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## Modi Pushes Women Led Governance, Bats for Early Rollout of Reservation Law

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, APR 7:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday asserted that women's empowerment has remained at the core of the NDA government's agenda, emphasising that the Women's Reservation Act marks a decisive step towards greater women-led governance in India.

Commenting on an article by Union Minister Annpurna Devi on enhancing women's legislative leadership, the Prime Minister said increased representation must translate into meaningful influence in decision-making processes.

In a post on X, Modi highlighted that the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam lays the foundation for empowering women in governance and forms a key pillar of the "Viksit Bharat"



vision. The legislation, passed in 2023, provides for 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, though its implementation is linked to the completion of the delimitation exercise.

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## J&K Bank Opens High-Tech Regional Centre in Jammu

New facility to enhance efficiency, expand outreach as business crosses Rs 2.90 lakh crore



HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 07:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday inaugurated the Regional Business Centre of Jammu & Kashmir Bank at Rail H Complex here, marking a significant step in the bank's expansion and modernization efforts.

Extending his felicitations to the bank's team, the Lieutenant Governor said the

new centre represents a major milestone in strengthening infrastructure and improving service delivery. He noted that the integrated and technology-enabled facility will boost operational efficiency while offering improved customer interface.

Designed as a key operational and administrative hub, the centre is expected to play a vital role in deepening market

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## J&K Bank's Business Crosses Rs 2.90 Lakh Crore, Says MD

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APR 7:** Jammu and Kashmir Bank's business has crossed Rs 2.90 lakh crore, its Managing Director and CEO Amitava Chatterjee said on Tuesday, as Lt Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurated the lender's regional business centre here.

Marking a significant milestone in the bank's infrastructure and business expansion strategy, the centre will serve as a vital operational and administrative hub.

The facility is designed to further improve service delivery and operational efficiency through its robust

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## EC Eyes Nationwide Voter Roll Clean-Up After Poll Season

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, APR 7:** The Election Commission of India is set to expand its Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls to the remaining 22 states and Union Territories once the ongoing Assembly elections conclude later this month, officials said.

Polling is underway in Kerala, Assam, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, with the process ending on April 29 and counting scheduled for May 4. Officials indicated that the revision exercise could begin immediately after polling or once results are declared.

The SIR drive, aimed at cleaning and updating voter lists, has already been completed in 10 states and three Union Territories, while a separate special revision was undertaken in Assam. Except for Uttar Pradesh, final electoral rolls have been published in all areas where the exercise has been carried out so far.

According to officials, around 60 crore voters out of the country's nearly 99 crore electorate have been covered under the exercise, leaving approximately 39 crore electors to be included

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## CM Assures Swift Action as Legislators Flag Constituency Issues

Says all genuine grievances will be addressed on priority with focus on balanced regional development



HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APR 7: Chief Minister

Omar Abdullah on Tuesday assured time-bound redressal of public

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## CM Pushes Fast-Track Completion of J&K High Court Complexes

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 07:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday reviewed the progress of construction of new High Court complexes for the Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court at Srinagar and Jammu, directing officials to expedite execution of the prestigious projects.

Chairing a high-level meeting, the Chief

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## CCTV Rollout in Police Stations to Be Streamlined in Two Weeks, Centre Assures SC

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, APR 7:** The Centre on Tuesday assured the Supreme Court of India that all pending issues relating to installation and functioning of CCTV cameras in police stations across the country would be resolved within two weeks.

Attorney General R Venkataramani informed a bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta that he was taking stock of the situation and would hold a series of meetings with the amicus curiae and concerned officials to ensure effective implementation of the scheme.

The Union Home Secretary also appeared before

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## J&K Loses Nearly Half of Its Lakes Since 1967, CAG Flags Alarming Decline

HT NEWS DESK / KNO

**SRINAGAR, APR 7:** Jammu and Kashmir has lost nearly half of its lakes over the past six decades, with hundreds more shrinking or facing the risk of disappearance, according to a recent audit report that raises serious concerns over environmental governance in the region.

The report reveals that of the 697 lakes recorded in 1967, as many as 315 have completely vanished, while 203 have

significantly reduced in size. In total, 518 waterbodies have experienced a decline in their water spread, pointing to a widespread deterioration of the region's fragile aquatic ecosystems.

The findings further indicate that 63 lakes have lost more than half of their original area, placing them on the brink of extinction. The disappearing and shrinking lakes together account for thousands of hectares of lost water spread,

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## Jitendra Singh Announces Quake Observatory for Kishtwar, Pushes Airport Plan

HT NEWS NETWORK

**KISHTWAR, APR 7:** Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh today reviewed key developmental proposals concerning District Kishtwar during the DISHA meeting here, with focus on strengthening disaster preparedness,

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## Jitendra Singh Announces Doda Radar, Sudhmahadev Tunnel Tender

HT NEWS NETWORK

**DODA, APR 7:** Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of

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## Chief Secretary Reviews Urban Schemes in J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 7:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, held a meeting of the Housing & Urban Development Department (H&UDD) to assess the progress of major schemes aimed at transforming urban infrastructure, generating livelihoods, ensuring cleanliness and improving quality of



life across the urban areas in J&K.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD; Commissioner, Jammu and Srinagar Municipal Corporations (JMC/SMC); Managing Director, J&K Housing Board; Managing Director, AMRUT; Chairperson, Jammu and Srinagar Development Authorities (JDA/SDA);

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## Sakeena Itoo visits hailstorm affected villages of Kulgam

HT NEWS NETWORK

**KULGAM, APRIL 07:** Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today visited the hailstorm affected villages of Kulgam district to assess the extent of damage and review ongoing response measures on the ground.

During the visit, the Minister conducted an on-spot appraisal of losses to agricultural crops, horticulture orchards, residential structures, and public infrastructure in various villages like D.H Pora, Nihama, Manzgam, Bathipora, Ladgoo Rambhama, Pombay and other areas.

Interacting directly with affected families, farmers, and local representatives, she

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**CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....**

**Modi Pushes.....**

The Prime Minister has announced a three-day extension of the Budget Session of Parliament from April 16 to 18 to facilitate amendments aimed at enabling the law's rollout from 2029. Officials indicated that advancing its implementation before delimitation would require an additional constitutional amendment, which is likely to be taken up during the extended session.

Modi also urged all political parties to rise above political considerations and support the initiative, describing it as a crucial step towards strengthening the trust of women across the country and ensuring more inclusive governance.

**J&K Bank.....**

penetration and supporting the bank's vision of sustainable and inclusive growth across regions.

Managing Director and CEO Amitava Chatterjee informed that the bank's total business has surpassed Rs 2.90 lakh crore, reflecting robust financial performance. He described the commissioning of the centre as a decisive step towards reinforcing the bank's business architecture in a key growth region.

The facility houses a currency chest, a state-of-the-art branch, departmental offices and dedicated operational units, aimed at enabling faster decision-making, improved coordination and enhanced customer service.

Among those present on the occasion were Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Principal Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor Mandeep K. Bhandari, Executive Director Sudhir Gupta, Directors R. K. Chhibber and Arun Gandotra, and IGP Jammu Bhim Sen Tuti, along with senior officials from the bank and various departments.

**J&K Bank's.....**

infrastructure and enhanced customer interface areas, an official spokesman said.

The Lt Governor congratulated and extended his felicitations to the entire team of J&K Bank on the occasion.

The integrated and technology-enabled business centre will be pivotal in driving efficiency, deepening market penetration and supporting J&K Bank's vision of sustainable and inclusive expansion across geographies, the spokesman said.

Chatterjee apprised the Lt Governor of the bank's strong financial performance, highlighting that its business has crossed Rs 2.90 lakh crore.

"The commissioning of the regional business centre is not merely an expansion of physical infrastructure, but a decisive step towards strengthening our business architecture in a key growth region," he said.

He said the new regional business centre will enhance the bank's presence in the Jammu region while reinforcing its commitment to modernising infrastructure in line with evolving customer expectations and business needs.

The new premise houses a currency chest, a state-of-the-art branch, multiple departmental offices, and dedicated operational and administrative units, significantly enhancing administrative and back-end support.

This facility will enable faster decision-making, improved coordination and superior customer service, the spokesman said.

**EC Eyes.....**

in the upcoming phase across 17 states and five Union Territories.

The poll panel had earlier directed chief electoral officers of the remaining regions, including Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, to complete preparatory work at the earliest, indicating a pan-India rollout of the revision exercise.

The initiative, however, has drawn political scrutiny, with petitions filed before the Supreme Court of India challenging its implementation in some states. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has also urged judicial intervention, alleging concerns over the exercise.

Earlier claims by poll officials about the detection of suspected foreign nationals from Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar in voter lists during preparations in Bihar remain unsubstantiated, with no official data released so far, even as opposition parties continue to question the intent behind the revision drive.

**CM Assures.....**

grievances after several legislators called on him at the Civil Secretariat here and raised a range of constituency-specific issues.

The meeting was attended by Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) from across Jammu and Kashmir, along with a delegation from Ladakh led by Member of Parliament Haji Mohd Hanefza Jan, who discussed matters of common concern pertaining to both regions.

The legislators apprised the Chief Minister of pressing developmental needs, infrastructure gaps and other public issues affecting their constituencies, urging early intervention. They emphasized that most of the concerns raised were of significant public importance and required urgent attention.

Giving a patient hearing to the visiting representatives, the Chief Minister assured them that all genuine demands would be examined and addressed on priority. He reiterated his government's commitment to

ensuring equitable and inclusive development across all regions, stressing that balanced growth remains a collective endeavour.

**CM Pushes.....**

Minister underscored the need for time-bound completion and seamless inter-departmental coordination, asking all concerned departments and executing agencies to fast-track the works. He also called for early administrative approval for the proposed Jammu wing at Raika, which is planned as a modern, integrated judicial complex.

The project, being implemented by National Buildings Construction Corporation Limited (NBCC), involves relocation of the existing High Court from Janipur to a purpose-built campus at Raika. The upcoming complex will include state-of-the-art courtrooms, judges' chambers, administrative blocks, litigant facilities, parking infrastructure and digital-enabled court systems in line with contemporary standards.

Officials informed the meeting that the project is being executed in multiple phases to ensure structured development and optimal resource utilization. A detailed presentation highlighted the layout, zoning plan, area matrix and phased construction strategy, along with timelines and execution challenges.

The Chief Minister also reviewed proposals for redevelopment of the Lower Court Complex in Srinagar aimed at upgrading judicial infrastructure in Kashmir to improve accessibility, case handling efficiency and litigant experience.

Stressing the importance of robust judicial infrastructure, he directed strict adherence to timelines, quality benchmarks and transparency in execution. He further called for regular monitoring and swift resolution of bottlenecks, particularly in approvals, fund flow and on-ground coordination.

Reiterating the government's commitment, the Chief Minister said modern court infrastructure is essential for efficient justice delivery and strengthening public trust in the legal system across Jammu and Kashmir.

**CCTV Rollout.....**

the court in compliance with its April 6 order, issued to facilitate better coordination in addressing gaps in the CCTV installation process.

Hearing a batch of pleas, including a suo motu case on non-functional CCTV systems, the bench expressed concern over the lack of a standardised approach across states and Union Territories. It observed that Kerala has already developed and fully implemented an efficient software system and suggested that it be adopted uniformly to avoid duplication of resources and delays.

The court noted that Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have established centralised dashboards for monitoring CCTV operations, and urged the Centre to issue guidelines encouraging other states to follow a similar model.

Taking note of the assurance given by the Attorney General, the bench directed that the matter be listed again on April 28, asking the amicus curiae to file a fresh status report. It also observed that the Home Secretary's personal appearance would not be required in future unless specifically directed.

Senior advocate Siddhartha Dave, assisting the court as amicus curiae, submitted that most states have completed installation of CCTV cameras and are in the process of operationalising centralised monitoring systems.

The apex court has been monitoring the issue since 2018, when it first mandated installation of CCTV cameras in police stations to check human rights violations. In 2020, it extended the directive to cover offices of central investigative agencies, including the Central Bureau of Investigation, Enforcement Directorate and National Investigation Agency, while also prescribing detailed guidelines on coverage, night vision capability, audio-video recording and minimum one-year data storage.

**J&K Loses.....**

reflecting a steady ecological decline. The audit attributes the situation largely to fragmented management, noting that lakes fall under multiple departments, including forest, revenue and agriculture, resulting in weak coordination and lack of accountability. While some lakes are overseen by district administrations and conservation authorities, the absence of a unified framework has hindered effective monitoring and restoration.

Conservation efforts, the report notes, have been largely restricted to just six major lakes, leaving the majority without any structured protection or restoration plans. Even among these, significant gaps persist in implementation, including inadequate monitoring of water capacity, poor sewage management, unchecked pollution, and delays in desilting and weed removal.

Encroachment and land-use changes have further aggravated the problem. In one wetland alone, over 2,500 kanal of land has been affected, underscoring the scale of human pressure on these ecosystems.

The report also points to limited financial commitment, stating that only around one per cent of the capital expenditure budget was allocated to the conservation of major lakes

between 2017 and 2022. It adds that potential sites eligible for central assistance were not identified, reflecting gaps in planning and resource mobilisation.

Warning that the continued degradation of lakes could have far-reaching consequences, the audit highlights the need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to safeguard these critical water resources, which play a vital role in maintaining ecological balance, supporting biodiversity, and mitigating floods in the region.

**Jitendra Singh.....**

infrastructure, and local economic initiatives.

The Minister announced that a new permanent seismological observatory is proposed to be set up in Kishtwar to augment the national seismological network, enhance earthquake monitoring and increase disaster preparedness in the region.

Dr. Jitendra Singh also announced that site selection for installation of Automated Weather Stations at Paddar and Machail has been completed to improve weather forecasting and support disaster management efforts. He said the installation process would be undertaken soon.

During the meeting, the issue of development of an airstrip in Kishtwar under the UDAN scheme was also discussed, particularly with regard to acquisition of additional land. The Minister directed Deputy Commissioner, Pankaj Sharma, to take up land extra acquisition proposal with concerned authorities for early progress.

The Union Minister also reviewed the proposal for development of a Saffron Park in Kishtwar, which has been pending for the past 12 years. He directed the concerned authorities to arrive at a consensus regarding the suitability of the identified land parcel so that the project can be expedited. Highlighting the importance of promoting local produce, the Minister emphasized the promotion of cumin seeds (kala zeera) under the One District One Product initiative. He suggested that cumin from the district could be developed as a signature product and presented as a souvenir to visiting dignitaries.

The Minister further reviewed issues related to the construction of cremation sheds, and directed the concerned department to accelerate the pace of work to ensure early completion. Addressing rehabilitation concerns of Kandani inhabitants affected by ongoing power projects, he instructed the authorities to take immediate steps for fair compensation, proper resettlement and addressing grievances in a time-bound manner.

During the DISHA meeting, which was also attended by Member of Parliament, Sajjad Ahmed Kitchloo, MLA, Kishtwar, Shagun Parihar and officers of various line departments, Dr Jitendra Singh emphasized the need for better inter-departmental coordination for timely execution of projects.

The Minister urged the public to avail benefits of various Centrally-Sponsored Schemes, and instructed officers to enhance awareness campaigns for wider outreach. The meeting witnessed detailed deliberations on ongoing developmental works, infrastructure gaps, and key public concerns across the district.

**Jitendra Singh.....**

State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh today announced the establishment of a Doppler Weather Radar for Doda to strengthen weather forecasting capabilities and enhance disaster preparedness in the region.

The Minister stated that the Doppler Weather Radar will enable accurate and real-time monitoring of weather conditions. This will improve early warning systems and support disaster management efforts in the district, he added.

Dr Jitendra Singh was chairing the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) meeting alongside Member of Parliament Sajjad Ahmed Kitchloo and MLA Doda West, Shakti Raj Parihar and the entire district administration at the DC Office Complex here to review the implementation and progress of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and key infrastructure projects in the district.

Dr. Jitendra Singh informed that the construction of the link road from Kalota and Humbal to National Highway-44 is to be taken up on priority being to improve connectivity and ease of transportation for the local population. He further stated that the road to the Mata Dedani Shrine is also being expedited, with directions issued to accelerate the pace of work to facilitate better access for devotees and promote religious tourism in the area. The Minister directed the authorities to repair the roads ridden with potholes at the earliest.

Dr Jitendra Singh also reviewed the status of infrastructure related to the medicinal and aromatic plants sector. During the meeting, Dr. Wahid, Technical Officer, J&K, Medicinal Plants Board, apprised that the Post Harvest Management Unit for Medicinal Plants at Kotli, comprising a marketing mandi, storage godowns, and drying sheds for medicinal and aromatic plants, is set to be fully operational

due to shortage of manpower. Taking note of the issue, the Union Minister directed that office space may be provided to local entrepreneurs engaged in the medicinal and aromatic plants sector under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model at High Altitude Medicine Centre Baderwah with necessary approvals from the Ministry of AYUSH in consultation with the District Administration.

