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“Education Shouldn't be Focused Solely on Marks Percentage”: Manoj Sinha

LG inaugurates new school building in Nagrota, stresses skills, values and lifelong learning



HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APR 23: Manoj Sinha on Tuesday inaugurated the new school building of Swami Pranavanand Vidyamandir at Panjgrain in Nagrota, calling for a transformation in the education system to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving world. Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor said the newly developed higher secondary infrastructure and skill facilities would ensure access to quality education for disadvantaged sections. He added that once fully completed, the institution would cater to over 1,500 students, bringing significant socio-economic transformation to the region. The school, managed by Bharat Sevashram Sangha, has been providing

Turn on Page 2

Article 370 abrogation ended uncertainty in J&K: Amit Shah

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, APR 23: Asserting that the abrogation of Article 370 led to complete integration of Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of the country, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said PM Modi led regime gave befitting reply to terrorists and their mentors by hitting them hard.

Addressing election rallies in rally in Balagarh, Hooghly district, West Bengal, Shah, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said PM Modi led regime's decision to abrogate Article 370 “ended uncertainty in J&K. “For 75 years, the Congress, Communists, Mamata Banerjee, Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samajwadi Party and DMK kept Article 370 in place. Prime Minister Narendra Modi ended Article 370 and made J&K an integral part of India,” he added.

“During the Manmohan Singh government and Mamata Banerjee's tenure, attacks were carried out in the country repeatedly. The present government responded through surgical



strikes, air strikes and Operation Sindoor. Terrorism and Naxalism have been curbed. Once a BJP government is formed, infiltrators will be identified and deported from across the country.” Shah said Jammu and Kashmir now operates under the same constitutional framework as the rest of India following the abrogation of Article 370.

Turn on Page 2

Ladakh Unveils Tourism Overhaul to Cut Red Tape, Spur Growth

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

LEH/JAMMU, APR 23: In a significant move aimed at boosting the tourism economy, Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena on Thursday approved a wide-ranging reform package to simplify regulations and reduce compliance burden in the hospitality sector across Ladakh.

The reforms focus on deregulating tourism-related businesses, easing entry barriers and introducing a unified, streamlined registration system for hotels, homestays and tour operators. Key documentation requirements such as character certificates, proof of bank balance and educational qualifications for tour operators have been scrapped to enhance transparency and accessibility.

Under the new framework, the validity of travel agent registrations has been extended from one year to five years, while the number of required documents has been reduced from seven to four. Separate registrations for adventure and

Turn on Page 2

Trade Bodies, Public Delegations Flag Key Issues Before CM Omar Abdullah

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APR 23: Several public and trade delegations on Wednesday met Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, raising a wide range of development and industry-related issues and seeking continued policy support to boost economic activity across the Union Territory.

A deputation led by Jammu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) President Arun Gupta discussed concerns



impacting trade and commerce, urging measures to create a more conducive business environment and streamline operations. The delegation

Turn on Page 2

Pahalgam Terror Attack; Nalwa Named Special Prosecutor for Pahalgam Attack Trial

Centre's Move on Anniversary to Fast-Track Prosecution in Case That left 26 Dead

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APR 22: The Centre has appointed senior advocate Karambir Singh Nalwa as Special Public Prosecutor to lead the trial in the Pahalgam terror attack case, marking a key development on the first anniversary of one of the deadliest attacks in Jammu and Kashmir

in recent years.

The appointment was notified by the Ministry of Home Affairs under provisions of the National Investigation Agency Act, 2008 and the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023. Nalwa will represent the National Investigation Agency before the NIA Special Court in Jammu as well as the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. His tenure will extend up to three years or until the completion of the trial, whichever is earlier.

The NIA has filed a comprehensive chargesheet naming six individuals along with Pakistan-based terror outfit

Turn on Page 2

Rathore Demands Kharge's Apology Over ‘Terrorist’ Remark on PM Modi

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, APR 23: Senior BJP leader Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore on Thursday demanded an apology from Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge over his alleged “terrorist” remark against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, terming it an attack on the democratic mandate of crores of Indians.

Addressing a press conference here, Rathore described the statement as

“verbal violence” against a constitutional post and said such language reflected “electoral frustration” on the part of the Congress leadership. He asserted that targeting the Prime Minister in such a manner amounted to disrespecting the electorate that chose him.

“This is not merely an attack on an individual but on the millions who elected him. Such remarks must be condemned,” Rathore said, adding that

Turn on Page 2

Water Supply to Be Hit in Srinagar, Ganderbal Areas for 48 Hours

PHE announces shutdown from April 25–27 for Sindh Power Canal repairs

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 23: The Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department has announced a temporary suspension of drinking water supply in several areas of Ganderbal and adjoining rural pockets of Srinagar from April 25 to April 27 to facilitate essential repair works on the Sindh Power Canal.

An official statement issued by the Executive Engineer, Rural Water Supply Division Ganderbal, said that Phase-II maintenance of the canal will be carried out on April 25 and



26. During this period, the raw water

Turn on Page 2

Languages Guard Our Identity, Culture: Sakeena Itoo

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 22: Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo today remarked that languages are not merely a means of expressing thoughts but they are the guardians of our history, identity and culture.

The Minister stated this while delivering the Keynote address during

One-day Seminar on ‘Relation of Urdu with Regional Languages’ at University of Jammu here.

The seminar was organised by Department of Urdu, University of Jammu in collaboration with National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL).

In her address the Minister said that this seminar is not just a formal event, but a reflection of our iden-



tity, as languages are not merely a means of expressing thoughts, they are the guardians of our history, identity, and culture.

“Urdu is a language that has evolved through centuries and has absorbed the influences of various civilizations and cultures. Lucknow and Delhi are considered the birthplaces of Urdu but Jammu and

Turn on Page 2

CS reviews ₹3440.43 Cr plan for flood restoration works



HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 23: The Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high-level meeting to review the comprehensive plan for utilization

of funds earmarked for works related to the permanent restoration of damages caused by floods and associated calamities in 2025.

The meeting besides the ACS, PDD; ACS,

Turn on Page 2

J&K set to spread red carpet for International Film Festival this year

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 23: In a significant initiative to promote cinema, culture, and tourism, the Government of Jammu & Kashmir has initiated plans to host a prestigious international film festival through the Department of Information & Public Relations (DIPR).

The decision was taken during a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, which was attended by the Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism; Commissioner Secretary, Information; Director, Information & Public Relations, and other senior officers.

Turn on Page 2

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

“Education Shouldn't.....

education from pre-primary to Class 8 since 2014 under the 'Har Ghar Shiksha' initiative, with a majority of students coming from economically weaker backgrounds.

Emphasising the need for future-ready classrooms, Sinha urged students and teachers to contribute to nation-building and align education with global trends. He highlighted the importance of cultural awareness and effective communication, stating that unity in diversity is a defining strength in today's interconnected world.

The Lieutenant Governor said students excelling in art, craft, music and entrepreneurship must receive equal recognition, asserting that a narrow focus on academic scores sidelines essential human capabilities. He stressed the need to nurture creativity, critical thinking, moral decision-making and collaboration—skills that remain irreplaceable in the age of artificial intelligence and automation.

“The world is changing rapidly, and the workforce now demands continuous learning, skilling and upskilling,” he said, noting that emerging technologies are transforming industries, offices, hospitals and schools alike.

Referring to the National Education Policy, Sinha described it as a powerful tool to bridge social and regional disparities while strengthening India's journey towards becoming a knowledge-driven economy. He said the policy would help nurture generations equipped with scientific temper, cultural values and a spirit of service.

Highlighting the importance of holistic development, he said true education must balance knowledge of the external world with self-awareness and emotional resilience.

The initiative has been supported by Indian Oil Corporation Limited and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited, among other donors. Several public representatives, officials and dignitaries were present on the occasion.

Article 370.....

He said the government has adopted a policy of retaliation against terrorism and strengthened border management.

He added that steps taken in recent years have led to a decline in incidents linked to terrorism and Left-wing extremism.

Targeting the Trinamool Congress government in West Bengal, Shah alleged corruption in recruitment processes and misuse of public funds, and said those involved would face action if his party forms the government in the state.

He also spoke about border security and said illegal infiltration would be addressed through identification and deportation measures. Shah said sealing of borders and coordination among agencies would be ensured.

Outlining proposals for north Bengal, he referred to plans for health and education infrastructure, including institutions such as an AIIMS, IIT and IIM, along with a cancer hospital and road connectivity projects.

Shah said support measures for farmers, women and youth would be implemented, including financial assistance schemes and employment-related initiatives.

Shah said issues related to Gorkha communities would be addressed and cases registered against them would be reviewed if his party comes to power in the state.

He said the Centre had held meetings to resolve matters related to Darjeeling but claimed the state government did not participate.

He added that efforts would continue to address political and administrative concerns in the region—(KNO)

Ladakh Unveils.....

mountaineering activities have also been merged into a single unified category, simplifying procedures for operators.

Announcing the decision on X, Saxena said the reforms are designed to promote ease of doing business by reducing compliance requirements and creating a more citizen-friendly system.

Hotel registration norms have been rationalised with the introduction of a provisional registration valid for 18 months, followed by a permanent registration for five years. Documentation has been streamlined, requiring only two documents for provisional approval and seven for permanent registration, compared to nine earlier.

The administration has also replaced the earlier multi-tier classification of hotels with a single uniform category. The number of documents required for transfer of registration has been cut from seven to three, further easing procedural requirements.

In a first, homestay registrations have been formally introduced with a five-year validity. Applicants can obtain provisional registration with two documents, while permanent registration will be granted after mandatory training prescribed by the administration.

The reforms also allow for cancellation and name changes, which were previously not permitted, and introduce an online auto-renewal mechanism to replace the earlier manual process.

Officials said the measures are expected to accelerate tourism growth and strengthen the local economy by making it easier for stakeholders to set up and operate businesses in the sector.

Trade Bodies.....

also appreciated the restoration of the Darbar Move, saying it has significantly revived economic activity in markets and positively impacted rental, hospitality and transport sectors.

Another deputation from the Pir Panjal Welfare and Development Trust, led by Vivek Verma, highlighted developmental priorities of the region and stressed the need to tap its tourism potential through sustainable initiatives. The members also called for strengthening healthcare and education infrastructure, ensuring reliable drinking water supply, and generating employment opportunities, particularly for youth in border areas.

They further raised issues related to the construction of community and individual bunkers and sought greater administrative strengthening in these activities.

The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to the delegations and assured them that their genuine concerns would be addressed on priority, reaffirming the government's commitment to inclusive development and responsive governance across all regions.

Pahalgam Terror.....

Lashkar-e-Taiba and its proxy The Resistance Front for their alleged involvement in planning and executing the attack at Baisaran meadows that claimed 26 lives, including 25 tourists and a local pony operator.

The agency has linked the conspiracy to cross-border handlers and named LeF chief Hafeez Saeed and TRF handler Habibullah Malik among key conspirators. Three Pakistani terrorists identified as Faisal Jatt alias Suleman Shah, Habeeb Tahir alias Jibran and Hamza Afghani, who allegedly carried out the killings, were later neutralised by security forces during Operation Mahadev in Dachigam on July 29 last year.

Two local accused, Parvaiz Ahmad and Bashir Ahmad Jothar, arrested in June last year for allegedly harbouring the attackers, have also been named in the chargesheet.

The appointment of a Special Public Prosecutor is expected to strengthen the prosecution's case and expedite trial proceedings in the high-profile matter.

Rathore Demands.....

senior leaders should uphold decorum in public discourse.

The BJP leader also welcomed the Supreme Court's observations on West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in connection with an Enforcement Directorate search at a political consultancy firm, calling it a “victory of truth.” He alleged that politics of fear had long dominated the state and expressed hope that enhanced deployment of security forces would ensure peaceful polling and higher voter turnout.

On the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, Rathore said the process was underway and would be completed in due course. He also criticised the Congress and some opposition parties for allegedly creating hurdles in the passage of a Constitutional Amendment Bill, stating that women had waited long for adequate representation in policymaking and governance.

Water Supply.....

supply to treatment plants dependent on the canal will remain suspended, leading to disruption in potable water supply.

The shutdown will take effect from 6 a.m. on April 25 and is expected to continue till 6 a.m. on April 27, impacting a wide range of urban and rural localities under the division.

In Ganderbal district, the affected areas include Ganderbal town, Nagbal, Rangil, Darend, Malshahibagh, Khalmulla, Nunner, Gutlibagh, Wayil, Nadribagh, Babaspora, Chattergul, Bandibagh, Arch, Saderbagh, Malpora, Gundrehman, Harran, Kachan, Hathbura, Sehpora, Shallbugh, Chundina, Gogjigund, Malikpora, Kogund, Devpora, Gadoora, Kujjar, Beehama, Manigam, Tullmulla, Waseepora, Theeru and Lar, among others.

In the rural areas of Srinagar district, localities including Gulab Bagh, Zakura, Habak, Shuhama, Chatterhama, Bakura, Inderhama, Syedpora, Khimber, Hadoora, Wanihama, Gassu, Qurashi Mohalla, Shanpora, Guzerbal, Palpora, Tangpora, Gurnanjipora, Pampore Colony, Goripora and Shunglipora are also likely to face disruption.

Officials said the shutdown is necessary to carry out critical repairs aimed at ensuring long-term stability and efficiency of the water supply system. Residents have been advised to store sufficient quantities of water in advance, while helpline numbers have been issued for emergency assistance. Authorities have sought public cooperation, stating that the temporary inconvenience is essential for improving overall service delivery.

Languages.....

Kashmir has equally nurtured this unique language”, she stated.

The Minister highlighted that the Urdu's bond with local languages like Kashmiri, Dogri, Gujri, Pahari, Bhadarwahi, Kishtwari, isn't just neighbourly, but a deep linguistic relationship.

“Urdu adopted words, idioms and tone from local languages and in return gave them a wider platform. J&K is a land where Urdu not only got official patronage, but Suffis, Rishis, Sanskrit and Persian scholars played a key role in taking it to the masses”, she said.

Sakeena Itoo further said that Urdu acts as a bridge connecting different communities here and helps reach each other's hearts. “Urdu language is the silken thread that unites our colorful culture”, she said.

Reaffirming the government's commitment, Sakeena Itoo stated that sustained efforts are being made to promote and preserve regional languages, including Kashmiri, Dogri, Gojri, Pahari, and others. She stressed the importance of inclusive policies that encourage multilingual education and safeguard linguistic identities.

She also assured the NCPUL and Urdu Department of Jammu University that Government is firm in its resolve for promotion of Urdu language as well as regional languages.

The Minister also underscored the need for academic research and community participation in documenting and revitalizing indigenous languages. She called upon scholars, educators, and students to actively engage in initiatives that celebrate linguistic diversity.

On the occasion, the Minister also released a Urdu magazine.

Addressing the gathering, Vice Chancellor Jammu University, Prof. Umesh Rai said that Urdu is a diverse language and is spoken in several parts of the country. He added that languages are a powerful tool to bind communities.

Prof. Rai highlighted that languages are connecting different cultures and traditions, and we need to promote languages for National integration.

Speaking on the occasion, Director NCPUL, Dr. Shams Equebal said that J&K is not only famous for its beautiful landscapes and valleys, but also for its culture and traditions. He highlighted that the strong bond of different languages is evident in Jammu and Kashmir with varied number of languages spoken in its different parts.

He also highlighted that NEP-2020 has also outlined the importance of regional languages.

Speaking on the significance of this seminar, Dr. Shams said that this seminar is a good platform to deliberate on impact of Urdu on Regional Languages.

In his welcome address, HoD, Department of Urdu, University of Jammu, Prof. Shohab Inayat Malik lauded the Education Minister, Sakeena Itoo for bringing new dimensions and upgradation in Higher Education sector. He underlined that the Education Minister has realised the dream of Sher-i-Kashmir, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah by playing a major role in the introduction and passage of Private University Bill in recently concluded Budget Session of J&K Legislative Assembly.

He also spoke in length about the basic contours of this one day seminar. He also spoke about the importance of Urdu language and its connection with the cultural roots of our country, highlighting that Urdu is binding the Indian Civilization and culture together.

Noted writers and poet, Prof. Qudus Javed and Dr. Khalid Hussain also spoke on the occasion and spoke about the multilingual, multicultural and multi-religious aspects of our Country.

CS reviews.....

Finance; ACS, PWD; Principal Secretary, DMRR&R was attended by Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD; Commissioner Secretary, YS&S; Commissioner Secretary, School Education Department.

The Deputy Commissioners also attended the meeting through video conferencing from their respective offices.

The Chief Secretary emphasised upon all Departments to accord necessary administrative approval and technical sanction to ensure that works are tendered and completed without any delay.

He called for submission of work-wise completion details in due course and stressed that each project must be executed strictly as per the approved list and within the prescribed estimates. He enjoined upon the Departments to expedite approvals so that tendering is completed promptly and execution of works is taken up by June this year.

