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“CHANGE, NOT REVENGE,” SAYS PM AFTER BJP’S SWEEP IN KEY STATES

Modi hails victory as a triumph of democracy, urges focus on future over fear

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAY 4: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday called for a forward-looking approach in governance, urging political stakeholders to embrace “change, not revenge” following the Bharatiya Janata Party’s decisive victories in multiple Assembly elections.

Addressing party workers at the BJP headquarters, Modi described the electoral outcome as a defining moment for Indian democracy, underscoring public faith in performance-driven governance, stability, and national unity. He said the results signal a strong mandate for development-oriented politics across several regions.

Referring to the party’s expanding



presence across states along the Ganga corridor, the Prime Minister remarked that the BJP’s symbol—the lotus—now stands firmly established across key regions, reflecting growing public support.

“Democracy has prevailed over fear,” Modi said, stressing that electoral verdicts should inspire constructive change rather than political retaliation. He called on all parties to prioritise the nation’s future and work collectively for progress.

The Prime Minister expressed gratitude to voters in West Bengal, Assam, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala, noting that high voter turnout—particularly in West Bengal—demonstrates the strength and vibrancy of India’s democratic framework. He also highlighted the significant

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Athletes Must Lead India’s Fight Against Drug Abuse: LG Sinha

Over 1,000 participants from 150 universities gather at KU for National Wushu Championship



HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 4: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday called upon athletes

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LG Chairs 7th J&K UT Wildlife Board Meeting

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 4: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Monday chaired the 7th meeting of the Wildlife Board for the Union Territory of J&K, at Lok Bhavan, Srinagar.

The meeting was attended by Shri Javed Ahmed Rana, Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment, and Tribal Affairs Departments; Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal and Shri Mian Mehar Ali

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MLAs Thank CM Omar Abdullah for Revival of Darbar Move in Srinagar

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 04: Several Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) from Srinagar on Monday called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah at the Civil Secretariat and expressed their gratitude for the resumption of the traditional Darbar Move after a gap of several years.

The delegation included Mubarak Gul, Shamim Firdous, Salman Sagar, Tanvir Sadiq, Sheikh Ahsan Ahmed Pardesi and Mushtaq Guru. Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani was also present during the meeting.

The legislators welcomed the restoration of the Darbar Move, noting that its resumption—first in Jammu last year and now in Srinagar—marks a return to a key administrative tradition. They said the move is expected to invigorate economic activity in the summer capital, particularly benefiting the hospitality sector, trade, and local businesses.

The MLAs further observed that the reopening of offices in Srinagar

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“We Will Enhance Public Service Delivery with Better Facilities”: Omar Abdullah

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 04: The annual Darbar Move resumed in Srinagar on Monday, with Chief Minister Omar Abdullah assuring improved facilities to strengthen public service delivery as the Civil Secretariat reopened in the summer capital.

The Chief Minister received a ceremonial Guard of Honour at the Civil Secretariat Srinagar, where he also inspected the parade. The occasion marked his first such reception in Srinagar following the restoration of the Darbar Move, a longstanding administrative tradition involving

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CM Chairs Meet as Srinagar Offices Open, Sets 6-Month Agenda

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 04: On the first day of the reopening of the Civil Secretariat in Srinagar after Darbar Move, marking the first full return to the summer capital in several years, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today chaired a high-level meeting to outline the governance roadmap for the next six months.

The meeting, held at the Civil Secretariat, was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary,

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“Religion Teaches Peace and Coexistence,”: Youth on 9-Month Pilgrimage to Amarnath

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

RAMBAN/JAMMU, MAY 4: Demonstrating extraordinary devotion and endurance, four youths from Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh are undertaking a rare, nine-month-long pilgrimage to the Amarnath Shrine, advancing entirely through repeated full-body prostrations while promoting a message of unity and communal harmony.

The pilgrims — Jatinder Rajput,

Rohit Ray, and Nayain Jain from Madhya Pradesh, along with Amit Rajput from Uttar Pradesh — are currently moving along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway in Ramban district, braving harsh weather and difficult terrain as they continue their spiritual journey.

Their method of travel involves lying flat on the ground and rising repeatedly to move forward inch by inch, a physically demanding

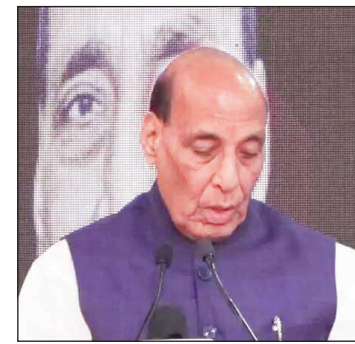
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Operation Sindoor Reflects India’s Technological Edge in Modern Warfare: Rajnath Singh

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAY 4: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said that Operation Sindoor has demonstrated India’s growing technological capability and preparedness to address rapidly evolving security challenges.

Speaking at a defence symposium in Prayagraj, Singh said the operation showcased the effec-



tiveness of indigenous systems and the armed forces’ readiness to adapt to new forms of warfare. He underlined that modern conflicts are increasingly shaped by advanced technologies such as drones, sensors and artificial intelligence.

Referring to recent global developments, the minister noted that the nature of warfare

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J&K Faces Sharp Voltage Slump

Power voltages hit severe lows: NRPC

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, MAY 04: In a stark admission before the Northern Regional Power Committee (NRPC), authorities have revealed that power voltages in Jammu and Kashmir have slumped to severe low

levels.

The authorities have revealed that key 400kV and 220kV bus voltages across have slumped to severe low levels at 347kV and 178kV respectively—thus raising serious concerns of the power supply.

According to the news agency—

Kashmir News Observer (KNO), NRPC in a recent meeting stated that the 400kV as well as 220kV bus voltages at various stations in Kashmir valley are remaining critically low, also reaching 347kV and 178kV respectively.

“The low voltage is a perennial

issue, and it has been deliberated in various meetings as well as in the recent meeting held in 2025,” it reads.

It also said, “Further Grid-India in quarterly operational feedback 2025 also highlighted low voltages at 400kV Amargarh, Wagoora

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Over 13,000 MSMEs assessed by JKMHC across J&K



HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 4: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the functioning and progress of the Jammu &

Kashmir MSME Health Clinic (JKMHC), a digital initiative aimed at diagnosing, reviving and strengthening micro, small and medium enterprises across the Union Territory. The meeting besides

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Kashmiri doctor included in World Book of Records

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 04: Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo, a distinguished physician and public health professional from Poshkri village of district Anantnag in Jammu & Kashmir, has been formally recognised by World Book of Records, London, with inclusion in its prestigious Excellence Category (E1) for eminent service and sustained impact in healthcare delivery, health education, and community empowerment.

According to the official Inclusion Letter issued by World Book of Records, London, the recognition honours individu-



als demonstrating exceptional achievement, distinguished service, and notable contributions in their respective fields, with particular emphasis on leadership, dedication, and

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“CHANGE, NOT.....

participation of women voters as a positive indicator of inclusive democratic engagement.

Describing democracy as deeply embedded in India's ethos, Modi said the election results reaffirm the resilience of constitutional institutions and democratic processes.

Senior leaders, including Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh, were present at the event.

The Prime Minister also commended the Election Commission of India, election officials, and security personnel for ensuring the smooth conduct of the polls, stating that their efforts have upheld the dignity of the nation's democratic system.

Athletes Must.....

to take a leading role in combating drug abuse, urging them to act as role models and inspire young people to adopt healthy, disciplined lifestyles through sports.

He was speaking at the inauguration of the All India Inter-University Wushu Championship at the University of Kashmir, where more than 1,000 athletes from over 150 universities across the country have assembled for the six-day event.

Emphasizing the importance of sports in shaping character and society, the Lieutenant Governor said the administration is committed to strengthening the sporting ecosystem across higher educational institutions, ensuring that every student has access to opportunities for physical development and well-being.

Describing the championship as a platform that goes beyond competition, Sinha said it promotes unity, discipline and national integration. He noted that such events bring together diverse cultures and backgrounds, helping foster mutual respect and a shared sense of purpose among the youth.

Highlighting the significance of Wushu as a sport that demands agility, strength and precision, he said its discipline reflects the resilience and determination of young people. He encouraged participants to use their influence responsibly, including through social media, to spread awareness about the dangers of substance abuse and the benefits of a positive lifestyle.

The championship is being conducted under the aegis of the Association of Indian Universities and features competitions for both men and women, reflecting the growing popularity and inclusiveness of the sport at the university level.

Among those present on the occasion were Vice Chancellor Prof. Nilofer Khan, Commissioner Secretary Youth Services and Sports Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Commissioner Secretary Higher Education Shri Ram Niwas Sharma, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Akshay Labroo, Registrar Prof. Naseer Iqbal, senior university officials, sports personalities, coaches and students.

LG Chairs 7th.....

Members of the Legislative Assembly; Shri Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Dr. Mandep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Ms. Sheetal Nanda, Commissioner Secretary, Forest, Ecology & Environment Department; Shri Sarvesh Rai, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Head of Forest Force; Shri Chaturbhuj Behera, PCCF & Chief Wildlife Warden, J&K, along with eminent conservationists, ecologists, environmentalists, representatives of the Army, NGOs working in the wildlife sector, and other members of the Board.

