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# People's Resolve Powers Anti-Drug Drive as LG Leads Campaign in Samba

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 25: The Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, on Friday joined a growing people's movement in Samba, spearheading the Union Territory's 100-day campaign to eradicate drug abuse and dismantle trafficking networks.

Addressing a large public gathering, Sinha asserted that the success of the "Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir" campaign would not be judged by symbolic marches or slogans, but by tangible outcomes on the ground. He stressed that every Panchayat must be drug-free and every police station cleared of drug traffickers, underscoring the need for strict enforcement and sustained community participation.

"The next 85 days are crucial. Weekly progress must be measurable—how many individuals have been rehabili-



tated, how many traffickers prosecuted, how many fake de-addiction centres shut down, how much contraband

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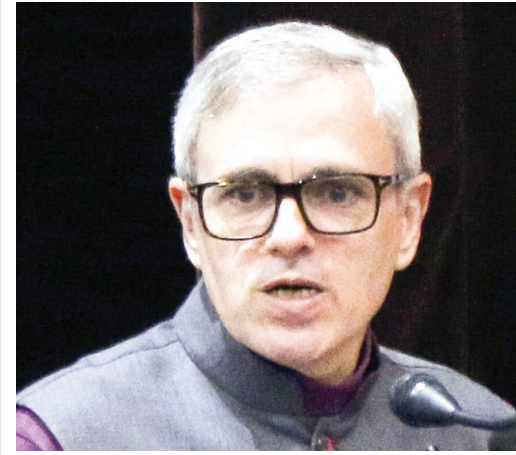
## LG Attends Chintan Shivir on Sports

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 25: The Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha today addressed national 'Chintan Shivir' on Sports at Srinagar. The three-day event organised by Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports focuses on key policy challenges in sports, strengthening Centre-States/UTs coordination and charting a comprehensive roadmap to transform India into a global sporting superpower. The event is being attended by Sports Ministers from various states,

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# CM Clears Key Urban Infrastructure Initiative to Ease Traffic Congestion Across J&K



HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 25: In a move aimed at addressing mounting traffic congestion and improving urban infrastructure, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has accorded administrative approval for the construction of a multi-level car parking facility in Ganderbal at an

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## CM pitches J&K as premier filming destination during Bengaluru outreach

HT NEWS NETWORK

BENGALURU, APRIL 25: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today interacted with filmmakers in Bengaluru, showcasing Jammu & Kashmir's scenic beauty and rich cultural heritage as an ideal destination for cinema.

A delegation of leading film producers and representatives of major production houses met the Chief Minister to explore opportunities for film production and collaboration.

The Chief Minister assured full support and a friendly, enabling environment for artists, reiterating the Government's commitment to making filmmaking in

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## Tulbul Project Back Under Review, Signals Shift in Indus Water Strategy

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, APR 25: The long-stalled Tulbul Navigation Project on the Jhelum River has returned to the policy spotlight, with officials confirming that the proposal is under active review and may soon move forward after decades of uncertainty.

Also referred to as the Wular Barrage, the project is being reassessed alongside ecological restoration efforts at Wular Lake in north Kashmir's Bandipora district. Officials told Kashmir News Observer that consultancy work is nearing completion, with further decisions expected following technical evaluation.

Originally launched in 1984, the Tulbul project was designed to regulate water flow in the Jhelum to ensure navigability during lean winter months. However, construction was halted between 1987 and 1989 after objections from Pakistan, which argued that the structure violated provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty restricting storage on western rivers.

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## Mandaviya Chairs Chintan Shivir Of Ministers Of Youth Affairs & Sports In Srinagar

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 25: The Chintan Shivir of the Ministers of Youth Affairs & Sports of States and Union Territories commenced in Srinagar today with focused deliberations on strengthening India's sports ecosystem through coordinated action, systemic reforms, policy convergence, and grassroots execution.

Addressing the inaugural session, Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, set the tone for the



deliberations by emphasising that India's sporting ambitions will be realised through execution on the ground.

"Our 10-year roadmap to becoming a global sporting powerhouse must not remain on paper, it must come alive in every playground, every district, and every young dream."— Union Sports Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya said.

The Honourable Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Manoj Sinha, also attended the

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## Kashmir Rains Break Heatwave, Temperatures Dip Sharply

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 25: Intermittent rainfall across Kashmir on Saturday brought a welcome respite from the recent heatwave, with a sharp drop in temperatures recorded across the Valley.

Widespread overnight showers lashed the plains, including Srinagar, continuing into the late morning hours. Higher

altitude areas also experienced weather activity, with reports of light snowfall from Zojila Pass, indicating a broader change in weather conditions.

The impact of the rain was immediately visible in the temperature readings. Srinagar, which had recorded a maximum of 28.1°C on Friday—over six degrees above the seasonal norm—saw the mercury plunge to 21.2°C on Saturday, a

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## Final electoral rolls likely by May 10–15: J&K CEC

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

BUDGAM, APR 25: Jammu and Kashmir State Election Commissioner (SEC) Shantmanu on Saturday said that final electoral rolls for the Union Territory are likely to be ready between May 10 and 15, with voter enrolment witnessing an improvement of around 4–5 per cent during the ongoing revision exercise.

Speaking to the media in Budgam, Shantmanu, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the revision process, which began on March 27, is in its concluding phase. He noted that continuous

monitoring through meetings and field inspections has ensured steady progress. "On-ground visits help us understand the actual situation, and I am satisfied with the way the process is being carried out," he said.

The CEC said the current exercise includes enrolling newly eligible voters who have attained the age of 18, while removing the names of deceased individuals and those who have shifted from their original locations. "Necessary corrections in voter details are also being undertaken simultaneously to enhance the accuracy of electoral rolls so that whenever in

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## J&K integrates 17,500 Migrant Ration Cards into NFSA

Extends April ration distribution to May: Principal Secretary DDMRR&R

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 25: Principal Secretary, Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction, Chandrakar Bharti, today convened a meeting to review implementation of the

ration distribution in terms of the Special Relief Ration Scheme for Kashmiri/Jammu Migrants and extension of benefits of social sector schemes to the eligible migrants.

The meeting was attended by Saurabh Bhagat, Commissioner Secretary Food Civil Supplies & Con-

sumer Affairs, Directors Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Jammu/ Kashmir, Director Social Welfare Jammu, Relief & Rehabilitation Commissioner (M), J&K, Senior Superintendent of Police, Jammu and senior officers of the Department of Disaster Management, Relief,

Rehabilitation & Reconstruction.

It was observed that more than 17,500 migrant ration cards have already been punched into NFSA database and the process of integration of about 8,000 migrant ration cards is in pipeline. Besides, the

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## CS reviews progress and implementation of HADP



HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 25: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo chaired a review meeting to assess the progress and performance of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) in Jammu and Kashmir in the presence of senior officers of the Agriculture Production Department and other concerned stakeholders.

The meeting besides ACS, Agriculture Production Department and MD, J&K Bank was attended by the MD, HADP; HoDs of the Department along with Representatives from Agricultural Universities here.

The meeting had an in depth review of the programme covering establishment status, key performance indicators, financial returns,

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## Ladakh LG Removes Bar on Career Advancement for Overqualified Govt Employees

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

LEH, APR 25: In a major relief to government employees in Ladakh, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Saturday lifted the embargo that had prevented overqualified staff from applying for graduate-level posts.

The restriction, earlier imposed through mandatory affidavits declaring non-possession of higher qualifications, had effectively blocked employees recruited for lower-grade posts from seeking career advancement despite holding graduate degrees. Terming the provision "unjustified" and "restrictive," the LG ordered its immediate withdrawal.

Under the revised directive, all government

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**CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....**

**People's Resolve.....**

seized, and how many women's committees formed at Panchayat and ward levels," he said.

Highlighting the importance of accountability, the Lieutenant Governor directed Deputy Commissioners, Senior Superintendents of Police, and other enforcement agencies to conduct continuous audits of the campaign. He called for a comprehensive chain of care, from identification and counselling to treatment, recovery, and rehabilitation.

Sinha described drug abuse as a grave crisis, alleging that it has been systematically fueled by hostile elements across the border to finance terrorism and destabilize society. He said the youth had been specifically targeted, and urged them to resist the menace with determination and purpose.

"The solution lies in the hands of our youth. Their dreams are powerful and their potential limitless. Society must stand firmly behind them to ensure those dreams are realized," he said, calling for collective vigilance and awareness at every level.

Reiterating the government's resolve, Sinha assured citizens of a decisive crackdown on drug networks, while emphasizing that the fight must also be waged within society through cooperation and shared responsibility.

"This is not just a government programme, but a people's movement. Parents, teachers, and community leaders must step forward to guide and protect the younger generation," he said, noting the growing public participation witnessed over the past two weeks.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor flagged off a bike rally and launched the Samba Cricket Premier League under the Nisha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyaan, aiming to engage youth in constructive activities and reinforce the anti-drug message.

**LG Attends.....**

sports administrators, Principal Secretaries from states and representatives from National Sports Federations.

Speaking on the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor emphasized the importance of nurturing a sports culture at the grassroots, beginning in villages and local communities.

"True champions rarely emerge solely from elite academies; they are discovered in small towns, neighbourhoods, and local clubs, where academies later refine their raw talent," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He also stated that sports must become woven into everyday life, extending beyond stadiums and competitions to thrive in neighbourhoods, streets, and open fields, becoming part of daily routines.

The Lieutenant Governor also urged Sports Ministers and Sports Administrators, participating in the event to provide physical teachers in schools all the resources they require to support and nurture talents.

"Physical education teachers in schools are often undervalued compared to their counterparts in science or mathematics. This mindset must change. Every Physical Education teacher plays a vital role in India's journey toward becoming a sporting superpower. They deserve respect, recognition, and resources to identify and nurture young talent," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He said that beyond medals, sports must be harnessed as a force for social transformation.

"Infrastructure alone is not enough; it must be aligned with purposeful initiatives. Schools, communities, local administrations, and families must collaborate to create ecosystems where every young athlete finds a platform, whether on a running track, football field, basketball court or swimming pool to discover their potential," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that our strength lies in harmonizing national vision with local execution, ensuring central schemes reach villages brimming with talent. He also observed that best practices from one state must be freely shared and replicated across others.

"We must establish systems that identify and propel rural youth talent, supported by scientific, accessible, and unbiased mechanisms. Sports infrastructure must be fully and efficiently utilized," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He also called upon the corporate sector to support in building a sustainable and inclusive sports ecosystem, which the government alone cannot achieve. He said Corporates, with their resources and social responsibility, must step forward not merely as sponsors but as co-architects of this national mission.

"I urge sports councils, federations, administrators, experts, industry leaders, and officials from across the country to craft a strategic development plan aligned with international events. India is rich with gifted athletes. Our responsibility is to bridge the gap between gifted talent and opportunity. Strengthening grassroots sports ecosystems is not merely an aspiration but a duty," the Lieutenant Governor said.

**CM Clears....**

estimated cost of Rs. 9.60 crore. The project, sanctioned under the Capex Budget 2026-27, will be executed by the Director, Urban Local Bodies, Kashmir, in accordance with approved technical specifica-

tions and codal procedures to ensure efficiency, quality, and timely completion.

Officials said the proposed facility is expected to significantly decongest the town's busy market areas by providing organized parking space and streamlining traffic movement. The initiative is also poised to contribute to planned urban development and improved public convenience in the area.

The Chief Minister emphasized strict adherence to quality standards and transparency in the tendering process, while directing concerned departments to ensure timely execution. He also instructed that all requisite approvals and regulatory clearances be secured prior to the commencement of work.

**CM pitches....**

Jammu & Kashmir easier and more accessible.

The interaction formed part of the Jammu & Kashmir Government's focused outreach in South India, aimed at building stronger connections with key stakeholders in the region's tourism and film industries. Recognising South India as a major hub of cinema, creativity, and outbound tourism, the initiative seeks to position J&K as a preferred destination for both filmmakers and travellers.

During the engagement, the Chief Minister highlighted J&K's unparalleled natural beauty, diverse landscapes, and rich cultural heritage, ranging from serene valleys and snow-clad mountains to vibrant traditions and local craftsmanship.

He also underlined recent policy measures introduced to facilitate film production in J&K, including streamlined permission processes, logistical support, and incentives for production houses.

Assuring full cooperation, the Chief Minister said that the Government is committed to providing a safe, supportive and enabling environment for artists and filmmakers. He added that continuous engagement with the film fraternity will help address their requirements and strengthen collaboration.

The Chief Minister also emphasised the role of cinema in boosting tourism, noting that films shot in Jammu & Kashmir can significantly enhance its visibility and inspire travel, thereby generating economic opportunities for local communities.

The interaction was also attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Zaidal Tanvir Sadiq, Director Tourism Jammu Vikas Gupta, and other concerned officials.

**Tulbul Project....**

India has maintained that the project is a non-consumptive navigational facility permissible under the treaty framework. The dispute, however, remained unresolved, effectively freezing progress for nearly four decades.

Fresh momentum has emerged following India's decision to place the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance in 2025, prompting a broader review of water infrastructure projects previously constrained by treaty provisions.

Officials said the project aims to regulate discharge by storing surplus water in Wular Lake during high-flow periods and releasing it during lean seasons, thereby maintaining stable water levels in the Jhelum. It is also expected to facilitate inland navigation, creating a navigable stretch of nearly 20 kilometres between Baramulla and Sopore, particularly during winter when water levels recede.

The proposed revival has been welcomed by local communities, who see it as a means to stabilise water levels and revive traditional livelihoods such as fisheries and water chestnut cultivation.

However, experts have flagged potential downstream implications, noting that regulating flow at Wular Lake could alter discharge patterns—an issue central to Pakistan's long-standing concerns. Environmental considerations also remain critical, with declining spring water levels in Wular increasingly linked to changing climate patterns affecting the lake's hydrology and biodiversity.

Officials emphasised that conservation and eco-restoration efforts at Wular Lake are progressing in parallel, with a focus on balancing ecological sustainability and long-term infrastructure development.

**Mandaviya Chairs....**

Chintan Shivir and applauded the vision of making India a powerhouse of sports.

The Union Sports Minister called upon states to move from policy adoption to active implementation, stressing that real progress will be measured by outcomes visible across districts, training systems, and grassroots sporting ecosystems.

"Khelo Bharat Mission is not just a statistic, it is a reflection of the energy of our youth and the commitment of the nation," he added.

Dr. Mandaviya called for bridging the long-standing disconnect between State Governments and Sports Federations, urging closer alignment to build a strong and unified talent pipeline.

Underscoring the importance of convergence, he highlighted that coordination with the education system is essential for early talent identification and that physical education teachers form the backbone of the grass-

roots sports ecosystem.

"If even one talented child is left behind due to lack of opportunity, it is not just a personal loss, it is a loss for the entire nation," he added.

He further noted that sports serve as a transformative tool, particularly in regions such as Jammu & Kashmir and other challenging areas, contributing to social harmony and national integration.

Addressing systemic gaps, the Minister Dr. Mandaviya called for regular certification and upgradation of coaches, scientific training of athletes, and capacity building in sports administration.

Emphasising the importance of a seamless ecosystem, Dr. Mandaviya stated, "When infrastructure, talent identification, and trained manpower come together as one unbroken chain, Olympic podiums will follow," highlighting the need to connect grassroots participation with elite performance through a structured pathway.

Dr Mandaviya also launched the YES-PE (Young Engagement in Sports & Physical Education ) programme by Lakshmi Bai National Institute of Physical Education, Gwalior, for students between 9-12 standard for promoting sports participation, sportsmanship and leadership.

Addressing the gathering, Secretary (Sports), Shri Hari Ranjan Rao, who welcomed participants and highlighted the significance of the Shivir as a platform for collective reflection and action.

Outlining the importance of the Chintan Shivir, he said, "This gathering is not merely a conference, it is a collective moment of reflection, resolve, and renewed commitment."

The Chintan Shivir saw thematic sessions focusing on medal strategy, policy coordination, clean and safe sport, and talent identification and development.

Over 15 State Sports Ministers, along with eminent sports personalities including Adille Sumariwalla, Abhinav Bindra, Pullela Gopichand and Gagan Narang, attended the Chintan Shivir and shared their ideas with the stakeholders, reflecting a collective commitment towards strengthening India's sports ecosystem and advancing collaborative policy dialogue.

Sports Ministers from various states appreciated the initiative to build a consensus around athlete- and player-centric approach. They emphasized that this model can be replicated across different regions of the country to strengthen and develop a robust sporting ecosystem in India.

