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HAJ-2026; Omar Abdullah Flags Off First Haj Batch from Srinagar

431 Pilgrims Depart From Srinagar ; Over 4,700 to Undertake Pilgrimage This Year

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 18: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday flagged off the first batch of Haj pilgrims from Srinagar International Airport, formally inaugurating the 2026 Haj operations from Jammu & Kashmir.

Interacting with the pilgrims, the Chief Minister conveyed his warm wishes and expressed hope that the sacred Hajj would be safe, peaceful and spiritually enriching. He said the pilgrimage embodies the values of compassion, unity and brotherhood, and prayed for its successful completion.

Abdullah also sought divine blessings
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LG Sinha Leads Anti-Drug Padyatra in Rajouri, Calls for 'Total War' on Narcotics

Launches sports initiatives, urges united societal push to dismantle drug networks

HT NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI, APRIL 18: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday joined a padyatra and addressed a public rally in border district Rajouri under the Drug-Free J&K campaign, asserting that the administration is determined to dismantle drug networks and free society from the scourge of addiction.

Describing Rajouri as a sensitive district prone to cross-border drug smuggling, the Lieutenant Governor said the government would "crush these challenges" through sustained enforcement and public participation. He highlighted a recent crackdown launched by Jammu and Kashmir Police from April 11, during which over 45 FIRs were registered, 63 smugglers arrested, and large quantities of narcotics seized within five days.

"Regular checks are now being conducted across schools, pharmacies, and drug agencies, and this drive will continue relentlessly," he said, adding that cases registered after April 11 have seen a threefold increase in the past week.



Calling addiction a deep challenge rather than a personal failing, Sinha said it has devastated many families across Jammu and Kashmir. He also alleged that cross-border elements are using drug smuggling as a tool to fuel terrorism and weaken society from within.

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HC Orders Darbar Move to Srinagar from May 4

Jammu offices to shut on April 30; ₹25,000 allowance for shifting employees

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APR 18: The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh has directed the annual Darbar Move of its main wing from Jammu to Srinagar for the summer season of 2026.

According to an official order, several offices, including the main wing of the High Court, the office of the Principal Secretary to the Chief Justice, Registrar Vigilance, Director of the J&K Judicial Academy, Registrar Rules, Registrar IT, and the Central Project Coordinator (e-Courts), will close in Jammu on April 30 after office hours.

The offices will reopen in Srinagar on May 4 in the forenoon, marking the seasonal transition of judicial functioning to the summer.

The order further states that employees shifting as part of the move will be paid a special move allowance of ₹25,000 each. However, those failing

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New Facility to Boost Advanced Care for Women & Newborns: CM

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 18: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today inspected the ongoing construction of the Extension Block at Government Lalla Ded Hospital and conducted a comprehensive review of the project's progress, execution strategy and infrastructure development.

The upcoming facility, being developed at the premier maternity care hospital, is



designed as a dedicated Infertility and Gynaecological Oncology Centre and will significantly strengthen special-

ised maternal and neonatal care. The facility will

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Modi Targets Opposition Over Women's Quota, Urges Ministers to Take Message to Masses

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APR 18: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday asked Union ministers to take the government's message to the grassroots and expose what he termed the opposition's "anti-women" mindset, following the failure of a Constitution amendment bill seeking early implementation of women's reservation.

At a Cabinet meeting, Modi said parties including the Indian National Congress would have to "pay a price" for not supporting the bill, which fell short of the required two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha on Friday, according to sources.



Reaffirming his government's

● Turn on Page 2

Amit Shah hails Cabinet nod to 2% DA/DR hike for Central Govt employees, pensioners

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 18: The Union Cabinet on Saturday approved a 2 per cent increase in Dearness Allowance (DA) for central government employees and Dearness Relief (DR) for pensioners, benefiting nearly 50.46 lakh employees and 68.27 lakh pensioners.

The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



Briefing reporters after the meeting, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said

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No fuel shortage, ports normal amid West Asia crisis: Govt

HT NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI, APR 18: The Government of India on Saturday said it is maintaining a high level of preparedness across key sectors amid the evolving situation in West Asia, assuring uninterrupted fuel supply, normal port operations and continued support to Indian nationals in the region.

According to an official statement, there is no shortage of petrol, diesel or LPG in the coun-



try, and citizens have been advised against panic buying. The Ministry of Petroleum and

Natural Gas said domestic LPG, PNG and CNG supplies are

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₹73K Spent on J&K Rajya Sabha Polls Amid Cross-Voting Drama

HT NEWS DESK / KNO

Srinagar, Apr 18: The Jammu and Kashmir administration spent Rs. 73,548 on arrangements for the October 2025 elections to the Rajya Sabha, according to official docu-

ments accessed by Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

Records reveal that the J&K Election Department had sanctioned Rs. 1 lakh for the exercise, of which Rs. 73,548 was utilised for

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India's First Petroglyph Conservation Park To Be Set Up In Ladakh

HT News Desk / Agencies

LEH, APR 18: In a landmark initiative to preserve Ladakh's ancient heritage, Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Saturday

laid the foundation stone for India's first Petroglyph Conservation Park on the banks of the Indus River here on World Heritage Day.

Petroglyphs are prehistoric images, symbols, or carvings etched, pecked, or engraved directly onto rock surfaces.

The park aims to serve as a

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Don't Fear AI; It's Only Aid, Not Substitute: CJI Surya Kant

HT NEWS NETWORK

BENGALURU, APR 18: Cautioning that the adoption of technology in the judiciary must be

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Bhaderwah-Chamba Interstate Road Reopens After Winter Closure

HT NEWS NETWORK

BHADERWAH/JAMMU, APR 18: After remaining closed to commuters for over three months owing to snowfall, the strategic

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

HAJ-2026.....

for enduring peace, harmony and prosperity in Jammu & Kashmir and for the well-being of its people.

As part of the first phase, three flights carrying 431 pilgrims were scheduled to depart from Srinagar on Saturday. Officials said a total of 28 flights will operate between April 18 and May 5 to facilitate the pilgrimage.

This year, 4,706 pilgrims from Jammu & Kashmir are expected to perform Haj.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Director Airport Srinagar, senior civil and police officials, members of the J&K Haj Committee, and representatives of various departments were present on the occasion.

LG Sinha Leads.....

Referring to the 100-day anti-drug campaign launched earlier this month at Jammu's MA Stadium, he said the administration aims to "completely break the backbone of drug networks" through coordinated action. "When the strength of society combines with administrative power, no criminal will be spared," he asserted.

Emphasising prevention, the Lieutenant Governor said awareness must reach young people before drugs do. "We must ignite self-respect and awareness in every school, college, playground, and community space," he added.

He directed law enforcement agencies to ensure strict punishment for traffickers and said a standard operating procedure (SoP) has been formulated to dismantle networks and ensure swift justice. He also stressed a comprehensive rehabilitation approach, including counselling, detoxification, and aftercare, while calling for weekly audits of progress and closure of fake rehabilitation centres.

Sinha urged civil society groups and NGOs to actively participate in the campaign, terming it a collective mission to restore dignity and rebuild lives.

On the occasion, he administered an anti-drug pledge and launched the Rajouri Premier League and Rajouri Football Club under the Nasha Mukta Jammu Kashmir Abhiyaan. Cultural performances, including a musical opera, were also presented to raise awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse.

HC Orders.....

to relocate within the stipulated time will not be eligible for the benefit.

New Facility.....

healthcare services in Jammu and Kashmir.

During the visit, the Chief Minister assessed the pace and quality of construction, reviewed augmentation of critical facilities and emphasised adherence to timelines. He directed the concerned authorities to ensure expeditious completion of the project while maintaining the highest standards of quality.

He was accompanied by his Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani, Principal and Dean Government Medical College Srinagar Dr. (Prof) Iffat Hassan, Administrator GMC Srinagar Mohammad Ashraf Hakak, Medical Superintendent LD Hospital, and senior officers from PWD (R&B), J&KERA Kashmir, among others.

The Chief Minister was briefed on the project, which is being executed under the World Bank-funded Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP) by the PWD (R&B) Department at an estimated cost of 118.22 crore. The facility is being constructed as a G+5+attic structure with a total built-up area of about 11,640 square metres and will house around 117 specialised beds (65 adults and 52 infants) for advanced care.

Officials informed that the centre will feature state-of-the-art infrastructure including modular operation theatres, ICU, HDU, NICU, Labour, Delivery and Recovery (LDR) suites, IVF laboratories and advanced fetal intervention facilities, in line with modern hospital standards followed at national and international levels.

Highlighting the project's structural resilience, it was given put that the building is being developed using advanced base isolation technology with 43 friction pendulum isolators, ensuring high seismic safety in Zone-V. The design and engineering components have been vetted by premier technical institutions to ensure quality and safety.

Reviewing the progress, the Chief Minister was informed that the foundation works and ground floor structural framework are fully in place. Installation of base isolators is at an advanced stage, while pre-engineered building (PEB) structural works are underway across multiple zones. Procurement of major medical equipment, as well as mechanical and electrical systems, has also been initiated.

The Chief Minister stressed the need for close coordination among all stakeholder departments, particularly the Health Department, to ensure uninterrupted fund flow, timely approvals and clearances, and smooth operationalisation of the facility upon completion.

Emphasising the importance of the project, he said that the new facility will mark a major milestone in upgrading healthcare infrastructure and providing specialised, accessible and high-quality care to women and newborns across Jammu and Kashmir.

Modi Targets.....

commitment, the Prime Minister said the Centre remains determined to implement women's reservation in legislatures by the 2029 Lok Sabha elections. He described the opposition's stance as a "big mistake" and urged ministers to carry the message to every village and section of society.

Sources said Modi also asked ministers to actively counter the opposition's position on social media, accusing rival parties of attempting to justify and cover up their stand after the vote.

Several ministers are learnt to have spoken during the meeting, expressing concern over the opposition's approach, as the government sharpened its political outreach in the aftermath of the bill's defeat. (Agencies)

Amit Shah.....

the increase would place an additional annual burden of Rs 6,791.24 crore on the exchequer.

The revised DA and DR will come into effect from January 1, 2026, and mark a 2 per cent rise over the existing 58 per cent rate of Basic Pay and Pension. The increase has been approved to offset the impact of rising prices.

The revised rates have been fixed in accordance with the accepted formula based on the recommendations of the 7th Central Pay Commission.

Reacting to the Cabinet decision, Union Home Minister Amit Shah as per news agency Kashmir Indepth News Service (KINS) described it as a major gift from the Modi government to central government employees.

In a post on social media, Amit Shah said that the Cabinet had approved a 2 per cent increase in Dearness Allowance for employees and Dearness Relief for pensioners, effective from January 1, 2026.

He said the decision reflects the Modi government's commitment towards the financial security of employees and their families. (KINS)

No fuel.....

being maintained at 100 per cent, with priority given to households and essential sectors such as hospitals and education.

Since March 23, over 17.25 lakh 5-kg free trade LPG cylinders have been sold, while PSU oil companies have reported a 70 per cent rise in auto LPG sales, particularly in states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Rajasthan and West Bengal. Additionally, 22 states and Union Territories are receiving extra commercial LPG allocations linked to PNG expansion reforms.

The government has also stepped up enforcement to curb hoarding and black marketing. Over 2,500 raids were conducted on April 17, leading to seizure of more than 750 cylinders. Oil marketing companies have penalised 263 LPG distributors and suspended 67.

Despite global volatility, all refineries are operating at high capacity with adequate crude stocks, and retail fuel outlets are functioning normally. The Centre has also reduced excise duty on petrol and diesel by 10 per litre to shield consumers from rising crude prices.

On the maritime front, authorities confirmed that port operations across India remain normal with no congestion and all Indian seafarers in the region are safe. Over 2,487 seafarers have been repatriated so far.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of External Affairs said Indian missions are working round-the-clock to assist nationals. The Indian Embassy in Iran has facilitated the evacuation of 2,373 Indians to Armenia and Azerbaijan for onward travel home.

The government reiterated its commitment to ensuring energy security, supply stability and the safety of Indian citizens amid the ongoing geopolitical developments.

₹73K Spent.....

conducting polls to four vacant seats from the Union Territory. An amount of Rs. 21,150 was spent on honorarium and refreshments for officers and officials deployed on election duty, while Rs. 52,398 was used for other logistical and administrative arrangements.

The elections, held on October 24, 2025, were conducted to fill vacancies pending since 2021, when the previous members completed their terms. The delay was due to the absence of an electoral college following the lack of elected MLAs in the Union Territory.

In the outcome, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference secured three seats, while the Bharatiya Janata Party won one seat despite lacking the required numerical strength in the Assembly.

The polls were marked by significant cross-voting, with at least eight MLAs—reportedly aligned with the ruling alliance—either voting against the bloc or invalidating their ballots, ultimately aiding the BJP's victory. Speculation persists in political

circles that the party may have also received support from legislators belonging to a rival camp, though no official confirmation has been made.

India's First.....

dedicated conservation space for centuries-old rock carvings (petroglyphs) that are increasingly under threat due to unregulated tourism, rapid infrastructure development, and a lack of awareness, officials said.

They said the park will house petroglyphs collected from vulnerable and isolated locations across Ladakh, ensuring their preservation for future generations while also making them accessible to visitors in a curated and educational setting.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Department of Archives, Archaeology and Museums and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for the preservation of heritage for future generations through joint intervention, they said.

Officials informed that nearly 400 sites across Ladakh contain petroglyphs, found either in clusters or in isolation.

While cluster sites are relatively easier to conserve, isolated petroglyphs—especially those along the banks of the Indus River and Zaskar River—face significant risk of damage due to construction activities and lack of awareness among people.

These endangered artefacts will be carefully relocated to the Petroglyph Conservation Park for protection and display, officials said, adding that some of the oldest petroglyphs have inscriptions in Chinese, Arabic, Sanskrit and other ancient languages.

The Lt Governor emphasised that the park would serve as a vital step towards preserving the region's ancient art and history for generations to come. He termed Ladakh as a "repository of ancient heritage" and said the region hosts one of the most extensive collections of prehistoric rock art in South and Central Asia.

"Beyond natural weathering and climate stress, human activities, such as road construction, blasting of rocks, and unregulated tourism, pose serious risks to these petroglyphs.

"Conservation of these heritage sites must be treated as an ethical responsibility and integrated into development planning," Saxena said, while addressing a workshop on the occasion of World Heritage Day, themed "Ancient Art, Modern Challenges: Safeguarding Petroglyphs and Shaping Tourism Circuits in Ladakh".

He noted that these rock carvings depicted early human life, including hunting scenes, animals like ibex and snow leopards, and later, symbols of Buddhist faith such as stupas and inscriptions.

This, he said, showcased the cultural transition over the centuries. The Lt Governor also emphasised the creation of curated heritage circuits, including petroglyph and Buddhist circuits, to manage tourist flow responsibly while promoting lesser-known sites.

He described the petroglyphs as "open-air museums" and "civilisations carved on stone," representing a continuous record of human history from the Palaeolithic Age to later historic periods.

Found in regions such as Domkhar, Dah Hanu, Alchi, Chilling, and Tangtse, these carvings depict ancient trade routes, migration patterns, belief systems, and ecological histories.

Calling for community participation, the Lt Governor urged local residents, monks, youth, and stakeholders to act as custodians of Ladakh's heritage. He reiterated that sustainable preservation requires collective effort, awareness, and respect for cultural and ecological sensitivities.

