

Srinagar
Saturday
April 18 | 2026
29 Shawwal 1447 AH
Issue No: 94
Volume: 16
Pages: 12
Price: Rs 02/-

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Border Villages Define Nation's Strength: LG Sinha in Rajouri

Inaugurates key projects under Vibrant Villages Programme, stresses inclusive growth and national security

HT NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI, APRIL 17: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday said that a nation is defined by its remotest villages, asserting that border areas are no longer the country's edge but its "first village and foremost opportunity."

Addressing a public gathering at Sarih in Rajouri, the Lieutenant Governor said that under the leadership of Narendra Modi, India is advancing with renewed resolve and a strengthened focus on integrating border regions into the mainstream.

During his visit, Sinha inaugurated a Common Service Centre and launched several development projects, including

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LG flags off Shobha Yatra to commemorate Bhagwan Parshuram Ji Jayanti in Jammu

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 17: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Friday flagged off a grand Shobha Yatra from Chanakya Chowk Parade, Jammu, to commemorate Bhagwan

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PM Modi Calls for Historic Backing to Women's Quota Bill in Lok Sabha

Urges MPs to ensure 33% reservation, says time has come to give women rightful share in governance

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APR 17: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday appealed to members of the Lok Sabha to vote in favour of the Women's Reservation Bill, asserting that the moment has arrived to secure equal participation for women in decision-making bodies.

Ahead of voting on the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, which seeks to provide 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, the Prime Minister urged lawmakers to act with sensitivity and unity, cautioning against any move that could hurt the sentiments of women across the country.

The Lower House is also scheduled to take up the Delimitation Bill and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, aimed at redrawing constituencies and increasing the strength of the Lok Sabha to 816 to facilitate implementation of the proposed quota.



Addressing members through a message posted on X, Modi said millions of women are closely watching Parliament's intent and decisions, describing the proposed legislation as a historic opportunity to deliver long-pending justice.

He noted that the issue of women's reservation

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Women's Quota Comes Into Force in J&K, UT Assemblies

Centre notifies implementation of 33% reservation for women from April 17

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APR 17: The Centre on Friday notified the implementation of the Women's Reservation Act, 2023, bringing into force provisions for 33 per cent reservation for women in legislative bodies of Jammu and Kashmir and other Union Territories with immediate effect.

According to separate notifications issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Second Amendment) Act, 2023, and the Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Act, 2023, have come into force from April 17, 2026.

The development marks a significant step towards operationalising the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam', passed by Parliament in September 2023 to enhance women's representation in governance.

The law provides for one-third reservation for women in the Lok Sabha

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Security Grid Tightened Across Kashmir Ahead of Key Events

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 17: Inspector General of Police, Kashmir Zone, V. K. Birdi on Friday chaired a high-level meeting at PCR Kashmir to review and finalize security arrangements for forthcoming events across the Valley, directing officers to reinforce vigilance and ensure seamless coordination on the ground.

The deliberations centred on strengthening the existing security framework, with a focus on optimising deployment of personnel at critical



and sensitive locations. Birdi instructed officers to intensify surveillance on anti-national elements and step up area domination measures in their respective jurisdictions to preempt any untoward inci-

idents. Emphasising the protection of key installations and tourist destinations, the IGP called for heightened alertness to ensure a secure environment

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Pahalgam Bounces Back : Tourists Returns After Deadly Meadow Attack

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 17: Nearly a year after a deadly terror attack shattered the calm of Pahalgam, the famed tourist resort is witnessing a steady return of visitors, signalling renewed confidence and resilience in Kashmir's tourism sector.

On April 22, 2025, militants struck the picturesque Baisaran meadow, killing 26 people, most of them tourists, in one of the deadliest attacks in recent years. The incident, attributed to Lashkar-e-Toiba, triggered panic among travellers and led to the closure of several tourist destinations across Jammu and Kashmir.



Authorities subsequently shut nearly 50 tourist spots and initiated a comprehensive security audit before reopening them in phases. The fallout saw a sharp decline

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Ladakh Gets First 'Him Sarovar' Water Body as LG Saxena Pushes Water Security Drive

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

LEH, APR 17: In a significant step towards strengthening water security in Ladakh, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Friday inaugurated and operationalised the first water body developed under the recently launched Him Sarovar project at Stok village in Leh district.

The reservoir, restored from a heavily silted depression at Phikar in Stok, was made functional with the release of glacial meltwater, barely three weeks after

the Lieutenant Governor's visit to the site on March 26, when he had directed its renovation.

Spread over 1,824 square metres and with a storage capacity of nearly 35 lakh litres, the water body is expected to benefit around 150 hectares of agricultural land, providing a crucial lifeline in a region grappling with chronic water scarcity.

The development comes just a week after the launch of Project Him Sarovar on April 10, an initiative aimed at

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CM Omar Abdullah meets delegations, assures time-bound redressal of public issues

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 17: Several legislators, delegations and individuals today called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, raising several issues concerning them for redressal.

Former minister and legislator Abdul Majid Wani, and former legislator Chaman Lal from

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SASCI reforms aims at capital growth and fiscal efficiency: CS

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 17: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo convened a high-level meeting of the Finance Department, attended by the Administrative Secretaries, to

review the progress of departmental work plans and the status of reforms under the Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI).

During the meeting, the Chief

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J&K shines in Mission Karmayogi; JKIMPARD gets special Award for Excellence

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APR 17: Jammu & Kashmir has secured the third rank nationally under Mission Karmayogi during SADHANA Saptah, marking a major milestone in institutionalising continuous learning and competency-driven governance among the civil servants.

The recognition reflects the

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J&K To Distribute Free Ration to Migrants from April 18

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APR 17: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday announced the

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Srinagar Tulip Garden Sees Over 50% Decline In Visitors This Year

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 17: The Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, Asia's largest and a major tourist

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

Border Villages.....

water conservation works under JSB 2.0 and playgrounds in Sariah, Pukharni, Bhawani, Chapardhara and Namban villages. He also paid tributes to Mohammad Usman. Highlighting the impact of the Vibrant Villages Programme, he said the Border Area Development Programme is ensuring that infrastructure and welfare schemes reach every border village. "No map fully captures the true essence of our border villages. Within those lines, I see a vibrant society and steadfast families advancing the nation's progress," he said.

Emphasizing the link between development and security, the Lieutenant Governor noted that national security flows not only from soldiers guarding the borders but also from the residents living in these areas. He said roads, and employment opportunities in border villages foster confidence, hope, and long-term community transformation.

Reiterating his vision, Sinha said border village development is integral to national security and must ensure prosperity for every such settlement. He added that since assuming office in 2020, the administration has prioritized addressing the aspirations of border residents through improved infrastructure, healthcare, digital connectivity, and welfare delivery.

Calling for complete implementation of government schemes, he directed officials to ensure 100 percent saturation of initiatives such as HADP, Mission Youth, and PM Mudra Yojana so that no eligible beneficiary is left out.

The Lieutenant Governor also visited an exhibition on Gyan Bharatam, inspected departmental stalls, launched the Vibrant Village Anthem, and distributed sanction and appointment letters to beneficiaries under various schemes, including PMAY-G. He also felicitated individuals, including TB-cured patients and volunteers of Nasha Mukta Abhiyaan, for their contributions to society.

Senior civil, police, and army officials, along with political leaders and local residents, were present on the occasion.

LG flags off.....

Parshuram Ji Jayanti. The procession was organized by the Dogra Brahman Pratinidhi Sabha, celebrating the life and teachings of Bhagwan Parshuram, the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

Earlier, the Lieutenant Governor paid obeisance to Bhagwan Parshuram and prayed for peace, progress, and prosperity for one and all.

Shri Ved Prakash Sharma, President Dogra Brahman Pratinidhi Sabha, and members of organising committee including Shri Parshotam Chander Sharma, Shri Chander Mohan Sharma, Shri Soujanya Sharma, Shri Surinder Sharma, Shri B D Sharma, Er Rajesh and Shri Raman Sharma; heads of religious organizations, prominent citizens and people from different walks of life attended the flag off ceremony.

Shri Yudhvir Sethi and Ms Devyani Rana, Members of Legislative Assembly; senior officials and prominent citizens were also present.

PM Modi Calls.....

in legislative bodies has remained unresolved for nearly four decades and said it is not appropriate that women continue to have limited representation in governance despite decades of independence.

Highlighting the extensive deliberations on the bill, the Prime Minister said discussions in Parliament continued late into the night and resumed on Friday morning, adding that the government has addressed all apprehensions and misconceptions with facts and clarity.

Appealing across party lines, Modi urged MPs to reflect on their conscience and support the legislation unanimously, stating that such a move would strengthen democracy and empower women across the country.

"Let us come together to create history and ensure that women, who constitute half of the nation's population, receive their rightful due," he said.

Women's Quota.....

and state legislative assemblies, though its nationwide implementation remains contingent on the delimitation exercise following the 2027 Census.

The notification comes even as Parliament debates amendments aimed at advancing the rollout of the women's quota, with the government indicating plans to implement it ahead of the earlier timeline.

Security Grid.....

for residents and visitors alike. He also directed strict monitoring along inter-district boundaries to prevent suspicious movement.

Addressing civic concerns, Birdi issued specific directions for effective traffic management in Srinagar, calling for a comprehensive plan to ease congestion, streamline vehicular movement and minimise inconvenience to the public.

The meeting also reviewed preparedness for upcoming Hajj operations, with the IGP stressing the need for adequate security,

facilitation and coordination at designated to ensure the safe and orderly movement of pilgrims.

Highlighting the growing challenge of misinformation, Birdi directed officers to maintain close watch on social media platforms and take prompt action to curb content that could disturb public order. He further called for intensified cordon and search operations in sensitive areas and along national highways.

Reaffirming commitment to maintaining peace and stability, the IGP urged all agencies to uphold the highest standards of preparedness and responsiveness to ensure the smooth conduct of all forthcoming events. Senior officials from the police and various central security forces attended the meeting.

Pahalgam.....

in tourist arrivals, dealing a blow to the Valley's economy.

However, the situation has markedly improved over the past year. The meadows of Pahalgam, often referred to as "Mini Switzerland," are once again bustling with activity, with tourists from across the country expressing satisfaction over the security arrangements and overall experience.

Visitors from states including Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Haryana and Rajasthan said the heavy presence of security forces has instilled a sense of safety. Many noted that while apprehensions existed following last year's attack, their on-ground experience has been reassuring.

Tourists who also visited Gulmarg and Sonmarg said the Valley appears well-secured, with improved logistics and visible deployment of forces at key locations.

Officials attribute the revival to strengthened security measures, reopening of major tourist sites, and improved connectivity. The introduction of the Vande Bharat Express and the successful conduct of last year's Amarnath Yatra have further boosted tourist confidence.

With footfall steadily rising, Pahalgam is gradually emerging from the shadow of last year's tragedy, reflecting a broader recovery in Kashmir's tourism landscape.

Ladakh Gets.....

creating a network of small water bodies across Ladakh to conserve snowmelt and ensure long-term water availability.

Addressing a gathering on the occasion, Saxena expressed satisfaction over the swift execution of the project, describing it as a key intervention to tackle the challenges posed by climate change and diminishing water resources in the high-altitude region. He underscored the need for public participation, stating that community involvement would be central to the success and sustainability of the initiative.

Under Phase I of the project, 50 such water bodies—30 in Leh and 20 in Kargil—are planned, covering nearly a quarter of the villages in Ladakh. The administration aims to extend the coverage to nearly half of the region's villages within a year.

Highlighting the importance of scientific water management, the Lieutenant Governor said the project would act as a "shield against climate change" while serving as a model of coordinated efforts involving government agencies, the armed forces and local communities.

During his visit, Saxena also announced the adoption of Stok village for its development as a model village, focusing on sustainability, cultural vibrancy and self-reliance. He said that along with Likir, Stok would be developed as a benchmark for holistic rural development in Ladakh.

He further launched work on block-paving of roads in the village, noting that improved infrastructure would enhance its aesthetic appeal and offer a cleaner, dust-free environment for residents and tourists alike.

Emphasising the potential of tourism, Saxena said visitors to Stok should leave with a memorable experience of Ladakhi hospitality, adding that the village could emerge as a premier destination with a focus on organic farming, solar energy and strengthened tourism infrastructure.

The Him Sarovar initiative is being seen as a crucial step in building climate resilience in Ladakh, where erratic snowfall and receding glaciers have intensified concerns over water availability in recent years.

CM Omar.....

Ramban, highlighted key concerns pertaining to their respective areas.

A delegation from the Indian Institute of Architects, J&K Chapter, led by its Chairman Vikas Dubey, apprised the Chief Minister of issues arising from recent amendments to the Unified Building Bye-Laws.

Meanwhile, a delegation led by President, Jammu University Teachers Association (JUTA), Prof. Ravinder Singh, presented matters concerning the teaching fraternity.

Moreover, several individuals met the Chief Minister to seek resolution of their grievances.

The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to all the delegations and individuals, assuring that all genuine issues would be addressed on priority.

SASCI reforms.....

Secretary assessed expenditure trends and underscored the importance of timely and efficient utilization of allocated resources. He emphasized the need to prioritize capital expenditure (Capex) from the very beginning of the financial year, cautioning against the tendency of last-minute spending rushes that often compromise efficiency and outcomes.

Highlighting the importance of proactive planning, the Chief Secretary directed departments to ensure prompt uploading of works on the BEAMS portal to facilitate timely tendering and execution. He further stressed the need for equitable distribution of projects across districts, aligned with on-ground requirements to ensure balanced development across all regions.

Reiterating the strategic importance of SASCI reforms, the Chief Secretary urged Administrative Secretaries to accord them top priority, noting their potential to bring substantial economic benefits to the Union Territory through incentive-based funding amounting to hundreds of crores. He called for their strict implementation in both letter and spirit to ensure tangible outcomes.

Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar, emphasized accountability and adherence to timelines, urging all departments to finalize and upload their action plans on the BEAMS portal by April 21, 2026. He noted that while 100 percent budget allocation has been made, further financial releases including the second installment of Capex funds will be contingent upon fulfillment of key reform conditions and demonstrable progress.

The meeting also highlighted key reforms mandated under SASCI guidelines, including the adoption of end-to-end digital tendering and contract management systems under Component II. Departments such as Power Development Department (PDD), Jal Shakti, Housing & Urban Development Department (H&UDD), and Youth Services & Sports (YSS) were directed to onboard the PWD-OMAS platform at the earliest to enhance transparency, monitoring, and accountability.

Progress in critical sectoral reforms was also reviewed, including mining sector reforms, operationalization of the Right of Way (RoW) Rules 2024, rollout of AgriStack in the Agriculture Department, and livestock sector reforms. It was emphasized that significant advancements in these areas are crucial for unlocking subsequent funding tranches.

To streamline financial management, all departments were directed to establish separate Single Nodal Agency (SNA) accounts for efficient release and monitoring of SASCI funds.

A detailed presentation outlined the proposed financial outlay under SASCI for the financial year 2026-27, totaling Rs. 4023.5 Cr. This includes Rs. 1406 Cr under Part I and Part II untied components, along with a substantial Rs. 2617.5 Cr available under incentive-based components linked to capital expenditure performance and reform milestones across sectors such as public finance IT infrastructure, mining, AgriStack, livestock, financial management efficiency, and compressed biogas initiatives.

The meeting also reviewed allocations under the Public Health Infrastructure component, with Rs. 330 Cr earmarked to improve key health indicators, including reduction in Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR), attainment of NQAS certification, and reduction in TB mortality.

