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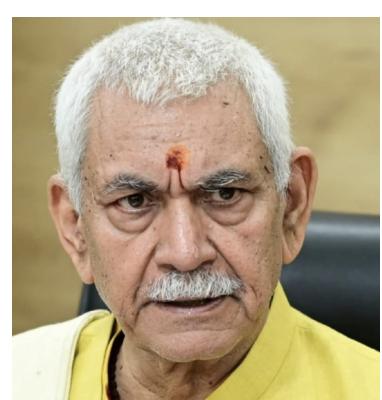
India to Emerge as Global Guide Through Spiritual-Scientific Renaissance: LG Sinha

Urges youth to combine inner awakening with technological excellence at Mahashivratri celebrations in Jammu

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 12: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Thursday said that India is poised to lead the world by harmonising its ancient spiritual wisdom with modern science and technology, calling upon the youth to blend inner consciousness with innovation to drive a balanced national renaissance.

Addressing the gathering at the Dyaar Dahan celebrations, part of the Mahashivratri festivities, at Mata Bhadrakali Asthan in Thalwal, the Lieutenant Governor said that in the near future India would guide the world towards the right path through a dual revolution of material progress and spiritual awakening.



"Our society, especially the youth, must recognise and harness their spiritual fire alongside technological and scientific prowess to surpass other nations in the journey of devel-

opment," he said.

Paying obeisance to Maa Shakti and Lord Shiva, the LG prayed for peace, prosperity and collective well-being. He observed that for thousands of years, India has progressed towards spiritual excellence, guided by saints and enlightened souls who attained the highest levels of consciousness.

Highlighting India's civilisational values, he said the nation has always placed the pursuit of truth above all else, promoting peace, universal brotherhood, social harmony, compassion and steadfast adherence to dharma.

"In today's fast-changing world, where nations compete in

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LG Chairs Milestone 50th SASB Meet; Big Push for Amarnath Yatra 2026

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 12: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday chaired the landmark 50th meeting of the Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board (SASB), approving a series of key initiatives aimed at enhancing safety, infrastructure and the spiritual experience of pilgrims for the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2026.

Among the major decisions, the Board

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Over 1,400 Illegal Structures Razed in J&K Since October 2024: Govt

Srinagar tops demolition list; CM says all actions taken after due legal process

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, FEB 12: More than 1,400 illegal structures, including residential and commercial buildings, have been demolished across Jammu and Kashmir since October 2024, the government informed the Legislative Assembly on Thursday.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, in a written reply to a starred question by PDP legislator Mir Mohammad Fayaz, said a total of 1,425 unauthorised structures were razed after following due procedure under the J&K Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1988, and other relevant laws.



The demolished properties included 1,194 residential and 231 commercial build-

ings. Srinagar district recorded the highest number of demolitions with 1,133 structures, including 119 commercial establishments, brought down by the J&K Lake Conservation and Management Authority, Srinagar Municipal Corporation and Srinagar Development Authority.

In Jammu district, 237 structures – including 75 commercial units – were demolished by the Jammu Development Authority, Jammu Municipal Corporation and revenue authorities. Other districts where anti-encroachment drives were carried out include Ramban (19), Anantnag (10), Kathua (7), Shopian (4), Kulgam,

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Consultative Rehabilitation Plan Assured as Ropeway Project Raises Livelihood Concerns

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, FEB 12: Amid mounting concerns over possible livelihood loss due to the proposed ropeway project on the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi pilgrimage route in Reasi district, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) on Thursday assured stakeholders that a comprehensive rehabilitation plan would be finalised through a structured consultation process.

The assurance came during a meeting with representatives of traditional service providers, including ponywallas, pithus and palkiwallas, associated with the yatra in Katra, the base camp for pilgrims. A spokesperson of the Shrine Board

said the meeting was convened to implement decisions taken during the 76th meeting of the SMVDSB, chaired by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, and in compliance with the directives of the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

The discussions focused on developing a sustainable and inclusive rehabilitation framework aimed at safeguarding the livelihoods of families dependent on yatra-related services, while ensuring environmentally responsible and pilgrim-friendly management of the pilgrimage.

The stakeholders demanded adequate compensation and stressed that the transition should be phased to minimise disruption and allow

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BRO Reopens Strategic Gurez Road, Restores LoC Connectivity in Record Time

■ HT NEWS DESK / KNO

SRINAGAR, FEB 12: The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) on Thursday completed snow clearance operations on the strategic Bandipora-Gurez road, restoring vital connectivity to the remote Gurez valley and the Line of Control (LoC) in record time, officials said.

The high-altitude road, pass-

ing through Razdan Top at around 3,300 metres, usually remains closed for nearly six months every winter due to heavy snowfall, cutting off Gurez valley from the rest of Jammu and Kashmir.

"This is the shortest time in which the Gurez road has been reopened after heavy snowfall. Despite extreme conditions, including sub-zero tempera-

tures, icy surfaces and strong winds, our teams worked relentlessly to restore connectivity," a senior BRO official said.

The 35-kilometre stretch between Bandipora and Razdan Top is considered among the most challenging winter routes in the region. Officials said coordinated efforts by the BRO and district administration

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Remote Area Incentives a Game-Changer: Sakeena Itoo

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 12: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, on Wednesday hailed Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's announcement of special incentives for employees posted in far-flung and remote areas, calling it a "remarkable and transformative" step aimed at strengthening public service delivery across Jammu and Kashmir.

Replying to a question by legislator Javaid Ahmad Mirchand during the Question Hour of the Budget Session 2026, the Minister



said the initiative announced in the Budget 2026-27 would motivate skilled professionals to serve in difficult terrains, thereby addressing long-pending staff shortages, particularly in critical sectors like health and education.

Highlighting steps taken to improve healthcare services in border and remote belts, she informed the House that 480 posts of Medical Officers have recently been referred to the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC) for recruitment. She added that the

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CS assesses the impact of HIMAYAT scheme in J&K

Stresses on timely target achievement and strong placement linkages

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 12: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gramin Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) – HIMAYAT scheme in J&K, an initiative

of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, aimed at skilling rural youth and ensuring their sustainable placement.

The meeting was attended by Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD), Ajaz Asad; Chief Operating Officer (COO), HIMAYAT,

Rajneesh Gupta; and other senior officers.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary emphasized the need to achieve the training targets under the revamped HIMAYAT 2.0 within stipulated timelines. He directed the department to adopt a result-orient-

ed approach and strictly link payments to Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) with their placement performance to ensure accountability and improved outcomes.

Reviewing the performance of the scheme's first phase, the Chief

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J&K Govt Frames Policy for Private Universities

Law Dept Vetting Underway; Proposals to Be Considered Post Approval

■ HT NEWS DESK / KNO

JAMMU, JAN 12: In a major step towards strengthening higher education infrastructure in the Union Territory, the Jammu and Kashmir Government has framed a comprehensive policy for the establishment of private universities, which is currently under legal scrutiny.

The development was disclosed by

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

India to Emerge.....

technological breakthroughs, we must also strive to connect hearts and nurture human values," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said India is currently witnessing two revolutions simultaneously — an outer revolution strengthening infrastructure, artificial intelligence and the digital economy, and an inner revolution transforming consciousness, values and societal vision.

"We are not merely conquering quantum computing; we are awakening a quantum consciousness in daily life. This dual transformation will make India not only prosperous, but a balanced global power," he asserted.

He further said India's strength lies not just in its human resources, innovations, startups, science and space technology, but also in its inner spiritual flame, ignited over millennia through meditation and wisdom.

"India's ancient wisdom shows that spirituality and science are not rivals but allies. Our rishis and sages were the original scientists, and the world today acknowledges India's immense contribution to both knowledge and spirituality," he said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor laid the foundation stone of a Cultural Heritage Centre at Mata Bhadrakali Asthapan and lauded NHPC for executing infrastructure works worth 6.60 crore at Thalwal, including development of community facilities, ghat, parking, yagya shala, protection works, compound wall, fencing and gate installation.

Senior officials, members of the Mata Bhadrakali Asthapan Trust and devotees attended the celebrations.

LG Chairs.....

approved setting up a Laser and Sound Show dedicated to 'Baba Barfani' in Jammu and Srinagar, envisioned as a cultural and spiritual attraction highlighting the religious heritage of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Board announced that the Pratham Pooja for the 2026 Yatra will be performed on June 29, coinciding with Jyeshtha Purnima, while the formal commencement date of the annual pilgrimage will be notified separately.

In a significant welfare step, the accidental insurance cover for registered yatrasis, service providers, officials, seasonal workers and pujaris has been enhanced from 5 lakh to 10 lakh.

Reviewing preparedness for the pilgrimage, the meeting discussed measures related to track maintenance, disaster management, medical facilities, sanitation, security, telecommunications, weather forecasting systems, grid connectivity and digital prepaid services. The Lieutenant Governor directed officials to identify additional locations for toilet facilities along the routes and ensure installation of shelter and rain sheds for pilgrims, service providers and security personnel.

The Board was informed that the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has achieved substantial progress in widening and upgrading the tracks on both Baltal and Pahalgam routes, ensuring safer and more comfortable movement for devotees.

Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Chief Executive Officer, SASB, presented a detailed overview of arrangements for Yatra 2026. The meeting was attended by Shrine Board members, senior civil and police officials, divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners and representatives of the BRO, both in person and virtually, at Lok Bhawan, Jammu.

J&K Youth Moving.....

cricket bat manufacturing have been established to boost local entrepreneurship.

Highlighting employment-driven initiatives, Karandlaje said that under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme, 73,349 units in J&K have received financial assistance worth Rs 4,394 crore, including Rs 1,530 crore in subsidies, enabling thousands of youth to set up enterprises.

She further informed that under the Vishwakarma Yojana, 22 lakh beneficiaries across the country have received skill training and toolkits, while special efforts are being made to integrate gig workers under ESI and EPFO through agreements with major digital platforms.

In a written reply, Union Labour and Employment Minister Mansukh Mandaviya stated that the unemployment rate in Jammu and Kashmir has declined from 6.7 per cent in 2019-20 to 6.1 per cent in 2023-24, while the Worker Population Ratio rose from 52.5 per cent to 60.4 per cent, underscoring improved employment trends in the Union Territory.

The government, the minister asserted, remains committed to accelerating development, generating sustainable livelihoods and ensuring long-term peace and stability in Jammu and Kashmir. (Agencies)

Over 1,400 Illegal.....

Ganderbal and Udhampur (3 each), Budgam (2), and Baramulla and Kupwara (one each).

Among the demolished properties was the house of journalist Arfaz Ahmad Daing in Jammu. The Chief Minister said the action was taken only after due verification by revenue authorities and completion of all legal formalities, adding that Daing, in a written submission dated November 19, 2025, had stated that he had no connection with the land or property in question. The demolition was carried out by the Jammu Development Authority on November 27, 2025.

Abdullah said no construction is permitted without proper authorisation, and demolition drives are conducted strictly in accordance with the law. He added that encroachments are removed under the Public Premises Act, while unauthorised constructions are dealt with under the Control of Building Operations (COBO) Act, 1988, following service of notices and due opportunity to violators.

Explaining how illegal constructions manage to come up despite regulations, the Chief Minister said legal interventions, lack of timely police assistance, construction at odd hours and deviations from approved plans often delay enforcement action, enabling offenders to advance construction before it is stopped. (AGENCIES)

Consultative.....

sufficient time for affected families to shift towards alternative income opportunities.

The Shrine Board is planning a 250-crore ropeway project to connect Taraknath Marg with Sanji Chhat along the 12-kilometre steep track leading to the cave shrine. The proposal has triggered protests from sections of service providers who fear economic displacement.

Reiterating its commitment to balancing environmental sustainability with socio-economic security, the Board said the rehabilitation plan would focus on creating alternative and sustainable livelihood avenues in line with NGT directions.

The Board assured the participants that all concerns and suggestions would be duly examined in consultation with the concerned authorities before finalising the comprehensive rehabilitation framework.

During the meeting, stakeholders also raised concerns over the existing registration mechanism and fee structure, urging the Board to take up the matter with the administration for review. They further proposed the development of an alternate parking facility to ease congestion at the Banganga area, which witnesses heavy traffic during peak yatra periods. (AGENCIES)

BRO Reopens.....

enabled early restoration this year.

"For the first time, a concerted effort was made to keep the road functional for a longer duration during winter to ensure uninterrupted access to essential supplies and services for Gurez residents," a district administration official said.

Traditionally, the valley remains isolated for nearly half the year, forcing residents to stock essential commodities ahead of winter. The road is usually closed after the season's first major snowfall.

Authorities said that, subject to favourable weather and final clearance, regulated traffic will be allowed from Bandipora to Gurez on Friday, February 13. Traffic will commence from TCP Tragbal at 9:00 am, with a cut-off time of 10:00 am.

No heavy motor vehicles (HMVs) will be permitted, and vehicles without anti-skid chains will not be allowed. Traffic from the opposite direction, from Gurez to Bandipora, will remain suspended.

Commuters have been advised to confirm road conditions before travel by contacting the District Control Room Bandipora at 7006526985 or PCR Bandipora at 9596767430.

The reopening of the vital road link has brought major relief to residents of the border valley, who depend on the route for essential supplies, healthcare access and emergency travel during the harsh winter months.

Remote Area.....

selected doctors will be deployed in far-flung and under-served areas, including Sub-District Hospital Tangdar in Karna and other border regions, as per policy.

The Minister further said that 292 vacancies in non-gazetted and paramedical categories under the Directorate of Family Welfare, Maternity and Child Health (MCH) and Immunization have been referred to the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) and are currently under advertisement.

She also informed that 802 vacancies of non-gazetted staff, including Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS) and Sanitation Workers under the Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir, are under active examination for referral to JKSSB.

Referring to appointments made in 2024, Sakeena Itoo said two Medical

Officers posted at NTPHC Hajinar and NTPHC Gundishor failed to join their duties, leading to cancellation of their appointment orders.

On the deployment of National Health Mission (NHM) staff in Karna constituency, she clarified that while postings are normally made against sanctioned positions, a few temporary adjustments have been undertaken on medical or administrative grounds without affecting health-care delivery, adding that staffing levels in Karna are presently largely stable.

Legislator Nazir Ahmad Khan (Gurezi) raised a supplementary question during the proceedings.

CS assesses.....

Secretary took note of the number of youth trained and the overall fund utilization. He also assessed the progress achieved during the current financial year 2025-26 and the targets earmarked under HIMAYAT 2.0.

On this occasion Secretary, RDD, Ajaz Asad, informed that the scheme provides job-linked skill training to eligible rural youth and facilitates their placement in regular employment, gig economy opportunities, or self-employment ventures, thereby promoting sustainable livelihoods.

He stated that the first version of the programme, implemented from 2016 to 2026, resulted in the training of 36,316 candidates across the Union Territory. Under DDU-GKY 2.0, which became effective from April 2025, Jammu and Kashmir has been assigned a target of training 2,248 candidates for the year 2025-26 with an approved outlay of 37.64 Cr. Of this, 1,838 candidates have already been trained so far.

Providing further details, COO HIMAYAT, Rajneesh Gupta, highlighted that during 2025-26, against a target of 996 candidates, 1,589 candidates were trained, with 850 of them successfully placed in various sectors. An expenditure of 27.49 Cr has been incurred during the year.

The meeting was informed about the key features of DDU-GKY 2.0, which mandate that PIAs must ensure a minimum of 70 percent placement of trained candidates, with a minimum monthly wage of

12,000, to qualify for project cost claims. It was also apprised that batch-wise monitoring has been introduced, including live streaming of training sessions to the HIMAYAT office for real-time monitoring and quality assessment of training delivery by PIAs.