The Board deliberated on key conservation and development matters and accorded approval for the construction of the Asha-Cheema-Gurdaligali-Aphrawat-Sarson-Anita Road at Gulmarg Wildlife Sanctuary, Baramulla. Now, the proposal will be recommended to the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SCNBWL) for grant of wildlife clearance.

During the meeting, the Lieutenant Governor underscored the importance of balancing developmental needs with ecological sustainability. He emphasized the need to safeguard and strengthen the unique biodiversity of Jammu & Kashmir.

The Board was also apprised of various initiatives undertaken by the Department for the conservation and protection of wildlife resources across the Union Territory.

MLAs Thank.....

would enhance governance accessibility and contribute to increased market vibrancy across the region.

“We Will.....

the seasonal shift of government offices between Jammu and Srinagar.

Senior officials, including the Deputy Chief Minister and Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, along with top civil and police officers, were present to receive the Chief Minister.

With the Secretariat now fully operational in Srinagar, the administration has formally begun its seasonal functioning in the summer capital, signalling continuity in governance and the return of an important institutional practice after a prolonged gap.

Later, the Chief Minister toured multiple sections of the Secretariat complex to re-

view administrative functioning and infrastructure. He inspected ministerial offices, clerical sections, and the renovated public waiting hall at the main entrance.

During his visit, Omar Abdullah interacted with officers, staff, and members of the public, reiterating his government's commitment to improving facilities and ensuring more efficient and responsive governance.

The resumption of the Darbar Move is seen as a significant step in restoring administrative rhythm and reinforcing governance structures in Jammu and Kashmir.

CM Chairs.....

Ministers Sakina Itoo, Javed Rana, Javid Ahmad Dar and Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to CM Dheeraj Gupta, Administrative Secretaries of key departments including Jal Shakti, PWD, Finance, Tourism and Mining, along with all Administrative Secretaries, Inspector General of Police Kashmir and senior officers.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah described the occasion as a significant milestone, noting that this was the first full-fledged Darbar Move to Srinagar after a prolonged gap. He acknowledged the logistical challenges involved but commended departments for successfully managing the transition.

“This is the first full Darbar Move in Srinagar after a number of years. The departments navigated the transition in Jammu effectively. This time, we were better prepared, having anticipated the move six months in advance,” the Chief Minister said.

He emphasized that the coming six months represent the most productive period of the year, with favorable weather conditions enabling maximum execution of development works. He lauded the Finance Department for ensuring timely completion of procedural formalities, including release of funds and approvals ahead of the working season.

“Now it is our responsibility to execute. Whether departments are under my charge or that of my colleagues, delivery will only happen if we work together. We all sit here with a shared mandate to meet the expectations of the people,” he asserted.

Calling for synergy between elected representatives and the administrative machinery, the Chief Minister urged officers to prioritize coordination.

“Within our resource constraints, we also have new avenues of funding, and support from the Government of India has enabled us to expand our delivery potential. The key takeaway from this meeting should be to find common ground and work collectively towards our goals,” he said.

Highlighting key priorities for the upcoming months, the Chief Minister said that the Darbar period in Srinagar coincides with critical events, including the annual Shri Amarnathji Yatra and the peak tourism season. He stressed that both require coordinated efforts beyond security arrangements, involving robust civil administration support.

“This is not just a working season; it is also a period that defines our governance outcomes. From tourism to pilgrimage management, we must put our best foot forward,” he said.

Referring to the recently concluded Budget session, the Chief Minister said the government now has a clear roadmap of commitments to fulfil. He called for efficient utilization of resources, timely execution of projects, and minimizing lapses in funds utilization.

“If we work with focus and coordination, we can end these six months with far greater optimism and satisfaction than we began with,” he added, extending his best wishes to officers for the months ahead.

During the meeting, the Deputy Chief Minister, Ministers and Advisor to the Chief Minister also shared valuable inputs, feedback and flagged key issues requiring attention particularly in respect of issuing new Industrial Policy and Mining Policy for J&K. Earlier, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo welcomed the Chief Minister, Council of Ministers and senior officers back to Srinagar and briefed the meeting on administrative preparedness.

He informed that most officers would remain stationed in Srinagar, while a roster system would ensure availability in Jammu as required. He stressed the need for proper arrangements for accommodation of Move employees, food supplies and essential services for people.

The Chief Secretary also highlighted preparedness for flood management, particularly in view of the approaching monsoon season, urging district administrations and the Irrigation & Flood Control Department to remain on high alert. He called for focused disaster mitigation efforts, especially in landslide-prone areas.

On infrastructure and services, he said that restoration works be expedited and that electricity and water supply be ensured across both Kashmir and Jammu regions. He further emphasized the need for speedy implementation of decisions taken by the

Council of Ministers over the past one and a half years.

He also urged departments to strictly implement Budget announcements and proactively flag any requirements. Highlighting upcoming administrative priorities, he informed that the Census process will commence with self-enumeration from May 17 to May 30, followed by subsequent phases, and called upon Deputy Commissioners and the Planning Department to play a pivotal role.

Additionally, he stressed the importance of digitization of land records as a key governance reform measure and for implementation of agristat project.

The Chief Secretary concluded by reaffirming the administration's commitment, under the guidance of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, to efficient governance, seamless coordination and effective delivery during the crucial six-month Darbar period in Srinagar.

“Religion.....

practice rarely undertaken over such long distances. Carrying minimal supplies, including blankets, water, and food, the group has endured extreme heat in the plains and colder conditions in the mountainous region.

The journey began months ago, with Amit Rajput setting out on July 23, 2025, while the other three commenced on September 3, 2025. “We have been on this journey for over nine months to seek divine blessings,” Amit said, adding that the pilgrimage has been a long-cherished aspiration.

The sacred cave shrine, located at an altitude of about 3,880 metres, houses a naturally formed ice structure associated with Lord Shiva and attracts thousands of devotees every year.

The annual Amarnath Yatra is scheduled to begin on July 3 and conclude on August 28, coinciding with Raksha Bandhan.

Beyond their spiritual goal, the youths emphasised that their journey is also aimed at spreading a message of peace and coexistence. They said their interactions with people across regions have reinforced their belief that true faith promotes harmony rather than division.

As they continue through Ramban district, the pilgrims' determination and message have turned their journey into a striking example of resilience, devotion, and social unity.

Operation Sindoor.....

has undergone significant changes in a short period, making continuous adaptation essential. He stressed that India must remain proactive and capable of responding decisively to future challenges.

Singh highlighted that maintaining the element of surprise remains critical in modern combat and said efforts are underway to further strengthen operational preparedness in this regard.

Emphasising the government's focus on defence innovation, he said research and development have been placed at the centre of policy priorities. Initiatives led by the Defence Research and Development Organisation are aimed at boosting domestic capabilities and reducing dependence on imports.

He added that technology transfer norms have been eased to promote collaboration with industry, with more than 2,200 technologies already transferred to private and public sector entities. Access to research facilities and patents has also been extended to support innovation and enhance competitiveness.

Calling on industry stakeholders to invest in emerging domains, Singh identified artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, hypersonic systems and advanced weapons platforms as key areas for future growth.

The minister also pointed to ongoing infrastructure development, including projects under the defence industrial corridor, aimed at strengthening the national defence manufacturing ecosystem.

Senior Army officials present at the event emphasised the need for closer coordination between the armed forces, industry and research institutions. They noted that capabilities such as unmanned systems, precision strike platforms and artificial intelligence-driven tools will play a decisive role in future conflicts.

J&K Faces.....

and Wanpoh S/s, 400kV voltages are reaching 360kV at Amargarh, Wagoora and Wanpoh substations.”

NRPC also said that due to inadequate compensation in J&K STU network, severe low voltages have been observed in J&K grid.

In last week of April-2026, this news agency reported that 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 in this regard revealing the power generation of J&K in MUs from 2020-21 to January 2026 states that

there 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—(KNO)

Over 13,000.....

Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce and Director, IIM Jammu was attended by Executive Director, JKEDI; Director, Industries Jammu; Director, Employment and other concerned officers.

During the meeting, Chief Secretary issued a series of strategic directions aimed at strengthening the effectiveness and institutional capacity of the MSME Health Clinic. He emphasized the adoption of an advanced, Large Language Model (LLM)-based solution for conducting root cause analysis of stressed units, with a mature agentic AI framework backed by appropriate guardrails.

He also directed that the system be trained on local datasets to enhance contextual relevance and explore development on indigenous platforms such as BharatGenetec.

Highlighting the importance of evidence-based interventions, the Chief Secretary called for the preparation of detailed case studies based on field-level diagnostics, citing the need for grassroots-driven analysis to inform policy and rehabilitation strategies.

He further stressed that capacity building should be a continuous process rather than a one-time exercise, directing that structured training programmes be conducted at least once every two months to build sustained expertise at the district level.

To strengthen institutional convergence, the Chief Secretary directed that experts from the Small Business Development Unit (SBDU) established under Mission YUVA be formally integrated into the MSME Health Clinic framework, with dedicated personnel deployed for implementation support.

He also called for inclusion of representatives from key institutions such as banks, NABARD and allied departments including agriculture, positioning SBDU as a nodal platform for coordinated guidance and execution at the grassroots level.

