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Udhampur Bus Tragedy; Death Toll Rises to 21



■ M S NAZKI
■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APR 20: Twenty-one people were killed and 51 others injured on Monday after an overcrowded pas-

senger bus veered off a hilly road and plunged nearly 100 metres down a slope in the Ramnagar area of Udhampur district, officials said.

The accident occurred near Kagort village around 10 am when the

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PM, HM, LG, CM & Ministers Express Grief Over Loss Of Lives

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APR 20: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday expressed pain over the loss of lives in a bus accident in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur and announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh for the families of those killed and Rs 50,000 for those injured. Geographic Reference

At least 21 people were killed and 29 injured when a passenger bus rolled down a hill while its driver was negotiating a

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Shah Says Govt "Ruthlessly Demolishing" Drug Cartels, 73 Convictions in 3 Months

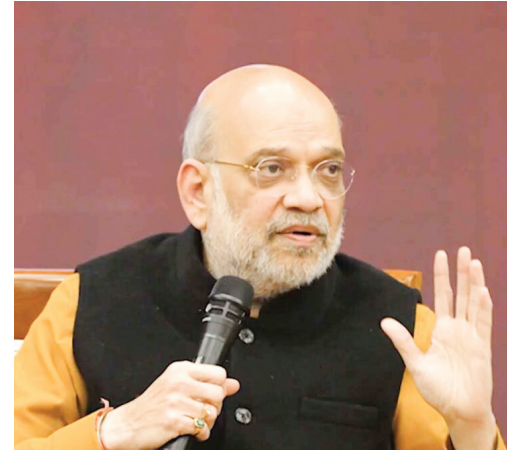
■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APR 20: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday asserted that the Centre is intensifying its crackdown on narcotics networks, stating that the government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is "ruthlessly demolishing" drug cartels while ensuring strict convictions against offenders.

Highlighting the latest achievements of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Shah said 73 drug offenders were convicted in 35 cases during the first quarter of 2026, reflecting a significant push to dismantle the drug trade through legal enforcement.

Of the total convictions, four offenders were awarded the maximum punishment of 20 years' rigorous imprisonment, while 54 received sentences of 10 years or more. Courts also imposed cumulative fines amounting to Rs 1.22 crore, according to official data.

Among the key cases was the seizure of 2.75 kg of heroin at Ahmedabad airport in 2021 and another involving 4.23 kg recovered near Fazilka along the India-Pakistan border in 2022.



Two foreign nationals linked to these cases were sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment.

In another significant case related to the diversion of pseudoephedrine in 2023, three accused, including the director of a Sonipat-based pharmaceutical firm, were sentenced to seven years in prison and fined Rs 1.5 lakh

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Smart City Bus Expansion Sparks Valley Shutdown, Transporters Cry Foul

■ HT NEWS DESK / KNO

SRINAGAR, APR 20: A valley-wide shutdown of public transport brought life to a near standstill across the Kashmir Valley on Monday, as transporters enforced a "chakka jam" against the expansion of Smart City bus services into district and inter-district routes.

Major roads across Srinagar and other parts of north, south and central Kashmir wore a deserted look, with buses, minibuses and taxis remaining off the roads. Key transport hubs, including Parimpora, Batamaloo, Nowgam, Sopore and Anantnag, witnessed a complete suspension of activity, leaving thousands of commuters stranded.

The shutdown was called by various transport unions under the banner of the All Jammu and Kashmir Transport Welfare Association, which accused authorities of following an "unconsulted and unregulated expansion" of Smart City bus operations into routes traditionally served by private operators.

Transport leaders said the move has triggered widespread anxiety among those dependent on the sector for their livelihood. "We are not against development or modern transport, but

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Nowshera Gets Major Infra Boost as Omar Abdullah Opens Road, 100-Bed Hospital

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

NOWSHERA, APR 20: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday inaugurated a key road project and a 100-bedded Sub-District Hospital in Nowshera, marking a significant push to strengthen connectivity and healthcare infrastructure in Rajouri district.

Accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, Health and Medical Education Minister Sakeena Itoo and Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani, the Chief Minister was accorded a warm public reception, with large crowds lining the route to welcome him.

The upgraded road from NH-144A Bridge to

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From Dhaba Owner to Stock Trader : 16-Year Disguise of Lashkar's Oldest Operative Ends in Srinagar Bust

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR/NEW DELHI, APR 20: Living under a series of shifting identities and professions, one of the oldest operatives of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) managed to evade security agencies for nearly 16 years by blending into everyday life across several Indian states, officials said on Monday.

The operative, Abdullah alias Abu Hureira, who was arrested earlier this month by Srinagar Police, had worked as

a cook, plumber, painter, electrician and even a stock trader while clandestinely carrying out his activities. Investigators said his ability to adapt and remain inconspicuous enabled him to establish bases outside Jammu and Kashmir as part of a broader terror strategy.

Having infiltrated into the Union Territory around 2010, Abdullah moved across Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab, taking up small jobs to integrate with local populations. Officials said he used

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J&K ON HIGH ALERT AHEAD OF PAHALGAM ATTACK ANNIVERSARY

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, APR 20: Security has been significantly strengthened across Jammu and Kashmir ahead of the first anniversary of the April 22, 2025 terror attack in Pahalgam that left 26 people, mostly tourists, dead.

Officials said senior officers are holding a series of preparatory meetings to finalise a comprehensive security plan, with a focus on religious shrines, tourist hubs and vital installations

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CS outlines vision for digitally empowered J&K at 'Tech Saksham' workshop

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 20: Presiding over "Tech Saksham", a landmark capacity-building workshop jointly convened by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and NICTE of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) at the Convention Centre, Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today set



a resolute tone for the digital future of Jammu and Kashmir.

He emphasised that digital governance is no longer a mere supporting function, but the absolute backbone of transparent, efficient and responsive public service delivery mechanism. The workshop was also attended by Shantmanu, State Election

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Dry Spell Ahead as Temperatures Rise Across J&K

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, APR 20: Day temperatures climbed across Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, with the Meteorological Department (MeT) forecasting largely dry weather conditions across the Union Territory till April 23, followed by intermittent rain and thundershowers later in the week.

According to official data, most places in both the Kashmir Valley and the Jammu division recorded above-normal temperatures. Srinagar registered a maximum temperature of 23.5 degrees Celsius, nearly 2.7 degrees above normal, while the minimum settled at 9.4 degrees Celsius.

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

Udhampur Bus.....

driver of the private bus, en route from Ramnagar to Udhampur, lost control while negotiating a blind curve. The vehicle rolled down the hillside, crushed an auto-rickshaw and landed upside down on the road below.

Officials said over 65 passengers, including women and students, were on board. Fifteen persons were found dead at the scene, while others succumbed to injuries at hospitals, taking the toll to 21.

An Army convoy passing through the area immediately launched rescue operations, joined by police and local residents. The severely mangled condition of the bus, with its top portion torn off, made the rescue operation difficult and prolonged.

Deputy Inspector General of Police Shiv Kumar Sharma said police teams and senior officers rushed to the spot, while the bus was later straightened using a hydraulic crane. He said locals played a crucial role in assisting the rescue teams.

Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo said 51 injured persons have been hospitalised, with 43 admitted to Udhampur District Hospital, six in Ramnagar hospital and two critically injured shifted to Government Medical College, Jammu.

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the loss of lives. The Prime Minister announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh for the families of the deceased and Rs 50,000 for the injured.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also expressed grief and announced financial assistance, assuring all possible support to the victims and their families.

Authorities said the incident highlights the urgent need for strict enforcement of traffic regulations, particularly against overloading and poor vehicle maintenance, to prevent such tragedies.

PM, HM, LG.....

blind curve near Kagort village in the Ram Nagar area in Udhampur district on Monday morning.

"Pained to hear about the loss of lives due to a bus accident in Udhampur, Jammu and Kashmir. I extend my heartfelt condolences to those who have lost their near and dear ones.

"I pray for the speedy recovery of the injured. An ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh from PMNRF would be given to the next of kin of each of those who lost their lives in the tragic mishap. The injured would be given Rs 50,000," Modi said in a post on X.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday expressed condolences to the families of those killed in the Udhampur bus accident.

In a message posted on X, Shah said the road accident in Udhampur is extremely tragic.

"I express my deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in this accident. The local administration is fully engaged with utmost promptness in relief and rescue operations. I pray for the speedy recovery of the injured" he said.

A passenger bus rolled down a hillside in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district on Monday, leaving 21 people dead and 29 others injured, officials said. The bus crushed an auto-rickshaw before landing upside down on the road below.

An Army convoy passing along the hilly stretch led the rescue operation after the driver of the private bus lost control while negotiating a blind curve near the hilltop Kagort village in the Ramnagar area around 10 am.

The bus was carrying 50 passengers, mostly those heading to their daily jobs, from Ramnagar to Udhampur.

The rescue operation proved extremely challenging as the vehicle had been reduced to a mangled heap of iron, with its top portion almost completely torn off.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday condoled the loss of lives in the road accident in Udhampur district and assured all possible assistance to the families of the deceased.

They also directed authorities concerned to provide immediate relief and necessary support to those affected.

At least 15 people were killed and 20 others injured when a passenger bus rolled down a hill in the district this morning.

In a post on X, the Lt Governor said, "Tragic road accident in Udhampur is heart-breaking. My deepest condolences to bereaved families. May God grant them strength. Praying for a speedy recovery of the injured." Sinha said he directed the district administration, police, the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and health department to provide every possible assistance to those affected.

The chief minister extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured.

In a post on X, Abdullah said, "The government stands firmly with the victims and their families in this hour of grief, and that all necessary assistance is being extended." Former chief minister and PDP

president Mehbooba Mufti also expressed grief over the incident.

"Deeply saddened by the tragic Udhampur-Ramnagar bus accident. Condolences to the bereaved families and pray for the swift recovery of those injured," she said in a post on X.

Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo has expressed deep sorrow and anguish over the tragic loss of lives in the unfortunate bus accident on the Ramnagar-Udhampur route.

The Health Minister conveyed her heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved families and prayed for eternal peace to the departed souls. She also expressed solidarity with the injured passengers, wishing them a speedy and complete recovery.

Taking immediate cognizance of the incident, the Minister issued urgent directions to the Principals of Government Medical College Jammu and Government Medical College Udhampur to ensure swift and coordinated medical response for all those injured.

She instructed the Principals of both medical facilities to keep emergency services on high alert and ensure prompt admission of all referred patients without delay.

"Deploy dedicated teams of senior doctors, trauma specialists, surgeons and paramedical staff for continuous monitoring and treatment. Maintain round-the-clock availability of specialist care, including critical care and surgical interventions wherever required", Sakeena Itoo directed both Principals.

The Minister also asked them to ensure adequate availability of blood, essential medicines and life-saving equipment in emergency wards and ICUs, as well as establish a coordinated referral mechanism between hospitals to handle critical cases efficiently.

The Minister further directed that no laxity should be tolerated in the treatment of the injured and emphasized that all necessary medical facilities must be extended free of cost on priority.

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today expressed profound sorrow and grief over the tragic loss of lives in the unfortunate bus accident at Jalo on the Ramnagar-Udhampur route.

Deeply saddened by the incident, the Deputy Chief Minister conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and prayed for eternal peace to the departed souls. He also extended his sympathies to those injured in the accident and wished them a speedy and full recovery.

He assured that the administration is extending all necessary medical care to the injured and that every possible support will be provided to the affected families during this difficult time.

The Deputy Chief Minister prayed for strength and courage for the grieving families to endure this irreparable loss.

Shah Says.....

each. The company was also penalised and its licence to manufacture the controlled substance was withdrawn.

Reiterating the government's resolve, Shah said efforts are underway to eliminate every "breathing space" for drug rackets and called upon enforcement agencies to prioritise prosecution in major undertrial cases involving key traffickers.

Smart City.....

when routes sustaining thousands of families for decades are taken away without safeguards, it becomes a question of survival," a union representative said.

Operators claimed that repeated assurances regarding route rationalisation and regulatory balance have not materialised on the ground, adding that rising fuel prices, mounting loan liabilities and declining passenger flow have already placed the sector under severe stress.

At Parimpora Bus Stand, usually abuzz with activity, rows of idle vehicles and shuttered booking counters underscored the scale of the disruption. Several drivers said uncertainty over the future of their work has deepened in recent months.

The impact of the shutdown was felt sharply across the Valley, with students missing classes, office-goers facing delays and patients struggling to reach hospitals. In many areas, commuters were forced to walk long distances or rely on private cabs charging higher fares due to increased demand.

In view of the disruption, the University of Kashmir announced that separate examinations would be organized for students who could not reach their centres on Monday.

The protest comes amid the ongoing rollout of Smart City transport initiatives aimed at modernising urban mobility in Srinagar. However, transporters allege that extending these services beyond city limits into semi-urban and district routes has created direct competition with private operators without a clear regulatory framework.

While union leaders described the shutdown as a "warning," they cautioned

that further action could follow if their concerns are not addressed. "If there is no immediate dialogue, we will be forced to decide our next course collectively," they said.

Authorities, meanwhile, have not issued any official response to the transporters' demands or the widespread disruption caused by the shutdown.

Nowshera Gets.....

Nowshera town, completed at a cost of Rs. 7.99 crore by the PWD (R&B) Department, is expected to ease traffic flow and reduce travel time. Abdullah later inaugurated the 100-bedded Sub-District Hospital, built at an estimated cost of Rs. 18.18 crore and equipped with modern diagnostic and treatment facilities to improve healthcare access in the region.

The Chief Minister inspected various sections of the hospital, including X-ray, ECG and ultrasound units, and interacted with doctors, staff and patients to assess the quality of services.

Addressing a public gathering, Abdullah said governance must focus on improving people's lives through better infrastructure, healthcare, education and employment opportunities. He reiterated that the aspirations of the Pir Panjal region would continue to guide government policies and ensure responsive administration.

He also highlighted welfare measures, including support for daily wagers, enhanced benefits for Anganwadi and ASHA workers, free gas cylinders for economically weaker sections, electricity assistance and free bus travel for women.

Reaffirming his political stance, Abdullah stressed the need to restore statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, calling it a commitment made to the people.

Earlier, the Chief Minister reviewed progress on the Sungal Tunnel project being executed by the Border Roads Organisation. Officials informed him that the 2.79-km tunnel across the Kalidhar Range is expected to cut travel time by 40-45 minutes and is slated for completion by June 30.

Choudhary said the government remains committed to equitable development across regions, while Itoo announced the establishment of a Government Degree College at Seri block in Nowshera. Other leaders also addressed the gathering, reiterating the administration's focus on development and public welfare.

Pahalgam.....

Following registration of the FIR in 1990 and filing of the chargesheet in 2003, the court, after examining the evidence, delivered its judgment on April 20, 2026, convicting all five accused. The matter has been posted for arguments on the quantum of punishment on April 24.

The ACB described the conviction as a major milestone in its ongoing efforts to ensure transparency and accountability in public service.

Meanwhile, in a separate development, the ACB has filed a chargesheet against former BDO Kupwara Abdul Majeed Ganie, along with officials Bashir Ahmad Mir and Sajad Ahmad Dar, and two private individuals, Zakir Hussain Pir and Gowher Yaqoob Khan, for their alleged role in siphoning off public funds.

The case stemmed from a complaint filed in July 2021 through the ACB grievance portal, alleging embezzlement of funds meant for developmental works in Block Kupwara. Investigation revealed that the accused, in alleged connivance, manipulated official records and fabricated electronic data to generate fraudulent Fund Transfer Orders, diverting funds into unauthorised bank accounts.

The probe further uncovered instances of double withdrawals, payments against non-existent works and illegal routing of labour payments through job card holders for subsequent misappropriation. Investigators also found that key records were destroyed or withheld and crucial digital evidence was not produced, indicating attempts to conceal the offence.

The ACB said the आरोपियों caused a loss of Rs. 4.86 lakh to the state exchequer while securing wrongful gains for themselves. The chargesheet has been presented before the competent court for judicial determination.

From Dhaba.....

forged documents, including Aadhaar and PAN cards, to operate freely and receive digital payments, masking his identity further.

Fluent in Punjabi, Abdullah had planned to relocate to Amritsar but abandoned the move fearing detection. He later settled for a time in Malerkotla, where he ran a roadside eatery before shutting it due to low earnings. During this period, he reportedly learned stock trading online and built a modest profit, even advising others on investments to strengthen his cover.

His arrest came during a coordinated operation launched on March 31 under the supervision of Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat, which led to the busting of a "deep-rooted" interstate terror module. Four others, including three Srinagar residents,

were also arrested for allegedly providing shelter, food and logistical support.

The investigation led to the discovery of multiple hideouts in and around Srinagar, from where security forces recovered arms and ammunition, including AK-series rifles, pistols, grenades and electronic devices.

Officials said Abdullah and another Pakistani national, Usman alias Khubaib, both categorised as 'A+' militants, had remained active in the Kashmir Valley for years and were involved in building networks beyond the region using forged identities and covert financial channels.

The crackdown follows earlier breakthroughs by Srinagar Police in dismantling terror modules, including one linked to the 2025 Red Fort blast, indicating a shift in militant tactics involving deeper infiltration into civilian and professional spaces.

J&K on High.....

across the Union Territory. The attack at Baisaran meadow, which also claimed the life of a local pony handler, had triggered a sharp decline in tourist arrivals and prompted authorities to shut nearly 50 destinations as a precaution. Several of these sites were later reopened in phases following security audits.