At present, 13 PIAs have been allocated 175 candidates each to meet the overall training targets. These agencies are conducting skill training in various trades across different training centres, including Office Assistant, Assistant Designer, Sales Assistant, Front Office Assistant, General Duty Assistant, Supply Chain Executive, Assembly Operator, Food & Beverage Assistant, and Multi-Skill Technician for Home Appliances.

The meeting also reviewed the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) initiatives undertaken under the scheme. Activities such as Kaushal Parv, Alumni Meets, operation of Kaushal Rath (mobilization van), and screening of documentation and awareness videos have been conducted across various districts of the Union Territory to enhance outreach and mobilization of eligible youth.

The Chief Secretary reiterated the Government's commitment to strengthening skill development initiatives and directed the department to ensure quality training, enhanced placement outcomes, and sustained livelihood opportunities for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

J&K Govt.....

Minister in-charge Higher Education Sakeena Itoo in a written response to a cut motion moved by Peoples Conference MLA Sajad Gani Lone in the Legislative Assembly. She said the policy has been prepared after extensive consultations and is presently being examined by the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

"The policy for setting up private universities in the Union Territory has been framed by the Higher Education Department following detailed deliberations and is currently under examination in the Law Department," the minister said.

She added that once the policy receives formal approval, all proposals seeking permission to establish private universities will be evaluated on a case-to-case basis.

"At present, there is no private university in Jammu and Kashmir. However, several demands for their establishment have been received, underscoring the growing need for expanded and diversified higher education opportunities in the region," she said.

The move is expected to open new avenues for academic investment, improve access to quality education, and reduce the migration of students to institutions outside the Union Territory.

— (KNO)

Sat Sharma meets BJP National President Nitin Nabin, reviews strategy to further strengthen BJP in J&K



■ HT NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI, FEB 12 : Jammu & Kashmir BJP President and Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), Sat Sharma CA, met the Bharatiya Janata Party National President, Nitin Nabin, at his New Delhi residence and held an in-depth discussion on strengthening the party's organizational framework and accelerating people-centric governance in Jammu and Kashmir.

He said that the BJP remains firmly committed to strengthening its organizational roots at the booth and mandal levels to further consolidate the party's connect with the masses.

"The BJP's politics is driven by service, development, and trust. Our focus is to ensure that the common citizen of Jammu and Kashmir experiences tangible change through transparent governance, robust infrastructure, employment opportunities, and empowerment-oriented policies," Sat Sharma said.

Sat Sharma comprehensively briefed the National President on the aspirations, challenges, and developmental priorities of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, highlighting the need for sustained political engagement and responsive governance. He shared key inputs on policy-driven initiatives aimed at accelerating economic growth, social empowerment, and regional integration.

AIMPLB Terms Mandatory Recitation of 'Vande Mataram' Unconstitutional, Seeks Immediate Withdrawal of Notification

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

imediate withdrawal of the notification, warning that it may approach the courts if the order is not revoked.

In a press statement issued on February 12, 2026, AIMPLB said the decision violates constitutional principles and conflicts with the religious beliefs of Muslims. The Board's General Secretary, Maulana Mohammad Faizur Rahim Mujaddidi, stated that compelling individuals to recite the



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DC Srinagar reviews Tehsil-wise progress on key Revenue matters

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, FEB 12: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, today chaired a meeting of senior Revenue Officers at the Conference Hall of the DC Office Complex to assess tehsil-wise progress on key revenue matters and streamline service delivery mechanisms across the district along with progress on digitisation of revenue records.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz,

SDM West, Irfan Bahadur, SDM East, Zubair Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Umar Gulzar and all Tehsildars.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner undertook a detailed tehsil-wise review of mutation cases, attestation of revenue records, issuance of certificates, disposal of public grievances, progress in digitisation of revenue records of the district and other time-bound services delivered through the Revenue Department.

The DC also reviewed the functioning of online service delivery platforms, particularly the Jan-



sugam and Revenue Plus portals.

On the occasion, the DC stressed the importance of adopting effective and efficient mechanisms to enhance the overall performance of the Revenue Department. He urged Officers to ensure quality and timely service delivery to citizens, emphasizing strict adherence to PSGA timelines, particularly with regard to the Jansugam and Revenue Plus portals.

The DC further asked the Revenue Officers to ensure effective monitoring of ongoing digitisation of revenue related records

District Rajouri receives appreciation for Digital Life Certificate drive

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI, FEB 12: District Administration Rajouri has been awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by the Finance Department, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, for its performance in improving coverage under the Digital Life Certificate (Jeevan Pramaan) campaign during 2025-26.

The award acknowledges the efforts of the administration in ensuring maximum enrolment of pensioners under the initiative.

Under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma, the administration, treasury staff and line departments coordinated to create awareness and facilitate doorstep services for the timely generation of digital life certificates, particularly in remote areas.

The Finance Department noted the district's proactive approach and sustained outreach, which enhanced coverage and assisted pensioners in availing benefits. The District Administration expressed gratitude to the Finance Department for the recognition.

Commissioner Survey and Land Records reviews progress on verification of digitized Jamabandies

Also takes stock of grievance redressal

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, FEB 12: In order to ensure accuracy and transparency in land records, the Commissioner, Survey and Land Records (CSLR), J&K, Inder Jeet today chaired a meeting of Revenue Officers of District Ganderbal here to check the status of verification of digitized Jamabandies as well as redressal of public grievances.

At the outset, Assistant Commissioner Revenue briefed the meeting about the status of verification and the challenges faced on ground for achieving purification of records.

CSLR underscored the need for coordinated efforts to ensure error-free verification and timely redressal of public grievances, reiterating that the ultimate goal is safeguarding the rights of the people through transpar-

ent and accurate land records. He instructed officers to expedite disposal of backlog mutations, conduct thorough checking of records, and address grievances on the spot wherever feasible.

Directions were also issued to strengthen grievance collection mechanisms and resolve errors in revenue entries.

The officers were directed to maintain quality checks at every stage and ensure that the digitized record truly reflects the original revenue record.

Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Sub Divisional Magistrate Kangan, all Tehsildars and Naib Tehsildars attended the meeting.

Earlier, the Commissioner visited Estate Arch, Tehsil Ganderbal, for physical verification of digitized

Jamabandies in the presence of the general public and landowners.

During the visit, a detailed review of digitized Jamabandies was conducted and compared with the physical records. The exercise aimed at identifying discrepancies, rectifying errors and strengthening the grievance redressal mechanism.

Public interaction was also held, wherein landowners raised various issues regarding entries, transliteration of names and other record-related concerns.

It was informed that tallying of digitized Jamabandies with physical records is underway and errors, wherever detected, are being rectified. Stress was laid on ensuring 100 percent parity between digitized and physical Jamabandies to eliminate inconsistencies.

PROANG Delegation Mounts Strong Pitch in New Delhi, Seeks Urgent Redressal of Retired Police Grievances

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI, JAN 12: In a determined bid to secure justice for retired police personnel and Special Police Officers (SPOs), a high-level delegation of the Police Retired Officers Association (Non-Gazetted) - PROANG, Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, called on senior national leaders in New Delhi to press for immediate redressal of long-pending issues affecting thousands of families across the UT.

The delegation, led by Chairman PROANG UT of J&K, Jinab Gh. Hassan Zargar, raised what it described as "serious and unresolved injustices" faced by retired Non-Gazetted Police personnel—many of whom are senior citizens grappling with financial insecurity and mounting medical

expenses.

According to Mir Niyaz Ahmad, Spokesperson and Media In-Charge of PROANG UT of J&K, the delegation included Jinab Farooq Ahmad Wani (President, PROANG UT of J&K), Jinab Abdul Khaliq Thoker (President, PROANG Awantipora), Jinab Tarseem Bhagat (District President, PROANG Jammu), Jinab Ashraf Ali Lone (Secretary, PROANG Awantipora), and Jinab Jaspal Singh (Senior Executive Member).

During the visit, the delegation met former Union Minister Jinab M. Abbas Naqvi at his office in New Delhi and presented a detailed account of the persistent pay anomaly stemming from the 5th Pay Commission. They also highlighted the non-implementation of the Hon'ble Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT),

J&K order dated 24-10-2024, terming the delay a matter of grave concern. The leaders underscored the severe medical and financial hardships being faced by retired personnel, stressing that those who devoted their lives to public service now deserve dignity and security.

Three comprehensive representations addressed to the Hon'ble Union Home Minister were formally submitted. The key demands included:

Immediate rectification of the historical pay anomaly and time-bound implementation of the CAT order dated 24-10-2024.

Enhancement of the Fixed Medical Allowance (FMA) from the existing Rs. 300 to at least Rs. 1000 per month, with uniform and retrospective implementation.

Robust welfare measures for

the J&K Police Pariwar, including upgradation of Police Hospitals, dedicated ambulance services, strict enforcement of Ayushman Bharat benefits, financial support for life-threatening illnesses, and dignity-based facilities for senior citizens.

The delegation also forcefully projected the grievances of Special Police Officers (SPOs), calling for a revision of the honorarium structure and regularisation after 15 years of continuous service on humanitarian grounds.

Jinab M. Abbas Naqvi assured the delegation of his full moral support and stated that the representations would be forwarded to the Ministry of Home Affairs and other concerned authorities for appropriate action. The PROANG team also met Jinab Tarun Chugh, Hon'ble National General Secretary,

BJP and In-Charge J&K Affairs, who assured that the issues would be taken up at the appropriate forums and that efforts would be made to facilitate a meeting with the Hon'ble Minister of State for Home Affairs after the ongoing Parliament session.

Chairman Gh. Hassan Zargar described the New Delhi visit as part of PROANG's sustained constitutional and democratic struggle to secure justice, dignity, and humanitarian relief for retired police personnel, SPOs, and the entire Police Pariwar of Jammu & Kashmir.

"This is not merely a financial issue—it is about honouring the service and sacrifices of those who stood on the frontlines for decades," he asserted, reaffirming that the association will continue its advocacy until tangible relief is achieved.

World Unani Day 2026 Celebrated in Kupwara on Birth Anniversary of Hakim Ajmal Khan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, FEB 11: The District Ayush Office Kupwara, under the aegis of the Directorate of Ayush, J&K (UT) and National Ayush Mission, today celebrated World Unani Day 2026 with enthusiasm and active participation of senior district and health officials, marking the birth anniversary of eminent Unani scholar Hakim Ajmal Khan.

The programme was presided over by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kupwara, Shri Gulzar Ahmad Khan, who graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The Chief Guest was warmly welcomed by Ayush officials on his arrival. In his address, the ADC highlighted the importance of the Unani system of medicine in providing

holistic, preventive, and affordable healthcare, and stressed the need for strengthening evidence-based practices.

The welcome address was delivered by Dr Raja Amjid Ali, District Ayush Officer Kupwara, who elaborated on the significance of observing World Unani Day on the birth anniversary of Hakim Ajmal Khan and explained the relevance of this year's theme, "Innovation and Evidence in Unani Practice." He also briefed the gathering about initiatives taken by the Ayush Department to strengthen Unani healthcare services in the district.

Dr Zaffer Ahmad, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Kupwara, attended the programme as Guest of Honour, while Dr Mohd Ashraf Mir, Deputy CMO Kupwara, was present as Special Guest. The dignitaries

emphasised the growing role of traditional systems of medicine, including Unani, in public healthcare.

The event was anchored by Dr Mohd Ayoub Marazi, Senior Medical Officer, who conducted the proceedings in a smooth and professional manner.

Besides the inaugural session, technical sessions were also held, during which experts and Unani practitioners delivered presentations focusing on research, innovation, clinical practices, and evidence-based Unani medicine.

Medical officers, Unani practitioners, and staff of the Ayush Department attended the programme, reaffirming their commitment towards the promotion and development of the Unani system of medicine in Kupwara district.

Play "Shikargah" Staged in Budgam, Highlights Human Nature Relationship

■ GULFAM BARJI

BUDGAM, FEB 12: A recreated Bhand Pather play titled "Shikargah" was staged in an open-air setting at Dreygam in Budgam district on Wednesday. The performance was presented by young artists from Tulkul Arts and Media Collective under the guidance and direction of noted theatre activist Rayees Wathori.

The play focused on the relationship between humans and nature, drawing attention to pressing environmental concerns such as the destruction of wildlife habitats, the adverse impact of mining on water bodies, and river pollution caused by waste dumping. The initiative aimed to spread awareness about environ-



mental responsibility through the traditional folk theatre form.

Speaking on the occasion, Rayees Wathori said that Bhand Pather continues to be a powerful medium for addressing social and environmental issues. He emphasized that the traditional art form remains relevant and effective in communicating important messages to the community. Wathori also informed that the

programme was organized without any external support and was personally funded to ensure the preservation and continuity of the centuries-old theatrical tradition.

The audience appreciated the energetic performance of the young artists and lauded their efforts to keep the traditional theatre form alive while making it socially meaningful and relevant.

DC Srinagar chairs District Telecom Committee Meeting

Reviews development of telecom infrastructure under JKCCIP

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR FEBRUARY 12: A meeting of District Telecom Committee (DTC) was today held under the Chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office to review and discuss the development of telecom infrastructure under Jammu & Kashmir Communication and Connectivity Infrastructure Project (JKCCIP).

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner, Rifat Aftab Qureshi; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz; Dy Superintendent of Police, Syed Sleeth Shah; Superintending Engineer R&B, Shabir Ahmad; Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Umar Gulzar; Assistant Commissioner Development; Tariq Ahmad Reshi, Chief Medical Officer, Dr Tahir Sajad; DIO, NIC Srinagar, Shahzad Naseem,

besides Officers from Forest, SDA, PCC and representatives of various telecom companies operating in district.

The Committee deliberated on key issues related to strengthening of telecom infrastructure and enhancement of network connectivity across Srinagar district. Detailed discussions were held regarding construction and commissioning of mobile towers, 4G saturation, status of Right of Way (RoW) applications for Optical Fiber Cable (OFC), progress under the amended BharatNet Project, 5G street furniture mapping and other related matters.

During the meeting, the DC stressed the need for close coordination among all concerned departments to ensure the timely completion of telecom infrastructure projects. He stressed the importance of connecting all panchayats with their respective blocks in a time-bound manner to improve governance and service



delivery mechanisms. He also called for expediting the implementation of 4G saturation and BharatNet projects across the district.

Highlighting the significance of robust telecom networks, the DC stated that improved connectivity is vital for effective governance, delivery of essential services, education and economic activities. He reiterated that strengthening network coverage and improving signal quality are crucial for public welfare and the overall development of the district.

During the meeting, the DC also took detailed feedback from telecom companies operating in Srinagar district and urged them to enhance the quality of telecom services, particularly in remote areas. He stressed the importance of close coordination between excavation agencies and asset owners to avoid any damage to existing infrastructure at project sites.

ADDC Shopian presides over two-day cluster level workshop to strengthen quality GPDP implementation

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, FEBRUARY 12: Rural Development Department (RDD) Shopian today organised a two-day cluster level workshop on quality Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) here at Mini-Secretariat Shopian to generate awareness and enhance capacity at the grassroots level for effective and participatory planning. The workshop was presided over by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone who emphasised the pivotal role of GPDP as a people-centric and need-based planning tool for holistic rural development. He underscored the importance of convergence, transparency and community participation in framing realistic and impactful development plans at the Gram Panchayat level.



Detailed deliberations were held on sector-wise planning, prioritisation of local needs, fund convergence and timely execution of developmental works.

Experts sensitised the participants on aligning GPDP with flagship schemes and ensuring inclusiveness, sustainability and accountability in Panchayat planning.

The workshop concluded with a commitment to strengthen grassroots governance and ensure quality implementation of GPDP across all Gram Panchayats of the district.