The Union Minister called for efficient utilization of resources and removal of bottlenecks. He stressed the importance of effective inter-departmental coordination with local public representatives to ensure last-mile delivery of services. The Minister also reviewed the status of key road projects, including the Thathri-Doda road and Paryote road under National Highways, and directed authorities to ensure timely maintenance. Directions were issued to expedite restoration works on the Assar-Baggar road and maintenance of the Khellani-Marmat stretch.

Progress of the Chattergal Tunnel project was also assessed, with instructions to expedite work and submit the Detailed Project Report at the earliest.

Addressing concerns regarding the Sudhmahadev Tunnel, Dr Jitendra Singh clarified that reports about stoppage of work were incorrect, and said the earlier tender was cancelled because of the security issue related to the allottee and said, a new tender will be floated soon.

Reviewing educational infrastructure, the Minister directed that vacant faculty positions, including that of Principal at KV School Jodhpur, be filled within a stipulated time frame. On healthcare, he emphasized the need to address staff shortages through a robust policy framework.

On the occasion, Dr Jitendra Singh also inaugurated three PMGSY roads, namely Thathri to Chira road, with a total length of 19 kilometres, costing 928.40 lakh rupees, Goila Morh to Trankal (5 km) and Puneja to Bhalara (9 km). Altogether, these roads will benefit 7,151 souls.

The meeting reviewed the progress of ongoing developmental works and implementation of various flagship schemes across District Doda. Sector-wise assessments were undertaken for key departments including health, education, roads and infrastructure, power, rural development, forest, agriculture, Jal Shakti, and employment generation. District Development Commissioner Doda, Krishan Lal, made a presentation on the status of developmental works and achievements across departments.

**Chief Secretary.....**

Directors of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) for Kashmir and Jammu divisions; Managing Director, Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY-NULM/Shehri); and other senior officers.

During the comprehensive review, the Chief Secretary took a detailed appraisal of the implementation of key Centrally Sponsored Schemes, including the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban), AMRUT 2.0, and Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY-NULM) Shehri.

Emphasizing the critical role of these initiatives in strengthening urban infrastructure and municipal services, the Chief Secretary directed the department to significantly accelerate the pace of implementation. He underscored the need for expeditious completion of projects, particularly those related to used water management, sanitation, waste disposal, and treatment.

With regard to PMAY (Urban), he stressed the importance of removing bottlenecks and ensuring timely completion of housing units. He called for proactive sensitization of beneficiaries to commence and complete construction promptly, alongside timely release of financial assistance. He further directed the department to sponsor all eligible beneficiaries under the Interest Subsidy Scheme (ISS) component and ensure rigorous monitoring for early completion of housing projects.

Reviewing the progress under AMRUT 2.0, the Chief Secretary instructed the concerned authorities to fix clear timelines for each project and ensure strict adherence to completion schedules through continuous monitoring.

Earlier, Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD, Mandeep Kaur, presented a detailed overview of the progress achieved under various schemes. She highlighted key bottlenecks, measures taken for their resolution, and outlined the implementation strategy and future roadmap to achieve the intended objectives.

Commissioner, JMC and MD, SBM (U), Devansh Yadav, made a detailed presentation on preparations for Swachhta Survekshan 2026. He elaborated on improvements in door-to-door waste

collection, segregation practices, and future plans for source segregation.

He also highlighted the development of sanitation infrastructure, including community and public toilets, Individual Household Latrines (IHHLs), Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs), Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs), Construction & Demolition (C&D) waste processing plants in Srinagar and Jammu, Compressed Biogas (CBG) plants in these cities, and bio-remediation of legacy waste across urban areas.

Commissioner, SMC, Peer Fazlul Haseeb, presented an overview of the existing and upcoming waste management infrastructure in Srinagar, focusing on scientific waste collection and disposal systems.

Managing Director, J&K Housing Board, Shahbaz Mirza, apprised the meeting of the progress under various verticals of PMAY (Urban), including Beneficiary-Led Construction (BLC), Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP), and Interest Subsidy Scheme (ISS). He informed that out of 39,153 houses sanctioned under Phase-I of BLC, 31,173 have been completed, while 1,791 have not yet been started, with the remaining nearing completion.

He further informed that under Phase-II of PMAY (Urban), around 27,700 applications were received across districts, of which 23,203 have been verified on the ground in coordination with Deputy Commissioners, resulting in identification of 3,011 eligible beneficiaries too.

Reviewing the progress under the newly launched D-JAY (Shehri) scheme, the meeting was informed that the scheme is currently being implemented on a pilot basis in Jammu and Srinagar cities. The initiative aims to address occupational, social, and residential vulnerabilities of the urban poor through strengthening grassroots institutions, enhancing livelihood opportunities, creating social infrastructure, and extending social security benefits over the next five years.

It was reported that 2,56,659 individuals have been enumerated under the scheme so far, including workers from vulnerable occupational groups such as construction workers, gig workers, waste workers, domestic workers, transport workers, caregivers, and others in the unorganized sector.

These individuals, as apprised in the meeting, have been covered under various social security schemes in convergence mode, including Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Ayushman Bharat, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan, Janani Suraksha Yojana, and One Nation One Ration Card, among others.

Later, the Chief Secretary, under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), launched the Single Use Plastic Challan and IEC Portal aimed at generating awareness about the hazards of single-use plastic and strengthening enforcement mechanisms to curb its usage across the Union Territory.

**Sakeena Itoo.....**

assured them that the Government stands firmly with the people during this difficult time and that timely assistance will be ensured.

"District Administration has been asked to conduct detailed assessment of losses accurately, facilitate timely relief under existing government norms and extend all possible assistance to affected orchardists and farmers without delay", Sakeena assured the affected farmers.

The Minister stated that the Government is committed to providing immediate relief as well as long-term support to mitigate the impact of natural calamities on farmers and rural livelihoods.

"Our Government completely stands with the farming community in this difficult time. We will ensure all losses are compensated fairly," she stated.

The Minister also instructed the accompanying officers of various stakeholder departments to deploy field teams for rapid surveys and ensure that eligible beneficiaries receive compensation strictly as per government norms. "Loss reports must be compiled transparently and submitted within a fixed timeframe to facilitate swift assistance for affected families", she maintained.

The Minister also directed the stakeholder departments to keep officers and officials on ground and maintain close liaison with local representatives and ensure prompt relief measures across all affected villages

While interacting with the Minister, the locals appreciated the Minister's visit and expressed hope that timely intervention by the Government will ensure swift and timely assistance to recover from the losses incurred by this devastating hailstorm.



# Div Com Kashmir reviews Flood Mitigation measures

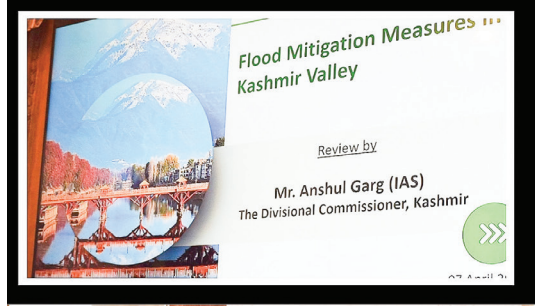
■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APR 07:** Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg today chaired a high-level meeting to review flood mitigation measures undertaken by the Irrigation & Flood Control (I&FC) Department, along with preparedness of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) ahead of the upcoming monsoon season.

The meeting focused on strengthening embankments to enhancing the overall flood resilience of the River Jhelum system besides mock drills of disaster management.

During the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner conducted a comprehensive review of ongoing flood management works and emphasized the need for timely execution of advance measures prior to the onset of the monsoon.

He also reviewed key non-structural interventions, including flood hazard mapping, land-use planning regulations, flood early warning systems, public awareness initiatives, and sediment management strategies



such as regulated riverbed material extraction.

The Div Com also assessed pre-



paredness and resource augmentation of NDRF and SDRF.

On the occasion, the Division-

al Commissioner directed NDRF and SDRF to conduct regular mock drills in coordination with district

administrations to ensure effective emergency response. He also stressed the importance of Yatra-specific preparedness of mountain rescue teams, alongside strengthening urban flood response mechanisms and augmenting equipment availability.

The Div Com directed I&FC Department to work as the nodal agency for resource and equipment pooling, as well as maintaining a centralized repository of manpower and contact details.

Furthermore, the Divisional Commissioner emphasized the need for clear demarcation of stretches along the River Jhelum under the jurisdiction of respective Executive Engineers.

He also directed the rational deployment of manpower, including shifting personnel from northern districts to southern areas for effective gauge monitoring across 126 identified beats comprising canals and rivulets of the Jhelum basin.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Engineer, I&FC; Executive Engineers; officers of NDRF and SDRF; and the Officer on Special Duty to the Divisional Commissioner.

## Twin Enforcement Drives in South Kashmir: 130 Challans Issued, Multiple Vehicles Seized in Shopian and Kulgam

■ FAROOQ RATHER

**SHOPIAN/KULGAM, APR 07:** In a significant push to strengthen road safety and enforce traffic regulations, the Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) carried out extensive enforcement drives in South Kashmir's Shopian and Kulgam districts, resulting in a large number of challans, vehicle seizures, and licence suspensions.

In Shopian, the enforcement drive was conducted under the directions of the Transport Commis-



sioner and supervised by ARTO Shopian, Dr. Showkat Ahmad Bhat (JKAS). The drive witnessed the active participation of Motor Vehicle Inspectors Waheed Ul Islam and Udyat Singh Jammwal, along with Motor Vehicle Traffic Assistants Aadil Ahmad Parray, Raiz Ahmad, and other officials.

Strategically placed naka points were established at multiple locations across the district to ensure systematic checking of vehicles and strict compliance with provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act. During the drive, a total of 35 challans were issued against traffic violators, with a fine amount of ₹61,000 expected to be realized. Additionally, 10 driving licences were recommended for suspension, 23 vehicles were blacklisted for repeated and serious violations, and 02 vehicles were seized.

Meanwhile, in Kulgam, a parallel enforcement drive was conducted as part of the ongoing Special Enforcement Drive across the Kashmir Division. The operation was also supervised by ARTO Kulgam, Dr. Showkat Ahmad Bhat (JKAS), under the directions of the Transport Commissioner.

The enforcement squad comprised Motor Vehicle Inspectors Er. Shahid Cherag and Mushtaq Ganai, along with Motor Vehicle Assistants Rakesh Raina, Suhail Wani, and Shabir Dar. Naka points were set up at five key locations across the district to monitor vehicular movement and ensure adherence to traffic norms.

During the drive, officials issued 95 challans, realizing a fine amount of ₹71,500. The authorities also recommended suspension of 07 driving licences, serving show cause notices to the offenders. Furthermore, 06 vehicles were seized for serious violations, while 07 vehicles were blacklisted.

Officials stated that these enforcement drives are part of a broader initiative to curb traffic violations, enhance road discipline, and ensure public safety. The department reiterated its commitment to intensifying such drives in the coming days.

The Motor Vehicles Department has urged the general public to strictly follow traffic rules, carry valid documents, and cooperate with enforcement agencies to ensure safer roads across the region.

## Author M S Nazki Presents His Books to Northern Command Chief Lt Gen Pratik Sharma

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APR 07:** Author M S Nazki presented two of his books to Pratik Sharma, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command, during



a meeting in Udhampur.

The Army Commander appreciated the author's work and lauded his contribution to writing on defence-related subjects.

Lt Gen Sharma, a highly decorated officer, said such literature on defence is the need of the hour and commended Nazki for presenting it in an insightful and effective manner.

He also encouraged the author to continue his work in the field and wished him success in future endeavours.

## Executive Meeting of Adabi Markaz Kamraz J&K Held

Editorial Board Formation, Annual Conference Plans, and Key Literary Decisions Approved

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BARAMULLA, APR 07:** An important meeting of the Executive Members of Adabi Markaz Kamraz Jammu & Kashmir was held under the patronage of Senior Vice President Mr. Shakir Shafa. The meeting commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran by Mr. Arshad Mohi-ud-Din, followed by a Naat presented by Mr. Nazir-ul-Hasan Tabasum.

The Secretary of the Markaz, Mr. Farooq Shaheen, presented a detailed report on the three-day Kashmiri Literary Conference held in Jammu. This was followed by the presentation of the meeting agenda by the General Secretary, Mr. Shabnam Tilgami.

During the meeting, several important matters were discussed. It was decided to constitute an Editorial Board for the early publication of the Markaz's official magazine "Pro." It was also resolved that special issues of "Pro" would be published focusing on the distinguished predecessors associated with the Markaz. The Editorial Board will have full authority to devise the framework and plan for these special editions.



During the meeting, Mr. Mir Manzoor, representative of Kashmir Performers Collective Pattan, proposed organizing a high-quality workshop under the leadership of the Markaz. The Executive Members approved the proposal with the condition that all theatre groups associated with the Markaz would participate in the workshop.

Regarding this year's conference, the proposal to organize the two-day Annual Kashmiri Conference at Pat-

tan was also approved.

In an important development, the Executive Members unanimously appointed Dr. Rafiq Masoodi as Patron of the Markaz for the next three years.

It was also decided that a General Council meeting will be convened next month.

Furthermore, it was resolved that the book of renowned Kashmiri writer and poet Mr. Rafiq Raaz will be released in Srinagar in the coming days.

## School Cooks Deserve Dignity and Fair Wages: JKTA Baramulla Urges Govt to Revise Honorarium

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BARAMULLA, APR 7:** In a statement District President Jammu Kashmir Teachers Association (JKTA) Baramulla Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat has strongly appealed to the Government to enhance the meager monthly honorarium being paid to school cooks working under the PM POSHAN (Mid-Day Meal Scheme) in government schools.

Expressing serious concern, Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat stated that school cooks are an essential yet most neglected workforce in the education system. Despite performing their duties with utmost sincerity—preparing meals for hundreds of students daily and ensuring hygiene and nutrition—they are being paid a paltry amount of Rs 1,000 per month, which is grossly unjust and insufficient in the present economic scenario.

Mushtaq Bhat emphasized that these cooks play a vital role in the successful

implementation of the Mid-Day Meal programme, which directly impacts student attendance, health, and learning outcomes. "It is unfortunate that those who ensure nourishment for our children are themselves struggling to make ends meet," he added.

JKTA Baramulla urged the Government to revise the honorarium of school cooks and bring it at par with minimum wage standards, acknowledging their contribution as part of the education support system. The Association also demanded timely disbursement of their dues and provision of basic social security benefits.

Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat reiterated that respecting the dignity of labour is the responsibility of a welfare state and appealed to the authorities to take compassionate and practical steps in this regard.

JKTA Baramulla stands in solidarity with the school cooks and assures full support in raising their genuine concerns at every appropriate platform.



## FIRE BREAKS OUT AT CRPF UNIT INSIDE FCI GODOWN IN KULGAM, NO CASUALTIES REPORTED

■ FAROOQ RATHER

**KULGAM, APR 07:** A fire broke out on Tuesday in a unit of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) 46 Battalion stationed inside a Food Corporation of India (FCI) godown in the Mirbazar area of south Kashmir's Kulgam district, officials said.

Soon after the incident, teams from the Fire and Emergency Services (F&ES) department, along with Kulgam Police, rushed to the spot and launched a swift operation to contain the blaze. The police team was led by DO Mirbazar, Nisar Ahmad. F&ES Headquarters Incharge

Qazigund, Ghulam Hassan, along with F&ES Headquarters Incharge Anantnag, Fayaz Ahmad, said that the fire was brought under control in a timely manner, preventing it from spreading further. They added that cooling operations were underway to eliminate any chances of reignition.

"No casualties or injuries have been reported in the incident," officials said, highlighting the prompt and coordinated response by emergency teams.

The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, and an investigation has been initiated. Further details are awaited.

## Veteran Ex-TSO Wali Mohammad Lone Passes Away, Leaves Behind Legacy of Service and Inspiration

Team Headlines Today, Editor-in-Chief expressed heartfelt condolences with bereaved family

■ HT NEWS DESK

**SRINAGAR, APR 7:** Wali Mohammad Lone, a respected former TSO, passed away, leaving his family, friends, and well-wishers in deep grief. He was remembered as a man of integrity, strength, and unwavering dedication, whose life touched many with wisdom and compassion.

His son, in an emotional message, described him as his "strength, guide, and greatest inspiration," crediting his father's love, sacrifices, and constant support for shaping his life. He recalled how Wali Mohammad Lone's presence brought warmth, courage, and guidance, leaving behind memories that will continue to inspire the family in the years to come.



The passing has cast a pall of sorrow over the community, where he was known for his humility and service.