The deliberations emphasised strengthening infrastructure, enhancing coaching systems, improving Centre-State convergence, ensuring ethical and safe sporting environments, and building a scientific, technology-driven talent pipeline integrated across schools, academies, and elite training centres.

These sessions also underscored the importance of structured pathways and institutional convergence to ensure continuity in athlete development, from identification to high-performance training.

Participants also highlighted the need for consistent monitoring, evaluation, and sharing of best practices across states to ensure that policy intent translates into measurable, on-ground impact.

The deliberations reaffirmed the importance of a unified and coordinated approach involving the Centre, States, and all stakeholders to build a robust, inclusive, and future-ready sporting ecosystem, aligned with India's long-term vision of emerging as a global sporting powerhouse.

**Kashmir Rains....**

drop of nearly seven degrees and slightly below average for this time of year.

Minimum temperatures, which had remained significantly above normal over the past few days, also moderated following the rainfall. Weather stations across the Valley reported below-normal daytime temperatures on Saturday.

The Meteorological Department said that while Sunday is expected to remain largely dry, fresh spells of light rain, thunder showers, and gusty winds are likely at scattered places from Monday onwards.

Officials further indicated that brief afternoon spells of rain and thunder are expected at isolated locations on April 29 and 30, suggesting continued intermittent relief from the recent heatwave conditions.

**Final electoral....**

the future panchayat elections happen, our electoral rolls are ready," he said.

He said that Panchayat Secretaries and Booth Level Officers are actively conducting door-to-door verification across the district. "Teams are reaching every household, assisting people in filling out forms, and ensuring that no eligible voter is left out. The response from the public has been encouraging," he added.

Shantmanu further said that once the final rolls are published, the remaining preparations for Panchayat elections are expected to be completed by May or June. The final decision regarding poll dates, he added, will be taken jointly by the Government of India and the Jammu and Kashmir administration.

He reiterated that all necessary steps will be taken to ensure free, fair, and transparent elections under the supervision of the Election

Commission of India.

The State Election Commissioner was accompanied by District Development Commissioner Budgam Athar Aamir Khan during the visit—(KNO)

**J&K integrates....**

ration distribution in terms of the Special Relief Ration Scheme for Kashmiri/Jammu Migrants has been started on 18-04-2026, from the migrant camps and the directions have been issued for ration distribution from all the designated 32 ration depots in Jammu district in a hassle free manner and that migrants can avail ration from any nearest ration depot. Similarly, the ration distribution should be done from the designated ration depots in other districts of Jammu Province.

Worthwhile to mention here that the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, in terms of S.O 392 and S.O. 393 of 2024, both dated 13.08.2024, has made necessary amendments in the Jammu & Kashmir Food Security Rules, 2021 and the Targeted Public Distribution (Control) Order 2023 for integration of the Migrant Ration Cards into National Food Security Act(NFSA) database, to enable the migrants to avail the benefits of various government schemes. Further, the administration in terms of Government Order No. 27-JK(DMRRR) of 2025 dated 16.05.2025, has clarified that the existing scale of ration distribution to the migrants registered under the relief category and norms/procedures for inclusion, deletion, bifurcation, conversion and corrections etc will continue as per the norms of Relief Organisation.

This has also been clarified through number of public notices and jingles issued through Department of Information & Public Relations. It was also conveyed that all relief ration card holders (irrespective of categorization into PHH, NPHH or Special category) will continue to receive 11 Kg free ration per person per month and 1Kg sugar as per the extant scale of ration distribution. Besides, those registered with the Relief Organisation under the non relief category (Pensioners etc) and categorized into NPHH category will also receive ration on the government approved rates as per their entitlement under NFSA.

It was decided that a one time extension in the distribution period of ration against the migrant ration cards for the month of April 2026 into May 2026 (in addition to ration of May 2026), shall be given, since the extension is imperative to ensure that migrant beneficiaries are not deprived of their entitled ration.

It was also decided that the officers of FCS&CA and Relief Organization shall ensure close supervision of integration of migration ration cards and more special camps shall be organized by the Social Welfare Department in coordination with the Relief Organization to reach out to the eligible potential beneficiaries. The move is facilitate them in filling various online applications for availing benefits of different social sector schemes like Old Age Pension, Widow Pension, Disability Pension, Marriage Assistance, Ayushman Bharat besides scholarships. About 450 families have, so far, availed benefit of various social sector schemes after integration of migrant ration cards into NFSA database.

The department is committed to fully operationalize the new scheme for all the migrants within the shortest time period.

**CS reviews....**

employment generation and district-wise outcomes.

The Chief Secretary noted that the programme reflects strong financial viability, with a government subsidy of around Rs. 450 crore expected to be recovered within approximately 2.6 years through enhanced farm incomes. He directed the department to intensify outreach efforts and ensure greater inclusion of eligible farmers, particularly in districts with lower coverage.

The Chief Secretary laid strong emphasis on the importance of adopting a data-driven, district-specific approach to improve conversion from approvals to unit establishment, which currently stands at around 25 percent. The Chief Secretary emphasized the need to further improve training coverage and capacity building to enhance productivity and sustainability.

He reiterated that HADP has the potential to transform the agricultural landscape of J&K by enhancing farmer incomes, generating employment and promoting sustainable agriculture here. He called for ensuring sustained momentum, effective convergence and focused interventions to maximize its impact across the length and breadth of the UT.

Moreover he issued directions for faster conversion of approved applications into established units. He enjoined upon the concerned to lay focus on improve-

ment in farmer registration and eKYC completion, strengthening of district-level monitoring and accountability, time-bound grievance redressal and scaling up of high-value agricultural activities to make this programme a success.

Regarding the functioning of Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs), he directed for strengthening them further by improving licensing and expanding service delivery, including onboarding of banking and digital services at these centres.

On this occasion the ACS, Agriculture Production Department, Dr Ashish Chandra Verma gave the overall preview of the performance of this programme here. He apprised the meeting that HADP has so far facilitated the establishment of more than 1.11 lakh units across all 20 districts, benefiting 74,589 unique farming families.

He further observed that while the programme has achieved full geographic coverage, the overall coverage remains around 8.1 percent of the PM-Kisan beneficiary base, thereby leaving a substantial scope for the department to work for its expansion and optimal utilization to meet our targets on time.

The Managing Director, J&K Bank, Amitava Chatterjee also presented a detailed roadmap aimed at maximizing benefits for farmers under HADP. He highlighted key suggestions pertaining to digital interventions, including integration and onboarding of various stakeholder platforms onto the HADP portal to enhance efficiency and outreach.

He further assured full support and closer institutional synergy with the Agriculture Production Department to ensure seamless implementation of the programme and achievement of its envisaged objectives across all districts of J&K.

The MD HADP, Dr. Sagar Doifode Datatray elucidated that the programme has generated an estimated annual revenue of Rs. 368 Cr and annual profit of Rs. 173 Cr at the beneficiary level, translating into an average income enhancement of about Rs. 25,000 per family per year, besides creating over 2.45 crore man-days of employment across 287 blocks and more than 5,100 villages and wards.

Revealing about the implementation quality, the MD gave out that about 92.9 percent of the units are functional and nearly 99 percent units are verified as existing, while 68.3 percent beneficiaries have undergone training under various components.

The meeting also reviewed district-wise performance, wherein districts such as Kulgam, Ganderbal and Shopian have recorded higher coverage, while districts like Poonch, Kishtwar and Reasi were identified as needing focused intervention.

It was further observed that large-scale projects such as Integrated Farming Systems, farm mechanization and fodder development are driving scale under HADP, while high-value sectors like dairy and agri-marketing offer higher returns and require scaling up through improved approval mechanisms.

The progress of the Kisan Khidmat Ghar (KKG) network was also reviewed. It was informed that 1,807 KKGs are functional across the Union Territory, serving over 8 lakh farmers with 96 percent fund utilization, and generating a combined monthly revenue of about Rs. 43.52 lakh.

It is pertinent to mention that HADP encompasses a comprehensive portfolio of 29 integrated projects spanning the sectors of horticulture, agriculture and livestock husbandry, each strategically designed to unlock the full potential of these domains and steer the sector towards enhanced sustainability, profitability and resilience.

With access to over 171 schemes and activities, the programme seeks to empower farmers, agri-entrepreneurs and rural youth through a structured framework of financial incentives, skill development, infrastructure creation and strengthened market linkages.

**Ladakh LG....**

employees—including those who had submitted such undertakings at the time of their appointment—will now be allowed to appear in graduate-level examinations and apply for higher positions without any bar.

The move is expected to benefit a large number of employees working in roles such as Orderly and Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS), who were previously ineligible for promotion avenues due to the earlier condition. Officials said the restriction had also discouraged qualified youth from applying for lower-category posts, fearing a lack of future growth.

The administration has clarified that the relaxation will apply uniformly to all existing employees and no candidature will be rejected on the basis of past declarations regarding educational qualifications. The order has come into force with immediate effect.



# Div Com reviews preparations for Mega NMBA Pad Yatra in Srinagar

Calls for widespread Public Participation in Rally to combat Drug Menace

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 25:** Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Friday chaired a high-level meeting to review arrangements for the upcoming Mega Nasha Mukta Pad Yatra, scheduled to be held on May 3 in Srinagar.

The event will be flagged off by Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners and Heads of Departments of Kashmir Division.

During the review, the Divisional Commissioner emphasized the need for broad-based participation from all sections of society to ensure the success of the rally and to effectively raise awareness about the growing drug menace. He underscored the importance of involving social organizations, NGOs, professionals, students, progressive farmers, associations, public representatives, institutions,



government departments, sportspersons, and other stakeholders to deliver a strong and unified message against substance abuse.

To facilitate large-scale participation, the Divisional Commissioner directed the concerned authorities, including SRTC, Transport Department, and Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), to make adequate transportation arrangements for participants. He also instructed the Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department to ensure the availability of drinking water facilities along the route and at the venue.

Further, the Hospitality and Protocol Department was tasked with arranging refreshments for participants.

Deputy Commissioners and Heads of Departments were directed to designate nodal officers to coordinate and ensure active participation of employees and the public in the event.

## World Veterinary Day Observed at Baramulla

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BARAMULLA, APR 25:** World Veterinary Day was observed with great enthusiasm at the District Veterinary office Complex Baramulla under the theme "Veterinarians: Guardians of Food and Health."

The programme was presided over by Chief Animal Husbandry Officer Baramulla, Dr. Intisar Makdooi.

On the occasion, an Anti-Rabies Free Vaccination Camp and deworming drive were organized to promote animal welfare and prevent zoonotic



diseases. A technical session was also conducted, highlighting best practices in animal care, disease prevention, and the importance of veterinary services.

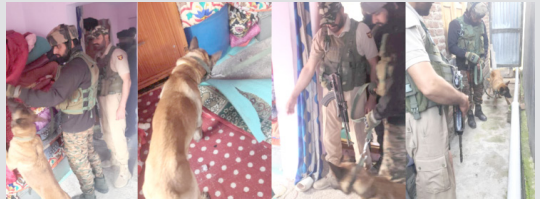
The event witnessed active participation from farmers, veterinarians, para-veterinarians, and pet owners, reflecting strong community engagement towards animal health and responsible pet care.

Officials emphasized the need for regular vaccination, proper nutrition, and timely medical care for livestock and pets, while appreciating the dedication of veterinary professionals in safeguarding both animal and human health.

## Handwara Police Deploy Sniffer Dogs in NDPS Operations for First Time

■ DR.AB QAYOOM

**HANDWARA, APRIL 25:** In a notable advancement in anti-narcotics enforcement, Handwara Police have, for the first time, deployed sniffer dogs during a search operation involving an accused under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. The move comes as part of the ongoing 100-day campaign "Nasha Mukta Abhiyaan," aimed at eliminating drug abuse and



trafficking from the region.

Officials described the initiative as a major step forward in strengthening investigative capabilities. The inclusion of trained sniffer dogs is expected to significantly enhance the accuracy and efficiency of search operations, particularly in detecting concealed narcotics. The operation reflects a growing emphasis on modern policing techniques and the adoption of specialized tools to combat the rising drug menace. Authorities stated that such methods will now become a regular feature in anti-drug drives across the district.

Handwara Police reiterated their commitment to intensifying efforts under the campaign and ensuring strict action against those involved in drug-related activities. The initiative also aligns with the broader vision of building a drug-free society, as envisioned by the administration.

Locals have welcomed the move, expressing hope that the use of advanced techniques will further deter illegal drug trade and contribute to safeguarding the youth from substance abuse.

## JKAACL Hosts 'Meet the Eminent' Event Honouring Dr. Rafeeq Masoodi

Eminent writer and former Doordarshan ADG reflects on literary journey, calls for preservation of cultural and linguistic heritage

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APR 25:** The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) on Saturday organised a literary programme under its 'Meet the Eminent' series, featuring noted broadcaster, poet and writer Dr. Rafeeq Masoodi, at Abhinav Theatre here.

Titled "Main Aur Meri Sahityik Yatra" (Me and My Literary Journey), the event drew participation from leading literary personalities, scholars and enthusiasts, who gathered to reflect on Dr. Masoodi's contribution to literature and public life. A former Additional Director General of Doordarshan, Dr. Masoodi retired from Prasar Bharati and the Cultural Academy and currently serves as Patron of Adbi Markaz Kamraz.

Secretary JKAACL Harvinder Kaur, in her welcome address, underscored the Academy's commitment to promoting literary culture and facilitating meaningful dialogue. She highlighted the importance of documenting the journeys of distinguished writers like Dr. Masoodi, whose work has enriched the cultural and intellectual fabric of Jammu and Kashmir.

Delivering the keynote address, Dr. Agnishekhar presented a reflective account of his association with Dr. Masoodi, sharing personal anecdotes that brought out his intellectual depth, literary sensibility



and administrative acumen. He described him as a creative writer deeply rooted in social commitment.

On the occasion, scholar Nisar Azam presented a comprehensive paper on Dr. Masoodi's literary oeuvre, examining its thematic richness, stylistic nuances and socio-cultural relevance, which was widely appreciated by the audience.

In his address, Dr. Masoodi offered an insightful account of his literary journey, interwoven with his experiences in public service. He spoke about the evolving literary landscape, challenges faced by contemporary writers and stressed the need to preserve linguistic and cultural diversity, while emphasising the role of institutions like JKAACL in nurtur-

ing emerging talent.

The programme was presided over by Khalid Hussain, who highlighted the transformative role of literature in shaping societal values and fostering critical thinking, describing such platforms as vital for cultural continuity.

Among those present were Jitender Udhamपुरi, Lalit Mangotra, Prof. Rajkumar, Naseeb Singh Manhas, Sonali Arun Gupta, Additional Secretary JKAACL, and Dr. Javaid Rahi, Chief Editor, Gojri.

The proceedings were conducted by Dr. Chanchal Sharma, while Lal Chand presented the vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to all participants for making the event a meaningful literary gathering.

## CRACKDOWN ON ILLEGAL CULTIVATION: POPPY CROP DESTROYED IN KULGAM'S ASHMUJI

■ FAROOQ RATHER

**KULGAM, APR 25:** In a decisive action against illegal narcotics cultivation, Kulgam Police, in coordination with the Revenue Department, on Saturday destroyed illicit poppy cultivation in the Kanchow area of Ashmuji in south Kashmir's Kulgam district.

Acting on specific intelligence inputs and as part of an intensified anti-narcotics drive, a joint team comprising officials from the

Police and Revenue Department conducted a targeted operation in the area. The team, led by the Tehsildar concerned and SHO Kulgam Inspector Kushap, reached the identified site where illegal poppy cultivation was being carried out.

Upon verification, officials found the cultivation to be in violation of the law, following which the standing poppy crop was destroyed on the spot to prevent its misuse from the production of narcotic substances.

In this connection, a case under FIR No. 62/2026 has been registered against the concerned landowner under relevant sections 8/18 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. Officials confirmed that further investigation into the matter has been initiated.

Meanwhile, the District Administration Kulgam has reiterated its strict stance against illegal cultivation of narcotics. Authorities have

already issued a one-month deadline to individuals involved in such activities to voluntarily destroy any poppy cultivation on their land. Failure to comply within the stipulated time will invite strict legal action, including registration of cases under the NDPS Act.

The operation was carried out under the directions of the Deputy Commissioner Kulgam Shahzad Alam (IAS) and SSP Kulgam, Anayat Ali Choud-

hary (IPS) reflecting the administration's firm commitment to eradicate the menace of drug cultivation and trafficking from the district.