Don't Fear.....

accompanied by a clear and conscious understanding of its inherent limitations, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Saturday urged judicial officers not to be "afraid" of AI.

Asserting that technology must remain an aid, not a substitute, he said the integration of Artificial Intelligence into the judicial process must be guided by a principle of balance—leveraging its benefits to enhance efficiency while steadfastly preserving the human intellect, experience, and constitutional conscience that lie at the heart of justice.

The chief justice was speaking at the 22nd biennial state-level conference of judicial officers, themed 'Reimagining the Judiciary in the Era of Artificial Intelligence', organised by the Karnataka State Judicial Officers Association.

"I would also like to add that you should not be afraid of AI. What do you do when a case involving very complicated facts and complex questions of law is placed before you? You apply more thought, spend more time, exercise greater patience, and feel a sense of satisfaction when you decide such a case," Justice Kant said.

"The same will happen with AI tools when we begin using them carefully and consciously, ensuring that the judge within you remains independent and is not influenced by these technical tools," he added.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Supreme Court judges B V Nagarathana and

Aravind Kumar, and Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court, Vibhu Bakhru, among others, were present at the event.

Stating that the emergence of AI presents both significant opportunities and serious challenges for the judiciary, the CJ said that, on one hand, AI has the potential to enhance efficiency in meaningful ways—by assisting in legal research, streamlining case management, organising large volumes of data, and reducing administrative burdens that often consume valuable judicial time.

"With structured and targeted training, judicial officers can effectively harness these tools to improve productivity and ensure that greater time and attention are devoted to the core function of adjudication," he said.

However, he added, the adoption of such technology must be accompanied by a clear and conscious understanding of its inherent limitations.

"AI operates on patterns, algorithms, and existing datasets; it does not possess judgment in the human sense, nor can it engage with the ethical, social, and moral dimensions that frequently underpin judicial decision-making," Justice Kant said.

"The process of judging is not merely analytical—it is also reflective, contextual, and guided by constitutional values. An over-reliance on AI tools risks reducing this nuanced exercise to a mechanical output, thereby diluting the depth, independence, and integrity of judicial reasoning," he said.

Expressing concern about inaccuracies generated by such systems, he said there have been recent instances of fabricated precedents, incorrect citations, and entirely fictitious legal propositions being produced by AI platforms.

"These so-called 'hallucinations' are not minor technical lapses; they strike at the very foundation of the judicial process, which rests on accuracy, authenticity, and trust. If left unchecked, they have the potential to mislead, distort legal arguments, compromise the quality of adjudication, and misdirect outcomes," he said.

Justice Kant further warned of the growing risk of AI tools being misused to generate misleading pleadings, frivolous claims, or superficially convincing yet substantively flawed submissions.

"Such practices not only burden the judicial system but also divert attention from genuine disputes that require urgent resolution. In an already strained system, this adds a layer of complexity that must be addressed seriously," he said.

Highlighting the role of judicial officers in this evolving landscape, the CJ said, "Technology must be approached with discernment, not deference." Any material generated through AI must be subjected to scrutiny and independent verification, he said, adding, "The responsibility to ensure accuracy, authenticity, and fairness cannot be delegated to a machine. It remains an essential and non-negotiable component of judicial duty." He emphasised that while navigating this evolving landscape, it is necessary to reaffirm a foundational principle—that justice is, and must remain, a human endeavour. "It is

shaped by reasoning, guided by values, and enriched by experience, and no technological advancement can replicate the intuitive understanding and moral judgment at the core of judicial decision-making," he said.

The CJ said the future of the judiciary will be shaped by its ability to adapt without losing its core identity. This requires continuous learning, reflection, and a commitment to excellence, he added.

"We stand at a moment of transition, where the choices we make will define the trajectory of the judiciary for years to come. While our tools and methods may evolve, our fundamental responsibility remains unchanged—to deliver justice that is fair, accessible, and humane," he said.

"As custodians of this responsibility, we must ensure that technology serves to enhance, and not replace, the human elements that define justice," he added, noting that trust in the judiciary is sustained not by words but by the consistent discharge of duty in courtrooms across the country.

Highlighting that there are moments in the life of an institution when introspection becomes indispensable, the CJ said the time to pause and introspect has arrived for the Indian judiciary.

A time comes when it must pause—not out of hesitation, but out of responsibility," he added. (Agencies)

Bhaderwah.....

140-km Bhaderwah-Chamba interstate road linking Jammu and Kashmir with Himachal Pradesh was reopened for vehicular traffic on Saturday, officials said.

The road, a key link for interstate connectivity and the tourism sector, was closed after heavy snowfall in the Bhaderwah sector on December 31 last year.

In recent weeks, the authorities began snow-clearing operations, which were carried out by the Mechanical Division Doda and the Roads and Buildings (R&B) Department, Bhaderwah, officials said.

The traffic, however, will not be allowed between 6 pm and 6 am beyond the Thanala check post from the Bhaderwah side and the Khundi Maral check post from the Chamba (Himachal Pradesh) side, Bhaderwah Additional Deputy Commissioner Sunil Kumar Bhatyal said.

Bhatyal said the road is a major driver of economic activity, as a large number of tourists from Dalhousie and Khajjiar visit Bhaderwah via this route, which, once reopened, also becomes a hub of commercial activity in the region.

Locals, especially those associated with the tourism industry, welcomed the restoration of traffic on the interstate road, saying it would open new avenues for tourism in the region.

"Tourism is the lifeline of the local economy, and the Bhaderwah-Chamba road serves as a catalyst for boosting the tourism sector," said Rashid Choudhary, a tourism strategist from Bhaderwah.

Imran Wani, a local tourist guide, said many tourists visiting Chamba in Himachal Pradesh also travel to Bhaderwah, and with the reopening of the road, "destinations such as Padri, Khanni Top, Bhal Padri and Jai Valley are expected to witness a renewed influx of visitors."

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Sakeena Itoo Launches Kulgam Projects, Pushes Inclusive Growth

Also inaugurates 100-bedded Girls' Hostel, Ayush Dispensary

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, APR 18: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today laid foundation stones for several key developmental projects in Kulgam district and also dedicated vital infrastructure to the public.

MLA, Kulgam, M.Y Tarigami; Mission Director ICDS, Director AYUSH, ADC Kulgam, senior officers of district administration, other sectoral officers and large number of locals were also present on the occasion.

In line with the Government's sustained push for inclusive and equitable development across Jammu & Kashmir, the Minister laid foundation stone for 'Viksit Village' at Yarikah-A, D.H Pora.

Speaking on the occasion, Sakeena Itoo said that under this flagship initiative, rural infrastructure will be improved, besides basic amenities will be significantly enhanced to transform this village into a self-reliant and sustainable place. "Government is prioritizing rural transformation through targeted investments in infrastructure, education, healthcare, and social welfare", she stated.

She added that this initiative reflects the Government's approach towards grassroots-focused development strategy.

Afterwards, the Minister also laid the foundation stone for the construction and upgradation of the Chiripora-Trengabal road under the Public Works (R&B) department at an approximate



cost of Rs. 2 crores.

Addressing the locals after foundation laying ceremony, the Minister said that this project is expected to significantly improve accessibility, reduce travel time and open new avenues for economic growth and service delivery in these areas.

Highlighting various achievements of Omar Abdullah led Government, Sakeena Itoo maintained that the Government is committed to equitable development of Jammu and Kashmir, with particular focus on rural and peripheral areas.

She outlined that the Government has accelerated rollout of rural road connectivity projects,

expansion of educational infrastructure, strengthening healthcare facilities, and enhanced social security coverage to ensure that development benefits reach every section of society. She further underscored that special focus is being laid on bridging developmental gaps in remote and underserved areas.

Later, the Minister also inaugurated a 100-bedded Girls' Hostel (KGBV - Type IV) at Kulgam, aimed at promoting access to education for girls from far-flung and disadvantaged areas.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that the hostel represents a significant step towards empowering girl students by

reducing dropout rates and encouraging higher enrolment in secondary and higher secondary education. She reiterated that the Government is committed to further expanding such facilities across Jammu and Kashmir to ensure equitable access to education for all.

The Minister also directed the concerned authorities to ensure the provision of modern amenities, quality services, and safe environment for girl students, to ensure it becomes safe, secure, and quality residential accommodation.

Meanwhile, Sakeena Itoo also inaugurated Ayush Dispensary at Wovri Khull as well as building

for Higher Secondary School at Khull D.H Pora.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister reaffirmed the Government's long-term vision, stating that sustained efforts are underway to build robust infrastructure, promote gender equity in education, and create livelihood opportunities, thereby ensuring comprehensive and inclusive growth across Jammu & Kashmir.

She emphasized that these initiatives are part of the government's broader vision to ensure equitable growth, improved public services, and enhanced quality of life for people in rural and underserved areas. She reiterated that the administration remains steadfast in its commitment to fast-tracking development works while ensuring transparency and accountability at every level.

Later, the Minister also visited Ardpora Khull, and witnessed the final match of Shaheed Wali Mohammad Itoo Memorial Cricket Tournament.

Interacting with the players on the occasion, Sakeena Itoo underscored the importance of sports in fostering discipline, teamwork, and a healthy lifestyle among young people. She assured participants continued government support for the promotion of sports infrastructure and youth engagement activities across the district.

She also distributed trophies among the Champion and runner up teams, as well as medallions among other top performers of the tournament.

Major Anti-Drug Crackdown in Kulgam

3 Peddlers Arrested, Poppy Cultivation Destroyed, Medical Store Sealed

FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, APR 18: Kulgam Police on Saturday carried out a major crackdown under the ongoing "War Against Drugs" campaign, conducting multiple operations across the district that led to the arrest of three drug peddlers in Qazigund, destruction of illegal poppy cultivation in Qaimoh, and sealing of a medical store in Devsar for regulatory violations.

Police said the action was part of sustained efforts under the Nasha Mukht J&K and Nasha Mukht Bharat initiatives to curb drug trafficking, illicit cultivation of narcotic plants, and misuse of controlled medicines.

Poppy Cultivation Destroyed in Qaimoh

Acting on specific inputs, Police Station Qaimoh registered FIR No. 34/2026 under relevant provisions of the NDPS Act following the detection of illegal poppy cultivation at Hassanpora Bagh. A police team conducted a raid at Hanji Mohalla, where poppy plants



were found growing on land under the possession of an individual. The crop was seized, sampled, and destroyed on the spot in the presence of an Executive Magistrate. The entire process was documented through videography and photography, with all legal formalities completed at the site.

Charas Seized in Qazigund

During naka checking at Drein Crossing, a suspect attempted to flee upon noticing police but was apprehended. A search led to the recovery of 322 grams of charas powder concealed in a polythene packet. An FIR under relevant sections of the NDPS Act has been registered at Police Station Qazigund, and investigation is underway.

In another operation near Grid Station Nipora on NHW-44, a police patrol intercepted a suspicious person carrying a polythene bag. Upon search, 1.5 kilograms of semi-grinded charas-like substance was recovered. A case has been registered and further investigation is in progress.

Heroin-Like Substance Recovered

During naka duty near Drein Railway Crossing, police apprehended another individual attempting to escape. A personal search resulted in the recovery of 6.4 grams of heroin-like substance. A case has been registered under the NDPS Act, and investigators are also examining possible links to organised criminal activity.

Medical Store Sealed in Devsar

In a joint operation with the Drug Inspector, "Good Luck Medical Store" in Devsar was sealed for violations related to improper maintenance of records of prescription (NRX) medicines. Legal proceedings under relevant provisions have been initiated.

Kulgam Police urged the general public to cooperate in the fight against drug abuse and share any information regarding drug peddling or narcotics-related activities, assuring that the identity of informers will be kept strictly confidential.

Officials reiterated that the anti-drug drive will continue with full intensity to safeguard the youth and eliminate the menace of drugs from society.

JKPICCA Delegation Meets Union Agriculture Minister Over Exporters' Concerns

HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, APR 18: A delegation of Jammu & Kashmir Fruits & Vegetable Processing & Integrated Cold Chain Association, led by Bashir Ahmad Naik, met Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan to raise pressing concerns of agri and horticulture exporters, especially those from Jammu & Kashmir operating under the EPCG Scheme. The delegation highlighted a sharp surge in global freight charges—reportedly up to 600 percent—along with unregulated ancillary costs and persistent logistical disruptions. They also flagged increasing procedural complexities affecting exporters' compliance and competitiveness. The Minister acknowledged the seriousness of the issues, particularly for perishable goods and cold chain logistics, and assured that the concerns would be examined on priority. He reiterated the government's commitment to protecting exporters' interests and strengthening the agri-export ecosystem. JKPICCA welcomed the response, expressing hope for timely policy measures to ease financial and operational pressures.

"Navid Pather" Showcases Rich Folk Theatre Tradition, Earns Widespread Appreciation at Chadoora

GULFAM BARJI

CHADOORA, APR 18: The Karam Buland Folk Theatre, Hanjigund Wathora Chadoora, successfully presented its production "Navid Pather" on 18th April 2026 under the Scheme of Repertory Grant (Guru Shishya Parampara), Ministry of Culture, Government of India, at Govt Middle School, Mukaam Chadoora.

The event was graced by Bashir Ahmad Ganaie Headmaster, Govt Middle School Mukaam Chadoora, as the Chief Guest and Gulzar Ahmad Bhat, Chairman, All J&K Artists Association, as the Guest of Honour.

The production effectively portrayed the socio-cultural realities of rural and urban life through authentic folk theatre expression, highlighting the struggles, aspirations, and cultural richness of society. The performance was widely appreciated for its artistic excellence, meaningful narrative, and impactful presentation. Speaking on the occasion, the dig-



nitaries praised the artists for their commitment to preserving and promoting folk theatre traditions and emphasized the importance of such cultural initiatives.

Fayaz Ahmad Bhat, Secretary, Karam Buland Folk Theatre, extended heartfelt gratitude to the Ministry

of Culture, Government of India, for its support through the Guru Shishya Parampara Repertory Grant Scheme. He also thanked the Chief Guest, Guest of Honour, school authorities, and all participants for their cooperation and encouragement in making the event a success.

SWD Spearheads Anti-Drug Crusade: Baderwah Youth Take Pledge for a 'Nasha Mukht' Society

AMIR IQBAL KHAN

BHADARWAH, APR 18: In a concerted push to eradicate the menace of narcotics, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) Baderwah organized a massive awareness and pledge-taking drive across multiple panchayats and educational institutions, marking the sixth day of the ongoing '100 Days Nasha Mukht' campaign. Operating under the guidance of the District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) Doda and the close supervision of Tehsil Social Welfare Officer (TSWO) Baderwah, Shahnaz Ahmad, the initiative aimed to mobilize the community against the growing threat of substance abuse.

The widespread campaign was suc-

cessfully executed by TSWO officials across six panchayats in the Baderwah Block namely Chinote, Chakka, Kulchari, Gatha, Sarna and Udrana. In addition to the rural outreach, dedicated programmes were also held at the Bhartiya Vidya Mandir School and the local TSWO Office to ensure maximum youth engagement.

