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## LG Sinha Cracks Down on Terror Links in Govt Ranks, Two More Employees Dismissed

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APR 08:** Invoking a zero-tolerance policy against terrorism, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday terminated two more government employees over alleged terror links, taking the total number of such dismissals to 90 in Jammu and Kashmir.

Official sources said the action was taken under Article 311(2)(c) of the Constitution, citing the employees' alleged association with Pakistan-backed militant outfits Lashkar-e-Taiba and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen.

According to sources, one of the dismissed employees, Farhat Ali Khanday, a Class-IV worker in the Education Department in Ramban, had been operating as a key facilitator for Hizb-ul-Mujahideen. Investigations revealed that he



allegedly used his government position as a cover to revive militant networks, channel hawala funds, and strengthen cadres, even after securing bail in earlier terror-related cases. **Turn on Page 2**

## Collective Action Key to Social Change: Omar Abdullah



HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 08:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday stressed that meaningful social transformation in Jammu & Kashmir can only be achieved through collective action, urging citizens—especially the youth—to actively participate in addressing pressing societal challenges.

Speaking at the launch of a three-day divisional-level awareness programme organised by the School Education Depart-

ment at the Convention Centre here, the Chief Minister drew a distinction between government responsibilities and those requiring public participation. While infrastructure development such as roads, bridges and hospitals lies with the government, he said, maintaining environmental safeguards and public assets is a shared civic duty.

Addressing a large gathering of students and stakeholders, he expressed concern **Turn on Page 2**

## CM Chairs Meet on Heritage & Tourism Strategy

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 08:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today chaired a meeting on Heritage Promotion and Cultural Tourism in Jammu & Kashmir to review measures for conservation and adaptive reuse of heritage assets aimed at boosting tourism in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Chief Minister stressed the need to strengthen institutional mechanisms and develop heritage-based tourism circuits to position J&K as a premier cultural tourism destination.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah underscored the importance of learning from national and international agencies that have successfully **Turn on Page 2**

## Mudra Yojana Transforms Credit Landscape, Fuels Grassroots Enterprise: Narendra Modi

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, APR 8:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana has redefined access to credit in India, empowering millions of people to pursue entrepreneurial ventures and



strengthening the country's economic foundation.

Marking 11 years of the scheme, the Prime Minister said it has removed long-standing barriers to finance and instilled confidence among citizens to dream big and realise their ambitions. In a post on X, he said the initiative has fostered a culture of enterprise by **Turn on Page 2**

## LG Chairs Cluster University Council Meet, Pushes Reforms and Youth Engagement

Calls for academic excellence, administrative modernization and stronger role in social awareness initiatives

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 08:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday chaired the second University Council meeting of Cluster University of Srinagar at Lok Bhavan in Jammu, where key academic and administrative reforms were discussed and approved.

The meeting was attended by Vice Chancellor Prof. Mohammad Mobin, Vice Chancellor of University of Jammu Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor of Cluster Univer-



sity of Jammu Prof. K.S. Chandrasekhar, along with senior officials and academic experts. The Council accorded in-principle approval to several

agenda items, including the establishment of the Abdul Ahad Azad Chair and adoption of a postgraduate curriculum framework under the Nation-

al Education Policy 2020 in line with UGC guidelines. Emphasizing academic excellence and student **Turn on Page 2**

## Intermittent snowfall, rain deepen chill across J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

**SRINAGAR, APR 08:** Fresh snowfall in upper reaches and rain in the plains on Wednesday brought back the chill, sending temperatures plummeting across Kashmir.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) fresh snowfall was recorded in the higher altitudes of Gurez, Tulail and Razdan Top in North Kashmir, as well as Sonamarg and Gulmarg, while rain lashed the plains, including Srinagar and parts of north and south Kashmir.

The region continued to record below-normal temperatures, with Srinagar registering a maximum of 11.8°C, nearly 7°C below normal, while the **Turn on Page 2**

## ALC Candidates Get Major Relief as Ladakh LG Approves Age Relaxation for SI Recruitment

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**LEH, APR 8:** In a significant relief to aspirants from border areas, Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has approved age relaxation for candidates from areas adjoining the Actual Line of Control (ALC) in the upcoming recruitment of 34 Sub-Inspector posts in the Ladakh Police.

As per the decision, ALC candidates will be granted an age relaxation of up to

seven years (5+2). This effectively raises the upper age limit from 28 to 35 years, allowing more aspirants from these remote and strategically sensitive regions to apply.

Under the existing Ladakh Police (Subordinate) Service Recruitment Rules, the prescribed age limit for direct recruitment to Sub-Inspector posts is 18-28 years. However, following multiple representations from aspirants, as well as social **Turn on Page 2**

## US-Iran Agree To Two-Week Ceasefire

HT NEWS NETWORK / AGENCIES

**TEHRAN, APR 8:** Iran, the United States and Israel reached a tentative, two-week ceasefire Wednesday in the war that tore across the Middle East and disrupted the global energy market, with US President Donald Trump pulling back from his threats to destroy Iranian "civilization."

But questions emerged over what appeared to be dueling proposals to halt the fighting and reopen the vital Strait of Hormuz, with Iran insisting it would control and charge ships passing through the strait and continue to **Turn on Page 2**

## India Welcomes West Asia Ceasefire, Calls for Lasting Peace

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 8:** India on Wednesday welcomed the two-week ceasefire agreement reached between the United States, Israel and Iran, expressing hope **Turn on Page 2**

## CS Begins AAY Beneficiary Identification for Free Power

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 08:** The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has initiated the process for identification of eligible beneficiaries under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) category across all districts for providing 200 units of free electricity, in line with its commitment to extend tar-



geted relief to economically weaker sections.

The progress of this initiative was reviewed in a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, focusing on accelerating reforms in the power sector with a balanced emphasis on social welfare, sustainability, and efficiency. **Turn on Page 2**

## J&K first to secure MeitY nod for establishing Centre of Excellence in AI

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 08:** In a significant stride towards strengthening the digital and innovation ecosystem of the Union Territory, Jammu & Kashmir has secured formal approval from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) for the establishment of a state-of-the-art Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Artificial Intelligence (AI) at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Jammu.

Terming the development as a landmark achievement, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo stated that with the visionary support of MeitY, Jammu & Kashmir is poised to **Turn on Page 2**



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

**LG Sinha.....**

The second employee, Mohammad Shafi Dar from Bandipora, who was working in the Rural Development Department, was identified as an active aide of Lashkar-e-Taiba. He allegedly provided logistical support, safe houses, and intelligence inputs to militants and was involved in a weapons recovery case during a joint security operation in April 2025.

Sources said the dismissals are part of an ongoing campaign to cleanse government institutions of individuals with terror links. "The administration is committed to rooting out elements embedded within the system who are working against the interests of the state," they said.

They added that the Lieutenant Governor has reiterated his resolve to dismantle the terror ecosystem completely, asserting that the drive will continue until all such networks are eliminated from the government machinery.

**Collective.....**

over the tendency to blame the government for issues like cleanliness, calling for a change in public behaviour. He asserted that a cleaner and progressive society can only be built through joint efforts.

Highlighting the potential of collective commitment, Omar Abdullah said that if citizens act on the pledges taken during the programme, Jammu & Kashmir can match global standards. He urged the younger generation to take the lead in building a responsible and forward-looking society.

Touching upon mental health, he noted that stigma continues to surround psychological issues and called for empathy and support for those affected. On drug abuse, he said the fight against the menace cannot be left to the government alone and requires active involvement from civil society, educational institutions and religious leaders.

The Chief Minister also emphasized the importance of career counselling, encouraging students to explore diverse opportunities. Advocating environmental responsibility, he suggested replacing ceremonial gestures with plantation drives, terming tree planting a lasting contribution.

On road safety, he urged citizens to follow traffic norms such as wearing helmets and seat belts, stressing that such measures are essential for personal and family safety rather than mere compliance with rules. He also advised students to limit excessive screen time and focus on holistic development.

During the event, Omar Abdullah administered a pledge covering mental health awareness, drug de-addiction, career guidance, traffic safety and environmental protection. He also distributed innovation kits, sanitation kits and outdoor educational equipment, and felicitated resource persons.

Minister for Health, Medical Education and School Education Sakeena Itoo said the enthusiastic participation of students reflects their commitment to societal development. She described the campaign as an important platform to address key issues including mental health, drug addiction and environmental sustainability.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani highlighted the need for early awareness and strict adherence to laws, while MLA Jammu West Arvind Gupta called for stronger civil society involvement in tackling drug abuse.

The programme was attended by senior officials, including Director School Education Jammu Naseem Javaid Choudhary, along with a large number of students, while participants from all ten districts of Jammu division joined virtually.

**CM Chairs.....**

undertaken conservation and adaptive reuse of heritage properties. He called for structured consultations with such stakeholders to draw upon technical expertise and professional inputs for transforming heritage sites into viable tourism assets.

Advocating a holistic and forward-looking approach, the Chief Minister emphasized the need to blend conservation with commercialization and community engagement. He said that Jammu & Kashmir's vast heritage wealth must be leveraged as a dynamic engine for tourism and economic growth, while ensuring preservation of its cultural legacy.

The meeting also discussed in detail the proposed constitution of the J&K Heritage Conservation and Preservation Authority, with emphasis on strengthening its institutional capacity and ensuring effective implementation of conservation policies.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary Tourism and Public Works (R&B), Commissioner Secretary Information, Secretary Culture and other senior officials.

During the meeting, Secretary Culture delivered a detailed presentation highlighting the immense heritage potential of Jammu & Kashmir, encompassing both tangible and intangible assets such as monuments, forts, shrines and performing arts traditions. It was noted that despite this diversity, many heritage sites remain underutilized and are facing gradual deterioration due to limited technical expertise, fragmented institutional mechanisms and inadequate financial and policy support.

The presentation revealed that over 600 heritage sites have been identified across Jammu & Kashmir, including both protected and unlisted monuments, reflecting the vast scale of opportunity in the sector.

A key focus of the presentation was the adoption of adaptive reuse models, particularly through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) frameworks. Drawing from successful examples in states such as neighbouring state Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, it illustrated how neglected heritage structures can be transformed into vibrant cultural and tourism destinations. Projects such as Qila Mubarak (Patiala), Neemrana Fort and Orchha Fort were cited as examples where heritage hotels, museums and experiential spaces have generated revenue while preserving historical integrity.

The presentation also reviewed the existing legal and institutional framework under the J&K Heritage Conservation and Preservation Act, 2010, identifying critical gaps including the inactive status of the Heritage Conservation Authority, lack of inter-departmental coordination and outdated institutional structures, which have hindered effective conservation and promotion efforts.

To address these challenges, a reform proposal was presented, including reconstitution and strengthening of the J&K Heritage Conservation and Preservation Authority with expanded powers, revised composition and active leadership under the Chief Minister.

The proposal further emphasized integrated planning, development of heritage tourism circuits, promotion of heritage hotels through PPP mode, and strategic branding of Jammu & Kashmir as a premier cultural and wedding destination.

**Mudra Yojana.....**

placing trust in the aspirations of the people. Describing the programme as a reflection of an inclusive economic ethos, Modi said it ensures opportunities are accessible, initiatives are encouraged and every dream is supported to grow, with notable impact on youth and women entrepreneurs.

The government's citizen engagement platform MyGovIndia highlighted that the scheme has enabled collateral-free credit, reduced reliance on informal lending, and expanded financial inclusion at the grassroots level. It said small loans and local ideas are driving a quiet but significant transformation in India's economy.

According to the platform, micro enterprises are scaling up, generating local employment and gradually integrating into the formal economic system. It added that over 52 crore job seekers have been transformed into job creators under the scheme.

Launched in 2015, the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana provides loans of up to Rs 10 lakh to non-corporate, non-farm small and micro enterprises, with a focus on supporting young entrepreneurs, skilled workers and women, while also acting as a regulator for micro-finance institutions.

**LG Chairs.....**

welfare, the Lieutenant Governor directed the university to implement targeted reforms and ensure full adoption of e-office systems to modernize administrative functioning and improve efficiency.

He also stressed the need for uniform recruitment rules for non-teaching staff across universities in the Union Territory to ensure transparency and streamline processes.

Highlighting the role of youth in nation-building, the Lieutenant Governor called for greater participation in initiatives like "Viksit Bharat Yuva Connect" and urged intensified awareness campaigns under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan.

"Universities and educational institutions must discharge their responsibility towards society and lead the fight against drug menace," he said.

During the meeting, Vice Chancellor Prof. Mohammad Mobin presented a detailed progress report of the university, while Registrar Prof. Syed Wilayat Hussain Rizvi placed various agenda items before the Council for consideration and ratification.

**Intermittent.....**

minimum settled at 8.8°C, slightly above normal, according to the Meteorological Department.

Most stations, including Qazigund, Pahalgam, Kupwara and Gulmarg, also reported significant departures in day temperatures.

Light to moderate rainfall was recorded across parts of the Valley, with Gulmarg receiving 8.2 mm and Kupwara 5.8 mm in the last 24 hours.

Jammu recorded a maximum of 24.0°C, around 6°C below normal, with trace rainfall during the day but 42.1 mm in the preceding 24 hours. Relative humidity remained high across the region, touching up to 98 per cent in Kupwara.

Meanwhile, the Meteorological Centre Srinagar said erratic weather conditions are likely to persist across Jammu and Kashmir till April 10, with generally cloudy skies and intermittent light to moderate rain and snowfall over higher reaches expected.

The MeI department said scattered areas may witness brief spells of light rain or thunder-showers on April 9 and 10, while April 11 and 12 are likely to remain partly cloudy with light

rain at isolated places.

Dry weather is expected from April 13 to 14, followed by generally cloudy conditions with light rain at a few places on April 15 and 16.

The department has issued an advisory warning of thunder, hailstorms and gusty winds of 40-50 kmph at isolated places, and the possibility of landslides in vulnerable areas.

Farmers have been advised to resume operations from Wednesday, while a gradual rise in day temperatures by 4-6 degrees Celsius is expected over the next few days—(KNO)

**ALC Candidates.....**

and political groups highlighting limited job opportunities and unique regional challenges, the administration moved to address the issue.

Taking cognisance of these concerns, the Lieutenant Governor directed the Chief Secretary—who also functions as the Administrative Secretary of the Home Department—to examine the matter and initiate appropriate action to provide relief.

Officials said a fresh recruitment notification incorporating the revised age criteria will be issued soon. The Police Headquarters has also been asked to finalise and notify the Standing Order under Rule 6(3) to formalise the change.

The move is expected to enhance participation from ALC areas, ensuring better representation and inclusivity in the Ladakh Police. Emphasising the rationale behind the decision, Saxena noted that candidates from border regions face distinct challenges such as difficult terrain, limited infrastructure, and restricted access to education and coaching facilities.

He reiterated that the Union Territory administration remains committed to responsive and inclusive governance, ensuring that deserving candidates are not deprived of opportunities due to circumstances beyond their control.

**US-Iran Agree.....**

enrich uranium. Trump then suggested American warships would be "hangin' around" the narrow waterway through which 20% of all oil and natural gas passes in peacetime. That could be a potential flashpoint as the days go on.

Varying reports of ceasefire's terms Trump initially said had Iran proposed a "workable" 10-point plan that could help end the war he launched with Israel on Feb. 28. But he later called the plan fraudulent without elaborating. Trump said ending Iran's nuclear program entirely was a key point of the war.

Israel backed the US ceasefire with Iran, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Wednesday it won't stop his country's fight against Hezbollah in Lebanon, which continued through the morning. That contradicted comments from Pakistan, a key mediator, which said the ceasefire included the fighting in Lebanon.

Pakistan said that talks over cementing a peace plan would begin in Islamabad as soon as Friday. Pakistan also said the ceasefire was to begin immediately, while Iran launched attacks on Gulf Arab states and Israel soon after. Oil prices fell and stocks rose as Asian markets opened Wednesday after the eleventh-hour agreement to reopen the strait.

UnSecretary-General Antonio Guterres called on all parties "to abide by the terms of the ceasefire in order to pave the way towards a lasting and comprehensive peace in the region," his spokesman said.

Iran and Oman to collect shipping fees in Strait of Hormuz

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said passage through the strait would be allowed under Iranian military management. It wasn't clear whether that meant Iran would completely loosen its chokehold on the waterway.

The plan allows for both Iran and Oman to charge fees on ships transiting through the strait, according to a regional official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss negotiations they were directly involved in. The official said Iran would use the money it raised for reconstruction.

But that would upend decades of reliance on the strait as an international waterway free for transit and will likely not be acceptable to the Gulf Arab states, which also need to rebuild after repeated Iranian attacks targeting their oilfields. "Big money will be made. Iran can start the reconstruction process," Trump said on social media.

Ceasefire leaves questions unresolved It's not clear what happens when the two weeks of the ceasefire ends.

