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LG Sinha Unveils 'Mehsoos' Book in Srinagar, Calls for Social Awakening

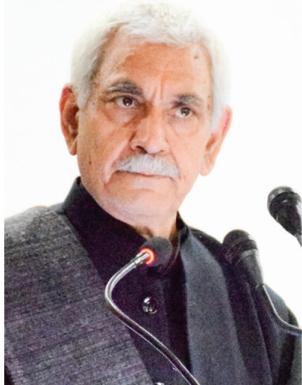
HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAR 14: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday urged people to reflect on their role in society and actively contribute to social progress while releasing the book "Mehsoos - Stories of Social Transformation" in Srinagar.

The book was released at the DIPR Auditorium and documents inspiring grassroots stories of selfless service and social initiatives undertaken by volunteers of Sewa Bharti Jammu and Kashmir and the Ekal Vidyalya Foundation.

Addressing the gathering, Sinha said the book captures inspiring accounts of dedication, sacrifice and commitment of volunteers working to transform

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J&K Emerges as India's Leading Trout Producer: LG Sinha

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAR 14: Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, on Saturday said the Union Territory has emerged as the leading producer of trout among India's cold-water states, attributing the achievement to focused government initiatives and expanding aquaculture infrastructure in recent years.

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Omar Abdullah Calls for Scientific Push to Boost Cold Water Fisheries in J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAR 14: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday called for harnessing the full potential of cold water fisheries in Jammu and Kashmir through improved scientific techniques, modern infrastructure and greater value addition while ensuring sustainability and livelihood security for fish farmers.

Addressing the National Conference on Cold Water Fisheries at the Sher-e-Kashmir International Conference Centre in Srinagar, the Chief Minister said the event would help the Union Territory learn best practices and develop stronger market linkages for sustainable growth of the sector.

The conference, organised by the Department of Fisheries under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India, brought together policymakers, experts, researchers and stakeholders from several states to deliberate on ways to sustainably harness the potential of cold water fisheries.



Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Minister of State for Fisheries S. P. Singh Baghel and J&K Agriculture Production Minister Javid Ahmad Dar were among those present on the occasion.

Welcoming the visiting dignitaries, the

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CS reviews plan to promote arts & culture among students

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 14: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today chaired a review meeting to examine a proposal for extending cultural activities to schools and higher education institutions across all districts of Jammu & Kashmir, with the aim of harnessing and channelising the creative potential of the youth

through structured arts based interventions.

The meeting, convened under the aegis of the Department of Culture, was attended by senior officers of the Culture and School Education departments along with other stakeholders.

Chairing the meeting, the Chief Secretary called for a well-structured and actionable plan for attracting the young popu-

lation of J&K towards arts and cultural activities. He suggested that a number of selected High Schools, Higher Secondary Schools and higher education institutions be identified and utilised as nodal centres for discovering, nurturing and giving direction to potential talent in art forms including poetry, creative writing, theatre,

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CM inaugurates Almond Blossom Festival-2026 at Badamwari



HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAR 14: Chief Minister

Omar Abdullah today inaugurated the Almond Blossom Festival-2026

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Two Lakh Tulips Set to Bloom at Scenic Sanasar, Garden to Open Soon

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, MAR 14: More than two lakh blooming tulips are set to welcome tourists at the picturesque meadow destination of Sanasar in Ramban district, with authorities preparing to open the garden to the public soon, marking the beginning of the new tourist season in the region.

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₹600 Cr Pharma Plant to Rise in Kathua

Jitendra Singh lays foundation stone; facility to produce key antibiotic ingredient, boost jobs

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 14: Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Saturday laid the foundation stone of a Rs. 600 crore pharmaceutical manufacturing facility in Kathua district, describing the project as a major step towards strengthening India's pharmaceutical manufacturing capabilities and reducing dependence on imports of critical drug intermediates.

The facility, coming up at village Gadadhar, will manufacture Amino Cephalosporanic Acid (ACA), a key antibiotic intermediate used in the production of cephalosporin drugs widely used in modern healthcare.

The project is being established by Orchid Pharma with facilitation from the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance

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NEW HYDROPOWER PROJECTS BEING PLANNED FOR J&K

Khattar says sites being identified; water diversion to northern states under study

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 14: The Centre has begun identifying sites in Jammu and Kashmir for new hydropower projects as part of efforts to enhance electricity generation and strengthen the country's power infrastructure, Union Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said.

In an interview with Times of India, Khattar said several



hydropower stations in the Union Territory are already

operational while desilting

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Special Teams to Check LPG, Fuel Stocks in Jammu

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 14: The district administration in Jammu on Saturday constituted special monitoring teams to verify LPG and fuel stock at distributorships across the district to ensure transparency and adherence to supply guidelines.

The decision was taken during a meeting chaired by Deputy Commissioner Rakesh Minhas with LPG distributors and representatives of oil marketing companies, an official spokesperson said.

During the meeting, the deputy commissioner made it clear that any irregularities in the distribution process would be dealt with strictly and erring distributors would be held accountable under applicable provisions.

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Over 70 Indian Students Evacuated from Iran, Set to Reach Delhi on Sunday

Majority from J&K travel via Armenia and Dubai after land journey from Iranian cities amid regional tensions

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAR 14: More than 70 Indian students, most of them from Jammu and Kashmir, who were stranded in Iran amid the ongoing regional tensions, are on their way back to India and are expected to

arrive in New Delhi on Sunday morning, the Jammu and Kashmir Students Association said on Saturday.

The association's national convener Nasir Khuehami said the students are travelling on a commercial flight and will reach Indira Gandhi International Airport after a connecting

journey through Armenia and Dubai. According to Khuehami, the group departed from Zvartnots International Airport in Yerevan on a flight operated by Flydubai, carrying over 70 Indian students along with other passengers.

The first leg of the journey left

Yerevan for Dubai International Airport at 13:25 local time on March 14 and is scheduled to arrive in Dubai at around 17:00. From there, the students will board another Flydubai flight departing at 05:05 local time and are expected to land in

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₹100 Cr Aqua Park Project Announced for Anantnag

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, MAR 14: Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh on Saturday announced a Rs. 100 crore Integrated Aqua Park Project for Anantnag district aimed at strengthening aquaculture infrastructure and generating employment opportunities in the region.

The announcement was made during the National Conference on Cold Water Fisheries held in Srinagar and organised by the Department of Fisheries.

The event was attended by Manoj Sinha, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Union Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and Panchayati Raj S. P. Singh Baghel.

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

LG Sinha Unveils.....

communities. He expressed hope that the stories would inspire more people across the country to participate in social service.

"This book is an inspiring chronicle for the people. I want these tales of Sewa Bharti's sacrifices, Ekal Vidyalaya's dedication, volunteers' commitment and the transformation in our communities to reach beyond J&K and ignite countless volunteers across India," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said Jammu and Kashmir holds immense potential to shape a bright future, highlighting the region's natural resources, energetic youth and service-oriented citizens.

"Great futures are not forged by fate but by resolve and collective endeavour. A prosperous Jammu and Kashmir will be defined not by economic metrics alone but by the quality of life every citizen cherishes," he said.

Calling for a collective effort towards social development, Sinha asked people to introspect about their contribution to society. "Ask yourself: What am I doing for my community? What legacy am I building for the people? What inheritance do I wish to leave for future generations? The answers within you will reshape our tomorrow," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also outlined five resolutions—social harmony, family awakening, environmental stewardship, civic duty and self-reliance—to guide the transformation of Jammu and Kashmir into a leading Union Territory. He said these principles would strengthen community bonds, protect the environment, promote responsible citizenship and encourage sustainable economic growth.

"These five resolutions are not mere ideas but our collective mandate to ensure robust socio-economic growth," he said.

Among those present at the event were Prof. Rakesh Kumar Jha, president of Sewa Bharti J&K; Suman Dhir, president of Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation; Dr Farooq Dar, vice president of Sewa Bharti J&K; and other office bearers and volunteers of both organisations. Senior officials including Rajiv Pandey, DIG Central Kashmir Range, and Srinagar Deputy Commissioner Akshay Labroo, along with prominent citizens from different walks of life, also attended the book release ceremony.

J&K Emerges.....

Addressing the National Conference on Cold Water Fisheries organised by the Department of Fisheries at Srinagar, the Lieutenant Governor highlighted the significant surge in fish production and sectoral development since 2020, reiterating the administration's commitment to strengthening livelihoods of fish farmers and promoting sustainable fisheries growth.

Sinha said the Union Territory holds strong potential to become a national model for integrated fisheries development, noting that a value-chain approach would help generate employment, reduce post-harvest losses and enhance the income of fish farmers.

He said under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) launched in 2022, an allocation of 233 crore was made for fisheries to encourage entrepreneurship, establish hatcheries, promote trout farming and support value-added ventures.

Highlighting the sector's progress, the Lieutenant Governor said trout production increased from 1,663 tonnes in 2021-22 to a record 2,650 tonnes in 2024-25. During the same period, private trout farming units rose from 936 to 1,649, hatcheries from one to nine, trout feed mills from none to six, Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS) units from two to nine and biofloc units from 10 to 59.

Sinha also expressed gratitude to the Government of India for approving a 100-crore Integrated Aqua Park project to be established in Anantnag district, saying the initiative would strengthen aquaculture infrastructure, boost fish production and create employment opportunities in the region.

The Lieutenant Governor noted that the fisheries sector faces emerging challenges including climate change impacts, rising water temperatures, water scarcity, slow growth of native species and fish health risks. He stressed the need to adopt scientific cold-water aquaculture practices, genetically improve trout and carp breeds, and develop climate-resilient production systems supported by strong seed-feed supply chains and aquatic health management.

He also emphasized that the rapid socio-economic progress of Jammu and Kashmir requires collective efforts from all sections of society, particularly the farming community, which he described as the backbone of the region's identity and economy.

Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Rajiv Ranjan Singh also attended the conference along with Omar Abdullah, Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, and Union Minister of State for Fisheries S. P. Singh Baghel.

During the event, model guidelines for the development of cold-water fisheries were released, while progressive fish farmers, fisheries start-ups and Fish Farmer Producer Organisations were felicitated. Beneficiaries also received sanction letters under schemes including the Kisan Credit Card initiative.

The conference brought together policy-

makers, experts, researchers and stakeholders from various states and Union Territories to explore collaborative strategies for sustainably harnessing the potential of India's cold-water fisheries sector.

Omar Abdullah.....

Chief Minister thanked the Government of India for choosing Srinagar as the venue for the conference, describing it as an important platform to discuss ways to further increase cold water fisheries production.

Abdullah said the conference had already provided valuable insights into emerging practices in aquaculture, noting that technological innovations are expanding the scope of cold water fisheries beyond traditional mountainous regions such as Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Referring to a case shared during the conference, he cited the example of a young entrepreneur from Hyderabad who has established a facility producing around 200 metric tonnes of trout using advanced techniques despite the tropical climate.

"This shows that technology can overcome geographical limitations. Regions like ours must continue to improve techniques and adopt modern scientific practices to remain competitive," he said.

The Chief Minister stressed that the government must support fishermen and aquaculture entrepreneurs by improving infrastructure, particularly in remote areas, and strengthening post-production facilities.

He underscored the importance of science and research in guiding the sector's development, saying innovation would be key to increasing production in a sustainable manner.

At the same time, he cautioned that growth must not come at the cost of environmental damage, stressing the need to protect natural fish stocks and maintain ecological balance.

Highlighting the impact of climate change, Abdullah said unusual weather patterns, including higher temperatures in Srinagar during February and early flowering of trees this year, indicate changing climatic conditions that could affect sectors like fisheries.

He also recalled that trout was first introduced in Kashmir more than a century ago and said the region's long experience in trout farming should be shared with other states while learning from their best practices.

The conference saw participation from representatives of several states and Union Territories including Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and northeast states, as well as Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala.

On the occasion, Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh announced that an Integrated Aquaculture Park would be established at Kokernag in Anantnag district. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah thanked the Union Minister for the announcement, saying the project would further strengthen the fisheries sector in Jammu and Kashmir.

CS reviews.....

visual arts, painting and music.

The CS underlined the critical importance of identifying and engaging resource persons from diverse art forms as an essential prerequisite for the success of the programme. He emphasised that youth engagement through the arts is fully in consonance with the spirit and vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which advocates for a holistic, experiential and multidisciplinary approach to learning.

The Chief Secretary stressed that participation of youth in cultural activities must be made impactful and interactive, moving beyond passive reception to active engagement. "We need to encourage our youth to participate meaningfully in such activities. The engagement has to be impactful and interactive," he observed.

Underlining the broader significance of culture as a sector, Atal Dulloo noted that culture is a great cause of economic activity and its relevance will only grow in the age of automation and Artificial Intelligence. "Culture and the arts will foster meaningful human existence in the age of AI. It is not just about heritage preservation, it is about building a future-ready generation rooted in identity and creativity," he remarked.

A detailed presentation on "Youth Engagement and Empowerment through Arts in Jammu & Kashmir" was made by renowned theatre personality and founder-director of Natrang, Balwant Thakur, who outlined a comprehensive, multi-phase framework for integrating arts-based interventions in educational institutions across the Union Territory.

The presentation highlighted the need for integrated arts-based interventions encompassing theatre and storytelling, music and dance and visual arts and crafts as purposeful tools within educational processes. It underscored that art builds confidence, creativity and critical thinking, strengthens communication and public speaking skills, bridges gaps in traditional education, fosters leadership qualities through empathy and collaboration and prepares youth to compete at national and international levels.

The proposed programme outlined a three-phase implementation strategy: Phase I

focused on Exposure and Awareness through formation of Travelling Art Units conducting live performances at schools, especially in underserved and remote areas; Phase II covering Identification and Capacity Building of Trainers by selecting and training serving government school teachers as Art Resource Persons; and Phase III entailing District-Level Implementation through deployment of Art Resource Persons, formation of School Art Clubs, organisation of workshops and art camps and District and UT-level Art Festivals for talent recognition.

The Chief Secretary directed joint formulation of a detailed, time-bound plan of action, assuring that approvals would be accorded at the earliest. He advised that implementation be commenced without delay, with a robust feedback mechanism put in place to continuously improve the programme. "Start with these activities, take feedback from the beneficiaries, improve further and make it a truly impactful initiative for our youth," the Chief Secretary concluded.

CM inaugurates.....

at Badamwari (Almond Alcove), titled Badam Vaer Blooms, in Srinagar's historic old city, heralding the arrival of spring in Kashmir.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that the Almond Blossom Festival symbolizes Kashmir's timeless connection with nature and its vibrant cultural traditions.

"Badamwari has always been a cherished part of Srinagar's heritage. The blooming almond blossoms mark not only the arrival of spring but also the spirit of renewal, hope and cultural vibrancy that defines Kashmir," he said.

He added that such festivals help revive historic spaces while promoting tourism and creating economic opportunities for local artisans and artists.

"Events like the Almond Blossom Festival provide a wonderful platform to showcase grandeur of Kashmir's Spring season, cultural heritage, traditional crafts and artistic talent. These also help attract tourists and encourage community participation in preserving our heritage," the Chief Minister said.

The event was organized by the Floriculture Department and witnessed participation from top officials, artists and a large number of visitors, including students and tourists.

Ministers Javid Ahmed Dar and Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Zadibal Tanvir Sadiq, Commissioner Secretary Floriculture department Zubair Ahmad, Director Floriculture Ms Mathura Masoom Director Handicrafts Mussarat ul Islam and other senior officers including senior officers of Jammu & Kashmir Bank who were also present on the occasion.

During the visit, the Chief Minister took a tour of the almond alcove and happily obliged enthusiastic visitors who sought selfies with him, adding to the lively and festive atmosphere at the historic garden.