The Chief Secretary stressed the importance of strict adherence to the guidelines issued by the Disaster Management Division, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for recovery and reconstruction. He observed that the Ministry is going to have its focus on the execution of these works therefore demands highest priority on our part as well. He directed all departments to ensure that project proposals are aligned with the PDNA

findings and that there is no duplication of funding across different schemes, particularly between R&R and SASCI components.

The Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shaileendra Kumar, underscored the need to fix strict timelines for each stage of implementation to ensure timely completion of all projects. He assured that the UT share would be made available without any hindrance to facilitate smooth execution of these works.

He advised the departments that necessary department-wise allocations would be made on BEAMStofacilitate timely uploading of works taken up under these additional components, over and above the budgetary allocations. He further stressed that this would help in ensuring their early execution and completion.

During the meeting, a detailed presentation was made by Principal Secretary, DMRR&R, Chandraker Bharti outlining the component-wise allocation of Rs. 3440.43 Cr, structured across multiple funding streams to address both immediate relief and long-term resilience.

Highlighting the need for capacity building, the Principal Secretary further revealed that the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) has been requested to conduct training programmes for officers and officials of line departments and districts. These programmes aim to strengthen institutional capacity for effective project formulation, implementation, and monitoring.

The Principal Secretary apprised that the largest share of Rs. 1579.09 Cr has been approved under the Recovery & Reconstruction (R&R) component of the UT Disaster Response Fund (UTDRF) as Central Financial Assistance based on the Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA). This includes Rs. 1421.118 Cr as Central share and Rs. 157.909 Cr as UT share.

Moreover it was divulged that the funds are aimed at permanent restoration of critical infrastructure such as roads, bridges, irrigation systems, and public assets, with a focus on adopting a “build back better” approach to enhance disaster resilience. The Central share is to be released in three installments of 30%, 40%, and 30%, subject to utilization conditions.

In addition, Rs. 330.34 Cr has been approved by the High-Level Committee (HLC) under SDRF/NDRF norms to cater to immediate and residual impacts of disasters including floods, flash floods, landslides, and cloudbursts. This component is intended to meet urgent restoration and relief requirements in accordance with prescribed norms and sector-specific needs.

The meeting further reviewed the strategy to spend Rs. 1431 Cr Special Additional Central Assistance under SASCI component, which provides supplementary support for critical gaps and resilience-oriented interventions not fully covered under other funding mechanisms.

It was emphasized that this funding window would be utilized judiciously for priority sectors requiring additional financial backing, while ensuring no overlap with R&R allocations. The component constitutes funding for raising critical infrastructure in R&B Sector worth Rs. 860 Cr, Jal Shakti (Rs. 315

Cr), PDD (Rs. 173 Cr), Agriculture Production Department (Rs. 51Cr) and Youth Services & Sports Department (Rs. 32 Cr).

The CAPEX Budget 2025–26 was also highlighted as an important component of the overall outlay, with dedicated provisions for flood mitigation and restoration works.

These include strengthening of flood control infrastructure, construction of protective works such as embankments and drainage systems, and integration of disaster resilience into capital development planning.

The Chief Secretary underscored the urgency of expediting restoration works, particularly in critical sectors, to ensure timely recovery and enhanced resilience against future disasters. He called for close inter-departmental coordination, robust monitoring mechanisms, and outcome-oriented implementation of all projects under the Rs. 3440.43 Cr plan.

J&K set to.....

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary directed the Information Department to begin preparations for this maiden film festival in the Union Territory. He emphasized the need for a professionally managed event of national stature, drawing parallels with the International Film Festival of India held in Goa.

To ensure seamless execution, it was decided that a dedicated committee will be constituted at the earliest to oversee all arrangements related to the festival. The committee will be responsible for planning, coordination, and overall supervision to ensure the smooth and successful conduct of the event.

The Chief Secretary further instructed that a competent and experienced agency be identified and engaged for efficient management of the festival. He stressed the importance of exploring best practices by studying similar events organized across the country.

Underscoring the importance of adhering to timelines, he directed that the process be initiated promptly, with the issuance of the work order to the selected agency targeted before the end of May.

The Commissioner Secretary, Information, while addressing logistical and financial aspects, informed that the National Film Development Corporation of India has indicated reasonable financial requirements for organizing the event. She added that the Department has already undertaken the necessary groundwork and is well-prepared to ensure its success.

The proposed festival is envisaged to be held after the conclusion of the annual Amarnath Yatra, with final dates to be decided by the concerned department.

Highlighting the importance of inclusive development and tourism promotion, it was also decided that the festival will not be confined to Srinagar alone. Film screenings and related events will be organized across multiple scenic locations, including Baderwah, Pahalgam, Gulmarg, and Jammu, thereby boosting both emerging and established tourist destinations.

This initiative marks a major step towards positioning Jammu & Kashmir as a vibrant hub for film tourism and cultural engagement at the national level.

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DC Srinagar assesses progress of major developmental project

Emphasizes seamless inter-departmental coordination for swift & timely execution of projects

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 23: In order to review the status of proposed major developmental projects and ongoing infrastructure works in the district, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today chaired a comprehensive meeting of senior Officers here at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office complex.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Chief Engineer SSCI, Abdul Qayoom Kirmani, Superintendent Engineer R&B, Tatheer Manzoor, Joint Commissioner, SMC, Suhail ul Islam, Collector Land Acquisition R&B, Syed Farooq, SDM West, Irfan Bahadur, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Umar Gulzar, Executive Engineers of R&B, PHE, KPDC, City Drainage, UEED&SMCTehsildars South,

Tehsildar Shalteng and other Officers.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner undertook a comprehensive assessment of the progress in planning and execution of utility shifting for both proposed and ongoing works, emphasizing the need to further expedite the process to accelerate overall project execution.

The DC was given project wise appraisal regarding the current status of estimate preparations and utility shifting for key development projects and ongoing infrastructure works including 4L Flyover from Parimpora to Dalgate Junction, Parimpora-Shalteng Flyover, Vehicle Under Pass (VUP) at Moominabad, Panthachowk flyover, FOB at Children's Hospital Bemina, expansion of Boulevard road and Vehicle Under Pass (VUP) at Nowgam Railway Crossing.



The DC was apprised that the encouraging progress has been achieved in the preparation of estimates of proposed major infrastructural projects with several key projects at advanced stages of finalization.

On the occasion, the DC emphasized the importance of inter-departmental coordination in timely addressing issues related to land acquisition, clearances and utility relocation. He stressed the need to work diligently on designs, technical feasibility and cost estimates to ensure that DPRs are robust, accurate and ready for timely submission and approval.

The DC directed Officers and Engineers to work with due diligence and ensure that all projects incorporate land acquisition costs in their DPRs for seamless and uninterrupted execution of major infrastructure development projects across the district within set timelines.

KU marks World Book & Copyright Day, launches AI-powered chatbot

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR APR 23: The Allama Iqbal Library (AIL), University of Kashmir (KU), organised an event to celebrate World Book and Copyright Day at the Main Campus on Thursday.

Held on the theme "The power of reading: Enriching minds, elevating institutions and empowering societies," the event focused on encouraging reading habits and strengthening engagement with library resources among students and scholars. It also aimed at deliberating on the ethical use of artificial intelligence and concerns related to plagiarism in the evolving academic landscape.



On the occasion, the University launched the AIL Chatbot, a digital assistant designed to support users with queries related to library services, availability of resources, and facilities. The chatbot also offers chat and call features to improve access and user support. A live demonstration of the tool was conducted during the event.

Vice-Chancellor, KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, in her address, said, "Reading remains central to academic life, even as digital tools reshape how knowledge is accessed. Initiatives like these help strengthen both traditional and technology-driven learning practices."

She further added that the integration of digital solutions such as the chatbot can enhance user experience and make library services more accessible and efficient. Dean Academic Affairs, KU, Prof. Shariefuddin Pirzada, in his remarks, emphasised the continued relevance of libraries as academic spaces and noted the importance of adapting to changing learning environments.

Earlier, Librarian, AIL, KU, Dr. Fayaz Ahmad Lone, in his welcome address, highlighted the efforts being made to modernise library services and promote reading culture within the University. The AIL newsletter was also released on the occasion. Students who recorded the highest reading engagement at the library and the top 10 users of AIL e-resources were felicitated on the occasion. They expressed satisfaction with the range of offline and online resources, services, and facilities available at the library.

The proceedings of the event were conducted by Uzma Qadri, while Ishaq Lone proposed the vote of thanks, Assistant Librarians at AIL KU.

Four Medical Shops Sealed in Anantnag as Drug Control Department Cracks Down on Violations

FAROOQ RATHER

ANANTNAG, APR 23: In a major enforcement drive aimed at safeguarding public health, the Drugs Control Department, Anantnag intensified inspections across several parts of the district, leading to the on-the-spot closure of four medical shops for violations of drug regulations.

The inspection drive, carried out on April 22, covered multiple locations including Lazibal, Sarnal, Cheeni Chowk, Sirgufwara, and adjoining areas. The initiative was undertaken to ensure strict compliance with the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, and to curb the misuse of prescription medicines with addiction potential.

During the drive, around 15 medical sale establishments were thoroughly inspected. Officials conducted detailed scrutiny of records related to prescription drugs to identify any discrepancies, unauthorized sales, or possible diversion for misuse.

Following the inspections, four medical shops were found violating norms and were immediately sealed under Section 22(d) of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act,



1940. The establishments include Kanroo Pharmacy at Lazibal, ALL MS Medicate at Sarnal (KP Road), Murad Medicate at Sarnal (KP Road), and Atif Medical Shop at Cheeni Chowk, Anantnag.

Officials from the department reiterated their zero-tolerance policy against any violations that could compromise public health and safety. They warned that strict legal action would be taken against individuals or establishments found involved in illegal sale or misuse of drugs.

The department further stated that such enforcement drives will continue across the district to ensure that only safe, standard, and quality medicines are made available to the public, while preventing the misuse of controlled substances.

JKAACL Organises a Prestigious Literary Interaction with Prof. Naseem Shafaie



JAMEEL ANSARI

SRINAGAR, APR 23: The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) organised a dignified literary interaction programme titled "Meet the Eminent Writer" with noted Kashmiri poet and academic Prof. Naseem Shafaie at the Seminar Hall of the Academy Complex, Lal-Mandi, Srinagar today on 23rd of April, 2026.

The programme was presided over by eminent writer, intellectual, critic, and academic Prof. Shad Ramzan. Former Head of All India Radio Srinagar Rukhsana Jabeen, Prof. Naseem Shafaie, and Editor, Kashmiri JKAACL, Jawaaid Iqbal Khan were also present on the podium.

At the outset, Jawaaid Iqbal Khan delivered the welcome address and remarked that such literary interactions provide valuable opportunities for students, researchers and young writers to directly benefit from the experiences of eminent literary figures and help promote serious engagement with contemporary Kashmiri literature.

During the programme, speakers highlighted the literary contributions, scholarly achievements, and distinctive poetic voice of Prof. Naseem Shafaie. They observed that through her writings she has effectively articulated women's issues, social sensitivities, and cultural values, and has played a significant role in the promotion and enrichment of Kashmiri language and literature.

In her address, Prof. Naseem Shafaie spoke in detail about her literary journey, creative process and the responsibilities of a writer in the contemporary age. A lively question-and-answer session was also held, related to literature, language, creativity, and contemporary social concerns.

On the occasion, Dr. Imtiyaz Lone presented a comprehensive and well-researched paper on the personality, intellectual depth, and literary contributions of Prof. Naseem Shafaie, which was highly appreciated by the audience.

While expressing their views,

Prof. Shad Ramzan and Rukhsana Jabeen emphasized that recognising the contributions of distinguished literary personalities like Prof. Naseem Shafaie and organising such interactive programmes are vital for strengthening the Kashmiri literary tradition and promoting women's perspectives in literature.

During the programme, Prof. Naseem Shafaie was honoured with a traditional shawl and presented with a commemorative memento by the JKAACL. Among others who shared their views on the occasion were Prof. Mohammad Zaman Azurda, Dr. Rafiq Masoodi, Prof. Farooq Fayaz, Prof. Majrooh Rashid, Mohammad Amin Bhat, Mushtaq Ahmad Mushtaq, Syed Saaduddin Saadi, Nasir Hamid, Prof. Nasir Mirza, and Mohammad Yousuf Shaheen.

A large number of writers, poets, scholars, and literature enthusiasts attended the programme. The proceedings were conducted by Dr. Gulzar Ahmad Rather, Assistant Editor (Kashmiri), while Jawaaid Iqbal Khan presented the vote of thanks.

Young Voices Lead Anti-Drug Movement in Kulgam School

FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, APR 23: In a spirited effort to combat the growing menace of drug abuse, Government Middle School Wani Mohalla Gandwani, Zone D.H. Porain South Kashmir's Kulgam district, organized an impactful Debate and Awareness Rally under the ongoing Nasha Mukht Abhiyaan.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, who actively engaged in a debate highlighting the harmful effects of drug addiction on individuals, families, and society at large. Displaying remarkable confidence and awareness, the young participants articulated their thoughts with clarity, stressing the urgent need to adopt a

drug-free lifestyle. The event also featured an awareness rally in which students marched through the locality carrying placards and raising slogans such as "Say No to Drugs" and "No to Smoking." The rally aimed to sensitize the local community and reinforce the message of a healthy and responsible way of life. Teachers and school staff played a crucial role in guiding the students and educating them about the long-term consequences of substance abuse. They emphasized the importance of making informed choices, maintaining discipline, and focusing on education and personal development.

The initiative stands as a testament to the school's commitment to nurturing socially responsible citizens and contributing to the broader vision of a drug-free society. It also reflects the growing awareness among the youth, who are increasingly taking the lead in promoting positive change within their communities. The programme concluded with a collective pledge by students and staff to remain vigilant against drug abuse and to spread awareness in their surroundings.

To further the message of the campaign, impactful skits were performed by the students of Islamic Revival High School Kangan, Kids Cottage High School Wussan, and Sheikh Ul Alam Public High School. The performances vividly depicted the social and physical consequences of drug addiction, drawing significant appreciation from the audience for their emotional depth and clarity. Sheikh Ul Alam Public High School clinched the first position for their creative contributions to the awareness program.

Massive Awareness Rally, Street Play organized under Nasha Mukht Abhiyan at Kangan

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, APR 23: In a major push to strengthen the campaign against drug abuse, the Sub-Divisional Administration Kangan today organized a mega Nasha Mukht awareness rally and street play at Government Boys Higher Secondary School Kangan.

The event was part of the ongoing 100-day "Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan" aimed at fostering a drug-free society and educating the youth about the devastating effects of narcotics.

The proceedings commenced with a massive rally that started from the Government Degree College Kangan and culminated at the Higher Secondary School premises.

The rally was led by Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Sheikh Salahuddin, alongside Sub-Divisional Magistrate Kangan, Nazir Ahmad Bhat, and Chief Education Officer, Oneel Kumar Bhat. A large number of officers and officials from various departments, personnel from the police department, and enthusiastic students from multiple schools across the sub-division participated in the march, carrying banners and chanting slogans to promote a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

To further the message of the campaign, impactful skits were performed by the students of Islamic Revival High School Kangan, Kids Cottage High School Wussan, and Sheikh Ul Alam Public High School. The performances vividly depicted the social and physical consequences of drug addiction, drawing significant appreciation from the audience for their emotional depth and clarity.

Sheikh Ul Alam Public High School clinched the first position for their creative contributions to the awareness program.

Rana inaugurates City Forest Park at Batote; boosting eco-tourism, green infrastructure

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN, APRIL 23: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmad Rana, today inaugurated the City Forest Park at Batote, Ramban marking a significant step towards strengthening the green infrastructure and promoting eco-tourism in the region.

He was accompanied by Legislators Sajjad Shaheen and Arjun Singh Raju, Chief Conservator of Forests, Jammu, Dr. V. Senthil Kumar, Conservator of Forests, Chenab Circle, Dr. A. D. Singh and other officers from the forest department.

Developed by the Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department, the City Forest Park has been established over an area of 12 hectares at an estimated cost of 62 lakh.

The initiative is aimed at creating a vibrant recreational green space for both the residents and the visitors, while simultaneously advancing ecological conservation and fostering environmental awareness.



Addressing the gathering, the Minister underscored the growing importance of urban forest spaces in improving the environmental quality and public well-being.

He emphasized that such initiatives not only encourage the community participation in conservation efforts but also serve as catalyst for nature-based

tourism. Highlighting the broader environmental impact, he noted that projects like the City Forest Park contribute meaningfully

to climate resilience while offering accessible, healthy recreational avenues for the public.

The park has been thoughtfully designed with eco-friendly amenities to enhance the visitor experience while maintaining sustainability.

Key features included scenic viewpoints offering panoramic vistas of the surrounding landscape, a 50-metre walking trail for nature enthusiasts, a wooden bridge adding both functionality and aesthetic appeal and soil and moisture conservation measures such as Dry Rubble Stone Masonry (DRSM).