Authorities have appealed to the public to extend full cooperation to law enforcement agencies and promptly report any instances of illegal cultivation or drug-related activities, emphasizing that community participation is crucial in eliminating the drug menace from society.

## MLA Visits Fire-Affected Family in Langate, Sanctions ₹1 Lakh Immediate Relief

■ DR.AB QAYOOM

**LANGATE, APR 25:** In a gesture of solidarity and prompt response, MLA Langate Shaikh Khurshheed on Saturday visited the residence of a fire-affected family in Mogdam Mohalla, Langate, to assess the damage caused by a devastating blaze that gutted their house. The fire incident, which occurred in the early hours, completely destroyed the residential house of Mohd Dilawar Mir, a labourer by profession, leaving the family in distress. Soon after receiving information, the MLA rushed to the spot and conducted an on spot assessment of the losses. Interacting with the affected family, the MLA expressed deep sympathy and assured them of all possible assistance during this difficult time. He emphasized that both the government and society stand firmly with the victims and that no effort would



be spared in their rehabilitation.

As an immediate relief measure, Shaikh Khurshheed announced financial assistance of Rs. 1 lakh from his Constituency Development Fund (CDF) to support the family in coping with the immediate aftermath of the tragedy.

The MLA also directed concerned departments, including Revenue, Education, and Forest, to provide immediate assistance and ensure coordinated relief efforts on the ground.

He instructed the local administration to expedite relief and rehabilitation measures so that normalcy could be restored at the earliest. Reaffirming his commitment, the MLA stated that he would personally monitor the situation and ensure that the affected family receives all due support in the coming days. Officials from the Municipal Committee, Police Post Langate, Revenue Department, and other concerned agencies were present during the visit. The MLA was accompanied by youth leader AIP Advocate Shah Nawaz Abdullah and several local workers, who appreciated the swift response and relief announced for the victim family.

# Sakeena Itoo visits Baramulla, inaugurates newly constructed Science Block at GDC Women Baramulla

Also lays foundation stones for Drug De-Addiction Centre 100- Bedded Girls Hostel, ST-PG Hostel

## HT NEWS NETWORK

**BARAMULLA, APRIL 25:** Minister for Health & Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today visited Baramulla and laid foundation stone of various important projects and also inaugurated key college building of Government Degree College (Women) Baramulla.

The Minister was accompanied by MLA Baramulla, Javid Hassan Baig; MLA Uri, Dr. Sajad Shafi; Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, S.F Hamid; Director Higher Education and other senior officers from the district.

At Government Degree College (Women) Baramulla, the Minister inaugurated newly constructed Science Block.

Addressing a large gathering on the occasion, Sakeena Itoo said that the Omar Abdullah-led Government remains firmly committed to public welfare, equitable development and empowerment of every section of society through quality education and improved institutional infrastructure.

She stated that education is the strongest pillar for building a progressive and prosperous society, and the Government is focused on ensuring that students, particularly girls and those from marginalized communities, receive better opportunities, facilities, and academic support.

Highlighting the importance of the newly inaugurated Science Block, the Minister said that it will significantly enhance the academic capacity of the college by providing modern laboratory facilities, improved classroom space, and a stronger platform for science education among female students.

"The inauguration of the Science Block is expected to significantly enhance academic infrastructure and provide improved laboratory and learning facilities to students, particularly encouraging greater participation of women in science



education. Our Government remains committed towards creating an enabling educational environment where every student can thrive. We are determined to bridge gaps in access, infrastructure, and opportunity," the Minister stated. Speaking regarding the importance of women's education, Sakeena Itoo described women as the true torchbearers of society and said they are less than none in any field of life.

"Women are the backbone of families and communities. They are leaders, creators, educators, and changemakers. When we educate and empower women, we strengthen the entire society.

Our daughters are capable of achieving the highest milestones, and it is our responsibility to provide them with every possible support," she added.

Acknowledging that women are facing difficulties in society, Sakeena Itoo called upon all the girl students to come forward and choose field as per their wishes and whims, adding the women have proven their mettle by occupying high positions and taking decisions at higher levels on most important matters of Jammu and Kashmir for the welfare of people.

The Minister, in her address, also condemned the use of abusive language on social media against

women, saying it reflected the failure and weakness of those indulging in it.

"I am open to discussions and criticism but use of foul language on platforms like Facebook is unacceptable. If you want to have a discussion, you can do it with me. You can discuss it with the MLAs of the government", she said.

MLA Baramulla, Javid Hassan Baig also spoke on the occasion and reflected on various achievements of the government.

Speaking on the occasion, Principal GDC Women Baramulla, Prof. Neelofar Bhat presented the brief report on the college.

On the occasion, the Minister

also released the Annual College Magazine 'SONZAL' of GDC Women Baramulla.

Later, the Minister laid the foundation stone for a Drug De-addiction Centre at Government Medical College (GMC) Baramulla which will provide specialized treatment, counselling, and rehabilitation services to individuals affected by substance abuse, aligning with the government's ongoing efforts to combat drug addiction under Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir.

She also laid the foundation stone for Autopsy/Mortuary Centre at GMC Baramulla. The facility will help streamline medico-legal procedures and improve the overall efficiency of healthcare services in the region.

In the meanwhile, the Education Minister also laid the foundation stone for ST-PG Hostel at Government Degree College Boys Baramulla, which will provide residential facilities to students belonging to Scheduled Tribe, ensuring better access to higher education.

She also laid foundation stone for 100-bedded Girls Hostel at Government Degree College (Boys) Baramulla, built with an aim to address accommodation challenges and promoting women's education by creating a safe and supportive environment for female students pursuing higher studies.

Speaking on the occasion, Sakeena Itoo reiterated the government's commitment to strengthening infrastructure in both education and healthcare sectors, emphasizing inclusive growth and improved service delivery.

The Minister stated that the infrastructure projects for which the foundation stones were laid today will be completed within stipulated timelines. She highlighted that these projects will play a vital role in enhancing accessibility, quality and equity in essential public services of the district.

## Bandipora witnesses widespread Anti-Drug Awareness initiatives under 100-Day NMBA Campaign

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, APRIL 25:** Continuing the ongoing 100-Day Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, District Administration Bandipora today carried forward a series of intensive awareness programmes across educational institutions and communities, aimed at sensitising youth and the general public about the harmful effects of substance abuse.

At PM SHRI Government Boys Secondary School Lahrawapora, an awareness session was conducted by Medical Officer, who delivered a detailed lecture on the growing menace of drug abuse. Students were sensitised about its adverse effects on health and society and were guided on preventive measures and ways to stay away from addiction.

Similarly, under supervision of the District Ayush Officer Bandipora, an awareness programme was organised at Higher Secondary School Arin. The session focused on the causes and ill effects of smoking, highlighting its impact on individuals, families, and society at large.



In another initiative, the Department of Ayush conducted an awareness campaign coupled with a yoga session at Government High School Karnie Mohalla Shahgund. The session emphasised the role of a healthy lifestyle in preventing substance abuse. Students actively participated in yoga practices, including asanas, pranayama, and meditation, learning techniques to manage stress and avoid addiction.

As part of enforcement measures under the campaign, the Drugs Control Department Bandipora, in coordination with Police Station Argam, carried out inspections of medical shops in Chattibanday to ensure compliance with the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

At PMSHRI HSS Shadipora, an awareness programme was organised under the Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan. The programme featured an awareness session and a mass pledge, wherein students and staff committed to a drug-free life.

An IEC-based awareness programme was also held at PM Shri Government High School Sumbal, where students were sensitised about the dangers of substance abuse and the influence of peer pressure. The programme included speeches, discussions, and a pledge ceremony, encouraging students to make responsible choices and act as ambassadors of change.

Meanwhile, the NCORD Cell of HKM Degree College Bandipora organised an awareness programme in the college auditorium under the leadership of Principal, Prof. Suresh Kumar Dogra. The event witnessed participation from Radio Kangan 88.4 FM, and an anti-drug pledge was administered by Convener NCORD Cell, Prof. Irfan Ahmad Wagay, reaffirming the commitment of participants towards a drug-free society.

Adding to the momentum, a rally was organised at Radiant Public School Nadihal under the directions of the District Administration Bandipora. The rally was addressed by Dr. Irfan Hussain Bandy, who highlighted the ill effects of drug abuse and emphasised the role of youth in spreading awareness and safeguarding their communities from substance abuse.

Across all programmes, pledge-taking ceremonies, awareness lectures, interactive sessions, and community outreach activities were conducted, witnessing active participation from students, teachers, healthcare professionals, and officials.

## SVEEP awareness programme held at NIPS Zainapora to promote electoral participation

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**SHOPIAN, APRIL 25:** In a step towards strengthening democratic participation, a grand SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) awareness programme was organized at National Innovations Public School, Zainapora under the aegis of the Chief Education Officer Shopian, Bashir Ahmad Shah (District Nodal Officer SVEEP). The programme was conducted in the form of a vibrant morning assembly, witnessing enthusiastic participation from students, teachers, and officials. The event aimed at sensitizing young minds about the importance of voting and fostering a culture of informed and responsible electoral participation. On the occasion, resource persons and



experts delivered insightful and motivating talks, emphasizing the pivotal role of every citizen in a democracy. They highlighted that voting is not merely a right, but a powerful responsibility that shapes the future of the nation. Special focus was laid on motivating first time voters and encouraging them to actively participate in the electoral process.

Adding further value to the programme, students of the institution actively participated by expressing their views, sharing awareness messages, and demonstrating a strong commitment towards the democratic ethos. Their involvement brought energy and purpose to the event, reflecting the growing awareness among the youth.

## Legal Awareness Programme on eradication of Drug Menace held at GDC Tangdhar

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**KUPWARA, APRIL 25:** In line with the Plan of Action and Calendar of Activities for July 2025 issued by the District Legal Services Authority Kupwara, the Tehsil Legal Services Committee (TLSC) Tangdhar Karnah in collaboration with the District Police Kupwara and Sub District Hospital Tangdhar organized a comprehensive awareness programme on Victims of Drug Abuse and Eradication of Drug Menace at the auditorium of Government Degree College (GDC) Tangdhar.

The programme was held under the guidance of Mansoor Ahmed Mir, Munsiff/Chairman, TLSC Tangdhar Karnah and witnessed the participation of various stakeholders including the staff of TLSC Tangdhar, members of Bar Association Tangdhar, Panel Lawyers, PLVs, faculty of GDC Tangdhar, health officials, police officers, and



around 100 students of the college.

Key speakers included Adv. Qazi Mehboob Allahi, President Bar Association Tangdhar; Adv. Abdul Majeed Bandy Adv. Farooq Ahmed Qureshi and Adv. Waqar Ahmad, who highlighted critical legal and social issues pertaining to drug abuse. They elaborated on the legal framework available to combat drug menace and emphasized the role of NALSA in promoting a Drug-Free India.

Dr. Muktayar Ahmad, Medical Officer, SDH Tangdhar, representing the Health Department, spoke on the psychological and physical impacts

of drug addiction and emphasized the crucial role of civil society in supporting rehabilitation efforts and fostering a healthy lifestyle.

Among the dignitaries present were Mushtaq Ahmad Wani, Principal of GDC Tangdhar, who underscored the importance of awareness, education, and collective societal action. He stressed the role of communities in socially boycotting drug peddlers as a deterrent strategy.

Police officers also addressed the gathering, reaffirming law enforcement's commitment to fighting the drug menace and extending full cooperation in community-driven efforts. The event concluded with a powerful message advocating a drug-free, healthy, and socially responsible society, reflecting the shared commitment of legal, medical, academic, and enforcement bodies towards this critical cause.

## Shantmanu visits Budgam, reviews process of ongoing SSR

Emphasizes on maintaining transparency, timely completion of SSR in district

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, APRIL 25:** State Election Commissioner (SEC), Shantmanu today conducted an extensive visit of district Budgam to oversee process of the ongoing Special Summary Revision (SSR) of Electoral Rolls.

During his visit, the SEC participated in special awareness camps on SSR at Sheikhpora and Razwen areas of the district.

The SEC personally monitored the registration process at these special camps, ensuring that no eligible citizen is left behind in the updated rolls. He assessed the progress of the revision process and took stock of various measures being implemented to ensure the

preparation of accurate, inclusive, and error-free electoral rolls. He emphasized on the importance of maintaining transparency, fairness, and timely completion of the revision exercise to strengthen the democratic process at the grassroots level.

Shantmanu interacted with officials associated with the electoral process and stressed the need for maximum public participation, especially encouraging the enrolment of eligible young voters, women, and members of marginalized sections of society. He also underlined the importance of removing duplications, correcting discrepancies, and ensuring that no eligible voter is left out of the



electoral rolls.

Interacting directly with a gathering of first-time voters (18+), the Commissioner emphasized on the importance of their participation in democratic process and encouraged the youth to take the lead in the electoral process.

Later, the SEC also chaired a high-level review meeting and held detailed evaluation of the current progress of the summary revision across various constituencies of the district as

well as status of voter registration, verification drives, awareness campaigns, and field-level coordination.

Deputy Commissioner Budgam (District Panchayat Officer Budgam) Athar Aamir Khan; Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR), Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs), Block Development Officers (BDOs), and all key election-related officers were present in the meeting.

Shantmanu directed the officers to adopt a proactive approach in

door-to-door verification and utilize digital platforms effectively to streamline the registration process, ensuring an error-free and inclusive voter list for the district. He directed the officers to intensify awareness efforts so that citizens are fully informed about the SSR process and can actively participate in updating their electoral details.

He further instructed the administration to ensure close monitoring at every level and maintain coordination among all stakeholders for smooth and efficient execution of the exercise. He reiterated that a robust and updated electoral roll forms the foundation of free, fair, and transparent election process.

# Rana reviews development works at Bheaderwah; Emphasises transparency & timely execution of projects

Interacts with several public delegations

**HT NEWS NETWORK**

**BHADERWAH, APRIL 25:** Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana today chaired a comprehensive review meeting at Dak Bungalow, Bheaderwah, to assess the status and progress of ongoing developmental works across departments in the sub-division.

During the meeting, the Minister laid strong emphasis on inter-departmental coordination, transparency in execution, adherence to timelines and robust grievance redressal mechanisms.

He called upon officers to adopt a proactive and accountable approach to ensure that projects are completed efficiently and without unnecessary delays.

Highlighting the need for balanced growth, the Minister underscored environmental sustainability and inclusive development, particularly in tribal and remote areas. He directed officials to fast-track pending works so that the benefits of government schemes reach the grassroots in a timely and effective manner.

While reviewing the performance of the Jal Shakti Department, the Minister laid focus on achieving 100 percent coverage under Har Ghar Jal and stressed the importance of regular water quality monitoring.



He instructed officials to expedite retrofitting works under the Jal Jeevan Mission and reviewed the progress of sand filtration plants, water lifting schemes and urban water supply projects under AMRUT 2.0 in Bheaderwah town. The Minister also reviewed flood protection measures, projects

under District Capex and UT Capex and road connectivity initiatives under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and allied schemes. He directed the concerned departments to expedite forest clearances for PMGSY Phase-IV (Batch-II).

Further, he instructed all departments to ensure the timely preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) and estimates for works proposed in the financial year 2026-27. Reiterating the Omar Abdullah-led Government's commitment to inclusive development and tribal welfare, the Minister directed the

administration to identify suitable land for the establishment of Gujjar & Bakerwal and Gaddi & Sippi hostels in Bheaderwah.

He also called for the preparation of a comprehensive DPR for a modern drainage system to address urban infrastructure needs in the town.

MLA Bheaderwah, Daleep Singh Parihar, who was present in the meeting, raised several public concerns and developmental demands, urging their prompt resolution in the larger interest of public welfare.

Among others who attended the meeting were ADC Bheaderwah, Sunil Kumar Bhatiyal, Chief Engineer Jal Shakti, Hanief Choudhary, CEO Bheaderwah Development Authority, Sanjeev Sharma, Executive Engineers of Jal Shakti, PWD (R&B) and PMGSY, officials from Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Corporation Limited, BMO Bheaderwah, Principal GDC Bheaderwah, and officers from various departments.

Following the meeting, the Minister interacted with several public delegations, attentively listening to their grievances and issuing on-the-spot directions for their swift resolution. He urged all departments to work with renewed commitment and maintain a result-oriented approach to ensure efficient and responsive public service delivery.

## Gandhi Memorial College Srinagar hosts seminar on Drug Awareness

**HT NEWS NETWORK**

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 25:** Centre for Women and Social Concerns (CWASC), Gandhi Memorial College, Srinagar today organized a seminar titled "Why Dreams and Drugs Can't Coexist" under the aegis of the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan in the college



auditorium. The seminar witnessed enthusiastic participation from faculty members and students, reflecting a strong commitment towards addressing the growing challenge of substance abuse.