During the interactive sessions, special emphasis was laid on sensitizing students and young adults about the severe physiological, psychological and social consequences of drug addiction. Officials addressed the gatherings, breaking down the catastrophic impact narcotics have on individuals and their families. Following the awareness sessions, participants were encouraged

to step forward and take collective pledges. Hundreds of locals and students solemnly swore to abstain from drugs and actively contribute to building a healthy, disciplined and resilient community. The initiative witnessed an overwhelming and active participation from various cross-sections of society. Local authorities noted that the enthusiasm reaffirmed the public's commitment to achieving the ultimate goal of a 'Drug-Free Baderwah', running in tandem with the broader Union Territory-wide mission.

Echoing the core sentiment of the campaign, officials and participants united under a shared message: "Together, let us build a strong and drug-free society for a better future."

Govt Strengthens Education: MLA Riyaz Khan Distributes Orders of engagement in Mattan

HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, APR 18: Reaffirming its commitment to strengthening the education sector in Jammu & Kashmir, the present government under the leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is taking governance to the grassroots level, said MLA Shangu-Anantnag East Riyaz Khan.

He made these remarks today while distributing appointment orders among Aayas at Educational Zone Mattan.

Speaking on the occasion, the MLA emphasized that the appointments have been made strictly on merit, following proper verification to ensure that only the most deserving



candidates benefit. He added that the initiative reflects the government's transparent and accountable approach.

Riyaz Khan further stated that the government is not only focused on developing educational infrastruc-

ture across the region but is also actively generating employment opportunities for the youth. He highlighted that such steps will go a long way in improving the overall quality of education while simultaneously addressing unemployment.

Commissioner SMC, Principal Census Officer (Urban) Srinagar assess preparedness for forthcoming Census 2027

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 18: Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Commissioner, Faz Lul Haseeb, and Principal Census Officer (Urban) Srinagar, today chaired a high-level review meeting to assess preparedness for the forthcoming Census 2027 at Municipal Central Office, Karan Nagar, Srinagar.

All district officers participated in the meeting, wherein a comprehensive review of preparedness was undertaken. The discussions primarily focused on strengthening inter-departmental coordination and ensuring timely deployment of employees for Census operations.

During the meeting, the Commissioner highlighted the



significance of the Census as a vital national exercise that provides critical demographic data essential for evidence-based policymaking, effective governance, and developmental planning. He urged all concerned departments to extend full cooperation and nominate competent, dedicated, and responsible officials to ensure the smooth and efficient conduct of the enumeration process.

The Census Charge Officers were specifically directed to ensure timely completion of all preparatory activities within their respective jurisdictions, including verification of staff deployment, coordination with line departments, and readiness for subsequent phases of Census operations.

DC Anantnag reviews Road Safety Measures, directs timely compensation to victims

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, APRIL 18: Deputy Commissioner (Chairman, District Road Safety Committee) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat, today chaired a review meeting of the committee to assess the measures taken by various agencies to reduce road accidents besides status of compensation for victims in the district.

The meeting was attended by ADC, SE R&B (Member Secretary), CMO, ARTO, DySP Traffic, Executive Engineers of R&B divisions, EOs of MCs, representatives of NHAI, BEACON and other agencies involved in road safety planning and implementation.

At the outset, the SE R&B presented a detailed overview of the decisions taken by the committee in the previous meeting and the progress achieved so far.

The chair was informed that in addition to responsive relief, several preventive measures including identification and remedial action at accident prone "black spots", regular road maintenance and strengthening of vulnerable stretches, improvement and standardisation of road signage and reflectors and technical inspection of vehicles to ensure road worthiness, have been taken to minimise the occurrence of accidents across the district.

It was further informed that during the year 2025, 536 road accidents were recorded resulting in 42 casualties.

Presently, the district has 24 PM RAHAT designated hospitals to provide timely medical care and support to accident victims.

On the occasion, the Committee held detailed deliberations on key issues like analysis of IRAD data, identification of remaining black spots and measures for their rectification besides smooth implementation of PM Sadak Suraksha (Setu/Sehat) financial assistance scheme in the district.

The DC stressed the need to expedite the process of victim identification and the timely disbursement of claims under the relief schemes, so the affected families do not face undue delays in receiving compensation. He directed all concerned departments to streamline documentation and verification procedures to ensure efficiency and transparency.

Dr. Bilal directed to conduct a detailed



analytical review of accident data which will be utilised to undertake specific engineering and enforcement actions. He issued further directions to make an in-depth analysis of all identified black spots and to propose permanent engineering solutions to prevent fatal accidents in the future.

EOs of MCs were asked to remove the encroachments along roads and footpaths for ease and safety of commuters. Cleanliness and usability of footpaths besides regulating roadside parking were also emphasized.

Additionally, in view of the ongoing 100 day campaign under Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyaan, the MVD and Traffic authorities were instructed to intensify enforcement action against the drug peddlers and other violators.

At conclusion, the committee underscored that a coordinated and multi departmental approach along with constant vigil and improvement in road safety infrastructure and services are essential to bring down the number and severity of road accidents in the district.

DC directed the ARTO to ensure that compensation to all deceased victims is processed and disbursed in a time-bound manner.

He also instructed all Executive Officers of Municipalities to ensure the immediate clearance and maintenance of footpaths across all towns.

The meeting was attended by the DSP Traffic, ARTO, and all Executive Officers of Municipalities.

DC Budgam leads Mega NMBA

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, APRIL 18: As part of the ongoing 100-day intensive Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA), a mega awareness programme was today organised at Higher Secondary School Hardpanzoo in Sub-Division Khanshab.

The event was presided over by the Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan.

The programme witnessed the presence of SDM Khanshab, Jahangir Giri, ACP Budgam, District Information Officer Budgam, District Social Welfare Officer Budgam, Tehsildar Khag, BDO concerned, and other officers.

A large gathering of students from various schools across the sub-division actively participated in the event, reflecting strong public engagement in the anti-drug campaign.

On the occasion, the DC inspected paintings prepared by school children on the theme of Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan and appreciated their creative expression and awareness on the issue.

A plantation drive was also carried out within the school premises, symbolizing a commitment towards a healthy and sustainable future.

Students also presented cultural programmes delivering powerful messages against drug abuse and advocating for a drug-free Budgam.

Addressing the gathering, the DC emphasized that eradication of the drug menace cannot be achieved by any single individual and requires collective and collaborative efforts of all stakeholders.

He urged the public, especially the youth, to stand united against substance abuse and actively contribute towards building a drug-free society. He further stated that the District Administration and Police are working in close coordination to eliminate the menace from its roots.

Highlighting the comprehensive approach adopted under the 100-day action plan, he informed that strong rehabilitation mechanisms have also been put in place. The Drug De-Addiction Centre at the District Headquarters is functioning 24x7, while the Addiction Treatment Facility (ATF) at District Hospital Budgam is actively providing counselling and treatment services to those in need.

The DC also stressed the importance of post-rehabilitation support, stating that efforts are being made to reintegrate affected individuals into society by making them productive through various employment-generating schemes such as Mission YUVA, PMEGP, and HADP.

The DC also highlighted that similar awareness programmes and activities under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan are being conducted across all educational institutions, colleges, ITIs, line departments, blocks, panchayats, and municipalities throughout Budgam district to ensure widespread outreach and community participation.

The DC said that these programme gave a message of renewed commitment from all stakeholders to intensify efforts and work collectively towards a healthier, drug-free Budgam.

GDC Qazigund organises Kabaddi under 100-day NMBA Campaign

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 18: As part of 100-day Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA), the College Well-Being & Anti-Substance Abuse Cell of Government Degree College (GDC) Qazigund, organized a friendly Kabaddi match to raise awareness among the students to curb the menace of drug abuse.

The activity witnessed an enthusiastic and active participation of the sports persons of the college. Anti-drug slogans were also displayed by the students to support the event.

A pledge was also administered to all the staff and students in this connection.

College Principal, Prof. Sudhir Singh, in his address expressed concerns over the involvement of youth in drugs' network, as is being unleashed during the NMBA campaign. "Sports can play a surprisingly strong role in preventing substance use—especially among young people—because they shape daily habits, identity, and social



circles in such ways that make risky behaviours less appealing or harder to sustain. Positive peer influence can reduce the likelihood of experimenting with harmful substances," he added.

Those who were prominently present on the occasion include Prof. Aufaq Zargar, Prof. Talib Ahmad, Prof. Irshad Ahmed and Prof. Rameez Ahmed.

ADC Ganderbal reviews implementation of SEHAT scheme

Emphasizes effective grievance redressal

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, APRIL 18: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Ganderbal, Syed Faheem Bihazi today chaired a meeting of the District Grievance Redressal Committee (DGR) to review the implementation and progress of the AB-PMJAY SEHAT scheme in the district. During the meeting, the ADC took a comprehensive review of beneficiary enrollment under the scheme and stressed the need for sustained efforts to ensure maximum coverage. He directed the field functionaries to intensify outreach activities so that all eligible beneficiaries are enrolled in a timely manner.

The meeting also reviewed the progress achieved in Golden Card generation, particularly for senior citizens aged 70 years and above under the Vay Vandana initiative. Emphasis was laid on expediting the process to ensure that beneficiaries receive their cards promptly and can avail seamless healthcare services.



The performance of empanelled hospitals was assessed with a focus on patient admissions, claims processing, and service delivery. The ADC impressed upon the hospitals to adhere strictly to the prescribed guidelines and continue providing quality, hassle-free treatment to beneficiaries under the scheme.

The Committee also reviewed the grievances received and noted that effective mechanisms are in place for timely disposal of cases. The ADC

highlighted the importance of further strengthening the grievance redressal system to ensure quick and efficient resolution of issues faced by beneficiaries.

The implementation of the PM RAHAT Scheme for road accident victims was also discussed in detail. The ADC reiterated the importance of ensuring immediate and cashless treatment to accident victims and maintaining proper documentation and timely reporting.

Intensified Awareness Drive continues across Baramulla

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, APRIL 18: As part of the ongoing 100 Days Intensified Campaign under Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, a series of impactful awareness and outreach activities were carried out across District Baramulla to reinforce the message of a drug-free society.

Continuing the district-wide efforts, multiple programmes were organized to engage different sections of the community and spread awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse.

In a significant initiative, the Psychiatry Department of Government Medical College (GMC) Baramulla conducted a day-long interactive session with individuals who have



successfully recovered from substance abuse.

The session provided a platform for open dialogue, where participants shared their personal journeys, challenges, and the importance of timely intervention, counselling, and community support in overcoming addiction.

Simultaneously, a number of awareness programmes and rallies were conducted across various educational institutions in collaboration with the Police Department where students were sensitized about the dangers of drug abuse, legal implications, and the importance of making informed life choices.

Adding further momentum to the campaign, Municipal Council Baramulla and Municipal Council Sopore, in collaboration with the Information Department Baramulla, conducted extensive Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) activities through mobile IEC vans.

These vans traversed key areas of the towns throughout the day, disseminating awareness messages through audio-visual content, and public announcements, ensuring maximum outreach among the general public.

Grand district level awareness programme held at GDC Shopian; Multi sectoral approach emphasized to combat drug abuse

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, APRIL 18: As part of the ongoing 100 Days Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir campaign, a grand district level awareness programme on drug abuse was conducted today at Government Degree College Shopian. Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone, attended the event as Chief Guest. The ADC in his address, emphasized the critical role of parents, teachers, and society in protecting youth from drug addiction.

He called for a coordinated and proactive approach at the grassroots level, focusing on awareness, guidance, and early intervention.

The programme was attended by Principal GDC Shopian, Prof Tariq Ahmad Mir, civil society members, representatives of traders associations, vendors, drivers,



ASHA workers, students, and officials from various departments.

CEO, Municipal Council Shopian, Suhail Ahmad, delivered the welcome address and highlighted the broader social importance of the campaign. He stated that the fight against drug abuse must evolve beyond a government

initiative into a people's movement, requiring collective ownership and sustained public participation.

He emphasized that meaningful success can only be achieved when all sections of society work together in a coordinated manner.

Dr. Ishrat Jabeen, Clinical Physiologist, spoke on the concept

of substance abuse, outlining its causes and adverse health implications. She emphasized the need for awareness, early identification, and preventive interventions to reduce the growing risk of addiction, particularly among youth. Dr. Muzaffar Ahmad, Psychologist, presented a detailed analysis of the psychological aspects of drug abuse.

He explained why individuals turn to drugs, discussed commonly abused substances and their classifications, and elaborated on the short term and long term effects on the human body and mind.

Through real life case examples and emotionally engaging narratives, he provided a stark insight into the consequences of addiction, reinforcing the urgency of timely intervention.

A short awareness film depicting the realities of drug abuse was screened during the programme,

further sensitizing participants and strengthening the impact of the session. Dy.SP Hqr Shopian, Imtiyaz Ahmad Mir, addressed the gathering from a law enforcement perspective. He highlighted ongoing efforts by police to curb drug trafficking and take strict action against peddlers.

He stressed the importance of public cooperation in reporting drug related activities and reiterated that community vigilance is essential to dismantle the supply chain. It was also highlighted that GDC Shopian has taken several concrete measures including constitution of monitoring cell, installation of CCTV cameras within the college premises, regular organization of awareness programmes, pledge ceremonies, and student engagement initiatives to ensure continuous vigilance against drug abuse.

Satish Sharma visits Kathua; outlines roadmap for development, youth empowerment

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA, APRIL 18: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, Satish Sharma, today visited Kathua and convened an exclusive interactive session with the public at Brahman Sabha, Kathua.

While addressing on the occasion, the Minister spoke on a wide range of public issues and shared the government's vision and roadmap for holistic development of Jammu & Kashmir, with special focus on youth empowerment, infrastructure development and improved public services.

The Minister emphasized that sustained efforts are being made to strengthen the governance and accelerate development across all sectors in the region.



Highlighting key initiatives, he announced that new bus services will be restarted connecting various religious places to facilitate the pilgrims and promote tourism.

He further informed that 10 new buses will be added in every district to augment the public transport and improve connectivity.

Underscoring the government's focus on employment generation, the Minister stated that avenues are being created to provide employment opportunities to around 50,000 youth.

He also highlighted that the present administration is working in a mission mode to make Jammu and Kashmir a hub of sports excellence he added that two modern stadiums will be developed with facilities meeting the standards required for hosting IPL matches.

The Minister stressed that the government has adopted a zero-tolerance policy against drug abuse and is waging a sustained war the dreaded menace. He called upon the youth and society at large to actively support the ongoing anti-drug campaign.

Speaking on education reforms, the Minister informed that the process related to CUET for college students of Jammu and Kashmir has been eased to ensure greater convenience and accessibility for the aspiring students.

Reaffirming his commitment to public welfare, the Minister said that he welcomes the public feedback and will continue to work on addressing the people's concerns in a responsive and time-bound manner.

MLA Hiranagar Vijay Kumar was also present on the occasion.

Adopt outcome driven approach: Saurabh Bhagat tells officials during Anantnag 100 day campaign review

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, APRIL 18: To evaluate the progress and impact of the ongoing 100 day intensive campaign under Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyaan, Commissioner Secretary Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Saurabh Bhagat, who is also the District Mentor for Anantnag, today virtually held a comprehensive meeting with the concerned officers of the district.

The meeting mainly focused on outcome-driven initiatives and was attended by Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat, SP, Sunny Gupta, SDMs, ACD, CMO, College Principals, DSWO and other officials.