Reviewing past financial performance, it was noted that Rs. 946 Cr had been expended during the April-September period of the previous financial year. The Chief Secretary emphasized that expenditure must reach at least Rs. 1040 Cr in the current year to qualify for incentive-based funding under Part III of the scheme, which focuses on capital expenditure growth.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to fiscal discipline and reform-driven growth, the Chief Secretary called upon all departments to maintain momentum, ensure transparency, and deliver measurable outcomes aligned with the objectives of the SASCI framework.

J&K shines in.....

Union Territory's structured implementation of reforms under the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB). With a focus on role-based capacity building, competency mapping and optimal use of the iGOT Karmayogi digital platform, J&K has shown measurable progress in strengthening its administrative capacity.

According to the official data, 2,01,962 officials from the UT have been onboarded on the platform, collectively achieving 4,13,722 course completions. Of these, 2,74,511 completions were in AI-focused courses. Further, 54,003 employees have completed more than one hour of learning while 37,309 officials have surpassed four hours, indicating deep engagement with the initiative.

The award was presented during the SADHANA Saptah Facilitation Ceremony held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

Minister of State for Personnel, Public

Grievances and Pensions Dr. Jitendra Singh presided over the function and felicitated the top-performing States, Union Territories and institutions. Commissioner/Secretary, General Administration Department, M. Raju, received the award on behalf of the government of Jammu & Kashmir.

In a notable achievement, the Jammu and Kashmir Institute of Management, Public Administration and Rural Development (JKIMPARD) was conferred a Special Award for becoming the first institution in the country to successfully complete the Capacity Building Plans (CBPs) across all the departments. This sets a national benchmark in operationalizing Mission Karmayogi objectives at the State/UT level.

During SADHANA Saptah, the UT administration ensured active participation through a structured and closely monitored approach. The nodal officers were designated to oversee the engagement and ensure completion of the prescribed learning hours on the iGOT platform, strictly in line with the NPCSCB guidelines. The J&K Chief Secretary efficiently monitored the progress through regular reviews to ensure effective implementation of the ambitious programme.

Dr. Jitendra Singh has consistently emphasized the strengthening capacity building and promoting good governance practices. This commitment was reinforced at the recent Regional Conference in Jammu on Holistic Development of Districts, which focused on integrated planning, enhanced capacity and improved governance outcomes at the grassroots level.

The recognition underscores the government's commitment towards building a competent, accountable and citizen-centric civil service, aligned with the vision of Mission Karmayogi Bharat. The Jammu & Kashmir government has reiterated its resolve to further strengthen the capacity-building mechanisms and sustain reform momentum for improved public service delivery.

J&K To.....

distribution of free ration to migrants from April 18 across designated ration depots in the Union territory.

According to the Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, the ration distribution will be carried out under a special scheme for migrants in both Kashmir and Jammu divisions as notified by the government on March 5. "All relief ration card holders, irrespective of their categorisation into priority household, non-priority household or special category, will continue to receive 11 kg of free ration per person per month along with 1 kg of sugar as per the existing scale", Relief Commissioner Arvind Karwani said.

Individuals registered with the relief department under the non-relief category, such as pensioners and classified under non-priority households, will receive ration at government-

approved rates as per their entitlement under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), the official said.

The government has already made necessary amendments to the Jammu and Kashmir Food Security Rules, 2021, and the Targeted Public Distribution System (Control) Order, to integrate migrant ration cards with the NFSA database.

"This integration enables migrants to avail benefits under various government welfare schemes," the relief commissioner said.

Karwani also said that according to the government order, the existing scale of ration distribution and procedures related to inclusion, deletion, bifurcation, conversion and corrections in ration cards will continue as per the norms of the relief department.

The department has also issued multiple public notices and awareness jingles to inform the beneficiaries about the scheme.

The scheme will be launched formally in Jammu at 11 am on April 18.

Srinagar Tulip.....

attraction here, witnessed a sharp decline in footfall this year, with visitors dropping by more than 50 per cent, officials said on Friday.

The garden had recorded its highest ever footfall last year, with 8.55 lakh visitors, they said.

This year, however, only 3.90 lakh visitors — including about 1200 foreigners — visited the garden, the officials said.

"This year, 3.90 lakh visitors visited the Tulip garden. Among them were 1222 foreigners, and 2.89 lakh domestic tourists," Assistant Floriculture Officer Incharge Tulip Garden, Imran Ahmad said, adding that about 1.6 lakh locals also visited the site.

The garden, a key tourist attraction during the spring season, was closed to the public on Thursday as the bloom came to an end.

Located on the banks of the famous Dal Lake here, the garden was thrown open to the public by Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on March 16 — a week ahead of schedule due to an early bloom triggered by rising temperatures.

It was added to the tourist spots of Kashmir in 2008 by then chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad to attract tourists to the valley in the lean spring season. More than 70 varieties of tulips were on display as the floriculture department increased bulb density to enhance the garden's visual appeal.

The garden had closed last year in April — two days after the Pahalgam attack, which forced most tourists to abandon their tour or cancel their bookings. According to officials, the garden recorded 4.45 lakh visitors in 2024, 3.75 lakh in 2023, 3.62 lakh in 2022, and 2.25 lakh in 2021.

The garden remained closed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 lockdown. In earlier years, it recorded 2.59 lakh visitors in 2019, 1.9 lakh in 2018, 1.50 lakh in 2017, and 1.75 lakh in 2016, the officials added. (Agencies)

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Div Com Kashmir reviews progress of 60 MLD Noorbagh STP, other Key Projects

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 17: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, today conducted a comprehensive review of the progress on the 60 MLD Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) at Noorbagh, along with other major ongoing projects being executed by the Urban Environmental Engineering Department (UEED) in Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Akshay Labroo; Chief Engineer, KPDCI; Superintending Engineer, UEED; Executive Engineer, R&B; representatives from NBCC; and other concerned officials.

At the outset, the Superintending Engineer, UEED, delivered a detailed presentation covering key aspects of the projects, including electricity supply, leakage issues, pending household connections, relocation of shops along the 90-foot road, and demoli-



tion of unsafe structures at Alamgiribazar.

He also shared details on the preparation of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for newly developed habitations in Zone-III of Greater Srinagar, incorporating advanced

systems such as tertiary treatment and SCADA for the 60 MLD STP.

The meeting also reviewed progress on other proposed STPs, including a 30 MLD facility aimed at mitigating pollution in Dal Lake,

a 14 MLD STP at Alluchibagh, and a 6 MLD STP to address pollution in Doodganga.

During the review, the Divisional Commissioner directed that all issues related to electricity supply and leakages at the

Noorbagh STP be resolved by May 31 to ensure the facility becomes fully operational. He further emphasized expediting the connection of all pending households to the STP network.

Regarding the relocation of shops, officials informed that funds have already been released by UEED and the process is expected to be completed by August this year.

It was also noted that UEED is in the process of preparing a fresh in-house DPR for newly developed habitations in Zone-III of Greater Srinagar, incorporating tertiary treatment, SCADA, and Online Continuous Effluent Monitoring Systems (OCEMS).

With respect to the proposed 30 MLD STP, the chair was informed that all pending issues have been resolved, and both survey and design work have been completed, while site development is currently under progress.

Anantnag born doctor awarded prestigious UK fellowship

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 17: Dr Tasaduk Hussain Itoo, an eminent physician from Village Poshkri in District Anantnag, Jammu & Kashmir, has been conferred the prestigious Fellowship of the Royal Society for Public Health (FRSPH), United Kingdom.

The Fellowship is awarded to professionals who demonstrate significant contributions to public health and uphold high standards of academic and professional excellence. This recognition reflects Dr Itoo's continued commitment to advancing health-



care and promoting public health awareness. The Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH), one of the UK's leading public health organizations, grants Fellowship status to individuals who have shown distinguished achievement and dedication in the field. The honour places Dr Itoo among a global network of public health professionals working to improve health outcomes.

Dr Itoo has been actively involved in clinical practice and academic pursuits, contributing to healthcare delivery and preventive health strategies. His work underscores a sustained focus on improving patient care and strengthening public health systems.

Dr Itoo is a Fellow of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF Fellow, Belgium), Member of the Academy of Medical Educators (MACadMED, UK), International Practitioner of the Faculty of Public Health - Royal Colleges of Physicians (IPFP, RCP, UK), Member of the Royal Society of Biology (MRSB, UK). He is also a member with several leading international organizations, including the American College of Physicians (ACP, USA), and an Academic Life Member of the Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI).

This achievement is a matter of pride for Anantnag and the wider region of Jammu & Kashmir, highlighting the growing global recognition of medical professionals from the region.

Grand Mehfil-e-Mushaira Held at Gundi Nowgam Sonawari

GULFAM BARJI

NOWGAM, APR 17: A grand Mehfil-e-Mushaira was organised at Govt PM Shri Middle School Gundi nowgam Sonawari under the joint auspices of Dilshad Cultural Forum Nowgam Sonawari and the J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages. The event witnessed participation from several eminent poets of the valley, who enthralled the audience with their poetic recitations.

The programme commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran followed by a Naat Sharif. President of Dilshad Cultural Forum Mukhtar Ali extended a warm welcome to the distinguished guests and participants.

The Mehfil-e-Mushaira was presided over by noted poet, writer, educationist and literary figure Syed Akhtar Hussain Mansoor, while Hujjat-ul-Islam Wal Muslimeen Maulana Bashir Ahmad Botu attended as the chief guest. Representatives of the JKAACL including Dr. Shabnam Rafiq and Farooq Ahmad were also present on the dais. The event was attended by the Headmaster of the school Fayaz Ahmad Shah along with teachers and a large number of



students. On the occasion Dr. Shabnam Rafiq highlighted various initiatives undertaken by the JKAACL to promote language and literature particularly in far-flung areas of Jammu and Kashmir. Maulana Bashir Ahmad Botu in his address emphasized the significance and role of poetry and poets in society.

Prominent poets who presented their works included Saleem Yousuf, Dr. Showkat Shahbaz, Gh. Hussain Haq Nawaz, Syed Mohammad Madani, Ramzan Najni, Ali Mohammad Gameen, Mir Shahnawaz, Mir Rafiq, Gulfam Nowgami, Sabir Shabir, Shahida Alvi, Wasim Ali Kazmi and Dilshad Mustafa. The proceedings of the Mehfil-e-Mushaira were conducted by Gulfam Barji.

Education Minister mourns demise of Sr. Lecturer Tariq Ahmad Matta

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 17: Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo has expressed deep grief and sorrow on the sad demise of Senior Lecturer of HSS Bomai, Tariq Ahmad Matta.

In her condolence message, the Education Minister said that the Late Tariq Ahmad was a dedicated educator, whose demise is a great loss to academic fraternity. "I am deeply saddened by the untimely demise of Tariq Ahmad Matta, Senior Lecturer in Zoology at HSS Bomai. A dedicated educator, inspiring mentor, and passionate sportsman, his loss is a great blow to the academic fraternity", she said.

The Minister also extended her deep condolences to the bereaved family as well as his colleagues and students. "My heartfelt condolences to his family, colleagues, and students. May Allah grant him Jannat-ul-Firdous", she added.

Enthusiastic Participation in Slogan Writing Activities under NMBA@ 100 Days in District Ganderbal

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, APR 17: In pursuance of the directions of the School Education Department and District Administration, various activities under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) @ 100 Days are being conducted across District Ganderbal with great zeal and enthusiasm.

As part of the ongoing campaign, Slogan Writing Activities were organized in schools throughout the district. Students from different institutions participated actively, showcasing their creativity and awareness regarding the ill effects of drug abuse. The slogans reflected a strong message of a drug-free society, highlighting the importance of healthy living and responsible citizenship.

Teachers and Heads of Institutions ensured the smooth conduct of these activities, encouraging students to express their thoughts and contribute towards the noble cause. The overwhelming participation is a testimony to the growing awareness and collective commitment of the school community towards eradicating the menace of drugs.

The initiative aims to sensitize young minds and strengthen the mission of building a Drug-Free Ganderbal and a Drug-Free Society.



Massive Anti-Drug Rally Held in Handwara Under Nasha Mukht Campaign

"Say No to Drugs, Say Yes to Life" Echoes Across Handwara Streets

DR. AB QAYOOM

HANDWARA, APR 17: In a powerful demonstration of unity and determination against the growing drug menace, the District Administration Kupwara on Friday organised a mega Pad Yatra in Sub-District Handwara under the slogan "Say No to Drugs, Say Yes to Life." The event carried a strong public message against substance abuse and reaffirmed the collective resolve to build a healthier, drug-free society.

The rally was flagged off from Chotipora and witnessed the presence of Sajad Gani Lone, Commissioner/Secretary School Education Department and District Mentor of 100 Days NMBA Campaign Shri Ram Niwas Sharma (IAS), Deputy Commissioner Kupwara Shrikant Balasaheb Suse (IAS), SSP Handwara Sahil Sarangal (IPS), Director Colleges Prof. (Dr.) S. Ajaz Bashir, ADC Handwara Javed Naseem Masoodi (JKAS), Tehsildar Handwara Zeeshan Khan, senior police officers including ASP and SDPO Handwara, besides several officers from different departments.



Former DDCC Chairman Kupwara Irfan Sultan Pandithpuri, members of civil society, traders, transport associations, youth groups, social activists and a large number of students from across Handwara

also participated enthusiastically in the awareness march.

Raising impactful slogans and carrying vibrant placards, participants transformed the streets of Handwara into a strong plat-

form of awareness, highlighting the harmful effects of drug abuse and the urgent need for collective action.

The march commenced from TRC Kargama and passed through

major streets and markets of Handwara town, drawing public attention and energising the anti-drug campaign at the grassroots level. Participants also took the Nasha Mukht pledge, reaffirming their commitment to stand united against substance abuse.

The rally culminated at the playground of Government Degree College Handwara, where more than 15,000 people from different walks of life assembled. Speakers, including Sajad Gani Lone and other dignitaries, stressed that the fight against drugs is not merely an administrative responsibility but a larger social mission requiring vigilance, awareness and sustained public participation.

A signature drive was also conducted on the occasion, symbolising the shared commitment of the people towards a drug-free future.

The District Administration Kupwara reiterated its commitment to continue such impactful initiatives and urged parents, educators and community leaders to play an active role in safeguarding the future of the younger generation.

GCoE Srinagar intensifies NMBA 2026 drive, organize awareness session, mass pledge ceremony

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 17: Government College of Education (GCoE), IASE Srinagar is actively participating in the ongoing Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA) 2026, and today the institute organized two significant activities under the banner aimed at promoting substance abuse prevention and mental well-being among students and staff.

The College Wellbeing and Anti-Substance Cell (CWASC), in collaboration with the Nodal Principal Kashmir Division Colleges organized an awareness and lecture session in the Conference Hall of the institution, focusing on the HED NMBA Policy 2026, outlining a comprehensive roadmap for developing substance-free and mentally healthy campuses.

Principal, Dr. Seema Naz graced the occasion as Patron.



The programme was coordinated by Prof. Lateef Ahmad Shah and moderated by Prof. Mohd Ishaq Dar, who highlighted the administrative framework and monitoring mechanisms of CWASC.

In his technical lecture, Prof. Lateef Ahmad Shah elaborated on key policy components, including the Mentor-Mentee System, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training, and the Pyramidal Sports Model

to ensure holistic student engagement.

The session concluded with an interactive discussion focusing on post-rehabilitation reintegration strategies, including academic

flexibility through SWAYAM and bridge courses.