The programme commenced with an inaugural address by the Principal, Prof. (Dr.) Masood Ahmad Malik, who elaborated on the multifaceted nature of addiction and underscored the need for collective societal efforts to eradicate the drug menace. He emphasized that awareness, education, and community engagement are key to building a drug-free society.

SP North, Showkat Ahmad, who attended the event as Chief Guest, highlighted the importance of police-public synergy in combating drug abuse. He stressed that coordinated efforts between law enforcement agencies and the community are essential to curb the spread of narcotics.

The participants were sensitized about the legal implications and consequences associated with substance abuse. The seminar effectively highlighted the friction between personal ambition and addiction, encouraging students to make informed and responsible life choices.

## DPEO Kulgam presides over SSR Camp for Panchayat Electoral Roll at Qaimoo

**HT NEWS NETWORK**

**KULGAM, APRIL 25:** As part of the ongoing Revision of Panchayat Electoral Roll 2026, a Special Summary Revision (SSR) Camp was organized today at Qaimoo to facilitate the enrolment of eligible voters and update electoral records.

The programme was presided over by District Election Officer (DPEO) (Deputy Commissioner) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam. The initiative was aimed at ensuring maximum participation of eligible citizens in the electoral process and facilitating them in updating their details in the Panchayat electoral rolls.



During the camp, several new eligible voters were enrolled on the spot, while citizens were also facilitated in submitting forms for inclusion, deletion, correction and transposition in the Panchayat electoral rolls. Addressing the gathering on the occasion, the DC emphasized the importance of maintaining accurate and updated electoral rolls for strengthening grassroots democracy and ensuring transparent Panchayat elections.

He urged citizens, particularly those who have attained the age of 18 years as on 01-04-2026, to verify their details and ensure inclusion of their names in the electoral rolls within the stipulated timeframe.

On the occasion, Deputy District Election Officer Kulgam, Bashir-ul-Hassan was present along with Tehsiladar Qaimoo, Block Development Officers (BDOs), Master Trainer, PEBOs, BLOs, Aanganwadi Workers (AWWs) and a large number of citizens from Qaimoo.

## Mega Yoga Event held at Kulgam under 100-day NMBA Abhiyan, Witnesses massive turnout

**HT NEWS NETWORK**

**KULGAM, APRIL 25:** Under the 100-day Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan, a mega yoga event was organized at Mini Secretariat, Kulgam, with the objective of promoting a healthy lifestyle and raising awareness about the ill effects of drug abuse, particularly among the youth. The programme witnessed massive participation, with hundreds of participants including Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad

Alam, senior officers, officials from various departments, students, and local residents. Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the importance of yoga in maintaining physical and mental well-being and urged people to continue their support in the fight against drug abuse.

Emphasizing the significance of fitness and mindfulness, the yoga session served as a powerful demonstration of how meditation and outdoor activities can act as effective

tools in combating substance abuse and promoting a disciplined way of life. During the session, participants actively engaged in various yoga asanas and awareness activities, with commitment to the message: "Say No to Drugs, Yes to Life." As part of the ongoing campaign, similar yoga sessions were also organized at various locations across the district, including educational institutions, to further strengthen awareness and community participation in building a healthy, drug-free society.

## DC, SSP inaugurate Cosco Cricket tournament in Shopian

District wide participation marks initiative to engage youth in sports to promote drug free society

**HT NEWS NETWORK**

**SHOPIAN, APRIL 25:** To promote a drug free society through constructive youth engagement, the District Administration Shopian today inaugurated a Cosco Cricket Tournament under the banner of Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan at YSS Stadium Shirmal Shopian.

The inaugural match was played between Civil Administration Shopian and Police Department Shopian.

Batting first, the Police Department set a target of 85 runs. In response, the District Administration team fell short by 8 runs. Mohammad Ashraf (Dy.SP DAR) was adjudged Man of the Match for his batting performance.

The tournament, organized

by the District Administration Shopian through the Department of Youth Services & Sports, Shopian aims to channel the energy of youth towards sports and positive activities, thereby discouraging substance abuse.

A total of 16 teams from across the district are participating in the tournament, ensuring representation from all blocks of Shopian district.

Besides, YSS Stadium Shirmal, matches are being held at multiple venues across the district, including sports fields at Kathuhallan, Sedow, Lathanthora, and Tilwani Wuder.

The event was formally inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Shishir Gupta, and SSP Shopian, Mushtaq Ahmad Choudhary in



presence ASP Shopian, Rameez Rashid Bhat, Dy.SP Hqrs, Imtiyaz Ahmad Mir, DYSSO Shopian, Sunil Kumar and officers of the district administration.

On the occasion, a pledge was also administered to participants and attendees, reaffirming their commitment towards a drug free society.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of sports as an effective tool in combating drug abuse and fostering a healthy, disciplined lifestyle among youth.

The tournament marks a proactive step towards community involvement, encouraging youth participation, and reinforcing the message of "Say No to Drugs, Yes to Life, Yes to Sports."

## DC Anantnag chairs NCORD Meeting; Reviews measures against Drug Abuse

Directs intensifying awareness, enforcement during 100 Day NMJKA Campaign

**HT NEWS NETWORK**

**ANANTNAG, APRIL 25:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat today chaired a meeting of the District Level Committee under the Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) to review the measures and overall response undertaken by various departments against drug abuse and trafficking in the district.

The meeting was attended by SSP, Amod Ashok Nagpure, ADM, Dr. Muzamil Maqbool Beig, SP, Sunny Gupta, SDM Dooru, SE PWD, CPO, CEO, CMO, DSO, Panchayats and urban areas,

Tehsildars, ETO, Assistant Drug Controller, CEO MCA, representatives of GMC Anantnag and GDCs, EOs of MCs besides other committee members and concerned officers.

During the meeting, the DC sought detailed Action Taken Report from all departments on important agenda points and directions issued during previous meetings. Enforcement, seizure and legal actions targeting drug supply, CCTV surveillance in hotspots, IEC and Nasha Mukta Bharat/JK Abhiyan activities in educational institutions, Panchayats and urban areas,

rehabilitation of victims, suspension/cancellation of licences of medical establishments and vehicles found violating rules and functioning of DDAC and ATF, status on proposal of DDAC by Social Welfare Department, among others, were reviewed threadbare.

Addressing the meeting, the DC said it is encouraging that scheduled awareness and enforcement activities are being held during the ongoing 100 day intensive campaign of Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan across the district. He appreciated the action of identification and legal action

against drug peddlers adding the same is vital to reduce supply of the contraband substances. He called for proper monitoring in educational institutions and medical establishments, robust surveillance CCTV mechanism in hotspots along with intensified awareness campaigns especially for vulnerable groups.

The DC said the interdepartmental coordination and sustained efforts are necessary to eradicate drug abuse in the district. Timely treatment and rehabilitation of the victims and empowering them through various self-employment Govt

Schemes shall be the top priority, he remarked. Dr. Bilal directed the departments to intensify awareness and enforcement activities and called for joint destruction drives of poppy and bhong especially in hot spots while taking necessary legal course. He asked the DSWO to conduct sustained awareness activities in hotspots and other critical areas so the vulnerable individuals and groups are identified and counselled thoroughly. He was further instructed to undertake proper follow up of the DDAC proposal with the concerned authorities.

On the occasion, the SSP briefed about the enforcement and preventive initiatives like registration of cases, arrests, seizures, and attachment of properties made in the district under NDPS Act and other rules. He said the fight against the drugs is in everybody's interest and we are equal stakeholders to realise the goal of a drug free district.

The SSP stressed while the law enforcing agencies are targeting the supply side, the other stakeholders should make collective efforts in their official and personal capacities to lower

the demand of drugs. The commitment against drug abuse should not last the 100 day campaign only but must be sustained through continued sensitisation and awareness of target groups, he emphasized.

The meeting was informed that 128 NDPS cases have been registered; out of which 26 have been challaned besides 5 houses and 1 vehicle have been attached, during the current year so far. 20 vehicles found involved in drug trafficking were seized and 5 driving licenses of drug peddlers/convicts have been suspended since last meeting.

HT EDITORIAL

City residents suffer as thousands of street lights continue to be defunct

Over the past few years, the Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) is busy in cabling and metering in Srinagar and other parts of the Kashmir valley. This move has been necessitated so as to ensure that there are minimum transmission and distribution losses. The people as a whole have welcomed the move and said that the cabling and metering would drastically bring down the hooking being carried out by some of the unscrupulous elements.

There are many areas in Srinagar where the cabling and metering has been completed and some of the areas are receiving round the clock power supply. However, at the same time a glaring civic issue has come up and surprisingly the people at helm are yet to come out with a solution to this problem. The civic issue being referred to here is the malfunctioning of the street lights across the length and breadth of the Srinagar city.

Thousands of street lights have become defunct in the Srinagar city and as on date these street lights have not been set right. The reason behind the non-functioning of street lights is that no shifing has taken place. Even though insulated cables have replaced the old transmission wires, the street lights have not been connected with the same. The people in general complain that they are up against many odds due to non-functioning of street lights following completion of the modernization process.

In most of the cases it has been observed that the officers and officials of KPDCL give the excuse that since the street lights have been installed by SMC it is the duty of the corporation officials to reconnect them with the insulated cable system. In such cases the people are at a loss as to whom to contact in this regard. It is important that action is taken and that too at the earliest. If the KPDCL officials have to do this job they must do it without any further delay.

In case SMC has to do this then the corporation officials should take up the job seriously so that there is relief for the people. It would be in place to mention here that this issue came up for discussion during a meeting chaired by chief minister Omar Abdullah a long time back. Even though the CM had asked for the air to be cleared in this regard no follow up action has been taken so far with the common masses being at the receiving end.

15TH ANNIVERSARY HEADLINES TODAY Voice To The Voiceless

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Time to Empower Tribal Women



SAHIL MANZOOR BHAT

In this important and evolving era, our nation is fully capable of producing great resources in every sector. Our nation is praised worldwide because, with each passing day, we are moving toward our goals of success. Our nation has immense potential and eminent goals, which we are achieving in different sectors. Our country has great diversity in cultures, religious perspectives, and people who think about the upliftment of our proud nation.

In India, one thing is always praised across the world: people from different cultures live under one colorful umbrella. This beautiful umbrella represents our unity in diversity.

However, one thing is unfortunate: in this developing era, some sections of society are still deprived of basic rights, such as access to higher education, skill development, proper shelter, clean water, and government welfare schemes.

Science and technology play an important and transformative role in today's nation. We now have electricity, internet, water, and road networks in most parts of the country. However, we still lack in some areas. Health centers should be available everywhere so people can receive better medical facilities. Above all, education remains the most powerful tool. Today, we understand the true essence of education and how it shapes the future of generations and transforms the fate of communities and nations. There is no alternative to education. Education is as essential as oxygen, food, and shelter for survival on this mesmerizing blue planet.

In this article, I share my views on the upliftment of tribal women. The government should never hesitate to provide well-equipped educational institutions and skill development centers and should remain deeply concerned about their upliftment. The upliftment of any community directly leads to the upliftment of the nation.

Education for the downtrodden classes should be free and compulsory at every stage, without scholarship barriers.

In a world increasingly connected by cutting-edge technology, true education rises above barriers of caste, color, creed, and gender. Educated individuals promote humanity, equality, and progress. Technology has unveiled the mysteries of the world and offers unprecedented opportunities for growth and empowerment. For tribal girls in India, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, education and technology hold the key to breaking the cycle of marginalization and building a brighter future.

The Role of Technology in Uplifting the Marginalized

The internet has revolutionized access to knowledge and opportunities. It serves as a powerful tool for the underprivileged by offering resources on entrepreneurship, higher education, and skill development. Platforms like YouTube and Google have become virtual classrooms, enabling students to gain knowledge that was once out of reach. Today's learners can access vast information from the comfort of their homes. This accessibility empowers individuals to improve their social and economic status.

Education is universally recognized as a cornerstone of success. It fosters peace, reduces violence, dispels ignorance, and opens doors to financial independence and social respect.

Educational Institutions as Catalysts for Change  
India's educational landscape has expanded significantly, reaching even remote areas through schools, colleges, universities, and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs). These institutions have transformed mindsets and enabled social mobility. Among tribal communities, particularly the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities of Jammu and Kashmir, educational awareness is gradually increasing. Education not only helps in securing jobs but also broadens horizons and promotes independence.

Focusing on Tribal Girls A National Priority  
This article highlights the challenges faced by tribal girls, especially from the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities, and the urgent need to uplift them. Although India has made progress in promoting gender equality, tribal communities remain economically and educationally disadvantaged. According to the 2011 Census, around 12% of

Jammu and Kashmir's population belongs to tribal groups, with Gujjars and Bakarwals being predominant. These communities migrate seasonally with livestock between Jammu's plains and the forests of Pir Panjal. Despite their deep connection with nature, they face significant barriers to education and economic opportunities.

Why Are Tribal Communities Lagging?  
Geographical isolation, lack of awareness about government schemes, and poor infrastructure hinder access to education. As a result, tribal girls struggle to realize their full potential and contribute to the nation.

Solutions for Upliftment  
Compulsory Education and Scholarships:  
Education up to the graduate level should be compulsory for girls, with full scholarships for professional courses. A 100% tuition fee rebate up to the postgraduate level would remove financial barriers.

Local Skill Development Centers:  
ITIs should be established in villages to help tribal girls gain technical skills and employment opportunities.

Awareness and Support Campaigns:  
Awareness drives should inform communities about scholarships, healthcare, and livelihood schemes. Free transport for women in remote areas will improve access to education.

Economic Empowerment:  
Granting forest rights will support livestock rearing and dairy production, strengthening traditional livelihoods.

Local Employment Opportunities:  
District-level recruitment drives will motivate tribal youth to pursue education.

Women's Safety and Rights Education:  
Awareness programs should educate girls about their rights and safety.

A Vision of Inclusive Progress  
The Gujjar and Bakarwal communities are an integral part of India's cultural diversity. By prioritizing the education and empowerment of tribal girls, India can uplift entire communities and strengthen the nation.

It is time to eliminate discrimination and embrace humanity. By investing in the education of tribal girls today, we can build a more inclusive and prosperous India tomorrow.

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The Sanctity of Pen and Scroll



MOOL RAJ

Today, as the world convenes under the banner of 'World Book Day,' we must internalize that a book is not merely an impression of ink upon the womb of paper; it is the enduring testimony of human existence within the infinite continuum of time and space.

A book is the sovereign document of the realm of enlightenment, bearing the indelible signatures of centuries of experimentation, the rise and fall of civilizations, and the profound spectrum of human agony and ecstasy.

In conclusion, the survival of the book is the final sanctuary of human civilization.

In the primordial silence of the cosmos, amidst the haunting stillness of non-existence, when the divine command 'Kun' (Be) echoed and human consciousness ascended the first step of evolution, the primordial miracle bestowed upon man was 'The Word.' The Word—the very raiment of thought—and the Book—its eternal sanctuary. Today, as the world convenes under the banner of 'World Book Day,' we must internalize that a book is not merely an impression of ink upon the womb of paper; it is the enduring testimony of human existence within the infinite continuum of time and space. It rescues man from the confines of mortal instincts and enshrines him upon the throne of immortal wisdom. A book is the sovereign document of the realm of enlightenment, bearing the indelible signatures of centuries of experimentation, the rise and fall of civilizations, and the profound spectrum of human agony and ecstasy. It is that transcendental mir-



ror in which man beholds not just his countenance, but communes with those recesses of his soul that remain inaccessible to any material instrument.

The archives of history bear witness that whenever the stygian night of ignorance descended upon humanity, the book emerged as the world-illuminating sun, irrigating the barren landscapes of intellect. From the ashes of ancient Alexandria to the blood-soaked waters of Baghdad's Bayt al-Hikmah, the annihilation of books was never the murder of a single generation, but the 'collective suicide of human memory.' Alberto Manguel, in his seminal A History of Reading, rightly posited that reading is an act of resistance—against tyranny, against oblivion, and against the ruthless tides of time. From the dialogues of Socrates to the Alchemy of Happiness by Imam Ghazali, and from Plato's Republic to the existential defiance of Nietzsche, it is the book that has provided the wings for human thought to soar into realms beyond the stars. Francis Bacon's aphorism—that "books are ships which pass through the vast seas of time, making contributions to the progress of the world"—has emerged today as an undeniable logical reality; for nations that fail to safeguard these vessels eventually vanish without a trace in the ocean of time.