ACD, Shopian, Muzaffar Ahmed, officers from Agriculture, Social Welfare, Rural Development and other allied departments were present.

DC Kulgam reviews Power Scenario in district, directs for uninterrupted supply during Sehri & Iftari hours

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, FEBRUARY 12: Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today chaired a meeting of officers from KPDCL and JKPTCL to review the power scenario across the district, with special focus on arrangements during the holy month of Ramadan.

During the meeting, the DC directed the concerned officers to ensure uninterrupted and smooth electricity supply, especially during Sehri and Iftari hours.

He stressed the need for close coordination between departments and real-time monitoring of the power supply to minimize disruptions. He also urged the public to use electricity judiciously and avoid the use of heavy-load appliances and crude heating devices to prevent overloading and ensure a stable power supply for all consumers. The meeting was attended



by Joint Director Planning, ACR, Executive Engineer ED Kulgam (KPDCL), Executive Engineer STD Bijbehara (KPDCL), Executive Engineer TLMD-VIII Bemina Srinagar (JKPTCL), and Executive Engineer TLMD-VI Bemina Srinagar (JKPTCL) and other officers.

DC BUDGAM REVIEWS RAMADAN ARRANGEMENTS

Directs for ensuring uninterrupted Essential Services at Iftar and sehri times

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, FEBRUARY 12: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-din Bhat, today convened a high-level meeting of district officers to comprehensively review the arrangements put in place for the ongoing holy month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak and to ensure that all necessary facilities are made available to the public in a smooth and hassle-free manner.

During the meeting, it was stressed that uninterrupted power and potable water supply across the district must be ensured throughout the holy month, with special emphasis on the critical hours of Sehri (Suhoor) and Iftar. The Executive Engineers of the Power Development Department (PDD) and Public Health

Engineering (PHE) Department were directed to sensitise their respective field staff and ensure round-the-clock monitoring so that any disruptions are promptly addressed and minimum inconvenience is caused to the public.

The DC further directed that special measures be adopted to maintain stability in essential supplies and ensure that adequate manpower is deployed to handle increased demand during peak hours. It was impressed upon the concerned departments that uninterrupted electricity supply during Sehri and Iftar timings shall be accorded top priority across all areas of the district.

At the outset, directions were issued for the constitution of special market checking squads to strictly monitor markets and

take firm action against profiteering, hoarding, black marketing and overcharging. It was emphasized that regular market inspections shall be carried out to ensure availability of essential commodities at notified rates and that strict enforcement of consumer protection norms shall be ensured in letter and spirit.

Emphasis was also laid on maintaining sanitation, cleanliness and proper illumination in all towns and municipal areas.

The Executive Officers of Municipal Committees were directed to launch special cleanliness drives with focus on cleaning of roads, lanes, drains and market areas. Regular lifting and disposal of garbage and waste material was directed to be ensured to maintain hygienic

conditions during the holy month. Instructions were also issued for the installation and maintenance of street lights to ensure proper lighting in public spaces.

The DC further directed the concerned authorities to ensure that public transport services remain operational during evening and late hours, particularly around Iftar timings, so that commuters and shoppers do not face any inconvenience.

It was also stressed that health and veterinary departments shall remain alert and responsive to ensure availability of essential medical and animal health services during the holy month. Departments were advised to maintain close coordination and adopt a proactive approach to address any public grievances in a time-bound manner.

The DC emphasised that all departments must work in close coordination to ensure that the holy month of Ramadan is observed in an atmosphere of comfort, cleanliness and ease for the people.

He directed that officers shall personally monitor the implementation of the directions issued and ensure that public service delivery remains efficient and uninterrupted.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Budgam, Mehraj Din Shah; Chief Planning Officer (CPO), Javid Ahmad; all Sub-divisional Magistrates (SDMs); Chief Medical Officer (CMO); Animal and Sheep Husbandry Officer; Executive Engineers of PHE and PDD, Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO), and other concerned officers.

DC Kupwara inspects preparations for Lolab Winter Festival 2026

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 12: In the lead-up to the Lolab Winter Festival 2026, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Shrikant Suse along with the Senior Superintendent of Police Kupwara, Syed Al-Tahir Gilani conducted an on-site inspection at Kariwan Eco Park, Devar Lolab, today to review arrangements for the forthcoming event scheduled on 15th February 2026.

Detailed discussions held regarding security, sanitation, parking



arrangements, traffic regulation, cultural presentations, food vending, snow sport activities and public amenities at the venue.

The DC directed all departments to ensure full proof arrangements for smooth conduct of the event.

The Lolab Winter Festival is envisioned as a premier platform to propagate the region's rich cultural heritage, bolster tourism, highlight indigenous handicrafts and culinary traditions, and afford opportunities for local artistes to exhibit their talent.

District Admin Bandipora conducts IEC Awareness Programmes under Nasha Mukht JK Abhiyan across district

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 12: As part of the ongoing Nasha Mukht Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan, the District Administration Bandipora today conducted a series of IEC awareness programmes across the district.

The events were held across various Urban Local Body (ULB) areas of the district, including Wangipora Payeen (Sumbal), Ward No. 2 Plan (Bandipora), and 4-Naid/Kacher Mohalla (Hajin), to sensitize the public about the harmful effects of drug abuse and promote a drug-free society.

The programmes were coordinated



by the designated IEC nodal officers at respective locations, with active participation from officials of Health,

Police, Education, Social Welfare, Youth Services & Sports, and JKRLM departments. The multi-departmental approach aimed at strengthening community outreach and ensuring effective awareness at the grassroots level. During the sessions, resource persons including doctors, police officials, teachers, and social welfare representatives delivered informative talks highlighting the physical, psychological, and social consequences of substance abuse. They emphasized preventive awareness, early intervention, and collective community responsibility in addressing the growing menace of drugs.

DC Baramulla chairs meeting to review arrangements for 6th edition Khelo India Winter Games 2026 at Gulmarg

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, FEBRUARY 12:

Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa chaired a high-level meeting at Gulmarg Club to review and finalize arrangements for the successful conduct of the 6th Edition of Khelo India National Winter Games 2026, scheduled to be held from 23rd to 26th February 2026 at the world-famous ski resort Gulmarg.

Athletes from various States and Union Territories are expected to arrive on 21st and 22nd February.

At the outset, the DC took a comprehensive review of the preparations being undertaken by different departments to ensure the smooth and hassle-free conduct of the prestigious national event.

Detailed discussions were held on venue readiness, preparation and inspection of ski slopes, accommodation for athletes and officials, transportation plans, traffic management, medical facilities including emergency response teams, uninterrupted water and power supply, sanitation, snow clearance, security arrangements, and overall logistical coordination.



The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments, including J&K Sports Council, Police, Chief Medical Officer, PHE, PDD, Tourism, Municipal authorities, Transport, R&B, and other line departments, to work in close coordination and ensure that all arrangements are put in place well in advance. He emphasized that no lapses will be tolerated and stressed the need to maintain the highest standards of professionalism, safety, and hospitality.

He further instructed officers to establish dedicated control rooms, deploy adequate manpower, and ensure round-the-clock availability of essential services during the event. Special focus was laid on the safety, comfort, and convenience of athletes, officials, guests, and visitors.

Highlighting the significance of the event, the DC stated that the Khelo India National Winter Games provide an important platform to showcase Gulmarg as a premier winter sports destination of the country. He reiterated that the district administration is fully committed to hosting the event in a well-organized, safe, and successful manner.

The meeting was attended by Joint Director Tourism, Waseem Raja; Assistant Director Tourism Gulmarg, Tahir Mohi-ud-Din Wani; CEO Gulmarg Development Authority, Tariq Hussain Naik, SDM Gulmarg, senior officers of the district administration, and representatives of all concerned departments.

Industry-Academia-Farmer interface and dog show highlight Day 2 of Kisan Mela-2026

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 12: The second day of the Agriculture Summit and Kisan Mela-2026 at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu (SKUAST-Jammu) witnessed vibrant stakeholder engagement through technical deliberations, farmer-centric programmes and public outreach events, reinforcing the University's commitment to sustainable agricultural development.

A key highlight was the Industry-Academia-Farmer Meet held at the Main Campus, Chatha, with participation from over 30 industries, agri-startups and Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs). The meet provided a collaborative platform for interaction among industry leaders, academicians, researchers, students and farmers. In his inaugural address, the Vice-Chancellor Prof B.N. Tripathi emphasized the need for sustained industry-academia collaboration to ensure that research, innovation and education remain aligned with field and market realities. He highlighted initiatives such as MoUs with leading industries, appointment of Professors of Practice, industry-sponsored internships and the establishment of the Bayer Learning Centre, reiterating SKUAST-Jammu's focus on employability, entrepreneurship and innovation.

The Guest of Honour, Dr Owais Ahmad,

Director, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Kashmir and Additional Charge Special Secretary, Planning, Development & Monitoring Department, Government of J&K, stressed the importance of structured internship programmes and active industry participation in shaping job-ready agriculture graduates. Two technical sessions and panel discussions were chaired by Dr Owais Ahmad, with Dr S.K. Gupta, Director Research and Dr Sudhakar Dwivedi, Director Students' Welfare, as Co-Chairs. Moderated by Dr Anil Bhat and Dr Pawan Sharma, the sessions underscored the need for bridging the industry-academia gap through collaborative research, internships and continuous stakeholder engagement. The meet was coordinated by Dr Sanjay Guleria, Dean, Faculty of Basic Sciences.

The day also featured a popular dog show. Additionally, the Agrometeorology Section, SKUAST-Jammu, organized a farmer awareness programme on "Resource Conservation and High Income through Agro-Advisory Services" under Grameen Krishi Mausam Sewa, attended by over 100 farmers. Shri O.P. Vidyarthi, Member, J&K and Ladakh Biodiversity Council, emphasized the role of trees in combating climate change. On the occasion, 210 mango and citrus fruit plants were distributed among farmers.

Various sports and recreational events further added to the festive spirit of the Kisan Mela.

IISM Gulmarg concludes Fourth 14-Day Skiing & Snowboarding Course

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, FEBRUARY 12: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, today graced the Graduation Ceremony of the fourth 14-day Skiing and Snowboarding Course of the 2025-26 training season at the Indian Institute of Skiing and Mountaineering (IISM), Gulmarg.

The course witnessed enthusiastic participation from winter sports aspirants across the country, reaffirming IISM's continued commitment to promoting excellence and professionalism in snow skiing and snowboarding training in India.

A total of 101 candidates successfully completed the course, including 57 in the Basic level, 14 in the Intermediate level, 7 in the Advanced level, and 23 in the Snowboarding category. Certificates and prizes were distributed among the successful participants.

Addressing the gathering, Minga Sherpa congratulated the students on successfully completing the course.

He described IISM as a premier institute of the country and highlighted that securing a seat in its courses is highly competitive, as registrations are conducted online and remain in great demand. He noted that the participants were fortunate to secure admission and encouraged them to make the most of the opportunity by learning wholeheartedly from the qualified and experienced instructors.

He expressed satisfaction at witnessing the enthusiastic participation of youth from across India and appreciated their dedication towards winter sports and adventure activities. He emphasized that institutions like IISM play a vital role in nurturing talent, discipline, and resilience among young people, preparing them to excel both in sports and in life.

The successful conduct of the course reflects IISM's sustained efforts to strengthen winter sports culture in the country and to provide structured, high-quality training in skiing and snowboarding.

The institute continues to serve as a premier hub for aspiring winter sports athletes, contributing significantly to the promotion of adventure tourism and professional training standards in India.

CGWB organises workshop on national aquifer mapping and groundwater management at Ramban

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN, FEBRUARY 12: The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation (RDGR) Jammu, in collaboration with the District Administration Ramban, today organised a one-day workshop on National Aquifer Mapping and Management (NAQUM) Studies at the Conference Hall, Ramban.

The workshop was chaired by Scientist-D Rakesh Rana in the presence of ACD Ramban Sheraz Ahmed and Senior Scientist Rayees Ahmad Pir. The programme commenced with the inaugural address by Scientist-D Rakesh Rana, highlighting the importance of scientific groundwater assessment and sustainable management practices. This was followed by a technical session featuring expert presentations.

Assistant Hydrogeologist Mohammad

DIC Ramban organises awareness workshop on self-employment schemes at Nachlana (Khari)

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN, FEBRUARY 12: In line with the directives of Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan, the District Industries Centre (DIC) Ramban today organised a one-day awareness workshop at Government High School Nachlana (Khari) to promote self-employment opportunities and government-supported entrepreneurship schemes among local youth and artisans.

The programme was held under the guidance of Director Industries & Commerce Jammu Arun Manhas and was inaugurated by General Manager, DIC Ramban, Ravinder Kumar.

During the workshop, the general public was sensitized about Udyam Registration under RAMP, 2021-30.

Addressing the gathering, Minga Sherpa congratulated the students on successfully completing the course.

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the PMEGP Scheme, PM Vishwakarma and various other schemes being implemented by the Industries & Commerce Department through District Industries Centre Ramban. Project Manager DIC Ramban Kuldeep Singh highlighted the benefits of these schemes and encouraged youth to register on the PMEGP portal to avail financial assistance and become entrepreneurs.

Participants were informed about various benefits, subsidies and financial assistance available under PMEGP for establishing manufacturing and service sector ventures. Awareness was also created regarding schemes such as NCSS, a centrally sponsored initiative and incentives available under the J&K Industrial Policy 2021-30.

Information about PM skill upgradation scheme for traditional artisans, was also



shared. Local entrepreneurs were briefed about the MSME Health Clinic initiative and encouraged to register their units on the MSME Health Clinic portal to avail advisory and financial support services.

Officers from various departments including AD MSME, Director SBI RSETI Ramban, LDM SBI Ramban, Employment Counsellor from the Employment Department, DNO JKEDI, FLC Ramban, Handloom/Handicrafts Department and officials from India Post delivered informative lectures on schemes related to their respective sectors.

Nearly 100 aspiring youth and artisans participated in the workshop and were motivated to explore entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities.

RTO Jammu completes 67,996 vehicle transactions, issues 45,121 driving licences in 2025

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 12: The Office of the Regional Transport Officer (RTO) Jammu hereby informs the general public that during the calendar year 2025, a total of 67,996 vehicle-related transactions were approved in Jammu District. These transactions comprised issuance of fresh Registration Certificates (RCs), transfer of ownership cases, addition and termination of hypothecation (HP), address changes, issuance of duplicate RCs and other allied services.

In addition, 5,906 route permits have been largely renewed and in a few cases, issued afresh to ensure smooth, efficient and uninterrupted public as well as commercial transport operations across the district.

During the same period, 12,111 vehicle fitness certificates were issued after due inspection, ensuring that vehicles complied with prescribed road safety and fitness standards. The department also issued 45,121 driving licences covering fresh licences, renewals, additional endorsements and other related services.

Furthermore, 30,576 learner licences were granted to new applicants, enabling them to legally commence their driving training process. It is further informed that the printing of all Driving Licence cards and RC smart cards is outsourced and centralized. These cards are printed on a real-time basis and are being delivered directly to the addresses mentioned by applicants in their respective DL and RC applications. During the year 2025, a total of 3,10,000 Driving Licences (DLs) were delivered to applicants at their respective addresses.

The Transport Department has consistently endeavoured to deliver services in a transparent, efficient and time-bound manner through its robust online platforms. The extensive digitisation of services has significantly transformed departmental functioning by reducing physical interface, enhancing transparency, curbing the role of middlemen and ensuring greater convenience for citizens.