Team Headlines Today extended its deepest condolences to the bereaved family during this difficult time. Editor in chief, while expressing solidarity, conveyed heartfelt sympathies, stating that the loss is immeasurable and prayed for strength and patience

for the family to bear this irreparable loss.

"We stand with the family in this hour of grief and pray that the departed soul finds eternal peace," the condolence message read.

Family members have appealed to relatives, friends, and the community to remember the deceased in their prayers.

May his soul rest in peace.

# DC Srinagar conducts review of proposed major infrastructural projects, ongoing infra works in district

Stresses timely progress, streamlined DPR preparations

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR APRIL 07:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today chaired a comprehensive meeting here at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office to assess the progress of mega developmental projects and ongoing infrastructure works in the district, besides reviewing the status of estimation and Detailed Project Report (DPR) preparation for upcoming works.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Chief Engineer SSCI, Abdul Qayoom Kirmani, Superintending Engineer R&B, Tatheer Manzoor, Superintending Engineer Hydraulic, Sajad Kawoosa, SDM East, Zubair Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Umar Gulzar, Executive Engineers of R&B, PHE, KPDC, City Drainage, UEED & SMC Tehsildars South, Tehsildar Shalteng and other Officers.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner was apprised



through a detailed presentation on the project-wise status and progress of major infrastructure development projects across the district.

The DC was briefed about key development projects, including 4L Flyover from Dalgate to Parimpora Junction, Parimpora-Shalteng Flyover, Vehicle Under Pass (VUP) at Moominabad, Panthachowk flyover, FOB at Children's Hospital Bemina, Vehicle Under Pass (VUP) at Nowgam Railway Crossing and 4L of Boulevard Road from Nehru Park to Kralasangri.

On the occasion, the DC undertook a comprehensive assessment of the progress of ongoing works and identified key bottlenecks affecting the pace of execution.

The DC also took stock of the status of utility shifting to ensure the seamless and time-bound execution of the projects across Srinagar district. He directed executing agencies to expedite

the estimation process so that all new works are processed promptly through the requisite stages of approval, tendering and allocation.

He underlined the importance of timely utility shifting and instructed all concerned departments to fast-track the process to facilitate smooth and uninterrupted execution of the projects.

The DC further stressed the need for streamlined preparation of estimates and DPRs of new initiatives underscoring that timely submission and approval of DPRs is essential for expediting project implementation.

Emphasising the importance of inter-departmental coordination, the DC called for enhanced synergy among all line departments to effectively address bottlenecks and ensure adherence to project timelines. He directed officers to adopt a proactive and coordinated approach in resolving issues related to land acquisition, clearances and utility relocation.

## DDC Kulgam flags off road safety rally from GDC Kulgam

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**KULGAM, APRIL 07:** Road Safety Club of Government Degree College (GDC) Kulgam today organised a Mega Road Safety Awareness Event in collaboration with the Transport Department, Kulgam, with the objective of spreading awareness regarding safe road practices among students and the general public.

On the occasion, the District Development Commissioner (DDC), Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, graced the occasion and participated in the Road Safety Pledge.



The DDC also flagged off a road safety rally from the college campus to the SP Office, Kulgam.

During the rally, students carried banners, placards, helmets, and awareness pamphlets to disseminate the message of road safety among the public. Helmets were distributed free of cost to riders found without protective gear, and they were sensitized about the importance of wearing helmets. Additionally, road safety pamphlets were distributed among the general public to enhance awareness.

The speakers emphasised that adherence to traffic rules, use of helmets and seatbelts, avoidance of rash driving, and respect for pedestrians are essential to minimise road accidents and save lives.

The programme concluded with successful culmination of rally and a renewed commitment from students and staff to act as ambassadors of road safety in society.

Earlier, a awareness programme was held in the conference Hall of the college and witnessed enthusiastic participation from faculty members, NCC and NSS volunteers, non-teaching staff, and students from different departments.

Dr. Showkat Ahmad, ARTO Kulgam, delivered an insightful awareness lecture on traffic discipline, responsible driving, the use of helmets and seatbelts, and the importance of safeguarding precious human life on roads.

Road safety awareness videos were also screened during the session, which greatly enhanced students' understanding of traffic rules and accident prevention measures.

During the event, students who secured first positions in various inter-college competitions of the Road Safety Awareness Programme were felicitated.

## Mega Job Fair in Baramulla draws record participation, boosts Youth Employment

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BARAMULLA, APRIL 07:** In a major push towards youth empowerment and employment generation, District Employment & Counselling Centre (DECC) Baramulla in collaboration with Dagger Division of the Indian Army, and several leading government and private sector organizations, successfully organized the third edition of the Mega Job Fair in Baramulla.

The two-day event witnessed an overwhelming response on its opening day, with over 1,800 job seekers participating and more than 550 candidates shortlisted, surpassing figures from previous editions.

The event was attended by MLA Baramulla, Javed Hassan Beigh, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Syeed Fakhruddin Hamid along with the Commander Dagger Gunners.

Bringing together reputed companies, corporate houses, and skill development institutions, the job fair offered diverse employment opportunities across sectors such as information technology, healthcare, hospitality, banking, retail, manufacturing, automobiles, and marketing services.

On-the-spot interviews, career counselling sessions, and skill development workshops were conducted to guide and prepare candidates for the job market. Notably, several companies from Bengaluru also conducted interviews online.

In addition, more than 15 government departments participated by showcasing various self-employment schemes and subsidized loan programs, encouraging entrepreneurship and financial independence among the youth.

Addressing the gathering, MLA Baramulla, appreciated the efforts of the Indian Army, emphasizing that such initiatives play a crucial role in job creation and regional development.

The Commander Dagger Gunners highlighted the Indian Army's commitment to community development and youth empowerment, stating that the initiative aims to provide meaningful opportunities for the talented youth of Baramulla to build a secure and prosperous future.

Among the beneficiaries, Hazik Hilal, a recent graduate, expressed her gratitude after securing a position at Hotel Sarovar Portico. She described the job fair as a life-changing opportunity that boosted her confidence and career prospects.

The Mega Job Fair concluded with hundreds of placements and numerous candidates enrolled in training and skill enhancement programs.

The initiative once again underlined the Indian Army's continued dedication to fostering peace, progress, and prosperity in Jammu & Kashmir

## Mission YUVA: 589 cases approved by DLIC Anantnag

DDC directs expeditious processing of Loan Cases

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**ANANTNAG, APRIL 07:** Further boosting the implementation of Mission Yuva in the district, the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC), Anantnag today approved 589 cases during its 28th meeting held at the DC office.

The meeting was chaired by District Development Commissioner (DDC), Chairman DLIC, Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat and was attended by Deputy Director Employment, representative of DSWO, DNO JKEDI, Employment Officer, officials from NABARD and banking institutions and other concerned officials.

Sector-wise, the approved cases included 312 in Retail and wholesale sector, 129 in Transport, 65 in the Service sector and 82 in agricultural and allied sector besides other small business ventures associated with meaningful employment. With these



589 fresh cases, the district's tally of approved cases has reached 6807, out

of which 2578 have received bank loans so far.

Notably, 39.5 percent of the applications were submitted by women aspirants, indicating their increasing interest in entrepreneurial initiatives in the district.

Addressing the meeting, the DDC directed the concerned departments and banking institutions to ensure expeditious processing of loan cases and provide necessary facilitation to the applicants so the benefits of Mission YUVA are accrued by them.

He emphasized the need for close coordination between banks and line departments for smooth implementation of the scheme.

At the conclusion, the DLIC reaffirmed the commitment to strengthening entrepreneurship avenues, promoting self-reliance and providing sustainable employment opportunities to the youth through Mission YUVA in the district.

## Mega Health Awareness Camp, Market Inspection Drive held at Aishmuqam

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**ANANTNAG, APRIL 07:** On the eve of World Health Day, the Tehsil Legal Services Committee (TLSC) Aishmuqam under the Chairmanship of Shyam Kumar Sharma, has organised a day-long comprehensive Health Awareness Program and Mega Medical drive to spread awareness about Health.

The event, presided over by the Chairman TLSC, underscores the judiciary's role in safeguarding the fundamental right to health. The camp, held at Court Complex Aishmuqam, saw a massive turnout.

Medical specialists from BMO Mattan and BMO Sallar provided a range of services, including Blood pressure, sugar levels, and general physical check-ups. Awareness session and expert talks on mental health, nutrition, and the ill effects of bad health

among students.

Moreover, essential medicines were provided to those in need following their check-ups.

Meanwhile, high-level team led by the Chairman TLSC, alongside the Naib Tehsildar and Executive Officer of the Municipal Committee, TSO Aishmuqam and TSO Pahalgam conducted a surprise inspection of the Aishmuqam Market. The drive focused on food safety ensuring that eateries and vendors adhere to the Food Safety and Standards Act. Directives were issued on-the-spot to shopkeepers regarding the scientific disposal of waste and the mandatory installation of dustbins.

The initiative aims to reinforce the principle that "Health is a human right, not a luxury." The program is designed to promote community wellness, provide essential medical



screenings, and educate students and the general public on the importance of preventive healthcare.

The medical camp features expert teams from BMO Mattan and BMO Sallar, equipped with necessary diagnostic tools to provide on-spot screenings and consultations.

The event was attended by senior local officials, including Naib Tehsildar Aishmuqam, Executive Officer of Municipal Committee, and Principal of Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Aishmuqam, TSO Aishmuqam and TSO Pahalgam.

The Chairman, TLSC Aishmuqam, emphasized that these drives are critical for building a resilient and thriving community. The local police, led by, SDPO Pahalgam and SHO Aishmuqam, provided necessary coordination and information support to ensure the smooth conduct of the day's proceedings.

## DC Srinagar conducts onsite inspection of new Revenue Complexes for SDM East, Tehsil Office Khanyar, Tehsil Office Eidgah

Administration focuses on modernizing Revenue infrastructure for efficient, transparent citizen services

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR APRIL 07:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Tuesday conducted an on-site inspection of the ongoing construction works for key Revenue infrastructure projects in the district including the SDM East Office, Tehsil Office Khanyar and Tehsil Office Eidgah.

The visit aimed at reviewing the progress and quality of work being executed under the District Administration's initiative to

modernize and strengthen the Revenue infrastructure.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Aadil Fareed, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Superintending Engineer R&B, Shabir Ahmad, SDM East, Zubair Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Umar Gulzar, Executive Engineer R&B Arif Hazari, Tehsildar Eidgah, Mohammad Iqbal and other concerned Officers.



During the inspection of the Revenue Complex for Tehsil

Office Eidgah, the DC was informed that about 80% of the

civil works have been completed. He directed the concerned

Officers to expedite the remaining finishing works, including development of the approach road and installation of chain-link fencing around the complex boundary, while ensuring strict adherence to quality standards. Similarly, the DC reviewed the progress of construction works for the new permanent Office buildings of SDM East and Tehsil Office Khanyar at Rainawari in the Shahr-e-Khaas area of the district. He assessed the status of structural works, finishing,

and internal services and instructed the executing agency to ensure completion of both projects by May 2026, so that the facilities can be dedicated for public use at the earliest.

Emphasizing the importance of timely completion of Revenue infrastructure, the Deputy Commissioner reiterated that these upgraded Revenue complexes will significantly enhance public service delivery and provide improved access to revenue-related services for the citizens.

# J&K Govt holds Steering Committee meet; explores AI adoption in governance

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 07:** The government of Jammu and Kashmir convened a high level Steering Committee meeting, chaired by Additional Chief Secretary (PwD) Anil Kumar Singh, to deliberate on adopting and mainstreaming Artificial Intelligence (AI) across key governance sectors in the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by the senior officials including Secretary, Information Technology, Dr. Piyush Singla, CEO JaKeGA Mahima Madan, technical experts and representatives from leading institutions like IIT, NHSRC and BISAG-N.

The objective of the meeting was to explore the potential of AI-driven solutions in enhancing the public service delivery, improving operational efficiency and enabling data-driven decision-making.

The meeting emphasised on identifying and adapting successful AI use cases being implemented in other States and Union Territories to suit the specific requirements of



Jammu and Kashmir.

It was informed that the priority sectors identified for AI integration included public works, disaster management, healthcare, agriculture, education, transport, finance and road safety.

Key application areas discussed included predictive analytics for disaster forecasting, satellite-based monitoring, AI-enabled diagnostics in healthcare, intelligent traffic and crime analysis systems besides smart learning and assessment tools in education.

The need for immediate identification of select high-impact and scalable use cases, particularly in agriculture and healthcare, was

also highlighted.

It was decided that all the Administrative Departments will prepare comprehensive, sector-specific AI roadmaps with clearly defined implementation timelines. Technical agencies and academic institutions will extend necessary support in solution design, pilot implementation and capacity building.

Additionally, the focus will be placed on identifying low-hanging use cases for early adoption to demonstrate quick and measurable outcomes. This initiative marks a significant step towards leveraging the emerging technologies for good

governance and positioning Jammu and Kashmir as a forward-looking, digitally empowered Union Territory.

The meeting also emphasized the need for customization of AI solutions considering the unique requirements of J&K, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, security governance besides adopting a synergistic approach across the departments. It was further suggested to organize dedicated workshops for finalization of use cases and awareness.

The meeting concluded with key directions, including constitution of a dedicated group of officers and technical experts for finalization of AI use cases, prioritization of key departments in the first phase and inclusion of domain experts from IITs and BISAG-N for structured implementation.

All the Administrative Departments have been directed to prepare comprehensive AI roadmaps for their respective sectors for presentation in the next review meeting.

# J&K proves its metal at India Skills Contest: Secures Gold in Fashion Technology

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 07:** Jammu and Kashmir has made a remarkable mark at the National level India Skills Competition 2025-26, securing a gold medal and Medallion of Excellence and making the Union Territory proud.

In a standout achievement, Diksha, a student of National Institute of Fashion Technology Srinagar, clinched the gold medal in Fashion Technology, earning the prestigious opportunity to represent India at the upcoming World Skills Competition scheduled to be held in Shanghai, China. The Medallion of Excellence further highlights the competitive edge, discipline and dedication of the participants from the region.

Mission Director Jammu and Kashmir Skill Development Mission, Leena Pada, lauded the achievement and dedicated this success to the officials who worked tirelessly to ensure effective implementation of the program. She termed it a significant milestone for the Union Territory's evolving skill development ecosystem.

Secretary Skill Development, Rajeev Ranjan Kumar, also lauded the achievement and congratulated the students for their hard work and dedication.

With the focused guidance of the Deputy Chief Minister, Jammu and Kashmir has



been steadily strengthening its skilling initiatives, leading to notable accomplishments at national-level skill competitions.

It is pertinent to mention that earlier, Jammu and Kashmir's talent had delivered an impressive performance at the India Skills North Regional Competition 2025.

Jammu and Kashmir's strong performance at the National India Skills Competition 2025-26 continued as 57 candidates participated, bagging 27 medals including 2 Gold, 3 Silver, 9 Bronze and 13 Medallions of Excellence across various skills like Fashion Technology, Bricklaying and Software Testing.

Out of 63 skills, the Union Territory participated in 28 skills, reflecting both strong representation and competitive performance. This continued success is expected to inspire many more young aspirants to pursue excellence in vocational skills and represent Jammu and Kashmir at national and international platforms.

# DLSA Shopian, Health Department observe World Health Day

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SHOPIAN, APRIL 07:** District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Shopian, in collaboration with the Health Department, today observed World Health Day at Mini Secretariat Shopian under the global theme "Together for Health: Stand with Science."

The programme was conducted under the directions of Chairman DLSA (Principal District & Sessions Judge) Shopian, Mehmood Ahmad Chowdhary, and Secretary DLSA Shopian, Mudasar Farooq.

The event aimed to raise awareness among participants regarding overall health, well-being, and the importance of



adopting healthy lifestyles.

Chief Health Officer, Mudasar Ahmad, in his address, emphasized that maternal and newborn health remains a cornerstone for building strong and healthy communities.

He stated that ensuring proper care and support for mothers and providing a healthy start to every child is essential for sustainable development.

District Microbiologist, Ishfaq Khursheed, stressed the importance of awareness programmes in promoting public health.

He highlighted that World Health Day serves as a global platform to draw attention to critical health issues each year

and emphasized the need to inculcate healthy daily habits. He also underlined the importance of both physical and mental well-being, particularly among the youth.

Deputy Chief LADC, Shah Nawaz Raina, also addressed the gathering and underscored that health is a shared responsibility. He highlighted that the right to health, medical care, and a clean environment are integral to the constitutional right to live with dignity.

The programme witnessed participation from Medical Officers, staff members, paramedical personnel, ASHA workers, and Para Legal Volunteers.

# DC Anantnag visits Yatra Transit Camps

HT NEWS NETWORK

**ANANTNAG, APRIL 07:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, (Yatra Officer Pahalgam Axis), Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat today made an extensive tour to Yatra Transit Camps, FCI Godown, Mir Bazaar and Walnut Factory, Qazigund and took first hand stock of arrangements and facilities, to be made available to the pilgrims during SANJY-2026.