In the contemporary cacophony of the digital revolution and the synthetic luminescence of Artificial Intelligence, human insight has been cast into a novel crucible. The glare of the screen has usurped that earthy, intoxicating fragrance of paper which

once plunged the reader into a state of mystical enchantment. T.S. Eliot perhaps queried for this very era: "Where is the wisdom we have lost in information?" Today, we are inundated by a deluge of information, yet haunted by a famine of wisdom. Technology has taught us to skim the 'surface' but has robbed us of the art of descending into the 'depths.' The tactile grace of a book, the rhythmic rustle of turning pages, and the marginalia of personal reflections are the 'human elements' for which no PDF or electronic device can offer a surrogate. AI may provide data, but from where shall it conjure that 'angst,' that 'empathy,' and that 'intuition' which distill from an author's lifeblood onto the parchment? A book is a living entity, a silent companion that converses with you, resolves your queries, and transmutes your solitude into a sacred devotion.

The significance of the book is inextricably linked to socio-economic stability. Intellectual sterility is, in fact, the root of economic decay. In societies where the tradition of reading expires, the springs of research and creativity run dry, leaving such nations to subsist merely on the crumbs of others' ideas. A book grants man 'creative self-reliance.' Psychologically, it integrates the fragmented nerves of an individual, tethering them back to the 'core of the self.' Psychologists contend that the study of a great book is the supreme antidote to mental turbulence, as it transports the reader into a universe where the confluence of logic and imagination elucidates the new meanings of life. Voltaire spoke truly when he

said, "Books rule the world"—and this sovereignty belongs not to the sword or gunpowder, but to the intellect and rhetoric that conquer hearts.

As we commemorate World Book Day globally, we stand in dire need of a new intellectual manifesto. We must understand that picking up a book is an assertion of one's being and a declaration of war against ignorance. These thoughts, draped in rhythmic and measured prose, are not mere linguistic flourishes; they are an expression of the profound grief resulting from our estrangement from the book. The book is that sheltering tree under whose shade man sheds his weariness, and that lighthouse which signals the shore amidst tempestuous waves. If we fail to forge a bond with the book, we shall descend into a mechanical age where man is reduced to a mere 'digit' and his individuality is crushed under the weight of technological tyranny.

In conclusion, the survival of the book is the final sanctuary of human civilization. The day the world's last book is closed, the chapter of humanity itself shall be shuttered forever. Enlightenment demands that we do not treat books as mere ornaments for our shelves but as inscriptions upon our souls. Every home must be a library and every individual a reader, so that we may liberate ourselves from the intellectual impoverishment that has marginalized us globally. Let us uphold the sanctity of the pen and the purity of the scroll, for this is the solitary path that can lead us from the depths of ignominy to the zenith of exaltation. Let the fragrance of books proliferate, for this is the essence that perfumes the soul and the light that shall endure unto eternity. Remember: if there is a book, there is consciousness; and if there is consciousness, the existence of the universe is validated.

THE AUTHOR IS A REGULAR COLUMNIST AND FREELANCE WRITER

HT- SUNDAY GOSSIP

# “Haka-Baka: A Moment of Unspoken Truth”



BY USUF MIR

*“The story is a real-life account of a shocking hospital moment that raises questions about ethics and humanity. The incident leaves a lasting impact on the narrator. It highlights how silence and unseen influences can overpower compassion”*

I was sitting quietly in a condolence meeting of a close friend who had passed away at a young age. The room was filled with a strange stillness—heavy, suffocating. Faces were pale, eyes moist, and words had lost their strength. Death, especially when it comes too early, leaves behind not just grief but unanswered questions.

Among those present was an elderly man. His appearance reflected simplicity and experience—long white beard, modest dress, and a white cap resting gently on his head. He looked like someone who had seen life closely, both its beauty and its cruelty.

When he began to speak, the gathering fell into deeper silence. “Yahan andhera hi andhera hai... total darkness everywhere,” he said slowly. “Not a single ray of hope remains. Insaniyat khatam hoti ja rahi hai... humanity is disappearing.”

His words were not loud, but they carried a weight that silenced every whisper in the room.

After a brief pause, he began narrating an incident from his past—an



experience that, as he described, had shaken him to his core.

“Some years ago, my sister was admitted to the city hospital. She was suffering from a pancreas-related illness. I stayed there with her for fifteen long days. Those days felt heavier than years. She was in Ward No. 18.”

He adjusted his sitting posture, as if reliving the moment.

“One day, I was sitting beside her bed, lost in thought. Two young men

entered the ward and sat near Bed No. 6, which was adjacent to my sister's bed. The patient on that bed was asleep. I assumed they had come to visit him, like any other attendants.”

The ward had its usual rhythm—occasional footsteps, low conversations, distant sounds of medical equipment, and the constant tension between hope and fear.

“In the meantime, a trauma patient—severely injured and bleeding—was

rushed into the side room of the ward. There was sudden chaos. A team of doctors hurried in. Their movements were quick, coordinated, and urgent. It was clear that the patient's life was hanging by a thread.”

He paused, his eyes lowering.

“I could see from where I was sitting... the doctors were doing everything they could to save that life. At that moment, I felt a sense of relief—that even in this world, there are people who

fight against death with all their strength.”

Then his tone changed. “But suddenly... mere sar par aasmaan toot pada.”

He looked around, as if seeking someone to understand the depth of that moment.

“I noticed those same two young men—who had been sitting quietly near Bed No. 6—stand up and walk straight into the side room.”

At first, he thought nothing of it. “But what I saw next... left me shaken.”

“They went close to one of the doctors. One of them gently placed his hand on the doctor's shoulder. In his hand, there was something—looked like a folded paper... perhaps more. The doctor paused... just for a second.”

The old man's voice grew heavier. “Then, one of the young men casually moved the doctor's stethoscope aside... and touched the patient's chest twice.”

He closed his eyes briefly, as if the scene was still alive before him.

“And then... they simply walked away.”

No noise. No explanation. “Main haka-bakka reh gaya... I was completely stunned. I could not understand what had just happened... or what it meant.”

The room fell silent again. After a long pause, he spoke softly: “Us din mujhe samajh aaya— andhera sirf roshni ki kami se nahi hota.

Andhera tab hota hai jab insaan zinda hote hue bhi insaniyat kho deta hai... jab zameer khamosh ho jata hai... jab jaan ki keemat bhi kisi aur cheez se kam ho jaye.”

## Their silence is thunder as the clouds clash!

MS NAZKI

Assam Rifles facilitated a heartwarming interaction between specially-abled students of Shalom Special School, Serchhip and Lt Gen Vikas Lakhera, AVSM, SM, DG Assam Rifles at HQ DGAR, Shillong.

During their educational tour, 18 students and 5 teachers had the opportunity to engage with the Director General, who encouraged them and applauded their resilience, enthusiasm and spirit. The interaction served as a powerful reminder of courage and determination, reflecting Assam Rifles continued commitment to fostering strong civil-military bonds and contributing to the well-being of communities in the region.

Shillong, the “Scotland of the East”, was established by the British in 1864 as a civil station for the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, later serving as the capital of Assam province. It became the capital of Meghalaya upon its formation in 1972. Historically known as “Yeddo,” the town served as a crucial administrative and trade hub.

British Influence: The area's rolling hills reminded British officials of Scotland, leading to the nickname. The Shillong Club was established in 1878 to cater to colonial officials.

Administrative Shift: From 1874 until 1972, Shillong served as the capital of Assam.

Formation of Meghalaya: When Assam was reorganized, Shillong became the capital of the new state of Meghalaya in 1972.

Colonial Infrastructure: Key landmarks such as the Lady Hydari Park were developed during this period.

Shillong has since grown from a small village into a bustling city, balancing its colonial legacy with its identity as a hub for cultural and tourism activities in Northeast India.

To start with I have a deep knowledge of Sillong since I have studied there! And Asmesese was one language I never knew

though it was necessary as a third language! I was in class eight and she Bharti was in class seven, Loreto convent! I had seen her walking on two legs but that Wednesday I saw her on a wheelchair! ‘Can't you walk?’ Why are you on a wheelchair cart? I cannot walk because my legs are out of the mark. She screamed back! It was Wednesday evening when we were watching an English movie, ‘The Legend’! Story dates back to 1972 when we had defeated Pakistan in 1971! Then I spoke about him to my father who was a Commanding officer in one of Gurkha Battalions (I do not want to take the name because I too was commissioned into the same unit but some seniors let me down)! My father immediately got her admitted to the Army hospital! She was back on her legs! But we had to part!.....She did come to see me off at Guwahati Railway Station and kissed my forehead! The short little love affair had to ensue.....That was the last time we met!.....!

Resilience, enthusiasm, and spirit, what is it?

Resilience, enthusiasm, and spirit combined represent the indomitable human drive to thrive, commonly referred to as the “resilient spirit”. It is the capacity to not just survive adversity, but to bounce back with energy, positivity, and a commitment to growing stronger through challenges.

Here is a breakdown of these interconnected qualities:

**Resilience (The Ability to Bounce Back):** This is the psychological and emotional strength to adapt to change, manage stress, and recover from failures or setbacks. It involves viewing obstacles as opportunities for growth rather than insurmountable dead ends. **Enthusiasm (The Energy to Keep Going):** This is the passion, optimism, and “long-life battery” that keeps spirits high during difficult times. It drives individuals to continue pursuing their goals with joy, despite setbacks. **Spirit (The Core Inner Strength):** This

is the intangible, inner force or “will to fight” that refuses to succumb to despair. It often includes a sense of purpose, faith, or connection to a higher meaning.

**Key Characteristics of This Combination:**

**Adaptability:** The ability to bend without breaking and change course when necessary.

**Unwavering Optimism:** Resilient people are often “incorrigibly optimistic,” viewing challenges as temporary and solvable.

**Proactive Problem-Solving:** Instead of passive waiting, it involves taking action to address issues.

**Growth Mindset:** The belief that abilities can be developed, allowing individuals to learn from mistakes.

Success is stumbling from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm.” — Often attributed to Winston Churchill, this quote perfectly captures the intersection of resilience (stumbling from failure) and enthusiasm (no loss of spirit).

Cultivating this “Resilient Spirit” can be done by building strong relationships, setting realistic goals, maintaining perspective, and taking care of one's physical and mental health.

Specially-abled students are individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, or developmental differences—such as autism, cerebral palsy, visual impairment, or dyslexia—requiring specialized educational approaches.

These students, sometimes referred to as having special needs or being differently-abled, need tailored teaching methods, assistive technology, and adapted environments to learn and reach their full potential.

**Key Aspects of Specially-Abled Students:**

**Categories of Needs:**  
Physical: Conditions affecting mobility or motor skills, such as muscular dystrophy or limb differences.  
Sensory: Impairments involving sight

(blindness/low vision) or hearing (deaf/hard of hearing).

**Cognitive/Developmental:** Learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia), Autism Spectrum Disorder, or Down syndrome.

**Behavioral/Emotional:** Conditions such as ADHD or anxiety disorders.

**Educational Support:** These students often benefit from Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), specialized instruction, and inclusive settings that address specific learning disabilities, communication disorders, or intellectual challenges.

**Diverse Abilities:** The term emphasizes that while these students may learn differently or have limitations, they possess unique capabilities and can lead active, productive lives with proper support.

**Environmental Adjustments:** Schools often need to provide accessible infrastructure (ramps, braille), special tools, or sensory-friendly environments.

Understanding that disability is a form of diversity helps create an inclusive environment where these students can thrive.

Specially-abled students and individuals worldwide demonstrate extraordinary resilience, overcoming severe physical and intellectual limitations to achieve remarkable success in sports, academics, and entrepreneurship. Stories include Jiya Rai, an autistic girl who set a world swimming record, and Kartiki Sawhney, a visually impaired student who became a Stanford University scholar. Inspiring Stories of Success and Resilience:

**Jiya Rai (Autism):** An 11-year-old from Mumbai, she became the youngest and first special-needs girl to swim 14 kilometers, crossing from Elephanta Island to Gateway of India.

**Kartiki Sawhney (Visual Impairment):** Despite being denied entry to the IIT entrance exam for three years, this blind student earned a full scholarship to Stanford University, proving his capabilities in computer science.

**Rahelu (Physical Disability):** After becoming paralyzed at eight months old, he overcame mobility challenges to win a silver medal in powerlifting at the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

**Charu (Intellectual & Physical Impairment):** Overcame depression and limited mobility, finding her strength in sports at DISHA, a resource center.

**Amit (Intellectual Disability):** Through specialized therapy, he developed the ability to communicate, eat independently, and participate in sports at Khushboo Welfare Society.

**Kajal & Ravi (Club Foot/Physical Disability):** Through free surgeries from Narayan Seva Sansthan, they overcame severe mobility issues to run and play.

**Viha (Blindness/Multiple Disabilities):** Overcame school rejection to excel at the Mariposa Foundation, which provides tailored support for children with disabilities.

**Abdul Rahim & Haroon Ejaz (Special Needs):** Former students who overcame disabilities to win Gold Medals in badminton and table tennis, respectively, at the National Special Olympics.

**Advocacy and Education:** Mariposa Foundation (India): Founded by a mother (Sejal) to educate children with disabilities after mainstream schools rejected her visually impaired daughter, now supporting 40+ children. These stories emphasize that with appropriate support, perseverance, and opportunities, specially-abled students can break societal barriers and excel in any field.

Several specially-abled students and individuals from North East India have achieved significant success, overcoming severe physical challenges through sheer determination. Key examples include para-cyclist Rakesh Banik (7,000-km journey), para-athlete Ababil Ali (World Para Athletics Grand Prix), and academic achievers like Nasrin Ahmed. These individuals demonstrate remarkable resilience in sports, arts, and education.

# Impact of Stress, Insomnia, and Melatonin on Sleep Quality and Health: A Hybrid Cross-Sectional Study in the Kashmir Valley



■ SAAQIB NABI WANI

**ABSTRACT:**

Background: Sleep disorders are increasingly prevalent in the Kashmir Valley, where regional psychosocial stressors and seasonal extremes influence physiological health. Objective: To evaluate the correlation between stress, insomnia, and melatonin efficacy in the Kashmiri population. Methods: A hybrid cross-sectional study (n=150) was conducted using field visits in Srinagar and digital surveys valley-wide. Tools included the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10). Results: A strong positive correlation (r=0.65) exists between high stress and poor sleep quality. Chronic hyperarousal and seasonal light variations were identified as key barriers to melatonin efficacy. Conclusion: Integrated clinical and community-based interventions are essential for the Kashmiri population.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Sleep is a fundamental homeostatic process essential for metabolic, cognitive, and immunological health. In the Kashmir Valley, this process is frequently compromised by a "triple threat": environmental factors (extreme winters), modern lifestyle shifts, and chronic psychosocial stress. This research explores the biochemical links—specifically the HPA axis and melatonin pathways—that connect regional stressors to the rising prevalence of insomnia.

**2. METHODOLOGY**

The study utilized a hybrid methodological approach to ensure comprehensive data triangulation:

**Field Component:** Purposive sampling was conducted via face-to-face interviews and clinical observations in Srinagar and surrounding rural community centers. This ensured representation from non-digital demographics.

**Digital Component:** Structured online questionnaires were disseminated to capture data from students and professionals across the valley, focusing on "Digital Insomnia" patterns.

Assessment Tools: The PSQI was used

to quantify sleep quality (scores >5 indicating dysfunction) and the PSS-10 was used to measure perceived stress levels over a 30-day period.

**3. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS & RESULTS**

Variable	Mean Score	Clinical Threshold	Interpretation
Perceived Stress (PSS)	22.4	>13	High Stress
Sleep Quality (PSQI)	7.8	>5	Poor Sleep Quality
Sleep Latency	45 mins	<30 mins	Significant Delay

In Kashmir, chronic stress triggers sustained activation of the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis. This results in hypercortisolemia, which prevents the transition into deep, restorative

**4.2 Seasonal and Cultural Contexts**

During the "Chilla-i-Kalan" (harsh 40-day winter), reduced sunlight exposure leads to delayed melatonin suppression

"Nun Chai" (salted tea) provide stimulant effects that counteract the body's natural sleep drive.

**4.3 Melatonin Limitations**

While melatonin supplementation is

A Pearson correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.65$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) demonstrates that stress levels are a significant predictor of sleep degradation in the Kashmiri sample.