Outlining the future plans, the Minister announced several proposed enhancements to further enrich the park.

These included the construction of an additional wooden bridge, development of a dedicated children's park, establishment of a thematic Nagar Van, creation of a selfie point to attract younger visitors and addition of more viewpoints to elevate the overall visitor experience.

DC Anantnag chairs Mission Yuva Meeting, Stresses time bound Credit disbursal 392 Cases approved by DLIC

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, APRIL 23: A meeting of the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) for Mission YUVA was today held by the Deputy Commissioner (Chairman, DLIC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, at the DC Office.

General Manager DIC, CPO, AD Employment, DSWO, DDNABARD, LDM, Employment Officer representatives from JKEDI, and other officials attended the meeting.

With focus on accelerating youth entrepreneurship in the district, the committee reviewed the progress of cases submitted under Mission YUVA.

During the proceedings, 392 Cases, including 376 Nano, 15 MSME and one Existing Enterprise cases were placed before the committee and after thorough evaluation, all these 392 cases were approved for financial assistance, capacity building, and handholding under the mission.

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

He termed Mission YUVA as "an investment in the potential, resilience, and creativity of youth" and expressed confidence that every approved project will act as a sustainable livelihood unit strengthening families and leading to a more self-reliant district.

The DC directed all concerned departments, banks and implementing agencies to ensure time-bound sanctioning, hassle-free disbursement, and continuous mentoring of the approved cases. He instructed that Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) must be completed without delay and emphasised that no application should remain pending unnecessarily at any level. Accountability, transparency, and efficiency must be maintained throughout the process, he noted.

Linking the success of Mission YUVA with onground viability and sustainability of these ventures, the DC stressed the need for regular monitoring besides enhancing their skill sets and market access so the young entrepreneurs can scale their businesses in tune with the current trends and demands.

Dr. Bilal further said that Mission YUVA holds special significance for underprivileged and marginalised youth, who be given proper support to improve their socio-economic conditions. He said the district is making substantial progress in self employment avenues and reiterated the administration's commitment for encouraging and supporting youth to improve their socioeconomic and financial conditions through this flagship initiative.

Anantnag witnesses Mega Awareness Rallies, Thousands join Padyatras

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, APRIL 23: As part of the district plan designed for the 100-day intensive campaign under Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyaan, mega awareness rallies and Padyatras were held today across the subdivisions of Anantnag district.

These rallies, led by respective SDMs and Senior Officers, were attended by officials from civil administration, police and law enforcing agencies, field functionaries, faculty, students, ex-public representatives, civil society, trade and transport union members, among others. A key highlight of the events was the massive participation of the common masses, who joined in thousands, reflecting a growing public concern on substance abuse and a positive response for its eradication from society.

At Dooru, SDM, Parvez Raheem, along with Tehsildars Dooru and Qazigund, led a mega rally through the main market where participants displayed banners and placards to disseminate message on the devastating consequences of drug abuse.

On the occasion, the SDM administered pledge to the participants, reaffirming their commitment to stay away from drugs and contribute positively toward a drug-free community.

At Pahalgam, SDM, Amit Gupta along with CEO PDA, Mir Nasrul Hilal led a large awareness march, emphasizing the importance of sustained awareness in tourist places and other important destinations. He administered the Nasha Mukht pledge to a large group of participants and urged them to make collective and coordinated efforts for eradication of drug abuse from the society.

At Bijbehara, SDM, Tanveer Ahmad Tanveer led a massive Padyatra through the town's prominent locations and also administered the anti-drug pledge to the devotees. He further laid stress on the high need to curb the drug menace through sustained efforts and to save the youth and future of the country.

At Kokernag, the rally was led by the Tehsildar, Syed Muiz Qadri, who sensitised the congregation, including students and civil society members, about ill-effects of drug abuse and also administered a collective pledge to them so the message of the campaign reaches everyone.

Similar event was organised by Municipal Council Anantnag wherein the Secretary administered Nasha Mukht pledge officials, students, youth and other participants and called upon them to create mass awareness on dreadful consequences of drug abuse during the ongoing initiative.

Throughout these rallies, the authorities emphasized that the fight against contraband substances requires a unified front, with the overwhelming public support showing the district's resolve to achieve desired goals during the 100-day intensive campaign.

District wide book donation drive begins in Shopian; Over 100 books donated across multiple government offices on Day 1

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, APRIL 23: District Administration Shopian recorded a strong response to the ongoing Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan with an encouraging response to the Book Donation Drive held across the district on Day 1.

More than 100 books were donated at multiple locations including Sub Division, Tehsil offices, Block offices, Municipal Council, and Mini Secretariat, reflecting active participation from officers and officials across departments.

The initiative, themed "Promote Books, Not Drugs," aims to encourage



reading habits while spreading awareness against drug abuse.

The campaign seeks to channel the energy of youth towards constructive and knowledge based pursuits, reinforcing the message that books can serve as a powerful alternative to harmful substances.

District Administration have urged

all officers and officials to actively contribute and ensure that the message of the campaign reaches every household across Shopian.

The administration emphasized collective responsibility in building a drug free society through awareness, education, and community participation.

Dosti Discussion' under Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan held at GHSS Izmarg

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 23: Continuing the outreach under the ongoing Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, the District Administration Bandipora on Thursday organised a "Dosti Discussion" programme at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Izmarg in Sub-Division Gurez as part of the Deputy Commissioner's tour.

The programme commenced with the National Anthem, followed by a cultural performance highlighting the message against substance abuse, which was appreciated by the Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib.

A panel discussion was held wherein students assumed the roles of a doctor, teacher, police officer, and parent, deliberating on the growing concern of substance abuse and underscoring the importance of early intervention. The panel emphasised that awareness and preventive measures are key to addressing the issue.

Participants highlighted the harmful physical, psychological and social effects of drug addiction and stressed the need for collective efforts by families, schools and society.

During the interaction, students shared their views and raised concerns, noting that peer pressure and lack of awareness contribute to the problem. The importance

of listening to parents and maintaining open communication within families was also underlined. Speakers stressed that parents must invest time in the upbringing of their children and play an active role in guiding them.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner underscored that prevention is the most effective strategy in tackling drug abuse. She urged students to stay away from harmful substances, remain vigilant and become ambassadors of change in their communities. She emphasised that strict action would be taken against those involved in drug peddling and called upon students to focus on positive activities and personal development.

The Deputy Commissioner also interacted with students on career awareness and livelihood opportunities, highlighting the importance of skill development. She encouraged youth to channel their energy towards constructive pursuits and self-reliance.

The event was attended by PO ICDS, SDM, ACP, CMO, Anganwadi workers, Asha Workers, students, faculty, local residents and other district and sectoral officers and officials.

The event concluded with a renewed commitment from students and the administration to work collectively towards a drug-free society and a healthier future for the youth of Gurez.

DC Bandipora visits Nyle, Bagtore; Reviews public issues, Assesses Developmental needs

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 23: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, today visited Nyle and Bagtore areas of Sub-Division Gurez to assess developmental needs and review public service delivery.

At Nyle, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed key issues projected by the residents, including the non-functional food grain store. The need for construction and repair of a retention wall was also highlighted. Issues related to plantation were discussed, and the Deputy Commissioner assured that necessary surveys would be conducted shortly, followed by plantation drives in the identified areas. She also reviewed electricity supply in the area and directed the concerned department to expedite works under RDSS. Road connectivity and mobile network issues were also raised, with directions issued for appropriate action under relevant schemes.

The Deputy Commissioner assessed issues pertaining to Grishat Nallah and directed the concerned departments to examine the requirements for necessary mitigation measures. The demand for public amenities, including parks, was also noted.

At Izmarg, the issue of non-availability of ATM services due to network constraints was discussed. The Deputy Commissioner directed exploration of alternative arrangements, including Business Correspondent services and mobile banking



facilities.

The demand for strengthening fire response mechanisms was also raised, to which the Deputy Commissioner stated that portable fire safety equipment would be provided at multiple locations as an interim measure.

In the health and education sector, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the functioning of institutions and noted the need for upgradation of health facilities and addressing staff shortages. Transport and connectivity issues were also discussed during the visit. The residents appreciated the Deputy Commissioner for ensuring the smooth movement on the Gurez-Bandipora road. The DC assured that all genuine issues raised during the visit would be addressed in a phased and time-bound manner.

The Deputy Commissioner Bandipora was accompanied by PO ICDS Bandipora, SDM Gurez, ACP, CMO and other concerned officers during the visit.

Mega awareness event held at Kakapora under Nasha Mukht Abhiyan

DC stresses collective action, youth engagement to curb drug menace

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, APRIL 23: As part of the ongoing 100-day campaign under the Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, District Administration Pulwama today organised a mega awareness event at Government Boys Higher Secondary School Kakapora.

The event aimed at creating awareness about the menace of drug abuse, particularly among youth and students.

The event was attended by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom and witnessed enthusiastic participation of students, youth and members of civil society.

Speakers on the occasion highlighted various aspects related to drug abuse, describing it as a societal challenge that adversely affects individuals, families and the community at large. They stressed the need for collective efforts to curb the

menace and promote a healthy, drug-free society.

The programme also featured a series of cultural performances including Rouf, martial arts demonstrations and student speeches centred around the theme of drug de-addiction and awareness. Addressing the gathering, the DC said that the 100-day campaign has been launched in the district with a comprehensive three-pronged strategy focusing on Information,

Education and Communication (IEC), treatment, rehabilitation and prevention, and enforcement. He added that the campaign is being implemented through a coordinated, multi-sectoral and community-driven approach.

Highlighting the role of civil society, local community and religious leaders in the successful implementation of the Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, he urged them to actively participate and take

collective responsibility in spreading awareness and discouraging drug abuse at all levels.

While appreciating the participation of youth, civil society and senior citizens of Kakapora in government initiatives, he said that the people of Kakapora are expected to set an example for other areas in leading the campaign.

The DC further said that a detailed action plan has been

devised with activities scheduled across all educational institutions, as well as in Panchayats and Municipalities across the district. He added that the Sports Department has also framed a plan to engage youth in constructive sports activities to promote a healthy and drug-free lifestyle.

On the occasion, Dr. Qayoom also highlighted that while strict enforcement measures are being taken against drug peddlers,

equal emphasis is being laid on treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims with compassion and dignity.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner also advised the students to stay away from drugs and focus on education, sports and other constructive activities for their overall development. He urged them to act as ambassadors of change by spreading awareness among their peers.

Satish Sharma reviews arrangements for National Chintan Shivir at SKICC

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 23: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, Science & Technology and ARI & Trainings, Satish Sharma, today conducted a detailed inspection of the arrangements being put in place for the upcoming national-level Chintan Shivir at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC), Srinagar.

During the visit, the Minister undertook a comprehensive review of all the logistical, administrative and security arrangements being put in place for smooth and successful conduct of the prestigious event. He inspected the main conference venues, breakout halls, seating arrangements, digital and IT infrastructure, media facilities, accommodation plans for the visiting dignitaries, transportation logistics, sanitation, power backup and emergency response mechanisms.

The Minister was apprised of the preparedness of various departments, including coordination between civil administration, police, hospitality, transport, and tourism wings to ensure seamless execution of the event.

The Chintan Shivir is expected



to be attended by the Sports Ministers from across the country, along with senior officers and policy experts, who will deliberate on a wide range of issues concerning development of sports in India. Key areas of discussion will include strengthening grassroots sports ecosystems, improving access to modern infrastructure, promoting inclusivity in sports, leveraging

technology in sports management, talent identification and nurturing mechanisms and enhancing the role of sports in youth engagement and nation-building.

Satish Sharma emphasized that hosting such a high-level national event in Jammu and Kashmir is a matter of pride and a reflection of the region's growing stature as a destination for major conferences

and sporting initiatives. He stated that the Union Territory offers immense potential in sports, particularly in disciplines such as winter sports, adventure sports and traditional games, which must be harnessed through focused policy interventions and investments.

The Minister directed the concerned departments to work

in close coordination and ensure that every aspect of the event is executed with precision and professionalism. He stressed that special attention should be given to hospitality, security and time-bound execution of responsibilities so that the visiting dignitaries have a comfortable and memorable experience.

He further highlighted the importance of presenting Jammu and Kashmir's sports achievements, emerging talent and future roadmap during the deliberations, stating that the platform should be effectively utilized for knowledge exchange, collaboration and forging partnerships with other states.

Satish Sharma also underscored the role of youth in shaping the future of sports and called for creating more opportunities, infrastructure and support systems to channelize their energy in a positive direction. He reiterated the government's commitment towards promoting sports culture and ensuring greater participation at all levels.

Senior officers from various departments accompanied the Minister during the inspection and assured him that all necessary arrangements would be completed well in time, adhering to the highest standards.

District Shopian unites against drug abuse through mass signature campaigns

HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, APRIL 23: In continuation of the ongoing Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan, large scale signature campaigns were organized at Clock Tower Shopian and multiple locations across Zainapora, aimed at raising awareness against drug abuse and mobilizing public support for a drug free society.



At Shopian, the campaign was organized by the Municipal Council, Shopian and formally launched by the Chief Executive Officer, MC Shopian, Suhail Ahmad.

He actively participated in the event and encouraged citizens to pledge their commitment towards eliminating the menace of drugs from society.

A significant number of stakeholders including shopkeepers, vendors, students, drivers, and members of the general public participated with enthusiasm.

Participants signed a pledge wall, expressing their collective resolve to stand against substance abuse and promote a healthy and responsible lifestyle.

The CEO also briefed participants about the objectives of the campaign, emphasizing that strong community involvement is essential in tackling drug addiction.

Simultaneously, similar campaigns were conducted across various locations in Zainapora under the banner of Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan with major Signature Campaign held at Zainapora led by SDM Zainapora, Bilal Ahmad.

The events witnessed massive public participation, with youth, traders, volunteers, civil society members, and citizens from all walks of life coming forward to sign the pledge and reaffirm their commitment to a drug free society.

Many participants also expressed their willingness to actively contribute towards eliminating drug abuse and other social evils.

Speakers on the occasion highlighted that the fight against drugs requires collective will, sustained awareness, and active public participation.

First ever Mobile Passport Services launched in Shopian

HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, APRIL 23: In a significant step towards enhancing citizen centric services, the Mobile Passport Seva services were inaugurated today by the Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Shishir Gupta at Mini Secretariat Shopian.

The inauguration was held in the presence of Regional Passport Officer Srinagar, B.S. Rawat and other officers and officials of district administration and Regional Passport Office, Srinagar.



The initiative brought passport services closer to the public, benefiting more than 50 applicants of the district on day one. A dedicated team from the Regional Passport Office Srinagar was present on the occasion to facilitate smooth operations. The Mobile Passport Van service will be held for two days, during which more than 100 applicants have booked appointments to avail passport related services.

During the programme, feedback was actively collected from applicants regarding their experience. It was assured that such Mobile Passport Van services will be organized regularly in the district, depending upon the demand from the local public, to ensure continued accessibility and convenience for the public.

Technical support for the camp was provided by NIC, ensuring seamless processing and coordination. The initiative received an encouraging response, with applicants appreciating the effort and expressing the need for such services to be conducted more frequently in the district.

MLA Sonawari lays foundation stones for key infrastructure projects in Ajas

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 23: Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Sonawari, Advocate Hilal Akbar Lone, on Thursday laid the foundation stones for several important developmental works in Ajas area of Bandipora district.

The projects include construction of a motorable bridge over Baji Khul at an estimated cost of Rs 48.89 lakh, construction of Tehsil Office Ajas at Rs 70.16 lakh, and construction of Niabat Office Ajas at Rs 15 lakh.

The proposed motorable bridge is aimed at improving connectivity to presently unconnected areas, thereby benefiting a large population. The construction of dedicated buildings for Tehsil and Niabat offices



will address the existing constraint of functioning from rented accommodations and is expected to enhance administrative efficiency and public service delivery.

Speaking on the occasion, the MLA reiterated his commitment towards

strengthening infrastructure and ensuring better governance at the grassroots level.

The MLA was accompanied by Executive Engineer R&B Sumbal, Tehsildar Ajas and Assistant Executive Engineer R&B Sumbal.

DC Bandipora reviews VVP-II, Aspirational Block Programme & CAPEX at Badugam

Engages public, assesses developmental needs in Tulail

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 23: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, on Wednesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting at Guest House R&B Badugam, Tulail, to assess the implementation of Vibrant Village Programme (VVP-II), Aspirational Block Programme and CAPEX works, as part of her ongoing tour of Sub-Division Gurez.

The meeting was attended by senior officers including PO ICDS Bandipora, SDM Gurez, Principal GDC Tulail, ACP, CMO, CEO, DSHO, Executive Engineers of PMGSY and KPDC, officers from Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, NRLM, Forest, ITI, Tourism, Banking and other line departments.