On the occasion, the DC directed the concerned officers to provide all necessary facilities to the pilgrims in a smooth and seamless manner, ensuring an enriching experience for them. He called for provision of good quality toilets in requisite numbers and parking areas with proper lighting facilities at all places.

To ensure proper drainage of water, the DC asked the concerned officers to install an efficient drainage system besides repairing the paths.

Dr. Bilal further directed officers of line departments to augment the services and ensure every facility committed will be provided to the pilgrims. He emphasized that proper supply of water be provided to the langars and toilets along with drinking water for the Yatris. Instructions were issued to the concerned departments to ensure uninterrupted supply of electricity besides proper cleanliness, sanitation and hygiene of the transit camps.

The DC was accompanied by ADC, SDM Dooru, Tehsildars Anantnag and Qazigund and other concerned officers.

Later, the DC made a site visit to Khanabal bridge and interacted with the locals who put forth their grievances regarding traffic congestion and construction of it's additional part.

The DC issued on spot directions to Engineer Engineer R&B to resolve the issues in coordination with ACR and submit a revised DPR so the work on the additional part is taken up at the earliest possibility.

# Social Forestry Budgam organizes Plantation Drive

HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, APRIL 07:** In an effort to promote environmental conservation and enhance green cover, the Social Forestry Range, Budgam today organized a comprehensive plantation drive in collaboration with Sheikh-ul-Alam Memorial Degree College Budgam within the college premises.

The programme was conducted under the leadership of Principal, Shiekh-ul-Alam Memorial Degree College Budgam, Dr. Mohammad Amin, who underscored the importance of collective responsibility in protecting the environment. He appreciated the initiative of the Social Forestry Department and emphasized the role of educational institutions in fostering environmental awareness among students.



The plantation drive witnessed active and enthusiastic participation from students, teaching faculty, and non-teaching staff of the college.

Employees from various departments also took part in the programme, making it a collective and community-driven initiative. Officials and field staff from the Social Forestry Range, Budgam were also present on the occasion.

During the drive, participants planted a variety of saplings, including ornamental and shade-giving species, across the college campus.

On the occasion, officials from Social Forestry Budgam, highlighted the significance of afforestation in mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change. They urged the public, particularly the youth, to actively participate in plantation drives and adopt sustainable practices to preserve the ecological balance.

The programme concluded with a pledge by participants to protect and nurture the planted saplings and to continue contributing towards environmental protection initiatives in their respective capacities.

# GMC Doda observes World Health Day 2026 with focus on community health

HT NEWS NETWORK

**DODA, APRIL 07:** Government Medical College (GMC) Doda observed World Health Day-2026 with great enthusiasm and academic fervour, focusing on this year's theme, "Together for Health, Stand with Science."

To mark the occasion, the Department of Community Medicine, under the guidance from the GMC Principal Dr. Dev Raj Dogra and Head of the Department of Community Medicine Dr. Suresh K. Kotwal, organized a series of awareness and outreach programmes at GMC and its associated field practice areas, including Urban Health Training Centre (UHTC) Ghat, Rural Health Training Centre (RHTC) Bhalla and Government Higher Secondary School Ghat, underscoring the importance of collective action and evidence-based approaches in improving public health outcomes. Dr. Walied K. Balwan, Assistant Professor coordinated the event.

These activities aimed to sensitize

the community and healthcare workers about preventive healthcare practices and the importance of scientific evidence in addressing health challenges.

Senior Resident Dr. Imran Zaffer highlighted the importance of preventive healthcare, early diagnosis and maintaining a balanced lifestyle. Demonstrator Dr. Waseem Ahmed delivered an informative session on medical misinformation and its adverse impact on public health.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Suresh K. Kotwal emphasized the significance of such academic and outreach initiatives in strengthening community awareness and shaping responsible future healthcare professionals.

The event witnessed active participation from faculty members, resident doctors, staff and students, reflecting a strong commitment towards public health awareness. Similar activities were also conducted at Government Nursing College Doda and Government

Nursing College Kishtwar, further extending the outreach and impact of World Health Day celebrations in the region.

Meanwhile, World Health Day 2026 was observed at Community Health Centre Thathri under the guidance of Dr. Tanveer Ahmed Rather and the supervision of Dr. Shakeel Ahmed Kichloo.

The programme witnessed active participation from medical and paramedical staff of the Hospital. On the occasion, awareness activities were convened to highlight the importance of preventive healthcare, healthy lifestyle and community participation in promoting overall well-being.

Health officials emphasized the significance of regular health check-ups, balanced diet, physical activity and maintaining hygiene for disease prevention.

Healthcare staff and participants pledged to work collectively towards strengthening health services and spreading awareness among the general public.

# DC Kathua chairs District Sainik Welfare Board meeting

Reviews issues of ex-servicemen, calls for strengthening welfare mechanism

HT NEWS NETWORK

**KATHUA, APRIL 07:** Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma, who is also Chairman of the District Sainik Welfare Board, today chaired the annual meeting of the Board at the DC Office Complex here.

The meeting was attended by General Manager DIC Mushtaq Chaudhary; ASP Sunil Kumar Kesar; Zila Sainik Welfare Officer Jagmeet Singh Chahal; Assistant Secretary Nisar Ahmed, besides members from the Board and ex-servicemen.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the action taken on issues raised in the previous meeting and assessed

the need for further intervention by the District Administration. It was informed that key issues projected earlier, including commissioning of KV Ramkot, improvement of Barwal Playground, commemoration of Martyrs' Days and strengthening of grievance redressal mechanisms for ex-servicemen, have been addressed by the district administration.

The meeting held detailed deliberations on the matters concerning the welfare of ex-servicemen and their dependents, including establishment of a Sainik Colony, renewal of gun licenses, holding of recruitment rallies and promotion of skill development initiatives.



Emphasizing the need for enhanced support systems, the Deputy Commissioner called for further development of the Zila Sainik Welfare Board Office as a multi-facility centre to better serve the needs of nearly 50,000 ex-servicemen and their dependents, including widows and war widows in the district. He also directed to incorporate the proposal for setting up a War Memorial in the DPR for proposed multi-facility.

The Deputy Commissioner further stressed the importance of regular engagement with stakeholders and suggested holding meetings on a monthly basis, to ensure timely redressal of issues.

HT EDITORIAL

Be proactive in saving water bodies of Kashmir

Over the past few days some of the media houses have reported the findings of the Comptroller & Auditor General (CAG) of India related to the water bodies of Jammu & Kashmir. In the CAG report it has been mentioned that some of the lakes that were in the union territory have vanished from the scene and as on date there is no address of these water bodies.

The disappearance of these water bodies from both the Kashmir and Jammu divisions of the union territory is worrisome and it depicts the non-seriousness of the people towards this all important natural resource. There was a time when huge numbers of lakes, rivers and springs were present in the Kashmir valley but with the passage of time these water bodies have vanished from the scene. As on date negligible water bodies are present in the Kashmir valley and these too are in bad condition.

Not to talk of the smaller water bodies, important water bodies spread across the length and breadth of the Kashmir valley are gasping for breath. Important water resources like Wular Lake and Dal Lake have over the years faced a lot of deterioration and there is no end to the same at present. Even though huge funds have been allocated for the preservation of these water bodies there is no significant result on the ground when it comes to saving them from further deterioration.

The people of Kashmir should keep it in mind that the valley is famous for its pristine and clear water. It is imperative that efforts are doubled in preservation of the water bodies. Both the state and non-state actors have to play their part in this regard and masses should not expect that the government would do all the things in this regard. The big and important service that can be done by the people in this regard is that they should stop the pollution of the water bodies.

The people in general and environmentalists in particular have been highlighting the extent of pollution in the water bodies in Kashmir. Day in and day out programmes are held in this regard but at the end of the day there is very little difference on the ground. It is important that people take proactive steps in preserving the water bodies for posterity and mere lip service would not be enough in this regard.

When "The Portal Is Not Working" Becomes a Systemic Failure in Jammu & Kashmir

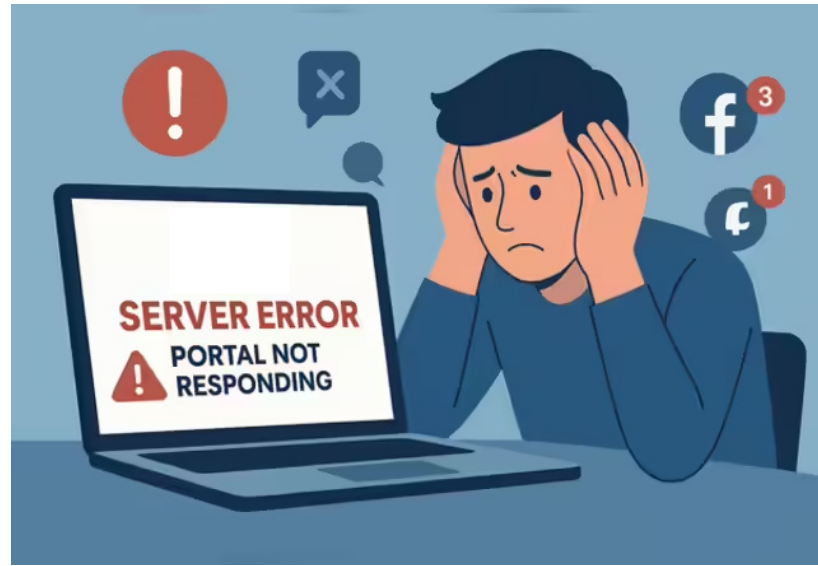


SHAHNAWAZ NAZIR

In the evolving landscape of governance, digital platforms were introduced as a promise—an assurance that efficiency, transparency, and accessibility would replace long queues, bureaucratic delays, and opaque systems. In Jammu & Kashmir, this promise carried even greater weight, as e-governance was seen as a bridge over decades of administrative and logistical challenges. Yet today, for many citizens, a simple phrase has come to symbolize a growing frustration: "The portal is not working."

What began as an occasional technical glitch has now become a recurring reality. From job application websites and scholarship portals to land record systems and grievance platforms, users frequently encounter unresponsive pages, server errors, or prolonged maintenance periods. The impact is not merely digital—it translates into missed deadlines, delayed services, and mounting public dissatisfaction.

At one level, the issue is undeniably technical. Many government portals in the region suffer from outdated infrastructure and inadequate server capacity. During peak usage—such as recruitment drives or deadline-heavy applications—these systems often collapse under pressure. This exposes a fundamental flaw in planning: the demand is predictable, yet the systems remain unprepared. In an age where private platforms han-



dle millions of users simultaneously, such repeated failures in public systems raise serious questions about capacity and investment.

However, the problem does not end with infrastructure. A deeper issues in maintenance and accountability. Portals are launched with enthusiasm, often accompanied by public announcements and political endorsement. But once operational, they are seldom updated or rigorously monitored. Broken links, outdated information, and non-functional helplines are common. When systems fail, responsibility becomes diffused—departments blame technical agencies, while technical teams cite administrative gaps. In this cycle, the citizen is left without answers.

Equally concerning is the normalization of this failure. "Portal not working" has, in many cases, evolved from an explanation into an excuse. It is now a convenient response in government offices, one that shifts responsibility from individuals to an invisible system. For the common citizen, this creates a sense of helplessness. Digital platforms were meant to reduce dependency on

physical offices, yet ironically, people often find themselves returning to the very counters these portals were designed to replace.

This dual failure—of both technology and accountability—undermines trust. E-governance is not just about digitization; it is about reliability. When systems fail repeatedly, they erode public confidence not only in technology but in governance itself. For a region like Jammu & Kashmir, where rebuilding trust between institutions and people is crucial, such setbacks carry broader implications.

Yet, amidst this criticism, it is important to acknowledge that the intent behind digital transformation is not flawed. The shift toward online systems is necessary and inevitable. It has the potential to reduce corruption, improve transparency, and make services accessible even in remote areas. But intent alone is not enough. Execution must match ambition.

To address this issue, a multi-pronged approach is required. First, there must be a significant upgrade in digital infrastructure. Portals should be designed to handle peak

loads, with scalable systems that can adapt to high traffic. Regular audits and performance testing should be mandatory, not optional.

Second, accountability mechanisms need to be strengthened. Every portal should have clearly defined ownership, with designated officials responsible for its functioning. When systems fail, there must be a transparent process to identify and address the cause. Silence and ambiguity only deepen public frustration.

Third, user support systems must be improved. Functional helplines, timely updates, and clear communication can make a significant difference. Even when a portal is down, informing users about the issue and expected resolution time reflects respect for their time and concerns.

Finally, there must be a cultural shift within administrative systems. Technology should not be used as a shield to deflect responsibility. Instead, it should be seen as a tool to enhance service delivery. Officials must be trained and encouraged to take ownership, ensuring that digital systems complement rather than complicate their work.

The phrase "portal not working" may seem minor, but it reflects a larger systemic issue—one that sits at the intersection of technology, governance, and public trust. Addressing it requires more than technical fixes; it demands a commitment to accountability, efficiency, and empathy.

As Jammu & Kashmir continues its journey toward modernization, the success of its digital initiatives will depend not on how many portals are launched, but on how reliably they serve the people. Until then, the gap between promise and reality will remain, echoing through every failed login and every unanswered request.

And for the common citizen, the question will persist: if the portal does not work, where does one go for justice?

Importance of schools outings



SAHIL MANZOOR

Learning is interesting.

The education system is well known to everyone, all of us. The importance of education has greatly impacted the world. In all corners of the world, people came to know the potential greatness of the education.

Education has no alternative, no barrier, and no constraints in any country in any part of the world. Acquiring education sums up laurels in our morals and bestows upon us the great chapters of life. Humans are literally considered the civilized society; any uncivilized act may count in animals.

It's simple to understand that there is little difference between humans and animals. Both the species are classified under the mammals. Biologically there are a number of resembling characters in the animals and the humans, but humans are the most beautiful creation of the Almighty. Having expressive reasons.

In the holy book of the Quran, almighty Allah says humans are the Ashraf ul Makhluqaat. It means there is no species like humans in this world, and humans were created beautiful in all aspects. Being a good human is not so hard, but it needs an environment where we can nourish and produce great humans.

Human beings should never forget their duties and responsibilities in the society. Every human being, or individual, has equal and constitutional rights that he or she can use to change the shape of the society or country or even change the shape of the world globe with just a single idea.

Clicking on a great idea may revolutionize your life. The state of our minds depended on what the environment we were surrounded by was.

Sensible people nourish their minds under the reach of great people. When you are surrounded by such minds, you feel unexpected change in your life. Like the way of thinking, you take every situation as your research task. Overall development is very necessary for the change in your life. There are people who never skip a single change that is vital for their life-changing goals and are people who skip bunches of changes and are

always expecting success without working hard.

Our body structure never decides our future, like being strong physically never means we are at the top; it's good and important that it will help us to achieve our life goals. Great people are those who possess a great mind that they can sort out troubles within seconds and are real assets for the world.

Great minds have no unique identity, no unique citizenship, and belong to no particular caste or color. Great people are the assets of the whole world. One thing that is very interesting is that there are 8 billion souls in the world. But there are fewer who are renowned, famous, and towering in different fields like science and technology, politics, education, art, music, religion, and sports. We know such great people and have respect for their contribution to the whole world. Great people are never always smoothing the way for the others and burning their nights for the noble cause.

Today I am going to share my experiences on how we can produce great minds and how we can nourish them under a free zone.

What is a free zone?

A free zone can be defined as the place where a learner learns concepts having no fear of punishment or any other physical, psychological, or mental means of barriers.

Today schools are providing free zones to the learners and nourishing them under happy trees. Today's education system is being transformed, introducing new policies and strategies. The goals are to produce great minds for the future. We need potential minds in any field.

Role of schools in producing great and influential personalities.

School is the place where future scientists, educationists, doctors, engineers, pilots, and politicians are being nourished. With the tireless hard work efforts of the teachers. Teachers are the real assets of the nation.

Appreciate and reward teachers with their own identity, like a logo or title against their names.

Such initiatives will literally help to boost the morale of the teachers, and such efforts may encourage them to produce great minds and will play a role in the development of the country in all aspects.

One thing that is very unfortunate is that the teacher fraternity lacks support in a number of ways, like teachers. There are people who set policies against teachers, forgetting that they are only where they are because of teachers. It is not possible that any individual grows and develops without any helping hand. In our success there are the hands and support of thousands of people,

and this act we should remember till our last breath. This act may bestow peace of mind and soul.

Honor

Housing anyone in any field never gives us bad results; instead, such efforts may produce great and effective results in a smart way.

Importance of field trips in the schools.