The Chief Minister commended Floriculture department for development of Badamwari and opening it for visitors on time which has seen huge footfall of tourists and locals in early spring season.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also inaugurated an online ticketing portal (e-ticketing system) for gardens across Jammu and Kashmir, aimed at simplifying the ticketing process and improving visitor convenience.

"The introduction of online ticketing for our gardens is an important step towards modernizing tourist facilities and ensuring a seamless experience for visitors," he said, adding that the initiative will make garden access easier and more efficient for tourists as well as locals.

The Chief Minister also inspected an exhibition set up at Badamwari where progressive farmers, florists and artisans had displayed their produce and handicrafts. He appreciated the stall owners for showcasing a wide variety of products and commended their contribution towards preserving Kashmir's traditional crafts, and for their ventures in horticulture and floriculture.

Two Lakh Tulips.....

Spread over about 35 kanals of scenic land, the tulip garden features more than two lakh flowers of 25 distinct varieties, creating a vibrant floral landscape expected to attract visitors from across the country.

Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan said the tulip garden has emerged as a colourful floral destination and will further enhance the tourism potential of the region. He said the blooming flowers at the scenic site present a mesmerising view and noted that this year 25 varieties of tulips have been planted in the garden.

Khan also said that the Patnitop Development Authority is developing a golf course at Sanasar to introduce golfing activities, alongside other development works aimed at the overall upgradation of the tourist destination.

He added that the activity calendar will focus on promoting such destinations and special emphasis will be laid on projecting Patnitop and Sanasar as wedding and film shooting destinations among interested clientele.

District Officer, Floriculture Department, Vikram Sharma said the tulip garden will soon

be thrown open to visitors once the flowers reach full bloom. He said the display of more than two lakh tulips in 25 varieties will provide a major attraction for tourists visiting the area.

Sharma said Jammu and Kashmir is endowed with unparalleled natural beauty and landscapes that hold immense potential for tourism. He appealed to people to visit the garden in large numbers and witness the vibrant bloom.

The project to develop the largest tulip garden in Jammu division at Sanasar was sanctioned by the government in 2023 as part of efforts to strengthen tourism infrastructure in the region.

₹600 Cr Pharma.....

Council (BIRAC) under the Department of Biotechnology. Singh said the investment, made under the government's Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, reflects growing confidence in the industrial and innovation potential of Jammu and Kashmir.

He said the facility is expected to generate direct employment for nearly 400 people while creating a similar number of indirect job opportunities in allied sectors such as logistics, supply chains and services.

Highlighting the region's industrial prospects, the minister said Kathua has the potential to emerge as a significant pharmaceutical manufacturing hub given the rapid development of industrial infrastructure in the area.

Describing the project as a breakthrough for the region's pharmaceutical sector, Singh said India currently relies almost entirely on imports of ACA from China, which exposes the country to risks related to supply security, pricing stability and access to essential medicines.

"Antibiotics are foundational to modern healthcare, and the pandemic showed how dependence on a single geography for essential inputs can quickly become a national vulnerability," he said.

Singh said the initiative aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of making India self-reliant in critical healthcare technologies and pharmaceutical supply chains. He also referred to the Rs. 10,000 crore Biopharma Shakti initiative announced in the Union Budget to strengthen India's biotechnology and biopharmaceutical ecosystem.

The minister said projects like the Kathua facility will not only expand India's pharmaceutical production capacity but also strengthen national health security by ensuring the availability and affordability of essential medicines even during global disruptions.

New Hydropower.....

work is underway to restore reservoir capacities. He added that construction has also resumed on three to four projects that had earlier stalled.

"Some plants are already operating, and desilting work is being undertaken to restore reservoir capacity. Work has also started on three-four projects that were stalled. Additional projects are being planned, and site identification is underway," the minister said.

Authorities are examining potential locations across the region to develop additional hydropower plants aimed at boosting electricity output.

Khattar also said the government is studying proposals to divert water from the region to northern states including Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi through canw als or tunnels.

"There are two or three possible routes. We have to see which one can be built faster and will be financially viable. One alignment proposed through the city of Jammu may not be feasible, while another route bypassing the city is being examined," he said.

The minister said the Government of India, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is expanding generation capacity with a greater focus on renewable energy sources. While thermal power plants earlier dominated capacity additions, the current emphasis is on solar power and other green energy sources.

Since solar power is not available round the clock, the government is working on storage solutions to ensure a reliable electricity supply. Nuclear power is also expected to play a larger role in the future energy mix.

India currently has around 8 gigawatts of nuclear capacity, with another 12 gigawatts under development. The long-term target is to scale up nuclear capacity to around 100 gigawatts by 2047, with states encouraged to host at least one project each. Thermal power will continue to support grid stability, Khattar said, adding that around 20,000 megawatts of thermal capacity is currently under development, with projects planned up to 2032.

Highlighting improvements in the power sector, the minister said the demand-supply gap, which stood at around 5.5 per cent in 2014-15, has narrowed significantly to about 0.1 per cent in 2024-25 following expansion of generation capacity and technical improvements.

On the financial health of power distribution companies, Khattar said that while discoms recently reported profits of around 2,700 crore, the sector still carries accumulated losses of nearly 6.7 lakh crore, largely due to tariffs being kept below the cost of supply when subsidised electricity is provided.

Special Teams.....

Minhas directed all distributors to adhere to the prescribed supply schedule in accordance with established guidelines and the latest circulars issued by the authorities.

To maintain strict oversight and check ground-level irregularities, the deputy commissioner announced the formation of special monitoring teams that will cross-verify stock status at distributorships across the district. The teams will carry out regular inspections to ensure compliance with laid-down protocols.

He also directed that no preferential treatment should be extended to any consumer and emphasized that distribution must be carried out in a fair and transparent manner.

The deputy commissioner further instructed distributors not to allow unnecessary queues to form outside distributorship premises, stating that such practices cause avoidable inconvenience to the public.

Over 70 Indian.....

New Delhi at about 9:55 am (IST) on Sunday.

Most of the returning students are enrolled at Urmia University of Medical Sciences and Tehran University of Medical Sciences, among other institutions in Iran.

Khuehami said the students travelled by buses from different Iranian cities and undertook a land journey to Armenia before boarding the flight from Yerevan.

Earlier, the students had been relocated to safer locations by the Embassy of India in Tehran. Another group of Indian students studying in Kerman has also been moved to the relatively safer city of Qom as a precautionary measure.

The association said it had been coordinating with the Ministry of External Affairs (India) and Indian missions in Tehran and Yerevan to secure the necessary transit permissions and flight arrangements for the stranded students.

Khuehami said the matter was also taken up with Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, following which the required permissions for land transit and onward travel were granted.

The association added that the MEA has advised Indian students in Iran to avoid sharing their exact locations or personal details on social media as a precaution amid the volatile security situation.

₹100 Cr Aqua.....

Speaking on the occasion, Singh said the Integrated Aqua Park to be established in Anantnag will significantly strengthen aquaculture infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir while boosting cold-water fisheries development and fish production. He said the project is expected to create new employment avenues and improve livelihoods of people associated with the fisheries sector.

The Union minister stressed the need to scale up trout production and strengthen the incomes of cold-water fish farmers by enhancing productivity, promoting value addition and tapping export markets where such species enjoy strong demand.

He emphasised the government's focus on promoting end-to-end value chain development so that cold-water regions can efficiently produce, process and market trout and other species with better access to modern infrastructure and stronger market linkages.

Singh also called for organising fish farmers through cooperatives and urged States and Union Territories to support them in accessing government schemes, infrastructure facilities and credit.

During the event, the Union minister, along with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, jointly released the Model Guidelines for Reservoir Fisheries and Aquaculture Management. The guidelines provide a comprehensive framework covering scientific seed stocking, cage and pen-based aquaculture, leasing and governance mechanisms, biodiversity conservation, value-chain linkages and monitoring systems aimed at promoting sustainable fisheries development.



Secretary RDD reviews PMAY-G progress; 97% houses completed, directs completion of remaining by April, 2026

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 14: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, MOHAMMAD Aijaz Asad, today chaired a high-level meeting to review the progress of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) across Jammu and Kashmir.

During the meeting, a detailed district-wise review of the scheme was undertaken with particular focus on completion of the pending houses. It was informed that 3,23,299 houses have already been completed, achieving an overall progress of 97 percent under the scheme.

The Secretary noted that 3447 houses have been completed from the last 2 months and directed officers to further accelerate the pace of work so that the remaining 11,340 houses are completed at the earliest.

Speaking on the occasion, Aijaz Asad said that the current phase of PMAY-G is nearing completion and a new phase of the scheme is set to begin, therefore all works



sanctioned under the existing phase must be completed without delay. He asked officers to work with seriousness and accountability to achieve the targets.

He directed Assistant Commissioners Development (ACDs) and Block Development Officers

(BDOs) to track each individual case and ensure that no sanctioned house remains incomplete. He further instructed that any technical or administrative bottlenecks hindering the progress of works should be resolved immediately.

The Secretary emphasized that all pending works must be completed by April 15, 2026, stressing that officers should make every possible effort, even if it requires working round the clock, as houses left incomplete under the previous phase will not be taken

up once the new phase begins.

Aijaz Asad also directed the Director Rural Development Jammu and Director Rural Development Kashmir to hold weekly review meetings and keep the department informed about the progress achieved.

He further stressed the need for early release of pending installments to beneficiaries, directing ACDs to conduct block-wise reviews in this regard.

Highlighting the importance of the recent survey conducted prior to the launch of the new phase, Aijaz Asad said that although the survey has been carried out using AI-based technology, it will still be reviewed at the Deputy Commissioner level to ensure that no eligible household is left out of the scheme.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Director Rural Development Kashmir Shabir Hussain Bhat, Director Rural Development Jammu Shehnaaz Akhtar, Joint Director Planning Kamal Kumar Sharma, besides ACDs and BDOs.

Women Walk 1 km Daily for Drinking Water in Wahipora, Langate

■ DR. AB QAYOOM

Langate, Mar 14: Residents of Chan mohalla Wahipora village in Langate are facing acute shortage of drinking water, forcing women to walk long distances to fetch water for their households. This evening before Iftar, several women were seen carrying earthen water pots on their heads while returning from a local tube well located nearly one kilometer away from their homes. The women said



they have no proper drinking water facility in the area and have to struggle daily to arrange water for their families. When asked about the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) water supply scheme, the locals expressed ignorance about any such facility reaching their village. One young girl said that during elections several representatives promised to solve the drinking water issue, but the promises remained unfulfilled. The villagers further stated that they often depend on the contaminated water of Nallah Pharou for daily use, and during rainfall and floods the situation worsens as even that source becomes unsafe. They appealed to the concerned authorities to take immediate steps to provide safe and regular drinking water to the area.

SSM College Alumni Meet Held, 61 Newly Recruited JEs Felicitated

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAR 14: The Alumni Association of SSM College of Engineering, Parihaspora on Saturday organised a grand alumni meet at the college campus, attended by more than 100 former students from across the country and abroad.

A highlight of the event was the felicitation of 61 students of the college who were recently recruited as Junior Engineers through the JKSSRB in the R&B (PWD) and Jal Shakti Departments. The newly selected engineers were invited as special guests and were congratulated by senior alumni and faculty members.

Prominent alumni present on the occasion included Dr. Muzamil Rafiqi, Superintendent Engineer (LCMA); Er. Firdous Ahmad Bhat, Chairman of the Institution of Engineers (India), J&K State Centre; and Er. Irfan Ahmad Reshi, Secretary of IIEI. Alumni working in government departments, private organisations, startups and entrepreneurial ventures also attended the gathering.



Addressing the programme, Dr. Rafiqi urged budding engineers to work with dedication and sincerity so that the responsibilities entrusted to them are fulfilled effectively. Er. Firdous Ahmad Bhat appreciated the contribution of the college management and faculty in shaping the careers of students.

Er. Irfan Ahmad Reshi emphasised the importance of strengthening alumni engagement with industry and academia to create more opportunities for students.

Alumni from outside India also joined the meet. Er. Mushafiq Ashai, a UAE-based web consultant, said SSM College not only provides a degree but also guides students towards achieving their dreams.

Er. Yaseer Ahmad Regoo, Senior Manager Cyber Security at J&K Bank, called for the inclusion of Artificial Intelligence courses across engineering and management disciplines, while entrepreneur Er. Kamran Nisar, chairman of several organisations including Winter Fell Café, highlighted the need to promote an entrepreneurial culture among students.

Members of the college managing committee, including Dr. G. N. Qasba, Mrs. Roma Wani, Prof. (Dr.) Barkat Hussain and Prof. (Dr.) M. A. Shah of NIT Srinagar, were also present on the occasion.

Authorities Intensify Crackdown on Illegal Mining Near Kharoo-Langate Bridge

■ DR. AB QAYOOM

LANGATE, MAR 14: Authorities have intensified their crackdown on illegal mining activities in the Nallah Mawer area near the Kharoo/Langate bridge after growing concerns about public safety and potential damage to vital infrastructure. The Geology and Mining Department, in coordination with Handwara Police, has sealed multiple entry and exit points to Nallah Mawer and declared the surrounding area a red zone to prevent illegal extraction of minerals. Officials said that during the past week, some miscreants have been carrying out illegal mining operations in broad daylight near the Kharoo bridge and the under-construction bypass bridge. The mining activities were reportedly taking place nearly 70 feet above and below the bridge area, posing a serious threat to the structural safety of the bridge. The Kharoo/Langate bridge serves as a crucial connectivity link between Baramulla district and the Handwara sub-district, and any damage to the structure could severely affect transportation and daily life in the region.

Despite continuous monitoring by Handwara Police under the supervision of the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Handwara and the efforts of the Geology and Mining Department, offenders have repeatedly attempted to access the restricted area through alternative routes. Officials said that on Saturday, the Geology and Mining Department, along with the police team led by the Duty Officer of Police Post Langate, Rayees Ahmad, conducted another raid in the area after receiving information about fresh illegal mining activities. Although the individuals involved managed to flee the spot, authorities sealed several additional entry and exit points to further restrict access to the red zone. The concerned departments issued a stern warning to those



involved in illegal mining, stating that strict legal action will be taken against anyone found extracting minerals from the restricted zone. They warned that such activities could lead to severe damage to the bridge and surrounding natural resources. Officials also confirmed that formal complaints regarding the issue have been received, and necessary legal proceedings will be initiated against those responsible. While talking to Headlines Today, the District Mineral Officer (DMO) Kupwara assured that strict action will be taken and that a committee will be constituted to address the issue comprehensively. He said that stringent measures would be enforced around the designated red zones of Nallah Mawer to deter illegal mining. The DMO noted that due to the heavy workload across Kupwara and Bandipora districts, it is sometimes difficult to maintain constant presence at every

location. However, he appreciated the efforts of field staff and local in-charges, along with the Jammu and Kashmir Police particularly the Handwara Police for their continued efforts to curb illegal extraction in the area. He further revealed that 17 seizures have been made during the past seven days, and a fine of Rs 90,000 has been imposed on illegally dumped mining material in the Langate area. Appealing to the public, officials urged local residents not to involve themselves in illegal mining activities. They also called upon civil society members, NGOs, and responsible citizens to help spread awareness about the harmful impact of illegal extraction on government infrastructure and natural water resources. Authorities reiterated that safeguarding public infrastructure and protecting natural resources remains a top priority, and strict monitoring will continue in the coming days to prevent further violations.

DISTRICT HOSPITAL PULWAMA MOVING ON PATH OF DEVELOPMENT; CIVIL SOCIETY APPRECIATES ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, MAR 14: Over the past two years, significant steps have been taken to improve healthcare facilities and provide better medical services to patients at District Hospital Pulwama. These initiatives have helped the hospital move steadily on the path of development. Members of the local civil society have welcomed the progress and appreci-

ated the efforts of the district administration and hospital authorities.