Expressing satisfaction on progress of the district, the Commissioner Secretary emphasized that the campaign must focus on the tangible outcomes through a multi pronged and holistic approach. He called for proper identification, treatment and rehabilitation of the victims on scientific lines while strictly maintaining their privacy. He directed the CMO to analyze drug use pattern, specifically class and intake route of drugs, to ensure targeted interventions are made by the authorities. He further stressed the need for a robust follow-up system to prevent relapse in recovered victims.

The Commissioner Secretary issued directions that teachers and other officials be trained as professional counselors to mentor the vulnerable students and specifically reach out to school dropouts. He further called for tough action on cannabis cultivation belts and intensified surveillance in tourist areas and hotels to break the supply chain. To create a strong deterrent, law enforcement agencies must impart wide publicity to the legal actions such as seizures, arrests and property attachments through print and social media, he remarked.

During the session, the Commissioner Secretary noted that the success stories of recovered victims and testimonials of their parents, on voluntary basis, be shared through social media and other platforms, to inspire hope and change within the community.

Earlier, the Deputy Commissioner provided a comprehensive briefing on the district's multi-pronged approach, which included district, department and Panchayat-level action plans. He highlighted the success of awareness rallies, sports activities and the active involvement of influencers and religious leaders who are using their platforms to denounce drug abuse.

The district has also prioritized the sensitization of tuition centers and the monitoring of courier services to prevent the illicit transport of substances while maintaining a close vigil on hotspots via CCTV surveillance and regular raids. Besides, identification, treatment and rehabilitation of victims through DDAC and ATF also featured in DCs briefing.

SP updated on enforcement efforts including seizures, convictions and the attachment of properties belonging to drug suppliers and peddlers.

Concluding the meeting, the Commissioner Secretary asked the DC to explore the establishment of a larger and augmented Drug De-addiction Centre (DDAC) to cater to the treatment and rehabilitation of possibly higher number of identified victims in future.

Multi-Specialty Medical Camp organized at MH Bhalra Baderwah

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BHADERWAH, APRIL 18: A Multi-Specialty Medical Camp was organized by the Health Department in collaboration with the Indian Army at Military Hospital (MH) Bhalra, Baderwah. The camp was conducted under the supervision of BMO Baderwah Dr. Versha Sharma and overall guidance of Chief Medical Officer Doda Dr. Tanveer Ahmed Rather.



The camp aimed to provide a wide range of healthcare services to the locals at their doorstep. Various services including general health check-ups, eye screening, ultrasound services, orthopedic consultation, AYUSH services, NCD screening, TB screening, Hb screening and other essential health services were provided during the camp.

During the camp, more than 200 patients were examined and provided with free medical consultation and treatment by a team of dedicated doctors from SDH Baderwah.

The medical team included Dr. Sandeep Kotwal (Physician), Dr. Bishan (Orthopedic Specialist), Dr. Priya, Dr. Deep Mala, Dr. Mamta and Dr. Saima Khateeb (MO AYUSH). The team was assisted by paramedical staff from SDH Baderwah and MMU staff from the CMO Office Doda, ensuring smooth conduct of the camp.

Health awareness sessions were also conducted during the camp, wherein participants were sensitized about prevention of lifestyle diseases, importance of regular health check-ups, TB awareness and maintaining healthy lifestyles.

Locals appreciated the initiative and expressed gratitude to the Health Department and Indian Army for organizing such a beneficial medical camp in the area. The Health Department reiterated its commitment to continue organizing such outreach activities to strengthen healthcare services in remote and underserved areas of district Doda.

DC, SSP Ramban interact with prominent citizens, religious leaders; call for unity, support to Nasha Mukta Abhiyan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN, APRIL 18: Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Mohammad Alyas Khan, along with Senior Superintendent of Police Arun Gupta today held an interaction with prominent citizens and religious leaders of the district to discuss issues related to communal harmony, peace and social responsibility.

The meeting was attended by ADC Varunjeet Singh Charak, Additional SP Mujeeb-Ur-Rehman, Dy. SP Hqr Waqar Bhat and other senior officers. During the interaction, the Deputy Commissioner and SSP appreciated the people of Ramban for their age-old tradition of communal harmony, unity and brotherhood, which has been a hallmark of the district.

Highlighting the importance of sustained peace, both officers urged the participants to continue fostering mutual respect and understanding among different communities.

They emphasized that collective efforts of citizens, especially religious leaders and influencers, play a crucial role in maintaining law and order and strengthening social cohesion.



Seeking active support of the participants in the ongoing "100 Day Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan", the Deputy Commissioner emphasised the significant role of community stakeholders in making the campaign successful.

He called upon the participants to actively spread awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and encourage youth to adopt a healthy and responsible lifestyle.

Stressing the need for a united

approach, the Deputy Commissioner urged religious leaders to use their platforms to sensitize the masses against drug abuse and promote positive values among the youth. He reiterated that the administration is committed to eradicating the menace of drugs and ensuring a safe and progressive society.

The participants assured full cooperation to the administration in supporting all public welfare initiatives in the district.

ADC Baderwah reviews rainy season preparedness; departments directed to submit detailed reports

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BHADERWAH, APRIL 18: As directed by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda, Krishan Lal a meeting to review the preparedness for the ensuing rainy season was held today at office chamber of the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Baderwah Sunil Kumar Bhutyal. During the meeting, all concerned officers were directed to attend in person and present comprehensive details regarding damages that occurred during the last rainy season, action taken reports, current year plan proposals and urgent issues requiring priority redressal.

The AEE, Jal Shakti Department was instructed to provide detailed reports on the Monda Water Supply Scheme, Amrut Ashapati Water Supply Scheme and Mohalla Qilla

reservoir. The Power Development Department (PDD) was directed to furnish complete details of wooden electricity poles in both urban and rural areas that need replacement with iron poles, and to ensure the removal of HT lines passing over residential houses and schools. The PMGSY department was asked to submit detailed information regarding Musda Nallah and other nallahs and kuls. The Executive Engineer R&B (PWD) was directed to ensure that all damaged roads, drains and nallahs are cleared and restored to proper condition and that crash barriers are installed wherever necessary.

The BMO Baderwah and Bhalla were instructed to ensure adequate availability of medicines, ambulance services in far-flung areas and uninterrupted essential health services at SDH Baderwah. The



Irrigation Department and BDOs of Baderwah and Bhalla were asked to provide detailed reports on damaged nallahs and landslides.

Officers were also directed to submit details of works executed under the NREGA scheme along with updates from their respective jurisdictions. The meeting was attended by ADC Baderwah, Tehsildars of Baderwah and Bhalla, Executive Engineer R&B (PWD), BMO Baderwah, BDO Bhalla, AE R&B, HDO, JE PMGSY, LDO, TSOs, Range Officers, AEE Jal Shakti, AE PDD and other concerned officers. Officers from Bhalla zone participated in the meeting through virtual mode. The ADC emphasized the importance of proactive planning and timely execution of works to minimize damage and ensure public safety during the upcoming rainy season.

ADC Baderwah conducts surprise inspection of government offices, warns against irregularity

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BHADERWAH, APRIL 18: The Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Baderwah Sunil Kumar Bhutyal, conducted a surprise inspection of several government offices to assess the regularity and punctuality of employees. The visit aimed to ensure proper attendance and the availability of officials during working hours.

During the inspection, the ADC thoroughly checked attendance records and verified the presence of staff members. He emphasized strict adherence to office timings and issued clear directions that no employee should leave the office before the prescribed time frame.

The ADC also issued a stern warning to all employees, stating that any negligence in duty or violation of office discipline would



be dealt with strictly. He urged officials to maintain professionalism and accountability in public service.

The inspection was carried out in multiple offices, including the CDPO Office, Fisheries Office, Agriculture Office, Horticulture Office and the Tehsildar Office.

Director Agriculture conducts intensive Poonch Tour, reviews schemes and farmer welfare initiatives

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

POONCH, APRIL 18: Director Agriculture Jammu, Anil Gupta, conducted a comprehensive two-day tour of District Poonch to assess the on-ground implementation of various agricultural initiatives and to interact directly with farmers and stakeholders. He was accompanied by Joint Director Agriculture (Extension) Sanjay Anand and Chief Agriculture Officer (CAO) Poonch, Yograj Singh Salathia along with other senior officers and field functionaries of the Agriculture Department.

During the visit, the Director inspected the Kisan Khidmat Ghar

(KKG) at Panchayat Bhata Dhurian, where he interacted with Krishi Udhmi Afzaal Naiem Khan. He reviewed the ongoing activities at the centre and took stock of the operational challenges being faced. SDAO Mendhar, Sanjeev Gupta along with AEO, JAEs and AEs of the concerned zone, were also present during the inspection and briefed the Director on the functioning of the KKG.

Subsequently, Director Agriculture held detailed interactions with local farmers to evaluate the outreach and effectiveness of various agriculture schemes. He enquired whether the intended benefits were reaching the farming community

and attentively listened to their concerns, particularly those related to field-level constraints and productivity.

Continuing his tour, Anil Gupta visited Zone Chandak in District Poonch, where he inspected the fields of a progressive farmer, Ishtaq Ahmad. The farmer has successfully adopted the bower system for the cultivation of bitter melon and bottle gourd, demonstrating an innovative and efficient approach to vegetable production.

The Director also inspected M/s Sumeet Seed and Fertilizer Store at Chandak, Poonch, where he reviewed the availability and distribution of fertilizers. He interacted with local

farmers present at the outlet to obtain firsthand feedback regarding the supply and accessibility of essential inputs. Stressing the importance of uninterrupted availability, the Director directed the CAO to ensure that there is no disruption in fertilizer supply to farmers. He further warned that strict action must be taken against any dealer found indulging in malpractices.

Later, Director Agriculture visited the Mini Soil Testing Laboratory at Chandak established under HADP (Project No. 19). He conducted a detailed inspection of the facility and reviewed its functioning and service delivery.

HT EDITORIAL

Redress grievances of private transporters

The introduction of Srinagar smart city bus service has landed into a major controversy as private transporters have objected to the operation of such bus service to the other districts. As on date the smart city bus service is operational in Budgam, Pulwama, Ganderbal and Bandipora districts other than the Srinagar district. This defeats the basic purpose of the smart city bus service for the Srinagar district.

The private transporters while objecting to the running of smart city bus service for districts other than Srinagar have given a call for strike on Monday. These private transporters have maintained that since the smart bus service has been extended beyond Srinagar their business has been badly hit. While analyzing the things it becomes clear that the private transporters are suffering huge losses over the past few years. There are multiple reasons responsible for the same and time demands that the government looks into the same with all the seriousness.

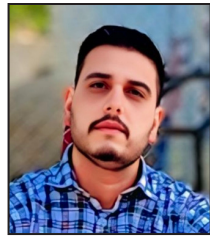
The long distance buses that used to run between Srinagar and other districts have almost vanished from the scene. As on date very few buses of private transporters run between the summer capital of Jammu & Kashmir and other districts of the valley. As on date green buses of the Jammu & Kashmir Road Transport Corporation and smart city buses of Srinagar Smart City Limited run between Srinagar and other districts of the valley. In most of the cases the passengers utilize the contract carriage service.

It is imperative that the people at helm introduce long distance buses so that the people are entitled to the best possible bus service. The authorities should recall the smart city buses running in other districts and these should ply on the routes of Srinagar where there is shortage of public transport. This would mean that the people of Srinagar don't face any problem in moving around and reaching their respective destinations in a comfortable manner.

As far as other districts are concerned, operation of green buses, long distance buses of private transporters and contract carriage vehicles would plug the loopholes as far as the public transport system is concerned. The private transporters should be allowed to operate the bus service and it is the responsibility of the government to secure the interests of these transporters. It is important to look into the grievances of the transporters so that they don't feel pushed to the wall.

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From Reels To Reality



JAWAID IQBAL

We are living in a time where a small screen has become bigger than the world itself. A few inches of glass now decide how we feel, what we think, and even how we spend our day. From morning to night, many young people are lost in endless scrolling—watching reels, short videos, and clips that last only a few seconds. These reels are entertaining, colorful, and addictive. But somewhere in this fast-moving digital world, we are slowly forgetting the beauty of real life.

Real life does not come with filters, background music, or perfect lighting. It is simple, sometimes slow, and often imperfect. Yet, it is real, meaningful, and deeply satisfying. The problem is not that reels exist—the problem is when reels start replacing reality. Reels are designed to catch attention quickly. They show only the best moments—perfect smiles, luxury lifestyles, funny jokes, and dramatic scenes. But they hide the truth behind those moments. A person who looks happy in a 15-second video may be struggling in real life. A perfect lifestyle shown on screen may be far from reality. When young people watch such content again and again, they start comparing their real lives with these edited highlights. This comparison creates dissatisfaction, low confidence, and sometimes even anxiety.

On the other hand, real life teaches patience and depth. When you talk to your parents, grandparents, or friends, you experience emotions that no reel can give. Sitting with family, listening to their stories, sharing your thoughts—these moments build relationships. They create memories that stay for a lifetime. A reel can make you laugh for a few seconds, but a real conversation can stay in your heart forever. Another important difference is learning. Reels give quick information, but often without depth. You may watch a short video about success, motivation, or knowledge, but it rarely explains the full story. Real life learning, however, takes time. It comes from books, teachers, experiences, and mistakes. When you study, practice, and fail, you truly grow. Growth in real life is slow but strong, while knowledge from reels is fast but shallow. Spending too much time on reels also affects our focus. Our brain becomes used to quick entertainment. We lose the ability to concentrate on long tasks like studying, reading, or even having a proper conversation. This weakens our thinking power.



In contrast, real life activities—like reading a book, playing a sport, or working on a skill—improve concentration and discipline. Physical health is also affected. Sitting for hours with a phone reduces movement. Eyes get tired, sleep gets disturbed, and the body becomes inactive. But real life encourages movement. Playing outside, walking, helping at home, or engaging in sports keeps the body active and healthy. Fresh air, sunlight, and physical activity are things no screen can replace. One of the biggest losses in the reel culture is the loss of genuine happiness. Reels provide instant pleasure, but it is temporary. After some time, the same videos feel boring, and we keep searching for more. This cycle never ends. Real happiness, however, comes from meaningful experiences—achieving a goal, helping someone, spending time with loved ones, or simply enjoying nature. These moments may not be flashy, but they bring peace and satisfaction. Real life also teaches responsibility. When you help your parents, take care of your younger siblings, or manage your time, you learn important life skills. Reels cannot teach responsibility—they only show moments, not the effort behind them. Life is not just about watching; it is about doing. It is also important to understand that time is limited. Every hour spent scrolling is an hour lost that could have been used to learn something new, build a skill, or create a memory. Young age is the best time to grow, explore, and discover yourself. If this time is wasted on endless scrolling, it may lead to regret later.

This does not mean that reels should be completely avoided. They can be a source of entertainment and even learning if used wisely. The key is balance. Use technology, but do not let it control you. Watch, but also live. Scroll, but also stop and think. Parents and teachers also have a role to play. Instead of only blaming children, they should guide them. Encourage outdoor activities, family time, reading habits, and real conversations. Create an environment where real life feels more interesting than the virtual world. Young people themselves must take responsibility. Ask yourself: how much time am I spending on reels? What am I gaining from it? Am I ignoring real relationships? Am I losing focus on my goals? These questions can help bring awareness and change.