As part of enhanced safety measures, a QR code-based identification system has been introduced for tourism service providers in Pahalgam to improve monitoring and ensure visitor security.

Security agencies have been placed on high alert following inputs about suspected militant movement along the International Border, particularly in Kathua and Samba districts. Vigil has also been intensified at major religious sites, including the Vaishno Devi shrine.

Senior Superintendent of Police Samba, Anuj Kumar, reviewed security arrangements in the Ramgarh sector, inspecting checkpoints and border police posts, and directing personnel to maintain heightened vigilance. He also visited Border Security Force outposts and stressed the need for close coordination among agencies.

Officials said security forces have intensified anti-terror operations across Jammu and Kashmir over the past year, resulting in the killing of around 46 militants, including those linked to the Pahalgam attack.

In the Jammu region, operations in Kishtwar, Udhampur and Kathua districts have yielded significant results despite difficult terrain and weather conditions.

On February 22, security forces eliminated a group of Jaish-e-Mohammad militants, including commander Saifullah, in the Chatroo forests of Kishtwar. Earlier, on February 4, two militants were killed in the Basantgarh area of Udhampur after forces targeted a cave hideout, while another commander, Usman alias Abu Maviya, was neutralised in Kathua's Billawar area on January 23.

According to the Army's White Knight Corps, seven militants involved in attacks on civilians and security personnel have been neutralised in Kishtwar district during 2025 and 2026. Officials said sustained operations, including winter deployments in higher reaches, have restricted militant movement, though concerns over infiltration attempts along the International Border persist, with forces maintaining round-the-clock surveillance and search operations.

CS outlines.....

Commissioner, J&K; Chandraker Bharti, Principal Secretary, Home Department; Dr. Piyush Singla, Secretary Information Technology Department; and Mahima Madan, Chief Executive Officer JaKeGA.

Varindra Seth, Deputy Director General NIC, Alok Tiwari, MD NICS; Jaskaran Singh Modi, State Informatics Officer; and Sanjay Gupta, ASIO NIC, were also present.

The Chief Secretary announced that the administration is firmly shifting towards a 'Whole-of-Government' approach. This strategic move is designed to break down departmental silos through interoperability and shared digital architecture, ensuring seamless and accelerated service delivery for all citizens.

The Chief Secretary highlighted that for a region defined by its geographical diversity, digital platforms serve as essential bridge. He stressed that robust digital systems are instrumental in significantly reducing administrative barriers, compressing service timelines, curtailing corruption and ultimately sustaining the bond of trust between citizens and the administration.

He favoured that digital platforms must feature user-friendly interfaces

and local language support to ensure no citizen is left behind in this revolution. He further noted that structured, well-governed data will serve as the bedrock for deploying Artificial Intelligence in public administration, turning raw information into actionable intelligence for better governance.

The Chief Secretary made it clear that strict adherence to cybersecurity protocols and the development of comprehensive crisis management plans across all departments are non-negotiable imperatives. He called for continuous capacity building of government personnel and urged robust collaboration between government departments, NICS/ NIC and premier academic institutions to accelerate the digital roadmap.

The Chief Secretary's address highlighted two major milestones in the shape of MeitY sanctioned Centre of Excellence in AI, which will be hosted at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Jammu through a Special Purpose Vehicle to drive region-specific research and innovation. Additionally he made out that the Government is actively contemplating to establish two dedicated IT Parks at both Jammu and Srinagar. These parks are envisioned as vital catalysts for nurturing the local start-up ecosystem and driving large-scale employment generation for the youth.

Addressing the gathering, State Election Commissioner J&K, highlighted the all-pervasive role of information technology across all sectors of governance.

Offering a thought-provoking analogy on Artificial Intelligence, Shantmanu cautioned that while AI should be embraced as a tool, it must also be studied with the rigorous vigilance reserved for a potential adversary. He stressed the need to thoroughly understand AI to harness its full potential while proactively mitigating the risks of its misuse. Drawing on his recent observations of election management frameworks in other states, he further underscored the transformative impact of IT tools in enhancing transparency for voters, candidates and the electoral machinery.

The workshop comprised specialised knowledge-sharing sessions on vital frontier technologies, starting with a crucial deep-dive into Cyber Security led by National Cyber Security Expert Amit Dubey, followed by an exploration of Cloud capabilities by Rajendran Dandapani, Director and President, Zoho Corporation. The technical agenda culminated in a dedicated session on Artificial Intelligence by Alok Tiwari. Vote of thanks was presented by Jaskaran Singh Modi, State Informatics Officer NIC J&K at the culmination of the session.

Dry Spell....

Qazigund recorded a high of 24 degrees Celsius, about 3.8 degrees above normal, while Pahalgam reported 20.4 degrees Celsius. Kupwara and Kokernag also witnessed above-normal temperatures at 21.6 degrees Celsius and 22.8 degrees Celsius, respectively. Gulmarg, a key tourist destination, recorded a maximum of 13.2 degrees Celsius, around 2.6 degrees above the seasonal average.

In the Jammu division, Jammu city recorded a maximum temperature of 34.7 degrees Celsius, 1.6 degrees above normal, while Katra registered 33 degrees Celsius, nearly 4.8 degrees above the average. Batote and Baderwah also reported temperatures above normal.

The MeT department said no significant rainfall was recorded across most stations during the day, although some areas received light precipitation over the past 24 hours. Pahalgam recorded the highest rainfall at 9.2 mm.

An official said the weather is expected to remain "generally dry" from April 20 to 23, with only brief spells of light rain at isolated places.

From April 24 to 25, conditions are likely to turn partly to generally cloudy, with one or two spells of light rain or thundershowers expected at scattered to many places. Gusty winds are also likely at a few locations, particularly during late afternoon and evening hours.

On April 26, brief spells of light rain or thundershowers may occur at a few places, while April 27 and 28 are expected to remain largely dry. Another spell of light rain and thundershowers, accompanied by gusty winds, is forecast at isolated places on April 29 and 30.

The MeT department has advised farmers to continue agricultural operations till April 23 in view of the prevailing dry weather conditions. It also said that day temperatures are expected to rise by 2 to 4 degrees Celsius across many parts of the Union Territory over the coming days.



Chief Secretary visits Road Accident Victims at GMC Udhampur

Assures Best Possible Medical Care to the victims

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR, APR 20: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today visited the Government Medical College (GMC), Udhampur, to enquire about the condition of individuals injured in a tragic road accident that occurred at Kaghote, Ramnagar.

The Chief Secretary was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Minga Sherpa; Transport Commissioner, Vishesh Paul Mahajan; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Prem Singh; along with other senior officials of the district administration.

During his visit, the Chief Secretary interacted with the injured and reviewed the medical care being provided. He directed the hospital administration and medical staff to ensure that all victims receive the highest standard of treatment and



adequate support facilities without any delay.

Describing the incident as deeply unfortunate and distress-

ing, the Chief Secretary expressed profound concern over the loss and suffering caused by the accident. He assured that the gov-

ernment is closely monitoring the situation and extending all possible assistance to the affected individuals and their

families.

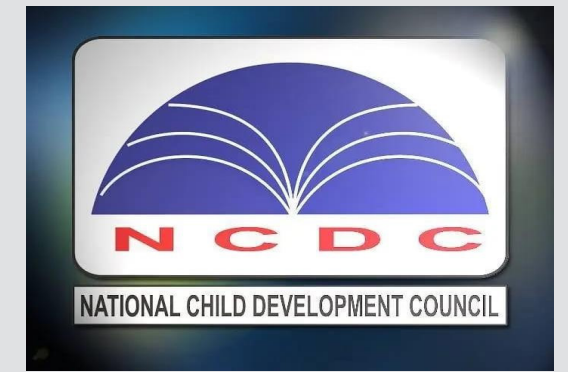
The Chief Secretary further informed that immediately upon receiving news of the accident, the district administration, in coordination with the Army and other concerned agencies, promptly launched a comprehensive rescue and evacuation operation to provide timely medical assistance to the victims.

Emphasizing the critical importance of road safety, he underscored the need for strict enforcement of traffic regulations to prevent such incidents in the future. He called for stringent action against overloading and stressed the necessity of ensuring the fitness and roadworthiness of vehicles to safeguard human lives. He reiterated that the administration remains committed to supporting the victims and taking all necessary measures to enhance road safety and prevent recurrence of such tragic incidents in J&K.

NCDC Core Committee Holds Deliberations on Rising Heatwave Concerns

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 20: The National Child Development Council (NCDC) recently held a core committee meeting to discuss the growing concerns about extreme heat across India. The focus was on child safety, public health, and environmental responsibility. During the session, members pointed out alarming reports that suggest India might see temperatures over 50°C in the weeks ahead. The discussion highlighted the increasing intensity of summers. Several regions are already experiencing unusually high temperatures and humidity.



Committee members stressed the urgent need for preventive measures. Key recommendations included staying hydrated, avoiding outdoor activities during peak hours (10 a.m. to 3 p.m.), and wearing climate-appropriate clothing like light-colored, loose cotton garments. They paid special attention to vulnerable groups, including children, the elderly, and outdoor workers. Caregivers and authorities were urged to ensure their safety.

The meeting also emphasized the importance of community responsibility. Participants called for small yet impactful actions like providing water for birds, regularly watering plants, and promoting greener surroundings through tree planting. They discussed the role of natural cooling methods, such as proper ventilation and reducing reliance on extreme air conditioning. Members warned about risks like dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke. They advised including fluids like buttermilk, coconut water, and fresh juices in daily diets. They also cautioned against sudden exposure to extreme cold, such as ice baths or very cold water, which can negatively affect the body.

From a policy standpoint, members suggested that governments consider changing working hours for laborers, improving public access to drinking water, and launching awareness campaigns on heat safety. They raised concerns about environmental issues, deforestation, and urbanization as factors that contribute to rising temperatures.

Massive Anti-Drug Rally Held in Kulgam Under Nasha Mukht Abhiyan

■ FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, APR 20: In a continued effort to combat drug abuse and promote a healthier society, District Police Kulgam on Monday organized a large-scale anti-drug awareness rally at Qaimoh under the ongoing Nasha Mukht Abhiyan.

The rally was conducted on the directions of SSP Kulgam, Anayat Ali Chowdhary (IPS), as part of a sustained campaign to sensitize the public—especially the youth—about the harmful effects of substance abuse. The awareness march, held in the form of a Pad Yatra, witnessed enthusiastic participation from police officers and officials, local residents, youth from Qaimoh and adjoining areas, as well as members of the general public. The overwhelming turnout reflected a strong collective resolve to eradicate drug abuse from society.

Participants carried placards bearing anti-drug messages and raised slogans advocating a drug-free lifestyle. The rally commenced from Wanpoh and passed through Khudwani before culminating at Kawaki Bazar in Qaimoh. Along the route, participants actively engaged with shopkeepers and locals, spreading awareness about the dangers of drug addiction and encouraging community involvement in the fight against narcotics. During the rally, all participants took a pledge to contribute towards building a drug-free environment and to actively support initiatives aimed at curbing substance abuse.

Reinforcing the message, "Say No to Drugs, Say Yes to Life," the Pad Yatra served as an effective platform to strengthen public awareness, promote community participation, and further the vision of a safe, healthy, and drug-free Jammu and Kashmir. The initiative is part of a broader campaign by District Police Kulgam to address the growing concern of drug abuse and to foster a sense of responsibility among citizens, particularly the younger generation, to work collectively towards a better future.

Srinagar Hosts Grand Launch of Rafiq Raaz's "Qalam Tarash"

Scholars hail work as a major addition to Kashmiri literary criticism



■ JAMEEL ANSARI
■ HT CULTURE DESK

SRINAGAR, APR 19: A prominent literary gathering in Srinagar marked the formal release of "Qalam Tarash," a collection of critical essays by noted writer and poet Rafiq Raaz, with speakers describing the book as a significant contribution to contemporary literary criticism.

The event was held at the Seminar Hall of the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages at Lal Mandi under the joint auspices of Adbi Markaz Kamraz and the Cultural Academy. It was presided over by eminent literary figure Ayaz Rasool Nazki, while several scholars and writers attended the function.

The programme began with a

recitation from the Holy Quran followed by a Naat, setting a reflective tone for the proceedings.

Welcoming the participants, Adbi Markaz Kamraz President Mohammad Amin Bhat said that Rafiq Raaz represents a generation of writers who view literature as a serious intellectual responsibility. He noted that "Qalam Tarash" seeks to deepen critical engagement within literary circles.

Presenting a detailed review, Dr. Nazir Azad described the book as a comprehensive critical work that explores multiple dimensions of literature with depth and balance. He said the author's analytical approach invites readers into meaningful discourse.

Dr. Rafiq Masoodi highlighted the role of Adbi Markaz Kamraz in promoting quality literary activities

and expressed hope that the publication would encourage further critical writing. Other speakers, including Syed Saad-ud-Din Saadi, also underlined the importance of the work.

Speaking on the occasion, Rafiq Raaz said the book is the result of years of study and reflection, aimed at keeping the tradition of literary criticism vibrant and relevant.

In his presidential remarks, Ayaz Rasool Nazki stressed that such works are vital for sustaining literary traditions and fostering critical awareness among readers and writers alike.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Javid Iqbal Khan, while proceedings were conducted by Shabnam Tilgami. A large number of writers, intellectuals and literature enthusiasts from across the Valley attended the function.

Smart City Bus Expansion Faces Backlash from Rural Transport Sector

Strike by Private Operators Disrupts Traffic in North Kashmir Districts

■ DR. AB QAYOOM

KUPWARA, APR 20: Traffic movement and daily life were partially disrupted across North Kashmir on Monday as private transport operators observed a strike opposing the proposed expansion of government-run Smart City bus services into district and rural routes. The shutdown call was given by the Transport Welfare Association (J&K), resulting in buses, Sumos, Ecos, Taveras, and other public transport vehicles remaining off the roads in several areas. Commuters in Kupwara, Handwara, Baramulla, Sopore, and Bandipora faced inconvenience, although private vehicles continued to ply normally,

preventing a complete breakdown of movement. Protests and sit-ins were held at multiple bus stands, with one of the largest demonstrations taking place at the Handwara bus stand. Transporters gathered along with their passenger vehicles, raising slogans and voicing concerns about the government's plan. Union representatives, including Ajaz Ahmad Mir and Ghulam Mohammad, led the peaceful protest. Participants expressed apprehension that extending Smart City bus services beyond Srinagar into rural belts could significantly impact their livelihoods.

Speaking on the occasion, transporter Ajaz Ahmad Mir said that the existing fleet of



Smart City buses has already affected their earnings. "Our daily income has dropped drastically, making it difficult to meet household expenses. We have been facing issues for the past seven years, but our grievances remain unaddressed," he said. Another op-

erator pointed out that while the operation of Smart City buses within Srinagar and district headquarters may be manageable, their expansion into far-flung areas would intensify financial pressure, particularly on those repaying vehicle loans. The protesters

warned that thousands of families dependent on private transport services could face economic hardship if the expansion plan proceeds. They urged the government to reconsider and roll back the proposal, citing uncertainty over the future of the private transport sector.

Despite the strike, the situation across North Kashmir remained largely peaceful, with protests confined to designated locations and no reports of any major law and order incidents. Transport leaders said they would abide by any decision taken collectively by the union in the coming days, indicating that further action may follow if their demands are not addressed.

IDE bootcamp to shape next-gen entrepreneurs begins at KU

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 20: The University of Kashmir (KU) on Monday began Edition 3, Phase II of a five-day Innovation, Design & Entrepreneurship (IDE) Bootcamp at the Main Campus. The bootcamp is being hosted by the Centre for Innovation, Incubation & Entrepreneurship (CIIE), Institute of Technology (IoT), Zakura Campus, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell, AICTE, Wadhvani Foundation, and SBI Foundation. The event is being conducted simultaneously with 13 institutions across the country. The bootcamp aims to develop problem-solving abilities among participants and guide them through the process of turning ideas into workable solutions, with a focus on innovation, entrepreneurship, and real-world application.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Vice-Chancellor, KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, said, "Platforms like these help students move beyond theory and engage with ideas that have practical relevance. It is important to nurture innovation at the institutional level and support young minds in exploring entrepreneurial pathways."

Shri Saurabh Bhagat (IAS), Commissioner Secretary for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs to the Government of J&K, said that such initiatives are important for building a culture of innovation and encouraging youth to contribute to economic and social development through entrepreneurship. Director, Outreach & Extension, SKUAST-K, Prof. Raihana Habib, highlighted the importance of collaborative platforms that bring together academia, industry, and policy stakeholders to support innovation-driven growth.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Dean & Director, IoT Zakura Campus, KU, Prof. Mohammad Tariq Bandy, said that the bootcamp provides a structured space for participants to engage with design thinking, develop business models, and refine their startup ideas through guided mentorship. The five-day long bootcamp includes sessions on design thinking, business model development, startup pitching, industry interaction, and hands-on workshops led by experts from different domains. Around 250 students, startup teams, faculty mentors, experts, and officials from institutions across the country are participating in the camp.

