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'Surgical Strike' on Drug Networks: LG Leads Ramban March Against Narcotics

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APR 15: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday led a padyatra in Ramban as part of the "Nasha Mukta Jammu Kashmir Abhiyaan," asserting that drug abuse is a "social cancer" and announcing an intensified crackdown on narcotics networks across the Union Territory.

Addressing a large gathering after the march, Sinha said the fight against drugs requires a "Whole of Government" and "Whole of Society" approach, stressing that the combined strength of institutions and public resolve can defeat even the most entrenched challenges. He alleged that Pakistan has for decades pushed drug smuggling into Jammu and Kashmir to fund terrorism and harm the

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Lok Bhavan J&K celebrates Foundation Day of Himachal Pradesh

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 15: Jammu Kashmir Lok Bhavan today celebrated the Foundation Day of Himachal Pradesh, at Jammu.

The cultural evening, celebrating the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat', was attended by students, senior officials, and the people of Himachal Pradesh living in the UT of Jammu & Kashmir, who were

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Kashmir Crafts Get Global Push with 'Know Your Artisan' Launch at Kashmir Haat

CM Omar Abdullah calls artisans custodians of heritage, urges public support for handmade products



HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 15: In a major boost to promote Kashmir craft sector, Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, today inaugurated the 'Know Your Artisan' programme at Kashmir Haat here, under the Handicrafts and Handloom's ongoing 'Soulful Kashmir' brand promotion campaign. He also inaugurated the new GI Testing

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War Memorial Rededicated as J&K LI Marks 78th Raising Day in Srinagar

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 15: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday rededicated the renovated War Memorial and attended the

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Rush Marks Start of Amarnath Yatra Registration in Jammu

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APR 15: Registration for the annual Amarnath Yatra began on Wednesday with a heavy rush of devotees at designated counters across Jammu, reflecting growing enthusiasm for this year's pilgrimage to the Himalayan cave shrine.

Long queues were witnessed outside bank branches from early morning, with many pilgrims arriving well before the counters opened to secure their slots. Authorities have facilitated both online and offline registration to streamline the process for yatrins from across the country.

The 57-day yatra is scheduled to commence on July 3 and conclude on August 28, coinciding with Raksha Bandhan. Pilgrims will undertake the journey via two routes — the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam track in Anantnag and the shorter but steeper 14-km Baltal route in Ganderbal.

Officials said registration is being conducted through 556 bank branches nationwide, with Punjab National Bank acting as the nodal agency. Of these, 310 branches belong to Punjab National Bank, while others include

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Srinagar's Visually Impaired Girl Shines with 95% in CBSE Class 10

Zainab Bilal writes exam without scribe, scores perfect 100 in computer science

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, APR 15: In an inspiring feat of determination and academic brilliance, a visually impaired student from Srinagar has secured 95 per cent marks in the Class 10 board examination conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education, results of which were declared on Wednesday.

Zainab Bilal scored an impressive 475 out of 500 marks, including a perfect 100 in computer science, setting a remarkable example

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Two-Decade Manhunt Ends as Police Nab Drug Kingpin, Bust Cross-Border Network in Jammu

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, APR 15: In a major breakthrough against drug trafficking, Jammu and Kashmir Police have busted a cross-border narcotics network with the arrest of most-wanted drug kingpin Gulzar Ahmad alias Lau Gujjar, who had been evading arrest for over two decades.

Senior Superintendent of Police (Jammu) Joginder Singh said the accused was a key figure in the regional drug supply

chain, involved in bulk trafficking of narcotics across multiple areas. "He was a hardcore criminal. With his arrest, the entire network has been identified and dismantled," Singh said.

Police said Gujjar began his criminal career as a bovine smuggler in 2006 before entering the narcotics trade around 2016 and scaling up operations by 2019. He was arrested on April 4, and a Pakistan-made pistol was recovered from his

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Jobs Push Gains Pace: 15,000 Youth Recruited in J&K : Dy CM

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 15: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Tuesday said the Jammu and Kashmir government has significantly stepped up its employment drive, with nearly 30,000 posts referred to recruiting agencies and around 15,000 youth already appointed over the past year.

Addressing a public gathering at Kunzar in the Gulmarg constituency, he said the administration is focused on generating sustainable employment opportunities, adding that recruitment has been carried out on merit through a transparent



process. He reiterated the government's commitment to empowering youth through

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CS Sets Outcome-Driven Plan for 100-Day Nasha Mukta J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 15: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high-level meeting to review the implementation of the UT-wide '100 Days Nasha Mukta J&K' campaign, which was kickstarted by the Lieutenant Governor on April 11

from MA Stadium, Jammu. The meeting was attended by all Administrative Secretaries designated as District Mentors by the Government, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir, Director, Information; Director, School Education, Jammu/Kashmir; HoDs from Social Welfare and Health

Departments along with Deputy Commissioners of all districts.

Emphasizing the importance of the initiative, the Chief Secretary called upon all stakeholders to transform the campaign into a mass movement reaching every

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CS REVIEWS SETUP OF KVs, JNVs ACROSS J&K DISTRICTS

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JAMMU, APRIL 15: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo,

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CAG Flags Academic, Regulatory Lapses at University of Jammu

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, APR 15: The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India has flagged multiple academic, regulatory and administrative deficiencies in the functioning of the University of Jammu, including running courses without mandatory approvals.

The CAG recommended corrective measures and said that the university should strengthen its affiliation process to ensure that only institutions meeting regulatory norms are granted affiliation, along with the preparation of comprehensive inspection reports to safeguard academic quality.

It also drew attention to the issues of poor industry linkages, delays in evaluation and weak placement outcomes.

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

'Surgical Strike'.....

youth, and vowed decisive action against the menace.

"We will map every hotspot and hit each one like a surgical strike. Not a single smuggler will be spared. The entire network will be dismantled," he said, directing police to break supply chains and identify traffickers at every police station level.

The padyatra, which began at the District Police Line and culminated at the District Administrative Complex, saw participation from public representatives, civil and police officials, religious leaders, traders, ex-servicemen, students and citizens in large numbers, all pledging to eradicate drug addiction from society.

Emphasising community responsibility, the Lieutenant Governor called for collective vigilance and urged panchayats and wards to form women-led committees to detect and respond to early signs of addiction. "Drugs spread like wind, not flames. If the neighbour's house is on fire, yours is not safe," he said, adding that society's unity strengthens the law.

Sinha highlighted the role of families in rehabilitation, urging that addicts be treated as patients in need of care rather than criminals. He also ordered strict monitoring of de-addiction centres, warning that any found operating illegally or harming patients would be shut down within 24 hours.

Addressing the youth directly, he said drugs are not "cool" but a form of slavery, encouraging them to channel their energy into sports, arts and education. He assured that identification, treatment and rehabilitation would remain key priorities in the government's strategy.

Calling the campaign a collective responsibility, Sinha said silence can no longer be an option. "If we fail today, future generations will not forgive us," he warned.

An anti-drug pledge was administered on the occasion and a bike rally flagged off, alongside awareness programmes aimed at mobilising public participation in the ongoing campaign against narcotics.

Lok Bhavan J&K.....

the special invitees on the occasion.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha extended his heartiest greetings and best wishes to the people of Himachal Pradesh.

"Cultural confluence on Himachal Diwas build the bedrock of a strong nation. When citizens and artists from varied states intertwine traditions, they weave invisible threads that bind civilization together," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Paying tribute to the iconic personalities of Himachal Pradesh, the Lieutenant Governor said that the state's history brims with richness and diversity and spirituality and rituals anchor Himachal Pradesh's social fabric.

"Himachal Pradesh's sacred earth, cradle of sages' austerities, abounds in ancient heritage and temples. Pilgrims worldwide revere its every stone as infused with divine energy. The state's history, indigenous culture, arts, and architecture stand pristine and many masterpieces are untouched across millennia. Centuries of traditions have gifted Himachal Pradesh unparalleled folk arts, dances, and songs," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that India stands as a rare treasure trove of pluralism with diverse languages, cuisines, customs, and art forms. He urged the people to embrace and share this vibrant mosaic, sustained by endless community celebrations.

"The "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat" initiative aptly recognizes cultural exchange as a dynamic catalyst for prosperity.

When local festivities transcend borders, they captivate citizens and spawn livelihoods. Interstate collaboration equips small communities with platforms and resources to scale their events, amplifying both reach and pride. A village's art, admired nationwide, yields not just income but enduring honor," the Lieutenant Governor said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor also released the activity calendar of J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages.

Kashmir Crafts.....

Lab, Giant LED Video Walls and launched high precision fibre analysis equipment along with Design-NWeave software, designed by IICT Srinagar.

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Zaidal, Tanvir Sadiq, MLA Hazratbal, Salman Sagar along with Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce, Vikramjit Singh and other senior officers of Industries & Commerce Department were also present on the occasion.

The latest edition of Soulful Kashmir campaign continues the momentum built over the past year, in line with Chief Minister's commitments made during his Budget Speech, aimed at strengthening 'Brand Jammu & Kashmir' and promoting the region's rich handicrafts and handloom heritage.

Immediately after his arrival, the Chief Minister inaugurated the Giant LED Video Wall installed at Kashmir Haat and the Know Your Artisan programme. He also inspected the Department's new initiative of Live Demos under 'Try Your Hands' segment, set up to provide an immersive experience to the visitors and tourists so that they feel the hard work of artisans and back-end processes involved in making such niche crafts.

The Chief Minister himself tried his hands at warping of yarn, an arduous exercise that goes into handweaving of pashmina. He was specifically impressed by the prototypes on display designed by the School of Designs and CDI.

The Chief Minister later visited the main Exhibition Gallery where 30 display-cum-sale counters offering authentic handmade products have been set up. During his interaction with various Shilp

Guru, National and J&K Awardees, he expressed deep appreciation for the initiative and the remarkable craftsmanship on display.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said the initiative marks a significant step in promoting Brand J&K and enhancing the visibility of the handicrafts sector. He emphasized that artisans are the custodians of the region's cultural identity and said the programme aims to provide them direct market access, ensure fair value for their work, and strengthen the authenticity of traditional products.

Chief Minister emphasized upon holding of such events with greater frequency and duration, so that the 'golden hands' and rich cultural heritage of Jammu & Kashmir are provided an ideal platform to reach out to a larger target audience. He directed the Handicrafts and Handloom Department to institutionalize the 'Know Your Artisan' initiative as a regular feature and to extend the present edition to maximize the outreach and impact.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has urged people to visit Kashmir Haat to experience the world-class art and craft created by the "magical hands" of Kashmiri artisans.

He emphasized that such visits not only allow people to witness the rich cultural heritage of Jammu & Kashmir firsthand, but also directly support local artisans by encouraging the purchase of authentic handmade products.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, who also holds the Industries & Commerce portfolio, reaffirmed the department's commitment to continue organizing such initiatives across multiple locations, ensuring wider visibility, enhanced market access, greater footprint of visitors and buyers and sustained socio-economic upliftment of the artisan and weaver community.

The event is expected to witness overwhelming response from visitors, tourists and stakeholders, marking yet another significant milestone in the ongoing efforts to position Jammu & Kashmir as a global hub for high-quality handicrafts and handloom products.

War Memorial.....

78th Raising Day celebrations of the Jammu & Kashmir Light Infantry (JAK LI) Regimental Centre in Srinagar.

Serving as the Chief Guest, the Chief Minister unveiled the refurbished memorial and laid a wreath in solemn tribute to soldiers who laid down their lives in the service of the nation.

The event witnessed the presence of several distinguished dignitaries, including former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, Colonel of the Regiment Lt Gen Manish Erry, Chief of Staff 15 Corps Maj Gen Saurabh Sharma, GOC 31 Sub Area Maj Gen Abhijit Mitra, Commandant JAK LI Regimental Centre Brig Ved Beniwal, and other senior officers.

The Jammu & Kashmir Light Infantry, among the most decorated regiments of the Indian Army, traces its origins to the J&K Militia raised during the 1947 conflict. The regiment has since played a pivotal role in key military operations, including the wars of 1965 and 1971, Operation Meghdoot in Siachen, and Operation Vijay during the Kargil conflict.

The Regimental Centre has also been widely recognised for its high training standards and its contribution to shaping a new generation of disciplined and committed soldiers, reinforcing the Army's operational strength.

Rush Marks.....

J&K Bank, State Bank of India and Yes Bank.

Six registration counters have been set up in Jammu, where both local residents and outstation pilgrims were seen waiting patiently to complete formalities. Many devotees expressed eagerness to be part of the first batch of yatris, citing improved facilities and a better security environment in Jammu and Kashmir.

Officials anticipate a further rise in registrations in the coming days and said efforts are underway to make the process more efficient to handle the increasing influx of pilgrims.

Srinagar's.....

of perseverance and excellence. Aspiring to pursue a career in the information technology sector, she plans to take up a bachelor's degree in computer applications.

Breaking new ground, Zainab became one of the first visually impaired students to write the CBSE examination using a laptop without the assistance of a scribe. Speaking about her ambition, she said she has long been determined to enter the IT field and work towards achieving her goals.

A student of the Learning Resource Centre at Delhi Public School Srinagar, Zainab credited her teachers, school administration, and family for their unwavering support. She expressed deep gratitude to the institution's management and her parents, whom she described as her strongest pillar of strength.

Encouraging parents of specially-abled children, Zainab urged them not to lose faith in their children's potential, stating that with the right support, anything is possible.

Beyond academics, Zainab has also distinguished herself in extracurricular activities. At the age of 12, she conducted interviews with prominent personalities, including former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Bollywood actor Aamir Khan, which were broadcast on Radio DPS, a student-run radio station of the school.

Sixth Delimitation.....

Representation of the People Act, 1957, while parliamentary constituencies were regulated under the Constitution of India.

The framework changed significantly after the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, following which provisions for delimitation were incorporated into

the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act. Subsequently, a Delimitation Commission headed by Justice (Retd.) Ranjana Desai was constituted in 2020 to redraw constituency boundaries and increase the number of seats.

The commission completed its exercise in 2022 and submitted its final award, marking the latest reconfiguration of constituencies in the Union Territory.

With fresh proposals now under consideration, the region may once again witness a redrawing of its electoral map, setting the stage for another major political and administrative exercise.

Two-Decade.....

possession. Three of his associates were also apprehended, and more than 700 grams of heroin was seized during the operation.

Authorities said interrogation of nearly 10 suspects linked to the network is underway, while around two dozen more have been identified and placed under surveillance.

A Special Investigation Team (SIT), headed by an officer of Superintendent rank, has been constituted to probe the case. The investigation will focus on tracing forward and backward linkages, financial transactions, and assets created through the illicit trade.

Police are also examining the routes through which narcotics entered the country, including possible channels via Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. The recovery of a Pakistan-made weapon has raised suspicions of cross-border involvement, with officials probing a possible narco-terror angle.

Gujjar is wanted in at least 28 cases in Jammu district, with several more registered against him in other states under different identities, police said.

Highlighting the ongoing crackdown, SSP Singh said 103 drug-related cases have been registered in Jammu district this year so far, including nine involving commercial quantities. Nearly 11 kilograms of heroin, along with poppy husk, ganja and controlled pharmaceutical substances, has been seized. Police have also cancelled around 20 driving licences and blacklisted nearly 200 vehicles linked to drug trafficking.

Jobs Push.....

both government jobs and self-employment initiatives.

The Deputy Chief Minister was accompanied by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Gulmarg Peerzada Farooq Ahmad Shah and senior officers.

On the occasion, he felicitated beneficiaries under the Mission Yuva scheme and distributed sanction letters, cheques and keys of commercial vehicles, stating that the initiative is strengthening the self-employment ecosystem and enabling young entrepreneurs to create livelihoods.

