarified in the Legislative Assembly that the Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura, continues to function as an autonomous and premier healthcare institution, dispelling concerns over any dilution of its status following the 2019 reorganisation.

Replying to a question raised by MLA Gulmarg, Pirzada Farooq Ahmad Shah, the government informed the House that SKIMS was established in 1976 and its core academic and institutional autonomy remains intact. While certain administrative arrangements, particularly relating to the composition of the Governing Body, have undergone changes after the reorganisation of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir, the institute's mandate has not been altered.

The government stated that SKIMS continues to award medical degrees strictly in accordance with the SKIMS (Grant of Degrees) Act, 1983, reaffirming its independent academic standing. It was further clarified that, under the prevailing Transaction of Business Rules, the subject of SKIMS continues to be assigned to the Health and Medical Education Department, as was the position earlier.

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Budget 2026-27 Sets Roadmap For Inclusive Growth, Welfare and Economic Revival in J&K: CM Omar Abdullah

Promises Regularisation of Daily Wagers, Rural Resurgence and Strong Social Justice Push

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 10: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday reaffirmed his Government's unwavering commitment to fulfilling all promises made to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, stating that the Budget 2026-27 lays a firm foundation for inclusive growth, social justice and long-term eco-

nomic revival across the Union Territory.

Replying to the three-day-long discussion on the Budget in the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Minister said the Government has presented a people-centric financial roadmap focused on employment generation, infrastructure development, welfare delivery and balanced regional growth. He



said the Budget has been widely debated both inside and outside the House, with people largely welcoming its direction and intent.

"The purpose of this Budget is to address present challenges while building a sustainable future. It is not easy to propel Jammu and Kashmir forward

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Rs. 3,450 Cr Booze Boost : J&K Rejects Dry UT Proposals, Flags Economic and Social Risks of Prohibition

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 10 : The Jammu and Kashmir government on Tuesday ruled out any move to declare the Union Territory a dry region, stating that liquor sales have generated over Rs. 3,450 crore in revenue during the last three financial years, while warning that prohibition could trigger serious economic, social and law-and-order chal-



lenges.

In a written reply to an Assembly question tabled by MLA Balwant Singh Mankotia, the government said there is no proposal under consideration to impose prohibition, as such a step could lead to a surge in smuggling from neighbouring States and UTs, illegal distillation, the strengthening of liquor mafias and heightened public health

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Fresh snowfall in higher reaches, rain in plains as temperatures rise across J&K

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, FEB 10: Fresh snowfall was reported in the higher reaches of the Kashmir Valley on Tuesday, while several areas in the plains received rainfall, even as temperatures showed a marginal improvement across Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

Light snowfall occurred in the middle and upper reaches of the Valley, including tourist destinations such as Gulmarg,

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JTFRP savings to fund critical care infrastructure; 100 ALS Ambulances

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 10: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired review meeting to assess the progress of the remaining works under the Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP) and directed all concerned departments to ensure strict adherence to timelines, stating categorically that

the current extension is final and no lapses will be tolerated.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department; Principal Secretary, Home; Secretary, Health & Medical Education; Director General, Budget; Managing Director, JKMSCL; Chief Executive Officer, J&K Economic Reconstruction Agency

(ERA); Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation, and other senior officers.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary undertook a project-wise review of all ongoing works, with particular emphasis on the expeditious operationalisation of the State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) at Humama, completion of the addi-

tional block at Lal Ded (LD) Hospital, and the critical care infrastructure proposed to be procured by the Health Department out of savings under JTFRP.

He stressed that procurement of equipment must proceed simultaneously with infrastructure creation so that the overall deadline of

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Gol sanctions 316 rural road projects for J&K under PMGSY-IV

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, FEB 10: As many as 316 rural road projects covering a length of 1,781.33 kilometres have been sanctioned for UT J&K under Phase-IV of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY-IV), the Centre informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

In a written reply to a starred question, the Ministry of Rural Development, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said that Rajouri district has received the highest allocation with 41 road works spanning 256.96 km, followed closely by Poonch with 40 roads covering

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Div Com Kashmir directs for uninterrupted power supply during sehri & iftari

Also, directs for intensified market inspections ahead of Ramadhan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, FEB 10: In view of the forthcoming holy month of Ramadhan, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting to review arrangements aimed at facilitating smooth observance of the fasting month across the Kashmir Division.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners, Senior Superintendents of Police, Chief Engineers of KPDCL, PHE and R&B, along with officers from the Food Safety Department, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Urban Local Bodies (ULB), Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), and Imams of prominent mosques.

Addressing the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner stressed the need for coordinated and comprehensive measures to

ensure public convenience throughout the holy month. He directed Deputy Commissioners to ensure all the arrangements in their respective districts.

Chief Engineer, KPDCL, was instructed to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply across the division during peak hours of Sehri and Iftari.

To ensure the availability of safe and quality food items in the market, the Divisional Commissioner directed the Food Safety Department to carry out intensive and regular market inspection drives across all districts. He also emphasized strict action against traders involved in illegal profiteering.

Srinagar Municipal Corporation was asked to undertake regular sanitation drives at mosques and shrines. Meanwhile, the General Manager, SRTC, was directed to augment public trans-



port services, especially around the Hazratbal area during evening and Taraweeh prayer hours. Deputy Commissioners were also urged to ensure adequate availability of public transport during evening hours.

FCS&CA Department was directed to ensure timely and adequate distribution of ration to meet increased demand during the holy month.

CE, R&B was instructed to repair the damaged roads leading to mosques and shrines while CE PHE was asked to supply tap water during the peak hours especially at Sehri. He was also urged to mobilize water tankers to provide drinking water to the areas facing shortages.

The Divisional Commissioner reiterated that all departments must work in close coordination to ensure hassle-free observance of Ramadhan by the public.

Dean Faculty of Agriculture Graces MSME-Sponsored Entrepreneurship Programme at SKUAST-K

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, FEB 10: The Division of Agriculture Extension & Communication, Faculty of Agriculture, Wadura, SKUAST-Kashmir organised a One-Week Entrepreneurship/Enterprise Management Development Programme (EDP) on the theme "Innovative Agri-Business Models for Rural Youth: Linking Extension, Technology & MSME Opportunities", sponsored by the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME).

The programme was graced by Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, Prof. Shakeel Ahmad Mir, who attended the event as the Chief Guest. In his address, Prof. Mir highlighted the growing importance of agri-entrepreneurship and urged rural youth to adopt innovative and technology-driven agri-business models for sustainable livelihoods.

The Cluster Head, J&K Bank, was present as the Guest of Honour and briefed participants about various financial schemes, credit facilities, and institutional support available for agri-entrepreneurs and MSMEs.

The programme was coordinated by Dr. Syed Shafat Kubrevi. During the training, Dr. Bilal Ahmad Bhat, Associate Professor; Dr. Shujaat Hussain Bhat, Assistant Professor; Dr. Qadri Javeed Ahmad Peer, Assistant Professor; and Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Shah, Assistant Professor, were also present and shared valuable insights and expert inputs related to the course modules, enriching the learning experience of the participants.

Director Panchayati Raj Highlights Key Responsibilities of Panchayat Secretaries

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 10: The 28-day Induction Training Programme for newly appointed Panchayat Secretaries concluded today in Jammu. The comprehensive curriculum featured a five-day exposure visit to Himachal Pradesh alongside extensive field studies across various Jammu Panchayats, designed to equip trainees with practical experience in administration, governance, and grassroots service delivery.

Addressing participants at the valedictory ceremony, Director of Panchayati Raj, Sham Lal, emphasized that Panchayat Secretaries serve as the primary interface of the department. He noted that they play a pivotal role in the entire governance lifecycle—from initial planning to the ground-level implementation of government schemes.

"The success of rural development initiatives depends largely on the efficiency, integrity, and dedication of our secretaries," he stated.