Real life is not always exciting, but it is always meaningful. It has ups and downs, joys and struggles, but that is what makes it beautiful. The laughter shared with friends, the love of family, the satisfaction of hard work—these are things no reel can ever replace. In the end, life is not meant to be watched like a video. It is meant to be lived. The world outside the screen is vast, colorful, and full of opportunities. Step out, look around, talk to people, experience nature, and create your own story. Because one day, it is not the reels you watched that will matter—it is the life you lived.

So, today's generation should not just watch life through reels. They should step into real life, feel it, live it, and make it worth remembering.

Attraction of Doodhpathri



SAHIL MANZOOR

Raiyar-Ich is an emerging village in Tehsil Khanshab in the district of Budgam. The village comprises Bhatti Mohallah, Dinda Mohallah, Tantray Mohallah, Sheikh Mohallah, Khan Mohallah, etc. The people are very cultured, follow the teachings of great scholars, and have been living in a friendly environment for decades. The village has been developing rapidly for the last two decades since the famous tourist destination Doodhpathri came into the eyes of the world. Doodhpathri and other picturesque places of the district, like Mujpathri, Sotchal Pathri, Arizal, and many small attractions, enhance the beauty of the district and attract tourists from all corners of the world.

An Endowed and Peaceful Hamlet in District Budgam

There are ten districts in the Kashmir Valley. Every district has its own unique and special history, and Budgam is one of them. Budgam district is 12 km from the heart of Srinagar's Lal Chowk. In the past, many popular areas that are now part of Srinagar district were once included in Budgam. Therefore, Budgam and Srinagar have shared close ties for decades.

Budgam is one of the most mesmerizing and picturesque districts in the Kashmir Valley. The shrine of Sheikh-ul-Alam (RA) in Charar e Shareef is very special to the district. It has beautiful tourist places like Doodhpathri, Tosamaidan, Sotchal Pathri, and Sukhnag, and many more places



will be explored in the future. Today, in this article, I am going to explore the mesmerizing beauty of Raiyar Ich.

About Raiyar Ich

Raiyar Ich is an emerging village in terms of rapid development. It is a Panchayat Halqa with nine Panch wards and beautiful topography.

Raiyar Ich is a picturesque hamlet and a resting place for tourists from different parts of the world. According to local legend, the name "Raiyar" comes from two Kashmiri words: "Rai" meaning lost and "Yaar" meaning friend. The name was given by the mystic Kashmiri Sufi saint Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Wali (RA). It is said that when he reached this village from the forests of Pir Panjal, he sent his friends to different parts of Kashmir to spread the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and continued his journey alone towards the Dreygam cave.

Why Raiyar is Attractive for Tourists

The village is blessed with rich

culture and lush green forests. During late nights, the cool breeze brings peace of mind to everyone. The soothing sound of the Sukh-Nag River feels like soft music from a guitar. The people of the village are innocent and humble and live peacefully with their inherited culture. Raiyar is famous for rajma (kidney beans), maize bread, and walnuts.

Sources of Income for Locals

It is very fortunate for the locals that Doodhpathri has gained a place on the tourist map. It is one of the emerging tourist destinations in Khanshab tehsil and Budgam district and provides employment to thousands of unemployed local youth.

What Locals Demand

Higher Secondary School: As Raiyar Ich has become a central hub for nearby villages, locals demand the upgradation of the high school into a higher secondary school. Many families cannot afford to send their children to Khanshab and have to spend Rs 50 on travel daily.

Sports Stadium: A well equipped sports stadium for emerging local sports talent.

Children's Park: A park with safe play equipment for children.

Grazing Area: Locals have grazed cattle for centuries and depend on it for their livelihood and the district's economy.

Computer Skill Centres: Centres under centrally sponsored schemes are important for unemployed youth who want to achieve goals in fields like medicine and teaching.

Stay Home Scheme: All households should be covered so families can improve their livelihood and upgrade their homes.

Road Connectivity: Bhatti Mohallah Tangnar road connectivity should be prioritised. During harsh winters, tourist flow can be diverted via TRC Tangnar so tourists can experience local culture and locals can earn income.

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Rise Above Addiction: A Call for Responsibility



■ MOHSIN JAVAID

■ **INTRODUCTION**

Kashmir was once known for its Beauty peace and. Purity. However over time smoking entered society, and gradually more dangerous substance such as drugs, heroine, and charas have spread among the youth what started as a small problem has now become a serious threat to the future of Kashmir

■ **RISING PROBLEM OF ADDICTION**

Today addiction is affecting people of all ages. Whether it is a 10- year - old child, a teenager, or even young adults many are falling into the trap of drugs and smoking. This is mainly because such substances are easily Available in markets and shop. When young people see others using these substances, They are influenced and start copying them, which leads to a dangerous cycle

■ **APPRECIATION FOR AUTHORITIES**

At the same time, I would like to appreciate the efforts of the Jammu and Kashmir Police. They are working hard and catching many people Involved in drug-related



Activities their efforts are showing results and strict actions are also being taken by district authorities. However more needs to be done to completely eliminate

This problem.

■ **ROLE OF SOCIETY AND SHOPKEEPERS**

One important point is that shopkeepers

Should not sell any kind of addictive substances

If cigarettes drugs and similar items are not Available in the market. Then it will Automatically reduce Their use. It is the responsibility of every individual in society to Stop promoting such harmful products if supply Stops, demand will also decrease.

■ **EFFECTS OF ADDICTION**

Addiction has Destroyed many lives

■ **Families. Its effects include**

1. **HEALTH PROBLEMS- Serious diseases weakness, and**

mental disorders

2. **VIOLENCE AND CRIME. People become Aggressive and may harm others even their own family.**

3. **LOSS OF FUTURE. Students loss focus on Studies and fail to Achieve their goals**

4. **SOCIAL ISSUES. Increase in theft unsafe Environment. And fear among people.**

5. **IMPACT ON WOMEN- Girls and**

Women feel unsafe while going outside due to the presence of Addicted individuals

■ **REAL-LIFE OBSERVATION**
One day while going to School i saw two very young boys hardly 12 years old, Smoking Cigarettes and using Harmful substances

In a garden. This shows How deeply this problem has entered our society if children Start such habits at an Early age the future becomes very dark

■ **NEED FOR STRICT ACTION**

This issue is growing mainly because supply is still continuing. Strong and strict action must be taken to stop the distribution of drugs and cigarettes. The government including MLAs and leaders should introduce strict laws and completely ban such substances from reaching markets.

■ **CALL FOR ACTION**

Kashmir is a beautiful land and it is our responsibility to protect it From this growing menace of addiction. If the government truly wants to stop this problem then immediate and strict action must be taken without any delay. Many lives and our youth can still be saved if strong steps are taken today it is time to act before it is too late so that our society and future generations can live in peace and safety. Together we can save our future

And addiction is not development it is destruction.

The Author is a Student in Class 12th Humanities at GHSS Delina

Chinar Corps Boosts Young Aspirations



■ M S NAZKI

I told her (Ameena) that things would change but it will take time. It did take time but things have changed phenomenally!

This is all because of the Indian Army! Ameena had met me just once when she was in school Baramulla! The place then was underdeveloped but it had the potential of becoming big! In an interaction I met Ameena and her first lines were, 'Halaat Bahut Kharab Hain Yahan!' My reply was, 'Sudhar Bhij Jayenge!' She stood silent and asked 'Kab?' My reply was 'time lagta hai, is me bhi time lage ga!' Now the wheel has turned full circle! Baramulla is a buzzing place now! I never met Ameena again but somehow she traced me out and the first thing she told me was, 'Sir, Aap Sayih They!'.....This incident is about 27 years back.....!

The historical part:
Baramulla, historically known as Varahamula, is an ancient city in Jammu and Kashmir founded around 2306 B.C. by Raja Bhimsina. As a key "Gateway to the Kashmir Valley," it served as a vital, ancient trade route and a major tourist, spiritual, and cultural hub visited by Mughal emperors and sages.
Ancient & Religious Roots: Known as Varahamula (meaning the boar's molar), it was a revered Hindu Teertha and home to Buddhist Vihars and stupas in ancient times.
Mughal & Islamic Influence: Emperor Akbar visited in 1586, and Jahangir visited in 1620. In 1421, the revered Muslim saint Syed Janbaz Wali made it the center of his mission.

Sikh History: The sixth Sikh Guru, Guru Hargobind Sahib, visited the city in the 17th century.

1947 Conflict: Following tribal infiltration from Pakistan, Baramulla was occupied on October 25, 1947, and subsequently liberated by the Indian Army by early November 1947.

Modern Era: It is now a crucial administrative and educational center, connected by rail to the rest of India.

Baramulla served as a significant cultural junction, hosting figures like Chinese traveler Xuanzang and hosting multiple religious traditions, including Buddhist stu-

pas from the Kushan period discovered in nearby Ushkara.

Modern day Baramulla:
Modern-day Baramulla, known in Kashmiri as Varmul, is a rapidly developing city and the administrative headquarters of the Baramulla district in Jammu and Kashmir, India. Situated on the banks of the Jhelum River in the foothills of the Pir Panjal Range, it acts as a crucial business and education hub in northern Kashmir.

As of early 2026, it is experiencing a mix of rapid modernization and infrastructural challenges, functioning as a key gateway to the Kashmir Valley.

Urban Structure: The city is divided into the old town (Shehr-e-Khas) on the north bank and the Greater Baramulla (new town) on the south bank, connected by five main bridges, with more planned.

Infrastructure & Connectivity: Baramulla is the terminal station on the 119-km Baramulla-Srinagar-Banihal-Sangaldan railway line. The road from Srinagar is a 4-lane highway, often considered the best in the valley.

Economy: A major centre for trade, particularly in the agricultural and horticulture sectors, with efforts underway to boost tourism.

Healthcare: While the Government Medical College (GMC) Baramulla has been functional since 2019, recent 2026 reports highlight a need for staffing and equipment upgrades, such as MRI and Cath labs.

Education: The city hosts the North Campus of the University of Kashmir, several government degree colleges, polytechnic colleges, and established institutions like St. Joseph's School.

Tourism: Eco Park (located on a Jhelum island) is a major attraction, with plans for a cable car project to further boost tourism.

Drug Control: In 2026, the administration prioritized a crackdown on drug trafficking in the region.

Land Management: Active efforts are being made to curb land fraud and manage town planning.

Cultural Fabric: Historically, Baramulla has been a site of diverse influences, including Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, and Sikh, known for a composite culture that persists today.

Infrastructure vs. Development: While digital connectivity and new buildings are appearing rapidly, some areas still face challenges with basic infrastructure.

Congestion: The old town is densely populated, requiring ongoing decongestion projects.

Environmental Concerns: The Jhelum

river and its ecological surroundings are being managed through eco-tourism projects, but they require continuous protection.

Mega job fair held at Chinar center, Baramulla!

Chinar YUVA Centre, Baramulla hosted Mega Job Fair 2026 on 07 and 08 April 2026. The annual event aimed to connect job seekers with leading employers across sectors such as IT, Hospitality, Automobile, Insurance, Retail and Allied fields.

This year witnessed an encouraging response, with over 3,000 aspirants registered a 60 percent increase over the previous year. Approximately 1,100 vacancies were on offer, also marking a 60 percent growth year-on-year. The aspirations of candidates have been carefully aligned with employment opportunities, particularly in Hospitality, Retail, Automobiles and Allied sectors.

Leading employers participating in the event included Flipkart, Swiggy, Blinkit, LG, Ather, Amazon, Raymond, Phone Pe, Hotel Sarovar Portico, Hotel Khyber, Myntra, Honda, Bajaj and SBI Life. The event featured online interviews by ten companies along with physical interviews, followed by short-listing and selection of candidates. In addition, representatives of the District Employment & Counselling Centre provided career counselling on industry trends and skill-building through "Mission YUVA" scheme.

Chinar YUVA Centre is also commencing new courses on Agro Entrepreneurship, aimed at fostering self-employment and enhancing livelihood opportunities for the youth. The initiative reflects the sustained commitment of Chinar Corps towards youth empowerment, skill development and facilitating meaningful employment opportunities as part of its broader outreach and Nation-Building endeavours in the region.

The Chinar YUVA Centre in Baramulla is a specialized skill development and vocational training facility established in 2016 to empower youth and women in Kashmir through training, entrepreneurship, and job placements. Supported by the Indian Army and ONGC CSR, it offers NSDC-certified courses in retail, IT, hospitality, and fashion, with a focus on sustainable livelihoods.

Purpose: To tackle unemployment, promote social/economic development, and provide employment opportunities for local youth, often serving as an alternative to conflict-driven paths.

Key Courses: The center offers courses in Fashion, Retail & Marketing, Information Technology (IT), Hospitality, Creative Arts, and recently, Agro Entrepreneurship.

Partnership: The initiative is a collaborative

effort involving the Indian Army, ONGC, and is managed/supported by the Aseem Foundation.

Impact: It has successfully placed local youth in jobs across India and provided, along with skills training, self-defense training to women to enhance confidence and safety.

Recognition: The centre is the only one of its kind in the valley certified by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).

Girls and boys from Chinar Yuva center Baramulla who have done well Chinar Yuva Centre in Baramulla, in collaboration with Aseem Foundation and REACHA, has empowered numerous youths in Kashmir through skill development, leading to notable achievements in sports, entrepreneurship, and employment. Key achievers include medal-winning martial artists, graduates in vocational courses, and individuals hired by national firms, demonstrating significant success in 2025-2026.

Highlights of Outstanding Achievers:

Sports & Martial Arts:
Snobar Akhter: Won a silver medal in the All India Pencak Silat Martial Art Championship in Mumbai.

Kamsina Ahad: Won a bronze medal at the Winter Games 2026 in Gulmarg.

Karate Premier League Success (2025): 13 students (8 girls, 5 boys) secured 11 medals, including gold winners Mohammad Zaid Lone, Adil Bashir, Sahil Hamid, Roheena Yousuf, Ifrah Parvaiz, and Falak Imtiyaz.

Sahil Hamid Mir: Completed a 311 kms solo marathon from Jammu to Baramulla ("Ek Sapna, Ek Rasta") to promote a drug-free Kashmir.

Employment & Entrepreneurship:

TATA Wistron Placements: Eight girls were placed at TATA Wistron following training.

Job Fair 2.0: Students successfully participated in local job fairs, with some transitioning from trainees to recruiters, such as a student achieving a role in Recruiter 3.0.

Skill Development: Graduates from the Beauty & Wellness and Fashion Designing courses have established independent, sustainable livelihoods.

The centre, established to provide vocational training in fields like IT, hospitality, and fashion designing, has served as a beacon of hope for youth empowerment in the region.

Aseem Foundation:

Aseem Foundation is a Pune-based NGO founded by Sarang Gosavi dedicated to building sustainable trust and development in India's border regions, particularly Jammu & Kashmir. It focuses on education, social entrepreneurship, and empowerment, aiming to connect remote border communities with the rest of India.

Key Focus Areas & Projects:

Education: Programs like Abhilasha, Yontan-la, and Super 40 provide schooling and support for students.

Social Entrepreneurship: The foundation creates local employment through initiatives like the all-women Mithas Bakery (Bandipore) and Tamanna Bakery (Uri), producing items branded as Koshur Krunch.

Skill Training: Partnered with the Indian Army to establish the Chinar Youth Club in Baramulla and other vocational projects for local youth.