During the meeting, officers

presented detailed proposals and sector-wise plans for inclusion under the Vibrant Village Programme. It was informed that 29 villages are being covered under the programme across four thematic areas, with 26 villages already covered and 3 pending.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed proposals related to infrastructure development, tourism promotion, agriculture and allied sectors, education, skill development and livelihood generation.

Threadbare discussions were held on key projects including PMGSY Phase-IV roads, electrification under RDSS, mobile connectivity in border areas, and strengthening of health and education infrastructure. The DC

emphasized timely completion of works, better inter-departmental coordination, avoidance of duplication in funding, and efficient utilization of resources.

Reviewing sectoral issues, the Deputy Commissioner directed departments to focus on tangible infrastructure improvements rather than mere procurement, and asked all departments to submit revised action plans within a stipulated timeframe.

She also stressed the need for saturation of developmental indicators, including completion of girls' toilets in schools, healthcare facilities, and essential services in remote areas.

The meeting also deliberated on livelihood generation initiatives under NRLM, promotion of

agriculture, animal husbandry, wool processing, and development of medicinal plants. Officers were directed to identify beneficiaries, ensure bank linkage, and facilitate skill training and entrepreneurship among youth.

Issues related to connectivity, including road access for heavy vehicles on Bandipora-Gurez road, mobile network gaps, and requirement of ATMs and transport facilities for students, were also discussed. The Deputy Commissioner directed concerned authorities to take necessary steps for early redressal.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner also listened to public grievances and demands. Locals raised concerns regarding winter hardships, health infrastructure, staff shortages,

transportation, and other basic amenities. She assured that all genuine issues would be addressed in a time-bound manner.

Emphasizing participatory governance, the Deputy Commissioner urged officers to conduct regular field visits and engage directly with the public to ensure effective implementation of schemes. She reiterated that Tulail requires focused attention and directed all departments to prioritize development works in the region.

The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation of the administration's commitment towards holistic and inclusive development of border and remote areas under various flagship programmes.

MLA Bandipora visits GBHSS Kaloosa, Leads Nasha Mukta Bharat Awareness Drive

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 23: MLA Bandipora, Advocate Nizamuddin Bhat, today visited NM Government Boys Higher Secondary School (GBHSS), where he participated in the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) pledge and awareness programme organized by the school.

Attending the event as Chief Guest, MLA was accorded a warm welcome by the school administration and students. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation, with

students taking a pledge to work towards building a drug-free society.

An alumnus of the institution, Advocate Nizamuddin Bhat turned nostalgic as he shared memories of his student life. He fondly recalled his school days and spoke about several notable personalities who were once his classmates. He described the school as one of the most prestigious institutions in the district, appreciating its consistent legacy of academic excellence.

In his address, MLA delivered an inspiring message, urging students to

remain disciplined, focused, and committed to their goals while actively participating in social causes, particularly the fight against drug abuse.

On the occasion, he announced financial assistance for the school's development, including Rs 2 lakh for furniture, Rs 1 lakh for the construction of a girls' toilet, and Rs 50,000 for sports facilities. He further extended support by donating an interactive panel board worth Rs 1.5 lakh on the spot to strengthen digital learning infrastructure.

SANKALP HEW conducts on-the-spot PMMVY portal issue resolution session in Bandipora

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 23: SANKALP - Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW), Mission Shakti, Department of Social Welfare Bandipora, in collaboration with the Child Development Project Office (CDPO) Bandipora, today conducted an on-the-spot issue resolution session to address technical challenges faced by ICDS workers and supervisors in PMMVY portal entries.

An expert from SANKALP HEW,

provided hands-on technical support and assisted participants individually and resolved various portal-related issues on the spot, facilitating smoother and more efficient data entry.

The session witnessed active participation of Anganwadi Workers and Supervisors, who benefitted from practical guidance and step-by-step support. Officials highlighted the importance of accurate and timely data entry under PMMVY to ensure timely disbursement of benefits to

eligible beneficiaries.

Awareness regarding various schemes of the Social Welfare Department and other line departments was also imparted, with emphasis on strengthening outreach at the grassroots level.

A session on Poshan Pakhwada under ICDS was also held, focusing on the importance of nutrition, maternal health and child care. Participants were sensitized about their role in promoting awareness within communities.

HT EDITORIAL

Industrialization needs to be given fillip in Kashmir

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Wednesday inaugurated the Eveready Industries India Limited's new industrial unit in Samba. The plant established with an investment of Rs.200 crore, will create local jobs, boost ancillary units, suppliers and service providers, promote skill development, generate opportunities for women and make a significant contribution to the economic development of Jammu & Kashmir. In other words, it can be said that the establishment of this unit would give a fillip to the economic activities in Jammu division.

In his speech the LG observed that across Samba, Kathua, Jammu and many parts of Kashmir, the industrial revolution being witnessed today is a living symbol of a new era for Jammu & Kashmir. He said in the past five years, the scale of industrial development has moved beyond mere economic figures and become the most powerful medium of transformation across the union territory. At the same time the scale of development in this regard is not uniform.

While the Jammu division has progressed by leaps and bounds when it comes to industrialization the Kashmir valley is far behind. In the Jammu division many top-notch companies have set up their units while that is not the case in Kashmir valley. Just a few companies have set up their units in the valley while there are many others that have shut their business due to varied reasons.

One can safely say that industrialization is yet to pick up the pace in Kashmir and this sector seems to be in infancy. The industrial estates in the Kashmir valley are not functioning to their full potential. There are many units in the industrial estates that have either wound up their business or are on verge of closing their business. The closed business units continue to be closed and these premises have not been given to any other entrepreneur.

In the past the big-wigs in the business industry have been complaining that lots of costs are involved in getting the raw material from different parts of the country to Kashmir. Given the fact that Kashmir has been connected with trains now the companies can now get the raw material at cheaper rates. As such the industry big-wigs can't complain about the cost factor involved in receiving the raw material. These companies should set up their units in Kashmir so that there is employment for the youth and there would be all round economic development.

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Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan
Say No to Drugs, Yes to Life



SAHIL MANZOOR

Every year on 31st May, World No Tobacco Day is observed with awareness programmes and seminars. Today, it is very unfortunate that our blooming and tender-age youth are engaging in the smoking curse, and most adult people in Kashmir are smoking for no reason. This should be eradicated and their extravagant expenditure should be saved. Recently, cigarettes and other related products are skyrocketing, and it is dreadful and not a good option to get involved in cigarette consumption habits.

Smoking causes lethal health issues in society. Tobacco belongs to the nightshade family and is cultivated for its dried leaves. Tobacco plants grow 1 to 3 metres tall and produce more than 10 broad leaves. The leaves of the tobacco plant are dried, processed, and used to manufacture cigars, cigarettes, etc., which are lethal to human health and have immense hazards.

Cigarettes contain about 4,000 chemicals, of which 43 are carcinogenic (cancer-causing). These include polycyclic hydrocarbons, ammonia, formaldehyde, and oxides of nitrogen. Carbon monoxide is one of the most dangerous and poisonous gases, which reduces the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood and affects smokers worldwide.

It is believed that in 1492, Christopher Columbus landed on Tobago Island and found that the natives were using dried tobacco leaves for pleasure. Since then, tobacco has spread throughout the world in different forms, such as chewing tobacco and cigars.

Nicotine is present in tobacco leaves and is the major addictive component. It has harmful effects on human health, as it causes heart attacks and affects the nervous system. Nicotine is also used in agriculture as an insecticide and in some gastrointestinal treatments. It makes people dependent, sick, unhygienic, and short-tempered.

Tobacco contains tar, which causes lung cancer and many other diseases among smokers.



Active smokers are ten times more likely to die from lung cancer than passive smokers. The mixture of carbon monoxide and nicotine increases heart rate and blood pressure and is responsible for strokes as well.

Carbon monoxide reduces the oxygen-carrying capacity of muscles and the brain, causing stress to these organs. Consuming tobacco products in different forms can trigger irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Smoking can harm the stomach and cause intestinal irritation.

Smoking is not only harmful to active smokers but also affects passive smokers. It causes irritation, coughing, sneezing, and greatly pollutes the environment. Every year on 31st May, Anti-Smoking Day is celebrated worldwide through seminars and anti-tobacco campaigns in schools, colleges, and public places.

Being responsible citizens, we must take steps to understand the factors that lead youth into tobacco and drug use. Our youth are losing their health and wealth in a very harmful way.

Major Health Hazards of Smoking

Heart Disease: Smoking damages the heart, blood vessels, and blood cells. The chemicals in cigarettes increase the risk of atherosclerosis (plaque buildup in arteries), which limits blood flow and causes dangerous blockages. Smoking also increases the risk of peripheral artery disease (PAD).

Damaged Lungs: Smoking increases the risk of lung cancer.

About 9 out of 10 lung cancer deaths are linked to smoking. It also increases the risk of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and asthma attacks.

Fertility Problems:

Smoking can damage a woman's reproductive system and make pregnancy difficult. In men, it increases the risk of erectile dysfunction and reduces sperm quality.

Weakened Immune System:

Smoking weakens the immune system, making people more prone to illness.

Vision Problems:

Smoking increases the risk of cataracts, macular degeneration, dry eyes, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy.

Poor Oral Hygiene:

Smokers have double the risk of gum disease. Smoking stains teeth, affects taste and smell, and causes swollen gums, bleeding, loose teeth, and sensitivity.

Unhealthy Skin and Hair:

Smoking causes premature ageing, wrinkles, hair loss, and increases the risk of skin cancer, especially on the lips.

Risk of Other Cancers:

Smoking contributes to cancers of the pancreas, bladder, stomach, mouth, throat, larynx, oesophagus, kidney, cervix, liver, colon, and acute myeloid leukemia.

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Losing identity behind filters

Social media and the self-image crisis of girls



DR. PRIYANKA SAURABH

Listen, girls—this isn't a sentimental appeal, but an essential truth. The worry that you might lose yourself in this race to look beautiful is no longer personal; it's becoming a social crisis. Today, the mirror resides not on the wall of our room, but on our mobile screens. And this mirror doesn't reflect reality, but rather what it wants to show. In this virtual world, beauty is no longer natural, but a project—edited, filtered, and measured by likes and views.

It would be wrong to assume that social media is merely a medium of entertainment. It has now become a psychological construct, gradually shaping our thoughts, our preferences, our self-confidence, and our identity. For young women in particular, it creates such pressure that they unconsciously begin to mold themselves into someone else's mold. Looking at someone else's "perfect" photo every day and finding flaws in their own face, wondering after each story how many people saw it, how many praised it—all this is turning into a dangerous habit.

This hunger for validation is subtle. At first, it seems normal—a little compliment, a few nice comments, a few likes. But gradually, it becomes a need.

When compliments aren't received, it leads to anxiety, self-doubt, and a faltering self-esteem. This is the moment when a girl, who could have been strong and self-reliant from within, becomes dependent on external reactions. This dependence leads to mental exhaustion and depression, but ironically, it's all hidden behind a smiling face.

What you see on social media isn't the whole truth. Everyone here only shows the best parts of their lives. No one posts pictures of their loneliness, no one shares their fears or failures. So when you see someone always happy, in love, or successful, it's important to understand that that's not the whole story. It's just a chosen frame, with the rest of the truth deliberately cut out.

The biggest danger is that this virtual comparison makes you underestimate yourself. You think you're not as beautiful, not as happy, not as successful. The truth is, you're complete in your own right. Your simplicity, your thinking, your nature—all of these make you unique. But when you try to be like someone else, you weaken your own identity.

In today's world, "trend" has become the new religion. Whatever's trending is considered right. But not every trend is meant for you. Sometimes, these trends take a toll on your health, your self-esteem, and your peace of mind. Strange beauty standards, unnatural lifestyles, and a habit of showing off—all of these slowly lead you in a direction where you drift away from your true self.

It's also true that social media has opened up new avenues for expression. But when this expression turns into comparison and competition, it loses its positivity. When every post becomes a performance, every photo a message saying "I'm happy," it's no longer natural life, but an act. And constantly acting is exhausting.

The most important thing in this entire scenario is to connect with yourself. Understanding that your true worth isn't determined by likes and comments. Your identity is bigger than any trend or filter. Your simplicity, your honesty, and your self-respect—that's your true strength. You don't have to prove yourself every day. It's also not necessary to flaunt every joy and hide every sorrow.

Real life is much bigger than that six-inch screen. There are relationships that flow without filters. There are emotions that come out without editing. There is struggle that teaches, and there is solace that brings satisfaction even without any likes. But when we start spending more time in that virtual world than in the real one, our balance gradually begins to deteriorate.

It's time to pause and reflect. To ask whether we're truly living, or just pretending we're living. Is our happiness genuine, or just manufactured for a post? These aren't easy questions, but they're essential to face.

You have to decide what kind of life you want—one that appears perfect to others, or one that brings you peace from within. Because in the end, what matters is how you feel about yourself, not how the world sees you.

Simplicity isn't a weakness, it's a strength. In today's age of pretentiousness, staying simple, being yourself, is the ultimate courage. A simple kurta, a tiny bindi, and a genuine smile—these can be more beautiful than any expensive makeup or trend, if combined with confidence and self-acceptance.

Learn to love yourself. This isn't a cliché, but a psychological necessity. When you accept yourself, you no longer need anyone else's approval. You can be happy to see others' happiness without thinking less of yourself. You can also accept your failures with ease, knowing that your worth isn't determined solely by your successes.

And sometimes, it's important to step away from the noise. Sitting alone for a night, spending time with your thoughts, listening to a good song—all of this connects you with yourself. It reminds you that you're not just a profile, but a sensitive, deep-rooted human being.

So, the next time you open social media, remember that it's just a part of your life, not your whole life. It's a platform, but your real story is written outside of it. There, where you can be yourself, without fear, without comparison.

Being authentic is more important than looking beautiful. And authenticity is what is true, what is real. So, don't stray from yourself. Because the greatest beauty in the world is staying true to yourself.

Dr. Priyanka Saurabh, PhD (Political Science), is a poet and social thinker

Yousuf Khayal: A Journey of Poetry, Spirit, and Resilience



■ SHAH NAWAZ NAZIR

Mohammad Yousuf Malla, known to the literary world as Yousuf Khayal, was born in September 1949, in the heart of Kashmir, into a household where scarcity defined everyday life. Books were rare treasures, pens were luxuries, and even a simple notebook costing a paisa was seldom available. Yet, amid these material deprivations, the seeds of curiosity, reflection, and spiritual sensitivity quietly took root. His family had no literary lineage, no academic tradition to nurture budding talent, but they did have the presence of a guiding light: the family Pir, Din Sob, also known as Mama Sob Shalimar. This spiritual mentor and elder became a pivotal figure in Yousuf Khayal's life, shaping not only his moral compass but also the earliest stirrings of his poetic sensibility.

From his earliest years, Yousuf was drawn to the world of learning, though formal education was modest. He began at Sogam 5th Primary School, continued through Zoohama Middle School, and completed his secondary education at Nagam Higher Secondary School. Teachers like Abdul Ghani Mir of Badipora and Headmaster Mumtaz Jal Uddin left indelible marks, while sporadic exposure to religious education offered moments of contemplation. Yet, it was Mama Sob's quiet mentorship that left a lasting imprint. Observing the young boy's natural inclination toward rhythm and words, he nurtured these sparks, blending spiritual guidance with encouragement for creative expression. It was under his watchful eyes that Yousuf first began to hum lines, turning them into conscious thought and, eventually, written verse.

Some of his earliest poetic



expressions reflect this period of nurturing:

"Dildar Karti Mai seet Izhari Haal Akh Dam"

"Aashaq Samith Che Sairi Chai Kun Kairith Che Sarkham"

Mama Sob would often notice Yousuf murmuring his verses and remark gently, "Ap kay gunguna rahay ho," recognizing the poet emerging within the boy. These small moments of recognition, combined with lessons in morality, discipline, and spiritual awareness, became the foundation of Yousuf Khayal's literary and ethical worldview.

In 1971, familial obligations led him to marry a woman from Sogam in a family-approved union. With marriage came the responsibilities of household life, and the demands of raising a family made it increasingly difficult to spend time in Sogam. Yet, the flame of poetry remained alive, continuing to guide him even as life's practicalities pressed upon him.

That same year marked a turning point in his literary journey. The Azad

Cultural Forum Chadora, a prominent literary organization, emerged in the region, providing young writers with a platform for expression. By 1973, Yousuf Khayal had become a registered member. Writing in Kashmiri, the language of his heart and heritage, he found a natural medium to convey the subtleties of emotion, reflection, and spiritual longing.

A particularly formative moment came during Eid Milad-un-Nabi at Sogam, in the presence of Qasim Shah Bulhari, Sadr of Anjuman Tableegul Islam, Jammu and Kashmir. On this occasion, Yousuf recited a naat:

"Bagi Gulshan Assi Shajomut Zakhmawai Seet Ya Rasool S.A.W"
"Aash Assi Chai Kaash Yihak Gaash Vandhoy Ya Rasool"

The appreciation and recognition he received ignited his passion for poetry and public recitation. Until this moment, he wrote simply as Yousuf, but inspired by this acknowledgment, he adopted the pen name

"Khayal", marking a new chapter in his literary identity. This event also cemented his engagement with both riwayat (tradition) and jadeediyat (modernity), a balance that would define his life's work.