Clarifying institutional roles, the Chief Secretary underlined that IIM Jammu should primarily focus on training and capacity building, while implementation responsibilities should rest with field-level institutions. He further stressed the need to develop a robust pool of trained human resources at the district level through repeated and structured capacity-building interventions.

The Chief Secretary also directed the Industries & Commerce Department to convene joint meetings with the Labour Department and other stakeholders, while actively seeking inputs from leading financial institutions including J&K Bank, SBI and NABARD, as well as industry bodies such as FICCI, ASSOCHAM and CII. He called for greater stakeholder engagement to incorporate sector-specific expertise into the functioning of the MSME Health Clinic.

Additionally, Dulloo instructed that a one-day comprehensive workshop be organized, preferably in July, after completion of a round of assessments in both Jammu and Kashmir divisions. The workshop, he said, should serve as a platform to gather structured feedback and suggestions from stakeholders across sectors to further refine the initiative.

The Chief Secretary further reviewed the implementation of key directions issued during the previous meeting held on March 30, 2026, including development of an interactive

chatbot, acceleration of health analysis, automation of health certificates, expansion of daily interactions and constitution of district-level committees.

The meeting was apprised by the Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce, Vikramjit Singh that the MSME Health Clinic has been conceptualized as an end-to-end mechanism to evaluate the financial and operational health of industrial units using real-time data sources such as GST filings, banking records, power consumption and EPFO statements.

Based on this analysis, enterprises are classified into stable, stressed (recoverable) and sick categories, enabling targeted interventions, expert advisory and structured rehabilitation plans, he added.

Highlighting the scale of progress achieved so far, he informed that 13,357 enterprises have been digitally assessed so far by the MSME Health Clinic, out of which 86.26 percent have been categorized as stable, 13.36 percent as recoverable and a small fraction identified as prone to sickness. The initiative is focused on early identification of stress signals and timely handholding to prevent units from slipping into irrecoverable stages.

Giving details about the implementation of previous directions the Director, I&C Jammu, Arun Manhas informed that a responsive chatbot has already been integrated into the portal to enable enterprises to assess their health status and receive recommendations, while work is underway to upgrade it into an AI-enabled system for enhanced user experience.

He further divulged that district-level committees have been constituted across 10 districts to oversee implementation and enhance outreach. These committees, comprising representatives from the Industries & Commerce Department, JKEDI and Mission Yuva, have been trained extensively and will begin large-scale interactions from May 10 with a target of scaling up engagements from 20 to 200 interactions per day.

Reviewing field-level interventions, the Chief Secretary was apprised that 56 industrial units across Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur and Kashmir divisions have been surveyed in detail, covering 29 sectors. The survey identified critical, stressed and healthy units and highlighted key challenges such as high input costs, market competition, logistics constraints and working capital issues. These findings are being used to design data-driven policy interventions and rehabilitation strategies.

It was also revealed that over 60 industrial visits have been completed, with diagnostic reports prepared for several units and strategic rehabilitation plans finalized for critically stressed enterprises. Additional reports are in the pipeline and are expected to be completed by the end of May, while further field visits are planned to expand coverage.

On the certification front, more than 1,000 MSME Health Certificates have already been generated and issued to stable units, with full automation of the certification process targeted by May 10. The system also provides an option for re-evaluation to ensure continuous monitoring and support.

The meeting also reviewed convergence with Mission Yuva, under which all enterprises are being onboarded onto the UDYAM portal and subsequently integrated with the MSME Health Clinic platform. API integration between the systems is expected to be completed by early June, enabling seamless data exchange and streamlined registration processes for the times to come.

Kashmiri doctor.....

measurable societal impact. The citation acknowledges Dr. Itoo's continued work in advancing clinical excellence, promoting medical education, and contributing to broader public health initiatives that positively influence communities.

On receiving the honour, Dr. Itoo stated:

“I am deeply honoured by this international recognition. This acknowledgement reinforces my commitment to continue serving humanity through medicine, education, and public health advocacy with dedication and integrity.”

The inclusion in the Excellence Category (E1) places Dr. Itoo among distinguished professionals recognised globally for setting benchmarks of excellence and inspiring future generations through impactful service. This honour further strengthens Dr. Itoo's growing international professional profile and reflects recognition of his contributions beyond national boundaries.



Deputy CM visits Shopian; reviews development works, stresses expeditious completion

HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, MAY 04: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today conducted an extensive tour of Zainapora Constituency in Shopian district to assess the progress of ongoing development projects across Chitragam, Zainapora and adjoining areas.

During the visit, the Deputy Chief Minister inspected the ongoing construction of a vital 45-meter span bridge on the Sujan-Chitragam-Zainapora road. The Deputy Chief Minister was accompanied by Chief Engineer PMGSY Ashwani Kumar, Additional District Development Commissioner Dr. Nasir Lone, SDM Zainapora, Tehsildar, DMO and senior officers from PWD, PMGSY and Mechanical Engineering departments.

Emphasizing strict adherence to quality standards, he directed the concerned authorities to ensure timely completion of the bridge to enhance connectivity and facilitate smooth movement for the local population.

"Ensure use of quality material including cement and iron and dedicate the bridge to the public at the earliest," he said.



The Deputy Chief Minister also assessed the progress on the under-construction Health Care Centre at Chitragam.

Stressing the importance of strengthening healthcare infrastructure, he directed for expeditious completion of ground levelling works and called for immediate initiation of construction activities.

He reiterated the government's commitment towards ensuring seamless delivery of essential healthcare services to the people.

"This government is focused on accelerated development and ensure seamless service delivery to the public," he said.

Reviewing the pace and quality of work on the other road bridge projects, the Deputy Chief Minister instructed the officials to maintain efficiency, transparency and quality in the execution of all projects to meet the public expectations and ensure holistic growth across the district.

Stressing on labour welfare, he called for organising the awareness-cum-registration camps to facilitate workers' enrolment for labour cards and enable them to avail benefits under various government schemes. He further directed the Assistant Labour Commissioner (ALC) Shopian to ensure strict adherence to SOPs by workers during project execution for safety of life. The Deputy Chief Minister reviewed ongoing road and bridge projects across Shopian district and underscored the need for timely and quality execution. He also directed that the local representatives be actively involved in project implementation to ensure smooth and effective execution on the ground.

Taking stock of mining operations in the district, he instructed the officials to ensure uninterrupted supply of construction material while strictly adhering to mining regulations.

Earlier, the Deputy Chief Minister visited the residence of MLA Zainapora, Showkat Husain Ganai, at Chitragam and expressed heartfelt condolences on the demise of his mother. He prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and strength to the bereaved family in this hour of grief.

Khursheed Ahmad Shah Takes Charge as Vice Chairman of J&K LCMA

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 4: Mr. Khursheed Ahmad Shah today assumed charge as Vice Chairman of J&K LCMA. Earlier, he served as Mission Director, J&K, and brings with him rich administrative experience and expertise.

He formally took over the responsibilities from the outgoing Vice Chairman, Mr. Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, who has been relieved from the post.

During the handover, Mr. Khursheed Ahmad



Shah expressed his commitment to strengthening the functioning of the J&K LCMA and ensuring efficient implementation of its objectives and responsibilities.

He appreciated the services rendered by Mr. Manzoor Ahmad Qadri during his tenure and acknowledged his contribution towards the institution. Officials and staff of J&K LCMA welcomed the new Vice Chairman and extended their full support and cooperation for the smooth functioning of the office.

Three Medical Shops Sealed in Achabal During Joint Inspection Drive

FAROOQ RATHER

ANANTNAG, MAY 4: In a decisive move to enforce regulatory compliance and safeguard public health, the Drug Control Organisation Anantnag, in coordination with Jammu & Kashmir Police, carried out a joint inspection drive in the Achabal area on Monday.

During the operation, a total of 19 medical establishments were inspected to assess adherence to prescribed norms and regulations governing the sale and distribution of pharmaceutical products.

Officials reported that three Shops—Hope Chemists and Druggists Achabal, Paray Medical Store located opposite Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Achabal, and Dar and Rather Pharmacy Achabal—were found violating established guidelines. Acting promptly, the inspection team ordered the immediate closure of these establishments.

The action is part of an ongoing effort by the authorities to curb irregularities in the pharmaceutical sector and ensure that medicines are dispensed in accordance with legal and safety standards.

Officials emphasized that such joint inspection drives will continue in the future, with a focus on maintaining transparency, accountability, and the highest standards of public safety across the district.

Dr Darakhshan address social awareness programme "Asluk Aalav" at Srinagar

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IS A MUST FOR A ENVIRON FRIENDLY COMPETENT YOUTH POWER: DR DARAKHSHAN ANDRABI

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 04: Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board Chairperson Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi today participated in the social awareness programme Asluk Aalav at Srinagar organised by Al Rahim Trust at Govt Girls Higher Secondary School Sonwar. The programme was aimed at social harmony, awakening swadeshi sentiment, civic duties, family entitlement, environmental conversation and strengthening moral values among new generation. "The programme aims to raise awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and to promote moral and ethical values, social responsibility and a healthy lifestyle among youth. Such programmes are the need of the hour as we have to reach to the grassroots within our society to create a healthy future through our brilliant youth", said



Dr Andrabi. Praising the mega anti-drugs initiative by the LG of J&K Manoj Sinha Ji throughout the Union Territory, Dr Andrabi said that we have to collectively end narco-terror from our society. BJP J&K General Secretary Ashok Koul, Ex DG CRPF SS Sandhu, Vice Chairman Minto Circle Altaf Hussain, Religious Preacher Molvi Owais

Qadri, CMO Srinagar Dr Tahir, BJP leaders Arif Raja, Bilal Paray, Arsheed Bhat & Nazir Gilkar also participated in this grand event involving civil society members, students, parents and the teachers. Dr Andrabi thanked the school administration and the Al-Rahim Trust for organizing such a meaningful and significant programme.