I am amazed at how people live who never attended a single day of school.

Is it possible that they think they know how days and nights are caused, how rain lashes, how streams flow throughout the year, how radios function, how television shows us such great quality visuals, how mobile phones contain so many features, how medicine works and relieves us from pain, and how we inhale and exhale? Etc., all these questions are discussed at the primary level or middle level. A period when every child has the right to free and compulsory education. How people remain illiterate. So bizarre but a fact.

We can eradicate all that we don't think is favorable and good for human beings and for all of humanity. Just keep your heart clear and fear no greediness, no dishonesty, no jealousy, no crime, no fraud, no harm, and no injustice.

Importance of field trips

Field trips induce and provide a great chance for the learners to learn concepts practically and apply every bit of learning practically in life.

Field-like while studying plants, students should be taken out from the school premises; ask them to have lunch outside and teach them what they or a teacher find about the selected topic. Repeat the thing the number of times you think they have to face it in their lives. Like measurement, units, and mechanisms, in short, so that they never feel a lack of confidence, and teach them in a way so that their learning is easy. Never force a student that you have to learn or be ready for punishment; always encourage them to take their time. This is so easy, and you can. If you can, it's ok; don't bother. Life is still yours.

Encouraging students

Encouraging is literally a great and effective tool for the learning process. Always try to clear the basics and leave the rest as optional for the students. For the teachers, encourage by giving marks of 9 out of 10 even if they deserve 5 or 6. Make them captains and monitors; make them always dress properly and simply, cut their hair simply, and appreciate their little to little try. Hope results will come back positive and may impact their future.

sahilmanzoor411990@gmail.com

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# Child is the Father of Man: The Transformative Power of Elementary Education



■ JAVAID BHAT

The famous line "Child is the father of man," coined by the poet William Wordsworth, carries a profound truth that resonates deeply within the realm of education. It suggests that the experiences, values, and learning acquired during childhood shape the character and destiny of an individual in adulthood. Nowhere is this more evident than in the sphere of elementary education, which forms the bedrock of a nation's future.

Elementary education is not merely the beginning of formal schooling; it is the stage where young minds are molded, curiosity is ignited, and foundational skills are developed. At this level, children learn not only to read and write but also to think, question, and interact with the world around them. These early years determine whether a child grows into a confident, responsible



citizen or struggles to find direction later in life.

A child's mind is like soft clay, flexible and receptive. Whatever is instilled during these formative years leaves a lasting imprint. Values such as honesty, empathy, discipline, and respect are best nurtured at the elementary level. Schools, therefore, carry a great responsibility:

they are not just centers of instruction but institutions of character-building. A caring teacher, a supportive environment, and meaningful learning experiences can profoundly influence a child's outlook towards life.

In many parts of the world, including developing regions, elementary education still faces challenges such as inad-

equate infrastructure, lack of trained teachers, and limited access to quality learning resources. Despite various government initiatives, the gap between policy and implementation often hinders progress. Strengthening primary schools, investing in teacher training, and ensuring inclusive education for all children must remain top priorities.

Moreover, the introduction of vocational and skill-based learning at an early stage can significantly enhance the relevance of education. When children are exposed to practical knowledge alongside academics, they develop confidence and adaptability. This approach not only reduces the risk of future unemployment but also prepares them to meet real-world challenges with competence.

Parents, too, play a crucial role in shaping a child's educational journey. A home environment that encourages learning, creativity, and moral values complements the efforts of schools. The partnership between parents and teachers can create a strong support system that nurtures holistic development.

In today's rapidly changing world, where technology and innovation are redefining every aspect of life, the importance of a strong elementary education system cannot be overstated. It is at this stage that children learn how to learn a skill that remains with them forever.

If we truly believe that children are the architects of tomorrow, then investing in their early education is not a choice but a necessity. The future of any society depends on how well it educates its youngest members today. After all, the child we nurture today is the adult who will shape our world tomorrow.

## QAZIGUND DESERVES HILL DISTRICT STATUS



■ RAYEES AHMAD KUMAR

In recent days, following the assent given by the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Manoj Sinha, for the introduction of a private member's bill proposing divisional status to the Pir Panchal and Chenab regions, as well as district status to several other areas, a wave of aspirations has emerged across the Union Territory. Various regions of Central, North, and South Kashmir have come forward to assert their long-pending demands for district status. Among these, the demand raised by the people of Qazigund stands out prominently. Cutting across political affiliations and party lines, residents of the entire Qazigund area gathered at the Tehsil Headquarters, engaging in detailed deliberations to strengthen and energize their movement for the grant of hill district status. Strategically located as the entry point to the Kashmir Valley, Qazigund is widely known as the "Gateway to Kashmir." Its geographical importance has long been acknowledged. During the first phase of the recent budget session held in Jammu, the government itself reiterated that additional funds would be allocated for the construction of a grand gateway structure at Qazigund. This announcement was welcomed enthusiastically by the local population, especially by the educated unemployed youth, who saw in it a sign of recognition and opportunity. A fair and unbiased analysis of Qazigund's case clearly indicates that it rightfully deserves district status. Historically, however, the region has faced neglect. During the tenure of the government led by Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, Qazigund was overlooked even for a tehsil status, which it merited at the time. Instead, Devsar, then a relatively smaller and less developed habitation, was granted that status. It was only after Omar Abdullah assumed office in 2009 that Qazigund was finally accorded tehsil status, albeit belatedly. Today, as the demand for new districts gains momentum across the Valley, the people of Qazigund are once again voicing their aspirations with renewed vigor. Granting district status to Qazigund would not merely fulfill a long-standing public demand but would also stand as a just and well-reasoned administrative decision. A significant portion of Qazigund's population resides in hilly terrains. The Kund belt, comprising around fifteen inhabited villages with a population exceeding one lakh, is particularly noteworthy for its immense tourism potential. This picturesque region attracts a large number of both local and non-local tourists during the summer season. Similarly, Brinal and Lammer are two other prominent hilly areas where a considerable population resides, and which hold untapped tourism prospects that deserve immediate attention and development. At present, the district headquarters of Anantnag and Kulgam are located at considerable distances from these remote and hilly regions. This geographical gap often results in administrative inconvenience and delays, adding to the

During the tenure of the government led by Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, Qazigund was overlooked even for a tehsil status, which it merited at the time. Instead, Devsar, then a relatively smaller and less developed habitation, was granted that status. It was only after Omar Abdullah assumed office in 2009 that Qazigund was finally accorded tehsil status, albeit belatedly

hardships faced by the local population. If Qazigund is granted district status, it would significantly improve administrative accessibility, accelerate development, and alleviate the long-standing difficulties of the people living in these far-flung areas. Such a decision would not only be widely welcomed but would also reaffirm the government's commitment to equitable and inclusive development. The areas of Kewa, Malikabad, and Manzmoh in Qazigund are located more than thirty kilometres away from the district headquarters at Anantnag. As a result, residents of these regions face considerable hardship in accessing essential administrative services, even for minor or routine matters. During the winter months, heavy snowfall, often reaching four to five feet, frequently cuts off these areas from both Qazigund and the district headquarters. The difficult hilly terrain further compounds the problem, making mobility and service delivery extremely challenging. Consequently, the local population continues to suffer due to limited accessibility and delayed administrative response. In this context, granting district status to Qazigund would significantly ease these difficulties. It would bring governance closer to the people, ensure faster delivery of services, and improve overall administrative efficiency in these far-flung areas. In light of these genuine concerns and merit-based considerations, it is humbly requested that the government take a positive, bold, and people-friendly decision regarding the grant of district status to Qazigund, widely regarded as the gateway to Kashmir. Such a step would provide long-awaited relief to the residents of these underserved regions.

Writer is a columnist based in Qazigund Kashmir

## To Value Chenab Valley Is To Value It's People



■ MOOL RAJ

The Chenab Valley, located in the eastern part of the Jammu region in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, derives its name from the Chenab River, which flows through its heart like a lifeline.

This sub-region comprises three primary districts: Doda, Kishtwar, and Ramban. It is bounded by the Pir Panjal Range to the north and the Zaskar Range to the south, covering an area of approximately 11,885 square kilometers.

The term Chenab Valley is commonly used to describe this region due to its shared geographic, cultural, and linguistic identity — all unified by the enduring presence of the Chenab River.

Understanding the Chenabi Identity

In recent years, the term "Chenabi" has emerged as a significant marker of both cultural and linguistic identity for the people of the Chenab belt.

According to Collins Dictionary and Wiktionary, the term was coined in 2017 by journalist Anzer Ayob, the term Chenabi is derived from the Chenab River, with the suffix "-i", commonly used to denote belonging. The term refers not only to the inhabitants of the Chenab valley but also to the unique collection of dialects, traditions, and cultural practices found in this mountainous region.

The Chenabi people do not constitute a single ethnic group. Rather, they represent a diverse community connected through shared customs, values, and linguistic heritage. Despite religious and social diversity, many identify with the collective cultural thread symbolized by Chenabi. This evolving identity offers a common platform for representation and recognition — particularly in the face of historical marginalization.

Linguistically, Chenabi refers to a cluster of Western Pahari dialects, including Bhaderwahi, Sarazi, Bhalesi, Padri, and others spoken across

the region. While these dialects are distinct, they are closely intertwined through oral traditions, cultural narratives, and regional history. Primarily oral and largely absent from formal education and mainstream media, these dialects face a growing risk of decline.

The rising use of Chenabi as a unifying term is more than symbolic — it represents an urgent call for the recognition and preservation of a regional identity that has long been overlooked. Embracing the Chenabi identity means valuing the unique human landscape of the Chenab Valley — not only in terms of geography, but in terms of language, heritage, and belonging.

Geographical and Cultural Profile of the Chenab Valley

The Chenab Valley, nestled within the steep, rocky mountains of eastern Jammu, is a land of dramatic natural beauty — shaped by deep gorges, dense pine forests, alpine meadows, and the roaring currents of the Chenab River itself. National Highway 244 cuts through this terrain, connecting the region to major cities while preserving its remote and serene character. The valley's ecological diversity, enriched by glacial streams and high-altitude passes, makes it one of the most environmentally significant regions in North India.

Culturally, the Chenab Valley is a living testament to pluralism. Its population is made up of a mosaic of ethnic communities — Kashmiris, Gujjars, Bhaderwahi, Sarazis, Kishtwaris, and Padaris — each contributing their own unique customs, attire, folklore, and cuisines. This diversity has not fragmented the region; rather, it has fostered a deep-rooted communal harmony, where difference is not just tolerated but woven into a collective way of life. In recent years, these plural traditions have increasingly come to be described under the broader umbrella of "Chenabi" — a term that respects internal diversity while emphasizing shared heritage.

A defining aspect of this shared heritage is the region's linguistic richness. Languages such as Bhaderwahi, Sarazi, Kishtwari, Kashmiri, Gojri, and Padari are spoken across the valley — often in local accents and passed down orally through generations. Though each dialect is distinct, they are now

collectively referred to as the "Chenabi languages", symbolizing a broader identity rooted in the Western Pahari linguistic tradition. These languages remain under-represented in formal education and media, and their preservation is essential to maintaining the valley's cultural foundation. The growing recognition of these dialects under the Chenabi identity reflects a serious and urgent call for safeguarding this oral legacy.

Tourism, too, remains an under-developed sector, despite the valley's unmatched natural beauty. Destinations like Bhaderwah, Jai Valley, Sinthan Top, Padri Pass, and Jantroon Dhar offer immense potential for eco-tourism and adventure tourism, if developed responsibly. The Chenab River, with its serene banks and breathtaking views, serves not just as the valley's geographic backbone but also as a site for photography, nature retreats, and cultural reflection. Chinta Valley, near Bhaderwah, stands out for its lush pine forests and green meadows — perfect for low-impact tourism such as bird-watching, nature walks, and landscape photography.

Beyond sightseeing, the Chenab River offers untapped adventure potential. Its upper reaches provide ideal conditions for river rafting, though the infrastructure remains minimal at present. With thoughtful investment and environmental safeguards, regulated rafting could emerge as a new draw for adventure enthusiasts. Fishing is another area of both traditional livelihood and emerging recreational interest. Streams and rivers in the region host species such as trout and mahseer, and with appropriate regulation, fishing tourism could evolve into a sustainable economic activity that benefits rural communities.

The river system is also of enormous hydroelectric importance. Major power projects like the Baglihar Dam, Dulhasti Project, and Salal Dam generate significant electricity for Jammu and Kashmir, with surplus energy even contributing to the national grid. This positions the Chenab as not only a natural and cultural artery but also an economic lifeline.

THE AUTHOR IS A REGULAR COLUMNIST AND FREELANCE WRITER

# THE HYDROPONICS: THE FUTURE OF SOIL-FREE FARMING



■ SURINDERPAL SINGH

Hydroponics is rapidly emerging as one of the most innovative and efficient methods of agriculture in the modern world. At its core, hydroponics is a technique of growing plants without soil, where water enriched with essential nutrients replaces the traditional role of soil. This method allows plants to absorb minerals directly through their roots from a carefully balanced solution. In many systems, the roots are either submerged in this nutrient-rich water or supported by inert growing media such as coconut coir, sand, or clay pellets. In simple terms, hydroponics can be understood as the art and science of cultivating plants using water and nutrients instead of soil.

The functioning of hydroponics is both simple in concept and sophisticated in practice. In traditional farming, soil acts as a reservoir of nutrients and water, providing support and nourishment to plant roots. However, hydroponics replaces this natural process with a controlled system that ensures plants receive exactly what they need for optimal growth. Plants are placed in containers or specialized setups where their roots have access to a continuous supply of nutrient solution. Oxygen is also supplied to the roots to prevent suffocation and rotting, which is crucial for healthy development. Light, either from the sun or artificial grow lights, supports photosynthesis, enabling plants to produce energy. The system is designed to circulate water and nutrients efficiently, ensuring consistency and reducing waste. This precision-based approach allows for faster and healthier plant growth compared

to traditional methods.

Over time, several types of hydroponic systems have been developed, each suited to different environments and scales of operation. Deep Water Culture is one of the simplest forms, where plant roots are suspended directly in a nutrient solution, allowing constant access to water and oxygen. The Nutrient Film Technique involves a thin stream of nutrient solution flowing over the roots, providing a continuous supply while maintaining aeration. The drip system delivers nutrients in controlled drops directly to the base of each plant, ensuring efficient usage. Aeroponics, considered one of the most advanced techniques, involves misting the roots with a nutrient solution, allowing maximum oxygen exposure and rapid growth. These systems highlight the adaptability and versatility of hydroponics across different conditions.

In the modern world, hydroponics has gained immense importance due to pressing global challenges such as population growth, climate change, and the shrinking availability of fertile agricultural land. As urbanization expands, traditional farming spaces are being replaced by buildings and infrastructure, leaving limited room for cultivation. Hydroponics offers a practical solution by enabling urban farming in rooftops, balconies, and indoor environments. It allows food production in regions where soil quality is poor or completely unsuitable, such as deserts or heavily polluted areas. Controlled environment agriculture, often practiced in greenhouses, uses hydroponics to maintain ideal growing conditions regardless of external weather. The method is also being explored in space research, where scientists aim to grow food in spacecraft and space stations to support long-term missions. Commercial farming has also benefited from hydroponics, as it enables high productivity and consistent quality, making it an attractive option for modern agriculture.

One of the most remarkable advantages of hydroponics is its ability to save space.



Unlike traditional farming, which requires large tracts of land, hydroponics can produce significant yields in compact areas. This is achieved through vertical farming, where plants are grown in stacked layers, maximizing the use of available space. Since plant roots do not need to spread widely in search of nutrients, they can be placed closer together, increasing plant density. This makes hydroponics ideal for urban homes, apartments, and areas with limited land availability. A small indoor setup can often produce as much food as a much larger traditional farm, demonstrating the efficiency of this method.

The benefits of hydroponics extend beyond space efficiency. Plants grown through this method tend to grow faster, often achieving maturity 30 to 50 percent quicker than those grown in soil. This is because nutrients are delivered directly to the roots, eliminating the need for plants to expend energy searching for them. The result is higher yields in shorter periods, which is particularly valuable for commercial farming. Water efficiency is another significant advantage, as hydroponic systems use up to 80 to 90 percent less

water than traditional agriculture. This is achieved through recycling and controlled usage, making it an ideal solution for regions facing water scarcity. The absence of soil also reduces the risk of soil-borne diseases and pests, leading to healthier crops and reducing the need for chemical pesticides. Additionally, hydroponics allows for year-round farming, as it is not dependent on seasonal changes. The produce is generally cleaner, with less dirt and fewer contaminants, making it more appealing to consumers.