As his literary sensibilities matured, he drew inspiration from Kashmir's literary and spiritual greats: Shamas Faqeer, whose mysticism he admired; Abdul Salam Sani R.A. Kralwari; Ali Mohammad Sheerazi, whose guidance profoundly shaped him; and Abdul Ghani Parwaz. His poetry matured further under the spiritual mentorship of Ghulam Hassan Dar of Ranger, also known by the pen name Javaid Aazad. Dar's guidance went beyond literary craft, encompassing ethics, spiritual discipline, and life lessons. One such memorable lesson still resonates: "If foul water descends from a drain, would you drink it?"—a metaphor for guarding the heart and mind from impurity, and for maintaining integrity in thought and action.

Yousuf Khayal's poetry is distinguished by its interplay between majaz (metaphor) and ishq hakeeki (divine love). It is a reflection of both the human condition and the eternal, weaving joy, sorrow, longing, and spiritual insight into lyrical forms. Personal tragedies—the death of close family members and children—could have shattered him, yet they became a crucible for artistic expression, deepening the emotional and spiritual resonance of his work. From these trials emerged some of his most poignant verses:

"Mai Chum Bud Seeni Kormut Teeerai Kyuit Kar Che Baaranah"
"Luqan Seenas Supar Duitmut Ratan Bui Chai Kuni Voch Voch"

Despite having written nearly 100 ghazals, financial constraints prevented their formal publication. Nevertheless, recognition came from those whose approval mattered most: mentors, spiritual guides, and literary peers, particularly Ali Mohammad Sheerazi and Abdul Ghani Parwaz who consistently appreciated his work and encouraged him to continue refining his craft. For Yousuf Khayal, poetry is more than art—it is a conduit, a bridge

connecting the social, personal, and divine realms. He has consistently emphasized to young writers the importance of correcting their pen, seeking guidance, and pursuing depth in their work.

For him, literature serves as both mirror and teacher. It reflects society, guides conscience, and nurtures the spirit. Observing the modern literary scene, he notes with concern that many poets are consumed by worldly pursuits, unprepared to lead or follow higher truths. In contrast, his own work seeks harmony between spiritual grounding and ethical discipline, offering readers insight, reflection, and moral clarity. His literary style blends tradition and modernity, honoring classical Kashmiri forms while engaging with contemporary thought, creating a dialogue between the past and present, the mystical and the immediate.

Looking ahead, Yousuf Khayal's wish is simple yet profound: that his poetry be read, printed, and remembered—not for personal fame but for the sincerity, resilience, and depth it embodies. His life, shaped by spiritual mentorship, personal hardship, and unwavering devotion to the craft of poetry, stands as a testament to the enduring power of literature to illuminate the human spirit and connect it with the eternal. Through his journey—from the early guidance of Mama Sob, the formative recognition at Eid Milad-un-Nabi, to the mentorship of Ghulam Hassan Dar—Yousuf Khayal emerges not merely as a poet but as a living bridge between tradition, spiritual insight, and modern literary consciousness.

His story is a reflection of Kashmir itself: a landscape of beauty, struggle, resilience, and enduring spiritual depth. It is a testament to the transformative power of guidance, perseverance, and the written word, and a reminder that poetry, when nurtured with care and devotion, becomes a lasting legacy of the human soul.

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Udhampur Bus Tragedy: Survivors Recall Cries Of Despair, Hail Indian Army's Heroic Act



■ MS NAZKI

There is no such thing as an accident, only a failure to recognize the hand of fate! It is drivers who control the fate of the passengers!

It takes two to make an accident. Sometimes even one is enough! Obviously it has to be a driver and the conductor!

This was a shocker, Jammu College Student Killed in a Road Accident During Picnic Trip!

A student of Government College for Women, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu, died in a road accident near Udhampur while travelling with fellow students to Patnitop on a picnic. The deceased was identified as Anjali Choudhary, a fourth-semester student of the college.

Officials said the exact circumstances of the accident are being ascertained..... The incident has triggered shock and grief across the academic community, with the Higher Education Department describing the loss as that of a young life full of promise and aspirations.

Minister for Education Sakina Itoo, in a post on X, expressed deep anguish over the tragedy and conveyed condolences to the bereaved family, friends, and the college fraternity. She termed the loss deeply distressing and directed that all possible assistance be extended to the family. Parents lost a living being! In the morning while leaving for a picnic she would have never imagined what was

awaiting her!.....!

Why do road accidents occur:

Road accidents in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) occur frequently due to a combination of treacherous hilly terrain, poor infrastructure, and human error, making it one of the highest-risk regions for driving in India.

Common causes include over-speeding, narrow roads with sharp curves, inadequate safety railings, vehicle overloading, and driving under extreme weather conditions like snow or fog.

Key factors contributing to the high rate of accidents include:

Treacherous Terrain & Infrastructure: Much of J&K's road network consists of narrow, single-lane roads traversing mountainous terrain. A lack of safety features like crash barriers, along with falling stones and landslides, increases the likelihood of vehicles plunging into gorges.

Reckless Driving & Overloading: Speeding and overtaking on blind curves are major causes of accidents, often involving passenger vehicles in rural or hilly areas.

Inadequate Enforcement: Despite efforts by the traffic department, weak enforcement of traffic rules, including monitoring overloading and vehicle fitness, allows for hazardous driving practices.

Weather Conditions: Rain, snow, and fog significantly reduce visibility and make roads slick, contributing to accidents, particularly in regions like Ramban and Doda.

Delayed Emergency Response: A lack of immediate access to trauma centers and ambulances in remote, mountainous areas causes many injury cases to become fatal.

The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has noted that J&K has a high density of accidents relative to its vehicle population.

I have a story that I would like to share

here! I'm in no way an interpreter of dreams as Sigmund Freud was but talking to people I have come to know the following! Yes, it is possible for a dream to give you the distinct impression that an accident is about to occur. While these dreams can feel like prophetic warnings, psychological perspectives suggest they are more likely reflections of your subconscious processing stress, trauma, or subtle, overlooked clues in your waking life.

Here is a breakdown of why this happens and what it means:

Psychological and Subconscious Causes: Symbolic Warning: A car accident in a dream often symbolizes a feeling that you have "lost control" of a situation or that something in your life is shifting too fast, such as a job, relationship, or project.

Processing Unconscious Information: Your brain may pick up on subtle signs of trouble (e.g., poor weather, erratic driving, or high stress) while you are awake that your conscious mind ignores. The dreaming brain then puts these clues together, creating a "prediction" that feels real.

Stress and Trauma: If you have experienced a real accident or are under extreme pressure, your brain may turn those fears into intense nightmares.

The "Premonition" Aspect Although scientific evidence for psychic forecasting is weak, many people report dreaming of events that later happen.

Hits vs. "Misses": People dream multiple times a night and forget most of them. When one dream eventually matches a real-life event, it seems prophetic. The thousands of dreams that didn't match anything are forgotten.

High Probability: Due to the volume of driving and daily activities, the statistical likelihood of having a dream about an accident that coincides with a real one eventually is quite high.

When to Take the Dream Seriously

If the dream is a "big dream"—usually very vivid, memorable, and carrying a strong emotional charge—it may be worth paying attention to. Rather than a guaranteed prophecy, it is best viewed as a "possible future" that you can still influence through your waking actions.

Now this story and it is real:

She was a school teacher posted at Tikri (near Udhampur)! In the morning she told her fellow teachers that she had a dream in which she was in the dress which she wore during her marriage! Everyone thought that it was a wonderful dream! But one teacher said that when is your husband returning from Doda for the weekend! She (Chitralekha) replied tomorrow! The teacher said to tell him to postpone his visit! Make the visit next week because the dream is inauspicious! But Chitralekha did not listen! It was Saturday when the teacher received a distress call.....I'm dying as my bus has met with an accident at Assar.....There was no further talk!.....Dreams do tell a story.....!

Major road accidents in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) have primarily occurred in the hilly districts of the Chenab Valley (Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban) and the Jammu-Udhampur-Poonch belt. These areas, particularly the mountainous roads, often feature in reports regarding buses and vehicles skidding off roads into deep gorges.

Based on reports from 2024 to early 2026, here are some of the most significant accident locations:

Udhampur District (April 2026): A bus accident in the Ramnagar area, specifically near Kagort village (Kanote), resulted in at least 15-21 deaths.

Akhnoor, Jammu (May 2024 & April 2026): In May 2024, 21 people died after

a bus fell into a gorge near Tanda Morh on the Jammu-Poonch Highway.

Doda District (November 2023): A major accident occurred in the Assar area of Doda district, where a passenger bus fell into a 300-foot gorge, claiming 39 lives.

Doda District (October 2022/2023): Multiple accidents were reported in the Sui-Gowari area (Doda-Thathri) and near Dossa Valley, with over 13 deaths.

Kishtwar District (July 2019): A minivan skidded off a hilly road, resulting in 35 fatalities.

Ramban District (October 2018): A fatal accident at Battery Chashma on the National Highway resulted in 21 deaths.

Key Accident-Prone Areas: Chenab Valley: Doda, Kishtwar, and Ramban.

Highway Stretches: Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH44), particularly near Ramban, Panthial, and Banihal.

But our focus is on the recent one that happened in Ramnagar:

Twenty-one people were killed and more than 61 injured after an overcrowded passenger bus tumbled down a hillside in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir on Monday (April 20, 2026). The bus crushed an autorickshaw before landing upside down on the road below.

The incident:

The bus was en route to Udhampur from Ramnagar when the accident occurred around 10 a.m. Officials said those travelling in the autorickshaw also sustained injuries.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh, who represents the Udhampur constituency in the Lok Sabha, confirmed the death toll. "Twenty-one casualties so far and 61 injured. Injured have been shifted to Udhampur Hospital, while one more seriously injured is being airlifted to Government Medical college Jammu.

The Cloud Seeding

Surinderpal Singh

The weather modification has been a subject of human fascination and scientific interest for a long time. Amongst the various techniques of weather modification the cloud seeding stands out as one of the most widely studied and implemented methods aimed at artificially enhancing the precipitation and changing the weather conditions. As the climatic changes are intensifying the global weather variability and exacerbating water scarcity in many regions of the world. The cloud seeding has emerged as a latest potential technological solution to address the water management challenges of the world.

The Science Behind Cloud Seeding

The cloud seeding is a geoengineering technique which is designed to stimulate the process of precipitation by artificially introducing the chemical substances into clouds to promote the droplet formation. The process is based on cloud microphysics particularly the role of condensation nuclei in cloud formation and growth.

There are two primary types of cloud seeding:

1. Warm Cloud Seeding

It targets the clouds with temperatures above freezing point, where hygroscopic particles (such as salt compounds) are dispersed to accelerate the coalescence of water droplets promoting the rainfall.

2. Cold Cloud Seeding

It targets clouds with temperatures below freezing point. The Silver iodide (AgI), due to its crystalline structure resembling ice, is commonly used to promote ice crystal formation enhancing the process of precipitation.

The cloud seeding agents are typically dispersed by aircraft or ground-based generators releasing the particles into the cloud mass to catalyze the droplet or ice formation and subsequent precipitation.

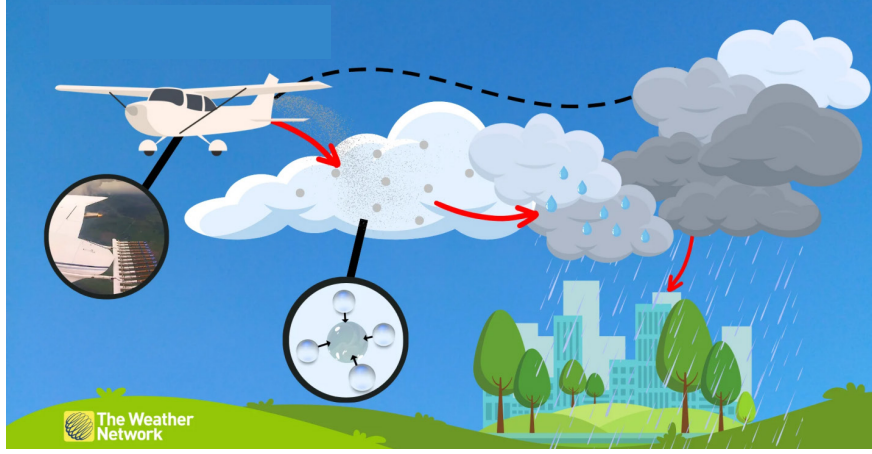
Historical Development and Applications

The concept of cloud seeding was designed by Dr. Vincent Schaefer and Dr. Bernard Vonnegut in the early 40's. The early experimentation demonstrated that introducing silver iodide into supercooled clouds could trigger ice nucleation. Since then the cloud seeding has been employed worldwide for diverse objectives:

1. Agricultural Support:

This process is used to enhance the process of rainfall in drought-prone agricultural regions to sustain the crop productivity.

2. Water Resource Management:



The cloud seeding boosts the reservoir levels in areas experiencing water shortages.

3. Snowpack Augmentation:

This process could increase the snowfall in mountainous regions to ensure the downstream water availability.

4. Weather Hazard Mitigation:

This process was employed to reduce the severity of hailstorms and dissipating the fog for aviation safety.

Scientific Evidence and Effectiveness

While cloud seeding has shown promise in experimental settings the overall effectiveness remains a topic of ongoing research and debate. Meta-analyses of various field studies suggested that cloud seeding can increase precipitation by approximately 10-15% under optimal conditions. However the variability of atmospheric conditions, cloud properties and the presence of natural condensation nuclei could complicate the consistent results.

The recent advancements in the field of science and technology further progressed the satellite remote sensing. Hence nowadays the cloud modeling have improved monitoring and prediction capabilities, allowing for better targeting of suitable clouds and evaluating seeding outcomes.

Risks, Challenges and Environmental Concerns

Despite its potential the cloud seeding poses several risks and challenges to the humanity.

Some of the challenges are enlisted below:

Environmental Impact:

The long-term ecological effects of introducing silver iodide and other chemical agents into the atmosphere are not experimentally proved to be harmless. Although studies suggest low toxicity at seeding concentrations cumulative impacts are poorly characterized.

Legal and Ethical Issues:

Cloud seeding raises questions of atmospheric ownership and interna-

tional governance. Disputes may arise if seeding in one region affects neighboring areas leading to geopolitical tensions.

Uncertainty and Reliability:

Cloud seeding cannot guarantee precipitation and remains dependent on favorable meteorological conditions. Ineffectiveness during unsuitable cloud formations limits its utility as a reliable water management strategy.

Future Prospects and Ethical Considerations

As global climate change exacerbates the extreme weather patterns and water scarcity, cloud seeding continues to attract attention as a tool for inducing artificial rains and snowfalls. With advances in computer simulations, AI-driven weather modeling and environmental monitoring promise to improve the precision and efficacy of cloud seeding operations.

Nonetheless, ethical considerations must guide its application. The precautionary principle suggests careful assessment of potential ecological consequences and transparent international collaboration. Furthermore, cloud seeding should not substitute for broader sustainable water and climate management strategies but rather complement them.

The cloud seeding represents a significant scientific innovation in the field of weather modification with the potential to support the water resource management and agricultural sustainability amongst the growing environmental challenges. While experimental and field data demonstrate modest success rates, the technology's long-term environmental impacts and ethical implications warrant careful, evidence-based implementation. Ongoing research, technological advancement, and international regulatory frameworks will shape cloud seeding's role in the future of climate adaptation and resource management.

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

Indian Hearts in Peril: A Silent Epidemic



Lalit Garg

The modern age, often celebrated as an era of convenience and abundance, hides a grim paradox. While machines and technology have made life more comfortable, they have also spawned diseases born of lifestyle choices, once considered rare. Foremost among them is heart disease—the world's leading cause of premature deaths, and a rapidly escalating crisis in India. The recently released Causes of Death in India 2021-23 paints a sobering picture. Heart attacks are no longer confined to the elderly; they are striking India's youth with alarming frequency. The report reveals that deaths from cardiac arrest among people over 30 have surged sharply. Once an anomaly, heart attacks among the young have become tragically common, threatening not just individual lives but the nation's social and economic fabric.

Globally, cardiovascular diseases claimed around 18 million lives in 2021, according to the World Health Organization—more than any other illness. In India, they account for nearly 28 percent of all deaths, meaning every fourth Indian falls victim to a cardiac condition. What is more alarming is the youthful face of this epidemic: over 40 percent of Indian heart attacks occur in those under 40. By contrast, developed nations such as the US and Europe report this figure at just 10-15 percent. India's young hearts are uniquely endangered. The Sample Registration Survey further underscores this crisis: 31 percent of deaths in India are caused by heart disease. Coupled with a staggering obesity rate—averaging 40 percent nationally, higher in women than men—the risks are compounded. Urban centers, where fast food, stress, and pollution converge, fare far worse than rural areas. States like Delhi, Chandigarh, and Puducherry report the highest obesity rates. The Covid-19 pandemic has only deepened vulnerabilities, leaving behind a legacy of weakened immunity and lingering health challenges.