In continuation of the initiative, a Mass Pledge-taking Ceremony was organized by the Department of Languages in collaboration with CWASC. The pledge taking ceremony aimed to instill a sense of responsibility among participants towards building a drug-free society. Students and staff took a solemn pledge, committing themselves to abstain from drugs, spread awareness, and contribute actively to a healthier nation. The ceremony reinforced the message of collective responsibility with the slogan, "Nasha Mukta Bharat, Khushhaal Bharat."

The conduct of these activities reflects the institution's commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive, and wellness-oriented academic environment under the broader framework of NMBA 2026.

DLSA Budgam holds review meeting with LADCs

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, APRIL 17: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Budgam, today convened a review meeting with all Legal Aid Defence Counsels (LADCs) in the office chamber of the Secretary, DLSA Budgam.



The meeting was chaired by Tabassum Qadir Parray, Secretary, DLSA Budgam, with the objective of assessing the performance of the Legal Aid Defence Counsels and ensuring adherence to the prescribed standards of service delivery.

The meeting was attended by Lateef Ahmad Khan, Chief Legal Aid Defence Counsel; Nazeer Ahmad Wagay, Deputy Legal Aid Defence Counsel; and Assistant Legal Aid Defence Counsels.

During the meeting, the counsels shared their experiences, highlighted challenges encountered in the field, and offered constructive suggestions to improve the delivery of legal aid services.

Key issues discussed included ensuring quality legal representation, expediting the disposal of pending cases, and strengthening coordination among counsels to enhance access to justice. Clear directions were also issued regarding the effective use of the LSMS Portal, with a target to achieve zero pendency.

The Secretary, DLSA Budgam, emphasized the importance of providing efficient, accessible, and high-quality legal aid services, and reaffirmed the Authority's commitment to delivering free and effective legal assistance to underprivileged and marginalized sections of society.

The meeting concluded with a collective resolve to further streamline legal aid mechanisms and enhance the overall efficiency of Legal Service delivery in the district and a target to achieve zero pendency on NALSA LSMS portal.

Series of Anti-drug awareness events held in Doda

HT NEWS NETWORK

DODA, APRIL 17: The Health Department, in collaboration with the School Education Department, on Friday organized a series of Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan awareness programs in different educational institutions of Doda Township.

The events witnessed enthusiastic participation from students and staff, who actively engaged in different activities designed to raise awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and the importance of adopting a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

Block Medical Officer Ghat Dr. Abdul Gafoor led the awareness programmes. The participants were sensitized to the social, psychological and health-related consequences of substance abuse.



The Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan pledge was administered, encouraging the participants to play an active role in building a drug-free society.

Meanwhile, the School Education Department Doda organized debate and symposium programmes across various schools in the district.

Students from different educational institutions participated enthusiastically in debates and symposiums focusing on the alarming issue of drug abuse. The events provided a platform for students to express their views, raise awareness and highlight social, psychological and health hazards associated with substance abuse.

The initiative aims to sensitize young minds, encourage informed discussions and empower students to act as ambassadors of change in their communities.

Government Dy. SP Aman Thakur Memorial Degree College Kastigarh organized an informative and engaging quiz competition on disastrous consequences of drug addiction.

The students showcased their knowledge on different aspects of drug abuse, including its impact on health, society and overall well-being. The quiz also served as an effective platform to educate students about preventive measures and responsible decision-making.

It was informed that the winning teams shall be awarded certificates at the conclusion of the 100-day campaign.

Fresh batch completes Desktop Publishing training at RSETI Kishtwar

HT NEWS NETWORK

KISHTWAR, APRIL 17: A group of unemployed youth on Friday completed Desktop Publishing (DTP) training course conducted by RSETI Kishtwar on its campus. The training programme was conducted over a specified duration, during which trainees were imparted both theoretical knowledge and practical exposure. The course curriculum included training in different DTP software such as MS Office, CorelDRAW, Photoshop and PageMaker, along with modules on typing skills, document formatting, graphic designing, printing techniques and basic computer fundamentals.

In addition, sessions on entrepreneurship development, digital literacy, communication skills and financial inclusion were also conducted to prepare the trainees for real-world challenges. Special emphasis was laid



on hands-on practice, enabling trainees to design visiting cards, brochures, pamphlets, banners and other publishing materials.

The participants gained knowledge about setting up small DTP units, managing clients and understanding market demand. The trainees were provided certificates at the valedictory function organised today. The Lead District Manager (LDM) Harsh Rawal

was the chief guest.

The Director RSETI Sanjay Kumar and guest faculty associated with the training programme were also present on the occasion. The chief guest appreciated RSETI for organizing the skill development programmes and motivated the trainees to make the best use of the obtained skills for achieving self-employment and financial independence.

SBDU, BHD Members imparted Capacity Building Training at IIM Jammu

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 17: To strengthen the implementation of Mission YUVA, a two-day capacity building training programme for members of the Small Business Development Units (SBDUs) and Business Help Desks (BHDs) was organized at Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu.

The programme aimed at equipping the newly recruited field functionaries with the knowledge and tools required for effective facilitation, handholding and credit linkage of aspiring entrepreneurs under Mission YUVA.

The sessions focused on key aspects of the Mission including entrepreneurial mindset development, credit guidelines and user journey, preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs), handling credit-related issues and

strengthening rural livelihoods through Self Help Groups (SHGs) and supporting through accessible network of SBDUs and BHDs.

Training on functioning of MSME Health Clinics was also held by the Industries department. Session focused on monitoring the performance of MSMEs and extending handholding in case of distress.

Experts from NABARD, J&K Bank, JKEDI, BISAG, Nirmat Bharat, Industries and other departments shared insights on financing mechanisms and institutional support for entrepreneurs.

Participants were also trained on capacity building strategies, analysis of sanctioned and rejected credit cases, promotion of Neo-innovative enterprises and onboarding of entrepreneurs on digital seller platforms under Mission YUVA. Sessions were conducted by domain experts and partners associated with

Mission YUVA including DIC, Nirmat Bharat, etc enabling participants to better guide and support youth aspiring to start their own enterprises.

Secretary Labour & Employment Department, Rajeev Ranjan expressed satisfaction over the team's performance under Mission YUVA across all deliverables. He emphasized the need for coordinated efforts by all stakeholders to achieve the scheme's objectives and to foster a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Union Territory.

Director Employment cum MD Mission YUVA J&K, Harvinder Singh addressed the trainees and interacted with the newly hired staff. During the session, he highlighted the vision and objectives of Mission YUVA and elaborated on the positive impact the initiative is creating on the ground by promoting entrepreneurship and self-

employment among youth. He shared the future course of action under Mission YUVA and emphasized the importance of proactive outreach, effective guidance and continuous handholding of aspiring entrepreneurs. He further guided and motivated the members of the SBDUs and BHDs, encouraging them to work with dedication and coordination to ensure the successful implementation of the mission across the districts.

Director, Indian Institute of Management Jammu Prof. B. S. Sahay also addressed the team and emphasized the importance of developing detailed job profiles for all members with clearly defined roles and responsibilities to ensure greater clarity, accountability and effective functioning of the team.

Dr. Muqbil Burhan (Chairperson CEISD) and Prof Pranav Das (Chairperson SBDU) from IIM

Jammu were also present during the session.

The programme was also attended by Joint Director Employment Jammu, Deputy/ Assistant Directors, Career Counselling Officers and Employment Officers of Employment department.

The programme concluded with a debriefing and feedback session led by Managing Director, Mission YUVA along with the Director of IIM Jammu, emphasizing the importance of coordinated efforts at the grassroots level to transform aspiring youth into successful entrepreneurs.

The training is part of Mission YUVA's broader strategy to build a strong district and block-level ecosystem that can effectively mentor, support and facilitate youth in establishing sustainable self-employment ventures across Jammu and Kashmir.

DYSSO Srinagar conducts Cyclothon under Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan from SKICC to Nishat

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 17: In a significant step towards promoting a drug-free society under the Nasha Mukta J&K campaign, a cyclothon was flagged off by the District Youth Services and Sports Officer (DYSSO) Srinagar, Gh Hassan Lone from SKICC.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation of over 300 students, parents, and other stakeholders, reflecting a strong community commitment towards eradicating the menace of drug abuse.

Speaking on the occasion, Gh Hassan Lone highlighted the importance of collective efforts in making the Nasha Mukta Abhiyan a success.

He emphasized the need for awareness, especially among the youth, and urged participants to act as ambassadors in spreading the message of a drug-free society.

The cyclothon culminated at Nishat



Garden, Srinagar, where awards were distributed among the participating students in recognition of their active involvement and commitment to the cause.

The event concluded with a renewed pledge among participants to work collectively towards building a healthier and drug-free society.

DDC Doda reviews implementation of HADP Schemes

HT NEWS NETWORK

DODA, APRIL 17: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Doda Krishan Lal today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress and implementation of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme in the district.

During the meeting, the DDC undertook a detailed review of the components of the HADP being executed by different line departments.

He emphasized the need for effective inter-departmental coordination and optimal utilization of resources to achieve the intended outcomes of the programme.

Officers from concerned departments briefed the chair on the physical and financial progress achieved so far. They highlighted



key initiatives undertaken to boost agricultural productivity, enhance farmers' income and promote sustainable farming practices across

the district.

Scheme wise physical and financial progress under HADP during the year 2025-26, along with

proposed targets for 2026-27 and Status of Kisan Khidmat Ghars were also discussed.

The DDC directed all implementing agencies to expand outreach and ensure that the benefits of the scheme reach the grassroots level in a transparent and efficient manner.

He stressed the importance of identifying potential beneficiaries, conducting awareness campaigns and ensuring convergence among departments for maximizing the impact of the programme.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer Manesh Kumar; District Animal Husbandry Officer; District Sheep Husbandry Officer; Lead District Manager (LDM) and officers from Agriculture, Horticulture, Sericulture, Fisheries, Horticulture Planning and Marketing, along with other allied departments.

Baramulla's Youth lead charge as Sports & Awareness Campaign gains unstoppable Momentum

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, APRIL 17: District Youth Services and Sports Baramulla continues to energize the district with a powerful blend of sports excellence and social awareness under the ongoing Inter-School Zonal Level Competitions and the Nasha Mukht J&K 100 Days Campaign.

In an inspiring display of commitment towards a drug-free society, multiple zones across Baramulla actively participated in both sporting events and awareness initiatives, engaging hundreds of students in meaningful and transformative activities.

Zone Chandanwari successfully conducted Inter-School Zonal Level Competitions under the



banner of Nasha Mukht Abhiyan, featuring Chess and Carrom for Under-14 boys, with an enthusiastic participation of 30 students, showcasing both skill and discipline.

Meanwhile, Zone Wagoora, on the 3rd day of its ongoing competitions, organized Under-14 boys events at HSS Kreeri, where 54 students participated with great zeal and competitive spirit, reflecting the growing enthusiasm for sports at the grassroots level.

Extending the campaign beyond playgrounds, Zone Dangiawacha organized a massive rally under the Nasha Mukht Abhiyan, witnessing participation from around 250 students, spreading a strong message against drug abuse across the locality.

Similarly, Zone Rohama conducted a series of impactful awareness activities including rallies, speeches, poster-making competitions, and interactive sessions. Both students and teachers participated actively, reinforcing the message of a healthy and drug-free lifestyle.

Adding to the momentum, Zone Uri also organized a grand rally under the Nasha Mukht Abhiyan, where hundreds of students took part, demonstrating unity and collective resolve to eradicate drug abuse from society.

The dual initiative of promoting sports alongside spreading awareness is proving to be a powerful tool in channelizing the energy of youth towards constructive and nation-building activities.

Handwara unites against Drugs: Mega Pad Yatra ignites a mass movement against Drug menace

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

HANDWARA, APRIL 17: In a powerful show of unity and resolve against drug menace, the District Administration Kupwara today organized a mega Pad Yatra in Sub-Division Handwara, sending a strong message against drug abuse and reaffirming the collective commitment towards a healthier, drug-free society.

The rally, flagged off from Chotipora, witnessed the gracious presence of MLA Handwara, Sajad Gani Lone, Commissioner Secretary, School Education Department and District Mentor-100 days NMBA campaign, Ram Niwas Sharma, Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Balasahab Suse, SSP Handwara, Sahil Sarangal, Director Colleges Prof (Dr) S. Ajaz Bashir and ADC Handwara Javed Naseem Masoodi, alongside enthusiastic participation from Former DDC members, officers, civil society members, traders association, transport association, youth, and a large number of students.

Echoing with impactful slogans and vibrant placards, the Pad Yatra transformed the streets of Handwara into a powerful platform of awareness, highlighting the devastating effects of drug abuse and the urgent need for collective action.

The overwhelming participation reflected a strong and growing public resolve to eliminate the menace from society. The march moved through key streets and markets, drawing widespread public attention and energizing the anti-drug campaign at the grassroots level. Participants also took the "Nasha Mukht" pledge, reaffirming their determination to stand united against substance abuse.

The rally culminated at Government Degree College Handwara, where speakers and dignitaries emphasized that the fight against drugs is not just an administrative responsibility but a societal mission requiring collective vigilance, awareness, and sustained action.

Adding further strength to the campaign, a signature drive was conducted, symbolizing a shared commitment to building a drug-free future.

Notably, similar Pad Yatras were organized simultaneously across Handwara sub-division under the Nasha Mukht JK Abhiyan, witnessing massive participation and amplifying the message across every corner of the district.

Later District Mentor also inspected functioning of Addiction treatment facility at GMC Handwara.

The District Administration Kupwara reiterated its firm commitment to continue such impactful initiatives and called upon parents, educators, and community leaders to play an active role in safeguarding the future of our youth.

DC Pulwama reviews functioning of Kisan Khidmat Ghars Interacts with Krishi Udyamis

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, APRIL 17: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr Basharat Qayoom reviewed the functioning of Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs) and held an interaction with Krishi Udyamis at Circuit House Pulwama.



During the review meeting, the Chief Agriculture Officer Pulwama gave a detailed presentation on the establishment and operational status of Kisan Khidmat Ghars in the district.

The presentation discussed the progress achieved and the role of KKGs in ensuring doorstep delivery of agricultural inputs and extension services to farmers.

The DC took a comprehensive review of input supply mechanisms, service delivery systems and the overall performance of Krishi Udyamis in the district. He emphasised the need for strengthening last-mile delivery to ensure that farmers receive timely and quality services.

Stressing the importance of Kisan Khidmat Ghars, the DC directed that these centres be made fully functional as single-window facilitation hubs for farmers. He called for maintaining transparency, accountability and efficiency in all service delivery processes.

Dr. Qayoom further stressed the need for regular capacity-building programmes for Krishi Udyamis to enhance their effectiveness and outreach.

Earlier, Krishi Udyamis shared their field experiences and provided valuable feedback aimed at further strengthening service delivery mechanisms.

The meeting was attended by senior officers of Agriculture and allied sectors and Krishi Udyamis from across the district.

District Admin Shopian strengthens grassroots vigilance under Nasha Mukht Abhiyan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, APRIL 17: Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Shishir Gupta convened a meeting today at Shopian, to review and strengthen the implementation of the Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, with a particular focus on enhancing grassroots level vigilance and awareness.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the critical role of Lambardars and Chowkidars as the "eyes and ears" of the administration in rural areas.

They were directed to actively monitor and report drug related activities and contribute to the prevention of substance abuse at the village level. Key directions issued during the meeting included identification of potential drug hotspots, thereby generating awareness and

other enforcement measures.

Participants were instructed to assist law enforcement agencies by generating local awareness on the substance and drug abuse. Lambardars and Chowkidars were also directed to ensure strict surveillance around educational institutions to prevent the sale of tobacco products within restricted zones. Emphasis was laid on active participation in Gram Sabhas to pass anti drug resolutions and mobilize community support. Further, Lambardars and Chowkidars were encouraged to lead awareness initiatives, including organizing anti drug pledges, displaying helpline numbers, and disseminating information in prominent locations.