There's little public sign that Iran and the United States had resolved disagreements over the fate of Iran's nuclear program, its ballistic missiles or its regional proxies – among the issues that the United States and Israel cited as justifications for launching the war. In addition to control of the strait, Iran's demands for ending the war include withdrawal of US combat forces from the region, the lifting of sanctions and the release of its frozen assets.

All those likely are nonstarters for Trump and potentially other Western nations. Iran's chokehold on the strait roiled the world economy and raised the pressure on Trump to reach a deal.

Since the war began, Trump has repeatedly backed off deadlines just before they expire. In doing so again Tuesday, Trump said in a social media post he had come to the decision "based on conversations" with Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Gen. Asim Munir, Pakistan's powerful army chief.

There are concerns in Israel about the agree-

ment, according to a person familiar with the situation who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not allowed to speak to the media. The person said Israel would like to achieve more. (AP)

**India Welcomes.....**

that it will pave the way for "lasting peace" in conflict-hit West Asia.

In an official statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) reiterated India's consistent position advocating "de-escalation, dialogue and diplomacy" as the only viable path to end ongoing hostilities.

The MEA highlighted that prolonged tensions have caused "immense suffering" to civilians while also disrupting global energy supplies and trade networks. It stressed the importance of ensuring "unimpeded freedom of navigation" and maintaining smooth global commerce through the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz.

India's response reflects its continued push for regional stability amid growing concerns over economic and security implications worldwide.

The ceasefire announcement was also confirmed by Shehbaz Sharif, who stated that Iran, the United States and their allies have agreed to an immediate and comprehensive halt in hostilities across all theatres, including Lebanon.

Diplomatic engagements are expected to follow, with delegations from Washington and Tehran likely to visit Islamabad on April 10 for high-level discussions, dubbed the "Islamabad Talks," aimed at forging a long-term resolution.

Meanwhile, Donald Trump signalled support for de-escalation efforts, raising hopes for a broader diplomatic reset in the region. Key US representatives, including Steve Witkoff, Jared Kushner, and Vice President JD Vance, are expected to participate in the talks.

Vice President Vance, currently on a visit to Hungary, may proceed to Pakistan for the upcoming negotiations.

**CS Begins.....**

The meeting also assessed the implementation of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) and scaling up of rooftop solar adoption under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana.

The free electricity initiative is expected to benefit over 2.22 lakh AAY households across the districts of the UT, ensuring near-universal district coverage. The process of identification and extension of this benefit to the eligible population is going on in coordination with the respective district administrations with many of the targeted beneficiaries living in far off areas.

On this occasion Additional Chief Secretary, Power Development Department, Ashwani Kumar, informed that extensive field verification and data validation exercises are underway in close coordination with district administrations to ensure that only genuine beneficiaries are covered.

He highlighted that efforts are being made to address challenges such as discrepancies between ration card and electricity consumer databases, cases of migration, locked or inaccessible households, and reluctance among certain beneficiaries. Special emphasis is being placed on ensuring inclusion of households in remote and mountainous areas, where logistical constraints such as scattered habitations and extended power distribution networks pose significant challenges.

Alongside this welfare initiative, the Union Territory has registered significant progress under the rooftop solar programme. The PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana is facilitating adoption through consumer-friendly financing options, including access to bank loans at attractive interest rates.

Managing Director, Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited, Gural Singh, informed that over 28,600 applications have been received in Jammu Division, with more than 11,000 installations completed, reflecting a progress of around 67 percent. Similarly, Managing Director, Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited, Mehmood Ahmad Shah, stated that Kashmir Division has witnessed an overwhelming response, with over 73,000 applications received and more than 17,700 installations completed, with several districts surpassing their assigned targets.

It was further informed that the scheme is largely being implemented under the RESCO (Renewable Energy Service Company) model, wherein private developers undertake installation and maintenance without requiring upfront investment from consumers, thereby making solar energy accessible to a broader population.

The meeting also reviewed progress under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), a flagship reform initiative aimed at strengthening the power distribution infrastructure. Key interventions under RDSS include smart metering, infrastructure augmentation, feeder segregation, energy accounting, and reduction of Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses.

It was informed that works amounting

to Rs. 5,762 Cr are being executed across districts through various Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs), including Rs. 1,053 Cr for smart metering and Rs. 4,709 Cr for loss reduction measures.

The meeting was apprised that over 7.10 lakh smart meters have been installed across Jammu and Kashmir, including nearly 3 lakh installations in the past six months alone. Significant improvements in operational efficiency were also reported, with the ACS-ARR gap reduced to 0.3 by FY 2025-26, billing efficiency increased to 77 percent, collection efficiency to 94 percent, and AT&C losses brought down to 30 percent.

The Chief Secretary reiterated that the integrated approach combining direct financial relief through free electricity with long-term structural reforms such as solarisation and RDSS-backed infrastructure upgrades is expected to substantially improve power reliability, reduce losses, and promote clean energy adoption across the Union Territory.

These measures are seen as a significant step towards ensuring inclusive growth, energy security, and sustainable development across all districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

**J&K first to.....**

emerge as a vibrant hub for artificial intelligence and advanced technologies, positioning the UT at the forefront of India's digital transformation with the establishment of IT parks at Srinagar and Jammu too in pipeline.

He maintained that the establishment of the CoE will open new avenues for the youth of the region by equipping them with cutting-edge skills in AI and allied domains so as to have local manpower available for the proposed IT parks for which land and other logistics are being worked out by the Department. He further observed that these initiatives will significantly enhance employability prospects and foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship among our young population.

Highlighting the strategic importance of the initiative, the Chief Secretary observed that the CoE is expected to catalyse the development of a robust research and innovation ecosystem. He envisaged that meaningful collaborations with premier national and international institutions, startups, and industry leaders, will further strengthen J&K's position in the technology landscape.

He further emphasized that the CoE together with these IT Parks will act as a catalyst for attracting investments in the technology sector, encouraging startups and leading industry players to establish a footprint in the Union Territory. This, he said, will contribute significantly to economic growth and large-scale job creation.

Reiterating the government's commitment to inclusive development, the Chief Secretary stated that the Centre will ensure that the benefits of advanced technologies like AI permeate even to the remotest areas of Jammu & Kashmir, thereby supporting equitable and sustainable development.

Secretary, Information Technology, Dr Piyush Singla, described the initiative as a "game-changer" for the UT's innovation ecosystem. He remarked that the CoE will bridge the gap between academia and industry, empower youth with future-ready skills, and enable the transformation of citizen-centric services through the adoption of AI-driven solutions.

It is pertinent to mention that the proposal from J&K was approved in the inaugural Project Approval Board (PAB) meeting under MeitY's pan-India initiative for setting up AI Centres of Excellence under the IndiaAI framework. The swift approval reflects the UT administration's meticulous planning, strong institutional coordination, and high-quality proposal submission. The Centre of Excellence will be established within a dedicated 10,000 sq. ft. built-up space at IIT Jammu, which will serve as the anchor institution and implementation agency for the project.

With a total outlay of Rs. 20 Cr under a 90:10 funding pattern between MeitY, Government of India, and the UT Government, to be disbursed over a period of four years, the CoE will operate through a robust Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) framework under the oversight of the Information Technology Department. The Centre will foster a collaborative ecosystem involving academia, government, industry, and corporate stakeholders, guided by MeitY's IndiaAI Division. This convergence of students, researchers, innovators, and industry leaders is expected to drive cutting-edge AI applications and solutions.

The CoE is going to spearhead advanced research and development in key sectors such as governance, healthcare, agriculture, and disaster management, while also nurturing startups and enhancing skill development. Aligned with the broader objectives of the IndiaAI Mission, the initiative is set to play a pivotal role in accelerating technological growth and socio-economic development across Jammu & Kashmir.



## Dr. Jitendra Singh chairs DISHA meeting; reviews development projects, pushes for timely execution

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**DODA, APRIL 08:** The District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) meeting of District Kishtwar was held today under the chairmanship of Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the Ministry for Science & Technology and Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office.

The meeting involved a comprehensive review of all the ongoing projects and public welfare measures being implemented in the district.

The Union MoS emphasized improved inter-departmental coordination, strict monitoring and timely execution to ensure effective grassroots delivery. He had a detailed discussion on various vital issues including development of airstrip facilities to boost regional connectivity and tourism and road works. He directed the officials to ensure adherence to quality parameters



and project completion timelines under schemes like PMGSY.

He also reviewed construction of cremation sheds, rehabilitation of Kandani inhabitants affected by power projects and promotion of local produce such as kala zeera and saffron through better mar-

ket linkages and branding.

Dr. Jitendra Singh stressed the youth engagement through Sansad Khel initiatives so that their energy is channelized in a right direction.

He directed the Power Development Department to ensure

transparent and consumer-friendly smart metering. He further called for wider awareness of government schemes and prompt grievance redress to achieve inclusive development.

The meeting was attended by Member of Parliament (Rajya

Sabha) Sajad Ahmed Kitchloo, MLA Kishtwar Shagun Parihar, nominated members of the DISHA Committee besides other district officers, who deliberated on key points related to previous Action Taken Reports (ATRs) and other developmental issues.

Dr. Jitendra Singh issued prompt directions to the senior district officers and officials from concerned departments to ensure timely resolution of all matters raised during the meeting.

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner, Kishtwar, Pankaj Kumar Sharma, presented a detailed overview of the district's developmental profile and social sector priorities. He highlighted the progress under various centrally sponsored and UT schemes, the status of key ongoing projects and sector-wise performance across health, education, rural development, agriculture and social welfare besides elaborating the actionable strategies to strengthen the service delivery and public outreach.

## Sakeena Itoo interacts with visiting Parliamentary Standing Committee at Srinagar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, JAMMU 08:** Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo today interacted with the members of Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports (EWCY&S) who are on two day visit of Jammu and Kashmir.

During the interaction, the Minister presented a comprehensive overview of the initiatives undertaken by the Government to enhance the quality, accessibility and inclusivity of education sector across Jammu and Kashmir. She emphasized that the Government is focused on creating a robust academic ecosystem aligned with national educational priorities and global standards.

Sakeena Itoo highlighted key reforms aimed at improving academic infrastructure, promoting



research and innovation, strengthening faculty development programmes and expanding digital learning facilities in schools, colleges and universities. She informed the Committee that sustained efforts are being made to modernize schools, college campuses, introduce industry-oriented courses and ensure skill-based education to improve employability among students.

The Minister also underscored the importance of equitable access to education, stating that special attention is being given to students from remote and underserved areas through scholarship schemes, upgraded facilities and enhanced connectivity initiatives.

The Members of the Committee appreciated the progress achieved in the higher education sector and held detailed deliberations on challenges, opportunities, and future strategies for academic growth. The discussion focused on improving research output, fostering innovation-driven learning, and strengthening institutional governance mechanisms.

Sakeena Itoo reiterated that the Omar Abdullah led Government remains committed to nurturing academic excellence, encouraging innovation and creating a learner-centric environment that empowers youth and contributes to socio-economic development of Jammu and Kashmir.

## Kulgam Police Intensify Anti-Drug Campaign, Hold Awareness Programmes Across District

■ FAROOQ RATHER

**KULGAM, APR 8:** In a sustained effort to tackle the growing menace of drug abuse, Kulgam Police have organized a series of comprehensive awareness programmes across the district under the theme "Nasha-Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan."

The initiatives witnessed active participation from senior police officers, faculty members, and a large number of students from various educational institutions, reflecting a collective commitment towards building a drug-free society.

During the sessions, police officers sensitized participants about the harmful effects of drug abuse, highlighting its devastating impact on individuals, families, and society as a whole. Speakers stressed the importance of early awareness, informed decision-making, and shared responsibility in curbing the spread of narcotics.

Students were encouraged to stay away from drugs and take on the role of ambassadors of change by spreading awareness within their peer groups and communities. The programmes also featured interactive sessions, where students engaged directly with police officers, sharing their concerns and seeking guidance on resisting peer pressure and adopting healthy lifestyle choices.

Kulgam Police reiterated its firm commitment to eliminating drug abuse and ensuring a safe environment for the youth. Officials assured that such awareness drives will continue in the future as part of a broader strategy to combat drug-related issues.

The police also appealed to the general public to cooperate in this mission and share any information related to drug trafficking or substance abuse, emphasizing that community participation is key to eradicating this social evil.

## Police crack down on unauthorised service providers in Sonamarg

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

**GANDERBAL, APR 08:** Ganderbal Police, continuing its sustained drive against unauthorised service providers in the tourist destination of Sonamarg, conducted a special enforcement operation on Wednesday.

During the drive, one individual, identified as Muzafar Ahmad Khatana, son of Gh Nabi Khatana, resident of Sumbal Bala Gund, Ganderbal, was found operating at the tourist resort Sonamarg using a forged license. "Acting promptly, police took cognisance of the offence and registered FIR No. 04/2026 under relevant sections of law, at Police Station Sonamarg," a police spokesperson said, adding that the investigation into the matter has been initiated.

In previous drives, 23 unauthorised service providers operating in violation of provisions of the Tourist Trade Act, 1978, were detained and fined accordingly.

Police said they are committed to ensuring a safe, lawful, and tourist-friendly environment in Sonamarg and have urged all stakeholders to strictly adhere to legal provisions. "The general public and visitors are advised to avail services only from authorised and registered providers," the spokesperson said—(KNO)

## KU's Linguistics Department holds special lecture on research ethics

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APR 08:** The Department of Linguistics, University of Kashmir (KU), organised a special lecture on 'Research Ethics' at the Main Campus.

The lecture aimed to sensitise students and scholars to ethical principles in research, including issues of plagiarism, data integrity, authorship, and responsible academic conduct in an increasingly digitised research environment.

Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, in her message said, "Ethical awareness is central to meaningful research. Scholars must uphold integrity, transparency, and accountability in their work, especially at a time when access to information is vast and immediate."

Dean, School of Arts, Languages and Literature KU, Prof. Aejez Mohammad Sheikh, emphasised the importance of cultivating ethical research practices among stu-



dents and noted that such lectures play a crucial role in guiding young scholars towards responsible academic engagement.

The lecture was delivered by Prof. Vaishna Narang, former Professor of Linguistics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, who discussed key aspects of research ethics, including plagiarism, proper citation practices, and the importance of maintaining originality in academic work. She also emphasized the need for critical engagement with sources, along with the respon-

sible use of research tools and methodologies in contemporary academic practice.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Head, Department of Linguistics, KU, Prof. Musavir Ahmad, noted the importance of such academic interactions in strengthening research culture and encouraging ethical awareness among students and scholars.

The lecture was attended by students and research scholars from the School of Arts, Languages and Literature at the Main Campus.

## Mujay Kuch Kaihna Hai

### HT - VOICE TO YOUR VAGARIES

## Ziyarat Road in Kreeri Lies Incomplete, Residents Face Mounting Hardships

Authorities draw flak for inaction as officials fail to provide a satisfactory response on halted construction

■ TAJAMUL BUKHARI  
■ HT CORRESPONDENT

**KREERI, BARAMULLA, APR 2:** Residents of Kreeri and its adjoining areas in north Kashmir have expressed strong resentment over the incomplete construction of the Ziyarat road, accusing the Rural Development Department of neglecting a vital public project and leaving locals to suffer.

The road, which stretches from Kreeri Market to the revered shrine of Syed Haji Mohammad Murad Bukhari (RA), serves as a crucial link for more than 20 villages, connecting Kreeri to Babareshi and Tangmarg via areas such as Suchipora, Dolipora, Kawachak Sheikhpora, Khaipora Kakothal, Nambalnar and others. Locals say the road is currently in a dilapidated condition, riddled with potholes and posing serious risks to commuters.

Residents alleged that despite repeated appeals, the department has failed to address the worsening condition. "The authorities seem to be in deep slumber. The road is in a shabby state, and vehicles are getting damaged regularly. Children and elderly people are finding it difficult even to walk," they said.

They said the road had earlier suffered from severe waterlogging due to poor drainage. Following persistent demands, funds were eventually sanctioned and construction work, including the laying of drainage pipes, was initiated. However, the work was abruptly halted just before the holy month of Ramadan and has not resumed since.

As a result, the situation has deteriorated further, with water accumulating on the road, soil subsiding at multiple locations, and the entire stretch turning



muddy and unsafe for both pedestrians and vehicles. Residents said the incomplete work has created serious inconvenience, particularly for patients, school-going children and emergency services.

The issue has gained urgency with the approaching Urs of Syed Haji Murad Bukhari (RA), an

annual religious event that draws a large number of devotees from across the region. Locals fear that the current condition of the road may lead to severe inconvenience, traffic disruptions and potential safety hazards for visitors.

Adding to the concerns, residents claimed that the contrac-

tor had cited alleged threats from certain individuals as a reason for not resuming the work, raising questions over the smooth execution of public welfare projects in the area.

Meanwhile, residents of the Kreeri-Wagoora constituency have appealed to their MLA, Advocate Irfan Hafiz Lone, to intervene and ensure immediate resumption of the work. "We only see politicians during elections. Basic amenities like road connectivity remain neglected," they said, urging the MLA to visit the area and assess the situation firsthand.