Highlighting welfare measures, he urged people to register for labour cards to avail benefits including scholarships, financial aid for specially-abled persons and other social security schemes.

Earlier, the Deputy Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for the upgradation of the Kunzar-Hardshoora road, noting that several road projects in the constituency had been completed last year under NABARD and PMGSY, with more underway to improve connectivity in the region.

Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani and MLA Peerzada Farooq Ahmad Shah also addressed the gathering, reaffirming the government's focus on infrastructure development and youth empowerment across Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier in the day, the Deputy Chief Minister, accompanied by MLA Tanvir Sadiq, paid obeisance at Gurdwara Damdama Sahib, describing it as an important spiritual centre for devotees.

CS Sets.....

household across Jammu and Kashmir. He underscored the need for a robust and result-oriented implementation plan to be prepared by each department and district for execution during the three-month campaign period.

Taking a detailed review, the Chief Secretary sought inputs from each District Mentor and Deputy Commissioner regarding their respective calendars of activities planned during the campaign. He directed that all Panchayats and Urban Local Body wards must be covered to ensure no area remains untouched.

Highlighting the need to make the campaign outcome-driven, he directed that data generated during these 100 days be distinctly captured on the 'Nasha Mukht J&K' portal of the Information Department. He asked the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) to handhold the districts in uploading and maintaining real-time data. He stressed that measurable outcomes such as number of people reached, victims counselled, treated or rehabilitated, and action taken against drug peddlers must be systematically recorded and showcased.

The Chief Secretary further directed key departments including Health, Social Welfare and Home to intensify their efforts during this period and work towards achieving quantifiable targets. He also called for a comprehensive review of all Drug De-Addiction Centres to assess availability of facilities and ensure adherence to prescribed norms and standards.

Principal Secretary, Home, Chandraker Bharti, emphasized strengthening enforcement alongside Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities. He highlighted the need to popularize the Tele-MANAS helpline among affected individuals and proposed its integration with the emergency response number 112 for centralized monitoring. He also encouraged citizens to report drug-related activities, assuring that their identities would be kept confidential.

He further stressed adherence to directions issued during UT-level NCORD meetings and asked districts to regularly review their implementation during the

campaign. He informed that all such directions would be shared with District Mentors and field functionaries for effective execution.

Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Sarmad Hafeez, presented a detailed overview of the three-month campaign, which commenced with a 'Padh Yatra' led by the Lieutenant Governor. He informed that the campaign aims to reach every district through extensive awareness and mobilization programmes. Departments have been directed to prepare specific action plans with a focus on participation of students and youth, NCC/NSS volunteers, NYKs, Scouts and Guides, PRLs and elected representatives, he added.

He further informed that a key component of the campaign involves intensified action by law enforcement agencies against drug trafficking networks in a mission mode. Elaborating on the guidelines, he stated that districts will identify and refer drug abuse victims to Drug De-Addiction Centres and Addiction Treatment Facilities in coordination with the Health Department, while also engaging influencers, sports persons and youth icons for awareness generation.

The campaign will focus on youth mobilization, hotspot interventions, and activities at schools, colleges, Panchayats and urban wards. Wide publicity will be ensured through print, electronic and social media in coordination with the Information Department.

He also informed that each district will nominate a nodal officer for coordination, monitoring and reporting. A robust daily reporting mechanism will be established with uploading of reports, photographs and videos on the 'Nasha Mukht J&K' portal to ensure comprehensive coverage of all Panchayats and wards without exception.

CS Reviews.....

today chaired a meeting to review the availability of land and infrastructure for Central Government educational institutions, including Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) and Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs), that are either non-functional or presently operating from temporary premises across various districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, School Education Department; Secretary, Revenue; Deputy Commissioners representing Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (JNV) and Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS); Director School Education, Jammu/Kashmir; Regional Officer, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Jammu, besides other senior officers. Divisional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners from the districts participated through video conferencing.

During the review, the Chief Secretary sought detailed district-wise and institution-wise inputs regarding the current infrastructural status of these schools. He specifically enquired about the identification and availability of suitable land for construction of permanent school buildings and the arrangements made for their temporary functioning till such infrastructure is developed.

Emphasizing timely action, the Chief Secretary directed the Revenue Department to expedite the transfer of identified land parcels to the School Education Department for further leasing to the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan to facilitate early execution of works. He stressed prioritization of districts where no KV or JNV presently exists and called for immediate commencement of academic activities in locations where temporary accommodation has already been identified.

Commissioner Secretary, School Education Department, Ram Niwas Sharma, apprised the meeting of the current status of each JNV and KV, highlighting specific requirements of land and infrastructure. He informed that out of 51 Kendriya Vidyalayas sanctioned for districts of J&K, 37 are already functional, while 14 are in the process of establishment. Of these, three schools including two at Ramban and Gool in district Ramban, and one at Ramkot in Kathuadistrict are expected to become functional shortly.

Moreover, he informed that 21 Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas have been sanctioned for the Union Territory, out of which 20 are already functional from their own buildings. He added that the JNV for Srinagar district is proposed to be made functional in a building identified by the district administration, while permanent infrastructure will subsequently be developed at a suitable site to be identified for the institution.

He further informed that the remaining 11 KVs are also in advanced stages of establishment, with land identified and temporary accommodation finalized, and formal transfer processes underway. The locations include Vijaypur (Samba), Bani and Ramkot (Kathua), Panchari (Udhampur), Mughal Maidan and Nagseni (Kishtwar), Gool and Ramban (Ramban), Kakriyal and Katra (Reasi), Gulpur (Poonch), Drugmulla (Kupwara), and Ratnipora and Chandhara in Pulwama district.

The Deputy Commissioners briefed the meeting on the status of land identification and availability of buildings in their respective districts, stating that the process for transfer and allotment of land has been initiated after assessing feasibility and completing requisite formalities in coordination with the authorities of KVS and JNV.

Representatives of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya

Samiti also shared updates on steps being taken to operationalize these institutions at the earliest. They expressed commitment to commencing academic activities preferably from the upcoming academic session.

Reiterating the government's commitment to strengthening educational infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir, the Chief Secretary directed all stakeholders to work in close coordination to ensure early operationalization of these institutions, thereby providing students with access to quality education through well-equipped and fully functional schools.

CAG Flags.....

The university was offering a wide range of programmes, including 38 doctoral, 24 MPhil, 50 postgraduate, 19 undergraduate courses, besides diplomas and certificate programmes across eight faculties, the CAG report on Union Territory finances for the year ended March 31, 2024, said.

However, the audit noted that the university had obtained approval from the All India Council for Technical Education for only two technical programmes - MBA and MCA - while four other technical courses were being run without approval. "Further, the MCA programme had not been accredited by the National Board of Accreditation, depriving students of quality assurance benefits".

The report also highlighted deviations from prescribed academic standards, including non-adherence to the AICTE model curriculum and lack of required infrastructure in programmes such as M Tech Computer Science.

On degree norms, the CAG observed that the university failed to align course nomenclature with guidelines of the University Grants Commission. "The Business Administration in Hotel Management (BBA-HM) course continued with outdated nomenclature and duration, in violation of UGC regulations".

The audit further pointed out that teacher education programmes were being conducted without recognition from the National Council for Teacher Education. "The university neither sought mandatory approvals nor adhered to prescribed norms for admissions and faculty requirements".

In terms of academic collaboration, the CAG pulled up the university for weak industry-academia linkages.

"Of 26 MoUs signed with national and international institutions, only two were fully functional, while 20 remained non-operational. The Industry-academia partnership centre, established in 2019, was also found non-functional due to infrastructure constraints".

The CAG report said that the university's innovation and startup ecosystem was similarly underperforming. "The University Business Incubation and Innovation Centre (UBIIC) and Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), set up to promote

entrepreneurship, remained largely inactive with activities limited to webinars". The report also raised concerns over poor placement outcomes. "Of over 1,000 students enrolled in professional courses between 2017 and 2022, only 224 secured placements, while students from general courses had virtually no placement support".

The audit report pointed to "serious" deficiencies in the examination system, including errors in marks cards, incorrect evaluation of answer sheets and delays in re-evaluation results. "The audit noted that up to 27 per cent of students saw their results change from fail to pass after re-evaluation, indicating significant flaws in assessment processes", it added.

Delays were also reported in PhD thesis evaluation, with only 22 per cent completed within the prescribed six months, it said, adding that in some cases, delays extended up to over four years, adversely affecting students' academic progression.

The CAG also pointed to instances of out-of-syllabus questions in 135 examination papers, leading to re-examinations and awarding of grace marks, but noted that no action was taken against erring paper setters.

On research, the audit found delays and incomplete projects, with eight projects remaining unfinished despite expenditure while terming monitoring mechanisms as "inadequate".

"The University Business Incubation and Innovation Centre (UBIIC) and Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), set up to promote startups and entrepreneurship, remained non-functional, the audit said, adding that the university failed to provide adequate support for innovation and startup ecosystems", it added. Additionally, the report highlighted that 82 per cent of affiliated colleges had not obtained accreditation from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, despite mandatory requirements. It also found that several colleges were operating with temporary affiliation for years and lacked qualified teaching staff.

The report highlighted that placement activities were confined to a few select departments. "Of around 1,000 students enrolled in professional courses between 2017 and 2022, only 224 secured placements through the Placement Cell". The CAG further noted that 84 colleges under the university were functioning with temporary affiliation for periods ranging from six to 28 years. "In 51

physically verified colleges, 113 out of 331 teachers appointed in 24 nongovernment colleges did not possess prescribed qualifications". (Agencies)



CS pushes for accelerated adoption of TReDS to boost MSME liquidity in J&K

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APR 15: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a meeting at the Civil Secretariat here to review the implementation and expansion of the Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS) in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department; Managing Director, J&K Bank; Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce; Secretary, Industries Department; Director Industries, Jammu; Chief General Manager, J&K Bank; Deputy General Manager, RBL Jammu; representatives from Receivables Exchange of India Limited (RXIL - TReDS platform); and senior officers from various government departments.



Emphasizing the transformative potential of TReDS, the Chief Secretary highlighted its critical role in improving cash flow for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) by facilitating timely realization of payments through invoice discounting. He stressed the need to fully leverage this digital platform to enhance

credit accessibility and strengthen the MSME ecosystem across J&K.

The Chief Secretary called for exploring the possibility of participation from Government Departments, Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), and large corporate buyers on the TReDS platform, noting that wider adop-

ties and departments onto the platform. He also emphasized conducting extensive awareness campaigns among MSMEs to educate them about the benefits and operational aspects of TReDS.

Setting clear targets, the Chief Secretary instructed the department to ensure onboarding of at least 500 MSMEs from each region of the Union Territory within the next few months, to maximize the reach and impact of the platform.

He also appreciated the proactive role played by the Reserve Bank of India and other stakeholders in promoting invoice financing mechanisms for MSMEs in the region, and expressed confidence that sustained efforts in this direction would help in enhancing the financial resilience and growth prospects of the MSME sector in Jammu & Kashmir.

Dr. Itoo to attend AoME Assessment Team Membership Meeting 2026

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 15: Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo, a distinguished medical professional, public health advocate, and internationally recognized medical educator, will participate in the upcoming Academy of Medical Educators (AoME), United Kingdom -



Assessment Team Membership Meeting, scheduled to be held virtually on 20 April 2026.

The annual meeting brings together AoME assessors from across the globe to deliberate on key aspects of membership and fellowship assessment processes. It serves as a vital platform for sharing experiences, exchanging insights, and strengthening quality standards in medical education. The session will also focus on discussions regarding feedback on the upcoming AoME website and assessment portal, reflecting the organization's commitment to innovation and excellence.

Dr. Itoo, who has recently been appointed as an Assessor by AoME (UK), represents a growing international presence in academic medicine from India. His participation underscores his continued contribution to advancing global standards in medical education, assessment, and professional development.

The meeting will be conducted virtually via Zoom and is expected to host leading medical educators and assessors from diverse regions, reinforcing collaboration and shared learning within the global medical education community.

Dr. Itoo holds multiple prestigious international distinctions, including FRSPH (UK), FIDF (Belgium), IPPPH (UK), MACadMed (UK), and MRSB (UK), and is a member of the American College of Physicians (USA) as well as an Academic Life Member of the Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI).

KU observes Ambedkar Jayanti, emphasizes constitutional values

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR APR 15: The Department of Students' Welfare (DSW) in collaboration with the Department of History, University of Kashmir (KU), celebrated Ambedkar Jayanti to commemorate the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna, Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar at the Main Campus.

The event was organised to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. It aimed to create awareness about his contributions to social justice, equality, and the making of the Indian Constitution. Speaking on the occasion, Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, said, "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision of an inclusive and just society continues to guide us even today. His ideas remain deeply relevant in shaping a more equitable and progressive nation."

She added that such commemorative events are important for students to understand the values of democracy, constitutional rights, and social responsibility.

Dean Students Welfare KU, Prof. Pervez Ahmad, in his remarks, highlighted the importance of Ambedkar's contributions in promoting education and empowering marginalised communities.

Dr. Younis Rashid, faculty at the Department of History, KU who coordinated the event spoke about Dr. Ambedkar's role as a social reformer, economist, and thinker, and emphasized the continued relevance of his ideas in contemporary society.

Students and research scholars from the Department of History shared their insights on the occasion.

Among the presenters, Shaista Amin, research scholar, linked Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's vision of social equality with environmental justice. Asif Nawaz, another research scholar, highlighted Ambedkar's transformative role in modern India, emphasizing his fight against social injustice, his contribution to the Constitution, and his commitment to human dignity. Other presenters included Sameen Ahmad, Rayees Ahmad, Basira Amreen, and Munaza Mansoor.

The event concluded with a formal vote of thanks by Dr. Shahid Ali Khan, Cultural Officer, DSWKU. Certificates were distributed among the students who presented their speeches on Dr. Ambedkar.

Medical Shop Sealed in Handwara Over Illegal Sale of Restricted Drugs

■ DR. AB QAYOOM

HANDWARA, APR 15: In a significant enforcement action under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan, the Tehsil Administration Handwara, in coordination with Handwara Police, sealed a medical shop for the alleged illegal sale of restricted drugs without valid prescriptions, officials said on Tuesday evening. According to official sources, the action was taken during a joint inspection drive conducted across multiple medical stores in Sub-District Handwara. The team, led by the Tehsildar along with police personnel, carried out a thorough examination of sale and purchase records, particularly focusing on Schedule and psychotropic drugs. An official, requesting anonymity, stated that during the inspection, the team found serious violations related to the sale of restricted medicines without proper prescriptions. Acting promptly on the directions of the duty



magistrate, authorities sealed Arwa Medicate, located near District Hospital Handwara, on the spot. "The violations observed were

grave in nature, especially concerning the maintenance of records and unauthorised sale of regulated drugs," the official said, adding that further legal proceedings for cancellation of the shop's drug license have been initiated as per established norms. The drive forms part of the ongoing crackdown under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan, aimed at curbing the misuse and illegal distribution of psychotropic and habit-forming substances. Officials reiterated that such inspection drives will continue across the sub-division to ensure strict compliance with drug control regulations. The administration, along with the police, has reaffirmed its commitment to making Handwara a drug-free zone and warned that any violation of the law will invite strict action. The authorities have also appealed to the public to cooperate with enforcement agencies and report any suspicious activities related to the illegal sale of drugs.

Northern Command Chief Lt Gen Pratik Sharma honours M S Nazki with Op Sindoor Medal

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APR 15: Mr M S Nazki, a soft-spoken author and columnist, had always felt a sense of purpose in shar-

ing stories of bravery. As a Special Defence Correspondent, he embedded himself with the Indian Army, documenting their tales of valor.