Collaboration with local leaders, teachers, and religious figures was highlighted as essential for spreading

awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse.

The DC also stressed the importance of promoting healthy alternatives for youth through sports and skill development activities.

Early identification of drug users and facilitating their access to de-addiction, rehabilitation and counseling services were underscored as key measures. Ensuring confidentiality of victims was highlighted to maintain trust within the community.

The meeting was attended by SSP Shopian, Mushtaq Ahmad Choudhary, Additional Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Shopian, Shakoor Ahmad Dar, Sub Divisional Magistrate Zainapora, Bilal Ahmad, DIO, DSWO, all Tehsildars, Lambardars and Chowkidars across the district.

GMC Srinagar conducts UT-level Psychiatry Virtual Medical Board Meet

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 17: Department of Psychiatry, Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS), GMC Srinagar, today successfully conducted the first UT-level Virtual Medical Board Meet in Psychiatry.

The academic meet witnessed an overwhelming participation of around 200 delegates, including senior faculty members, consultants, postgraduate scholars and trainees from all medical colleges across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, including GMC Jammu, SKIMS Medical college GMC Anantnag, GMC Baramulla, GMC Handwara, GMC Doda, GMC Kathu, GMC Rajouri and also Psychiatrists from Telemans team.

The session was inaugurated by Principal GMC Srinagar who emphasized the need for strengthening academic integration

and clinical uniformity across all medical institutions of the UT.

The Scientific session mainly revolved around newer role for mECT particularly in Neuro Cognitive Disorders. An atypical clinical case with diagnostic and management implications was presented by Dr. Chandini Wani senior resident and moderated by Dr. Yuman Kawoos, Assistant Professor Psychiatry and Dr Faisal, Assistant Professor Anaesthesia provided insights about anaesthetic implications of the procedure.

The meet served as an important platform for discussion on key psychiatric and mental health priorities, standardization of clinical practices, interdepartmental referrals, and structured academic activities aimed at improving mental healthcare delivery.

The role of IMHANS, GMC Srinagar, was particularly significant in facilitating the



academic coordination, expert interaction, and structured conduct of the virtual board meet, reaffirming its position as a leading mental health and academic hub in the UT.

The participants actively engaged in discussions related to evolving challenges in mental health care, strengthening institutional collaboration, and enhancing coordinated psychiatric services across Jammu and Kashmir.

The initiative was widely appreciated by attendees as a step forward towards unified mental health planning and improved academic networking.

The Department of Psychiatry at GMC Srinagar reiterated their commitment to continue such UT-level academic and clinical engagements in the future, with the goal of enhancing both patient care and academic excellence in the field of Psychiatry across the region.

DC Doda launches 'AASHA' Digital Platform to mainstream Out-of-School Children

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

DODA, APRIL 17: In a significant step towards strengthening inclusive education, the District Administration Doda on Friday launched a comprehensive digital initiative—AASHA (Action to Assure Schooling and Holistic Access)—aimed at identifying, tracking and mainstreaming Out-of-School Children (OoSC) across the district. The move has been taken under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme Samagra Shiksha.

The web-based platform, accessible at www.aasha.ceododa.in, was formally launched by Deputy Commissioner Krishan Lal at DC Office in the presence of Chief Planning Officer Manesh Kumar Manhas, Chief Education Officer Bhushan Kumar Pathak and other key officials associated with the initiative.

Developed under the aegis of the Chief Education Officer,

AASHA marks a transition from conventional paper-based surveys to a dynamic, technology-driven system. The platform is designed to generate real-time, household-level educational data, enabling scientific identification of children who are either never enrolled or have dropped out and facilitating their enrollment and sustained retention in schools.

The initiative follows directives from Project Director Samagra Shiksha J&K Bhawani Rakwal and Director School Education Jammu Naseem Javaid Chowdhary, who emphasized the need for updated and accurate OoSC data through field-driven mechanisms.

The planning and field framework developed with key contributions from K. D. Shah (Auditor, Samagra Shiksha Doda) and Majid Anjum (Programmer Samagra Shiksha Doda). The technical development of the platform was undertaken in-house by Saqib Ahmed (Incharge



IT, CEO Office Doda) and Rafiqat Rasool (Vocational Trainer IT, GHS Nichlathara), who built it as a Progressive Web Application

(PWA) featuring offline survey capability, real-time data capture and user-friendly dashboards. The developers have earlier

contributed to digital systems like the Integrated Management System (IMS) and Record Management System (RMS),

reflecting Doda's growing emphasis on e-governance in the education sector.

From the security standpoint, the platform complies with MeitY guidelines, ensuring data privacy, secure architecture and adherence to data residency norms.

The district-wide household survey under AASHA is scheduled to begin on April 18, with completion targeted within 10 days. Surveyors identified at the zonal level will conduct door-to-door visits, while trained Zonal Nodal Officers will oversee implementation. Consolidated data is expected by April 30, 2026.

The initiative aims to reduce dropout rates, improve literacy levels, enhance enrollment in government schools, strengthen retention, ensure access to quality education and optimize resource allocation under Samagra Shiksha.

The DC termed the initiative a "commendable step towards

data-driven governance," emphasizing the importance of accurate field identification for effective educational planning. He also directed for daily monitoring of survey progress through the application.

The CEO stated that AASHA represents a practical approach to achieving universal school access by systematically linking every identified child with the education system and ensuring continuous monitoring.

The administration urged parents and the general public to cooperate with survey teams and provide accurate information to ensure the success of the initiative.

With its scalable and user-friendly design, AASHA is expected to emerge as a replicable model for other districts, reinforcing the collective commitment of the administration, educators and the community to ensure that no child is left behind in the journey towards education.

HT EDITORIAL

Strengthening Jal Jeevan Mission for a Sustainable Future

The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), one of the Government of India's most transformative flagship programmes, has significantly altered the rural water supply landscape across the country. By extending tap water connections to households in even the most remote regions, the mission has brought convenience, dignity, and improved public health outcomes to millions. In regions like the Kashmir Valley, this initiative has ensured that communities once dependent on distant and uncertain water sources now have access closer to home.

The scale and pace of implementation reflect the government's strong commitment to improving the quality of life for its citizens. The steady expansion of infrastructure under JJM has laid a robust foundation for universal water access. This progress is particularly noteworthy in geographically challenging areas, where logistical and climatic constraints often pose hurdles.

As the mission continues to evolve, attention is increasingly being directed towards strengthening and modernising existing systems. Upgrading pipelines, enhancing storage capacity, and improving distribution networks are essential steps that will further consolidate the gains already achieved. Such measures will ensure that the growing demand for water, especially during seasonal variations, is met effectively and efficiently.

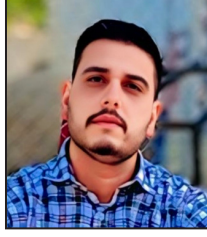
Equally important is the emphasis on water quality. The government's focus on ensuring safe and potable water through regular treatment and monitoring reflects a holistic approach to the mission. Maintaining adequate supplies of purification agents and ensuring timely maintenance of water supply systems are integral components of this effort, helping safeguard public health and well-being.

The Jal Jeevan Mission stands as a testament to what can be achieved through visionary planning and determined execution. It has not only addressed a basic necessity but has also contributed to social and economic empowerment by easing the daily burden on households, particularly women.

At the same time, as with any large-scale and dynamic initiative, there remains scope for further refinement and enhancement. Continuous improvement, innovation, and adaptation to emerging needs will ensure that the mission remains responsive and sustainable in the years to come.

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Between Grandparents and Gadgets: The Story of Change



JAWAID IQBAL

There was a time when life was not something we chased but something we quietly lived, when the value of a day was not measured by tasks completed or deadlines met but by the moments shared with the people who made those days meaningful, when childhood was not confined to rooms and screens but stretched across courtyards, fields, and long conversations with grandparents whose presence alone felt like a form of security, when a grandfather did not need to speak much to be understood because his silence carried experience, and a grandmother's stories were not just tales but lessons wrapped in warmth, teaching patience, kindness, and the art of enduring life with grace, when children would sit beside them not out of obligation but out of a natural desire to belong, to listen, to feel connected to something deeper than themselves, and in those simple, unhurried interactions, values were not taught but absorbed, becoming a part of one's character without even realizing it. In those days, a mother was not just someone who managed the household but the quiet heartbeat of it, her presence felt in every corner of the home, in the food she prepared with care, in the way she noticed even the smallest change in her child's expression, in the silent sacrifices she made without ever needing acknowledgment, her love not expressed in grand words but in constant attention, in waking before everyone else and resting only after ensuring everyone was cared for, creating an environment where comfort was not a luxury but a given, and a father, though often occupied with responsibilities, was never distant in the way we sometimes see today, for even in his busyness there was involvement, there was guidance, there was a sense that he was present not just physically but emotionally, walking his children to school, asking about their day, correcting them when needed, encouraging them when they faltered, shaping not only their future but also their sense of right and wrong, and together, parents did not merely raise children, they nurtured human beings grounded in relationships, respect, and resilience.

Families were not fragmented units trying to coordinate schedules but living systems where time was shared naturally, where evenings did not require planning but happened on their own, as everyone gathered in one place, talking about their day, sharing laughter, sometimes sitting in silence that still felt full rather than empty, where meals were not rushed or eaten alone but were occasions of connection, where the act of sitting together held as much importance as the food itself, and where even

disagreements were resolved through conversation rather than distance, strengthening bonds rather than weakening them, and within this rhythm of life, there existed a sense of balance, a feeling that one belonged not only to a family but to a way of living that valued presence over productivity and connection over convenience.

But slowly, almost without notice, this way of life began to shift, and today we find ourselves in a world that is faster, more efficient, yet strangely more distant, where life feels less like something we experience and more like something we manage, where mornings begin not with human interaction but with screens, where the first instinct is to check notifications rather than to greet those around us, where time is divided into tasks and obligations, leaving little room for the unplanned moments that once gave life its richness, where grandparents, who were once central figures in daily life, are now often separated by distance or reduced to occasional conversations, their stories unheard, their presence missed but rarely prioritized, turning what was once a living connection into a fading memory.

Mothers today continue to carry immense responsibility, but their time is no longer as fluid as it once was, stretched thin between countless demands, leaving them with less opportunity to offer the kind of unbroken attention that once defined their role, and fathers, too, are often caught in a cycle of work and pressure that leaves them physically exhausted and emotionally unavailable, not by choice but by circumstance, creating a gap where presence once existed, and children, growing up in this environment, find themselves surrounded by technology rather than people, learning behaviors from devices rather than from lived interactions, forming habits that prioritize speed over depth, convenience over connection, and independence over interdependence, which, while valuable in certain ways, also creates a sense of isolation that was far less common in earlier times.

Homes, which were once spaces of warmth and interaction, have in many cases become places where individuals coexist rather than truly live together, where each person is absorbed in their own routine, their own screen, their own world, where conversations are shorter, often functional rather than meaningful, and where silence no longer feels comforting but empty, reflecting not peace but disconnection, and even something as fundamental as food has undergone a transformation, shifting from a shared, thoughtful activity to something quick and convenient, eaten alone or in haste, losing not only its nutritional value but also its role as a medium of bonding, as kitchens that once echoed with conversation now often stand quiet, replaced by the efficiency of ready-made solutions.

Along with these changes, we also witness a shift in health and well-being, where the slower, more balanced lifestyle of the past has given way to one filled with stress, pressure, and constant mental engagement, leading to conditions that appear earlier and affect more people than before, where

rest is often postponed, and care for oneself becomes secondary to the demands of daily life, creating a cycle that is difficult to break, and while modern advancements have undoubtedly improved many aspects of living, they have also introduced complexities that distance us from the simplicity that once kept life grounded and manageable. At the heart of all these changes lie three profound shifts that define the difference between then and now, the first being our relationship with time, which has transformed from something we lived within to something we constantly chase, creating a sense of urgency that rarely allows us to pause and truly experience the moment, the second being the nature of our connections, which have moved from deep, consistent interactions to brief, often distracted exchanges that lack the emotional depth necessary to sustain strong relationships, and the third being our priorities, which have gradually shifted from people and presence to productivity and progress, redefining success in ways that sometimes overlook the importance of human connection and emotional well-being.

Yet, despite all that has changed, it would be incorrect to say that what we once had is entirely lost, for the essence of that life still exists, not as something distant or unreachable but as something we have simply moved away from, something that can still be rediscovered in small, intentional choices, in taking the time to sit with our grandparents and listen, not because we have to but because we want to, in allowing mothers the space to share not just responsibilities but moments, in creating opportunities for fathers to be present beyond their roles as providers, in choosing to put aside devices, even briefly, to engage in real conversations, to share meals, to rebuild the sense of togetherness that once came so naturally, and in doing so, we begin to understand that the difference between merely surviving and truly living does not lie in the amount of time we have but in how we choose to use it, in whether we allow it to slip away in constant motion or hold onto it long enough to create memories that endure.

Because in the end, life is not defined by speed, nor by efficiency, nor by how much we achieve in measurable terms, but by the depth of our relationships, the warmth of our homes, and the presence we offer to those who matter most, and while the world around us may continue to change, the choice of how we live within it remains ours, leaving us with a simple yet powerful realization that perhaps what we are searching for is not something new, but something we have known all along, something that existed in the laughter of grandparents, the care of mothers, the guidance of fathers, and the shared moments that once made life feel whole, reminding us that even today, amidst all the noise and rush, we still have the ability to return, not to the past itself, but to the values that made it meaningful, and in doing so, transform our lives from a state of mere survival into one of true and lasting fulfillment.

The writer is Renowned Teacher

Unity Between Shia And Sunni: A Path Toward Strength And Stability



SYED SAHRAAN HOSSEIN AL-BOKHARI AL-NAQVI

The Muslim Ummah today faces numerous challenges – political instability, social division, and external pressures. In such times, the importance of unity between Shia and Sunni Muslims becomes more crucial than ever. Despite historical differences, both communities share the same foundational beliefs: the oneness of Allah, the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), the Holy Qur'an, and the core principles of Islam. Common Foundations Both Shia and Sunni Muslims believe in:

Tawheed (Oneness of Allah) Risalah (Prophethood) The Qur'an as the final revelation The Day of Judgment These shared beliefs form a strong basis for unity. Differences exist mainly in historical interpretations, particularly regarding leadership after the passing of the Prophet, but these should not overshadow the overwhelming common ground.

"Teachings of Unity in Islam."
Islam strongly emphasises brotherhood and unity. The Qur'an states:
"And hold to the rope Allah all together and do

not become divided." (3:103)
Similarly, teachings from the Ahlul Bayt(a.s) and the companions encourage maintaining harmony among Muslims. Imam Ali (alaih al salam) emphasised wisdom, patience, and unity even during times of political conflict, showing that preserving the Ummah is of utmost importance.

"Role of Scholars and Leaders"
Throughout history, many scholars have worked to bridge the gap between Shia and Sunni communities. Contemporary figures like Shaheed Imam Syed Ali Hosseini Khamenei(RA) had repeatedly called for Islamic unity, warning that sectarianism only benefits the enemies of Islam. Likewise, scholars across different schools have stressed mutual respect and coexistence.

"Dangers of Division"
Sectarian conflict weakens the Muslim world. It diverts attention from real issues such as poverty, injustice, and external threats. Division creates an environment where misunderstanding and hatred can grow, often fueled by misinformation or political agendas rather than genuine religious differences.