According to sources, a modern emergency block is currently being constructed at the hospital at a cost of several crores of rupees. The new facility is expected to strengthen emergency medical services and ensure timely treatment for patients in critical conditions. Once completed, the emergency block will provide advanced facilities and sig-

nificantly improve the hospital's ability to handle urgent medical cases efficiently.

In addition, to reduce the growing patient rush at District Hospital Pulwama, several medical departments have been shifted to the Covid Hospital Prchoo. The move aims to streamline healthcare services and reduce overcrowding at the main hospital, allowing doctors and medical staff to provide better attention

and care to patients.

Another important development is that the operation theatre at District Hospital Pulwama is now available 24 hours a day for the convenience of patients. This step has greatly helped in handling emergency surgeries without delay and ensuring that patients receive immediate medical attention when required. Representatives of Pulwama's civil society have praised the

efforts of the Deputy Commissioner Pulwama and the Medical Superintendent of District Hospital, Dr. Abdul Ghani Dar. They stated that these initiatives have brought noticeable improvement in the healthcare sector in the district. They also expressed hope that similar measures will continue in the future so that people of the area can benefit from better and more accessible medical services.

Market Inspection in Qazigund: Expired Food Items Seized, ₹20,000 Fine Imposed

■ FAROOQ RATHER

QAZIGUND, MAR 14: In order to ensure the availability of safe and quality food items to the public and to maintain price discipline in the market, a special market inspection drive was conducted in Qazigund on Saturday. The drive was carried out under the supervision of Tehsildar Qazigund, Shakeel Ahmad, with the assistance of police personnel and officials from the concerned departments.

During the inspection, several shops in the market were thoroughly checked. Authorities recovered expired food items and other products worth thousands of rupees, including Kurkure, Lays, shampoo, soap, and other daily-use commodities. The seized expired items were immediately destroyed on the spot to prevent any risk to public health.

Officials also imposed a cash fine of ₹20,000 on shop-



keepers found violating the rules during the inspection.

Speaking on the occasion, Tehsildar Qazigund Shakeel Ahmad directed shopkeepers to strictly avoid selling expired or substandard products and to ensure adherence to the government-approved rate lists. He warned that such inspection drives would continue in the future and strict action would be taken against anyone found violating the rules. Local residents appreciated the initiative of the administration and expressed hope that such drives would help curb the sale of substandard goods and prevent overpricing in the markets.

Rana inspects desilting of canals; emphasizes timely completion, community involvement

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MARCH 14: Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmed Rana, today conducted a detailed inspection of the irrigation canal network from Belicharana to Suchetgarh to review the progress on ongoing desilting works and assess preparedness of the irrigation infrastructure ahead of the ensuing agricultural season.

During the visit, the Minister inspected various stretches of the canal system, including the distribution network and key syphons to evaluate the pace and quality of desilting operations.

The inspection was undertaken ahead of the scheduled recharging of canals with the objective of ensuring uninterrupted water supply to tail-end areas during the forthcoming irrigation season.

The Minister was accompanied by MLA, Dr. Gharu Ram Bhagat, Chief Engineer, Irrigation and Flood Control, Manoj Gupta, SDM R.S. Pura, Anuradha Thakur and other officers from the district administration and Irrigation and Flood Control Department.

With the irrigation and cropping seasons approaching, the Irrigation and Flood Control Department has intensified preparations to ensure that canals are thoroughly desilted and restored for smooth and efficient water flow. These efforts aim to guarantee adequate irrigation facilities for the farmers during the crucial agricultural period.

During the inspection, the Minister directed the senior field officers to ensure that all desilting and maintenance works are completed within the stipulated timeframe so that irrigation water



can be supplied without disruption to the farming community.

He informed that water is likely to be released into the canal network within the next seven days. He emphasized that all pending desilting and repair works must be completed before the release to ensure the system remains fully functional ahead of the cropping season.

The Minister inspected several key components of the irrigation network including main Ranbir Canal at Belicharana, the canal syphon at Dharab, MRC Muraliyan, D10, D10A and the Tanda Branch at R.S. Pura.

During the inspection, Chief Engineer was directed to improve the overall condition of the canal

network by strengthening canal embankments, removing accumulated silt and repairing damaged sections to enhance the efficiency and carrying capacity of the irrigation system.

The Minister further instructed that the silt removed during the desilting process should be promptly cleared from canal embankments and disposed of in a scientific manner so that it does not slide back into the canals or obstruct the free flow of water.

"The timely desilting and restoration of the canal network will significantly improve water flow to agricultural fields, benefiting thousands of acres of cultivable land in the command area. This will ensure a reliable

irrigation supply to farmers and facilitate timely sowing during the upcoming agricultural season," the Minister said.

He observed that regular maintenance of canals is essential to preserve their water-carrying capacity and to minimize the risk of breaches, overflow and waterlogging during peak irrigation periods and the monsoon season. Such preventive measures, he said, are vital for protecting standing crops and safeguarding agricultural lands.

The Minister added that improved canal flow also contributes to natural groundwater recharge through controlled seepage, which helps sustain the local water table and supports

long-term water security for farmers.

Taking serious notice of the dumping of waste into canals, the Minister directed the SDMRs Pura to take strict measures to prevent the practice. He stated that dumping garbage into irrigation channels leads to choking of waterways and pollutes irrigation water, adversely affecting both agriculture and the environment. He stressed that effective monitoring and public awareness are necessary to keep the canal system clean and functional.

The Minister also appealed to the public to cooperate with the authorities and refrain from throwing waste into agricultural canals, emphasizing that maintaining clean waterways is essential for efficient irrigation and sustainable water management.

He also directed the local administration and concerned officials to actively involve local communities and stakeholders in safeguarding the canal network.

The Minister highlighted the need to launch awareness initiatives to educate people about the harmful effects of dumping waste into irrigation canals.

During the visit, the Minister also reviewed a proposal for upgradation and renovation of Dak Bungalows in the area to improve existing infrastructure and facilities.

During his tour, the Minister met several delegations en route and listened to their grievances. He directed the concerned officers to take prompt action on the issues raised and ensure that genuine public concerns are addressed in a time-bound manner.

Mission Shakti Shopian organizes Capacity Building Programme for ASHA Workers under BBBP

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, MARCH 14: Sankalp Hub for Empowerment of Women, Mission Shakti Shopian, in collaboration with the Department of Health, organized a Capacity Building Programme for ASHA Workers under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) initiative at the Mini Secretariat Shopian today.

The programme aimed to enhance the knowledge and skills of ASHA workers who play an important role in promoting maternal and child health, nutrition awareness, and preventive healthcare at the grassroots level.

On the occasion, the Chief Medical Officer Shopian, Arshid Hussain Tak highlighted the vital role of ASHA workers in strengthening healthcare delivery in rural and remote areas.



He appreciated their dedication in spreading awareness about maternal health, institutional deliveries, immunization, and child care.

Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Shopian, Nazir Ahmad also addressed the gathering and stressed the importance of continuous training for frontline health workers.

He encouraged ASHA workers to promote safe motherhood practices and awareness about the importance of protecting and educating the girl child in line with the objectives of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao.

CHO Hermain shared insights on community health initiatives and emphasized the importance of coordination between health workers and community institutions to ensure that government health schemes reach the intended beneficiaries.

The Gender Specialist from Sankalp Hub for Empowerment of Women, Mission Shakti Shopian sensitized participants about gender equality, women's rights, and awareness about government welfare schemes for women and girls.

SMC organises Health Camp under Theme "Naari Leads Swachhata"

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MARCH 14: On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) organised a comprehensive Health Camp at its Head Office, Karan Nagar, in collaboration with Government Medical College Srinagar (GMC) and Associated Hospitals, Srinagar.

The initiative was held under the theme "Naari Leads Swachhata", highlighting the vital role of women in advancing sanitation, public health, and community well-being. The health camp was organised on the directions of Faz Lal Haseeb, Commissioner SMC, as part of the Corporation's ongoing commitment to safeguarding the health and welfare of its workforce, particularly women who play a pivotal role in maintaining sanitation and cleanliness across the city. The programme was conducted under the



supervision of Dr. Fauzia Habib, Health Officer, SMC, who meticulously coordinated the initiative and ensured its successful execution in collaboration with the medical team from GMC and Associated Hospitals, Srinagar.

A team of specialist doctors and trained paramedical staff from GMC and Associated Hospitals carried out medical consultations, health screenings, and general health assessments for the female sanitation workers as well as the female staff of the SMC Central Office. The camp focused on preventive healthcare, early diagnosis, and raising awareness on hygiene and well-being, particularly for women engaged in sanitation and public service.

Dr. Rehana Kausar, Consultant, GMC Srinagar, was also present during the programme and coordinated the participation of the specialist medical team, ensuring that comprehensive medical care and professional guidance were provided throughout the camp. The initiative reflects SMC's sustained efforts to promote women's health, dignity, and empowerment while recognising the invaluable contribution of women in leading sanitation and cleanliness initiatives under the spirit of "Naari Leads Swachhata." Through such programmes, the Corporation continues to reaffirm its commitment to building a healthier workforce and fostering a cleaner, safer, and more sustainable urban environment.

DC Budgam reviews status of Panchayat Electoral Roll Revision in District

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, MARCH 14: Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today chaired a meeting to review the status of Panchayat Electoral Roll Revision in the district.

During the meeting, the DC took a detailed review of the progress regarding printing and distribution of Electoral Rolls (E-Rolls) across various blocks and subdivisions of the district.

The DC emphasized the importance of timely printing and proper distribution of E-Rolls and directed the concerned officers to ensure that the process is completed within the



stipulated timelines.

He further stressed on maintaining accuracy and reliability of electoral data, instructing officials to carry out thorough verification so that the electoral rolls remain error-free and updated in accordance with the

prescribed guidelines.

The DC also called for close synergy among all election officials at district, subdivision and block levels to ensure smooth and efficient management of the Panchayat electoral roll revision process.

DIPR Shopian conducts awareness camp on Nasha Mukti at Imam Sahib

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, MARCH 14: An awareness programme under the ongoing JEC Campaign on Nasha Mukti Abhiyaan, J&K was conducted today by the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Shopian in collaboration with the Education Department at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Barbugh Imam Sahib.

SDM Zainapora, Bilal Ahmed attended the programme as the Chief Guest. While speaking on the occasion, he highlighted the measures being taken to tackle the menace of illegal cultivation of cannabis and destruction of wild bhung. He urged the audience to cooperate with the administration in eliminating the menace of drug abuse and illegal cultivation. He also advised students to stay away from narcotics and become ambassadors of a drug-free society. While inaugurating the event, District Information Officer, Showkat Hussain Ganie highlighted the growing menace of drug abuse and stressed the need for collective efforts to eradicate it from society. He urged the participants to adopt a healthy lifestyle and spread awareness among people, especially the youth, about the harmful effects of drugs.

Other speakers emphasized that public cooperation, awareness and strong willpower are essential to make the Nasha Mukti Abhiyan a successful movement at the grassroots level. On the occasion, two skits highlighting the ill effects of drug abuse



were presented by the students of GHSS, Barbugh Imamsahib and Raja Art and Cultural Foundation Dooru, which were widely appreciated by the participants and officials present on the occasion.

Slogan writing and painting competitions were also held on the theme of drug-free society in which 30 students from different schools participated. In the Painting Competition, Sweeba Kausar, Mohammed Huzafa and Sehreen Iqbal secured first, second and third positions respectively.

Similarly in the Slogan Writing Competition, Rahail Hussain, Sahiba Showkat and Artiza Manzoor secured first, second and third positions respectively.

All winners were felicitated with mementos and certificates, while all participants were also honoured for their participation. Among others present on the occasion were Tehsildar Barbugh Imamsahib, Principal GHSS, Barbugh Imamsahib, teachers and staff, besides a large number of students who pledged to contribute towards making society drug-free.

DC Budgam chairs DLC Meeting on Land Use Conversion

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, MARCH 14: A meeting of the District-Level Committee (DLC) regarding conversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes under the J&K Agricultural Land (Conversion for Non-Agricultural Purposes) Regulations, 2022 was held today under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan.

The meeting focused on deliberation of pending land use conversion cases across the district. During the meeting, several cases related to the establishment of units such as packaged drinking water plants, construction of shops, hotels, and other commercial establishments were discussed in detail.

After thorough deliberation and examination of the cases, pending land use conversion cases placed before the committee were decided in accordance with the provisions of the regulations.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments to ensure verification of technical parameters, ownership documents before issuing recommendations in such cases.

He stressed the need for effective inter-departmental coordination to streamline the land conversion process while ensuring strict adherence to legal provisions under the relevant regulations.

Among others, the meeting was attended by the CEO Doodhpathri Development



Authority, General Manager DIC Budgam, ACR Budgam, Chief Agriculture Officer, Chief Horticulture Officer Budgam, DFO Pir Panjal Forest Division Budgam, Executive Engineers of PWD (R&B) Budgam and Beerwah, Executive Engineer Irrigation & Flood Control Division Budgam, Executive Engineer KPDCI Budgam, Executive Engineer PHE Budgam, Pollution Control Board Officer Budgam, and other concerned officers.

Commissioner Secretary Cooperative chairs review meeting of Anantnag Central Cooperative Bank Ltd

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MARCH 14: Commissioner Secretary, Cooperative Department, Yasha Mudgal, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting held to evaluate the performance and operational status of the Anantnag Central Cooperative Bank Ltd. (ACCB) at the JCC Bank Rail Head Complex.

The meeting was attended by the senior officials, including Registrar, Cooperative Societies, Mohammed Shafiq Chak; Director Finance, Cooperative Department; Assistant General Manager, NABARD, Ravi Shankar Sharma; other senior officers from the department and branch heads of the bank.

General Manager, ACCB, Intikhab Hussain, delivered a detailed PowerPoint Presentation highlighting the bank's physical and financial performance. The overview encompassed key parameters such as deposit mobilization, advances, loan disbursement, liquidity management, asset quality, profitability, productivity, and human resource management. He also outlined ongoing initiatives



aimed at enhancing the operational efficiency, strengthening internal controls, and transforming the bank into a financially sound, customer-centric institution with improved service delivery to members and customers.

The meeting featured in-depth

discussions on the bank's overall financial health, operational challenges, and strategic priorities. Key focus areas included measures to reduce Non-Performing Assets (NPAs), strengthening recovery mechanisms, improve profitability, and ensure long-term sustainability.

The Commissioner Secretary was briefed on various operational aspects, performance indicators, challenges encountered and proposed strategic interventions to fortify the cooperative banking framework across Jammu and Kashmir.

Emphasizing the critical importance of financial discipline, Yasha Mudgal directed the officials to prioritize robust recovery strategies, enforce timely loan repayments and adopt sound financial management practices. She instructed the concerned officers to focus on achieving the targeted financial benchmarks, particularly improving the Capital to Risk-Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR), enhancing overall financial stability and ensure regulatory compliance.

The Commissioner Secretary further asked all the officers to work with full dedication. She reaffirmed the bank's commitment to proactive steps for boosting operational efficiency, elevating financial performance and delivering superior banking services to members and customers.

She reiterated the need to increase quality loan disbursement, modernize management systems and accelerate recovery efforts. She asked the Branch managers to expand high-quality lending while ensuring effective recovery of outstanding dues, and to implement aggressive measures to bring NPAs down to targeted levels.

First National Lok Adalat-2026 settles 2321 cases in Reasi

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

REASI, MARCH 14: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Reasi, under the aegis of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and Jammu and Kashmir Legal Services Authority successfully organised the 1st National Lok Adalat of the year 2026 in the district.