COUNSELLING SESSIONS ON MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING HELD IN GANDERBAL

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, MAY 04: Under the noble vision of Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan @ 100 Days, the schools across District Ganderbal today transformed into centres of wisdom, com-

passion and collective awakening through meaningful counselling sessions on Mental Health and emotional well-being. The participation of nearly 37,000 students, teachers and parents reflected a powerful message that a healthy mind is

the foundation of a healthy society.

The sessions inspired young minds to rise above negativity, anxiety and substance abuse, while nurturing hope, resilience, humanity and moral consciousness. It

was a reminder that true education is not merely the pursuit of knowledge, but the cultivation of character, inner peace and responsible citizenship.

When families, teachers and society walk together in

the light of awareness, nations grow stronger and generations become emotionally empowered. Such initiatives are not only programmes, but movements towards a compassionate, enlightened and drug-free future.

5th Edition Of (JFF) Announces In Jammu

Introduces ₹1 Lakh Award for Local Talent

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAY 4: The 5th Edition of the Jammu Film Festival (JFF) was officially announced at a press conference held at Press Club, Jammu marking a key milestone in the region's cinematic journey. With five successful editions completed, and in collaboration with the International Film

Festival of Srinagar (TIFFS) the initiative has now reached a total of nine film festival editions in J&K. Over the years JFF has emerged as a credible international platform attracting filmmakers from across India and abroad. Notable personalities such as M. K. Raina, Rahul Roy and Yashpal Sharma have previously been part of the festival. The 4th edition



was inaugurated by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, reflecting its growing prominence. A major highlight of the upcoming edition is the Rs. 1 lakh award for Best Local Production aimed at encouraging regional talent. The festival will be held on September 28-29, 2026 in Jammu. Submissions open from May 6 via Film Freeway. Organised by Vomedh in

association with The Avanti Foundation, the festival will feature screenings, interactions, and curated cinematic experiences with participation from national and international filmmakers. Sanjeev Kak, Bhawna Pandita, Bindya Raina, Bharti Kaul, Kusum Tikoo, King C Bharti, Suman Bhat, and Kasksha Dogra also attended the press conference.

DC Ganderbal reviews arrangements for Kheer Bhawani Mela 2026

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, MAY 04: A high-level preparatory meeting was today convened here under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore to review and finalise arrangements for the annual Mata Kheer Bhawani Mela 2026, scheduled for 22nd June, 2026.

Reviewing the preparedness, the DC noted that the mela witnessed a footfall of more than 15000 devotees in 2025 and said that adequate arrangements should be put in place this year to cater large gatherings. Devotees are expected to start arriving from 21st June, with the main congregation on 22nd June.

It was informed that the Mata Kheer Bhawani Temple premises and the Central University of Kashmir campus at Tulmulla have been designated as the main accommodation sites. Adequate tents, bedding and essential facilities will be put in place well in advance.

The DC directed the R&B department to ensure timely



completion of all tendering processes so that transit camps are fully equipped before the arrival of pilgrims.

The Irrigation and Flood Control department were directed to expedite desilting and cleaning of the Tulmulla Nallah, particularly in areas requiring manual intervention. Sanitation arrangements will be jointly managed by the Municipal Council and Rural Development department, with strict measures in place to maintain cleanliness across the area.

KPDCL was directed to ensure uninterrupted power supply with

sufficient backup at all venues and along approach roads. Street lighting and mobile charging facilities are to be made fully operational ahead of the mela.

Reviewing security and medical preparedness, the DC was informed that comprehensive arrangements are being put in place by the district police, SDRF and traffic authorities. A joint control room will be established for effective coordination. The Health Department will deploy ambulances, specialist doctors and set up a dedicated medical camp at the shrine and other design-

nated venues.

Assistant Regional Transport Officer and District Traffic Police were directed to prepare a comprehensive transport and traffic management plan to ensure hassle free movement of pilgrims during the Mela.

The Floriculture department was directed to ensure beautification of the temple surroundings, while the Social Welfare department was directed to provide facilities for differently-abled pilgrims, including wheelchairs. BSNL and other telecom agencies were asked to strengthen network connectivity in and

around the Mela area.

The Food Safety Department was directed to ensure availability of adequate ration, along with availability of LPG within the premises. Food Safety department was tasked with Market checking and monitoring throughout the Mela period.

Issues raised by representatives of the Dharmarath Trust and Samaj Sudhar Committee as well as representatives of Kashmiri Pandit community were taken up during the meeting, and concerned officers were directed to resolve them on priority.

The meeting was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police, Sudhanshu Dhama; Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Syed Faheem Bhaq; Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B), Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Chief Planning Officer, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Education Officer and other officers and officials of district administration besides representatives of the Dharmarath Trust and Samaj Sudhar Committee.

Yoga Awareness event under Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan held at Polo Ground Srinagar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 04: A Yoga Awareness Event was today organized at Polo Ground Srinagar under the aegis of the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan, aiming to promote a healthy and drug-free lifestyle among youth.

The programme was conducted in collaboration with the Directorate of School Education Kashmir under the directions of District Administration Srinagar and was coordinated by the District AYUSH Office Srinagar.

On the occasion, speakers emphasized the importance of yoga as a holistic discipline that significantly contributes to physical and mental well-being. They highlighted its role as an effective tool in preventing substance abuse and fostering a balanced lifestyle.



The event was organized with the objective of raising awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and encouraging the adoption of healthy and disciplined living through yoga practices. Participants were sensitized about preventive approaches to addiction and the importance of building a drug-free society.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students and staff of various government schools, along with officials from the AYUSH and Education Departments.

Among those present were Chief Education Officer Srinagar, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din; District AYUSH Officer Srinagar, Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Payer; Nodal Officer (Yoga & Naturopathy), Dr. Seema Mustafa; and District Coordinator (CEO Srinagar), Hina Amin.

A mass yoga demonstration by participating students, an awareness session on drug abuse prevention, and interactive engagements promoting healthy lifestyle practices were key highlights of the event.

Participants actively performed yoga exercises and reinforced the message: "Say No to Drugs, Say Yes to Life."

The event served as a significant initiative in spreading awareness and encouraging youth to embrace a healthy, disciplined, and drug-free lifestyle.

District Treasury Shopian bids adieu to outgoing DTO

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, MAY 04: A farewell cum welcome function was organized by District Treasury Office Shopian to bid a heartfelt farewell to the outgoing District Treasury Officer (DTO) Shopian, Muzaffar Ahmad Rather and to extend a warm welcome to the newly appointed District Treasury Officer Shopian, Umar Javaid.

The event was marked by appreciation, reflection, and optimism as officers and staff gathered to acknowledge the contributions of the outgoing officer and to greet the incoming leadership.

Speaking on the occasion, officers and officials highlighted the professional excellence and dedication demonstrated by the outgoing DTO during his tenure. They noted that the officer's leadership significantly strengthened financial management systems and ensured smooth functioning of treasury operations.

Employees of the District Treasury Office shared their experiences and praised the outgoing DTO for his approachable nature, administrative competence, and commitment to staff welfare.

In his farewell address, DTO Shopian, expressed deep gratitude and emotion, describing his tenure of more than two years in Shopian as both professionally fulfilling and personally enriching.

He said he felt proud to have worked with such a capable and dedicated team, acknowledging both those who had been with him since the beginning and those who joined over time.

He concluded by thanking all staff members for their unwavering support and expressed hope that they would continue their excellent work under the new leadership. The incoming District Treasury Officer, Umar Javaid, in his address, expressed gratitude for the warm welcome extended to him. He acknowledged the strong foundation laid by his predecessor and assured the staff that he would work collaboratively with the team to maintain efficiency, transparency, and accountability in treasury operations. He emphasized the importance of teamwork and mutual support in achieving organizational goals and expressed his commitment to strengthening the functioning of the office.

The function was attended by District Fund Officer Shopian, Ershad Ul Haq Manhas; DIO Shopian, Showkat Hussain Ganie; Additional Treasury Officer Shopian, Raza Ali Khan; Treasury officers of Zianapora and Kapran, Section Officers, AAOs, Accounts Assistants, employees from Sub Treasury Office Shopian, Zainapora and Kapran and other departments.