Director Lal highlighted the essential duties of the new officials. He directed the officials to maintain a



consistent presence in their assigned areas, stay connected with the citizenry. The Director further stressed the high expectations held by both the department and the public, urging the secretaries to work with transparency and a proactive sense of accountability. He specifically noted their role in public health, calling on them to lead a shift in public mindset regarding

sanitation and village hygiene. Finally, he mandated the rigorous use of government portals and digital tools—including the Karam Yogi platform and various mobile applications—to enhance monitoring and streamline service delivery.

Joint Director (Directorate of Rural Development, Jammu) Avleen Kour was also present on the occasion.

AKFAA Welcomes Government Announcement on Expansion of Cultural Centres in the Valley

■ GULFAM BARJI

SRINAGAR, FEB 10: The All Kashmir Folk Artists Association (AKFAA) has warmly welcomed the approval of the budget for the establishment of additional cultural centres across various districts of Jammu and Kashmir. Approved for the first time in the Union Territory, this historic initiative is being described as a significant milestone towards the promotion, preservation, and revival of the region's rich and diverse cultural heritage. In a statement, the Association said that the initiative reflects the present government's commitment to strengthening cultural infrastructure and empowering artists at the grassroots level. The proposed cultural centres will provide an effective platform for folk artists and cultural practitioners, helping to safeguard traditional art forms and ensure their transmission to future generations. The Association also praised the leadership and vision of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Omar Abdullah, and appreciated his proactive and sensitive approach towards the promotion of arts and the welfare of the cultural community. Chairman of the Association, Mr. Shah-e-Jahan Ahmad Bhagat, stated that the decision has generated renewed hope



among folk artists across the Valley and the region as a whole. General Secretary Mr. Fayaz Ahmad Rather said that such initiatives would play a vital role in preserving and strengthening the cultural identity of Jammu and Kashmir. The All Kashmir Folk Artists Association expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Hon'ble Chief Minister for this landmark decision and hoped that continued encouragement and support would be extended to the cultural sector in the future. The Association also expressed hope that more cultural centres would be established in other districts of Jammu and Kashmir in the coming times.

Wani Arfat Extends Heartfelt

Congratulations to Sabzar Ahmad Bhat on His Short Story Collection "Ghutan"

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, FEB 11: An notable and intellectually significant addition to contemporary Urdu literature was marked with the formal release of "Ghutan", the latest short story collection by acclaimed fiction writer Sabzar Ahmad Bhat. This publication, the author's third major literary work, stands out for its deep intellectual engagement, social awareness, and powerful reflection of present-day realities.

The dignified book release ceremony was organized through the committed efforts of Suhail Salim, Editor-in-Chief of Koh-e-Maran, Miraj-ud-Din Fraz, Editor-in-Chief of Nida-e-Kashmir and Zamindar, and renowned writer and intellectual Parvez Manoos, whose contributions to Urdu literature are widely recognized and respected.

The event was graced by the presence of prominent literary figures, scholars, and intellectuals, lending academic depth and creative vitality to the occasion. Distinguished attendees included Mushtaq Haider, Hasan Anzar, Professor Nasir Mirza, Dr. Abdul Majeed Bhaderwah, Bashir Athar, Mohammad Yaseen Ganaie, Liqat Abbas, Sheikh Gulzar, Manzoor Kant, Talib Fayaz, Rehana Shajar, Mohammad Yusuf Shaheen, Abdul Rasheed Rahgir Ladakhi, Allama Nabi Shahid, Malik Man-

zoor, Hafiz Abrar, Fayaz Jamal Bhat, and the author's brother Agha Mudassar Ahmad Bhat. Their presence made the gathering both memorable and intellectually enriching. The proceedings were conducted with clarity and grace by Zubair Qureshi, whose effective moderation added coherence and polish to the programme. On the occasion, Bashir Athar, Humayun Jamal, Miraj-ud-Din Fraz, and Noman Mudassar presented gifts to the author as a gesture of appreciation and encouragement.

Addressing the gathering, noted literary figure Wani Arfat extended heartfelt congratulations to Sabzar Ahmad Bhat on the publication and successful launch of his third book. He observed that Bhat's fiction vividly portrays the suffocation, inner conflicts, and social contradictions of the contemporary world with honesty and artistic strength. He remarked that "Ghutan" is not merely a collection of short stories but a significant intellectual document of our time, one that adds fresh meaning, direction, and depth to modern Urdu fiction.

Wani Arfat further expressed confidence that Sabzar Ahmad Bhat would continue to serve Urdu literature with the same creative sincerity, intellectual insight, and commitment, and that his writings would keep inspiring readers to reflect deeply on the social realities of the present age.

Secretary RDD reviews SBM-G, RGSA implementation in J&K

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 10: Secretary, Rural Development Department and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Ajaz Asad, today chaired a high level review meeting to assess the implementation, progress and on-ground impact of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) and Swachh Bharat Mission—Grameen (SBM-G) across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Director General Rural Sanitation Anoo Malhotra; Director RDD Kashmir Shabir Hussain Bhat; Director Panchayati Raj Sham Lal; Director RDD Jammu Shahnaz Akhter; Additional District Development Commissioners; Deputy Secretary RD&PR Tahir Ahmad Magray;



Superintending Engineers REW; Assistant Commissioners Panchayat; Executive Engineers and other concerned officers.

The Secretary reviewed the component wise and district-wise status of tendering under SBM-G, including major sanitation infrastructure such as Faecal Sludge Treatment Plants (FSTPs), GOBARdhan plants, DEWATS, Community Sanitary Complexes, Plastic Waste Management Units, Segregation Sheds and other sanitation assets. He directed the officers to expedite tendering process, remove procurement bottlenecks and ensure transparency, quality and adherence to timelines so that assets are made operational without delay.

Reviewing the progress of Individual Household Latrines (IHLs), the Secretary assessed coverage, pendency and district-wise performance. He stressed that no eligible household should be left out and directed the district authorities to fast-track verification and approval of pending applications alongside enhanced community mobilisation to achieve universal sanitation coverage.

The meeting also reviewed Operation and Maintenance (O&M) mechanisms and Faecal Sludge Management (FSM) policies.

Emphasising sustainability, the Secretary directed for early finalisation and operationalisation of O&M and FSM frameworks. He stressed that functionality and maintenance of sanitation assets must receive top priority.

The Secretary reviewed the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) 2026-27 under SBM-G, stressing it be realistic, outcome-oriented and aligned with ground-level needs. He emphasized quality infrastructure, behavioural change, sustainability, convergence and data-driven planning, directing for timely submission to ensure smooth implementation. Asking the Additional District Development Commissioners to fast-track land identification for remaining Panchayats, the Secretary called for early resolution of bottlenecks and advised exploring relocation options where suitable land is unavailable. He also stressed according top administrative priority to completion of construction of Panchayat Ghars.

Reviewing the status of Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs), the Secretary underscored the need for participatory, need-based and outcome-oriented planning, with strong community participation and effective convergence with departmental schemes.

The meeting also reviewed the progress of co-location of Common Service Centres (CSCs) in Panchayat Ghars.

The Secretary directed for expediting the process to ensure CSCs are operational, thereby strengthening digital governance and citizen-centric service delivery.

Reviewing the functioning of Panchayat Learning Centres (PLCs), the Secretary directed all Assistant Commissioners Panchayat to make PLCs fully functional and asked both Directors RDD to operationalise 40 newly established PLCs.

Highlighting the Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0 as a key tool for performance assessment, the Secretary directed the officers to create widespread awareness among Panchayats and stakeholders and ensure active participation for effective implementation of the index.

HT EDITORIAL

Ensure all things are in place during Ramadhan

The holy month of Ramadhan is just a few days away and people are hoping that everything will be in proper place during this holy month. It is important that the basic amenities are available to the people so that they don't face problems in this holy month. The onus is more on departments like Power Development Department (PDD) and Jal Shakti department. These departments should ensure that quality power and potable drinking water is available to the people.

Over the past few days, it has been observed that the power supply is not up to the mark. The power supply was very good during the previous months of winter but there has been some deterioration in the same over the past few days. Not to talk of non-metered areas, the people living in the metered areas are also facing unscheduled power cuts. These people are quite upset over the frequent disturbances in the power supply.