Despite its numerous advantages, hydroponics is not without challenges. One of the primary drawbacks is the high initial cost associated with setting up the system. Equipment such as pumps, grow lights, containers, and monitoring devices can be expensive, making it less accessible for small-scale farmers. The method also requires a certain level of technical knowledge, as factors like pH levels, nutrient balance, and water quality must be carefully monitored and maintained. Unlike traditional farming, where soil acts as a buffer, any imbalance in a hydroponic system can quickly affect plant health. The

dependence on electricity is another concern, as pumps and lighting systems require a continuous power supply. In the event of a power failure, plants can suffer damage within a short period. Additionally, hydroponics is not suitable for all types of crops, particularly large-scale grains like wheat and corn, which are more effectively grown in soil. The system also demands regular maintenance and attention, which can be time-consuming.

Even with these limitations, hydroponics is widely regarded as a revolutionary concept for the future of agriculture. As the global population continues to rise, the demand for food is increasing at an unprecedented rate. Traditional farming alone may not be sufficient to meet this demand, especially in the face of environmental challenges. Hydroponics offers a sustainable and efficient alternative that reduces dependence on fertile land and minimizes water usage. It aligns with the principles of eco-friendly farming by reducing waste and optimizing resource use. In regions where water scarcity is a critical issue, hydroponics provides a viable solution by using significantly less water while maintaining high productivity. Its ability to function in urban and extreme environments further enhances its relevance in the modern world.

However, it is important to understand that hydroponics is not intended to completely replace traditional agriculture. Instead, it serves as a complementary system that can work alongside conventional methods to enhance overall food production. It is particularly effective for growing high-value crops such as vegetables, herbs, and leafy greens, which are in constant demand and can be cultivated efficiently using hydroponics. By integrating this method into existing agricultural practices, farmers can achieve better yields and diversify their production systems.

The author is a Faculty in Science Department Sri Amritsar Sahib Pubjab

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JOIN FACEBOOK LIVE  
WITH Dr.SUMIT , Mr.TURAB, Former Sr. Audiologist at Max Hospital Saket ,Delhi  
@ Kifayatkifi  
8:00PM On January 18<sup>th</sup>, Sunday

# Payment Withheld for Bribe: Two PWD Govt Officials Held in Baramulla

DR. AB QAYOOM

**BARAMULLA, APR 07:** In a major crackdown on corruption, the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), Jammu & Kashmir, on Tuesday arrested two officials of the PWD (R&B) Mechanical Division, North Kashmir, Baramulla, for demanding and accepting a bribe for releasing pending payment.

According to an official statement, the ACB received a telephonic complaint on April 6 through its helpline from a manager of a private firm registered on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal. The complainant stated that his firm had successfully secured a tender for the supply of a customized vehicle for live fish transportation to the Department of Fisheries, Bandipora. Despite completing all formalities,



including submission of bills through the GeM portal and hard copies to the concerned department, the payment was allegedly withheld deliberately. The complainant further alleged that Mushtaq Ahmad (Senior Assistant) and Farooq Ahmad (Junior Assistant) demanded a bribe of Rs.13,000 for processing and releasing the payment.

Acting swiftly, the ACB conducted a discreet verification which prima facie established the allegations. Subsequently, a case FIR No.

01/2026 under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (as amended in 2018), read with Section 61 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, was registered at Police Station ACB Baramulla. During the investigation, a trap team of ACB successfully apprehended both the accused

officials while demanding and accepting the bribe amount from the complainant. The accused were taken into custody on the spot after completing all necessary legal formalities. Officials also told, that further investigation into the case is underway. The ACB reiterated that corruption in public offices will not be tolerated and urged citizens to report any such incidents. People can contact the ACB through its toll-free helpline 1800-180-7152, WhatsApp number 9419678060, Satark Nagrik Mobile App, or email director.vigilance@jk.gov.in.

## Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my Father in Law name MALLA SAMAD S/O MALLA ISMAIL R/O WATERGAM Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040001000 wants to be registered on my name ABDUL RASHID GANAIE S/L GH RASOOL MALLA R/O WATERGAM .If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained  
**Name.ABDUL RASHID GANAIE , S/L ...GH RASOOL MALLA, R/O ...WATERGAM , BLOCK.... WAGOORA**

## Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application ARZIMNA MUSHTAQ D/O MUSHTAQ AHMAD GANAIE R/O SHEIKHPORA Tehsil KREERI for the issuance of OBC ( Other Backward classes in his/her favor

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of OBC in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of SHEIKHPORA of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the GANAIE community having annual income 211960 // the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1...MUSHTAQ AH GANAIE Father 47 years Dilywager
- 2.SHAREEFA BEGUM mother 45 years H/W
- 3...DANISH MUSHTAQ Brother 27 years student
- 4...NISHA MUSHTAQ sister 24 years student
- 5...SUFIAIEA MUSHTAQ sister 21, years student
- 6...ARZIMNA MUSHTAQ self 19 years student

If anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of said certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

**Naib Tehsild Kreeri**

## Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application MUSKAAN SHAFI D/O MOHD SHAFI WAR R/O SHEIKHPORA Tehsil KREERI for the issuance of OBC ( Other Backward classes in his/her favor

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of OBC in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of SHEIKHPORA of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the WAR community having annual income 660000 // ( Six Lack Sixty Thousand ) the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1...MOHD SHAFI WAR father 56 years Labour
- 2..SHAKEELA BEGUM Mother 52 years H/W
- 3... WASEEM SHAFI Brother 27 years student
- 4....AISEMA SHAFI sister 29 years student
- 5...SONOBER SHAFI sister 29 years student
- 6...MUSKAAN SHAFI 19 years student

If anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of said certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

**Naib Tehsild Kreeri**

## Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my Father's name MOHAMMAD SUBHAN DAR R/O KEEL MOHALLA WAGOORA Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 021204000636 wants to be registered on my name ABDUL KAREEM DAR S/O MOHAMMAD SUBHAN DAR R/O KEEL MOHALLA WAGOORA .If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained  
**Name.ABDUL KAREEM. DAR , S/O...MOHAMMAD SUBHAN DAR , R/O ....KEEL MOHALLA WAGOORA BLOCK.... WAGOORA**

## Public Notice

I, SHOWKAT AHMAD SHEIKH, S/o GH MOHAMMAD SHEIKH, R/o Kalantra Payeen, hereby inform that I have lost my Class 9th School Certificates. I intend to apply for a duplicate certificate from Govt. Higher Secondary School Kachwa Muqam.

If anyone has any objections, please submit them to the Office of The Principal, Govt. Higher Secondary School Kachwa Muqam, within 7 days from the date of this publication. Objections received after this period will not be considered.

**Showkat Ahmad Sheikh, S/O Gh Mohammad Sheikh R/O Kalantra Payeen**

## Public Notice

It is to inform the general public that I, Amrit Pal Soni W/O-Vicky Soni R/O- 24/A Mandir Road Hari Vihar, Kakrola South West Delhi -110078 wants to transfer my vehicle bearing registration number DL8CY 6109 to Abual Mohd S/O- Mohd Taqi R/O- Namsuru Kargil. Anybody having any objection may contact ARTO Kargil within the seven days of this notice.

## J&K Swimming Association Elections in April 2026

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, AR 07:** It is hereby informed to the general public and all concerned that the General Body Election of the Jammu & Kashmir Swimming Association (Regd.) are scheduled to be held in the month of April 2026 under the proper monitoring and supervision of the J&K Sports Council and the Swimming Federation of India. In this regard, an Electoral College comprising 66 members was earlier framed and published in leading newspapers including State Times, The Excel Express, Headlines Today's, Jammu Express, Jandrah Images, and others from 25th March 2026 to 27th March

2026, inviting objections, if any, from stakeholders within the stipulated time period.

In continuation of the earlier notification dated 24-03-2026 vide reference No. JKSA/116, it is hereby clarified that the Electoral College actually comprises 68 members. However, in the previous press release, only 66 members were published due to an inadvertent omission. The remaining member, which was mistakenly left out earlier, is now being included through this press release. Accordingly, the Jammu & Kashmir Swimming Association (Regd.) hereby includes the name of Mr. Himayoun Wani S/o Mr. G.M. Wani, R/o Rose Avenue, opposite PHQ Peer Bagh, Srinagar /Hyderpora, Jammu & Kashmir, Mobile No. 9419063256, a businessman by profession, as Serial No. 67 in the Voter List in the Electoral College and Naveen Kumar Soodan S/o Late Sh. Balinder Kumar Soodan R/o 1/6 Shant Nagar Old Janipur Jammu-180007(M)9419240860,8717041854 as Serial No. 68 in the Voter List. The revised voter list now stands updated with a total of 68 members.

Any person having objection(s), if any, regarding the inclusion of the above-mentioned member in the voter list. May submit the same in writing within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. Any objections received after the stipulated period shall not be entertained under any circumstances. All objections may be addressed to: Mrs. Anshuja Tak, Advocate, Returning Officer / Election Incharge, Jammu & Kashmir Swimming Association (Regd.), Office: Above J&K Bank ATM, Near D.C. Office, Wazarat Road, Jammu - 180001.

## KU to host 45th IACR annual meet, international conference on cancer research

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR APR 07:** The Department of Biochemistry, University of Kashmir (KU), is set to host the 45th Annual Meeting of the Indian Association for Cancer Research (IACR) along with an international conference on "Advancements in Cancer Research: Discoveries, Therapeutics and Challenges" from April 10 to 13 at the varsity's Convocation Complex at the Main Campus.

The four-day event will be graced by leading scientists, clinicians, and researchers from across India and abroad, including participants from institutions such as AIIMS, IISc Bengaluru, IITs, and globally reputed universities like Mayo Clinic, Emory University, and Harvard University. The conference is designed to engage with the full spectrum of cancer research, from understanding disease mechanisms to exploring therapeutic interventions and addressing emerging challenges in clinical and real-world contexts.

Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, said, "Hosting this important scientific gathering shows the University's commitment to engaging with pressing health concerns through research and academic exchange. It is an opportunity to connect local research efforts with global scientific developments in cancer studies."

## RASME CHAHRUM



With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of Mrs. Mohammad Amin Khan, R/o Yachpora, Dangarpura Nawa Kadal, who left for his heavenly abode on 6th April 2026 after a brief illness.

The Rasm-e-Chahrum of the departed soul will be observed on 9th April 2026 (Thursday) at 10:00 AM at the graveyard near Islamia College, Srinagar.

We pray that Almighty Allah grants the departed soul eternal peace and the highest place in Jannat-ul-Firdous and bestows patience and strength upon the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss.

**Bereaved Family**

**Contact No 9419004800, 9596815229**

## Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that the name of my son has been incorrectly recorded in the Aadhaar database.

Name shown in Aadhaar: Mohd Aaban Sheikh Correct and legal name: Mohammad Aaban Father's Name: Fida Hussain Sheikh Address: Kachri Langate, Jammu and Kashmir - 193302.I, Fida Hussain Sheikh, hereby declare that the name ( Mohd Aaban Sheikh ) mentioned in the Aadhaar card of my son is incorrect. His correct and legal name is Mohammad Aaban.

Any person having any objection to this correction may submit their objection to the concerned UIDAI Aadhaar Seva Kendra, Srinagar, within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice.

If no objection is received within the stipulated period, necessary steps for correction of the name in Aadhaar records will be undertaken.

**Date: 07/04/2026**

**Fida Hussain Sheikh)  
Father of Mohammad Aaban  
Phone : 7006378783**

## Public Notice

This is to notify the general public that the name recorded in the Aadhaar database is incorrect. Name shown in Aadhaar: Sabreena Jan, Correct name: Sabreena Jan, Fathers name, Farooq Ahmad Lone Address: Audoora Qalamabad Langate Jammu and Kashmir 193302. The above mentioned person (Sabreena Jan) hereby declares that the name printed on the Aadhaar is incorrect and that her correct and legal name is Sabreena Jan .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, Ishfaq Ahmad Ganie, S/o Mushtaq Ahmad Ganie, R/o Udiopora, Langate, Kupwara, Jammu and Kashmir, 193302, hereby declare that I am the Father of Qulsuma Jan. This is to inform the general public and concerned authorities that I am applying for the issuance/ registration of the Date of Birth certificate of my Daughter, Qulsuma Jan, at the Block Office Kralgund. Her actual and school Date of Birth is 02/03/2017 and as per our knowledge and records, She was born at home at Udiopora, Langate. If any person has any objection regarding the above mentioned particulars, he/she may submit the same before the concerned Block Office Kralgund within the stipulated period. Otherwise, no objection shall be entertained.

**Name, Ishfaq Ahmad Ganie  
S/o, Mushtaq Ahmad Ganie  
R/o, Udiopora Langate  
Phone : 8825039345**

## Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application NARGIS FAROOQ D/O FAROOQ AHMAD GANAIE R/O SHEIKHPORA Tehsil KREERI for the issuance of OBC ( Other Backward classes in his/her favor

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of OBC in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of SHEIKHPORA of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the GANAIE community having annual income 340,000// (Three Lack Forty Thousand ) the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1...FAROOQ AH GANAIE Father 45 years Labour
- 2.SARA BEGUM mother 43 years H/W
- 3...FIZA FAROOQ sister 20 years student
- 4...NARGIS FAROOQ self 19 years student
- 5...MURTAZA FAROOQ brother 16 years student

If anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of said certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

**Naib Tehsild Kreeri**

## UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR, OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION SOPORE

**DETAILED TENDER NOTICE No. 01 of 2026-27 | Dated: 06-04-2026**

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of J&K UT, Tenders are invited on %age basis (QCBS) from registered, approved and eligible Bidders as per Instruction to Bidder (ITB) and Terms of Reference at Annexure-I. The Bidders (Firm/ Consultant/ Agency/ Company) shall have the eligibility as per Annexure- II under Eligibility Criteria: -

S.No	+Name of Work	T.D Cost	E/M	Time
1.	Empanelment of Engineering Consultants for Providing Consultancy Services (Architectural, Structural Etc) for variou6 Building/ Bridges/Road works of R&B Division Sopore.,	1000/-	10,000/	FY 2026-27

**Date and time of opening: 28-04-2026**

**Class of Contractor: Consultancy**

**MH of Account: All Heads (Contingencies)**

**Position of Fund As and when project gets approved by the competent authority**

1. The bidding documents, which would include qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications/drawings, a bill of quantities (B.O.Q), a set of contract terms and conditions, and other details, can be viewed/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in on the dates listed below: -

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	06 .04.2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	06 .04.2026 4.00 PM to 27 .04.2026 (4.00 PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	07 .04.2026 ( 4.00 PM)
4	Bid Submission End Date	27.04.2026 ( 4.00PM)
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	28.04.2026 (12.00 PM) In the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore.

2. Bids must be accompanied by a Treasury Challan (dated between the bid start date and the Bid Submission End date) deposited in M.H. 0059 mentioning their in Name of work/ NIT No.& date. in the name of Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore (tender inviting authority) as the cost of the tender document.

3. At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to the tender receiving authority. Besides that, the successful bidder will have to provide Performance Security @ 5% at the time of contract award, strictly in accordance with the Government's circular instructions from time to time. The earnest money/bid security of 2% will be released to the successful bidder only after the submission of a Performance Security of 5% of the quoted cost, within the stipulated time which will be released after successful completion of the DLP/Maintenance Period.

4. The tenderers are directed to submit their tender online in case the last date of opening of tenders happens to be a holiday/hartal the same shall be opened on the next working day.

**Qualification of the Bidder**

In order to qualify all bidders shall upload following documents as defined below:-

I. Registration Card duly renewed for the current financial year 2026-27. PAN Card, GST Certificate and latest GST clearance ending previous Month.

II. In light of Govt. Notification issued by Finance Department Civil Secretariat Vide No.A/24(2017)-651Dt. 07-06-2018, the bidder must upload the copy of Challan / receipt in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore on account of cost of tender documents remitted in the treasury concerned for that the bidders must write an application to be addressed to treasury officer concerned requesting therein for remittance of amount as cost of tender documents towards M. H. 0059.

Unbalanced Bid:- In case bid of the successful bidder is unbalanced, the Successful bidder will have to provide additional performance security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Tender received authority (tender receiving authority) vide Principal Secretary to Government Finance department's circular issued under endorsement No: DF-Code/ 441/ 2021-02-158 dated" 8.8.2025.

The consultant shall prepare the detailed quantity estimates, analysis of rates, bill of quantities, technical specifications design drawings in hard and soft copies and procurement documents for the works. The design drawings submitted shall be vetted from DIQC/ NIT/IT.

**No: 137-46 | Dated: 06-04-2026**

**DIPK: 199/26 | Dated: 07-04-2026**

**Sd/- Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Sopore**

# Rana inaugurates, lays foundation for multiple development projects in Mendhar

HT NEWS NETWORK

**MENDHAR, APRIL 07:** In a significant push to strengthen the public infrastructure in border areas, Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for multiple development projects in the Mendhar constituency.