Mass Counselling Sessions on Mental Health held across Ganderbal

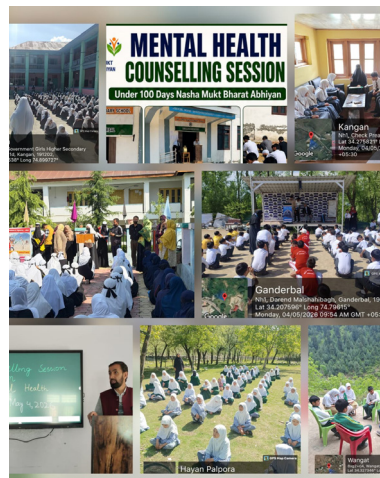
Over 37,000 students, teachers, parents participate

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, MAY 04: Under the vision of Nasha Mukta Abhiyaan @ 100 Days, schools across District Ganderbal today transformed into centres of awareness, reflection and collective awakening through a series of counselling sessions on mental health and emotional well-being.

The initiative witnessed the active participation of nearly 37,000 students, teachers and parents, sending a strong message that a healthy mind forms the cornerstone of a progressive and harmonious society.

During the sessions, resource persons and educators sensitised participants about the importance of mental health, encouraging young minds to overcome negativity, anxiety and substance abuse. The pro-



grammes emphasized the values of hope, resilience, empathy and moral responsibility, guiding students towards a balanced and purposeful life.

Speakers highlighted that educa-

tion goes beyond academic learning and must also focus on character building, inner strength and responsible citizenship. They stressed the need for a supportive ecosystem where families, teachers and society work in unison to nurture emotionally strong and socially responsible individuals.

The district-wide initiative was widely appreciated for fostering awareness and promoting a culture of compassion and mindfulness among the youth. It reinforced the commitment of the administration towards building a drug-free, mentally resilient and enlightened society.

The programme concluded with a collective resolve to carry forward the message of mental well-being and continue sustained efforts under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan

Anti-Drug Awareness, Enforcement Activities continue across Pulwama

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, MAY 04: A series of awareness, counselling and enforcement activities were carried out today across Pulwama district as part of the ongoing 100-day campaign under the Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyaan.

The Department of Youth Services and Sports (YSS) Pulwama organised a range of counselling sessions and sports activities across Pulwama, Pampore and Tral.

The programmes focused on mental health awareness and sensitising youth about the harmful effects of drug abuse.

Counselling sessions were conducted at various institutions including DMPS Pampore, Lalapora, HS Rathsuna, GMS Tral, Nagbal, HSS Hawl, HS Malanpura, HS Murrin, BMS Goosu and UPS Chewakalan.

Experts and speakers on the occasion highlighted the long-term consequences of substance abuse on individuals and society, urging youth to engage in constructive and positive pursuits. Each programme began with oath-taking ceremonies, where participants pledged to work towards a physically fit, mentally sound and drug-free society.

Besides, as part of the campaign, the Drug Control Depart-



ment has intensified enforcement measures across the district.

During an inspection drive conducted today, the department

ordered the closure of a retail medical shop at Rajpora Pulwama for violation of prescribed laws and regulations.

Officials stated that strict adherence to the provisions of the relevant acts is necessary adding that any non-compliance will attract action as per law.

Meanwhile, awareness programmes with active community participation were also conducted at Lalpora Tral, Booh Awantipora and Rajpora, focusing on sensitising the public, particularly youth, about the harmful effects of drug abuse and the importance of collective responsibility in making the Pulwama drug-free.

DC Kulgam inaugurates Grocery Mart at Yaripora under Mission YUVA

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, MAY 04: Promoting entrepreneurship and strengthening grassroots economic development, Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, today inaugurated a Grocery Mart at Yaripora.

The unit has been established by beneficiary, Asif Amin Bhat with an investment of Rs 35 lakh, under the ambitious Mission YUVA (MSME), aimed at fostering self-employment and empowering local youth.

Further enhancing its market outreach, the business has also been registered on the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) platform, enabling digital access and wider customer connectivity.

The Deputy Commissioner appreciated the entrepreneurial initiative of the beneficiary and emphasized the importance of integrating traditional businesses with digital platforms like ONDC to expand market opportunities and ensure sustainable growth.

Speaking on the occasion, he added that the administration's commitment to providing continuous handholding support to entrepreneurs under Mission YUVA and other government initiatives.

He encouraged youth to avail such schemes and actively contribute towards building a self-reliant economy.

The event was attended by officers from the district administration, officials associated with Mission YUVA, and members of the local community.

DC Bandipora interacts with 'Mahila Samitis' during 'Maa se Guftagu' Series

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, MAY 04: As part of the ongoing 100-Day Mission Mode Campaign under the Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan, District Administration Bandipora on Sunday organised an interaction and awareness programme with Panchayat-level Mahila Samitis under the "Maa se Guftagu" initiative, aimed at strengthening grassroots efforts against drug abuse.

The programme witnessed participation from District Programme Officer ICDS Bandipora, Yaar Ali Khan; Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Shabir Ahmad Wani; CDPOs, Mahila Samitis, ICDS Supervisors, Anganwadi Workers (AWWs), Anganwadi Helpers

(AWHs), NRLM representatives and other stakeholders.

During the programme, the functioning of Mahila Samitis across all 151 Panchayats and 43 Municipal Wards of the district was reviewed, with special focus on their role in strengthening grassroots implementation of the anti-drug campaign.

District Programme Officer ICDS Bandipora, presented a detailed strategy and action plan outlining the responsibilities of Panchayat Mahila Samitis. The presentation highlighted six core mandates, including awareness generation, counselling support, community vigilance, convergence, rehabilitation, and reporting mechanisms at the Panchayat level.

A comprehensive 100-day action plan focusing on training programmes, awareness drives, identification of addicts, home visits, and follow-up assessments was also shared. Addressing the gathering, Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, underscored the vital role of women in building a drug-free society and called upon Mahila Samitis to serve as "change agents" at the village and ward levels.

She stressed the need for intensified door-to-door awareness campaigns, mohalla meetings, community vigilance, and timely identification of vulnerable youth. The Deputy Commissioner observed that parents have a crucial role in safeguarding children from addiction and noted that

substance abuse often contributes to domestic violence cases. She urged participants to counsel affected individuals while strengthening preventive awareness at the grassroots.

The meeting also deliberated on a multi-pronged strategy involving ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, Self Help Groups (SHGs), and PRI institutions. Directions were issued to organise awareness drives, school rallies, and nukkad natak, besides facilitating counselling and rehabilitation support through the District De-addiction Centre.

Representatives of Mahila Samitis also shared challenges related to social stigma and increasing peer pressure among adolescents. UNI

Baramulla's Young Athletes shine in Multi-Zonal School Competitions

HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, MAY 04: DYSS Baramulla continues its relentless drive to promote sports culture and youth engagement across the district, with a series of Inter-School Zonal Level Competitions being successfully conducted in multiple zones, witnessing overwhelming participation and enthusiasm among students.

Zone Dangerpora today organized an Inter-School Under-14 event at AFI Dangerpora, drawing participation from an impressive 420 students representing both government and private institutions.

The event was graced by Mushtaq Sopori, Principal Higher Secondary School Danger-



pora, as the Chief Guest. He lauded the department's efforts in nurturing young talent and encouraged students to actively engage in sports for their holistic development.

Meanwhile, Zone Pattan successfully conducted an Inter-School Chess Competition for Under-14 and Under-17 boys at GHSS Pattan under the banner of the Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyaan. The competition witnessed the participation of 42 young chess enthusiasts, showcasing strategic brilliance and competitive spirit.

In a similar stride, Zone Singhpora Kalan is actively conducting an Inter-School Badminton Competition for Under-14 and Under-17 girls at GHSS Singhpora Kalan, where budding ath-

letes are demonstrating remarkable skill and determination.

Adding further momentum, Zone Dangiawacha organized an Inter-Cluster/Zonal Level Volleyball Competition for Under-14 and Under-17 boys on May 4, 2026. The event recorded vibrant participation across clusters. In Cluster Behrampora, 180 students in U-14 and 48 students in U-17 categories participated.

Additionally, at the zonal level in Dangiawacha, 180 students in U-14 and 84 students in U-17 categories showcased their sporting talent.

The event saw an outstanding total participation of 492 students, reflecting immense enthusiasm and sportsmanship.

Counselling Sessions, Awareness Drives held across Shopian

HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, MAY 04: Continuing the ongoing Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyaan, a series of awareness and outreach activities were organized across district Shopian to discourage substance abuse and promote a healthy lifestyle among youth.

Counselling sessions on mental well-being were conducted in various schools and institutions, including Govt Polytechnic College Shopian and several higher secondary schools. The sessions focused on stress management, building self-confidence, and adopting positive life choices. Students actively participated and interacted with resource persons.



Awareness events were held at multiple locations, including Fantalaz Educational Institute Alishapora and High School Gatipora, where participants carried placards and raised slogans advocating a drug-free society.

In Zone Harman, Poshan Project Shopian organized awareness activities at AWC Gagran, involving community interaction and poster displays to sensitize the public.

Additionally, Tourism Development Authority, Dubjan- Peer Ki Gali conducted awareness events at Tourism Park Bohrihalan and Shirmal Shopian, further extending the campaign's outreach.

As part of youth engagement initiatives, the Mental Health & Wellbeing Committee of GDC Shopian organized a badminton match within the college campus, encouraging students to adopt sports and constructive activities as a means to stay away from substance abuse.