During the year 2025, an amount of ₹1.78 crore as compensation was disbursed and directly transferred into the bank accounts of the legal heirs of accident victims in fatal cases as well as into the accounts of injured persons, strictly as per the prescribed eligibility criteria. Besides this, an amount of ₹2.70 crore was disbursed as transport subsidy to 54 beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). Furthermore, 85 additional cases are presently in the pipeline at various stages of processing.

It is pertinent to mention that as on date, no online service application is pending with the department.

DLSA Reasi reviews preparations for National Lok Adalat, conducts awareness programmes

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

REASI, FEBRUARY 12: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Reasi organised a meeting at District Court Complex Reasi on 12 February 2026 to review preparations for the National Lok Adalat scheduled on 14 March 2026. The meeting was chaired by Khalid Choudhary, Chairman DLSA Reasi and Principal District and Sessions Judge Reasi, under the guidance of Pooja Gupta, Secretary DLSA Reasi.

The meeting was attended by ACR Reasi, ACD Reasi, Assistant Labour Commissioner Reasi, Tehsildar Reasi, ARTO Reasi, Assistant Food and Supply Officer Reasi, District Social Welfare Officer Reasi, DFO Reasi, Assistant Director Fisheries Reasi, Secretary Zila Sainik Welfare Board Reasi, Sanitation Officer Municipal Council Reasi and other officers.

Discussions were held regarding identification of suitable pre-litigation and pending cases for settlement during the National Lok Adalat. Government departments were urged to refer appropriate

matters to facilitate expeditious and cost-effective resolution of disputes through mutual consent.

Meanwhile, Para Legal Volunteers of TLSC Katra organised an awareness programme on "Mediation for Nation 2.0" at Panchayat Akhli Katra to educate the public about mediation as an effective alternative dispute resolution mechanism.

Para Legal Volunteers of TLSC Mahore conducted an awareness programme on "Bal Vivah Mukt Bharat" at Mahore and Bhamla, Reasi, highlighting the ill effects of child marriage and provisions of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act. Participants were sensitised about ensuring education, health and a secure future for children, especially girls.

A slogan writing competition on dowry prohibition was organised by PLVs of TLSC Katra at LLC Katra to create awareness about the Dowry Prohibition Act.

Panel Lawyers and PLVs of DLSA Reasi also organised an awareness programme on observance of traffic rules at Reasi.



classroom practices and measurable outcomes. He urged Principals to work in close coordination with DIET Jammu and SCERT for effective ground-level implementation and sought their active cooperation.

The Chief Education Officer called upon Heads of Institutions to implement the mandate of NEP 2020 in letter and spirit, focusing on competency-based education, digital integration, holistic

development and special focus on the

findings of Rashtriya Sarvekshan 2024 (PARAKH).

(PARAKH).

Heads of various DIET wings Jameel

Ahmed (MSE), Kewal Ram Sagar (P&M), Kanwal Preet Kour (DRU), Anita Devi (PSTE), Monika Kalsotra (Education Technology) and Sarabjeet Kour (CMDE) along with their teams contributed to the successful organisation of the programme.

The event was coordinated by Dr

Romesh Kumar, HOD DIET Jammu.

HT EDITORIAL

Time to regulate social media has come

Journalism is the fourth pillar of democracy and journalists are expected to deliver to their best level so that the people come to know about the latest happenings at the local, national and international levels. There was a time when only well read people would join the different news organizations or news channels and become reporters. The trend has changed of late and as on date no formal education is required to become a journalist.

As on date the symbol of a journalist is a mobile phone and a mike. There is no need to go to any college or university to get formal education and then become a journalist. The worst part of the story is that most of the people believe these social media people and not the real journalists. Whatever is said or broadcast by the uneducated people is considered to be authentic by most of the people even though there are exceptions.

Over the past few years there has been a mushroom growth of the people running social media pages and then claiming to be the journalists. Not to talk of the ordinary people, the people at helm also tend to give importance to the social media people and invite them to the official functions. Most of the accredited journalists are not invited to the official functions while as the social media people are given due protocol by the officers and officials.

Credibility has taken a hit and there are very few people who are ready to believe the news as and when they come out. Given the fact that social media platforms flash the news as they come, there are very few people who want the same to be read in tomorrow's newspapers. Most of the time it has been seen that the different social media platforms in order to score brownie points flash a news without checking the authenticity of the news.

It is imperative that the Department of Information regulates the functioning of the different social media pages. It must be ensured that the trend by which every Tom, Dick and Harry can become a journalist is stopped and that too at the earliest. This would ensure that credibility is restored to the field of journalism and journalists are looked at with respect by the common masses. Sooner it is done better it will be for the future of journalism and the journalists.

The Most Suffered Generation of Kashmir

Kashmiri Youth, Government Policies & The Rising Crisis of Unemployment



■ **ALTAF HUSSAIN PEERZADA**

Kashmir has always been known for its breathtaking beauty, serene valleys, and rich culture. Yet behind this natural charm lies a silent struggle the story of a generation that has grown up amidst uncertainty, conflict, policy shifts, and economic instability. Today's Kashmiri youth are often described as the most suffered generation, not because they lack talent or ambition, but because they face challenges that limit their opportunities and test their resilience every day.

The youth of Kashmir have grown up in an environment marked by frequent disruptions — school closures, internet shutdowns, political instability, and economic slowdowns. Education, which should be a ladder of progress, often becomes interrupted. When academic continuity breaks, dreams get delayed, and confidence wanes.

Despite these barriers, Kashmiri students consistently show determination. Many aspire to become doctors, engineers, civil servants, entrepreneurs, and educators. However, aspirations alone are not enough without systemic support.

Government policies, whether at the Union Territory level or national level, aim to bring develop-

ment, stability, and integration. Infrastructure projects, skill development programs, and employment schemes have been introduced. However, the gap between policy announcements and ground implementation often leaves youth feeling unheard.

For young people, policies are meaningful only when they translate into:

- **Regular and transparent recruitment processes**
- **Industrial growth and private sector investment**
- **Skill-based employment opportunities**
- **Support for startups and entrepreneurship**

When policies fail to address immediate employment needs, frustration grows.

Unemployment among Kashmiri youth is not just an economic issue — it is a social and psychological crisis. Thousands of educated graduates compete for a limited number of government jobs. Private sector growth remains limited, and many skilled individuals remain underemployed.

This imbalance creates:

- **Financial dependency on families**
- **Delayed marriages and life planning**
- **Mental stress and anxiety**
- **Migration to other states or countries**

A society where youth remain jobless risks losing its most productive force.

When opportunities shrink, vulnerability increases. Idle minds can become victims of despair, misinformation, or destructive pathways. It is not a matter of choice for many, it is a consequence of limited alternatives.

However, labeling youth as "at risk" should not

overshadow their resilience. Kashmiri youth are innovative, digitally aware, and globally connected. Given the right environment, they can transform the region's economy through tourism, IT services, handicrafts, agriculture innovation, and entrepreneurship.

The solution does not lie only in criticism but in constructive reform:

1. **Transparent Recruitment Systems** — Timely government job notifications and fair selection processes.
2. **Private Sector Development** — Encouraging industries, startups, and MSMEs in the region.
3. **Skill-Based Education** — Linking academic programs with market needs.
4. **Mental Health Support** — Counseling and youth engagement programs.
5. **Youth Participation in Policy Making** — Including young voices in decision-making forums.

Kashmir's future depends on empowering its youth. A generation that has endured conflict, uncertainty, and unemployment deserves not sympathy, but structured opportunity.

The youth of Kashmir are not a problem to be managed; they are a potential to be nurtured. They are educated, ambitious, and hopeful despite adversity. What they need is consistent policy support, economic opportunity, and trust.

If provided with genuine opportunities, this "most suffered generation" can become the strongest generation one that rebuilds, reforms, and redefines Kashmir's future.

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Charm of Verinag

A Visit to Verinag A Place of Surreal Beauty in Anantnag District



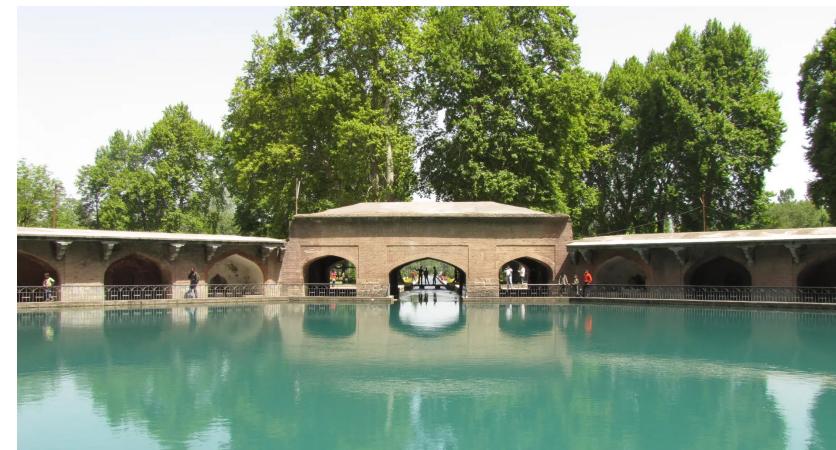
■ **SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI**

Kashmir Valley is known throughout the world for its unmatched beauty, serene landscapes, and heart-touching hospitality. Among its countless natural treasures, Verinag stands as one of the most charming and peaceful destinations in the district of Anantnag. It is not just a tourist spot; it is a place where nature speaks softly to the soul, where rivers flow with purpose, and where mountains stand tall like silent guardians of heaven on earth.

Verinag is often described as a place where people feel like angels walking amidst paradise. The crystal-clear waters of the spring flow gently towards their destination, offering solace and peace to every visitor. The sound of flowing water soothes the disturbed mind and refreshes the tired soul. The snow-clad mountains in the background give a bridal impression, as if nature itself is dressed for a grand celebration. The lush green pine trees stand upright like decorative candles placed carefully by an artist, spreading their green charm far into the distance.

The lofty waterfalls in the upper reaches fall gracefully without missing a single drop, creating a breathtaking and sensational view. The green vegetation surrounding the area is mesmerizing. It carries a natural aroma that has the power to heal a troubled and restless mind. In summer, the meadows of the valley turn into soft, green carpets that invite visitors from every corner of the world. They offer peace, comfort, and unforgettable memories. Each season paints these meadows in different colors: spring brings freshness, summer spreads greenery, autumn showers golden shades, and winter covers everything in white silence.

Nature lovers capture these scenes in their hearts and memories, preserving every beautiful moment for times of loneliness. Kashmir Valley is unique and rare, blessed abundantly by nature. Its fame across the world is genuine and well deserved. Along with its natural beauty, the sweet and hospitable people of Kashmir add warmth to the cold



climate. Visitors are always impressed by the kindness and welcoming nature of the locals.

Kashmir is also famous for its four distinct and charming seasons: spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Each season has its own importance and beauty. Tourists from India and abroad visit the valley throughout the year, and almost every visitor leaves with the same thought: there is truly no place like Kashmir.

■ A Visit to Verinag in Winter

In this article, I would like to share my personal experience of visiting Verinag during the harsh winter season. On 22nd January 2025, I visited Verinag with my parents after meeting one of our close relatives in Shahabad Doora. My parents had never been to Verinag before, and that became the main reason for our visit, even though it was the peak period of Chilai Kallan, the harshest phase of winter in Kashmir.

Generally, local Kashmiri avoid recreational visits during winter due to freezing temperatures and minus degrees. People prefer to stay indoors, keeping themselves warm and protected from the cold waves. However, for true nature lovers, all 365 days of the year are equally charming and mesmerizing in the Kashmir Valley.

From our relative's house, it took us about thirty minutes to reach Verinag. We parked the car outside the garden, paid the entry fee, and entered through the main gate. The gate remains open throughout the day, as locals often visit the spring to collect water for daily use.

As soon as I entered the garden, I felt as if I had never visited this place before. The environment in winter was completely different from the lively atmosphere of summer. The soothing sound

of water echoed more clearly in the silence. The cold waves touched my face, ears, and hands, making them numb. The air was sharp, pure, and refreshing.

The spring looked calm and patient, as if it were silently waiting for summer to return. It felt like the spring was calling out, "Oh summer, where are you? I miss the laughter and the gathering of people." During summer, the place remains crowded with visitors, but in winter, there was a peaceful emptiness. It seemed as if the spring itself was longing for the cheerful noise and joyful presence of tourists.

■ Summer and Winter at Verinag

The contrast between summer and winter at Verinag is remarkable.

During summer, every corner of the garden is filled with visitors. There is a constant buzzing sound of conversations and laughter. Some people search for perfect backgrounds to take photographs, capturing memories against the blue waters and green surroundings. Others sit quietly on benches, relaxing their minds and enjoying the cool breeze. Families gather for picnics, enjoying tea and lunch together. Children run around joyfully, adding life to the place.

In winter, however, the atmosphere changes completely. The silence dominates the garden. When I visited during winter, there were only a few people present. I jokingly felt like a VIP or an influential personality who had been granted exclusive access to this beautiful place. The emptiness gave me a rare opportunity to observe every detail closely — the gentle ripples of the water, the reflection of trees in the spring, and the peaceful rhythm of nature uninterrupted by noise.

Winter gives Verinag a unique charm.

Though the trees appear less vibrant and the air is freezing, the calmness creates a deeper connection with nature. The absence of crowds allows visitors to experience true solitude and peace.

■ Why Verinag is Famous

Verinag holds historical and geographical significance. It is believed to be the origin of the River Jhelum, one of the major rivers in South Asia. In ancient Sanskrit texts, the river was known as Vitasta. The Jhelum flows through the Kashmir Valley, then through Pakistan-administered Kashmir, and finally into the Punjab region of Pakistan, covering more than 700 kilometers.

The Mughal Emperor Jahangir recognized the beauty of Verinag and developed it into a Mughal garden in the 16th century. He ordered the construction of a beautiful octagonal stone basin around the spring. His son, Emperor Shah Jahan, who was also a great lover of nature and architecture, further enhanced its beauty.

Surrounded by lush pine forests and the majestic Pir Panjal mountain range, Verinag offers visitors immense peace of mind. Even in the scorching heat of July, the water of the spring remains cold and crystal clear. The greenish shade of the water, along with the fish swimming inside, enhances its charm and attracts thousands of visitors every year.

Located in Tehsil Shahabad Bala of District Anantnag, Verinag holds great importance not only for tourists but also for local residents. It is a symbol of natural beauty, historical heritage, and spiritual calmness.

■ Conclusion

Verinag is more than just a tourist destination. It is a place where nature heals, history speaks, and silence comforts the heart. Whether in the lively days of summer or the quiet moments of winter, Verinag never fails to enchant its visitors. My winter visit gave me a new perspective and allowed me to appreciate its calm beauty even more deeply.

Kashmir Valley, with its enchanting landscapes and kind-hearted people, truly deserves its title as "Paradise on Earth." Among its countless gems, Verinag shines brightly, calling visitors from every corner of the world to witness its timeless charm.