His words painted vivid pictures of their sacrifices, touching hearts nationwide. When Northern Command's Chief GOC-in-C, Lt Gen Pratik Sharma,

presented him the Operation Sindoor Medal, Nazki's eyes welled up. "This honor isn't mine alone," he said, "it's for every soldier who's fought for us."



Kulgam Police Nab 10 Drug Peddlers; Narcotics Seized, Poppy Cultivation Destroyed

■ FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, APR 15: In a major crackdown against drug trafficking, Kulgam Police apprehended 10 drug peddlers, including two involved in backward linkage, during multiple operations across the district. Authorities also detected and destroyed illegal poppy cultivation, registering an FIR against the cultivator.

Officials said the operations were carried out at several locations as part of an intensified drive against substance abuse and narcotics.

At Khudwani on NH-44, under Police Station Qaimoh, an auto load carrier was intercepted during naka checking. A search led to the recovery of 5.16 grams of heroin-like substance from the dashboard. The driver, Fayaz Ahmad Dar of Bat

Tachloo, was arrested and an FIR under Section 8/21 of the NDPS Act was registered.

During further investigation, another accused, Asif Abbas Dar of Batengoo, was apprehended near Khudwani Bypass. Police recovered 1.40 grams of heroin-like substance from his possession and added Section 29 NDPS Act, establishing backward linkage.

In a separate operation under Police Station Qazigund at Levdoora, Saqib Manzoor Itoo of Wampoh was apprehended with 5.05 grams of heroin-like substance. FIR under Section 8/21 NDPS Act was registered.

Under Police Station Devsar, police apprehended Adil Manzoor Ganie near Arrigatnoo and recovered approximately 120 grams of cannabis-like substance and 2

grams of brown sugar-like substance. FIR under Sections 8/20 and 21 NDPS Act was registered.

At Zadoora under Police Post Mir Bazar, an auto load carrier was intercepted and a concealed polythene bag recovered from beneath the driver's seat. Upon search, approximately 119 grams of charas powder-like substance was seized. The accused, Junaid Salam Nengroo of Badroo Yaripora, was arrested and an FIR registered under Section 8/20 NDPS Act.

In another incident at Khudwani near SKAUST, two individuals attempting to flee were apprehended and identified as Jasir Imtiaz of Karigam and Basit Ahmad Kaloo of Sopore. Police recovered 20 grams of charas-like substance (10 grams each). FIR was registered, and during follow-up investigation,

Amir Maqbool of Badderpora Qaimoh was arrested with 29.08 grams of cannabis-like substance. Section 29 NDPS Act was invoked.

At Qazigund, Ghulam Mohi Din Khan of Kalian Devsar was apprehended during naka duty. A search of a rice bag led to the recovery of approximately 1.35 kilograms of ganja-like substance. FIR under Section 8/20 NDPS Act was registered.

Meanwhile, in Sopat village under Devsar, police detected illegal poppy cultivation spread over 2.42 marlas of land. The crop was destroyed on the spot, and an FIR under Section 8/18 NDPS Act was registered against the cultivator, Ab Rasheed Mir.

In another operation at Sadiwara Dooru Road under Police Post Jawahar Tunnel, a suspect identified as

Arif Hussain Wani of Nadoora attempted to flee but was apprehended. Police recovered approximately 1.7 kilograms of poppy straw from his possession, and an FIR under Section 8/15 NDPS Act was registered. All accused have been arrested, and further investigation is underway to trace the source and dismantle the wider narcotics network.

Senior Superintendent of Police Kulgam, Anayat Ali Chowdhary, urged the public to cooperate with the police in curbing the drug menace and share any information related to drug peddling, assuring strict confidentiality. Reaffirming its commitment, Kulgam Police stated that it will continue its zero-tolerance policy against drugs and take strict action against those involved in narcotics trade.

Medical Shop Sealed in Mattan for Illegal Sale of Medicines; Action Initiated

■ FAROOQ RATHER

ANANTNAG, APR 15: In a major crackdown on the illegal sale of medicines, Anantnag Police, in coordination with the Drug Control Department, sealed a medical shop at Paibugh Mattan in Anantnag district for violating prescribed norms. Officials said the action was taken following credible inputs regarding the unlawful sale of medicines without valid prescriptions. Acting on the information, a joint inspection team raided the shop and found the owner dispensing medicines without mandatory prescriptions from a registered medical practitioner, in clear violation of established regulations.

Authorities noted that such practices pose a serious threat to public health, as the misuse of medicines without proper medical supervision can lead to harmful consequences.

Taking immediate cognizance of the violation, the authorities sealed the shop under relevant legal provisions. Further proceedings have been initiated against the erring individual, and strict action will follow as per the law. Reiterating its commitment to safeguarding public health, Anantnag Police urged all medical shop owners to strictly adhere to the rules governing the sale of medicines. The general public has also been advised to report any such violations to the nearest police station to ensure timely action.

DC Srinagar launches revamped Official District Website to enhance accessibility, transparency, citizen-centric information sharing

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 15: In a step towards strengthening digital governance and enhancing public service related transparency & information sharing, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, today formally launched the revamped Official website of District Srinagar here at Conference Hall of the DC Office.

The upgraded digital platform has been designed to provide a more user-friendly, accessible and efficient interface for citizens, ensuring seamless access to government services, information, and updates.

The initiative reflects the District Administration's continued commitment to leveraging technology for transparent, accountable, and citizen-centric governance.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized that the revamped website marks



an attempt in improving communication between the administration and the public. He highlighted that the platform has been redesigned with improved navigation, better-organized content and enhanced readability, enabling citizens to easily access key services and vital information.

He further stated that the integration of real-time updates, including social media feeds, will ensure timely dissemination of information and keep the public informed about government initiatives, programs and district-level developments.

Underscoring the importance of sustainability and relevance of digital platforms, the DC stressed the need for regular updates and continuous improvements based on user feedback. He encouraged departments to actively contribute to maintaining the platform as a

dynamic and responsive information hub.

The DC also appreciated the efforts of the National Informatics Centre (NIC) District Srinagar led by DIO, Shahnaz Nayeem and ADIO, Syed Mujadid and their entire team for their dedicated work in upgrading and modernizing the website. He urged them to continue innovating and developing more digital solutions aimed at improving governance and service delivery.

The event also saw participation of Additional District Development Commissioner Rifat Aftab Qureshi, Additional Deputy Commissioner Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, Chief Planning Officer Fayaz Ahmad Dar, SDM West Irfan Bahadur, SDM East Zubair Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Umar Gulzar, District Informatics Officer (NIC) Shahnaz Nayeem, ADIO Syed Mujadid and other Officers.

Sports momentum peaks in Baramulla; Vibrant activities energize Young Athletes

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, APRIL 15: Department of Youth Services and Sports Baramulla continues to witness vibrant sports activities across various zones of the district, as Inter-School Zonal Level Competitions, Cross Country Runs, and Intramural events were successfully conducted, engaging hundreds of young students.



Zone Wagoora and Zone Tangmarg today formally kicked off the Inter-School Zonal Level Competitions with great enthusiasm and participation. In Zone Wagoora, a Badminton competition for Under-14 girls was organized at HSS Kreeri, where 42 students from various government and private schools participated with zeal and sportsmanship.

Similarly, Zone Tangmarg organized a Chess competition for Under-14 boys and girls at GHS Tangmarg, witnessing enthusiastic participation and showcasing the strategic skills of young minds.

Adding to the spirit of fitness and awareness, Zone Dangerpora organized a Cross Country Run under the banner of Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan, in which hundreds of students actively participated. The event aimed at promoting physical fitness while spreading awareness about the ill effects of drug abuse among youth.

Meanwhile, Zone Jhulla conducted a series of Intramural Competitions in games such as Kabaddi and Volleyball for Under-14 and Under-17 boys and girls. The competitions saw massive participation, providing a platform for students to exhibit their talent and encouraging grassroots-level sports development.

These activities are being conducted as per the Annual Sports Calendar issued by the Directorate of Youth Services and Sports J&K, ensuring holistic development, discipline, and active engagement of students across the district.

DC Bandipora Distributes Three-Wheelers, Fish Vending Carts; Inaugurates Live Fish Vending Centre under PMMSY

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 15: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, today distributed three-wheelers and fish vending carts among selected beneficiaries under various schemes, aimed at strengthening livelihood opportunities and boosting the fisheries sector in the district.



On the occasion, the DC distributed 07 three-wheelers equipped with ice box units among fishermen who were selected through a transparent draw of lots conducted by the District Level Steering Committee (DLSC) under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) for the year 2025-26.

Additionally, two fish vending carts were distributed among beneficiaries under the Jammu & Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement Project (JKCIP) 2025-26, further facilitating market access and enhancing income generation for small-scale fish vendors.

The DC also inaugurated a Live Fish Vending Centre at Nibrepora, established under PMMSY 2025-26, marking a significant step towards modernizing fish marketing infrastructure and ensuring the availability of fresh fish to consumers.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted that PMMSY is a flagship scheme aimed at promoting the sustainable development of the fisheries sector through infrastructure creation, improved marketing facilities, and enhanced livelihood opportunities for fishermen.

The DC urged the beneficiaries to make optimal use of the assets provided to enhance their income and contribute towards the overall growth of the fisheries sector in the district.

Among others, the Assistant Director Fisheries Bandipora, officials from the Fisheries Department, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders were present on the occasion.

District Level awareness programme on NMBA held at GDC Shopian

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, APRIL 15: A district level awareness programme under the 100 Days Campaign of Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA), themed "Ill Effects of Drug Abuse," was organized today at the Auditorium Hall of GDC Shopian.

Students from various educational institutions across the district participated actively in the programme, reflecting strong engagement and awareness among the youth.

Additional District Development Commissioner Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone, who was the Chief Guest, in his address described students as the pillars of the nation and emphasized their crucial role in nation-building. He called upon the youth to channel their energy towards constructive activities and uphold values that strengthen society and further appreciated the efforts of the organizing departments in conducting such meaningful initiatives.

Chief Education Officer (CEO) Shopian, Bashir Ahmad Shah, in his address highlighted the importance of coordinated efforts by educational institutions in shaping responsible



citizens. He stressed the role of education in instilling moral values and resilience among students to resist social evils like drug addiction.

While addressing the gathering, the Dy. CEO Shopian, Aijaz Ahmad emphasized the serious consequences of drug abuse on individuals and society. He urged students to remain vigilant, adopt healthy lifestyles, and act as ambassadors of change by spreading awareness against substance abuse in their communities.

The programme also featured vibrant cultural and artistic performances presented by students from various schools, adding

enthusiasm and creative expression to the event.

On the occasion, a felicitation ceremony was held to honour students, schools, and Heads of Institutions. Institutions including BHSS Shopian, HSS Imamsahib, RHMS Keegam, HSS Gatipora, HSS Shadab Karewa, Alamar Education Institute Pinjora, and several other schools were felicitated.

The event was attended by the Principal GDC Shopian, Tariq Ahmad, Heads of Institutions, officials from the Education Department, teachers, and a large number of students from different educational institutions.

DLSA Srinagar reviews role of Para Legal Volunteers, grassroots Legal Awareness stressed

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 15: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar held review meeting of Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) today at the Conference Hall of District Court Srinagar under the aegis of the J&K Legal Services Authority, Srinagar.

The meeting was conducted under the guidance of Haq Nawaz Zargar, Chairman, District Legal Services Authority (Pr. District & Sessions Judge) Srinagar.

The meeting was convened by Tabassum Qadir Parry, Secretary, DLSA Srinagar, who emphasized the crucial role of Para Legal

Volunteers in spreading legal awareness and ensuring access to justice for all sections of society, particularly the marginalized and underprivileged.

During the session, the Secretary sensitized the Para Legal Volunteers about various schemes of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), with special emphasis on creating awareness about the NALSA SPRUHA Scheme. The volunteers were encouraged to actively disseminate information regarding these schemes at the grassroots level so that the benefits reach the deserving sections of society. Various important aspects relating to the duties and



responsibilities of PLVs were discussed in detail. The participants were guided on their role in legal aid activities, outreach programmes, and assisting litigants effectively.

Further, the importance of dedication, coordination, and proactive engagement by PLVs in strengthening the legal aid system was highlighted and PLVs were encouraged to work with sincerity and commitment.

All the Para Legal Volunteers actively participated in the meeting, making it interactive and fruitful. Queries raised by the participants were addressed comprehensively and necessary feedback was taken from PLVs.

Training Programme for Master Trainers on Houselisting, Housing Census 2027 Commences at IMPARD Srinagar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 15: Training Programme for Master Trainers on Houselisting and Housing Census (Phase-I) under Census 2027 commenced today at the Jammu & Kashmir Institute of Management, Public Administration and Rural Development (IMPARD), Main Campus, M.A. Road, Srinagar.

The programme is being organized in collaboration with the Directorate of Census Operations, J&K, and the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Government of India.

The four-day training programme, scheduled from April 15 to April 18, is witnessing the participation of around 34 Master Trainers drawn from various districts of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. These

Master Trainers will play a pivotal role in cascading the training further by training field-level trainers at the district level, who will subsequently train enumerators and supervisors across different blocks, ensuring effective implementation of Census operations throughout the region.

In his inaugural address, Dr. Bilal Ahmad Bhat, Course Coordinator, highlighted the critical importance of the Census as the largest and most comprehensive source of statistical data on the demographic, social, and economic characteristics of the population. He emphasized that the data generated through the Census serves as a foundational input for evidence-based policy making, planning, and governance.

Dr. Bhat further noted that



Census data plays a vital role in fulfilling constitutional requirements such as delimitation of constituencies, reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), and equitable allocation of

developmental resources. Welcoming the participants, He expressed his appreciation for the commitment of the Master Trainers and underscored their responsibility in ensuring accuracy and reliability in data

collection. Arun Kumar, Joint Chief Principal Census Officer and National Trainer, Directorate of Census Operations, J&K, in his address, stressed the crucial role of Master Trainers in maintaining

the quality and credibility of Census data. He pointed out that the success of the Census largely depends on the efficiency and understanding of trainers at all levels. He urged the participants to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the detailed manuals, structured procedures, and comprehensive guidelines developed for Census operations, and to effectively address queries at the field level. He reiterated that the Census, being the world's largest enumeration exercise, holds immense significance not only for administrators and policymakers but also for researchers, academicians, and the general public.

Manmeet Singh Loomba, Deputy Chief Principal Census Officer and National Trainer, Directorate of Census Operations J&K, highlighted a significant transformation in the upcoming

Census exercise. He informed that, for the first time in the 150-year history of the Census, data collection will be conducted using digital technology through a specially designed mobile application. This technological advancement is expected to enhance the accuracy, efficiency, and timeliness of data collection. He further emphasized that the Census 2027 data will be instrumental in shaping future developmental strategies, particularly in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

The programme marks a significant step towards capacity building and preparedness for the successful conduct of Census 2027. Through structured training and collaborative efforts, the initiative aims to ensure a robust, transparent, and technology-driven Census process across the region.

DC Srinagar hands over IOCL sponsored Truenat machines, AI based X-ray units to major City Hospitals to strengthen TB screening & Testing

Felicitates officers, healthcare functionaries for achieving TB-Free Panchayat status for 21 Panchayats

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 15: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today handed over advanced diagnostic equipments, including three Truenat machines and handheld X-ray unit with AI technology to major City hospitals of the district, aimed to significantly enhance early detection and treatment outcomes of tuberculosis.

The three Truenat Machines have been sponsored by Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) under their CSR initiative.