There are dozens of areas in Srinagar and other districts of Kashmir valley that are entitled to round the clock power supply but these areas too are facing power cuts over the past one week or so. Given this scenario the residents are quite perplexed over the power supply in the upcoming holy month of Ramadhan. Round the clock power supply in Ramadhan is pivotal since people are busy in usual prayers as well as special prayers.

In the same way it is important that drinking water is available to the people especially at the time of Iftar and Sehri. The Jal Shakti department officials need to pull up their socks and ensure that there are minimal problems to the people during the holy month of Ramadhan. One can hope that all the officers and officials' chip in and do their bit in providing relief to the people during the month of Ramadhan. All things need to be in the proper place so that there are no hardships for the people.

At the same time, it is important that the administration carries out review meetings during the holy month of Ramadhan. This would ensure that the officers and officials are always on their toes and they don't take people for a ride. It is the responsibility of the people managing the different line departments to issue directions to the subordinate staff so that all necessary steps are taken to provide quality services to the people.



■ **REYAZ BADANA**

It is the need of the hour that the tribal communities of Jammu and Kashmir work collectively for the promotion and preservation of their culture, traditions, and language so that their identity remains alive for future generations. At the same time, it is the responsibility of the government to provide proper platforms to poets, writers, and artists associated with the Gojri language, so that tribal literature, culture, and heritage may flourish and be safeguarded.

The tribal communities of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly the Gujjar and Bakerwal tribes, form an integral part of the region's social, cultural, and historical fabric. For centuries, these communities have lived close to nature, and their culture is deeply rooted in simplicity, hard work, self-respect, and collective values. Even today, the tribal society retains a distinct identity through its traditions, language, and way of life, although changes have gradually emerged over time.

Marriage ceremonies within the tribal society have traditionally been marked by simplicity. Until nearly two decades ago, weddings were conducted in a very modest manner. Brides were often carried in dolis, while grooms would ride horses as part of the wedding procession. These scenes beautifully reflected tribal cultural values. Marriages were largely performed in accordance with Islamic traditions (Sunnah), leaving no room for extravagance or unnecessary display. Even the poorest families were able to arrange marriages for their children with dignity, as simplicity was regarded as true honor within the community.



However, with the passage of time, external influences have increasingly found their way into tribal society. In many areas, customs and practices of other communities are being adopted, including lavish ceremonies, unnecessary rituals, and excessive expenditures. These changes have become a source of serious concern for poor and ordinary tribal families, as economic pressure is forcing them away from their traditional values of simplicity.

The lives of the Gujjar and Bakerwal communities are closely linked to grazing lands and livestock. Animal husbandry has traditionally been their primary occupation and the backbone of their economic system. These communities migrate seasonally, moving from high-altitude pastures to plains according to weather conditions. This nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle reflects a deep and enduring relationship with nature, which remains a defining feature of their culture.

Traditional attire also plays a vital role in shaping tribal cultural identity. Men generally wear

traditional kurta, shalwar, waistcoats, and distinctive headgear, while women wear simple yet dignified clothing, often adorned with traditional embroidery and vibrant colors. These garments are not only suited to the climate but also serve as symbols of tribal identity.

Today, the Gujjar and Bakerwal communities continue to face numerous social, economic, and educational challenges. Although a dedicated department has been formally established to address the issues of tribal communities, it has yet to become fully functional and effective. There is an urgent need to activate this department so that tribal people can benefit at the grassroots level and their long-standing problems can be resolved in a meaningful manner.

In conclusion, the culture and traditions of the tribal communities of Jammu and Kashmir are deeply rooted in simplicity, perseverance, and rich heritage. Preserving and promoting this cultural legacy requires collective efforts so that language, literature, and traditions continue to thrive, enabling the tribal society to move toward a dignified, self-reliant, and progressive future.

Wular Bird Festival 2026

A Celebration of Nature, Wetlands and Community Spirit



■ **SHOAIB MOHAMMAD BHAT**

The spectacular banks of Wular Lake are again reverberating with the calls of migratory birds and the thrill of nature lovers as the Wular Bird Festival 2026 is being held from 9 to 13 February. The festival is an amazing project that is organized in the serene beauty of Bandipora district in Jammu and Kashmir. It is a combination of conservation, education, eco-tourism and cultural pride on a meaningful common platform.

Wular Lake is one of the largest freshwater lakes in Asia and holds great ecological significance. It is a Ramsar site of international significance, which supports a rich biodiversity. Along with associated wetlands such as Wular Lake, Hokersar, Haigam, Shalabugh, every winter, thousands of migratory birds arrive here after travelling long distances like Central Asia, Siberia and even parts of Europe, in search of shelter in the serene waters and rich food supply of wetlands, making it a paradise for birdwatchers and environmental researchers alike.

The date of the Wular Bird Festival 2026 is particularly important as it follows World Wetlands Day, celebrated globally on 2nd February. This global celebration marks the signing of the Ramsar Convention and highlights the necessity to preserve wetlands worldwide.

Wetlands like Wular provide ecological services like purification of the environment, flood control by absorbing extra rainfall, recharging



the groundwater table, supporting fishing activities, among many other ecological functions. However, wetlands all over the globe are facing threats like urbanization, pollution, and climate change due to encroachment. With these activities taking place in the wetlands, festivals like the Wular Bird Festival are crucial in raising ecological awareness and promoting the adoption of a clean environment.

The festival is a five-day event that offers a plethora of well-designed activities, such as birdwatching sessions where experts are available for the identification of birds and their migration patterns. The view of a number of birds flying at sunrise over the glittering waters of Wular is an experience that cannot be forgotten, creating a sense of proximity with nature itself.

Besides birdwatching, the festival also includes educational workshops, awareness campaigns, photography competitions, and interactive sessions. School and college students are also involved in these programs and learn about biodiversity, conservation measures, and the significance of sustainable development. This kind of exposure motivates young minds to be future custodians of the environment.

Community involvement is another significant aspect of the Wular Bird Festival.

The local people, such as homestay owners, boatmen, eco-guides, and small vendors, are the direct beneficiaries of the boost in tourism during the event. Eco-tourism is responsible and it provides livelihood opportunities and at the same time protects the natural resources. When the local communities are made stakeholders in conservation, environmental protection becomes a collective responsibility and not a far-fetched idea.

The employment of local, trained, and educated young minds as bird guides has great potential, as this ability not only serves to increase their recreational experience but also recalls a marked change at the local level with regard to environmental issues.

The festival also has other cultural activities. As such, the festival offers information on the traditional crafts, food, and performances of the people of Kashmir. This shows an intimate relationship between the people and their environment. Wetlands are not simply ecological systems but, in fact, cultural landscapes as well.

Over the years, it has experienced problems such as siltation, weed

growth, and encroachment. Nevertheless, the positive changes have come about in the course of sustained improvement works as well as increasing awareness among the people. The fact that activities such as the Wular Bird Festival take place is a pointer to the increasing interest in promoting the ecosystem within the lake. It is an indicator that collectively, degraded environments can be rejuvenated to restore ecological balance.

The presence of migratory birds at Wular Lake is a strong representation of global interconnectedness. These birds move across continents, relying on various ecosystems to survive. Without the protection of wetlands such as Wular Lake, Hokersar, Haigam, and Shalabugh, the whole migratory chain is broken. Thus, local conservation helps in protecting biodiversity globally.

The Wular Bird Festival 2026 is more than a gathering of bird enthusiasts. It represents a broader movement towards environmental responsibility, community participation, and sustainable coexistence. It reminds us that conservation is not a one-time effort but a continuous process rooted in awareness, action, and care.

In a nutshell, the Wular Bird Festival 2026 stands as a celebration of diversity, a strengthening of our efforts to protect our wetland conservation initiatives, and a light of hope for coexistence. The Wular Bird Festival can help remind us that protecting the wetlands today means a healthier planet tomorrow by bridging our commitment to World Wetlands Day and our local action at Wular Lake. The songs of the migratory birds are a simple but powerful message that nature thrives because we choose to protect it.

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Discussion on Budget 2026-27 concludes in Legislative Assembly

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 10: The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly today concluded the discussion on Budget 2026-27 with Legislators deliberating on various developmental priorities besides sector specific issues.

Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma remarked that the Budget 2026-27 outlines the government's one-year roadmap and should provide relief to the people. He emphasized that the government should address the Opposition's queries.

He raised issues related to employment, regularization of daily wagers and rehabilitation of terror victim families. He also demanded job policy for unemployed youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

Initiating the debate on the concluding day of the budget discussion, MLA Dr. Bashir Ahmad Shah Veeri, while speaking in support of the Budget, said that the budgetary allocations reflect the government's collective responsibility towards the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

He stated that the Budget presented is clearly guided by the responsibility rather than populism, adding that in the present circumstances, emphasis on capital investment is both timely and significant.

Dr. Veeri said that the Budget has been preceded by wider consultations with all stakeholders to ensure inclusivity and balanced development across J&K.

Legislator Saif-ud-din Bhat said that the Budget has addressed all key aspects and will prove beneficial for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He noted that Kashmir is endowed with abundant natural



resources and emphasized the need for their sustainable utilization.

Raising constituency specific concerns, he highlighted gaps in various sectors and demanded upgradation of health, education and other basic infrastructure to improve service delivery.

Speaking during the discussion, MLA Ranbir Singh Pathania noted that diverse opinions had emerged on the Budget presented in the House. He added that the government should have taken more concrete steps towards employment generation.

Joining the debate, Legislator Sajad Ganj Lone said that the Budget could have placed greater emphasis on employment generation and expressed concern over the increasing reliance on outsourcing of jobs. He said that Budget should help create more positive economic ambience conducive to attract investment and generating sustainable employment opportunities.

In his address, MLA Mian Mehar Ali said that while the Budget contains many positive measures, it must ensure equitable development between rural and urban areas. He also emphasized the need to open tourist destinations, saying this would help local people generate livelihood opportunities and boost the regional economy.

Speaking in favour of the Budget, Legislator Sheikh Ahsan Ahmed Pardesi said that people are witnessing positive changes in their lives, reflecting progress in growth and development.

MLA Pawan Kumar Gupta, while joining the budget debate, said that the real test of governance lies in the outcomes of government actions and directions and how effectively public promises are translated into tangible results on the ground.

Speaking during the discussion, Legislator Irfan Hafiz Lone said that the Budget is guided by a commitment to work for welfare

of the people and is anchored in a pledge to continue striving for their interests within the available resources.

He highlighted the long pending demands of Anganwadi workers, vocational teachers, Rehbar-e-Janglat and casual labourers. He said these issues deserve focused attention and urged the government to accord top priority to health and education sectors.

Referring to the Chief Minister's budget speech, he said that the remarks on casual labourers were optimistic and offered a renewed sense of hope.

Speaking during the discussion, MLA Irshad Rasool Kar called for strengthening of embankments around Wular Lake and dredging to address the flood related concerns in his constituency.

He said that significant improvement has taken place over the last year, bringing relief to the people. He also thanked the Chief Minister for sanctioning various development projects in his

constituency.

Legislator Mushtaq Guroo said that the Budget has addressed all sections of society and taken care of a wide range of issues. He described the Budget as people friendly, adding that the interests of the poorest sections have been adequately safeguarded.

Speaking during the discussion, MLA Randhir Singh appreciated the pre-budget meetings saying that all MLAs were taken on board, reflecting a consultative approach in budget formulation.

He also raised various constituency specific issues on various sectors.

Joining the debate, Legislator Javaid Riyaz Bedar appreciated improvement in the surface connectivity between Jammu and Srinagar.

Appreciating Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for touching every sector in the budget 2026-27, the Legislator said that both regions have huge potential for pilgrimage tourism.

Speaking during the debate, MLA Khursheed Ahmad Sheikh reflected upon promises by the current government. He also demanded starting work on the GMC Handwara and asserted that work be expedited on all projects pending for last several years in Langate Constituency.

In his address to House, MLA Tariq Hameed Karra said that the Budget was comprised of three components, which are hope, intent and delivery. He said this budget is rural and infrastructural specific.

He welcomed the announcements for electricity infrastructure, support to farmers and upgradation in Health and Education sectors. He stressed that effective execution is required for its solid implementation on the ground.

DLSA Shopian organises awareness programme on 'Mediation for the Nation 2.0' at District Court Complex

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, FEBRUARY 10: District Legal Authority (DLSA) Shopian today organized a special awareness programme on "Mediation for the Nation 2.0" at District Court Complex Shopian to promote awareness on mediation as an effective mode of alternative dispute resolution.

The events were organized under the supervision of Mehmood Ahmad Chowdhary, Chairman DLSA (Principal District & Sessions Judge) Shopian and the guidance of Mudasar Farooq, Secretary DLSA Shopian.



Mehmood Ahmad Chowdhary, Chairman DLSA (Principal District & Sessions Judge) Shopian and Secretary DLSA Shopian, Mudasar Farooq laid emphasis on mediation. They addressed the gathering that mediation can play an effective role in disposal of cases which is flexible, expeditious in nature, less expensive and restore social harmony.

All the trained mediators were directed to give their best to make mediation process an effective way for disposal of cases. All the judicial officers of District Shopian were directed to identify and refer maximum number of cases for mediation and actively participate and coordinate to make this campaign successful and strengthen in the mediation through process of dialogue."

The 90-day mediation drive is justice at the doorstep. Mediation not only saves time and resources but also preserves relationships", said the Chairman DLSA. He also appealed to the lawyers, litigants and general public to come forward and take advantage of this campaign while highlighting how disputes, especially matrimonial matters, MACT, NI Act, Civil Disputes, Criminal Compoundable Cases and recovery suits can be resolved effectively through mediation. The programme was attended by all the judicial officers, legal aid defense counsels, the Learned Advocates, PLVs and general public.

ADDC Shopian chairs awareness event, emphasizes adopting safer digital practices

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, FEBRUARY 10: In a bid to strengthen cyber awareness and promote responsible digital practices, National Informatics Centre (NIC) Shopian today organised a comprehensive awareness programme on the occasion of Safer Internet Day at Mini Secretariat, Shopian.



The programme was chaired by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone and was attended by officers/officials of various departments.

Addressing the participants, the ADDC underscored the growing dependence on digital platforms in governance and service delivery and stressed the importance of maintaining robust cyber hygiene. He highlighted that safeguarding sensitive government data, preventing cyber breaches and adopting secure digital practices are essential for ensuring efficiency, transparency and public trust in administration.

On the occasion, experts from NIC, Srinagar, Ishfaq Ahmed, Network Engineer, NIC, Shopian, Zaffer Ahmed and others delivered detailed presentations on major cyber threats such as phishing, malware, data breaches and identity theft. The sessions also covered best practices related to password management, secure handling of official information, data privacy, safe use of social media and effective mitigation strategies against cyber risks.

Special emphasis was laid on the safe and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence, encouraging officers to adopt AI tools responsibly while ensuring compliance with data protection norms and ethical standards.

The event was organised in line with the nationwide 'Safer Internet Day' campaign, aimed at fostering a secure, inclusive and trustworthy digital environment.

Officers attending the programme were encouraged to further disseminate the knowledge gained through internal training and awareness sessions within their respective departments and wider audience to ensure wider outreach and long-term impact.

DC stresses need for awareness and preventive safeguards

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, FEBRUARY 10: Safer Internet Day was today observed in Kulgam with a focus on the theme "Smart Tech, Safe Choices – Exploring the Safe and Responsible Use of AI."

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan inaugurated a mega sensitization programme, organised at the Mini-Secretariat Kulgam.

Addressing the gathering, the DC highlighted the growing penetration of digital technology and artificial intelligence across the country and

stressed the need for awareness and preventive safeguards. He said that with technology usage at an all-time high, ensuring the safe and responsible use of the internet and AI tools has become essential.

He emphasized that awareness at all levels is necessary and that teachers have a particularly important role in guiding students toward ethical, secure, and productive use of digital platforms. He underlined that preventive measures, digital literacy, and early education are key to safeguarding users from online risks, misinformation, misuse

of AI tools, and cyber threats.