The activities witnessed active participation of students, Anganwadi workers, and local residents, reflecting increased awareness and community involvement towards building a drug-free and healthy society in the district.

PCCF felicitates Winners of Forest Photography Competition

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 04: Principal Chief Conservator Forests (PCCF)/ Head of Forest Force (HoFF), J&K, Sarvesh Rai felicitated the participants of Inaugural Forest Photography Competition organized by the Planning and Publicity Division of Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department.

Launched by the J&K Forest Department, the initiative was designed to document the rich ecological heritage of the region and encourage field staff to actively record biodiversity, landscapes, People and forest sceneries.



Speaking at the event, Sarvesh Rai emphasized that the competition serves a dual purpose: showcasing the unparalleled beauty of Jammu and Kashmir's forests to the world and fostering a culture of conservation and observation among forest frontline staff.

The competition saw enthusiastic participation from across the departments. Top honors were awarded to Abdul Qayoom Sofi (Birds), Amir Shafi Rather (Landscape), and Hilal Ahmad Malik (Wildlife, People and Forest-life) for their exceptional photographic documentation of the region's diverse ecosystem.

Poonch unites for a drug free future: Thousands Rally in 'Nasha Mukta' Campaign

HT NEWS NETWORK

POONCH, MAY 04: District administration Poonch today organised a massive "Nasha Mukta" (Drug Free) awareness rally as part of the ongoing 100 day Jammu & Kashmir anti drug campaign.

The rally commenced from the Sports Stadium and passed through Dugas Chowk, Labour Chowk, Parade Chowk and Nakha Wali Chowk, before culminating back at the Sports Stadium. Thousands of school and College students participated in the rally with great enthusiasm, alongside officers, officials and members of civil society. Participants carried the National Tricolour, symbolising their love for the nation and raised impactful slogans such as "Yes to Life, No to Drugs" along with other "Nasha Mukta" messages, spreading awareness among the public throughout the route. Earlier, the rally was flagged off by Deputy Commis-



sioner Ashok Kumar Sharma in presence of SSP Shafiq Hussain. Notable participants included Additional Deputy Commissioner Tahir Mustafa Malik, Principal GDC Dr Jasbir Singh, along with other officers.

At the end, participants took solemn pledge, reaffirming their commitment towards building a drug free society. District Social Welfare Officer Khalil A Bandy administered the pledge. Heads of the district level departments also participated, reflecting a coordinated and unified approach of the administration in tackling the menace of drug abuse.

The rally forms a key component of the Government's 100 day campaign aimed at sensitising the public, particularly the youth, about the ill effects of substance abuse and encouraging community participation. Notably, the district has witnessed massive public engagement, with more than 3 lakh people participating in over 1,800 awareness and outreach activities conducted across the district.

The district administration reiterated its commitment to continue such initiatives to ensure a healthier, safer and drug free Poonch.

District Cooperative Development Committee meeting held at Udhampur

Focus on strengthening cooperative ecosystem

HT NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR, MAY 04: A meeting of the District Cooperative Development Committee was convened today under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Mingsha Sherpa to deliberate on strategies for strengthening the cooperative movement in the district and enhancing its outreach at the grassroots level.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner Jugal Kishore; Assistant Commissioner Revenue Dr. Umesh Shan;

ACP Dr. Ashwani Hansa; Deputy Registrar Cooperatives Nishtha Nayar and officers from various line departments and representatives of banking institutions.

At the outset, the Deputy Registrar Cooperatives listed the initiatives being undertaken to strengthen the cooperative sector in the district. She also highlighted the awareness programmes organized to promote cooperative societies and educate the public about their benefits.

The DC emphasized the need for greater synergy among Cooperative Department and line departments to effectively imple-



ment awareness campaigns. He directed the concerned authorities to intensify efforts to sen-

sitize the public, promote local products especially Garlic, Guchi mushroom, Jaggery and strength-

en market linkages with special focus on high-value produce such as Guchi.

He further instructed the concerned officers to take concrete steps to revitalize inactive cooperatives and expand business activities in other areas such as petrol pumps, handmade local products and enhance their operational efficiency for the benefit of local communities.

He underscored the importance of building a robust cooperative ecosystem and assured full support from the District Administration in achieving the desired objectives.

DI&C Jammu organises awareness-cum-registration prog on Trade Receivables Discounting System

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAY 04: Directorate of Industries and Commerce (DI&C) Jammu, in collaboration with Receivables Exchange of India Ltd. (RXIL) successfully organized a Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS) awareness-cum-registration camp today at the Bari Brahmana Industrial Association Office.

The RXIL delegation was led by Manager - Business Development Akshay Batwara and Senior Manager - Business Development Mar-tand Srivastava.

The programme was attended by Joint Director (Planning) Shivwali Sharma along with General Manager District Industries Centre (DIC) Jammu Abhishake Abrol and other officials from the Directorate and DIC.

The event saw active participation from approximately 70-80 industry stakeholders, including MSME buyers and sellers.

During the session, the RXIL team delivered a comprehensive presentation on the operational framework of the TReDS platform, detailing the onboarding requirements, documentation process and the wide-ranging benefits for both sellers and buyers. Emphasis was laid on the platform's ability to significantly reduce financing costs for MSMEs in comparison to conventional banking channels.

A key highlight of the discussion was the recent Union Budget announcement regarding the integration of the Governmente-Marketplace (GeM) with the TReDS platform. This strategic linkage is expected to facilitate timely payments for MSME vendors supplying to government departments, thereby enhancing liquidity and financial stability within the sector. The team also provided insights into the existing base of registered buyers and sellers on the RXIL platform and outlined strategies to expand participation

among local enterprises.

The interactive session encouraged valuable inputs from the industry participants. Suggestions included enhancing platform flexibility to broaden MSME accessibility and introducing enabling provisions to support new and emerging entrepreneurs in leveraging TReDS benefits. Participants requested that these recommendations be escalated to higher authorities for consideration and implementation.

The programme concluded with a constructive exchange of views, underscoring the importance of addressing MSME concerns, streamlining onboarding processes and strengthening the overall TReDS ecosystem to ensure wider adoption.

The Directorate reaffirmed its commitment to forwarding the feedback to the appropriate authorities and facilitating necessary reforms to improve the system's effectiveness and inclusivity.

DC Kishtwar reviews progress of RDSS, PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

Sets deadline for smart metering & solar rollout

HT NEWS NETWORK

KISHTWAR, MAY 04: Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Pankaj Kumar Sharma today chaired a meeting to review progress under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) and PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana in the district.

At the outset, Executive Engineer JPDCI Abdul Hamid briefed the Deputy Commissioner on the prevailing power supply scenario and ongoing initiatives, including loss reduction measures and smart metering under RDSS.

The DC conducted a detailed assessment of infrastructure works such as installation of electricity poles, cable laying, smart metering and transformer augmentation. He also reviewed feeder-wise performance along with physical and fi-

nanical progress under the schemes. The DC directed the concerned executing agencies to submit comprehensive feeder-wise reports covering both urban and rural areas.

Stressing timely execution, the Deputy Commissioner called for intensified efforts to accelerate smart metering, noting its critical role in improving efficiency and boosting rooftop solar adoption.

Expressing dissatisfaction over the slow pace of work by M/S Genus in the smart metering sector, he directed the agency to immediately enhance manpower and speed up smart metering.

The DC further instructed Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) to begin advance ducting for underground cabling, particularly in areas slated for road black-topping, to prevent future disruptions

and safeguard infrastructure. The DC set clear timelines for completion of smart metering across the district and directed the JPDCI to ensure close coordination among all stakeholders. He also ordered daily progress monitoring and weekly review meetings.

Reviewing the status of rooftop solar installations under PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, the Deputy Commissioner directed JPDCI to expedite installations for all 2,902 registered consumers by ensuring timely vendor engagement and execution.

He also expressed concern over delays by executing firms, including Vijai Electricals Pvt. Ltd. and Genus Power Infrastructures Ltd., directing them to deploy additional workforce and accelerate project implementation across the district.

HT EDITORIAL

In order to avoid flood, carry out dredging of water bodies, flood channels

Over the past 15 years or so the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir has been hit by many disasters with people losing their lives and properties getting damaged. In such a scenario it was important that all necessary precautions should have been taken by the government so that future disasters could have been averted. However, on ground the situation is grim with disaster preparedness missing.

The lack of preparation from the people at helm in mitigating the disasters has become evident from time to time with the floods of 2025 in both the Kashmir and Jammu divisions of the union territory being a stark reminder in this regard. Even though the government claimed that there is nothing to worry about, at the end of the day the people were at the receiving end. Lakhs of people suffered on account of floods and thousands of families had to shift from their native areas following the floods.

Referring to the floods of Kashmir valley chief minister Omar Abdullah had said that the matters have been made worse since no dredging has taken place in the flood channels of the valley. Omar while talking to media persons during his visit to one of the affected areas had said that since huge funds had been allocated for the dredging of flood channels a probe needs to be carried out as to where has the money gone.

While analysing the statement of Omar one can say that he is right and investigations need to be carried out as far as allocation of funds for dredging purposes is concerned. Over the years virtually very little dredging has been carried out in the flood channels and as such there has been no change in the carrying capacity of these flood channels. As on date a rainfall of a few hours keeps the people of Kashmir valley on tenterhooks and the basic reason for the same is the less carrying capacity of flood channels.