These initiatives aim to enhance the essential services, improve connectivity and promote socio-economic development in the area. The Minister inaugurated a newly constructed Food Store Building at Mendhar, developed under the FCS and CA sector. Built with an expenditure of Rs. 151.80 lakh, the facility is expected to significantly strengthen the public distribution system by improving the storage capacity and ensuring better availability of essential commodities for the local population.

In a significant move to promote education and empowerment among young women, the Minister inaugurated a 100-bedded Girls Hostel (G+1) at Mendhar. Constructed under the SAMAGRA (PAB) 2022-23 programme at a cost of Rs. 259 lakh, the hostel



aims to provide safe and improved residential facilities for girl students.

Furthering infrastructure development, the Minister laid foundation stone for a 300-metre RCC motorable bridge and culvert on the Jugal-Salwah road, constructed at an estimated cost

of Rs. 120 lakh. This project is poised to enhance the accessibility, facilitate smoother transportation and stimulate economic growth in the surrounding areas.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that these projects reflect the government's commitment towards improving

the essential infrastructure and ensuring better facilities for the people, particularly in far-flung and border areas. "Our government is committed to bridge the divide between rural and urban areas so as to achieve balanced and equitable development across the region," he said.

The Minister said that sustained efforts are being made to bridge the developmental gaps and improve infrastructure across all sectors in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in far found and underserved areas. He highlighted that investments in infrastructure, education and connectivity are crucial for accelerating growth and improving the overall quality of life.

During the visit, the Minister also inspected and reviewed the progress of several ongoing projects, including Synthetic Athletic Track at Bhatidhar, 50 MVA, 132/33 KV Grid Station at Kottan, Mendhar and Polyhouses with High-Density Plantation under HADP. He emphasized the importance of timely completion of these projects to ensure that their benefits reach the people without delay.

Among others the event was attended by Ashok Kumar Sharma, Deputy Commissioner Poonch; Manoj Gupta, Chief Engineer I&FC Jammu; Hanief Choudhary, Chief Engineer Jal Shakti Jammu; Gul Sayed, Director Horticulture Jammu; Arshad Hussain Reshi, Chief Engineer (Distribution) JPDC and Ravi Kant, Chief Engineer (Projects) JPDC besides other district and departmental officials.

## Higher Education department carries massive plantation drive across J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 07:** The Higher Education department carried out a massive plantation drive across Jammu and Kashmir in line with the Green Jammu and Kashmir Mission formally launched by Minister for Education Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo from Jammu.

In alignment with this vision, Directorate of Colleges rolled out a comprehensive action plan for implementation of the plantation drive across colleges in Jammu and Kashmir. Under this plan around 10,000



saplings were planned to be planted in around 145 colleges across Jammu and Kashmir with active institutional participation, identification of suitable plantation sites, monitoring mechanisms, and sustained maintenance of saplings to ensure long-term ecological benefits.

At Srinagar, Commissioner Secretary Higher Education department, Ram Niwas Sharma kick started the plantation drive from Amar Singh college here by planting saplings.

As part of the drive, Special Secretary, Higher Education, Shafiq Iqbal and Director Colleges, Dr. Sheikh Aijaz Bashir planted the saplings at Government Degree College Bemina and Government Degree College Women, M.A Road Srinagar.

The approach adopted by the Higher Education department positioned colleges as core drivers of this initiative, linking environmental action with student engagement, thereby contributing to long-term ecological outcomes.

The initiative witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, faculty, and institutional leadership, reinforcing a collective commitment towards environmental protection and sustainable development.

## Kandhari Beverages donates ambulance to J&K High Court

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 7:** A formal ceremony was held today at the High Court of J&K and Ladakh at Jammu to mark the generous donation of a fully equipped ambulance by Kandhari Beverages Private Limited for the benefit of Judges, advocates litigants and staff visiting the Court premises.

The ambulance was formerly handed over by



Major Deepak Choudhary, Advisor of Kandhari Beverages Private Limited to Chief Justice Arun Palli in presence of Justice Sindhu Sharma, Justice Rajnesh Oswal, Justice Rahul Bharti, Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi, Justice Rajesh Sekhri, Justice Mohammad Yousuf Wani and Justice Shahzad Azeem.

M.K. Sharma, Registrar General, Senior Advocates, Members of the Bar, Officers and officials of the Registry of the High Court besides medical staff deployed in the High Court were also present on the occasion.

The Chief Justice expressed deep appreciation for the philanthropic gesture noting that the facility would significantly strengthen the emergency medical response within the High Court premises besides enhancing the overall welfare infrastructure.

The High Court administration expressed gratitude to the donor for this meaningful contribution which will serve as a vital resource in safeguarding health at responding to the emergencies within the Court premises.

## Rs 24.10 Lac disbursed among road accident victims in Samba

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SAMBA, APRIL 07:** The District Administration Samba has released Rs 24.10 Lakh in favour of the victims/legal heirs of the deceased under the provisions of the Road Accident Victim Fund Rules, 2022.

As per RTO, Deputy Commissioner

Samba sanctioned and disbursed the compensation through Direct Bank Transfer (DBT mode) among 22 heirs of deceased persons ( 1 Lakh each); 4 grievously injured persons ( 50,000 each) and 10,000 to one person with minor injuries.

"Till date a total amount of Rs 64.60 Lakh has been disbursed to the Victims

of the Road accident in the district. The disbursement has been made in accordance with the guidelines laid down under the Road Accident Victim Fund Rules, 2022, with the objective of providing immediate financial relief to the victims and their families," informed the Assistant Regional Transport Officer.

## JKAACL pays rich tributes to eminent Punjabi & Urdu Writer S. Saran Singh

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 07:** The Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) today held a meeting at K.L. Saigal hall to pay rich tributes to noted Punjabi and Urdu writer S. Saran Singh (Retd Chief Conservator of Forests and former Member, Public Service Commission), who passed away in Delhi at the age of 89 years.

Born in Baatpora-Baramulla, S. Saran Singh was a distinguished literary figure who made remarkable contributions to both Punjabi and Urdu literature. His writings were marked by deep human sensitivity, social consciousness and a rich cultural ethos.

In Punjabi literature, he authored three acclaimed short story collections — Bhulekhe Te Hor Kahaniyan, Nangi Dhoop De Vairi and Panj Peer. He also penned a novel titled Nangi Dhoop Kaji Kaji. His poetic works include Parchhavian Da Jangal and Paper Di Janjh. In addition, he contributed significantly to Urdu literature by translating Nangi Dhoop into Urdu, thereby fostering linguistic harmony and cultural integration.

To mourn his demise, JKAACL organized a condolence meeting where eminent literary personalities and officials gathered to pay heartfelt tributes and recall the rich literary legacy of the departed soul.

Among those who paid tributes were Secretary Harvinder Kour; Popinder Singh



Paras; Ajit Singh Mastana; Dr. Monojit; Khalid Hussain; Dr. Satwant Singh; Prof. Gurcharan Singh Raina; M.S. Kamra; Suraj Singh; Balvinder Singh; Prof. Raj Kumar and several others.

The speakers described Saran Singh's demise as an irreparable loss to the literary fraternity and highlighted his immense contribution towards enriching Punjabi and Urdu languages.

They also shared personal reminiscences, acknowledging his dedication and passion for literature.

The meeting concluded with a two-minute silence observed in honour of the departed soul, pray for his eternal peace and express solidarity with the bereaved family

## DC Kathua reviews preparedness for National Deworming Day

HT NEWS NETWORK

**KATHUA, APRIL 07:** A one-day awareness meeting on National Deworming Day (NDD) was held today in the DC Office Complex, here. The meeting was presided over by Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma.

At the outset, Chief Medical Officer Dr Vijay Raina presented a detailed overview of the programme, highlighting the disease burden, causes, preventive measures and treatment protocols related to Soil-transmitted helminthiasis (STH). He informed that the campaign targets the 1-19 years age group and aims at improving nutritional status by reducing worm infestation, a major cause of anaemia and impaired growth among children.

During the meeting, it was informed that NDD shall be observed on April 13, 2026, followed by a Mop-Up Day on April 18, 2026. The programme involves administration of Albendazole tablets to all eligible children through schools and Anganwadi centres.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for robust inter-sectoral coordination among Health, Education, ICDS and allied departments to ensure the safety and well-being of target beneficiaries. He called for intensified IEC activities to enhance awareness among parents, teachers and children.

The DC directed all stakeholders to work in a coordinated manner to achieve the set targets and ensure 100 percent

coverage, while maintaining strict monitoring and safety protocols. He reiterated that awareness regarding proper nutrition, hygiene and prescribed dietary practices should be widely disseminated to prevent recurrence of infections.

Earlier, the Nodal Officer NDD Dr Rupali presented the implementation schedule and preparedness plan, including adverse event management mechanisms. She emphasized that all necessary arrangements have been put in place to achieve near-universal coverage, with a target of 189689 children to be covered during this round.

The meeting also highlighted the importance of community-level engagement through morning assemblies, Parent-Teacher Meetings and the active involvement of Anganwadi Workers and ASHAs to educate children about hygiene practices and the importance of deworming. Special focus was laid on children registered under POSHAN and those studying in government and private schools.

Pertinently, deworming under NDD is part of the larger vision of Krimi Mukht Bharat, aimed at eliminating intestinal worm infections among children and adolescents.

The meeting was attended by GM DIC Mushtaq Chaudhary, ASP Sunil Kumar Kesar, CEO Kewal Krishan, District Immunisation Officer, Dr Vaasna, BMOs, officers from Health, Education and ICDS departments, besides other concerned officials.

## Historic Musical Play "Mata Sukrala Ki Kahani" to be staged at Abhinav Theatre on April 09

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 07:** In a landmark cultural initiative, Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture & Languages (JKAACL), in coordination with Bhartiya Lok Sangeet Kala Sansthan (BLSKS), is set to present a grand musical play titled "Mata Sukrala Ki Kahani"—a first-of-its-kind production in the history of Jammu & Kashmir on April 09, 2026 at 4:30 PM here at Abhinav Theatre.

The musical opera "Mata Sukrala Ki Kahani" is a unique dance-drama production designed to promote Duggar culture, national integration and communal harmony. The play incorporates diverse folk traditions such as Ras, Jaggar, Gagail, Chhinj Hira Harn,

Jattar and Bhagatia—presenting a vivid tapestry of Jammu's cultural legacy.

The production aims to revive traditional folk theatre while channelizing the creative energies of youth towards nation-building. It highlights the ideals, emotions and collective spirit embedded in traditional art forms, making it a complete and meaningful artistic experience.

The musical play, based on the folk deity of Duggar Pradesh, narrates the untold story of 'Mata Mal' through the rich medium of traditional folk theatre, reflecting the spiritual and cultural ethos of the region.

All art lovers, cultural enthusiasts and the general public are cordially invited to grace the occasion.

## DC Udhampur reviews formulation of District capex budget 2026-27

Assesses progress of key developmental schemes

HT NEWS NETWORK

**UDHAMPUR, APRIL 7:** Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Minga Sherpa today convened a meeting of officers from the line departments to review formulation of the District Capex Budget 2026-27 and assess progress of ongoing developmental works being executed under SASCI, Tribal Welfare, DA-JGUA, UT Capex and other schemes.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer Uttam Singh, Assistant Commissioner Development, Om Parkash and other district officers.



The Deputy Commissioner took a detailed block-wise review of the physical and financial status of works under the Annual Development Plan ADP, covering ongoing projects and the status of plan submissions.

The DC directed the departments to finalize plans after due consultation with elected representatives. He further instructed to include need based and feasible works.

Emphasizing accountability and quality in developmental works, the DC called for strict adherence to timelines and quality standards.

# India's agriculture sector records annual growth of 4.4pc, driven by robust production

■ SOURAV SHEKHAR

**NEW DELHI, APR 7:** India's agriculture sector witnessed robust growth in the past years, contributing to economic resilience and safeguarding national food security.

According to government data, over the past five years, this sector has achieved an annual growth rate of around 4.4 per cent, which indicates its strength. It's a sector of prime economic significance with a supporting capacity of about 55 pc of the Indian population.

In FY 2024-25, India achieved the foodgrain output of 357.73 million metric tonnes (MMT), which is just about 25.43 million metric tonnes in the corresponding period last year. This increase of 7.7 pc is attributed to the high production of rice, wheat, maize, and coarse meals.

Agricultural expansion isn't limited only to high production numbers; it's also contributing to the country's earnings in the same manner.

Export earnings from agriculture, which were USD 34.5 billion in FY20, rose to USD 51.1 billion in FY 25, which is a CAGR of 8.2pc.

Coming to crop distributed growth, India has established its dominance in cereals, pulses, and millets. The country is the second-largest producer of rice and wheat, with its output reaching 150.18 million tonnes and 117.94 million tonnes in FY 2024-25, respectively.

If pulses and millets production is seen, both are leading Indian crops, contributing a high amount of economic value also. Pulses and millets witnessed exports of USD 855 million and USD 59.20 million in FY 2024-25, respectively.

Rice exports also contributed to USD 12.95 billion of exports in FY2024-25. The performance is attributed to government policies aiming for agricultural development.

In the same line, the recently presented Budget 2026-27 emphasised the promotion of high-value crops by announcing targeted support



for some crops in the north-eastern region.

According to government data, the budgetary allocation for the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has increased to USD 15.73 billion in FY 2026-27 from USD 2.64 billion in FY 2013-14.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her recent budget speech, "Our

third kartavya aligns with our vision of Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas towards a Viksit Bharat. This requires targeted efforts for increasing farmers' income through productivity enhancement and entrepreneurship with special attention to small and marginal farmers."

This targeted policy approach of the government towards small farmers helped

them to gain security coverage. Till February 2026, about 24.95 lakh farmers have enrolled in Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana (PMKMY), which provides a minimum fixed pension of Rs 3,000 per month to small and marginal farmers.

To foster connectivity in the agricultural system, the government has introduced tech-driven initiatives like

e-National Agriculture Market (e-NAM), which is a pan-India electronic trading portal designed to integrate existing Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) across the country.

Till February this year, 10,000 farmer-producer organisations had been registered on this portal.

By these measures, the government is also ensuring food security provided to the citizens while maintaining balance in Minimum Support Prices (MSP). As per government data, subsidised foodgrains have been provided to 81.35 crore beneficiaries, which cover 75pc of the rural population and 50pc of the urban population.

The One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) system is also transformational in ensuring food security and equitable access. It is now fully operational across all states and union territories, with 99.8pc Aadhaar seeding of ration cards, ensuring seamless access for beneficiaries nationwide.

Over 99pc of Fair Price

Shops are equipped with ePoS devices, enabling 98pc digital transactions and improving transparency.

In FY24, Rs 267.6 crore was transferred via DBT to more than 10 lakh beneficiaries, enhancing efficiency and accountability. Overall, these reforms have strengthened portability, reduced leakages, and improved food security through a more digitised and integrated distribution system.

The different facets of agricultural initiatives taken by the government are closely aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Schemes aimed at productivity enhancement, public procurement, and food security measures directly contribute to the fulfillment of SDG 2 (Zero Hunger).

Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2), also known as 'Zero Hunger,' refers to a UN initiative aiming to end global hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030. (UNI)

## India's services sector growth slows to 14-month low in March

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, APR 7:** India's services sector growth slowed to a 14-month low in March even as cost pressures rose sharply, according to HSBC and S&P Global PMI data. Firms have reported the fastest increase in input prices in nearly four years.

The HSBC India Services PMI Business Activity Index fell to 57.5 in March from 58.1 in February, marking the weakest expansion in 14 months, though it remained above the long-run average of 54.4.

The HSBC India Composite PMI Output Index declined to 57.0 in March from 58.9 in February, signalling the slowest expansion in private sector output since November 2022.

The data suggested that the slowdown in overall activity was primarily driven by softer domestic conditions, even as foreign sales continued to support growth.

Input cost inflation climbed to a 45-month high, driven by rising expenses for fuel, transport, food items and labour, it said.

Further, the survey noted that employment in the services sector rose for the third consecutive month, with job creation reaching its strongest pace since mid-2025. Business confidence also improved. Firms reported their highest optimism in nearly 12 years, supported by expectations of stronger demand and improved market conditions.

The survey noted that the firms have passed on part of these higher costs to customers, with selling price inflation rising to a seven-month high. UNI

## Markets open on negative note after Trump's fresh warnings to Iran on Sunday

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, APR 7:** Indian stock markets opened on a negative note on Monday with both Sensex and Nifty falling in the initial morning session.

This fall is attributed to US President Donald Trump warnings to Iran, which he posted on Truth-Social on Sunday.

At 10.32 am, Sensex was sliding at 72,936.63 due to a fall of 382.91 points, and Nifty reached 22,604.85 after a fall of 108.25 points.

The stock market is facing turbulent times since the start of unrest in West Asia.

