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# LG Calls for Bold, Science-Led Transformation of Agriculture at SKUAST Jammu Summit

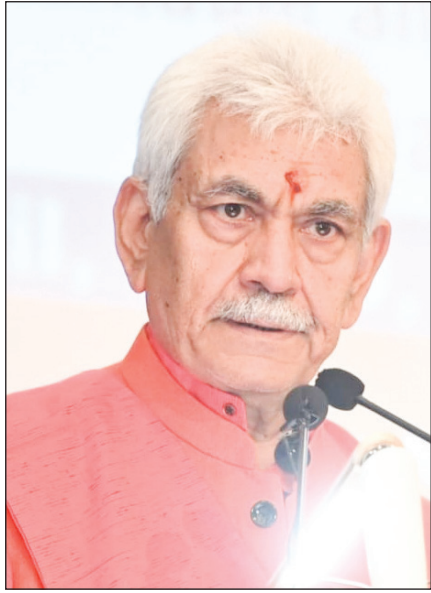
Manoj Sinha urges unified action to build climate-resilient agro-ecosystems

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 28:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday underscored the urgent need for a paradigm shift in India's agricultural approach, advocating a science-driven, farmer-centric transformation to tackle the growing threat of climate change.

Addressing the National Summit on "Sustainable & Climate Resilient Agro-ecosystems: Innovations and Policy Framework" at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu, Sinha called upon scientists, innovators, policymakers and farmers to join forces in building resilient and sustainable agro-ecosystems.

Warning that climate change now poses a serious threat beyond farmlands, **Turn on Page 2**



## LG Attends the Launch of the Book: 'The Waves of Resilience, Story of Radio Sharda'

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 28:** The Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha, today launched the book 'The Waves of Resilience, Story of Radio Sharda' edited by Shri Ramesh Hangloo, the founder of Radio Sharda. The book is a collection of articles written by common listeners, litterateurs and renowned **Turn on Page 2**

# ₹3,566 Crore PMGSY-IV Package to Transform Rural Connectivity in J&K



HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 28:** In a significant boost to rural infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir, Union Minister for Rural Development Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday handed over a **Turn on Page 2**

## 5 Lakh J&K Families to Get Pucca Houses After Verification

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APR 28:** Union Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday said that all five lakh families in Jammu and Kashmir living in 'kuchha' houses, will be provided 'pucca' houses after physical verification.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given me the task of providing pucca houses to poor people under the PM Awas Yojna. A new survey in Jammu and Kashmir found that five lakh families lack permanent housing. After conducting physical verification, I assure you that no one will live in a kuchha house in **Turn on Page 2**

## MeT predicts rain, hailstorm, gusty winds across J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

**SRINAGAR, APR 28:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday forecast generally cloudy weather with spells of light rain and thundershowers across Jammu and Kashmir over the next two days, accompanied by gusty winds and possible hailstorms at isolated places.

As per the news agency—Kashmir



News Observer (KNO), according to the Meteorological Centre Srinagar, many places are likely to witness intermittent rain and thundershowers on April 28-29, particularly during the afternoon and evening hours. Hailstorms are also expected at a few locations.

The weather is expected to **Turn on Page 2**

## No Double Standards on Terror: Rajnath Singh

Calls for decisive action against state-sponsored terrorism

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, APR 28:** Rajnath Singh on Tuesday delivered a strong message against "double standards" in the global fight against terrorism, urging members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to act firmly against nations that support and shelter terror groups.

Addressing a high-level defence ministers' meeting in Bishkek, Singh underscored that "state-sponsored" cross-border terrorism poses a direct threat to national sovereignty and must be confronted without hesitation.



His remarks were seen as an indirect reference to Pakistan. **Turn on Page 2**

## "Act East, Act Fast": PM Modi Unveils Fast-Track Growth Vision for Northeast

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**GANGTOK, APR 28:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to accelerating development in the Northeast, declaring that the government will not only "Act East" but also "Act Fast" to unlock the region's full potential, which he described as India's "Ashtalakashmi."

Addressing the valedictory function of Sikkim Statehood Golden Jubilee, Modi said the eight northeastern states symbolise prosperity and diversity, and **Turn on Page 2**



## Shopian Seminary Declared Unlawful Under UAPA After Probe Reveals Alleged Militant Links

HT NEWS DESK / KNO

**SHOPIAN, APR 28:** The Jammu and Kashmir administration has declared Darul Uloom, Jamia Siraj-ul-Uloom at Imam Sahib in Shopian as an unlawful entity under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), following what officials described as an extensive and evidence-based investigation.

Sources said the action was initiated after District Police Shopian compiled a comprehensive dossier, prompting

proceedings under Section 8 of the UAPA. During the process, the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, issued a formal notice to the institution's management, granting it a full and fair opportunity to present its defence.

The management submitted its objections, which were examined along with documentary evidence and police inputs. After due consideration, the Divisional Commissioner, in an order dated April 24, formally declared the **Turn on Page 2**

## Ladakh LG Appoints DCs, SPs for Five New Districts

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**LEH/JAMMU, APR 28:** The Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena, on Tuesday approved the appointment of Deputy Commissioners (DCs) and Superintendents of Police (SPs) for five newly created districts—Changthang, Nubra, Zaskar, Sham and Drass—just a day after their formation.

Officials said the decision is aimed **Turn on Page 2**

## Hydel power generation of J&K sees a steep 16% decline

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

**SRINAGAR, APR 28:** From 17,489 Million Units (MUs) in 2020-21 to just 14,660 MUs in 2025-26, Jammu and Kashmir in nearly past five years has recorded a decline in hydel power generation by over 16 percent—reflecting an average annual fall of nearly 3-5 percent.

The official figures available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) revealing the power generation of J&K in MUs from 2020-21 to January 2026 states that there **Turn on Page 2**

## Global Dagnet Nets Drug Kingpin Salim Dola, Brought Back to India

Amit Shah underscores zero-tolerance policy as NCB executes "Operation Global-Hunt"

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, APR 28:** In a major success for India's anti-narcotics campaign, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Tuesday secured the return of fugitive drug trafficker Mohammad Salim Dola from Turkey, marking a significant break-

through in the fight against transnational drug syndicates.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah hailed the operation as a testament to the Centre's "zero tolerance" approach to narcotics and organised crime, asserting that Indian agencies are now capable of pursuing offenders beyond national borders.



Dola (59), who had been evading law enforcement for years, was arrested in Turkey on the basis of an Interpol Red Notice issued at India's request in March 2024. He was brought to New Delhi under the coordinated "Operation Global-Hunt" and taken into custody upon **Turn on Page 2**

## J&K's fruit cultivation area, output see sharp rise: NITI Aayog

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

**SRINAGAR, APR 28:** The "Roadmap for Horticulture Development in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir @ 2047" released by NITI Aayog highlights significant growth in the sector, with the area under fruit cultivation expanding from 1.31 lakh hectares in 1980 to 3.44 lakh hectares in 2022, and production rising from 5.6 lakh tonnes to 27.22 lakh tonnes.

Jammu and Kashmir, known as the "Land of Fruits", benefits from favourable agro-climatic conditions that support a wide range of horticultural crops. The sector provides livelihoods to around 3.5 million people and contributes 6-7% to the UT's GDP, with an annual turnover of about 10,000 crore, according to the report accessed by the news **Turn on Page 2**

## Gurez, Wular, Chitternagar to get eco-tourism boost: CCF Kashmir

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

**BANDIPORA, APR 28:** Gurez valley, Wular Lake and Chitternagar in north Kashmir's Bandipora district will see expanded eco-tourism infrastructure as part of efforts to promote sustainable tourism, Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Kashmir Irfan Rasool Wani said on Tuesday.

Wani, who visited the Forest Training School at Chitternagar, said the Forest Department is focusing on developing eco-tourism sites across the district while ensuring conservation of forest resources and biodiversity.

"Bandipora has immense potential for eco-tourism given its rich forests and natural landscapes. Gurez is being **Turn on Page 2**

## AIMSA writes to Amit Shah, seeks security for doctors in J&K after assaults

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

**SRINAGAR, APR 28:** The All India Medical Students Association (AIMSA) has appealed to Union Home Minister Amit Shah to take immediate steps to strengthen security for doctors and healthcare staff, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, following a series of reported assaults in government medical institutions.

In a formal communication sent on Tuesday, AIMSA Vice President Dr Mohammad Momin Khan expressed deep concern over what he described as a "growing sense of insecurity" among medical professionals. The letter, accessed by the news **Turn on Page 2**

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

**LG Calls for.....**

The Lieutenant Governor said the crisis endangers all sectors dependent on agriculture and leaves no room for complacency. He emphasized that incremental reforms must give way to bold interventions, with a strong focus on climate-resilient crops and bridging the gap between laboratory research and field implementation.

Highlighting India's agricultural progress under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Sinha said the country recorded 357 million tonnes of agricultural production in 2024-25, marking a significant rise from the previous year, while horticulture output reached 362 million tonnes driven by diversification into high-value crops.

He also pointed to key initiatives such as the distribution of 25 crore Soil Health Cards, enhancement of farmer credit limits from Rs. 3 lakh to Rs. 5 lakh, and a Rs. 100 crore national mission to promote high-yielding seeds. Procurement of pulses and oilseeds at Minimum Support Price has seen substantial growth since 2013-14, he noted.

However, Sinha cautioned that extreme weather events witnessed across states in recent years highlight the intensifying impact of climate change. He stressed the need for localized climate advisories, expansion of climate-responsive insurance, promotion of green credit, and conservation of traditional seed varieties.

Calling for a farmer-first approach, the Lieutenant Governor said small and marginal farmers, despite contributing least to climate change, bear its harshest consequences. He emphasized that farmers must be recognized not only as producers but as custodians of culture, food security and sustainable development.

The summit was attended by senior officials, scientists, academicians and policymakers, including Director General of Meteorology Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, Vice Chancellor Prof. B. N. Tripathi, and other experts in the field.

**LG Attends the.....**

personalities from Kashmiri Pandit Community and highlights the impact of Radio Sharda on the socio-cultural activities of the community.

The Lieutenant Governor commended Shri Ramesh Hangloo and his team for preserving rich culture and values.

"Kashmiri Pandit community endured genocide and was uprooted from their ancestral soil. They left behind all material possessions, carrying only light of culture, tradition, faith, education, and language. More than two decades later, in 2011, Ramesh Hangloo transformed it into a beacon of hope and unity through Radio Sharda, connecting Kashmiri Pandits across the world to their roots," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that Radio Sharda has preserved songs, stories, and traditions and gave platforms to poets, scholars, and artists, ensuring their voices inspire new generations.

"Radio Sharda and various government initiatives are pathways for youth from the community. Now it is their responsibility to protect and expand rich cultural heritage, breathe new life into traditions, language, music, and rituals. Youth must ensure that Kashmiri Pandit's cultural legacy thrives, evolves, and endures meaningfully for generations to come," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that successive generations of Kashmiri Pandits endured profound hardships beyond the genocide, a wound time cannot fully heal. He said initiatives like Radio Sharda provided a vital lifeline, reinforcing community bonds.

The Lieutenant Governor also felicitated prominent citizens of the community from diverse fields for their contribution to the society.

**Rs. 3,566 Crore.....**

Rs. 3,566 crore sanction letter under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)-IV, Batch-II to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah at a function held at Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre.

The package envisages construction of 330 roads covering nearly 1,600 kilometres, aimed at connecting 363 unserved habitations and strengthening last-mile connectivity across the Union Territory.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister expressed gratitude to the Union Government for approving the projects and assured their timely execution. He said the administration would ensure high-quality implementation within stipulated timelines so that the benefits reach people on the ground without delay.

Emphasising the transformative impact of road connectivity, Abdullah described roads as the backbone of rural development, noting that improved infrastructure would significantly enhance access to healthcare, education and employment opportunities in far-flung areas. He reiterated the government's commitment to connecting every remaining habitable habitation in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Chief Minister also highlighted welfare measures for farmers, including crop insurance schemes, and underscored the role of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) in empowering women through Self-Help Groups (SHGs). He said the government envisions

"Lakhpati Didis" progressing to "Crorepoti Didis" through sustained support and expanded livelihood opportunities.

Reaffirming his government's broader vision, Abdullah said efforts are underway to build a "Viksit Jammu and Kashmir" in line with the national goal of "Viksit Bharat," ensuring inclusive and equitable development.

In his address, Union Minister Chouhan said he had brought a message of peace and development to Kashmir and highlighted the Centre's continued financial support. He noted that with the latest sanction, his ministry has released Rs. 7,790 crore to Jammu and Kashmir over the past year.

He also announced a Rs. 4,568 crore "mother sanction" under the National Rural Livelihood Mission for the entire country, including Rs. 40.90 crore for Jammu and Kashmir. Additionally, he said a Clean Plant Programme would soon be introduced to provide disease-free planting material to farmers, while urging them to adopt integrated multi-crop farming practices.

The event was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Minister for Rural Development Javaid Ahmad Dar, Members of Parliament, legislators, and senior officials from both the Union and Jammu and Kashmir governments.

**5 Lakh J&K.....**

Jammu and Kashmir," Chouhan said addressing a function here.

The minister also launched 330 new road projects covering 1,600 km at a cost of Rs 3,550 crore under the Batch-II of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). These roads will benefit 363 remote habitations in Jammu and Kashmir.

He said Prime Minister Modi has given top priority to development of Jammu and Kashmir, and the government will leave no stone unturned in this regard. "I have come with the prime minister's message of development and message of love. The doors of Delhi and our hearts are open for people of Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

The Union minister said the Centre will take all steps to ensure development of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Under the PM's leadership, all efforts are being made to make 'viksit' Jammu and Kashmir. Development is the duty of the government but the Modi government is according top priority to J-K as the problems of road connectivity are more in the union territory. We put Jammu and Kashmir first. It was the first to get road projects approved under the PMGSY-IV, batch I and it is the first to get approval in batch II," he said.

On the Women self help groups, Chouhan said Rs 4,000 crore were being disbursed for making the women self reliant.

"There are two lakh Lakhpati Didis in Jammu and Kashmir. The PM set a target of six crore for the country. We want that no one should remain poor in this country," he said.

The minister said the government was introducing schemes and taking new measures to ensure that the income of farmers increases. (Agencies)

**MeT predicts.....**

improve slightly on April 30 with partly cloudy skies and brief spells of light rain at isolated places. From May 1-2, conditions are likely to remain largely dry, although brief showers cannot be ruled out.

However, another spell of generally cloudy weather with light rain and thundershowers is forecast between May 3 and 5 at scattered to many places. From May 6-9, the region is expected to remain mostly dry, with chances of brief showers at isolated locations.

The MeT department has issued an advisory asking farmers to suspend agricultural operations on April 28-29 in view of expected rainfall, gusty winds and possible hailstorms.

Meanwhile, daytime temperatures across the Valley remained below normal. Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 21.2°C, which is 1.9 degrees below normal, while the minimum settled at 12.6°C, 3.1 degrees above normal.

Qazigund registered a high of 20.0°C, while Pahalgam recorded 18.2°C. Kupwara saw a maximum of 21.0°C and Kokernag 20.2°C. Gulmarg, the coldest among the recorded stations, registered a maximum of 15.0°C.

In the Jammu region, Jammu city recorded a maximum temperature of 32.6°C, 3.1 degrees below normal, and a minimum of 25.1°C. Banihal and Batote recorded 21.6°C and 20.1°C, respectively, while Katra registered 30.0°C.

Light rainfall was recorded at several stations during the day, including Pahalgam (7.2 mm), Kupwara (2.0 mm), and Kukernag (1.8 mm), while Srinagar recorded 0.1 mm.

The department said the weather conditions may lead to temporary disruptions and advised people to remain cautious during the afternoon and evening hours—(KNO)

**No Double.....**

"There is no place for any double standards in combating terrorism," Singh said, stressing that the SCO must take appropriate action against those who abet and provide safe havens to terrorists.

Highlighting India's firm approach, he referred to Operation Sindoor, stating that it demonstrated the country's resolve that "terror epicentres are no longer immune to justifi-

able punishment."

The Defence Minister called for greater international cooperation to counter terrorism, extremism, and radicalisation, describing them as the most serious threats to the evolving global order. He noted that the SCO, founded on shared values, has consistently condemned such ideologies and must strengthen collective efforts to combat them.

Singh also flagged the broader geopolitical context, pointing to increasing unilateralism and a surge in global conflicts that have caused widespread loss of life and property.

"As stakeholders in defence and security, it is time to introspect and take effective measures to address these challenges," he said, urging coordinated global action to ensure stability and peace.

**"Act East, Act....."**

are central to India's growth story.

Highlighting tourism as the mainstay of Sikkim's economy, the Prime Minister announced a series of connectivity and infrastructure projects aimed at boosting tourist inflow. These include a proposed expressway linking Bagdogra to Sikkim, a ring road in Gangtok, and ropeway and skyway projects. An expressway at Nathula Pass is also on the anvil.

Praising Sikkim's pristine environment and biodiversity, Modi said the state stands as a model of sustainable development, with its people acting as "brand ambassadors" of nature conservation. He noted that the Northeast is poised to emerge as a hub of eco-friendly growth, driven by organic agriculture and eco-wellness tourism.

The Prime Minister said nearly 1,000 homestays are being developed to strengthen tourism infrastructure, alongside investments in adventure tourism. He also stressed efforts to enhance sports facilities in the state, particularly in football and archery, to nurture young talent.

Describing Sikkim as the "heaven of the East," Modi invited tourists to explore its scenic beauty and rich floral diversity, especially its orchids. He further said the state reflects the spirit of unity and inclusiveness at a time when divisive forces seek to fragment society.

In a veiled political attack, Modi accused previous Congress governments of neglecting key sectors in Sikkim, particularly healthcare, and asserted that his government is committed to providing quality and affordable medical services to the people.

**Shopian Seminary.....**

seminary unlawful.

Officials said the decision was based on "substantial and credible evidence," including alleged instances of radicalisation and recruitment. According to sources, several individuals associated with the institution had joined militant outfits, with at least 17 former students later killed in separate encounters.