The machines were formally handed over to the Medical Superintendents of Super Speciality Hospital, Children Hospital and District Tuberculosis Office Srinagar in a function held here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

On the occasion, the Deputy



Commissioner also felicitated senior officers of District Administration, Block Development Officers, Senior functionaries and other healthcare workforce in recognition of a remarkable public health achievement to attain TB-Free Panchayat status in 21 Gram Panchayats in District Srinagar.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner urged healthcare personnel to continue their dedicated efforts under the Pradhan Mantri TB Mukat Bharat Abhiyan and assured full support from the District Administration in sustaining and further advancing these achievements.

The DC also expressed gratitude to Indian Oil Corporation Limited and Power Grid Corporation of India for their consistent support under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in

providing advanced diagnostic equipments.

It is pertinent to highlight that District Srinagar is among the few districts in the country to be conferred with the prestigious Gold Status under the TB Mukat Panchayat initiative for all the 21 gram Panchayats.

The event was attended by Chief Planning officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Assistant Commissioner Panchayats, Sakhi Khan, BDO Harwan, Mohammad Muqsit, BDO Qamarwari, Saima Ahad, Chief Medical Officer, Dr Tahir Sajad, District Tuberculosis Officer, Dr Abdul Rouf, Assistant Director TB DSHK, Dr. Afshana Bano, State TB Officer Kashmir Dr. Basra Mir BMO Hazratbal, Dr Abdul Majeed, Zonal Medical Officers, and other concerned staff associated with the program.

DC Pulwama leads plantation drive at CB Nath Shadimarg under NMBA

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, APRIL 15: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, today led a plantation drive at CB Nath, Shadimarg under the ongoing 100-day intensive campaign of the Nasha Mukat Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan.

The drive was organised by the District Administration in collaboration with Mashaal Welfare Foundation (J&K).

Addressing the gathering, the DC said that the 100-day campaign has been launched with the objective of eliminating drug abuse from society through coordinated efforts of all stakeholders. He added that a comprehensive district action plan has been rolled out with a three-pronged strategy focusing on Information, Education and Communication (IEC), treatment and rehabilitation, and enforcement and prevention.

Laying special emphasis on enforcement, he said that strict action has been initiated against drug peddlers and the same will be further intensified in the coming days.

Highlighting the role of youth, the DC said that youth clubs across the district will be revitalised and strengthened by involving motivated young individuals who will act as ambassadors of positive change under the campaign.

Emphasising inclusivity and community participation, he urged religious leaders, Auqaf members, senior citizens, social activists, civil society members and public representatives to actively participate in the campaign and help transform it into a mass movement to ensure a drug-free Pulwama.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from local residents, youth, tribal social activists, civil society members and students.

Among others, Chief Agricultural Officer, Pulwama; Block Development Officer Shadimarg, Tehsildar Rajpora; Block Medical Officer Rajpora; officers from education department and other block-level officers were also present on the occasion.

Meanwhile, as part of the campaign, a series of awareness programmes and activities were conducted across municipal wards and Panchayat halqas in areas including Kuchmulla Tral, Achan Lasipora and Booh Awantipora, focusing on themes related to a drug-free society.

In addition, special awareness sessions highlighting the ill effects of drug abuse were organised in educational institutions across the district.

Furthermore, the Drug Control Department carried out intensive inspections of medical shops as part of the ongoing enforcement measures under the campaign.

District Admin Kupwara intensifies efforts under Nasha Mukat JK Abhiyan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, APRIL 15: District Administration Kupwara today organized a series of impactful activities under the 'Nasha Mukat JK Abhiyan' aimed at raising awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and mobilizing collective efforts for a drug-free society.

Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, inaugurated a cleanliness drive at the D.C. Office Complex as part of the campaign.

The initiative, carried out in collaboration with the Army, symbolized the administration's commitment to promoting a healthy and drug-free environment across the district.

In another significant event, the Deputy Commissioner flagged off an Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) vehicle from the D.C. Office premises.

The vehicle will travel across various parts of the district to disseminate awareness messages on the dangers of substance abuse and encourage community participation in eliminating the drug menace. Officers and employees from multiple departments were present on the occasion.

A 'Nasha Mukat Pledge' was also administered, with participants reaffirming their resolve to work collectively towards eradicating drug abuse and safeguarding the future of the youth.

As part of the ongoing campaign, cleanliness drives were conducted across all blocks and municipalities in the district, engaging local bodies, volunteers, and community members.

Simultaneously, enforcement drives have been intensified by the Police department to curb drug-related activities and ensure strict action against offenders.

The District Administration has also released a comprehensive schedule outlining a series of sustained and rigorous activities under the 'Nasha Mukat JK Abhiyan'.

These include awareness programs in educational institutions, social media campaign, community outreach initiatives, counseling sessions, and coordinated enforcement measures, all aimed at fostering a united and proactive approach against substance abuse.

Reiterating its commitment, the District Administration Kupwara has called upon all stakeholders, including civil society, educational institutions, and youth organizations, to join hands in making Kupwara a drug-free district.

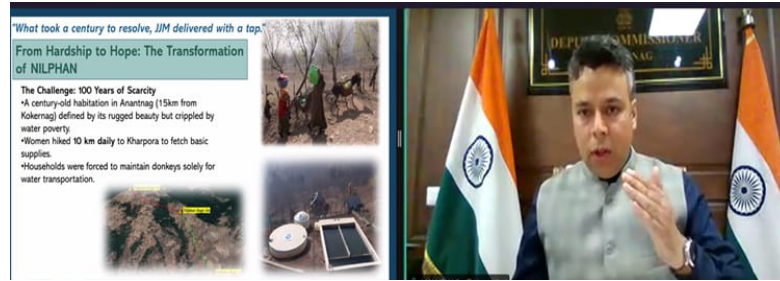
DC Anantnag participates in JJM Peyjal Samvad-2026

Presents best JJM practices, achievements of District

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, APRIL 15: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat today virtually participated in the 7th edition of District Collectors' Peyjal Samvad held under Jal Jeevan Mission by Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti, GoI.

The Samvad is a knowledge sharing platform allowing stakeholders to interact and enhance cross-learning among districts. During the Samvad, the DC presented a detailed presentation of the best JJM practices, challenges and outcomes in the district since its implementation. He highlighted key achievements like sources development, construction of infrastructure, realising targets besides creating grassroots awareness by involving local representatives, community leaders and villagers including women. The technical and procedural aspects



adopted for successful implementation of the JJM were shared during the online session.

Further, the presentation featured a special segment on rejuvenation of springs (Naghs) such as Badamnag and Zadinag. Zoning of service reservoirs was done to cater population at different elevations with varying demands for ensuring pressure equity across the terrains and with significant hill population, gravity-based schemes have been prioritised reducing O&M cost and dependency on electricity.

Convergence with different departments like Forest Department, Fisheries Department and RDD was established to protect catchment areas and ensure long term source and effective use of winter anti freezing techniques.

Interdepartmental co-ordination for immediate resolution of impediments of JJM in the district was also discussed.

Water testing is done in all the villages, Anganwadi Centres and Schools of the district to ensure supply of potable water to the beneficiaries.

District Admin Kulgam organises Interactive Programme with Religious Leaders, Civil Society Members under 100-Day Campaign

DC seeks support to combat Drug Menace

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, APRIL 15: District Administration Kulgam today organised an interactive programme with religious leaders, members of civil society and other stakeholders under the ongoing 100-day campaign of the Nasha Mukat Bharat Abhiyan.

The programme was presided over by Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, who highlighted the crucial role of religious leaders, civil society members and other community stakeholders in spreading awareness against drug abuse and guiding youth towards a healthy and productive life.

Addressing the gathering, the

Deputy Commissioner urged all stakeholders to actively join the fight against drug abuse and work collectively to eradicate the menace from society. He particularly called upon religious leaders to use their influence and platforms to create awareness among the youth about the harmful effects of drugs and motivate them to adopt a healthy and responsible lifestyle.

The Deputy Commissioner also urged people to actively participate in the ongoing 100-day awareness activities being organised across the district under the campaign.

He further briefed the participants about the various measures being undertaken by the district administration to curb drug abuse and strengthen the



ongoing efforts to build a drug-free society. Additional Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Viqar Ahmad Giri, also spoke on the

occasion and stressed the need to ensure zero cultivation of poppy in the district. He highlighted the measures taken by the district

administration to combat the menace and shared the action plan in this regard. During the programme, the importance of community participation in tackling drug abuse was emphasised, with participants sharing their views and suggestions for strengthening awareness at the grassroots level. Resource persons also briefed the participants about the punitive laws related to drug trafficking and substance abuse, highlighting the legal consequences associated with such offences. The participants assured full cooperation with the district administration in spreading awareness and supporting initiatives aimed at making society free from the menace of drugs.

NASHA MUKAT CAMPAIGN MARKED BY SPORTS BASED AWARENESS ACTIVITIES IN SHOPIAN

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, APRIL 15: Under the ongoing '100 Days Nasha Mukat Jammu & Kashmir Campaign 2026', the Department of Youth Services & Sports (DYSS), District Shopian, today organized a series of sports based awareness activities across the district to engage youth and reinforce the message of a drug free society.

The activities were conducted at multiple educational institutions including GHSS Shopian, HSS Sedow, HS Pahnoo, and Gunj Baksh Hanfia Public High School Arhama, witnessing active participation from students.

As part of the campaign, sports tournaments on the theme of "Say No to Drugs" were organized, including cricket, football, and kabaddi competitions.



These activities aimed to channelize the energy of youth into positive and constructive pursuits while simultaneously spreading

awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse.

Students actively participated in the events, which also featured interactive sessions, discussions, and motivational inputs highlighting the physical, mental, and social consequences of drug addiction.

Emphasis was laid on adopting a healthy lifestyle, discipline, and the role of youth in building a drug-free society. The programme also focused on sensitizing students about resisting negative influences and making informed life choices.

Trainers and officials encouraged participants to take responsibility as ambassadors of change within their communities.

A total of 167 students, including 98 boys and 69 girls, participated enthusiastically in the activities, reflecting strong engagement and awareness among the youth.

ADC Handwara reviews arrangements for Mega Padyatra under NMBA

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, APRIL 15: Additional Deputy Commissioner, (ADC), Handwara, Javed Naseem Masoodi today chaired a review meeting to finalize arrangements for the upcoming mega rally/Padyatra being organized under the Nasha Mukat Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) scheduled on 17 April 2026. During the meeting, threadbare discussions were held regarding various logistical and administrative arrangements to ensure the smooth and successful conduct of the rally. Emphasis was laid on coordinated efforts among all concerned departments for effective execution of the programme.

The ADC directed the officers to ensure adequate arrangements for transportation, security, medical facilities, drinking water, and sanitation. He also stressed the importance of widespread awareness and active participation of students, youth, civil society members, and the general public to make the rally impactful.

The ADC reiterated the commitment of the administration to eradicate drug



abuse and urged all stakeholders to work collectively to make the mega rally a grand success and to spread a strong message against substance abuse across the sub-division Handwara.

The meeting was attended by Principal GDC Handwara, Tehsildar Handwara, Block Development officer Nutnussa, Dy SP HQ Handwara, DSP Traffic Kupwara, Principals of BHSS Handwara and GHSS Handwara, Medical Superintendent Associated District Hospital, GMC Handwara; Block Medical officer Handwara, Zonal Education officer Handwara, Zonal Physical officers of Handwara, Langate and Mawer and representative of Municipal Committee Handwara.

HT EDITORIAL

Make Hajj affordable for people once again

The departure of pilgrims for Hajj 2026 from the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir will commence from April 18 with all the arrangements being made in this regard. This year 4704 pilgrims from Jammu & Kashmir will make the journey for Hajj. This number is very less when compared to the number of pilgrims undertaking this journey in the past.

Over the past few years there has been a drastic decline in the number of Hajj pilgrims from Jammu & Kashmir. There was a time when the authorities would frame two to three waiting lists of Hajj pilgrims with around 10,000 seats being allotted to Jammu & Kashmir for the annual Hajj pilgrimage. This trend has changed of late and the authorities are no longer forced to come out with the waiting list of the Hajj pilgrims. As on date there is a tremendous shortfall of the Hajj pilgrims from Jammu & Kashmir.

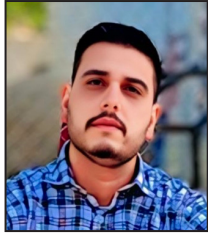
Going by the statistics of the past one can easily say that around 50 percent of the Hajj pilgrims of the allotted quota for Jammu & Kashmir have been lying vacant for the past two or three years. In other words, we can say that Jammu & Kashmir surrenders half of its Hajj quota and these seats are allocated to some other seats of the country. In the past the Jammu & Kashmir government would make the request for additional Hajj seats for its pilgrims.

The trend has changed and there are many reasons for the less departure of people from Jammu & Kashmir for the annual Hajj pilgrimage. It is an established fact that the Hajj pilgrimage carried under the aegis of Haj Committee of India was cheaper as compared to that carried out through private Hajj and Umrah operators. Over the past few years there has been an inflation in the rates for the Hajj carried out through the government. This has resulted into a situation where-in very few people are able to make the annual pilgrimage.

In addition to this due to the ongoing business slump witnessed at the global level the economic condition of the people is not good. People are more interested in saving the money instead of spending the same even if it is for a religious duty like the Hajj pilgrimage. Since Umrah is comparatively cheaper, more and more people are eager to undertake this pilgrimage instead of the Hajj pilgrimage.

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The Vanishing Hoofprints: A Reflection on the Decline of Cattle Rearing in Kashmir



JAWAID IQBAL

There was a time, not long ago, when the pastoral rhythm of Kashmir was deeply intertwined with the gentle presence of cows. Their soft lowing echoed through verdant meadows, their hooves pressed into the damp earth of village paths, and their existence formed an indispensable part of rural life. The valley, known for its ethereal beauty, was equally renowned for its abundance of cattle and the purity of the milk they produced—milk that was unadulterated, wholesome, and deeply nourishing. Today, however, that intimate relationship between man and cattle appears to be fading, leaving behind a poignant void in both culture and sustenance. In earlier decades, almost every household in rural Kashmir reared cows. The practice was not merely economic; it was cultural, even emotional. A cow was considered a member of the family, cared for with affection and respect. Children grew up learning the responsibilities of feeding, grazing, and tending to these animals. The mornings often began with the sound of milking, a ritual that symbolized both sustenance and self-reliance. The milk obtained was not just consumed at home but shared with neighbors, fostering a sense of community and mutual dependence. The purity of milk in those times was unquestionable. It was fresh, organic, and free from the artificial additives that plague modern dairy products. Butter, curd, and ghee were prepared at home, their taste carrying the essence of natural nourishment. The health benefits were evident—stronger immunity, better growth in children, and a lifestyle that was inherently balanced. The absence of chemical interference ensured that what people consumed was in harmony with nature.

However, the last decade has witnessed a significant decline in cattle rearing across the valley. The reasons for this shift are multifaceted, rooted in socio-economic changes, evolving lifestyles, and the pressures of modernization. One of the pri-

mary factors is the increasing inclination of younger generations towards urban employment. Traditional occupations like farming and animal husbandry are often perceived as labor-intensive and less profitable compared to modern professions. As a result, many families have abandoned cattle rearing in pursuit of alternative livelihoods.

Urbanization has also played a critical role. As villages expand into towns and towns into cities, the availability of grazing land has diminished. Open pastures, once abundant, are now replaced by concrete structures. Without adequate space, maintaining cattle becomes a challenge. The infrastructure required for proper animal care—such as sheds, fodder storage, and grazing fields—is no longer easily accessible to many households.

Another contributing factor is the rising cost of maintenance. Feeding cattle has become increasingly expensive due to the scarcity of natural fodder and the high price of commercial feed. Veterinary care, too, has become costlier, discouraging small-scale farmers from continuing this practice. The economic burden often outweighs the perceived benefits, leading families to give up cattle rearing altogether.