The Lok Adalat was inaugurated by DLSAA Chairman (Pr. District & Sessions Judge), Reasi Khalil Ahmad Choudhary. The inauguration ceremony was attended by several distinguished dignitaries, including Kumar Abhishek, Deputy Commissioner Reasi, Geeta Kumari, Chief Judicial Magistrate Reasi, Shivali Sharma, Munsiff Reasi, Aastha Sharma, Addl. Spl. Mobile Magistrate Reasi, Vishal Jamwal, SDPO Reasi, Vijay Kumar Verma, ACD Reasi, Mohammad Ashraf Malik, AEE (HQ) PWD Reasi, Pawan Kumar Bogia, Executive Engineer PWD Reasi, Ajaz Shah, Superintending Engineer PWD Circle Reasi, Pawan Dev Singh, President Bar Association Reasi along with other executives of bar and bar members, Ms. Rashi Baru, Chief LADC, DLSA Reasi along with their team of LADCs, staff members of Court Complex Reasi, PLVs and litigants etc.

Sixteen benches constituted across the district took up 3,105 cases, out of which 2321 cases were disposed of amicably resulting in a settlement of Rs 1,06,01,019.

The cases disposed of included Matrimonial cases, NI Act cases, Civil Cases, Criminal Compoundable cases, Bank recovery cases, Pre-litigation cases etc.

The National Lok Adalat aimed to provide a platform for amicable settlement of disputes, promoting justice and reducing pending cases. The DLSA Reasi has achieved the objective by settling a significant number of cases through the Lok Adalat.

Besides this, an exhibition of Handicrafts/Vocational Training Products was also organized in collaboration with the Department of Handicrafts, Reasi. The exhibition was attended by the advocates, staff members of different Courts of District Court Complex Reasi, PLVs of DLSA Reasi and litigants.

The Bench number-1 was presided over by Khalil Ahmad Choudhary, Principal District & Sessions Judge, Reasi along with Pooja Gupta, Secretary DLSA Reasi as bench member.

Seed, Fertilizer dealers sensitized to regulatory provisions at Basholi

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA, MARCH 14: The dealers and retailers of Basholi dealing in seeds, fertilizers and pesticides were today sensitized to the regulatory provisions governing the sale and distribution of agricultural inputs.

The meeting was convened by Law Enforcement Inspector Kathua Anil Gupta under the directions of Assistant Director Law Enforcement Jammu.



The dealers were asked to ensure strict adherence to the provisions of the Seeds Act 1966, Fertilizer Control Order 1985 and the Insecticides Act 1968 along with the rules framed thereunder.

"The dealers and retailers need to prominently display the approved price list of all seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, issue proper bills or invoices for each and every sale and maintain accurate stock and sales registers as provided under the provisions of the Act," they were told.

It was further emphasised that any deviation from or non-compliance with these instructions shall be viewed seriously and necessary action under the relevant provisions shall be initiated against the defaulting dealers and retailers without any further notice.

Intensive market checking conducted in Doda Town ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, Navratra

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

DODA, MARCH 14: A joint team of enforcement departments today conducted an intensive market inspection drive in Doda town and adjoining areas to check quality and prices of essential items ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, Navratra and the ongoing holy month of Ramzan.

The drive was conducted to ensure availability of quality essential commodities, prevent overcharging and safeguard consumer interests during the festive season when market activity increases significantly.

The enforcement team comprised officers and officials from the Legal Metrology Department, Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) and Food Safety Department. During the inspection, more than 20 shops were checked for compliance with display of rate lists, accuracy of weighing and measuring instruments and maintenance of hygiene and quality standards in food items.

Seven challans were booked against



erring traders for violation of various provisions and a penalty of Rs 6300 was imposed.

The team also inspected LPG dealerships to verify compliance with legal norms and ensure delivery to genuine consumers through the OTP-based verification system.

The shopkeepers, especially those dealing with eatables and essential

commodities were strictly directed to maintain hygiene, avoid sale of substandard food items and refrain from unfair trade practices such as overpricing, hoarding or short weighing.

The team also sensitized traders about consumer rights and warned that strict action shall be taken against violators.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar inaugurates 1st National Lok Adalat-2026 at District Court Complex Jammu

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MARCH 14: The First National Lok Adalat of the year 2026 was held today at District Court Complex Jammu under the visionary leadership of the Chief Justice, Arun Palli, of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh (Patron-In-Chief, J&K Legal Services Authority) and under the chairmanship of Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Judge High Court of J&K and Ladakh and Executive Chairman of J&K Legal Services Authority, besides under the guidance of R. N. Watal, (Pr. District

& Sessions Judge, Jammu) and under the directions of Shazia Tabassum, Member Secretary, Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority and overall supervision of Maleeka Sharma, Secretary District Legal Services Authority Jammu.

A total of 6217 cases pertaining to different natures were taken up, of which 4325 cases were settled. The total amount recovered stood at Rs. 22,43,12,358.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Judge High Court of J&K and Ladakh and Executive Chairman of J&K Legal Services Authority inaugurated

the National Lok Adalat 2026.

Speaking on the occasion, Justice Sanjeev Kumar emphasized the importance of National Lok Adalat in the amicable settlement of long pending disputes. "Alternative dispute resolution is a vital tool in the justice delivery system which ensures speedy and one time settlement of disputes," he added.

Later, Justice Sanjeev Kumar conducted an inspection of various Courts and interacted with the litigants. He encouraged them to take benefit from the National Lok

Adalat. Justice Sanjeev Kumar also distributed MACT cheques among the claimants. The National Lok Adalat took up different kinds of cases. A total of 31 benches were constituted in different Courts to deal with the matters of civil nature, Bank Recovery, Criminal Compoundable, MACT, Matrimonial, NI Act u/s 138, Revenue Cases, BSNL Cases, Other Civil Cases in the District Court Complex Janipur Jammu. Motor Accident Claims Tribunal, Jammu also settled several cases. In Jagmeet Singh & Ors vs Shri Ram Finance Co Ltd case, an

amount of Rs. 1,20,00,000 was awarded in favour of the claimant after settlement. The amount was paid as compensation by the respondent. In Suriya & Ors Vs Avinash Kour case, the Lok Adalat awarded an amount of Rs. 76,00,000 in favour of the claimant after settlement. The amount was paid as compensation by respondent Shri Ram Finance Co. Ltd.

In Rajni Devi Vs TATA AIG General Insurance Co. case, an amount of Rs. 20,00,000/- was awarded in favour of the claimant after settlement.

First National Lok Adalat of 2026 held across UT of J&K

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MARCH 14: Continuing its endeavour to fulfil the constitutional commitment of providing swift, cost-effective, and efficient dispute resolution to the masses in general and the litigant public in particular, the J&K Legal Services Authority under the patronage of Justice Arun Palli, Chief Justice, High Court of J&K and Ladakh (Patron-in-Chief, J&K Legal Services Authority), the dynamic leadership of Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority and the able guidance of Justice Sanjay Dhar, Chairperson, High Court Legal Services Committee organized the first National Lok Adalat for the year 2026 across the UT of Jammu &

Kashmir, to promote amicable settlements in a wide range of cases, including MACT claims, matrimonial disputes, cheque bounce cases under the Negotiable Instruments Act, money recovery, commercial disputes, and compoundable criminal offences.

To ensure maximum participation and effective disposal of cases, pre-Lok Adalat sittings and pre-counselling sessions were conducted well in advance across the districts of the Union Territory, encouraging parties to explore amicable settlement of their disputes. Several awareness programmes, meetings and sensitization sessions were also conducted by the Legal Services Institutions to promote the concept and importance of Lok Adalats among litigants and stakeholders.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority inaugurated the 1st National Lok Adalat at District Court Complex, Jammu. Upon his arrival, the Executive Chairman was received by Mr. R. N. Watal, Principal District & Sessions Judge (Chairperson, DLSA) Jammu, Shazia Tabassum, Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority, Smt. Maleeka Sharma, Secretary, DLSA Jammu along with other Judicial Officers of the District Judiciary.

During his visit, the Executive Chairman inspected various benches constituted for the Lok Adalat and interacted with the Presiding Officers, members of the benches, Advocates and litigants, appreciating the arrangements made for the smooth and effective conduct of the Lok Adalat. Several

disputes were amicably settled on the spot with the active intervention of the benches. MACT compensation cheques were also distributed among eligible beneficiaries, providing timely relief to the claimants.

As per the information received from various Legal Services Institutions working in different districts across the UT of J&K, out of total 76,707 cases taken up by 194 Benches in the day long National Lok Adalat, 67,993 cases were amicably settled and disposed off involving an amount of Rs. 55,86,33,017/- as compensation/ settlement amount in cases like Motor Accident Claims, civil, criminal, labour disputes, Electricity and Water Bills, Land Acquisition, Family matters, cheque dishonor and Bank Recovery etc.

National Lok Adalat held at Ramban

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN, MARCH 14: As per NALSA's annual Calendar of activities and on the directions of J&K Legal Services Authority, the first National Lok Adalat of the year 2026 was held at District Court Complex Ramban and other subordinate Courts today by District Judiciary, Ramban.

The event was conducted under the patronage of Chairman, District Legal Services Authority, Ajay Kumar Gupta and with the assistance of Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Priyanka Mahajan.

The Chairman inaugurated the Lok Adalat at the District Court Complex, where he emphasized the importance of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in ensuring quick and affordable justice.

The Lok Adalat focused on matters such as motor accident claims, bank recovery cases, matrimonial disputes,

labour disputes and compoundable criminal cases etc.

By encouraging dialogue and mutual agreement between parties, the National Lok Adalat provided a cost-effective and time-saving alternative to conventional litigation. Judicial officers, legal services authorities, advocates, and volunteers worked together to ensure smooth conduct of the proceedings. The initiative reaffirmed the judiciary's commitment to providing accessible and efficient justice to all citizens.

Nine benches were constituted across all Courts of District Ramban for amicable and speedy settlement of the cases. A total no. of 770 cases (672 Post-litigation and 98 Pre-litigation) were taken up, out of which 490 Post-litigation and 50 Pre-litigation cases were disposed of with a settlement amount of Rs. 1,79,73,600 in Post-litigation cases. A total settlement award amounting to Rs. 1,93,59,107 was settled out.

HT EDITORIAL

Along with dog bite cases cat bite cases also increase alarmingly

Over the years the dog bite cases have caused panic among the people of the Kashmir valley and in the recent past yet another disturbing trend has come to the fore. The same is in the form of the rise in the cat bite cases in Srinagar and other parts of the valley. The rise in the cat bite cases has led to anxiety among the valley residents and they are quite worried about the same.

The anti-rabies clinic at Shri Maharaja Hari Singh (SMHS) hospital in Srinagar reported more than 6,500 cat bite cases in the last year. In fact, the cat bite cases have outnumbered the dog bite cases for the year 2025. The increase in cat bite cases means that more and more people are coming into contact with cats. In most of the cases the cat bites have been due to the reason that they have bit their masters while being at their houses.

Over the past few years, it has been observed that many people have started to have cats as their pets at their respective homes. This was not the trend earlier with people only having dogs as their pets and in some cases, rabbits were being used as pets. It seems that the people who have cats as their pets are not fully aware about the precautions that need to be taken while keeping them at their respective homes.

It is important that the people who want to or intend to have some pet at their home should consult a veterinarian so that they come to know about the various facets associated with the same. Most of the people are not aware about the precautions that need to be taken while rearing an animal at their home. At the same time, it is important that food is given to the pet animals at the appropriate time so that they don't feel starved.

Like humans, animals are to be given food at regular intervals and this needs to be kept in mind by the people who have cats or dogs as pets at their homes. Timely vaccination of the pets is also very important and most of the time it is skipped by the masters. It is essential that vaccines are administered to the pets well on time so that they are protected from different ailments and diseases.

Clean Environment Needs Ample Plantation

Planting Trees Can Beautify the Heart of Srinagar



SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Development is essential for every country. Today, only a few countries in the world are economically strong and capable of generating a large number of employment opportunities through beneficial schemes. These countries have well-developed sectors that offer employment with good earnings to their educated and skilled youth. It is expected that in the future many more nations will join the list of developing countries. In the modern era, we have immense and effective communication tools that help in exchanging business ideas from one corner of the world to another. Most trade-related deals are now carried out through virtual means such as emails, WhatsApp, and video conferencing. For the progress of any country, development is crucial and plays an important role in strengthening the economy. Development of roads, transport systems, trade and commerce, and proper management of cities while keeping environmental concerns in mind are essential aspects of development.

The government has established various departments that look after environmental issues and issue guidelines from time to time to safeguard the environment. Development does not only mean the construction of tunnels, large buildings, railway tracks, wide roads, or dams. Development must go hand in hand with environmental protection. The development of any country requires proper planning, effective management, and coordination among different agencies while keeping environmental concerns in mind. There is also an intellectual class within the government sector that continuously addresses the grievances of the public and ensures the availability of essential facilities.

In this article, I would like to highlight the importance of planting trees in cities and major business hubs of the district where there is heavy movement of traffic. Day by day our demands are increasing, and the rising flow of traffic pollutes the environment in many ways. Factories in the manufacturing



sector release a significant amount of pollution into the air, water, and soil. Such activities cannot be stopped overnight. Therefore, the only viable option is to minimize environmental damage by actively participating in environmental protection measures and addressing the threats we face today. The government administration is doing commendable work by taking notice of environmental issues and implementing necessary measures.

The environment plays a vital and significant role in our lives. Environment means our surroundings; it includes plants, water bodies, animals, birds, air, soil, and other natural elements. It is a broad and essential concept in our day-to-day life. First and foremost, we must understand the importance of the environment and its role in sustaining life. However, development in the form of roads, bridges, buildings, railway tracks, airports, factories, industries, and hydroelectric dams, in some ways, harming our environment.

If we analyze how this damage occurs, one major reason is the cutting down of trees during road widening and railway construction. This leads to soil erosion, which means the wearing away of the upper fertile layer of the soil. Soil erosion adversely affects soil fertility and increases the risk of flash floods, landslides, and other environmental hazards.

How to Maintain Temperature in Cities
Cities are busy business hubs. They enhance the beauty and economic strength of a country, state,

union territory, or district. However, temperatures in cities often rise due to the emission of polluting gases from vehicles. Greenhouse gases are responsible for the increase in temperature in areas with heavy vehicular movement, and cities are the most affected.

Effective city management is crucial for the administration. While planning urban development, authorities must prioritize a clean environment, protection of water bodies, improvement of air quality, and proper drainage systems. These aspects should be carefully considered while widening roads, installing sewage systems, and managing solid waste generated from hospitals, business establishments, and households.

Planting more and more trees can significantly help lower city temperatures, improve air quality, and enhance the overall beauty of urban areas. Trees act as natural air purifiers and provide shade, thereby reducing the heat island effect in cities. In addition, eco-friendly transportation options should be promoted. The use of e-rickshaws should be increased, as currently there are only 314 e-rickshaws operating in the city (source: Daily Sheherbeen), 2024.

In conclusion, planting trees is one of the most effective and sustainable ways to beautify the heart of while protecting the environment. It is a shared responsibility of both the government and citizens to ensure balanced development that harmonizes economic growth with environmental preservation.

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Joy Returns as Educational Institutions Resume Classwork Across Kashmir



RAYEES AHMAD KUMAR

Schools across the valley organised a Welcome Day on Monday as primary and middle schools across the Kashmir Valley reopened after the long winter vacation.