**4. DISCUSSION**  
**4.1 The HPA Axis and Chronic Hyperarousal**

sleep. Chronic Regional Stress Cortisol Insomnia

in the morning, contributing to circadian misalignment. Furthermore, cultural habits like late-evening consumption of

a viable pharmacological aid, its efficacy is compromised in individuals with high psychological arousal. The research indicates that pharmacological interventions must be paired with behavioral modifications to be effective in high-stress environments.

**5. CONCLUSION**

The study confirms that insomnia in Kashmir is not merely a clinical symptom but a public health crisis linked to regional stressors. Future healthcare policies should focus on "Sleep Hygiene" education and the integration of mental health screenings in primary care settings across the valley.

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## Study shows rheumatoid arthritis begins years before symptoms appear

Scientists have discovered that rheumatoid arthritis (RA) silently starts years earlier, long before symptoms appear, an advance that may pave the way for earlier treatment and prevention.

RA is a debilitating autoimmune disease that causes painful joint inflammation and damage.

The new research, published in the journal Science Translational Medicine, reveals that during the early phase of RA, the body fights an autoimmune battle invisibly.

This wasn't a localised joint inflammation, but rather a body-wide inflammatory state that resembles what's seen in people with active RA.

"Overall, we hope this study raises awareness that rheumatoid arthritis begins much earlier than previously thought and that it enables researchers to make data-driven decisions on strategies to disrupt disease development," said Mark Gillespie, assistant investigator at the Allen Institute, US.

During the seven-year study, researchers tracked several people carrying ACPA antibodies -- known biomarkers for individuals at risk for developing RA. They also identified previously unknown factors associated with disease development, including widespread inflammation, immune cell dysfunction, and cellular reprogramming.

The team found that among people at risk of RA, several types of immune cells had significant abnormalities. B cells, which normally produce protective antibodies, had shifted toward a pro-inflammatory state.

Further, T helper cells, particularly a subset



resembling Tfh17 cells, were dramatically expanded beyond normal levels.

Perhaps most remarkably, the study found that even "naive" T cells -- immune cells that haven't encountered threats before -- showed epigenetic changes.

The researchers also identified monocytes (a type of white blood cell) in the bloodstream that were producing high levels of inflammatory molecules.

Significantly, these blood cells closely re-

sembled the macrophages found in the inflamed joint tissue of RA patients, suggesting the disease process was already preparing to target joints.

The study reveals new early-warning signs (biomarkers and immune signatures) that could help doctors identify who among at-risk individuals is most likely to develop RA, enabling more targeted monitoring and earlier intervention.

If caught early, RA could be stopped before it starts -- saving patients years of pain and disability.

Courtesy IANS

## World Lung Day: Pulmonologist busts common myths about lung health



Lung function is something most people don't think much about until they experience a problem breathing or develop a disease. While other parts of the body may exhibit early signals that something isn't right, the lungs are mainly silent, operating in background mode even as they keep a person alive with every breath. This quiet effectiveness can make it easy to overlook how crucial they are, or even worse, to believe myths about how best to maintain them.

Lung health myths can be dangerous because they discourage people from taking preventive actions or seeking appropriate care. It's a popular idea that lung issues are the exclusive domain of smokers, that shortness of breath is sim-

ply what happens when you age and exercise alone can protect lungs from harm. In fact, lung diseases don't discriminate, and their risks go beyond smoking to pollution, occupational exposures, infections and genetics.

Quashing these myths with the truth is essential for good respiratory health, explains Dr Manish Garg, Associate Director & Unit Head - Pulmonology, Critical Care & Sleep Medicine, Max Super Speciality Hospital, Dwarka. By knowing the actual causes and initial symptoms, and undertaking preventive actions, people can be active players in having healthy lungs, enhancing quality of life and reducing the costs associated with these chronic diseases.

Courtesy Healthline

# Grand Education Conclave in Srinagar Backs Private Universities, Calls for Skill-Based Learning & Institutional Synergy

■ FAROOQ RATHER

**SRINAGAR, APR 25:** A high-profile education conference held in Srinagar on Friday brought together leading academicians, policymakers, and stakeholders who strongly endorsed the newly passed Private University Act, terming it a transformative step toward reshaping the education landscape of Jammu & Kashmir.

The conference was jointly organised by Shri Khushal Das University in collaboration with the Private Schools Association (PSA) Jammu and Kashmir, under the central theme "Connecting Schools with Universities: Aspirations and Opportunities for J&K Youth - Together for a Progressive Jammu & Kashmir."

Participants lauded the leadership of Omar Abdullah, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, and Education Minister Sakeena Itoo for facilitating the passage of the Private University Bill. Special appreciation was also extended to MLA Gulmarg Farooq Ahmad Shah for his role in advocating the legislation.

Exposure, Not Just Talent: Farooq Shah

Addressing the gathering, Farooq Ahmad Shah emphasized that Jammu & Kashmir is rich in talent but lacks adequate exposure.

"Our region has immense potential, but it needs opportunities. Private universities will open new doors for our youth and reduce the need to move outside J&K," he said, adding that modern, skill-based courses aligned with emerging technologies like AI must be prioritized.

Academic Excellence Key to Progress: CUK VC

Vice Chancellor of Central University of Kashmir, Prof. Ravinder Nath, stressed the importance of academic excellence, research, and institutional collaboration in driving regional progress.

Private Universities to Boost Employment & Research

Chairperson of SKD University, Dr. Dinesh Juneja, assured full support for the initiative, stating that private universities would not only expand access to education but also



generate employment, promote research, and strengthen industry linkages.

PSA Terms Act a Landmark Step  
PSA Patron Ghulam Nabi Var described the legislation as historic, noting that it would create a robust ecosystem where education, employment, and innovation can thrive together.

He highlighted that nearly 6.5 lakh students in Kashmir are currently enrolled in private institutions, driven by community trust and the efforts of local educators. He called for distinguishing genuine contributors from those violating norms, emphasizing accountability in the sector.

Shift from Rote Learning to Skill-Based Education

National Independent Schools Alliance (NISA) President Kulbhushan Sharma advocated for a shift from rote learning to skill-based education.

"Education is not just about buildings but about quality teaching and collaboration among teachers, parents, and management," he said, praising the contributions of PSA leadership in strengthening the education sector.

Veteran educationist J. S. Paranjyothi emphasized the need for continuous teacher training, stating that education must go beyond information to shape values and responsible citizens.

Bridging School-University Gap  
Dean Alumni & International Affairs at National Institute of Technol-

ogy Srinagar, Prof. M. A. Shah, stressed bridging the gap between school and higher education.

He called for adopting practical, life-oriented teaching methods aligned with the National Education Policy, urging stakeholders to revive Kashmir's historical legacy as a centre of learning.

Strengthening Collaboration for Better Outcomes

PSA State President Bilal Ahmad Bhat termed the conference a milestone for academic collaboration, while General Secretary M. Syed Wani highlighted the need for seamless coordination between schools and universities to improve career outcomes.

Director Media & Communications Owais Mattoo noted that such platforms help shape inclusive and future-oriented education policies.

Collective Resolve for Educational Transformation

The conference concluded with a unified commitment to promote quality education, institutional collaboration, and youth empowerment in alignment with national goals.

An award ceremony marked the conclusion of the event, where distinguished participants were felicitated.

Participants unanimously described the Private University Act as a game-changing reform that will position Jammu & Kashmir as an emerging hub of higher education, innovation, and skill development, paving the way for a more dynamic and future-ready education ecosystem.

## Public Notice

It is hereby notified that my daughter DOB has been wrongly mentioned in adhar regards bearing aadhar no 4504 6507 6579 Hadiya Mohi ud din DOB 20/07/2013 instead of Hadiya Mohi ud din DOB 20/03/2014 D/O Ghulam Mohi ud din Magray 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 Block Development Office Langate/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.

**HADIYA MOHI UD DIN DOB 20/03/2014  
D/O GHULAM MOHI UD DIN MAGRAY  
R/O WAHIPORA TEHSIL LANGATE  
DISTRICT KUPWARA**

## Public Notice

It is hereby notified that my Name spelling has been wrongly mentioned in my Driving license bearing Driving Licence no JK09 2016008158 Naseer Ahmad Sofi S/O Ghulam Ahmad Sofi instead of Naseer Ahmed Sofi S/O Ghulam Ahmad Sofi as fo 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 ARTO office Drugmulla Kupwara within the period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice After that no objection shall be entertained.

**NASEER AHMED SOFI  
S/O GH AHMAD SOFI  
R/O HANDWARA TEHSIL HANDWARA  
DISTRICT KUPWARA**

## Public Notice

I want to change the name on electricity bill bearing consumer id no 0214010013299 From Hilal Ahmad Bhat S/O Gh Rasool Bhat ,R/O Rajpora Tehsil Zachaldara, District Kupwara to Rafiq Begum W/O Gh Rasool Bhat R/O Rajpora Tehsil Zachaldara if anybody having any objection in this regards he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the P.D.D Department chotipora Handwara within in 7 days from the date of publication of this notice After that no objection will be entertained.

**Rafiq Begum  
W/O Gh Rasool Bhat  
R/O Rajpora Tehsil Zachaldara  
District Kupwara**

## Public Notice

It is hereby notified that my Name DOB Address has been wrongly mentioned in adhar regards bearing aadhar no 8574 8463 4822 Fahmeeda Begum DOB 16/11/1973 W/O Javid Iqbal Bhat R/O Malik Mohallah Handwara instead of Fehmida Bano DOB 12/12/1973 W/O Javid Iqbal Bhat D/O Abdul Majid as for 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 Block Development Office Kralgund/ Tehsil office Kralgund 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.

**FEHMIDA BANO  
DOB 12/12/1973  
W/O JAVID IQBAL BHAT D/O ABDUL MAJID  
R/O MALIK MOHALLA MARATGAM TEHSIL  
HANDWARA DISTRICT KUPWARA**

## اشتہار عام باپت بولی سبگھاس کٹائی

برخاص و عام کو بذریعہ نوٹس اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ آئی۔ٹی۔آئی (I.T.A) پانپورتلہ باغ میں سبگھاس کٹائی کی بولی لگانی مطلوب ہے اس لئے تلہ باغ کے غیور عوام کو 02/05/2026 یعنی بروز سیٹھ وار کو صبح 11:30 بجے بولی میں شرکت کرنے کی دعوت دی جاتی ہے۔ یہ بولی ایک سال کی مدت کے لئے معقول ہوگی۔ صحیح دام لگانے والے کو 75% بولی کا رقم بروقت ادا کرنا لازمی ہوگا اور ہر مرحلے میں گھاس کی پوری کٹائی کرنا لازمی ہوگا۔ اور کٹائی کا گھاس ساتھ ساتھ آئی۔ٹی۔آئی کے احاطے سے اٹھانا بھی لازمی ہوگا۔ ان شرائط میں اگر کوئی کوتاہی سرزریائی گئی تو 75% بولی کی رقم بطور جرمانہ عائد ہوگا۔

سپر انٹنڈنٹ  
Superintendent  
Industrial Training Institute  
آئی۔ٹی۔آئی پانپورتلہ

DIPK: 787/26 | Dated: 25-04-2026

## PW JKBOSE Wallah Students Rank Among Top Performers in JKBOSE Class 12th & 10th Summer Zone Results 2026



■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APR 25:** Education Company, PhysicsWallah (PW)'s JKBOSE Wallah announced that 194 students have delivered strong performances in the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) Summer Zone Results 2026. 49 students from class 12 secured 90% and above, while 145 Class 10 students scored 90 percent and above. The students emerged among the top performers across the Union Territory, following the result announcement this week.

A spokesperson said that among Class 12 students, Ayushi Sharma (99.40%) secured Rank 1, followed by Chitvan Ma-

hajan (99.20%) and Rajveer Singh (99.20%) at Rank 2 among other students that secured ranks under 10. In Class 10, top scorers included Niyati Dutta (99.80%), Aliya Malik (99.40%), Mohit Kumar (99.40%), Pari Sharma (99.40%), and Mehak Pathan (99.20%), among others.

Sharing her experience, Ayushi Sharma (Class 12th) said, "This achievement feels very special. There were moments of pressure during preparation, but staying disciplined and focused made a difference. PW's JKBOSE Wallah lectures helped simplify concepts, and consistent revision kept me exam-ready. The support from teachers and my family kept me motivated

throughout." Speaking about her journey, Niyati Dutta (Class 10th) said, "Preparing for board exams felt challenging at times, but staying consistent really helped me. Studying through PW's JKBOSE Wallah's Kohinoor batch helped me build conceptual clarity, and the faculty was always supportive whenever I had doubts. I credit my success to my entire family and my teachers, who played a crucial role in my performance." Speaking on the results, Alakh Pandey, Founder and CEO, PhysicsWallah (PW) said, "We are proud of our students for their performance in the JKBOSE Class 10th and 12th results. Their results truly

reflect their sincere efforts and commitment. For students who may not have scored as expected, it's important to remember that one exam does not define your journey; what matters is how you move forward."

The results showcase a strong performance by the students and highlight the impact of structured preparation, continuous assessment and timely academic support in driving positive student outcomes. PW's JKBOSE Wallah continues to support students through video lectures, practice sessions, revision modules, and mentorship, aimed at providing a comprehensive and effective learning experience.

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

e-mail:- randb-zainapora@jk.gov.in

### NOTICE INVITING TENDER

**SINGLE COVER SYSTEM (up to Rs. 2.50 Crores)**

**NIT No: 08/ZNP/RnB/e-Tendering/2026-27 | Dated: 24-04-2026**

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

S. No	Name of Work	Advt. Cost	E/M	Class	Time	T.D Cost
1	Construction of Causeway on DK Pora Narwani Road.	Advertised Cost excl. GST: 42.01 Advertised Cost incl. GST: 49.57	99140/-	AAY/BEE	45 Days	1100/-

**Major Head Of Account: UT Capex Budget Road Sector 2025-26 (Flood Damaged Works)**

**Technical sanction No. & Date: 11/SE/PS of 2026-27 Dated: 22-04-2026**

**Position of funds: - Committed**

**Project Authority: PW(R&B) Department Kashmir**

**AAA No. Date: 04-SE/PS of 2026 Dated: 16-04-2026**

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

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

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	24-04-2026	
2	Document downloading Start Date.	24-04-2026	From 6.00 P.M
3	Document Downloading End Date.	07-05-2026	up to 6:00 P.M
4	Bid submission Start Date.	24-04-2026	From 6.00 P.M
5	Bid Submission End Date.	07-05-2026	Up to 6:00 P.M
6	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	08-05-2026	at 01.00 P.M

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

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

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

34. All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25 (Double agreement Form) as well as this NIT.

Sd/- (Er. H.M Jahangir)  
Executive Engineer R&B Division Zainpora

DIPK: 769/26 | Dated: 25-04-2026

## District Admin Srinagar's Rolling Trophy event for 1st Inter-College Debate Competition-2026 organised under Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme

DC Srinagar highlights the importance of skill development, holistic youth empowerment

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 25:** Srinagar District Administration on Saturday organised the District Administration Srinagar's 1st Inter-College Debate Competition-2026 under the Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme here at the Auditorium of Amar Singh College. The programme was presided over by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo.

The event was attended by Chief Planning Officer Srinagar, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Nodal Principal, Kashmir Division Colleges, Seema Naaz, Principal, Amar Singh College, Ajaz Ahmad Hakak, besides, enthusiastic participants from students and faculty members of various City Colleges, fostering intellectual and critical discourse among students.

In his address, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the initiative as part of a comprehensive 12-month Youth Empowerment Plan aimed at fostering academic excellence, critical thinking and active youth participation in sports. He emphasized the need for structured academic and extracurricular interventions to prepare young individuals for emerging challenges.

The Deputy Commissioner stated that the Rolling Trophy Debate Competition is a key component of the District's Youth Development & Empowerment Plan and reflects the administration's commitment to nurturing intellectual discourse among students.

The DC underscored that such initiatives are instrumental in protecting youth from social evils like drug abuse and



channeling their energies towards positive and

constructive societal roles. He added that such events also safeguard youth from the menace of drug abuse and fostering responsible participation in society.

The debate centered on the theme, "Skill development and not the delivery of formal degrees should be the priority of the government today," which generated insightful and engaging discussions. Students from various colleges across the city presented well-reasoned arguments both for and against the motion. At the conclusion of the event, the Deputy Commissioner felicitated the winners in recognition of their outstanding performance. Earlier, the Principal, Amar Singh College in his welcome address highlighted the significance of such academic platforms in nurturing analytical thinking and public speaking

skills among youth. He emphasized the importance of aligning education with contemporary societal needs, particularly in the context of employability and skill enhancement.