Rana directs fast-tracking, streamlining of FRA compliance in J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 20: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, on Monday directed the officials to expedite and streamline the compliance mechanism under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The directions were issued during a high-level review meeting held at the Civil Secretariat in Jammu to assess the progress on Act's implementation in the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by senior officials, including Commissioner Secretary Forests, Ecology & Environment, Sheetal Nanda; Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Sarvesh Rai; Secretary Tribal Affairs Department, Prasanna Ramaswamy G; Director Tribal Affairs J&K, Mohd. Mumtaz Ali; Director Finance, Tribal Affairs Department, Iftikhar Chouhan and Nodal Officer, Tribal Research Institute, Dr. Abdul Khahir, among others. Emphasising the need for a more efficient and transparent framework, the Minister instructed



the officials to accelerate the recognition of forest rights and ensure prompt operationalisation of Forest Rights Act (FRA) cells at the district level. He noted that these cells play a pivotal role in facilitating claim documentation, ensuring inter-departmental coordination and enabling timely uploading of records.

"The formation of FRA cells must be fast-tracked. The entire process should be time-bound, coordinated and people-centric, with clearly defined accountability

at every stage to safeguard the interests of tribal communities," Rana said.

Highlighting the importance of inter-departmental synergy, the Minister called for seamless convergence between the revenue, forest and tribal affairs departments to eliminate procedural delays and administrative bottlenecks that hinder effective implementation.

It is pertinent to mention that Jammu and Kashmir Government has designated the Tribal Affairs Department as the nodal agency

for implementing the Act, replacing the Forest Department in this role. The legislation aims to address the long standing concerns of the forest-dwelling communities by recognising both individual and community rights over forest land and resources for Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers.

Seeking greater transparency and accountability, Rana directed the officials to compile comprehensive data on rejected claims, along with detailed reasons

for such rejections. This, he said, would help ensure that the genuine beneficiaries are not excluded and enable corrective measures wherever necessary.

The Minister further underscored the critical role of Gram Sabhas in the process, stressing the need for adequate and meaningful representation of tribal communities in these grassroots institutions, which are responsible for verifying and recommending the claims under the Act.

Calling for intensified outreach, Rana instructed the officials to strengthen awareness campaigns so that eligible beneficiaries are fully informed about their rights and the procedures for filing claims. He emphasised the need for district-level awareness drives and training programmes to educate the communities about their entitlements under the Act.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to protect the rights and welfare of tribal populations, the Minister called for regular monitoring, periodic reviews and strict adherence to timelines to ensure effective and timely implementation of the Forest Rights Act across Jammu and Kashmir.

Baramulla ramps up preparations for Census 2027

HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, APRIL 20: Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Baramulla, Nisar Ahmad today chaired a review meeting of charge officers at the DC office meeting hall here to assess the preparedness for the upcoming Census 2027 exercise in the district.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on the roles and responsibilities at the charge level to ensure smooth and timely execution of the census operations.

Emphasis was laid on the creation of House Listing Blocks (HLBs) and accurate mapping of villages to facilitate systematic enumeration. The officers were directed to ensure that all necessary groundwork is completed well in advance to avoid any last-minute challenges.



During the meeting, the CPO stressed on the charge officers to finalize the list of supervisors and enumerators, ensuring that the selected personnel possess a basic understanding of technology to effectively handle digital tools and applications associated with the census process.

To strengthen capacity building, the CPO highlighted the need for organizing training sessions in batches for enumerators and supervisors which will focus on familiarizing field staff with census procedures, digital platforms, and data collection methodologies.

Underscoring the importance of public participation, the CPO called for a robust Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaign at the grassroots level and hold Special Gram Sabhas across all the 402 panchayats and municipal wards to raise awareness about the significance of the census and to encourage active public participation.

The CPO reiterated the importance of coordinated efforts, timely execution, and community involvement in making Census 2027 a success, urging all stakeholders to work with commitment and diligence towards achieving the objectives of this vital national exercise.

The meeting was attended by the District Coordinator for census Baramulla and all the appointed charge officers.

DC Kulgam reviews Projects under NABARD Sector

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, APRIL 20: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam today chaired a review meeting of NABARD funded RIDF Projects in the district.

The meeting was attended by JD Planning, ACR, ACD, SE R&B, DDM NABARD, District Sectoral Officers and Executive Engineers of R&B, Jal Shakti, IFC and



KPDCL.

Giving out the details, AGM, NABARD, Rouf Zargar informed that NABARD has sanctioned 115 projects worth Rs 362.66 Cr since inception out of which 25 are ongoing projects with total outlay of Rs 113.56 Cr, under different sectors.

The DC took the detailed physical and financial review of individual projects directing the executing departments to expedite the works and clear all the bottlenecks in the projects.

He took stock of new projects formulated by the departments which could be considered under RIDF under various sectors in view of the operational guidelines of NABARD including the funding modalities, and sectoral priorities of the scheme.

The DC laid emphasis on the Executive Engineers to complete the projects under timelines and expedite submission of project completion reports for completed projects.

DDC Kulgam reviews status of works under District Capex 2025-26 Stresses prioritizing Public-Centric Projects in 2026-27 Capex Plan

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, APRIL 20: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kulgam, Shahzad Ahmad, today chaired a meeting at the Mini-Secretariat to review the status of works under District Capex 2025-26 and discuss preparation of the District Capex Budget Plan for 2026-27.

During the meeting, the DDC took a detailed review of the progress of various developmental works being executed by different departments across the district.

He emphasized the need for effective planning, proper coordination among



departments and timely completion of projects.

The DDC directed all concerned officers to prepare the District Capex Plan for 2026-27 in a comprehensive manner, ensuring that projects with

maximum public benefit and developmental impact are prioritized.

He further stressed the importance of identifying key infrastructure gaps and proposing works that address the genuine needs of the people, while ensuring transparency and efficient utilization of resources.

Various officers including, Joint Director Planning, Assistant Commissioner Development, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Agriculture Officer, Executive Engineers of different departments and other district officers attended the meeting.

Nasha Mukt J&K Campaign gains momentum with widespread awareness activities in Shopian

Departments, Institutions intensify outreach to promote drug free society

HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, APRIL 20: In continuation of the ongoing Nasha Mukt Jammu and Kashmir Campaign, a series of awareness programmes were conducted across district with active participation from different departments and educational institutions in Shopian.

Health and Wellness Center, GDC Shopian organized an awareness programme focusing on sensitizing students about the harmful effects of drug abuse and promoting a culture of healthy and responsible living.

The programme began with an address by the Convenor, who highlighted the growing concern of substance abuse among youth and emphasized the importance

of awareness, prevention, and collective responsibility.

An expert talk was delivered by Dr. Alamgeer from District Hospital Shopian, who elaborated on the medical and psychological impacts of drug addiction, early warning signs, and the need for timely intervention.

He also informed that District Hospital Shopian has a dedicated Addiction Treatment Facility providing professional support and treatment to affected individuals. Similarly, the Department of Horticulture organized pledge ceremonies at fruit plant nurseries in Zainapora and Keegam, where officials and staff reaffirmed their commitment towards building a drug free society and spreading awareness at the



grassroots level. An awareness programme was also held at HSS Kapran, where medical experts delivered informative sessions on drug addiction and its harmful

effects. The speakers highlighted the physical, psychological, and social consequences of substance abuse and urged students to stay vigilant and make informed life

choices. At HS Tekipora, an awareness programme featuring painting and slogan writing activities was held to sensitize students about the dangers of drug abuse. The creative participation of students helped in effectively conveying strong anti-drug messages. Similarly, Government Polytechnic College Shopian organized a pledge ceremony wherein students and staff collectively took an oath to stay away from drugs and contribute towards a healthier society.

These activities form part of the district's sustained efforts under the Nasha Mukt Jammu and Kashmir Campaign to engage communities, especially youth, through awareness, education, and collective responsibility.

Awareness Programme on Drug De-addiction held at GDC Sumbal

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 20: Government Degree College (GDC) Sumbal on Monday organised an awareness programme on drug de-addiction at its auditorium under the guidance of Principal Prof. (Dr.) Shabeena Iqbal Shawl, featuring a powerful theatrical performance aimed at sensitising students about substance abuse.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate Sumbal, Murtaza Ahmad, attended the programme as chief guest, urged students to stay vigilant and committed towards a drug-free society.

The Principal underscored the role of educational institutions in promoting awareness and responsible citizenship.

The highlight of the programme was the staging of the play "Kanjoo's" by Karam Buland Folk Theatre, introduced by Nissar Naseem. The performance effectively depicted the harsh realities and far-reaching impact of drug addiction, leaving a strong



impression on the audience.

As part of the event, video clips under the Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) were presented by Convenor NMBA, Prof. Aijaz ur Rehman, highlighting the serious consequences of drug abuse.

The event reinforced awareness and collective resolve to combat drug abuse.

Chess, Indoor Games energize Inter-School competitions across Baramulla

HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, APRIL 20: District Youth Services and Sports (DYSS), Baramulla continues to witness enthusiastic participation as Inter-School Zonal Level Competitions progress across multiple zones of the district in line with the annual sports calendar.

The competitions are being successfully conducted in Zones Dangiawacha, Dangerpora, Chandanwari, Singpora Pattan, and Kunzer, drawing active involvement from students of various government and private educational institutions.

In Zone Dangiawacha, Inter-School Zonal Level Chess competitions for Under-14 and Under-17 girls were held, witnessing participation of 43 students who showcased remarkable skill and strategic thinking.

Similarly, Zone Dangerpora conducted the second day of its Chess



competition for Under-14 girls, where 34 students participated with great enthusiasm and competitive spirit.

Zone Chandanwari, on the third day of competitions, organized Chess and Table Tennis events for both boys and girls. The competitions witnessed an overwhelming

participation of 210 students, reflecting the growing interest of youth in indoor sports.

Meanwhile, Zone Kunzer conducted Inter-School Zonal Level Chess competitions for boys in Under-14 and Under-17 categories, with 72 students actively competing.

The events across all zones were conducted under the supervision of field staff and were marked by discipline, sportsmanship, and vibrant participation.

Speaking on the occasion, DYSSO Baramulla, Sheikh Shafiqat Iqbal, stated that these competitions are being organized strictly as per the annual calendar issued by the Directorate of Youth Services and Sports, J&K. He emphasized that such activities play a vital role in honing the talent of young students and providing them a platform to excel at higher levels.

He further appreciated the efforts of the organizing staff and encouraged students to actively participate in sports for their overall physical and mental development.

The competitions will continue across other zones in the coming days, ensuring maximum participation and talent identification at the grassroots level.

Satish Sharma visits GMC Udhampur, reviews treatment facilities for accident victims

Calls for strengthening Trauma Care, Emergency Response

HT NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR, APRIL 20: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, and Information Technology, Satish Sharma, today visited the Government Medical College (GMC) Udhampur to review the medical facilities being provided to the road accident victims and assess the overall preparedness of the institution in handling such emergency cases.

During the visit, the Minister conducted a detailed inspection of various wards including emergency and trauma sections. He took stock of the treatment being provided to the injured. He interacted with the patients and their attendants, seeking feedback on the services being extended to them by the hospital.

Sharma reviewed the availability of doctors, paramedical



staff, critical care infrastructure, medicines and diagnostic facilities.

He emphasized that timely and efficient medical intervention during such emergencies is crucial in saving the precious human lives. He directed the hospital authorities to further strengthen the emergency response mechanisms.

The Minister instructed the hospital administration to ensure round-the-clock availability of specialist doctors, well-equipped ambulances, blood bank services and essential life-saving drugs.

Highlighting the need for an integrated approach, Sharma called for enhanced coordination among the health, transport and police departments to streamline accident response and patient referral systems. He also directed for regular monitoring of trauma care services and timely upgradation of medical equipment to meet the growing healthcare demands.

The Minister underscored the importance of maintaining high standards of hygiene, sanitation

and patient care within the hospital premises.

He also reviewed the ongoing and proposed infrastructure development works at GMC Udhampur and assured that necessary resources would be provided to further strengthen the healthcare facilities in the region.

Appreciating the dedication of doctors, nurses, and paramedical staff, Sharma lauded their efforts in managing the emergency cases, asking them to continue serving with commitment and compassion.

The Minister was accompanied by MLA Ramnagar R.S Pathania, MLA Gulabgarh Khursheed Ahmad, Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, senior health officials and hospital authorities, who briefed the Minister on the functioning of the institution, patient load and steps being taken to enhance the service delivery.

Dosti Discussion held at High School Bagh; DC Bandipora Engages Students on Drug Abuse Concerns

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 20: Continuing the district-wide outreach under the 100-Day Mission Mode campaign of the Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, the District Administration Bandipora on Monday organised the second edition of the "Dosti Discussion" series at High School Bagh, aimed at addressing the menace of drug abuse through open dialogue and community participation.

The programme saw active participation from students and teachers. The Principal of High School Bagh welcomed the Deputy Commissioner and participants, underlining the importance of such engagements in shaping a drug-free future. Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal



Chib, held a candid and thought-provoking interaction, during which several students came forward with their observations and suggestions. Expressing concern, the DC noted that the Bagh area has witnessed a high incidence of drug abuse, including reported fatalities, and termed the situation deeply alarming. She observed that even young students being aware of drug prevalence in their surroundings reflects the gravity of the issue, and that such exposure at an early age calls for urgent intervention.

Stressing the need for honesty, the DC remarked that many parents tend to ignore or conceal their children's involvement in substance abuse, only to regret it later. She urged society to first acknowledge the existence of the problem in order to effectively address it.

Cautioning students on the tactics of drug peddlers, the DC said youngsters are often deliberately targeted and lured into addiction, which in turn can draw them into various forms of crime. At the same time, she clarified that drug addicts must be treated as patients requiring care and rehabilitation, not as criminals.

Students put forth several practical suggestions, including empowering class monitors to check school bags, maintaining vigilance on outsiders and nearby shopkeepers, and organising more awareness programmes in the main town areas.

Taking note of the inputs, the DC directed the Head of Institution (HO) to implement a roster for NCC candidates and to ensure that class monitors are rotated every fortnight. She also instructed police authorities to maintain strict vigilance in and around school premises, and emphasised that the Head of Institution must serve as a role model for students. Teachers participating in the discussion highlighted the importance of addressing root causes such as financial stress, domestic issues, and career-related pressures.

The DC shared her contact number (7006235244), encouraging students and citizens to report concerns, seek help, or offer suggestions on drug-related issues.

Underlining healthy alternatives to manage stress, she encouraged students to engage in sports, chess, reading, writing, gardening, painting, yoga, and emerging fields such as technology and artificial intelligence. She noted that expressing emotions — whether through conversation or even crying — can play an important role in relieving stress. The programme concluded with a shared commitment from all stakeholders to work collectively towards a drug-free society, with strengthened coordination between schools, parents, and enforcement agencies.

The "Dosti Discussion" series continues to be a key initiative of the District Administration Bandipora, aimed at reaching every school across the district and fostering a culture of awareness, responsibility, and resilience among the youth.

GMC Anantnag emerges as major Cardiac Care hub

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 20: Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag has rapidly emerged as a vital centre for advanced cardiac care, offering renewed hope to patients across South Kashmir and parts of the Chenab Valley.

The recent establishment of a state-of-the-art Cath Lab at the institution marks a significant milestone in strengthening tertiary healthcare services in the region.

Commissioned in April 2025, the high-end Cath Lab established by Omar Abdullah led Government has transformed the cardiac care landscape in South Kashmir. In a short span of just nine months, the Department of Cardiology has successfully conducted over 3,000 procedures, including more than 1,000 critical life-saving interventions such as primary angioplasties and pacemaker implantations.

The Cath Lab has significantly strengthened timely and life-saving interventions like coronary angiography, angioplasty, pacemaker implantation, electrophysiological studies, and other advanced cardiac procedures. This facility has brought critical cardiac care closer to the people of South Kashmir and other adjoining districts, eliminating the need for patients to travel long distances for specialized treatment. The facility, functioning under HoD, Dr. Syed Maqbool and other cardio specialists like Dr. Shamim Iqbal; Dr. Showkat Hussain Shah and Dr. Shahood is currently performing an average of 10-15 procedures and is catering not only to patients from South Kashmir but also from several districts of the Jammu division, including Banihal, Ramban, Doda, Kishtwar, Rajouri, and Poonch.

Demonstrating high efficiency and preparedness, the cardiology also achieved a door-to-balloon time of just 15-20 minutes in eight primary angioplasty cases handled within a 12-hour window, an indicator of adherence to top clinical standards in emergency cardiac care.

Prior to the establishment of this facility, patients from South Kashmir, home to an estimated population of 25 lakh, were compelled to travel nearly 70 kilometers to Srinagar for specialized cardiac treatment. This often led to critical delays during emergencies and adversely impacted patient outcomes.

The Cath Lab at GMC Anantnag has effectively bridged this crucial gap, significantly improving accessibility and timely intervention. In a further boost to its growing reputation, the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) has granted accreditation for three DrNB (Doctorate of National Board) super-specialty seats in cardiology to GMC Anantnag. This recognition, awarded to the Department of Cardiology on February 17, underscores the institution's advanced medical infrastructure and clinical capabilities. Notably, GMC Anantnag has become the first among newly established medical colleges in the country to receive such accreditation, marking a historic achievement. Recently, Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo also dedicated 1.5 tesla MRI facility for the public use at the associated hospital of GMC Anantnag, describing the development as a landmark moment for both treatment and specialist care at the facility.

She described the MRI facility as a major milestone and a long-pending addition that will significantly improve diagnostic services at the hospital. "The facility will benefit patients across South Kashmir by providing timely and advanced diagnostic services locally, reducing the need for referrals to Srinagar hospitals," she said.

Apart from these advanced facilities like Cath Lab and MRI facility, other facilities like advanced modular OTs and free diet for patients have also been started by the present Government.

Moreover, a Sarai is also being established in the Associated Hospital of GMC Anantnag to provide support to attendants during their stay in hospitals.