Security agencies, they added, had over time submitted adverse reports indicating activities deemed prejudicial to the security and integrity of the State. Inputs also pointed to the presence of an environment that allegedly enabled and encouraged unlawful activities.

Authorities further claimed that some relatives of slain militants were holding key positions within the institution, and alleged that individuals linked to the banned Jamaat-e-Islami were operating through proxies to continue their activities while evading legal scrutiny.—(KNO)

**Ladakh LG.....**

at ensuring the immediate rollout of administrative and policing structures in the newly carved districts, particularly in far-flung and strategically significant areas. The move is expected to enhance governance delivery and strengthen law and order while bringing administration closer to the people.

The Lieutenant Governor directed the newly appointed officers to take charge without delay and work towards inclusive development, keeping in view the aspirations of local residents. He also assured that vacancies in subordinate ranks would be filled on priority and necessary logistical support would be extended for smooth functioning.

According to official orders, Nitish Rajoria has been posted as DC of Changthang with S Z Abbas Jaffari as SP. Mukul Beniwal and Stanzin Losal will serve as DC and SP of Nubra, while Omkar Rajendra Gundage and Rigzen Sandup have been appointed for Zanskar. Kunzes Angmo and Aijaz Malik have been posted in Sham, and Imteaz Kacho and Ishtyaq Ahmad in Drass as DCs and SPs respectively.

Meanwhile, the existing administrations of Leh and Kargil will continue functioning with current officials and coordinate with the new districts during the transition phase, officials added.

**Hydel power.....**

has been a power generation fall by 16.18 percent.

The figures reveal that in the year 2020-21, J&K had generated a total of 17,489.83 MUs of power followed by 17,170.62 MUs in the year 2022-23.

It also said that during the year 2023-24, Jammu and Kashmir was able to generate only 16,282.93 MUs of energy followed by 15,595.82 MUs in 2024-25.

The figures further states that in the year

2025-2026: upto January-2026, J&K had generated only 14,659.92 MUs of power.

Stating the source and state wise generation data from various sources including thermal, hydro, nuclear and renewable energy for 2025-26 (upto January, 2026), the official figures reveal that a total of 14,659.92 MUs from renewable sources were generated by J&K including 375.01 MUs by the small hydro projects and 14,284.91 MUs from large hydro projects.

As already reported by KNO, Jammu and Kashmir has indicated that a power load requirement of up to 7 Gigawatts (GWs) by the coming five years needs to be considered in the winter season—signalling major infrastructure upgrades to avoid seasonal blackouts.

The officials have conservatively trimmed the load requirement to 5 GW by the financial year 2029-30.

As per the documents, the statutory body Northern Regional Power Committee (NRPC) in a joint study meeting has said that "J&K indicated that a load of 6-7GW needs to be considered in the winter season by 2029-30."

"However, on conservative side load is considered to the tune of 5 GW," it reads.

Stating the details of Northern Region states load considered in Power System Simulator for Engineering (PSS) for 2029-2030, the committee has projected 4211 Megawatts (MWs) of Emergency Power Supply (EPS) load in J&K by 2029-2030 timeframe.

Pertinently, the news agency has reported that Jammu and Kashmir is importing more than 95 percent of its electricity in the month of December.

The officials earlier in the month had informed that Jammu and Kashmir is importing electricity ranging from 2900 MWs to 3100 MWs during the peak hours. It also said that during the other hours, the region is importing electricity ranging from 2400 MWs to 2800 MWs.

Earlier KNO had reported that Jammu and Kashmir is likely to face a four percent Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) increase in electricity requirement and six percent increase in peak electricity demand for the period of 2025-26 to 2035-36—(KNO)

**Global Dagnet....**

arrival at Indira Gandhi International Airport early Tuesday.

The Ministry of Home Affairs said the operation reflects the government's firm resolve to track down and bring back fugitives involved in narcotics trafficking and organised crime, regardless of their location.

Investigators describe Dola as a key figure in a sprawling international drug network with links across the Middle East, Africa and Europe. A close associate of fugitive underworld don Dawood Ibrahim, he allegedly played a central role in supplying narcotics to distribution networks in India.

Over a criminal career spanning more than two decades, Dola has been linked to multiple high-value drug seizures, including heroin, charas, mephedrone, mandrax and methamphetamine, particularly in Maharashtra and Gujarat. He was also wanted by the Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad and Mumbai Police.

Officials noted that the operation highlights strong cooperation between Turkish authorities, Interpol, and Indian agencies, reinforcing global efforts to combat drug trafficking networks.

Earlier, Dola's son Tahil Salim Dola and several associates were arrested by Mumbai Police after being extradited from the United Arab Emirates in 2025, further tightening the net around the syndicate.

**J&K's fruit.....**

agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO). Apple remains the dominant crop, accounting for nearly 50% of the area and over 77% of production, with the highest yield among fruits. Among dry fruits, walnuts lead, covering about 93% of the area and contributing around 12% to total production.

Jammu and Kashmir has been designated as an export zone for apple and walnut crops and is a leading producer of apples, cherries, walnuts, and almonds in India. The region is also known for high-quality honey, kala zeera, and saffron.

District-wise mapping of horticulture crops shows apples and walnuts as dominant, widely spread clusters, while pear, cherry, and mango are more localised and specialised.

A comparative assessment highlights the UT's strong national position in apples, walnuts, and almonds, with a major share in area and production and top rankings in yield, making these key strengths of the sector.

Per capita consumption of fresh and dry fruits has increased notably between 2011-12 and 2023-24, especially in rural areas. Apple consumption grew faster in rural regions, while dry fruits saw steady demand due to wider availability and us-

age.

Marketing infrastructure has also improved, with 5 terminal mandis and 14 satellite mandis operational across districts, along with 5 Apni Mandis enhancing market access for local growers.

The report notes that horticulture in Jammu and Kashmir holds significant importance, contributing around 76% of India's apple production and nearly 96% of the country's walnut output. It is also the producer of GI-tagged Kashmiri saffron, underscoring its national prominence—(KNO)

**Gurez, Wular.....**

actively promoted, and camping sites have already been established there," he said, adding that Haba Khattoon Park in Gurez is being developed and is expected to be inaugurated soon.

The CCF, as reported by the new agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the department is creating facilities such as viewpoints and resting points at Wular Lake to encourage tourists travelling towards Bandipora and Gurez to stop and experience the area.

He said eco-parks developed at various locations, including Chandaji, have led to an increase in tourist footfall since their inauguration last year, and more such sites are being identified for sustainable tourism development.

Addressing trainees of Foresters Batch 107 at the Chittarnar training school, Wani stressed the need for balancing tourism promotion with forest conservation. He said forests remain critical for ecological stability, water conservation, soil protection and biodiversity.

"Forest conservation and development must be carried out with a scientific approach. Focused management of smaller forest compartments can yield better results with available resources," he said.

The officer called for stronger afforestation measures, disease-free planning and regeneration of forests to maintain ecological balance.

Highlighting public participation, Wani said involvement of local communities and awareness among younger generations are key to long-term forest protection. The Forest Training School at Chittarnar, he said, is being developed as an eco-tourism and learning centre. "The department plans to construct an ecotourism hut there with a museum-like facility to educate students about forests, biodiversity and environmental conservation," he added.

Wani urged the trainees to work with discipline and responsibility, describing them as "guardians of Kashmir's green wealth". He called for sustained efforts to protect forest resources while promoting eco-friendly tourism in the region—(KNO)

**AIMSA writes.....**

agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), emphasised that doctors, who often work in high-pressure and resource-constrained environments, are increasingly facing threats to their safety while performing their duties.

"Doctors dedicate their lives to public service, frequently under challenging circumstances. However, repeated incidents of violence have created an atmosphere of fear within the healthcare community," the association said.

The concern comes in the wake of recent incidents at key medical institutions in Kashmir. At Government Medical College (GMC), Anantnag, several doctors, including Dr Ainal Huda and Dr Zamin, along with paramedical staff, were assaulted. A similar case was reported at GMC Baramulla, where a doctor identified as Dr Mustafa allegedly faced physical assault.

Highlighting the seriousness of the situation, AIMSA called for a series of corrective measures. These include strengthening security infrastructure in hospitals and medical colleges nationwide, with a particular focus on Jammu and Kashmir.

The association recommended deploying trained security personnel in sensitive areas such as emergency wards, where tensions often run high.

The AIMSA urged authorities to ensure strict legal action against those involved in attacks on medical staff, along with fast-track investigations to deliver timely justice. It proposed the installation of CCTV surveillance systems and the creation of emergency response mechanisms within hospital premises.

"There is a need for a comprehensive national policy dedicated to the protection of healthcare workers," the association said, arguing that safeguarding medical professionals is critical to maintaining the integrity and functionality of the healthcare system.

"Ensuring the safety of doctors is essential for protecting the healthcare system itself. We hope for immediate intervention and decisive action on this pressing issue," the AIMSA said—(KNO)



# Div Com, IGP Jammu review arrangements for SANJAY 2026

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 28:** Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar and Inspector General of Police Jammu Bhim Sen Tuti today reviewed the arrangements for Shri Amarnathji Yatra 2026 here at a high level meeting.

The meeting was attended by IG CRPF, IG BSF, IGP Traffic, Commissioner JMC, Deputy Commissioners and SSPs of Jammu, Kathua, Samba, Udhampur, Reasi and Ramban, Director Information, Director Tourism, Transport Commissioner, HODs and officers from Rural Sanitation, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, JKRTC, PWD, Jal Shakti, JPDCL, Fire and Emergency Services, NHA, BSNL, Airtel, JIO, RTO Jammu, Deputy Controller Food Safety Jammu.

The Divisional Commissioner reviewed the action plan for setting up of registration counter in Jammu and RFID centres at Lakhampur, Bhagwati Nagar and other Lodgment centres from where the pilgrims can get their e-KYCs done before departing for the Holy Pilgrimage from Bhagwati Nagar Yatra Camp.

It was informed that this year Token Centres for on-the-spot/Tatkal registration shall be set up at the Tawi River Front relieving the pilgrims from large queues and traffic issues near Railway Station.



The meeting was attended by IG CRPF, IG BSF, IGP Traffic, Commissioner JMC, Deputy Commissioners and SSPs of Jammu, Kathua, Samba, Udhampur, Reasi and Ramban, Director Information, Director Tourism, Transport Commissioner, HODs and officers from Rural Sanitation, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, JKRTC, PWD, Jal Shakti, JPDCL, Fire and Emergency Services, NHA, BSNL, Airtel, JIO, RTO Jammu, Deputy Controller Food Safety Jammu.

The Divisional Commissioner directed for ensuring proper arrangements of Drinking water, Langar facility and Sanitation at the venue of Token Center.

Reviewing the arrangements for Base camp at Bhagwati Nagar, the Divisional Commissioner directed the stakeholder departments for timely starting and completion of all the works. It was informed that tenders have been floated for repair and renovation works at Bhagwati Nagar Base Camp from where the yatra convoy leaves under proper security and regulation for

Pahalgam and Baltal Base camps.

The Divisional Commissioner directed for ensuring all the works are completed by June 10, 2026, including the facelifting, Whitewash, establishment of stalls for Bus ticket booking, Langar setup, Cloak room facilities along with proper arrangements for accommodation, washroom, power and lighting arrangements inside and outside the Bhagwati Nagar camp.

Directions were also issued for setting up of convenience store by the Cooperative Department inside the Bhagwati Nagar camp, provision of prepaid sims and installation of German hangars for pilgrims.

Threadbare discussion was held on other aspects of the arrangements for smooth conduct of the holy pilgrimage from the Bhagwati Nagar. The Divisional Commissioner directed the Fire and emergency Services for conducting a thorough audit of fire safety. PWD was directed to take up blacktopping of roads inside and around Bhagwati Nagar camp. PDD was asked for proper illumination along with provision of backup generator sets for uninterrupted power supply.

The Divisional Commissioner also reviewed the arrangements to be ensured in Lodgment centres in districts falling on the Yatra route -Kathua, Samba,

Udhampur and Ramban. The Deputy Commissioners were directed to review the provision of civic amenities and other facilities in the lodgment centres falling in their respective districts, including power, water, langar and CCTV cameras.

IGP Jammu reviewed the arrangements for deployment of security forces. He emphasized on proper illumination at each lodgment centre and adherence to yatra cut off timings.

Transport department was asked to ensure enforcement measures to check overcharging by public transport operators, while ferrying the pilgrims in Jammu city. The Divisional Commissioner directed the JKRTC to keep provision of busses for sightseeing and visit of pilgrims to the tourist destinations around Jammu city.

Director Food, Civil Supplies was asked to ensure availability of LPG and other commodities for Langars, while Deputy Controller Food Safety was instructed for proper checking of Langar sites.

The Divisional Commissioner further directed all the departments for appointing a nodal officer who shall be available in the Control Room that will be setup at Bhagwati Nagar Base camp for smooth operations of all the works.

## Budshah Cultural Institute Presents Grand Folk Play Performance at Govt. Degree College Bijbehara

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BIJBEHARA, ANANTNAG, APR 28:** The Budshah Cultural Institute, Wathoor Chadoora Budgam, successfully organized the final show of its seminar-cum-production of the traditional folk play "Aan Posh Teli Yeli Van Posh" at Government Degree College Bijbehara, Anantnag today.

The event witnessed a huge and enthusiastic audience, including students, faculty members, and cultural enthusiasts, who thoroughly enjoyed the powerful and meaningful performance rooted in Kashmiri tradition and social awareness.

The program was graced by Chief Guest Prof. Davinder Kumar, Principal of Government Degree College Bijbehara, who appreciated the remarkable efforts of the institute in preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of Kashmir. He lauded the artists for their dedication and impact-



ful presentation.

Guest of Honour Shah-e-Jahan Ahmad Bhagat, Chairman of All Kashmir Folk Artists Association and a national awardee, praised the initiative and emphasized the importance of folk traditions in maintaining cultural identity.

Special Guest Gull Mohar Poree, a renowned folk theatre expert, also appreciated the performance and highlighted the need to preserve traditional art forms for future generations.

During the program, guests and senior artists were felicitated in recognition of their valuable contributions to art and culture.

The folk play "Aan Posh Teli Yeli Van Posh" delivered a strong message of environmental awareness and cultural values, leaving a deep and lasting impact on the audience.

The play was directed by Younis Majid Rather and assistant directed by Shabir Ahmad Bhagat, whose creative vision and dedication contributed significantly to the success of the performance.

The program was organized under the Guru-Shishya Parampara (Repertory Grant) scheme, approved by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, for the year 2025-26.

The event concluded on a highly successful and fruitful note, receiving overwhelming appreciation from the audience. Many attendees expressed their admiration and requested the Budshah Cultural Institute to present the play again at the college, reflecting its strong impact and popularity.

## ASHA Workers Hold District Conference in Kupwara, Seek Regularisation and Minimum Wages

■ FAROOQ RATHER

**KUPWARA, APR 28:** The Jammu and Kashmir ASHA Workers Union (affiliated with CITU) on Tuesday organised a one-day district conference in Kupwara, with participation of delegates from various blocks across the district.

During the conference, participants reiterated their resolve to strengthen the organisation to effectively address their long-pending demands. Speakers highlighted the significant role played by ASHA workers in raising awareness about healthcare services, ensuring safe and risk-free deliveries, and serving as a crucial link between communities and the healthcare system.

A key resolution demanding the regularisation of ASHA workers and their inclusion under the Minimum Wages Act was unanimously passed during the conference. On the occasion, a new district body of the union was constituted. Zahida Ji Langkot was elected as District President, while Tahira Ji Villagam was appointed as Secretary. Tasleema Ji Langate was chosen as Chief Organiser. Haseena Ji Langkot was named Cashier, Shameema Ji Handwara as Cashier-II, and Abida Ji Villagam as Cashier-III.

Mehfooza Ji Trehgam and Perveeza Ji Langkot were elected as Vice Presidents, while Saleema Ji Kupwara also assumed the role of Vice President. Shaheena Ji Kralpora was appointed Deputy Secretary, with Rafiq Ji Handwara as Organiser-II. Gulshana Ji Tanghdar was named Additional Secretary, and Rafeeqa Ji Lolab was designated as Patron. The proceedings were supervised by senior leaders of the apex body, including Firdousa Ji, Amina Ji, and Dilshada Ji.

## Anti-Drug Awareness Programme Held in Srinagar under Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan

Curtain Call Theatre's Play "Aalav" Highlights Dangers of Drug Abuse.

■ JAMEEL ANSARI

**SRINAGAR, APR 28:** Under the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan, an anti-drug awareness programme was successfully organised at SP Higher Secondary School Srinagar by the District Administration Srinagar in collaboration with the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages.

The programme aimed to create awareness among students and youth about the harmful effects of drug abuse and to promote the vision of a healthy, drug-free society. A large number of students and teachers participated in the event and showed keen interest in the awareness activities.

On the occasion, Assistant Editor of the Cultural Academy, Dr. Syed Iftikhar Ahmad, welcomed the participants and shared his views on the importance of such initiatives.

A thought-provoking and impactful play titled "Aalav" was presented by Curtain Call Theatre Srinagar. The play effectively portrayed the devastating impact of drug addiction on individuals, families, and society.



The performance was widely appreciated by the audience.

The cast, including Shabir Hakak, Hilal Ahmad Khan, Mehjabeen Inksari, Shahid Shalla, Nazim Mehran, and Sameer Dar, delivered commendable performances and received applause for their artistic expression.

Speaking on the occasion, the Principal of SP Higher Secondary School Srinagar highlighted the importance of such awareness programmes and urged students to stay away from drugs and contribute towards building a drug-free society.

He appreciated the efforts of the District Administration, Cultural Academy, and the artists for organising a meaningful and socially relevant programme.

Teachers and students also lauded the initiative and stressed the need for more such programmes to raise awareness among youth.

At the conclusion of the event, participants collectively pledged to actively contribute towards the mission of a drug-free and healthy society under the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan.