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Education Sectors Require a Greater Government Involvement



■ DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

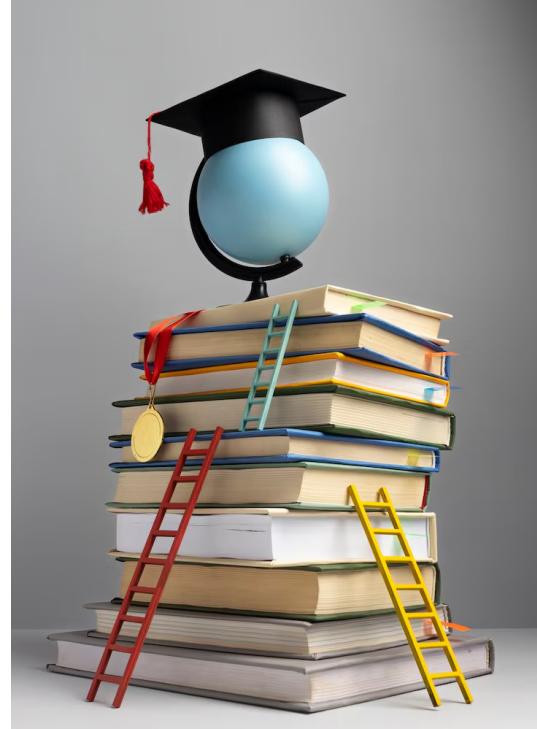
When a government policy prioritizes inclusion, it honors the Constitution. In this sense, the government's role in education is not optional—it is existential. It is the soul of the nation's progress. And it must rise to the occasion. Education is the cornerstone of any society's progress. It shapes individuals, empowers communities, and builds nations. While private institutions have proliferated in recent decades, the role of government in the education sector remains irreplaceable. In fact, as global challenges intensify and inequalities deepen, government education sectors have a greater role to play than ever before. Their responsibility is not merely administrative—it is moral, strategic, and foundational to the future of democratic societies. Government involvement in education is not a modern invention.

From ancient Gurukuls supported by kings to colonial-era schooling systems, state patronage has long influenced the structure and reach of education. In post-independence India, the government took on the task of universalizing education, recognizing it as a fundamental right and a tool for national integration. The Right to Education Act (RTE), launched in 2009, was a landmark move that made elementary education free and compulsory for children aged 6 to 14. This was not just a policy—it was a declaration that education is a public good, not a private privilege. Government education sectors are not just service providers—they are nation builders. Their role transcends infrastructure and administration. They shape values, bridge divides, and create futures. In a country as diverse and populous as India, only the government can ensure that education reaches every child, nurtures every talent, and uplifts every community. The challenges are many—funding gaps, teacher shortages, regional disparities—but the potential is immense. With vision, commitment, and public support, government education sectors can transform India into a knowledge society rooted in equity, excellence, and empathy.

In some newspapers of Kashmir, it is discussed repeatedly that over 98% school access has been achieved across all levels in the Union Territory. This is a remarkable achievement, especially considering the terrain, weather conditions, and historical disruptions. With 24,137 schools in total—18,724 of them government-run—the public education system is the backbone of learning in the region. These schools are not just buildings; they are community centers, safe spaces, and gateways to opportunity. In the unique socio-political and geographical landscape of Jammu and Kashmir, government schools are not just institutions of learning—they are instruments of equity, stability, and transformation. The region's history of conflict, displacement, and developmental challenges has made education a critical tool for empowerment and peacebuilding. While private schools exist, they are concentrated in urban pockets and cater to a limited demographic. Government schools, on the other hand, serve the vast majority, especially in rural, tribal, and economically disadvantaged areas. Their role is not supplementary—it is foundational.

Higher education, too, demands robust government stewardship. Public universities like Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) have long been centers of excellence. They produce not only skilled professionals but critical thinkers, researchers, and leaders. Government funding, autonomy, and policy support are essential to maintain their standards and expand their reach. Moreover, the government must ensure that higher education remains affordable and inclusive, especially for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Research and innovation are areas where government education sectors must play a catalytic role. Private institutions often focus on market-driven courses, but foundational research in science, humanities, and social sciences requires sustained public investment. Bodies like the University Grants Commission (UGC), Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), and Department of Science and Technology (DST) fund research projects that shape national policy, technological advancement, and cultural understanding. Without government support, such long-term, non-commercial research would wither.

Yet, the challenges remain vast. India's education system is one of the largest in the world, with over 1.5 million schools and more than 250 million students. Managing such a system requires not only infrastructure but vision, equity, and accountability. Government schools, especially in rural and marginalized areas, are often the only accessible institutions for millions of children. These schools are not just centers of learning—they are lifelines of opportunity. When the government invests in them, it invests in the future of the nation. One of the most critical roles of the government is ensuring equity in education. Private institutions, while often better resourced, cater to those who can afford them. Government schools must serve everyone, regardless of caste, class, gender, or geography. This inclusivity is what makes them indispensable. Through targeted schemes



like mid-day meals, free textbooks, uniforms, and scholarships, the government attempts to level the playing field. These interventions are not mere welfare—they are strategic tools to reduce dropout rates, improve attendance, and enhance learning outcomes.

The government plays a pivotal role in curriculum development and standard-setting. Education is not just about access—it is about quality. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), under the Ministry of Education, designs textbooks and frameworks that shape the intellectual foundation of millions. These materials are not only pedagogical tools but cultural artifacts that reflect national values, histories, and aspirations. In a diverse country like India, where regional identities coexist with national unity, the government's role in crafting inclusive and balanced curricula is vital. Teacher training and recruitment is another domain where government intervention is crucial. Teachers are the backbone of any education system. Their competence, motivation, and integrity directly affect student outcomes. Government bodies like the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) and state-level training institutes are responsible for equipping teachers with modern pedagogical skills. Moreover, transparent recruitment processes, fair salaries, and career progression pathways are essential to attract and retain talent in public education.

Technology integration is yet another frontier where government education sectors must lead. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the digital divide in stark terms. While urban students shifted to online platforms, millions in rural areas were left behind. The government's role in bridging this gap is non-negotiable. Initiatives like DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing), SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds), and PM eVIDYA aim to democratize digital learning. But these efforts must be scaled, localized, and made accessible in vernacular languages to truly empower all learners. The government also plays a diplomatic role in education. International collaborations, student exchange programs, and global rankings are influenced by state policy. India's participation in UNESCO, its bilateral education agreements, and its efforts to attract foreign students through the Study in India program are examples of how education serves as soft power. Government education sectors must therefore align domestic priorities with global standards, ensuring that Indian students are competitive and culturally rooted. In addition, the government must address emerging challenges like mental health, climate education, and skill development. The pressures of modern life, exam stress, and social media exposure have made student mental health a critical concern. Government schools must integrate counseling services, life skills education, and safe spaces for emotional well-being. Climate change, too, demands curricular attention. Students must be equipped with ecological literacy, sustainability practices, and civic responsibility. Skill development, aligned with industry needs, is essential to reduce unemployment and enhance employability.

Inclusive education for children with disabilities is another area where government intervention is vital. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 mandates inclusive education, but implementation remains patchy. Government schools must be equipped with ramps, special educators, assistive technologies, and sensitization programs. Education must be a right, not a privilege, for every child, regardless of ability. The government must empower these bodies with training, resources, and decision-making authority. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can complement government efforts, but they must be guided by equity and ethics. While private players bring innovation and efficiency, the government must ensure that profit motives do not override public interest. Regulatory frameworks, quality benchmarks, and grievance redressal mechanisms are essential to maintain balance. The transformation of the education sector in Jammu and Kashmir has been aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes equity, inclusion, and quality.

Government schools have been at the forefront of implementing these reforms. From infrastructure upgrades to digital learning initiatives, the state has

made strides in modernizing its public education system. The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) of girls has exceeded that of boys in several districts, signaling a shift in gender norms and parental attitudes. This is not just progress—it is a cultural shift. In Kashmir, where conflict has often disrupted schooling, government schools have played a stabilizing role. They have reopened quickly after curfews, provided psychological support to students, and maintained continuity in learning. Teachers in these schools are not just educators—they are mentors, counselors, and community leaders. Their presence in remote villages ensures that education is not a casualty of unrest. Moreover, government schools often serve as polling stations, relief centers, and vaccination hubs, further embedding them in the social fabric. The government's investment in teacher training, curriculum reform, and inclusive education has begun to yield results. Programs like Samagra Shiksha and PM SHRI Schools are being implemented to enhance learning outcomes and infrastructure. Digital platforms like DIKSHA and eVidya are being localized to suit Kashmiri students, with content in Urdu and regional languages. These efforts are critical in bridging the digital divide and ensuring that students in Kashmir are not left behind in the national education narrative.

Government schools also play a key role in preserving cultural identity. In Kashmir, where language, art, and history are deeply rooted in local traditions, public schools can integrate regional heritage into the curriculum. This fosters pride, continuity, and resilience. Private schools, often modeled on national or international frameworks, may not prioritize local culture. Government schools, by contrast, can be vehicles of cultural preservation and civic education. The role of government schools in Kashmir extends to countering radicalization and misinformation. In a region where youth are vulnerable to ideological manipulation, education can be a shield. By promoting critical thinking, civic values, and emotional literacy, government schools can nurture informed and empathetic citizens. This is not just pedagogy—it is nation-building. In higher education, government colleges and universities in Kashmir must be supported to become centers of excellence. Ultimately, government schools in Kashmir are more than classrooms. They are symbols of hope, resilience, and unity. Their role is not limited to literacy—it extends to healing, empowerment, and transformation. In a region striving for peace and progress, the government education sector must rise to the occasion. It must invest not only in infrastructure but in dignity, inclusion, and imagination. Because in Kashmir, every school built, every teacher trained, and every child educated is a step toward a more just and harmonious future.

But these challenges underscore the need for greater government involvement, not less. The private sector cannot fill these gaps at scale or with equity. Only the government can ensure that every child, regardless of location or background, receives a quality education. The government must also prioritize mental health in schools. Students in Kashmir have experienced trauma, displacement, and loss. Counseling services, peer support programs, and trauma-informed teaching are essential. Government schools can lead in this domain, integrating psychosocial care into the education system. Vocational training and skill development are other areas where government schools can make a difference. By aligning education with local economies—horticulture, handicrafts, tourism—schools can prepare students for meaningful livelihoods. This reduces unemployment, curbs migration, and strengthens local communities. Policy formulation and regulation are perhaps the most strategic roles of the government. Education is a dynamic field, influenced by global trends, demographic shifts, and technological disruptions. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a testament to the government's vision for a holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary education system. It emphasizes early childhood care, vocational training, mother tongue instruction, and liberal arts integration. Implementing such a policy across states, languages, and socio-economic contexts is a mammoth task that only the government can undertake. Monitoring and evaluation are equally important. Schemes and policies must be assessed for impact, efficiency, and equity. Government bodies like the National Achievement Survey (NAS) and Performance Grading Index (PGI) provide data-driven insights into school performance. These metrics help identify gaps, allocate resources, and design interventions. Transparency and accountability in education governance are essential to build public trust and ensure that taxpayer money is used effectively.

The future of education is not just digital or global—it is democratic. And democracy begins in the classroom. When a government school in a remote village offers quality education, it affirms the dignity of every child. When a public university fosters critical thinking, it strengthens the republic. Many government schools in Kashmir face teacher shortages, inadequate infrastructure, and inconsistent electricity. Winter closures, security concerns, and internet shutdowns disrupt learning.

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Eternal River of Love

The river flows fluidly beneath
the morning sun,
Calling your name, I open my soul,
you're my prized part,
Roses bloom quietly, while words are
left unsaid,
Their fresh fragrance whispers
love instead,
Serene emotions linger, where our
hearts are never apart,
With sunlight's soft kiss, O love, as one
we're spun.
Along the lover's lane we walk
as shadows fall,
Hands woven, holding the warmth of
shared life,
Your laughter sparkles, a stream
bathed in moonlight,
And my smile returns, my heart alight
with pure delight,
Every heartbeat echoes, a song
untouched by past strife,
Our souls entwined as we heed love's
sweet call.
No magic vow from fairy
tales is sought,
We share quiet nights, together side
by side,
Resting my head, I hear your heart's
soft song,
Gentle rhythm that's been
ours all along,
Love drifts like mist along
the riverside,
Valentine keeps our tender dreams,
never bought.
Waves of memory ripple
beneath the moon,
Each current murmurs secrets
of our past,
Moments we've shared, glowing in
tranquil streams,
Wings folded as one, we live our
endless dreams,
Crystal waters whisper love that is
meant to last,
Its gentle flow hums our
romantic tune.
When sunset paints the river
gold and wide,
Your presence warms me, even in
twilight,
Candlelight of love dances
on the waves of life,
Promises float softly, and gentle hearts
escape all strife,
You and I as one, hearts pure
and bright,
Love flows eternal, like a river's
endless tide.

Khursheed Wani
Thi Lan Anh Tran (Germany)

Waiting for Your Pious Arrival

O Master, when will you come?
Beloved, when will you be here?
My eyes long to see you.
We long for you to bring justice and peace.
Our hearts are heavy with waiting.
We would tell you everything.
Without you, this place is empty.
Come, Master, and fill this place with light.
Our hearts are tired from waiting so long.
I sit among many people,
but my mind is only on you.
In the middle of the night,
I speak to you quietly, alone.
You know me,
even when you are silent.
You live so close, inside our hearts,
but our eyes cannot see you.
We wait for your pious arrival.

By Bilkees Akhtar

THE TOUGHNESS OF MIND



■ DR. SURINDERPAL SINGH

Mental toughness is often described as psychological resilience, cognitive endurance, or emotional robustness. This ability is no longer a trait limited to sportsmen, athletes, or army personnel. Contemporary medical science, neuroscience, and psychology recognize mental toughness as a fundamental factor in mental health, stress regulation, productivity, and overall well-being. In an era marked by rapid technological change, intense material competition, and chronic psychosocial stressors, cultivating a tough and adaptive mind has become a public health necessity.

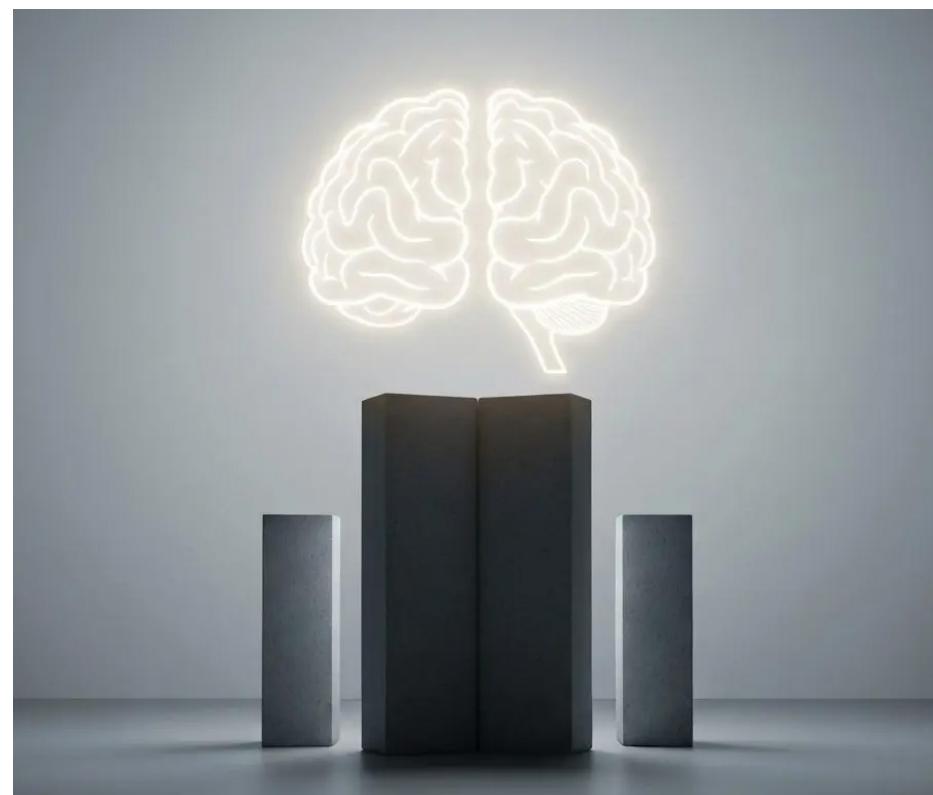
The toughness of mind refers to the capacity to withstand stress, adapt to adversity, regulate emotions, and maintain purposeful action despite challenges. Scientifically, it aligns with constructs such as psychological resilience, stress tolerance, cognitive flexibility, and emotional regulation. Rather than being rigid, mental toughness is dynamic and trainable, grounded in neural plasticity and shaped by experience, learning, and deliberate practice. Medical research increasingly supports the view that mental toughness is not an inherited luxury but a modifiable psychobiological trait that significantly influences mental health outcomes.