A recent news report published in a local daily has presented a one-sided and incomplete picture of Cardiac facilities and services available at GMC Anantnag. The report fails to acknowledge the substantial progress made in upgrading healthcare infrastructure and expanding specialized services at the institution.

The Government reiterates that continuous efforts are underway to enhance medical facilities and ensure optimal patient care. Recruitment of necessary medical and paramedical staff is being carried out on a regular basis to further strengthen service delivery.

DC Bandipora holds interaction with Coaching Centre Owners on Drug Abuse Prevention

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 20: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, on Monday chaired a meeting with coaching centre owners at the Conference Hall to review measures for curbing drug abuse in the district.

It was informed that 14 registered coaching institutions are functional in the district, providing academic support to students from classes 8th to 12th, including JEE and NEET preparation. Coaching centre owners apprised that CCTV surveillance systems have been installed and are functional at key points including corridors, gates, and classrooms.

During the meeting, concerns were raised that some coaching institutions are increasingly becoming vulnerable spaces for substance abuse due to limited surveillance. The DC stressed the need for strict monitoring, including bag checking and frisking, and underscored that both men and women are involved as users as well as peddlers.

Referring to directives of the Home Department, the DC reiterated that strict action will be taken against any violation. A presentation on drug abuse awareness was also delivered during the session.

Padma Shri awardee, Faisal Ali Dar addressed the gathering and highlighted the rising trend of substance abuse, urging coordinated preventive efforts.

Coaching centre operators shared that measures such as regular attendance sharing with parents



are being implemented. Suggestions were put forth to ban the sale of cigarettes and tobacco in and around institutes and to involve private skill development institutes in awareness initiatives.

The DC observed that while systems are in place, the desired outcomes are yet to be achieved, emphasizing the need to involve every stakeholder. She

directed coaching institutions to conduct regular Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) and stated that Action Taken Reports (ATRs) will be reviewed in next week.

Stressing vigilance and accountability, the DC called for a proactive approach, urging stakeholders to "respect all, suspect all" in the collective fight against drug abuse.

Principal Secretary Culture calls for collective action to eliminate menace; youth, officers join padyatra

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, APRIL 20: As part of the Nasha Mukta Abhiyan (NMBA @100), the District Administration Ganderbal today organized a padyatra cum mega awareness rally to sensitize the public, particularly the youth, about the harmful effects of drug abuse and the need for united efforts to eliminate the menace.

The rally commenced from the Mini Secretariat Lawns and culminated at Qamaria Park, witnessing enthusiastic participation from officers, students, and members of civil society.

The event was flagged-off by Principal Secretary, Culture, Brij Mohan, in the presence of Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Ganderbal, Sudhanshu Dhama; Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Ganderbal, Syed Faheem Bihagi, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, and other district officers.

Addressing the gathering, the Principal Secretary emphasized that drug abuse destroys families and stressed that the fight against drugs must begin at home.

Highlighting the crucial role of parents in prevention, he urged citizens to report cases of drug abuse or trafficking through the district administration's helpline. He called for

active public participation and reiterated the commitment to make Ganderbal a drug-free district.

Students from various schools and colleges actively participated in the rally, raising slogans and carrying placards to spread awareness. The Department of Art and Culture also presented a skit depicting the adverse impact of drug addiction and the importance of prevention and rehabilitation. A play depicting the harmful effects of drug abuse was also presented on the occasion. On the occasion, the ADC administered a pledge to the participants, reaffirming their commitment to stay away from drugs and contribute towards a drug-free society. SSP Ganderbal, while addressing the youth, encouraged them to adopt positive role models and make constructive life choices. He stated that police are taking effective measures to curb drug trafficking and highlighted the importance of rehabilitation for affected individuals. He also advised students to use social media responsibly.

In his concluding remarks, the ADC Ganderbal expressed gratitude to the chief guest, officers, students, and participants for their active involvement. He appreciated spreading awareness and reiterated the administration's resolve to make Ganderbal a drug-free district.

District Admin Bandipora intensifies Awareness Drive under Nasha Mukta Abhiyan

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 20: Continuing the ongoing Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, the District Administration Bandipora on Monday organised a series of awareness programmes across educational institutions and Panchayats in the district to sensitize students and the public about the harmful effects of drug abuse.

Expert talks, awareness sessions, rallies and pledge-taking ceremonies were conducted in several institutions including HS Achoora, PM SHRI HSS Shadipora, HSS Hajin, PM SHRI GHS Odina, GHS Nadihal, HS Panar, HS Jurniyal, GHSS Gadakhud, HSS Sumbal, GHS Kanzalwan, HSS Purana Tulail, HSS Budoab Tulail, and PM SHRI HSS Quilmuqam, among others.

During these programmes, resource persons highlighted the physical, psychological and social consequences of substance abuse, with a focus on key causes such as peer pressure, stress, and lack of awareness. Students were encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles, make informed decisions, and act as ambassadors against drug abuse in their communities.

At GHSS Gadakhud, awareness sessions on the role of AYUSH and yoga in preventing substance abuse were conducted, complemented by practical yoga demonstrations.

Anti-drug rallies were also organised,



notably by HSS Hajin in collaboration with the Police Department, while wall paintings and IEC activities were carried out at institutions like HSS Hajin and Panchayat Ghar Sonerwani to spread awareness at the grassroots level.

Pledge-taking ceremonies reaffirming commitment to a drug-free society were held at multiple locations including HSS Sumbal and Laharwalpora. Interactive sessions and morning assembly talks by teachers and resource persons further reinforced awareness among students.

The programmes, conducted under the 100-day IEC campaign, witnessed active participation of students, teachers, and community members, reflecting a collective resolve to combat drug abuse and build a healthier, drug-free Bandipora.

HT EDITORIAL

Need to take probes seriously

The health & medical education minister Sakeena Masood Itoo on Sunday ordered for a probe into the circumstances that led to the death of a youth at Government Medical College (GMC), Anantnag after he was injured in a road accident at Qazigund on Saturday evening. The probe was ordered after the relatives of the youth alleged that there was a delay in the treatment of the injured youth.

According to the reports the accident took place at about 7:00 PM following which the injured youth was shifted to GMC Anantnag. The relatives of the youth alleged that the staff at the hospital delayed the investigations of the youth due to which he passed away at about 11 in the night. The relatives of the youth protested against the alleged negligence from the hospital staff and wanted swift action against the errant officers and officials. It was after this the health minister ordered a probe in the incident.

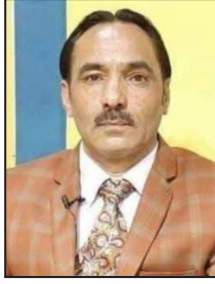
It is pertinent to mention here many such unfortunate incidents have taken place in the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir. In most of these cases investigations were ordered by the successive governments but at the end of the day nothing came out. Enquiry committees were formed by the people at helm with the directions that the probe needs to be carried to the logical conclusion. The worst part in this whole scenario is that the time frame was never followed in such probes with the guilty managing to run away.

Most of the people have in the past complained that the staff posted in the government health institutions resort to unnecessary delay in attending to a person injured in a road accident. The hospital administrators ask the attendants of such a patient to complete different formalities before starting the treatment of the patient. There is no harm in asking the attendants of the patient to complete the formalities but that should not be at the cost of the life of any patient.

There is a golden rule in the treatment aspect of healthcare according to which the first hour of any patient especially of an emergency patient is very critical and important. This rule needs to be kept in mind by the administrators of the hospitals both in the government and private sectors. This would mean that precious lives would be saved and there would be no mental agony for the affected families.

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Smart City Buses and the Transporters' Dilemma



JAMEEL ANSARI

In Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in the Valley of Kashmir, the transport system has long been an essential pillar of everyday life. With changing times, a growing population, and evolving urban demands, the government's introduction of Smart City buses is widely regarded as a progressive and welcome step. Yet, alongside this development, a wave of anxiety and protest within the private transport sector has sparked a serious debate: in the march toward modernization, are certain sections of society being left behind?

The arrival of Smart City buses has undoubtedly transformed public commuting. These buses offer a modern, comfortable, and time-bound travel experience. Operating on fixed routes and schedules, they enable employees, students, and the general public to reach their destinations punctually. In contrast, traditional private buses often function in a less regulated manner—stopping frequently to pick up passengers and thereby prolonging travel time. It is, therefore, unsurprising that a significant portion of commuters now prefer Smart City buses over conventional services.

A particularly commendable feature of this system is the provision of buses reserved for women, along with, in some cases, free travel facilities. This initiative not only enhances safety and convenience for women but also encourages their greater participation in social and economic spheres. Such measures reflect the ethos of a progressive society and deserve due appreciation.

However, the other side of this narrative is equally significant. Thousands of individuals associated with the private transport sector—including bus owners, drivers, conductors, and support staff—find themselves increasingly vulnerable under the new system. Many of these operators have invested heavily, often by taking bank loans or selling personal assets, to sustain their livelihoods. Any adverse impact on their business, therefore, is not merely a personal setback but a matter of broader economic concern.



The ongoing strikes and shutdowns are, in essence, expressions of this deep-seated unease. They should not be viewed merely as resistance, but rather as an appeal for inclusion in the process of change. Ignoring these concerns may lead to heightened social unrest and economic instability.

It is, therefore, imperative for the government to adopt a comprehensive and balanced approach. While expanding the Smart City bus network, equal attention must be given to modernizing the private transport sector. Integrating private operators through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models could offer a viable path forward. Additionally, measures such as loan relief, subsidies, and vehicle replacement schemes could help ease their transition. Fair allocation of routes and improved traffic planning would further contribute to a more equitable system.

At the same time, the expansion of Smart City buses has begun to yield visible improvements in traffic management. Organized routes, designated stops, and digital monitoring systems are helping to streamline urban mobility and reduce the chaos often witnessed on roads. These changes are likely to result in fuel efficiency, reduced environmental pollution, and a lower risk of accidents. If implemented effectively, this model has the potential to evolve into a sustainable and future-ready transport system not only for Srinagar but for other districts as well.

It is equally important to recognize that the concerns of private transporters should not be dismissed as mere resistance to change. Rather, they represent a legitimate economic reality. Constructive dialogue between the government and transport stakeholders is essential. By incorporating their experience and ground-level insights into policy-making, and by providing access to modern technology, training, and financial support, private operators too can rise to meet new standards of service. This would foster healthy competition and, ultimately, benefit the commuting public with more diverse and efficient travel options.

In conclusion, while the introduction of Smart City buses marks a significant and necessary step forward, the true essence of progress lies in inclusivity. Development must not come at the cost of livelihoods. The government must strive to strike a delicate balance between enhancing public convenience and safeguarding the economic interests of private transporters. Such an approach alone can ensure sustainable growth, social harmony, and long-term stability in the region's transport landscape.

In conclusion, while the introduction of Smart City buses marks a significant and necessary step forward, the true essence of progress lies in inclusivity. Development must not come at the cost of livelihoods. The government must strive to strike a delicate balance between enhancing public convenience and safeguarding the economic interests of private transporters. Such an approach alone can ensure sustainable growth, social harmony, and long-term stability in the region's transport landscape.

I saw people with nothing yet they still managed to smile



SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Most of us move from villages to cities due to hardship, weaving dreams. Different minds have different dreams; some achieve them while others remain regretful. Later, we realize the same truth: enjoy your time nothing is permanent. Not every wish becomes reality.

One thing I have experienced is that we should never judge people by their intellectual potential, behaviour, will-power, or energy. I have seen people with nothing no big dreams who were satisfied with a few belongings, and now they are leading those who were energetic, smart, and full of potential. This is the reality of life: do your best and trust your destiny. In fact, the most successful person is the one who remains satisfied and calm throughout life. Life teaches you and me lessons every day; simply learn, try to be happy, and keep others happy.

There was a time when our minds were filled with countless hopes. Life is truly a blessing from Allah (SWT). People hold different opinions and views about life. Our perception of life changes with time the past felt different from the present, and the future remains beyond our anticipation.

Our surroundings the abiotic components of the environment such as air, water, and soil are deeply connected to our daily lives. Life seems to exist within these elements. This is not just poetic imagination; it also has scientific grounding.

People with a poetic mindset often see these elements as symbols of emotion. "This air," they say, "touches my

face and reminds me how mesmerizing it is. I wish I could feel the touch of my beloved's long, flowing black hair in its breeze." Or, "This water reminds me of someone calling my name, as if my beloved still lingers around me." Even the trees seem to whisper, "Where is the one who once gave meaning to your life."

Life carries different meanings for different people. Some are mischievous, some stern, others light-hearted or serious. Some turn away from worldly attractions and seek renunciation. Some are poetic, some scientific, and others political. Some love reading books, while others enjoy driving or going on adventurous journeys.

And then there are those who fall in love for no clear reason at all.

Why do we fall in love with strangers without knowing their intentions, attitudes, or true nature? Love is natural. Good-hearted people often fall in love without bias or judgment. Love is an extraordinary and indescribable feeling. It makes you feel as though the whole world belongs to you, as if you are steering its course. Love removes hatred and gives birth to kindness and generosity. It lifts your mind into another dimension and fills your heart with warmth.

I had an unforgettable circle of friends during my school and college days. A few of them left a lasting impact on me people I will never forget. I want them to know that their love and kindness still live in my heart.

We used to sit on the same bench for more than five years. On that bench, we dreamed together and shared countless hopes. We discussed the priceless treasures life offers and planned our futures with excitement and innocence. That bench was not just a piece of wood and iron; it was a witness to our laughter, secrets, arguments, and dreams.

Even now, when I pass by that bench, it seems to call out to me:

"Hey buddy, how are you? Will you come again this evening to share new ideas?"

And I reply silently in my heart:

"Though those times have passed, the memories remain. The only difference is that I no longer have you all by my side to sit and dream together."

Sometimes it feels as if everything has vanished like children who were once playing happily but suddenly disappeared with the setting sun. The laughter that once filled the air has faded into silence. Strangers now walk along those same paths, speaking gently and carrying the rare fragrance of floral perfumes that linger briefly before disappearing.

That bench holds my love and my most cherished memories.

I cannot change the past, but I can relive the beautiful moments I shared with my friends. I know I cannot bring back those exact days, yet I can preserve them in my heart. Memories are powerful; they remind us of who we were and how far we have come.

There is one thing that remains forever unchanged: time.

Time cannot be reversed. It shapes our fate, influences our destiny, and leads us through the journey of life from childhood to youth, from youth to adulthood, and finally to our last chapter. Time teaches us lessons that no classroom ever can. It shows us the value of relationships, the importance of patience, and the reality of change.

As children, we longed to grow up quickly. We thought adulthood would bring complete freedom and happiness. But as adults, we often look back at our childhood with longing. We miss the simplicity of those days—the carefree laughter, the small dreams, and the strong friendships that felt unbreakable.

Life is a journey of constant transformation. Friends part ways, circumstances change, and priorities shift. Some friendships fade not because of hatred, but because of distance and

responsibilities. Yet true connections never disappear; they remain alive in memories and prayers.

Whenever I think of those days, I realize how blessed I was to have such genuine companions. They taught me the meaning of loyalty, trust, and unconditional support. Together, we faced academic pressure, personal struggles, and moments of confusion about our futures. But we also celebrated small achievements and shared countless jokes that still bring a smile to my face.

The bench still stands there, silent and steady, as if guarding the stories of our youth. It reminds me that places can hold emotions just as deeply as people do. It reminds me that dreams may evolve, but hope never dies.

Today, life has taken each of us in different directions. Some are pursuing careers, some are building families, and others are chasing new ambitions. The world has become faster and more demanding. Yet deep within, a part of me remains seated on that bench laughing, dreaming, and believing that the future holds endless possibilities.

If I could speak to my younger self sitting on that bench, I would say:

"Value these moments. Cherish these friends. Time will move faster than you think. One day, these ordinary days will become extraordinary memories."

The bench of hopes is not just a physical place; it is a symbol of youth, friendship, love, and dreams. It represents a chapter of life that shaped my personality and strengthened my heart. Though the pages of that chapter have turned, its words remain engraved in my soul.

And whenever I walk past that bench, I smile not with sadness, but with gratitude.

Because some places do not just hold memories.