The DC added that structured training and awareness programmes on AI and safe internet practices will be started in schools across the district to equip students and teachers with practical knowledge on responsible AI usage, digital safety and wellbeing.

DIO, NIC Kulgam, Nadeem Yousuf, along with other experts and speakers, also spoke about safe browsing practices, digital responsibility, responsible use of AI and the importance of community participation in building a secure online environment.

DC Budgam presides over Safer Internet Day Programme

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, FEBRUARY 10: Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi ud-din Bhat, today presided over a district-level awareness programme to mark Safer Internet Day 2026, organised under the aegis of the Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA) Project of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in collaboration with NIC and other stakeholder departments.

The programme was organised as part of the nationwide campaign being observed across the country on the second Tuesday of February, with the theme "Smart Tech, Safe Choices", focusing on promoting safe and responsible use of the internet and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The event also served as a national-level precursor to the upcoming AI Impact Summit 2026 scheduled to be held in New Delhi from February 15th to 20th.

While addressing the participants, the DC highlighted the growing importance of digital safety in today's technology-driven world and stressed the need for creating widespread awareness among students, government employees, and the general public regarding cyber threats and safe online practices.

He underscored that with the increasing use of digital platforms and AI-based tools, citizens must be equipped with the right knowledge to protect themselves from cyber frauds, misinformation, and data breaches.

The DC emphasised that responsible

and ethical use of AI is essential for ensuring inclusive and people-centric development. He also stressed the role of AI in key sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, education, and governance, while cautioning against its misuse for scams, deepfakes, and misinformation.

During the programme, detailed presentations were made on key aspects including safe internet usage, cyber hygiene practices, common cyber threats such as phishing, OTP and UPI frauds, fake customer care scams, malware, deepfake and AI voice scams, online shopping frauds, and digital arrest scams. Participants were sensitised on mechanisms for reporting cybercrimes through the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal and the helpline number 1930.

The participants were also educated on best practices such as use of strong passwords, enabling two-factor authentication, avoiding suspicious links, securing UPI and card transactions, and protecting personal identifiable information. Awareness resources including www.staysafeonline.in and www.infosecawareness.in were also highlighted.

An online pledge for safe and responsible use of AI was administered, and participants were encouraged to enrol in ISEA e-learning courses and download the ISEA Cyber Hygiene mobile application to further strengthen their understanding of cyber safety.

Besides, DIO Informatics, the programme witnessed active participation from officials, students, teachers, Representatives from Revenue, RDD and other stakeholders.

DC Srinagar, SSP hold District NCORD meeting; 73 driving licences disqualified, 56 vehicles blacklisted under NDPS Cases in district

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 10: A meeting of District Level Committee on Narcotic Control Centre (NCORD) was Tuesday held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo here at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office to review the ongoing anti-drug measures and efforts to curb drug abuse and drug trafficking in the district.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Sandeep Chakravarthy was also present in the meeting. At the outset, the meeting conducted a comprehensive review of inter-agency coordination to combat drug abuse, including identification of drug hotspots, confiscation of vehicles under NDPS and ongoing anti-drug IEC activities, particularly in educational institutions to sensitise youth about the illicit effects of narcotics.

The meeting was informed that, as per the directions of the NCORD Committee, the District Administration in coordination with the Police and other stakeholder departments, has launched a massive crackdown on drug peddlers and drug trafficking. Acting firmly against offenders, the driving licences of 73 accused involved in narcotics cases have been disqualified. In addition, 56 vehicles have been blacklisted by the Regional Transport Office, Kashmir under the NDPS Act. Addressing the meeting, the DC appreciated the Transport Department and other stakeholders for strengthening administrative controls by suspending licences and blacklisting vehicles involved in NDPS cases, thereby disrupting the

logistical support of drug peddlers. He reiterated that driving licences and vehicle registrations are privileges not rights and that anyone found misusing them for drug-related offences will face strict action without any leniency. The DC emphasized that such measures will continue across to curb the drug menace in the district and break the supply chain of narcotics trade. He underlined that the administration's firm resolve to protect society, especially the youth, from the devastating impact of drugs.

SSP Srinagar, in his remarks, stated that the action against drugs shall continue and the message of zero tolerance against drug crimes is loud and clear. He stated that drug peddlers will face criminal prosecution, disqualification of licences, blacklisting of vehicles and other punishments as warranted under law. On the occasion, the meeting decided to further strengthen coordination among stakeholder departments and continue focused enforcement, preventive awareness, and rehabilitation measures to effectively combat the drug menace in Srinagar district.

The meeting was attended by Regional Transport Officer, Kashmir, Qazi Irfan, Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, Dy Superintendent of Police, Syed Sleeth Shah, Programme Officer, ICDS, SDM West Irfan Bahadur, SDM East, Zubair Ahmad, District Social Welfare Officer, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad, Assistant Labour Commissioner, Adnan Tariq, Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Tahir Sajad and Officers of Excise, Drug Control Organization, YS&S, Heads of ATFs and other concerned.

DC Srinagar inspects developmental works in Harwan Block; takes onsite review of ongoing works

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 10: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, on Tuesday undertook an extensive onsite visit to various Panchayat Halqas of Harwan Block and inspected several ongoing developmental works in the area aimed to improve road connectivity and enhancing public convenience.

The DC was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mir Imtiyaz ul Aziz; Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; Superintending Engineer R&B, Taseer Manzoor, SDM East, Zubair Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Development, Executive Engineer R&B, Farid Ahmad, and other concerned officers. DDC Member from Harwan Block, Shabir Ahmad Reshi, was also present during the inspection.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the ongoing construction of three bridges over Maloori Nallah at Syedpora, Sarabagh, and Ganttal-Ganimohar Road.

While inspecting the construction of the bridge at Syedpora Bala over Maloori Nallah along with the link road to Mavas Canal, the DC assessed the progress and quality of work and directed the concerned executing agencies to ensure completion of the project within the stipulated timelines while maintaining quality standards as per approved specifications.

The DC was informed that over



65 percent of the work on the project has been completed. The project is being executed by the R&B

Department under NABARD. It was further apprised that the bridge structure is almost complete, while

work on the approach road is in progress and the link road is scheduled to be taken up shortly.

Similarly, at Sarabagh area of Syedpora, the DC took stock of the construction of the bridge over Maloori Nallah being executed which is expected to significantly improve connectivity for the adjoining areas.

Later, the DC inspected the ongoing works on the construction of the bridge over Maloori Nallah at Ganttal-Ganimohar Road, being executed by the R&B Department under NABARD. The DC reviewed the progress of the works and issued necessary directions to the concerned officers to ensure timely completion of the project to benefit people in local habitation.

The DC was informed that about 35 percent of the work has been completed on the project, which will improve connectivity in Ganttal, Ganimohar, Dardkhovar, Moshpajan, Dar, Fakir Gujri and other adjoining areas.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner interacted with local residents and stated that the completion of bridges over Maloori Nallah along with approach and link roads will significantly enhance connectivity and benefit several habitations in the area.

He emphasized the importance of quality infrastructure for improving public convenience and directed officers to maintain close monitoring of all developmental projects in the block.

DC Ganderbal chairs preparatory meeting for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, FEBRUARY 10: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore today chaired a review meeting here to assess the comprehensive action plan for the forthcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY)-2026.

During the meeting, detailed deliberations were held on action plans submitted by various departments, with a focused emphasis on strengthening service delivery and upgrading infrastructure to ensure a smooth and safe Yatra for pilgrims.

Key areas discussed included augmentation of healthcare facilities, sanitation, slide protection measures, parking arrangements, mobile connectivity, transport services, disaster preparedness, and other essential infrastructure components.

Officers from concerned departments apprised the chair of the status of their preparations and ongoing works related to SANJY-2026.

The DC issued slew of directions to the concerned departments to augment necessary infrastructure to ensure seamless facilities to the pilgrims for smooth and safe yatra.

Directions were issued to undertake necessary repairs to power and water supply infrastructure on the Yatra track damaged due to rains and landslides, besides desilting and debris clearance along the track.