Students returned to school with great enthusiasm and excitement. The young students looked cheerful and happy to meet their classmates and teachers after the prolonged break. While interacting with some students, they said that they were very happy to see their friends, classmates and teachers again. They added that the first day back at school would remain a memorable moment for them. The first day began with a prayer, followed by the morning assembly. The assembly started with the Tilawat-e-Qalam Pak, after which some students recited Naat Sharif. A few students also delivered short speeches highlighting the importance of education in life. A sense of joy and renewed energy returned to school campuses after educational institutions resumed classwork after remaining closed for over three months due to the winter break, bringing students back to classrooms and restoring normal academic activity across the region. The reopening of schools brought a sense of joy and relief among students, parents and teachers, as classrooms once again witnessed lively interactions after a



prolonged break. Many students expressed excitement about reuniting with their classmates and resuming regular academic activities. School campuses across the Valley saw renewed energy and activity, with morning assemblies, classroom discussions and co-curricular activities returning to normal. As per the directions of the higher authorities of the Education Department, elaborate arrangements were made to welcome the little champs. Educational institutions were decorated beautifully, creating a cheerful atmosphere that filled students with excitement as they entered their school campuses. Sweets and candies were distributed among kindergarten and primary-level pupils, while dates and other eatables were served to the students of higher classes for breaking their fast at dusk. After the academic session was reverted to November a year ago, students, teachers, parents, and all other stakeholders expressed immense joy while sending their children back to school following the reopening of institutions after a lengthy winter break. This year, another directive from the Directorate of School Education Kash-

mir regarding the monitoring of academic activities in classrooms through live video calls appears to be a promising initiative. It is likely to make both teachers and students more accountable and also help authorities suggest remedial measures wherever necessary. The initiative was well received by the teaching staff and the Heads of Institutions, especially considering the importance of educating children from underprivileged sections of society in public schools. This year, educational institutions across the valley displayed better results at the 10th and 12th levels. As a result, members of civil society, the government administration, and officials of the Education Department joined together in applauding and appreciating the teaching community for their dedication and hard work. Both the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) and the SCERT remained vibrant and active during the winter period, organizing various training programmes for teaching officials and Heads of Institutions. These initiatives aimed at equipping them with the latest teaching methodologies and enhancing their profes-

sional skills and efficiency. Now that the new academic session has formally commenced, every teaching official, irrespective of cadre or posting, should strive to give their best in the classroom. Teachers must constantly work to improve their knowledge, teaching skills, and strategies to effectively handle lively classrooms, because a nation is shaped within the four walls of a classroom. A teacher should always prepare thoroughly before delivering a lecture and regularly review the syllabus and prescribed textbooks assigned to them according to the timetable. Their foremost aim should be to achieve improved and better results at the end of the academic session. By doing so, teachers will not only perform their professional duties with satisfaction and enthusiasm but will also render a great social service. In an era where moral values among youth appear to be diminishing, it has become increasingly important to impart moral lessons both during the morning assembly and in routine classroom activities. Issues such as drug addiction, substance abuse, and the rising crime rate pose serious challenges to society today. These problems must be addressed and uprooted at the earliest; otherwise, they may lead to widespread social devastation. Teachers, being the builders of the nation and key stakeholders in society, should always remain at the forefront in guiding the younger generation. By nurturing responsible citizens and instilling strong moral values, they can help build a society that is crime-free, drug-free, and truly worth living in.

Writer is a columnist based in Gazigund Kashmir.

Ningli Nallah: A River Crying for Protection



■ MUDASIR AHMAD NAJJAR

In the beautiful land of north Kashmir, surrounded by green fields, mountains and peaceful villages, flows a small but very important stream called Ningli Nallah. At first sight, it may look like an ordinary stream of water, but for the people living near it, this river has always been much more than that. It is a part of their lives, their history and their daily routine.

Ningli Nallah begins its journey from the famous Shranz Waterfall, located in the foothills of the Pir Panjal mountain range in Baramulla district. From this beautiful natural source, the stream flows through many villages before finally joining the Jhelum. During its long journey, the river passes through several villages such as Nagbal, Satersreen, Dandmoha, Bandi Payeen, Kalantra Payeen, and many others. For the people living in these villages, Ningli Nallah has always been an important source of water and livelihood, supporting agriculture, daily life and the natural environment for generations.

For many centuries, this river has played a very important role in the lives of the people living along its banks. It has helped farmers grow crops, provided water for daily needs and supported fish and other living creatures. In many ways, Ningli Nallah has been the backbone of these villages. But today, this peaceful river is slowly facing a serious problem. The river that once gave life to villages is now crying for protection.

■ A River That Supported Generations

Older people in the villages still remember the days when Ningli Nallah was very clean and full of life. The water was clear, fresh and flowing strongly throughout the year. People respected the river and treated it like a gift from nature.

Farmers depended on the river to irrigate their fields. Water from Ningli Nallah helped crops grow and supported agriculture in many villages. Without this water, farming would have been very difficult. The river was also known for its fish.

Many fishermen used to catch fish from its clean water. These fish were not only used for food but also sometimes sold in nearby markets. In this way, the river also helped people earn a living. Children played near the river, enjoying its cool water. Families often spent time near its banks during warm summer days. The sound of flowing water created a peaceful and relaxing atmosphere for the villagers.

For the people living in the region, Ningli Nallah was not just a river. It was a friend, a supporter and a silent witness to their lives.

■ The Changing Condition of the River

Unfortunately, the condition of Ningli Nallah today is very different from the past. As the river flows through village after village, a new problem has started appearing along its banks.

In many places, people have started throwing plastic bags, bottles, food wrappers and other household waste near the river. Slowly, the banks of the stream are turning into dumping areas.

Plastic waste is one of the biggest problems. Unlike natural materials, plastic does not break down easily. It stays in the environment for many years and pollutes the water and soil.

When this waste enters the river, it not only destroys the beauty of the place but also harms the water quality. The clean stream that once reflected nature's beauty is now struggling with pollution.

■ Harm to Fish and Nature

The pollution of Ningli Nallah is not only affecting the appearance of the river but also damaging its natural life.

Fish and other aquatic animals need clean water to survive. When plastic and other waste enter the water, it becomes difficult for these creatures to live there. Slowly, the number of fish in the river has started decreasing.

Birds, plants and small animals that depend on the river are also affected. A polluted river can disturb the entire natural system of the area.

Nature works like a chain where every part is connected. If one part is damaged, the whole system can suffer. This is why protecting rivers is very important for maintaining environmental balance.

■ A Lesson About Human Responsibility

The story of Ningli Nallah teaches us an important lesson about our relationship with nature.



Nature always gives generously. Rivers provide water, land becomes fertile, trees give oxygen and mountains protect the environment. But in return, nature expects only one thing from humans respect and care. When people throw waste into rivers or damage natural resources, they slowly destroy the same environment that supports their lives.

Protecting a river does not require very complicated solutions. Often, it begins with simple actions such as not throwing garbage into water and managing waste properly.

If every person living near Ningli Nallah takes responsibility, the condition of the river can improve greatly.

■ The Role of Local Communities

The people living along the riverbanks have the power to protect Ningli Nallah. Villagers can work together to keep the river clean and safe.

Community awareness is very important. Schools, local leaders and social organizations can help educate people about the importance of protecting rivers. Clean-up drives can also be organized where villagers gather to remove plastic waste from the banks of the river. Such activities not only improve the environment but also create a sense of responsibility among people. When communities work together with a shared purpose, even small actions can bring big positive changes.

■ A Request to the Government

While the support of local communities is important, the role of the government is equally necessary in protecting rivers like Ningli Nallah. The concerned authorities must take this issue seriously and look into the matter as soon as possible. If timely action is not taken today, the situation may become much more difficult to control in the future for both the people

and the government.

The government can introduce better waste management systems in the villages through which the river flows. Providing dustbins, proper waste collection services and recycling facilities can greatly reduce the amount of garbage that reaches the riverbanks. Environmental departments should also organize awareness programs so that people understand the importance of keeping the river clean.

Regular monitoring of the river and small development projects such as strengthening the riverbanks, planting trees along the river and conducting regular cleaning campaigns can help restore the natural beauty of Ningli Nallah. Therefore, it is a sincere appeal to the government and concerned authorities to take immediate steps to protect this river. If action is taken now, Ningli Nallah can still be saved for future generations. But if the problem is ignored, the damage may become so serious that it will be very difficult to repair later.

■ A River Worth Protecting

Even though Ningli Nallah is not a very large river, its importance for the region cannot be ignored. It has supported generations of people and continues to flow quietly through villages and fields. Every drop of water in this stream carries the history of the villages it passes through. It has seen people grow, farms flourish and communities develop over time. Allowing such a river to suffer from pollution would mean losing an important part of our natural and cultural heritage. Fortunately, nature has a strong ability to recover if given proper care and attention.

■ Listening to the River's Voice

Today, Ningli Nallah seems to be sending a silent message to everyone living near its banks. It is asking for care, respect and protection.

This river has given life to more than a hundred villages for centuries. Now it is the responsibility of those villages to protect and preserve it.

If people stop throwing waste into the river, organize cleaning efforts and work together with government support, the river can once again become clean and full of life. Future generations deserve to see Ningli Nallah as a beautiful and healthy stream, just as their ancestors once saw it. After all, a river is not just flowing water. It is a symbol of life, nature, and responsibility.

Author from
Dandmoha, Kreeri, Baramulla

Jammu and Kashmir's Struggle with Drug Addiction



■ AADIL GHULAM

Recently, Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed a steep and troubling rise in substance abuse, pushing the region into a public health emergency. Official data placed before Parliament by the Central government suggests that nearly 10 lakh people in the Union Territory are affected by drug abuse — close to 8% of the population. Subsequent disclosures have presented an even more dire picture. In August 2023, the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment informed Parliament that approximately 13.5 lakh adults in Jammu and Kashmir are estimated to be drug users, most of them abusing heroin, often through injectable forms.

The issue extends beyond the adult population. According to the same parliamentary report, in the 10-17 age group, an estimated 1.68 lakh children in Jammu and Kashmir were reported to be using drugs. The substances identified range from cannabis and opioids to sedatives, cocaine, amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), inhalants and hallucinogens. This indicates not merely experimentation but early and multi-drug exposure, raising serious concerns about long-term health, cognitive development and social integration.

Gender-disaggregated data further complicates the picture. The National Survey on Drug Use (2023), conducted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, reveals that although men represent the

majority of users, women comprise a substantial and frequently overlooked segment. Estimates indicate that approximately 36,000 women in Jammu and Kashmir use cannabis, 8,000 use opioids, and a similar number relies on sedatives. Women account for about 7% of the total drug-using population, translating to roughly 62,000 individuals. Given the stigma associated with female addiction, many believe these figures to be underestimates.

What makes women's substance use particularly consequential is its location within domestic spaces. Addiction among men is more visible and often externalised; addiction among women is hidden, managed privately, and frequently denied. This invisibility has costs that extend beyond the individual. When women, who are often primary carers, struggle with untreated addiction, the effects ripple outward—disrupting child care, nutrition, schooling, and emotional stability. However, policy discussions rarely include children affected by maternal addiction, as they often get overlooked by health services, schools, and welfare institutions.

Jammu and Kashmir's treatment infrastructure remains inadequate, despite the magnitude of the problem. The Union Territory currently has 10 Addiction Treatment Facilities, 5 District De-addiction Centres, and 1 Rehabilitation Centre. None of these are designed specifically for women. There is no formal mechanism linking de-addiction services with child welfare systems, nor are treatment centres required to assess family circumstances or dependent children. Without addressing the underlying causes, frontline workers under ICDS and the school system respond to symptoms such as absenteeism, malnutrition, and behavioural distress.

Law enforcement has been the most visible arm of the state's response. The NDPS Act aims to disrupt supply and deter trafficking through property attachments and arrests. While such measures are necessary, they remain insufficient. Addiction is driven not only by availability but also by demand shaped by social



conditions. Decades of conflict, political uncertainty, unemployment and economic stress have created a climate of chronic vulnerability in Jammu and Kashmir. For many, substance use functions less as recreation and more as coping.

The legal framework itself can unintentionally deepen the problem. Fear of criminalisation discourages users, particularly women, from seeking help. Mothers face the additional anxiety that disclosure

may invite social ostracism or jeopardise their children's custody. In such circumstances, silence appears safer than treatment — a perverse outcome for a policy ostensibly aimed at harm reduction.

Funding constraints are often cited as an obstacle, but resources already exist. The National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) provides for prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. What is missing is transparent utilisation, targeted allocation, and credible monitoring, especially for gender-sensitive and family-centred interventions. Funds, in the absence of outcome-based accountability, run the risk of becoming part of administrative routine instead of transforming into meaningful care.

India's broader drug policy has long oscillated between viewing addiction as a crime and recognising it as a health condition. This ambiguity has produced half-measures — aggressive enforcement on one side and insufficient healthcare capacity on the other. Global evidence suggests that balanced approaches, combining policing with sustained treatment and prevention, yield better outcomes. The lesson is not about replicating foreign models, but about aligning intent with design.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the consequences are particularly significant. Substance abuse undermines not only physical and mental health but also families, livelihoods and social cohesion in a region already burdened by intergenerational trauma. Measuring success solely through seizures and arrests misses the more profound question: whether people can access treatment without fear, and whether children can remain in classrooms rather than slipping into neglect.

Until policy places care alongside enforcement, the drug crisis in Jammu and Kashmir will continue to grow — not just in numbers, but in the quiet damage it leaves behind.

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RISING TOBACCO USE AMONG YOUTH: A GROWING SOCIAL CHALLENGE



MOHAMMAD HANIEF

Tobacco addiction has increasingly become one of the most pressing social and public health concerns affecting young people in many parts of India. In the region of Jammu and Kashmir, this issue has begun to take on worrying proportions, particularly among school, college and university-going students. Health experts, teachers and social workers in the region warn that the rising number of young smokers reflects not only a health concern but also a broader social challenge that demands urgent attention from families, educational institutions and policymakers alike.

For many years, tobacco use has been recognised globally as one of the leading preventable causes of disease and death. According to the World Health Organization, millions of people die every year due to illnesses caused by tobacco consumption. These illnesses include heart disease, lung cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and several other life-threatening conditions. While global public health campaigns have worked tirelessly to reduce tobacco consumption, the habit continues to spread among younger populations in various regions, including parts of Jammu and Kashmir.

Across towns and cities in the Union Territory, it is not uncommon to see young students smoking cigarettes outside campuses, in markets or at social gathering spots. What is particularly concerning is that many of these students are still in their teenage years or early twenties. For them, smoking often begins as a casual experiment influenced by curiosity, peer pressure or the desire to appear socially confident among friends. However, this seemingly harmless experimentation can quickly turn into nicotine dependence.

Nicotine, the addictive substance found in tobacco, has a powerful effect on the human brain. When a person smokes, nicotine reaches

the brain within seconds and creates temporary feelings of relaxation or alertness. Over time, the brain begins to depend on this chemical stimulation, leading to repeated cravings and withdrawal symptoms whenever a person attempts to stop. For young students whose bodies and brains are still developing, this addiction can have particularly harmful consequences.

Doctors in Jammu and Kashmir are increasingly reporting tobacco-related health issues among younger individuals. Persistent cough, breathing difficulties, reduced stamina and early signs of cardiovascular strain are being observed even in individuals in their twenties. Medical professionals warn that if tobacco use continues at such levels among the youth, the long-term health burden on the region could become severe.

Another major concern is the social normalisation of smoking among young people. In some college environments, smoking is often seen as a symbol of maturity or independence, which can encourage more students to try it. In reality, however, smoking creates long-term dependence that is difficult to overcome without support. Many young smokers eventually realise the dangers of tobacco but struggle to quit due to the strong grip of nicotine addiction.

Studies have shown that most smokers make several attempts to quit before they succeed. Unfortunately, many of these attempts fail because the withdrawal symptoms associated with nicotine addiction can be intense. These symptoms may include irritability, anxiety, restlessness and strong cravings for cigarettes. Without access to proper support systems, young smokers often return to their old habits even after trying to quit.

In recent years, health experts have emphasised the importance of nicotine replacement therapies as a practical method to support individuals who want to stop smoking. Products such as nicotine gums are designed to help smokers gradually reduce their dependence on nicotine. These gums provide controlled amounts of nicotine to the body without exposing users to the thousands of harmful chemicals found in cigarette smoke.