Furthermore, the availability of packaged milk and dairy products has altered consumption patterns. Supermarkets and local shops offer convenience that traditional methods cannot match. However, this convenience often comes at the cost of quality. Adulteration, preservatives, and processing techniques compromise the nutritional value of milk. Yet, the ease of access continues to attract consumers, gradually eroding the demand for locally produced, natural milk.

The decline of cattle rearing is not merely an economic or agricultural issue; it is a cultural loss. The traditions associated with it—the knowledge passed down through generations, the skills of dairy production, and the communal bonds it fostered—are slowly disappearing. Festivals and rituals that once involved cattle now lack their original essence. The connection between people and nature, once so intimate, is weakening. Environmentally, too, this shift has consequences. Cattle rearing, when practiced sustainably, contributes to ecological balance. Cow dung, used as a natural fertilizer, enriches the soil and reduces dependence on chemical inputs. The integration of livestock with agriculture creates a self-sustaining system that benefits both land and people. The decline of such

practices leads to increased reliance on synthetic fertilizers, which can degrade soil quality over time. Despite these challenges, the situation is not irreversible. There is a growing awareness among certain sections of society about the importance of returning to natural and sustainable practices. Organic farming movements and initiatives promoting indigenous cattle breeds are slowly gaining momentum. Government schemes and subsidies aimed at supporting dairy farming can play a pivotal role if implemented effectively and made accessible to small farmers. Education and awareness are equally crucial. The younger generation must be made to understand the value of traditional practices, not as relics of the past but as viable solutions for the future. Integrating modern technology with traditional knowledge can make cattle rearing more efficient and less labor-intensive. For instance, improved fodder management, better veterinary services, and innovative dairy processing techniques can enhance productivity and profitability. Community-based approaches can also help revive this practice. Cooperative dairy models, where resources and responsibilities are shared, can reduce individual burden and increase collective benefit. Such systems have proven successful in other regions and can be adapted to the unique context of Kashmir.

Moreover, there is a need to re-establish trust in local dairy products. Encouraging the consumption of fresh, locally sourced milk can create demand that motivates farmers to return to cattle rearing. Branding and marketing initiatives that highlight the purity and health benefits of natural milk can further strengthen this movement.

In conclusion, the decline of cattle rearing in Kashmir is a reflection of broader societal changes. While progress and modernization are inevitable, they should not come at the cost of losing valuable traditions and sustainable practices. The cows that once roamed the valley were not just sources of milk; they were symbols of a way of life that valued simplicity, self-reliance, and harmony with nature.

Reviving this tradition requires collective effort—by individuals, communities, and policymakers alike. It calls for a balanced approach that embraces modern advancements while preserving the wisdom of the past. Only then can the valley hope to hear once again the gentle echoes of cattle in its meadows and taste the purity of milk that nourishes both body and soul.

Mesmerizing Kashmir



SAHIL MANZOOR BHATI

Spring is one of the most charming and mesmerizing seasons of the Kashmir Valley. It brings excitement for every Kashmiri because the season arrives after long winters in Kashmir. This season has great importance for the tourism sector and the agricultural sector, and it brings unlimited hope for the native people of the Kashmir Valley.

Some people like winter, some enjoy the flurry of snow, some love winter dishes like Kashmiri harissa, some prefer the soothing sound of rain, and some eagerly wait for the arrival of spring. Seasons reflect human choices, and every individual has a different preference when it comes to nature's changing moods.

With the bright and sunny day of 21st March, the beautiful season of spring gently steps into our lives. It brings warmth, freshness, and a sense of renewal after the long and harsh winter. Nature seems to awaken from its deep sleep, spreading colors, fragrance, and life everywhere.

The festival of Nowruz is celebrated every year on 21st March. This day holds great cultural and traditional importance and marks the beginning of a new phase of life. In the Kashmir Valley, this day is also associated with the beginning of plantation and agricultural activities. Farmers consider it a sign to start their work in the fields, making it a day full of hope and productivity.

There is also an old belief, which may sound like a myth to some, that people used to bathe in cold water on this day, even in rivers, to welcome

the end of winter. Whether true or not, it strongly symbolizes that the harsh winter days are gone and the pleasant spring has arrived.

Spring is one of the most mesmerizing, delightful, and enchanting seasons in the Kashmir Valley. It attracts millions of tourists from all corners of the world who come to witness its breathtaking beauty. Not only spring, but all four seasons in Kashmir have their own charm and significance. However, spring stands out because of its freshness, greenery, and colorful blossoms.

The spring season generally begins on 21st March and lasts until 21st June. With its arrival, farmers across the valley start planting trees, preparing their land, and engaging in agricultural activities. This season holds immense importance for them, as it sets the foundation for their livelihood.

Orchard owners begin spraying and taking care of their fruit trees to protect them from pests and diseases. Everywhere around, trees are covered with blossoms in shades of white, pink, red, and golden. The growth of plants resumes, and nature looks lively once again. From small plants to large trees, everything appears refreshed and vibrant.

Gardens during this season become a paradise on earth. Flowers bloom in full glory, spreading fragrance and beauty. The entire environment feels fresh and pleasant, lifting the spirits of both locals and visitors. The charm of spring lies in its ability to transform the surroundings into a colorful and lively landscape.

One of the major attractions during spring is the famous Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, which is considered Asia's largest tulip garden. Situated at the foothills of the Zabarwan Mountains, it attracts a large number of tourists every year. The garden opens during spring and remains accessible for about a month, depending on the blooming period



of tulips.

The tulip garden is a symbol of natural beauty and human effort. Every year, new varieties of tulips are introduced, making it more attractive and diverse. The well-maintained paths, colorful flower beds, and scenic background create a magical atmosphere. Visitors often feel as if they are in a dreamland. It is a perfect place for photography, relaxation, and creating unforgettable memories.

Apart from the tulip garden, Kashmir is also home to several historic Mughal gardens built during the Mughal era. These include the famous Shalimar Bagh, Nishat Bagh, Chashme Shahi, Pari Mahal, and Verinag Spring, which is known as the origin of the Jhelum River. These gardens showcase beautiful architecture, flowing water channels, and terraced lawns, making them ideal places to visit during spring.

Kashmir is also rich in spiritual and historical sites. Tourists visit places like Hazratbal Shrine, Charar-e-Sharif, and Jamia Masjid. Another well-known site is the Shankaracharya Temple, which stands as a symbol of religious harmony and historical importance.

Talking about the seasons in Kashmir, there are four main seasons: spring (21st March to 21st June), summer (21st June to 21st September), autumn (21st September to 21st December), and winter (21st December to 21st March). Each season has its own significance and contributes to the tourism industry.

Kashmir is unique in many ways. Its weather is pleasant, rivers are calm, waterfalls are majestic, mountains are snow-covered, forests are lush green, and meadows look like soft carpets spread across the land. Every part of the valley is blessed with natural beauty.

The culture of Kashmir is equally rich and attractive. People are known for their warm hospitality, kindness, and simplicity. Traditional items like carpets, papier-mâché products, and local cuisines reflect the artistic and cultural heritage of the region.

Spring, in particular, plays a vital role in enhancing this beauty. It brings life, color, and joy to the valley. It refreshes not only nature but also the minds and hearts of people. The pleasant weather, blooming flowers, and scenic landscapes create a perfect environment for peace and happiness.

In conclusion, the charming beauty of spring in the Kashmir Valley is truly unmatched. It is a season of hope, renewal, and natural elegance. I would like to invite people from all over the world to visit Kashmir during spring and experience its breathtaking beauty. It is a place where nature speaks, hearts find peace, and memories are made forever.

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Dr. Aziz Hajni

A Towering Litterateur and Visionary Administrator of Kashmir



■ GULFAM BARJI

The Valley of Kashmir—often revered as Resh Vaer, the land of saints and sages has for centuries nurtured extraordinary minds whose contributions have shaped the linguistic and cultural identity of the region. Among these luminaries the name of Dr. Aziz Hajni shines with enduring brilliance. Though his physical presence is no longer with us his intellectual legacy continues to illuminate the path for scholars, writers and lovers of Kashmiri language and literature.

Born on March 07, 1957 in Hajin a culturally rich area of Bandipora district, Abdul Aziz Parry—later widely known as Dr. Aziz Hajni emerged from a family deeply rooted in tradition and values. From an early age he displayed a profound inclination towards literature particularly the Kashmiri language. This passion accompanied him throughout his academic journey from school to university ultimately shaping his life's mission, the preservation, promotion and enrichment of Kashmiri literature. Dr. Hajni holds the distinction of being

the first gold medalist in Kashmiri from the University of Kashmir a testament to his academic excellence and dedication. Over time he established himself as a respected figure in literary and academic circles earning recognition not only for his scholarly achievements but also for his administrative acumen.

Throughout his career, Dr. Hajni served in several key positions. He worked as Deputy Director (Academics) for the Kashmir Division, Research Officer at the State Institute of Education in Srinagar and Officer on Special Duty for Cultural Education in the Department of Education, Government of Jammu and Kashmir. His association with the University of Kashmir also remained significant where he contributed as Coordinator of the Sheikh-ul-Alam Chair for Studies.

His leadership qualities were most prominently reflected during his tenure with the J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages. In both 2011 and 2014, a high-level selection committee chose him as Secretary of the J&K Academy of Art, culture and Languages an acknowledgment of his integrity, competence and visionary outlook.

Dr. Hajni's literary contributions are vast and multifaceted. He authored several books in Kashmiri and translated important works from English into Kashmiri, thereby bridging linguistic and cultural divides. As a playwright, critic, poet and educationist, he enriched multiple dimensions of Kashmiri litera-



ture. His writings not only reflected intellectual depth but also resonated with the socio-cultural realities of the region.

In recognition of his outstanding contributions, Dr. Hajni was honored with the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award In 2013, he was also recognized in New Delhi as the best Kashmiri translator further cementing his reputation as a literary stalwart.

His association with the Sahitya Aka-

demi extended beyond accolades. He served as a member of its Kashmiri Advisory Board from 1997 to 2002 and later as a member of its Executive Board from 2008 to 2012. Additionally, he played an active role in cultural organizations serving multiple terms as General Secretary of Adbi Markaz Kamraz "J&K" and as President of the Kashmir Theatre Association.

Dr. Hajni's influence was not confined to Kashmir alone. He represented Kash-

miri literature on international platforms, participating in seminars, symposia and conferences in countries such as Canada, the United States, and the United Arab Emirates. Through these engagements he introduced global audiences to the richness of Kashmiri literary traditions.

Beyond his professional achievements, Dr. Hajni was admired for his humility, dedication and unwavering commitment to cultural preservation. He belonged to a generation that saw literature not merely as an art form but as a responsibility—a means to safeguard identity and heritage.

On the intervening night of September 11 and 12, 2021, Dr. Aziz Hajni passed away at the age of 64, leaving behind a legacy that will continue to inspire generations. His demise marked the end of an era, but his contributions ensure that his voice remains alive in the literary consciousness of Kashmir.

Today, as young writers and scholars in the Valley strive to carry forward the torch of Kashmiri language and literature they draw inspiration from figures like Dr. Hajni. His life stands as a reminder that true greatness lies not only in personal achievement but in the ability to uplift and enrich an entire cultural tradition.

May his soul rest in eternal peace and may his work continue to guide and inspire all those dedicated to the preservation of Kashmiri language and literature.

Counting Wealth Beyond Coins



■ ABID HUSSAIN RATHER

In common global usage, the terms "wealth" and "poverty" are often understood as being closely linked to money and material resources. But in reality, the matter is far more complex and multifaceted. Is wealth only defined by bank balances, property and assets? Or do knowledge, character, health, abilities and social respect also count? If someone has a lot of money but no peace of mind, and another has limited means but he has utmost inner satisfaction and self respect—who is truly rich and who is genuinely poor? This is a thought provoking question that deserves our attention and we need to ponder it.

In Islam, true wealth is not counted as a lot of money and other assets but true wealth is described as the richness of the heart. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "True richness is the richness of the heart." The Qur'an presents wealth as a test rather than an ultimate measure of superiority and pomposity. Religious obligations like zakat, charity and spending in the way of God remind us that wealth is a social trust and responsibility and we are not its absolute owners. In Christianity, a saying attributed to Jesus suggests that wealth borne arrogance and economic haughtiness distances a person from spirituality and righteousness. In Buddhism, desires are considered the root cause of sufferings, so true wealth lies in controlling desires. In Hinduism, wealth (Artha) is accepted but kept subordinate to righteousness (Dharma). Thus, religions do not deny the importance of wealth, but they do not place it above morality and spirituality. All religions teach us that wealth should be treated as a source to fulfil our needs rather than being a source to satisfy our all desires blindly.



It is pertinent to mention here that standards of wealth vary across societies. In Western capitalist societies, money, power and luxurious lifestyle are often seen as signs of success, whereas in Eastern societies, family systems, social respect and education are also highly valued. According to the United Nations Development Programme, poverty is not just lack of income but deprivation of education, health, and quality of life. This is why the concept of "multidimensional poverty" has emerged, including factors like education, nutrition, clean water and neat housing. In this context, a person may be finan-

cially average yet rich in several human development indicators.

An important question is whether true wealth is money or capability. History is full of individuals who rose from poverty through their abilities. Names like Bill Gates and Elon Musk are often cited, but behind their success were education, opportunities and supportive environments. If a society lacks quality education and equal opportunities, talent remains suppressed. Therefore, wealth is not just individual effort but also a result of collective systems.

Government policies play a crucial role in reducing or increasing the gap between

rich and poor. A fair tax system, equal access to education, healthcare facilities and employment opportunities can balance economic inequality. Whereas corruption, nepotism and unfair distribution of resources leads to the accumulation of wealth in a few hands. Global reports show that a large portion of the world's wealth is concentrated among a limited group, indicating that inequality is not merely the result of individual effort or laziness but also because of structural disparities.

The distinction between lawful and unlawful wealth is also important. From an Islamic and moral perspective, lawful

earnings bring blessings, whereas wealth gained through bribery, corruption and exploitation may shine temporarily but does not bring lasting respect. Rather, wealth earned through illicit and illegal means destroys peace of mind. Ignoring the difference between legal and illegal wealth leads to moral decline in society. True wealth benefits not only the individual but society as well.

Another ongoing debate is whether wealth and poverty are a result of destiny or efforts. Religion acknowledges destiny but also emphasizes striving and hard work. Humans are encouraged to work hard and persevere. Psychological studies show that a positive mind set and continuous efforts expand life opportunities. However, it is also true that someone raised in poverty, malnutrition and poor educational conditions faces greater challenges. Thus, destiny and effort are interconnected.

In conclusion, wealth and poverty are not determined solely by money but their measurement has some other parameters. They are a combination of abilities, opportunities, state policies, social justice, moral values and individual efforts. Money is important but not the only criterion for determining being wealthy or poor. True wealth includes peace of heart, strength of character, light of knowledge and usefulness to society. If money exists alongside these qualities, it is a true blessing; otherwise, it is merely a number with temporary shine which fades with the passage of time. Finally it can be said that wealth is not what we possess but what we become through what we possess. As Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA) beautifully said, "Wealth is not in having many possessions, but in having few wants." Likewise, Socrates wisely observed, "Contentment is natural wealth, luxury is artificial poverty." And in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "The world has enough for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed." Thus, a heart at peace, a mind enlightened and a life of purpose remain the greatest treasures one can ever attain.

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Keep Hydrated This Summer



SHAHNAZ HUSAIN

Does your skin feel tight, dull, or rough with the arrival of summer? That's often a sign your skin is losing moisture faster than it can retain it.

Heat, sun exposure, and long hours in air-conditioned spaces can quietly dehydrate the skin, affecting its texture and natural glow.