What explains this rapid rise? Genetics play a role, but lifestyle factors dominate. India's youth increasingly rely on processed, oily, and sugar-laden foods, abandoning traditional diets of pulses, vegetables, and grains. The relentless pressures of modern life—job insecurity, fierce competition, financial burdens—have locked young people in chronic stress. Stress disrupts hormonal balance, raising blood pressure and destabilising heart rhythms. Add smoking, alcohol, and drug abuse, and the picture darkens.

Cigarette smoke narrows arteries; alcohol and narcotics erode cardiovascular resilience. Equally damaging is India's sedentary urban lifestyle. Long hours at desks or in front of screens mean negligible physical activity, spawning obesity, diabetes, and hypertension—the "triple threat" for heart health. Pollution in India's cities adds yet another killer, with studies linking toxic air directly to cardiac arrests.

The consequences extend far beyond personal health. A sudden cardiac death in one's thirties or forties devastates families, robbing them of breadwinners, and cripples communities. For a developing nation that prides itself on its youthful population as a strategic asset, such losses jeopardise its very future. But heart disease is not inevitable—it is preventable. The solutions are neither complex nor out of reach. A return to healthier diets rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat foods must replace junk and processed meals. Regular exercise, yoga, and mindful practices such as meditation can mitigate both physical and mental risk factors. Avoiding tobacco, alcohol, and drugs is critical. Periodic health check-ups—monitoring blood pressure, cholesterol, and sugar—enable early intervention. Most importantly, awareness must rise. Heart disease has been dubbed a "silent killer" precisely because it creeps in unnoticed until it strikes fatally. A collective awakening is essential. Governments must launch sustained public health campaigns, healthcare institutions must improve screening and treatment, and society must normalise healthier lifestyles.

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India's healthcare infrastructure has expanded. Yet new challenges like the surge in heart disease demand more than hospitals and medicines. They demand a health-conscious revolution. It is not enough to cure disease; India must cultivate wellness. Citizens must adopt discipline, balance, and moderation; governments must invest in preventive care; and medical institutions must continually innovate. The warning is clear: India is facing not just a health crisis but a generational challenge. The rhythm of the nation's future lies in the beating hearts of its youth. To let those heartbeats fall silent prematurely is to endanger both lives and aspirations. Safeguarding them must become the nation's highest priority.

The author is a Writer, Journalist, Columnist, E-253, Saraswati Kunj Apartment, 25 I.P. Extension, Patparganj, Delhi-92

THE ALOPECIA

Surinderpal Singh

Alopecia which is commonly known as hair loss is a medical condition that affects millions of individuals worldwide. The term alopecia refers to the partial or complete absence of hair from areas of the body where it normally grows particularly the scalp. Hair loss is not only a matter of physical concern but it also affects the individuals psychological and socially. The alopecia could affect the self-esteem and overall quality of life.

MEDICAL AND SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING OF ALOPECIA

Alopecia is classified into several types the most common being:

1. Androgenetic Alopecia (AGA):

It is also known as male or female pattern baldness and is the most prevalent form of hair loss primarily caused by genetic predisposition and hormonal imbalances, specifically increased sensitivity of hair follicles to dihydrotestosterone (DHT).

2. Alopecia Areata (AA):

An autoimmune condition in which the immune system mistakenly attacks hair follicles, leading to well-circumscribed patches of hair loss.

3. Telogen Effluvium (TE):

It is characterized by widespread thinning of hair due to stressors such as illness, surgery, medication or nutritional deficiencies, which shift hair

follicles prematurely into the telogen (resting) phase.

4. Cicatricial Alopecia:

It involves scarring of hair follicles, leading to permanent hair loss, typically associated with inflammatory skin disorders.

PATHOPHYSIOLOGY

Hair growth occurs in a cyclical process involving three phases:

Anagen (growth phase):

This phase would last for several years in where active hair production occurs.

Catagen (transitional phase):

This is a short period where growth of hair ceases.

Telogen (resting phase):

The prominent feature of this phase are the hair detaches and eventually falls out.

In alopecia there are many factors such as genetic susceptibility, immune dysregulation, hormonal imbalances and environmental stressors who plays a vital role in disrupting the normal hair cycle, either shortening the anagen phase or accelerating the transition to the telogen phase.

CONVENTIONAL TREATMENTS

The current medical treatments for curing alopecia include pharmacological agents such as minoxidil (a topical vasodilator) and finasteride (a 5-alpha reductase inhibitor), as well as advanced interventions like platelet-

rich plasma (PRP) therapy and hair transplantation surgery. Although these therapies are effective for many, these treatments may have side effects and are not universally accessible due to cost or contraindications.

NATURAL APPROACHES TO MANAGE ALOPECIA

With growing public interest in holistic health many natural remedies for treatment of alopecia have gained attention. Although rigorous scientific studies for these remain limited, several natural interventions show promise either through anecdotal evidence or preliminary research.

1. Nutritional Interventions

Biotin (Vitamin B7): Biotin is essential for keratin production, the biotin supplementation may improve hair strength and reduce shedding in cases linked to deficiency.

Zinc and Iron:

The deficiencies in these minerals are commonly linked to telogen effluvium. Hence Zinc and iron supplementation can restore normal hair cycles.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids:

Omega-3 fatty acids are found in flaxseed and fish oil and in they possess anti-inflammatory properties that may support scalp health.

2. Herbal Remedies

Aloe Vera (Aloe barbadensis): Aloe Vera is known for soothing properties, it may reduce scalp inflam-

mation and improve hair follicle health.

Green Tea Extract (Camellia sinensis):

Green tea extract are rich in polyphenols, especially epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), green tea may inhibit 5-alpha reductase and promote hair growth.

3. Scalp Massage and Essential Oils

Regular scalp massage enhances local blood circulation, promoting nutrient delivery to hair follicles.

Essential oils such as rosemary oil and peppermint oil have demonstrated potential in stimulating hair growth through vasodilation and anti-inflammatory effects.

A small controlled study found that rosemary oil applied topically over several months improved hair count comparable to minoxidil in androgenetic alopecia.

4. Stress Management

Psychological stress is a well-established trigger for telogen effluvium and alopecia areata. Techniques such as mindfulness meditation, yoga and biofeedback therapy can modulate the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, potentially reducing the hair loss.

5. Lifestyle Factors

Adequate sleep hygiene, avoidance of harsh chemical hair treatments and protection from environmental pollutants are important preventative

measures. A balanced diet rich in vitamins, proteins and antioxidants is essential for overall hair health.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Despite the popularity of natural treatments they fails to deliver the best results due to lack of scientific studies. Most existing studies are small-scale or observational. There is a need for systematic research to establish standardized dosages, safety profiles and long-term effectiveness of natural interventions.

Alopecia represents a complex interplay of genetic, immunological and environmental factors. While conventional pharmacological treatments remain the mainstay of clinical practice, natural remedies offer complementary approaches that are increasingly appealing due to their minimal side effect profile and accessibility. Integrative strategies combining nutrition, herbal remedies, stress management and lifestyle adjustments may improve patient outcomes. Healthcare professionals should guide patients toward evidence-based natural therapies, recognizing the need for further scientific validation.

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

JKTA Zone Wagoora Holds Meeting at Thindima; New Members Join the Forum

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KREERI, APR 23: The Jammu & Kashmir Teachers Association (JKTA) Zone Wagoora held a significant meeting at Thindima to strengthen the organisational structure and enhance coordination among members.

The meeting was conducted under the leadership of Zonal President, Mr. Mir Majid, and was attended by prominent members including District Finance Member Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad Rather, District Media Advisor Mr. Zeeshan Pervaiz, Zonal Vice President



Mr. Latief Ahmad Lone, Zonal Organiser Gh. Hassan, Mr. Fayaz Ahmad, Mr. Farooq Ahmad, Mr. Bashir Ahmad, and others. During the session, various issues related to the teaching fraternity and organisational development were discussed in detail. A notable highlight of the meeting was the joining of several new members into the JKTA forum, reflecting growing trust and confidence in the leadership and vision of the Association.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Mir Majid emphasized unity, collective responsibility, and active participation as key pillars for strengthening the organisation. He welcomed the new members and assured that JKTA will continue to work tirelessly for the welfare and rights of teachers. The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to further consolidate the organisation and serve the teaching community with dedication and sincerity.

Public Notice

This is to notify the general public that the name recorded in the Aadhaar database is incorrect. Name shown in Aadhaar: Sahah Begum, Correct name: Shah Begum, Husbands name: Abdul Karim Lone, Address: Kultoor Langate Kupwara Jammu and Kashmir 193302.

The above mentioned person (Sahah Begum) hereby declares that the name printed on the Aadhaar is incorrect and that her correct and legal name is Shah Begum. Any objection to this correction should be brought to the attention of the UIDAI Aadhaar Seva Kendra, Office Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, the necessary correction procedures may be undertaken.

Public Notice

This is to notify the general public that the name recorded in the Aadhaar database is incorrect. Name shown in Aadhaar: Matloob Bashir, Correct name: Musaib Bashir Parray, Fathers name: Bashir Ahmad Parray, Address: Mundigam Langate Kupwara Jammu and Kashmir 193302. The above mentioned person (Matloob Bashir) hereby declares that the name printed on the Aadhaar is incorrect and that his correct and legal name is Musaib Bashir Parray. Any objection to this correction should be brought to the attention of the UIDAI Aadhaar Seva Kendra, Office Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, the necessary correction procedures may be undertaken.

Public Notice

This is to notify the general public that the name recorded in the Aadhaar database is incorrect. Name shown in Aadhaar: Gh Hussan Shah, Correct name: Gh Hassan Shah, Fathers name: Ab Rashid Shah, Address: Pohrupeth Langate Kupwara Jammu and Kashmir 193302. The above mentioned person (Gh Hussan Shah) hereby declares that the name printed on the Aadhaar is incorrect and that his correct and legal name is Gh Hassan Shah. Any objection to this correction should be brought to the attention of the UIDAI Aadhaar Seva Kendra, Office Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, the necessary correction procedures may be undertaken.

Public Notice

This is to notify the general public that the name recorded in the Aadhaar database is incorrect. Name shown in Aadhaar: Sufoora Jan, Correct name: Safura Nisar, Fathers name: Nisar Ahmad Mir, Address: Sagipora Sopore Kupwara Jammu and Kashmir 193201. The above mentioned person (Sufoora Jan) hereby declares that the name printed on the Aadhaar is incorrect and that her correct and legal name is Safura Nisar. Any objection to this correction should be brought to the attention of the UIDAI Aadhaar Seva Kendra, Office Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, the necessary correction procedures may be undertaken.

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office of the Naib Tehsildar, Mattan

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public that Parvaiz Ahmad Shah S/o Gh Nabi Shah and Seerat Parvaiz D/o Parvaiz Ahmad Shah, residents of Devipora Mattan, have applied for issuance of ST (Scheduled Tribe) Certificate before this office.

Now, therefore, any person having any objection with regard to the issuance of the said certificate in favour of the above-mentioned applicants may present his/her objection along with documentary proof in the office of the Naib Tehsildar, Mattan within 07 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. After the expiry of the stipulated period, no objection shall be entertained.

Issued under my hand and seal of this office.

Naib Tehsildar Mattan

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office of the Assistant Director Tourism, Pahalgam

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: Application of Flory Amin Do Mohammad Amin Ganie, S/o Mohammad Amin Ganie, Resident of Near Rafting Point, Movera, Pahalgam, for registration of Travel Business.

Whereas, the above-named applicant has applied in this office for registration of his travel business with the Tourism Department, Pahalgam. Now, therefore, any person having any objection with regard to the said registration may present his/her objection along with documentary proof in the office of the Assistant Director Tourism, Pahalgam within 07 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. After the expiry of the stipulated period, no objection shall be entertained.

Issued under my hand and seal of this office.

Assistant Director Tourism Pahalgam

Public Notice

The front and back number plates of my vehicle bearing registration no: JK01P7224 have lost, as such I am applying for duplicates. Any objection in this regard may be intimated to concerned authorities within 7 days. Afterward no objections shall be entertained.

Javeed Ahmad Dar
Kursoo Rajbagh Srinagar
Owner of the vehicle

Public Notice

It is hereby notified that my son Name has been wrongly mentioned in adhar regards bearing aadhar no 3940 1018 9809 Tawseef Yousuf instead of Ayan Yousuf Khan DOB 06/05/2017 S/O Mohammad Yousuf Khan as for School regards now I have applying for it's correction of the same if any person have any objection in this regards may file the same to the office of the concerned authority /Adhar seva within the period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice After that no objection shall be entertained.

AYAN YOUSUF KHAN DOB 06/05/2017
S/O MOHAMMAD YOUSUF KHAN
R/O PANDITHPORA DISTRICT KUPWARA

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 hassubmitter case file pertainingto Birth of RABIAJI JAN & SHAHIDA AKHTER S/O SAJAD AHMAD LONE R/O. KHARGAM Tehsil PATTAN Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 27/04/2015 & 07/12/2016 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 hassubmitter case file pertainingto Birth of MUSAIB AHMAD GANAIE & AIMAN JAAN D/O FAROOQ AHMAD GANAIE R/O. HAIL Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 11/06/2016 & 11/09/2015 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

Public Notice

It is hereby notified that my son Name has been wrongly mentioned in adhar regards bearing aadhar no 3940 1018 9809 Tawseef Yousuf instead of Ayan Yousuf Khan DOB 06/05/2017 S/O Mohammad Yousuf Khan as for School regards now I have applying for it's correction of the same if any person have any objection in this regards may file the same to the office of the concerned authority /Adhar seva within the period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice After that no objection shall be entertained.

AYAN YOUSUF KHAN DOB 06/05/2017
S/O MOHAMMAD YOUSUF KHAN
R/O PANDITHPORA DISTRICT KUPWARA

Public Notice

I Danish Gul Wani S/O Ghulam Mohammad Wani R/O Darahu Frasta Wari Wagoora Baramulla hereby inform the general public that I am applying for Pesticides and Fertilizers Licence

if anyone has any objection regarding the same He/She may contact the head Office Horticulture Department, Lal Mandi Srinagar within the stipulated time

After that no objection shall be entertained.

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 UT of Jammu and Kashmir OFFICE OF THE SHEEP AND WOOL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER BANDIPORA

(GOAT FARM ARINDARDORA)

Email ID: [sdo-bandipora@jk.gov.in/](mailto:sdo-bandipora@jk.gov.in)

NOTICE INVITING QUOTATIONS

Subject: Sale of Fresh Milk from Goat Farm Arindardpora Bandipora. Sealed quotations are hereby invited from interested firms/individuals/authorized vendors for daily lifting and purchase of fresh milk produced at the Goat Farm Arindardpora.

1. Details of Item:
 - Item: Goat Milk
 - Quantity: Approx. 5 to 10 litres per day (may vary)
 - Location of lifting: Goat Farm Arindardpora (Arindardpora Station).
2. Terms & Conditions:
 1. The milk shall be sold on a daily basis to the successful bidder.
 2. The rate shall be quoted per litre (inclusive of all charges).
 3. The quantity may vary depending upon daily production.
 4. The successful bidder shall arrange transportation at his/her own cost.
 5. The bidder shall ensure hygienic handling and compliance with norms of.
 6. Payment shall be made on daily basis, and proceeds shall be deposited into Government Treasury under proper head through procedures.
 7. The department reserves the right to accept or reject any quotation without assigning any reason.
 8. The contract period shall be for 04 months (extendable based on performance).

3. Eligibility:
 - Registered firms/individuals dealing in milk/dairy business
 - Preference may be given to local cooperatives/experienced vendors
4. Submission of Quotation
 - Sealed quotations addressed to the Sheep & Wool Development Office Bandipora by or before 29.04.2026 up to 04:00PM.
 - Quotations shall be opened on 30.04.2026 in presence of committee designated & bidders (if present).

No: SDO-GFA/Bpr/Store/2026-27/125-29
Dated: 23 /04/2026

Sd/-
Sheep & Wool Development
Officer Bandipora

DIPK: 728/26 | Dated: 23-04-2026

Government Medical College, Srinagar 10-KARAN NAGAR, SRINAGAR KASHMIR, 190010 (ACADEMIC SECTION)

Subject: Engagement of Dr. Sheikh Zaid Amin as Senior Resident on Academic Arrangement Basis, in the Department of Microbiology. Government Medical College, Srinagar. Reference: This office Advertisement No. 13 of 2025 Dated.11.10.2025.