Research conducted by international organisations, including studies reviewed by Cochrane, has consistently shown that nicotine



replacement therapy significantly increases the chances of successfully quitting smoking. Smokers who use such therapies are far more likely to overcome their addiction compared to those who attempt to quit without any medical assistance.

Nicotine gums, typically available in strengths of 2 mg and 4 mg, have been used globally for more than three decades as medically approved smoking cessation aids. They are recognised by the World Health Organization as effective tools for tobacco cessation and are included in its Essential Medicines List. Unlike cigarettes, nicotine gums do not produce tar, carbon monoxide or other toxic substances generated by burning tobacco.

In India, nicotine gums are regulated under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and are categorised as therapeutic medicines intended to help smokers quit tobacco. Health experts emphasise that these products should not be confused with recreational nicotine products. Instead, they are medical tools designed to support individuals who genuinely want to overcome nicotine addiction.

For the youth of Jammu and Kashmir, increasing awareness about these cessation tools could make a significant difference. Many students who are addicted to tobacco remain unaware that medically approved methods exist to help them quit. Public health specialists believe that educating students about nicotine replacement therapy could encourage more young smokers

to seek help rather than continuing their harmful habits.

Educational institutions across the region have a crucial role to play in addressing this growing social issue. Schools, colleges and universities can serve as platforms for spreading awareness about the dangers of tobacco use. Health education programmes, seminars and counselling sessions can help students understand the risks associated with smoking and the benefits of quitting early.

Teachers and parents must also play an active role in guiding young people toward healthier choices. Open communication about the dangers of tobacco and the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle can discourage experimentation with smoking. Encouraging students to participate in sports, cultural activities and academic pursuits can also reduce the likelihood of tobacco use by promoting positive outlets for stress and energy.

Another important step is the strict enforcement of smoke-free environments in educational institutions. Creating smoke-free campuses sends a strong message that tobacco use is not acceptable within spaces dedicated to learning and personal development. Such policies also protect non-smokers from exposure to second-hand smoke, which itself poses serious health risks.

Globally, several countries have adopted comprehensive strategies to reduce tobacco consumption. Nations such as the United States,

United Kingdom, Canada and Australia have combined strong anti-tobacco campaigns with easier access to smoking cessation tools. These approaches have helped millions of people quit smoking and have contributed to a gradual decline in tobacco use in many developed countries.

Public health experts believe that a similar approach could help address the tobacco problem among the youth of Jammu and Kashmir. Preventive education must be combined with supportive measures that help individuals who are already addicted to nicotine. When young smokers are given the right information and the right tools, they are more likely to take the difficult step of quitting.

The growing prevalence of tobacco use among students in the region is not merely a health issue; it is a social challenge that affects families, communities and the future workforce of Jammu and Kashmir. If large numbers of young people become addicted to tobacco, the consequences could extend beyond individual health to impact productivity, healthcare systems and the overall well-being of society.

Jammu and Kashmir is home to a vibrant and talented youth population with immense potential to contribute to the progress and prosperity of the region. Protecting this generation from the harmful effects of tobacco must therefore become a collective priority. By promoting awareness, strengthening prevention programmes and ensuring access to effective cessation support, society can help young people lead healthier and more productive lives. Ultimately, addressing the problem of tobacco addiction requires cooperation from all sections of society. Governments, healthcare providers, educators, parents and students themselves must work together to create an environment where tobacco use is discouraged and quitting is actively supported. Through sustained awareness and community engagement, Jammu and Kashmir can take meaningful steps toward overcoming this growing social challenge and safeguarding the health of its youth for generations to come.

The author is a senior analyst and can be mailed at hanief@gmail.com
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11 civil services aspirants from University of Kashmir's CCCP clear JKCE-2024 exam

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAR 14: In a notable achievement, 11 candidates from the Centre for Career Counselling, Coaching and Placement (CCCP), University of Kashmir (KU), have qualified the Jammu & Kashmir Combined Competitive Examination-2024 (JKCE), as per the results declared by the Jammu and Kash-

mir Public Service Commission (JKPSC) on March 13. The successful candidates include Dawood Bin Salam (Rank 11), Syed Zeeshan Nisar (14), Mir Mujeeb (24), Aamir Hassan (26), Muhtashim Ishaq (29), Faizan-ul-Haq (30), Aarif-ul-Asad (35), Khalid Bashir (70), Naveed Shareef (72), Talib Zargar (80) and Imtiyaz Poswal (89). Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof.

Nilofer Khan, congratulated the successful aspirants and described the achievement as a reflection of their dedication and perseverance. "The success of these candidates highlights the importance of focused guidance and sustained academic support in preparing for competitive examinations. We hope they will serve society with commit-



ment and integrity," she said. Prof. Khan also acknowl-

edged the efforts of CCCP faculty, team and coordinators for providing mentorship and academic support to civil services aspirants. She further appreciated the role of the CCCP Overseeing Committee for their guidance and coordination in strengthening the programme. Registrar KU, Prof. Naseer Iqbal, also congratulated the successful candidates and appreciated the efforts of the CCCP team, mentors and fac-

ulty members associated with the centre for their sustained contribution in guiding aspirants preparing for competitive examinations. Members of the Overseeing Committee and the Centre for Career Counselling, Coaching and Placement (CCCP) also congratulated the selected candidates and wished them success in their future roles in public service.

ISB, Punjab Police, CyberPeace launch India's Premier Cybersecurity & AI Safety Hackathon 2026

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAR 14: The Indian School of Business (ISB), through its Institute of Data Science (IDS), in collaboration with the Punjab Police State Cyber Crime Division and the CyberPeace has announced the launch of the National Hackathon on Cybersecurity & AI Safety 2026 — a major national initiative to strengthen India's capabilities in cybersecurity, digital resilience and responsible artificial intelligence.

A spokesperson said the hackathon will bring together students, researchers, technologists, law enforcement professionals and policy experts from across India to develop innovative solutions addressing emerging threats in digital security and AI Safety. The initiative seeks to catalyze grassroots innovation, generate open-source tools and datasets, and contribute to national policy discussions on AI safety.



Participants will work across five cutting-edge problem tracks. These include cyber fraud detection, addressing financial cybercrime in BFSI, telecom and fintech sectors, with particular relevance for law enforcement. Misinformation & Deepfake Defence, building tools to detect synthetic media and AI-generated disinformation to prevent political manipulation.

Agentic AI safety, ensuring autonomous AI agents remain controllable, interpretable and accountable in real-world deployments. LLM safety & adversarial ML, red-teaming, adversarial testing and responsible alignment techniques for large language models. Network defence & digital

forensics, strengthening intrusion detection and forensics capabilities for India's critical digital infrastructure.

Key Dates
Registration Deadline March: 22, 2026
Solution Submission Deadline: March 22, 2026
Hackathon Finale: March 26-28, 2026
Venue ISB, Mohali Campus, Punjab Registration
By fostering collaboration between academia, industry and law enforcement, the initiative aims to generate practical technologies and research insights that can strengthen India's Cyber defence Ecosystem. Registration for the Hackathon on Cybersecurity & AI Safety 2025-26 is now open and closes on March 22, 2026. Interested participants can register at: www.isb.edu/events/hackathon-cybersecurity-and-ai-safety-2025-26.

Satish Sharma interacts with tourists in Srinagar; reviews facilities at Mughal Gardens

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAR 14: Minister for FCS&CA, Transport, Youth Services and Sports, IT, Science and Technology Satish Sharma today visited several prominent tourist locations in and around Srinagar, including the famous Mughal Gardens where he interacted with the tourists from different parts of the country and abroad.

During the visit, the Minister held interaction with the visitors, enquiring about their travel experiences and the facilities available at the tourist destinations. He welcomed them to Jammu and Kashmir and expressed satisfaction over the increasing tourist influx to the Valley.

Satish Sharma said that the growing number of tourists visiting Kashmir reflects the renewed confidence of travellers in the region and highlights the immense tourism potential of Jammu and Kashmir. He maintained that the government is making sustained efforts to further strengthen tourism infrastructure and ensure that visitors have a safe, comfortable and memorable experience during their stay.

The Minister also reviewed the facilities available at the Mughal Gardens and other tourist spots and stressed the need for maintaining cleanliness, proper transport connectivity and improved visitor services. He said that the government is committed to upgrade the civic amenities, enhancing transportation services and providing all necessary support to promote tourism in the Union Territory.

Highlighting the importance of tourism for the local economy, Satish Sharma said that the sector plays a pivotal role in generating employment and livelihood opportunities for thousands of youth associated with hospitality, transport, handicrafts and other allied sectors.

The Minister also appreciated the hospitality extended by the local people towards tourists and urged the visitors to explore more scenic and cultural destinations across Jammu and Kashmir.

The tourists expressed delight over the breathtaking natural beauty of Kashmir and praised the hospitality of the people as well as the arrangements made at various tourist destinations. Many visitors described their experience as memorable and said they would encourage others to visit the Valley.

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that the Electricity Connection standing in the name of Gh Rasool Bhat, S/o Late Ghulam Ahmad Bhat, R/o Near Makbar Station, Barthana, Srinagar, is proposed to be transferred in favour of Hafiza Bano, W/o Gh Rasool Bhat, R/o Malik Pora, Qammarwari, Barthana, Srinagar.
This notice is published for the purpose of transfer of ownership of the electricity connection in the records of the concerned department.
If anybody has any objection regarding the proposed transfer, he/she may contact the undersigned within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. Thereafter, no objection shall be entertained.

Public Notice

I, Mohd Ayoub Khan, S/o Bashir Ahmad Khan R/o Gloora, Langate, Kupwara, Jammu and Kashmir 193302, hereby declare that I am the father of Masrat Ayoub and Asiya Ayoub Date of Birth 21/03/1998 and 15/03/1995 respectively.
This is to inform the general public and concerned authorities that I am applying for the issuance/registration of Date of Birth certificate of my daughters (Masrat Ayoub and Asiya Ayoub) from the Block Office Langate. If any person has any objection regarding the above-mentioned particulars, he/she may submit the same before the concerned Block Office Langate within the stipulated period. Otherwise, no objection shall be entertained later.

Public Notice

In the Bank records bearing Account No 0131040100024034 My name spelling has been mentioned as Anwan John W/O Rafiq Dar Whileas My correct name is Anwar Jan Begum W/O Mohammad Rafiq Dar as for Adhar regards now I want to apply for the correction of the same in bank regards if any person has any objection in this regards he/she may contact Main Branch J&K bank office Handwara within seven days from the date of publication of this notice After seven days no objection shall be entertained
Anwar Jan Begum W/O Mohammad Rafiq Dar R/O Khudi Tehsil Qalamabad District Kupwara

Public Notice

This is to notify the general public that the name recorded in the Aadhaar database is incorrect. Name shown in Aadhaar: Ahnan Ishfaq, Correct name: Hanan Ishfaq Ganie, Father's Ishfaq Ahmad Ganie, Address: Udipora Langate Handwara Kupwara Jammu and Kashmir 193302. The above mentioned person (Ahnan Ishfaq) hereby declares that the name printed on the Aadhaar is incorrect and that her correct and legal name is Hanan Ishfaq Ganie. 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

This is to notify the general public that the name recorded in the Aadhaar database is incorrect. Name shown in Aadhaar: Suhaib Javid, Correct name: Sohail Javeed, Father's Javed Ahmad Shah Address: Kralgund Handwara Kupwara Jammu and Kashmir 193302. The above mentioned person (Suhaib Javid) hereby declares that the name printed on the Aadhaar is incorrect and that his correct and legal name is Sohail Javeed. 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 hereby declare that I want to dismantle my own house on my own will at Langer Mohalla Khushipora HMT Srinagar, Tehsil Central Shalteng. If anybody having any objection in this regard can contact the house owner within the period of seven days of this publication.
House owner: Barkat Ali and Mohammad Akbar Address: Langer Mohalla Khushipora HMT Srinagar. Ph. No.: 6006595812, 89997 75345

Office of the Executive Engineer, Mechanical Irrigation Division Srinagar

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Near J&K Bank (Zaldagar)

Telefax No: 0194-2952696 | e-mail Id: to-exenmidsrinagar@jk.gov.in

Sub: e-NIT No. 36 of 2025-26, dated: 05-02-2026 for below mentioned work:
Lift Irrigation Scheme Chountwailwar (Stage 1st & 2nd)
Ref: JK Government official e-Procurement portal Tender ID No.: 2026_IFC_302414_1

CANCELLATION NOTICE

In view of the letter received from the Superintending Engineer, Mechanical circle, I&FC Department Srinagar, vide No. MCO/T/9616-23, dated: 12-03-2026, the above-mentioned e-NIT is hereby cancelled.

No: MIDS/Ts/5870-83 | Dated: 14-03-2026

**Sd/- Executive Engineer
Mechanical Irrigation Division Srinagar**

DIPK: 11892/25 | Dated: 14-03-2026

Office of the Collector Land Acquisition (SUB DIVISIONAL MAGISTRATE KANGAN)

Government of UT of Jammu & Kashmir

Subject: Preliminary Notification under section -11(1) of "The Right to fair compensation and Transparency in land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013" for Acquisition of land measuring 07 Kanals & 01 Marla for public purpose namely Acquisition of additional land for construction of SSG road in estate Sonamarg, Tehsil Gund, District Ganderbal.
Ref: 1. Indent placed by Officer Commanding Beacon, 122 RCC (GREF) vide his office Letter No: 2066/SBP/210/E2LA Dated: 18-05-2024 addressed to Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal.

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

Whereas the Officer Commanding Beacon, 122 RCC (GREF) has placed an indent vide his office Letter No: 2066/SBP/210/E2LA Dated: 18-05-2024 for acquisition of additional land measuring 07 kanals & 01 Marla for public purpose namely Acquisition of additional land for construction of SSG road in estate Sonamarg, Tehsil Gund, District Ganderbal.

Whereas, it appears to the appropriate Government/Authority that land measuring 07 Kanals & 01 Marla at village Sonamarg is required for public purpose namely Acquisition of additional land for construction of SSG road through indenting Department namely Beacon.

Whereas, in terms of Sub Rule (1) of Rule 4 of Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, a committee was constituted by District Collector (Deputy Commissioner), Ganderbal vide order no. 34-DCG/LA of 2024 Dated: 03.07.2024 issued under endorsement no. DCG/LAS/SSG/24/F-457/452-68 Dated: 03-07-2024 for conducting a Preliminary Enquiry for determination of Social Impact and Public purposes.

Whereas, the committee so constituted visited the spot, conducted preliminary enquiry and submitted detailed report through Tehsildar Gund vide Letter No. 69/LAS/TG/2024; dated: 22-08-2024 to Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal.

Whereas, the Tehsildar Gund, vide his office letter no. TG/OQ/2021/631-32 dated: 01-11-2024 submitted a report to Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal stating that there is no involuntary displacement of persons due to the acquisition and no rehabilitation is involved.

Whereas vide S.O. 237 Dated: 23-07-2020 issued by Revenue Department J&K Government, the collector land Acquisition Sub Divisional Magistrate Kangan has been designated as Collector Land Acquisition to perform duties under Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition & Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.

In view of above, I Collector Land Acquisition (Sub Divisional Magistrate Kangan) in terms of powers vested in me vide Section-11(1) of the Right to Fair Compensation Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013, hereby, notify the land required for public purpose i.e., Acquisition of additional land for construction of SSG road in estate Sonamarg, Tehsil Gund, District Ganderbal. The description of the land is as under:

S.No	Khasra No.	Type of Title Private / Govt. / common	Type of Land Rural / Urban	Area Under Acquisition		
				K	M	Sft
01	385	Private	Rural	02	01	00
02	118	Private	Rural	03	00	00
03	44 min	Private	Rural	02	00	00
		Total Land		07	01	00

This notification is made under the provisions of Section 11(1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, to all whom it may concern.