"Steps Toward Unity"
1. Promoting Mutual Respect
Accept differences without hostility. Disagreement does not justify hatred.

2. Focusing on Common Goals
Issues like education, justice, and social welfare should unite Muslims.

3. Encouraging Dialogue
Open and respectful discussions can

remove misconceptions.
4. Avoiding Provocation
Refraining from insulting revered figures of either side is essential for harmony.

"Conclusion"
Unity between Shia and Sunni is not about erasing differences but about managing them with respect and wisdom. The strength of the Muslim Ummah lies in its diversity when guided by shared faith and mutual understanding. By returning to the core teachings of Islam and following the examples set by righteous leaders, Muslims can build a future of cooperation, dignity, and peace.

Author's Note
This article is written with a sincere intention to promote unity within the Ummah of Prophet Muhammad(s.a.w.w). As a follower of the path of Ahlul Bayt(a.s), I firmly believe that love for them should be a means of guidance, not division. The teachings of Imam Ali(a.s) remind us that wisdom, patience, and justice must prevail over conflict and discord. Differences in beliefs and historical perspectives exist and cannot be denied; however, they should be approached with knowledge, respect, and dignity rather than hostility. The enemies of Islam benefit from our divisions, while unity strengthens our identity and purpose. May Allah guide us all toward understanding, mutual respect, and the true essence of Islam – peace, justice, and brotherhood.

Preserving Kashmir's legacy amid hardship and change



■ MOHAMMAD HANIEF

The preservation of cultural heritage in Jammu and Kashmir today stands at a critical juncture, as the region's centuries-old traditions face mounting pressures from economic hardship, modernization, and shifting social priorities. At the heart of this challenge are thousands of artisans whose skills have long sustained Kashmir's identity but whose livelihoods are increasingly under strain.

Across the Valley and the wider regions of Jammu and Kashmir, traditional crafts such as Pashmina weaving, carpet making, papier-mâché, and wood carving are not merely artistic practices but vital sources of income and cultural continuity. Yet, for many artisans, these crafts no longer guarantee economic security. The gap between the labor invested and the financial return continues to widen, forcing many to reconsider their ancestral professions.

One of the most pressing concerns is the declining profitability of traditional crafts. Handmade products, which require weeks or even months of meticulous effort, often fetch prices that do not reflect the skill and time invested. The dominance of middlemen in the supply chain further reduces artisans' earnings, leaving them with only a fraction of the final market value. In many cases, artisans struggle to meet basic household expenses, making it difficult to sustain their craft as a full-time occupation.

Adding to these challenges is the rising cost and limited availability of raw materials. The production of authentic Pashmina shawls, for instance, depends on fine wool that has become increasingly expensive and difficult to procure. Similarly, traditional dyes, quality wood, and other essential materials used in crafts across Jammu and Kashmir are becoming scarce. This forces artisans to either compromise on quality or absorb higher costs, both of which undermine the sustainability of their work.

The impact of these economic pressures is evident in the changing aspirations of

the younger generation. Many young people, even those from families with a long history of craftsmanship, are reluctant to continue in these professions. With limited financial stability and growing exposure to alternative career opportunities, they are opting for more secure sources of income. This gradual shift threatens the transmission of traditional skills that have been preserved for generations through hands-on learning and practice.

Despite these hardships, recent trends indicate a growing awareness about the importance of cultural preservation. Digital platforms have emerged as a significant tool in this regard, enabling artisans to reach wider markets and connect directly with customers. Social media and e-commerce have allowed some craftsmen to showcase their work globally, reducing dependence on intermediaries and increasing visibility. However, access to digital tools and literacy remains uneven, particularly in rural areas, limiting the benefits for many artisans.

Tourism has also played a dual role in shaping the future of Kashmir's cultural heritage. The resurgence of tourism in the region has created new opportunities for artisans to market their products and engage with visitors interested in authentic cultural experiences. Craft exhibitions, local markets, and heritage tours have become important platforms for promoting traditional arts. At the same time, the commercialization driven by tourism often prioritizes quantity over authenticity, leading to the mass production of items that lack the originality and craftsmanship of traditional work.

Government initiatives and institutional efforts aimed at supporting artisans have shown some positive impact, but challenges in implementation persist. Financial assistance schemes, training programs, and promotional campaigns have been introduced to revive traditional crafts and improve market access. However, limited awareness, bureaucratic hurdles, and inconsistent execution often prevent these measures from reaching artisans at the grassroots level. There remains a need for more targeted and transparent policies that address the specific needs of different craft sectors across Jammu and Kashmir.

Beyond economic factors, broader social and environmental changes are also influencing cultural preservation. Rapid urban-



ization has altered traditional ways of life, with modern construction replacing indigenous architectural styles and reducing the demand for traditional skills. Changing consumer preferences have further contributed to the decline in everyday use of handcrafted items, affecting the relevance of certain crafts.

Climate change has emerged as an additional challenge, subtly impacting the ecosystem that supports traditional practices. Variations in weather patterns affect the availability and quality of raw materials, while environmental degradation threatens the natural landscapes that have historically inspired Kashmiri art and

culture. These changes add another layer of uncertainty to an already fragile system.

Amid these challenges, the resilience of artisans remains a defining feature of Kashmir's cultural landscape. Many continue to practice their craft despite limited returns, driven by a sense of pride and a commitment to preserving their heritage. Their work reflects not only technical skill but also a deep cultural memory that connects past generations with the present.

Encouragingly, there is a gradual shift towards integrating tradition with modernity. Efforts to introduce design innovation, improve product quality, and adapt to contemporary markets are helping some crafts regain relevance. Collaborations between artisans and designers, along with the promotion of sustainable and ethical products, are opening new possibilities for growth.

Education and awareness also play a crucial role in this process. By incorporating cultural studies into academic curricula and promoting local heritage through community initiatives, it is possible to foster a deeper appreciation for traditional crafts among younger generations. Such efforts can help transform cultural preservation from a passive concern into an active societal responsibility.

Ultimately, the preservation of cultural heritage in Jammu and Kashmir requires a holistic and sustained approach. Economic support for artisans, improved market access, technological integration, and policy reforms must work in tandem to create an environment where traditional crafts can thrive. Equally important is the role of consumers, whose choices can influence demand and support authentic craftsmanship.

The future of Kashmir's cultural heritage depends not only on protecting monuments and traditions but on ensuring the survival and dignity of the artisans who sustain them. Their struggles highlight the urgent need for meaningful intervention, while their resilience offers hope for renewal.

In safeguarding its crafts and traditions, Jammu and Kashmir is not merely preserving its past—it is shaping a cultural legacy that can endure in a rapidly changing world.

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Seperate Geography Governance For Chenab Valley



■ MOOL RAJ

The recent debate on Chenab as a separate division has once again brought to the forefront a question that has lingered for decades: whether administrative reorganisation is an act of fragmentation or an instrument of equitable justice. For the people of Doda, Kishtwar, and Ramban, this is not merely a political slogan but a lived reality marked by geographic isolation, developmental neglect, and administrative inaccessibility.

The Chenab Valley, named after the life-giving river that carves through its majestic topography, is a region of immense potential and contribution. Yet, despite its strategic importance and rich natural resources, it remains one of the most underdeveloped pockets in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. A separate administrative division is not about creating a wedge; it is about bridging the gap between the people and governance, ensuring that the fruits of development reach the last mile with dignity and efficiency.

The Cry for Educational Justice

The foundation of any progressive society is education, yet the Chenab region faces a severe infrastructural deficit in this sector. While the government has established government degree colleges at the district headquarters, the higher education landscape remains

barren for the rural population. Students aspiring for professional courses in engineering, medicine, or management are forced to migrate to Jammu or beyond—a journey fraught with difficult terrain and heavy financial burden.

A separate divisional status would necessitate the establishment of a dedicated Directorate of School Education and Higher Education within the region. This would enable:

Decentralized Administration: Faster recruitment of teaching staff, who currently avoid postings in the region due to the hardships of travelling to the winter capital for bureaucratic processes.

Satellite Campuses: The creation of cluster universities or satellite campuses of Jammu University in Kishtwar, Doda, and Ramban to serve the local population.

Skill Development: Focused ITIs and polytechnics tailored to the region's industrial needs—particularly in hydropower and tourism—ensuring that locals are equipped for the jobs created in their own backyard.

Healthcare: A Question of Survival

If education is the foundation, healthcare is the lifeline. Currently, the Chenab region's healthcare infrastructure is woefully inadequate to handle its geographic isolation. During winter, when the region is often cut off from Jammu, residents of far-flung areas like Marwah, Warwan, or Paddar must travel 6 to 8 hours on treacherous roads to reach the district hospital in Kishtwar or the Government Medical College (GMC) in Doda.

With separate divisional status, the following improvements could be realized:

Specialized Tertiary Care: The existing

GMC Doda could be upgraded into a full-fledged super-specialty hospital under the administrative control of a Division-level Directorate of Health Services, making oncology, cardiology, and neurology units truly functional rather than existing only on paper.

Winter Preparedness: A Division-level Disaster Management Authority stationed in the valley would ensure faster road clearance, adequate stocking of essential medicines, and significantly reduced emergency response times during harsh winter months.

Reduced Referral Burden: Patients requiring advanced care would no longer need to travel 180–220 km to Jammu.

Power Projects: Powering the Nation, Yet Living in Darkness

The irony of the Chenab region is stark. This area forms the backbone of India's green energy mission, with operational power projects such as Salal, Baglihar, and Dulhasti already contributing significantly to the national grid. Today, the Chenab Valley is witnessing an unprecedented surge in hydropower development. Major projects including Pakal Dul, Kiru, Ratle, and Kwar are under construction and are being fast-tracked for commissioning in the coming years. Once completed, these projects will further establish the region as the powerhouse of the Union Territory.

Yet, despite this immense contribution, the local population continues to face erratic power supply and lacks the industrial growth that such energy abundance should naturally foster. The valley powers the nation, but its own development remains a distant dream—a paradox that a separate divisional administration could effectively address by ensuring rightful royalties, local employment

opportunities, and infrastructure upgrades commensurate with the scale of these monumental projects.

Linguistics and Cultural Uniqueness

One of the strongest arguments for a separate division lies in linguistics. The Chenab region is the cradle of Pogali, Sarazi, Bhandarwahi, Kashmiri, and Kishtwari dialects. While Kashmiri predominantly speaks Kashmiri and Jammu predominantly speaks Dogri, the Chenab Valley possesses a distinct linguistic identity that is often overlooked.

A separate division would allow this unique linguistic and cultural identity to receive the patronage it deserves. A divisional administration would be empowered to advocate for the official recognition of local dialects, which form the soul of this land. This would not only safeguard an invaluable cultural heritage but also instill a deep sense of pride and belonging among the people.

Tourism: The Untapped Paradise

For decades, tourism in Jammu and Kashmir has been synonymous with the Kashmir Valley. However, the Chenab region holds the key to the future of sustainable, offbeat, and adventure tourism. With the Chenab River raging through deep gorges, the area is a goldmine for white-water rafting, trekking, and mountaineering. Destinations like Sinthan Top (connecting Kishtwar to Anantnag) and Kailash Kund offer alpine landscapes that rival the best in the world.

Currently, the region lacks the administrative focus needed to market these assets effectively. A Divisional Commissioner stationed in the valley could aggressively promote tourism infrastructure—including hotels, homestays, and

improved road connectivity—thereby creating meaningful employment for local youth.

A Demand for Administrative Efficiency

The demand for a separate Chenab Division is fundamentally a demand for administrative efficiency. Currently, the region falls under the Jammu Division. While Jammu is an excellent administrative hub, it is geographically distant. A Deputy Commissioner in Doda, for instance, reports to the Divisional Commissioner in Jammu, who sits nearly 200 kilometres away, across a formidable mountain range.

Creating a new division with its headquarters in the central part of the valley would:

Reduce bureaucratic red tape

Ensure timely utilization of funds allocated for roads, healthcare, and education. Give the people of the region a genuine "seat at the table" where decisions affecting their lives are made.

This is not about dividing Jammu. It is about doing justice to a region that powers the nation, preserves cultural diversity, and guards its borders. It is about transforming "Chenab" from a mere postal address into a dynamic administrative entity.

As the new power projects illuminate the national grid and roads to remote tourist destinations improve, let us also light up the lives of the people of Doda, Kishtwar, and Ramban with the justice of administrative proximity. A separate Chenab Division is not a division of land—it is a union of aspirations.

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The Brain & The Heart: A Silent Dialogue That Sustains Life



■ SURINDERPAL SINGH

The human body is not a collection of isolated organs working independently, but a finely tuned system where every part communicates with and depends on the others. At the center of this remarkable coordination lies one of the most vital relationships in the body—the connection between the brain and the heart. These two organs, often symbolically associated with thought and emotion, are in reality engaged in a continuous and complex dialogue that governs not only survival but overall well-being. Modern science has increasingly revealed that this connection is far more intricate than once imagined, confirming that the brain and heart are deeply intertwined both physically and functionally.

The relationship between the brain and the heart is maintained through an advanced communication system often referred to as the neurocardiac axis. This system ensures that both organs remain in constant contact, exchanging signals that regulate bodily functions moment by moment. One of the primary ways this communication occurs is through the nervous system, particularly the autonomic nervous system. This system operates subconsciously and is divided into two key components that influence heart activity in contrasting ways. The sympathetic nervous system prepares the body for action, increasing the heart rate during moments of stress or danger. In contrast, the parasympathetic nervous system promotes relaxation, slowing the heart rate and conserving energy when the body is at rest.

At the core of this neural communication lies the vagus nerve, a powerful and essential pathway that directly connects the brain to

the heart and other vital organs. The vagus nerve plays a crucial role in regulating heart rate, digestion, and even emotional responses. It acts as a bridge, carrying signals that help maintain balance within the body. When functioning optimally, it allows for smooth coordination between mental states and physical responses. However, any disruption in this communication can lead to imbalances that affect both mental and cardiovascular health.

In addition to neural pathways, hormonal signals form another critical link between the brain and the heart. The brain, particularly through the endocrine system, releases hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol in response to stress. These hormones have immediate and noticeable effects on the heart, increasing heart rate, raising blood pressure, and altering blood flow. While these responses are essential in short bursts, especially in emergency situations, prolonged exposure to stress hormones can have damaging consequences. Chronic stress keeps the body in a heightened state of alertness, placing continuous strain on the heart and gradually weakening its function over time.

Equally important is the role of blood circulation in maintaining this connection. The heart is responsible for pumping oxygen-rich blood to the brain, ensuring that brain cells receive the nutrients they need to function effectively. The brain, despite being a relatively small organ, consumes a significant portion of the body's oxygen supply. Even a brief interruption in blood flow can result in serious consequences, including the death of brain cells within minutes. This delicate dependency highlights how closely the health of one organ is tied to the performance of the other.

When the heart becomes unhealthy, the impact on the brain can be immediate and profound. Conditions such as hypertension, heart attacks, or irregular heart rhythms can compromise the efficiency of blood flow to the brain. Reduced circulation increases the risk of stroke, a condition that can lead to lasting neurological damage. In many cases, individuals may experience symptoms such

as dizziness, confusion, or memory impairment even before a major event occurs. Over time, chronic cardiovascular issues can contribute to cognitive decline, affecting a person's ability to think, remember, and make decisions.