## Etonner Festival 2026 Concludes at SSM College Pattan, Draws Strong Youth Participation

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**PATTAN, APR 28:** The two-day Etonner Festival 2026 concluded at SSM College Pattan in north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Monday, witnessing enthusiastic public participation and a strong response from youth.

Held under the theme Reviving Traditions, the festival attracted large crowds over both days, with students, local artists and performers from different parts of the country participating in a series of cultural and artistic programmes.



The concluding day witnessed heightened enthusiasm as a large number of spectators gathered to witness music performances, art displays and cultural showcases blending traditional heritage with modern creativity.

Students who participated in the festival said the event provided them with a valuable platform to showcase their talent and build confidence. They said such programmes help young people stay connected with their cultural roots while encouraging them to pursue their interests.

Organisers said the objec-

tive of the festival was to promote cultural awareness, encourage young talent and strengthen community engagement through creative platforms.

Visitors and attendees appreciated the initiative, describing it as a meaningful event for the youth of the region and stressing the need for more such programmes in future.

With its successful conclusion, the Etonner Festival 2026 has left a positive impact on participants and audiences alike, reinforcing the growing demand for cultural and youth-centric events in the Valley.

## Joint Director Central visited Ganderbal

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**GANDERBAL, APR 28:** Worthy Joint Director Central School Education Department Mr. Syed Shabir Ahmad, accompanied by the Chief Education Officer Ganderbal, today paid a comprehensive visit to Government Boys Higher Secondary School Safapora to review the academic functioning and overall performance of the institution.

During the visit, the Joint Director interacted with students and teachers, took stock of the ongoing academic activities, and student engagement in the learning process.

The visiting officer emphasized the importance of maintaining high standards of education and urged the teaching staff to adopt innovative and student-centric teaching practices. He stressed the need for regular assessment, timely completion of syllabus, and focused attention on improving learning outcomes.

Special emphasis was laid on strengthening foundational concepts among students and ensuring their active participation in co-curricular activities.

The Joint Director advised the school administration to further enhance the academic environment by ensuring optimal utilization of available resources, including ICT tools and laboratory infrastructure.

Interacting with the students, he encouraged them to remain focused on their studies and make the best use of the facilities being provided. He also highlighted the importance of moral values, discipline, and career-oriented education.

The visit reflects the department's ongoing efforts to closely monitor and enhance the quality of education across all schools in the district.

# Rana reviews JPDCCL functioning in Poonch, calls for accelerated RDSS implementation

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 28:** Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, on Tuesday reviewed the functioning of Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited in Poonch district, with a special focus on expediting implementation of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS).

The meeting was attended by the Managing Director JPDCCL, Chief Engineer and other senior officials, who briefed the Minister on the current status of works and outlined the roadmap for accelerated implementation of RDSS in the district. The Minister conducted a detailed review of the scheme's progress, examining key components such as the material supply chain, feeder-wise execution of works besides the availability and installation of critical infrastructure, including electric



poles, conductors, LT AB cables and transformers.

Termining RDSS a transformative initiative aimed at modernising and strengthening the power distribution sector, he stressed the need for improved efficiency,

strict accountability and proactive planning. He directed the officials to identify bottlenecks promptly and ensure their timely resolution to maintain momentum.

Expressing concern over the slow pace of progress in parts of

the district, the Minister instructed the officers to expedite ongoing works and remove all impediments. He reiterated the government's commitment towards ensuring reliable and equitable power supply, particularly in remote and

underserved areas.

Highlighting the importance of planned development, Rana cautioned against the haphazard installation of infrastructure. He emphasised that deployment of poles and related assets must follow proper technical planning, with priority given to rural and far-flung regions that have historically lagged in infrastructure.

Underscoring the need for accountability at all levels, the Minister also called for regular on-site inspections to ensure adherence to quality standards and timelines. He stressed the importance of maintaining geo-tagged photographic records of each project site to enhance transparency, monitoring and real-time tracking of progress.

He also directed that any leftover works be taken up under CAPEX or other suitable schemes to ensure their completion within stipulated timelines.

## DJMC IUST holds academic outreach program at Amar Singh College

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 28:** As part of its ongoing Academic Outreach Initiative, the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication (DJMC), Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), visited Amar Singh College here on Tuesday.

The programme aimed to generate awareness about the scope of media studies and saw enthusiastic participation from the media students of the college. It served as an engaging platform where faculty members, research scholars and students from DJMC interacted with the college students.

In her introductory remarks, Dr. Rabia Noor, Head, DJMC IUST, gave an overview of the department and its course curriculum. "The beauty of our Master's programme is the specialisation that is offered in different areas of media. Students are taught basics of all the subjects in first two semesters, and then they are provided with an opportunity to excel in one of them," she said.

Speaking on the occasion, Principal, Amar Singh College, Prof. Aijaz Ahmad Hakak, said, such interactions are a must for students to shape their career, as these aware them about the career opportunities they have. He also praised IUST for its vibrant academic activities.

Dr. Haifaa Mohammad, Assistant Professor, DJMC, held an interaction session with students and explained as to how pursuing a postgraduate degree can help them get better career opportunities and a competitive edge. She also conducted an interactive activity, called 'Viral in 60 Seconds', where students came up with different creative media ideas.

Through a series of insightful discussions and interactive sessions, the faculty and technical staff shared first-hand experiences, practical knowledge and career guidance across key domains, such as journalism, photography, digital content creation and so on.

The session also included a hands-on training in camera and videography, conducted by Zahoor Ahmad, Junior Technical Assistant, DJMC. While addressing the students, he said, professionalism is the key to sustain in the field. "Students need to learn basic journalism skills so that they excel and compete in the field," he said.

Meanwhile, a question-answer session was held, wherein the students raised several queries regarding careers in media. The team was also given a tour of the Department of Media Studies.

Earlier, welcoming the IUST team, Parvez Majeed Lone, Head, Department of Media Studies, Amar Singh College, said, there is a need of industry-ready professional, "and by the virtue of media studies, we make them society ready." Faculty members, Benish Ali Bhat and Saima Riyaz, were also present on the occasion.

## Baramulla buzzes with Sporting Spirit as DYSS ignites Youth Power

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BARAMULLA, APRIL 28:** Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYSS) Baramulla continues to energize the sporting landscape of the district through a series of Inter-School Zonal Level Competitions held under the dual banner of the Annual Sports Calendar 2026 and the ongoing Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan (100 Days Campaign).

In Zone Kunzer, an Inter-School Zonal Level Badminton Competition for Boys Under-14 and Under-17 categories was successfully conducted at the Playfield, HSS Kunzer. The event witnessed spirited participation from 32 teams representing various government and private institutions, reflecting the growing enthusiasm for sports among youth.

Meanwhile, Zone Wagoora organized an Inter-School Zonal Level Volleyball Tournament for Under-14 boys at HS Watargam, drawing participation from 180 students across multiple institutions. Similarly, Zone Nehalpora conducted Inter-School Volleyball Tournaments for Under-14 and Under-17 girls at BMS Waripora, with 70 students actively participating.

Zone Chandanwari also marked its presence by successfully organizing an Inter-School Zonal Level Volleyball Tournament for Under-17 boys under the banner of NMBA (Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan) and Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir. The tournament witnessed participation from various schools, with a total of 96 students showcasing their talent and sportsmanship.

In Zone Singhpora Pattan, Inter-School Zonal Level Badminton Competitions for both boys and girls in Under-14 and Under-17 categories were kick-started under the NMBA initiative, aimed at building a drug-free society. On the opening day, more than 100 participants enthusiastically took part in the competitions.

Adding to the sporting fervor, Zone Baramulla organized an Inter-School Badminton Competition for Under-14 boys at the prestigious Bipin Rawat Stadium.

The competition saw 26 teams competing in the doubles category and 23 teams in singles, with students from diverse educational institutions participating with zeal and determination.

Speaking on the sidelines of these events, DYSSO Baramulla, Sheikh Shafiq Iqbal stated that these competitions are being conducted as part of the Annual Sports Calendar 2026, alongside the dedicated schedule issued under the Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan, aimed at engaging youth in constructive activities and steering them away from substance abuse.

## Unity March Rally against Drug Abuse held in Srinagar under NMBA

Witnesses strong participation of students, faculty and officials

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 28:** Department of Physical Education and College Well-Being And Anti-Substance Cell (CWASC) of Government College of Education (IASE), M.A. Road, Srinagar, in collaboration with the Nodal Principal, Kashmir Division Colleges, and the District Administration Srinagar, organized a Unity March Rally under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) to spread awareness against substance abuse and promote a sense of collective social responsibility among students and the general public.

On the occasion, Prof. (Dr.) Seema Naz highlighted the objectives of the rally, stressing the crucial role of youth in building a



drug-free society. She said such initiatives are aimed at sensitizing students about the ill effects of substance abuse and strengthening community participation in prevention efforts.

The rally commenced from Government College of Education, M.A. Road, Srinagar, and passed through Maulana Azad Road, Polo View, and the GPO, footbridge Raj Bagh and culminating back at the college premises.

The event witnessed wide participation from students, faculty members, and officials, reflecting strong support for the nationwide campaign against drug abuse.

Among those present on the occasion were Prof. Lateef Shah, Prof. Alaf Shah Syed, Prof. Shawana Manzoor, Arshad Sauleh, Daljeet Kour, Dr. Qazi Inam, and others.

## 3-Day Skill Development Programme under HADP, Silk Samagra-2 commences at Bandipora

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, APRIL 28:** Sericulture Development Department Bandipora today kick started a three-day Skill Development Training Programme under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) and Silk Samagra-2 for the year 2026-27. The programme aims to strengthen the sericulture sector and enhance the income of farmers through capacity building and adoption of modern practices.

A total of 60 farmers, including participants from General and Tribal categories, are attending the training. Notably, a significant number of women farmers are participating, reflecting growing inclusivity in the sector. During the inaugural session, silkworm rearing appliances including pruning scissors and black cloth were distributed among the participants to support scientific rearing practices. The programme is being supervised by District Sericulture Officer Bandipora, Dr. Inayat Saleem Fazili, while technical sessions are being conducted by expert resource persons from Kupwara and the concerned Zonal



Incharge of the district.

It was given out that, over the three days, participants will receive training on improved mulberry cultivation, advanced silkworm rearing techniques, and disease management practices to enhance cocoon productivity and quality.

Speaking on the occasion, the District Sericulture Officer highlighted that the initiative is aimed at equipping farmers with modern technologies and scientific knowledge to boost production and ensure better economic returns.

## GCOE Srinagar holds Awareness Drive to combat Substance Abuse

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 28:** College Wellbeing and Anti-Substance Cell of Government College of Education (GCOE), M.A. Road, Srinagar, on Monday organised an awareness programme at its auditorium in collaboration with the Nodal Principal, Kashmir Division Colleges, and the District Administration Srinagar.

The programme was held under the theme "From Awareness to Action: Combating Substance Abuse with Community and Police Support," with the objective of sensitising students and the wider community about the harmful effects of substance abuse and the need for collective action.

Prof. (Dr.) Seema Naz, Nodal Principal, Kashmir Division Colleges, served as the patron of the event. Umar Shah, SP Headquarters Srinagar, and Syed Sleet Shah, DySP Headquarters Srinagar, were the key speakers.

Among others who addressed the gathering were Prof. Lateef Shah and Syed



Bilquees Alsam Shah.

The speakers underscored the vital role of community participation and coordinated efforts with law enforcement agencies in tackling the growing menace of substance abuse.

The event saw active participation from students, faculty members, and officials, reflecting a shared commitment towards building a drug-free society.

## DLSA SRINAGAR CONDUCTS AWARENESS DRIVES ON ADR

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 28:** District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar through its para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) today organized Awareness Programmes at Legal Literacy Clubs, Legal Aid Clinics and Local Areas of Srinagar on the Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) and the upcoming National Lok Adalat to be held on 9th May 2026 under the guidance of Haq Nawaz Zargar, Chairman DLSA (Principal District & Sessions Judge), Srinagar and overall supervision of Secretary DLSA, Srinagar.

The programmes were aimed at spreading awareness about Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms and the significance of Lok Adalat as an effective means for resolving disputes in a speedy, cost-effective, and amicable manner.

The PLVs sensitised the participants

about the benefits of settling cases through Lok Adalats, including reduced litigation costs, expeditious disposal of cases, and preservation of relationships.

During the sessions, the PLVs interacted with members of the public, distributed informational material, and addressed queries regarding legal rights and remedies available under the legal services framework. Emphasis was laid on encouraging people to opt for ADR mechanisms to avoid lengthy court procedures.

The initiative witnessed active participation from local residents, students, and members of the community, reflecting a growing interest in alternative modes of dispute resolution.

DLSA Srinagar reiterated its commitment towards promoting legal awareness and ensuring access to justice for all, particularly at the grassroots level, through continuous outreach programmes.

## NMBA@100: Ganderbal unrolls Mat against Drugs by convening Mass Yoga session at Mini-Secretariat Lawns

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**GANDERBAL, APRIL 28:** District Administration Ganderbal today organised a large-scale yoga session at the DC Office Lawns, bringing together students, government employees, and residents in a united stand against drug abuse.

The event was presided over by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Ganderbal, Syed Faheem Bihagi, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Principal, Government College of Physical Education; Deputy Superintendent of Police Hqrs; and other officers and officials at the Mini-Secretariat Lawns, with parallel sessions held simultaneously across schools, colleges, and public spaces throughout the district.

The initiative is part of the Nasha Mukht Abhiyan (NMBA@100), a

structured 100 day campaign being implemented under the vision of the Honorable Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir to make the Union Territory drug-free. Ganderbal's administration has drawn up a dedicated 100-day district calendar anchoring health awareness at the centre of this mission.

On the occasion, trained yoga instructors led the participants through a series of structured yoga sessions, guiding them step by step through postures and breathing exercises aimed at promoting physical fitness and mental calm.

Speaking on the occasion, the ADC said that yoga activity has dual impact as it builds physical resilience while also strengthening mental well-being, both of which are recognised as key protective factors against substance dependency. He

said the administration believes that nurturing healthy daily habits, particularly among young people, is among the most sustainable ways to keep communities drug-free.

"Today's yoga drive, however, is only one component of a broader and coordinated district-wide effort.

On the enforcement front, authorities are carrying out sustained action against drug peddlers and supply networks operating across the district. Alongside this, the administration is running sports competitions, public awareness marches, and door-to-door outreach campaigns to engage communities directly," Bihagi said.

He added that schools and colleges are also at the heart of this effort, with targeted educational programmes designed to reach young people before substance abuse takes

hold. Taken together, these measures are driving home a single, clear message "Say No to Drugs, Yes to Life" into every household across Ganderbal.

The administration has set a clear and time-bound target to declare Ganderbal a drug-free district within the 100-day campaign window. Officials have emphasised that achieving this goal calls for participation from every section of society viz. families, teachers, religious leaders, youth groups, and local institutions alike and that the momentum built so far is a strong foundation for the days ahead.

"Physical wellness and community solidarity are our strongest tools in this fight. When people are healthy, engaged, and connected, they are far less vulnerable to the trap of substance abuse.

# Satish Sharma calls for climate-resilient agroecosystems; stresses innovation, youth-led sustainable growth in J&K

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 28:** Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, Information Technology, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, today called for urgent, innovation-driven measures to build climate-resilient agroecosystems in Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing the national conference on Sustainable and Climate Resilient Agroecosystems at SKUAST-Jammu, the Minister said the region's unique Himalayan ecology and agrarian economy place it at the frontline of climate change. He said that erratic weather patterns, shifting cultivation cycles and extreme climate events are already impacting the farmers,



horticulturists and pastoral communities.

"Jammu and Kashmir is a living laboratory of climate change. Our response must be immediate, locally relevant and science-based," he said.

Highlighting that nearly 60-70

percent of the population depends on agriculture and allied sectors, Satish Sharma stressed that long-term economic growth hinges on building resilient farming systems. He said Kashmir's apple economy is facing stress from rising temperatures and shorter chilling

periods and urged faster research into climate-resilient varieties. For Jammu, he highlighted declining groundwater and erratic monsoons affecting the key crops and called for greater adoption of precision irrigation and stronger agro-advisory outreach.

The Minister also drew attention to the challenges faced by Gujjar and Bakarwal communities due to disrupted grazing patterns, urging for integrated support that blends the traditional knowledge with modern science. He further stressed the need for watershed management and soil conservation.

Emphasizing the role of technology, Satish Sharma advocated real-time weather advisories, AI-driven farming solutions, stronger market linkages and robust cold-chain

infrastructure. "Technology must connect research directly with the farmer," he said.

He also appreciated the ongoing afforestation efforts and called for scaling up ecological initiatives across both the rural and urban areas.

Urging stronger collaboration between the institutions and policymakers, the Minister called for actionable recommendations under programmes like the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme.

Encouraging youth participation, he said young researchers and agri-entrepreneurs will play a decisive role in shaping a sustainable future.

"The future of our agriculture lies in the hands of our youth," he added.

# Yasha Mudgal reviews preparations for high level Zonal Cooperative Workshop at Srinagar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 28:** Commissioner Secretary, Cooperative Department, Yasha Mudgal, today chaired a high-level preparatory meeting to review the arrangements for the upcoming Zonal Review Workshop to be held at Srinagar from June 24 to 26, 2026.

The meeting was attended by the Special Secretary, Cooperative; FA/CAO Cooperative Department; Joint Registrar (Audit), Kashmir and other senior departmental officers.

During the meeting, the Commissioner Secretary was informed that the workshop, being organized by the Union Ministry for Cooperation, will witness participation from the senior officers of the Union Ministry as well as the Secretaries and Registrars of Cooperative Departments from various States and Union Territories.

A detailed overview of the event framework, covering agenda, thematic sessions, resource persons and expected outcomes, was presented. Besides, the current status of preparations, including proposed venues, timelines and identified nodal officers for different functional areas was also presented.

Reviewing the arrangements, Yasha Mudgal stressed the need for comprehensive planning and coordinated management of all aspects of the event, covering arrival, stay, conference proceedings and departure of delegates. She emphasized that all the arrangements must be executed in a seamless and professional manner.