Dehydration leads to flakiness, wrinkles, itching, and skin infections. The tricky part is that your skin can look oily even when it's dehydrated underneath.

Dehydration can affect many bodily processes, including digestion, immune system support, and temperature regulation.

Dehydration isn't just about feeling thirsty – it can affect your mood, focus, skin, and vital organ functions. The key to avoiding it lies in knowing how to hydrate your body consistently, especially when the temperature soars.

Thirst is often a late indicator of dehydration.

Listen to your body – if you're feeling thirsty or sluggish, you might already be running low on hydration. Mild fluid loss can mess with how you feel.

There's no magic number when it comes to how much water you need daily – it all depends on your activity level, health conditions, height, weight, gender, and other factors. Experts recommend drinking 8–10 glasses of water daily for healthy adults.

Pregnant women should drink 10 glasses of water daily, and breastfeeding women should drink 12 glasses. Kids and teens should drink 6 to 8 cups of water a day.

Drink a glass of water every 2 hours to maintain hydration.

Most people should drink water, not sports drinks, during their workouts. Sports drinks may be useful for people doing



intense exercise for a long time, especially if they're sweating a lot. But for non-athletes, sports drinks are simply another sugary beverage.

Water doesn't have any added sugars or calories in it, which makes it a great beverage to have throughout the day.

Adding lime, cucumber, or mint makes it easier to keep sipping throughout the day as the flavour encourages increased fluid intake compared to plain water.

Infusing water with lemon, lime, cucumber, and mint is an easy way to add nutrients and a burst of natural flavour. It's also a tasty way to stay hydrated, support digestion, and promote alkalinity while adding vitamins, antioxidants, and a natural cool-

ing effect.

It's an extra refreshing way to stay hydrated and a cooling alternative when it's too hot to sip on herbal tea.

The hydrating effects of cucumber mint water contribute to glowing, healthy skin.

Cucumbers are composed of approximately 95–96% water, making them one of nature's most hydrating foods.

Cucumbers contain vitamins C and K, which help reduce skin inflammation and promote collagen production.

Keep water within reach. Carry a reusable water bottle everywhere and use it – refill it often so hydration stays on your radar.

Water-rich fruits are rich in natural sugars, fibre, and antioxidants. They are not only an excellent source of hydration but also protect the body against damage caused by heat and sun exposure. Many fruits naturally contain high amounts of water along with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Including hydrating summer fruits such as watermelon (92%), strawberries (91%), cantaloupe (90%), and peaches (89%) not only provides essential nutrients like vitamin C, vitamin A, potassium, and antioxidants, helping with hydration, immunity, and overall energy.

Adding a variety of colourful water-rich fruits ensures that you get different nutrients to stay healthy all season long. Incorporating hydrating fruits into daily meals just requires minor dietary changes to add these fruits to your routine. You may prepare fresh fruit salads for breakfast or snacks, add fruits to smoothies or yoghurt bowls, and consume chilled fruit slices during mid-day breaks. Key strategies include adding berries or bananas to morning oatmeal/yoghurt, swapping processed snacks for apples or citrus, and adding sliced fruit to salads.

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Eat whole fruits. However, if you drink fruit juice, keep your serving to ½ cup, and be sure it's labeled 100%. Skip fruit drinks, punches or fruit cocktails. They are often loaded with excess sodium and/or added sugar. Be sure to take a wide variety of water-rich fruits with different types and colours since they offer different nutrients. Always keep a good stock of fresh fruit in your refrigerator so that you are always prepared to eat healthily. Develop a habit of eating two servings of water-rich fruit daily.

Choose Coconut Water or Natural Electrolyte Drinks for hydration during this summer season.

Electrolytes are minerals that conduct an electrical charge when mixed with water. They help regulate a variety of your body's most essential functions, including nerve signalling, pH balance, muscle contraction, and hydration.

Coconut water replenishes lost electrolytes and is a natural alternative to energy drinks, making it one of the top hydration tips for tropical climates.

Coconut water is best for fluid replenishment after light activity. It offers a hydration boost that performs somewhere between water and traditional sports drinks or electrolyte solutions.

Unsweetened coconut water also contains naturally occurring sugars—about 7 to 10 grams per cup.

Coconut water, milk, fruit juices, and smoothies are high in electrolytes. Drinks with electrolytes may help you rehydrate after intense exercise, vomiting, or diarrhoea. You can also make your own drink at home.

The author is international fame beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India

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Indian Army's Chakpuran Camp Leads Green Initiative at Pokhriwal, Qaziabad

■ DR.AB QAYOOM

LANGATE, APR 15: Demonstrating its continued commitment to environmental conservation and community welfare, the Indian Army's Chakpuran Camp on Tuesday organised a plantation drive at Pokhriwal in Qaziabad area of Langate. The initiative, held as part of the Army's broader civic responsibility programmes, witnessed enthusiastic participation from local residents, school children, and officials from the Forest Department. The plantation drive aimed at enhancing the green cover in the area while promoting ecological balance and environmental awareness among the masses. A significant number of saplings were planted during the event, contributing to the long-term sustainability of the region's ecosystem. What made the initiative particularly noteworthy was the active involvement of school children, whose participation added both energy and meaning to the programme. The event also served as an educational platform, instilling a sense of responsibility and awareness among the younger generation about the importance of preserving nature. Officials from the Forest Department were also present on the occasion, providing technical guidance and ensuring that the plantation was carried out in an environmentally sustainable manner. Their presence reinforced the ecological importance of the drive and ensured that the



saplings planted would contribute effectively to the region's biodiversity. Local residents lauded the Army's efforts, highlighting the importance of such initiatives in fostering a sense of unity and shared responsibility between the armed forces and the civilian population. The plantation drive not only strengthened civil-military relations but also promoted a collective vision for a greener and healthier future. The Indian Army has consistently been at the forefront of

nation-building activities beyond its primary role of ensuring security. Initiatives like the plantation drive at Pokhriwal reflect its dedication to environmental stewardship and community engagement. As the saplings take root and grow, they will stand as a living testament to the collaborative effort between the Army and the local community symbolising hope, sustainability, and a shared commitment to safeguarding the environment for generations to come.

Satish Sharma reviews petroleum supply chain, stresses equitable distribution; vows zero tolerance for hoarding

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APR 15: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, Satish Sharma today chaired a meeting to review the supply and distribution of petroleum products, with emphasis on operations managed by the Indian Oil Corporation.

During the meeting held at Narwal office of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the Minister had a comprehensive review of the current availability of petroleum products, supply chain logistics and distribution mechanisms across various districts. He emphasized the need for maintaining uninterrupted supply and directed the officials to ensure close coordination with the oil companies for adequate stock level and timely replenishment.

Highlighting the importance of balanced distribu-



tion, Satish Sharma called for rationalisation of petroleum allocation to ensure equitable availability across all regions. He stressed that no area should face scarcity and that supply must be aligned with actual demand patterns to avoid shortages or regional imbalances.

The Minister also made it clear that there will be zero tolerance for hoarding, cautioning that strict action will be taken against any

malpractice that disrupts fair supply.

The Minister instructed the officials to establish a robust monitoring system and maintain regular oversight to address any emerging challenges promptly. Reiterating the government's commitment, he said that ensuring seamless availability of essential commodities remains a top priority to safeguard public convenience.

Following the meeting,

the Minister visited the plant site where he inspected the bottling process and reviewed on-ground operations. He also directed the authorities to upgrade facilities for the labour workforce at the plant, emphasizing the need for improved working conditions and welfare measures.

Senior officials from the concerned departments and representatives of oil companies were present during the meeting.

Darbar Move: Govt Orders Shift Of Offices To Srinagar From May 4

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APR 15: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday ordered the annual Darbar Move of offices from Jammu to Srinagar for the Summer Season 2026, outlining a detailed schedule for closure, reopening, transportation, security, and administrative arrangements.

According to Government Order No.786-3K(GAD) of 2026 dated April 15, offices observing a five-day week will close in Jammu on April 30 after office hours, while those following a six-day week will close on May 2. All offices are scheduled to reopen in Srinagar on May 4. As per the order, offices moving

in camp will carry only 33 percent of staff strength or a maximum of 10 officials, whichever is less. The Jammu and Kashmir Road Transport Corporation (JKRTC) has been directed to provide sufficient buses on May 1 and 3, with advance ticketing starting from April 20.

The order further states that each convoy will be accompanied by a crane, two empty buses, and mobile workshops to address any breakdowns en route. J&K Police will escort the convoys and ensure priority passage through key tunnels, including the Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Tunnel and Banihal-Qazigund Tunnel.

Healthcare arrangements will be made along the route at multiple places including Jhajar Kotli, Udhampur, Chenani, Ramban, Ramsu, Banihal, and Qazigund, with necessary instructions to be issued by the Health and Medical Education Department.

Employees have been instructed not to occupy government or municipal accommodations without proper allotment, though they may retain Jammu accommodations for family use under

prescribed conditions. Ration counters will also be established in Srinagar for move employees.

A uniform Special Move Travelling Allowance of Rs 25,000 has been sanctioned for employees undertaking the move within the stipulated timeline, while advance salary for April will be drawn on April 29.

The order also specifies that leave during the move period will be granted only under exceptional circumstances, with three days of special casual leave allowed for Jammu-based employees opting for it.

The General Administration Department will establish the Summer Secretariat in Jammu, while all departments have been directed to detach attached staff before April 27. Accommodation arrangements in Srinagar will be handled as per past practice.

Office timings upon reopening in Srinagar have been fixed from 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM for Civil Secretariat and departments within its premises, and from 10:00 AM to 4:30 PM for offices outside, observing a six-day week. (KNC)

Public Notice

My Mothers Name has been wrongly written in my D.O.B certificate as Usman Gulzar Khanday S/O Gulzar Ahmad Khanday Mothers Name Meema Gulzar R/O Rampora Chattabal While my actual name is Usman Gulzar Khanday S/O Gulzar Ahmad Khanday Mothers Name Nelofar R/O Rampora Chattabal. Now I want to correct it.

If any body have any objection He /She can contact SMC Srinagar within a period of 7 days ,after that no objection will be entertained.

**Name:-Usman Gulzar Khanday
S/O Gulzar Ahmad Khanday
Mothers Name Nelofar
R/O Rampora Chattabal**

Public Notice

My son's and daughters parentage has been wrongly written as MOHD RAFAEEQ MIR while his/her correct parentage is RAFAEEQ AHMAD MIR which needs to be corrected if anybody having objection in this regard he /she may contact with the office of GOVT HIGH SCHOOL KAKOTHAL / ZONE WAGOORA within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

**Mane....RAFAEEQ AHMAD MIR, F/O ...AIMAN RAFAEEQ
F/O ..MOHSIN RAFAEEQ, R/O ...KAKOTHAL**

Public Notice

I have changed my name from NAZIRA BANO To NAZIRA BEGUM in my passport bearing passport No.. N8929857 in future will be known as NAZIRA BEGUM . If anybody is having any objection in this regard he/she may contact with passport office Srinagar within 07 days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

**Name....NAZIRA BEGUM
W/O...SYED FAYAZ AHMAD
R/O ...HAIL JAGIR , Distt.....BARAMULLA**

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI / KALANTRA

Subject: Application NAJMA FAYAZ S/O FAYAZ AHMAD WANI R/O KOHLINA Tehsil KREERI for issuance of RBA certificate in favour .

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of RBA in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of WANI of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the KOHLINA community having annual income 270,000// the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1... FAYAZ AHMAD WANI father 51 years Labour
- 2...NAJMA FAYAZ self 29 years semi Govt Job
- 3...SHAMEEMA FAYAZ sister 26 years student
- 4...SIHEELA FAYAZ do 25 years //
- 5...FARHAN GAZALA do 17 years //

If anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of said certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained. Subject: Application NAJMA FAYAZ S/O FAYAZ AHMAD WANI R/O KOHLINA Tehsil KREERI for issuance of RBA certificate in favour.

NAIB TEHSILDAR KALANTRA

Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my Father'sname AB RAZAQ TELI R/O AB WAHAB TELI R/O WARIPORA BALA Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 021204000 3478 wants to be registered on my name FAYAZ AHMAD TELI S/O AB RAZAQ TELI R/O WARIPORA BALA .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 ofthis notice after that no objection will be entertained.

**Name....FAYAZ AHMAD TELI, S/O...AB RAZAQ TELI
R/OWARIPORA BALA , BLOCK.... WAGOORA**

Public Notice

My son's and daughters parentage has been wrongly written as MOHD RAFAEEQ MIR while his/her correct parentage is RAFAEEQ AHMAD MIR which needs to be corrected if anybody having objection in this regard he /she may contact with the office of GOVT HIGH SCHOOL KAKOTHAL / ZONE WAGOORA within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

**Mane....RAFAEEQ AHMAD MIR, F/O ...AIMAN RAFAEEQ
F/O ..MOHSIN RAFAEEQ
R/O ...KAKOTHAL**

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar hassubmitted case file pertainingto Birth of MUSHTAQ AHMAD GANAIE S/O GH MOHAMMAD GANAIE R/O. KOHLINA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 16/05/1978 event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection.

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

Sd/- Executive Magistrate 1st Class Kreeri

Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my Father'sname AB RAZAQ TELI R/O AB WAHAB TELI R/O WARIPORA BALA Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 021204000 3478 wants to be registered on my name FAYAZ AHMAD TELI S/O AB RAZAQ TELI R/O WARIPORA BALA .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 ofthis notice after that no objection will be entertained.

**Name....FAYAZ AHMAD TELI
S/O...AB RAZAQ TELI
R/OWARIPORA BALA
BLOCK.... WAGOORA**

Government of Jammu & Kashmir Department of Forest, Ecology & Environment Civil Secretariat, J&K NOTIFICATION Jammu, 13th April 2026

S.O. 107 (E) Whereas the use of Aadhaar number to establish identity enables individuals to receive subsidies, benefits and services in a convenient and seamless manner, obviates the need for multiplicity of documents to establish identity, simplifies processes and promotes transparency and efficiency:

And whereas the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India, after consultation with the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), had allowed vide its letter no. eF. No. 13(6)/2022-EG -II, dated 04.12.2025 to the Forest, Ecology and Environment Department, (hereinafter referred to as the said Agency), Government of Jammu and Kashmir (hereinafter referred to as the said Government) for the purposes prescribed under sub-rule (1) of rule 3 of the Aadhaar Authentication for Good Governance (Social Welfare, Innovation, Knowledge) Rules, 2020 (hereinafter referred to as the said rules) that the said Government /Ministry/Department/ Agency may be allowed to perform authentication and be permitted the use of Aadhaar number during authentication for establishing identity of Aadhaar number holder and notify the same under rule 5 of the said rules read with sub-clause (i) of clause (b) of sub-section (4) of section 4 of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016 (hereinafter referred to as the Act):

And whereas, the Aadhaar authentication shall be performed for usage of digital platform to ensure Good Governance (hereinafter referred to as the said purpose) as prescribed under sub-rule (1) of rule 3 of the said rules and the performance of Aadhaar authentication for the said purpose shall be on voluntary basis and that the said Department shall perform the Aadhaar authentication only for establishing the identity of Nomadic graziers for issuance of Grazing Pass and collection of fee, using Yes/ No Authentication facility. (hereinafter referred to as the use case(s)).

Now, therefore, in pursuance of rule 5 of the said rules read with sub-clause (i) of clause (b) of sub-section (4) of section 4 of the Act and in the supersession of notification S.O 20 of 2026 dated 28h January, 2026, the said Department hereby notifies the following, namely:

(1) The Forest, Environment and Ecology Department, of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir as provided in the Act, shall obtain the consent of the Aadhaar number holder for the purpose of authentication herein.