When contacted, Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Baramulla, Mudasar Choudhary, said he would verify the status of the project and respond. However, no further response was received, and subsequent attempts to reach him went unanswered, further adding to the residents' frustration.

# DC Srinagar conducts comprehensive review of major water supply projects in district

Fast-track key water projects to boost Srinagar supply & quality

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 08:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today chaired a comprehensive meeting here at DC Office to conduct a detailed project-wise review of major water supply projects being implemented under Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) 2.0 aimed at strengthening and augmenting the water supply and quality of water across the district.

The Meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Superintending Engineer, Er. Ambreen Anjum, Executive Engineer Water Works Division, Aijaz Rafiq, Water Supply Master Plan Division, Muzamil Ahmad, Executive Engineer, I&FC, Executive Engineer, UEED, Executive Engineer, Ground Water, Executive Engineer PHE Mechanical Division and other concerned Officers.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner was given a detailed



overview through a detailed presentation highlighting the progress of different projects under the scheme aimed to augment and boost the water supply in the district.

The DC was informed that 19 projects have been approved for Srinagar City under AMRUT 2.0, with work progressing in full swing and several major water supply projects nearing completion to boost and augment water supply in Srinagar District.

On the occasion, the DC conducted an in-depth review of each project, focusing on critical parameters including infrastructure quality, operational efficiency and citizen-centric outcomes. He emphasized the importance of quality execution and strict adherence to timelines to ensure that residents benefit at the earliest.

Highlighting the significance of AMRUT 2.0, the DC stated that the scheme prioritizes water security for urban areas through

sustainable and modern solutions. He observed that the completion of key water supply projects will strengthen existing networks, enhance groundwater availability and supplement traditional water sources to meet the growing demand of Srinagar's expanding population.

The DC directed the concerned Officers to ensure that all projects are completed with enhanced functionality, durability and efficiency.

He stressed the need for regular monitoring and reporting mechanisms to maintain transparency and accountability throughout project execution. He also issued actionable directions to expedite pending works and address operational challenges, ensuring completion within the stipulated timeframe.

He directed for coordinated inter-departmental synergy to resolve impending bottlenecks, if any, to further expedite the completion.

## DC Budgam reviews Hajj-2026, SANJY-2026 arrangements at Srinagar Airport

HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, APRIL 08:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan today visited Srinagar International Airport Humhama, to review the arrangements put in place for the smooth dispatch of Hajj pilgrims 2026, scheduled to commence 18th of this month, and also assessed preparedness for the upcoming Shri Amarnath ji yatra (SANJY) 2026.

During the visit, the DC conducted a comprehensive inspection of facilities available for pilgrims and passengers.

He reviewed arrangements related to clean drinking water, medical facilities, refreshment counters, volunteer assistance, traffic regulation within and outside the airport premises, immigration processes, baggage handling systems, Zam Zam water storage etc.



Emphasis was laid on ensuring seamless coordination among departments for efficient passenger management and timely facilitation.

While reviewing the arrangements for Hajj pilgrims, the DC stressed the need for maintaining high standards of hygiene, adequate seating, proper guidance mechanisms, and hassle-free movement of pilgrims from entry points to boarding areas.

He underscored the importance of deploying sufficient manpower and ensuring round-the-clock assistance for elderly and special-needs pilgrims.

On the Occasion, the DC also reviewed the preparedness for SANJY-2026, focusing on coordination among stakeholder departments, logistical readiness, and facilitation measures for pilgrims expected during the Yatra period.

He highlighted the importance of proactive planning, effective traffic management, and public convenience to ensure smooth conduct of the pilgrimage.

The DC reiterated the need for close inter-departmental coordination and continuous monitoring to ensure that all arrangements are executed efficiently and in a timely manner for the convenience of pilgrims.

Officers present during the visit included Director Airport Authority Srinagar, Javed Anjum; Senior Superintendent of Police Budgam, Hariprasad K.K.; Chief Planning Officer Budgam, Executive Officer Hajj House Bemina, CMO, DIO, DSWO and officers and officials from various departments.

## Functioning of Child Care Institutions reviewed at Bandipora

HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, APRIL 08:** In a significant step towards strengthening child protection services, District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) Bandipora, Bashir Ahmad Malik chaired a detailed review meeting and inspection of Child Care Institutions (CCIs) for both boys and girls Bandipora.



The meeting cum inspection was aimed at evaluating the functioning of these institutions and ensuring that standards of care and protection are being properly maintained. During the review, the DCPO conducted a thorough examination of case files of each child residing in the institutions.

The scrutiny focused on admission details, individual care plans, and overall rehabilitation progress. The meeting also deliberated on the overall management and functioning of the institutions, with emphasis on accountability and improved service delivery. Officials were directed to ensure that all procedures related to child care and protection are strictly followed, and that regular monitoring mechanisms are strengthened.

In addition, the DCPO inspected the availability of essential facilities being provided to the children. This included checking arrangements related to food, clothing, accommodation, hygiene, and general well-being. The DCPO further directed timely intervention, proper supervision, and adherence to child protection guidelines. The inspection was conducted in the presence of officials from the District Child Protection Unit, who accompanied the DCPO and assisted in evaluating records and facilities.

## Training Programme on e-Office 2.0 held at Shopian

ADDC reviews progress; staff trained in digital file management

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SHOPIAN, APRIL 08:** A training programme on e-Office 2.0 was today conducted at the Mini Secretariat, Shopian for e-Office dealing assistants and concerned staff from various Sectoral Departments of the district.

Prior to the training session, Additional District Development Commissioner Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone undertook a brief review of the status of e-Office implementation across departments in the district.

He directed all concerned to promptly resolve any pending issues and bottlenecks to expedite smooth and effective functioning of the e-Office system.

He emphasized that all sections must actively utilize the platform to ensure efficiency, transparency, and timely disposal of official work.

The training programme was attended by e-Office dealing assistants and concerned officials from different



departments.

During the session, Master Trainer, Mohd. Iqbal imparted detailed hands on training, covering key aspects of e-Office including file handling, digital workflow, and system operations.

NIC Shopian provided technical support during the session, addressing queries, resolving technical issues,

and guiding participants on system functionalities.

It was also highlighted that around 20 other Trainers have been designated to facilitate the smooth implementation of e-Office, including creation of login credentials and providing continuous technical assistance to departments.

## DC Anantnag urges Principals of College, HSS to embrace Tech, Student-Centric approach

Calls for holistic development of students

HT NEWS NETWORK

**ANANTNAG, APRIL 08:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat today chaired a meeting with principals of degree colleges and higher secondary schools of the district at Dak Bungalow, Khanabal.

ADC, Principals of GDCs, CEO, Hols of HSSs, their representatives and other officials attended the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, the DC emphasized that teaching faculty must stay updated with new technologies and innovations, implementing modern methodologies in practical classroom teaching. He highlighted that the education system must be student-centric, urging teachers to be friendly with students to

foster their emotional, psychological and overall development. The educators should strive to inculcate social, moral and scientific values along with positive attitude towards society and national building among the students, allowing them to grow into responsible citizens, he stressed.

Emphasizing the welfare and development of each and every student, the DC said it is the responsibility of the Principals and Teachers to ensure all students are provided positive and favorable environment in the educational institutions.

Dr. Bilal further highlighted the need for teachers to interact closely with students to understand their emotions and needs so they feel the presence of a responsive and supportive system at the



educational institutions.

He said the lecturers and professors should work in their full capacities to ensure the teaching-learning process is conducive and result-oriented. The educators should focus on enhancing the skill set of students, engaging them in sports and co

curricular activities besides imparting them requisite training in time with modern day demands, he remarked.

Showing concern on the weakening social and parental bonds, the DC noted that loose emotional ties between parents and children and among family members, lead to shortcomings in child development and social maladjustment. It is thus a collective responsibility of the parents as well as the educational institutions to work on the shortcomings so that holistic human development of students and youth is achieved.

Additionally, the DC called for strict implementation of drug detection processes in every institution, adhering to the prescribed schedules in letter and

spirit. He cautioned about the individual, social and financial consequences of drug abuse, and called for sustained awareness against this menace, in the educational institutions. He further advocated for a scientific and compassionate approach to deal with the drug abuse victims, so they do not feel stigmatised.

During the meeting, the Principals and Hols put forth their valuable suggestions regarding the modernistic approach on education and the measures being taken to train and motivate students about employable skill sets and job-oriented traits. They also briefed the chair about the sports and co-curricular activities besides awareness campaign against drug abuse being conducted in their institutions.

## JKEDI Baramulla concludes FY 2025-26 Development Programmes

245 Youth trained under RAMP to boost Entrepreneurship

HT NEWS NETWORK

**BARAMULLA, APRIL 8:** JKEDI Baramulla successfully concluded its developmental programmes for the financial year 2025-26 with the completion of 8 Management Development Programmes (MDPs) and 2 Entrepreneurship Skill Development Programmes (ESDPs).

A total of 245 candidates were trained under the RAMP scheme during this period. The participants unanimously appreciated the programmes, noting their significant



role in shaping their outlook towards self-employment and entrepreneurship.

During the valedictory ceremony,

Er. Showkat Ahmad and Er. Javed Ahmad, ITI Superintendent, interacted with the participants. They shared valuable insights and

encouraged the trainees to effectively apply the knowledge and skills gained during the programmes in their entrepreneurial journeys.

Addressing the gathering, officers from JKEDI District Centre, Baramulla highlighted the Government's commitment to building a strong startup ecosystem in Jammu & Kashmir. While concluding the programme, JKEDI emphasized the importance of youth participation in such initiatives and encouraged them to explore diverse entrepreneurial opportunities.

## District Admin, GDC Bandipora organise Drug De-Addiction Awareness Programme under NMBA

HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, APRIL 08:** As part of the ongoing activities under the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA), an awareness programme was conducted today at HKM GDC Bandipora to sensitise students about the harmful effects of drug abuse and the importance of leading a healthy and drug-free life.

The programme was organised by the Higher Education Department as the nodal department, in collaboration with the Excise Department, Youth Services & Sports Department, and Health Department of District Bandipora.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation of Principal, GDC Bandipora, Prof. Suresh Kumar Dogra, Faculty members, students of the college, young and promising students representing various Higher Secondary Schools of the district.

On the occasion, Dr. G.M. Khan highlighted the alarming rise in drug abuse and underscored the urgent need for collective and sustained efforts to combat this societal menace. The student speakers, both from the college and Higher Secondary institutions, deliberated on the multifaceted dimensions of drug addiction, including its root causes, devastating consequences, and preventive strategies.

## DC Srinagar reviews progress of upgradation, renovation works at Banquet Hall-Conference Complex at MA Road

Banquet Hall Complex functional by month-end, heritage intact

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**Srinagar, April 08:** Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Wednesday conducted an on-site inspection of the ongoing upgradation and renovation works at the Banquet Hall-Conference Complex at M.A. Road, Srinagar.

He also reviewed the progress of renovation and upgradation works being carried out within the complex.

During the visit, the DC was accompanied by Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Superintending Engineer Hydraulic, Sajad Kawoosa, Executive Engineer R&B, Khalid Mehmood, Executive Engineer, UEED, Shabir Hussain and other senior Officials and Engineers.

During the inspection, the Deputy Commissioner assessed the progress and quality of works being executed at the site. He emphasized the need for



maintaining high standards and ensuring timely completion of the project in accordance with the prescribed specifications. He also

emphasized the need for a robust and efficient Audio-Visual (AV) system at the Conference Complex to enhance its overall functionality and ensure seamless conduct of official proceedings.

The DC underscored the importance of creating a well-equipped and efficient space in district to cater to official meetings, high-level interactions and other administrative engagements.

The DC further reviewed the ongoing renovation and allied works of the other units within the Banquet Hall Complex. He conducted a detailed assessment of the progress achieved so far and the quality of execution.

The DC directed the executing agencies to ensure that the upgraded and renovated Banquet Hall-cum-Conference Complex is completed in all respects by the end of this month, enhancing its overall utility and

functionality while preserving its historical and administrative significance.

Highlighting the importance of the facility, the Deputy Commissioner stated that the Banquet Hall on M.A. Road serves as a vital venue for hosting government meetings, delegation-level discussions, official functions, and citizen-centric awareness programmes.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the renovation process of gutted security huts. He was informed that approximately 90 percent of the work has been completed. He also assessed measures being undertaken to address drainage-related issues within the premises.

The DC directed the concerned departments to expedite the remaining works and ensure seamless completion within the stipulated timeframe.

## DC Budgam reviews availability, supply of Essential Commodities in district

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, APRIL 08:** Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today chaired a meeting to review the availability and supply position of essential commodities and key public services across the district.

The meeting was attended by JD planning, Javid Ahmad Najar, Assistant Director Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), Chief Agriculture Officer, Chief Education Officer, Executive Engineers of concerned departments, all Tehsildars, representatives of oil companies, transport authorities, and other concerned officers.

During the meeting, a comprehensive review of the supply position of essential commodities, including food grains, petrol, diesel, and LPG, was conducted. The DC directed all concerned departments to ensure smooth, timely, and uninterrupted supply of essential commodities to the public across all areas of the district.

The status of agriculture-related inputs such as fertilisers, manures, and seeds was also reviewed. The DC stressed ensuring their timely availability and distribution to farmers at all designated centres to meet seasonal requirements.

The meeting also reviewed the supply and usage of LPG in schools and other institutions.

The DC directed concerned authorities to ensure regular LPG supply to all educational institutions for smooth functioning of mid-day meal schemes and related services.

Reviewing the electricity scenario, the concerned officers informed about the prevailing supply position. The DC directed the department to ensure uninterrupted power supply and prompt redressal of any disruptions, especially during peak hours.

The transport sector was also discussed, with emphasis on ensuring availability of public transport services across all routes.

Emphasising public convenience, the DC directed Tehsil and Sub-Division level monitoring committees to intensify market inspections and maintain strict vigil against hoarding, black marketing, overcharging, or any malpractice in the distribution of essential commodities.

He issued strict instructions against unauthorized sale practices and warned that any attempt to create artificial scarcity, indulge in profiteering, or spread rumours will invite strict action under law.

The DC stressed the importance of coordinated efforts among all departments to ensure transparency, accountability, and uninterrupted supply of essential commodities and services to the public across the district.

## DLIC Budgam approves 623 Cases under Mission YUVA in district

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, APRIL 08:** A meeting of the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) for Mission YUVA was today chaired by the Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, at the Conference Hall of the DC Office Complex. The meeting focused on accelerating youth entrepreneurship and reviewing the progress of cases submitted under the mission.

During the meeting, 623 cases, duly verified by the Small Business Development Units (SBDUs), were placed before the committee for consideration. After thorough evaluation, all 623 cases were approved for financial assistance, capacity building, and handholding support under Mission YUVA.

The approved cases include entrepreneurial ventures, ranging from traditional crafts such as shawl embroidery, sozni, Aari work, tailoring and cutting units, carpentry and joinery workshops, as well as modern and service-oriented businesses including load carriers, dairy units, repair shops, stationery/printing units, food businesses, retail stores, packaging units, and other micro-enterprise activities.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC said that Mission YUVA is a transformative initiative aimed at empowering young men and women by enabling them to become self-reliant entrepreneurs. He emphasised that the goal is not only to provide financial support but to create a sustainable ecosystem where youth have access to training, market linkages, guidance, and long-term mentorship.

"Mission YUVA is our investment in the potential, resilience, and creativity of Budgam's youth. Every project approved today represents a new livelihood opportunity, a family strengthened, and a step towards a more self-reliant district," he noted.

The DC directed all concerned departments, banks and implementing agencies to ensure time-bound sanctioning, hassle-free disbursement, and continuous mentoring of the approved cases.

He instructed that Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) must be completed without delay and emphasised that no application should remain pending unnecessarily at any level. Accountability, transparency, and efficiency must be maintained throughout the process, he added.

He further said that the success of Mission YUVA will be determined by how many of these ventures become viable and sustainable in the long run.

He stressed the need for regular monitoring, skill development programmes, and facilitating market access so that young entrepreneurs can scale their businesses effectively.

The DC further said that Mission YUVA holds special significance for underprivileged and marginalised youth, who will be given priority support to improve their socio-economic conditions.

## Two Days orientation programme on Sustainable Sewage Treatment Technologies commences at Anantnag

DC Calls for greater public awareness on SSTTs

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**ANANTNAG, APRIL 08:** Two Days Orientation Programme on efficient Operation and Maintenance and Sustainable Treatment Technologies for Sewage Treatment Plants commenced today at Mehndi Kadal Anantnag. The program is being organised by UEED in collaboration with JAKNAP Projects Private Limited.

The event was graced by Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat as Chief Guest and witnessed active participation of SE and Exen UEED, other engineers, technical and

field staff of the department.

In his address, the DC laid focus on greater public awareness of sewage network and sewage treatment technologies for safeguarding the environment towards a better future. He said there is high need the younger generation including youth and students are acquainted about these modern scientific techniques and practices so they contribute towards sustainable and balanced development.