The Commissioner Secretary further reviewed the protocol and liaison mechanisms, underscoring the vital importance of maintaining effective communication with the Union Ministry and participating States/UTs. She directed that robust facilitation measures be ensured to handle all protocol-related engagements without any lapses.

While taking stock of transport, accommodation and hospitality arrangements, the Commissioner Secretary called for meticulous advance planning and efficient coordination to ensure maximum convenience of delegates. She emphasized the need for maintaining appropriate standards and ensuring consistent logistical support throughout the three-day event.

She also reviewed the conference management and venue readiness, directing that all necessary infrastructure and support systems be finalized timely in strict accordance with the established norms.

Highlighting the importance of inter-departmental synergy, Yasha Mudgal stressed the need for close coordination among all the concerned departments and agencies. She called for continuous monitoring and the development of contingency plans to ensure smooth and successful conduct of the workshop.

# DC Pulwama reviews NEET (UG) Examination preparations

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**PULWAMA, APRIL 28:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom today chaired a comprehensive meeting at the Circuit House Pulwama to review the arrangements for the forthcoming



NEET (UG) Examination.

At the outset, the Additional Deputy Commissioner briefed the chair on the overall preparedness, including identification of examination centres, deployment of staff, implementation of SOPs, transportation plans, security arrangements, and other logistical requirements. The DC also sought detailed inputs from Centre Superintendents regarding preparedness at their respective centres, including adherence to prescribed SOPs and arrangements put in place for smooth conduct of the examination.

The DC directed all concerned Centre Superintendents to ensure foolproof arrangements for the smooth and fair conduct of the examination. He stressed the importance of maintaining strict adherence to the guidelines issued by the National Testing Agency (NTA) and ensuring proper coordination among all stakeholders. Emphasizing the sensitivity of the examination, the DC directed for adequate deployment of magistrates and security personnel at all examination centres. Dr. Qayoom further instructed the concerned departments to facilitate seamless transportation, ensure uninterrupted power supply, and provide all essential services on the day of the examination.

Highlighting the need for effective inter-departmental coordination, the Deputy Commissioner called for a collaborative approach to create a conducive environment for the candidates.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Awantipora; Centre Superintendents of all designated centres, City Coordinator/Nodal Officer NTA (District Pulwama), and officers from Police and Civil Administration.

# Rana meets public delegations in Jammu, Assures time-bound action on development issues

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 28:** Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today met multiple public delegations at the Civil Secretariat, listening closely to their concerns related to development and community welfare.

During the meeting, representatives from various areas raised pressing issues, particularly emphasizing the need to upgrade road infrastructure, improve water availability and strengthen essential public services.

The delegations highlighted that rural and underserved regions require focused attention, citing their unique challenges they face in accessing basic facilities.

The Minister gave a patient and attentive hearing to all submissions,



acknowledging the proactive role played by the delegations in voicing the concerns of their communities.

He assured them that all genuine demands would be carefully examined and addressed in a phased, time-bound manner.

Reaffirming the government's

commitment, Rana reiterated that the administration led by Omar Abdullah remains focused on responsive governance, prioritizing timely resolution of public issues and ensuring balanced, sustainable development across regions and sub-regions in Jammu and Kashmir.

# ACS Tourism visits Budgam; flags off 'Run for Nasha Mukht JK', participates in plantation drive

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, APRIL 28:** The district administration Budgam today organized a comprehensive programme under the 100 day Jammu and Kashmir Nasha Mukht Abhiyan at Sheikh-ul-Alam Degree College, Budgam, aimed at strengthening the public awareness and collective action against drug abuse. The programme was graced by Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) Tourism, Dr. Ashish Chandra Verma, who is also the district mentor for Budgam.

The event commenced with the flag-off of the "Run for Nasha Mukht JK", symbolizing a united pledge towards a drug-free society. This was followed by a plantation drive, reinforcing the message of sustainable and healthy living.

Signature campaign witnessed enthusiastic participation of the students and stakeholders, highlighting community commitment to the cause.

In his keynote address, Dr. Verma lauded the district administration and participating institutions for their proactive role

in implementing the Nasha Mukht Abhiyan. The ACS stressed the need for sustained awareness campaigns, community participation and institutional accountability in curbing the drug abuse. He directed all the departments to adopt a mission-mode approach, ensure regular outreach in educational institutions and strengthen the counseling and rehabilitation mechanisms.

He further emphasized the importance of youth engagement through sports, culture and skill-based initiatives to channel their

energies positively.

Dr. Verma also underscored the need for inter-departmental coordination, strict enforcement against drug peddling and enhanced vigilance at vulnerable points. He called for leveraging local leadership, including Panchayati Raj Institutions and civil society, to amplify the impact of the campaign.

Deputy Commissioner Budgam Athar Aamir Khan in his remarks, reiterated the district administration's commitment towards making Budgam a drug-free district through coordinated

efforts. He highlighted that a multi-pronged strategy involving awareness, enforcement and rehabilitation is being actively pursued. Senior Superintendent of Police Budgam Hariprasad KK and Principal Degree collage Dr. Amin also spoke on the occasion.

The programme concluded with the administration of a pledge against drug abuse by the chief guest, followed by a vote of thanks.

Others present were PO ICDS, CHO, district officers, students, NSS volunteers, NCC cadets and local citizens.

# DC, SSP Shopian visits Dubjan to monitor ongoing rescue operation of drowned kid

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SHOPIAN, APRIL 28:** Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Shishir Gupta and Senior Superintendent of Police Shopian, Mushtaq Ahmad Chaudhary today visited Dubjan, where a kid from Pulwama district drowned in Rambaira river on Sunday.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the ongoing rescue operation at the site. He took stock of the efforts being undertaken by the concerned rescue agencies and issued

necessary directions to further intensify the search.

Rescue teams comprising Police, SDRF, local volunteers and other experts are carrying out extensive search operations in the river to trace the kid.

The Deputy Commissioner assured that the district administration is taking every possible step to trace and retrieve him. He stated that the administration is maintaining close supervision over the entire operation to ensure effective coordination among all agencies.

# Judiciary gets boost in Bandipora as New Court Complex ready for use

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, APRIL 28:** Principal District and Sessions Judge (PD&SJ) Bandipora, Jeema Bashir, along with the Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal today conducted an on-site inspection of the Advocate Chambers at the newly constructed Court Complex in Bandipora.

During the inspection, both officers reviewed the ongoing finishing works and assessed the readiness of the Advocate

Chambers and associated infrastructure. Emphasis was laid on ensuring that all necessary facilities are in place to provide a functional and efficient working environment for the legal fraternity.

The officials expressed satisfaction over the pace and quality of the work, noting that the project is nearing completion.

They directed the concerned executing agencies to expedite the remaining minor works so that the complex is made fully operational at the earliest.

# DC Anantnag reviews SANJY-2026 preparations at Nunwan, Chandanwari Base Camps

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**ANANTNAG, APRIL 28:** Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag, Yatra Officer, Pahalgam Axis, Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, today visited Nunwan Pahalgam to review and assess the preparations being made for the upcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra - 2026.

ADC, Dr. Muzamil Maqbool Beigh, SDM Pahalgam, Amit Gupta, SE Hydraulics, CAHO, BMO Sallar, Tehsildar Pahalgam, officers from PDA and engineering wings besides other concerned officials accompanied the DC during the visit.

On the occasion, the DC took a detailed and comprehensive review of the preparedness and arrangements for the upcoming Yatra. He was briefed about the logistical facilities including accommodation, tentage, water supply,

power supply, health care, sanitation and other essential services that shall be made available to the pilgrims during their journey to the Holy Cave.

It was informed that round-the-clock monitoring mechanisms have been planned to ensure uninterrupted services and promptly address any emergent issues faced by the Yatri. Further, as a novel initiative, "females only kiosks" will be installed at Nunwan Base Camp to cater to the special needs and issues of the female devotees.

Expressing satisfaction on overall progress on SANJY 2026 preparations made so far, the DC directed that all necessary arrangements including essential services be put in place in a smooth and time bound manner. He instructed for providing adequate facilities to the devotees at all base camps, transit points and other

important locations enroute the Holy Cave so they have a seamless and enriching experience during the entire journey.

Dr. Bilal called for collective efforts and sustained coordination by all stakeholder agencies including civil administration, line departments, police, security forces and service providers, so the Yatra is conducted safely and successfully. He further asked the departments to augment the gaps or loopholes, if any, encountered during last year Yatra and take the effective remedial measures well in advance to facilitate the sacred pilgrimage. Later, the DC visited Chandanwari Camp and inspected the medical facilities, availability of emergency response systems, and preparedness for high-altitude health emergencies.

# DLSA, District Admin Shopian organise Nasha Mukht Awareness Camp at GDC

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SHOPIAN, APRIL 28:** District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Shopian, in collaboration with the District Administration Shopian, today organised a Mega Awareness Camp under the ongoing "100 Days Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan" at Government Degree College (GDC), Shopian. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, faculty members, legal professionals, police officials, and officers of the district administration, reflecting a collective commitment to eradicate drug abuse from society.

Mohammad Ahmad Chowdhary, Principal District & Sessions Judge Shopian, who attended the programme as Chief Guest, lauded the efforts of DLSA and the District Administration

in organising the awareness campaign. He urged students to act as ambassadors of the anti-drug movement and called upon teachers and parents to remain vigilant.

He further affirmed that the judiciary stands firmly with the youth in the fight against substance abuse and will continue to support initiatives aimed at building a drug-free society.

ADDG Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone, while speaking on the occasion expressed gratitude to all dignitaries, speakers, performers, and participants for making the event successful. He urged all stakeholders to actively support the ongoing campaign against drug abuse. Chairman DLSA Shopian, Mahmood Ahmad, elaborated on the legal framework to tackle drug abuse and reiterated the Authority's commitment to providing free legal

aid to victims and their families. Rafie Ahmad Ganie, Chief Legal Aid Defence Counsel (LADC) Shopian, and Mudasir Farooq, Secretary DLSA Shopian, spoke about rehabilitation measures, legal aid services, and support mechanisms available for individuals affected by substance abuse.

District Information Officer (DIO) Shopian, Showkat Hussain Ganie, in his address underscored the need for collective societal efforts to curb the growing menace of substance abuse. He highlighted that addiction often begins at an early stage and requires timely intervention and awareness.

A cultural segment organised by DIPR Shopian, featuring a folk performance and poetry recitation, captivated the audience and effectively conveyed the anti-drug message among the youth.

HT EDITORIAL

Identify, push elements who want to undermine Urdu language

A ruling party and the opposition parties are always on the lookout to target each other, but there are occasions where the rulers and the opponents are on the same page. This holds true with all the states and union territories and Jammu & Kashmir is no exception in this regard. The ruling National Conference and the main regional opposition party the Peoples Democratic Party always trade charges.

However as of late an issue has brought about bonhomie among these two main regional political parties. The issue in question is the recent recruitment advertisement in the revenue department. In the past the candidates applying for posts like Naib Tehsildar and Patwari should be proficient in the Urdu language with this language being mandatory for all the applicants. This time around no such criteria has been set and the Urdu language has been rendered irrelevant by the recruiting agency.

This is despite the fact that the revenue documents better known as revenue extracts in the past were issued in Urdu language. The trend has changed over the past few years and the revenue extracts are also published in other languages. In other words, it can be said that attempts are being made to undermine the Urdu language with the recent recruitment notice being a stark reminder in this regard. Voices have become louder in the union territory especially in Kashmir valley against this calculated move to remove Urdu language from the scene.

Since decisions about the recruitment in the union territory are taken by the local government one fails to understand who has issued orders for not making Urdu as a mandatory language for the Naib Tehsildar and Patwari posts. Education minister Sakeena Itoo recently in a function said that attempts are being made to remove Urdu from the annals of history adding that such steps would be countered with all the might. It is the responsibility of the government to clear the air in this regard so that the people come to know about the real truth.

Since many legislators of the National Conference have also voiced concern over the matter, it is the moral responsibility of such legislators to make their government issue a statement in this regard. Once an official statement is issued in this regard it would be known to one and all as who is the culprit. Once the culprit is known then action can be taken against him and in future such things would not be repeated.

# Mindfulness Matters in a Restless World



■ SURINDERPAL SINGH

In an age defined by constant notifications, relentless competition and an ever-growing pursuit of material success, a simple yet powerful psychological practice is gaining global attention—mindfulness. Once rooted in ancient contemplative traditions, mindfulness has now entered modern life through psychology, education and even corporate culture as a practical tool to cope with stress and mental fatigue.

At its core, mindfulness is the practice of paying deliberate attention to the present moment without judgment. It involves being fully aware of what one is doing, thinking and feeling instead of functioning on autopilot. This awareness creates a mental space where thoughts and emotions are observed rather than immediately reacted to, allowing individuals to respond with clarity instead of impulse.

From a psychological perspective, mindfulness helps people recognize that thoughts and emotions are temporary experiences. Rather than becoming overwhelmed, individuals learn to step

back and observe their inner state with calmness. This shift reduces emotional reactivity and builds resilience in challenging situations.

A common question arises whether mindfulness can truly reduce stress, tension and anxiety. The answer is yes, but with realistic expectations. Much of human stress stems from dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. Mindfulness interrupts this pattern by anchoring attention in the present moment. With consistent practice, it can lower physiological stress responses such as increased heart rate and cortisol levels while improving emotional regulation. It also helps reduce repetitive negative thinking, often referred to as rumination.

However, mindfulness is not a magic solution. It does not eliminate problems but transforms how individuals relate to them. Stressful situations may still arise, but they are experienced with greater clarity and less emotional disturbance.

The growing popularity of mindfulness reflects the pressures of modern life. Continuous digital exposure has created information overload, leaving little room for mental rest. Materialistic lifestyles often lead individuals to chase external success while feeling internally unfulfilled. At the same time, increased awareness of mental health issues has encouraged people to seek non-medical coping strategies. Scientific research has further strengthened mindfulness by showing its positive impact on brain areas related to attention and emotional control.

There is also a strong argument for introduc-

ing mindfulness in schools. Today's students face academic pressure, social comparison and reduced attention spans. Teaching mindfulness early can improve concentration, enhance emotional intelligence and reduce exam-related stress. Simple practices like short breathing exercises or moments of reflection can be easily integrated into daily routines.

Practicing mindfulness does not require special tools or long hours. It can be cultivated through simple habits such as focusing on one's breath, paying attention to bodily sensations, eating with awareness, observing surroundings without judgment and becoming conscious of digital consumption. These small practices gradually build a more attentive and balanced mind.

While mindfulness is effective, it should not be overestimated. It works best when combined with healthy lifestyle habits such as proper sleep, physical activity and meaningful social connections. In cases of severe mental health challenges, professional support remains essential.

Ultimately, mindfulness represents a shift from external achievement to internal awareness. In a world that constantly pulls attention outward, it teaches individuals to return inward—to a space of calm, clarity and control. Its rising relevance signals a deeper human need not just to live faster or achieve more, but to live more consciously and meaningfully.

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# Life On Our Planet Earth



■ MOOL RAJ

In the context of this article, Earth Day serves as a powerful lens through which the narrative of environmental decline, illustrated by biodiversity loss, climate disruption, and human overexploitation, can be understood as a scientific concern as well as a shared global responsibility.

These changes illustrate how localized human actions can have global environmental consequences. Transitioning to renewable energy is another critical step, as the Earth receives abundant solar energy that can meet human needs without damaging ecosystems.

Observed every year on 22 April, Earth Day is a global environmental observance that emerged in 1970 to raise awareness about the protection of the planet and to act collectively against challenges such as pollution, deforestation, and climate change. Today, it is the world's largest civic environmental movement, engaging more than a billion people across over 190 countries in efforts to safeguard Earth's natural systems for future generations.

In the context of this article, Earth Day serves as a powerful lens through which the narrative of environmental decline, illustrated by biodiversity loss, climate disruption, and human overexploitation, can be understood as a scientific concern as well as a shared global responsibility. The warnings and solutions discussed serve the very purpose of Earth Day: to recognize the urgency of restoring balance with nature and to inspire meaningful action toward a sustainable future.

The abandoned city of Chernobyl in Ukraine stands as one of the starkest reminders of how human error can make a place suddenly uninhabitable. Once home to nearly 50,000 people, Chernobyl possessed everything necessary for a comfortable and secure community life. Yet on 26 April 1986, the nearby Chernobyl nuclear power station exploded, and within forty-eight hours, the entire city was evacuated. No one has lived there since. The disaster, caused by poor planning and human mistakes, triggered an en-



vironmental catastrophe whose effects were felt across Europe and which many regarded as among the costliest in human history. Still, Chernobyl was a single event. The greater tragedy of our time is far broader, slower, and often less visible from one day to the next: the decline of the natural world and the loss of Earth's biodiversity.

Life on Earth is sustained by a complex and interconnected web of ecosystems, where millions of species interact in delicate balance. This biodiversity is not merely aesthetic or incidental; it is the foundation of the Earth's life-support system. Human survival depends entirely on these natural processes, from oxygen production to climate regulation. However, modern human lifestyles, driven by industrialization, expansion, and overconsumption, are disrupting these systems at an extraordinary scale, pushing the planet toward instability and making it unfit for human life.

Historically, Earth has undergone five mass extinctions, each reshaping life dramatically. The current era, known as the Holocene, has been uniquely stable, allowing ecosystems to flourish and human civilization to emerge. This stability enabled agriculture, settlement, and technological advancement. However, human intelligence has helped us progress, but it has also led us to use nature beyond its limits. Unlike other species, humans have the capacity to transform their environment through ideas and technology, but this power has in-

creasingly distanced humanity from the natural systems upon which it depends.

The oceans provide a clear example of this imbalance. Industrial fishing has depleted approximately ninety percent of large marine species, disrupting vital nutrient cycles. Predatory fish, which play a crucial role in maintaining ocean productivity, have been removed at such scale that entire marine ecosystems are weakening. Similarly, the polar regions, once considered untouched, are rapidly changing. Arctic ice is melting, reducing the Earth's ability to reflect sunlight and accelerating global warming. These changes illustrate how localized human actions can have global environmental consequences.