They hold pieces of our hearts.

sahilmanzoor411990@gmail.com

Hazrat Baba Haider Rishi also known as Resha Mol Sahib (RA)



■ RAVEES AHMAD KUMAR

History bears witness that the spread of Islam in the region of Kashmir became possible largely due to the tireless efforts and dedication of pious saints and accomplished spiritual figures. While many of these noble souls came from outside regions, a significant number were born in this very land. Great personalities such as Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Wali (RA), Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom (RA), and Allama Baba Dawood Khaki (RA), among others, were born in this beautiful and vibrant land, often described as an unparalleled paradise. Despite countless hardships and challenging conditions, these chosen servants of Allah remained steadfast like mountains in their mission and left no stone unturned in spreading the message of the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to every household. There is no doubt that Allah made this land a center of Islam through these saints and friends of God. It is believed that blessings such as rainfall and mercy descend due to their presence, and the growth of vegetation is attributed to their purity of heart and sincerity in action. This is why, alongside its unmatched natural beauty, Kashmir holds the honor of being a land inhabited for centuries by Sufi saints and Rishis. It is through their efforts that the population embraced Islam. In almost every corner of Kashmir, one finds the shrines of these pious individuals. In the town of Islamabad (Anantnag), there



exists the shrine of a remarkable saint, which for over four hundred years has remained a center of devotion for believers. This is the shrine of Hazrat Baba Haider Rishi, also known as Resha Mol Sahib (RA). He was a highly revered saint and belonged to the Ahangar (blacksmith) community. He was born in a village named Danter in the Anantnag district. He is regarded as a saint by birth. It is said that Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani (RA) had foretold years earlier that a great saint would be born one hundred years after his passing, who would be a saint from birth, and this prophecy is associated with Resha Mol Sahib (RA). From childhood, he displayed a deep inclination towards devotion and love for God. He belonged to the Rishi order of ascetics, known for self-discipline and

remembrance of Allah in forests and remote areas, away from worldly distractions. The Rishi order is connected to the Kubrawiya and Suhrawardiya Sufi traditions. Though outwardly he did not appear to be affiliated with a spiritual guide, he later took spiritual allegiance (bay'ah) at the hands of Hazrat Sultanul-Arifeen Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom (RA) and became one of his distinguished disciples. It is said that Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom (RA) himself traveled to Anantnag for his spiritual training. When Resha Mol Sahib learned through divine inspiration of his mentor's arrival, he went out to receive him. It is believed that near Khanabal, when the two saints met, Resha Mol Sahib presented a bowl of milk, symbolizing his spiritual completeness. In response, Sheikh Hamza

placed a rose petal upon the milk. Resha Mol Sahib (RA) spent his nights in prayer and remembrance of Allah, and his days were also devoted to worship. He was known for his exemplary character and remarkable hospitality. Historians narrate that during his childhood, a guest once arrived at his home. His mother bought a fish from the market to serve the guest, but an eagle swooped down and took it away. When she mentioned this to him, he calmly remarked that if the sustainer had destined the fish for them, the eagle would not have taken it. Shortly thereafter, the eagle returned and placed the fish back in the dish. On another occasion, while traveling with his mentor Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom (RA) to visit another disciple, Hazrat Mir Baba Haider Tulla Mola (RA) in Tullam-

ulla (Ganderbal), Sheikh Hamza expressed a desire to eat freshly fried fish. Upon their arrival, Mir Baba Haider (RA) welcomed them and immediately served two freshly fried fish, demonstrating the spiritual insight and miraculous nature of these saints.

Hazrat Baba Dawood Khaki (RA), the foremost disciple of Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom (RA), documented the virtues, stories, and miracles of Resha Mol Sahib (RA) in his famous work Wird-ul-Mureedeen. When he presented the book to his mentor, Sheikh Hamza remarked that such a lengthy work was unnecessary; it would have sufficed to write that Baba Haider Rishi (Resha Mol Sahib) was his disciple. Another incident reflecting his spiritual stature occurred when he was working at a blacksmith's shop. An elderly woman came to purchase something, and the shopkeeper asked her to bring milk, sending Resha Mol Sahib along with her. Although she had a cow, it would not yield milk despite her efforts. When Resha Mol Sahib touched the cow and began milking it, all the earthen vessels in the house were filled with milk. News of this miracle spread rapidly throughout the area. Resha Mol Sahib (RA) passed away on the 1st of Dhu al-Qa'dah, 986 AH. He is buried in the center of Islamabad (Anantnag), and his shrine continues to attract devotees daily. During the days of his annual Urs (death anniversary), there is complete abstinence from meat throughout the region, as he himself never consumed meat in his lifetime. Like his spiritual mentor Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom (RA), he also never married.

May Allah grant us the ability to follow the path shown by these pious servants. Ameen.

Writer is a columnist based in Qazigund Kashmir

Durga Mata Mandir Dedani Spiritual Tourist Spot



■ MOOL RAJ

I would like to express my views on Baisakhi Festival at Durga Mata Temple Dedani Tehsil Marmat District Doda through the medium of your daily English newspaper for the people of Jammu and Kashmir and hope space should be given to my article. It is pertinent to mention that on Dated 12-03-2025 than the District Development Commissioner Doda Sh Harvinder Singh IAS along with BDO Khellani Mr Akshay Parihar, SHO Khellani and Naib Tehsildar Khellani Mr Surjeet Kumar Flag off NGO and 50 Cadets of NCC Students of PM Shree Govt Higher Secondary School Khellani Doda to Durga Mata Temple Dedani on Swachh Bharat Mission a cleanliness drive that clean the surrounding of Temple on the eve of Basakhi Festival on April 14, 2025. This cleanliness drive clean the area in and around the Durga Mata Temple Dedani as a part of 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' initiative of the Government of India. During the drive than around 50 cadets of 2 J&K Boys Battalion of Higher Secondary School Khellani under the supervision of Harish Katoch cleaned the area with brooms and by removing the weeds. Volunteers of the NCC during the driver under the slogan of 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' were instilled about sanitation and healthy life style. On the occasion, massive Cleanliness drive was launched in which the NCC Cadets along with Associate NCC officer made their commitment to keep the area neat and clean. The NCC Volunteers of Higher Secondary School (Boys) Khellani collected polythene wrappers and other rudiments lying in the vicinity of Durga Mata Temple Dedani. The Darbar of Durga Mata Mandir Dedani located at Village Dedani native village (Hambal) about 35 kms away from District

Doda shall open on April 14, for the annual festival. The annual festival in the form of Trishool Bhaant Yatra, is being celebrated since 1982 in the memory of re-installation of ancient idol of Mata Durga after it was recovered from Chennai (Udhampur). The idol was stolen by smugglers from the temple. The Darbar will open this year on April 13 on the eve of Baisakhi and pilgrims from Doda, Ramban, Udhampur, Kishtwar and many parts of Jammu & Kashmir are expected. The festival is celebrated on the special occasion of Baishakhi every year. The management committee has sought all the facilities for the pilgrims. Security has also been sought. Main yatra from Khellani via Shree & Saras will start from Durga Mandir Chinar Chowk after Trishool Poojan by 07:00 Am. Trishool Yatra from Kihanda (Paryote) Hambal, Saras and other parts starting simultaneously. Some of the famous food items to eat during the festival are Rice & Rajmash Chawal at the Lungar of Mata Rani. Local food specialties include Klan (or Klan kulcha and are very tasty.

The Durga Mandir Dedani Darbar will open on April 14th, the eve of Baisakhi. This is an annual event where pilgrims from various districts, including Doda, Ramban, Udhampur, and Kishtwar, gather for the festival and to pay their respects. The Darbar is a sacred place visited by pilgrims throughout the year, not just during the main festivals. The annual festival, in the form of Trishool Bhaant Yatra, is being celebrated since 1982 in the memory of re-installation of ancient idol of Mata Durga after it was recovered from Chenani (Udhampur) stolen by smugglers from the Temple.

The Darbar of Durga Mandir Dedni is now going to open this year on April 13, 2025 on the eve of Baiksakhi on this occasion the pilgrims from various parts of District Doda, Ramban, Udhampur, & Kishtwar participate in the annual function/festival. The festivals on the special occasion are celebrated on Baisakhi every year. Thousands of pilgrims participate.

No doubt District administration provides every rest of facilities including medical. Security and drinking water for

which the public of Marmat Galiyan and particularly the managing committee is highly grateful of District administration still there a great problem is being faced during the festivals i.e. the provision of electricity power supply.

In addition to the main festivals the pilgrims visit the scared place throughout the year i.e. from Baisakhi to Durga Ashtma falling in the month of Magher Mass.

The festival is very colourful and the celebration starts with people in large numbers visiting the Temple of Goddess Durga Mata Dedni Walli. On April 13, 2025:- Arrival of sewaks at Darbar by 08:00Am. April 13, 2025

Havan 7:00 am to 8:30 Am there after Darbar opened for Darsshannid pay obeisance.

April 14, 2025:- Main yatra from Khellani via shree & Saras will start from Durga Mandir Chinar Chowk after Trishool Poojan by 08:30Am.

Trishool Yatra from Kihanda (Paryote) Hambal and Seen other parts starting simultaneously. Trishool Bhaant at Darbar at 11:30am. Some of the famous food items to eat during the festival are Rajmash Chawal with Desi Ghee, Chatni.

Local food specialties include Klari (a milk preparation like paneer) or Klari kulcha and are very tasty and one must eat there. Those who love sweets have Jlabis and pure Khoya to eat. It is a great fair which provides lot of entertainment, natural scenery, joy and spiritual experience"

Where spiritual connection between deity and devotee is strengthened.

In the year 1982, the sacred idol of Durga Mata was stolen by smugglers from the temple premises, which were then open throughout the year for pilgrimage. After intervention by the district administration, subsequent search operations were initiated by the police and local people. Consequently, the smugglers were apprehended, and the idol was recovered from the Chenani Tehsil of district Udhampur. It was reinstalled in the temple on August 25th, 1982. Thus, every year, the Sathapna Diwas has been celebrated in memory of this event by organizing the Kood Mela by the Management Committee of Durga Mata Mandir, Dedni.

Durga Mata Temple is located in Marmat Ghallyan area of Doda District, in the village of Dedni of Khellani block, approximately 20 kms away from the District Headquarters Doda.

TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE: Although the architecture of this temple was not influenced by the Nagara Style of Temple Architecture, which was popular in northern India, it was primarily influenced by the geographical and climatic conditions of the location. Nevertheless, it shares some commonalities with it.

The entire temple structure is built on a stone platform with a staircase leading to it. The tallest tower, the Shikhara, is entirely made of steel sheets, chosen due to heavy snowfall conditions in the winters. At the top of the Shikhara, the Kalash is installed. Inside the temple, the ARDH MANDAP is in the front, serving as the entrance porch to the temple, adorned with hanging brass bells. Within the ARDH MANDAP, there is a MANDAP, the assembly hall for devotees to offer prayers. Within the Mandap, there is a GARBH-GRIYA (Sanctum Sanctorum) where the idol of Durga Mata is installed. Outside the temple, a round PRADAKSHINA MARG (Ambulatory) is also built, holding religious significance.

The entire temple premises are surrounded by a park and boundary walls with two gates, one in the front and the other exactly at the back.

Outside the boundary wall, the temple is surrounded by vast meadows covered with lofty Fir and Deodar trees, offering a magical view to pilgrims and tourists. Within the meadows, ponds are also present.

The Management Committee of Durga Mata Mandir, Dedni, organizes two fairs annually: the Baisakhi festival on April 14th and Sathapna diwas, also known as Kood Mela, on August 24th and 25th.

ABOUT SATHAPNA DIWAS: Sathapna diwas is a unique aspect of the celebrations at Dedni Mata Mandir. This ritual serves as a reminder of the temple's enduring presence in the lives of the people and is believed to strengthen the spiritual connection between the deity and her devotees.

On the morning of August 24th, three

different Trishool Bhaant Yatras start: one from Khellani via Shree and Saras, the second one from Paryote via Kalaya Village to Dedni, and the third one from the village of Humbal. All three yatras meet at Dedni Padri, 2 km before the temple, and together march towards the temple, arriving in the evening at 5 pm, where they are welcomed by the Pujari and devotees awaiting them.

Subsequently, devotees from different parts of district Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban, Jammu, and Udhampur arrive in the evening and take darshan of the Mata, with langar facilities available for the next two days. Jagrata is also organized by the management committee, in which devotees participate throughout the night. Facilities for overnight stays are also made available in the dormitories by the management committee.

The following day, the celebrations at Dedni Mata Mandir are deeply rooted in local culture, showcasing a splendid array of traditional music, dance, and art. Artisans and craftsmen from the region also play a crucial role in the fair. The temple complex transforms into a bustling marketplace where these skilled individuals display their exquisite handcrafted wares, including pottery, textiles, woollen blankets, and agricultural implements. This exchange of goods not only fosters economic growth but also preserves and passes down traditional craftsmanship from one generation to another.

After the traditional group dance, Dhaku, performed at 11 am, on this special occasion of Kood Mela, the festivities continue until 4 pm, after which devotees begin marching back to their villages, concluding the two-day Kood Mela.

This Sathapna Divas provides a much-needed respite from the monotony of daily life and serves as a platform for social bonding. Families and friends come together to share in the festivities, strengthening interpersonal relationships. These celebrations transcend age, caste, and creed, fostering a sense of unity and brotherhood within the community.

THE AUTHOR IS A REGULAR COLUMNIST AND FREELANCE WRITER

Common Bacteria May Trigger 12M Stomach Cancer Cases



The vast majority of stomach cancer cases have been linked to a common bacteria that often doesn't produce any symptoms.

A new study published in the journal Nature Medicine trusted Source reports that 76% of stomach cancers worldwide may be attributed to the *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*) bacteria.

The scientists found that nearly 16 million people born between 2008 and 2017 are expected to develop gastric cancer sometime during their lifetime. Of those cases, around 12 million will be caused by *H. pylori* bacteria.

They noted that about 8 million of those bacteria-related cases are expected to occur in Asia. Another 1.5 million are predicted for North America and South America.

The researchers said their findings may help explain the rise in gastric-related cancers in younger people in recent years.

They also noted that a vaccine to prevent *H. pylori* bacteria "would be a powerful tool for gastric cancer prevention," but there appears to be "little momentum at present to advance its development."

Experts not involved in the study told Healthline the findings are important and should be noted by medical professionals.

"This is truly a fascinating, practice-changing study," said Anton Bilchik, MD, a surgical oncologist as well as the chief of medicine and director of the Gastrointestinal and Hepatobiliary Program at Providence Saint John's Cancer Institute in Santa Monica, CA. "This tells us that ... it is a preventable cancer."

"We have known that *H. pylori* infection increases an individual's risk of developing stomach cancer for many years," added Joo Ha Hwang, MD, a professor of medicine at Stanford University.

"This study quantifies the estimated number of deaths that would likely occur if we do not start screening individuals who are at moderate to high risk for *H. pylori* infection and gastric cancer. This study is a call to action to address a preventable cancer," Hwang noted.

H. pylori bacteria driving stomach cancer rates

Alan Venook, MD, a professor of medical oncology and translational research at the University of California San Francisco, and program development director at the Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, said the connection between the *H. pylori* bacteria and gastric cancer has been known for more than 30 years.

He cited older research from 1991 published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that first made the connection, and said the findings in the new study aren't surprising. Still, he expressed concern over the persistent nature of the bacteria's connection to cancer.

"The most interesting thing in this study to me is that this is still a problem," Venook said, adding he is "mystified" as to why progress hasn't been made. "I think the message to medical professionals is that this remains a terrible problem," he noted. "This is a wake-up call."

Bilchik, who had attended the 1991 pre-

sentation of the original study, said the research was initially dismissed by the medical community. Since then, he said those early findings have proven to be correct.

"This is a clear message to both patients and professionals that stomach cancer is not necessarily caused by smoking and alcohol," he said.

Nilesh Vora, MD, a hematologist and medical oncologist and medical director of the MemorialCare Todd Cancer Institute at Long Beach Medical Center in California, has some cautions about the new research.

He called it "thought-provoking," but added that more research is necessary to confirm the data and the conclusions.

What to know about *H. pylori* bacteria
The *Helicobacter pylori* bacteria grow in the digestive tract and tend to attack the stomach lining. It has adapted itself to live in the highly acidic world of the human gastrointestinal system.

H. pylori often develops in a person's stomach during childhood. The bacteria are typically harmless and don't cause symptoms. However, in some cases, they may lead to stomach ulcers and some diseases, including gastric cancer.

Many people with *H. pylori* don't have symptoms. However, an estimated 30% of people with the bacteria develop peptic ulcers and other conditions.

Some common symptoms from the bacteria include:

- burning stomach pain
- feeling full quickly
- nausea
- burping
- unexplained weight loss

The bacteria can be transmitted via saliva, contaminated food, and other methods. It can be diagnosed with tests involving breath, stool samples, and blood antibodies. Doctors sometimes order an endoscopy, which involves placing a tube down a person's throat.

The bacteria are treated with antibiotics. Some people may be prescribed proton pump inhibitors to help the stomach heal.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) notes there are currently no recommendation-trusted Source for routine stomach cancer screenings for those with average risk.

"Given the relatively low prevalence of gastric cancer in the United States, there is currently no screening recommendation for *H. pylori* in patients without symptoms," said Anu Agrawal, MD, vice president of Global Cancer Support at the American Cancer Society.

"The high incidence in Asia particularly could justify screening protocols which, as noted in the publication, have been initiated in a few Asian countries," he told Healthline.

Bilchik said that people should not ignore gastrointestinal symptoms that linger for an extended period of time. "If the symptoms are persistent, then go to a physician and be proactive," Bilchik advised.

Vora added that while screenings are important, there are some logistical issues. Endoscopies, he said, are invasive and ex-

pensive. He added that the big questions are whether general screenings should be done for this bacterium and whether everyone with long-term gastrointestinal symptoms should be tested for *H. pylori*.

Hwang agreed that screening should be selective.

"*H. pylori* often infects family members, so if one family member is diagnosed with *H. pylori*, family members who live together should be tested for the infection," he said.

"We have been advocating for individuals who have immigrated from regions that have a high incidence of *H. pylori* infection and gastric cancer, such as East Asia, Eastern Europe, and the west coast of South America, to be tested for *H. pylori* infection and treated if positive."

What to know about stomach cancer
The National Cancer Institute (NCI) estimates trusted Source there will be about 30,000 new cases of stomach cancer in the United States this year. More than 10,000 people are expected to die from the disease.

Those numbers represent less than 2% of all cancer cases and all cancer deaths in the United States.

Almost 38% of people in the United States with stomach cancer are expected to live at least five years after diagnosis.