Dr. Bilal described modern sewage treatment plants as essential public utilities especially amid growing urban needs and challenges and urged the

participants to preserve water bodies through responsible and proactive approach.

The programme is aimed to enhance the technical knowledge and operational skills of engineers, field staff, and stakeholders involved in the management of sewage treatment infrastructure.

On the first day, experts and resource persons delivered insightful sessions on best practices in operation and maintenance (O&M), energy-efficient processes, sludge management, and adoption of sustainable and cost-effective treatment technologies.

## DDC Anantnag convenes Public Durbar at Dooru to address public grievances and review developmental needs

Assures time bound resolution of genuine Public Grievances

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**ANANTNAG, APRIL 08:** To address the concerns and grievances of the local community and ensure efficient public service delivery, the District Development Commissioner (DDC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat today convened a Public Durbar and outreach cum grievance redressal camp, at Rasool Mir Auditorium, Dooru.

The program was attended by ADC, CPO, ACD, CAO, CEO, CAHO, DD Fisheries, ARTO, ALC, BMO, BDOS, CDPO, Exens R&B, PHE & PDD, AEEs, TSWO, EO MC, officials from various other departments besides Ex DDC & PRI members and representatives from SHGs, civil society and general public.

During the program, the DDC gave a patient hearing to the residents who raised issues pertaining to road connectivity, healthcare services, banking facilities, rationalization of teaching staff and school infrastructure, beautification and tourism promotion, electricity bills, ration

stores, irrigation facilities, urban amenities and infrastructure, relocation of government offices, among others.

The demands included upgradation of Anantnag Dooru Verinag Road and widening of Sabdran & Dooru bridges, Mini Secretariat at Dooru, specialists at SDH Dooru, commissioning of Water Filtration Plant, parking space, public toilets and solar lights in town areas, development of Rasool Mir & Bakhshi Park, construction of Muffin Court and shopping complexes, beautification of Dooru Lisser Road, Bus Service from Dooru to Srinagar and aligning movement of SRTC Buses with school timing in Kapran, career counseling programs for students and youth, irrigation facilities in Dooru, Bragam, Nowpora and Nathipora areas, utilisation of services of Marriage Hall at Mehmooodabad, water supply to Naidpora and Larkipora, Naidpora-Hakura, Arampora & Trajan Nowgam Nad Road construction, ambulance for hilly areas of Shahabad, connecting Kapran with ADV Road widening, minimising

wild animal attacks in upper areas, separate PDD feeders, culvert bridge, circular road and children park Nowgam, upgradation of Verinag Qazigund Road, fencing of retrieved state land, construction of HS Batagund and Samagra School Chowgund, SBI Branch Qamar Shahabad, Kapran Drangmang Filtration Plant and playfields for Gawas and other areas.

The DDC issued on spot directions to revenue authorities to identify suitable land required for Schools at Batagund and Chowgund in consultation with the School Education Department.

R&B and Revenue authorities were instructed to take appropriate actions on ADV and other roads as demanded by the public. Directions were issued to PHE Department to submit a detailed report on the alternate source proposed for Water Supply Schemes under JJM for Naidpora and Larkipora Villages.

Regarding Water Filtration Plant Dooru, the PHE authorities informed that the same will be commissioned within next 2-3 weeks while as 95 percent work

has been completed on Kapran Drangmang Filtration Plant.

ARTO was directed to explore the feasibility of Dooru Srinagar Bus Service as well as changing the timing of SRTC Buses for students in Kapran areas. ULB and Revenue authorities were asked to make field survey to provide parking space and public toilets in urban areas.

Addressing the gathering, the DDC assured that major issues would be taken up with the suitable authorities and emergent ones shall be resolved by the concerned departments in a time bound manner. For sustainable, inclusive and holistic development, it is imperative that people participate in planning process at grassroot level, he remarked.

Terming public welfare paramount responsibility of district administration, the DDC enjoined upon the officers to visit the panchayats and villages frequently and get valuable feedback from the people so that the beneficiary oriented schemes and development initiatives are implemented effectively.

Regarding playfields, the DDC said these facilities will be developed at Panchayats and the existing sports infrastructure will also be upgraded across the district.

Advising youth to avail benefits of self employment and livelihood generation schemes, the DDC asked the concerned departments to create proper awareness of the flagship initiatives like Mission YUVA, HADP, Spurring Entrepreneurship, PMEGP etc. and conduct awareness/registration camps in far flung areas of the district for their facilitation and enrollment. He further asked the people to engage with the administration on fight against drug abuse so that this menace is eliminated from the society.

At conclusion, the DDC said there is need to conduct more such camps in the area and assured public that the outreach will continue in near future.

Local public and civil society members hailed the initiative hoping such programs will be held in routine for their overall welfare and community development.

## DC Budgam reviews developmental projects, addresses key public issues across Budgam Division

Stresses timely completion of Projects, accelerated execution & Public-Centric Governance

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, APRIL 08:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of developmental projects and address key public issues pertaining to Division Budgam of the District at the Conference Hall, DC Office Complex.

At the outset, the Assistant Commissioner Revenue Budgam, Afroza Bano presented a detailed overview of the administrative

and developmental profile of the sub-division. It was informed that Sub-Division Budgam comprises one tehsil, four niabats, 23 patwar halqas, and 107 revenue villages, along with two CD blocks and one Council.

A detailed department-wise review was conducted, covering major sectors including Public Works (R&B), Jal Jeevan Mission (PHE), Power Development Department (PDD), Health, Education, Revenue, Rural Development, Social Welfare, Irrigation & Flood Control, and

Urban Development.

The Social Welfare Department apprised the chair that under ICDS, a significant number of beneficiaries are being covered, including 8,852 children (6 months to 6 years), 572 pregnant women, and 598 lactating mothers.

The meeting was also informed about the upgradation of one Palna Creche Centre and seven Bal Vatika centres in the division. The Public Works (R&B) Department presented updates on various ongoing works,

including Capex, PRI, BDC, CDF, and DMRRR projects. Progress under Jal Jeevan Mission was also reviewed, with emphasis on timely completion of water supply schemes. The Health Department briefed the meeting on healthcare services, including implementation of the PM Dialysis Programme at the District Hospital Budgam. The School Education Department highlighted infrastructural gaps, particularly the requirement of land for 46 rented school buildings. The KPDCCL and

Irrigation & Flood Control departments also presented updates on their respective works and service delivery mechanisms. The Municipal Council Budgam provided details of works under various State Capex Budgets, including FC Grants, IDMT, and Normal Sources. During the meeting, several key issues affecting the public were highlighted, including lack of adequate parking space at major government offices such as District Court and District Hospital Budgam, congestion at

the Main Adda Budgam, and the need for widening of the Srinagar-Humhama road.

Addressing the meeting, the DC stressed the importance of timely execution of all developmental works, improved inter-departmental coordination, and prompt resolution of public grievances. He directed all departments to ensure efficient implementation of schemes, optimal utilization of resources, and adherence to timelines.

The DC further emphasised the need for proactive planning,

removal of bottlenecks, and a focused approach towards enhancing public service delivery across the sub-division.

The DC gave directions for necessary follow-up action and regular monitoring of all ongoing projects to ensure their timely completion and maximum public benefit.

Besides, ACR Budgam, JD planning Budgam, CMO, CEO, CAO, concerned Tehsildar's, EOs, Executive Engineers and other concerned officers were present in the meeting.

**HT EDITORIAL**

**Remove aggressiveness from automobile advertisements**

There is an old saying that children usually imitate things that are shown on television more so when the acts are adventurous in nature. Some of the advertisements shown on the television are quite aggressive and they tend to tempt the younger generation. These advertisements are mostly associated with the automobile sector and the youngsters usually get attracted to such advertisements very easily.

The stunts performed by the professionals while driving cars, sports utility vehicles and motorcycles are copied by the youth and in most of the cases the stunts turn out to be dangerous. It is important that the companies who publicize their products in such a manner should be taken to task. It must be ensured that there are no stunts in the advertisements and once this happens then there are chances that unfortunate incidents come to an end.

Over the years it has been observed that the authorities usually take action against the youth who perform stunts on the roads while driving their vehicles. Nobody disputes such action taken by the authorities but nobody goes to the root cause of the problem. It is imperative that stern directions are issued to the higher-ups of the companies who advertise their products through stunt performance by the professionals. They must be warned that action under rules would be taken against them in case it is found that the advertisements are aggressive in nature.

At the same time the youngsters should understand that the stunts performed in these advertisements are done by the professionals who have expertise in the same. These youth should understand that their life is precious and there is no reason for them to risk their lives for actions that they cannot do. Life is precious and it must be understood by one and all that one can live life just once. The parents have an important role in this regard and they should counsel their children not to go for adventurous acts.

It must be kept in mind that the children are not given easy money and their ingenuine demands should not be accepted by their parents and other relatives. In most of the cases it has been seen that undue love and favour most of the times spoil children. Such children usually go out of control of their parents and they carry out acts that defame them and also their parents.

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# Private Schools in Kashmir: Partners, Not Targets



■ **ALTAF HUSSAIN PEERZADA**

In the fragile yet hopeful landscape of Jammu and Kashmir, education remains one of the strongest pillars of progress and transformation. Yet, a deeply concerning trend has begun to overshadow this progress, the persistent scrutiny and targeting of private educational institutions. This raises a fundamental and uncomfortable question: Are we weakening the very institutions that are striving to strengthen our future?

At a time when quality education is not a luxury but an absolute necessity, the approach towards private schools appears increasingly harsh, often misplaced, and ultimately counterproductive. These institutions are not merely buildings or businesses, they are spaces where aspirations are nurtured, where young minds are shaped, and where the foundation of tomorrow's society is laid.

Private educational institutions in Kashmir have consistently proven their commitment through results that speak louder than any argument. Year after year, they have delivered outstanding academic performances, often surpassing expectations and setting benchmarks for excellence. But their contribution goes far beyond examination results. They have invested tirelessly in improving infrastructure, introducing modern and innovative teaching methods, and fostering child-centered environments where learning is not forced but inspired.

And yet, despite these sincere efforts, the narrative surrounding them is often reduced to criticism over minor, avoidable, or exaggerated issues. Instead of celebrating their achievements or strengthening their efforts, the spotlight is repeatedly shifted to fault-finding. This pattern does not just question institu-



tions—it silently discourages the educators who dedicate their lives to shaping future generations.

One must ask what message are we sending to those who are trying to do better?

In most parts of the country, private schools are viewed as partners in progress. They are encouraged, supported, and seen as an essential component of the educational ecosystem. However, in Jammu and Kashmir, the story appears different. Here, mistrust often replaces cooperation, and scrutiny often overshadows support. This contrast is not only unfortunate, it is deeply concerning.

No one denies the importance of regulation. Accountability is necessary, and standards must be maintained. But regulation without empathy, and oversight without encouragement, can create an environment of fear rather than growth. Education cannot thrive under constant pressure and public criticism. It flourishes in an atmosphere of trust, collaboration, and shared purpose.

If we genuinely aspire to elevate the standard of

education in our region, then our approach must evolve. Private institutions should not be seen as adversaries to be controlled, but as partners to be empowered. Their efforts must be recognized, their challenges understood, and their contributions valued.

Because in the end, this is not a debate about institutions or policies, it is about our children, their opportunities, and their future.

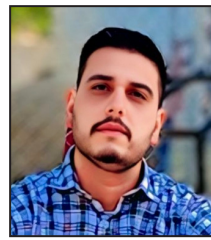
To continue on a path of unnecessary criticism is to risk discouraging progress. But to choose collaboration is to build a stronger, more enlightened society.

It is time we ask ourselves honestly: Will we continue to target those who are trying to uplift education, or will we stand beside them and move forward together?

The future of Kashmir's education depends on the answer.

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## Beyond Smiles and Status



■ **JAWAID IQBAL**

In the grand theatre of human existence, few phenomena possess the quiet profundity and transformative potency of friendship. It is a covenant neither inscribed in law nor bound by blood, yet it has historically surpassed both in intimacy and resilience. However, as the tectonic plates of civilization have shifted under the weight of technological acceleration, cultural reconfiguration, and moral ambivalence, the very ontology of friendship has undergone a subtle yet disquieting mutation. The friendships of yesteryears, imbued with sincerity, constancy, and organic evolution, now stand in stark juxtaposition to the contemporary constructs of association—often transient, performative, and precariously anchored in superficial validation.

The Past: An Epoch of Unfeigned Affection and Enduring Loyalty. In earlier times, friendship was neither a commodity to be acquired nor a status to be displayed; it was an experience to be lived and a bond to be nurtured. It germinated in the fertile soils of shared adversity, mutual dependence, and unarticulated understanding. The absence of digital mediation endowed relationships with an authenticity that modern interactions frequently lack. Communication was deliberate, often face-to-face or through handwritten correspondence, which imbued each exchange with emotional gravitas.

Friendships were not forged in haste but cultivated over time through patience and shared experiences. The lexicon of loyalty was not reduced to ephemeral gestures but manifested in tangible

acts—standing beside a friend in adversity, safeguarding confidences with unwavering discretion, and offering counsel devoid of ulterior motives. Trust was not demanded; it was earned, often through silent demonstrations of integrity.

Moreover, earlier friendships were not plagued by the incessant need for validation. The absence of social comparison frameworks, such as those perpetuated by modern digital platforms, meant that individuals valued companionship for its intrinsic worth rather than its perceived social capital. A friend was not an accessory but an extension of one's own emotional universe.

The Present: A Paradigm of Superficial Connectivity and Fragile Alliances

Contrastingly, the contemporary epoch has witnessed the commodification of friendship, wherein relationships are frequently predicated upon convenience, utility, and performative engagement. The advent of social media has engendered an illusion of connectivity while simultaneously eroding the depth of interpersonal bonds. One may possess an extensive network of "friends" in the virtual realm, yet remain ensnared in profound loneliness. Modern friendships often emerge with alarming rapidity, bypassing the natural processes of trust-building and emotional investment. They are susceptible to dissolution at the slightest inconvenience, revealing a fragility that would have been inconceivable in earlier times. The transactional nature of many present-day relationships—wherein individuals are valued for their utility rather than their essence—has rendered friendship a precarious endeavor. Furthermore, the performative aspect of contemporary interactions cannot be overlooked. Expressions of affection are frequently curated for public consumption rather than genuine emotional exchange. The sanctity of private companionship has been supplanted by the spectacle of

public display, wherein the authenticity of emotions is often subordinated to the pursuit of social validation.

In an era characterized by duplicity and superficial charm, discerning genuine friends from counterfeit companions has become an arduous yet indispensable task. Authentic friendship is not proclaimed through grandiloquent declarations but revealed through consistent actions. A true friend is one who remains steadfast in your absence, who celebrates your triumphs without envy, and who offers constructive criticism without malice.

Conversely, the counterfeit friend is often identifiable by inconsistency, opportunism, and an underlying current of self-interest. They are present in moments of convenience but conspicuously absent in times of need. Their words may be adorned with affection, yet their actions betray a lack of genuine concern.

To believe in someone, therefore, necessitates a judicious evaluation of their conduct over time. Trust must be conferred cautiously, not as an act of naïveté but as a measured response to demonstrated reliability. It is imperative to heed not merely what individuals say, but what they consistently do.

Guarding the Self: Strategies to Evade the Snare of Inauthentic Relationships

To remain insulated from the pernicious influence of insincere friendships, one must cultivate a heightened sense of self-awareness and discernment. The following principles serve as a bulwark against emotional exploitation:

**Prioritize Quality over Quantity:** It is far preferable to possess a handful of genuine friends than a multitude of superficial acquaintances. Depth of connection invariably surpasses breadth.

**Observe Patterns, Not Promises:** Individuals reveal their true character through repeated behavior. Do not be swayed by eloquent assurances; instead,

evaluate consistency.

**Establish Boundaries:** Emotional boundaries are not manifestations of coldness but instruments of self-preservation. Learn to delineate the extent of your vulnerability.

**Value Reciprocity:** A friendship devoid of mutual effort is inherently imbalanced. Genuine relationships thrive on reciprocity, not unilateral sacrifice.

**Trust Intuition:** The human psyche often perceives incongruities before the conscious mind articulates them. An uneasy feeling is frequently a harbinger of underlying insincerity.

**Detach from Validation:** The desire for external approval can render individuals susceptible to manipulation. Cultivate self-worth independent of others' perceptions.

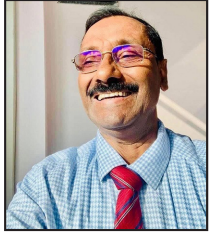
**Conclusion: Reclaiming the Essence of Friendship**

The metamorphosis of friendship from an enduring covenant to a transient association is a reflection of broader societal transformations. Yet, it would be erroneous to succumb to cynicism and dismiss the possibility of genuine companionship in the modern age. Authentic friendships, though rarer, continue to exist as luminous exceptions amidst the prevailing obscurity.