Human dominance over the planet is now evident in measurable terms. Vast deforestation, overfishing, freshwater depletion, and land conversion for agriculture have reshaped Earth's ecosystems. Wildlife has been displaced by domesticated species, and natural habitats have been replaced by human-managed environments. The balance of life has shifted dramatically, with humans and livestock now constituting the overwhelming majority of biomass, leaving only a small fraction for wild species.

Drawing on decades of observation, David Attenborough presents this remarkable witness statement as a lived reality in a Netflix series called 'A life on Our Planet'. Since the mid-twentieth century, global wildlife populations have more than

halved. What once appeared to be abundant wilderness was, in many cases, already in decline. His account compresses the story of environmental degradation into a single human lifetime, making the scale and speed of change both tangible and alarming.

Despite these warnings, the narrative is not without hope. The future course of the planet depends on the choices humanity makes today. If current trends continue, ecosystems such as the Amazon rainforest may collapse, Arctic ice may disappear entirely during summers, and a sixth mass extinction could become a present reality. However, these outcomes are not inevitable. The restoration of biodiversity is presented as the central solution to stabilizing the planet.

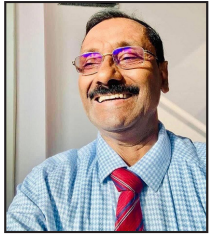
This restoration requires both reducing harmful human activities and reorganizing society in sustainable ways. Stabilizing population growth through education, healthcare, and social development is one key strategy. Transitioning to renewable energy is another critical step, as the Earth receives abundant solar energy that can meet human needs without damaging ecosystems. Countries like Morocco demonstrate that a shift toward renewable energy is both feasible and beneficial.

The recovery of natural systems is also possible when given the opportunity. Marine ecosystems can regenerate through protected zones, as seen in Palau, where conservation efforts have improved both biodiversity and local livelihoods. On land, reducing agricultural pressure, particularly through dietary shifts and efficient farming, can free space for rewilding. Forest restoration, exemplified by Costa Rica, shows how policy interventions can reverse environmental damage and restore ecological balance.

At its core, the argument emphasizes a fundamental shift in perspective: humanity must recognize that it is not separate from nature but deeply embedded within it. The lesson is both humbling and hopeful, nature has the capacity to recover, as seen in the resurgence of wildlife in abandoned Chernobyl. The critical question is whether humanity will adapt in time to coexist with the natural world. Whatever the answer is, sustainable living is no longer optional but essential.

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# Betrayal, the Biggest Crime: History and Literature



■ DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

Betrayal has always been regarded as one of the darkest crimes in human life, a violation that destroys trust and reshapes destinies. Across history and literature, betrayers have left indelible marks, not only on the individuals they deceived but on entire societies and cultures. From the political treachery of Mir Jafar and Afzal Khan in India to the literary betrayals depicted in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, the theme of betrayal reveals itself as a universal force that transcends time and geography. Betrayal is a word that evokes a visceral reaction in almost every human being. It is not just a breach of trust—it is a profound violation of the emotional and moral fabric that binds individuals together. Unlike theft, assault, or even murder, betrayal is uniquely personal. It is committed not by strangers but by those closest to us: friends, lovers, family members, colleagues. It is this intimacy that makes betrayal the worst crime in human life. It is a wound that cuts deeper than physical harm, leaving scars that may never heal. In this essay, we explore the nature of betrayal, its psychological and emotional consequences, its historical and cultural significance, and why it remains the most devastating offense one human can commit against another.

Examining these figures together allows us to understand betrayal not merely as an act of personal disloyalty but as a crime with profound social, political, and moral consequences. In Indian history, Mir Jafar stands as one of the most infamous betrayers. As the commander of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah's army, he was entrusted with defending Bengal against the British East India Company. Yet, at the Battle of Plassey in 1757, Mir Jafar secretly allied with Robert Clive and withheld his forces at the crucial moment. His betrayal ensured the defeat of Siraj-ud-Daulah and paved the way for British dominance in India. This act of treachery was not merely a personal betrayal of his ruler but a betrayal of an entire nation, altering the course of Indian history for nearly two centuries. Mir Jafar's name has since become synonymous with treachery, a reminder of how one man's ambition can enslave millions. Similarly, Afzal Khan, a general of the Bijapur Sul-

tanate, attempted betrayal in a more personal and violent form. Sent to subdue the rising Maratha leader Shivaji Maharaj, Afzal Khan pretended to negotiate peace. He invited Shivaji to a private meeting, feigning friendship, but concealed a dagger in his robes with the intent to assassinate him. Shivaji, however, anticipated the treachery and used his concealed *wagh nakh* (tiger claws) to kill Afzal Khan. This incident at Pratapgad in 1659 became legendary, symbolizing not only Shivaji's courage but also the destructive nature of betrayal. Afzal Khan's duplicity cost him his life and strengthened the Maratha resistance, showing how betrayal can backfire on the betrayer himself.

In literature, betrayal is no less devastating. Shakespeare's tragedies are filled with characters whose treachery drives the narrative forward. In *Macbeth*, the titular character betrays King Duncan, his kinsman and benefactor, by murdering him in his sleep to seize the throne of Scotland. This act of betrayal is compounded when Macbeth later arranges the murder of his loyal friend Banquo, fearing the prophecy that Banquo's descendants would inherit the crown. Macbeth's betrayal is driven by ambition, but it leads to tyranny, paranoia, and ultimately his downfall. Shakespeare portrays betrayal here as a corrosive force: once committed, it demands further treachery to sustain itself, until the betrayer is consumed by guilt and fear. In *Hamlet*, betrayal takes a different form through Claudius, who murders his own brother, King Hamlet, by pouring poison into his ear. Claudius then marries Queen Gertrude and seizes the throne of Denmark. His betrayal is both familial and political, violating the bonds of kinship and the sanctity of kingship. The revelation of this treachery sets Hamlet on a path of revenge, leading to a chain of deaths that culminates in tragedy. Claudius's betrayal is emblematic of corruption at the heart of power, showing how treachery destabilizes not only personal relationships but entire kingdoms.

When we place Mir Jafar and Afzal Khan alongside Macbeth and Claudius, striking parallels emerge. All four betrayals are driven by ambition—whether for power, wealth, or survival. All four betrayals involve deception, cloaking treachery in the guise of loyalty or friendship. And all four betrayals have consequences far beyond the immediate act: Mir Jafar's treachery led to colonial domination, Afzal Khan's duplicity strengthened the Marathas, Macbeth's betrayal plunged Scotland into tyranny, and Claudius's crime destroyed Denmark's royal family. Betrayal, in each case, is not a private sin

but a public catastrophe. Yet, there are differences too. Mir Jafar's betrayal was calculated and political, a long-term alliance with foreign powers. Afzal Khan's was immediate and personal, a physical attempt at assassination. Macbeth's betrayal was driven by supernatural prophecy and personal ambition, while Claudius's was coldly pragmatic, a calculated murder for power. These variations show the many faces of betrayal: it can be subtle or violent, political or personal, but its essence remains the same—a violation of trust that reshapes destinies.

Culturally and historically, betrayal has always been viewed as one of the gravest offenses. Literature, religion, and history are replete with stories of betrayal and its consequences. In the Bible, Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus is considered one of the most infamous acts of treachery. In Roman history, Brutus's betrayal of Julius Caesar—immortalized in Shakespeare's "Et tu, Brute?"—is a symbol of political and personal treachery. These stories endure because they tap into a universal truth: betrayal is a moral and emotional wound that transcends time and culture. In the realm of politics and war, betrayal can have catastrophic consequences. Espionage, treason, and political backstabbing have altered the course of history. Betrayal in these contexts is not just personal—it can affect nations and civilizations. The betrayal of alliances, the leaking of secrets, and the undermining of leaders have led to wars, revolutions, and the collapse of empires. Yet even in these grand narratives, the emotional core of betrayal remains the same: a trusted party turning against another for personal gain.

In personal relationships, betrayal is often the most painful. Romantic betrayal, such as infidelity, can destroy marriages and families. The emotional intimacy shared between partners makes the breach of trust particularly devastating. The betrayed partner may feel not only hurt but humiliated, questioning their own desirability and worth. The ripple effects can extend to children, extended family, and social circles, creating a web of emotional fallout. Friendship, too, is vulnerable to betrayal. When a friend reveals a secret, spreads rumors, or fails to support us in a time of need, the sense of betrayal can be overwhelming. Friendships are built on mutual respect, loyalty, and shared experiences. When these are violated, the loss can feel like a death. The betrayed individual may grieve not just the friendship but the memories and the future they envisioned together.

In the workplace, betrayal can take the form of sabotage, gossip, or unethical

behavior. Professional relationships are built on collaboration and mutual goals. When a colleague undermines another for personal advancement, it creates a toxic environment. The betrayed employee may suffer professionally and emotionally, leading to stress, burnout, and a loss of motivation. What makes betrayal particularly insidious is its stealth. Unlike open conflict, betrayal is often hidden, masked by smiles and kind words. This duplicity intensifies the pain, as the betrayed must reconcile the image of the betrayer with the reality of their actions. The emotional dissonance can be overwhelming, leading to confusion and a sense of unreality. The betrayed may ask themselves: "How could I not have seen this coming?" or "Was everything a lie?"

Despite its devastating impact, betrayal can also be a catalyst for growth. It forces individuals to reevaluate their relationships, boundaries, and values. It can lead to greater self-awareness and resilience. Some find strength in the aftermath of betrayal, learning to trust themselves more and to be more discerning in their relationships. However, this growth often comes at a high emotional cost. In philosophical terms, betrayal challenges our understanding of morality and human nature. It raises questions about loyalty, integrity, and the capacity for cruelty. Why do people betray those they love? Is betrayal a result of weakness, selfishness, or a deeper moral failing? These questions have no easy answers, but they underscore the complexity of human behavior. In conclusion, betrayal is the worst crime in human life because it violates the very essence of what it means to be human. It destroys trust, damages relationships, and leaves lasting emotional scars. It is a crime not of the body but of the soul, and its consequences reverberate through every aspect of life. While other offenses may harm us physically or financially, betrayal wounds us emotionally and spiritually. It is a reminder of our vulnerability and the importance of trust, loyalty, and integrity in human relationships. In a world where connection is essential to well-being, betrayal is the ultimate act of destruction.

The enduring lesson from these stories is that betrayal is the worst crime in human life because it destroys the very foundation of human relationships: trust. Without trust, families collapse, friendships disintegrate, kingdoms fall, and nations are enslaved. Betrayal is not just an act against an individual; it is an act against the collective bonds that hold societies together. Whether in the battlefield of Plassey, the fort of Pratapgad, or the castles of Scotland and Denmark,

betrayal leaves behind scars that echo through generations. In conclusion, from Mir Jafar to Afzal Khan, from Macbeth to Hamlet, betrayal emerges as a universal theme that transcends history and literature. It is a crime that devastates individuals and societies alike, driven by ambition and cloaked in deception. These stories remind us that betrayal is not only the worst crime in human life but also the most destructive force in human history. It teaches us to value loyalty, integrity, and trust, for without them, the fabric of human existence unravels.

At its core, betrayal is the deliberate breaking of trust. Trust is the foundation of all human relationships. It allows us to be vulnerable, to share our thoughts, feelings, and lives with others. When someone betrays that trust, they shatter the sense of safety and connection that we rely on. The betrayal may come in many forms—infidelity in a romantic relationship, a friend revealing a secret, a colleague sabotaging a project, or a family member turning their back in a time of need. Regardless of the form, the impact is often the same: shock, disbelief, anger, sadness, and a deep sense of loss. Psychologically, betrayal can be devastating. It triggers a cascade of emotional responses that can lead to long-term mental health issues. The betrayed individual often experiences anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress. They may struggle with self-esteem, questioning their own judgment and worth. The pain of betrayal is not just about the act itself but about the implications it has for one's identity and worldview. If someone we trusted could hurt us so deeply, what does that say about the nature of relationships, about our ability to judge character, about the safety of the world around us? Moreover, betrayal often leads to isolation. The betrayed person may withdraw from others, fearing further harm. They may become cynical, suspicious, and emotionally guarded. This erosion of trust can affect future relationships, making it difficult to form new bonds or maintain existing ones. In this way, betrayal does not just damage one relationship—it can poison an entire social and emotional ecosystem.

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## From Memory to Destiny



■ M.S. NAZKI

One cannot reshape the past because it is already written in the ink of time, unalterable and beyond recall. What has happened cannot be undone, no matter how deeply one reflects or how strongly one wishes otherwise. Regret has no power to rewrite history, just as worry has no strength to predefine what lies ahead. Yet within this simple truth lies a profound realization: while the past is fixed, the future remains fluid, waiting to be shaped by the choices we make today. You cannot go back and change the beginning, but you can begin where you stand and change the ending. No individual is wealthy enough to buy back yesterday, but every individual is capable of investing in tomorrow.

Life often tempts us into the trap of dwelling on what has been or fearing what may come. In doing so, we

risk losing the present moment, the only space where real change is possible. The future is not an abstract concept; it is the direct outcome of present actions. It is built step by step, decision by decision, with responsibility as its foundation. The future belongs to those who prepare for it today, to those who take control of their destiny instead of surrendering it to uncertainty. One cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by avoiding it today, for every action, or inaction, silently shapes what is yet to unfold.

With this thought, the journey moves toward the majestic Kumaon hills, a region where history, strategy, and resilience converge. Nestled at the crossroads of India, Nepal, and Tibet, the Kumaon region stands as a crucial pillar in India's northern security framework. Its rugged terrain forms a natural barrier, guarding the fertile plains while enabling vigilant surveillance of the Himalayan frontier. Beyond its geographical importance, Kumaon has long served as a gateway of ancient trade routes, connecting civilizations and facilitating cultural exchange, even as it demanded constant vigilance.

In these very mountains, where the air grows thin and the terrain unfor-

giving, stories of courage are etched into every ridge and valley. Leadership here is not distant or symbolic; it walks alongside the soldiers, sharing their hardships and their resolve. When Lt Gen Harpal Singh ventured into the rugged frontier to review critical infrastructure and meet the steadfast Panchshul Warriors, it reflected a leadership that leads from the front. Amid biting winds and icy heights, the spirit of the soldiers stood unshaken, guarding the nation's borders with unwavering determination. In such moments, the mountains themselves seem to echo with courage.

The military history of Kumaon is as intense as its landscape. From the era of the Chand dynasty to the Rohilla invasions, from the Gorkha conquest to the British annexation, the region has witnessed continuous **संघर्ष** and resistance. The Battle of Almora during the Anglo-Nepalese War marked a turning point, while the uprising of 1857 added another chapter of defiance. Each conflict reinforced the region's identity as a land of warriors, resilient and unyielding.

This legacy finds its finest expression in the Kumaon Regiment, one of the most decorated units of the Indian Army. Known for their endurance and courage in high-altitude warfare, the

soldiers of Kumaon, affectionately called "Bhullas," have repeatedly demonstrated extraordinary bravery. The story of Major Somnath Sharma, India's first Param Vir Chakra awardee, stands as a testament to sacrifice and leadership. Equally inspiring is the tale of Major Shaitan Singh and his men at Rezang La, who fought against overwhelming odds at extreme altitudes, choosing valor over surrender. The warriors of 6 Kumaon at Walong further exemplified this spirit by launching a rare counter-attack during the 1962 conflict, proving that courage can defy even the harshest realities.

Beyond its military strength, Kumaon is a region of breathtaking beauty and deep cultural roots. From the serene lakes of Nainital to the towering peaks of Nanda Devi, from the tranquil landscapes of Ranikhet to the remote charm of Munsiyari, the region offers a unique blend of nature and heritage. Its pine forests, vibrant traditions, and spiritual legends enrich its identity. Stories of Nanda Devi, the mystical Aachri, and ancient folklore rooted in sacred texts give Kumaon a timeless aura, where mythology and reality coexist.

The role of the Border Roads Organisation in this region adds another dimension to its importance.

Through relentless effort in extreme conditions, roads are carved out of mountains, connecting remote villages, strengthening military logistics, and enabling pilgrimage routes like the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra. These efforts are not merely infrastructural achievements; they are lifelines that bind communities, enhance security, and open doors to development.

As the narrative returns to its central theme, the lesson becomes clear. The past is not a place to live in, but a reference point from which to learn. It is a stepping stone, not a burden to carry. Those who fail to remember it risk repeating its mistakes, yet those who remain trapped within it risk losing their future. The real challenge lies in transforming experience into wisdom and action into progress.

The future belongs to those who dare to dream and possess the courage to act on those dreams. It is shaped by belief, strengthened by effort, and realized through determination. Tomorrow does not arrive by chance; it is created through vision and perseverance. In the end, it takes courage to convert the lessons of the past into the possibilities of the future, and it is this courage that defines both individuals and nations alike.

# BIRTH CONTROL

## PILLS IMPAIR COMPLEX EMOTION RECOGNITION IN HEALTHY WOMEN: STUDY



Oral contraceptives, even if widely used, may leave unwanted and adverse health impacts in the long run. A recent study that featured in the journal *Frontiers in Neuroscience* suggested that women who use oral contraceptives are less able to recognize facial expressions of complex emotions. Titled *Oral Contraceptives Impair Complex Emotion Recognition in Healthy Women*, the study stated, "Despite the widespread use of oral contraceptives (OCs), remarkably little is known about the effects of OCs on emotion, cognition, and behaviour. However, coincidental findings suggest that OCs impair the ability to recognize others' emotional expressions, which may have serious consequences in interpersonal contexts."

To further investigate the effects of

oral contraceptives on emotion and recognition in women, the researchers tried to investigate whether women taking oral contraceptives were less accurate in the recognition of complex emotional expressions than women who were not using oral contraceptives.