Conversely, when the brain is affected by stress, anxiety, or other psychological conditions, the heart often bears the burden. Emotional and mental stress triggers physiological responses that increase heart rate and elevate blood pressure. While occasional stress is a normal part of life, persistent emotional strain can lead to long-term cardiovascular problems. Anxiety and depression have been closely linked to an increased risk of heart disease, as they disrupt the natural balance of the autonomic nervous system. This imbalance can result in irregular heart rhythms and a sustained increase in cardiac workload, ultimately weakening the heart.

What makes this connection even more significant is the realization that emotions are not merely abstract experiences confined to the mind. They have tangible physical effects that can influence heart health. Feelings such as anger, fear, or sadness can trigger measurable changes in heart function, while positive emotions like happiness and calmness can promote stability and resilience. This emotional dimension adds another layer to the brain-heart relationship, emphasizing the importance of mental well-being in maintaining physical health.

Amid these complexities, one of the most effective ways to strengthen the connection between the brain and the heart is through regular physical activity. Exercise serves as a powerful tool that benefits both organs simultaneously. When the body engages in physical movement, the heart becomes stronger and more efficient at pumping blood. Improved circulation ensures that the brain receives a steady supply of oxygen and nutrients, enhancing its performance. Over time, regular exercise helps lower blood pressure, reduce cholesterol levels, and improve overall cardiovascular health.

The benefits of exercise extend beyond

the physical, playing a crucial role in mental well-being as well. Physical activity stimulates the release of endorphins, often referred to as feel-good chemicals, which help reduce stress and improve mood. Exercise has been shown to enhance memory, boost cognitive function, and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. Activities such as walking, jogging, cycling, yoga, and strength training all contribute to maintaining a healthy balance between the brain and the heart. Even a simple routine of moderate exercise for thirty minutes a day can bring significant improvements, reinforcing the connection that sustains overall health.

Diet also plays a foundational role in supporting the brain-heart relationship. The foods we consume directly influence both cardiovascular function and cognitive performance. A balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables provides essential antioxidants that protect cells from damage. Whole grains contribute to steady blood flow, while nuts and seeds offer healthy fats that support brain function. Fish, particularly those rich in omega-3 fatty acids, are known to benefit both the heart and the brain by reducing inflammation and promoting healthy circulation. Olive oil, another valuable component, helps lower harmful cholesterol levels and supports overall cardiovascular health.

On the other hand, poor dietary choices can disrupt this delicate balance. Processed foods, excessive sugar, high salt intake, and trans fats contribute to a range of health issues, including obesity, high cholesterol, and inflammation. These conditions place additional strain on the heart and impair blood flow to the brain. Over time, such habits increase the risk of both cardiovascular diseases and cognitive disorders. The impact is often gradual, making it easy to overlook until significant damage has occurred.

Beyond exercise and diet, other lifestyle factors also play a crucial role in maintaining the harmony between the brain and the heart. Adequate sleep is essential, as it allows the body to repair and restore itself. During sleep, the brain processes information, while

the heart experiences periods of reduced activity that are vital for recovery. Lack of sleep disrupts these processes, leading to increased stress levels and a higher risk of both mental and cardiovascular issues.

Stress management is equally important in preserving this connection. Techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, and mindfulness can help regulate the nervous system and reduce the production of stress hormones. By promoting a state of calmness, these practices support both mental clarity and heart health. Over time, they contribute to a more balanced and resilient system, capable of handling challenges without causing harm to the body.

The relationship between the brain and the heart is a powerful reminder that health cannot be viewed in isolation. Every action, whether physical, emotional, or psychological, has a ripple effect that influences the entire body. When one organ suffers, the other inevitably feels the impact. This interconnectedness underscores the importance of adopting a holistic approach to health, where lifestyle choices are made with an awareness of their broader consequences.

Taking care of the heart is, in essence, taking care of the brain, and vice versa. This partnership forms the foundation of a healthy and fulfilling life. It is not defined by complex medical interventions but by consistent and mindful habits that support overall well-being. By staying active, eating wisely, managing stress, and prioritizing rest, individuals can nurture this vital connection and ensure that both the brain and the heart continue to function in harmony.

In the end, the dialogue between the brain and the heart is a silent yet powerful force that shapes our lives. It influences how we think, feel, and respond to the world around us. Recognizing and respecting this connection is not just a matter of scientific understanding but a pathway to living a healthier and more balanced life.

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Max Smart super speciality hospital Saket & Max Hospital Dwarka . NEW DELHI

Director Sankalp ENT & Cochlear Implant Centre NEW DELHI

@kifayatkifi

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

Public Darbar Held in Ompora, Budgam; MLA Agha Syed Muntazir Mehdi Listens to Public Grievance

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, APR 17: In a significant outreach initiative, a public darbar was organized for the first time in the Ompora area of Budgam district by MLA Budgam, Agha Syed Muntazir Mehdi. The event witnessed a large turnout of local residents, who participated actively to voice their concerns and grievances.

During the darbar, Agha Muntazir Mehdi patiently listened to various issues raised by the public, ranging from basic amenities to developmental concerns. He issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned departments for prompt redressal of the grievances.

Officials from several departments, including Public Health Engineering (PHE), Roads and Buildings (R&B), and other government agencies, were present at the venue. Their presence ensured that public issues were not only heard but also properly understood, allowing for immediate coordination and response.

Addressing the gathering, the MLA assured the people that all genuine grievances would be taken up on a priority basis. He emphasized that no negligence in developmental works would be tolerated and reaffirmed his commitment to improving public services in the constituency.

On the occasion, Chairman of the Ompora Auqaf Committee, Ejaz Ahmad, expressed his gratitude to the MLA for organizing the public darbar. He noted that such initiatives play a crucial role in bridging the gap between elected representatives and the public. He further expressed optimism that the move would benefit not only the residents of Ompora but also those living in adjoining areas, ensuring quicker resolution of their issues.

The public darbar was widely appreciated by attendees, who viewed it as a positive step towards responsive governance and strengthened public engagement.



Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application of Mst HAJIRA BEGUM S/O SONAULLA CHOPAN R/O SUCHIPORA for the issuance of LEGAL HEIR certificate

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above in this context a report sought from patwari halqa concerned and the Death certificate issued by the competent authority reveals that SANOUALLAH CHOPAN S/O GHULAM MOHAMMAD CHOPAN has passed away on 05/02/2026. The report of the patwari further depicts that the deceased has left behind following dependent as tabulated below

- 1... HAJIRA BEGUM wife 70 House wife widow
- 2... GH QADIR CHOPAN son 50 years WAZA married
- 3... NASEEMA BEGUM daughter 48 years H/W widow
- 4... ABDUL MAJEED CHOPAN son 40 years driver married
- 5... MANZOOR AHMAD CHOPAN son 37 H/W WAZA married
- 6... ZAHOOR AHMAD CHOPAN son 35 years shopkeeper married
- 7... MUMTAZA BEGUM daughter 34 years H/W married

The applicant has applied for Issuance of Legal heir certificate in favour of Self

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

Naib Tehsild Kreeri

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri (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)/ chokdar has submitted case file pertaining to 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

From The Office of Mr Zahid Ameen Khan Advocate J&K High Court

In the case of:, Aijaz Ahmad Gojree S/o Ab Rahim Gojree R/o Bader her/Handwara vs Public at large

In the matter of :, Caveat Application under section 148 A of CPC.

The caveator apprehends that the any person may file any suit or writ or Application or Appeal at the back of caveators and may manage to get exparte order ,therefore the caveators submit that in case of any petition, Appeal, suit ,Application or such proceedings are filed before this Hon'ble court by any person against the caveator, The caveator or the Counsel for the caveator may be provided reasonable opportunity of being heard before passing any of the order in said petition ,Appeal, suit ,Application or any proceedings otherwise the caveator may suffer such an irreparable loss and injury which cannot be compensated later on in any manner and same would be an abuse of process of court.

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

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.

NAIB TEHSILDAR KALANTRA

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application of FAREEDA BEGUM S/O NAZIR AHMAD WANI R/O WARIPORA BALA for the issuance of LEGAL HEIR certificate

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above in this context a report sought from patwari halqa concerned and the Death certificate issued by the competent authority reveals that NAZIR AHMAD WANI S/O ABDUL GUFOR WANI R/O WARIPORA BALA has passed away on 01/04/2026 .The report of the patwari further depicts that the deceased has left behind following dependent as tabulated below

- 1... FAREEDA BEGUM wife 49 House wife widow
- 2... WAZEERA NAZIR daughter 33 years H/W married
- 3... AMIR NAZIR son 27 years labour unmarried
- 4... HASEENA BEGUM daughter 45 years H/W married
- 5... RAFIA NAZIR daughter 24 years students unmarried
- 5... RAFIQ AHMAD WANI son 25 years //

The applicant has applied for Issuance of Legal heir certificate in favour of Self

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

Naib Tehsild Kreeri

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application of SHAISTA BASHIR D/O BASHIR AHMAD HAJAM R/O RESHIPORA kreeri Tehsil KREERI for the issuance of OBC (Other Backward classes in his/her their favor

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of OBC in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of RESHIPORA of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the HAJAM community having annual income 110000// (One lakh Ten Thousand) the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1... BASHIR AHMAD HAJAM Father 50 Labour
- 2... HAJA BEGUM Mother 45 years H/W
- 3... AZAD AHMAD HAJAM Brother 25 years student
- 4... SHAISTA BASHIR self 18 years student
- 5... NAZIMA BASHIR sister 16 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.

Naib Tehsild Kreeri

Public Notice

It is informed to the general public that I intend to apply for the registration of a DEE Class Contractor Card at the Office of the Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B) Circle, Baramulla/Kupwara. If anybody has any objection in this regard, he/she may file his/her objection in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B), Baramulla, within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

ISHFAQ AHMAD WANI
S/o MOHAMMAD YOUSUF WANI
R/o KALANTRA PAYEEN, TEHSIL KREERI
DISTT. BARAMULLA

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

Public Notice

My son's and daughters parentage has been wrongly written as MOHD RAFAQEER MIR while his/her correct parentage is RAFAQEER 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

Mame...RAFAQEER AHMAD MIR
F/O ...AIMAN RAFAQEER
F/O ...MOHSIN RAFAQEER
R/O ...KAKOTHAL

Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my Father's name 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 of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

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

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that my name has been wrongly mentioned in my Aadhaar Card bearing Aadhaar No 3544 2000 2063 Now I want to change my name from UZAIIF AHMAD (Old Name) to HUZAIIF AHMAD (New Name). In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he or she may approach the concerned authorities within a period of seven days. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

Name: HUZAIIF AHMAD
S/O: MUSHTAQ AHMAD GOGRI
R/O: FALLCHILL, BUDGAM, Jammu
And Kashmir- 191111

Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER, POSHAN PROJECT H S BUGH

Phone/Fax No: +91-1931-465044

Subject: Tentative/revise merit list of 2nd meritorious candidate for the post of Sanginis (Anganwadi Worker) at Mah Ward No.09.

(PUBLIC NOTICE)

The Tentative /Revised merit list at Annexure-A of 2nd meritorious candidates for the post of Sangini (Anganwadi Worker) is published for calling of objections from the general public/desirous candidates. The said post was advertised vide this Office notice no: - 01- CDPO HSB OF 2026 Dated: - 06/01/2026 in which the top meritorious candidate namely Sarwat Gull D/o Gh.Mohd Shah R/o Mah ward No. 09 has withdrawn her candidature from the tentatively selection list, now the 2nd meritorious candidate is tentatively selected for calling of objections. The objections should be reach to office of the under signed within a period of ten (10) days from the date of publication of this notice after the date of expiry no objection will be entertained.

ANNEXURE- "A" (Sangini (Anganwadi Worker) Revised/General Merit of AWC Mah Ward No.09

S. No	Name of the Candidate	Parentage/ W/O	Qualification	DOB	Max Marks	Marks Obtained	% of Marks	Additional 2 point of HRP	Total Merit
1	Shobby Jan	Mohammad Altaf Wani	12th	10-03-2003	500	302	60.40%	0	60.40%
2	Shaista Mubarik	Mubarik Ahmad Shah	12th	04-03-1996	500	222	44.40%	0	44.40%
3	Rafi Ayoub	Zahid Rashid Shah	12th	18-02-1993	750	394	52.53%	0	52.53%
4	Salma Yousuf	Shamid Rashid Shah	12th	29-03-1994	750	382	50.93%	0	50.93%
5	Aasifa Jan	Mohd Altaf Wani	12th	01-01-1993	500	250	50.00%	0	50.00%
6	Showki Jan	Younus Ahmad Wani	12th	10-04-1990	750	360	48.00%	0	48.00%

Tentatively Selected Candidate of AWC Mah Ward No.09

S. No	Name of the Candidate	Parentage/ W/O	Qualification	DOB	Max Marks	Marks Obtained	% of Marks	Additional 2 point of HRP	Total Merit
1	Shobby Jan	Mohammad Altaf Wani	12th	10-03-2003	500	302	60.40%	0	60.40%

No: CDPO/Poshan/ HSB/2026/135 | Dated: 17-04-2026

Sd/- Child Development Project officer,
Poshan Project H S Bugh, (Member secretary)

DIPK: 512/26 | Dated: 17-04-2026

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR (UT) OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION PULWAMA

TENDER NOTICE

E-NIT No: 11/EEP/RNB/of 2026-2027/573-83 | Dated: 17/04/2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT term e-tenders (In Single Cover system) are invited on %age Basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Government for the following work:

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost	T.D Cost	Class	Major Head of Accounts	Call No:
1	Construction of Public Library At Achan Pulwama.	15.76	800/=	CEE/BEE	MPLADS	Ist call

Earnest Money (In %age.): 2% of ADV. Cost

Time of Completion in working Days: 120 working days

Administrative Accord Approval No: AAA.No. 45-DDCP of 2026 Dt.11.04.2026

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www .jktenders. gov .inas per schedule of date given below:-

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	17- 04-2026
2.	Bid downloading Start Date	17- 04-2026 from 10:00 A.M
3.	Bid submission Start Date	17- 04-2026 from 10:00 A.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	29- 04-2026 upto 0 4:00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	30 - 04-2026 at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Div.Pulwama
6.	Submission of Performance Security(PS)	Within three (03) days of receipt of LOA. (The First lowest successful bidder has to provide 5% of allotted cost as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG and EMD of 2% shall be released after receipt of 5% Performance security.

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in the shape of Treasury Challan /Receipt as per Annexure -C (Debited to M.H.0059 PWD) and EMD in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to the Executive Engineer R&B Div. Pulwama (The Date of Treasury Challan and EMD should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date.

2. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Div. Pulwama

3. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.

4. EMD in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of the Executive Engineer R&B Div. Pulwama

5. The Contractors are advised to visit the site and to be aware of the conditions for launching at site of work before quoting the rates.

6. The contractor shall also be responsible for any theft/ damage to any of the component at site and the cost of damage/ theft if any shall be deducted from the work done or CDR of the Contractor till completion of work and handing over.

7. The 1st lowest bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/ BG in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Pulwama within three (03) days after the date of receipt of letter of acceptance and shall be released after successful completion of DLP. The Bank Guarantee should be valid for 45 days beyond DLP

Sd/- Executive Engineer R&B Division Pulwama

DIPK: 491/26 | Dated: 17-04-2026

Satish Sharma emphasizes robust enforcement mechanism in Legal Metrology, zero tolerance for consumer exploitation:

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 17: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Transport, Youth Services & Sports and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting of the Legal Metrology Department to assess its functioning and strengthen enforcement mechanisms aimed at protecting the consumer interests.

The meeting was attended by Controller Legal Metrology and other senior officers of the department. They briefed the Minister on the current status of enforcement drives, manpower deployment, inspection mechanisms, and key challenges being faced in ensuring compliance across markets.