The onus lies upon individuals to embody the very virtues they seek in others—integrity, loyalty, empathy, and sincerity. For in a world inundated with artifice, the most profound act of defiance is to remain genuine. By cultivating discernment and upholding personal values, one can navigate the labyrinth of modern relationships without forfeiting the essence of true friendship.

Ultimately, friendship, in its purest form, transcends temporal boundaries. It is neither confined to the past nor extinguished in the present; it endures wherever there exist hearts willing to connect beyond pretense, beyond convenience, and beyond the ephemeral allure of superficiality.

# Orwell's 1984: An Enduring Philosophical Inquiry



■ DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

To understand Nineteen Eighty-Four as an enduring philosophical inquiry is to recognize that its power does not lie merely in its dystopian narrative, but in the way it transforms fiction into a space for relentless questioning. George Orwell does not offer answers; instead, he constructs a world in which the very possibility of answers is destabilized. The ending, often described as "unexplained," is in fact the point where literature dissolves into philosophy—where narrative certainty gives way to existential doubt. At the core of this inquiry is the nature of truth. Orwell's fictional regime insists that truth is not objective but manufactured, mutable, and subject to authority. George Orwell's 1984 remains one of the most unsettling and intellectually provocative novels of the twentieth century, not merely because of its grim depiction of a totalitarian future, but because of its deeply ambiguous and haunting ending. Readers across generations have grappled with the final transformation of Winston Smith, a transformation so complete and so psychologically disturbing that it raises questions which seem, even today, resistant to definitive answers. The ending of 1984 is often described as "unexplained," not because the events themselves are unclear, but because their philosophical, psychological, and moral implications defy closure. Orwell does not provide a comforting resolution; instead, he leaves us in a space of profound unease, forcing us to confront the terrifying possibility that truth, individuality, and resistance can be entirely extinguished.

The Party's doctrine that reality exists only in the human mind—and that the Party controls that mind—echoes and distorts philosophical traditions such as idealism, which argues that reality is mentally constructed. Yet Orwell's vision is not a neutral exploration of metaphysics; it is a warning. If truth becomes entirely dependent on power, then epistemology—the study of knowledge—collapses into politics. The question is no longer "What is true?" but "Who decides what is true?" This shift is profoundly unsettling, and Orwell leaves it unresolved, forcing readers to confront the fragility of their own assumptions about reality. At the heart of the novel's conclusion lies Winston's betrayal of Julia and his subsequent "conversion" to the ideology of the Party. After enduring brutal torture in the Ministry of Love, particularly under the

calculated manipulation of O'Brien, Winston reaches a breaking point in Room 101. Faced with his deepest fear—rats—he begs that the horror be inflicted on Julia instead of himself. This moment is not simply an act of betrayal; it is the destruction of the last vestige of Winston's humanity.

Love, which had served as a form of rebellion against the Party, is annihilated. Orwell suggests that the Party's ultimate goal is not merely to control behavior but to conquer the inner life of individuals, to reshape their emotions, loyalties, and perceptions of reality. Yet the ambiguity of the ending lies in what follows. Winston is released back into society, seemingly rehabilitated. He spends his days in the Chestnut Tree Café, drinking Victory Gin and playing chess. He has become a hollow man, devoid of independent thought. When he encounters Julia again, their conversation is brief and emotionally barren; both admit to having betrayed each other. Their love has not merely faded—it has been erased, replaced by indifference. The Party has succeeded in its most insidious aim: it has severed the emotional bonds that could have sustained resistance.

The final lines of the novel are among the most chilling in modern literature: Winston looks up at a poster of Big Brother and realizes that he loves him. This declaration has puzzled and disturbed readers for decades. Does Winston truly love Big Brother, or is this merely a conditioned response, a survival mechanism masquerading as genuine emotion? Orwell offers no explicit explanation, and it is precisely this lack of clarity that has fueled endless debate. One interpretation is that Winston's love for Big Brother is entirely artificial, a product of psychological conditioning so thorough that it overrides his former self. The Party's methods—constant surveillance, propaganda, torture, and the manipulation of language—are designed to break down the individual's capacity for independent thought. In this view, Winston's final state is not one of genuine belief but of total submission.

However, another interpretation suggests that Winston's transformation is not merely imposed but, in a twisted sense, real. The Party does not settle for outward compliance; it demands inward conviction. O'Brien explicitly states that the Party seeks to create a world in which power is an end in itself, where reality exists only in the human mind, and the Party controls that mind. If Winston genuinely comes to love Big Brother, then the Party has achieved something even more terrifying than coercion: it has redefined reality itself. In this reading, the ending is not ambiguous because it is unclear, but because it confronts us with a possibility we are reluctant to accept—that human consciousness can be reshaped so completely that even love can be manufactured.

The unexplained nature of the ending also relates to Orwell's treatment of truth.

Throughout the novel, the Party insists that reality is subjective, that truth exists only insofar as the Party defines it. The famous equation "2 + 2 = 5" symbolizes this assault on objective reality. By the end of the novel, Winston accepts this logic, not merely intellectually but emotionally. He sees five fingers when O'Brien holds up four, and he believes it. This raises a profound question: if a person can be made to believe something that is demonstrably false, does truth still exist in any meaningful sense? Orwell does not resolve this question; instead, he leaves it hanging, forcing readers to grapple with the implications.

Another layer of ambiguity arises from the role of memory. Winston's resistance is initially rooted in his belief that the past has been falsified by the Party. He clings to fragments of memory as evidence of an objective reality beyond the Party's control. However, as the novel progresses, even these memories become unreliable. By the end, Winston's recollections have been so thoroughly manipulated that he can no longer trust them. The past, like the present, has been subsumed by the Party's narrative. This erasure of memory contributes to the sense that the ending is "unexplained," because it removes the foundation upon which explanation itself depends. Without a stable sense of reality, how can any conclusion be fully understood?

The psychological dimension of Winston's transformation is perhaps the most unsettling aspect of the ending. Orwell portrays torture not merely as a means of extracting information but as a tool for reshaping identity. O'Brien's interrogation is methodical and philosophical; he seeks to dismantle Winston's beliefs and reconstruct them in accordance with the Party's ideology. This process raises questions about the limits of human resilience. Is there a point beyond which resistance becomes impossible? Can any individual withstand such sustained psychological assault? Orwell does not offer a definitive answer, but Winston's fate suggests a bleak conclusion: under certain conditions, the human spirit can be broken entirely.

At the same time, the ending resists a purely deterministic interpretation. Orwell does not explicitly state that Winston's transformation is inevitable or universal. Instead, he presents it as a possibility—one that serves as a warning rather than a prophecy. The ambiguity lies in the tension between inevitability and contingency. Is Winston's fate the result of extraordinary circumstances, or does it reveal a fundamental vulnerability in human nature? The novel does not resolve this tension, leaving readers to draw their own conclusions.

Furthermore, the ending invites readers to consider their own relationship to truth and authority. Winston's transformation is extreme, but it raises questions that are

relevant beyond the fictional world of 1984. To what extent are our beliefs shaped by external influences? How do we distinguish between genuine conviction and indoctrination? Orwell does not provide answers, but he compels us to confront these questions, making the novel as relevant today as it was at the time of its publication. The final image of Winston sitting in the café, gazing at the poster of Big Brother, encapsulates the novel's enduring power. It is an image of defeat, but also of ambiguity. Has Winston found a form of peace, however hollow, in his submission? Or is his apparent contentment merely another layer of control, masking a deeper emptiness? The novel does not tell us. Instead, it leaves us with a sense of unresolved tension, a recognition that the questions it raises cannot be easily answered.

In this sense, the ending of 1984 remains "unexplained" not because it lacks meaning, but because it contains too much of it. It resists closure, inviting multiple interpretations and challenging readers to engage with its complexities. Orwell's refusal to provide a definitive conclusion is a testament to his understanding of the issues he explores. Totalitarianism, truth, memory, and identity are not problems that can be neatly resolved; they are ongoing struggles, both within individuals and within societies. Ultimately, the power of 1984 lies in its ability to unsettle. The ending does not comfort or reassure; it disturbs and provokes. It forces us to consider the fragility of the values we often take for granted and the potential consequences of their erosion. In leaving the ending unexplained, Orwell ensures that the novel continues to resonate, challenging each new generation of readers to confront its implications.

Thus, the ambiguity of Winston's final declaration—his love for Big Brother—is not a gap to be filled but a space to be inhabited. It is a reminder that the most important questions are often those that cannot be answered definitively. In this unresolved ending, Orwell achieves something remarkable: he transforms a work of fiction into an enduring philosophical inquiry, one that remains as urgent and as unsettling today as it was when 1984 was first published.

Winston begins the novel with a fragile sense of individuality, sustained by memory, desire, and a longing for truth. By the end, this self has been dismantled. The question arises: what constitutes personal identity? Is it memory, emotion, belief, or some deeper, inviolable core? Orwell's narrative seems to suggest that the self is not as stable as we might hope. Under sufficient pressure, it can be reshaped, even erased. This resonates with existentialist concerns, particularly those of thinkers like Jean-Paul Sartre, who argued that identity is not fixed but constructed through experience and choice. Yet Orwell pushes this idea into darker territory:

what happens when those choices are no longer free, when they are coerced and manipulated?

The ending of the novel intensifies this philosophical tension. Winston's declaration that he loves Big Brother is not simply a narrative conclusion; it is a paradox. Love, traditionally understood as a deeply personal and authentic emotion, becomes an instrument of control. This raises unsettling ethical questions. Can genuine emotion be manufactured? If a person believes they love something, does it matter whether that belief is freely chosen or imposed? Orwell does not resolve these questions, leaving readers in a state of moral and psychological ambiguity. Memory, too, becomes a site of philosophical inquiry. The Party's systematic rewriting of history challenges the very notion of an objective past. If all records are altered and all memories are unreliable, does the past have any independent existence? This dilemma touches on debates within historiography and epistemology. Moreover, the philosophical significance of 1984 extends beyond its fictional world. It invites readers to examine the structures of power, language, and belief in their own societies. The novel does not claim that reality is identical to its dystopia, but it suggests that the mechanisms of control it depicts are not entirely alien. This is why the ending feels so unsettling; it blurs the boundary between fiction and reality, between possibility and inevitability.

In this sense, 1984 functions as a kind of thought experiment. It asks: what would happen if certain tendencies—toward surveillance, propaganda, and the manipulation of truth—were taken to their logical extreme? The answer it provides is not definitive but suggestive, leaving room for interpretation and debate. This openness is what allows the novel to remain relevant across different historical contexts. Each generation can read it anew, finding in its pages reflections of its own concerns and anxieties. Ultimately, the unexplained ending of 1984 is not a gap to be filled but a deliberate space for reflection. It compels readers to grapple with questions that have no easy answers, to confront the possibility that the foundations of reality and selfhood are more fragile than we might like to believe. In doing so, Orwell transforms a work of fiction into a lasting philosophical dialogue—one that continues to provoke, disturb, and inspire long after the final page has been turned.

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## Education Know No Age Limit Age Is Just A Number



■ MOOLRAJ

Sometimes, the most powerful stories of transformation are not written in the early chapters of life, but in its later pages—when hope seems faint and opportunities long gone. Yesterday was one such moment, where silence met courage and hesitation slowly gave way to determination. In the gentle hum of an assessment centre, under the quiet promise of ULLAS Scheme, I witnessed something deeply moving: lives that had carried the weight of missed chances finally pausing to reclaim what was once left behind. It was not just about learning to read or write, it was about rediscovering self-worth, about proving to oneself that it is never too late to begin again.

At its heart, ULLAS – Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society – is far more than a policy document or a time-bound programme. It is a humane effort to restore lost opportunities and

rekindle fading dreams. Aligned with National Education Policy 2020, it strives to provide foundational literacy, numeracy and essential life skills to those who were once left behind by circumstances beyond their control. Rooted in the spirit of Kartavyabodh – a sense of collective duty, it draws strength from volunteers: students, teachers and ordinary citizens who step forward to become torchbearers of light. In doing so, ULLAS is not merely teaching alphabets and numbers, it is restoring self-worth, rebuilding confidence and breathing hope into hearts that had quietly accepted illiteracy as their fate. It gently tells them: 'Your story is not over yet.'

They came, hesitant footsteps echoing years of silence, wrinkled hands holding pens as if reconnecting with a long-lost companion. Men and women in their 40s, 50s, even 60s. Some arrived as couples, walking side by side in shared resolve; others came as grandparents, carrying both the weight of years and the innocence of first-time learners. They were united by a common truth, that life had demanded responsibilities too early, leaving no room for classrooms, books or dreams of education. Childhood slipped into adulthood and education remained a distant, unfulfilled chapter.

There was a visible hesitation in their eyes when they first entered. A quiet discomfort, a sense of unfamiliarity, even a trace of embarrassment as if they were stepping into a world they believed no longer belonged to them. A silent question lingered in the air, 'Is it too late for us?' But as they sat down, as answer sheets were placed before them, something beautiful began to unfold. Courage slowly replaced doubt. The same hands that had spent decades working tirelessly for their families now attempted to write letters, words and thoughts. It was not just an assessment, it was an act of reclaiming something deeply personal.

I had the privilege of being among them – not merely as a facilitator, but as a witness to their quiet resilience. I guided them gently, explained what was expected and encouraged them to trust their own ability. And in those moments, I did not see 'illiterate adults'. I saw individuals filled with strength, humility and an unspoken determination to rewrite their own narrative. Some smiled softly after managing to write a few words, as if they had achieved something monumental. Some paused often, reflecting not just on the paper in front of them, but on the years gone by. A few voices, trembling yet honest, spoke of regret. "Why they had never been to

school, why life had denied them this simple yet powerful gift." There was pain in those words, a sense of incompleteness they had carried for decades.

Yet, amidst that pain, there was something even more powerful – hope. I told them what I deeply believe: learning does not belong to age; it belongs to the will. That no moment is too late to begin, and no effort is ever wasted. Slowly, those words found a place in their hearts. Their hesitation softened, their eyes began to shine with a quiet confidence and their grip on the pen became firmer. It did not matter whether the answers were perfect. What mattered was their courage to try. What mattered was that they had shown up. What mattered was that they had refused to give up on themselves.

As they walked out of the centres, there was a visible transformation. Their steps were steadier, their faces carried a sense of achievement and their smiles – though gentle, spoke volumes. They had not just taken a test; they had broken a lifelong barrier. They carried with them a silent promise – to return, to learn, to grow... to not let this second chance slip away. Perhaps, for the world, it was just another phase of an assessment. But for them, it was a beginning, a deeply emotional, long-awaited beginning.

Yesterday reminded me that education is not confined to classrooms or age brackets. It is a light that can be kindled at any stage of life. And sometimes, the most powerful stories are not of those who started early, but of those who dared to begin... even when the world thought it was too late. In those humble rooms, amidst simple desks and answer sheets, I witnessed something extraordinary – not just learning, but healing... not just writing, but reclaiming... not just education, but dignity restored.

This is the true promise of ULLAS Scheme – not merely the ability to read and write, but the power to live with independence and self-respect. It opens doors to understanding everyday realities – reading a prescription, signing one's name, helping grandchildren with studies or simply navigating life without dependence. In its essence, ULLAS is not just creating literate individuals; it is nurturing empowered citizens, restoring voices that were once silent and turning years of regret into moments of pride. And perhaps its greatest achievement lies in this, that it replaces the quiet pain of "I wish I had learned" with the hopeful resolve of "I am still learning."

**THE AUTHOR IS A REGULAR COLUMNIST AND FREELANCE WRITER**

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# Numb Within: The Silent Drift of Emotion

■ DR. SURINDERPAL SINGH

Emotional anesthesia is a psychological state in which a person becomes numb or less responsive to emotions, both positive and negative. Much like medical anesthesia dulls physical pain, emotional anesthesia reduces emotional sensitivity and intensity. A person experiencing it may feel detached, empty, or disconnected from their surroundings, struggling to experience joy, sadness, or empathy in their full depth. Situations that once carried emotional meaning may now feel distant or insignificant. Reactions become muted, and life may seem to unfold without the same emotional color. Importantly, this condition is not always a disorder; it can emerge as a temporary coping mechanism, though for some individuals it may evolve into a prolonged pattern that shapes their daily existence.

At its core, emotional anesthesia develops as a defense mechanism. Human beings are not designed to endure constant emotional overload. When stress, trauma, or repeated emotional strain becomes too intense, the mind instinctively protects itself by turning down the volume of emotional experience. This internal adjustment is not a conscious choice but a survival response. Experiences such as personal loss, chronic stress, burnout in academic or professional life, and even continuous exposure to distressing news or digital content can push individuals toward this state. Fear also plays a powerful role—fear of vulnerability, fear of rejection, and fear of being hurt again can all contribute to emotional withdrawal. In simple terms, when feeling too much becomes painful, the brain adapts by choosing to feel less.