Modern neuroscience provides compelling evidence that mental toughness has a biological basis. The prefrontal cortex,

responsible for executive functions such as decision-making, impulse control, and emotional regulation, plays a crucial role. A well-regulated prefrontal cortex enables individuals to respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively to stress. The amygdala, central to fear and stress responses, shows reduced hyperactivity in mentally tough individuals, resulting in lower anxiety and emotional reactivity. The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, which governs cortisol secretion, is often dysregulated under chronic stress, contributing to anxiety and depression. Mental toughness enhances stress recovery and restores hormonal balance. Neuroplasticity further confirms that repeated adaptive coping strengthens neural pathways associated with resilience, proving that the toughness of mind can be trained across the lifespan. These findings establish that mental toughness is embedded in brain structure and function, not merely a philosophical concept.

From a psychological standpoint, mental toughness involves several interrelated mechanisms. Cognitive reframing allows individuals to interpret adversity as a challenge rather than a threat. Emotional regulation enables the management of intense emotions without suppression or emotional overflow. Self-efficacy fosters a strong belief in one's capacity to influence outcomes, buffering against helplessness. A clear sense of purpose and meaning strengthens endurance during hardship. Clinical psychology consistently shows that individuals possessing these traits experience lower rates of stress-related disorders.

Research identifies multiple evidence-based strategies for inculcating mental toughness. Mindfulness and meditation practices strengthen the prefrontal cortex



and reduce amygdala reactivity, improving emotional stability. Cognitive behavioral training helps individuals identify maladaptive thought patterns and replace them with resilient cognitive frameworks. Controlled exposure to manageable stress builds tolerance and confidence. Physical exercise, including aerobic and resistance training, increases brain-derived neurotrophic factor, enhancing mood and cognitive resilience. Consistency and discipline reinforce neural circuits associated with perseverance and emotional control. These approaches demonstrate that mental toughness is cultivated through intentional and sustained lifestyle practices.

Mental toughness plays a significant role in reducing tension and depression. Chronic stress, perceived helplessness, and emotional dysregulation often contribute to depressive states. By reducing rumination and catastrophic thinking, enhancing stress recovery and emotional balance, improving coping responses during failure or loss, and preventing the transition from acute stress to chronic depression, mental toughness serves as a protective factor. Clinical studies reveal that resilient individuals tend to exhibit lower cortisol levels, better sleep patterns, and reduced

incidence of anxiety and depressive disorders.

In the modern materialistic world, relentless emphasis on achievement, comparison, financial success, and constant connectivity fuels chronic stress, burnout, dissatisfaction, emotional insecurity, and fear of failure. Within such an environment, mental toughness becomes essential for psychological survival. It allows individuals to remain goal-oriented without becoming emotionally fragile, ambitious without becoming anxious, and competitive without sacrificing mental health. Mental toughness acts as an internal anchor amid external instability.

From a public health perspective, fostering mental toughness can reduce the societal burden of mental illness, improve workplace productivity, and enhance educational outcomes. Integrating resilience training into schools, workplaces, and healthcare systems could serve as a preventive strategy against the growing epidemic of stress-related disorders.

The toughness of mind is a scientifically validated, biologically grounded, and psychologically trainable attribute essential for mental health in the modern era. By strengthening neural resilience, regulating emotional responses, and fostering adaptive cognition, mental toughness plays a pivotal role in reducing tension and depression. In a fast-paced, material-driven world, cultivating a tough and flexible mind is not merely an individual advantage but a societal necessity. Future healthcare models must recognize mental toughness as a cornerstone of preventive mental medicine and sustainable human well-being.

The author is a Faculty, Science Department Sri Amritsar Sahib Punjab

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f

Dr Mandaviya Announces Dates For Gulmarg Leg, Says 'Perfect Time For Khelo India Winter Games'

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI, FEB 12: The Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, on Wednesday announced the dates for the Gulmarg leg of the Khelo India Winter Games 2026, which will be held from February 23 to 26 in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. This will be the sixth edition of the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG).

The first leg of KIWG 2026, featuring ice sports, was successfully held in Ladakh from January 20 to 26, while Gulmarg will host the snow sports competitions. The Indian Army will defend its overall championship title in Jammu & Kashmir.

"The Gulmarg leg is coming at the back of the Winter Olympics, and this is the perfect time to host the Khelo India Winter Games. We had a very successful first phase in Leh (Ladakh), and surely, we will see the same excitement in Jammu & Kashmir as athletes will once again battle with nature and challenging conditions," said Dr Mandaviya.

"Every season of the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) has seen exciting performances and rising competition. In Leh, the addition of figure skating enhanced the competitive intensity, and in Gulmarg, we are expecting some impressive timings

on the Kongdoori slopes," he added.

Until the introduction of the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG), winter sports in India had very limited visibility, awareness, or structured competition. Ice and snow disciplines largely remained niche pursuits with negligible public engagement and sporadic athlete participation at the international level. The Khelo India Winter Games have fundamentally transformed India's winter sports ecosystem by creating a national competitive platform for both ice sports and snow sports, significantly expanding participation, performance standards, and public awareness. What was once a marginal sporting segment is now steadily evolving into a structured talent pipeline.

This transformation is already reflected in international outcomes. Indian winter athletes are beginning to register podium finishes and competitive performances abroad, signaling the emergence of a new generation of talent. Notably, Indian figure skater Tara Prasad has delivered medal-winning performances at international competitions, while the Indian women's ice hockey team won a historic bronze medal at the 2025 IIHF Women's Asia Cup, marking India's first-ever podium finish in an international ice hockey championship. The team also recorded landmark victories during the tourna-

ment, underlining the rapid progress being made in ice sports at the global level.

These achievements highlight how Khelo India Winter Games are laying the foundational bedrock for sustained international participation, moving India beyond an earlier phase where participation in the Winter Olympics was often limited to one or no athletes. With regular domestic competition, exposure to high-pressure environments, and increasing depth across disciplines, this trajectory is expected to strengthen further in the coming years. The timing of the Gulmarg leg of KIWG 2026 is also strategically significant, as it follows soon after the conclusion of the Winter Olympics Milano Cortina 2026, where India is represented by alpine skier Arif Khan and cross-country skier Stanzin Lundup, helping to carry forward global momentum, enthusiasm, and competitive energy into the domestic winter sports calendar, and ensuring continuity in athlete motivation, public interest, and national focus on winter sports development.

Gulmarg will feature four medal disciplines, namely Ski Mountaineering, Alpine Skiing, Nordic Skiing (Cross-Country), and Snowboarding, with around 400 athletes expected to compete, and Alpine Skiing drawing the highest participation.

Gulmarg will host the snow sports competitions. The Indian Army will defend its overall championship title in Jammu & Kashmir.

"The Gulmarg leg is coming at the back of the Winter Olympics, and this is the perfect time to host the Khelo India Winter Games. We had a very successful first phase in Leh (Ladakh), and surely, we will see the same excitement in Jammu & Kashmir as athletes will once again battle with nature and challenging conditions," said Dr Mandaviya.

"Every season of the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) has seen exciting performances and rising competition. In Leh, the addition of figure skating enhanced the competitive intensity, and in Gulmarg, we are expecting some impressive timings

Govt focused on consolidation of infrastructure in already upgraded Schools: Education Minister

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEB 12: Minister for Education, Sakeen Ito today informed the House that the department is currently focusing on consolidation of infrastructure and provision of teaching faculty in already upgraded Schools.

The Minister stated this while replying to a question of Legislator, Dr. Sajjad Shafi regarding up-gradation of Schools in Legislative Assembly today.

The Education Minister highlighted that up-gradation of schools is a continuous and ongoing process and such proposals are examined from time to time strictly in accordance with the prescribed norms and criteria.

She added that up-gradation requires the fulfilment of laid-down criteria and feasibility norms, like distance, feeding schools and top-class enrollment, which are prerequisites. She added that there is no immediate proposal with the government for up-gradation of existing schools to the next higher level.

She highlighted that up-gradation of schools to the next higher level involves significant financial implications for creation of infrastructure and teaching/non-teaching posts and therefore, requires concurrence from the Finance Department.

The Minister said that the areas like Uri require special consideration due to remoteness and limited access to higher education. She assured that institutions in Uri will be prioritised while upgrading the schools.

Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my Father's name KHIZAR MOHAMMAD PARRY R/O KAREWA KREERI. Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040000368 wants to be registered on my NOOR UD DIN PARRY S/O KHIZAR MOHAMMAD PARRY R/O KAREWA. If anybody have any objection in this regard He/ She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name..NOOR UD DIN PARRY , S/O ... KHIZAR MOHAMMAD PARRY , R/O .KAREWA

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that my name has been wrongly mentioned in my Aadhaar Card bearing Aadhaar No. 5184 27619906 . Now I want to change my name from AZEE (Old Name) to AAZMA (New Name). In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he or she may approach the concerned authorities within a period of seven days. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

Name: AAZMA

W/o: GHULAM QADIR MIR

R/O: KATHWAR KAISTWAR BUDGAM J&K-191111

Public Notice

This is to notify the general public that the name recorded in the Aadhaar database is incorrect. Name shown in Aadhaar: Sufiya Farooq. Correct name: Sufiya Farooq, D/o, Farooq Ahmad Ganie

R/o: Glura Langate Handwara Kupwara Jammu and Kashmir 193302. The above-mentioned person (Sufiya Farooq) hereby declares that the name printed on the Aadhaar is incorrect and that her correct and legal name is Sufiya Farooq. Any objection to this correction should be brought to the attention of the UIDAI Aadhaar Seva Kendra, Office Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, the necessary correction procedures may be undertaken.

Name: Sufiya Farooq,

D/o, Farooq Ahmad Ganie

R/o: Glura Langate Handwara Kupwara

Public Notice

I, Rayees Ahmad Wani, S/O Ghulam Mohammad Wani, Resident of Dudipora, hereby declare that I am applying for the Licence for dealing in Pesticides, as per the rules and regulations of the concerned Department. If any person, authority, or organization has any objection regarding the issuance of the said licence in my favour, they may submit their objection in writing to the concerned Licensing Authority within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice.

If no objections are received within the stipulated time, the licence shall be processed further in accordance with the rules.

Name: Rayees Ahmad Wani

S/O: Ghulam Mohammad Wani

R/O: Dudipora Tehsil Handwara District Kupwara

Purpose: Licence for Pesticides,

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR, PAHALGAM

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: Application of Aamina Shakeel D/o Shakeel Ahmad Lone R/o Pahalgam, Tehsil Pahalgam, District Anantnag for issuance of RBA Certificate.

Whereas the above named applicant has applied in this office for issuance of RBA (Resident of Backward Area) Certificate in her favour. In this connection, report from the concerned Patwari Halqa has been sought, which reveals that the applicant is a resident of Pahalgam, Tehsil Pahalgam, District Anantnag.

Now, therefore, any person having any objection with regard to the issuance of the said certificate in favour of the applicant may present his/her objection along with documentary proof in this office within 07 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. After the expiry of the stipulated period, no objection shall be entertained.

Issued under my hand and seal of this office.

Naib Tehsildar

Pahalgam

Laptop Care House

Wholesale Dealer Of New And Pre Used Laptops

DEALS IN ALL KINDS OF LAPTOPS AND ACCESSORIES

REPAIRING OF: ALL TYPES OF LAPTOPS & DESKTOPS



7006083461

Public Notice

This is to notify the general public that the name recorded in the Aadhaar database is incorrect. Name shown in Aadhaar: Sufiya Farooq. Correct name: Sufiya Farooq, D/o, Farooq Ahmad Ganie R/o: Glura Langate Handwara Kupwara Jammu and Kashmir 193302. The above-mentioned person (Sufiya Farooq) hereby declares that the name printed on the Aadhaar is incorrect and that her correct and legal name is Sufiya Farooq. Any objection to this correction should be brought to the attention of the UIDAI Aadhaar Seva Kendra, Office Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, the necessary correction procedures may be undertaken.

Name: Sufiya Farooq.

D/o, Farooq Ahmad Ganie

R/o: Glura Langate Handwara Kupwara

Public Notice

My name and date of birth have been wrongly entered in Aadhar Card bearing number 226362187591 as BOLA BEGUM and 01-09-1970 while my correct name and date of birth is BOLA and 19-03-1955. Now I am applying for its correction. In this regard if anybody is having any objection may convey to concerned authority/ Government Ranbir Press, Jammu within seven days. No objection shall be entertained after the stipulated period.

BOLA W/o. Abdul Rashid Langoo R/o. Rambagh

Payeen, Srinagar

Public Notice

I, Rayees Ahmad Wani, S/O Ghulam Mohammad Wani, Resident of Dudipora, hereby declare that I am applying for the Licence for dealing in Pesticides, as per the rules and regulations of the concerned Department. If any person, authority, or organization has any objection regarding the issuance of the said licence in my favour, they may submit their objection in writing to the concerned Licensing Authority within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice.

If no objections are received within the stipulated time, the licence shall be processed further in accordance with the rules.

Name: Rayees Ahmad Wani

S/O: Ghulam Mohammad Wani

R/O: Dudipora Tehsil Handwara District Kupwara

Purpose: Licence for Pesticides

Public Notice

This is to notify the general public that the name recorded in the Aadhaar database is incorrect. Name shown in Aadhaar: Sufiya Farooq. Correct name: Sufiya Farooq, Father's Name: Farooq Ahmad Ganie Address: Glura Langate Handwara Kupwara Jammu and Kashmir 193302. The above-mentioned person (Sufiya Farooq) hereby declares that the name printed on the Aadhaar is incorrect and that her correct and legal name is Sufiya Farooq. Any objection to this correction should be brought to the attention of the UIDAI Aadhaar Seva Kendra, Office Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, the necessary correction procedures may be undertaken.

Public Notice

I Athara Akbar wants to mention that my name spelling in my aadhar card bearing no. 3489 1739 6128 has been wrongly mentioned as Athra Akbar instead of Athara Akbar. Now I want to make correction in my aadhar card.

Name: Athara Akbar, DOB 15/03/2009, D/O Mohammad Akbar Dar, R/o: Shanno Tehsil Langate District Kupwara 193221

Public Notice

I Pir Jasarat Atiq wants to mention that my name spelling in my aadhar card bearing no. 3960 4874 3081 has been wrongly mentioned as Peerzada Jasarat instead of Pir Jasarat Atiq. Now I want to make correction in my aadhar card.

Name : Pir Jasarat Atiq, S/O Pir Atiq ullah

R/o : Ratten Pora Behni pora

Tehsil Zachalda District Kupwara 193221

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER BARAMULLA

OFFICE: KANLIBAGH ROAD, MINI SECRETARIAT, BARAMULLA

Phone No.: 01952-234869, Fax: 01952-234869,

Subject: Tentative Seniority list of Junior Librarians District Baramulla as it stood on 01-01-2026.