Under Sub Section (1) of Section 11 of the Act, no person shall make any transaction or cause any transaction of land i.e. sale/ purchase, etc., or create any encumbrances on such land from the date of publication of such notification without prior approval of the Collector.

Objections to the acquisition, if any, may be filed by the person(s) interested within 60 (sixty) days from the date of publication of this notification as provided under Section 15 of the Act, before Collector Land acquisition, Sub Divisional Magistrate Kangan.

No: SDM/KGN/LAS/26/90-99 | Dated: 25-02-2026

**Sd/- Collector Land Acquisition
Sub Divisional Magistrate Kangan**

DIPK: 11890/25 | Dated: 14-03-2026

PUBLIC WORKS(R&B) DEPARTMENT CIVIL SECRETARIAT, JAMMU/SRINAGAR

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Subject: Compassionate appointment of Smt. Bandana Pandita W/o Late Sh. Revinder Pandita (Ex-Junior Assistant) R/o Village Achan, Tehsil & District Pulwama, under J&K Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme -2022-Notice thereof.
Reference No: OM No. GAD-RAS/2/2026-09 (7721663) dated 11.02.2026, from the General Administration Department.

NOTICE

Smt. Bandana Pandita, W/o Late Sh. Revinder Pandita (Ex-Junior Assistant), R/o Village Achan, Tehsil & District Pulwama, is hereby informed through this notice to furnish her email address and mobile/contact details to the Public Works (R&B) Department, Civil Secretariat, Jammu/Srinagar, for registration under the Employee Verification System (EVS) Portal.

The requisite details may be submitted either in person or through email at clericalhallrnb121@gmail.com within a period of 15 days from the date of issuance of this notice, in terms of Circular No. 18-JK(GAD) of 2022 dated 20.05.2022 issued by the General Administration Department.

It is further informed that failure to furnish the above-mentioned information within the stipulated time frame shall be construed as unwillingness to accept appointment in the Public Works (R&B) Department under the J&K Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme, 2022, and the claimant shall forfeit her right to appointment without any further notice.

No: PWD-SRO/39/2024-05 (7590913) | Dated: 19-02-2026

**Sd/- Namrita Wanchoo
Under Secretary to the Government**

DIPK: 11910/25 | Dated: 14-03-2026

MP Mian Altaf Ahmad chairs DISHA Meeting at Anantnag; Reviews progress of CSSs

Emphasises improving Health & Education sectors

HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, MARCH 14: Member of Parliament Anantnag-Rajouri Parliamentary Constituency, Mian Altaf Ahmad today chaired a meeting of the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) at Dak Bungalow, Anantnag to review the progress of various Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) being implemented in the district.

The meeting was attended by MLA Pahalgam, Altaf Ahmad Wani, MLA Bijbehara, Dr. Basheer Ahmad Shah (Veeri), MLA Shangus (Anantnag East), Reyaz Ahmad Khan, District Development Commissioner (DDC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat, Principal GMC Anantnag, ADC, SEs PWD, KPDC & PHE, GM DIC, DPO, CPO, ACR, ACD and other district and sectoral officers of concerned departments and engineering wings.

At the outset, the DDC briefed the chair through a detailed Presentation about the status and progress of various flagship programmes and developmental works being executed across the

district.

During the review, the meeting was informed that under Jal Jeevan Mission, against the target of 1,32,915 Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs), 1,23,516 connections (around 93%) have already been provided across the district.

The meeting also reviewed the implementation of housing schemes including Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G) and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U), where emphasis was laid on timely completion of sanctioned houses and ensuring that eligible beneficiaries receive the benefits under the schemes.

Progress under RDD sector including initiatives like MGNREGA and PMAY(G) was also reviewed, with focus on livelihood generation, creation of durable assets, construction of houses for the eligible and development works in rural areas.

The chair further reviewed the progress of road connectivity projects under PMGSY R&B, BRO and NHAI and stressed to expedite road construction works to enhance connectivity to far-flung



and rural areas of the district. Similarly, implementation of health and sanitation programmes including National Health Mission (NHM), Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

(PMJAY) and Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) was also discussed with emphasis on strengthening healthcare services and sanitation infrastructure. The chair further directed for construction of public amenities under SBM while ensuring regular maintenance in places lacking such facilities.

Taking the review of government initiatives like Dharti Abha JGA, KGVs, Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal and Sheep Husbandary Programs, the MP said these are directly related with the welfare of the tribal population. The programs need to be implemented in a holistic and sustainable manner with proper community awareness, he remarked.

The progress of livelihood and financial inclusion initiatives such as National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), PMSBY, PMJJBY & Mudra which aim to promote financial empowerment and insurance coverage were also reviewed.

While reviewing the progress, the MP emphasized the need for timely completion of developmental works and

adherence to quality standards especially in PHE, Irrigation & Flood Control, PWD, PMGSY, KPDC and other sectors. He directed the concerned departments to expedite the pace of ongoing projects, remove bottlenecks and ensure proper interdepartmental coordination for effective implementation of these projects.

Main Altaf expressed satisfaction on implementation of PMMVY, NSAP, PM Poshan and PM Vatika besides other schemes of the ICDS, Social Welfare and Education. He was further briefed about the performance of PM SRI Schools which are running as per the National Education Policy-2020.

The MP stressed that the benefits of flagship programmes such as HADP, Mission YUVA and PM SGMBY must reach every eligible beneficiary and underscored the importance of strengthening public service delivery in Health, Education and Social Welfare Departments and addressing genuine issues of the people. He called for enhancing grassroot awareness of all these initiatives so that the

eligible people in remote areas receive the benefits.

The MP assured the committee that the issues regarding JJM, R&B, Health, Education Agriculture and other important areas will be taken up with the concerned authorities. He asked the concerned departments to draft proposals in consultation with the elected public representatives and in accordance with the relevant rules & guidelines. The MP said that genuine issues raised by the MLAs will be discussed at proper forums. He further directed the departments to explore the possible solutions to problems faced by the public regarding drinking water, irrigation, road connectivity, horticulture, agriculture, health and education and put in place the alternative arrangements for public convenience.

The meeting concluded with directions from the chair to all departments to ensure transparency, accountability and improved coordination for successful implementation of public welfare and developmental initiatives in the district.

DEO Kulgam chairs meeting on Revision of Panchayat Electoral Roll

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, MARCH 14: District Election Officer (DEO) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam today chaired a meeting regarding the Revision of Panchayat Electoral Roll 2026 and Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Electoral Rolls at the Meeting Hall of DC Office-cum-Mini Secretariat, Kulgam.

The meeting reviewed the preparations and modalities for the revision process and emphasized effective coordination among concerned departments for smooth conduct of the exercise.



The DEO emphasized that accurate and updated electoral rolls are crucial for strengthening grassroots democracy and directed all stakeholders to strictly adhere to the prescribed timelines.

Officers present in the meeting included, Additional District Development Commissioner, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Joint Director Planning, Deputy District Election Officer, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Kulgam, Assistant Commissioner Development Kulgam, Tehsildars of D.H. Pora, Kulgam, Pahloo, Devsar, Qaimoh, Frisal and Yaripora, besides Block Development Officers of Kulgam, D.H. Pora, D.K. Marg, Manzgam, Pombay, Pahloo, Devsar, Qaimoh and Frisal.

DC Kulgam reviews arrangements for upcoming festivities in district

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, MARCH 14: To review arrangements for the smooth celebration of Shab-i-Qadr, Navratras and Eid-ul-Fitr festivals in the district, the Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam today convened a meeting of officers and prominent citizens of the district here at Mini-Secretariat Kulgam.

ADDC, Altaf Ahmad Khan; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Viqar Ahmed Giri; Joint Director Planning, Malik Suhail; ACD, Bilal Kamgar; ACR, Riyaz Ahmad Shah, senior officers of various departments, besides members of local management committees.

Threadbare discussions were held on various arrangements related to security, drinking water, power supply, first-aid, sanitation, checking of rates, fire tenders, repair of street lights, lifting of garbage, traffic, etc.

Necessary directions were issued to district heads of various departments to ensure fool-proof arrangements pertaining to their respective department during the festivals.

The DC instructed the Police Department to make sufficient security arrangements to avoid any untoward incident during the festive season.

Executive Engineer Jal Shakti was instructed to ensure regular supply of drinking water and to



press tanker services where ever required besides Executive

Engineer KPDC was directed to ensure uninterrupted power supply during the festivals.

Stressing on maintaining cleanliness in the town and villages the DC directed the CEO MC and other concerned to take necessary steps and ensure proper cleanliness.

Keeping in view the festive season, concerned officers were directed to conduct extensive checking of the market to prevent any overcharging by the shopkeepers.

Traffic department was directed to deploy adequate number of traffic personnel at traffic jam prone areas to avoid any traffic congestion during the festival.

DC Kulgam visits Arigatnoo, interacts with community on Jal Arpan Diwas

WSS Arigatnoo handed over to community

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, MARCH 14: As part of Jal Arpan Diwas celebrations under the ongoing Jal Mahotsav Pakwada, completed water supply schemes are being formally handed over to the community. In this regard, the Water Supply Scheme (WSS) Arigatnoo was handed over to the community in the presence of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam.

During the visit, the DC, along with local residents, inspected the assets and source of the scheme and guided



the community members about their

responsibilities during the operation and maintenance phase.

He emphasized the importance of community participation in safeguarding the infrastructure and ensuring the sustainable functioning of the water supply scheme for the long-term benefit of the area.

Among others, Executive Engineer Jal Shakti, Ishiyaq Hamid, Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE), Block Development Officer (BDO) Pahloo, Tehsildar Pahloo, and local residents of Arigatnoo were present on the occasion.

National Lok Adalat held at Court Complex Kathua

HT NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA, MARCH 14: The National Lok Adalat was held today at the ADR Centre of the Court Complex in Kathua under the esteemed guidance of the Chairman, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Kathua, Jatinder Singh Jamwal, (Principal District & Sessions Judge, Kathua).

To facilitate the smooth conduct of the Lok Adalat, eight benches were constituted.

A substantial number of cases were taken up for amicable settlement during the proceedings, resulting in successful resolutions and significant recovery of amount tuning to Rs. 3,46,96,500/-



The initiative reflects the commitment of the Judiciary and the Legal Services Authority towards promoting alternate dispute resolution mechanisms and ensuring timely justice to the public.

Among the 3 benches constituted at District Court Complex, the 1st Bench comprised of Principal District & Sessions Judge, Jatinder Singh Jamwal and Additional District & Sessions Judge, Pravin Pandoh; 2nd Bench comprised of Chief Judicial Magistrate Kathua Ajay Sharma and Munsiff JMIC, Kathua, Viren Magotra; 3rd Bench comprised of District Mobile Magistrate (T) Kathua Poonam Gupta and Naiya Sharma Advocate.

DC reviews drug control measures in Udhampur

Directs officers to intensify awareness activities, strengthen counselling services

HT NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR, MARCH 14: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Minga Sherpa today chaired a meeting of the District NCORD Committee to review the enforcement measures in place to curb trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and to strengthen measures aimed at curbing drug abuse in the district.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh; Additional SP Sandeep Bhat and senior officers from line departments attended the meeting.

The meeting reviewed the identification and rehabilitation



of drug addicts, PIT-NDPS cases, drug seizures recorded during 2025, action taken against erring pharmacies, installation of CCTV cameras, measures against illicit crop cultivation, inspection of de-addiction centres, block-wise data

on drug abusers, identification of hotspots, surveillance of educational institutions, IEC campaigns, mass awareness programmes, Nasha Mukti Abhiyan, Nasha Mukti Panchayats and cases registered under the NDPS Act.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasised the need for close inter-departmental coordination to effectively track and apprehend individuals involved in drug trafficking, identify abuse hotspots and promote community-based

rehabilitation and awareness initiatives.

He directed the stakeholder departments to intensify counselling services and strengthen IEC activities to sensitise the public about the harmful effects of drug abuse.

The Chief Education Officer and College Heads were also instructed to organise regular awareness programmes in their respective institutions.

Emphasising strict enforcement, the Deputy Commissioner called for decisive action against perpetrators of drug abuse to safeguard the youth from falling prey to drug addiction.

Automated Processing Ensures Premium Popcorn Quality at Gourmet Popcornica Plant

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUSUNURU (ANDHRA PRADESH), MAR 14: Gourmet Popcornica Private Limited operates a highly automated popcorn maize processing facility at Musunuru in Andhra Pradesh, where advanced sorting and quality-control technologies ensure premium-grade kernels for cinemas and retail markets across India.

According to company CEO Yugandhar Yanamadala, harvested popcorn maize undergoes multiple stages of cleaning, grading and sorting before being packed for dispatch.

The maize is first processed through vibrating machines that separate kernels based on size and grade. It then moves to a gravity table where air is blown from the bottom while the surface vibrates, separating lighter kernels from heavier ones.

The process is a mechanised version of the traditional winnowing method once used in villages to separate grain using airflow.

After grading, the maize passes through specialised systems including de-stoners, gravity separators, colour sorters and X-ray machines before reaching the packing stage.

The X-ray machines, imported from Japan, are designed to detect and remove foreign particles such



as small stones, rubber fragments or other contaminants that cannot be visually identified.

If any impurity is detected, the system automatically stops and the affected portion of the batch is removed for manual reprocessing.

Yugandhar said most of the processing lines at the facility are built using domestic technology, with only the X-ray machines sourced from Japan, while the remaining equipment has been manufactured in India.

The plant currently operates four processing lines with a combined capacity of about 29 tonnes per hour. The company initially began with a two-tonne-per-hour line, later added five-tonne units, upgraded the earlier line to four tonnes, and subsequently installed a 15-tonne-

per-hour processing line.

Plans are underway to add another 15-tonne-per-hour line next year to further expand processing capacity.

In addition to bulk packing in 25-kg and 30-kg bags, the company is preparing to introduce a one-kilogram retail packing line to cater to growing demand from supermarkets and consumers, particularly in northern India, he said.

The proposed line is expected to handle around two tonnes per hour and may become operational next year, he said.

Yugandhar said the company plans to invest about Rs 78 crore in upgrading processing capacity and packaging infrastructure in the next phase of expansion.

At its research and development

facility, the company uses standard testing equipment such as the Metric Weight Volume Tester (MWVT) to assess popcorn quality. He said there are two main types of popped corn shapes – butterfly and mushroom. Butterfly popcorn spreads irregularly when popped and is typically used for salted or savoury flavours, while mushroom popcorn pops into a round shape and is commonly used for sweet coatings such as chocolate and caramel.

Headquartered in Chennai, Gourmet Popcornica supplies premium popcorn to more than 2,200 cinemas and retail outlets across India.

The company sources popcorn maize from about 17,500 farmers across nine states and operates one of the country's most automated popcorn processing facilities at Musunuru in Andhra Pradesh.

Yugandhar said the company has significantly expanded its cultivation footprint, increasing acreage from about 840 acres to nearly 36,000 acres over the past eight years, while the total area under popcorn cultivation in India is estimated at around 1.3 lakh acres.

Overall, the company's revenue has grown significantly from Rs 22 crores in FY16 to approximately Rs 550 crore by FY26, achieving an estimated CAGR of around 40 per cent. UNI

Bharat Biotech marks 30 years of scientific innovation, global vaccine leadership

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, MARCH 14: Vaccine maker Bharat Biotech on Friday celebrated three decades of scientific innovation and global public health contributions, marking its 30th anniversary with the unveiling of a special commemorative logo at its Genome Valley facility in Hyderabad.

The logo was unveiled by the company's founders, Krishna Ella, Executive Chairman, and Suchitra Ella, Managing Director, in the presence of employees.