Emphasizing the critical role of the Legal Metrology Department in safeguarding the consumer rights, the Minister directed the officials to intensify regular market inspections and ensure strict adherence to the prescribed



standards. He stressed that enforcement must be visible, consistent and effective to deter violations and build consumer confidence.

Sharma laid special emphasis on inspection of petrol pumps, directing the department to undertake frequent and surprise checks to prevent any malpractice in measurement and delivery. He said that even minor discrepancies in fuel dispensing directly impact the consumers and must be dealt with firmly. He instructed that strict penal action be taken against the erring outlets found violating norms.

The Minister further directed the officials to widen the scope of inspections to cover shops, retail outlets and other commercial establishments. He called for strict monitoring of the use of standardized weights and measures, proper stamping and verification of equipment and mandatory display of price lists and other consumer-related information to ensure transparency and accountability.

Highlighting the need for a proactive approach, Sharma asked the department to strengthen its field presence and adopt a technology-driven monitoring system to ensure

efficiency and accountability. He also stressed the importance of regular awareness campaigns to educate the consumers about their rights and encourage them to report violations.

Reiterating the government's unwavering commitment to consumer protection, the Minister called for a zero-tolerance policy against any form of malpractice, fraud or exploitation. He directed that enforcement action be taken promptly and without exception, ensuring that defaulters are dealt with strictly under the law.

The Minister also reviewed the department's future action plan and stressed the need for better coordination with district administrations and other enforcement agencies to ensure uniform implementation of Legal Metrology laws across all regions.

The senior officers assured the Minister that necessary steps would be taken to further strengthen the enforcement and enhance transparency in market practices.

JPVCL organises "Sunshine Snacks: A Picnic Basket Competition" at Jhajjar Kotli

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 17: The Jammu Pariyatan Vikas Cooperative Limited on Friday organised Sunshine Snacks - A Picnic Basket Competition.

The event was aimed at inculcating the concept of picnic among the school students. The event also focused on creating travel-friendly, sustainable and creative food such as sandwiches, salads and snacks in an innovative and healthy manner, while showcasing high quality presentation and the themed concepts.

A large number of students from various schools including KC Public School, Jammu Sanskriti School, Bhartiya Shiksha Kendra Higher Secondary School, Model Academy, Indent Public School participated in the event with great enthusiasm.

General Manager JKTDC Riyaz Ahmad was the Chief Guest. He appreciated the students for depicting their talent and creativity in preparing the picnic basket and also highlighted that more such events should be organized in the serene environments of nature.

Advocate V.K. Magoo, Former Assistant Solicitor General of India and Former Chairman JK Housing Corporation was the Guest of Honour. Magoo appreciated the

organizers for organizing such an innovative event, especially at the backdrop of nature.

Earlier, Chairperson Jammu Pariyatan Cooperative Limited Neetu Dhar welcomed the guests. Highlighting the importance of the event, she said that students in today's world are more inclined to infrastructure-oriented picnics and therefore they need to be taken out so that they can understand the environment in a real sense.

Event Advisor Prof. Suvidha Khanna stressed that the events of this nature are the need of the hour. She urged all participating schools and their accompanying teachers to organize picnics in such open and serene environments. She also emphasized that, as responsible citizens, we should work towards reviving such beautiful tourist destinations.

Chairman Unati and Chairman JK Dairy Federation Vikrant Dogra was the sponsor of the event. He emphasized the importance of organizing innovative competitions like this to help students to develop a sense of responsibility towards the environment and benefit from learning in an open setting.

The judges for the event were Prof. Komal Nagar from The Business School, University of Jammu, Sukriti Vaid, Founder Director Adivyom and Pawandeep Singh Mehta Owner Kashmir Innovative Craft.

Javed Rana reviews public grievances in Mendhar, reaffirms commitment to responsive governance

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

MENDHAR, APRIL 17: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today held an extensive public outreach session in Mendhar to assess and address the grievances and demands of the local residents there.

The Minister interacted with multiple delegations and took stock of the public issues and concerns, assuring prompt action on the same.

During the interaction, the Minister patiently listened to the grievances and developmental demands raised by the delegations and individuals. He assured that all genuine issues would be addressed in a time-bound manner through coordinated efforts among the concerned departments.



A delegation from the Transporters' Union, while meeting the Minister, conveyed their appreciation for the recently introduced traffic management plan devised by the Sub-Divisional Administration.

They said that the initiative is expected to significantly ease traffic congestion in the area and improve mobility for commuters as well as traders.

Another delegation raised the issue of better road connectivity and other infrastructural requirements.

Reiterating his commitment to transparent and people-centric governance, the Minister underscored the importance of sustained public engagement and proactive outreach.

He stated that such interactions are vital for identifying grassroots issues and ensuring their prompt resolution, ultimately contributing to the accelerated and inclusive development.

National conference on Indian Knowledge Systems concludes at SKUAST-Jammu

Speakers advocate blending traditional knowledge with modern science for Viksit Bharat 2047

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 17: The three day National Conference on "Integrating Indian Knowledge Systems with Modern Science for Viksit Bharat", organized by Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu (SKUAST-Jammu), concluded today with a valedictory function held at Baba Jitto Auditorium, Main Campus, Chatha.

The valedictory function was attended by Professor B. R. Kamboj, Vice Chancellor, Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University (CSHAU), Hisar, as the chief guest and Babila Rakwal, Commissioner Secretary, Science and Technology as the guest of honour.

Professor B. N. Tripathi, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-Jammu lauded the successful organization of the conference. He remarked that the

participation of diverse disciplines and multiple generations has been one of the major achievements of the conference. He expressed satisfaction over the enthusiastic involvement of a large number of students.

He emphasized that with the Government of India's strong focus on Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), SKUAST-Jammu is committed to actively contribute and take meaningful initiatives in this direction.

Addressing the gathering, Professor B. R. Kamboj highlighted the need for scientific validation, documentation and wider dissemination of traditional knowledge for national development. He underscored that India's traditional knowledge systems hold immense potential in ensuring sustainability and resilience and their integration with modern science is vital for



realizing the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Commissioner Secretary, in her address, appreciated the initiative taken by SKUAST-Jammu and said that India is a land of profound wisdom from Ayurveda to Astronomy rooted in centuries of knowledge and innovation. The need of the hour is not only to preserve this rich legacy but to

integrate it with the modern science, paving the way for a truly Viksit Bharat.

The conference, held from April 15 to 17, 2026, brought together eminent scientists, academicians and policymakers from across the country. It featured technical sessions, panel discussions and research presentations on themes such as sustainable agriculture,

climate resilience, biodiversity conservation and traditional farming practices.

During the valedictory session, awards and certificates were distributed among the outstanding participants and presenters in recognition of their contributions.

All statutory officers of the University were present on the occasion. The event also witnessed the participation of dignitaries of Vigyan Bharti, Heads of Divisions, faculty members, scientists, students and non-teaching staff in large numbers.

The programme concluded with a formal vote of thanks by Dr. Vinod Gupta, Organizing Secretary of the conference acknowledging the efforts of the organizing committees, collaborating institutions and all stakeholders for making the conference a grand success.

DC Bandipora launches 'Maa se Guftagu' at Arin under Nasha Mukht Abhiyan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 17: District Administration Bandipora today launched "Maa se Guftagu", a weekly community outreach initiative under the 100-Day Mission Mode Campaign under the Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, with its first edition held at Arin. The programme, to be conducted across ICDS blocks throughout the campaign period at the rate of one event per week, places mothers and women at the heart of the fight against drug abuse.

The inaugural edition witnessed significant participation from women, students, ASHA workers, and field functionaries despite inclement weather. The event was presided over

by Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, who appreciated the enthusiasm of participants and lauded the "spirit of motherhood in the fight against drugs."

True to the spirit of the initiative, women participants took centre stage, holding placards bearing emotionally resonant slogans such as "Mamata ki taqat, nashe ki shikast", "Maa ka pyaar, nasha ka inkaar", and "Maa ki dua, nashe ki dawa", reinforcing the role of mothers as the first and most powerful line of defence against drug abuse. An ASHA worker present at the programme spoke about the responsibilities of motherhood, urging parents to closely observe their children's behaviour and not dismiss early signs of change as insignificant.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner noted that while addiction is widely visible, communities often look away instead of intervening. "An addict is not a criminal, they are a person in need of care and support. The real criminal is the one who knows and still chooses silence," she said.

The DC also highlighted a social paradox, that while families celebrate the birth of a child, they sometimes fail to maintain adequate engagement during adolescence, leaving children vulnerable to negative influences.

In a direct gesture of accessibility, the DC shared her personal contact number with the audience, urging participants to reach out for assistance or to report information related to drug networks.

DC Bandipora interacts with Resource Persons under Nasha Mukht Abhiyan Campaign

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 17: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, today chaired a review meeting with resource persons to assess the implementation of the Nasha Mukht Abhiyan under the ongoing 100-Day Mission Mode Campaign and to take feedback on IEC (Information, Education and Communication) awareness programmes. During the meeting, the DC interacted with resource persons, who shared their field experiences, challenges, and suggestions. She specifically sought reasons for low participation in certain IEC activities. The DC emphasised the need to reassess outreach strategies to ensure that awareness efforts are effectively reaching the intended target groups. She underscored the importance of establishing an emotional connect, noting that different age groups require tailored



approaches. She also clarified the distinction between orientation and training, stating that structured de-addiction training will be provided to interested individuals.

On the occasion, ACB Bandipora stressed that awareness content should be delivered in simple language and preferably in the mother tongue to ensure clarity and better public engagement. It

was also emphasised that programmes should prioritise impact and behavioural change over mere numerical coverage.

Resource persons from various departments shared valuable insights. The ATF informed that multiple training sessions have been conducted on handling addiction cases, identifying early warning signs, and leveraging the

role of religion in prevention. Teachers highlighted concerns such as increasing social isolation among youth and lack of adequate recreational spaces. Health department representatives pointed to behavioural indicators like withdrawal, changes in routine, and emphasised the need for early screening and regular parent-teacher interactions.

Reiterating the role of families in prevention, the DC stressed the importance of strong communication between parents and children. She urged parents to closely observe changes in behaviour, habits, and peer groups of their children, and not to ignore early warning signs. She further advised that simple practices such as regularly sharing meals and engaging in indoor activities with children can help families stay connected and better monitor the well-being and movements of adolescents. Officials from Social

Welfare and other departments noted that neglect of children and lack of parental engagement are significant contributing factors. It was informed that awareness programmes are being conducted across schools and Panchayats, covering both substance and non-substance addictions, including excessive social media use.

Police and other stakeholders stressed the importance of community participation, religious engagement, and promotion of sports activities as preventive measures against substance abuse.

The DC directed that the single-point contact number under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan be widely shared for greater accessibility. She also called for systematic collection of data on addicts and recovered individuals to enable targeted interventions, reiterating that addicts must be treated as persons in need of care and rehabilitation, not as criminals.

PD&SJ Bandipora chairs 2nd UTRC Meeting 2026 in District

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 17: Principal District & Sessions Judge (PD&SJ) (Chairman, District Legal Services Authority), Bandipora, Jeema Bashir, today chaired 2nd Under Trial Review Committee (UTRC) meeting with the objective of ensuring timely review and release of undertrial prisoners, thereby promoting their rights and access to justice.



The meeting was held in the Conference Hall at ADR Centre (District Court Complex), Bandipora and was attended by Indu Kanwal Chib, District Magistrate, Bandipora; Aijaz Ahmad Zargar, Senior Superintendent of Police, Bandipora; Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary, DLSA Bandipora; Barkat Ahmad Dar, Superintendent, District Jail Baramulla, Ahmad Shaafi, DySP, DAR Bandipora (In-charge Subsidiary Jail) Bandipora; Syed Sareer Ahmad, Chief Prosecuting Officer, Principal District and Sessions Court, Bandipora; Iftikar Hassan, Public Prosecutor, Additional Sessions Court, Bandipora, Gazanfer Syed, Superintendent District Jail Kupwara and Bilal Ahmad Bhat, Chief, LADC Bandipora.

The Committee conducted a preliminary review of four cases and recommendations made by the UTRC will be forwarded to the competent authorities for necessary action. The meeting underscored the commitment of the District Legal Services Authority, Bandipora, to uphold the principles of justice and safeguard the rights of undertrial prisoners. The Authority remains dedicated in promoting access to justice and protecting the rights of marginalized and vulnerable sections of society. The District Legal Services Authority, Bandipora, will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that justice is served and the rights of all individuals are protected, under law.

ASMS, UAL Biotech Sign MoU to Promote Sustainable Agriculture

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, APR 17 : Avio Smart Market Stack Limited (ASMS), formerly known as Bartronics India Limited, on Friday said it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UAL Biotech Pte Ltd, a Singapore-based bio-innovation company, to explore opportunities in sustainable agriculture and rural ecosystem development.

The collaboration aims to integrate ASMS's rural digital network, which spans over 5,000 villages and reaches nearly 40 million farmers and rural residents, with UAL Biotech's eco-sustainable biological solutions.

The partnership will focus on promoting regenerative farming practices, improving agricultural productivity, and enabling environmentally responsible solutions across agriculture, aquaculture, and allied sectors, the company said in a release.

As part of the initiative, the two organisations will explore



the deployment of bio-based agricultural inputs through ASMS's platform, along with farmer advisory and training programmes to encourage adoption at the grassroots level.

The collaboration will also work

towards developing traceable, chemical-free supply chains and undertake pilot projects to demonstrate the impact of sustainable practices.

The initiative seeks to combine digital infrastructure with bio-

technology innovation to enhance soil health, improve crop yields, reduce dependence on chemical inputs, and support long-term food security and rural economic growth.

It will also emphasise data-driven farming practices and scalable models.

Dr. Raja Krishna Murthy M, Head - Agri Tech Business at ASMS, said the partnership aims to build an integrated and sustainable agri-ecosystem by leveraging digital reach and bio-innovation.

R. Chakrapani, Director at UAL Biotech, said the collaboration would help bring advanced biological solutions to farming communities at scale and promote safer, more sustainable agricultural practices.

The partnership is expected to contribute to transforming agriculture through the convergence of digital platforms and bio-innovation, creating long-term value for farmers and the rural economy. UNI

Markets rebound: Sensex jumps 505 pts, Nifty tops 24,300

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17 : The Indian stock market on Friday recouped losses and ended higher. Nifty was above 24,300, supported by positive geopolitical developments. At close, the Sensex was up 504.86 points or 0.65 percent at 78,493.54, and the Nifty was up 156.80 points or 0.65 percent at 24,353.55.

Nifty Midcap index adding 1.2% and Smallcap index rising 1.5%. For the week, BSE Sensex and Nifty added 1.2 percent each.

Among the sectors, all the indices ended in the green with FMCG, media, metal, oil & gas, power, capital goods, consumer durables, and energy up 1-2%.

On Nifty, the gainers were HUL, Nestle, JSW Steel, Power Grid Corp, and Apollo Hospitals, while on the losing end were Wipro, HDFC Life, Sun Pharma, L&T, and M&M.

Over 160 stocks touched their 52-week high on the BSE. These included Lloyds Metals, Siemens, ABB India, Apar Industries, NLC India, Adani Energy, BHEL, Adani Power, Anand Rathi, Syrma SGS, Welspun Corp, Granules India, Aurobindo Pharma, SAIL, Tata Power, J&K Bank, Gujarat Mineral, among others.

In today's session, investors earned

about Rs 5 lakh crore as the overall market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms rose to nearly Rs 466 lakh crore from Rs 461 lakh crore in the previous session.