NOTIFICATION

WHEREAS, vide this office notification No CEO/BLA/NTS/Srt/01-235 dated 01-01-2024 issued the final seniority of various categories of Non-Teaching officials of District Baramulla as it stood on 01-12-2023, wherein list of 07 (Seven) Junior Librarians Forming Annexure "E" to the Seniority List was notified; and

WHEREAS, after issuance of the said seniority list 02 Junior Librarians (figuring at S. No. 4 & 5) were promoted as Librarians; 02 Junior Librarians attained superannuation (figuring at S. No. 2 & 3) and 02 Library Assistants were promoted as Junior Librarians by the Departmental Promotion Committee in its DPC held on 29-10-2024 and were accordingly deleted/included in the Seniority List of Junior Librarians; and

NOW, THEREFORE, the tentative seniority list of 05 (Five) Junior Librarians as it stood on 01-01-2026 forming Annexure-A to this notification is notified and circulated among the members of the service and among all DDO's for inviting objections (if any) to the seniority position assigned to them, category, date of birth recorded in the relevant columns in the said seniority list within 07 days positively from the date of issuance of this notification.

Besides, it is ordered that any member of the service who is either not included or is aggrieved with the position assigned to him/her in this tentative seniority list can file a review petition within 07 days positively from the date of issuance of this tentative seniority list along with supporting documents, through concerned DDOs. No petition shall be entertained after the expiry of stipulated time period. The tentative seniority list is also available on the official website of this office (i.e. www.ceobla.in).

Moreover, the promotion of the officials who have enhanced the qualification during in-service, is subject to the effect that they have acquired proper permission and other formalities issued by the competent authority.

No: CEO/BLA/NTS/Srt/2026/1816-20 | Dated: 31/01/2026

SD/- CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER BARAMULLA

DIPK: 10856/25 | Dated: 12-02-2026

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER BARAMULLA

OFFICE: KANLIBAGH ROAD, MINI SECRETARIAT, BARAMULLA

Phone No.: 01952-234869, Fax: 01952-234869,

Subject: Tentative Seniority list of Junior Assistants District Baramulla as it stood on 28-01-2026.

NOTIFICATION

WHEREAS, vide this office notification No CEO/BLA/NTS/Srt/12/2025/25732-36 dated 09-05-2025 issued the final seniority list of 135 (One Hundred Thirty Five) Junior Assistants as it stood on 30-0

DIPR organises day long workshop 'CINE CONNECT' on Cinema Art at Jammu

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 12:

Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) today organised a one-day workshop 'CINE CONNECT' - a workshop on Cinema Art at Media Complex here.

The workshop was attended by students from Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Jammu, Government Polytechnic College, Gandhinagar as well as Artists from Academy of Art Culture and Languages.

The workshop was conducted by DIPR as part of ongoing efforts to promote film culture and create awareness about opportunities in the cinema industry under the Film Policy of Jammu & Kashmir.

Speaking during the concluding ceremony of the workshop, Director Information and Public Relations, Nitish Rajora said that the initiative aims to strengthen the cinematic ecosystem and provide valuable exposure to aspiring artists and

filmmakers in Jammu & Kashmir. He added that the department will organise such kind of workshops on regular basis to acquaint the aspiring students and young minds about the nitty gritty of filmmaking and art.

Joint Director Information (HQ), Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Raina in his address appreciated the initiative and highlighted the importance of such workshops in nurturing local talent. He reiterated the commitment of DIPR towards implementing the J&K Film Policy effectively to promote Jammu & Kashmir as a preferred filming destination and to generate employment opportunities in the creative sector.

In his welcome address, Nodal Officer, Film Policy J&K, Maheer Thakur highlighted the objectives of organizing the workshop. He emphasized that Cine Connect aims to bridge the gap between aspiring artists and industry professionals by providing first-hand exposure to various aspects of cinema



art. He also underlined the significance of the J&K Film Policy in fostering a vibrant film ecosystem in the Union Territory.

The workshop featured eminent resource persons from the film industry like Actor & Director, Ajay Paul Singh Andotra; Filmmaker & Founder, AVD

Motion Pictures, Atul Vinod Duggal and Bollywood Actor, Mir Sarwar briefed the participants about performing arts, acting and film making.

Mir Sarwar conducted an engaging and interactive session on acting techniques. He provided a live demonstration explaining

different types of acting, including method acting and situational performance, and actively involved participants in practical exercises. His interaction with the youth encouraged them to develop confidence, discipline, and dedication towards pursuing a career in acting.

Ajay Paul Singh Andotra spoke in detail about the scope and career opportunities in acting and direction. He shared insights from his professional journey and guided participants on the skills, training, and perseverance required to succeed in the film industry.

He also emphasized the importance of theatre as a foundation for aspiring actors.

Atul Vinod Duggal delivered a comprehensive presentation on filmmaking, outlining the various departments involved in film production such as direction, cinematography, editing, sound design, production management, scriptwriting, and art direction. He elaborated on the vast scope of employment in Bollywood and regional cinema, encouraging participants to explore diverse technical and creative roles beyond acting.

The resource persons also provided participants practical exposure and professional insights in the field of performing arts, particularly in acting, film-

making, and theatre arts.

An interactive session was also held by resource persons with the students and artists. The session witnessed enthusiastic participation from students and artists, who posed queries related to career pathways, auditions, filmmaking techniques, and industry challenges.

Director Information and Public Relations, Nitish Rajora; Joint Director Information (HQ), Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Raina; Joint Director Information, Jammu, Deepak Dubey; Nodal Officer, Film Policy J&K, Maheer Thakur; officers and officials of DIPR; faculty members from Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), Jammu and Government Polytechnic College, Jammu were also present on the occasion.

Pertinently, the workshop marked a significant step towards strengthening the film culture in Jammu & Kashmir and empowering the youth with knowledge and opportunities in the field of cinema.

DLSA Srinagar, Traffic Authorities launch Special Awareness Drive on J&K Road Safety Policy 2025

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, FEBRUARY 12:

District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar, in collaboration with the Special Mobile Magistrate Traffic Srinagar and Additional Spl. Mobile Magistrate Traffic, Srinagar and Kashmir Road Safety Foundation, conducted a special awareness drive in District Srinagar to sensitize the general public about the objectives and implementation of the J&K Road Safety Policy 2025.

The programme aimed at educating commuters, drivers, pedestrians, transport operators, and shopkeepers about traffic discipline, safe driving practices, and the legal consequences of traffic violations. Informational material was distributed and on-the-spot interactions were held to reinforce the importance of responsible road usage.

The programme was graced by Haq Nawaz Zargar, Chairman District Legal Services Authority (Principal District & Sessions Judge) Srinagar. The drive was marked by the presence of Shabir Ahmad Malik, Spl. Mobile Magistrate Traffic, Srinagar; Mufti Nahida, Additional Spl. Mobile Magistrate Traffic, Srinagar; Ajaz Ahmad Bhat, SSP Traffic Srinagar; Ghulam Muhammad Bhat, DySp Lalchowk Srinagar along with officials of District Legal Services Authority Srinagar, representatives of the NGO, members of the legal fraternity, and the local public.

Addressing the gathering, Chairman District Legal Services Authority Srinagar, emphasized



that the J&K Road Safety Policy 2025 lays special focus on minimizing road accident fatalities through stricter enforcement of traffic laws, mandatory use of helmets and seat belts, prevention of over-speeding and drunken driving, scientific road engineering measures, identification and

rectification of accident-prone zones, and strengthening of emergency medical response systems.

He underscored that road safety is a collective responsibility and called upon citizens to actively cooperate with enforcement agencies in fostering a culture of

discipline and safety on roads.

Special Mobile Magistrate Traffic, Kashmir highlighted that legal awareness is a powerful instrument in preventing road accidents and promoting responsible civic behaviour. He observed that ignorance of traffic laws often results in avoidable mishaps and stressed the necessity of sustained public outreach programmes to instill accountability among drivers and pedestrians alike. He further reiterated the pivotal role of the Legal Services Authority in spreading awareness about citizens' rights and duties under the law.

SSPT Traffic City, Srinagar, stated that maximum number of cases involving road accidents are because of substance abuse.

During the drive Mufti Nahida, Additional Spl. Mobile Magistrate Traffic, Srinagar also interacted extensively with locals and drivers.

In her concluding remarks Secretary District Legal Services Authority, Srinagar, reiterated the commitment of District Legal Services Authority Srinagar, in making roads safer for commuters. She patiently heard the grievances of the commercial vehicle drivers and assured them necessary measure would be taken to ensure smoother traffic management and enhanced road safety in the district.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation of officials from Traffic Department, volunteers, and drivers reflecting a shared commitment towards making Srinagar's roads safer for all.

DLSA Srinagar conducts inspection of Central Jail Srinagar, Prison Legal Aid Clinic

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, FEBRUARY 12: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar conducted a comprehensive inspection of the Central Jail Srinagar and the Prison Legal Aid Clinic functioning within the jail premises to review the legal aid services and overall welfare measures being provided to inmates.

The inspection was carried out by Haq Nawaz Zargar, Chairman, District Legal Services Authority (Principal District & Sessions Judge) Srinagar, in the presence of Tabassum Qadir Paray, Sub-Judge/Secretary, District Legal Services Authority Srinagar; Sheikh Zulfikar Azad, Senior Superintendent of Central Jail Srinagar; Shahbaz Hussain Bhat, Deputy Superintendent, Central Jail Srinagar; Raja Zuhai, SP East Srinagar; Medical Officers; and other officers and officials of the jail administration.

During the visit, the Chairman and Secretary, accompanied by the jail authorities, undertook a detailed inspection of all barracks and interacted extensively with inmates, including women prisoners. The team patiently heard the grievances and concerns raised by the inmates and assured them that their issues would be addressed in accordance with law. The inmates were also provided an open platform to share feedback regarding the legal aid services extended by District Legal Services Authority Srinagar.

The inspection covered a wide range of facilities within the jail premises, including the Jail Legal Aid Clinic, Welfare Block, Vocational Training Centre, Computer Training Centre, Music and Fine Arts Centre, Calligraphy Centre, Jail Hospital, Kitchen Area, Women Block, and the exclusive Women-Centric Tailoring Centre. Special attention was paid to the Medical Centre and the de-addiction facilities available to inmates, with emphasis on ensuring adequate healthcare and rehabilitation services.



The Chairman DLSA Srinagar, emphasized the importance of strengthening the Prison Legal Aid Clinic to ensure that every eligible inmate has timely access to free legal assistance. He further issued directions for streamlining the video conferencing facilities with the courts where the cases of jail inmates are pending trial. He further added that a cause list should be issued fortnightly and the trial courts should be informed beforehand about the pendency of the cases of the Undertrial prisoners.

Secretary District Legal Services Authority Srinagar was directed to coordinate between the jail authorities and the District Court so that legal aid counseling and the statement of witnesses brought in the cases involving inmates are taken on priority.

The inspection served as a significant step towards safeguarding the rights, dignity, and welfare of prisoners and reaffirmed the commitment of District Legal Services Authority Srinagar to ensuring access to justice for all, including those lodged in custodial institutions.

DLSA BUDGAM ORGANIZES AWARENESS PROGRAMME ON SC/ST ACT AT LEGAL AID CLINIC KHAN SAHIB

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, FEBRUARY 12: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Budgam, organized an awareness programme on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 at the Legal Aid Clinic, Khan Sahib, Budgam.

The programme aimed to educate the general public about the rights, protections, and safeguards available to members of the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) under the Act. Emphasis was laid on preventing atrocities, safeguarding dignity, and ensuring equal access to justice.

During the session, Zahoor Ahmad Malik, Assistant LADC Budgam, elaborated on the salient features of the Act, including the



procedure for lodging complaints, provisions related to compensation and rehabilitation of victims, and the role of various authorities in

ensuring effective implementation of the law. He highlighted that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities)

Act, 1989, as amended in 2015 and 2018, provides comprehensive legal safeguards to protect SC/ST individuals from violence, social humiliation, and economic exploitation. The Act seeks to promote social justice, dignity, and equality by criminalizing specific acts of atrocity and ensuring speedy trial and rehabilitation for victims.

Participants were also informed about the availability of free legal aid and assistance through DLSA Budgam.

DLSA Budgam reiterated its commitment to organizing legal awareness camps in vulnerable areas to sensitize SC/ST communities about their rights, compensation mechanisms, and access to legal aid services. Sensitization programmes aimed at promoting social harmony and discouraging

caste-based discrimination will also be conducted to foster inclusiveness and uphold constitutional values.

The speaker further emphasized that strengthening initiatives for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is essential to address systemic discrimination and ensure effective access to justice. Such efforts must be aligned with the framework of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and supported by institutions like the National Legal Services Authority (NLSA).

The programme witnessed active participation from students and faculty members, who appreciated the initiative and expressed the need for continued awareness activities to further strengthen social justice and equality.

SWD Baramulla holds Inter-Generational Bonding Programme

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, FEBRUARY 12: Social Welfare Department (SWD), Baramulla today organized a vibrant Inter-Generational Bonding Programme under the National Plan for Senior Citizens at the North Campus, University of Kashmir, Delina, Baramulla.

The event was aimed at fostering meaningful engagement and mutual understanding between the younger and older generations.

The programme was presided by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Baramulla, Altaf Hussain Musvi and was attended by the Chief Planning Officer, Nisar Ahmad; District Social Welfare Officer Baramulla, Sajad Ahmad and other officers and officials.

The event also witnessed enthusiastic participation from senior citizens, students, faculty members and others, creating a platform for dialogue, cultural exchange, and shared experiences.

Speaking on the occasion, the ADC highlighted the importance of strengthening inter-generational ties in today's fast-paced society.

Labour force, female participation increase as unemployment declines in India

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, FEB 12: India's labour market showed positive momentum in the October-December 2025 quarter, with a rise in female labour force participation, an increase in overall workforce participation, and a decline in unemployment rates, according to the latest Quarterly Bulletin of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) released by the National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

The overall Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for persons aged 15 years and above increased to 55.8 percent during October-December 2025, up from 55.1 percent in the previous quarter. Rural LFPR rose to 58.4 percent, while urban participation remained broadly stable during the period.

Female LFPR recorded a notable rise, climbing to 34.9 percent in October-December 2025 from 33.7 percent in July-September 2025. The increase was largely driven by rural women's participation,



which rose from 37.5 percent to 39.4 percent during the same period, while urban female LFPR remained steady.

The Worker Population Ratio (WPR) for persons aged 15 years and above improved to 53.1 percent in the October-December quarter from 52.2 percent in the previous quarter. The overall WPR rise was primarily attributed to increased workforce engagement in rural areas.

The Unemployment Rate (UR) for persons aged 15 years and above declined in both rural and urban areas.

In rural areas, the UR dropped to 4.0 percent from 4.4 percent in the previous quarter. In urban areas, unemployment eased to 6.7 percent, compared to 6.9 percent earlier, mainly due to a reduction in male unemployment.

Self-employment saw a modest increase. In rural areas, the share of self-employed workers rose to 63.2 percent in October-December 2025 from 62.8 percent in the previous quarter. In urban areas, the proportion increased slightly

to 39.7 percent.

Agriculture continued to dominate rural employment, accounting for 58.5 percent of employed persons aged 15 years and above during October-December 2025, up from 57.7 percent in the previous quarter. In urban areas, the tertiary sector remained the leading employer, engaging 61.9 percent of workers.

The estimated number of employed persons aged 15 years and above rose from 56.2 crore in July-September 2025 to 57.4 crore in October-December 2025. Of the total employed in the latest quarter, 40.2 crore were males and 17.2 crore were females.

The quarterly estimates are based on a survey of 5,61,108 persons across rural and urban India.

The PLFS, which was revamped from January 2025 to provide monthly and quarterly estimates for both rural and urban areas under the Current Weekly Status framework, continues to serve as the country's primary source of employment and unemployment data. UNI

AP: Daikin-Rechi India kickstarts construction of New Plant in Sri City

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

SRI CITY (TIRUPATI), FEB 12: Daikin Rechi India Pvt. Ltd., a joint venture between Daikin Air-conditioning India Pvt. Ltd. (a wholly owned subsidiary of Daikin Industries Ltd., Japan) and Rechi Precision Co. Ltd., Taiwan, commenced construction of its new rotary compressor production unit here on Wednesday.