The DC also issued instructions for proper maintenance of roads and parking areas in Base Camp besides proper barricading to ensure smooth movement of pilgrims and ponies.

To ensure smooth and uninterrupted



operations, directions were issued for providing power backup for on-spot registration and RFID counters. Further, PHE Department was instructed to plan and augment water sources well in advance to avoid any shortage of water during Yatra.

Rural Development Department was also instructed to prepare a comprehensive sanitation and waste management plan and ensure adequate deployment of men and machinery.

In order to ensure hassle free connectivity, telecom authorities were directed to ensure adequate connectivity at the Base Camp and along the Yatra route.

The DC stressed upon the officers to ensure timely submission of finalized action plans for early execution of works.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Syed Fahim Bihagi; Chief Executive Officer, Sonmarg Development Authority; Additional Superintendent of Police; Superintending Engineer KPDCL, Superintending Engineer Jal Shakti; Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Kangan, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Education Officer, Executive Engineers and officers and officials from various line departments.

DC Srinagar presides over Mega Awareness Camp at Harwan for coverage under Government welfare schemes

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 10: With an aim to cover every eligible beneficiary under Government welfare schemes in rural areas, ensuring no eligible beneficiary is left out, a mega awareness camp was held at Nayabat Office in Harwan Block of Srinagar district.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar Akshay Labroo, presided over the awareness programme organised by Block Development Office, Harwan in collaboration with District Administration Srinagar.

The awareness programme focused on identifying left-out and eligible citizens, providing on-the-spot facilitation, ensuring timely documentation and enabling instant registration through departmental counters and CSC support ensuring 100% coverage and last-mile delivery of key schemes of various departments.

The awareness camp witnessed a large participation of people from



DC Kupwara reviews functioning of Health Sector in district

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 10: Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, chaired a series of meetings to review key health sector initiatives including Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) and Tele-Consultation (e-Sanjeevani).

He reviewed block wise performance under ABHAID generation and scan & share service. The Deputy Commissioner directed underperforming medical blocks to improve performance through intensified enrolment drive. He emphasised coordinated efforts by Health, ICDS and Common service centres to improve performance in the 0-5-year age category.

It was informed that individuals can also self-enrol under ABDM to generate their Health ID through the link (<https://healthid.ndhm.gov.in>).

The DC also reviewed the advancement of telemedicine services across the district, designed to enhance specialist healthcare accessibility, particularly in remote and border regions.

Dr. Zaffar Akbar, Chief Medical Officer, Kupwara briefed block-wise progress under E-Sanjeevani OPD and E-Sanjeevani ABHWC. It was informed that the E-Sanjeevani is being operated through 11 functional hubs, 5 functional hubs cum spokes and 130 functional spokes, enabling doctor-to-patient and doctor-to-doctor consultations to reinforce healthcare delivery.



Taking serious note of low coverage in some medical blocks, he directed BMOs to ensure substantial progress is achieved in next one month. He also directed the CMO to take action against non-performing officers/officials at HWCs and PHCs where progress is unsatisfactory.

The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the rollout of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme. He stressed the importance of inter-departmental coordination between Health, school education and social welfare department and called for intensified IEC campaign.

The meetings were attended by Chief Medical Officer Kupwara, Chief Planning Officer, District Immunization Officer, BMOs and officials from Health, Education, ICDS and others.

District Admin Budgam organises Day-long Programme under NMBA

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, FEBRUARY 10: The District Administration Budgam in collaboration with Information and PR department Budgam today organised a day-long district-level awareness programme under the NASHA Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA) at the Indoor Sports Stadium, Budgam. The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-din Bhat who attended the programme as the Chief Guest, delivered a comprehensive address highlighting the serious physical, psychological, social, and economic consequences of substance abuse on individuals, families, and society at large.

It was emphasised by the DC that drug addiction not only destroys individual lives but also weakens the social fabric, thereby posing a grave challenge to the overall development and well-being of the community. While addressing the gathering, it was stressed that the menace of drug abuse cannot be tackled by enforcement agencies alone and that a holistic and collective approach is required.

The DC underlined that coordinated efforts of parents, teachers, educational institutions, community and religious leaders, civil society organisations, healthcare professionals, and youth groups are essential for effectively preventing and combating drug addiction. The DC further said that early awareness, timely intervention, counselling, and rehabilitation are key

components in addressing the issue in a sustainable manner. He exhorted the youth to remain vigilant, stay away from drugs, and channel their energy towards constructive and positive pursuits such as sports, education, skill development, and community service. He reiterated that a drug-free youth is the foundation of a strong, progressive, and prosperous society. The DC also highlighted the importance of strengthening de-addiction and rehabilitation services and ensuring that affected individuals are provided with proper medical, psychological, and social support to facilitate their reintegration into society. During the programme, a series of expert talks were delivered by medical professional Dr. Shahid and subject expert DSWO Budgam wherein participants were sensitised about the health hazards of drug abuse, signs and symptoms of addiction, and available treatment and counselling mechanisms.

A short awareness film on the ill effects of substance abuse was also screened, followed by cultural performances and a skit, which effectively conveyed strong messages against drug addiction in an engaging manner. A pledge-taking ceremony under the NASHA Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan was also organised, wherein DC budgam administered "NASHA MUKT BHARAT PLEDGE" to the participants and the participants reaffirmed their commitment to remain drug-free and to actively contribute towards spreading awareness against drug abuse in their respective communities.

DC Ganderbal reviews progress of works under District CAPEX, UT CAPEX, CDF and SASCI schemes for F.Y. 2025-26

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, FEBRUARY 10: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore today chaired a comprehensive meeting here to review the physical and financial progress of works under District CAPEX budget, CDF, SASCI, Tribal Plan, UT CAPEX and DA-JGUA schemes for the financial year 2025-26.

At the outset, Chief Planning Officer briefed the meeting regarding the progress achieved under District CAPEX Budget, sector wise status of new and ongoing works, and expenditure statement for new and ongoing works.

DC reviewed sector wise position of tendering, allotment, and completion, besides status of projects under SASCI.



DC directed all executing agencies to ensure early completion of the remaining District CAPEX works. He emphasized strict adherence to quality standards, transparency in execution and proper utilization of funds under the District CAPEX budget.

He instructed that the works not taken up yet to be expedited and completed at the earliest.

DC further instructed the departments to expedite financial expenditure to avoid lapsing of funds and ensure regular monitoring of works at the ground level.

BDOs and all executing agencies were directed to closely monitor the execution of CDF works and take up remaining works at the earliest.

DC also took a detailed review of various ongoing projects under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SACI) programme.

He instructed officers to maintain strict adherence to the approved deadlines and ensure that all ongoing projects are executed with high standards of quality and transparency. He also directed the executing agencies to ensure proper financial management and utilization of funds.

DC also reviewed the progress of UT Capex works pertaining to the Revenue Department and works under the Tribal Plan. He directed the executing agencies to ensure timely completion of all works under the UT Capex sector and to utilize the released funds timely.

The meeting was attended by Superintending Engineer Jal Shakti Department, Chief Planning Officer, Assistant Commissioner Development, Executive Engineers from KPDCL, R&B, PHE and I&FC, Block Development Officers, District and Sectoral Officers, besides other concerned officers and officials.

CS pushes for robust tracking for lifelong rehabilitation of victims

Calls institutional support key to realise 'Nasha Mukt J&K'

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 10: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high-level meeting of senior officers to deliberate upon and give shape to a robust mechanism for rehabilitation and reintegration of drug abuse victims across the districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, Home; Commissioner Secretary, General Administration Department (GAD); Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department; Commissioner Secretary, School Education Department; Secretary, Health & Medical Education (H&ME); Secretary, Skill Development Department (SDD) and Labour & Employment (L&E); Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD); Director General, Budget; Director, Information; Managing Director, JKRLM; Director Colleges and other concerned officers.

While reviewing the framework, the Chief Secretary stressed the need for systematic tracking of every registered drug abuse victim who comes forward for treatment to ensure sustained handholding, rehabilitation and social reintegration. He emphasized that such individuals should



be monitored for several years post-treatment and provided opportunities in livelihood generation, skill development, self-employment or education based on individual rehabilitation needs.