The Nodal Principal Colleges, Kashmir Division presented vote of thanks and expressed gratitude to the District Administration Srinagar, the participating institutions, judges, faculty members, and students for their valuable contributions in making the event a grand success.

The competition was adjudicated by a panel of judges comprising Dr. Mushtaq Shoukat Ali, Prof. Shah Lateef, Prof. Sheikh Mohammad Irfan and Dr. Shah Nawaz Muntazir, whose expert evaluation ensured fairness and encouraged high standards of academic excellence.

Hadiya Binti Rouf from GCW Nawakadal Srinagar secured the First Prize, followed by Vadiha Aqeel from Amar Singh College Srinagar who secured the Second Prize, while Maryam from GDCW Zakura Srinagar was awarded the Third Prize.

The debate session was moderated by Prof. Basharat Shameem, who ensured the smooth conduct of the proceedings while maintaining a balanced and engaging environment for both speakers and the audience.

The entire programme was organized and facilitated by the Debates and Seminars Committee of Amar Singh College, headed by Dr. Shabnam Ara, Head, Department of Sociology, and co-headed by Prof. Ishaq Ahmad Wani, Head, Department of English. Their dedicated efforts ensured the seamless execution of the event.

### JKAACL hosts 'Meet the Eminent Writer' Programme at Abhinav Theatre

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 25:** Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages today organized 'MEET THE EMINENT', a literary programme on former Secretary of the Academy Dr. Rafeeq Masoodi. The programme titled "Main Aur Meri Sahityik Yatra" (Me and My Literary Journey) was held here at Abhinav Theatre.

The event witnessed participation from eminent literary personalities, scholars and enthusiasts. Dr. Rafeeq Masoodi, IBS (Retd.), is a noted broad-caster, poet and writer from Srinagar. The former Additional Director General of Doordarshan, who retired from Prasar Bharati and Cultural Academy, is currently the Patron of Adbi Markaz Kamraz, the literary and linguistic organization in JK.

At the outset, Secretary JKAACL Harvinder Kaur welcomed the distinguished guests and participants. In her address, she elaborated on the Academy's sustained efforts to nurture literary culture, promote meaningful dialogue and provide a vibrant platform for writers and scholars. She particularly underscored the importance of documenting and celebrating the literary journeys of distinguished personalities like Dr. Masoodi, whose contributions have enriched the cultural and intellectual landscape of Jammu and Kashmir.

Delivering the keynote address, Dr. Agnishekhar presented a deeply engaging and reflective discourse. He fondly recalled his early association with Dr. Masoodi, sharing personal anecdotes that highlighted his intellectual depth, literary sensibilities and administrative acumen. His speech eloquently portrayed Dr. Masoodi as a creative writer and a dedicated public servant, whose works reflect both sensitivity and social commitment.

On the occasion, Nisar Azam presented a comprehensive and well-researched paper on Dr. Masoodi's literary oeuvre. He critically examined the thematic richness, stylistic nuances and socio-cultural relevance of his writings, drawing appreciation from the audience for his scholarly insight and analytical depth.

In his address, Dr. Rafeeq Masoodi shared an illuminating account of his literary journey, interwoven with experiences from his public service. He spoke about the evolving literary environment, the challenges faced by contemporary writers and the pressing need to preserve linguistic and cultural diversity. He emphasized that institutions like the Academy play a pivotal role in fostering creativity, encouraging young writers and safeguarding the region's literary heritage.

The programme was presided over by Khalid Hussain, who, in his presidential remarks, highlighted the transformative power of literature in shaping societal values and fostering critical thinking. He remarked that such programmes serve as vital forums for intellectual exchange and cultural continuity.

Among the distinguished attendees were Jitender Udhamपुरi, Lalit Mangotra, Professor Rajkumar, Naseeb Singh Manhas, Sonali Arun Gupta, Additional Secretary, JKAACL and Dr. Javaid Rahi, Chief Editor, Gojri whose presence added to the significance of the occasion.

## Mega awareness event held at Rahmoo under Nasha Mukht Abhiyan

DC stresses community participation, rehabilitation and strict enforcement to curb drug menace

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**PULWAMA, APRIL 25:** As part of the ongoing 100-day campaign under the Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, District Administration Pulwama in collaboration with Rahmoo Public Interest today organised a mega awareness event at Rahmoo.

The programme aimed at creating awareness about the menace of drug abuse and building a healthy, drug-free society.

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

The programme featured a variety of cultural activities centred around the themes of drug de-addiction and awareness. Students presented speeches highlighting the ill effects of drug abuse, while resource persons and officers sensitised the participants about

its adverse impact on individuals, families and society at large.

On the occasion, a medical camp and blood donation drive were also organised by the Health Department. The medical camp provided on-the-spot consultations and counselling services to the participants.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner outlined the comprehensive framework of the ongoing campaign, stating that the administration is focusing on creating widespread awareness through a well-structured action plan covering all Panchayats, Municipal Wards and educational institutions across the district. He said that today's programme forms an important part of these awareness-focused initiatives.

Highlighting rehabilitation as a key pillar of the campaign, the DC urged participants to spread awareness in the society regarding drug de-addiction centre and



addiction treatment facility available in the district. He added that the administration is working towards reintegration of rehabilitated individuals into society by linking them with various government-sponsored schemes and providing skill development

training to enable them to become self-reliant and future entrepreneurs.

Emphasising enforcement, the DC said that strict action against drug peddlers has been intensified to eradicate the menace from society.

Appreciating the students for their impactful speeches, he said that they have effectively highlighted the harmful effects of drug abuse and added that youth are the future leaders who can play a vital role in shaping a drug-free society.

On the occasion, the DC also highlighted the crucial role of the community in the successful implementation of the Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan. He urged the people of Rahmoo to actively participate in community-led destruction of illicit poppy cultivation with the support of Police and the administration. He also called upon the participants to take part

in the door-to-door citizen-led certification survey declaring Rahmoo as a "poppy-free" village, adding that the initiative will be replicated in other revenue villages across the district.

During the event, the Deputy Commissioner also led a plantation drive and a signature campaign as a mark of collective resolve towards the success of the Abhiyan.

Furthermore, as a gesture of appreciation, certificates were awarded to youth activists, prominent social and religious leaders, students and other individuals in recognition of their contribution towards spreading awareness and supporting the cause of a drug-free society.

Among others, the event was attended by Chief Medical Officer, Pulwama; Tehsildar Rajpora; Block Development Officer, Shadimarg; and officers from Police, Health, Education and other line departments.

## Drug Control department conducts enforcement drives across multiple areas of Shopian

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SHOPIAN, APRIL 25:** Drugs Control Department conducted an intensive inspection drive during the current week across multiple areas of District Shopian, including Hermain, Zainapora, Chitragam, and Main Town Shopian.

The drive aimed to ensure strict compliance with the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and the rules framed thereunder, particularly regarding the maintenance of records for scheduled formulations.

During the inspections, drug sale establishments were thoroughly checked for adherence to regulatory requirements.

Officials verified computerized billing systems, examined the



operational status of CCTV surveillance, and scrutinized purchase and sale records of various scheduled drugs.

Special attention was given to Schedule H1 drugs, with records being carefully reviewed to ensure proper documentation and compliance.

As part of the enforcement process, eight drug samples of lesser known brands were lifted for laboratory testing and analysis to assess their quality and safety standards.

In addition to retail establishments, courier service offices were also brought under inspection. Consignments handled by courier agencies were examined.

Parcels were opened and verified to check for the presence of scheduled drugs that may be susceptible to misuse or illegal distribution.

The drive resulted in strict action against violators. Four firms were issued show cause notices for non-compliance with regulatory provisions, while the operations of two medical shops were suspended due to violations of license conditions.

## DC Reasi reviews progress of Heritage Projects, service delivery under PSGA & Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**REASI, APRIL 25:** Deputy Commissioner Reasi Kumar Abhishek today chaired a series of meetings to review the implementation and progress of schemes of the Department of Archives, Archaeology & Museums, service delivery under the Public Services Guarantee Act and the ongoing special 100-day Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan in the district.

During a meeting with officials of the Archives, Archaeology & Museums Department, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed ongoing heritage conservation and restoration works. Discussions focused on the repair and renovation

of key sites at Bhim Garh Fort and the Dera Baba Shrine, along with other restoration initiatives. Emphasis was laid on preserving historical significance while ensuring structural integrity.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned officers to undertake beautification measures and install appropriate lighting at Bhim Garh Fort to enhance its aesthetics. He also stressed the need for expeditious execution of works while maintaining high-quality standards to effectively preserve and promote the district's cultural heritage.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner chaired a meeting with Revenue officials to review the delivery of



services under the PSGA, with focus on pendency. He conducted tehsil-wise assessment of pending applications across various services and examined the reasons for delays. Emphasizing accountability,

he reiterated that all notified public services must be delivered within the timelines stipulated under the Act.

In another meeting, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the progress of the ongoing 100-day Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan with officials of stakeholder departments.

Emphasizing the need for a coordinated and sustained approach, he directed all departments to regularly upload details of daily activities on the designated portals for effective monitoring. He underscored the importance of consistency in outreach efforts and instructed officers to organize regular awareness programmes, including

community-based activities with a focus on active engagement of youth to disseminate awareness and discourage drug abuse across the district. He further directed the Block Development Officers to conduct awareness activities at the Panchayat level and in Gram Sabhas to ensure widespread participation and grassroots-level awareness across the district.

Additional District Development Commissioner Sukhdev Singh Samyal; Additional Deputy Commissioner Rakesh Kumar; Assistant Commissioner Revenue Nitin Verma; Chief Medical Officer; Tehsildar and other concerned officers were present at the meeting, while SDMs and BDOs participated virtually.

## Book Donation Drive emerges a beacon of hope under Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan Campaign in Shopian

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SHOPIAN, APRIL 25:** In a compelling demonstration of civic consciousness under the Information, Education & Communication pillar of the 100-Day Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, the district-wide Book Donation Drive witnessed remarkable public participation across Shopian today, elevating the anti-drug movement into a dignified crusade for knowledge and enlightenment.

Designated collection centres at the Municipal Council Office Shopian and SDM Office Zainapora became hubs of constructive engagement, as citizens, officials, and civil society members converged to contribute books and reaffirm their commitment to a drug-free society founded on learning and awareness.

At MC Office Shopian, nearly 100 books were voluntarily contributed by employees, civil society representatives, and volunteers.

Presiding over the event, SDM Zainapora, Bilal Ahmad, commended the extraordinary public fervour and articulated a compelling vision for social transformation through education. He exhorted citizens to sustain this noble momentum by donating books at collection centres operational across all Tehsil and Block offices in the district.

He implored every stratum of society to fortify this initiative, so that Shopian may emerge as a paragon of a knowledge-driven, progressive, and drug-free district. The Book Donation Drive stands as a flagship district-specific IEC initiative, conceptualized and led by Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Shishir Gupta, under the Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan. Cumulatively, over 560 books have been contributed by individuals representing all walks of life, reflecting an unprecedented convergence of social will.

The repository created shall be systematically disseminated to deserving individuals and endowed to school, panchayat, and public libraries across the district, thereby nurturing a vibrant reading culture and ensuring equitable access to knowledge, especially for the underprivileged youth.

The initiative aspires to channelize collective public energy into affirmative engagement, foster societal awareness through the transformative power of literature, and consolidate an unyielding social compact against the scourge of drug abuse.

# TELANGANA DY CM BHATTI CALLS FOR DEMOCRATIC ROLLOUT OF HILT POLICY

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**HYDERABAD, APR 25 :** Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka on Friday said the government will implement the HILT (Hyderabad Industrial Lands Transformation) policy democratically, balancing industrial growth with the overall development of the city and state.

At a Cabinet Sub-Committee meeting on resource mobilisation held at the Secretariat, attended by ministers N Uttam Kumar Reddy, D Sridhar Babu, and Jupally Krishna Rao, he said stakeholders' views would be considered before finalising guidelines.

He suggested holding detailed consultations with all industrial associations located within the Outer Ring Road (ORR) to expedite the policy's implementation.

The Deputy CM noted that while some industry representa-



tives proposed shifting polluting units beyond the ORR in view of rising air pollution, the government would proceed only after taking all opinions into account. He also suggested that under the UDL (Undeveloped Land) policy, land development should be undertaken jointly by the Centre, State, and industrial stakeholders.

Industrial representatives

proposed setting up dedicated industrial parks between the ORR and the proposed Regional Ring Road (RRR), and sought basic infrastructure, including worker housing. Some also requested time for implementation and a reduction in conversion charges. The Deputy CM said these suggestions would be examined.

Minister D Sridhar Babu said

the government is committed to promoting industry while preventing pollution, and noted that dormitory facilities for workers have been made mandatory under the new industrial policy.

The Sub-Committee also directed that revised land market values be implemented from the first week of May. Minister Jupally Krishna Rao asked officials to compile comprehensive data on government lands, including vacant and encroached parcels, even at the district level.

Vikramarka reiterated that the government has no intention of troubling industries and that the Cabinet, under Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, is focused on balanced development.

He warned officials to strictly implement decisions under resource mobilisation and said negligence would not be tolerated. Senior officials attended the meeting, according to an official statement.UNI

# Reliance Industries PAT rises 18.3pc riding on strong growth in digital, retail businesses

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 25 :** Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) reported a record annual financial performance for FY26, with consolidated profit after tax (PAT) rising 18.3 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to Rs 95,610 crore, driven by strong growth in digital services and retail businesses.

Consolidated revenue for the year stood at Rs 11,75,919 crore, up 9.8 per cent YoY, while EBITDA increased 13.4 per cent to Rs 2,07,911 crore, according to the company's media release.

However, on a quarterly basis, RIL reported a decline in profitability. The company's PAT for the January-March quarter (Q4 FY26) fell 8.1 per cent YoY to Rs 20,616 crore, compared to Rs 22,434 crore in the year-ago period, reflecting pressure from its energy businesses.

RIL's consolidated revenue for Q4 FY26 rose 12.9 per cent YoY to Rs 3,25,290 crore, supported by double-digit growth across oil-to-chemicals (O2C), digital services and retail segments.

Despite the robust topline growth, EBITDA for the quarter remained largely flat at 48,588 crore, as gains in tele-

com and retail were offset by weaker performance in energy businesses amid volatile global conditions.

The company's digital arm, Jio Platforms, continued to be a key growth driver, with Q4 EBITDA rising 17.9 per cent YoY to Rs 20,060 crore. Jio's subscriber base crossed 524 million, including 268 million 5G users.

Reliance Retail also delivered steady growth, with Q4 EBITDA up 3.1 per cent YoY to Rs 6,921 crore. The business expanded its footprint, crossing 20,000 stores during the quarter.

The O2C business saw mixed performance, with quarterly EBITDA declining 3.7 per cent YoY despite higher revenues, as rising crude premiums, elevated freight costs and geopolitical disruptions weighed on margins.

The oil and gas segment also reported weakness, with Q4 EBITDA falling 18.1 per cent YoY due to lower production and realisations.

RIL's capital expenditure for FY26 stood at Rs 1,44,271 crore, reflecting continued investments in telecom, retail and new energy businesses. Net debt rose to Rs 1,24,717 crore, with a net debt-to-EBITDA ratio of 0.64.UNI

# Adani Green posts Rs 514 Cr Q4 profit

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**MUMBAI, APR 25 :** Adani Green Energy Ltd officially announced on Friday that it has reported a 34 per cent year-on-year rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 514 crore for the March quarter (Q4).

However, the company also stated that it had written off Rs 52-crore during the quarter related to the withdrawal from a 434 MW wind power project in Mannar and Pooneryn in Sri Lanka, part of a series of one-off items.

The company reported steady revenue growth during the quarter, with total income rising 14 per cent to Rs 3,727 crore, while revenue from power supply increased 16 per cent to Rs 3,094 crore, reflecting higher generation and improved plant performance.

Yet, the company's net profit, for the full year



FY26, declined marginally by 0.7 per cent to Rs 1,987 crore, despite total income rising 11 per cent to Rs 13,819 crore.

The annual performance was impacted by multiple exceptional items, including refinancing costs, project exits and liquidated damages.

These included the Sri Lanka project write-off, Rs 24 crore in liquidated damages paid for exiting a power purchase agreement, and Rs 178 crore in one-time refinancing costs linked to prepayment of borrowings across subsidiaries.

The company added 5.1 GW of greenfield renewable energy capacity in FY26, taking its total operational portfolio to 19.3 GW, among the highest annual capacity additions globally outside China.