Stomach cancer usually develops over a number of years. Many times, there are no symptoms until the cancer has spread to other parts of the body.

The disease is more common in adults over the age of 60 and in those who smoke, have obesity, or have a family history of the disease. It's also more common in people of Asian descent and people with a diet high in salty foods, meat, and processed products.

Symptoms of stomach cancer include:

- frequent heartburn
- loss of appetite
- bloating or burping
- indigestion
- abdominal pain

The disease can be treated with chemotherapy, radiation, surgery, and immunotherapy.

Experts say you can lower your risk of stomach cancer by:

- eating a healthy diet
- exercising regularly
- quitting smoking if you smoke
- limiting or avoiding alcohol
- treating *H. pylori* infection if you receive a diagnosis

The American Cancer Society has a list-trusted Source of ways people can lower their risk. "Obesity, tobacco use, alcohol, diets high in smoked foods or foods preserved by salting, or diets low in fruits and vegetables are risk factors," said Agrawal. "If you have a family history of stomach cancer, are a first-generation immigrant from a high prevalence area (e.g., East Asia), or have certain genetic cancer predisposition syndromes, you should be screened for stomach cancer."

Vora said the message is pretty simple: "Eat well and exercise more."

Courtesy Healthline

Doctor explains why Ozempic use is causing worrying 'Ozempic-sex' side effect

■ Tom Chapman

For those who feel like they're carrying a few extra pounds, the likes of Ozempic, Wegovy, and Mounjaro seem like a godsend.

These semaglutides were originally designed as an anti-diabetic medication, but in 2025, they're proving to be an effective way to tackle obesity.

The problem is, instead of being prescribed the so-called 'skinny jab' by a medical professional, many are turning to online alternatives in the hope of getting that summer body.

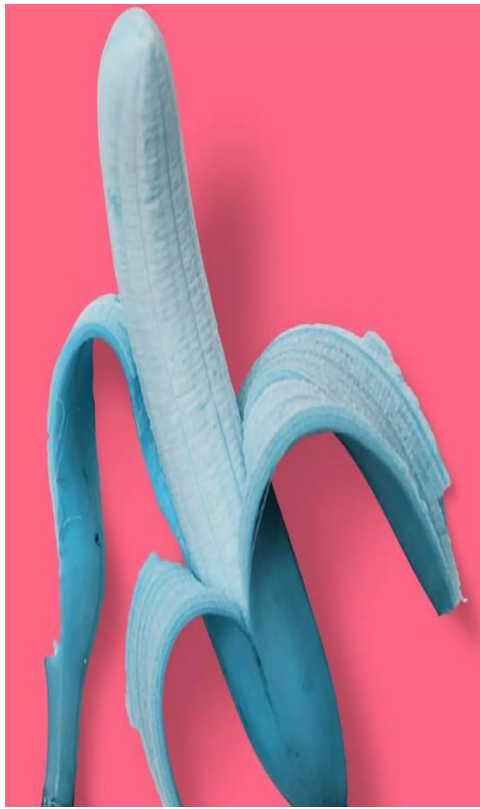
Still, with major celebrities ranging from Elon Musk to Sharon Osbourne, Amy Schumer to Tracy Morgan admitting to taking these medications, and with the weight dropping off them, it's no surprise that the general public is scrambling to get similar results.

It's important to weigh up the supposed pros and cons of these jabs, with side effects like 'Ozempic breath' and increased fears of pancreatitis being discussed alongside the potential to reverse liver disease, as well as various cardiovascular benefits.

We've already got a bit raunchy when discussing the supposed 'Ozempic penis' where a gentleman's manhood might appear larger, but on the other end of the spectrum, what about the injections affecting your performance in the bedroom?

After all, what's the point in having the kit if you don't know how to use it?

Over on Reddit, one Ozempic user was concerned with their lack of sex drive since going on the jab, explaining: "I've been on Ozempic for a few months now and I love it. Almost no side effects and I'm down 30lbs. Halfway to my goal weight. I'm on 1.5mg compounded with



Vitamin B.

"The only side effect I have noticed that's causing issues in my life is that I have absolutely no sex drive at all, and I'm almost repulsed by the notion of it. I have more or less the same feelings that I have when presented with a big meal. Like the thought of having sex is almost nauseating."

"If I was single this really wouldn't impact my life very much, but I live with my boyfriend

of about 2.5 years, and the sharp decrease in our sex life is causing issues in our relationship. He isn't pressuring me or anything, but we have been kind of growing distant, and we have been bickering."

Others in the thread reported similar 'issues', with one person stating: "Male here 42. Same boat. The new studies show it takes the pleasure out of alcohol and gambling as well. You are not alone. Thankfully I'm divorced and single."

A third said: "Definitely feel same way and glad I'm not the only one. The drug messes with our hormones so much and I'm thinking about taking some libido pills that will amp up my sex drive."

Still, not everyone was convinced. Someone else went the other way and claimed: "This is not my experience. I (F51) feel like I have an increase in my sex drive. I just don't have an outlet right now. Ugh."

Apparently, there's some genuine science behind it all, with Dr. James Simon, a reproductive endocrinologist, OBGYN and clinical professor at George Washington University, telling *The Wall Street Journal*: "These drugs do work in the same places that pleasure and sexual interest are located in the human brain—male and female."

As these drugs work by affecting your appetite to make you feel full, it's thought that they may work similarly to the part of our brains that regulates our sex drive.

With semaglutide users seemingly split on whether they're feeling like they can't bear to be touched, and others tearing a partner's clothes off, it seems this is one potential side effect that's hard to pin down.

Courtesy Unilad Tech

How to spot and manage heart rhythm issues

■ Camilla Foster

A new do-it-yourself heart monitor, the ePatch by Philips, is being given to patients on the NHS to help diagnose heart rhythm issues. Unlike traditional monitoring which requires specialist setup and numerous wires, patients can be sent the ePatch in the post and attach it to their skin with ease at home. After wearing it for a few days, patients post the patch back and then the data from it is analysed by Cardiologists, an AI tool, with final review by a clinician.

Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust is the first hospital in the country to roll out the device, with hopes that the device will soon be used across other NHS trusts.

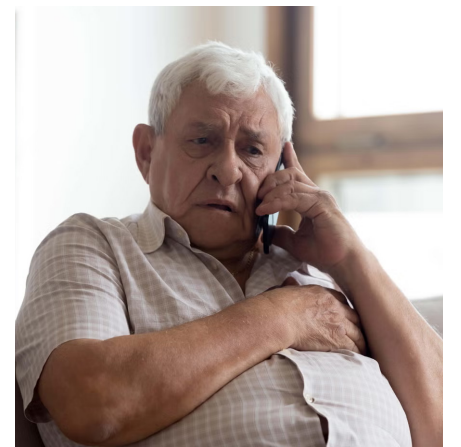
This new device can be used to investigate heart rhythm problems, known as arrhythmias, such as atrial fibrillation, tachycardia and heart blocks.

Arrhythmias can present in different forms, so we got in touch with Dr Oliver Segal, consultant cardiologist and electrophysiologist at The Harley Street Clinic, part of HCA Healthcare UK, to find out how to identify and manage these conditions.

"An arrhythmia is a problem with the heart's electrical system, which controls how the heart beats," explains Segal. "Normally, electrical signals cause the heart to beat in a steady, coordinated rhythm."

"However, in arrhythmias these signals become irregular or disrupted, causing the heart to beat too fast, too slow, or in an uneven pattern. This can affect how well the heart pumps blood around the body."

"Atrial fibrillation (AF) is the most common serious arrhythmia, where the upper chambers (atria) of the heart beat in a rapid and irregular way," says Segal. "AF



can significantly increase the risk of stroke and often occurs without noticeable symptoms, making screening important in some individuals." Bradycardia and tachycardia are also fairly common types of arrhythmia.

"Bradycardia is when the heart beats too slowly which can cause tiredness, dizziness or fainting," explains Segal. "Whereas, tachycardia is when the heart beats too fast. This can originate from the upper chambers (supraventricular tachycardia) or the lower chambers (ventricular tachycardia), which can be more dangerous."

"Other arrhythmias include premature atrial or ventricular contractions (extra beats) and more rare conditions like ventricular fibrillation."

"Risk factors include heart disease, high blood pressure (which can strain the heart over time) and thyroid problems, especially an overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism)," says Segal. "In addition, older age and family history can also increase your risk."

Courtesy Nuffield Health

JKTA Baramulla Strengthens Organisational Structure, Announces New District Team

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, APR 20: A meeting of the District cadre of JK Teachers Association Baramulla was held today at District headquarter to deliberate on important organisational matters and to chart out a roadmap for strengthening the Association at all levels. The meeting witnessed enthusiastic participation from Zonal Presidents and senior members of the Association.

During the deliberations, detailed discussions were held on reinforcing the organisational structure, improving coordination among zones, and enhancing the role of teachers in addressing academic and service-related issues. The members unanimously stressed the need for unity, discipline, and collective responsibility to make the Association more vibrant and effective.

On the occasion, the District Body of JKTA Baramulla was also revamped to ensure better representation, accountability, and smooth functioning of the Association. Various responsibilities were reassigned with the aim of energising the cadre and making the organisation more responsive to the concerns of the teaching community.

The speakers highlighted that a strong and united organisation is essential for safeguarding the dignity, rights, and professional interests of teachers. They reiterated their commitment to work collectively for the welfare of the teaching fraternity and the betterment of the education system in the district.

The meeting concluded with a pledge to further strengthen the organisational base of JKTA and to work with renewed dedication and unity.

The new list of office bearers is as under:

1. Mr Mushaq Ahmad Bhat (District President)
2. Mr Javid Iqbal Najar (Patron)
3. Mr Mohd Maqbool Khan (Convener)
4. Mr Sajad Ahmad Bhat (V President)
5. Mr Nazir Ahmad Dar (V President)
6. Mr Samir Ali Khan (G Secretary)
7. Mr Ashwani Bhamu (Add Secretary)
8. Mr Mohd Akbar Lone (J. Secretary)
9. Mr Avtar Kishan (Chief Spokesperson)
10. Mr Shabir Ah Lone (Chief Advisor)
11. Mr Imtiyaz Hussain Rather Wagoora (Treasurer)
12. Mr Ab Rasheed Dar (Organiser)
13. Mr Bilal Ahmad Lone (Organiser)
14. Mr Showkat Ahmad Sood (Discipline coordinator)



15. Mr Zeeshan Pervaz (Media Advisor)
16. Mr Mukhtar Ah Qureshi (Boniyar) (Publicity Secretary)
17. Mr Liyakat Ahmad Tantray Uri (Advisor)
18. Mr Imtiyaz Ahmad Lone Nehalpora (Chief Coordinator)
19. Mr Ab Rehman Lone Baramulla (Media Cell)
20. Mr Nazir Ahmad Guroo (Media Coordinator)
21. Mr Mohd Imran Khan Dangerpora (Legal Advisor)
22. Mr Fayaz Ahmad Malik (Coordinator)
23. Mr Nisar Ah Khan Jhulla (Deputy Organiser)
24. Mr Ab Razak Lone (Auditor)
25. Mr Gh Nabi Najar Khanpora (Auditor2)
26. Mr Shabir Ahmad Malik (Patran) Deputy Coordinator
27. Mr Peerzada Tariq Ah (Dangiwach) Deputy Organiser
28. Mr Tasleem Ahmad Khan (Incharge Programs)
- Sikh Minority cell:
 29. Mr Jatinder Pal Singh
 30. Mr Balvinder Singh
 31. Mr Jagjeet Singh
- ST cell:
 32. Mr Chowdhary Mohd Saleem
 33. Mr Chowdhary Munaver Hussain
 34. Mr Mohd Amir
- PM Package Employees Cell:
 35. Mr Opindher Kholi
 36. Mr Ashwani Bhatt
 37. Mr Pawan Kumar
- Jammu Based Reserved category Cell:
 38. Mr Ram Krishan Salgotra
 39. Mr Suresh Kumar
 40. Mr Vipon Verma
 41. Mr Kuldeep
 42. Mr Shabana Gul

Public Notice

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

Name: JAHANGIR AHMAD MALLA S/O....ABDUL RASHEED MALLA R/OWATERGAM, BLOCK.... WAGOORA

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir

Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application of FAREEDA BEGUM W/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

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Naib Tehsild Kreeri

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Hilal Ahmad Marazi, resident of Bahw Din Sahab Nowhatta Srinagar hereby inform the general public that my name has been incorrectly recorded as "Hilal" on my Driving Licence bearing No. JK01/2026/000/2979 whereas my correct name as per my Aadhaar Card is "Hilal Ahmad Marazi."

I have applied for the necessary correction of my name with the concerned authority at RTO Srinagar.

If any person has any objection regarding this correction, they may kindly contact the concerned office within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After the expiry of the stipulated period, no objection shall be entertained.

Hilal Ahmad Marazi
S/o: Abdul Aziz Marazi ,
R/o: Bahw Din Sahab Nowhatta Sgr
Contact No: 9796972447

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of ZAINAB SHOWKAT D/O SHOWKAT AHMAD MIR R/O. KREERI Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 18/05/2014 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order .In this connection.

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

Sd/- Executive Magistrate 1st Class Kreeri

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar 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

Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PW (R&B) DIVISION ZAINPORA

NOTICE INVITING TENDER | CIVIL WORKS
SINGLE COVER SYSTEM (up to Rs. 2.50 Crores)

NIT No: 06/ZNP/RnB/e-Tendering/2026-27 | Dated: 20-04-2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Advertised cost (in Lacs)	E/M	Technical sanction No. & Date
1	Elementary Boys Toilet at GUPS Gundi Darvesh.	Adv. Cost without GST: 1.985 Adv. Cost with GST: 2.342	4684/-	09/TS/SAMAGRA(PAB) of 2026-27 Dated: 11-04-2026
2	Sr. Secondary Boys Toilet at HSS Zainapora.	Adv. Cost without GST: 3.145 Adv. Cost with GST: 3.711	7422/-	10/TS/SAMAGRA(PAB) of 2026-27 Dated: 11-04-2026

Major Head Of Account: SAMAGRA

Time of Completion: 45 Days

Position of funds: Committed

AAA No. Date: 06-CHIRAG of 2024 Dated:05-01-2024

Endorsement No: Edu/SmS/PD/2025-26/Misc-01 Dated: 20-01-2026

The Payment shall be made strictly as per the release of funds by the Competent authority.

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

Sl	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	20-04-2026	
2	Document downloading Start Date.	20-04-2026	From 6.00 P.M
3	Document Downloading End Date.	11-05-2026	up to 6:00 P.M
4	Bid submission Start Date.	20-04-2026	From 6.00 P.M
5	Bid Submission End Date.	11-05-2026	Up to 6:00 P.M
6	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	12-05-2026	at 01.00 P.M

1. Bids must be accompanied by a Treasury Challan (dated between the bid start date and the Bid Submission End date) deposited in M.H. 0059 PWD in the name of Executive Engineer R&B Division Zainpota (tender inviting authority) as the cost of the tender document.

NOTE: The Date of Treasury Challan must be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date. Any deviation shall render the bidder as Non-responsive.

1.1. At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Zainapora. The successful bidder will have to provide Performance Security @ 5% at the time of contract award, strictly in accordance with the Government's circular instructions from time to time. The earnest money/bid security of 2% will be released to the successful bidder only after the submission of a Performance Security of 5% of the Bid Cost, which will be released after successful completion of the DLP/ Maintenance Period beyond 60 Days.

1.2. **Unbalanced Bid:** The successful bidder L1 shall have to deposit an additional performance security in the shape of CDR / FDR/ B.G before award of contract in case the bid of the successful bidder is found to be unbalanced and the following scale shall apply there to :-

1.21 Where the bid price is below 10% but not below 20% of the project cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee/ security percentage shall be incremented by 0.1% for every percentage of bid price below 10% of the project cost put to bid starting at 11% with the additional bid performance guarantee being 0.1% and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.

1.22 Where the bid price is 20% or more below of the project cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee percentage shall be incremented by 0.2% for every percentage of bid price below 20% of the project cost put to bid in addition to 1% of the bid price and this additional performance guarantee Percentage shall be applied on the bid price.

1.23 The additional performance guarantee percentage shall be rounded off to the next lower percentage based on whether the decimal point of the percentage of bid price is below 0.5% or next higher percentage based on whether the decimal point of the percentage of bid price is 0.5% or more.

1.24 The additional performance security shall be treated as part of the performance security. Additional performance security shall be taken only after approval of next higher authority.

2. Bidders are advised to quote Rates without GST. GST @ 18% shall be added at the time of allotment by allotting authority

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

3.1. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on website www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the Bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of responsive bidders shall be opened online on website in the office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Zainpota (Tender receiving authority).

4. The earnest money shall be forfeited If :-

- a) Any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
- b) Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.
- c) Failure of Successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

No: R&B/ZNP/DIV/NIT/298-308 | Dt: 20-04-2026

Sd/- (Er. H.M Jahangir)

Executive Engineer R&B Division Zainpota

DIPK: 592/26 | Dated: 20-04-2026

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL IRRIGATION DIVISION, SRINAGAR NEAR J&K BANK, "ZALDAGAR"

Sub: Annual HT Electrical Framework Contract of Irrigation/Dewatering/ Tubewell Schemes of Mechanical Irrigation Division Srinagar covering Sub-Divisions Ganderbal & Headquarter having jurisdiction in district- Ganderbal, Srinagar and Budgam.

Ref: This office e-NIT No. 04 of 2026-27, dated: 10.04.2026.