For the purpose of the study, the team of researchers asked two groups of women to participate in an emotion-recognition task. The first group consisted of 42 healthy women who were on oral contraceptives, while the second group comprised of 53 healthy women who were not on the pill.

Alexander Lischke, a researcher in the Department of Physiological and Clinical Psychology/Psychotherapy at the University of Greifswald in Germany, and the senior author of the study explained, "If oral contraceptives

caused dramatic impairments in women's emotion recognition [as hypothesized]. We would have probably noticed this in our everyday interactions with our partners. We assumed that these impairments would be very subtle, indicating that we had to test women's emotion recognition with a task that was sensitive enough to detect such impairments. We, thus, used a very challenging emotion recognition task that required the recognition of complex emotional expressions from the eye region of faces." "Such emotional expressions included contempt and pride, which are more complex than the expressions of simpler emotions, such as fear or happiness".

After analysis, it was found that even if both the groups were equally good at recognising easy expressions, the group

of people on oral contraceptives were less likely to identify difficult expressions correctly. On a more specific note, women who took the pill were 10 percent less accurate in their emotion recognition than women who did not take the pill.

As reported in *Medical News*, Lischke stated, "Cyclic variations of estrogen and progesterone levels are known to affect women's emotion recognition and influence activity and connections in associated brain regions. Since oral contraceptives work by suppressing estrogen and progesterone levels, it makes sense that oral contraceptives also affect women's emotion recognition. However, the exact mechanism underlying oral contraceptive-induced changes in women's emotion recognition remains to be elucidated."

Courtesy Healthline

## Stress can spur development of pancreatic cancer

WASHINGTON D.C.: Stress can speed up the development of pancreatic cancer, finds a study.

The researchers stated that stress triggers the release of "fight-or-flight" hormones.

Beta-blockers--commonly used medications that inhibit these hormones--were found to increase survival in a mouse model of the disease.

An additional analysis of patients with advanced pancreatic cancer revealed that those who were taking selective beta-blockers, which are used to treat heart conditions, lived approximately two-thirds longer than those who were not taking the medications.

Recent studies have shown that emotional and psychological stress play a role in the development of tumors in general. This effect is thought to occur through the sympathetic nervous system, which releases hormones that give the body a surge of energy so that it can respond to perceived dangers.

"Some biologists dismissed this idea because stress is hard to measure," said study leader Timothy C. Wang, MD, the Dorothy L. and Daniel H. Silberberg Professor of Medicine at CUMC. "Others wondered how stress could possibly be related to a biological process that involves DNA mutations and the growth of cancer cells within a particular organ, such as the pancreas."

The current study was designed to find the links between stress and early development of pancreatic cancer. The researchers studied mice that are genetically predisposed to developing abnormal growths in the pancreas. The mice were raised in stressful living conditions (confined to a small space); control mice were raised in normal housing.

After 14 weeks, 38 percent of the stressed mice were found to have neoplastic pancreatic lesions, a precursor to pancreatic cancer. No such lesions were observed in the controls.

"We know that you need a DNA mutation to start on the path to cancer, but our findings suggest that stress is doing something to move things along," said Dr. Wang.

That "something" was the subject of a subsequent experiment. Studies of the mice revealed that stress increases levels of catecholamines--the fight-or-flight hormones--in the bloodstream. Within the pancreas, catecholamines drive production of molecules that stimulate nerve growth around tumors. Those new nerves, in turn, promote tumor development and make more catecholamines, perpetuating the cycle. "In other words, stress sets up what we call a feed-forward loop between nerves and cancer cells that promotes tumor development," says Dr. Wang.

In experiments with a different mouse model of pancreatic cancer, the CUMC team demonstrated that treating mice with chemotherapy and nonselective beta-blockers, which are used to treat a variety of conditions, lived significantly longer than mice treated with chemotherapy alone. The researchers also looked at survival in 631 patients who had surgery to treat advanced pancreatic cancer between 2002 and 2013. Those who were taking nonselective beta-blockers after surgery had a median survival of 40 months, about two-thirds longer than patients taking selective beta-blockers or neither type of beta-blocker.

"It would be premature to recommend the use of beta-blockers for these patients, until we conduct prospective clinical studies said Dr. Wang. "But beta-blockers could potentially become part of the overall treatment regimen for pancreatic cancer."

"A handful of studies, and a lot of anecdotal evidence, suggest that maintaining a positive outlook is good for your health and can help with recovery from almost any disease. Will a positive outlook change the prognosis of a patient with advanced prostate cancer? Probably not. But it certainly won't hurt, and it could be part of the overall approach to slowing the progression of cancer to allow other types of therapy to kick in," said Dr. Wang. **Courtesy EMJ**

## World Immunization Week 2026: For Every Generation, Vaccines Work

DR. R. KISHORE KUMAR

Vaccines have already proven their value--both in data and in daily clinical practice. The science is robust, the outcomes are visible, and the impact is undeniable. The question is no longer whether vaccines work. The question is whether we will continue to trust and use them.

In my early years of clinical practice, it was not uncommon to see children admitted with severe measles, struggling with complications that could turn fatal.

Polio was not a chapter in textbooks--it was visible in outpatient clinics, in children who came in with permanent disabilities, and in families learning to cope with lifelong consequences.

Diarrheal diseases filled pediatric wards, often pushing already fragile children to the brink. These were not isolated cases; they were a pattern we saw far too often. What changed this reality was not a coincidence. It was vaccines.

Over the years, I have witnessed firsthand how immunization has transformed pediatric care in India. The introduction of the measles vaccine in 1985, followed by the second dose in 2010, has brought us to a point where a disease once feared by every parent is now on the verge of elimination.

Similarly, the impact of the Pulse Polio Immunization campaign has been extraordinary.

From routinely seeing children affected by polio, we moved to a historic milestone--India being declared polio-free on March 17, 2014. For clinicians who have seen both sides, this shift is nothing short of remarkable.

The change has been equally significant in other areas. There was a time when severe diarrhea dominated pediatric admissions. Today, with better sanitation and the introduction of the rotavirus vaccine in 2016, we see far fewer cases of severe rotavirus-related illness. This is not just a statistic--it is reflected in fewer hospital admissions, less distress for families, and better outcomes for children.

More recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of vaccines became evident on an unprecedented scale. As healthcare providers, we experienced the strain of the pandemic firsthand. The introduction of vaccines in January 2021 marked a turning point. It not only reduced the severity of illness but also brought a sense of control in an otherwise uncertain situation. The ability to protect lives at such a scale reaffirmed what medicine has known for decades--vaccines are among the most powerful tools we have.

Across diseases, across decades, and across generations, one truth remains consistent: vaccines save lives. However, despite these clear gains, we are now witnessing a concerning shift.

In recent years, vaccine hesi-

tancy has started to emerge--even among well-informed populations. As a clinician, this is deeply concerning. When diseases become less visible, people begin to underestimate their impact. Questions arise, doubts increase, and misinformation often fills the gap.

The consequences of this are already visible globally. The re-emergence of measles in countries with strong healthcare systems is a clear warning.

As per CDC data from March 18, 2026, the United States has reported 1,362 confirmed measles cases across 20 states, with multiple outbreaks--after more than two decades of control. This is not due to a lack of availability of vaccines, but due to reduced uptake.

From a medical standpoint, this is both predictable and preventable. Vaccination is not just about protecting one individual--it is about safeguarding entire communities. In my practice, I often remind families that immunization protects not only their child but also those who are more vulnerable--newborns, pregnant women, and individuals with weakened immunity. When vaccination rates decline, this collective protection weakens, and diseases find their way back.

History has shown us that progress in public health is not permanent unless it is sustained. The absence of disease does not mean the absence of risk--it often reflects the success of prevention.

Courtesy Health & Me



## Sleep Problems Might Lead To Hypertension In Women

Women, please take note. Even if you are having mild sleep problems, such as having trouble falling asleep, it can raise your blood pressure, a new study suggests.

The study found that women who had mild sleep problems--including those who slept for seven to nine hours a night, as measured by a wristwatch-like device

--were significantly more likely to have elevated blood pressure. The researchers also found an association between endothelial inflammation and mild sleep disturbances.

"Our findings suggest that mild sleep problems could possibly initiate the vascular endothelial inflammation that's a significant contributor to cardiovascular disease," said lead author Brooke Aggarwal from the Columbia University Irving Medical Center. According to the researchers, nearly one-third of adults don't get enough sleep and for women, the problem may be even bigger.

"That's concerning, since studies have shown that sleep deprivation and milder sleep problems may have a disproportionate effect on cardiovascular health in women," Aggarwal added. **Courtesy Healthline**

## New research investigates potential probiotic benefits of pear-enriched diet

NEW DELHI: A new in vitro (test tube) study, "Dietary functional benefits of Bartlett and Starkrimson pears for potential management of hyperglycemia, hypertension and ulcer bacteria *Helicobacter pylori* while supporting beneficial probiotic bacterial response," was published in the March issue of *Food Research International*.

In a laboratory in vitro setting, Kalidas Shetty, PhD, currently a professor of plant science at North Dakota State University, and the research's lead author, Dr. Dipayan Sarkar, studied the compounds found in two pear varieties, Bartlett and Starkrimson, in order to better understand the impact of those compounds on chronic diseases.

The results suggest fermentation of these pear cultivars further enhances their ability to control stomach related diseases involving *H. pylori*, the most common chronic bacterial infection in humans, without affecting beneficial

bacteria with probiotic potential.

"Bacteria is often perceived as something that causes diseases; however, the body is full of bacteria that are mostly good. It's exciting to explore the potential that pears can have to balance beneficial bacterial activity in the digestive process, as gut health helps support overall health of the body," said Dr. Kalidas Shetty.

In addition to studying the probiotic potential of pears, the researchers looked at pears as part of a dietary strategy to provide efficient and effective management options to combat diet-linked non-communicable diseases like type II diabetes and its associated cardiovascular disease complications.

The study found that Bartlett and Starkrimson pear varieties have compounds such as phenolics and antioxidants as well as activity that slows down enzymes related to starch and glucose metabolism, which relates

to managing early stages of hyperglycemia and diabetes-induced hypertension.

Pears are among the most popular fruits in the world, and are an excellent source of fiber and a good source of vitamin C for only 100 calories per serving.

One medium pear provides about 24 percent of daily fiber needs. And, they are sodium-free, cholesterol-free, fat-free, and contain 190 mg of potassium. An overall balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables, including pears, provides micronutrients, vitamins, dietary fiber, potassium, antioxidants, and more.

Dr. Shetty's new research builds on a previous in vitro study that explored the pulp extracts of different pear varieties and how they impact absorption of glucose during digestion. It is not known if the results of either of these in vitro studies can be replicated in humans, but these findings provide the scientific rationale to

perform human studies in the future.



Courtesy EMJ

# Youth Trekking Expedition at Divenal Highlights Spirit of Adventure and Peace in Langate

■ DR.AB QAYOOM

**LANGATE, APR 28:** A vibrant hiking and trekking expedition was organised today by the Pohru Youth Foundation Langate in collaboration with the Indian Army for students of Handwara sub-district in Langate. The event brought together around 40-50 enthusiastic students from classes 9th to 12th representing various schools across the area. The participants set out early in the morning towards the historic mountain destination of Divenal, exploring its scenic beauty while engaging in a physically enriching and adventurous journey. The initiative aimed to instill a spirit of adventure, promote physical fitness, and encourage teamwork, discipline, and resilience among the youth.

Conducted under well-coordinated and safe arrangements, the trek provided a unique platform for students to connect with nature, build confidence, and develop a strong sense of camaraderie. The event also reflected a broader shift in the region, where young people are increasingly engaging in constructive and positive activities. Over the past decade, the improving situation has opened new avenues for youth participation in outdoor and educational pursuits. Where once access to forested and mountainous areas was limited, today such initiatives highlight the growing sense of normalcy and opportunity. The role of the Indian Army in facilitating a secure and supportive environment was acknowledged by organisers and participants alike. Chairman of the Pohru Youth Foundation and gold medalist, Noorul Shabaz, expressed immense excitement and gratitude for the initiative, calling it an eye-opener and a memorable experience for all involved. He noted that such programmes not only promote adventure but also inspire youth to channel their energy into positive and nation-building activities. The expedition concluded successfully, leaving participants motivated and enriched, with a renewed appreciation for nature, teamwork, and the peaceful environment that enables such initiatives to thrive.



Conducting a secure and supportive environment was acknowledged by organisers and participants alike. Chairman of the Pohru Youth Foundation and gold medalist, Noorul Shabaz, expressed immense excitement and gratitude for the initiative, calling it an eye-opener and a memorable experience for all involved. He noted that such programmes not only promote adventure but also inspire youth to channel their energy into positive and nation-building activities. The expedition concluded successfully, leaving participants motivated and enriched, with a renewed appreciation for nature, teamwork, and the peaceful environment that enables such initiatives to thrive.

## Road Safety Awareness Programme Held at GDC Qazigund by TLSA and NSS

■ FAROOQ RATHER

**QAZIGUND, APR 28:** The Tehsil Legal Services Authority (TLSA), Qazigund, in collaboration with the Anti-Drug Abuse System (A-VIS) and the National Service Scheme (NSS) Unit of Government Degree College (GDC) Qazigund, organised an awareness programme on road safety and substance abuse in the college campus on Monday.

The programme aimed to sensitize students about traffic rules, responsible driving behaviour, and the legal consequences of rash and negligent driving, especially under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

Addressing the gathering, Principal Prof. (Dr.) Sudhir Singh highlighted the vital role of educational institutions in promoting social responsibility among youth. He emphasized that institutions must nurture students into responsible citizens who act ethically and uphold a strong sense of duty towards society.

Resource persons, including Amir Hamid and Ms. Zahaan (Panel Lawyers, TLSA), delivered detailed sessions on legal aspects of road safety. They elaborated on the consequences of reckless driving, stressing that driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is not only a punishable offence but also a serious threat to human life. The speakers urged students to strictly follow traffic regulations, value human life, and adopt safe driving practices. They also encouraged them to act as responsible citizens by reporting instances of drunk driving and avoiding distractions such as mobile phone usage while driving.

Prof. Nadia Kanz Fatima, NSS Programme Officer, underscored the importance of such awareness initiatives, noting that students are frequent commuters and thus more vulnerable to road-related risks. She referred to recent road accidents in the region and called for enhanced legal awareness and preventive education among youth.

Officials from Traffic Police Qazigund also participated in the programme, interacting with students, addressing their queries, and sharing insights on traffic management and road safety measures.

The event witnessed active participation from faculty members, including Prof. Khaliq Ahmad Zargar (HoD Computer Science), Dr. Ishaq Ahmad Shah (HoD Education), Prof. Iqbal Ahmad Ganai (HoD Sociology), Prof. Ijaz Ahmad Matoo (HoD Political Science), and Prof. Imtiaz Ahmad Shah (HoD EVS), along with a large number of students.

The programme concluded with an interactive session, reinforcing the importance of legal awareness, road safety, and responsible civic behaviour among the youth.

## KU organises free medical camp for respiratory diseases, mental health under Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyaan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR APR 28:** The University of Kashmir's (KU) Health Centre in collaboration with J&K Association of Chest Physicians and Paras Health Srinagar organised a free medical camp for respiratory disease and mental health under the Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan at the Main Campus under the aegis of the Department of Students Welfare (DSW) KU.

The camp aimed to promote health awareness and provide medical support services, including respiratory care, mental health counselling, and basic diagnostic facilities.

During her visit to the camp, Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, said, "Universities must actively promote preventive healthcare and mental well-being by creating awareness and ensuring access to timely

medical guidance and counselling services for students and the community."

Registrar KU, Prof. Naseer Iqbal, said that collaborative health initiatives within educational institutions are important for encouraging awareness, early diagnosis, and informed lifestyle choices among young people. Coordinator, Health Centre KU, Dr. Khalid Nazir, said that the camp was organised to encourage timely medical consultation and provide accessible healthcare services, particularly in areas related to mental well-being and respiratory-related health concerns.

Medical experts who participated in the camp included Dr. Rajinder Singh, Chest Specialist, former Dean GMC Jammu; Dr. Naveed Nazir, Professor and Head, Pulmonary Medicine CD Hospital GMC Srinagar; Dr. Naem Firdous, Senior Consultant,

Pulmonary Medicine, Paras Health; Dr. Arshid Ahmad Sofi, Senior Resident, Pulmonary Medicine, CD Hospital GMC Srinagar; and Madeeha Mukhtar, Clinical Psychologist, IM-HANS.

The camp included facilities for Pulmonary Function Test (PFT), HbA1C, blood sugar testing, Forced Oscillation Technique (FOT), allergic rhinitis detection through Kribado Machine, and targeted mental health sessions.

Participants expressed satisfaction with the facilities and consultations provided during the camp. Huge number of students, scholars, employees, and members of the university community attended the camp and availed the healthcare services.

The camp was managed by Dr. Surayya Jan and Dr. Azhar Ahad, Medical Officers, Health Centre KU.

## Local Folk Artists Continue Efforts to Preserve Traditional Art Form in Valley

■ GULFAM BARJI

**BUDGAM, APR 28:** Local folk artists in Valley continue their dedicated efforts to preserve and promote centuries-old traditional art forms across the Valley. As part of this mission artists associated with Baba Reshi Folk Theatre "BRFT" Lolpora Tangmarg presented the popular folk performance "Angrez Paether" at Govt. Middle School Paripora Magam Budgam. The programme was organized under the guidance and supervision of renowned folk theatre expert and National Award-winning artist Mohammad Sadiq Bhagat. His outstanding performance in the play received immense appreciation and applause from the audience. The event



was supported by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, under the Cultural Fiction and Production Grant Scheme. Through this programme school students were also educated about the importance, history and heritage of this centuries-old folk art. A large number of students, school staff and local residents attended the event and highly appreciated the artists for their sincere efforts in keeping the traditional art alive.