Much of this expansion came from projects commissioned in resource-rich regions such as Khavda in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

Adani Green Energy Ltd Executive Director Sagar Adani said FY26 marked a "landmark year" driven by strong execution and operational excellence, with continued progress at the Khavda renewable energy park.

On the storage front, the company installed 1,376 MWh of battery energy storage systems (BESS) capacity at Khavda, one of the largest single-location deployments globally, and is targeting over 10,000 MWh by FY27. It is also progressing on its pumped hydro storage project in Andhra Pradesh.UNI

# Jan Dhan deposits cross Rs 3.07 lakh cr, accounts rise to 58 cr

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, APR 25 :** India's flagship financial inclusion programme Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana has entered a new phase of active usage, with total deposits crossing Rs 3.07 lakh crore as of April 2026, said data shared by BLSE-Services, one of India's largest Business Correspondent (BC) networks.

The total number of Jan Dhan accounts has risen to 58.06 crore as of April 8, 2026, up from 55.28 crore a year ago and 52.01 crore in 2024, indicating continued expansion alongside growing account activity.

Deposits have steadily increased from Rs 2.34 lakh crore in April 2024 to Rs 2.62 lakh crore in April 2025, before reaching the current level.

Data shared by BLSE-Services Limited highlights the rising

role of business correspondent (BC) networks in driving last-mile banking access and deposit mobilisation, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas.

Uttar Pradesh has emerged as the top contributor, with 10.32 crore accounts and deposits of around Rs 64,000 crore, accounting for nearly 18 per cent of the total PMJDY base.

Bihar and West Bengal follow with about Rs 30,000 crore each, while Rajasthan (Rs 24,000 crore), Maharashtra (Rs 22,000 crore) and Madhya Pradesh (Rs 19,000 crore) are also key contributors.

Other states such as Karnataka, Odisha, Jharkhand and Gujarat are witnessing steady growth, reflecting broad-based expansion.

The surge in balances is being attributed to the rapid scaling up of BC-led doorstep banking services, which allow customers



to deposit, withdraw and transfer money within their local communities without relying on physical bank branches.

Public sector banks, led by State Bank of India, continue to account for a significant share of Jan Dhan accounts and have strengthened their BC networks to enhance financial inclusion at the grassroots level.

BLSE-Services Limited, which operates over 45,800 BC outlets and more than 1.5 lakh touchpoints nationwide, said a substantial portion of deposits is now coming from rural and smaller towns where access to formal banking infrastructure remains limited.

The model has helped activate previously dormant ac-

counts by enabling frequent transactions and building trust among users.

Industry experts note that the BC ecosystem—comprising around 16 lakh correspondents across the country—is playing a critical role in deepening financial inclusion by facilitating services such as direct benefit transfers, micro-insurance, pensions and small-ticket loans.

With over half of Jan Dhan account holders being women, the scheme is also contributing significantly to financial empowerment at the household level.

As the programme matures, stakeholders expect the next phase of growth to be driven by credit, insurance and pension penetration, building on the strong deposit base and improved customer engagement achieved over the past decade.UNI

# MORBI CERAMIC UNITS EYE FULL REVIVAL IN MAY AS GUJARAT GAS RAMPS UP PNG SUPPLY

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, APR 25 :** Morbi's ceramic industry, which has already recovered to around 290 operational units after a near-shutdown in March, is set to return to full capacity in May with 675-700 units expected to be running as Gujarat Gas ramps up piped natural gas supply to the cluster, a senior government official said on Friday.

"Operations picked up in April, with gas consumption rising from 0.36 million metric standard cubic metres per day (mmscmd) at the end of March, when about 83 units were operational, to 2.70 mmscmd by April 22, serving around 290 units," a Gujarat Gas official said.

Sandip Kundariya, president of the Floor Tiles Division of the Morbi Ceramic Manufacturers Association, said the cluster was on track to return to full strength by next month.

"Production has resumed across the cluster and most units are ex-

pected to be operational by May 10. Nearly 670 ceramic units in Morbi are connected to piped natural gas (PNG) supplied by Gujarat Gas and the industry is currently relying entirely on PNG," he told HT.

He said units with liquefied natural gas (LNG) or PNG connections are not using propane or LPG under the current policy and supply situation, effectively shifting the Morbi cluster fully to piped natural gas.

Kundariya said around 400 units have already completed minimum guarantee offtake (MGO) agreements with Gujarat Gas for May, while the remaining units are expected to do so in the next few days. "Gas prices have increased sharply and are nearly double compared to March. Part of the cost will be passed on to customers, and for now production will be focused on domestic demand as export orders are limited," he said.

Gujarat Gas Limited, a state-run city gas distribution company, sup-

plies piped natural gas to industrial, commercial and domestic consumers across the state, including the Morbi ceramic cluster. During the recent disruption, the company directly sourced LNG from Africa and other non-Middle East markets and engaged with industry stakeholders to ensure continued supply, stable pricing and alignment of volumes to support the restart of units, said a company official.

Before the disruption, a large section of units operated on LPG and propane, which were key fuels for kiln operations until supply constraints and restrictions forced a shutdown and shift to PNG.

The sector had slowed from mid-March after the Iran war disrupted fuel supply chains, tightening availability of propane and LNG and pushing up input costs. Nearly 450 of around 700 units suspended production and shifted to maintenance mode, affecting over two lakh workers, according to the Gujarat Gas official.UNI

# India, US agree to remain engaged after trade talks

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, APR 25 :** India and the US have agreed to "remain engaged" after three days of trade talks in Washington concluded on Wednesday, a commerce ministry statement said — signalling that the finalisation of an interim bilateral deal awaits the Trump administration instituting a legally tenable tariff framework after the US Supreme Court struck down the basis of reciprocal tariffs in February.

The Indian delegation, led by chief negotiator Darpan Jain, discussed "multiple areas such as market access, non-tariff measures, technical barriers to trade, customs and trade facilitation, investment promotion, economic security alignment and digital trade," the ministry said on Friday.

The meetings were conducted in a "constructive and positive spirit" with "meaningful and forward-looking discussions" enabling progress on key matters, it added.

The round was the first face-to-face meeting since the two countries agreed on a framework for an interim deal on February 7. "The framework reaffirmed the countries' commitment to the broader India-US Bilateral Trade Agreement negotiations," the ministry said. "Both sides agreed to remain engaged to maintain this momentum as they move forward."

Days before the delegation's departure, commerce secretary Rajesh Agrawal had said both parties were looking at finalising a legal agreement as a logical follow-up of the February 7 joint statement. "There is a need for further discussions and follow-up engagement to take this forward," he said.

At a hearing before the House ways and means committee on Tuesday, USTR Jamieson Greer confirmed that Indian negotiators were in Washington and that the two sides were actively discussing specific commodities, including dried distillers' grains, soybean meal and ethanol. "India is a tough nut to crack."

They've protected their agricultural markets for a very long time. As part of this deal, they're going to want to protect a lot of that still. There are things though where I think we can find mutual agreement," he said.

India's foreign ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal on Thursday said the talks were "ongoing and constructive." "Both sides are working towards a balanced, mutually beneficial and forward-looking trade agreement, taking into account each other's concerns and priorities, and to achieve a trade target of \$500 billion by 2030," he said. That target would be more than double bilateral goods and services trade of roughly \$212 billion in 2024.

# AirPods Max 2 is Apple doubling down on a sharp formula of subtle refinement

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, APR 25 :** There are two ways of looking at this. Continuity is great. Or, is this it? A gap of five years between the first Apple AirPods Max and the sequel, there is perhaps more scope for the latter question to be asked by those who may be willing to part with 67,900 for the headphone that will (despite all criticisms) still set the aspirational benchmark. People would want to be seen with this, they'd in fact love to be seen with this. A lot has changed with the audio hardware driving the experience, but it remains nigh impossible to tell the two generations apart at first glance.

In 2024, the generation one point five update gave the AirPods Max a USB-C port, in line with EU guidelines mandating a universal charging aperture. Apple used that moment to add lossless audio via USB-C and ultra-low latency to the AirPods Max. But the troika of big spec upgrades have been reserved for now—a new built-in amp, the H2 audio processing chip, and tweaks to active noise cancellation. The latter, even more crucial considering the window between the two generations has seen competition including Sennheiser and Sony seriously upping the game on the noise cancellation algorithms. What's not changed is the design, including the lack

of a power button and a Smart Case design that still requires you to be careful. The weight, at 386.2 grams, is the same too—some of you may find it a bit on the heavier side initially, before your neck muscles get attuned to it in a while. The positive side to that heft and weight is, a very robust and fine build. That absolutely isn't something Apple would compromise on. The combination of the aluminium ear cups, the metal frame with continuous adjustments, and a taut mesh headband simply looks good in any of the five dual-tone colours. If you want restrained, the choice should be Midnight. For maximum attention, go with Orange or Purple.

The big audio upgrade of the minor upgrade a couple of years ago also added lossless audio when connected via USB-C, something the Lightning port didn't have. That foundational piece allows the AirPods Max 2 to keep the new H2 chips as its core step forward. Some may feel this isn't enough for an ultra-premium headphone, but that's just Apple's methodology of baking things exactly as they feel is just right. And that is pretty much the case here too, with the original 40mm audio driver size (they are custom-built drivers) paired with an improved high dynamic range amplifier, delivering sound that'll leave nothing on the table to complain about. And

that includes a step forward with noise cancellation.

Between the previous generation and this, the AirPods Max 2 makes it very clear from the outset that there is much more definition to the music, though the already wide soundstage continues without any changes either way. What was already profound has only become better, and not clung to continuity for the sake of it. The H2 chip clearly makes its mark in the most positive of ways, not just with the audio experience, but also delivering the Apple ecosystem promise. Bass is definitely more than last year, and in a good way, with just the right tuning. UNI



# Pathirana boost for KKR against LSG as No. 10 meets No. 9

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**KOLKATA:** It has been a tough season for Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) and Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR). They are the two bottom teams in IPL 2026 and will try to get their season back on track when they meet at the Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow. LSG started well, winning two of their first three matches but have since had a steep fall, losing four in a row. KKR didn't manage a single win in their first six games (one was a washout) before beating Rajasthan Royals. KKR, who had to contend with a depleted fast bowling attack, will welcome the addition of Matheesha Pathirana, who is fit and available for the LSG game. Who he replaces becomes the key question. One option could be replacing Rovman Powell, but Powell has been in decent form. That could mean Pathirana comes in for Tim Seifert, and Sunil Narine opens the batting with Ajinkya Rahane. KKR have the worst econ-

omy rate in the powerplay so far in the tournament and have picked up the second-fewest wickets in that phase. They will hope Pathirana's inclusion helps to improve those numbers. LSG's headaches lie more with their batters, as their bowlers have been flying. With most first-choice players available, they are one of the few teams to have an all-Indian bowling attack, and their effectiveness shows in the numbers. They have the best economy rate (7.59) in the powerplay and have taken the second-most wickets in the phase (14). Leading the pack are Prince Yadav and Mohammed Shami, while Mohsin Khan has also been consistent. LSG's batting, however, has failed to click. They have the worst scoring rate in the powerplay (8.19) and middle overs (7.75), and the second-worst at the death (9.18). Nicholas Pooran is having a forgettable season, Mitchell Marsh and Aiden Markram are yet to hit top gear and Rishabh Pant has blown hot and cold. They need a batting rethink and quickly.

LSG will be buoyed by the fact that their last win in IPL 2026 came against KKR, when Mukul Choudhary announced himself with an unbeaten 54, taking his team over the line in a last-ball thriller. LSG fielded just three overseas players in the last two games, with Matthew Breetzke on the Impact Player bench but not used. With LSG's batting stuttering and stumbling, there is a chance that he might replace Pooran or Markram, or come in as an Impact Player. Fast bowler Anrich Nortje has flown back to South Africa for the birth of his twins and will not be available for the KKR game. Varun Chakravarthy finally found form in KKR's previous outing against RR, picking up 3 for 14 and taking the Player-of-the-Match award. He downplayed his return to form, crediting the slow Kolkata surface but KKR will be pleased with one of their main weapons finally getting among the wickets. On a tacky Lucknow surface and against a brittle LSG middle-order, Varun will want to extend his wicket-taking run.

## Cook has no idea about IPL: Pietersen

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI:** Former England captains Kevin Pietersen and Alastair Cook are again involved in a public disagreement, this time over youngster Jacob Bethell's decision to continue in the IPL despite not getting matches. Bethell, who is part of defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru in IPL 2026, is yet



to play a game this season with the star-studded franchise preferring an overseas combination of Phil Salt, Tim David, Romario Shepherd and Josh Hazlewood.

Cook felt the 22-year-old should return to England and play county cricket instead of sitting on the bench. However, Pietersen strongly disagreed and backed Bethell's decision to stay in India, saying the IPL environment itself is a big learning experience.

"Alastair Cook has absolutely NO IDEA what it's like to be in the IPL. What it's like to always be around the best players in the world."

"So his opinion on Jacob Bethell doesn't matter at all. Stay in India, Jacob. I know, even though you're not playing, you're learning and will be a way better player." Cook, speaking on a podcast, said Bethell would benefit more from regular game time in county cricket.

"He should be back playing county cricket rather than sitting on his a\*\*\* at the IPL not doing anything," Cook said. Despite not getting chances in the playing XI due to strong competition at RCB, Bethell has already shown his potential at the international level.

He was England's top scorer in the T20 World Cup with 280 runs from eight innings at a strike rate of over 152, and had also smashed a 48-ball century against India at the Wankhede in the semifinal, though England lost that match by seven runs while chasing 254. Bethell himself said the IPL experience has helped him improve.

"I feel better now than I did a month ago. Just being around the players here and the standard of cricket in the IPL is amazing," he said. "There's a different intensity here and everyone raises their game. It's something you understand only when you are part of it."

## Shanto hundred, Mustafizur's 5 wicket haul- help Bangladesh clinch ODI series against New Zealand

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**CHATTOGRAM (BANGLADESH):** Najmul Hossain Shanto's century and Mustafizur Rahman's five-wicket haul helped Bangladesh thrash New Zealand by 55 runs and clinch their ODI series on Thursday.

The 2-1 victory marked Bangladesh's third straight in ODIs following wins against the West Indies and Pakistan.

Shanto retired on 50 due to cramps in the second ODI on Monday and followed with 105 in 34-degree sticky heat, leading Bangladesh to a competitive 265-8.

He and Liton Das, both former captains, rescued Bangladesh from 32-3 with a 160-run partnership in the testing conditions. Liton struck 76, his first ODI fifty since October 2023.

New Zealand was dismissed for 210 in 44.5 overs and recalled

fast bowler Mustafizur claimed 5-43, his first five-wicket haul since the 2019 Cricket World Cup.

Opener Nick Kelly scored a slow 59 and Dean Foxcroft hit a career-best 75 off 72 balls, sloggng seven sixes without pressure when the result was inevitable.

"We knew a big partnership would bring us back to the contest after we slumped to 9-2," Shanto said. "Liton played beautifully, he held one end and took the pressure off me. Once we put up 250 plus we knew it would be difficult for them to chase in this conditions."

New Zealand made Bangladesh bat first and the decision paid off immediately when fast bowler Will O'Rourke removed the openers and Soumya Sarkar to have 3-16 off five overs. But when O'Rourke bowled again, Shanto was on 89 and Liton on 56.

Left-arm medium-pace



Muhammad Abbas also wasn't bowled out, as he tied down five overs with 0-16.

Meanwhile, Shanto and Liton resisted slow and steady, rotating the strike and running well. They put 50 together by the 20th over and 100 by the 30th.

Liton, wearing a towel around his neck to soak the sweat, was

out for 76 off 91 balls backing away from leg stump and watching left-arm spinner Jayden Lennox knock it over.

Shanto was more calculating to reach his fourth ODI century and first in two years off 114 balls with a single off Lennox. Soon after, Lennox claimed Shanto for 105, caught on the boundary

to a running catch by Nathan Smith.

"I am really excited to get a hundred finally," Shanto said. "I got my last hundred in this venue in 2024."

New Zealand's chase struggled to get out of second gear.

Mustafizur and Nahid Rana, who took 2-37 following 5-32 on Monday, ripped out the New Zealand top order. Kelly kept going for his second consecutive fifty in his fifth ODI without support.

"We kept losing wickets in the first 20-25 overs," New Zealand skipper Tom Latham said. "We were happy with the target to achieve but lack of partnerships made it difficult."

Mustafizur took three wickets in 17 balls for his sixth five-wicket haul, leaving New Zealand 160-9 when Foxcroft had a lash to delay Bangladesh's party. The teams begin a Twenty20 series on Monday.



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