Among the specific performers, Ola Electric Mobility also witnessed strong buying interest, with the stock rising 5.5%. Wipro shares dropped 2.8% after its March quarter results.

Shares of Kalyan Jewellers India fell nearly 6%. Titan, which sells jewellery under the Tanishq brand, was also in the red as its shares were trading down 1.02%.

Rupee traded stronger at 93.24, up by 0.15%, supported by a softer dollar index hovering near 98.

Oil prices declined in early Asian trade on optimism that the West Asia conflict may be nearing a pause after a 10-day ceasefire.

Brent crude futures dropped \$1.34, or 1.35%, to \$98.05 a barrel at 0021 GMT while the US West Texas Intermediate crude fell \$1.65, or 1.74%, to \$93.40 a barrel.

Gold prices were largely steady, with the spot gold price flat at 4,789.67 per ounce, but up 0.9% for the week. US gold futures for June were steady at \$4,809.30. MCX gold rate for June futures contracts was trading 0.01% higher at 1,53,168 per 10 grams. UNI

FSSAI directs States to intensify checks on use of prohibited fruit ripening agents

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APR 17 : The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has directed all States and Union Territories to step up surveillance and enforcement against the use of unauthorized and hazardous artificial ripening agents in fruits, reiterating that substances such as calcium carbide are strictly prohibited.

In a communication issued on April 16, FSSAI asked Commissioners of Food Safety, Regional Directors and Central Licensing Authorities to intensify inspections across fruit markets, mandis, storage facilities, wholesalers and distribu-



tion networks, particularly during the seasonal arrival of fruits.

The authority reiterated that the use of calcium carbide, commonly referred to as "masala",

for artificial ripening is banned under the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2011. It warned that the chemical

poses serious health risks, including difficulty in swallowing, vomiting and skin ulcers.

FSSAI also noted instances where food business operators (FBOs) are using ethephon solutions for ripening fruits such as bananas.

It emphasized that its guidelines on artificial ripening permit only the use of ethylene gas under controlled conditions and strictly prohibit direct contact of fruits with ethylene in powder or liquid forms.

Calling for stricter vigilance, the regulator said enforcement drives may be undertaken to curb the illegal use of calcium carbide and other non-permitted agents, including synthetic colours and

wax.

The presence of such substances at premises or near fruit consignments could be treated as evidence for initiating prosecution under relevant provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act.

Additionally, enforcement officials have been advised to use strip paper tests to detect acetylene gas in godowns or ripening chambers, which may indicate the use of banned chemicals.

The directive forms part of FSSAI's ongoing efforts to ensure food safety and protect public health by eliminating unsafe practices in the fruit supply chain. UNI

Gautam Adani surpasses Mukesh Ambani to become Asia's richest person

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17 : Gautam Adani surpasses Mukesh Ambani to become Asia's richest person, fueled by gains in Adani Group stock values. Adani's wealth stands at \$92.6 billion, while Ambani's is about \$90.8 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaire Index. Both tycoons are among the top 20 richest people in the world.

Mukesh Ambani had long held the position, and now follows closely. While the gap remains narrow, the change highlights the volatile nature of global wealth movements.

Adani's rise has been supported by steady gains in his group's stock performance this year, adding \$8.1 billion to his fortune. In contrast, Ambani has faced a decline of \$16.9 billion in his net worth over the same period, reflecting mixed trends in Reliance Industries' market performance.

As per Bloomberg Billionaire Index, seven of the top 20 billionaires have recorded declines this year. Bernard Arnault has seen the sharpest drop, losing \$44 billion. Others facing setbacks include Steve Ballmer, Larry Ellison, Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, Amancio Ortega, and Mukesh Ambani.

Globally, Elon Musk continues to dominate the global rankings with a net worth of \$656 billion, followed by Larry Page at \$286 billion. Other names in the top 10 include Jeff Bezos, Sergey Brin, Mark Zuckerberg, Larry Ellison, Michael Dell, Jensen Huang, Bernard Arnault, and Jim Walton.

Shares of billionaire Gautam Adani-backed Adani Enterprises rose as much as 2.17% to hit an intraday high of Rs 2,190.90 on the National Stock Exchange (NSE), and on the BSE, Adani Enterprises shares advanced as much as 2.09%.

This comes after global investment firm Jefferies in a note said that its copper and road business will see a ramp up during the current financial year.

A sectoral analysis of the index shows that technology entrepreneurs continue to dominate the global rich list, while industrials, energy and retail billionaires have seen relatively higher volatility in their net worth.

Lakshmi Mittal ranked 62nd globally with a net worth of \$36.9 billion while HCL founder Shiv Nadar stood at the 70th position with \$33.5 billion, followed by Shapoor Mistry and family at 71st with \$33.2 billion. UNI

India slips to sixth-largest economy amid Rupee weakness, Iran war impact

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17 : India has dropped out of the list of the world's top five economies, with the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) latest World Economic Outlook now ranking it as the sixth-largest economy in nominal GDP terms.

The shift reflects currency-driven changes rather than structural weakness, with projections suggesting that India could regain the lost ground in the coming years.

According to the IMF's April 2026 World Economic Outlook, the latest estimates place the United States at over \$30 trillion, China at around \$19-20 trillion, Germany at about \$5 trillion, and both Japan and the United Kingdom in the \$4-4.5 trillion range.

With just over \$4 trillion, India now ranks just below this group.

The Iran War has hit hard on the Indian Economy as the country imports nearly 90% of its crude oil, higher prices of oil has widened the import bill and increase dollar outflows, putting direct pressure on the currency.

The geopolitical tensions have also triggered bouts of risk aversion in global markets, leading to volatile foreign portfolio flows

India continues to be one of the fastest-growing major economies, with growth projected in the 6.4-6.5% range over the next two years.

Recently, the IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva has praised India's growth story saying the growth rate is more than two times higher than the average global growth.

"Look at India today. India's growth rate is more than two times higher than the average global growth.

That is happening because the country has strong fundamentals," said International Monetary Fund chief Kristalina Georgieva.

Georgieva attributed India's resilience to factors such as macroeconomic stability and robust domestic demand, which continue to support momentum.

IMF chief said there are no signs of a sharp slowdown in India's growth path, even as the global economy faces headwinds from geopolitical tensions and supply disruptions linked to the West Asia conflict.

Sasken announces Hyderabad CoE to boost engineering, digital capabilities

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, APR 17 : Sasken Technologies Ltd. on Thursday announced the launch of a new Center of Excellence (CoE) in Hyderabad, aimed at scaling its product engineering and digital transformation capabilities while strengthening regional delivery operations.

The new facility will deepen collaboration with key chipset partners such as Qualcomm and their OEM ecosystem, as demand grows for advanced engineering solutions across global markets, the IT company said in a release here.

The Hyderabad CoE will drive innovation in areas including 5G-led platforms, connected devices, IoT solutions, embedded systems, and digital product engineering.

It is expected to support complex global programs across sectors such as automotive, smart devices, industrial technology, and satellite communications.



The new centre will enhance customer proximity, accelerate engineering cycles, and enable faster time-to-market for high-tech products, the release said.

As part of the expansion, the company appointed Nirmala Datla, Chief Data Science & Engineering Officer, as Site Leader for the Hyderabad CoE.

She will oversee delivery, capability building, and talent development at the new facility.

Sasken also announced plans to hire over 100 specialised professionals in the coming months, tapping into Hyderabad's strong technology talent pool. Recruitment will focus on high-skill roles across semiconductors, automotive engineering, ODM, and data science.

The company described the Hyderabad CoE as a strategic investment aligned with its growth roadmap in product engineering and digital services.

ED arrests top Anil Ambani aides Jhunjunwala, Bapna

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI, APR 17 : The Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested Amitabh Jhunjunwala and Amit Bapna, close associates of industrialist Anil Ambani, on Thursday, according to an official statement.

The arrests are part of an ongoing investigation under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), based on multiple cases registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Allegedly, Jhunjunwala, who was the director of Reliance Capital Limited, was one of the key decision-makers in various operations of Reliance Home Finance Limited (RHFL) and Reliance Commercial Finance Limited (RCFL).

Anil Ambani-linked companies allegedly laundered more than Rs 40,000 crore. In the money laundering case, investigating agencies have seized assets worth about Rs 17,000 crore so far including a luxurious house worth Rs 3,700 crore.

During investigations by the CBI and the ED, industrialist Anil Ambani often claimed that he stepped down from the board of directors of the companies being probed, in 2017 itself.

Earlier in April, the CBI had registered a case against Reliance Communications Ltd (RCom), Anil Ambani himself, unknown public servants, and unknown others for allegedly causing wrongful loss of Rs 3,750 crore to the Life Insurance Corporation

(LIC) of India.

The CBI case was registered based on a complaint received from LIC for alleged conspiracy, cheating, misappropriation and offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, according to an official statement.

Allegedly, LIC was fraudulently induced to subscribe to Non Convertible Debentures (NCDs) worth Rs 4,500 crore based on false representations made by Reliance Communications Ltd and its management regarding the financial health of the company, as well as security and asset cover offered to LIC while subscribing to the NCDs.

Earlier, the CBI had registered three cases against RCom Ltd, Anil Ambani himself and others

alleging defrauding many banks.

The CBI also interrogated Anil Ambani at its Delhi headquarters for two days in a row, in connection with the alleged Rs 2,929.05 crore SBI fraud case.

In March, the Supreme Court had stressed the need for a coordinated, fair and time-bound investigation into alleged large-scale bank frauds linked to the Anil Ambani associated Reliance Communications (RCom) and its group entities.

A Supreme Court bench, headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant, observed that investigating agencies like the ED and the CBI must "join hands" and work in coordination to unearth the truth.

Meanwhile, on Thursday, April 16, the Supreme Court

refused to interfere with a Bombay High Court's judgment which had classified the loan accounts of Reliance Communications Group of companies as "fraud", thereby dismissing Anil Ambani's petition seeking a stay on the Bombay High Court's order.

After pronouncing its order, the Supreme Court also recorded Anil Ambani's statement that "he wished to settle the matter with the banks" (Bank of Baroda, Indian Overseas Bank and the IDBI Bank) made by his counsel senior advocate Kapil Sibal, amidst vehement opposition from Solicitor General Tushar Mehta who appeared for the consortium of banks, which had loaned cash to Anil Ambani-linked companies. UNI

CM Omar unveils Sher-i-Kashmir Cricket Club jersey, releases wildlife publication

■ HT SPORTS DESK

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today unveiled the jersey of Sher-i-Kashmir Cricket Club (SCC) at a function held here.

The event was attended by Minister for Youth Services & Sports Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani and members of the club.

Appreciating the club's contribution to promoting cricket, the Chief Minister said that the government is committed to extending all possible support to encourage sports activities and nurture young talent across Jammu and Kashmir.

On the occasion, SCC President Aman Cheema highlighted the club's achievements, noting that it has participated in and won several tournaments. He added that the club is playing a positive role in engaging youth and steering them away from negative influences such as drug abuse by channelizing their energy into sports.

Earlier, the Chief Minister also launched a wildlife magazine titled 'Checklist of Mammals of Jammu and Kashmir, India'. A delegation of wildlife ecologists led by Muzaffar Kichloo briefed him on their ongoing and upcoming projects.

The Chief Minister commended their efforts and emphasized the importance of scientific research and conservation in preserving the region's rich biodiversity.



England beat world champions Spain in World Cup qualifier

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

WEMBLEY: England claimed a significant victory over rivals Spain to take control of their 2027 Women's World Cup qualifying group.

In a repeat of both the Euro 2025 final and the 2023 World Cup showpiece, two of Europe's best teams were battling to take top spot in Group 3.

It was a perfect start for Sarina Wiegman's side at Wembley as Lauren Hemp poked the ball over the line within three minutes to give them a crucial lead.

The Manchester City winger almost doubled her tally when Lucy Bronze's backheel set her up in the box but Hemp sliced her effort just wide. That set the tone for the Lionesses, who defended well and played out the perfect gameplan in the first half to limit Spain's chances.

The reigning world champions controlled possession and came close through Irene Paredes and Ona Batlle, but did not do enough to test goalkeeper Hannah Hampton. Only the top team in the group earns automatic qualification to the World Cup in Brazil, with the rest entering the play-offs, so there was a lot at stake.

It led to a fiery second half with both teams creating huge chances. Lauren James, Alessia Russo and Lucia Kendall failed to take theirs for England, while Olga Carmona and Vicky Lopez struck the woodwork for Spain.

Spain put the hosts under late pressure and Edna Imade headed wide from close range before being denied by a fine save from Hampton in the final minutes.

Victory maintained England's 100% record in qualifying after three games and sit top of the table on nine points, knowing a trip to Spain is due in June. They head to Iceland - third in the group after beating Ukraine - on

India secure third place with thrilling win over Malawi in FIFA Series Kenya 2026

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: The India women's football team registered a thrilling 3-2 win over Malawi in the third-place play-off of the FIFA Series 2026 in Nairobi, ending their campaign on a positive note on Wednesday.

Astam Oraon (18'), Aveka Singh (45+1'), and substitute Priyadarshini Selladurai (84') were on target for India, while Khumalo Ireen (42') and Henry Deborah (60') scored for Malawi at the Nyayo National Stadium.

India's attacking intent paid dividends in the 18th minute when Nirmala Devi Phanjoubam floated in a corner from the right.

Malawian goalkeeper Esther Maulidi came off her line but failed to make contact, allowing the ball to bounce off Aveka Singh and fall kindly to Astam Oraon, who reacted swiftly to slot it into the net and hand India the lead.

It was the 21-year-old's first goal for the national team.

Trailing by a goal, Malawi grew into the game and began to enjoy more possession in the Indian half. Their pressure paid off in the 42nd minute when



Sanfida Nongrum brought down Bernadetta Mkandawire on the edge of the box, conceding a free-kick in a dangerous position. Khumalo Ireen stepped up and unleashed a superb left-

footed strike into the top corner. India goalkeeper Shreya Hooda made contact with the ball but was unable to keep it out.

India responded immediately, as in the first minute of first-

half stoppage time, a slick one-two down the left between Karishma Shirvoikar and Babina Lisham saw the latter whip in a dangerous cross into the box. Aveka Singh was perfectly

positioned and scored with a composed volley to restore India's lead just before the break.

Malawi came out aggressively after the restart and pressed the Indian backline in numbers, winning possession on multiple occasions. They equalised for the second time just after the hour mark. Khumalo Ireen delivered a corner from the right, which was first met by substitute Mulimbika Sarah, and Henry Deborah reacted quickest to fire a volley into the net, making it 2-2.

The match grew increasingly scrappy in the closing stages, with both sides resorting to long balls. With the tie seemingly headed for a penalty shootout, the decisive moment arrived six minutes from time. Nirmala's free-kick from the halfway line picked out substitute Priyadarshini Selladurai, who did brilliantly to cut inside onto her right foot before unleashing a precise strike into the bottom corner, leaving the Malawi goalkeeper with no chance to make a save.

India had earlier suffered a 0-2 defeat to Kenya in the semifinals, while hosts Kenya are set to face Australia in the final.



Saturday knowing another three points will put them in a strong

position going into the final round of qualifying fixtures in the summer.

Wiegman said afterwards: "I think as a team against Spain you have to defend really well as their individual quality is so high.

"If you don't stay compact, like we did, then they find spaces to get behind and become more dangerous. We tried not to let them drag us out of position.

"Overall, we did that. We also had moments in the game where we went forward and created chances.

"At the moment it's a really good result and we're really happy but we need to keep that significance by getting a result on Saturday against Iceland."

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