Highlighting the importance of institutional support, the Chief Secretary called for dovetailing resources and manpower of multiple departments to ensure comprehensive support to individuals at every stage of recovery. He observed that while family and societal support remains crucial, long-term reintegration into mainstream society largely depends on strong institutional mechanisms.

The Chief Secretary noted that motivating victims to undergo treatment is only the first step and must be complemented by

regular follow-up, counselling and livelihood support to prevent relapse. He underscored the need for an end-to-end mechanism covering awareness generation through IEC campaigns, treatment, counselling, rehabilitation and post-rehabilitation engagement of affected youth.

To ensure accountability and effectiveness, he directed the creation of a district-level monitoring framework under senior officers, supported by dedicated teams to identify gaps and ensure lifetime rehabilitation outcomes.

He further instructed development of an integrated online platform with clearly defined departmental roles and unique identification for each beneficiary to enable real-time tracking and case management.

During the meeting, Commiss-

ioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Sarmad Hafeez, made a detailed presentation outlining the proposed inter-departmental coordination mechanism and post-rehabilitation framework. He informed that under the ongoing Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan, a dedicated Task Force has been constituted under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary, Home Department, with the mandate to plan, coordinate and monitor rehabilitation and reintegration interventions across departments.

The meeting was informed that the Task Force will focus on multi-departmental coordination, standardized screening and referral mechanisms, availability of trained psychiatrists in hospitals, strengthening law enforcement for supply reduction and

enhancement of rehabilitation processes.

It was further highlighted that the rehabilitation framework envisages standardized rehabilitation protocols and counseling units across J&K. The importance of integrating skill development programmes, livelihood support, start-up credit linkages, self-employment assistance and private sector partnerships was also emphasized to ensure sustainable recovery of rehabilitated individuals.

The meeting also underscored the need for school-based preventive programmes, community engagement initiatives, post-care monitoring systems and strengthening of infrastructure and capacity building. The roles and responsibilities of departments including School Education, Higher Education, Rural Development, Skill Development, Labour & Employment, Health, Home and Social Welfare were clearly delineated to achieve the long-term objective of a drug-free Jammu and Kashmir.

Reaffirming the government's commitment, the Chief Secretary stressed that addressing drug abuse requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to safeguard the future of youth and build a healthier society.

J&K observes Safer Internet Day 2026; launches UT wide outreach campaign

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 10: The Information Technology Department, today observed Safer Internet 2026, reaffirming its commitment towards promoting safe, secure and responsible use of internet among the citizens, particularly youth and vulnerable sections of society.

As part of the event observance at Civil Secretariat Jammu, a workshop on cyber safety and cyber crime awareness was organised, bringing together the government officials, domain experts, J&K Police and stakeholders to deliberate upon emerging cyber threats and the importance of cyber hygiene.

Commissioner Secretary Science and Technol-



ogy, Dr. Shahid Iqbal Chaudhary, chaired the event. He emphasised the need for collective responsibility in ensuring a safe digital ecosystem. He highlighted the importance of digital literacy and awareness in safeguarding the citizens against cyber frauds, misinformation and online exploitation.

Dr. Shahid Iqbal launched various initiatives including e-Brochure on Safer Internet Day, Bulk SMS Campaign and Radio Jingles to promote safe internet practices, in presence of Secretary Information Technology Department Dr. Piyush Singla.

Singla delivered the keynote address, underlining the government's initiatives towards strengthening the cyber security awareness and capacity building across Jammu and Kashmir. He stressed the importance of proactive citizen engagement, responsible digital behaviour and close coordination with J&K Police to mitigate cyber frauds.

Detailed presentations on the subject were delivered by ASIO, National Informatics Centre (NIC) and Albeena Malik, Deputy SP, Crime Headquarters, highlighting safe digital practices, prevalent cyber-crime trends, preventive measures and best practices for citizens to remain safe in the digital space.

As part of outreach activities, Common Services Centres (CSCs) dedicated awareness canopies across various locations from 9th to 10th February, 2026, providing information and guidance to citizens on safe internet usage and cyber fraud prevention.

Further strengthening the grassroots outreach, various awareness campaigns were organized at district, block and Gram Panchayat level, in close coordination with the district administration and CSCs, with massive participation in schools, degree colleges and ITIs.

Govt considering 5 marla land allotment to Bagra flood victims: Deputy CM

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 10: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today said that the government is considering allotment of 5 marla land plots to the eligible families hit by flash floods at village Bagra in Kathua district on the intervening night of 16th and 17th August 2025.

The Deputy Chief Minister was replying on behalf of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to a question raised by Legislator Dr. Bharat Bushan in the Legislative Assembly today.

He said that as per SDRF norms, a compensation of Rs. 4 lakh each was released in favour of the Next of Kin (NOK) of the deceased and additional Rs. 2 lakh each was also released through the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. He added that Chairman, Red Cross Society Kathua (Deputy Commissioner Kathua) also released Rs. 50,000 compensation

each to the NOKs of the deceased. The Deputy Chief Minister said that heavy flash floods triggered by flash rains and landslides occurred in several areas of Village Bagra, which resulted in unfortunate loss of two persons and damages to various private and public properties.

He informed the House that seven houses fully damaged during the flash floods were duly compensated as per SDRF guidelines. He added that temporary restoration measures have been taken by the district administration while the line departments are taking further necessary action for permanent restoration. He said that during this period, the affected families were shifted to safe lodgement centres, where all basic amenities like food, water, medicines and blankets were provided to them.

The Deputy CM added that the link

road in Bagra has been damaged to a length of 1.20 km and some temporarily restored stretches will be fully reinstated by August 2026.

He said that during the recent spell of heavy rainfall/flash floods, certain low-lying areas of Kathua Town were affected, resulting in damage to residential houses and property, particularly in areas located near natural drainage channels and Kathua Khad. He said that due to sudden heavy discharge of rainwater, Kathua Khad experienced overflow at several vulnerable locations, causing erosion of embankments.

He added that the proposal of channelization and protection work in Sahar Khad has been duly incorporated in the DPRs titled "Construction of flood protection works on Sahar Khad/Maggar Khad/Sukhal Khad and other tributaries of river Ravi" under NABARD, with a total estimated cost of Rs. 1500.71 lakh.

Deputy CM launches ODOP Fest to boost J&K Products Nationally

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 11: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today inaugurated ODOP Fest, Buyer Seller Meet, organised by the Jammu & Kashmir Trade Promotion Organisation (JKTPO) under the One District One Product (ODOP) and Districts as Export Hubs (DEH) initiatives at Convention Centre, Jammu.

The event is being held under the theme and tagline "Connecting District Treasures to National Markets."

The event aims to promote the unique ODOP products of Jammu and Kashmir and provide a strong national level platform to the local producers, artisans and enterprises to connect directly with buyers from across India.

The inauguration ceremony was also attended by the senior officers from the Industries & Commerce Department and other officials.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Chief Minister underscored the importance of the ODOP initiative in promoting district-specific products, strengthening grassroots entrepreneurship and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities.

He emphasized that platforms such as the ODOP Fest play a vital role in connecting the local producers with wider markets, enhancing exports and positioning Jammu and Kashmir's unique products in national and global value chains.

Addressing the participants, Sudershan Kumar, Managing Director, JKTP, stated that the ODOP Fest has been conceptualised as a flagship trade promotion platform aimed at connecting the district treasures to national markets by facilitating structured buyer-seller interactions, promoting branding of ODOP products and creating sustainable domestic and export market linkages.

Office of the Chief Project Officer National Fish Seed Farm, Manasbal

Department of Fisheries, Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Email: cpo-manasbal@jk.gov.in, Ph: 01954295287

ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE

In order to enhance outreach and visibility of scheme and to ensure wider participation of eligible beneficiaries, applications are invited from Fish Farmers/Fish Workers/Fish Vendors/Entrepreneurs/Private firms/members of Fishers Cooperative Society, Fishery Self Help Groups, Joint Liability Groups, FFPOs for "Providing Three Wheeler with Ice Box including E-Rickshaws for Fish Vending" under centrally Sponsored Scheme "Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)" for the financial year 2025-26. Applicants who have already applied in response to the earlier advertisement No: CPO/NFSF/M/25/796-99, Date: 26-12-2025, need not apply again. Their applications shall remain valid and will be considered as per the revised/updated guidelines, if any. The scheme details are as mentioned below.