Cultural Exchange: Organizes exposure and study tours for students from Pune to remote border areas to foster understanding.

Their approach is based on a "triad of communication-trust-development" to improve the quality of life in disturbed border areas.

REACHA:

REACHA is a registered voluntary, community-based non-profit organization formed in 1992 in India, dedicated to driving high-impact community development. It works closely with underprivileged communities to empower youth and women through education, skill training, health initiatives, and entrepreneurship, often partnering with the government, corporate CSR, and the Indian Army for projects.

Key Aspects of REACHA:

Core Focus: Improving livelihoods, digital literacy, and sustainable development, particularly in rural and remote areas.

Key Projects: Notably involved in projects like Nokia Smartpur (digital centers) and Chinar YUVA (youth training) with the Indian Army in Kashmir to boost local skills and development.

Approach: Acts as a facilitator bringing together stakeholders to create sustainable local development in harmony with nature.

Geographical Reach: Operates across India, including Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, and Delhi-NCR.

REACHA aims to bridge the gap between people's needs and government mandates, promoting self-reliance, particularly among youth.

Mission Yuva:

Mission YUVA (Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan) is a Jammu & Kashmir flagship initiative aimed at tackling unemployment by creating 1.37 lakh enterprises and 4.25 lakh jobs over 5 years. It supports youth and women entrepreneurs through financial assistance (loans/grants), capacity building, mentoring, and strengthening market linkages, particularly to turn ideas into small business units.

■ SURINDERPAL SINGH

Mind Isolation in Mental Well-Being

In an age where life moves at an unrelenting pace, the human mind is constantly exposed to a flood of information, expectations and emotional pressures. From the moment one wakes up to the sound of notifications to the endless demands of professional and personal responsibilities, there is rarely a pause. This continuous stimulation has quietly reshaped the way individuals think, react and feel. As a result, stress, anxiety and emotional fatigue have become increasingly common experiences. Yet, within this complex landscape, mental health experts are drawing attention to a powerful and often overlooked approach—mind isolation, combined with awareness and intentional action. This approach does not require drastic changes in lifestyle or withdrawal from society; rather, it emphasizes developing the ability to create inner space, regulate thoughts and consciously shape one's mental environment.

Mind isolation, despite how it may sound, is not about physical isolation or distancing oneself from people and responsibilities. It is a refined mental skill that allows individuals to detach from negativity without disconnecting from life. It is the practice of filtering what enters the mind and deciding how to respond to it. In simpler terms, it is about protecting the mind in the same way one protects physical health. Just as individuals avoid unhealthy food to maintain bodily well-being, mind isolation encourages avoiding toxic thoughts, harmful content and unnecessary emotional burdens. This conscious filtering creates a mental boundary, enabling individuals to stay grounded even in chaotic situations.

The modern world presents numerous triggers that can disrupt mental balance. Continuous exposure to distressing news, unrealistic portrayals on social media and constant comparison with others can quietly influence thoughts and emotions. Over time, this exposure leads to mental clutter, making it difficult to focus, relax or think clearly. Mind isolation offers a way to counter this overload. By consciously reducing the intake of negative or overwhelming information, individuals can create a calmer internal

environment. This does not mean ignoring reality, but rather choosing when and how to engage with it. The mind, when not overloaded, naturally becomes more capable of processing challenges with clarity and resilience.

A crucial element of this practice is the ability to observe thoughts without becoming entangled in them. The human mind generates thousands of thoughts each day, many of which are repetitive or influenced by past experiences and fears. Often, individuals react to these thoughts instantly, allowing them to dictate emotions and actions. Mind isolation encourages a shift from reaction to observation. When a person begins to watch their thoughts as passing events rather than absolute truths, a sense of distance is created. This distance allows for better decision-making and emotional control. Instead of being carried away by every worry or doubt, individuals learn to pause, reflect and respond with intention.

Silence plays an equally important role in strengthening this ability. In a world dominated by noise, both external and internal, moments of silence have become rare yet invaluable. Even a few minutes of quiet time each day can significantly calm the mind. During silence, mental activity slows down, and awareness deepens. It becomes easier to identify patterns of thinking and emotional triggers. This clarity forms the foundation for meaningful change. Silence is not an absence of activity; it is a space where the mind resets and regains balance.

Emotional awareness further enhances the practice of mind isolation. Emotions are a natural part of human experience, but when they are not understood, they can become overwhelming. Many individuals either suppress their emotions or become completely absorbed in them. Both extremes can be harmful.



Mind isolation encourages acknowledging emotions without allowing them to take control. By recognizing feelings such as anger, sadness or anxiety without judgment, individuals gain the ability to manage them effectively. This awareness transforms emotions from disruptive forces into valuable signals that guide understanding and growth.

An essential aspect of this approach lies in understanding the subconscious mind. While the conscious mind deals with immediate thoughts and decisions, the subconscious mind operates in the background, shaping beliefs, habits and emotional responses. Many negative patterns, including self-doubt, fear and limiting beliefs, originate from subconscious conditioning developed over time. These patterns often go unnoticed, yet

they influence behavior in significant ways. Mind isolation, when combined with awareness, allows individuals to identify these underlying patterns and gradually change them.

Techniques such as positive affirmations and visualization play a significant role in this process. Affirmations involve repeating constructive statements that reinforce positive beliefs. Although they may seem simple, their consistent practice can influence the subconscious mind over time. Visualization, on the other hand, involves mentally imagining desired outcomes or positive scenarios. This technique helps align thoughts with goals, making it easier to take actions that support them. When practiced regularly, these methods can reshape internal narratives, replacing negativity

with confidence and clarity.

Self-reflection is another powerful tool in this journey. Taking time to reflect on daily experiences, reactions and thought patterns provides valuable insight into one's mental state. Reflection helps identify recurring triggers and habits that may be hindering growth. It creates an opportunity to question automatic responses and replace them with more constructive ones. Over time, this practice builds self-awareness, which is essential for lasting mental well-being.

While awareness forms the foundation of mind isolation, it is consistent action that leads to transformation. Without action, even the deepest understanding remains ineffective. Developing a disciplined routine is one of the most practical ways to implement this approach. Regular sleep patterns, structured daily activities and dedicated time for self-care create stability in an otherwise unpredictable environment. Discipline does not restrict freedom; instead, it provides a framework within which the mind can function more efficiently.

Improving focus is another important step. In a world that constantly encourages multitasking, the ability to concentrate on one task at a time has become increasingly valuable. Multitasking often leads to mental fatigue and reduced productivity. By practicing single-tasking and giving full attention to the present moment, individuals can enhance both efficiency and mental clarity. This practice aligns closely with the principles of mind isolation, as it involves directing attention intentionally rather than allowing it to be scattered.

The connection between the mind and body also plays a vital role in mental well-being. Physical activities such as walking, stretching or exercising help release tension and improve mood. Breathing exercises and meditation further strengthen this connection by calming the nervous system and promoting relaxation. These practices are not merely physical routines; they are essential tools for maintaining mental balance. When the body is relaxed, the mind naturally follows.

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

MS. JAASINDAH MIR

RCI-LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST | EFT MASTER PRACTITIONER | FLOWER ESSENCE PRACTITIONER | AUTHOR

TRAUMA-FOCUSED PSYCHOLOGIST

MA Applied Psychology (Clinical)-Jamia Millia Islamia Air 4-NIPCCD (RCI-Licensed)

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Javid Dar attends review meeting with Union RDD Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Ahead of VB-G RAM G rollout, J&K Minister flags need to raise MGNREGA wages in hilly regions

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 18: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, today participated in an online review meeting convened by Union Minister for Rural Development Department, Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

The meeting was held with Ministers in charge of Rural Development from States and Union Territories to review the status of implementation of MGNREGA and seek suggestions for The Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) which is being rolled out for implementation shortly.

During the deliberations, Javid Dar raised key issues concerning Jammu and Kashmir, particularly the need for enhancement of MGNREGA wage rates in hilly regions from Rs 272 to Rs 311, keeping in view the unique geographical and economic conditions of the area.

He also emphasized that the revision should be in line with the Minimum Wages framework and sought



adequate financial support from the Government of India for clearing the pending material liabilities as the

system is transitioning towards implementation of new framework under VB G RAM G Mission.

Drug awareness films were screened across schools in Ganderbal

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, APR 18: Under the scheduled Activity Calendar of Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan @ 100 Days, "Drug Awareness Films" were screened across High and Higher Secondary "Schools of District Ganderbal" with profound engagement and thoughtful reflection.

The initiative aimed not merely at informing, but at awakening young minds to the silent devastation caused by substance abuse. Through the powerful medium of film, students were exposed to the harsh realities that drugs impose on individuals, families, and society at large—eroding values, dimming aspirations, and disrupting the very fabric of life.

Education, in its truest sense, is not confined to textbooks but extends to shaping character and conscience. These awareness films served as a mirror, urging students to choose the path of clarity over confusion, strength over surrender, and purpose over peril.

The activity witnessed enthusiastic participation, with students and staff collectively reaffirming their commitment to a healthier, drug-free society. It stands as a reminder that awareness is the first step towards transformation, and that the youth, when guided rightly, become torchbearers of a brighter and more responsible future.

Drug Awareness Drives Intensified in Kulgam Under 100-Day Anti-Drug Campaign

■ FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, APR 18: In a continued effort to curb drug abuse, District Police Kulgam under the aegis of the ongoing 100-day Drug-Free campaign organized a series of awareness programmes across various parts of the district.

As part of the initiative, Police Station Kulgam conducted multiple awareness sessions in different schools, witnessing enthusiastic participation from students and staff. The programmes aimed at educating young minds about the harmful effects of substance abuse and encouraging them to adopt a healthy and responsible lifestyle.

During the sessions, students were sensitised about the physical, mental and social consequences of drug addiction. Police officials also provided guidance on how to resist peer pressure and stay away from narcotics, stressing the importance of informed decision-making at an early age.

On the occasion, Station House Officer (SHO) Kulgam, Inspector Kushab, along with other police personnel, highlighted that early awareness and active public participation are key to eliminating the menace of drugs from society. They urged students to act as ambassadors of change by spreading awareness among their peers, families and communities. The officials further reiterated the commitment of Jammu & Kashmir Police towards making the region drug-free and ensuring a safe environment for the youth.

The awareness drive received an encouraging response from students, teachers and educational institutions, reflecting a growing collective resolve to combat drug abuse and build a healthier future in Kulgam district.

Natrang Unveils 'Balwant Thakur's XXI': A New Era of Theatre Training Begins in Jammu

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APR 18: In a bold and refreshing move set to redefine theatre training in the region, Natrang Jammu today officially launched at Natrang Studio Theatre Balwant Thakur's XXI, an innovative initiative inspired by the sporting concept of Chief Minister's XI. The project, already set in motion, introduces a dynamic team of 21 young theatre aspirants who have begun their new journey under the direct mentorship of eminent theatre director Padamshree Balwant Thakur.

Unlike traditional theatre setups, this project places the entire responsibility of grooming the selected talent on Balwant Thakur himself, mirroring the role of a coach shaping a high-performance team. From training and personality development to production, performances, and media projection, every aspect will be professionally managed, allowing the young artists to focus solely on growth and creativity. During the entire training programme they will always be given a special status and will be treated differently.

What makes Balwant Thakur's XXI particularly compelling is its trans-

formative training approach. Moving far beyond acting, the programme integrates cutting-edge, theatre-based techniques designed to reshape personalities and build essential life skills. Participants are being trained to develop strong communication abilities, command over public speaking, and the confidence to express themselves effectively in any situation. The curriculum also emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative leadership skills increasingly valued in today's fast-evolving world.

Sources close to the project describe the training as "intensely immersive," where theatre becomes a medium for self-discovery and empowerment. Through innovative exercises and performance-based learning, the young aspirants are expected to undergo a visible transformation, both as artists and individuals.

In a significant departure from established norms, this initiative is also breaking financial barriers. Traditionally, newcomers are required to bear the costs of training and production, but under this project, all such expenses are being taken care of by Balwant Thakur, making it a rare and commendable effort to dem-

ocratize access to quality theatre education.

The inaugural team of 21 has been carefully selected from Model Institute of Education and Research Jammu, marking a strong collaboration between the institution and Natrang. On the occasion, Balwant Thakur acknowledged the support of Director Dr. Adit Gupta, emphasizing the shared vision of using the arts as a powerful tool for personality transformation.

With the launch already completed and training underway, Balwant Thakur's XXI is being seen as a game-changing experiment, one that could reshape how theatre is taught, perceived, and experienced in Jammu and beyond. Senior theatre director and actor Neeraj Kant will assist the project and Mohd. Yaseen will coordinate.

The lucky XXI are Aatifa Nisar, Hargun Kour, Anannia Bhagat, Ridhima Sharma, Manpreet Kour, Bhoomi Charak, Aiyza Naz Chib, Divya Sharma, Mehak Mattoo, Charu Rajput, Sheetal Singh, Ankita Sharma, Navvya Verma, Essha, Saloni Sharma, Shriya Mantoo, Nixon Gour, Akshay Tiwari, Kamalshahi Bali, Sunaina Rajput and Arzoo Sharma.

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 GUFOOR 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 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 GAFFAR 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... 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 (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 Wagooraj) chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Death of SARA BEGUM W/O MOHD AKBAR MIR R/O. KAKOTHAL Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of death as 21/03/2026 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 Death certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Sd/- Executive Magistrate 1st Class Kreeri

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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 SANULLAH 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... ZAHOR 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

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 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

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR Office Of The Deputy Director Estates, Kashmir

TEL/FAX: 0194-2470970

Fresh e-Auction Notice No: 02 of 2026 | Dated: 17/04/2026

Sub: e-auction notice for disposal of obsolete/ unserviceable wooden/steel /electronic/furniture and furnishing items etc.

e-Auction Notice

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of J&K, e- bidding in double cover system is invited by Deputy Director Estates, Kashmir for disposal of obsolete / unserviceable wooden / steel / electronic / furniture and furnishing items etc. The tender documents along with list of items can be downloaded from the website https://jktenders.gov.in from 17/04/2026 to 23/04/2026 till 11.00 am for which the cost of tender documents in the shape of DD of Rs. 500/- (Rupees five hundred only) in favour of Deputy Director Estates, Kashmir or G.R. to be remitted in treasury under M.H. 0216-Housing is to be uploaded with tender documents. The earnest money amounting to Rs. 30,000/- in the shape of CDR/FDR pledged to Deputy Director Estates, Kashmir is to be uploaded with tender documents. The bidders should submit the bid Forms in two parts i.e., Technical bid and Financial bid separately. The financial bid shall be opened only after the bid documents of intending bidders are found technically qualified.