In the context of the modern world, emotional anesthesia is becoming increasingly visible, particularly among younger generations such as Gen Z and millennials. The reasons for this shift are deeply rooted in the changing structure of contemporary life. One of the most significant factors is digital overload. Today's generation is constantly connected to a stream of information, social media updates, and global news. While this connectivity offers awareness and engagement, it also creates emotional fatigue. Continuous exposure to intense and often negative content gradually desensitizes individuals. When

every headline is urgent and every post demands attention, the emotional system becomes overwhelmed. As a result, the mind begins to dull its responses, leading to a state where nothing feels as impactful as it once did.

Alongside digital overload, the fast-paced lifestyle of modern society contributes significantly to emotional numbness. There is a persistent emphasis on productivity, achievement, and performance. Individuals are encouraged to move quickly from one goal to the next, often without pausing to reflect on their emotional experiences. This constant motion leaves little space for processing feelings. Over time, unprocessed emotions accumulate, and the mind responds by shutting down emotional engagement altogether. In such an environment, emotional expression may even be perceived as a weakness, further reinforcing the tendency to suppress feelings.

Social comparison is another powerful driver of emotional anesthesia. Social media platforms often present curated versions of reality, showcasing success, happiness, and perfection. Constant exposure to these idealized images can lead individuals to question their own worth and achievements. Instead of feeling inspired, many experience inadequacy and self-doubt. To cope with these uncomfortable emotions, they may withdraw emotionally, choosing not to engage deeply with their own feelings. This withdrawal gradually contributes to a broader sense of numbness.

Fear of vulnerability also plays a crucial role, particularly among younger individuals. In a world where opinions are quickly judged and shared, expressing emotions openly can feel risky. Past experiences of disappointment or rejection can reinforce this fear, leading individuals to build emotional barriers. Many prefer independence and self-reliance over emotional dependence, believing it to be safer. However, this self-protection often comes at the cost of genuine emotional connection.

Despite its seemingly negative nature, emotional anesthesia is not entirely without purpose. In certain situations, it serves as a valuable protective mechanism. During moments of crisis or extreme stress, emotional detachment can help individuals remain functional and composed. For



example, healthcare professionals, emergency responders, or individuals facing life-threatening situations often rely on a degree of emotional distance to perform effectively. In such cases, emotional anesthesia allows them to focus on immediate tasks without being overwhelmed by emotional reactions.

Additionally, reduced emotional interference can sometimes enhance decision-making. When emotions are temporarily subdued, individuals may be able to think more logically and make clearer judgments, especially in high-stakes situations. Emotional anesthesia can also provide a temporary refuge during periods of grief, loss, or trauma. It creates a psychological buffer, giving individuals the time and space needed to gradually process their experiences. However, it is important to recognize that these benefits are primarily short-term. When emotional numbness persists beyond its protective purpose, it begins to create more harm than good.

The long-term risks of emotional anesthesia are significant. One of the most profound consequences is the erosion of meaningful relationships. Emotional connection is the foundation of human interaction, and when individuals are unable to fully experience or express emotions,

their relationships may become shallow or distant. Empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, also diminishes. This can lead to misunderstandings, isolation, and a sense of disconnection from the social world.

Another major impact is the loss of motivation and joy. Emotions are closely linked to purpose and engagement. When individuals feel disconnected from their emotions, they may struggle to find meaning in their activities. Achievements may feel hollow, and experiences that once brought happiness may no longer have the same effect. Over time, this can lead to mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, or dissociation. Emotional anesthesia, while protecting individuals from pain, simultaneously distances them from happiness and fulfillment.

A key question that arises is whether emotional anesthesia is inherited or developed. The evidence suggests that it is largely shaped by experience rather than genetics. Environmental influences, cultural expectations, and personal coping mechanisms play a central role in its development. For instance, individuals raised in environments where emotional expression is discouraged may learn to suppress their feelings from an early age. Similarly,

repeated exposure to stress or trauma can condition the brain to adopt emotional shutdown as a default response.

That said, biology does have a partial influence. Certain personality traits, such as being naturally more sensitive or less expressive, can affect how individuals respond to emotional challenges. Differences in brain chemistry and stress-response systems may also influence the likelihood of developing emotional numbness. However, these biological factors do not directly cause emotional anesthesia; rather, they shape how individuals interact with their experiences.

The encouraging aspect of emotional anesthesia is that it is often reversible. Reconnecting with emotions requires intentional effort and patience, but it is entirely possible. One of the most effective approaches is mindfulness, which involves becoming aware of one's thoughts and feelings without judgment. Mindfulness practices help individuals gradually reconnect with their emotional experiences and develop a deeper understanding of themselves.

Open communication is equally important. Talking to trusted friends, family members, or mentors can provide a safe space for emotional expression. Sharing experiences and feelings helps break the cycle of emotional suppression and fosters connection. Professional support, such as therapy or counseling, can also be highly beneficial. Mental health professionals can guide individuals through the process of understanding and addressing the underlying causes of emotional numbness.

Reducing digital overload is another crucial step. Limiting exposure to excessive social media and negative news can help restore emotional balance. Engaging in meaningful real-life experiences, such as spending time in nature, pursuing hobbies, or building genuine relationships, can also rekindle emotional sensitivity. The goal is not to eliminate emotional protection entirely but to achieve a balanced emotional state where individuals can experience both positive and negative emotions in a healthy way.

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



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## World Health Day 2026 Observed At SKIMS Medical College Bemina With Academic Deliberations & Community Outreach

SKIMS Principal Prof. (Dr.) Fazlul Parray Highlights Importance Of Early Prevention & Public Health Awareness

■ AADIL BASHIR

SRINAGAR, APR 08: On the occasion of World Health Day 2026, the Department of Community Medicine, SKIMS Medical College & Hospital Bemina organised a comprehensive programme combining academic discussions with community outreach initiatives, in line with the global theme "Together for Health, Stand with Science." The activities highlighted the institution's continued commitment towards strengthening evidence-based healthcare and promoting preventive health awareness at the grassroots level.

The institutional academic programme was held at the college auditorium under the guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Ashfaq Ahmad Bhat, Professor and Head, Department of Community Medicine, who also served as the Organising Chairperson, while Prof. (Dr.) Fazlul Qadir Parray, Principal, SKIMS Medical College & Hospital, Bemina, was the Patron of the event.

In his address, Prof. (Dr.) Fazlul Qadir Parray emphasised the growing importance of scientific evidence and ethical medical practice in addressing emerging public health challenges.

"The observance of World Health Day reminds us that strong healthcare systems must be built on scientific evidence, ethical medical practice and collaborative engagement across disciplines. Initiatives that promote awareness, prevention and early intervention are vital for ensuring better health outcomes and strengthening public trust in healthcare institutions," said Prof. (Dr.) Fazlul Qadir Parray.

The programme commenced with a welcome



address by Prof. (Dr.) Ashfaq Ahmad Bhat, who highlighted the significance of the global theme and underscored the role of community medicine in bridging the gap between clinical science and public health awareness.

The academic session featured expert talks and a panel discussion by distinguished faculty members including Dr. Yasmeen Jan (Associate Professor, Community Medicine), Dr. Muzaffar Naik (Associate Professor, General Medicine), Dr. Sameera Imran (Associate Professor, Pharmacology) and Dr. Nizam-ud-Din Dar (Associate Professor, Psychiatry). The deliberations focused

on the need for interdisciplinary collaboration, rational healthcare strategies and strengthening preventive approaches in tackling contemporary health challenges.

A poster competition for undergraduate students was among the major highlights of the programme, encouraging innovation and awareness on key public health issues. The entries were evaluated by an expert panel comprising Dr. Sieqa Shah (Associate Professor, Obstetrics & Gynaecology), Dr. Shams ul Bari (Associate Professor, General Surgery), Dr. Afiya Shafi (Professor & Head, Pathology) and Dr. Syed Arshi (Professor &

Head, Microbiology).

The final winners Mehdiya Javid Shah (First Prize), Nayeema Amin (Second Prize) and Amman Shuja (Third Prize) were felicitated for their commendable contributions and creative presentations.

As part of its outreach programme, the department also conducted a community awareness programme at Lawaypora School, aimed at promoting healthy lifestyle practices, preventive healthcare awareness and early identification of common health concerns among school children.

The outreach programme began with introductory remarks by Dr. Beenish Mush-

taq (Associate Professor, Community Medicine), who highlighted the importance of developing healthy habits from an early age. An interactive session by Dr. Fahd Bukhari, Senior Resident, focused on healthy lifestyle practices and nutritional anaemia, effectively engaging students through discussion-based learning.

Students of Class 10th also participated in a panel discussion on the growing burden of cancer, followed by an interactive question-and-answer session. Simultaneously, general physical examinations of students from Classes 4th and 5th were conducted by Dr. Altaf along with team members Dr. Sanjeeda (Intern) and MBBS student Krishna Sahu. A dental screening for the same group was carried out by Dr. Ishtiyaz (Dental Surgeon), emphasising the importance of oral hygiene and regular check-ups.

The programme concluded with an informative session on menstrual hygiene by Dr. Najma, Senior Resident, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, for students of Classes 5th and 6th. The session was conducted in a sensitive, age-appropriate manner aimed at promoting awareness and removing stigma around adolescent health issues.

The overall event reaffirmed the commitment of the Department of Community Medicine, SKIMS Medical College & Hospital, Bemina, towards promoting scientific temper, strengthening evidence-based healthcare practices and encouraging active student participation in public health initiatives, in line with the broader objective of building a healthier and more informed society.

# JKCSF Kupwara Reaffirms Commitment to Welfare with New Induction

Senior Pharmacist Shri Jaffer Hussain Joins JKCSF Kupwara

■ DR.AB QAYOOM

**KUPWARA, APR, 08:**The Jammu & Kashmir Civil Society Forum (JKCSF), Kupwara, accorded a warm and dignified welcome to Mr. Jaffer Sahib, a respected and experienced pharmacist, on his formal joining of the organization. The joining ceremony was held in the presence of Chairman JKCSF, Abdul Qayoom Wani, along with other senior functionaries and members of the forum. Prominent among those present were Senior Vice President Mohd Suliman Bhat, Provincial President Mir Fayaz, District President Malik Ghulam Hassan, Vice President JKPUF Kupwara Gh Rasool Bhat, General Secretary JKCSF Kupwara Syed Mehraj Din, Financial Secretary Ab Ahad Bhat, and General Secretary JKPUF Arshad Mohidin, besides other district members. Speaking on the occasion, the members expressed satisfaction over Jaffer Hussain's inclusion, stating that



his vast professional experience and dedication would significantly strengthen the forum and enhance its outreach in public service. The leadership emphasized that his association would be a valuable asset not only to the Civil Society Forum but

also to the Pensioners United Front (JKPUF), contributing positively towards community welfare initiatives. The event concluded with a collective resolve by the members to continue working in unity for the betterment and welfare of society.

## Medical Shops Sealed in Kulgam for Violating Drug Norms

■ FAROOQ RATHER

**KULGAM, APR 8:** Kulgam Police on Tuesday launched a major enforcement drive in the Devsar area against violations of drug control regulations, resulting in the sealing of multiple medical shops. The inspection was carried out by police teams from Police Station Devsar in coordination with the Drug Control Department. During the drive, two medical shops were found involved in serious violations related to the handling of scheduled/NRX drugs, raising concerns about possible misuse and diversion.

Officials said that Irfan Medical Store, registered under No. JKPC/32C/8416 (valid up to July 8, 2026), was sealed for violation of Section 18 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act due to non-maintenance of mandatory records of NRX drugs. Similarly, Alshafa Medical Store was seized for violations under Section 22(d) read with Section 18 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act on the same grounds.

In addition, two other medical shops were temporarily sealed for failing to comply with CCTV installation norms, which authorities described as essential for monitoring and accountability. Police said further legal action is being initiated against the erring shopkeepers as per law. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kulgam, Anayat Ali Choudhary (IPS), said that the police have a zero-tolerance policy towards violations in the sale and distribution of regulated medicines. He warned that strict action will be taken against defaulters and advised all medical shop owners to maintain proper records and ensure installation of CCTV systems.

Kulgam Police reiterated its commitment to ensuring strict enforcement of laws to prevent misuse of pharmaceutical substances and safeguard public health.

## 32nd Death Anniversary of Ghulam Qadir Mir Observed in Murran

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**PULWAMA, APR 9:** The 32nd death anniversary of Ghulam Qadir Mir, popularly known as Shere Murran, was solemnly observed today at Murran, with several social and political organisations paying heartfelt tributes to the late freedom struggle member and respected social figure.

On April 9, 1994, unknown armed men shot dead Ghulam Qadir Mir at his residence in Murran Pulwama, leaving the community in deep shock and grief. Even decades later, his legacy of courage, social service and dedication to public welfare continues to be remembered across the district.

Among those paying homage was the Jammu & Kashmir National Conference, which organised remembrance events and highlighted the sacrifices and contributions of the late leader. Party president Ferooz Abdullah, along with other senior leaders, recalled Mir's commitment to the people and said his services would remain etched in public memory. Speakers described Shere-e- Murran as a symbol of resilience and community leadership whose life inspired generations. Floral tributes and prayers were offered, with participants pledging to carry forward his ideals of service, unity and dedication to society.

Locals and party workers said the anniversary serves as a reminder of the sacrifices made by individuals who devoted their lives to the welfare of their people, affirming that Ghulam Qadir Mir's legacy will continue to inspire future generations.



### Public Notice

I have Lost my 10Th class Marks card, certificate bearing reg no Reg no N18480560012 Roll no 5214231 now I am applying for it's duplicate in this regard if anybody having any objection may file the same to government Boys higher secondary school Handwara / Board office Kupwara within 7 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

**SAIM RASHID S/O ABDUL RASHID KHAN R/O KULAN GAM TEHSIL HANDWARA DISTRICT KUPWARA**

### Public Notice-

**It is to inform the general public that I, Gh. Haider S/O- Haji Abass R/O- Tambis, Kargil wants to transfer my vehicle bearing registration number JK07 0920 to Ijaz Ali S/O- Haji Ghulam Abass R/O- Mangbor Akchmail. Anybody having any objection may contact ARTO Kargil within the seven days of this notice.**



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

Subject: Application AB MAJEED PARRA S/O AB HAMEED PARRA R/O KOKATHAL 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 KOKATHAL of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the PARRA community having annual income 440000// ( Four Lack Forty Thousand ) the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1..AB MAJEED PARRA self 49 years Farmer
- 2.SHAREEFA BEGUM wife 49 years H/W
- 3...ZAHID MAJEED Son 16 years student
- 4...ANZAR MAJEED Son 16 years student

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

**Naib Tehsild Kreeri**

### Public Notice

I have changed my name from (old name) HAJRA to (new name) HAJRA BANO. in future i will be known as (new name) HAJRA BANO. If anybody having any objection he/she may contact passport office, srinagar within 7 working days. after 7 days no objection will be accepted.

### Public Notice

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that the name and date of birth (D.O.B) of my son and daughter have been wrongly recorded in the school records as Zeeshan Tashreeq and Zahrea Tashreeq instead of their correct names Zeashan Tashreeq Rather and Zahrea Tashreeq Rather.

Further, the date of birth of both has been incorrectly entered as 12/09/2012 instead of the correct date 15/09/2013 respectively. Now, we intend to rectify/correct the said entries in the official school records.

If anybody has any objection regarding the above-mentioned correction, he/she may contact the Principal of Lavender Convent Secondary School within a period of seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

**Tashreeq Ahmad Rather  
Father of Zeashan Tashreeq Rather &  
Zahrea Tashreeq Rather**

### Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that my actual name is "Mohd Ali" S/O- Ghulam Mohammad, but it has been recorded wrongly in the Driving License bearing registration number LA01 2023000627 as "Mohd Ali" S/O- "Ghulam Moham". Now I want its correction to be done. Anybody having any objection may contact ARTO Kargil within the period of 7 days.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Abdul Khaliq Karnai, hereby inform the general public that I have lost the Registration Certificate (RC) of my vehicle (Grand i10 Sport) bearing registration No. HR10AD-9566 during travel from Qamarwari, Srinagar.

If anyone finds the above-mentioned document, they are kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the address given below or inform the concerned Police Station.

Further, I have applied for a duplicate copy of the said RC at the RTO Office Srinagar. If any person has any objection in this regard, they may contact the concerned office within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After the expiry of the stipulated period, no objection shall be entertained.

**Sajad Ahmad Khaliq  
S/o Abdul Khaliq Karnai  
R/o Parimpora, Srinagar  
Mobile No: 7006271822**

### Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill ) power connection is registered on my Fathers name Gh Mohi ud din Rather S/O Ab Khaliq Rather Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040003446 wants to be registered on my own name Irshad Ahmad Rather S/O Gh Mohi ud din Rather .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.