CORRIGENDUM

The clause No. 29 of the above referred e-NIT is hereby amended and may be read as:

Clause - 29: Old / Unserviceable Material.

Instead of	May be Read as
Old / Unserviceable Material (if any), shall be returned to Divisional Stores against proper return indent.	Old / Unserviceable Material (if any), shall be returned to Divisional Stores against proper return indent. However, the scrap copper/aluminium shall be decided by the Tender Committee during the technical evaluation of the above-referred e-NIT.

Rest of the terms and conditions shall remain un-altered as laid down in the original tender document.

No: MIDS/Ts/346-47 | Dated: 20-04-2026

**Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Mechanical Irrigation Division Srinagar**

DIPK: 596/26 | Dated: 20-04-2026

DC Budgam reviews Development Works at Doodhpathri

Stresses on sustainable Tourism Development

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, APRIL 20: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today chaired a review meeting at TRC Tangnar, Doodhpathri to assess the progress and future roadmap for tourism development in the picturesque destination.

The meeting was attended by senior officers including CEO, Doodhpathri Development Authority (DDA), ACR Budgam, Superintending Engineer R&B, SDM Khansahab, JD planning Budgam, Divisional Forest Officer Budgam, Divisional Head Ecology & Environment Department and SHO Khansahab.

During the meeting, a detailed presentation highlighted the immense tourism potential of Doodhpathri, which is steadily emerging as a major eco-tourism and adventure destination. It was informed that the area has witnessed significant tourist footfall in recent years, with encouraging projections for further growth.

The destination, located at an altitude of around 8960 feet, is known for its lush green meadows, scenic landscapes, rivers like Shaliganga and Sukhnag, and trekking routes connecting Tosamaidan, Yousmarg, and other high-altitude locations.



The DC reviewed the status of the existing infrastructure, including accommodation facilities, road connectivity, power supply, mobile connectivity, SWM, etc. Detailed discussion strengthening hospitality infrastructure, enhancing road

connectivity, and augmenting essential services to meet the growing tourist influx was held.

The Deputy Commissioner also deliberated on the Master Plan of Doodhpathri. The DC stressed on the timely completion and finalisation of the master plan. Directions were issued to departments for coordination, information sharing, GIS mapping, ground truthing for ensuring time bound completion.

After the meeting, the DC visited various tourist spots in Doodhpathri to take on-ground assessment of facilities and ongoing development works.

Later, the DC inspected an under-construction bridge at Doodhpathri, Skillift Project, and the proposed Gondola project site.

A plantation drive was also conducted at the Doodhpathri tourist destination as part of sustained efforts to promote environmental sustainability and preserve the ecological balance of the area.

The DC stated that Doodhpathri will be developed as a model eco-tourism destination with focus on infrastructure development, environmental sustainability, and livelihood generation for local communities.

Director Agriculture reviews HADP projects in Sunderbani

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 20: Director Agriculture Jammu Anil Gupta today conducted an extensive tour of Sunderbani area in District Rajouri to review the progress of various initiatives being implemented under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP).

He was accompanied by Joint Director Agriculture (Extension), Sanjay Anand, Chief Agriculture Officer Rajouri, Rajesh Verma along with other officers of the department.

During the visit, Anil Gupta visited the Growth Multipurpose Cooperative Society, Sunderbani, where he inspected a Commercial Vermicompost Unit established under HADP. The unit is playing a vital role in supplying quality organic manure to farmers, with a production of approximately 600 quintals of vermicompost recorded within a year.

The members of the cooperative also informed that, with the support and guidance of the Agriculture Department, they are in the process of launching a local brand of pickles, aimed at enhancing value addition and farmers income.

The Director also visited a Hi-Tech Polyhouse established by young entrepreneur farmer Rajesh Prasher of Bhajwal-A, Nadani, Sunderbani. The farmer apprised that through multi-layer farming practices, crops such as bitter melon, pumpkin and bottle gourd are being cultivated simultaneously along with brinjal, strawberry and tomato in lower layers. He further informed that the produce is completely organic, with no use of chemicals and strict adherence to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) is being ensured by workers. The initiative is also generating employment opportunities for local youth.

Appreciating the efforts of the progressive farmer Rajesh Prasher, the Director emphasized that youth must actively engage in modern and sustainable agricultural practices. He stated that adoption of innovative technologies like polyhouses and organic farming can significantly enhance farm productivity, generate employment and contribute to strengthening the rural economy.

He further highlighted that HADP is designed to transform agriculture into a profitable and sustainable enterprise, encouraging diversification, value addition and entrepreneurship among farmers.

During the tour, the Director also conducted field visits to review natural farming practices, including cultivation of turmeric, ginger, curry leaves, colocasia (kachalu), mint and rose farming. He visited orchards where farmers have planted 250 pecan nut plants, 300 lemon plants and 500 galgal trees.

Later, Anil Gupta visited the Seed Multiplication Unit established under HADP by Alok Nath in Sunderbani. He emphasized the critical importance of quality seed production in enhancing agricultural productivity. He stated that seed multiplication units play a pivotal role in ensuring the availability of high-quality, locally adapted seeds to farmers, thereby reducing dependency on external sources and improving crop yields. He urged farmers to actively participate in such initiatives and adopt certified seed practices to achieve better returns.

The Director reiterated the department's commitment to empowering farmers through innovative interventions, capacity building and infrastructure development under HADP, aimed at ushering in a new era of agricultural growth in the region.

Power Shutdown by KPDCL

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 20: Chief Engineer, Distribution, KPDCL has informed that the Shutdown of 33 KV Wanganpora- S.H Pora line will be observed due to which power supply to Jamallata, Nawa Bazar, Zaina Kadal, Zal Dagar, Nowhatta, Nawa Kadal, MR Gunj, Kaka Sarai, Maidan Pora, SMHS Hospital & adjoining areas will be affected from 03 PM to 5 PM on 21 April 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 KV Shamsipora Tap line will be observed due to which power supply to Shamsipora & adjoining areas will be affected from 9 AM to 4 PM on 23 & 27 April 2026

Likewise, shutdown of 33 KV Wanpoh- Qaimoh line will be observed due to which power supply to Qaimoh, Rampora, Mathal Hama, Rahpora, Redwani, Kujar, Nowbal & adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 03 PM on 21 April 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 KV Wanpoh- Qazigund line will be observed due to which power supply to Qazigund town, Y.K Pora, Manzmoh, Nassu, Baitengo, Razloo, Chowgam, Khargund, Lamer & adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 03 PM on 23 April 2026.

Further, shutdown of 33 KV Tral-II line will be observed due to which power supply to Batagund, Lurgam, Nanar, Taki, Lam, Jawharpora, Aripal, Khangund and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 03 PM on 23, 27 & 29 April 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 KV Wanganpora-BANK line will be observed due to which power supply to Shanglipora, Danimar, Sangam & adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 03 PM on 21 April 2026.

Likewise, shutdown of 33 KV Wanganpora-Khaniyar line will be observed due to which power supply to Miskeen Bagh, Rozabal, Maqdoom Sahib, Hazari Bagh, Jogi Lanker, JLNH Hospital, Kondabal, Hasnabad & adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 03 PM on 21 April 2026.

Likewise, shutdown of 33 kV Baramulla -1st line will be observed due to which power supply to Main Baramulla, Kamibagh, Microwave & adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 03 PM on 25 April 2026.

Committee on Ease of Doing Business and New Industrial Policy begins stakeholder talks in Jammu, promises competitive, investor-friendly J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 20: The Committee on Ease of Doing Business and revision of the New Industrial Policy for Jammu and Kashmir held its first meeting with the stakeholders at Udyog Bhawan here today.

The Committee, chaired by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar, met the representatives and office bearers of various industrial and trade associations from the Jammu Division. Committee members Vikramjit Singh, Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce Department and Amitava Chatterjee, Managing Director & CEO, J&K Bank, attended the meeting.

This was the committee's first stakeholder consultation on revising the J&K Industrial Policy and improving the Ease of Doing Business in the Union Territory. The next meeting will be held in Kashmir.

During the deliberations, industry representatives gave detailed feedback on a wide range of issues. Suggestions focused on regulatory simplification, reducing the compliance burden, improving access to finance, upgrading infrastructure and building mechanisms to attract fresh investment while supporting the growth of existing units.

The stakeholders also proposed specific amendments for incorporation in the new Industrial Policy.



The Committee underlined the importance of continuous stakeholder engagement in policy formulation and assured that all constructive suggestions would be examined. It stated that the

forthcoming Industrial Policy will aim to create a competitive, transparent and investor-friendly ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was also attended by Director, Industries and Commerce-Jammu, Dr Arun Manhas; Chairman, Federation of Industries Jammu, Virender Jai; Arun Gupta, President, Chamber of Commerce & Industry Jammu, Arun Gupta; National Chairman, D2C Industry Association, M A Alim; Vice President, CII, Sidhant Choudhary; Chairman ICC, Rahul Sahai; President-ASSOCHAM Manik Batra; Chairman FICCI, Rakesh Bhat; President BBIA Lalit Mahajan; President, PHDCCI Rakesh Wazir; Chairman, FICCI FLO, Varsha Bansal besides officers from the Directorate of Industries and Commerce.

Month-long Oral Health programme concludes with Walkathon at DH Ganderbal

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, APRIL 20: A month-long Oral Health programme organised by District Hospital (DH) Ganderbal concluded today on a vibrant and positive note with a walkathon aimed at promoting awareness about oral hygiene.

Students participated enthusiastically in the walkathon, carrying banners and raising slogans such as "A Happy Mouth Is A Happy Life," spreading a strong message on the importance of oral health.

Medical Superintendent, District Hospital Ganderbal, Dr. Fara Shafi,

along with a team of dental surgeons, joined and led the walkathon, boosting the morale of participants.

The programme, which commenced on March 20, featured a series of activities including oral health awareness drives, screening camps, interactive sessions and community outreach initiatives. These efforts witnessed active participation from students, faculty members and the general public, reflecting a growing awareness about the link between oral health and overall well-being.

Later in the day, a valedictory function was held at District Hospital Ganderbal to mark the successful

culmination of the programme.

Deputy Director Dentistry, Dr. Jehanzaib, graced the occasion and appreciated the dedicated efforts of dental surgeons from the hospital and DEIC, as well as the supporting staff.

It was informed that around 3,000 beneficiaries were screened during the programme, with oral health kits distributed and demonstrations conducted on their proper use. Emphasis was also laid on the connection between oral health and other medical conditions.

The event concluded with the felicitation of participants and distribution of certificates of appreciation.

DC Doda reviews preparations for World Red Cross Day; issues key directions

HT NEWS NETWORK

DODA, APRIL 20: A review meeting regarding the preparations for the upcoming celebration of World Red Cross Day was held today under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Doda Krishan Lal, who also serves as Chairman of the District Red Cross Society Doda.

The meeting aimed at finalizing the planning, arrangements and overall strategy for the observance of the event on 8th May 2026 across the district.

A comprehensive presentation on the celebration plan and preparedness was delivered by Assistant Commissioner Revenue

Ashraf Pervez which included organization of awareness programmes, health camps, blood donation drives, first-aid training sessions and grand rally to mark the occasion.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized increasing the number of voluntary blood donors in the district to ensure timely availability of blood for needy patients.

It was informed that the main rally for World Red Cross Day will commence from the DC Office Complex Doda, proceed towards GMC Doda and culminate at Government Boys Higher Secondary School Doda, where a mega event will be celebrated.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all departments to work



in close coordination for the successful organization of the event and to ensure maximum public participation especially among youth and students. He instructed the Chief Education Officer to organize Red Cross Day activities in all schools to promote awareness.

The Deputy Commissioner issued directions to ensure proper

security arrangements and preparation of banners for the event, assigning responsibilities to the Additional Deputy Commissioner. He further directed that individuals who have made notable contributions to Red Cross activities be felicitated during the celebration.

He stressed the need for enhanced publicity of Red Cross initiatives and urged civil society members and business stakeholders to come forward and extend their support.

The District Information Officer was directed to intensify awareness campaigns and ensure wide dissemination of information regarding all activities under the Red Cross Society.

The district officers also shared

their valuable suggestions for the successful celebration of the event and for strengthening the Red Cross Society in the district.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Anil Kumar Thakur, Additional Deputy Commissioner Sunil Bhatnagar, ASP Headquarters Mohd Aslam, ACDDin Mohammad Afaqi, SDMs, SE Jal Shakti, Principal GDC Javid Iqbal, Chief Education Officer Bhusan Kumar Pathak, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Tanvir Ahmed, District Information Officer Abhimanyu Singh, District Social Welfare Officer Zubair Ahmed, Tehsildar along with other district officers, representatives of the Indian Army and officials from various government departments.

DC Kupwara reviews finalization of data under 3rd phase of Agriculture Census

HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, APRIL 20: Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, who also serves as the Chairman of the District Level Coordination Committee, today convened a meeting of concerned officers to review and finalize the data compilation process under the third phase of the Agriculture Census in the district. During the meeting, a comprehensive review of the progress achieved so far was undertaken. He stressed that reliable data is essential for effective planning, resource allocation, and implementation



of farmer welfare schemes.

Officers from different departments, including Agriculture, Revenue, and allied sectors, briefed the chair on the status of data collection, verification, and digitization. The Deputy Commissioner called upon all stakeholders to work with dedication and a sense of responsibility to ensure that the Agriculture Census data for the district is finalized in a comprehensive and error-free manner.

Assistant Commissioner Revenue Kupwara, District Statistics & Evaluation Officer, besides, officers from Agriculture, Revenue, Statistics, and allied sectors, participated in the meeting.

Adani incorporates subsidiary for nuclear power venture

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI, APR 20: Adani Power Ltd informed the stock exchange here on Monday that it has incorporated a wholly owned step-down subsidiary called Coastal-Maha Atomic Energy Ltd, which will undertake the generation, transmission and distribution of power from nuclear reactors.

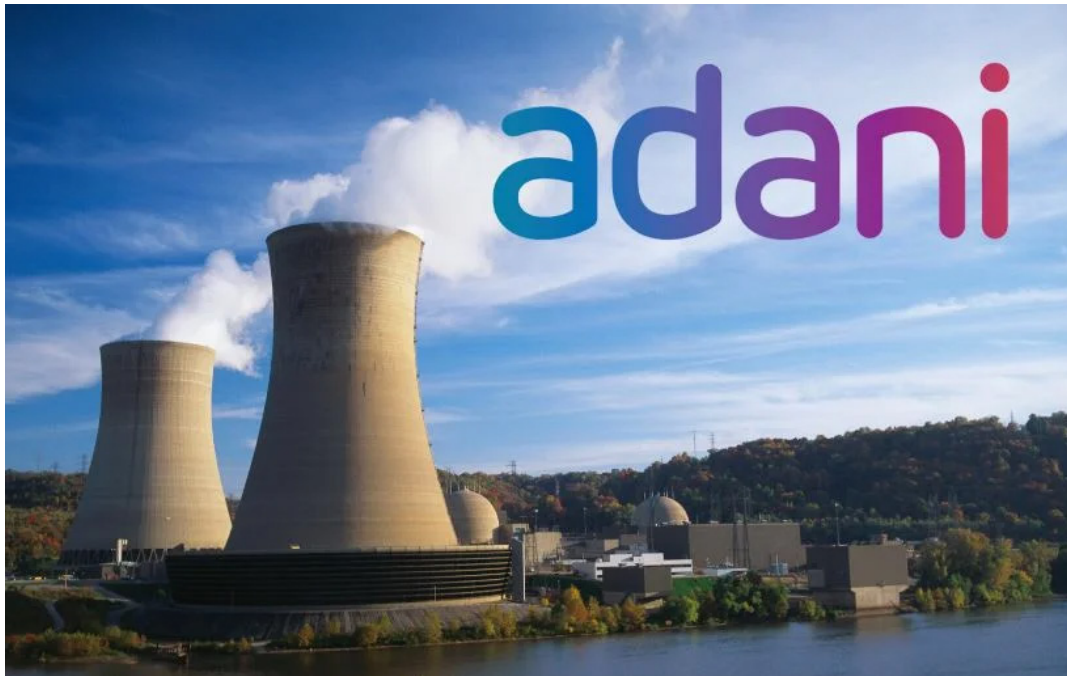
The company stated in a regulatory filing, that CMAEL has been incorporated by Adani Atomic Energy Ltd (AAEL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Adani Power.

The development has come after the company's February 12 announcement of its incorporation of AAEL, which marked its entry into the nuclear power segment.

CMAEL was incorporated on April 13, with the certificate of incorporation received on April 18.

The entity has been set up with an authorised capital of Rs 5 lakh, divided into 50,000 equity shares of Rs 10 each, with subscription made in cash.

As per the filing, CMAEL is fully owned by AAEL, which in turn is a wholly owned subsidiary of Adani



Power, making it a step-down subsidiary of the listed entity.

The company added that no governmental or regulatory approvals were required for the incorporation at this stage.

The development comes amid a broader policy push by the Centre

to expand private sector participation in nuclear energy.

In recent statements, the government has signalled its intent to open up the nuclear power value chain through potential changes to existing legal frameworks, while retaining strategic control over

critical areas such as fuel management and safety oversight.

The relatively modest initial capital suggests that the company is in an early-stage setup phase, likely to scale as projects and regulatory clearances progress. The structure allows flexibility

for future capital infusion aligned with project development needs.

CMAEL will operate in the nuclear energy sector, with a mandate to generate, transmit, and distribute power derived from nuclear or atomic sources.