## Hindware expands retail footprint with new Brand Store launch in Srinagar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APR 28:** Hindware, India's leading bath ware brand, has launched a new Brand Store in Srinagar, taking its total tally in the city to three and its presence across Jammu & Kashmir to 15 Brand Stores. Located at Alamgari Bazar, Shribhat, opposite Machami Sahib, the store MANS TRADING CO., operates as a Hindware Premiere Store for Bath & Tiles and as an Exclusive Store for appliances.

A spokesman of the company said that the store showcases Hindware's wide product range across faucets, sanitaryware, tiles, and appliances, including brands such as Hindware, Hindware Italian Collection (HIC), QUEO, Hindware Smart Appliances, and HIC Tiles. The integrated store format allows customers to explore a comprehensive

range of contemporary designs, advanced technologies, and functional innovations under one roof.

Srinagar is witnessing steady growth in residential development, driven by urban expansion and increased renovation activity. Alongside this, there is a gradual shift towards well-designed, durable, and reliable home solutions. The launch of this new Brand Store is aligned with these evolving consumer preferences, offering customers direct access to trusted brands and quality-driven products backed by strong after-sales support.

Commenting on the launch, Nirupam Sahay, Chief Executive Officer, Hindware Limited, said, "Srinagar is an important market for us, with a growing preference for well-designed, high-quality home solutions. Expanding to three stores here is a conscious decision that reflects



our confidence in the city's long-term potential and the strength of local demand. For us, it's about being closer to our customers, improving their overall experience and providing Sukoon in their lives, and continuing to build our presence in markets

that are shaping the future of India's home solutions space." "Hindware was built on a simple belief, that quality should never be a luxury. Decades later, that belief continues to guide us. Every new store is an extension of this commitment, bringing

dependable craftsmanship and thoughtful design closer to customers in their own cities and neighbourhoods. Srinagar has been an important part of our journey, and we are proud to strengthen our presence here with a retail experience that reflects the Hindware standard," said Shashvat Somany, Non-Executive and Non-Independent Director, Hindware Limited.

With a robust presence built over decades, Hindware today operates over 35,000 active retail touchpoints, with 500+ distributors covering 700+ districts, and 575+ strategically located Brand Stores nationwide. Underpinning this expansive network is a dedicated after-sales service infrastructure of 1,090+ trained technicians operating across 700+ districts, with a turnaround time of 24 hours in metro cities and 48 hours in upcountry regions.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Faisal Rashid S/o Abdul Rashid Shiekh, R/o Parimpora, Srinagar, hereby inform the general public that my important documents including Driving Licence, Aadhaar Card, Election Card, and other necessary documents have been lost during travel from Parimpora to Qamarwari, Srinagar. Any person who finds the above-mentioned documents is requested to kindly contact the undersigned at the address given below or inform the nearest police station. The finder will be highly appreciated.  
**Faisal Rashid**  
**S/o Abdul Rashid Shiekh**  
**R/o Parimpora, Srinagar**  
**Mobile No-6005880499**

### Public Notice

It is hereby informed to the general public that I, TALIB HUSSAIN BEIG S/o MOHAMMAD HUSSAIN BEIG, R/o FAQIR BAGH CHANDDOOSA, having Consumer No. 0212040015633 installed at a shop in FAQIR BAGH CHANDDOOSA under PDD Sub-Division Watergam Wagoor, am transferring my electricity connection to my son, DANISH HUSSAIN BAIG S/o TALIB HUSSAIN BAIG, R/o \*FAQIR BAGH CHANDDOOSA for the same premises. If any person has any objection to this transfer, he/she may file the objection with the Office of the Assistant Executive Engineer, PDD Sub-Division Watergam Wagoor, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after the stipulated period.  
**Sd/- TALIB HUSSAIN BEIG**

### Public Notice

My Name and Parentage wrongly mentioned in my service book as Ajaz Ahmad Khan instead of Aijaz Ahmad Khan and my Parentage as Samad Khan instead of Ab Samad Khan. Now I am applying for its correction if anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may contact Concerned authorities within seven days from the publication of this notice after no objection will be entertained.  
**AIJAZ AHMAD KHAN S/O AB SAMAD KHAN R/O TERKI BATPORA TEHSIL KUNZAR P/S TANGMARG DISTRICT BARAMULLA**  
**Contact 9906592297**

### Public Notice

I have lost my discharge certificate at somewhere bearing admission date 15/11/1994. Now I am applying for its duplicate if anybody having any objection in this regard he /may file his/her objection in the office of GOVT HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL WOGOORA / ZEO office within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.  
**Name....TARIQ AHMAD HAJAM**  
**S/O.... GH QADIR HAJAM**  
**R/O ...VIZER WAGOORA**

### Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my Father's name MOHAMMAD SUBHAN SOFI. Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040001144 wants to be registered on my name MOHAMMAD HAMZA (MALYARE) SOFI S/O MOHAMMAD SUBHAN (MALYARE) SOFI. If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.  
**Name....MOHAMMAD HAMZA MALYARE ( SOFI)**  
**S/O....MOHAMMAD SUBHAN MALYARE (SOFI)**  
**BLOCK.... WAGOORA**

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

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

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoor) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of RABIYA JAN & SHAHIDA AKHTER S/O SAJAD AHMAD LONE R/O. KHARGAM Tehsil PATTAN Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 27/04/2015 & 07/12/2016 event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order. In this connection.

If anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.  
**Sd/- Executive Magistrate 1st Class Kreeri**

## Laptop Care House

Wholesale Dealer Of New And Pre Used Laptops

DEALS IN ALL KINDS OF LAPTOPS AND ACCESSORIES

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## Div Com Kashmir interacts with Trade Bodies; extends invitation for Nasha Mukht J&K Pad Yatra on 3rd May

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 28:** Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, today held an interaction with members of various trade bodies of Srinagar and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to appreciate their active role against drug menace and extended invitation for participation in the Nasha Mukht J&K Pad Yatra, a mass movement aimed at raising awareness against drug abuse and narcotics.

During the interaction, the Divisional Commissioner stressed on the collective efforts of traders, civil society groups, NGOs and youth organizations for their enthusiastic involvement in the Pad Yatra, which will witness mass participation across the region.

He emphasized that such unified initiatives reflect the strong societal responsibility to combat the growing menace of substance abuse.

Anshul Garg stressed that the fight against drugs requires



sustained community engagement and coordination among all stakeholders.

He urged trade associations and NGOs to mobilize their members for overwhelming participation in Pad Yatra on May 03 for spreading awareness about the harmful effects of narcotics, particularly among the youth.

On the occasion, participants shared their suggestions to further strengthen anti-drug campaigns, organizing awareness drives, and community outreach programs at the grassroots level.

Meanwhile, participants assured to work in unison with the administration to eliminate the threat of narcotics from the region.

Besides, Director I&C and VC LCMA, the president of KCCI, Chairman of Nigeen Lake Conservation Organisation, representatives of various trade associations were present during the interaction.

## DSEJ reviews implementation of Educational Reforms in Jammu Division

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 28:** Director School Education Jammu today chaired a review meeting attended by Joint Directors and Chief Education Officers of Jammu Division here at the Directorate headquarters Muthi. Personnel Officer Manisha and other officials of the Directorate also attended the meeting.

The meeting, comprehensive in both scope and intent, focused on a wide spectrum of academic, administrative and developmental issues central to the functioning of the School Education Department.

At the outset, the Director undertook a detailed review of the recently declared Class 10th and 12th Board Examination Results (Winter and Summer Zones). District-wise, zone-wise and institution-wise performance was assessed with emphasis on pass percentage, subject performance and comparative trends.

The Director complimented schools, students and the teaching fraternity for the commendable performance recorded this year. He urged institutions fallen short of expectations to introspect and redouble their efforts. Calling for collective resolve, he urged all stakeholders to work in unison to secure even better results in the years ahead.

The issue of Masters' Seniority was also discussed at length. Stressing the importance of transparency, fairness and procedural correctness, the Director directed the concerned officers to expedite all pending matters in accordance with established norms and regulations.

Acknowledging the growing importance of digital learning, the meeting deliberated extensively on the preparation of high-quality subject-wise e-content, including detailed video lectures and supplementary academic material. Officers were instructed to ensure that such resources are developed systematically and made accessible to students across all regions, particularly those in remote and underserved areas.

A detailed review was also conducted regarding the progress of K-12 schools across Jammu Division. Zone-wise, block-wise and tehsil-wise assessments were undertaken

to evaluate academic standards, infrastructural development, implementation of innovative practices and overall institutional preparedness.

"These schools must evolve into centres of excellence and innovation," the Director emphasized.

The Plantation Drive undertaken across schools also came up for review. District-wise Action Taken Reports were examined and officers were directed to ensure not only the completion of plantation targets but also the survival, maintenance and sustained care of the saplings planted.

The meeting further reviewed the status of online classes being conducted across schools. Comprehensive data regarding schools and teachers actively engaged in virtual instruction was sought. The Director reiterated that digital teaching must continue to complement conventional classroom practices and serve as an effective mechanism for filling learning gaps, reinforcing classroom instruction and ensuring academic continuity for every student.

Financial management under Samagra Shiksha formed another major component of the discussions. Budget allocations, expenditure patterns, pending liabilities and future financial planning were reviewed in detail to ensure optimal utilization of available resources.

Finally, the Director reviewed the list of works completed during the financial year 2025-26, both in physical and financial terms. Officers were directed to ensure timely completion, proper documentation and strict adherence to quality standards in all developmental projects.

Speaking on the occasion, the Director observed, "Educational progress is built upon constant review, timely intervention and collective commitment. Every officer, every institution and every teacher has a crucial role in shaping the future of our students. We must celebrate success, address shortcomings and move forward together with renewed determination."

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to academic excellence, administrative efficiency and the holistic development of the school education sector across Jammu Division.

## DIPR Cultural Unit Jammu promotes anti-drug campaign among students

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, APRIL 28:** Continuing its outreach under the "Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir - 100 Day Campaign", the Cultural Unit of the Department of Information & Public Relations (DIPR) Jammu today organised a Symposium-cum-Theme Based Cultural Programme here at Doon International School.

The programme was aimed at sensitising students about the harmful effects of drug abuse and motivating them to adopt a healthy and responsible lifestyle.

Students actively participated in the symposium and shared insightful views on the subject, reflecting awareness towards building a drug-free society. Ashuya Malik secured the first position for an impressive presentation, whereas Gurveer Singh and Prikshit Singh were adjudged second and third respectively.



The Chief Guest, Vice Principal Dr. Sarita Moza Kaul along with Special Guest Sajjad and Headmistress Shivali Singh, appreciated the initiative and encouraged students to act as ambassadors for spreading awareness against drug abuse. They also acted as Jury for the symposium.

The competition was coordinated by Amardeep Kaur and Avneet Kour, while the proceedings were conducted by Maleena Mushtaq. Adding further impact to the programme, a Nukkad Natak on Nasha Mukht was presented by the students of the school, effectively conveying a strong social message. The artists of the Cultural Unit Jammu also presented theme-based songs in Hindi and Punjabi, which inspired the audience and reinforced the campaign's message.

The programme witnessed active participation from students, staff members and faculty, making it a meaningful awareness initiative.

The programme was conducted under the direction of Joint Director Information Jammu Deepak Dubey and under the supervision of Cultural Officer Mohit Sharma.

## DLIC Approves 317 Cases under Mission YUVA in Bandipora

HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, APRIL 28:** A review-cum-District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) meeting under Mission YUVA was today held at Bandipora under the chairpersonship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib.

During the meeting, a total of 325 cases were placed before the committee for consideration, out of which 317 cases were approved after thorough scrutiny and deliberations.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for timely processing of cases, proper handholding of beneficiaries, and close

coordination among all stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of Mission YUVA schemes.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments and banking institutions to work in synergy for speedy disbursement of sanctioned cases and to facilitate aspiring entrepreneurs in establishing sustainable livelihood ventures.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Chief Agriculture Officer Bandipora, DSHO, CHO, ARTO, Lead Bank Manager J&K Bank, Cluster Head J&K Bank, SBDU Lead, and BHD Leads of Bandipora, Gurez and Sumbal.

## Harvinder Singh reviews progress of 100 Day J&K Nasha Mukht Abhiyan in Poonch

Over 550 activities engage more than 2 lakh people

HT NEWS NETWORK

**POONCH, APRIL 28:** Director Employment & MD Mission YUVA Harvinder Singh (Mentor for District Poonch) today reviewed the implementation of Government's 100 Day J&K Nasha Mukht Abhiyan (NMJKA) in this border district here at a meeting held in the meeting Hall of the Deputy Commissioner Office.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Ashok Kumar Sharma; Senior

Superintendent of Police Shafiq Bhat; ADC Tahir Mustafa Malik and other district and sectoral officers.

At the outset, District Social Welfare Officer Khalil A Bandy delivered a PowerPoint presentation, outlining the action plan and progress achieved under the campaign across the district.

It was informed that District Poonch has conducted more than 550 activities so far, with participation exceeding 2 lakh

individuals, reflecting a massive public outreach and community involvement.

Harvinder Singh appreciated the concerted efforts of all departments and emphasized the need to sustain momentum, strengthen grassroots level engagement and ensure impactful awareness initiatives under the ongoing Government campaign.

Deputy Commissioner Ashok Kumar Sharma reiterated the administration's commitment to involve youth, educational

institutions and community stakeholders, while the SSP Shafiq Bhat stressed upon robust enforcement measures alongside awareness drives.

Later, Harvinder Singh visited Government Girls Higher Secondary School, where a painting competition on the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan was being conducted. He appreciated the creativity and active participation of students in spreading awareness against drug abuse.

He also visited the Sports

Stadium, where he inaugurated a cricket match organized as part of the campaign, highlighting the importance of sports and youth engagement as powerful tools for promoting a healthy and drug free lifestyle.

The meeting and subsequent visits concluded with a renewed commitment to further scale up activities under the Government's 100 Days J&K Nasha Mukht Abhiyan, ensuring deeper outreach and meaningful societal impact across District Poonch.

## DC inaugurates 3-day Mobile Passport Van Service Camp at Ramban

HT NEWS NETWORK

**RAMBAN, APRIL 28:** The Regional Passport Office (RPO) Jammu, under the Ministry of External Affairs-Government of India, today launched a three-day Mobile Passport Van Service Camp at the District Administrative Complex Ramban. Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Alyas Khan inaugurated

the camp in the presence of Section Officer Sunil Kher and others.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner advised the public to take full advantage of this unique opportunity to apply for passports at their doorstep, especially benefiting those residing in hilly and remote areas. The camp will conclude on April 30, 2026.

The Deputy Commissioner expressed gratitude to the Regional Passport Office Jammu and the Ministry of External Affairs for organizing the Mobile Passport Van Service Camp in the district for the second time. "District Administration will extend full cooperation to ensure smooth conduct of the camp and facilitate maximum public participation," he assured.

## DC Reasi reviews preparedness for summer season

Calls for proactive measures for medical emergencies amid rising temperature

HT NEWS NETWORK

**REASI, APRIL 28:** Deputy Commissioner Reasi Kumar Abhishek chaired a meeting to review preparedness of departments for summer season, particularly effective management of Heatwave amid rising temperatures.

A comprehensive assessment of departmental readiness was undertaken, with emphasis on a coordinated and proactive response. The Deputy Commissioner directed all departments to remain alert, respond promptly to IMD advisories and strengthen mitigation measures including establishment of dedicated cool rooms in hospitals, equipping ambulances for heat-related emergencies and regulating



working hours where necessary. He stressed ensuring uninterrupted electricity and drinking water supply, maintaining adequate

stocks of ORS and essential medicines across health facilities and intensifying public awareness on heatstroke prevention,

particularly for children and the elderly. He also called for provision of water for livestock, issuance of safety advisories for outdoor workers, organization of awareness camps and strengthening of fire and forest safety measures.

The Education Department was advised to regulate school timings and implement safeguards for students during peak heat conditions. The Jal Shakti Department and Municipal Committees were directed to ensure uninterrupted and accessible drinking water facilities, with special focus on tourist locations. The Jal Shakti Department was further tasked with monitoring water supply schemes and preparing contingency plans, including water tanker deployment,

while the Power Development Department was directed to ensure stable power supply during peak hours. The Police Department was directed to maintain strict vigil at checkpoints and ensure availability of fluids to assist persons in distress, particularly during heat wave conditions and cases of heat stroke.

The Animal Husbandry Department was instructed to create awareness regarding livestock care during heat wave conditions and ensure availability of veterinary medicines.

The Deputy Commissioner called for intensified IEC campaigns to disseminate precautionary measures among the public and directed all departments to issue detailed advisories.

## SBI RSETI Ramban launches Soft Toys Making Training Program at Dharmound

HT NEWS NETWORK

**RAMBAN, APRIL 28:** SBI RSETI Ramban today inaugurated a Soft Toys Making Training Program at Dharmound, continuing its push toward practical skill development and self-employment generation.

The inauguration was attended by the Lead District Manager (LDM) Davinder Singh as the Chief Guest along with Cluster Coordinator NRLM (National Rural Livelihoods Mission) Ajay Kumar, reflecting institutional backing—but the real test will be what participants actually build from this training, not just attendance on day one.

The program is being conducted under the overall supervision of Director RSETI S Harvinder Singh, ensuring structured delivery and alignment with entrepreneurship goals rather than just skill exposure.

During the session, officials stressed the importance of converting training into income. That's the part most programs fail at—skills without market linkage are just hobbies. Participants were encouraged to treat this as a business opportunity, not a routine course.

The training aims to equip candidates with hands-on skills in soft Toys making, with a clear objective: enable them to start micro-enterprises or generate sustainable income.

The outcome will depend entirely on execution, consistency and whether follow-up support actually happens.

The inauguration saw active participation from candidates, but the real success of the program would be measured in the number of trainees who become earning entrepreneurs in the coming months.

# Leverage FTAs to expand market access, employment opportunities: Piyush Goyal to exporters, industry bodies

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 28 :** Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, urged the exporters and industry bodies to fully leverage India's Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with developed economies to expand market access, boost exports and create employment opportunities, noting that timely utilisation of these agreements is critical.