**IRSHAD AHMAD RATHER S/O GH MOHI UD DIN  
RATHER R/O WARIPORA BALA**

### Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill ) power connection is registered on my Father in Law name NOOR UD DIN SHAH S/O GH AHMAD SHAH R/O CHANDERSEERA Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0213040007978 wants to be registered on my name SYED RIYAZ AHMAD S/O SYED GHULAM MOHAMMAD R/O CHSNDERSEERA Tehsil PATTAN .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...SYED RIYAZ AHMAD  
S/O ..SYED GHULAM MOHAMMAD  
R/O ..CHANDERSEERA  
TEHSIL...PATTAN, DIVISION.... SOPORE**

### 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**

### 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**

## OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL GOVT BOYS, MODEL HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL BIJBEHARA

### Tender Notice For Running of School Canteen

Sealed tenders affixed with a revenue stamp of Rs. 5/- are invited from reputed registered canteen catering service providers for running of canteen at GOVERNMENT BOYS MODEL HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL BIJBEHARA for the Academic Year-2026-2027. The interested tenderers may collect the complete tender document from the Office of the Undersigned on any working day during Office hours. The last date for submission of tenders is 08-04-2026 to 14-04-2026 up-to 2:00 PM.

The intending tenderers must quote their rates on their letter heads against the list of items and before quoting/offering rates they are requested to go through the terms and conditions. Conditional, incomplete and ambiguous tenders shall be straightaway rejected.

The School Administration reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

**No: BHSS/BIJ/553/26 | Dated: 08-04-2026**

**Sd/- Principal, Govt Boys,  
Model Higher Secondary School Bijbehara**

**DIPK: 238/26 | Dated: 08-04-2026**

# DC Srinagar, Principal GMC interact with students & Faculty

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 08:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo and Principal Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, Prof Iffat Hassan Shah on Wednesday held an interactive session with faculty and students of GMC Srinagar and the Nursing College to assess their requirements with respect to infrastructural upgradation, improvement in civic services and augmentation of existing facilities.

Administrator GMC Srinagar, Mohammad Ashraf Hakak, Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Aadil Fareed, Joint Commissioner SMC, Nuzhat Khurshid, Executive Engineer, R&B, Abdul Qayoom, Medical Superintendent SMHS Hospital, Dr Andleeb, District Youth Services & Sports Officer, Ghulam Hassan and other senior officers

of the District Administration and GMC Srinagar were present on the occasion.

During the interaction, faculty and students highlighted requirements relating to development and upgradation of sports and recreational facilities, enhancement of library, reading room and smart classroom facilities, improvement of sanitation, civic facilities and hostel infrastructure, measures to address stray dog menace within and around the campus and macadamization, landscaping and green space development across the College premises.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC emphasized that interaction between administration and academia enables constructive solutions and meaningful progress through a coordinated approach. He assured the faculty and students of continued support from the District Administration



to ensure a safe, supportive and conducive environment for academic and welfare of the students.

He assured the students that all issues and demands put forth by them would be addressed on priority in a time bound manner.

Earlier, the Principal GMC Srinagar acknowledged the support and cooperation of District Administration for infrastructure upgradation at GMC Srinagar, including the commissioning of a receiving station that ensures uninterrupted power supply to SMHS Hospital, Super Speciality Hospital, Dental College, and Nursing College, allotment of land for construction of additional blocks, provisioning of enhanced street lights in and around the campus thereby enhancing healthcare services and operational efficiency in the College and its associated hospitals.

## DC Kulgam assesses implementation of Enterprise Mentorship Programme under Mission YUVA in district

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**KULGAM, APRIL 08:** Deputy Commissioner, Kulgam, Shahzad Alam today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress and implementation of the Enterprise Mentorship Programme under Mission YUVA in the district.

At the outset, a detailed overview of the programme was presented, highlighting key achievements and ongoing activities.

The chair was informed that a total of 21 enterprises have been successfully onboarded under the initiative so far.



It was further apprised that 8 mentors are currently engaged in conducting structured mentorship batches aimed at guiding and supporting aspiring entrepreneurs at various stages of their enterprise development journey.

While reviewing the progress, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need for scaling up the initiative to achieve broader outreach and impact.

He stressed upon the concerned departments and stakeholders to intensify efforts towards identification and onboarding of more viable enterprises across diverse sectors. He also underscored the importance of mobilizing and enrolling a larger pool of entrepreneurs in the mentorship batches to ensure maximum participation and benefit under Mission YUVA.

Highlighting the significance of mentorship in nurturing sustainable enterprises, the Deputy Commissioner called for close coordination among all stakeholders to ensure quality mentoring, regular monitoring, and effective handholding of beneficiaries.

The meeting also deliberated on strategies to enhance the effectiveness of mentorship sessions, streamline communication between mentors and mentees, and address any operational challenges being faced during implementation.

The meeting was attended by the CCO DE&CC Kulgam, IPO DIC Kulgam, SBDU/ BHD staff, and the on-boarded enterprise mentors.

## Several delegations meet Jal Shakti Minister at Mendhar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**MENDHAR, APRIL 08:** Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana today met several public delegations from different areas of his Mendhar constituency and listened to their grievances and development-related demands.



During the interaction, the delegations projected a range of issues pertaining to strengthening of health infrastructure, improvement of road connectivity, augmentation of electricity and drinking water supply.

Giving a patient hearing to the public representatives, the Minister issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned officers for immediate examination and time-bound resolution of the genuine issues raised by the delegations.

Reiterating Omar Abdullah led government's commitment towards equitable development and improved service delivery, the Minister assured the people that all priority concerns related to basic infrastructure and essential services would be addressed in a phased and systematic manner.

## SKUAST-K launches NextGen e-Plant Clinic at Shalimar Campus

VC inaugurates tech-driven agri-advisory ecosystem

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 8:** Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) today signalled a paradigm shift in regional agriculture with the inauguration of a high-tech ecosystem dedicated to digital advisory and farmer-centric innovation.

In a ceremony at the varsity's Directorate of Extension, Shalimar, Vice-Chancellor, Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai accompanied by University Officers, Heads of Divisions and Scientists launched a suite of next-generation facilities.

These include the e-Plant Health Clinic, Farmer School Centre, Agri-Clinic and Agri-Business Centre and the newly established Conference Hall of the Directorate of SAMETI Kashmir.



The launch was also attended by progressive farmers and orchardists who hailed the move as a 'game-changer' for the region.

Prof Ganai described the e-Plant Clinic as a critical bridge between laboratory breakthroughs and field-level reality. "We are moving from reactive to proactive agriculture," Prof Ganai said.

"This platform leverages digital

tools for the instant diagnosis of pests and diseases, ensuring that our farmers aren't just guessing, they are acting on scientific certainty", he added.

Director Extension, Prof Raihana Habib Kanth emphasized that these facilities are 'engines of capacity building.' She highlighted how the integration of the Agri-Business Incubation Centre will transform the local landscape by fostering a culture of innovation and startups among the educated youth.

Director Planning, Prof Haroon Naik said that SKUAST-K has solidified its position as a 'brand institution,' setting a national benchmark for how universities can drive regional prosperity. "The development reflects a perfect synergy between academia and funding agencies," Prof Naik added.

## Jammu Municipal Corporation, Jammu Smart City Limited announce Grand Tawi Mahotsav to celebrate Baisakhi

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 08:** Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) and Jammu Smart City Limited is preparing for the Swachh Tawi Mahotsav, a major celebration of local heritage and environmental care.

Being organized by the Housing and Urban Development Department, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, the event shall be held at the 4th Tawi Bridge to mark Baisakhi. The festival aims to highlight JMC's ongoing work to make Jammu a cleaner and more culturally active city under the Swachh Bharat Mission Urban 2.0.

The details were shared by JMC Commissioner Dr. Devansh Yadav at a press Conference held today in the presence of Joint Commissioner (H&S) Abdul Star and Joint Commissioner (R&E) Subah Mehta, along with Swachhata Champions, JMC officials, the Secretary and staff members who have worked on the city's cleanliness drives. Their involvement shows the teamwork behind managing this large-scale cultural and environmental project.

The festival offers a variety of activities for the public, including the Tawi Aarti and boating on the riverfront. To make it a family-friendly event for Baisakhi, JMC

is going to organize a traditional Mela, a Dangal (wrestling match) and a Food Festival. There will also be celebrity performances, a laser show, cultural programs and fun rides for children, making the riverfront a main attraction during the mela.

The Commissioner JMC Dr. Devansh Yadav said that the Mahotsav is a way to celebrate



local traditions while committing to keep the Tawi River clean for the future. The Commissioner announced that the Tawi Mahotsav would be a three-day event starting on April 14 till April 16.

Organized with the coordination of Departments of Tourism and Information, the festival shall take place on the left bank of the Tawi riverfront, which will be fully open to the public. The event includes the Dangal, food stalls with authentic Dogri cuisine and handloom exhibits. Families can use the dedicated play areas while supporting efforts to keep the "Surya Putri Tawi" clean.

A new feature this year is the

introduction of professional boating services using motorboats and rafts. While entry to the festival and cultural shows is free, boating will cost 50 for children and 100 for adults. This is a trial run before a final report from the National Institute of Water Sports (NIWS) Goa, which would help set up permanent water sports in the coming months. The Commissioner also informed that JMC has increased fines for littering to keep the riverfront clean, balancing the celebration with strict urban maintenance. JMC invites everyone in Jammu to join the festival and help make the city cleaner and more beautiful.

## Divisional Level Mega Awareness Programme inaugurated at Doda; Focus on Health, Education & Social Responsibility

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**DODA, APRIL 08:** The Divisional Level Mega Awareness Programme organized by the Directorate of School Education Jammu was inaugurated today at Town Hall Doda. The inaugural day witnessed the commencement of technical sessions, marking the beginning of the three-day awareness initiative.

The main event was simultaneously held at the Convention Hall Jammu, where the programme was formally inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Omar Abdullah. The live telecast of the event was held at the venue, enabling students and participants to witness the proceedings virtually.

The programme here was graced by MLA Doda West Shakti Raj Parihar, as the Chief Guest, while District Development Commissioner Krishan Lal attended as the Guest of Honour. Former DDC Chairman Dhananter Singh Kotwal and former Minister

and Religious Leader Khalid Najib Suhrawardy were also present on the occasion. The event was ably anchored by Master Om Prakash Bhagat. Among others present included Joint Director Education Mohammad Ashfaq; CPO Manesh Kumar Manhas; ACDDin Mohammad Afaqi; Chief Education Officer Bhushan Kumar Pathak; ASP Headquarters, Principal GDC, along with district officers, teaching staff and a large number of students. The event commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by the Chief Guest. Students from Government Girls Higher Secondary School presented a soulful rendition of the National Anthem under the guidance of Master Om Prakash Bhagat, followed by a welcome song that added vibrancy to the occasion. The participants took a solemn pledge to fight against drug abuse, reinforcing the commitment to build a drug-free society. In his inaugural address, the chief guest spoke extensively on the issue of drug

abuse and congratulated the organizers for conducting such an important awareness programme. "Drug abuse is one of the biggest challenges faced by the country today and the goal of Nasha Mukta Bharat can only be achieved through collective efforts," the Chief Guest noted. He directed the police department to act strictly against drug peddlers and urged people to come forward, irrespective of caste, creed or religion to eradicate the menace of drugs from society and the nation. He also appealed to the public to promote traffic awareness, cultivate civic sense and actively contribute towards environmental protection. He stressed that illegal activities must not be supported under any circumstances.

Speaking on the occasion, the District Development Commissioner emphasized the importance of traffic discipline and urged students to follow rules responsibly. He stressed the need to prioritize mental well-being through practices like yoga.

He further called for collective efforts towards environmental conservation, including plantation drives and prevention of deforestation. He also highlighted the ongoing 100-day drug de-addiction campaign in the district and informed that Panchayat-level committees have been constituted to combat drug abuse, urging community and religious leaders to actively participate in the campaign. Former Minister Najib Suhrawardy also addressed the gathering, expressing concern over rising drug abuse and increasing digital distractions among youth. He encouraged students and parents to remain vigilant, promote value-based education and focus on holistic development rather than merely job-oriented goals. Earlier, the Chief Education Officer delivered the welcome address, highlighting that the three-day programme aims to raise awareness on key issues such as traffic safety, mental health, drug de-addiction, career counselling and environmental protection.

## 3-day divisional-level awareness programme takes off in Udhampur

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**UDHAMPUR, APRIL 08:** A three-day Divisional-Level awareness programme began in Udhampur, with its virtual inauguration by the Chief Minister Jammu & Kashmir, Omar Abdullah, from the Convention Centre Jammu.

The programme was jointly organized by the School Education Department in collaboration with the District Administration Udhampur here at Conference Hall, DC Office Complex.

Deputy Commissioner Minga Sherpa; Joint Director School Education Udhampur-Reasi Dr. Jagdish Chander Mehra; Assistant Commissioner Revenue Dr. Umesh Shan; Chief Education Officer and other district officers, staff members and students from various educational institutions attended the inaugural session.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the significance of the three-day awareness initiative and emphasized its objectives. He informed that the programme aims to sensitize students and the general public on key themes such as road safety, environmental



protection, social awareness, mental health, drug de-addiction and academic and career guidance. He reiterated that the initiative is designed to promote awareness, encourage responsible behaviour and strengthen inter-departmental coordination for effective outreach at the grassroots level.

Stressing the importance of collective responsibility, he urged participants to actively spread awareness regarding environmental protection, adherence to traffic rules, preservation of water bodies and the need to conserve water resources.

Earlier, the Joint Director School Education Udhampur-Reasi presented a brief overview of the programme and informed that a series of awareness activities will be conducted across the district Udhampur during the three-day event to maximize public engagement and impact.

# Bank of Baroda launches 'bob SAMVAD' for real-time multilingual banking

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 8:** The Department of Financial Services (DFS) Secretary, M. Nagaraju, launched 'bob SAMVAD', an AI-powered multilingual conversational platform of Bank of Baroda, on Tuesday, according to an official statement.

'Bob SAMVAD' is essentially an industry-first AI platform designed to transform customer interactions at its branches. This tool is specifically designed to eliminate language barriers and allow smooth communication between customers and branch staff.

M Nagaraju said, "The bob SAMVAD will promote inclusive and accessible service delivery and help improve customer service at branches. This initiative has set a new benchmark for the sector."

Another interesting factor regarding this tool is that it's devel-



oped entirely in-house. The platform leverages AI-driven speech and language technologies to enable real-time, low-latency, two-way communication across twenty-two languages.

It will also ensure contextual accuracy and natural fluency while maintaining India's linguistic di-

versity.

"With bob SAMVAD, Bank of Baroda is leveraging AI to make our branches more inclusive and customer-friendly by enabling seamless real-time conversations in local languages.

This initiative reflects our commitment to operational excel-

lence by combining technology with customer-centric design," said Dr Debadatta Chand, Managing Director and CEO of Bank of Baroda.

Now, with the help of this tool, customers can speak or input their queries in their preferred language, which will be instantly translated by the staff member's chosen language and vice versa. For more clarity, interactions are displayed on the screen with an optional voice mode that converts text into speech. It's great for those customers who prefer audio over reading.

In the first phase, bob SAMVAD will be rolled out across 250 branches in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra, the Finance Ministry statement added.

This will be followed by a phased, large-scale deployment across the Bank's branch network. UNI

## TAFE inaugurates Research Centre at Rajasthan

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**CHENNAI, APR 8:** Tractors and Farm Equipment Limited (TAFE), one of the world's largest tractor manufacturers, inaugurated its adaptive research centre, TAFE JFarm Rajasthan, at Bhawani Mandi, on Tuesday reiterating its commitment to driving farm productivity and farmer prosperity through sharing sustainable agricultural practices.

This facility aims to empower farmers with practical insights and real-time demonstrations, helping them improve productivity and efficiency, a company statement here said.

The centre will showcase the latest advancements in agronomy and farm practices, including trends in crop production, protection, and processing, along with world-class farm mechanization solutions adapted to Indian farming conditions.

The JFarm Bhawani Mandi centre focuses on transforming Rajasthan's agricultural landscape, with active participation from farmers, towards a more productive and sustainable future. TAFE believes in empowering its customers to become a progressive, self-sustaining, and prosperous

agri-community.

Dr. Lakshmi Venu, Vice Chairman, TAFE, said, "we have always believed that the progress of Indian agriculture depends on combining strong domain knowledge, appropriate technology, and a deep respect for sustainability. The inauguration of the JFarm Rajasthan, reflects this belief and our enduring corporate social responsibility (CSR) commitment to stand alongside farmers as partners in their growth."

This centre offers practical learning spaces—where farmers can see, experience, and adopt solutions through live field demonstrations, crop specific applications, and targeted training programmes. JFarm Rajasthan, as a key hub, will play an important role in advancing farm mechanisation and extending its benefits to farmers across Rajasthan and the wider North Indian region.

TAFE's vision of 'Cultivating the World' reaffirms its long standing association with the farming community in Rajasthan and reflects our belief that sustainable agricultural development must always be inclusive, practical, and farmer focused", she added. UNI

## West Asia tensions threaten trade, MSMEs: CAIT seeks Centre's intervention

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 8:** The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has cautioned that the ongoing West Asia conflict could adversely impact India's trade and industrial sectors, particularly MSMEs, small businesses, and exporters, and has called for immediate government intervention to cushion the fallout.