The event marked the start of a year-long series of initiatives celebrating the company's journey and reaffirming its commitment to advancing global health.

Founded in 1996 by Krishna Ella and Suchitra Ella, Bharat Biotech began with a vision of developing world-class, research-driven vaccines in India.

Over the years, the company has grown from a single facility into a global biotechnology leader and played a key role in the development of Genome Valley, now recognised as Asia's largest life sciences cluster.

Reflecting on the milestone, Krishna Ella said the company was built on the belief that Indian science can solve global health challenges, emphasising the role of its scientists, proprietary technologies and commitment to affordable healthcare.

Suchitra Ella said the journey reflected the dedication of researchers, partners and healthcare workers who contributed to building India's vaccine innovation ecosystem.

She added that the company is now expanding into advanced cell and gene therapy research while remaining focused



on "science for society."

Over the past three decades, Bharat Biotech has developed several vaccines that are part of national and global immunisation programmes, including vaccines for rotavirus infection, Japanese Encephalitis, typhoid fever, and malaria.

One of its major milestones was the development of COVAXIN, India's first indigenously developed COVID-19 vaccine, created in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The vaccine received emergency use authorisation in multiple countries and contributed to global vaccination efforts.

The company has also emerged as the world's largest manufacturer of rabies vaccines, expanding access to life-saving post-exposure prophylaxis worldwide.

Today, Bharat Biotech has a portfolio of more than 20 vaccines, world-class manufacturing facilities in Hyderabad, Ankleshwar, and Odisha, and holds over 220 granted patents.

Grand Inauguration of "Drape N Shine" Fashion & Style Store at Solina, Srinagar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAR 14: A new fashion destination, Drape N Shine (Fashion & Style Store), was today inaugurated at Solina, Srinagar in a graceful ceremony. The store was formally inaugurated by prominent social worker Syed Aijaz Kashani in the presence of several dignitaries, well-wishers, and members of the local community.

The event witnessed an enthusiastic gathering as the owner of the store, Miss Farkhanda Altaf, welcomed the guests and expressed her gratitude for their support. Speaking on the occasion, she high-



lighted her vision of bringing elegant fashion, quality clothing, and modern styles to the people of Srinagar through the newly launched store.

Addressing the gathering, Syed Aijaz Kashani congratulated the owner on this new venture and appreciated the initiative of promoting entrepreneurship among the youth. He emphasized that such business initiatives play an important role in strengthening the local economy and creating opportunities within the community.

The inauguration ceremony was marked by a ribbon-cutting, followed by a tour of the store where guests viewed the latest fashion collections and stylish apparel displayed at the outlet.

The special guests Mr Hilal Ahmad Wani and Mr Zameer Lone extended their best wishes to Miss Farkhanda Altaf for the success and growth of Drape N Shine, hoping it will become a popular fashion destination in the city.

Flexi staffing employment grows in India, IT hiring shows momentum: Report

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAR 14: India's flexi staffing industry continued to expand in the October-December quarter of 2025, with overall employment rising 4.4 per cent year-on-year, according to the latest employment trends report released by the Indian Staffing Federation (ISF) here.

The report showed that staffing companies added nearly 69,000 new formal flexi workers over the last four quarters, taking the total workforce represented by ISF members to around 1.91 million during the third quarter of FY26.

However, on a sequential basis, the industry witnessed a marginal decline of 0.5 per cent quarter-on-quarter, reflecting seasonal adjustments in hiring.

Sector-wise demand remained strong across several industries. Global Capability Centres (GCCs), e-commerce and logistics,

manufacturing, FMCG, retail, healthcare, and tourism and hospitality were among the key sectors driving hiring activity during the quarter.

Manufacturing demand was supported by investments linked to production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes, while festive season consumption boosted recruitment in retail and consumer sectors.

The report noted that the general staffing segment recorded 4 per cent annual growth in new employment compared with the same quarter last year, although it slipped 0.6 per cent sequentially.

Demand in this segment was largely driven by FMCG and consumer durables, retail, logistics and transportation, e-commerce and quick commerce, and BFSI, with organised retail expansion and compliance requirements also contributing to hiring.

In contrast, the IT staffing segment posted robust momentum,



registering 16.1 per cent year-on-year growth in employment and 2.3 per cent growth on a quarterly basis.

The recovery in technology hiring was largely led by tier-2 technology firms and Global Capability Centres, which accounted

for about 73 per cent of new IT job additions, particularly in emerging areas such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, cybersecurity and platform engineering.

The report also highlighted the growing role of the staffing sector in India's formal job creation.

According to payroll data, manpower suppliers contributed around 41 per cent of net formal payroll additions during the quarter, underscoring the sector's importance in expanding organised employment.

The staffing industry has also played a significant role in integrating young workers into the formal economy. Data indicates that nearly 59 per cent of new subscribers to formal payroll systems are in the 18-25 age group, suggesting that flexi staffing is increasingly becoming a key entry point for first-time job seekers.

Over the past decade, India's formal contract staffing workforce has expanded steadily, reaching over 7 million workers in 2025. The sector also contributes significantly to the economy through salary payouts and statutory contributions, including social security and tax payments. UNI

Sensex, Nifty tumble nearly 2 pc amid broad-based selling

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAR 14: Indian equity markets witnessed a sharp decline on Friday afternoon, with benchmark indices falling nearly two per cent amid broad-based selling across sectors.

The BSE Sensex dropped 1,351.31 points or 1.78 per cent to trade at 74,683.11 around 1:32 pm IST, compared with the previous close of 76,034.42. During the session, the index touched a day's high of 75,576.20 and a low of 74,538.71, after opening at 75,444.22.

Similarly, the Nifty 50 declined 463.45 points or 1.96 per cent to 23,175.70 around 1:15 pm IST, against



the previous close of 23,639.15. The index opened at 23,462.50, climbed to a day's high of 23,492.40, and later

slipped to a low of 23,180.55 during the trading session.

The decline reflects sustained selling pressure through the day, with both indices trending downward after a weak opening. The broader market sentiment remained cautious as the benchmarks struggled to hold early levels and continued to drift lower into the afternoon trade.

On a yearly basis, the Sensex remains below its 52-week high of 86,159.02 but above its 52-week low of 71,425.01. Meanwhile, the Nifty 50 is trading below its 52-week high of 26,373.20, while staying above the 52-week low of 21,743.65. UNI

Bears lead stock market, Nifty dragged below 23,150

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAR 14: At the stock market, the bears were leading as the Nifty was dragged below 23,150 intraday amid broad-based selling.

At close, the Sensex was down 1,470.50 points or 1.93pc at 74,563.92, and the Nifty was down 488.05 points or 2.06pc at 23,151.10. During the week, both the indices declined over 5pc, recording their biggest weekly fall in more than a year. Broader indices underperformed the benchmarks, with the Nifty Midcap and Smallcap each falling 2.5pc. The total market capitalisation of firms listed on the BSE falling to around Rs 430 lakh crore on Friday from Rs 440 lakh crore. Total market capitalisation has declined by over USD 533 billion so far in 2026, the sharpest fall since 2011, when Indian markets saw about USD 625 billion wiped out during the entire year.

Indian rupee depreciated for the second consecutive session to hit a fresh record low of 92.47 against the US dollar. Among the sectors, all the indices ended in the red. The key sectors like auto, PSU Bank, metal, media, PSU Bank were down 3-4pc. Nifty Metal fell 4.82pc, while Nifty PSU Bank and Nifty Auto also plunged sharply by 3.72pc and 3.60pc, respectively.

On Nifty, the gainers were Tata Consumer, HUL, Bharti Airtel while the biggest losers were Hindalco, L&T, Tata Steel, UltraTech Cement, JSW Steel. Over 500 stocks touched their 52-week low on the BSE. These included Sapphire Foods, Birla Corp, Gravita India, Latent View, Jyoti CNC Auto, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles, Newgen Software, Embassy Developers, Sonata Software, Piramal Pharma, Five-Star Business, Vedant Fashions, Exide Industries, Jyothy Labs, Alkyl Amines, Berger Paints, HDFC Bank, Indegene, KPIT Technologies, among others. L&T Technology Services gained 9.6pc, while ACME Solar Holdings also rallied 6.5pc. Amid the ongoing geopolitical tension, Adani Total Gas, Jindal Steel & Power, RR Kabel, Hindalco Industries, Reliance Power, Hindustan Copper, and Bharat Forge all have declined over 6pc. UNI

Progressive Punjab Investors' Summit 2026 to kick off in Mohali with 89 high-impact sessions

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHANDIGARH, MARCH 14: Punjab is set to position itself as a global destination for innovation and economic growth as the Progressive Punjab Investors' Summit 2026 commences at Plaksha University in Mohali from March 13 to 15, a senior state minister said on Thursday.

Announcing the details at a press conference, Cabinet Minister for Industries and Commerce Sanjeev Arora stated that the summit will serve as a premier platform for industry leaders, policymakers, and international investors to explore the state's diverse economic landscape.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann is scheduled to inaugurate the event Friday morning, while AAP National



Convener Arvind Kejriwal will grace the summit as the Chief Guest. The three-day event is designed to be one of the most comprehensive investment summits in the state's history, featuring a total of 89 specialized sessions. Minister Arora highlighted that the summit will include country-specific discussions focusing on the United Kingdom, Japan, and South Korea, alongside dedicated sessions for

the MSME sector. A significant emphasis will be placed on Mohali's rapid transformation into a major Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence hub, supported by world-class infrastructure and a robust industrial ecosystem. The event will also feature an industrial exhibition showcasing local innovations and manufacturing

capabilities. Despite minor disruptions in travel for some delegates from the Middle East due to recent flight cancellations, the Minister confirmed that the majority of invited international investors are expected to attend. The summit aims to build on the momentum of the state's new Industrial and Business Development Policy, which has already garnered significant praise

from industrialists nationwide for its investor-friendly framework. Arora noted that the government is committed to improving the state's Ease of Doing Business rankings while maintaining a steadfast focus on sustainable and environment-friendly industrial growth. The summit's inaugural session is slated to begin at 11:00 AM on Friday, followed by networking opportunities and sector-specific deliberations. Senior officials, including Secretary of Industries and Commerce Gurkirat Kirpal Singh and CEO of Invest Punjab Amit Dhaka, underscored the government's readiness to host the global delegation.

The summit will conclude on March 15, with expectations of significant investment commitments that will bolster the state's economy.



Rishabh Pant takes Yuvraj Singh's help to sharpen his game

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI: We haven't seen Rishabh Pant, the most expensive buy of the 2025 mega auction, since he suffered a side strain on the eve of the ODI series against New Zealand in January. Pant, who is not a first-choice pick for India in white-ball formats, has been keen to sharpen his batting and, in that pursuit, it is understood he sought out former India allrounder Yuvraj Singh to spend some time with him. The two got together last week in Mumbai, where Yuvraj, who was recently seen working with Abhishek Sharma and Sanju Samson, is under-

stood to have focused on both skills and temperament aspects of Pant's game. Pant, who is Lucknow Super Giant captain, is in Chennai this week for the franchise's pre-season camp before heading to Lucknow, where the main camp will be held.

"He'll be ready to go. He's training at the moment," Justin Langer the sidelines of the men's Hundred auction. "We've got a camp going on at the moment, so I'll see him in a couple of days. He's firing, and as I said, with all champions, they don't stay down for long. His last game last year in the IPL, we saw how brilliant he can be, so that's our expectation for him this year."

550 Girls Compete in ASMITA Pencak Silat League

HT SPORTS DESK

SRINAGAR: The ASMITA Pencak Silat State League 2025 (J&K) commenced today at the Indoor Sports Complex, Polo Ground Srinagar, bringing together around 550 girls from various districts of Jammu & Kashmir to compete and showcase their skills in the traditional martial art of Pencak Silat.

The opening ceremony was graced by Ms. Nusrat Ghazala, Divisional Sports Officer Kashmir (J&K Sports Council) as the Chief Guest, while Mr. Hilal Ahmad, Manager J&K Sports Council, Polo Ground, attended the ceremony as the Guest of Honour. The dignitaries appreciated the initiative of organizing a large-scale women's sporting event aimed at empowering young girls through sports.

While addressing the gathering, the Chief Guest emphasized the importance of sports in building confidence, discipline, and leadership among young women. She praised the growing participation of girls in sports across Jammu & Kashmir and highlighted that such platforms play a crucial role in identifying and nurturing emerging talent.

The ASMITA Pencak Silat State League is being organized as part of the Khelo India initiative, which focuses on strengthening women's participation in sports across the country. The league provides an important competitive platform for female athletes and encourages them to pursue



excellence in martial arts.

During the event, athletes displayed great enthusiasm and determination, reflecting the increasing popularity of Pencak Silat in the region. The competition features multiple age and weight categories, allowing young athletes to compete and gain valuable exposure at the state level.

The organizers expressed their gratitude to the Ms Nuzhat gul Secretary J&K Sports Council for their continuous support and for providing excellent facilities at the Polo Ground Indoor Sports Complex for the successful conduct of the event.

The two-day league, scheduled from 14th to 15th March 2025, is expected to witness exciting bouts and outstanding performances by young female athletes from across the Union Territory, further strengthening the movement for women empowerment through sports in Jammu & Kashmir.

'Proud moment for the women's game': Devine on Hundred auction

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

VISAKHAPATNAM: After topping the bidding and earning £210,000 in the inaugural women's Hundred auction on Wednesday, Sophie Devine, 36, reflected on the growth of women's cricket. "Look, certainly exceeded expectations by a fair stretch" Devine said. "The really cool thing for me is just to see where the women's game's gone - from back when I first started and you got paid 30 bucks for a weekend to some of the money that was getting thrown around. So, look, I'm certainly really privileged and grateful for the opportunity and to be snapped up."

"But more importantly, to see where the women's game's got to... it's hard to believe that it's got to this point and it's only going to continue to get better. So, yeah, really grateful and humbled. I'm sure I've already had about five or six people come up to me saying it's my shout for the rest of my life. So, yeah, I think it's all good. But for me,

it's a really proud moment for the women's game."

Devine will turn out for Welsh Fire, where she will reunite with Michael Klinger. The pair had worked together at Gujarat Giants earlier this year in the WPL.

After time away in overseas T20 leagues, Devine is now preparing to return to action for New Zealand in the upcoming five-match T20I series at home against South Africa. This will be her first assignment for New Zealand since she retired from ODI cricket following the World Cup last year, but she will remain available for T20Is, under a casual contract with New Zealand Cricket (NZC), and has now set her sights on the Women's T20 World Cup in June.

"I think it [South Africa series] is great preparation for us," Devine said. "I think we've had an excellent build-up. Obviously, we've had a whole heap of domestic cricket as well, then Zimbabwe. And then to take on South Africa and England before getting to the World Cup, you probably



couldn't ask for much better preparation. "I think conditions here are going to be really similar to what we're going to experience over in England with potentially a little bit of the ball

moving around and some good wickets. We want to be able to nail down how we want to go about playing the game and to also defend that title. Feels like it was a while ago now but we

want to make sure we are doing everything we can to get to the business end of the tournament."

The South Africa series will also be Devine's first since relinquishing captaincy. She is now happy to sit back and assist Amelia Kerr, who has eased into a full-time leadership role with Player-of-the-Series performances in the T20I and ODI series wins against Zimbabwe at home recently.

"I was really impressed with the way they went about [against Zimbabwe]," Devine said. "I thought it was clinical. For Melie [Kerr] to lead by example - it's probably a sign of things to come. I probably have to learn to keep my mouth shut a little bit and just sit in the background and let Melie do her thing. It's her team and for her to really put a mark on that, I'll always be around to support and lead in my own natural way but making I give her the space to be able to drive this group forward. She is such an exciting talent and captaincy and leadership is something that is going to come naturally to her."

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