Canwaljeet Jawa, Chairman and Managing Director of Daikin, performed the bhoomi pooja ceremony along with Sekika Naoto, Director of Daikin-Rechi India, and senior leaders from Daikin and Rechi.

Describing the new plant as a significant milestone in Daikin's localisation journey under the Prime Minister of India's "Make in India for the World" vision, Jawa stated: "This facility will further strengthen the Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) manufacturing ecosystem and establish a hub catering to both domestic and international markets. The investment underscores our commitment to technology transfer, skill development, and employment generation, while enhancing India's role in the global supply chain."

"We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Andhra Pradesh government and the Sri City management for their outstanding support. Sri City is not just an industrial park—it is a thriving ecosystem that fosters skill development, innovation, and global integration. With our AC sector academy preparing future talent, this plant reinforces India's emergence as a global manufacturing hub," Jawa added.

The Sri City management for their outstanding support. Sri City is not just an industrial park—it is a thriving ecosystem that fosters skill development, innovation, and global integration. With our AC sector academy preparing future talent, this plant reinforces India's emergence as a global manufacturing hub," Jawa added.

The upcoming facility, spread across 33.10 acres, will have a built-up area of 1,33,000 square meters and will be developed in three phases, the company said in a release here.

In Phase 1, the company will invest Rs. 547 crores to establish production lines for rotary compressors.

To begin with, the plant will have an annual capacity of 2 million units, which will be scaled up to 9 million units in its final phase. These compressors will cater to all major AC brands, initially serving the domestic market and expanding to exports in subsequent phases.

The project, which marks a major milestone in Daikin's expansion in India, is expected to generate nearly 500 direct job opportunities in its first phase, while also contributing to technology transfer and strengthening India's role in the global Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) supply chain. UNI

RBI Deputy Governor calls for transparency, teamwork in modern banking

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, FEB 12: Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Deputy Governor Swaminathan J today underscored the importance of organisational culture, ethics and ownership in building resilient financial institutions.

While speaking at the Axis Champions Awards held at Axis House in Mumbai, the Deputy Governor said that while banks often celebrate performance, true institutional strength lies in how results are achieved.

"Being recognised as a Champion today is not just about what you achieved, but how you achieved it," he said, emphasising that "means matter" as much as ends.

Highlighting the theme of the awards, he noted that institutions meet rising expectations not only through strategy but through



culture.

He outlined five core values underpinning the recognition of customer centricity, ethics, teamwork, transparency and ownership, describing them as "practical guides for daily behaviour" rather than abstract ideals.

On customer centricity, the Deputy Governor stressed that effective service is rooted in getting the basics right. Clear communication, accuracy in execution, fairness in dealings and timely resolution are what matter most in banking, he said. The best service, he added, is often "quiet

and consistent," built on clarity, care and responsiveness.

Calling ethics a "working discipline," he cautioned against treating it as a soft theme. Ethical conduct, he said, prevents small compromises from turning into major problems and is critical in handling grey areas and correcting mistakes fairly and quickly.

Regulatory discipline, he said, should not be seen as a box-ticking exercise but as central to long-term credibility.

Addressing the complexity of modern banking risks, he observed that challenges often cut across departmental boundaries and require coordinated teamwork. Effective collaboration reduces blind spots and improves response times, he said.

On transparency, he emphasised the need for clear communication with customers, particularly in digital journeys, ensuring that

terms, charges and consent are unambiguous.

Transparency, he noted, is also inward-facing—encouraging employees to raise concerns and flag errors without fear.

The Deputy Governor described ownership as the difference between viewing something as "my task" and "my responsibility".

Champions, he said, not only deliver results but set standards that others emulate.

While Axis Bank recognised 100 Champions at the event, he reminded the gathering that institutional strength ultimately rests on the collective conduct of thousands of employees.

"In the long run, it is values, not just strategies, that determine credibility and longevity," he added, congratulating the awardees and wishing the Axis Bank family continued success rooted in strong governance and ethics. UNI

Avantel bags Rs. 122.58 Cr order from ISRO's Commercial Arm NSIL

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, FEB 12: Avantel Limited on Wednesday said it has received a purchase order worth Rs. 122.58 crore (excluding taxes) from ISRO's commercial arm NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) for the supply of S/X-band with Ka-band ready full motion antennas. This full motion antenna will be capable of providing uninterrupted TTC/data reception support for LEO satellite, the company said in a release.

NSIL is responsible for commercialising space



products and services, including launch services, satellite services, and transfer of space technologies to industry. The order covers the supply, installation, and commissioning of the antennas and forms part of NSIL's satellite communication and ground segment requirements. The contract is scheduled for completion by August 2027. Avantel has previously received orders from NSIL.

Siddhartha Abburi, Director, Avantel Limited, said, "This order covers the supply, installation, and commissioning of S/X-band with Ka-band ready full motion antennas. It supports our role in providing communication solutions for satellite and ground segment operations in India."

Avantel, through its efforts, remains committed to the Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat initiatives, thereby contributing to the nation's self-reliance in communication infrastructure.

Avantel Limited specializes in designing, developing, and maintaining communication products, radar systems, and network management software applications, primarily catering to the aerospace and defence sectors.

The company's expertise spans various technological domains, including satellite communications (SATCOM), radar subsystems, Software-Defined Radios (SDRs), and Defence Electronics. UNI

ixigo launches Airport Cab booking service across India

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, FEB 12: ixigo, India's leading AI-based travel platform, on Wednesday said it has introduced Airport Cabs, a new service that allows travellers to book reliable and cost-effective cabs to and from major airports across the country.

With a focus on on-time pick-ups and zero last-minute cancellations, the service aims to simplify airport transfers for millions of travellers, the company said in a release. Travellers can book their airport cab directly through the ixigo app or website by selecting the "Airport Cabs" option on the homepage, entering their origin, destination, pickup date and time, choosing a cab, applying any available coupon, and completing the payment. First-time cab bookers on ixigo can avail a flat 50 per cent off up to Rs 200, while returning users can enjoy a flat 20 per cent off, up to Rs 100.



Cabs can be scheduled up to 90 days in advance, with the service available Pan-India across all major airports. Travellers can also choose from a range of cab types, including hatchbacks, sedans, SUVs/MPVs, luxury vehicles, and eco-friendly options such as electric and CNG cars. Airport entry charges, tolls, state taxes, and driver allowance are all included in the fare, with dynamic pricing based on the city, date, and time of travel. Free cancellation is allowed up to 30 minutes before the scheduled pickup time, and the fares include 30 minutes of free waiting time. ixigo also offers a 24x7 SOS support feature to assist with breakdowns, accidents, or emergencies. Speaking on the launch, Rajnish Kumar, Group Co-CEO, ixigo, said, "With ixigo Airport Cabs, we have handpicked cab partners across 100 cities in India to bring added convenience to the first and last mile of trips. From on-time pick-ups to flexible cab options, our focus is on removing friction at every step. This launch marks another step towards building a more dependable and hassle-free customer experience across all legs of the journey." UNI

UBS expands its presence in Hyderabad with opening of a new office

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, FEB 12: UBS, a leading global wealth manager and the leading universal bank in Switzerland, on Wednesday announced the opening of a new office at Centaurus by Phoenix in Gachibowli in the city, further expanding its footprint in the city and strengthening its long-term presence in India.

Participating in the inauguration, Telangana Minister for IT and Industries Sridhar Babu said "UBS has emerged as a strong partner in Telangana's growth story, bringing global scale and deep capabilities to the state's GCC ecosystem. We view this expansion as a long-term partnership growth that strengthens Hyderabad's role in global innovation while contributing to the broader India-Switzerland & EU economic relationship."

The new office marks the next phase

of UBS's growth in Hyderabad.

Since establishing operations in the city in 2020, UBS has steadily scaled its teams and capabilities.

With this expansion, UBS expects to hire another 2000 to 3000 professionals in the coming months, doubling its workforce in the city, the company said in a release here.

UBS already has offices in Pune (Kharadi), Navi Mumbai (Airoli) and Hyderabad (Gachibowli).

"Hyderabad continues to be an important growth location for UBS, thanks to its strong talent pool, supportive policies, and excellent infrastructure. We're looking forward to further expanding our tech capabilities, including AI, while enhancing our operations footprint in the location," said Matthias Schacke, Head India Service Company and Group Operation & Technology Office India.

Sanjay Kumar, Special Chief

Secretary, Department of Information

Technology, Electronics & Communications (ITE&C), said: "This new office will catalyse high-end skill creation, strengthen cross-border collaboration, and further integrate Hyderabad into the world's most sophisticated financial and technology value chains."

"The Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) will further strengthen the already robust economic ties between Switzerland and India. It will create new opportunities for businesses and individuals in both countries through investment, manufacturing and trade, as well as by generating more jobs. UBS's growing presence in India aligns with this vision, reinforcing India's role as a strategic hub for supporting global innovation and service delivery on a large scale," said Dr. Angela Honegger, CEO & Consul General at Swissnex in India, Consulate General of Switzerland.

opportunities and expansion plans. The company continues to strengthen its physical infrastructure across India, operating around 60-65 hubs nationwide, including nearly 50 non-AD hubs and about 15 AD hubs, he said in Hyderabad, operating four hubs with one additional hub under development. Highlighting new facilities are being planned with a focus on green operations and zero-emission infrastructure, aligning with its sustainability goals, he said that we are planning to set up four hubs in the next 2-3 months, including one green hub Hyderabad and two hubs in Andhra Pradesh.

On the financial front, CARS24

reported a cash burn of Rs. 162 crore in the first half (H1) and expressed confidence of achieving profitability within the next quarter, reflecting improving unit economics and operating leverage as volumes scale, he informed.

During H1 FY26, nearly 10 percent of vehicles transacted on CARS24 originated from Telangana, with Hyderabad accounting for the bulk of overall state volumes, he said the market continues to see strong demand for trusted retail purchases, faster price discovery, and financing-led convenience trends that are reshaping the used-car ecosystem in the region.

At a group level, CARS24 reported

Adjusted Net Revenue of Rs. 651 crore in H1 FY26, up 18 per cent year-on-year, he said in the first six months of the year, nearly 85,000 cars were transacted across India, the UAE, and Australia, generating Rs. 3,731 crore in vehicle transaction GMV.

Retail GMV crossed Rs. 2,000 crore, growing 21 per cent YoY, and now contributes more than 50 percent of total vehicle transaction GMV, supported by expanded margins of 19.3 per cent, he said.

Hyderabad's pre-owned car market remains largely petrol-led, with petrol vehicles accounting for 87.6 percent of total transactions, while diesel models contribute

11.6 per cent, reflecting customer preference for lower ownership and maintenance costs, he said.

Among individual models, the *Nexon* emerged as the most preferred pre-owned car in Hyderabad, accounting for 4.1 per cent of total sales, followed closely by the *Baleno* (3.97%) and the *Swift* (2.43%). Collectively, the top three models contribute over 10% of all pre-owned car transactions in the city, he said.

The data highlights a clear inclination towards compact SUVs and hatchbacks, underlining Hyderabad consumers' growing demand for versatile, fuel-efficient, and city-friendly vehicles, he said. UNI

Cars24 eyes IPO; plans to further expand its retail and financing presence in Telangana

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, FEB 12: Cars24, India's leading auto-tech platform, which announced preparing for an Initial Public Offering (IPO), is focusing to expand its retail and financing presence in Telangana, deepen local partnerships and increase adoption of its ownership services across Hyderabad and other key cities in the state.

Without disclosing the size of the issue, the company CFO India Shivanshu Makkar in a press conference here on Wednesday said it does not require capital to sustain core operations and will determine the IPO size close to the listing, depending on acquisition

opportunities and expansion plans. The company continues to strengthen its physical infrastructure across India, operating around 60-65 hubs nationwide, including nearly 50 non-AD hubs and about 15 AD hubs, he said in Hyderabad, operating four hubs with one additional hub under development. Highlighting new facilities are being planned with a focus on green operations and zero-emission infrastructure, aligning with its sustainability goals, he said that we are planning to set up four hubs in the next 2-3 months, including one green hub Hyderabad and two hubs in Andhra Pradesh.

On the financial front, CARS24

Moonball Magic: Sam Curran's Ultra-Slow Surprise



SL, minus Hasaranga, take on Oman at bogey venue

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HARARE: On most days Sri Lanka would enter Thursday's clash in Kandy against Oman as heavy favourites. They've beaten Oman in all their three meetings in internationals - twice in T20Is, once in ODIs - and are generally formidable in home conditions. But the psychological and tactical knock-on effects of Wanindu Hasaranga being ruled out of the tournament provide an intriguing backdrop.

The star legspinner is a renowned bully of Associates and those lower down the T20 rungs, as highlighted by his match-turning 3 for 25 against Ireland, whose batters found him too much to handle even on one leg. His absence therefore leaves a massive hole in Sri Lanka's middle-overs containment plan - one Oman will no doubt be looking to exploit - while his power-hitting will also be missed.

His replacement, legspinning allrounder Dushan Hemantha, is like-for-like cover on paper, but the only area in which Hemantha has regularly excelled in his handful of international white-ball outings has been in the field. The pressure will squarely shift to Maheesh Theekshana and Dunith Wellalage to spearhead the spin attack, with neither being as proficient a wicket-taker as Hasaranga.



Sri Lanka's bowling had been their trump card coming into this tournament, but Hasaranga's injury following that of Eshan Malinga's days prior to the tournament have exposed yet another chink in their armour. Sri Lanka's batting concerns have also been exacerbated by Hasaranga's absence. The middle order has struggled for consistency, particularly against spin - a challenge they're likely to face in abundance against a spin-centric Omani attack - and now one of their better spin hitters is out. Runs up the order from Pathum Nissanka and Kusal Mendis have been crucial to Sri Lanka's recent successes, while a revelatory knock from Kamindu Mendis against Ireland has offered hope lower down. But you sense the key to an unlikely upset will be whether Oman can access Sri Lanka's soft middle cheaply - do that and it's anybody's game.

For Oman, this is a quintessential do-or-die fixture. Currently at the bottom of Group B after a loss to Zimbabwe, they must secure a victory to keep their Super Eight hopes alive.

T20 World Cup: Depleted Australia reach 182-6 as skipper Marsh ruled out of Ireland clash

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

COLOMBO: A depleted Australia, rocked by the loss of their captain Mitchell Marsh to injury, eked out 182-6 against Ireland on Wednesday in their opening T20 World Cup match in Colombo. Travis Head stood in as captain and elected to bat on winning the toss but made only six. Josh Inglis was promoted to open in place of Marsh and made 37 off 17 balls, while Marcus Stoinis top scored with 45. Matt Renshaw made 37.

For Ireland, pace man Mark Adair was the pick of the bowlers with 2-44 from his four overs.

Marsh was ruled out earlier Wednesday after being struck in the groin during training.

Steve Smith will fly to Sri



Lanka as standby in case open-

er Marsh is unable to take any

part in the tournament.

"Mitchell Marsh will miss the

opening match of the ICC men's

T20 World Cup after sustaining

a direct blow to the groin during training earlier this week," said Cricket Australia in a statement.

"He is experiencing ongoing pain and discomfort which is restricting his movement.

"Scans have confirmed internal testicular bleeding and he will require a period of rest and rehabilitation." His return to play will be guided by symptom resolution and medical advice."

It is the latest injury blow to hit the Australia squad after leading pace bowlers Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood were forced out with injury. The in-form Smith, Australia's best player against spin, was controversially omitted from the squad despite his blistering Big Bash League form this year as an opening batsman.

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