The company's formation signals Adani Power's intent to diversify beyond conventional thermal power and position itself in alternative energy segments.

While no immediate regulatory approvals were required for incorporation, the nature of the business indicates that future operations will likely involve extensive compliance frameworks.

Ownership remains tightly held within the group, with 100 percent of CMAEL owned by Adani Atomic Energy Limited, and in turn, 100 percent of Adani Atomic Energy Limited held by Adani Power.

This ensures complete strategic and operational control as the company builds capabilities in a highly specialised sector.

The structure also simplifies decision-making and aligns the subsidiary's direction with the parent company's long-term energy strategy.

Hyundai launches bold New Venue Knight

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHENNAI, APR 20: Passenger car makers Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL) on Monday announced the launch of the Venue Knight – a bold and dynamic expression of style, crafted for customers who seek a distinctive and commanding road presence.

Building on the strong success of Hyundai's Knight range, the Venue Knight embodies the enigmatic allure of black through exclusive design elements and premium interior highlights.

With its assertive blacked out design and Knight exclusive enhancements, the Hyundai VENUE Knight elevates the ownership experience with enhanced visual appeal and refined character, a HMIL release said.



Commenting on the launch, company Head, Product Strategy and Planning, Amit Dhaundiyal said "we continuously strive to bring products that resonate with the evolving aspirations of Indian customers.

The Venue Knight represents a bold expression of style and individuality, specially crafted for customers who want their car to reflect their personality.

With this launch, we are taking the distinctive black themed Knight philosophy to one of our most popular compact SUVs. Every element of the Hyundai Venue Knight, from its blacked out exteriors to its premium interiors with brass inserts, has been thoughtfully curated to create a strong visual identity that stands apart on the road.

Alongside the Knight, the introduction of dashcam on select Venue variants and the addition of new matte colours further enhance the overall line up, addressing evolving customer expectations."

More than 92,000 units of Knight range have been sold since its first launch in 2022.

The prices ranged from Rs 9,69,800 to Rs 14,79,000 of 5 variants of Venue Knight, Rs 10,88,388 to Rs 15,64,000 of three Venue variants and Rs 15,48,000 for Venue N Line. UNI

Banking sector to see 9-13% industrial credit growth in Jan-June period: Survey

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 20: In the January-June period of 2026, the Indian banking sector is likely to see 9-13 per cent industrial credit growth, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry-Indian Banks' Association (Ficci-IBA) survey said.

The survey said there will be a steady and gradual expansion, likely to be supported by the ongoing revival in capital expenditure, infrastructure push, and sectoral demand recovery. The industrial credit of small finance banks and cooperative banks largely are expected to have around 7-9 per cent credit growth, reflecting relatively conservative expansion expectations.

Further, the report said the public-sector banks display stronger confidence, with expectations skewed toward higher growth bands, reflecting optimism anchored by improved asset quality, strengthened capital buffers, and continued traction in corporate lending, particularly amid signs of capex revival.

It said that for the foreign banks, growth is expected to be in the 11-13 per cent range reflecting moderate optimism largely shaped by global liquidity conditions, capital allocation priorities, and selective participation in domestic corporate credit markets.

"Segment-wise responses indicate clear variation in expectations across bank categories. Small Finance Banks and Cooperative Banks are largely clustered in the 7-9 per cent growth range, reflecting relatively conservative outlooks on industrial credit expansion, possibly due to limited exposure to large industrial borrowers and a stronger orientation toward retail and MSME lending," the survey added. The survey highlighted a strongly optimistic outlook for retail loan growth, with expectations heavily skewed toward high double-digit expansion. Agriculture and allied sector credit growth is expected to see around 9-13 per cent growth in the January-June period of 2026.

Infrastructure sector including power, roads, and telecom is expected to witness high growth in demand for term loans over the next six months, followed by metals, iron and steel, real estate and construction.

Auto and auto components, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and engineering goods, also feature prominently among the top sectors anticipated to see increased borrowing activity. Other sectors such as chemicals -- excluding pharma, leather and leather products, and rubber and plastics received comparatively fewer mentions. UNI

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India's truckers brace for first diesel price hike in four years

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APR 20: Operators of truck fleets across India are bracing for fuel rationing and the first significant increase in diesel prices in years, a move that would end a period of relative stability that has continued even into a war in the Persian Gulf.

The world's third-largest oil importer is among the countries most exposed to the trade upheaval in West Asia as the conflict extends into an eighth week—but it has not faced the widespread price hikes at the pump seen elsewhere, as the government shields consumers and state-run refiners absorb losses.

That may be about to change, once key regional elections wrap up next week, as pressure increases and the war drags on. A hike by those government-owned refiners would add to inflationary pressures

weighing on the economy. Truck drivers already report widespread informal rationing that forces them to stop more frequently to fill their tanks, delaying deliveries.

"We are going to see an increase in diesel prices after the elections," said Shailendra Gupta, an executive member at All India Motor Transport Congress, a truckers' lobby group. "Already nearly 10% of the fleet is idle, if the fuel prices are increased that number could go up to 30%."

Pumps have withdrawn discounts they used to give earlier on monthly purchases above a certain threshold, he said.

Much of India's cargo moves around by road—trucks account for nearly 70% of the freight movement—so diesel is the lifeblood of the economy. Private players Naryana Energy Ltd. have already raised pump prices and Reliance Industries Ltd. and its partner BP Plc have rationed supplies. Still,



any widespread increase in retail fuel prices, coupled with a weak exchange rate, would feed through to the wider economy.

Ajay Bansal, president of All India Petroleum Dealers Association, said there was currently no rationing at state outlets—though they were feeling

the knock—on effect from other restrictions.

"With the private refiners curtailing sales, there has been an abnormal spike in demand at pumps of state retail outlets which may have led to dry-outs at some outlets and forcing them to curtail sales," Bansal said.

The government has urged citizens to avoid panic buying fuel and said on Sunday that retail outlets were operating normally. There was no increase in regular retail prices for petrol or diesel, it added. India has already reduced local taxes on petrol and diesel and raised export levies in order to protect consumers.

Standard Chartered Plc economists led by Anubhuti Sahay said in a report last Friday that if crude averages \$95 a barrel in this fiscal year, the government would be forced to raise pump prices by 8-15 per litre for petrol and diesel, along with higher cooking gas prices. Even if crude averages \$85-\$90 a barrel, retail fuel prices may still need to rise by 3-7 per litre, they said.

Brent crude was trading around \$96 a barrel on Monday. India's last widespread pump price increase was in 2022.

Over 73,200 IT layoffs recorded in first 3 months of 2026

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APR 20: Over 73,200 jobs were cut in the initial three months of 2026 Q1FY26 by 95 Information Technology (IT) companies, data compiled by Layoffs. fyi said. The key names that announced layoffs in quick succession were The Walt Disney Company, Meta Platforms, Snap Inc., and Oracle Corporation.

Disney is preparing to cut around 1,000 jobs. The development comes as the first major restructuring since Josh D'Amaro took over as chief executive in March.

Disney's severance packages vary, based on role and tenure. Non-managerial employees with under five years of service will receive four weeks of pay, while those with longer tenures will get one week per year of service, capped at 52 weeks.

In March, Meta reduced around 700 roles across recruitment, sales, and operations. The company continues to reduce

its workforce with 198 roles set to be cut across its California offices in Burlingame and Sunnyvale. Earlier in January, the company had already cut about 1,500 jobs tied to its augmented and virtual reality initiatives. Oracle Corporation is also undertaking one of the largest restructuring drives. It has rolled out plans to cut between 20,000 and 30,000 jobs worldwide. India is among the hardest-hit regions, with estimates suggesting around 12,000 roles impacted. As per the reports, these layoffs span cloud, healthcare, sales, and NetSuite divisions, pointing to a company-wide overhaul driven by heavy investment in AI infrastructure.

Snap Inc. is planning to lay off around 1,000 employees, nearly 16 per cent of its workforce. Snap is also eliminating more than 300 unfilled roles, signalling a broader hiring slowdown. The company expects to save over USD 500 million annually by the second half of 2026. UNI

Market valuation of 8 of top 10 firms surges by over Rs 1.87 lakh cr

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 20: The combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most valued firms surged by Rs 1,87,497.45 crore last week. Bharti Airtel emerged as the biggest gainer, as its market valuation jumped Rs 58,831.52 crore to Rs 11,25,125.21 crore.

In a rank-wise analysis, Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm. It was followed by HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, TCS, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, Infosys, LIC.

In a week, Sensex jumped 943.29 points or 1.21 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 302.95 points or 1.25 per cent.

The valuation of ICICI Bank edged higher by Rs 18,266.82 crore to Rs 9,65,008.67 crore while the mcap of HDFC Bank dropped by Rs 16,163.04 crore to Rs 12,31,315.53 crore. State



Bank of India went up by Rs 12,599.79 crore to Rs 9,97,229.77 crore.

The market valuation of Bajaj Finance diminished by Rs 9,769.3

crore to Rs 5,65,437.17 crore, and the valuation of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) surged

Rs 27,608.62 crore to Rs 5,32,691.31

crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Reliance Industries rallied by Rs 20,231.05 crore to Rs 18,47,317.84 crore and that of Larsen & Toubro climbed Rs 18,577.91 crore to Rs 5,63,314.50 crore. Infosys went by Rs 10,650.1 crore to Rs 5,34,774.50 crore.

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) added Rs 20,731.64 crore, taking its market valuation to Rs 9,34,063.56 crore. Mcap of Reliance Industries rallied by Rs 20,231.05 crore to Rs 18,47,317.84 crore and that of Larsen & Toubro climbed Rs 18,577.91 crore to Rs 5,63,314.50 crore.

The 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 per cent at 78,493.54, and the Nifty was up 156.80 points or 0.65 per cent at 24,353.55. UNI

Kerala Blasters beat Jamshedpur FC 2-0 at home

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

KOCHI: Kerala Blasters produced a commanding first-half display to defeat Jamshedpur FC 2-0 in their Indian Super League match here on Saturday.

Goals from Nihal Sudheesh (12th) and substitute Vibin Mohanan (36th) ensured all three points for the hosts, who were resolute at the back with goalkeeper Arsh Shaikh delivering a standout performance to preserve a clean sheet.

Nihal Sudheesh was adjudged the Player of the Match.

The match began at a lively tempo, with both sides looking to impose themselves in midfield. Kerala Blasters showed early intent through Karim Benarif and Kevin Yoke, while Jamshedpur responded with measured build-up play, making for an evenly contested opening phase.

The breakthrough arrived in the 12th minute through a well-crafted attacking move. Kevin picked out Benarif on the left, who drove forward before beating his marker and delivering an inviting cross into the box. Nihal Sudheesh timed his move perfectly from the right and rose above his marker to head the ball into the net, giving the hosts a 1-0 lead.

Jamshedpur responded almost immediately



and came close to equalising two minutes later. Lazar Irkovi met a corner delivery with a powerful header that struck the post, with the rebound narrowly evading danger as Kerala survived a moment of pressure.

The contest continued at a brisk pace, with both sides creating openings. Jamshedpur looked threatening down the right through Nikhil Barla and Mohammed Sanan, while Nikola Stojanovi orchestrated play from midfield. However, the visitors lacked precision in the final third, with chances going astray.

Kerala Blasters doubled their advantage in the 36th minute. Francisco Feuillassier delivered a well-weighted cross from near the touchline, and substitute Vibin, who came 10 minutes earlier for injured Benarif, rose inside the box to head the ball past Albino Gomes, making it 2-0 for the hosts.

Jamshedpur attempted to respond before the break, with Vincy Barretto testing Arsh Shaikh with a header and Sanan seeing an effort blocked, but Kerala's defence remained organised as they carried a two-goal lead into half-time.

The visitors began the second half with renewed urgency, pushing numbers forward in search of a way back into the contest. Early pressure saw Arsh Shaikh called into action to deal with a dangerous cross from Rei Tachikawa, while Ritwik Das and Messi Bouli both tested the Kerala goalkeeper soon after.

Despite Jamshedpur's sustained attacking efforts, Arsh Shaikh stood firm, producing a series of crucial saves to deny Bouli, Stephen Eze and others as the Blasters absorbed pressure with discipline.

Kerala continued to pose a threat on the counter, with Yoke and substitute Victor Bertomeu linking up well, while Vibin nearly added a third but was forced wide under defensive pressure.

The game took another turn in the 84th minute when Jamshedpur captain Stephen Eze was shown a red card, reducing the visitors to ten men and effectively ending their hopes of a comeback.

In the closing stages, Kerala managed the game intelligently, retaining possession and limiting Jamshedpur's opportunities as the visitors struggled to create clear chances.

The final whistle confirmed a deserved 2-0 victory for Kerala Blasters FC, as they secured their second win of the season and climbed to 11th in the table with eight points.

Jamshedpur FC, meanwhile, slip to fifth with 15 points from nine matches following a frustrating outing away from home.

Ashwin sees Samson as future CSK captain

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHENNAI: Former India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin believes Sanju Samson could be the future captain Chennai Super Kings, but stressed that the wicketkeeper-batter should build his own identity instead of trying to follow anyone else's legacy.

Speaking about CSK's leadership transition, Ashwin said the process had already begun a few years ago when Ravindra Jadeja briefly took over the captaincy, even though that phase didn't go as planned. He added that current skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad has effectively been leading the side in recent seasons, alongside head coach Stephen Fleming.

"I think the mantle is already passed on. When Jadeja took over the captaincy a few years ago, I think that is when the mantle was likely to be passed on. Didn't quite work out, and then it's been, Ruturaj... I think Ruturaj has been running the show for the last 2-3 years along with Fleming," Ashwin told



ESPNcricinfo.

Ashwin also said that, in his view, Samson could eventually take on the leadership role at CSK, although he made it clear

that he wasn't predicting when that might happen.

"The mantle passing over, if you ask me, I mean, I'm no astrologer, but all I can tell you

is I do see Sanju captaining CSK at some stage. Don't know when, but I do see that happening," he added. However, Ashwin emphasised that Samson should

not feel the pressure of stepping into the shoes of past leaders, especially given CSK's long-standing legacy under MS Dhoni.

"The one thing I wouldn't want to risk upon or don't want for Sanju is him stepping into anybody's shoes. You don't have to really step into anybody's legacy. We don't necessarily need to live like that nor play like that," he said. "He's got his own unique clothing in which he lives, and I would like to see his own imprint on it. The very fact that we need to follow somebody's footsteps is where the issue begins. Then we don't live our lives, right? We start catering to somebody else's footprints. That is something I don't want to see him do," he explained.

Meanwhile, Samson, who joined CSK ahead of the IPL 2026 season through a trade, has bounced back strongly after a slow start. He struck a century against Delhi Capitals in his fourth match and followed it up with a quickfire 48 off 32 balls in the next game, showing signs of returning to form.

Struggling Kolkata Knight Riders get Matheesha Pathirana boost

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

KOLKATA: Sri Lankan pacer Matheesha Pathirana is finally joining Kolkata Knight Riders late on Saturday, giving a much-needed boost to the side, who are currently languishing at the bottom of the IPL table. Having recovered from a calf strain sustained in the T20 World Cup, Pathirana has cleared the mandatory fitness test by Sri Lanka Cricket and received the no-objection certificate.

He is currently in transit and will link up with the squad ahead of their match against Rajasthan Royals on Sunday. However, he is unlikely to be named in the playing XI straightaway, as the team's medical team will first assess his match fitness over a couple of training sessions, said a team source.

The slinger pacer, who was bought by KKR for Rs 18 crore at the last IPL auction, was always expected to miss



the initial matches after suffering a calf strain during the T20 World Cup earlier this year.

Having recovered from his injury, Pathirana was initially expected to join before their game against Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad on Friday.

The development comes as a big relief for KKR, who are still searching for their first win after six matches and remain at the bottom of the

points table. The Ajinkya Rahane-led side has just one point so far, which came from a rain washout match against Punjab Kings. Bowling has been a major concern for KKR even before the start of the tournament.

Mustafizur Rahman was unavailable for non-cricket reasons, while frontline pacers Harshit Rana and Akash Deep missed games due to injuries. Their problems worsened with Varun Chakravarthy struggling for form, leaving them heavily dependent on Sunil Narine and the relatively inexperienced Anukul Roy in the spin department. KKR failed to defend 220 in their opening game in Mumbai, before Sunrisers Hyderabad took their 65-run defeat in Kolkata.

A rain washout against Punjab Kings gave them their only point before Lucknow Super Giants pulled off a thrilling win, exposing their inexperienced pace attack.

Rampaging Punjab Kings eye another win, skipper Pant available for LSG

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MULLANPUR: Table-toppers Punjab Kings will bank on their strong batting to continue their winning run against a struggling Lucknow Super Giants who will, however, be boosted by the presence of their skipper Rishabh Pant in their IPL match here on Sunday. PBKS, the only unbeaten side so far, have looked ominous this season with four wins from five matches, with one game against Kolkata Knight Riders washed out. The Shreyas Iyer-led side boasts a healthy net run rate of +1.067, thanks to their strong batting displays that have powered clinical chases. The Kings have won nine of their last 11 matches while chasing since the 2025 season, underlining their dominance, and it was also seen in their recent win over Mumbai Indians. It will take something special from LSG to halt the home team's momentum. Lucknow, currently seventh in the points table, are reeling from back-to-back losses, but the return of Pant in Sunday's match will be a relief for them. The LSG skipper had suffered an elbow injury in their previous match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

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