Bid documents should be deposited in electronic format on the website: http://jktenders.gov.in the bids (technical/financial bid) shall be opened on 23/04/2026 online or any other date which may be convenient to the Committee in presence of bidders willing to be present in the office chambers of the Undersigned. The bid documents consisting of list of unserviceable items, set of terms and conditions of the Auction and other details can be seen/downloaded from the website: https://jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:

Date and time of inspection of unserviceable stock items for intending bidders All working days between 17/04/2026 to 22/04/2026 from 10:00 a.m to 4.00 pm and 23/04/2026 10.00 am to 10.30 am

Date of issue of Tender notice:	17/04/2026
Period of downloading of tender documents	17/4/2026
Bid Submission start date:	17/04/2026 (from 4.00 pm)
Bid Submission end date	23/04/2026 at 11.00 am
Date and time of opening of bids (online).	23/04/2026 at 12.30 pm

The details of auction sites alongwith details of items are given in Annexure "A" to Annexure "O" Further details can be had from the office of Deputy Director Estates, Kashmir at Pratap Park, and Kashmir during office hours.
No: DDES/NIT/2026-27/904-909
Date: 17/04/2026

Sd/- Deputy Director Estates, Kashmir, Srinagar

DIPK: 531/26 | Dated: 18-04-2026

Deputy Chief Minister convenes public outreach programme in Nowshera; assures swift redress of public issues, concerns

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

NOWSHERA, APRIL 18: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today continued his extensive public outreach programme across Nowshera, holding a series of public interaction sessions and inspections to address the public issues and concerns and review the ongoing development works.

During the outreach programme, the Deputy Chief Minister visited Panchayat Chowki, Handan, Kalsian, Langer, Panchayat Bhawani, Janghar, Laroka, Killa Darhal and Lamberi, where he interacted with the local residents and met various public delegations.

At these locations, several delegations called on the Deputy Chief Minister, highlighting the local concerns and developmental needs. He assured them of timely and amicable resolution of their genuine issues.



The Deputy Chief Minister listened to their grievances and demands besides seeking feedback on implementation of development works in their respective areas. He assured them that their issues

would be taken up with the concerned authorities for a speedy redress.

The Deputy Chief Minister also reviewed the progress of the ongoing development works at

Langer Dhanaka. He stressed strict adherence to the set quality standards and directed the officials to ensure timely completion of all the projects.

Earlier, he inspected the Bharat

Gas Agency at Nowshera to assess service delivery and operational efficiency. He laid emphasis on ensuring uninterrupted and timely LPG supply while maintaining transparency and enhancing consumer satisfaction.

Reiterating the Government's commitment to grassroots engagement, the Deputy Chief Minister said that such outreach programmes are vital for strengthening the public trust and ensuring that development initiatives are aligned with the needs and aspirations of the people.

He further directed the concerned officers to remain proactive in addressing the public grievances, ensuring that all developmental works are executed efficiently and within stipulated timelines.

Senior officers accompanied the Deputy Chief Minister during the public outreach.

DC Anantnag chairs CLU Meeting; Directs streamlining Land Use Conversion Cases

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, APRIL 18: Deputy Commissioner (DC), (Chairman District Level CLU Committee), Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat, today chaired a comprehensive meeting on Change of Land Use (CLU), with the concerned officers at the DC office.

The meeting was convened to deliberate upon and dispose of various cases involving the conversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes under Section 133-A of the J&K Land Revenue Act, Svt. 1996.



ADC, SEs Hydraulics, PWD & PDD KPDCCL, GM DIC, ACR, SDMs Bijbehara/Doorru/Pahalgam, DFOs, CAO, Wildlife Warden South Kashmir, DOPCC and other officials attended the meeting.

During the proceedings, the DC reviewed applications in accordance with the J&K Agricultural Land (Conversion for Non-Agricultural Purposes) Regulations, 2022. He emphasized the importance of adhering to these regulations to ensure balanced and sustainable development while safeguarding agriculture sector. He further called for adherence to the legal mechanism and procedural guidelines for disposing of the CLU applications.

Taking strong notice of the procedural gaps observed during the review, the DC asked the concerned departments to take immediate corrective measures and streamline the process as envisaged by the relevant regulations. He enjoined upon the officers to focus on resolving the issues and discrepancies so that appropriate action is taken in a time bound manner as per laid down criteria. All cases be routed through Revenue Department and the district and sectoral officers shall personally examine the cases, he stressed.

To ensure a holistic review of each application, the meeting involved intensive coordination and technical discussions among various key departments. Detailed scrutiny of applications was held especially with regard to Revenue Record, procedural guidelines and other essential aspects. A total of 17 cases, pertaining to different categories; out of which nine, complete in all respects, were approved.

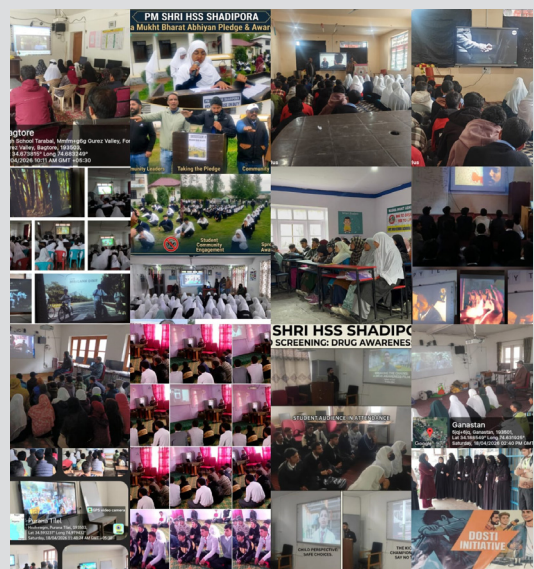
At conclusion, explicit directions were issued to the concerned officers to make appreciable progress on pending formalities and procedural issues before the next meeting.

District Admin Bandipora organises Awareness Programmes under Nasha Mukta Abhiyan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 18: As part of the ongoing Nasha Mukta Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan, the District Administration Bandipora organised a series of drug awareness programmes across educational institutions in the district, aimed at sensitising students about the harmful effects of substance abuse.

The programmes featured screening of awareness films, short videos and documentaries in PM SHRI HSS Shadipora, GHS Hajin, HSS PTL Gurez, HSS Nowgam, HS Jurniyal, HS Ketson, HS Odina, HSS Chuntimulla, HSS Hajin, HS Achoora, GHS Nadihal, HSS Mantrigam, GHSS Gadakhud Sonawari, HS Panar, Government High School Ahamisharief, HS Kanzalwan, PM SHRI GHS Sumbal, HS Kehnusa, HS Tarabal and HS Malangam.



The films highlighted the physical, psychological and social consequences of drug abuse, including its impact on health, families and society.

Students actively participated in discussions, listened to awareness talks by teachers, also took pledges to remain drug-free.

Similarly, Government Degree College Sumbal organised an awareness talk and an interactive session under the Nasha Mukta Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan (Dosti Initiative). The awareness session sensitised students about the harmful physical, psychological and social effects of substance abuse, while emphasising the role of positive peer influence and informed choices.

Meanwhile, interactive session was conducted, wherein students actively engaged in discussions on drug-related concerns and their wider societal impact.

The initiative, conducted under the 100-day IEC campaign, encouraged students to adopt healthy lifestyles, report suspicious activities and act as ambassadors for a drug-free society, reaffirming the district administration's commitment to tackling the menace of drug abuse.

RFID-Based Smart Yatra Management introduced for Shri Machail Mata Yatra 2026; 'No RFID, No Darshan' Rule enforced

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KISHTWAR, APRIL 18: The District Administration Kishtwar, under the supervision of the Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar and with execution led by the Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Pankaj Kumar Sharma, has announced comprehensive, technology-driven arrangements for the upcoming Shri Machail Mata Yatra, which commenced on the auspicious occasion of Vaisakhi on April 14.

The yatra marks the ceremonial return of the revered deity from the winter abode at the house of Pehalwan Singh to the main shrine.

Addressing the media today, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kishtwar, Pawan Kotwal extended greetings to devotees and outlined a series of new measures designed to ensure a safe, smooth and efficiently managed pilgrimage.

In a significant shift from previous years, the administration has made the entire registration process fully online and introduced a mandatory Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) system for all pilgrims.

The earlier hybrid system has been discontinued, and devotees must now register through the official portal before undertaking the journey. During registration, pilgrims are required to upload their photograph, mobile number, and address, after which a



unique travel ID is generated. RFID cards will be issued at designated centers upon verification, and the administration has made it clear that the rule of "No RFID, No Darshan" will be strictly enforced throughout the yatra.

To enhance safety and oversight, a 24/7 control room has been established at the SDM Office in Gulabgarh, equipped with advanced surveillance systems. Sensitive and high-traffic locations along the route, including Chashoti, Hummori, intermediate stretches and the Darshani Gate are being continuously monitored.

Live surveillance feeds are accessible to senior officials, including the Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar and the Senior Superintendent of Police Kishtwar, enabling real-time supervision and rapid response to any situation.

The administration has also deployed high-tech systems for crowd and traffic management, including AI-enabled video surveillance to

monitor crowd density and public address systems for instant communication with pilgrims.

Vehicle movement from Gulabgarh to key yatra points is being strictly regulated and drivers have been instructed to adhere to all safety guidelines, particularly regarding passenger limits.

A dedicated communication network has been established to ensure uninterrupted connectivity along the route, independent of third-party telecom providers and compliant with Department of Telecommunications norms.

In addition, real-time weather alerts are being issued to help pilgrims plan their yatra safely and avoid potential risks.

Pilgrims have been instructed to wear their RFID cards visibly at all times during the journey and to return them at designated exit points, especially at Gulabgarh, after completing darshan.

The ADC emphasized that these initiatives represent a major step forward in ensuring pilgrim safety, improving operational efficiency and enabling real-time monitoring throughout the yatra.

The shrine has remained open to devotees since April 14 and pilgrims are encouraged to take part in the sacred journey and seek blessings under the enhanced management system.

Bandipora launches 'Dosti Discussion Series' across schools to combat Drug Abuse

DC Administers Anti-Drug Pledge, Engages students and Residents in Wide-Ranging Interaction

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 18: In a significant community outreach under the 100-Day Mission Mode campaign of the Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, the District Administration Bandipora on Saturday took the fight against drug abuse to the grassroots by organising a "Dosti Discussion" at Higher Secondary School Aragam, focusing on the transformative role of peer groups in preventing substance abuse among youth.

Saturday's session at HSS Aragam marks the beginning of a district-wide series. The District Administration has planned "Dosti Discussions" across every High and Higher Secondary School in

Bandipora during the 100-day campaign, ensuring that no school and no student is left out of the conversation. The session witnessed active participation from students, parents, and local residents, setting a tone that was less of administrative instruction and more of collective dialogue. Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib administered the anti-drug pledge and engaged in an open and candid interaction with the audience. She listened attentively to public concerns, assured administrative support, and went a step further by sharing her personal contact details, encouraging people to report drug peddling, seek help for affected individuals, or offer suggestions.

"The time for action has come," the DC said, stressing that drug abuse is no longer an individual issue but a societal emergency requiring a unified response.

The DC urged the community to display anti-drug messages prominently at mosques, schools, and other public spaces, and called upon families, educational institutions, religious bodies, and youth organisations to actively contribute to the campaign. Highlighting the role of families, the DC emphasised the need for parents to invest time in their children, foster discipline at home, and remain actively involved in shaping their behaviour. She also advocated greater youth participation in sports, libraries,

co-curricular activities, and government initiatives like Mission YUVA, presenting these as constructive pathways that reduce vulnerability to substance abuse.

The DC also cautioned against measuring student potential solely through academic performance, underscoring that holistic development is key to nurturing confident and capable individuals.

The District Administration reiterated its zero-tolerance approach, stating that strict action will be taken against those involved in drug peddling, reinforcing that community engagement and enforcement will go hand in hand.

Principal, HSS Aragam, Mohammad Syed Mir, described the occasion as a historic step for

Aragam, a community, he said, consciously moving towards a drug-free Jammu & Kashmir.

Participants expressed appreciation for the initiative and pledged full cooperation. The programme concluded with a shared resolve to strengthen peer support systems and work collectively towards a drug-free Bandipora.

The "Dosti Discussion" series forms a key component of the District Administration Bandipora's 100-day IEC and outreach calendar under the Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, scheduled from April 15 to July 23, 2026, with sessions planned across all High and Higher Secondary Schools in the district.

DC Kathua listens to public grievances at Dhar Mahanpur; assures time-bound redressal

Massive Nasha Mukta rally held; public urged to support Nasha Mukta Abhiyan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA, APRIL 18: Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma today conducted a public outreach programme at Dhar Mahanpur and listened to a wide range of grievances and demands projected by the local residents.

Public highlighted the damaged Kholi Talai-Katham road, pending land compensation and demanded a 6 km Naili-Katham road. Residents of Dhar Korah Panchayat sought water supply renovation, veterinary

and allopathic hospitals and restoration of the Zero Morh-Sanganghat road closed since flash floods. They also raised staff shortages at HSS Dhar Mahanpur and UPS Kohar and called for upgraded electric infrastructure. MLA Basohli, Darshan Singh while addressing the gathering informed that the matter of school upgradation has been taken up with the Education Minister, addressing staff shortages flagged by locals. He assured that issues slowing the Jal Jeevan Mission including

water supply concerns, will be resolved soon and added that ration card bifurcation is under consideration with the Centre Government. He announced an ambulance from CDF and an RDD building under the Capex plan, while stressing prompt redressal of road, power and other public grievances and seeking people's cooperation. Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner assured that all genuine demands would be looked into and resolved in a time-bound manner.

Regarding the healthcare centre at Sanganghat, the Deputy Commissioner informed that he has personally visited the site and the land dispute will be resolved shortly. On the issue of shortage of staff in schools, he directed the Chief Education Officer to rationalize teaching staff as per requirement.

With regard to the vacant post of veterinary doctor, the Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, on the directions of the Deputy Commissioner, ordered on-the-spot posting of a doctor, thereby

resolving the issue.

On the matter of gun licenses, the Deputy Commissioner informed that the licenses are issued strictly through online mode only. He also assured that the District Administration will work on the demand for establishment of a fruit market.

Taking note of road sliding issues, the Deputy Commissioner directed the Irrigation and Flood Control Department to install crates to prevent further damage. Regarding the demand for opening a J&K Bank branch, he

asked the bank authorities to explore a suitable site in consultation with the local population.

The Deputy Commissioner also spoke about Mission YUVA and the ongoing Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir 100 Days Abhiyan, urging people to actively participate in these initiatives.

Earlier, a massive awareness rally under the Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan was organised at Dhar Mahanpur, drawing participation of hundreds of people from all walks of life.

The rally witnessed enthusiastic involvement of youth, students, women and members of civil society, reflecting a strong collective commitment towards eradication of drug abuse from society.

Participants carried placards and banners bearing anti-drug messages, spreading awareness about the ill effects of substance abuse and the need for a drug-free society. Slogans were raised in unison, urging people to stay away from drugs and support the ongoing campaign.

Tea bodies urge PM Modi to scrap mandatory auction norms, seek market freedom

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

SILIGURI, APR 18 : Four major tea industry bodies from Assam and North Bengal have jointly appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking urgent amendments to existing regulations mandating the compulsory sale of tea through public auctions, warning that the policy is placing severe financial and operational strain on producers.

In a letter sent on April 15, the Assam Bought Leaf Tea Manufacturers Association (ABLTMA), North Eastern Tea Association (NETA), Bharatiya Cha Parishad (BCP), and North Bengal Tea Producers' Welfare Association (NBTPWA) raised concerns over provisions under the Tea (Marketing) Control (Second Amendment) Order, 2015 and the subsequent 2024 amendment.

The Associations, which collectively represent a significant share of North India's tea output,



urged the Prime Minister to withdraw or suitably modify the requirement that mandates at least 50 per cent of total annual tea production be routed through public auctions. They argued that such compulsion undermines market flexibility and imposes additional costs on producers.