Goyal chaired a meeting with Export Promotion Councils (EPCs) and industry associations where he highlighted that India's total merchandise and services exports reached a record USD 860.09 billion in FY 2025-26, registering a 4.22% year-on-year growth.

The minister noted that sectors such as engineering goods, electronics, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, gems & jewellery and agri-based products have sustained



export momentum despite global disruptions.

He emphasised that this milestone should serve as a springboard for achieving USD 2 trillion in exports by 2030 under the Viksit Bharat vision.

Goyal's remarks came after

India and New Zealand signed the India- New Zealand Free Trade Agreement giving duty-free access, and a commitment of \$20 billion investment between both the countries.

During the meeting, The Minister assured continued Govern-

ment support, including facilitation under ongoing schemes and targeted interventions to reduce entry barriers and enhance ease of doing business.

The Director General of Foreign Trade also made a detailed presentation on export performance, ongoing reforms and a structured framework for achieving measurable export outcomes.

The presentation outlined a comprehensive export reform framework covering sectoral export performance, a KPI-based framework for EPCs, promotion of e-commerce exports, Districts as Export Hubs, the proposed Digital Trade Academy, the Government's response to the West Asia crisis, progress under the Export Promotion Mission, and the ongoing special drive for expediting the Export Obligation Discharge Certificate (EODC).

# India-New Zealand FTA sparks textile boom, will accelerate sectoral job creation

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 28 :** The India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is set to open a new growth chapter for India's textile and apparel sector, with government data and industry stakeholders highlighting strong export potential, enhanced competitiveness and job creation prospects.

According to official data, the agreement provides comprehensive market access for Indian goods, including textiles, apparel and made-ups, with tariff elimination expected to significantly improve price competitiveness in the New Zealand market.

New Zealand imports textiles worth about USD 0.33 billion, apparel worth USD 1.27 billion, and made-ups worth USD 0.33 billion annually.

With a population of around 5.3 million and a per capita income of nearly USD 52,000, the country represents a high-value premium market for Indian exporters, particularly in value-added segments.

The FTA is expected to give a major boost to labour-intensive sectors such as textiles and apparel, while supporting MSMEs, employment generation, and export diversification.

It also aligns with India's broader strategy of expanding trade partnerships and integrating more deeply into global value chains.

Welcoming the development, A Sakthivel, Chairman of the Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPCC), said the agreement would significantly enhance India's export competitiveness.

"This forward-looking agreement is a major boost for India's apparel exporters. With 100pc duty-free access to the New Zealand market, Indian products will gain immediate price competitiveness, particularly in labour-intensive segments such as garments and textiles. This will support higher export volumes, job creation, and growth of MSMEs across the value chain," he said.

Sakthivel highlighted that New Zealand imports over USD 1.2 billion worth of ready-made garments, while India currently holds only about 4.4pc market share, indicating substantial room for

expansion. He pointed to strong opportunities in categories such as cotton T-shirts, shirts, knitwear and garments.

He further said the agreement has the potential to treble India's ready-made garment (RMG) exports to New Zealand within the next two years, driven by improved market access and competitive pricing.

"The textiles and clothing sector, being one of the largest employment generators in the country, stands to benefit immensely from this agreement. It will strengthen India's position as a reliable sourcing destination and drive sustainable export growth," he added, noting that the pact opens a new chapter for India's apparel exports.

Echoing similar optimism, K M Subramanian, President of the Tiruppur Exporters' Association (TEA), said the FTA marks a significant milestone for the sector.

He stated that the agreement is expected to facilitate additional investments worth around USD 2 billion into India, while strengthening long-term economic cooperation between the two countries.

The pact ensures complete elimination of tariffs across all tariff lines, including those currently ranging from 4.19-10pc, thereby improving India's global competitiveness.

Subramanian also noted that the agreement aligns with the 'Make in India' vision, supporting industrial growth and broader economic development.

He emphasized that the textile and apparel sector—one of the largest employers of women—will benefit significantly, reinforcing India's position as a reliable global manufacturing and export hub.

Industry bodies further pointed out that while the agreement complements India's strengths in cotton-based apparel, it also opens new avenues for expanding exports in man-made fibre (MMF) products to meet New Zealand's evolving demand.

Overall, the India-New Zealand FTA is expected to drive export growth, boost employment, attract investments, and strengthen India's footprint in global textile trade, positioning the country to tap into new and high-value international markets.UNI

# Reliance to invest Rs 1.6 lakh crore in setting up data centre in Andhra Pradesh: Report

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 28 :** Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) is set to invest Rs 1.6 lakh crore in setting up a 1.5-gigawatt data centre cluster and a captive solar battery storage system in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

This will be India's largest data centre cluster, eclipsing Google's 1-GW project being set up in the same region with an investment of \$15 billion.

Reliance plans to establish a giga-scale artificial intelligence data centre cluster in three phases, and has sought 935 acres of land for the cluster, including 300 acres for the first phase and 635 acres for the second phase. It has also requested 1 acre for a cable landing station and 80 acres for



a desalination plant, reports said.

In the first phase, a 500-MW data centre is proposed at Polipalli village, while the second phase is expected to add 1 GW of capacity at Bhogapuram East and West. The entire cluster is planned near Visakhapatnam's upcoming airport at Bhogapuram. Google has announced a \$15 billion investment for a 1-GW cluster in the region. Andhra Pradesh government has outlined a long-term vision to develop a multi-gigawatt digital ecosystem with a total capacity of around 6.5 gigawatts, positioning Andhra Pradesh as a major data hub.

Sify is set to build a 500-MW data centre, while Digital Connexion (1 GW) and Anant Raj Cloud (around 300 MW) are also in the pipeline.

In a separate development, Meta has announced two energy partnerships to deliver reliable power for its AI infrastructure and data centres' needs by advancing innovative energy generation and storage. Meta said it is partnering with Overview Energy to bring up to 1 GW of space solar energy to Earth. It is also partnering with Noon Energy to deploy up to 1 GW/100 GWh of ultra-long-duration energy storage enabling 24/7 clean, reliable power for its next-generation AI data centers.UNI

# India-New Zealand FTA to boost exports, deepen trade ties: FIEO

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**HYDERABAD, APR 28 :** The Federation of Indian Export Organisations on Monday welcomed the signing of the India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA), stating that the pact will significantly enhance export opportunities and strengthen bilateral trade relations.

In a statement, FIEO President S C Ralhan said the agreement would provide improved market access for Indian exporters in sectors such as agriculture, textiles, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, and services including IT, business services, education, construction and healthcare.

He noted that reduced tariff barriers and simplified trade procedures would improve the competitiveness of Indian businesses in the New Zealand market.

The FTA, he added, would also help diversify India's export destinations and reduce dependence on traditional markets, while creating opportunities for MSMEs to tap into a high-value market.

Ralhan said the agreement is expected to facilitate smoother trade flows, encourage investments and strengthen supply chain linkages between the two countries. He urged exporters to align product standards and marketing strategies to fully leverage the benefits of the pact.UNI

# Vipul Organics' membrane unit AdiMem Technologies Commences Commercial Sale of Membranes

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**MUMBAI, APR 28 :** Vipul Organics Limited, India's leading specialty chemicals player in pigments and dyes, today announced that its unit, AdiMem Technologies has commenced commercial sales of membranes, achieving a pivotal milestone just months after showcasing at IFAT India 2025.

Transitioning from pilot to full-scale, the company will launch Reverse Osmosis (RO) and Ultrafiltration (UF) membrane manufacturing at its Sayakha, Gujarat facility, leveraging proprietary Reverse

Phase Transition technology for indigenously produced, high-performance membranes. AdiMem Technologies is India's first fully indigenous manufacturer of membranes, said a release.

AdiMem now supplies membranes alongside end-to-end Effluent Treatment Plants (ETP), Sewage Treatment Plants (STP), and pre-treatment systems, for chemicals, pharma, and other sectors.

The Sayakha unit of AdiMem will integrate manufacturing, rolling, quality control, and a performance testing infrastructure, enabling comprehensive

water and wastewater solutions and consistent product performance at scale.

Membrane revenues are expected to impact the revenues and the margins of Vipul Organics Limited. Vipul organics is targeting 25% of its topline coming from sales of Membranes and Membrane based solutions in the next three years.

The company is also targeting a sizeable part of the USD 6.33 billion India filtration market projected for 2033.

AdiMem's comprehensive lineup, spanning MF/UF/NF/RO, tubular and hollow fibre configurations, and MBR systems

is the first fully Indian-made offering in this category. It delivers superior filtration, resilience, and sustainability, the release added.

Vipul Organics, which champions sustainability with 98% effluent recycling, ZDHC Level 3 certification, and ISO 14001 compliance, is now extending its commitment to membranes that it produces commercially. These membranes will enable 90% water recovery in different applications.

"We are happy to announce that commercial sales of AdiMem products and solutions have now begun. Our Sayakha expansion

will scale up our high-performance membranes and full solutions, reinforcing India's sustainability drive," said Mr. Vipul P. Shah, Managing Director, Vipul Organics Limited.

"From pigments (10,000 TPA expansion) to membranes, this strategic move reduces import reliance on China-dominant supply chains and opens access to the global USD 350 billion market.

The company is bullish on its expansion into Membrane solutions with proprietary technology and Dr. Vatsal Shah, a technocrat leading the initiative." UNI

# 'Sigma Advanced Systems' secures 300 Million Pound long-term agreement with Rolls-Royce

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**HYDERABAD, APR 28 :** Sigma Advanced Systems, a globally integrated aerospace and defence company, on Monday said it has signed

a seven-year long-term agreement with Rolls-Royce, marking a significant milestone in its global aerospace journey.

Valued at nearly 300 million Pound (approximately INR 3,800

crore), the agreement strengthens strategic relationship between the two companies and positions Sigma Advanced Systems at the core of critical global engineering programmes.UNI

# Adani Airports, MakeMyTrip launch pre-booking for duty-free shopping

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**MUMBAI, APR 28 :** Adani Airport Holdings Ltd (AAHL) and MakeMyTrip announced a partnership here on Monday to enable international travellers browse as well as pre-book duty-free products on the travel booking platform before departure or arrival at Adani-managed airports which operate duty-free outlets across Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Mangaluru, Jaipur and Thiruvananthapuram.

The facility will enable international travelers to browse and reserve products even before arriving at or departing from select Indian airports managed by Adani Airport Holdings Ltd (AAHL).

Under the arrangement, duty free catalogues will be accessible through MakeMyTrip's app and mobile website. International passengers can pre book items for pick up at Adani managed airports, covering both departure and arrival journeys.

The initiative shifts duty free purchases to the trip planning stage rather than relying on in terminal shopping. The service offers access to more than 14,000 products across over 100 brands and more than 10 categories, including liquor, tobacco, fragrances, accessories and electronics.

Online exclusive prices and offers are available, which users can review prior to travel.

AAHL currently operates duty free outlets at six airports—Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Mangaluru, Jaipur and Thiruvananthapuram—where passengers can collect their pre booked purchases.

# KVB inaugurates new divisional office in Tiruppur in TN

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**TIRUPPUR, APR 28 :** In a strategic move to drive operational empowerment across its administrative and credit functions, Karur Vysya Bank (KVB) inaugurated its new divisional office at the knitwear industry hub of Tiruppur in Tamil Nadu.

This milestone reflects the bank's commitment to Tiruppur's industrial growth by bringing senior leadership and localized sanctioning authority directly to the heart of India's Knitting City.

The establishment of this divisional office is a strategic

response to the evolving needs of Tiruppur's economy, a bank release said.

KVB currently operates a robust network of 37 branches across the Tiruppur region. As a global hub for textiles and exports, the region houses thousands of MSMEs requiring rapid credit intervention and specialized financial expertise.

By elevating its presence to a divisional level, the bank is stationing senior leadership and dedicated experts on-site. This ensures that local entrepreneurs, exporters, and those in the garment and textile manufacturing sectors benefit from signifi-



cantly faster processing of business loans and financial solutions.

Bank CEO and MD Ramesh Babu said "Tiruppur is a vital engine of India's export econo-

my. By upgrading our presence to a divisional office, we are positioning our administrative and credit sanctioning teams in immediate proximity to our

customers. This infrastructure will facilitate swifter turnaround times for credit proposals and provide localized, high-touch assistance, empowering local businesses to scale their operations and remain globally competitive."

Through this new office, KVB continues to bridge the gap between traditional banking trust and modern commercial agility. Regional business owners can now access a comprehensive suite of corporate, MSME, and trade finance services with enhanced efficiency, backed by the 110-year legacy of the bank.UNI

# Young Athletes Shine as Under-14 Zonal Level Kabaddi Tournament Begins at BMS Sharkoot Kupwara



■ JAVAID BHAT

**VILGAM KUPWARA:** Under-14 Zonal Level Kabaddi Competition was successfully inaugurated at Boys Middle School Sharkoot. The

event witnessed enthusiastic participation from around 20 schools across the zone. The opening ceremony was marked by high energy and a spirit of sportsmanship, as young athletes

showcased their talent and dedication. The competition aims to promote a healthy and drug-free lifestyle among students by engaging them in constructive and competitive activities like

sports. The matches were thrilling, with students delivering brilliant performances, reflecting their hard work, discipline, and passion for the game of kabaddi. Spectators

and staff alike were captivated by the intensity and skill displayed on the field. School authorities highlighted the importance of such initiatives in shaping the character of students

and steering them away from social evils like drug abuse. They appreciated the efforts of all participating schools, coaches, and organizers in making the event a grand success.

The competition will continue over the coming days, with teams competing for top honors while spreading the message of a Nasha Mukht Bharat (Drug-Free India).

## Jr World Cup shooting: India win 2 medals on final day, finishes on top of medal tally

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI:** Hemant Burman won silver in 50m Rifle 3Positions Men and the pair of Zuhair Khan and Addya Katyal won bronze in Trap Mixed Team event as India completed the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Junior World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun in Cairo, Egypt on top of the table with a total of 16 medals including five gold, six silver and five bronze.

In the first finals of the day, Hemant Burman won silver after shooting 351.7 across the three positions in the 50m 3Positions event. The 18-year-old had qualified for the final in seventh place with a score of 578-24x and was joined by Vedant Nitin Waghmare and Rohit Kanyan in the finals who shot 581 and 580 respectively. Rohit finished in sixth place in the final with a score of 311.9 and Vedant finished in seventh



with a score of 300.5.

Oleg Noskov of Kazakhstan with a new world junior record score of 355.6 won the gold medal and Nikita Solokov of Uzbekistan won bronze with a score of 341.2. The other Indians in qualification, Manvendra Singh Shekhawat (578-23x), Kushagra Singh Rajawat (576-24x) and Hithesh Srinivasan (574-26x) finished outside the top eight.

In the final event of the Junior World Cup, the pair of Zuhair Khan and Addya Katyal secured the bronze medal with a final score of 19 after qualifying for the medal rounds with a qualification score of 137. The pair who were in silver medal places after the first two series, faltered in the third series with Addya missing four of her five shots and Zuhair missing one which pushed them down to the bronze medal places.

Bence Doeberhegyi and Anna Nyitrai of Hungary won the gold medal with a new world junior record score of 32 while neutral athletes Ramir Nikolaev and Kseniia Tatarinova won silver with a score of 25.

In the 50m Rifle Prone Women event, all Indians, Tejal Nathawat, Yugeshwari Bais, Anushka Thokur and Khwaish Sharma finished outside the medal places.

The Indian junior athletes will now shift their focus to the ISSF Junior World Championship, the blue riband event in the calendar which will be held at Suhl in Germany in June.

## Players need to reinvent to keep pace with new scoring trends: RCB mentor Karthik

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI:** Royal Challengers Bengaluru mentor and batting coach Dinesh Karthik on Sunday said the ever-escalating scoring trends in the Indian Premier League have forced teams to constantly reinvent, even as he hailed the tournament as a benchmark for modern-day cricket.

With 200-plus totals becoming routine this season, Karthik admitted that planning has become increasingly complex for both batters and bowlers.

On Saturday, Punjab Kings pulled off a record-breaking chase of 265 against Delhi Capitals.

"It is obviously a challenge. Batting-wise, you try to be more aggressive and with the ball, you try to protect as much as you can. The game is constantly raising the bar and players need to reinvent to keep pace," he said on the eve of RCB's clash against Delhi Capitals.

Calling the IPL a "different brand of cricket altogether", Karthik said the high standards are a result of intense competition among evenly matched teams.

"Every team is pushing the other to do something special to win. That's what you want in terms of rivalry and standard. The IPL is in a very good place and, in many ways, an example of how cricket and even sport should be played," he noted.

On the bowling front, he acknowledged the pressures of the "new normal", where totals in excess of 220 are frequently chased down.

"It almost feels like 220 is the old 180. Bowlers are challenged because pitches are flat and batters have expanded their range and power. As a unit, you need to be very aware and keep evolving, possibly with more variations," he said.

Karthik also underlined the role of data analytics in modern cricket, revealing that RCB are



increasingly relying on metrics to fine-tune performance.

"We do use data and try to understand how to use it to our advantage. Our analyst brings interesting insights and it's up to the coaching group to interpret and apply them. It's been a

fascinating learning curve," he said. Lavishing praise on skipper Rajat Patidar, Karthik credited his consistency to constant self-improvement and composure under pressure.

"He is someone who keeps upping his standards. He reviews

his game every season and works on areas of improvement. On the field, he is composed and makes very good decisions under pressure," he said.

Karthik added that Patidar benefits from the guidance of experienced players such as Virat Kohli, Josh Hazlewood, Krunal Pandya and Bhuvneshwar Kumar, as well as wicketkeeper-batter Jitesh Sharma, whom he described as a "good lieutenant".

On Pandya's evolution, Karthik termed the all-rounder a "trendsetter" in finger spin bowling. "He is pushing the boundaries of what finger spin means, bowling deliveries people couldn't fathom a few years ago. He uses them smartly to create doubt in the batter. He will be remembered for changing the landscape of finger spin," he said.

Karthik also lauded Jitesh's improvement behind the stumps, attributing it to disciplined practice and behind-the-scenes work with the coaching staff.

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