OFFICE ORDER No: 435-RA of 2026
DATED: 20-04-2026

Pursuant to the Selection Notification issued vide No. 50-EC of 2025 Dated. 24.12.2025 followed by Notification No. 14-RA of 2026 Dated: 18.03.2026, Dr. Sheikh Zaid Amin, MD, not In-service candidate is provisionally engaged as Senior Resident in the Department of Microbiology on Academic Arrangement basis under S.O. 364 of 2020 Date. 27.11.2020 and Government Order No. 383-JK (HME) of 2024 Dated. 20.06.2024 initially for a period of one year, which is extendable upto maximum period of (03) years only, on the basis of good performance to be certified by the concerned HOD. However, the selection of the aforesaid candidate is made purely on a temporary basis in anticipation of the Character & antecedents report by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), J&K in view of extreme exigency & urgency expressed by concerned HOD. In case of adverse report with regard to his character and antecedents received from Additional Director General of Police, CID or leaves the job before receipt of CID verification, the aforesaid Candidate shall have no claim for Senior Residency benefits i.e. Experience certificate and Salary.

- The appointment of the above doctor is further subject to the following terms and conditions:
1. The selected candidate is supposed to submit his joining report alongwith affidavits in the office of the undersigned duly attested by the Judicial Magistrate to the effect that:
 - a. He is not In-service candidate, the information if found wrong the selectee shall be punished under Rules which includes confiscation of the Registration of the Doctor.
 - b. He will not participate in any kind of strike during the period of his tenure engagement. In the event he proceeds on strike, his tenure engagement shall be terminated without any notice as this service is covered under ESMA Act.
 - c. He shall remain disciplined during the whole tenure; any kind of misconduct shall make him liable for termination without any prior notice.
 - d. He is not involved in any criminal activity or there is no FIR pending or registered in any criminal department or police station against him.
 - e. He shall not claim any experience certificate in case he leaves Senior Residency before completion at least of six months.
 - f. He will not indulge in any private practice. In case he is found doing private practice; his appointment shall be liable for termination without any notice.
 - g. In case of adverse report with regard to his character and antecedents received from Additional Director General of Police, CID or if he leaves the job before receipt of CID verification, he shall have no claim for Senior Residency benefits i.e. Experience certificate and Salary.
 2. The above doctor shall have to execute an agreement with the institution on the prescribed format (Form A) with regard to the various terms and conditions applicable during academic arrangement same can be downloaded from the official website of Government Medical College, Srinagar.
 3. The appointee is required to join within (21) days from the date of issuance of this order; failing which the order shall be deemed to have been cancelled.
 4. The Senior Resident appointed on an Academic Arrangement Basis shall be paid as per S.O. 364 of 2020 Dated. 27-11-2020.
 5. The Senior Resident appointed on Academic Arrangement Basis shall be entitled for leaves as per the Government Order No. 451-JK (HME) of 2024 Dated. 08.07.2024.

No: GMC/RA/SR/Micro/806-10/MC | Dated: 28-04-2026

Sd/- Principal / Dean
Govt. Medical College, Srinagar

DIPK: 722/26 | Dated: 23-04-2026

Chief Justice flags off Multi Utility Vehicles for strengthening legal aid outreach across J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 23: In a significant step towards strengthening access to justice and expanding outreach of legal services to the grassroots level, Justice Arun Palli, Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and Patron-in-Chief, J&K Legal Services Authority in the august presence of Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority and other Companion Judges of the High Court at Jammu today flagged off a fleet of Multi Utility Vehicles for District Legal Services Authorities of the Jammu Province, at High Court Complex, Janipur, Jammu.

These vehicles have been procured under the guidance of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) with the objective of strengthening the delivery of legal aid and welfare services, particularly in far-flung, rural, remote and underserved areas of the Union Territory.

Chief Justice appreciated the initiative and observed that access to justice must not remain confined to courtrooms alone, but should



meaningfully reach every citizen, especially those belonging to vulnerable and marginalized sections of society. He emphasized that such initiatives are essential for taking justice to the doorsteps of the people.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority, also appreciated the launch of the vehicles and stated that the same would greatly enhance the outreach and efficiency

of District Legal Services Authorities. His Lordship further observed that this initiative marks another important step in making legal services more accessible to the common people.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar also expressed that similar Multi Utility Vehicles are planned to be launched shortly for districts of Kashmir Province as well, so that the benefits of this initiative reach every region of the Union Territory in an

equitable manner.

While interacting with media persons, Shazia Tabasum, Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority, highlighted that the vehicles shall be utilized for conducting legal awareness programmes, facilitating outreach camps, extending assistance to beneficiaries under various legal aid schemes, supporting Para Legal Volunteers, and ensuring better coordination of legal services

activities at the district level. She further stated that the initiative would significantly strengthen the institutional capacity of District Legal Services Authorities in serving the people more efficiently.

The vehicles shall also be used for carrying out awareness campaigns relating to legal aid, women and child rights, senior citizens' welfare, victim compensation, mediation, Lok Adalats, drug de-addiction awareness, child protection, and other welfare-oriented initiatives undertaken by Legal Services Institutions from time to time.

The programme was attended by M.K. Sharma, Registrar General, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, Judicial Officers, officers of the Registry, Muzamil Hayat Kabli, Administrative Officer, other officials of J&K Legal Services Authority, staff members and other dignitaries.

The initiative reflects the continued commitment of J&K Legal Services Authority towards ensuring that free legal aid and justice delivery mechanisms become more accessible, responsive and citizen-centric across the Union Territory.

Libraries Deptt organises events to rediscover magic of books, showcases rare collection of literary resources

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 23: A series of events were organized by the Department of Libraries & Research today across Kashmir division to commemorate the World Book & Copyright Day-2026.

World Book and Copyright Day is celebrated on April 23 every year to promote the love for reading and writing; power of publishing, making reading accessible for all and the importance of protecting intellectual property through copyright laws. The Day also signifies the potential of books and literature in shaping minds, uniting people, and inspiring social transformation.

Proclaimed by UNESCO in 1995, the day commemorates the passing away of literary legends including William Shakespeare, Miguel de Cervantes, and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, all of whom passed away on this day.

This year's theme for World Book and Copyright Day is - "Literacy through multilingualism and access to books for all".

To mark the day, today's main event was organized at SPS Central Library complex with an Exhibition of Special Literary Collections including Manuscripts, Rare Books and Miniature Paintings.

The exhibition was opened to public by Mrs Rubina Kousar, Director General, Libraries & Research, J&K.

The main attractions of the exhibition, jointly organized by SPS Library Srinagar & the Oriental Research Library (ORL) Srinagar, were the historic manuscripts like Qarabai-Din, Sadh Panduqman and Shahnama Firdous. Some of the rare books including Mahabharata & Ramayana, Rajtarangni by Kalhana, Tareekh-e-Rasheedi, Gazetteer of India and Kashmir - a history of Kashmir were also displayed at the exhibition.

Speaking on the occasion, Director General Libraries & Research, J&K said the Oriental Research Library, Srinagar established in 1904, is a repository of around 6000 rare manuscripts in 17 languages encompassing varied fields. The library also has around 500 rare books and miniature paintings.

Mrs Rubina said the manuscript collection of ORL is a treasure-trove of religious, philosophical, historical, literary and scientific writings rich in classical languages like Persian, Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, Turki, Brij Bhasha and Arabic. These languages have left deep impression on Kashmiri language by conditioning its growth in terms of forms and scope, she said and added that the Sanskrit, language of court and culture in 9th and beginning of 10th century in Kashmir contributes number of religious, aesthetic and poetic articulations and are preserved in ORL Srinagar.

She said such exhibitions make our young generation aware about, the culture, traditions, heritage and history of Jammu and Kashmir. A large number of people from different walks of life visited the exhibition and evinced keen interest in the rare literary resources.

Book exhibitions and other activities including literary tours of libraries to re-discover the magic of books and re-inculcate reading habits among the youth were organised in District and Tehsil Libraries across Kashmir as part of World Book & Copyright Day-2026 events.

The Department of Libraries, has for the past few years, laid special emphasis on selection of reference books for students preparing for IAS/KAS/NEET/JEE and other competitive examinations to make productive use of the resources earmarked for the purchase of books resulting in huge boost to the footfall of youth in public libraries.

KVK Budgam organizes Input Distribution programme under Tribal Sub Plan

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, APRIL 23: Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Budgam, under the leadership of Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai and in collaboration with the TSP-ICAR project 'Promotion of Natural Farming in Tribal farmers of Kashmir' successfully conducted a comprehensive training and input distribution programme to tribal farmers belonging to villages Tral and Sangerwani of district Pulwama.

The initiative was designed to empower tribal farmers by equipping them with high-quality inputs to boost productivity and ensure sustainable livelihoods through Natural Farming practises.

The programme was presided over by Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, Director Extension, SKUAST-K, who was the chief guest on the occasion besides Prof. Javeed Ahmad Mugloo, Professor & Head, ETC & KVK Pulwama and Scientists from both KVK's were also present. In her address, Prof. Raihana highlighted SKUAST-Kashmir's continued efforts towards the upliftment of tribal farming communities. She emphasized the critical role of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in promoting climate-resilient agriculture and improving livelihood security. She added that KVK's are playing a pivotal role in transforming the lives of tribal farmers by introducing innovative, sustainable practices and providing timely access to quality agricultural inputs. She stressed on the importance of adopting scientific practices for achieving sustainable agricultural growth and improving rural livelihoods. Prof. Javeed Ahmad Mugloo, Head, ETC & KVK Pulwama in his address highlighted the objectives of the Tribal Sub Plan, emphasizing the commitment of ICAR and SKUAST-Kashmir towards improving the livelihoods of tribal farming communities through location-specific technologies, capacity building and input support. He urged farmers to adopt scientific farming practices and make the best use of the inputs provided. He also outlined the Kendra's mission to advance sustainable farming and enhance access to technology for marginalized communities.

During training sessions Dr. Shazia Ramzan (PI of project) and Dr. Shabeer Ahmad Ganie (Co-PI of project), KVK Budgam covered various topics like need and importance of Natural Farming, pillars and practises of Natural Farming and strategies for climate-smart agriculture.

A major highlight of the event was the distribution of inputs like drums, buckets, shoes, gloves etc., to participating tribal farmers for practising Natural Farming on their fields.

CEO KDA reviews development works across key tourist spots

HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, APRIL 23: Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Kokernag Development Authority (KDA), Mohammad Rouf Rahman, yesterday conducted an extensive tour of various important tourist locations under KDA to review the on-ground progress of ongoing work.

Accompanied by staff and R&B engineers, the tour commenced at Mirza Swami Kaakh Temple Trust, Hangalgund, where the CEO, along with members of the Kashmiri Pandit community, inspected the premises. On the occasion, a newly constructed 4-seater toilet block was handed over to the Trust, addressing a long-pending requirement for pilgrims visiting the temple in large numbers.

Later, the CEO visited Vailoo Main Chowk and conducted a spot inspection



to resolve issues related to the location and construction of toilet blocks near the main road and Jamia Masjid. The matter was settled amicably on the spot.

The CEO also visited Daksum, where he reviewed the progress of the KDA cafeteria and the construction of concrete steps leading up to the hutment area of KDA, Tourism Department, and JKTDC. The visit was attended by local residents, shopkeepers, hoteliers, and officials from R&B and KDA.

During the tour, the CEO also visited Dandipora Park and directed KDA officials to ensure its proper upkeep and maintenance. He emphasized preparing the park to welcome tourists and visitors from across Jammu & Kashmir and beyond, with improved facilities and a clean aesthetic environment.

Massive Awareness Rally, Street Play organized under Nasha Mukt Abhiyan at Kangan

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, APRIL 23: In a major push to strengthen the campaign against drug abuse, the Sub-Divisional Administration Kangan today organized a mega Nasha Mukt awareness rally and street play at Government Boys Higher Secondary School Kangan.

The event was part of the ongoing 100-day "Nasha Mukt Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan" aimed at fostering a drug-free society and educating the youth about the devastating effects of narcotics.

The proceedings commenced with a massive rally that started from the Government Degree College Kangan and culminated at the Higher Secondary School premises.

The rally was led by Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Sheikh Salahuddin, alongside Sub-Divisional Magistrate Kangan, Nazir Ahmad Bhat, and Chief Education Officer, Oneel Kumar



Bhat. A large number of officers and officials from various departments, personnel from the police department, and enthusiastic students from multiple schools across the sub-division participated in the march, carrying banners and chanting slogans to promote a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

To further the message of the campaign, impactful skits were

performed by the students of Islamic Revival High School Kangan, Kids Cottage High School Wussan, and Sheikh Ul Alam Public High School. The performances vividly depicted the social and physical consequences of drug addiction, drawing significant appreciation from the audience for their emotional depth and clarity.

Sheikh Ul Alam Public High

School clinched the first position for their creative contributions to the awareness program.

Speaking on the occasion, Assistant Commissioner Revenue emphasized the collective responsibility of the administration, educators, and parents in protecting the younger generation from the menace of substance abuse. He highlighted that such initiatives

are crucial for building a resilient community and ensuring a brighter future for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

The police department also participated in the rally, and officers present at the event reiterated their commitment to a zero-tolerance policy against drug peddling, urging the public to cooperate with law enforcement agencies to break the supply chain of illicit substances in the region.

The event concluded with a formal pledge ceremony administered by SDM Kangan, where all participants committed themselves to stay away from drugs and contribute actively towards a drug-free nation.

Following the pledge, a felicitation ceremony was held to honor and encourage the students who participated in the skits and other awareness activities, recognizing their role as ambassadors of change in the sub-division.

SWD Srinagar organizes Awareness Program on various Women Centric, Social Security Schemes

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 23: Social Welfare Department (SWD) Srinagar, conducted an awareness programme today, at Government Polytechnic College for Women, Bemina, with the objective of sensitizing students and faculty members about a wide range of women-centric schemes, social security initiatives, and financial assistance programmes being implemented by various line departments.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, faculty, and officials from SANKALP-HEW Srinagar. It aimed to disseminate comprehensive

information about government-sponsored welfare schemes designed to empower women, strengthen social protection mechanisms, and extend financial support to vulnerable sections of society.

During the session, officials elaborated on several key initiatives focused on women's empowerment, including programmes related to education, livelihood generation, healthcare support, and rehabilitation services. Detailed insights were also provided on social security measures such as pension schemes for widows, senior citizens, and specially-abled individuals, along with financial assistance programmes for economically weaker sections.

DYSSO Srinagar organises series of activities to mark Earth Day across district

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 23: In line with the ongoing 100 Days "Nasha Mukt J&K Abhiyan" the District Youth Services and Sports Office (DYSSO) Srinagar today organised a series of activities across various educational institutions to mark Earth Day and Open Mic Day.

The programme was conducted, aiming to promote a healthy and drug-free lifestyle among the youth.

The initiative focuses on sensitising young minds about the harmful effects of substance abuse and encouraging them to adopt positive life choices.

Students from different institutions actively participated in pledge ceremonies, awareness programmes, open mic sessions, and talk shows.

The events highlighted the importance of a pollution-free environment and a drug-free society, reinforcing the message "Choose Life, Not Drugs." As part of the campaign, an open mic talk show was also organised at the iconic Zero Bridge, symbolising heritage and unity. The platform provided an opportunity for youth and the general public to express their views openly and discuss the adverse effects of drug abuse. District Youth Services



and Sports Officer Srinagar, Ghulam Hassan Lone, along with officials and field staff of the Youth Services and Sports Department, personally participated in the programme, encouraging youth engagement and

boosting their morale. The initiative witnessed enthusiastic participation and served as a meaningful step towards building a healthier, aware, and responsible generation.

India's current minimum wage laws doing more harm than good to low-income workers: FED report

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 23 : India's current minimum wage laws are doing more harm than good to low-income workers, said a Foundation for Economic Development (FED) report released on Thursday.

FED is an independent, economic policy action tank based in the national Capital.

The report 'Minimum Wages Hurt the Most Vulnerable Workers' highlighted some stark findings that minimum wages cause job loss, especially for low-skill workers.

"Minimum wages are set so high across states that an estimated 64pc of India's workers earn below the minimum wage, and for 50pc of India's workers, hiring them even after a 30pc raise would still be illegal," it found using the PLFS data for FY 2023-24.

The FED report noted that India's minimum wage, which varies by state, is 50 per cent higher than average minimum wages in key exporting countries like China, Vietnam and Bangladesh.

"Minimum wage in India is also, on average, about 1.7 times



the median wage for a casual worker. In countries like the US, Japan, Korea, or the UK, this multiple is 0.26-0.60, implying that the Indian figure is 3 to 7 times higher," it said.

The report said a higher minimum wage, coupled with other uncompetitive labour mandates such as double overtime rates compared to 1.25 to 1.5 rates seen in other countries is a substantial

reason why firms cannot hire low-skilled labour and remain competitive in export markets.

Resultantly, labour-intensive industries face an annual export shortfall of approximately USD 60 billion, losing lakhs of jobs to competitor nations.