It is important that the government takes up the dredging of flood channels and water bodies seriously and people heave a sigh of relief. It is important to carry out dredging of water bodies as the same would lead to increase in the carrying capacity of these natural resources. Once the water bodies are able to absorb more water then there are least chances of flood and areas getting inundated.

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RNI No: Jkeng/2011/39231
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A Lifelong Bond of Literature and Scholarship

"True friendship endures not through time or circumstance, but through a shared passion that continues to inspire, enlighten, and elevate both minds and hearts."

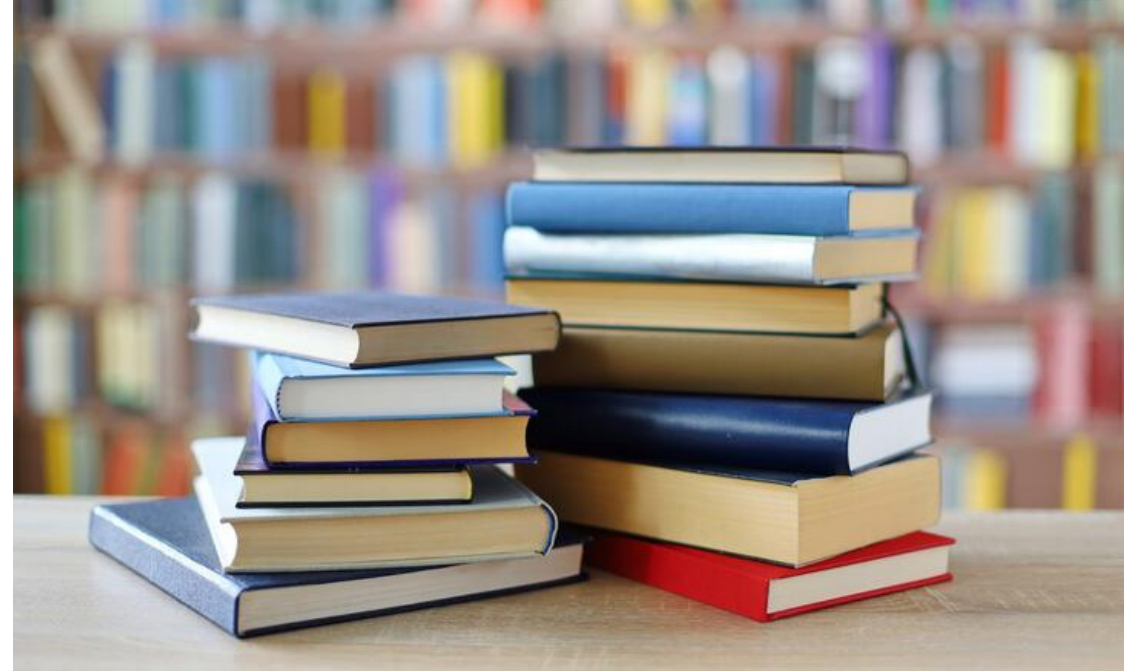


DR. MOHIUDIN ZORE KASHMIRI

During my Ph.D. journey in the Department of Urdu at the University of Kashmir, I had the privilege of meeting a young and enthusiastic scholar named Altaf Anjum. He was a distinctive personality, round faced, often sporting yellow colored hair, and deeply passionate about literary discussions. Altaf hailed from the revered town of Charar-e-Sharif, a place held in great spiritual esteem due to its association with the eminent Sufi saint Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani (R.A.), widely known as Nund Rishi. Our early interactions revolved around literature, criticism, and evolving intellectual thought, which laid the foundation of a lasting friendship.

Later, when I joined the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages in Srinagar, Altaf continued to stay in touch. He would frequently visit me, seeking books, exchanging ideas, and engaging in meaningful conversations about Urdu literature. Our association strengthened further over time. In December 2007, I moved to the Higher Education Department of Jammu & Kashmir, and shortly thereafter, in April 2008, Altaf secured a position at the Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE) at the University of Kashmir.

As years passed, many of our friends drifted apart due to professional responsibilities, personal commitments, and changing priorities. However, what remained constant between Altaf and me was our shared passion for literature. This



enduring intellectual bond kept our friendship alive and vibrant, even as circumstances evolved around us.

Dr. Altaf Anjum went on to achieve significant academic distinction. Notably, he became the first Ph.D. scholar of Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad. His area of specialization, postmodern literary criticism in Urdu, earned him recognition and respect in academic circles. Through his dedication and scholarly contributions, he established himself as a notable literary critic, following in the footsteps of distinguished figures such as Professor Gopi Chand Narang and Professor Hamidi Kashmiri.

In addition to his academic accomplishments, Dr. Anjum made remarkable contributions to the Centre for Distance and Online Education. His efforts were instrumental in strengthening and

reshaping the Urdu section of the institution, benefiting students, researchers, and the academic community at large. His commitment, vision, and administrative capabilities led to his well-deserved promotion to the rank of Professor.

Today, as he assumes the prestigious role of Director of the Centre for Distance and Online Education, it is a moment of pride and celebration. On behalf of our organization, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Altaf Anjum. His journey stands as an inspiring testament to dedication, scholarship, and the enduring power of literary passion.

Dr Mohiudin Zore Kashmiri is Associate Professor of Urdu in the Dept. of higher education J&K Govt. he can be mailed: drzoreurdu@gmail.com

There is Nothing More Important Than Health



SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Today, in all corners of India, especially in the Kashmir Valley, anti-drug campaigns are being carried out on a large scale. Intellectuals, senior citizens, and the Governor's administration are leaving no stone unturned to eradicate the drug menace from society.

Schools, colleges, universities, and government departments are conducting anti-drug campaigns and spreading awareness in society to eradicate this curse and transform the nation in an impressive manner.

To control this menace, we must remain vigilant and keep our youth aware of drug addiction. We should provide them with alternative ways to enjoy life and keep themselves healthy and happy.

This requires continuous efforts from the police, senior citizens, and families. This evil has no place in our pious society.

Kashmir's renowned doctor, Mr. Mohammad Sultan Khuroo, recently highlighted that during the last fifteen years, cases of fatty liver and Helicobacter pylori have increased due to people's lifestyle. This is very alarming. We must seriously reflect on our lifestyle and improve our diet.

Today, young people are becoming victims of obesity, which is very unfortunate. Youth should be physically fit because they are the future of the nation. We live in an era of awareness and cutting-edge technology, yet we lack a basic understanding of how important physical fitness is and how dangerous junk food and an unhealthy lifestyle can be. Fast food is not entirely bad, but we must take every health-related matter seriously and never be careless in this regard.

During the 1990s, the Kashmir



Valley suffered for various reasons, and young people did not have enough opportunities to explore their interests and careers. Today, however, we have numerous opportunities to fulfil our dreams and live comfortably. Our parents, teachers, relatives, and well-wishers have great expectations of us. We must keep our promises and do our best for the nation and for humanity.

Routine Exercise Reflects Discipline
Routine exercise reflects discipline and keeps us fit and healthy. Therefore, regular exercise is vital for good health. Today's era is full of stress and anxiety, and people often complain about fatty liver, high cholesterol, obesity, and many other health issues. To overcome these problems, we need discipline in our lives. We must follow a balanced diet, exercise regularly, and go for routine medical check-ups.

Healthy People, Healthy Nation
Today, people face severe health problems such as obesity, gastrointestinal disorders, fatty liver, heart disease, orthopedic issues, and many other health risks. Our body performs countless functions such as digestion, blood circulation, and waste removal. When we observe these processes, we realize how perfectly they work. We are blessed with intelligence to study and research what already

exists in the universe. We should always be grateful and hopeful for the future.

Unfortunately, even in the age of advanced technology, we still lack complete treatments for certain diseases like cancer, AIDS, and several genetic disorders. This reminds us that every part of the universe has value and that we must remain humble.

Health Comes First
Today, people are motivated to achieve success and wealth but often forget to prioritize health. In reality, health comes before money, buildings, and fame.

Workers and labourers are fortunate because their jobs involve physical activity, which keeps them fit, although their income is often low. They deserve appreciation and better support. Sportspeople are also fortunate because regular physical activity keeps them healthy while bringing recognition and financial stability.

Many people complain that they do not have time for exercise. For them, a home gym is a great solution.

Importance of a Home Gym
A home gym means setting aside a room or a small space with basic equipment to exercise daily. You can gradually add equipment as your financial condition improves. You

may even request friends and relatives to gift fitness equipment on special occasions.

Benefits of Exercise
I started gym exercises in the 8th class. In Kashmir, it is often called the "iron game." During this journey, I met kind and supportive people who motivated me. I experienced great positivity, increased energy, and improved confidence. Exercise helps remove fatigue and brings freshness to daily life.

I encourage young people to join gyms, stay away from drugs, develop an interest in sports, and become confident and disciplined individuals. Before starting a home gym, consult a trainer for proper guidance. Involve your parents and siblings to make fitness a family habit.

Schools should establish mini gym centres to create awareness among students. Colleges should open gym facilities for students to reduce stress and promote healthy activities. In villages, many youngsters fall into harmful habits such as smoking and drug use. It is our collective responsibility to replace these habits with healthy activities.