(2) As per sub- rule (2) of rule 3 of the said rules. Aadhaar authentication is on voluntary basis. The Forest, Ecology and Environment Department shall inform to the Aadhaar number holder of alternate and viable means of identification and shall not deny any service to the Aadhaar number holder for refusing to, or being unable to, undergo Aadhaar authentication, namely

- i. Bank or Post office passbook with Photo; or**
- ii. Permanent Account Number (PAN) Card; or**
- iii. Passport; or**
- iv. Ration Card; or**
- v. Voter identity Card; or**
- vi. Driving license issued by the Licensing Authority under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988(59 of 1988); or**
- vii. Certificate of identity having photo of such person issued by a Gazetted Officer or a Tehsildar or an official letter head; or**
- viii. Any other document as specified by the Department;**

This notification shall come into effect from the date of its publication in the official Gazette.

By order of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

No: FST-IT/61/2025-02 Dated: 13-04-2026

**Sd/- Sheetal Nanda, IAS
Commissioner / Secretary to Government**

DIPK: 419/26 | Dated: 15-04-2026

Two-Day Consultative Meeting on framing regulations of JKSSSA Commences in Srinagar

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 15: Atwo-day consultative meeting for the formulation of regulations of the Jammu and Kashmir School Standards and Safety Authority (JKSSSA) commenced here today at JKBOSE, Srinagar.

The meeting was attended by key stakeholders, subject experts, and representatives from NIEPA, New Delhi, the School Education Department, JKSCERT, Higher Education Department, Universities of the UT and Administration.

The meeting aimed to deliberate upon and develop a comprehensive, robust and contextually relevant framework of regulations to guide the functioning of JKSSSA.

The initiative is a significant step toward strengthening institutional mechanisms for ensuring quality standards, safety protocols and infrastructural parameters across schools in the



Union Territory.

During the inaugural session, Gh. Hassan Sheikh, Chairperson, JKBOSE, who chaired the meeting,

emphasized the importance of establishing a transparent, accountable and forward-looking regulatory architecture aligned with

NEP 2020 and contemporary educational needs.

Prof Rasmita Das Swain from NIEPA, New Delhi highlighted the necessity of integrating best practices, stakeholder perspectives, and field realities into the bylaw framework.

Over the course of two days, the consultative meeting, reflecting a collaborative and participatory approach to policy formulation towards an inclusive and responsive framework to the evolving needs of the school education system, will focus on key thematic areas including governance structure, regulatory mandates, compliance mechanisms, quality assurance benchmarks and safety standards.

Interactive sessions, thematic presentations and group deliberations are expected to contribute to a well-rounded and implementable set of regulations.

DLSA Srinagar promotes legal literacy, empowers young minds with knowledge to safeguard their rights

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 15: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar, in collaboration with the School Education Department, organized a series of legal awareness programmes today at Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Gulabagh, Srinagar.

The programme was conducted under the guidance of Haq Nawaz Zargar, Chairman, DLSA Srinagar (Principal District & Sessions Judge), and under the supervision of Tabassum Qadir, Secretary, DLSA Srinagar.

The awareness sessions aimed to sensitize students on vital legal issues and to enhance their understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

Adv. Sabiya Kousar, Pro Bono Lawyer, delivered an informative session on the NALSA (Child-Friendly Legal Services for Children) Scheme, 2024, highlighting its key provisions and benefits. She also spoke on Sexual Assault and Child Protection Laws, emphasizing the importance of legal safeguards available to children.

Further, Urba Rashid, Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel (LADC), conducted an



engaging session on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act, educating students about workplace dignity, safety, and legal remedies.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students and faculty members, reflecting a keen interest in legal awareness initiatives.

Such programmes are part of the continuous efforts of DLSA Srinagar to promote legal literacy and empower young minds with the knowledge necessary to safeguard their rights and make informed decisions.

DLSA Reasi hosts series of Legal Awareness events

HT NEWS NETWORK

REASI, APRIL 15: Under the visionary leadership of Chairman District Legal Services Authority Reasi (also Principal District and Sessions Judge Reasi) Khalil Choudhary and the guidance of Secretary, DLSA Reasi Pooja Gupta, an awareness programme on Right to Education was today organized at Government Middle School Garan.

The programme was conducted by the Para Legal Volunteers of TLSC Katra. During the session, the students and staff were sensitized to the importance of education as a fundamental right under Article 21-A of the Constitution of India. The participants were informed about free and



compulsory education for children between the ages of 6 to 14 years under the Right to Education Act, 2009.

The PLVs highlighted key provisions of the Act, including access to quality education, prohibition of discrimination and the role of parents and authorities in ensuring school enrollment and retention. The students were encouraged to actively pursue their education and be aware of their rights. A quiz competition on the theme "Freedom Fighters" was organized by the Para Legal Volunteers of TLSC Katra at Government Middle School, Nangal. As many as 15 students enthusiastically participated in the competition, showcasing their knowledge and awareness about the contributions and sacrifices of India's freedom fighters.

Another awareness programme on Pre-litigation Matters was organized by the Para Legal Volunteers of TLSC Mahore at LAC Shajroo. The programme focused on spreading awareness regarding Pre-Litigation Cases and the upcoming Special Lok Adalat scheduled to be held on 18th April 2026.

During the session, the participants were informed about the importance of amicable settlement of disputes through Lok Adalats, which provide a speedy, cost-effective and hassle-free mechanism for resolving cases without prolonged litigation.

Similarly, an awareness programme on the theme "Protection of Environment" was organized at the Front Office Mahore by the Tehsil Legal Services Committee (TLSC). The participants were sensitized to the importance of environmental protection, conservation of natural resources and the role of individuals in maintaining a clean and sustainable environment.

Emphasis was laid on reducing pollution, proper waste management, plantation drives and adopting eco-friendly practices in daily life.

Bandipora launches 100-day intensive campaign against drug abuse to curb addiction and strengthen community awareness

DC leads district-wide coalition in zero tolerance push

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 15: District Administration Bandipora today launched a 100-Day Mission Mode campaign under Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan at Mini Secretariat Bandipora, with the formal roll-out of a detailed activity calendar, marking the commencement of an intensive district-wide anti-drug campaign.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, presided over the Calendar Roll-Out Ceremony, which witnessed wide participation from officers of civil administration, police, security forces, and representatives of various stakeholder groups including traders, transporters, chemists, petrol and LPG dealers, contractors, mining associations, fishermen, hoteliers, NGOs, Bar Association, religious leaders, retired police personnel, private schools, media, and students.

On the occasion, the DC administered a pledge to all participants, reaffirming their collective commitment towards eradicating the drug menace from the district.

Addressing the gathering, the

Deputy Commissioner outlined a comprehensive strategy to tackle drug abuse through a combination of enforcement, awareness, and community participation. She stressed the need for identification and mapping of drug-prone areas for targeted interventions and called for stronger coordination with religious institutions to build a value-based preventive framework. She emphasized mass mobilisation across all sections of society to ensure collective ownership of the campaign.

The DC further announced the conduct of "Dosti Sessions" in schools to facilitate open dialogue with students, and "Maa Se Guftagu", a weekly outreach programme involving mothers to be conducted through the ICDS Department. She also highlighted the development and dissemination of IEC material, including posters and pamphlets tailored for both youth and adults, and encouraged active stakeholder engagement by inviting suggestions to strengthen the campaign.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Zaffar Husson Shawl, highlighted that drug abuse is a serious social concern requiring coordinated efforts and



active participation from all sections of society.

Deputy District Election Officer presented an overview of the proposed activities, objectives, targets, and departmental responsibilities under the 100-day campaign framework.

The programme also witnessed intense and constructive deliberations among officers of the civil administration, police, security agencies, and stakeholder

groups, wherein participants shared ground-level insights, challenges, and practical suggestions on curbing drug abuse. The discussions focused on identifying effective enforcement strategies, strengthening community-based interventions, enhancing awareness mechanisms, and ensuring seamless coordination among all stakeholders to achieve tangible outcomes during the campaign period.

Speaking on the occasion, noted religious scholar Mufti Nazir Ahmad Qasmi underscored the adverse impact of drug addiction on families and society and called for a collective moral response, emphasizing the role of parents and ethical upbringing in prevention.

Additional Superintendent of Police, Bandipora, outlined the enforcement measures being undertaken, including strict action under relevant provisions of law and sustained efforts to dismantle drug networks.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner also launched a dedicated Single-Point Contact Helpline (7006235244) to facilitate reporting of drug-related activities, seeking assistance for affected individuals, and accessing rehabilitation services. She emphasized that individuals affected by addiction will be supported through rehabilitation and livelihood schemes, while strict action will be taken against drug peddlers as per law.

The programme concluded with a collective resolve from all stakeholders to work in coordination with the District Administration towards making Bandipora a drug-free district.

Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan: IEC Van drives Anti-Drug Awareness across Harwan

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 15: In a significant push towards building a drug-free society, the ongoing Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan is gaining momentum at the grassroots level, with an Information, Education and Communication (IEC) van actively traversing remote and rural areas of Harwan block to spread awareness about the dangers of drug abuse.

Moving through several panchayats including Dara-B, Gandthal, Fakir Gujri and adjoining areas, the IEC van, equipped with a public address system, disseminates powerful messages on the harmful effects of substance abuse,

preventive measures, and the importance of collective responsibility in tackling the menace.

The initiative, spearheaded by the Information Department in collaboration with Rural Development Department, reflects a proactive approach to reach communities at their doorsteps. The use of audio messaging ensures that even those in far-flung areas are not left out of the awareness campaign.

The van does not only spread information but also sparks conversations among locals, particularly youth, about the long-term consequences of drug addiction. The campaign emphasizes early

intervention, community vigilance, and the role of families in guiding individuals away from substance abuse.

Local residents have responded positively to the initiative, appreciating the government's efforts to address the growing concern of drug abuse through direct outreach. The presence of the IEC van in their neighborhoods has reinforced the message that awareness is the first step towards prevention.

The initiatives like the IEC van campaign are vital in bridging the information gap and empowering communities with knowledge and resources.

Director FCS&CA reviews functioning of Department

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 15: Director Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Jammu Rajesh Kumar Shavan today chaired a meeting to review the functioning of the Department. He reviewed the availability of essential commodities, K.Oil, LPG and Petrol/Diesel.

The meeting was attended by all Assistant Directors and Tehsil Supply Officers/Area Inspectors of the



Division. During the meeting the ADs and TSOs were directed to conduct daily inspection of wholesale and retail markets, fair price shops, godowns and other business establishments dealing in essential commodities and to ensure proper display of price lists at all business premises. Directions were issued for taking strict action against violators.

The officers were exhorted to keep strict vigil on the daily prices of essential commodities such as wheat flour, rice, pulses, edible oils, sugar, LPG, kerosene, salt, onions, potatoes and other notified items. "No complaint should come from any corner regarding overcharging, hoarding and profiteering," he directed.

Further, the ADs and TSOs for being officers of the enforcement department were directed to wear uniform during office hours to inculcate the sense of discipline.

Run for Health, Walk for Change: Srinagar's Youth Unites for Nasha Mukta J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 15: It wasn't just about running or walking. It was about reclaiming lives.

A powerful wave of unity and determination swept through the heart of Srinagar as the Directorate of Youth Services and Sports J&K, under the direct and compassionate supervision of the department's Director General Anuradha Gupta, organized a heartfelt Mega Unity March and spirited Mini Marathon.

The event was held in close collaboration with the District Administration Srinagar, as part of the ongoing Nasha Mukta J&K

Abhiyan.

The morning came alive at the historic Ghanta Ghar in Lal Chowk, where the flag-off ceremony was led by DYSSO Srinagar, Ghulam Hassan Lone, alongside the Chief Education Officer Srinagar Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Bhat. But the real heroes of the day were the young participants over 1,159 determined girls and 718 motivated boys who poured into the streets with a single, loud message: we choose life over addiction.

Parents, teachers, and officials from the Youth Services and Sports Department walked shoulder to shoulder with the students, turning



the rally into a true people's movement. The march concluded at Sher-i-Kashmir Park, where the air was filled not just with exhaustion, but with pride. Winners of the mini marathon were honored with medals, but every participant left with something greater: a renewed sense of purpose.

This initiative is a vital part of the "100 Days Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan" launched by the J&K Administration. Before the actual start of the marathon, every attendee took a solemn anti-drug pledge: a promise to themselves, their families, and their society.

Every USD 10 rise in crude oil may impact 0.4 percentage points of India's GDP: S&P Global

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 15: India's economic growth could slow by up to 80 basis points if crude averages USD 130 per barrel in 2026, said S&P Global Ratings on Tuesday. Higher oil prices could widen the current account deficit, with estimates suggesting a USD 10 per barrel increase may expand the gap by about 0.4 percentage points of GDP, it said.

"India isn't immune to the shocks reverberating from the West Asia war. The pain of higher energy prices and supply disruptions may persist for months, crimping economic activity across households, corporations, and banks," S&P Global Ratings said in a report.

The report assumes Brent crude at USD 130 per barrel in 2026 and USD 100 in 2027 under the stress case, versus a base case of USD 85 and USD 70, respectively. It does not expect any immediate impact on India's sovereign rating, though fiscal consolidation efforts could face



temporary setbacks.

S&P said strong domestic fundamentals, potential government support, and significant improvement in corporate and banking sector health over the past few years would mitigate the severity of any shock.

Under its stress scenario, corporate earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) could decline 15-25 per cent in FY27, with leverage rising

by 0.5x-1x, while banking sector asset quality may weaken, pushing bad loans to around 3.5 per cent.

Strong corporate balance sheets, well-capitalised banks and a resilient external position provide buffers against the impact, S&P said.

An energy shock would transmit through higher input costs, squeezed corporate margins, rising consumer prices and increased

fiscal strain if the government steps in with subsidies. Growth could also be hit by potential supply disruptions affecting fuel and petrochemicals.

Despite these risks, India's economy entered 2026 with strong growth momentum, resilient domestic demand and low inflation, which should help absorb near-term shocks, it said.

S&P Global Ratings said India can weather a few months of elevated oil prices and supply disruptions, though a prolonged shock would pose broader risks to growth, fiscal stability and external balances.

Asian Development Outlook report, ADB said the GDP expansion to moderate to 5.1pc this year from 5.4pc in 2025.

The report's projections were finalised more than a week into the Iran war, and assume a scenario where oil prices will gradually normalise and move towards pre-war levels by year-end. The situation remains volatile, with oil prices whipsawing on daily developments in the conflict.

Auto industry hits record high in FY26; all segments post strong growth: SIAM

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 15: The Indian automobile industry registered its best-ever performance in the financial year 2025-26, with all vehicle segments recording the highest annual sales, driven by strong demand, policy support and improving macroeconomic conditions.

Passenger vehicle sales rose to a record 46.43 lakh units, marking a growth of 7.9 per cent over the previous year. The segment benefited from improved affordability, lower financing costs, and a sharp rise in electric vehicle adoption.

Two-wheelers led the growth momentum, with sales touching an all-time high of 2.17 crore units, up 10.7 per cent, surpassing the previous peak. The segment saw strong traction in the second half of the year, supported by policy reforms and rising consumer demand.

Commercial vehicles also achieved their highest-ever sales at 10.80 lakh units, registering a growth of 12.6 per cent, aided by increased economic activity, infrastructure spending and better financing conditions.

Three-wheelers recorded a new peak of 8.36 lakh units, growing 12.8 per cent, driven by demand for last-mile mobility and expansion of electric autorickshaws. Exports remained robust across cat-

egories, with passenger vehicles, two-wheelers and three-wheelers witnessing strong growth, reflecting increasing global acceptance of Indian vehicles.