It contributes to slow formal-sector job growth in the country, leaving nearly 90pc of India's workforce millions of individuals

stuck in informal, low-paying jobs that lack contracts or social security benefits.

Rahul Ahluwalia, founding director of FED, stated, "The evidence is clear: well-intentioned wage floors prevent workers from getting opportunities that would improve their lives. If nearly half of our workforce cannot be legally hired even after giving them a 30pc raise, then the minimum wage has backfired."

FED's report provided suggestions to allow workers to freely negotiate their wages.

The report cautioned that this is a politically sensitive subject; in the meantime, governments should use wage subsidies instead of further minimum wage hikes.

This will support higher pay without reducing the demand for workers and without making low-skilled hiring unviable.

Further, the government should allow flexibility in the national floor wage to reflect different regional realities and to prevent pricing poorer states out of formal job creation, the report added. UNI

India's private sector activity picks up in April; Composite PMI rises to 58.3

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APR 23 : India's private sector activity gathered momentum at the start of the new financial year, with the HSBC Flash India Composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) Output Index rising to 58.3 in April from 57.0 in March, according to data compiled by S&P Global.

The latest reading signalled a sharp expansion in overall business activity and remained well above the long-run average, indicating sustained economic resilience. The rebound follows a moderation in March, when growth was impacted by disruptions linked to the ongoing West Asia conflict.

The upturn in April was largely driven by the manufacturing sector, which recorded stronger gains in both output and new orders compared to services.

The flash manufacturing PMI climbed to 55.9 in April from 53.9 in March, reflecting improved demand conditions and increased production.

The services sector also continued to expand, albeit at a relatively slower pace. The services PMI stood at 57.9, marginally higher than 57.5 in the previous month.

A PMI reading above 50 indicates expansion in activity, while a print below 50 signals contraction.

The acceleration in business activity was supported by a combination of factors, including better demand conditions, rising inflows of new work, capacity expansion and higher investments in technology.

Firms reported stronger growth in new orders, suggesting that demand momentum remained intact despite global uncertainties.

Employment across the private sector rose at the fastest pace in ten months, as companies ramped up hiring to meet increasing business requirements and support expansion plans.

The hiring push also reflected positive business sentiment, with firms expressing optimism about output growth over the next 12 months.

This confidence was underpinned by ongoing marketing efforts, a pipeline



of pending project approvals and rising client enquiries.

However, overall sentiment eased slightly from March levels, even as it remained the second-highest in nearly 18 months.

Despite the growth momentum, companies continued to face elevated input cost pressures in April. Firms reported higher expenses on fuel, gas, oil and a range of raw materials, including chemicals, food items, jute, leather, metals and rubber.

Transportation costs also remained high, with some firms citing gas shortages as a contributing factor.

Although input cost inflation softened from March, it remained the second-highest level seen in nearly three years, highlighting persistent cost-side challenges.

Businesses partially passed on these higher costs to customers by increasing output prices.

However, the pace of increase in selling prices remained lower than the rise in input costs, indicating margin pressures for firms.

Overall, the April PMI data points to a strong start to FY27 for India's private sector, with robust demand, improving output and rising employment. However, elevated cost pressures and global uncertainties—particularly those linked to geopolitical tensions—continue to pose risks to the growth outlook. UNI

Amazon India announces Rs 2,800 cr investment

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

BENGALURU, APR 23 : Amazon India on Thursday announced an investment of over INR 2,800 crore (approximately \$300 million) aimed at strengthening associate safety, health, and financial well-being, while further enhancing its logistics and operations network in India.

The company said the fresh investment will focus on scaling key social and welfare initiatives such as Project Ashray, Sushruta, and Samridhi. These programmes are designed to improve workplace safety, expand healthcare access, and support financial security for associates across its operations ecosystem.



As part of the initiative, Amazon India will also expand healthcare coverage, insurance benefits, and broader social security access for its workforce. The company said the move reinforces its commitment to building one of India's safest, fastest, and most reliable operations networks.

On the operational front, the investment will support the growth of its logistics infrastructure and the expansion of Amazon Now, its quick-commerce service, aimed at faster deliveries across key markets.

The company also highlighted increased use of artificial intelligence and machine learning to improve route optimisation, navigation efficiency, and workload balancing, with the goal of enhancing both safety and productivity.

This latest commitment builds on Amazon's earlier investments in India and aligns with its broader plan to invest over \$35 billion in the country by 2030. UNI

Rupee weakens to 94.08 amid global caution due to US-Iran peace negotiations

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APR 23 : The Indian rupee remained under pressure, slipping to 94.08 against the US dollar, as global uncertainty and cautious investor sentiment continued to weigh on emerging market currencies.

The domestic unit has witnessed notable volatility over the past month, moving in a range of around 92.5 to 94.5. Despite intermittent recovery, the rupee has struggled to sustain gains, with the latest level indicating a depreciation trend

in the latter half of April.

The volatility is attributed to the ongoing diplomatic engagement between the United States and Iran, where efforts to ease tensions are underway through continued dialogue.

While talks have offered some optimism, the absence of a clear breakthrough has kept global markets on edge.

The rupee's movement is also being influenced by a firm US dollar, fluctuating crude oil prices, and persistent foreign institutional investor (FII) outflows.

Engineering exports hit record USD 122 bn in FY26; WANA shipments slump amid West Asia crisis: EEPC India

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APR 23 : India's engineering exports touched an all-time high of USD 122.43 billion in 2025-26, registering a growth of 4.86 per cent, even as shipments to the West Asia and North Africa (WANA) region witnessed a sharp decline due to geopolitical disruptions, according to EEPC India.

Despite elevated tariffs imposed during the tenure of Donald Trump, the United States remained the top export destination for Indian engineering goods, with shipments rising 2.3 per cent year-on-year to USD 19.60 billion in FY26, underlining the sector's resilience.

However, exports to key West Asian markets showed weakness. Shipments to the UAE and Saudi Arabia—among India's major export destinations—declined by 10 per cent and 13 per cent, respectively, during the fiscal year.

On a positive note, several

major markets, including Germany, the UK, China, Italy, South Africa, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia, recorded growth in engineering imports from India, reflecting diversification of export destinations.

Engineering exports in March 2026 grew marginally by 1.13 per cent year-on-year to USD 10.94 billion, despite severe supply chain disruptions triggered by the West Asia conflict and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a key global shipping route.

The impact of the crisis was most visible in the WANA region, where exports plunged by 50.7 per cent in March. Shipments to the UAE and Saudi Arabia alone dropped sharply by 67 per cent and 45 per cent, respectively, largely due to logistics disruptions and reduced transshipment activity. The UAE, a major trade hub for Indian exporters, also saw warehouse operations affected amid the regional tensions.

Commenting on the performance, EEPC India Chairman



Pankaj Chadha said the sector demonstrated remarkable resilience by achieving record exports for the second consecutive year despite global uncertainties.

"The growth came at a time when global trade faced unprecedented challenges, particularly due to geopolitical tensions in the Middle East that disrupted key maritime routes. While exports to the WANA region were impacted, India maintained positive momentum across North

America, Europe, and other regions," he said.

He added that the performance strengthens India's path towards its medium-term target of USD 250 billion in engineering exports by 2030.

Among product categories, 26 out of 34 engineering product panels recorded year-on-year growth during FY26, indicating broad-based expansion across segments.

The council also highlighted the role of government support

measures such as the Resilience and Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation (RELIEF) scheme, which helped mitigate challenges related to war-risk insurance, rising premiums, and elevated logistics costs during the crisis period.

Engineering exports continued to dominate India's merchandise trade basket, accounting for 27.71 per cent of total exports in FY26, with the share rising to 28.11 per cent in March.

Region-wise, exports to North America grew by 1.9 per cent, while shipments to the European union rose by a stronger 8.6 per cent during the fiscal year. In contrast, exports declined to WANA, Other Europe, and CIS regions, reflecting the uneven global trade environment.

EEPC India said that going forward, sustained export growth will depend on a combination of sectoral resilience, diversification of markets, and continued policy support to navigate global uncertainties. UNI

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UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

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The volatility is attributed to the ongoing diplomatic engagement between the United States and Iran, where efforts to ease tensions are

underway through continued dialogue.

While talks have offered some optimism, the absence of a clear breakthrough has kept global markets on edge.

The rupee's movement is also being influenced by a firm US dollar, fluctuating crude oil prices, and persistent foreign institutional investor (FII) outflows.

After the first round of US-Iran talks, Brent oil prices in the International market fell below 90 USD/Bbl, but today at 12:31 PM, they rose to 103.39 USD/Bbl.

Overall, the rupee remains vulnerable to external cues, with traders closely watching global developments and macroeconomic signals for further direction. UNI

Graviti Pharmaceuticals launches Karnataka operations

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

BENGALURU, APR 23 : Graviti Pharmaceuticals on Tuesday announced the launch of its operations in Karnataka, marking a key milestone in its India expansion strategy as the globally oriented pharmaceutical company deepens its presence in major domestic markets.

The launch event, held at an iconic hotel in Bengaluru, signals the company's next phase of growth after successfully completing one year of operations in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. With the Karnataka entry, Graviti Pharmaceuticals aims to strengthen its position as a quality-driven pharmaceutical player in India with global standards. Headquartered in Hyderabad,



the company has built a strong international presence, particularly in the United States, and continues to emphasise globally benchmarked quality and compliance systems.

Its manufacturing facility at Pashamylaram in Hyderabad operates in line with USFDA standards, underscoring the company's focus

on stringent global requirements in quality, safety, and regulatory compliance.

Graviti Pharmaceuticals is led by Managing Director Dheeraj Gorukanti and Chief Operating Officer Thilak Vangala, under whose leadership the company is expanding its strategic and operational footprint across markets.

Speaking on the occasion, Thilak Vangala, Chief Operating Officer, Graviti Pharmaceuticals, said the Karnataka entry represents a strategic milestone in the company's growth journey.

"Our entry into Karnataka represents a strategic milestone in our India growth journey. With a strong foundation in international markets and a continued focus on quality and compliance, we are committed to scaling our presence and delivering globally aligned pharmaceutical solutions across key therapy segments," he said.

The launch was attended by the company's leadership team and key stakeholders, marking the beginning of Graviti Pharmaceuticals' focused expansion in Karnataka.

Samson century, Hosein four-for hand Mumbai Indians their biggest defeat

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI: Playing the first IPL El Clasico of their career, Chennai Super Kings' Sanju Samson (101 not out) and Akeal Hosein (4-1-17-4) handed Mumbai Indians their biggest loss by runs in IPL history. CSK's batting revolved around their new talisman, Samson; their second-highest score was 22. MI crumbled to spin, eight of their XI dismissed for single-digits.

CSK and MI came into the game as the seventh and eighth-placed teams in the season. And yet the amped-up nature of a game between the IPL's two most decorated teams ever was on show from the very first ball, where Sherfane Rutherford couldn't find the wicket-keeper with a regulation throw and the short fine leg

fielder backing up didn't do his job properly either. Jasprit Bumrah, the bowler, asked his fielders to calm down and then, in a sign that he was pushing himself harder too, overstepped. In the chase, Tilak Varma and Jamie Overton got into a brief but heated argument.

This game was a tactical give-and-go. Hardik Pandya quickly realised how well the ball was coming onto the bat. He went for 38 runs in two overs. So he took pace off in the powerplay. The two overs of spin he went to yielded two wickets. CSK countered that by promoting Shivam Dube. AM Ghazanfar took him down for 5 off 8. He was brave to take the ace off. Dube, along with Rituraj Gaikwad, the other batter Ghazanfar dismissed, are having a poor IPL 2026. The CSK captain has a high score



of 28 and a strike rate of 119.54. Aaruchaamy, Dube's nickname, loosely translated as God of sixes, has hit only two in seven innings.

CSK were also aware of their disadvantage batting first at Wankhede Stadium. So every batter made an effort to hit early boundaries. CSK put up

73 for 2 in the first six overs. Only once have they made more against MI, and that was way back in 2015. When the field spread and MI looked like re-

gaining control, taking two wickets and only giving two boundaries in a stretch of 3.3 overs, Dewald Brevis walked out and smashed Mitchell Santner for two sixes. One of them made Santner trying to hide the ball outside off stump look entirely silly. This is the talent Brevis has. MI knew they had to get rid of him.

There were plenty of mistakes - too many on the pads, too many with width - but there were also good plans. MI showed signs that the pressure was getting to them but they didn't buckle. In the 11th over, after being taken for two fours, Ashwani Kumar didn't lose sight of what his team wanted to do. Go short at Brevis. He made things better for himself by taking pace off as well. So when the batter tried to upper cut him, the ball didn't have enough

to clear the boundary. Brevis' wicket for 21 off 11 left CSK at 122 for 4 in the 11th over, with Kartik Sharma and Overton left to bat.

All night long, he had shown his touch. Creaming Bumrah through cover point for the first boundary of the innings. Whipping Hardik off his pads for six. Often it seems he expends no effort to score these runs. Nothing exemplified this aspect of his game more than the boundaries he got through third man. All he needed to do was beat the infield. Later, he did push himself. Facing a free-hit against Bumrah in the 19th over, he predicted the fast bowler would go for a yorker, so he walked down the pitch, shaping to play the reverse ramp, saw the ball was a little too straight and so went proper ramp and got four for it.

Abhishek Sharma equals Kohli with ninth T20 ton

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD: Abhishek Sharma produced a defining T20 masterclass, equalling Virat Kohli for the most centuries by an Indian while unleashing one of the most destructive in-nings of the Indian Premier League season on Tuesday.

Abhishek's blistering hundred - his ninth in T20 cricket - places him alongside Kohli and a distinguished global group featuring Quinton de Kock, Rilee Rossouw and Sahibzada Farhan, underlining his rapid rise into the format's elite tier.

The milestone came with trademark ferocity in the 31st IPL match against Delhi Capitals. Facing Nitish Rana in the 14th over, Abhishek first cleared



the ropes and then pounced on a long hop, swivelling into a savage pull that disappeared over deep mid-wicket to bring up his century. A boundary soon after capped a passage of play that summed up his complete domination.

Beyond the milestone, the innings stood out for its sheer power. Abhishek hammered 10-plus sixes in the knock - the fifth time he has achieved the feat in T20 cricket, placing him second only to Chris Gayle (18) on the all-time list. He now moves ahead of Evin Lewis and Shreyas Iyer, who have done it four times each. Notably, this was the second instance of Sharma striking 10 or more sixes in an IPL innings, making him only the second batter after Gayle - who has four such innings - to achieve the feat multiple times in the tournament.

While Gayle (22 centuries), Babar Azam (12) and David Warner (10) remain ahead in over-all T20 hundreds, Abhishek's latest effort was more than a statistical milestone - it was a statement of dominance.

As he soaked in the applause and acknowledged his family in the stands, the message was unmistakable: Sharma is no longer chasing greatness - he is beginning to define it.

31-member Indian team to compete in Asian Beach Games in China from April 22 to 30

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: A 31-member Indian team will compete in the 6th Asian Beach Games to be held in Sanya, China, from April 22 to 30. The Games will have medal events across 15 disciplines, with a total of 62 gold up for grabs.



India will compete in 3x3 basketball, beach kabaddi, sailing and beach wrestling.

India had sent a big contingent of more than 200 in the last edition in Vietnam in 2016, and had won 24 medals (2 gold, 4 silver, 18 bronze).

Organised by the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) since 2008, the Asian Beach Games is a multi-sport event focused on beach and coastal disciplines.

The Asian Beach Games were last held in 2016 in Da Nang, Vietnam. After that, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a prolonged delay, with the event now resuming after a decade.

Sony bags Asian Games broadcast rights

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: Sony Pictures Networks India has secured the exclusive broadcast rights for the 20th Asian Games Aichi-Nagoya 2026, scheduled to be held in Japan from September 19-October 4.

As per the deal, the continental showpiece will be telecast on Sony Sports Network channels and streamed on Sony LIV across India and the subcontinent.

India will head into the Games on the back of a historic campaign in the previous edition, where it secured a record 107 medals.

"We are proud to bring this continental multi-sport event back to Sony Pictures Networks for the third time," Rajesh Kaul, Chief Revenue Officer and Business Head - Sports and International, SPNI said in a release.

The Asian Games, one of the biggest multi-sport events globally, will feature 41 disciplines, including 32 Olympic sports, with new additions such as mixed martial arts and surfing.

Traditional events like cricket, tennis, esports, kabaddi, sepak takraw and kurash will also be part of the programme.

Cricket is expected to be a major attraction for Indian audiences, with



both men's and women's teams in contention for top honours.

"India's historic performance at the last edition, where the nation crossed the 100-medal milestone for the first time, has ignited unprecedented interest in multi-sport events," he said.

"The stage is set for another

unforgettable chapter with the inclusion of cricket along with a formidable Indian contingent ready to chase new milestones.

"We are committed to delivering immersive coverage that celebrates every medal and in-spires millions across the country as our athletes strive for greatness once again."

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