In a representation to union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, CAIT leaders urged the Centre to take proactive relief and precautionary measures to address emerging economic risks.

The signatories to the letter included National President B.C. Bhartia, Secretary General and MP Praveen Khandelwal, National Secretary S.S. Manoj, and Working Committee member P. Venkitarama Iyer. They also stressed the need for intervention by the Prime Minister, citing the seriousness of the situation.

CAIT noted that escalating tensions in West Asia could drive up crude oil prices, disrupt supply chains, and increase overall costs, affecting key sectors such as petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, plastics, textiles, fertilisers, chemicals, auto components, logistics, and other energy-intensive industries.

Exporters, the body said, may soon face higher freight and insurance costs, shipment delays, route diversions, and payment uncertainties, all of which could erode India's global competitiveness. At the same time, rising input costs, working capital constraints, supply chain bottlenecks, and margin pressures are expected to disproportionately burden MSMEs and small traders.

To address these challenges, CAIT has proposed a set of relief measures, including loan repayment extensions and relaxations for MSMEs, a special credit guarantee scheme to enhance liquidity, interest subsidies for severely impacted sectors, and close monitoring and stabilisation of fuel and raw material prices. It also recommended freight and insurance support for exporters along with expedited refund mechanisms.

## West Asia crisis dampens Indian summer travel; Europe trips take a major hit

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 8:** The ongoing war in West Asia has had ripple effects across various sectors of the global economy. While the energy crisis and its impact on transport, manufacturing and allied activities are more evident, the adverse impact on people's discretionary — yet important — need to unwind through annual leisure travel, including visits to friends and relatives, has received less attention.

Summer months, especially school vacations, are the preferred leisure travel period for Indians, which they plan well in advance.

The war scenario in West Asia has, however, poured cold water on the travel plans of Indian tourists. Travel trade players told UNI that there has been a delay in the conversion of enquiries into firm bookings for the summer season.

"We are facing a situation very close to a Covid-19-like scenario this season," said Sriharan Balan, Managing Director

of a Chennai-based travel company.

Several other tour operators echoed similar sentiments. "There is a 70 to 80 per cent dip in enquiries because of the uncertainties created by the Iran war," said Ankit Bajaj, a travel operator from Ahmedabad.

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC), the Iran conflict is causing an estimated loss of USD 600 million per day in international visitor spending in the travel and tourism sector. The war situation has also disrupted key global aviation hubs in the Middle East — Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Doha and Bahrain — which collectively handle over 5.26 lakh passengers per day.

Although Gulf destinations are not the final port of call for most Indian vacationers during summer, they heavily rely on Gulf carriers for travel to Europe and other regions due to their extensive connectivity within India and relatively affordable pricing compared to Air India and European carriers.



Travellers from cities like Ahmedabad depend largely on three Gulf carriers for travel to Europe and other destinations, confirmed Mahendra Vakharia, a specialist in outbound travel based in Ahmedabad.

"The situation in these Gulf hubs is not instilling confidence among travellers. The overall sentiment is 'wait and watch,'" he said.

A similar trend is visible in southern India, where travellers prefer Gulf carriers for European holidays due to seamless connectivity and competitive

fares. "Southern states heavily rely on Middle Eastern carriers for Europe. In the prevailing situation, we have to look for alternatives like Air India and European carriers, but the fares are prohibitive compared to what Middle Eastern carriers offer," Sriharan said.

While Europe remains a preferred summer destination for Indian travellers, the continuing uncertainty in West Asia has prompted many to explore alternative destinations such as South Africa, South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Bali and

the Philippines.

"The travel bug is strong; people are just waiting for some reassurance," Vakharia added.

Further compounding the situation is the depreciation of the Indian rupee. The currency has weakened significantly against the US dollar in recent weeks, breaching the Rs 90 mark, thereby impacting travel budgets.

"Currency fluctuation has been severe in the last couple of weeks. Package costs estimated at the beginning of the year are no longer relevant," said Sriharan. He added that even a one-rupee change can translate into a minimum increase of Rs 2,000 per day/per individual in international travel packages.

Although the traditional notion that tourism thrives only in peaceful times may no longer hold entirely true. However, the current geopolitical scenario remains highly volatile and unpredictable, making leisure and business travel planning increasingly challenging and decision-making more complex.

## Young Entrepreneurs Association announces new leadership

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**HYDERABAD, APRIL 8:** The Young Entrepreneurs Association (YEA) on Tuesday announced its new leadership team for 2026-27, with RC Rahul elected as president, marking a new phase of growth and collaboration for the city-based entrepreneurial network.

The new team was announced at the Annual General Meeting held on Monday, the association said in

a release here.

Other office-bearers include Aditya Bansal as General Secretary, Manasa as Treasurer, Vinita Surana as Membership Chair, and board members Avinash Chukkappalli, Kunal Jain, and Mohit Jadeja.

Speaking on the occasion, Rahul said it was an honour to lead the association at a crucial time and stressed the need to further strengthen YEA's ecosystem for collaboration and growth.

He said the focus would be on creating opportunities for entrepreneurs to connect, collaborate, and expand both locally and globally.

Founded in 2012, YEA has grown into a vibrant platform for young entrepreneurs, with around 100 members aged between 25 and 45.

The association facilitates knowledge exchange, networking, and business growth through regular engagements. UNI

## Air India fares to spike as airlines announces revisions in fuel surcharge

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 8:** Air India on Tuesday announced revisions in the fuel surcharge structure across domestic and international routes effective from Wednesday (April 8).

It also mentioned revision effective from April 10 for Europe, North America & Australia.

The revision in fuel surcharges will tend to increase the air fare prices however, Air India said it continues to absorb a significant portion of this increased cost.

Air India has revised the fuel surcharge for international routes categorized by region. For SAARC countries (excluding Bangladesh), the surcharge has been set at USD 24, West Asia and the Middle East will attract a surcharge of USD 50, while routes covering China and Southeast Asia (excluding Singapore) will see a surcharge of USD 100.

Singapore has been assigned a surcharge of USD 60, while flights to Africa will carry a surcharge of USD 130.

The passengers travelling to Europe (including the United Kingdom) will be charged a fuel surcharge of USD 205.

Meanwhile, flights to North America and Australia will attract the highest surcharge, set at USD 280 each.

In a separate development, the Chief Executive of Air India, Campbell Wilson, has resigned from his position but will remain in his role until a successor is appointed. Wilson's five-year term had been due to run until September next year.

Air India is facing several challenges, including regulatory scrutiny, financial losses and disruptions caused by geopolitical tensions.

The airlines has been under heightened regulatory scrutiny after a fatal Ahmedabad crash in 2025 that killed around 260 people.

Air India and Air India Express together reported losses of about 98 billion in the 2024-25 financial year. UNI

## PHDCCI's first China clean energy mission sparks strong industry response, opens new avenues for collaboration

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI/SHANGHAI, APR 8:** In a significant push to deepen India-China engagement in clean energy and electric mobility, the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) successfully led its first-ever business delegation to China, witnessing strong interest and active participation from leading Chinese companies across the renewable energy and EV ecosystem. The delegation, held from March 29-April 4, brought together eight members, including six innovative Indian start-ups working across EV charging infrastructure, electric trucks, battery storage systems, and energy trading platforms.

The primary objective was to explore cutting-edge technologies, identify reliable suppliers, and build long-term partnerships for sourcing advanced machinery and components

critical to India's growing clean energy sector.

Led by Shalini S Sharma, the delegation held key discussions with Pratik Mathur, who termed the initiative a milestone, noting that it was the first such industry visit following the revival of bilateral engagements and the inauguration of India's new Consulate office in Shanghai.

He underlined that East China—covering Shanghai, Zhejiang, and Wuxi—accounts for nearly 41 per cent of China's total trade, making it a strategic hub for industrial and technological collaboration.

The Consul General provided a detailed briefing on India-China trade dynamics, regulatory frameworks, and investment opportunities, while industry and financial experts shared insights into legal systems, policy developments, and operational requirements for Indian businesses looking to enter

or collaborate in the Chinese market. Highlighting the broader significance, Dr Ranjeet Mehta, CEO and Secretary General of PHDCCI, said that China's global leadership in renewable deployment, lithium-ion battery manufacturing, and EV production aligns well with India's rapidly expanding clean energy capacity and electric mobility ambitions. He stressed that closer cooperation could help lower technology costs, accelerate innovation cycles, and contribute substantially to global climate commitments.

A major highlight of the visit was the intensive B2B engagement facilitated by the Shanghai New Energy Industry Association at the Global New Energy Empowerment Centre in Shanghai's Minhang district.

Indian delegates interacted with over a dozen major Chinese firms, including Jinko ESS, Svolt Energy Technology, FR Electric

(Zhejiang), Haitu Solar, Jiangsu Oliter Energy Technology, Jiansu EverShine Energy Technology, and Shanghai Huitian New Material. The discussions were marked by strong enthusiasm, with meetings extending beyond scheduled hours and senior executives travelling long distances to participate. At the policy level, the delegation also engaged with Wujin district authorities, including Deputy District Mayor Wang Ting and Commerce Bureau Director Hu Yanhong. During the interaction, Ms Sharma reiterated PHDCCI's commitment to facilitating greater collaboration in renewable energy and highlighted the chamber's role across diverse sectors of the Indian economy. Prominent Chinese companies such as Star Charge, Suwen Electric Energy Technology, Teld New Energy, Xinnian Group, Trina Solar, and Shandong Jinchao Holdings were part of these dis-

cussions. The delegation undertook extensive site visits to leading Chinese enterprises, gaining first-hand exposure to advanced manufacturing and innovation ecosystems.

These included Narada Power (energy storage batteries), Yinenergy Digital Power Technology (digital energy solutions), Chilwee Group (lithium-ion batteries for EVs and renewable storage), Shanghai Tianyu New Energy Technology (complete solar systems), Eraergy Technology (mobile and distributed energy solutions), Trina Solar (flexible solar panels), and Shanghai Energy Electronic Technology (battery management systems). These interactions offered deep insights into the scale and sophistication of China's clean energy industry—from highly automated lithium-ion battery production lines to next-generation EV charging innovations such as energy bots. UNI

# Jaiswal: Vaibhav Relieved Pressure vs Bumrah

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**GUWAHATI:** Amazed by Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's seemingly effortless takedown of Jasprit Bumrah, Rajasthan Royals batter Yashasvi Jaiswal said his 15-year-old opening partner eased the pressure on him in the 27-run IPL win over Mumbai Indians on a rain-soaked evening here.

The talking point before the match was the first face-off between the redoubtable pacer and the teen sensation, and Sooryavanshi lived up to the hype, smashing an incoming Bumrah 131kph delivery on middle and leg for a first-ball six over mid-on.

"First ball, he hit him for a six, and I told him to just keep playing his shots," said Jaiswal, who scored a 32-ball 77 not out to lift RR to 150/3 in the 11-overs a side match that was truncated because of inclement weather.

Mumbai Indians, in reply, managed 123/9 to slump



to a second loss on the trot, while Rajasthan Royals climbed to the top of the table with three wins from three matches. The Bihar left-hander, who was signed by Rajasthan Royals for Rs 1.1 crore during the 2025 IPL mega auction.

He had shown glimpses of his prodigal talent by becoming the youngest centurion in T20 cricket and the second-fastest in IPL history with a record-breaking 35-ball hundred against Gujarat Titans last season. On Tuesday too, he was in beast mode from the outset, even though Bumrah operating with the new ball. Sooryavanshi, who turned 15 a day before IPL 2026 began, went on to hit two of his four sixes off the pacer in his opening over, setting the tempo early with a 14-ball 39.

It made life easier for Jaiswal at the other end as their confidence soared, allowing them to target other MI bowlers like Deepak Chahar and Trent Boult who both leaked 22 runs in their respective overs.

"Of course, Bumrah bhai is one of the legends, so if he's scoring against him, it's amazing. It made us feel that other bowlers we can also take down," said Jaiswal, who hit 10 fours and four sixes and anchored the innings," Jaiswal said.

"So it was quite good for him to go out and play his shots. That took the pressure off me, and then I could take on someone else. It was a good partnership, and we really enjoyed it."

The duo put on 80 runs off just 30 balls at the top to set the tone.

"It's amazing to bat with Vaibhav. We both like to play our shots, so the way we're playing, we just keep passing positive messages to each other. I've been playing for the last few years, so I just wanted to play according to the situation and give the team the best start," he said.

With two fifties in three matches, Jaiswal is now the leading run-scorer (170) and the left-hander said: "I've been really working hard in the nets, trying different shots. A lot depends on the wicket as well. I always try to do something with my batting and make little changes here and there."

"I just try to live in the present moment and keep enjoying it. I always strive to keep improving," added the 24-year-old.

"We didn't know how this game was going to go because of the rain. We needed to adapt, as Mumbai Indians are quite an opposition."

## Ayush stuns World No 7 in opening round, Lakshya falls early

■ AGENCIES

**BENGALURU:** On a day when Lakshya Sen, the recent All England Open finalist, suffered defeat in the first round of the Badminton Asia Championships in Ningbo, China, Ayush Shetty gave India fresh hope. Shetty didn't just step up — he produced a statement win.

The rising star from Karnataka tore through the event with a performance that stunned World No 7 Li Shi Feng ruthlessly. The reigning Hong Kong Open champion was dismantled 21-13, 21-16 in a match that never slipped out of Shetty's control.

There was a noticeable edge to his backhand, and smashes which looked sharper and more reliable compared to his recent tournaments. Smashes were perfectly angled, targeting the sidelines and dragging Feng out of position. "I'm trying to bring variations on my smashes from the backside of the court. I'm confident of my long rallies as well," Shetty had said while talking to this daily recently. That constant variation left Feng second-guessing his returns, never quite able to settle into a rhythm. Coach Irwansyah's influence was clearly evident in Ayush's game.

In a surprising turn of events, World No 13 Lakshya Sen suffered a disappointing first-round exit. Despite his recent run to the All England Open final, the Indian shuttler fell in straight games (12-21, 19-21) to Hong Kong's Lee Cheuk Yiu. It was very difficult for Sen at the early stage of the game, but he missed some crucial points to give Lee an early edge. Even though he showed much better resistance in the second set, Lee's control over the game helped him to clinch the set 19-21.

On a positive note, in the women's section, PV Sindhu rallied to enter the second round after winning the singles opener 15-21, 21-11, 21-19 against Wong Ling Ching of Malaysia. Even though she seemed to be a bit rusty in the first game, the seasoned shuttler showed her pedigree with a sensational comeback, winning the following two games. In the decider, while both players were relying on longer rallies, Sindhu held her nerve at 19-19, stringing together the final two points to seal progression.

Later, Youngster Unnati Hooda also pulled off a come-from-behind victory over Supanida Katethong of Thailand in their women's singles clash. Hooda won 23-25, 21-8, 21-18.

It's shaping up to be a high-stakes Thursday for India at the continental event. Sindhu and Shetty will take centre stage in their Round of 16 clashes, going up against Wang Zhi Yi and Chi Yu-jen, respectively. Joining Shetty in the second round, HS Prannoy, who beat Nguyen Hai Dang on the day, also has a tough challenge ahead as he locks horns with Weng Hong Yang of China.

## Green expected to begin bowling in KKR's game against LSG on Today

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**KOLKATA:** Cameron Green is expected to begin bowling for Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) when they go up against Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) at their home venue of Eden Gardens on Thursday.

Green didn't bowl at all in KKR's first two IPL 2026 games, against Mumbai Indians (MI) and Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH), both of which KKR lost, before their third game, against Punjab Kings (PBKS) was washed out after 3.4 overs. KKR had been informed by Cricket Australia that Green would start IPL 2026 as a specialist batter. "Cameron has a lower-back injury, which is being man-



aged, but requires him to abstain from bowling for a short period," CA had said on March 30. "Cameron is currently rebuilding his bowling loads in India with a view to return in around 10-12

days' time."

Now, with KKR playing the 15th game of the season and more than ten days having passed since that update, that Green is ready to bowl in a competitive situation.

Green not bowling has affected KKR's plans, especially with a number of their main bowlers sidelined for one reason or another. Mustafizur Rahman had been removed from the squad on instructions from the BCCI well before the tournament started, and both Harshit Rana and Akash Deep were ruled out with injuries shortly before the tournament kicked off. To add to that, Sunil Narine missed KKR's previous game because of an illness, and Varun Chakravarthy, too, was ruled

out due to a hand injury.

Not only has Green not bowled, his form with the bat has been iffy, which has led to questions about his position in the team after he was acquired by KKR at the last auction for a record sum of INR 25.20 crore, the highest price for an overseas player ever at an IPL auction, though he was only going to be paid a capped salary of INR 18 crore in accordance with IPL regulations. Green has so far scored 18, 2 and 4 in his three innings. "One of those dismissals has been a run out [against SRH], not a part of his fault. Still, he's missed out twice. There's a bit of panic, he's not looking the same as the past," Aaron Finch said of his countrymate on Tuesday.

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