The January-March quarter capped the year on a high note, with all segments reporting their highest-ever quarterly sales and double-digit growth. Passenger vehicles grew 13.2 per cent to 13.16 lakh units, commercial vehicles rose 18.9 per cent to 3.25 lakh units, three-wheelers increased 26.7 per cent to 2.27 lakh units, while two-wheelers surged 26.4 per cent to 577.3 lakh units.

Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) Director General Rajesh Menon said each vehicle segment recorded its highest-ever sales during the January-March quarter, registering strong double-digit growth compared to the same period last year.

He noted that the broad-based growth across passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, three-wheelers and two-wheelers reflects the improving demand environment and positive market sentiment.

The industry remains optimistic about sustaining growth momentum in 2026-27 on the back of strong domestic demand and stable economic fundamentals, though concerns over global uncertainties, including geopolitical tensions and fuel price volatility, persist. UNI

SnapUp launches Bluetooth speaker 'Groove Blast' for affordable audio market in India

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 15: SnapUp, an Indian consumer electronics brand, on Tuesday launched its latest Bluetooth speaker 'Groove Blast', aiming to strengthen its presence in the country's rapidly expanding affordable audio segment, a company statement said here on Tuesday.



The company said the launch comes amid rising demand for digital entertainment and portable audio devices, particularly across Tier 2, 3 and 4 markets, where consumption patterns are evolving beyond metro cities.

Designed as a compact yet powerful device, Groove Blast features a 14W output system supported by a 66mm driver, delivering deep bass and room-filling sound tailored for Indian music preferences.

The device offers up to 10 hours of playtime on a single charge and includes hands-free calling support, making it suitable for both entertainment and everyday use.

To enhance versatility, Groove Blast comes with Bluetooth 5.3 connectivity and multiple playback options, including TF card, USB and FM radio. It also supports TWS pairing, allowing users to connect two speakers for a stereo sound experience.

SnapUp said it continues to expand its portfolio across audio products, wearables, power solutions and home appliances, backed by growing retail presence and local manufacturing under the Make in India initiative. UNI

Val-Met Engineering secures RS 200 cr funding from Nuvama Crossover to become leader aerospace, defence and space supply chain

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHENNAI, APR 15: The Chennai-headquartered Val-Met Engineering, a specialized supply chain management company focused on aerospace, defence, and space-grade raw materials, on Tuesday announced that it has successfully closed its funding from Nuvama Crossover Opportunities Funds.

With this investment, Val-Met Engineering aims to strengthen its sourcing network, expand inventory capabilities, enhance technological and processing infrastructure, and deepen relationships with domestic and global OEMs, suppliers and cus-

tomers.

This is the first fund raiser for Val-Met Engineering and was led by Nuvama Crossover Opportunities Funds. It marks a strategic investment and a significant milestone in Val-Met's growth journey, underscoring strong investor confidence in the company's capabilities and long-term vision.

Commenting on the funds raised, P.H. Subramoni, Promoter and MD, Val-Met said, "Persistent supply chain constraints remain a key reason for the current industry backlog. This coupled with robust demand is creating a significant opportunity to position India as a strategic hub in the global supply

chain of leading aerospace OEMs. Against the backdrop of strong, long-term growth outlined by major global aerospace players, our well-established infrastructure, state-of-the-art capabilities, experienced team, long years of proven track record and robust systems uniquely position us to capitalize on this opportunity. Nuvama Private Equity's investment will play a crucial role in supporting our growth journey and scaling our capabilities to meet the demand."

Pranav Parikh, Managing Partner and Head, Private Equity, Nuvama Asset Management Limited said "There is a congruence of positive tailwinds in the aerospace, defence and precision

manufacturing in India. As a critical link in the supply chain of these high growth industries, Val-Met will play a crucial role in fulfilling this demand towards self-fulfilment of India's crucial needs as well as high value exports from the country.

"Our strategic minority stake investment aligns closely with the philosophy of Nuvama Crossover Opportunities Fund series, where we back established industry leaders with proven operating track records and compelling growth potential. With a focus on profitable industrial businesses, the fund remains focused on investing in high quality, scalable businesses positioned at critical inflection

points of market transition, with the objective of driving sustained, long-term value creation", Parikh said.

The investment will support in creation of enhanced capabilities that will enable a true just-in-time supply of critical raw materials as near-net shapes, resulting in improved manufacturing and processing efficiency for customers and OEMs, diving optimisation, cost savings, and scalable growth.

The announcement comes at a time when leading global aircraft manufacturers and their tier suppliers are actively expanding their component and assembly supply chains in India. UNI

BoB, Jio partner to launch 'bob World Lite' mobile banking app for feature phone users

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, APR 15: Bank of Baroda (BoB) and Reliance Jio on Monday announced a partnership to launch 'bob World Lite', a mobile banking application designed specifically for feature phone users, aimed at expanding digital inclusion across India. The app will be available on the JioPhone Prima 4G and is positioned as a comprehensive banking solution for users without smartphones, Reliance Industries said in a release. It will be accessible to both existing Bank of Baroda customers and users of other banks through a self-onboarding process.

The companies said the initiative aligns with the Government of India and Reserve Bank of India's push for greater financial inclusion and digital payments accessibility.



Unlike conventional apps, 'bob World Lite' is built with a lightweight, low-bandwidth architecture and keypad-based navigation, enabling users in semi-urban and rural areas to access digital banking services simply, seamlessly, and easily.

The app currently offers services such as UPI-based scan-and-

pay, money transfers, bill payments, recharges and profile management, with additional features to be introduced in phases. It will come pre-loaded on JioPhone Prima 4G devices and can also be downloaded via the JioStore. Managing Director and CEO of Bank of Baroda, Debajyoti Chandra, said the initiative would help extend digital banking beyond the smartphone ecosystem and bridge the digital divide. President of Reliance Jio, Sunil Dutt, said the partnership marks a step towards delivering affordable and accessible digital services, enabling seamless banking for millions of feature phone users.

The collaboration is expected to significantly expand the reach of digital banking services by leveraging Jio's nationwide digital network and Bank of Baroda's extensive customer base. UNI

Zero Tolerance: Tata Sons chairman responds to 'Gravely Concerning' harassment claims at TCS Nashik

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 15: Tata Sons Chairman, N. Chandrasekaran, reacting to the Nashik sexual harassment case, said that the Tata Group maintains a "zero-tolerance" policy towards any form of coercion or misconduct by its employees.

"The Tata Group maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards any form of coercion or misconduct by its employees. A thorough investigation is underway to establish the facts and identify all individuals responsible for this situation," he added.

His comments follow serious allegations of sexual harassment at the Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) Nashik office.

He termed the allegations at TCS Nashik as gravely concerning and anguishing. In a statement, he said that Arathi Subramanian, Chief Operating Officer at TCS, will lead the investigation.

The Tata Sons Chairman's response comes after the IT giant TCS suspended all employees accused of sexual harassment at its Nashik office.

The company said that the staff members under investigation have been suspended until the inquiry is completed. TCS has asserted that it maintains a zero-tolerance policy on harassment and is fully cooperating with the police.

"This incident is being treated with the utmost seriousness. Action has already been initiated against the accused employees, and the company is extending its full cooperation to the ongoing investigations," Chandrasekaran said.

According to police reports, at least eight women have come forward, leading to the registration of multiple FIRs. The allegations include inappropriate touching, sexually explicit remarks, exploitation under the pretext of marriage, and attempts to outrage modesty.

The accusations also include attempts at religious conversion in the workplace. These incidents reportedly took place between February 2022 and March 2026. UNI

Grand Continent hotels strengthens presence in Spiritual tourism with Rameswaram launch

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

RAMESWARAM, (TAMIL NADU), APR 15: Enhancing its presence in spiritual tourism, Grand Continent Hotels Limited on Tuesday launched its new property in this island town, one of India's most significant pilgrimage destinations, marking the brand's 31st hotel.

Located on Pamban Island, the contemporary four-star vegetarian hotel reflects the company's continued focus on expanding in high-demand spiritual and leisure travel markets across India.

The launch underscores the brand's strategic emphasis on destinations witnessing consistent year-round footfall driven by pilgrimage tourism apart -- as the temple town will witness huge footfalls during weekends, festival and auspicious occasions

with devotees thronging the ancient Sri Ramanathasamy Temple -- from key business cities.

With Rameswaram attracting a steady influx of domestic and international pilgrims, travellers, families, and spiritual seekers, the property is positioned to offer a comfortable, hygienic, and well-connected stay experience close to key landmarks, Grand Continent Hotels Founder and MD Ramesh Shiva told reporters after the launch.

"The launch of our Rameswaram property marks an important milestone as our 31st hotel and reinforces our focus on high-potential pilgrimage destinations. South India continues to be a strong growth market for us and we see sustained demand in destinations like Rameswaram where trav-



ellers seek reliable, comfortable, and well-located accommodation", he said.

"Going forward, we are coming up at Somnath, Varanasi and Ayodhya as we aim to expand across key high demand micro-markets as we work towards building a 3,000-key portfolio over the next few years, while continuing to focus on operational consistency and guest experience", he added.

The launch comes at a time when it has expanded its portfolio to 31 properties across 17 cities with over 1,850 keys, reflecting steady growth driven by its asset-light model. The company continues to see strong demand across spiritual circuits as well as emerging leisure destinations, which are increasingly driving organised hospitality growth.

With a strong foundation in

South India and a growing presence across North India, along with international markets such as Dubai and the USA, the company remains focused on building a scalable and sustainable hospitality network. Expansion plans will continue to prioritise high-demand micro-markets, including pilgrimage destinations, business hubs, and leisure-driven locations.

The Rameswaram hotel features 48 well-appointed rooms across categories including Grand Suite Rooms, Premium Rooms with Balcony, Grand Family Rooms, and Deluxe Rooms, designed with contemporary interiors and equipped with essential amenities such as high-speed Wi-Fi, smart TV, tea and coffee maker, electronic safe, and 24-hour hot water, along with wheelchair access for added convenience.

Ben Stokes: Talk of Rift with McCullum is 'Massive Overstatement'

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

ADELAIDE: Ben Stokes has claimed it is a "massive overstatement" to suggest that he and Brendon McCullum were not "aligned" during England's 4-1 Ashes defeat in Australia, and insisted he is "very confident" in their ability to work together.

Stokes will continue as England's Test captain, but has kept a low profile since the tour. He has not featured in the early rounds of the County Championship season after fracturing a cheekbone in a freak accident while training at Durham, and has not spoken to the media since the final day of the series in Sydney.

He posted an expletive-filled message to England fans on social media after the ECB confirmed that Rob Key and McCullum would continue as managing director and head coach respectively, and has now used the ECB's in-house media channels to address his relationship with McCullum, as England's next Test series against New Zealand in June draws closer.

"When you're in a position of leadership along with someone else, if anyone thinks that you're always going to agree on everything, then it's just impossible," Stokes

told the ECB's website.

"To me, that just isn't a healthy environment for sport, in particular, where everyone just agrees with everyone or says yes to the person up there. You need debate. You need... not arguments, but you need discussions. Then you end up getting to the place you both want to end up getting to. "As similar as me and Brendon are, we're also dissimilar in other areas as well. But the thing we both want is to be as successful as we possibly can. How we get to being successful might be the same here, but slightly differs here - but we will always be able to end up in the same place by having these discussions.

"We agree 95% of the time on things, but those 5% things that we might have different views on, we talk about it between each other and then we end up getting to the place where we both feel that we want to get to. Agreeing on every single thing, that's just impossible. Saying that we weren't aligned, I think is a massive overstatement."

Stokes' central contract runs until the end of England's 2027 home summer, which will include an opportunity to beat Australia across five Tests for the first time in 12 years. He said that he hopes to remain in position - alongside

McCullum - by the end of that series, though hinted they would look to take the team in a "slightly different" direction over the next 18 months.

"With what me and Brendon were able to achieve with the group over a four-year period, I just couldn't imagine doing what we were trying to do with anyone else," Stokes said. "We're both very proud men in what we do. We put a lot of our heart and soul into this job. Brendon certainly has for the four years he's done it so far, and hopefully we'll still be together at the end of 2027, winning what we want to win. You need... not arguments, but you need discussions. Then you end up getting to the place you both want to end up getting to

"I'm very confident in mine and Brendon's ability to be able to work together - because we've done it for such a long period of time now - but work together in a slightly different way. "The main point of me and Brendon is our alignment towards winning things and making this team as good as they can be. That's always been the thing since we started. It might just look a little bit different now to how that operates, on the back of four years working together.



Dhoni hits Chepauk nets but his recovery continues to stretch

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHENNAI: MS Dhoni's return from the calf injury that forced him out of the opening two weeks of IPL 2026 might be delayed as he still seems to be working his way back to match fitness.

On March 28, the opening day of the season, CSK said in a statement that he's "likely to miss the first two weeks" and that he will undergo rehab. While Dhoni has been training with his team-mates, he has only been facing throwdowns and is yet to hit full tilt. On Monday, the eve of CSK's home match against Kolkata Knight Riders, Dhoni had a short hit in the nets towards the fag end of CSK's training session under lights at Chepauk, but once again he limited himself to facing throwdowns from the support staff, including batting coach Mike Hussey.

When Hussey dug one into the middle of one of the practice pitches, the ball climbed on Dhoni and hit the splice of his bat. But when the ball landed in his slot, Dhoni whipped it away with his bottom hand to the midwicket boundary. He proceeded to launch another slot ball into the 'J' stand over the leg side before CSK wrapped up their three-hour training session at 9pm IST. Dhoni didn't keep wicket. Dhoni, 44, has missed each of CSK's four games so far and might also miss their fifth on Tuesday. He hasn't travelled with the squad for their away games in Guwahati and Bengaluru. Nor has he been travelling with the team to Chepauk on match days for their home games.

Despite being on the sidelines with injury, head coach Stephen Fleming said that Dhoni is still "heavily involved in the side and his influence in the side is very strong" during his first press conference of the season in Guwahati. In the absence of Dhoni, Sanju Samson, who was traded from Rajasthan Royals ahead of the season, has kept wicket while Jamie Overton, the England allrounder, has offered glimpses of his big-hitting as a finisher.

CSK also have Rajasthan wicketkeeper Kartik Sharma, for whom they shelled out INR 14.2 crore at the mini-auction in December last year, and Gujarat wicketkeeper Urvil Patel, in the reserves.

In the past few seasons, Dhoni has settled into a role where he batted 10-12 balls per innings and concentrated on hitting every one of them for six. His strike rate in 2023 was 182. His strike rate in 2024 was 221. But last year, he had to play 145 balls, which was more than 2023 (57) and 2024 (73) combined, and he struggled, maintaining a strike rate of 135. CSK are also waiting for the arrival of Spencer Johnson, their replacement for the injured Nathan Ellis. Johnson himself is working his way back from injury and is likely to link up with the CSK side around April 21-23.

Tarzoos Sports Association Constitutes Adhoc Committee

HT SPORTS DESK

TARZOO, APR 14: A meeting of sports lovers, members, and promoters of Tarzoos Sports Association was convened today to review the functioning of the association and to ensure continuity in its activities after the completion of the previous term.

In view of the need for effective management and smooth conduct of upcoming events, an adhoc committee has been constituted to look after the day to day affairs of the association. The committee will also ensure the successful organization of the 9th edition of the Wular Premier League and



will facilitate the conduct of free and fair elections for the formation of a new elected body.

The adhoc committee comprises the following members: Shamas ud Din Wani, Sajad Ahmad Wani, Mohammad Saleem, Mohammad Yousuf.

The members of the association expressed full confidence in the newly formed committee and extended their support for the successful execution of its responsibilities. The committee has assured that all efforts will be made to uphold the spirit of sportsmanship and transparency in its functioning.

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