In their representation, the organisations highlighted four key demands. First, they called for the

withdrawal or modification of the 50 per cent compulsory auction clause introduced under the 2015 notification. Second, they sought similar reconsideration of the 2024 amendment, which not only reiterates the 50 per cent requirement but also mandates that 100 per cent of dust-grade teas be sold through auctions.

Third, the Associations stressed the need to allow producers the

freedom to choose their mode of sale—whether through auctions or private channels—based on prevailing market conditions. They argued that such flexibility is essential for improving efficiency and sustaining profitability in a highly competitive sector.

Finally, as an alternative, they requested that the government consider granting suitable exemptions or relaxations to affected stakeholders under existing provisions of the Tea (Marketing) Control framework.

The industry bodies maintained that compulsory auction sales increase transaction costs and lengthen the sales cycle, often eroding already thin profit margins. They also contended that such restrictions run counter to the government's stated objective of promoting ease of doing business, and called for policy reforms to ensure a more balanced and sustainable growth environment for the tea sector. UNI

MARKETS REBOUND: SENSEX JUMPS 505 PTS, NIFTY TOPS 24,300

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 18 : 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, Syra 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

PIB fact-checks influencer CA Sarthak Ahuja's video about income tax clearance certificate for travel abroad

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APR 18 : The Indian government on Saturday issued a clarification and "fact check" on a social media influencer's video about who really needs an income-tax clearance certificate while traveling abroad. But the influencer, Sarthak Ahuja, hit back and said his video was not misleading.

The government's Press Information Bureau posted his video with the label "fake" on X and wrote: "An Instagram video by the account (@casarthakahuja) is claiming that all Indian

citizens must obtain an income-tax clearance certificate (ITCC) every time before leaving the country. This claim is fake."

It added, "Under Section 230 [of the Income Tax Act, 1961], tax clearance certificates are not mandatory for everyone; they are only required for specific individuals under certain legal circumstances. This rule has remained unchanged since 2003, even after the amendments vide Finance (No 2) Act, 2024." It also shared a link to a press release from 2024, debunking misinformation at the time too.

"Tax clearance certificate...

may be required to be obtained by persons domiciled in India only in the following circumstances: where the person is involved in serious financial irregularities and his presence is necessary in investigation of cases... or where the person has direct tax arrears exceeding 10 lakh," that release said, sharing other nuances too.

However, Sarthak Ahuja, a Chartered Accountant known for making videos on personal finance and related subjects, wrote in reply to the shared clip: "I follow you and your videos. To be honest, the start of your

video is quite confusing," while yet another X user said, "Then what do you mean by 'Every time you leave the country'?"

CA Sarthak Ahuja is famous for having a large social media following, prominently on Instagram. His profile says he completing CA, CS, and CMA by age 23, and has a management degree from the Indian School of Business (ISB).

He has written bestselling books too, including 'Founder's Office', 'Daily Coffee & Startup Fundraising', and 'The Money Ball'. UNI

ASMS, UAL Biotech Sign MoU to Promote Sustainable Agriculture

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, APR 18 : 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 biotechnology 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

Cabinet okays additional instalment of DA to central govt employees and DR to pensioners

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 18 : The union Cabinet on Saturday approved an additional installment of Dearness Allowance (DA) for Central government employees and Dearness Relief (DR) for pensioners, offering relief amid rising prices.

Chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Cabinet cleared a 2 per cent increase over the existing rate of 58 per cent of basic pay and pension, raising the total DA/DR to 60 per cent with effect from January 1, 2026, the Ministry of Finance



statement said here.

The decision will benefit about 50.46 lakh Central government employees and 68.27 lakh pensioners across the country.

The combined financial impact on the exchequer on account of the increase in both DA and DR is estimated at Rs 6,791.24 crore per annum, according to the official release.

The increase follows the accepted formula based on the recommendations of the 7th Central Pay Commission and is aimed at compensating employees and pensioners for price rise.

The move is expected to provide additional financial support to government staff and retirees, while also supporting consumption demand in the economy. UNI

India-EU FTA to boost Ferrari's accessibility, act as demand catalyst: Regional Head

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 18 : Italian luxury carmaker Ferrari expects the proposed India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to significantly improve accessibility and accelerate demand in the Indian market, even as it maintains its global strategy of limited volumes and brand exclusivity.

Charles Antoine Geneste, Head of Southeast Asia and India at Ferrari, said the anticipated reduction in import duties could materially lower entry barriers for potential buyers while aligning with the company's long-term India strategy.

"The FTA is great news for us. We see it as an improvement of accessibility for our cars and a catalyst to accelerate the demand that we are already witnessing in India," Geneste told HT Auto.

Currently, completely built units (CBUs) attract import duties upwards of 100% in India. Under the proposed FTA framework, duties could reduce significantly, potentially to around 30%.

"With the information we have today, a reduction in import duty

from around 110% to 30% could translate into roughly a 30% reduction in retail price for customers," Geneste said.

He added that Ferrari intends to pass on the benefits of any duty reduction directly to customers. Interestingly, the company is already preparing buyers for a post-FTA scenario.

"Customers can already walk into dealerships, configure their cars, and effectively align deliveries with the expected implementation timeline of the FTA," he noted.

Despite the potential for increased demand, Ferrari reiterated that its global philosophy will remain unchanged, prioritising exclusivity over scale. "Our strategy is not volume-driven. As our founder said, we will always produce one car less than the demand," Geneste said.

This approach will continue to guide allocations in India as well, even if demand surges post-FTA. "We will follow demand with a balanced and strategic approach, but always maintaining the same philosophy, focusing on quality, community, and long-term engagement

rather than volumes," he added.

While India remains a relatively small market for ultra-luxury performance cars, Ferrari sees strong structural tailwinds, from rising wealth to improving infrastructure and growing enthusiast culture. "India is a developing market, but all indicators (from infrastructure to customer appetite) are moving in the right direction," Geneste said.

He pointed to expanding track infrastructure and increased branded activities as key enablers of market maturity.

Ayush Trivedi, Country Manager, Ferrari India, highlighted the natural alignment between the brand's core values and India's evolving consumer mindset. "There is an organic alignment between Ferrari's values (innovation, performance, pushing limits) and the aspirations of Indian customers today," Trivedi said.

Ferrari expects the FTA to bring in new customers and potentially accelerate purchase decisions. However, it emphasised that buying behaviour in this segment is not purely price-led. UNI

NIA adds terror funding charge in 2014 ISIS link case, files fifth supplementary chargesheet

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI, APR 18 : The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed its fifth supplementary chargesheet against former engineering student Areeb Majeed in the 2014 ISIS link case, adding the charge of raising funds

for terror activities.

Majeed, a resident of Kalyan in neighbouring Thane district, is already facing trial for commission of various terrorist acts and penal offences.

The chargesheet with additional section 17 of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)

against Majeed, the only arrested accused in the case, has been filed before the special NIA court. The said provision specifically deals with punishment for raising funds for a terrorist act. On Friday, special judge Chakor Baviskar took the cognizance of the chargesheet and directed

that a copy be given to the accused.

As per the probe agency, four engineering students—Fahad Shaikh, Saheem Tanki, Aman Tandel and Majeed had flown to Baghdad on May 23, 2014, with a group of 22 pilgrims to visit religious shrines in Iraq.

After returning to India, other pilgrims told police that Majeed, Fahad, Tandel and Tanki had gone to Fallujah.

On August 26, 2014, Tanki had called up Majeed's family and told them that their son had become a 'martyr' while fighting for ISIS in Syria.

SC cautions HCs against growing tendency to publicly criticise subordinate judicial officers

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APR 18 The Supreme Court has cautioned the high courts against the growing tendency to publicly criticise subordinate judicial officers, observing that "the high court is expected to act as the guardian of officers in the district judiciary".

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta made

the observation while setting aside a Calcutta High Court order cancelling an accused's bail in a tenancy-related criminal case. The top court said the dispute was largely civil in nature and that the high court was not justified in unsettling a bail order after nearly eight years on technical grounds.

"It has become a recent trend to castigate judicial officers and record adverse remarks/struc-

tures against them in judicial orders passed by the high court in the exercise of supervisory, appellate or revisional jurisdiction.

"The high court, being a court of record in the state, is expected to act as the guardian of the officers in the district judiciary," the bench said.

The apex court also said that while finding infirmities in the order passed by a judicial officer,



the immediate reaction ought not to be to make adverse or disparaging observations against the concerned officer in a judicial dispensation.

"Such disparaging remarks/strictures may ruin the career of the judicial officer in addition to demoralising the district judiciary as a whole.

"Power of superintendence conferred upon the high courts by Article 227 of the Constitu-

tion ought not to be used as a tool of oppression but rather as a mechanism for nurturing and guiding judicial officers in the state," the bench said.

The top court said that in some high courts, an in-house mechanism is already in place to take care of a situation whenever any flaw or infirmity is noted in any order passed by the trial judge while exercising the supervisory jurisdiction.



Got nothing to lose: Rahane hopeful despite KKR slump

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

KOLKATA: With six matches gone and still no win, Kolkata Knight Riders are staring at a tough road ahead in IPL 2026. Despite the poor run, captain Ajinkya Rahane has urged his players to stay positive, embrace the difficult phase, and focus on one game at a time.

KKR's latest setback came in Ahmedabad, where they suffered a five-wicket loss to Gujarat Titans, their fifth defeat in six matches. Their only point so far has come from a rain-affected game against Punjab Kings at Eden Gardens.

"It's about accepting and embracing these tough days. Every day is a new day... trying to do better, playing with freedom, and backing each other," Rahane said after the match.

With just one point and eight games left, KKR's playoff hopes are hanging by a thread. In a 10-team league, at least seven wins are usually needed to stay in contention, which means the three-time champions now have very little room for error.

Rahane, however, insisted the team is not giving up and will approach the remaining matches with a free mindset. "We're thinking one game at a time. It's tough when you lose games, but everyone is trying their best. No one wants to lose any match -- we all want to win -- but that's what sport is all about... keep your heads up. For us, it's about going out there, being positive, and playing with freedom. We've got nothing to lose."

"Let me tell you one thing: everyone is working really hard. For us, it's all about playing for our fans and the people of Kolkata, and we're trying to do our best."

"After each and every game, there's discus-

sion about how we can improve. Obviously, when you lose, you tend to think about combinations and the areas we can get better at, so the discussion is always on," he added.

Even Rahane's decisions have come under scrutiny. After winning the toss against Gujarat, he chose to bat first, raising many eyebrows, especially with dew expected later in the evening. The decision didn't work, as KKR were reduced to 32 for 3 early on. A fighting knock from Cameron Green, who scored 79 off 55 balls, helped KKR recover and post a competitive total.

"It's never easy when things are not going your way, and the courage he showed was fantastic. All credit to him," Rahane said.

"Yes, as a batting team we were thinking about 200 on this wicket. It would have been challenging, but let's not take anything away from his innings. Attacking Rashid Khan and their fast bowlers, he was fantastic tonight for us." Despite being under pressure, KKR's inexperienced bowling attack showed some fight. Gujarat, who were cruising at 95 for 1, were pushed till the final over before sealing the chase.

Rahane praised the young bowlers for their effort. "Special mention to our bowling unit. It's such an inexperienced attack with just two seniors in Sunil Narine and Varun Chakravarthy, but the kind of improvement they've shown, especially in the last three games, has been fantastic," he said. "Kartik Tyagi, Vaibhav Arora, and Anukul Roy have also been fantastic, bowling tough overs in the powerplay and picking up wickets. Our support staff is doing a great job of keeping the environment really good. It's all about accepting, but we will keep trying our best," he added.

Rodrigues: 'When time came to capitalise, we were not able to'

■ AGENCIES

DURBAN: When Jemimah Rodrigues and Harmanpreet Kaur were batting together and adding runs with some enterprise for the third wicket, India looked like they would get to around 175. That didn't happen. Rodrigues fell at "the wrong time", and all India could put up was 157. South Africa got past that with five balls in hand to take a 1-0 lead in the five-T20I series.

"We were around 15-20 runs short. With the kind of start we got - Shafali [Verma, who scored 34 in 20 balls], the way she batted was great. Then two wickets falling in two overs [Verma and Smriti Mandhana]..." Rodrigues said after the game. "But then Harman and I getting that partnership back. I think when we had built that momentum and removed the difficult part of it, when time came to capitalise, we were not able to capitalise."

"And also, the conditions were a little bit tricky in the first innings. There was slight hold on the wicket. But yeah, definitely we were 15 runs short. And, coming in the second innings, I think our bowlers did really well to get it to the last over. Like Shreyanka [Patil] bowled really well. [N] Shree Charani bowled really well. A little more better execution and I think we are going to come back stronger in the next game."

Rodrigues was sent back by Tumi Sekhukhune in the 15th over, leaving India 119 for 3. The stand with Harmanpreet was worth 71 in 51 balls, even though Harmanpreet batted till the end to remain unbeaten on a 33-ball 47, the lower-order batters couldn't quite come to the party.

"It was just that when the time came for us to capitalise, I got out, I fell on the wrong time," Rodrigues said. "Because for set batters, it's easier to bat through and take it deep. So, in the next match, I will come back and take that responsibility again."

"In the next game, I think in the day, again we know what the conditions will be like. We know that this pitch might have slight turn and slight hold. And I feel in the daytime, it's also going to play the same in both the innings. So, that is one positive where it's not much on the toss. And the second thing would be, as a bowling unit, we will work a lot more on our execution and come back stronger."

The T20 World Cup is later in the year. In June-July in England and Wales. India are the ODI world champions, but have lost four out of nine games against the top-ranked sides - Australia, England and now South Africa - in the last 12 months. They have a 10-4 win-loss record in this period, but that's bolstered by a 5-0 whitewash of Sri Lanka at home in December 2025.

"Coming to the World Cup, we have batting till the end, a lot of allrounders," Rodrigues said. "But also, the allrounders coming later have not got so much match time and experience. So, I think playing here in South Africa is going to be really great for us as a preparation also for the World Cup and for our entire batting order too."

DOON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL HOLDS ANNUAL CROSS COUNTRY RUN ALONG SRINAGAR-BARAMULLA HIGHWAY

■ HT SPORT DESK

PATTAN: Doon International School Singpora Pattan on Saturday organised its annual cross country run along the Srinagar-Baramulla National Highway, with students covering a distance of approximately 7 kilometres from Narbal to Singpora.

Around 365 students participated in the event, marking a significant turnout. The initiative was aimed at promoting physical fitness, discipline, and sportsmanship among students while encouraging outdoor sporting

culture. The run was flagged off by SDPO Pattan Raja Majid and DYSP Operations Abid Hussain. Both officers lauded the school administration for organising the event and urged students to adopt healthy lifestyles through regular physical activity.

Vice Chairman of the institution, Raajibhat, said such events play a crucial role in the holistic development of students. He noted that beyond academics, participation in sports activities helps build confidence, resilience, and teamwork among young learners.



He further stated that the school remains committed to providing platforms that nurture both physical and mental well-being of students, adding that more such initiatives will be organised in the future to engage youth constructively.

The event was conducted smoothly with active support from school staff and local authorities. Students displayed determination and enthusiasm throughout the race, making it a successful and well-coordinated sporting event.

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