Donald Trump's warning to Iran on Sunday also led to the fall in the stock market.

On Sunday, Trump posted on TruthSocial, "Tuesday will be Power Plant Day and Bridge Day, all wrapped up in one, in Iran."

"There will be nothing like it!!! Open the fucking strait, you crazy bastards, or you'll be in Hell—JUST WATCH! Praise be to Allah. President DONALD J. TRUMP" the post added. (UNI)

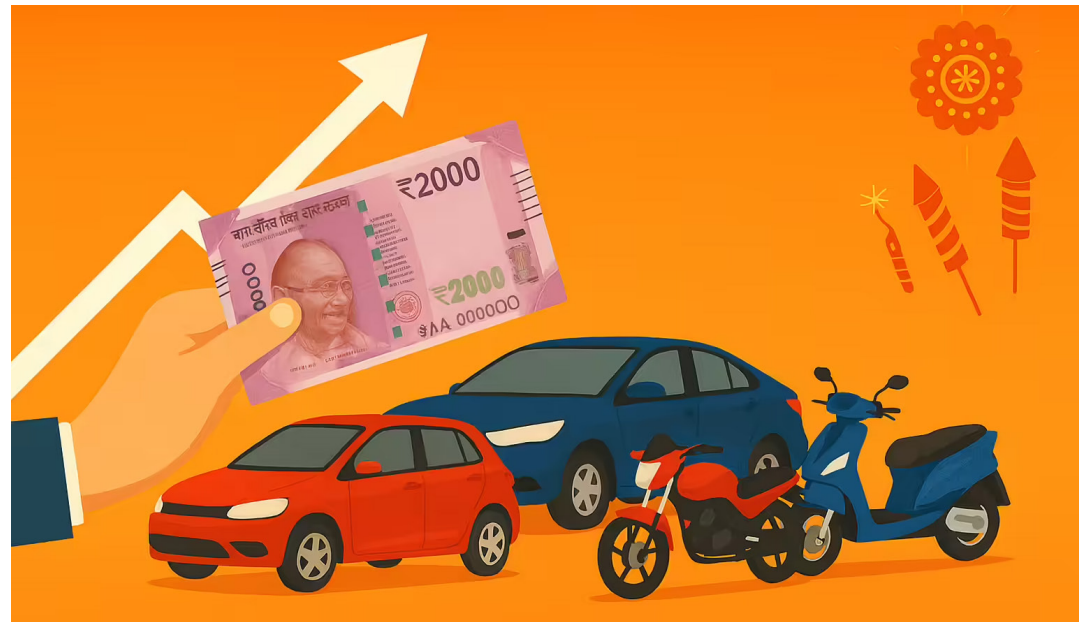
## Automobile retail sales record FY26 as best year driven by GST reforms

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, APR 7:** Automobile retail sales witnessed best-ever year in the financial year 2026 with five of six vehicle categories posting record annual sales. The overall auto sales have been pushed closer to 30 million mark up 13 pc against the previous financial year.

The stellar show was mainly owing to the GST 2.0 boost, said data shared by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (Fada).

Passenger vehicles crossed the 4.7-million mark for the first time moving up by 13 per cent, two-wheelers reclaimed their pre-Covid peak, retailing over 21.4 million units and growing 13.4 per cent, commercial vehicles recorded best ever figures and above the 1-million mark for the first time at 11.74 per cent growth, and three-wheelers set



their third consecutive annual record at 11.68 per cent growth, the data further said.

Fada said tractors became

the year's standout performer, crossing 1 million retail units for the first time in history at 18.95 per cent growth. Construc-

tion Equipment was the sole exception, declining 11.70 per cent as project-level delays and a high base weighed on volumes.

## Tata Play Fiber partners IBM to build AI-ready data infra

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**BENGALURU, APR 7:** Tata Play Fiber has announced a collaboration with IBM to develop a next-generation, AI-ready enterprise data lakehouse powered by IBM watsonx, aimed at unifying its data ecosystem and strengthening analytics capabilities.

The platform will consolidate 25 disparate data sources into a single, scalable environment, enabling advanced analytics, improved customer retention, and new cross-sell and upsell opportunities, the company said.

Tata Play Fiber noted that in a competitive broadband market, its earlier data systems were fragmented across customer records, marketing, finance, call center interactions, and service operations, leading to inconsistencies, lack of standardisation and limited real-time reporting capabilities.

The new architecture is expected to address these challenges by providing a unified and trusted data foundation.

Built on IBM watsonx, the data lakehouse will support scalable AI workloads while integrating structured and semi-structured data, thereby enabling enterprise-wide analytics and more informed decision-making.

Anand Sahai, CEO, Tata Play Fiber, said building a robust information system is central to the company's



digital transformation journey.

He added that the platform will help derive deeper insights into customers and operations, strengthen retention, unlock new revenue opportunities and deliver improved customer experiences.

Nebu Joy, Vice President, Information Technology, Tata Play Fiber, said unifying multiple data sources into a single architecture will provide real-time visibility across the organisation and empower teams, including call centre agents and field engineers, with contextual insights to enhance responsiveness.

Gaurav Agarwal, Vice President, Technology, IBM India & South Asia, said the collaboration demonstrates how a hybrid, AI-enabled data architecture can help enterprises modernise their data systems and

build a future-ready foundation for artificial intelligence.

The company said the transition will enable a shift from fragmented reporting and manual processes to data-driven decision-making at scale. The evolving architecture will also incorporate network and additional operational datasets to enhance regional demand forecasting and support deeper analytics across business operations in the future.

Tata Play Fiber, founded in 2015 as a subsidiary of Tata Play Limited, is building a pan-India fibre-to-the-home broadband network aimed at delivering high-speed and reliable connectivity. IBM is a global provider of hybrid cloud and AI solutions, offering enterprise technologies and consulting services across multiple industries. (UNI)

## Brent Tops \$110, Holds Near \$111

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**WASHINGTON/TEHRAN, APR 7:** Oil markets opened on an increasingly uncertain and tumultuous note as Brent crude surged past USD 110 a barrel, holding a near USD 111 late Sunday amid the conflicting signals emerging from both Washington and Tehran over the trajectory of the ongoing war, as neither has been clear about its side. The sharp spike comes amid the background of a market caught in the midst of consistently changing rhetoric, with US President Donald Trump on one end, threatening to intensify strikes including attacking Iran's power plants and bridges if the Strait of Hormuz remains blocked, while simultaneously claiming that Washington was engaged in "deep negotiations" with the authorities in Tehran. Iran's own stance likewise is heavily contradictory, as on one end it has declared that it will go on a prolonged war, if need be, while claiming that it is in negotiations with Washington. However, Tehran has publicly refuted the US terms for ending the war, calling them "one-sided" and "unfair", and vowed to continue.

Yet, despite conducting military strikes against GCC nations, it has repeatedly claimed that these actions were only against the US installations they house rather than them, and continues referring to them as friendly states, adding to the confusion.

That uncertainty is further adding to the great volatility flooding energy markets, which are already strained by increasing disruptions due to closure of one of the world's most critical crude supply routes, controlling 20 per cent of the total flow, or roughly one-fifth of the total supply. On the ground, mixed developments are adding to the stream of confusion, as Iranian officials have indicated that Iraqi, Russian, Indian, Chinese and Pakistani oil shipments may be allowed to pass, and at least one tanker has reportedly transited the strait.

# Omar Abdullah Opens Sher-i-Kashmir Cricket Tournament in Jammu



HT SPORTS DESK

**JAMMU:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today launched the trophy for the 2nd edition of the Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Tournament and unveiled the team jerseys at Maulana Azad Stadium here.

At the launch ceremony, Minister for Agriculture Javid Ahmed Dar, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, tournament organizer Tejinder Singh, along with other organizers, participating teams and concerned officials, were present.

The Chief Minister unveiled the trophy for the day-and-night 2nd Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Tournament and also released

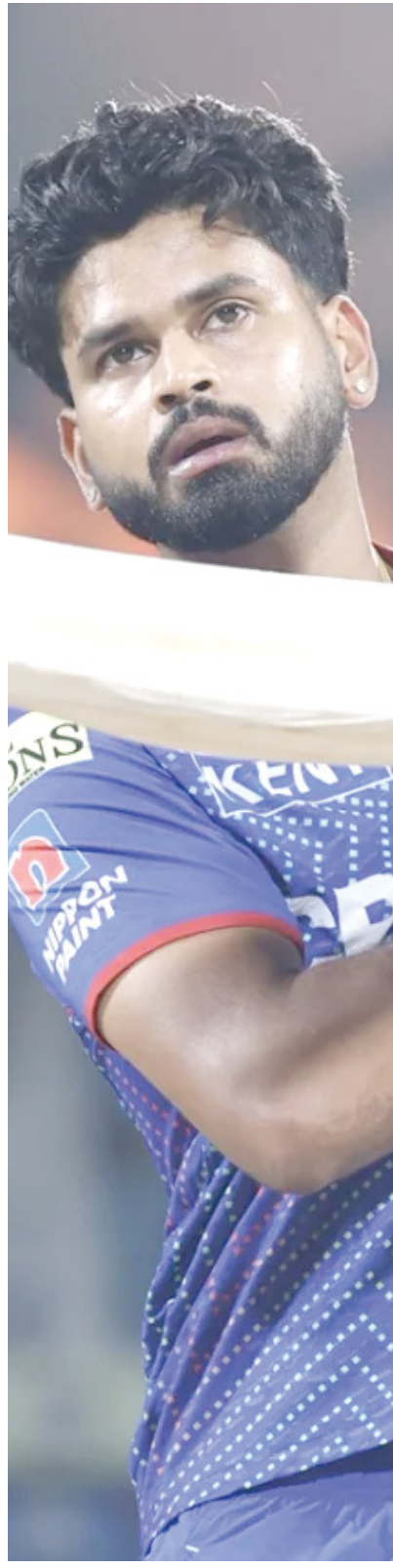
the official jerseys of the participating teams.

Interacting with the players on the occasion, the Chief Minister wished them the best of luck for the tournament.

The 2nd edition of the Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Tournament is being organized as part of a social awareness initiative aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle.

The tournament underscores the importance of staying away from substance abuse and encourages engagement in constructive activities like sports.

Community leaders, organizers and participants highlighted the role of cricket in fostering unity and inspiring youth to lead healthier and more disciplined lives.



# The Iyer touch: PBKS on the rise, KKR on the downward spiral

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**CHENNAI:** Gen Zs call it a "generational fumble" - the one you let slip and then spend nights wondering what might have been. Kolkata Knight Riders' (KKR) inability to find a way to hold on to captain Shreyas Iyer after their IPL 2024 victory will appear like one to those from the outside. Their loss has been Punjab Kings' (PBKS) gain, and the two teams face each other on Monday after extremely contrasting starts to IPL 2026.

After more than a decade of being the team most memed about off the field and among the least threatening on it, the Iyer touch has made PBKS formidable after a run to the final in 2025.

They have started this season from where they left off. Iyer used just five bowlers to restrict Gujarat Titans to 162 in New Chandigarh and then, after keeping Chennai Super Kings to 209 on a batting-friendly Chepauk surface, he smacked 50 to shepherd a successful chase. His shots in that innings were so smooth that it didn't seem like he was operating at a strike rate of 172.41.

KKR, on the other hand, have found some runs from their next captain Ajinkya Rahane, but something has been missing as they finished way outside the playoff positions in 2025 and have started 2026 with two defeats. Among things that can be measured, their Nos. 4 to 8 have had the highest dot-ball percentage, the third-lowest batting average and third-lowest batting strike rate since IPL 2025.

It is easy to value what is visible - runs, averages, strike rates, economies - but what is harder to identify and harder still to replace, is leadership. Iyer and KKR could not agree on the worth of their No. 4 and captain, and

PBKS found a rare opportunity to pick up a proven, young leader who could reunite with a coach he didn't need to build a relationship with from scratch.

The general consensus in cricket circles is that Iyer has been among the most inspirational captains of the 2020s. Tom Moody feels his calmness has a trickle-down effect on the rest of the team. Brad Haddin has highlighted his care for players. Ian Bishop has noted his willingness to make things happen rather than wait.

The stats back it up. At a win percentage of over 60%, Iyer's record is better than MS Dhoni's and Rohit Sharma's. And Iyer is the only one to have captained three different teams to the IPL final, in 2020 (Delhi Capitals), in 2024 (KKR) and in 2025 (PBKS).

And we haven't even spoken about his batting. Iyer was always one of the best players of spin, but he also ironed out his issues against the short ball, and the result of both was his 604 runs at a strike rate of 175 in IPL 2025. Since Iyer left, KKR have been trying to fill that No. 4 slot. Unsuccessfully.

For PBKS, the decision to pursue Iyer at the auction was straightforward. A franchise that had spent years going through a number of captains suddenly had an opportunity of finding a stable leader offering a long-term vision. All that value from Iyer simply outweighed the size of the cheque they eventually dish out.

While it would be reductive to attribute all of PBKS' recent success and KKR's dip in results to one individual, he has played a crucial part. And when he walks out on Monday in front of an Eden Gardens crowd that he once commanded, there might be many who wonder: what could have been?

# Rayudu: CSK 'just stuck to that bad plan' against RCB

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**BENGALURU:** Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) have now won both their matches in IPL 2026 more than comprehensively and "are setting great standards for themselves," in Ambati Rayudu's words. Chennai Super Kings (CSK), on the other hand, have lost all their three games so far. Two by a distance. One slightly less so. And, as Aaron Finch put it, "that's worrying signs".

On Sunday night in Bengaluru, CSK were in the game for three-fourths of the first innings. And then they were battered into submission by Tim David. Their bowling plans for the death overs were not in evidence. "[But] was the planning right? I don't think it was. Was the execution right? No, it absolutely wasn't. So when you're missing both of them, that's worrying signs." Where Finch blamed the planning, Rayudu went a step further. "More than a bad plan, they just stuck to that bad plan," he said. "There was nobody to intervene and to just take some time off, take those 20-30 seconds, just make it slightly more slow and then guide the bowler with a message. I think they should have slowed it down a little bit." The 16th over started with RCB on 153 for 3. The next few went for 19 (Khaleel Ahmed), 21 (Noor Ahmad), 14 (Anshul Kamboj), 30 (Jamie Overton) and 13 (Kamboj again). Kamboj held his own. Did brilliantly under the circumstances. The others didn't.

"[Overton bowled] everything was around the wicket. Around the wicket, six, six, six. At no point was there anyone go up to the bowler and say, 'okay, maybe this plan is not working, let's think of something else'," Finch said. "What it is, is your head starts spinning in a situation like that. 'I've been in that situation as a captain where you're thinking: what's happening? And before you know it, that over's gone and you've forgot to rejig your plans.' Rayudu put it down to "lack of experience" in the bowling line-up, though numbers suggest that isn't the case, not entirely.

"Their follow-up balls after a boundary or a six aren't great," Rayudu added. "Generally, as a bowler, you need to be aware that, okay, I have been hit for a six, but it's the next ball that matters. Whenever you see good death bowlers, they always follow up with a very good ball. But their powerplay bowling and middle-overs bowling was much better than what it was last game." On the subject of the around-the-wicket line of attack, analyst Gaurav Sundararaman pointed out that it was something the Super Kings franchise has focused on even in other leagues (MLC, SA20) for the past couple of seasons, but CSK hadn't done it because, as Rayudu said, "MSD didn't approve of that sort of an angle at the death".

# Hardik Pandya returns to training

The MI captain trained in Guwahati after sitting out their previous match due to sickness

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**MUMBAI:** Hardik Pandya, who missed Mumbai Indians' (MI) previous match, away against Delhi Capitals (DC), returned to the nets in Guwahati on Sunday night ahead of the game against Rajasthan Royals on Tuesday.

Suryakumar Yadav led MI in the game against DC and confirmed at the toss that Hardik was "unwell".

MI had been forced to make a couple of changes to cover for Hardik's absence, with Deepak Chahar and Corbin Bosch coming in, and Trent Boult making way for Bosch to keep the overseas players to four. Hardik looked in fine spirits in the training session, though, and could be in line for a return to the field.

After warming up, Hardik began with a bowl, having a go in



an empty net and spearing his yorkers in at good pace, telling Nitin Patel, the team's physiotherapist, that he had taken to practicing his yorkers at training since the T20 World Cup earlier this year: "If yorkers you can land means the other balls are much more easier". With batting coach Kieron Pollard keeping a close eye on him, Hardik then had a hit in the nets. The ball found

the middle of the bat more often than not, and the bat made a pleasing sound as the ball pinged off it, inviting encouraging nods from Pollard. Hardik bowled his three overs for 1 for 39 and then scored an unbeaten 11-ball 18 in MI's season-opener against Kolkata Knight Riders, which they won by six wickets before losing the second game to DC.

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