S. No.	Type	Unit Cost (lacs)	No of Units	Pattern of Funding
01	Providing Three Wheeler with Ice Box including E-Rickshaws for Fish Vending	03.00	04	Govt. share 40% of the unit cost. Beneficiary share 60% of the unit cost

The applications should reach in the office of the Chief Project Officer, National Fish Seed Farm, Manasbal by or before 16th of February 2026 up to 04:00 p.m.

Terms and Conditions

- The applicants must be not less than 18 years and not more than 60 years of age as on the date of submission of application.
- The applicant must be a domicile of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, supported by a valid Domicile Certificate and falling under the jurisdiction of Chief Project Officer, National Fish Seed Farm Manasbal.
- The applicant must be an active fisher/fish vendor/fish worker/members of Fishers Cooperative Society, Fishery Self Help Groups, FFPOs continuously engaged in fish vending/marketing or fisheries-related livelihood for at least three (03) consecutive years immediately preceding the date of application. The applicant shall submit copies of fishing licences or other documentary proof of vending/marketing/entrepreneurial activity for each of the last three (03) years.
- The applicant must possess a valid Driving Licence for the category of vehicle (Three Wheeler/E-rickshaw) as per the Motor Vehicles Act and Rules. The applicant shall comply with all Transport Authority norms.
- The applicant must possess a valid QR-coded Aadhaar Card.
- The applicant must not have availed similar benefits earlier under PMMSY or any similar Central/State/UT Government scheme.
- Final eligibility shall be subject to field verification and certification by the Department of Fisheries, J&K. Any false declaration or suppression of facts shall lead to rejection of the application and recovery of assistance with penal action, as per rules.
- The applicant must fulfil the criteria as per the guidelines of the PMMSY scheme/ Department of Fisheries, J&K.
- The final selection of beneficiaries shall be made by the District Level Committee (DLC) constituted vide Government Order No. 944-JK(GAD) of 2020 dated 15-10-2020.

Further details may be sought from the office of the Chief Project Officer, National Fish Seed Farm Manasbal during the office hours.

DIPK: 10769/25 | Dated: 10-02-2026

Public Notice

I, Zahid Ahmad Koka, S/o Abdul Aziz Koka, R/o Batkoot, Pahalgam, do hereby inform the general public that the Date of Birth mentioned in my Driving Licence is incorrect.

The Date of Birth recorded in the Driving Licence is wrong. However, my correct Date of Birth is 05/03/1994 as per my Aadhaar Card and official records.

I have applied to the concerned RTO office for correction of my Date of Birth in the Driving Licence to match my Aadhaar details.

If any person has any objection regarding this correction, he/she may contact the undersigned within 7 days from the publication of this notice. After that, no claim or objection shall be entertained.

Applicant:
Zahid Ahmad Koka
S/o Abdul Aziz Koka
R/o Batkoot, Pahalgam

Public Notice

It is hereby informed to the general public that Green Glade Tour & Travel, registered with the Tourism Department, Pahalgam, is operating illegally.

Any person dealing with the said tour and travel agency does so at his/her own risk. The Tourism Department, Pahalgam, shall not be responsible for any loss or damage incurred.

Any claim or objection in this regard shall not be entertained after this notice.

The Applicant:
Naeem Fayaz Malik
S/o Fayaz Ahmad Malik
Resident of Bhatte Kote, Pahalgam

Public Notice

I have changed my name (old name) Mohammad Aslam Rather to (New name) Mohammad Aslam. In future I will be known as Mohammad Aslam (New name). If anybody having any objection he/she may contact passport office Srinagar within 7 days and no objection will be accepted.

Name Mohammad Aslam
R/o: Rajbagh Srinagar

Public Notice

I have cleared my loan from J&K Bank Drass of the vehicle bearing registration number JK07 3463. Anybody having any objection may contact Manager, J&K Bank, Drass within the period of 7 days from the publication of this notice.

Name- Mohd Ismail
S/O- Ghulam Hussain
R/O- Chokwyal, Drass

Public Notice

It is information for general public that I have changed my DOB 04/08/2003 to 15/07/2008. If anybody is having any objections he or she may contact madina public high school balharan within 07 days after 07 day no objection will be accepted

Name Wilayat mohammad
R/o chainabal

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FESTIVAL OF MOTHER LANGUAGES; 46TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF ADBI MARKAZ KAMRAAZ (AMK)

Writers, Poets Call for Preserving J&K's Multilingual Heritage, Seek Classical Status for Kashmiri Language

"Poets and Writers Must Safeguard the Multilingual Ethos of J&K : Abdul Rahim Rather

JEHANGIR BUKHARI

JAMMU, FEB 10: A Powerful Call to preserve Jammu and Kashmir's rich multilingual heritage and a resounding demand for granting classical language status to Kashmiri marked the opening day of the 46th three-day Annual Literary Conference of Adbi Markaz Jammu & Kashmir (AMK), which began here on Tuesday under the theme "Mother Tongue Day."

The conference opened on an inspiring and inclusive note with a multilingual mushaira, presided over by eminent literary figures Manshoor Banjali, Syed Sad-ud-Din Saidi, K.D. Maini and others, setting a vibrant cultural tone for the deliberations. Poets and writers representing Kashmiri, Dogri, Gojri, Pahari, Punjabi and other regional languages

showcased the Valley's linguistic diversity and shared literary legacy.

Inaugurating the conference, Speaker of the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, urged poets, writers and intellectuals to take the lead in preserving and promoting the region's multilingual ethos, describing it as the cornerstone of Jammu and Kashmir's cultural identity.

"Jammu and Kashmir is a land of many languages, and this diversity is our collective strength. Poets and writers have a historic responsibility to nurture and protect this priceless heritage," Rather said, lauding Adbi Markaz Kamraz for providing a common platform to different linguistic communities and fostering unity through literature.

He said that honouring genuine and quality writers not only enriches litera-

ture but also motivates the younger generation to remain rooted in their cultural traditions, thereby strengthening social harmony.

The proceedings were conducted by Vice-President AMK Shakir Shafi, while General Secretary Shabnum Tilgami presented the annual report of the organisation, outlining its literary and cultural activities.

In his welcome address, President Adbi Markaz Kamraz J&K highlighted the vital role of language and literature in building bridges among diverse identities and guiding society toward a higher sense of unity. Expressing concern over the growing cultural disconnect among youth, he called for collective efforts to revive and strengthen linguistic and civilisational bonds.

A major highlight of the inaugural

session was the strong and united demand for granting classical language status to Kashmiri. Most speakers passionately advocated this long-pending recognition, asserting that Kashmiri fully meets the established criteria for classical languages.

Delivering the presidential address, Sahitya Akademi Convener (New Delhi) Professor Shad Ramzan made a compelling case for the classical status of Kashmiri, citing its rich cultural ethos, vast literary treasure and history spanning thousands of years.

"Kashmiri is one of the oldest living languages, with a profound philosophical and literary tradition. Its recognition as a classical language is both justified and overdue," he said, urging that the demand be vigorously pursued at all government and academic levels.

Participants echoed his views, noting that classical status would significantly enhance research, preservation, and promotion of Kashmiri language and literature. The day-long proceedings also saw the felicitation of eminent poets and writers representing various regional languages, including Aseer Kashtiwi (Kashmiri), Vijay Verma (Dogri), Javid Rahi (Gojri), K.D. Maini (Pahari), Khalid Hussain (Punjabi) and Prem Nath Shad (Kashmiri), in recognition of their contributions to literature.

Throughout the sessions, speakers and participants underlined the need for sustained and collective efforts to promote mother languages, preserve linguistic diversity and strengthen cultural harmony, setting a positive and purposeful tone for the remaining two days of the conference.