Regular exercise keeps you happy, healthy, and energetic.

sahilmanzoor411990@gmail.com

Nature Fading Grace



■ ANZAR FAYAZ BANDAY

Nature, once the pride of our land, is slowly losing its charm. The graceful beauty of Kashmir, known for its snow-covered mountains and crystal-clear lakes, is fading before our eyes. I still remember the days when the snow from the mighty peaks melted gently into the lakes, forming a mesmerizing sight that made us believe paradise truly existed on Earth. Today, those same lakes are burdened with garbage and waste, turning beauty into neglect.

It is heartbreaking to see how human carelessness has stolen nature's grace. Pollution, plastic, and reckless dumping have taken over the pure waters that once reflected the glory of the mountains. We often talk about development



and progress, but what kind of progress destroys the very environment that gives

us life? The air feels warmer, the winters are shorter, and the once-familiar snow-

fall now feels like a distant memory. When we were children, we used to

witness snowfall as early as November. The white blanket would cover the valleys, and the world seemed peaceful and still. But in the past few years, the snow has become rare. The seasons have shifted, and the climate has changed. It's a silent cry from nature — a reminder that something is deeply wrong. All this is not nature's fault; it is the result of human negligence.

We have ignored the warnings, polluted the land, and harmed the balance that once kept our world thriving. Now, it is our responsibility to correct this mistake. We must take serious steps to keep our surroundings clean, reduce waste, and restore the beauty of Kashmir.

If we act now — plant more trees, protect our lakes, and limit pollution — perhaps nature will forgive us. The grace of nature is fading, but it is not lost forever. With care, awareness, and unity, we can bring back the purity of our valleys and the snow that once marked the beginning of winter's magic.

The author from Baramulla Kashmir

Bye Bye Mailbox



■ DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

"At Srinagar I wrote to you / from the house of roses / from the house where the windows open/ to the lake/ from the house where the pigeons/ fly into the kitchen/ I wrote to you/ from the house of roses /But you never received my letter." The haunting fragment of the poem captures the essence of the whole poem of Agha Shahid Ali 'A Letter from Kashmir' He was a Kashmiri-American poet celebrated for his lyrical style and his ability to weave together personal memory, political conflict, and cultural heritage. "A Letter from Kashmir" was written when Ali was still a student, and it captures the ache of distance from home. The poem is often read as a precursor to his later works, where the breakdown of communication in Kashmir—post offices closed, letters undelivered—became a metaphor for silenced voices and fractured identities. "The Country Without a Post Office" was written in 1997 when the local Kashmiris took to guns to fight against the Indian rule in the state. The poem talks about the haunted and haunting experiences of widespread bloodshed and violence in Kashmir that resulted in total collapse of state machinery, including the breakdown of all the post offices in Kashmir. Originally called "Kashmir Without a Post Office," the poem, "The Country Without a Post Office" is considered Agha Shahid Ali's one of the best masterpieces. Dedicated to Ali's life-long friend James Merrill, the poem continues to maintain the integrity of feeling in the midst of political violence and tragedy.

The mailbox was once a fixture of everyday life, a small but significant object that stood outside homes, offices, and public spaces, silently waiting to carry words across distances. It was more than a container for letters; it was a symbol of anticipation, of human connection, of the art of waiting. Denmark's decision to do away with the mailbox marks the end of an era, not only for that country but as a sign of a global transformation in communication. The mailbox, once indispensable, is now obsolete, replaced by digital systems that deliver messages instantly, securely, and efficiently. This change is practical, but it is also deeply symbolic, reflecting the way modern communication has reshaped human interaction and gradually turned letter writing into a lost art.

Denmark's postal reforms did not happen overnight. For years, the country witnessed a steady decline in the number of letters being sent. In 2000, millions of letters flowed through the Danish postal

system, but by 2024, volumes had dropped by nearly ninety percent. Citizens no longer relied on handwritten correspondence or even printed letters for official communication. Instead, they turned to secure digital mail systems, where government notices, tax documents, and healthcare information arrived electronically. The red mailboxes that once dotted Copenhagen's streets became redundant. In 2025, Post-Nord, Denmark's state-run postal service, delivered its final letter, ending more than four centuries of traditional mail delivery. About 1,500 mailboxes were removed, and some nostalgic citizens even bought retired boxes to keep as mementos, reminders of a slower, more tactile form of communication.

The disappearance of the mailbox in Denmark is emblematic of a global trend. Across Europe, North America, and Asia, letter writing is gradually becoming a lost art. The romance of handwritten letters, the thrill of waiting for the postman, the joy of opening an envelope—all these experiences are fading. In their place, we have the immediacy of emails, the brevity of text messages, and the ubiquity of social media. Communication today is faster, more efficient, and more accessible, but it is also less tangible, less personal, and often less reflective. The handwritten letter carried not just words but also the imprint of the writer's hand, the rhythm of their thoughts, the pauses of their emotions. Digital communication, for all its advantages, rarely captures that depth.

In South Asia, too, the mailbox is disappearing. Bangladesh, India, and other countries in the region once had thriving postal cultures. The red mailbox in India was an iconic symbol, standing proudly in neighborhoods, railway stations, and marketplaces. It was the gateway to distant

connections, the bridge between families separated by migration, the lifeline for students writing home, and lovers exchanging tender words. In Bangladesh, the green postal boxes carried similar significance, serving as vessels of human emotion and social connection. Today, those boxes stand neglected, rusting in corners, rarely used, often forgotten.

The rise of digital communication in South Asia has been rapid and transformative. Mobile phones have penetrated even the remotest villages, bringing with them the power of instant messaging and voice calls. Internet connectivity, though uneven, has expanded dramatically, enabling millions to access email, social media, and video calls. Government services, banks, and businesses now rely on digital platforms for communication, reducing dependence on physical letters. In India, the Aadhaar-linked digital identity system has further accelerated the shift, with citizens receiving official notifications electronically. In Bangladesh, mobile banking and e-governance platforms have made digital communication indispensable. The mailbox, once central to everyday life, has been replaced by the smartphone screen.

Yet, the disappearance of the mailbox raises questions about what we lose in the process. Letter writing was not just a means of communication; it was an art form, a ritual, a deeply personal act. A letter carried the texture of paper, the fragrance of ink, the individuality of handwriting. It was something to hold, to keep, to treasure. Families preserved letters for generations, lovers tied them with ribbons, historians studied them for insights into the past. Emails and texts, by contrast, are ephemeral. They can be deleted with a click, lost in the flood of digital data, forgotten in the endless scroll of messages. The permanence

of letters, their ability to endure, is something digital communication struggles to replicate.

Moreover, the pace of digital communication has altered the nature of human interaction. Letters required patience. You wrote, you waited, you anticipated. That waiting was part of the emotional experience, deepening the value of the message when it finally arrived. Today, communication is instant. We expect replies within minutes, sometimes seconds. The art of waiting, the joy of anticipation, has been lost. In its place, we have the anxiety of immediacy, the pressure to respond quickly, the constant buzz of notifications. Communication has become faster, but not necessarily richer. Denmark's farewell to the mailbox is therefore both a practical decision and a symbolic moment. It reflects the inevitability of change, the triumph of digital efficiency, but also the fading of a cultural practice that once defined human connection. Other countries will follow, not because they want to, but because the logic of modern communication demands it. Postal services worldwide are struggling with declining revenues, rising costs, and shrinking relevance. Digital platforms are cheaper, faster, and more secure. The mailbox, once indispensable, is now redundant.

In Bangladesh and India, the transformation is particularly poignant. These are societies where letter writing was deeply embedded in cultural life. Bengali literature is filled with references to letters—poems, stories, and songs that celebrate the act of writing and receiving. Rabindranath Tagore himself wrote letters that are treasured as literary gems. His correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi, compiled in *The Mahatma and the Poet*, reveals how letters were not just communication but intellectual debates and moral appeals. Tagore's letter

to Gandhi after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919, renouncing his knighthood, is a powerful example of how letters carried political weight and personal conviction. Similarly, Jawaharlal Nehru's letters to his daughter Indira Gandhi, written from prison, became the celebrated *Letters from a Father to His Daughter*. These letters were not only personal but educational, introducing Indira to history, science, and philosophy. They remain treasured documents, showing how the act of writing could nurture thought across generations.

In Urdu literature, ghazals and novels romanticize the arrival of a letter as a moment of revelation. The letter is often the bearer of love, longing, or heartbreak. In countless South Asian films, the postman is a character of anticipation, his arrival a moment of drama. The cultural imagination of the region is filled with letters, their arrival shaping stories, their absence creating tension. The decline of letter writing in these societies is therefore not just a technological shift; it is a cultural loss. Yet, it would be simplistic to romanticize the past and dismiss the present. Digital communication has brought undeniable benefits. It has democratized access, allowing millions who never had reliable postal services to connect instantly. It has enabled education, healthcare, and commerce to flourish in ways that letters never could. Online classes, telemedicine, and virtual meetings are modern miracles, made possible by digital communication. In South Asia, where distances are vast and infrastructure often inadequate, digital platforms have bridged gaps that letters could never fill. The mailbox may be gone, but connectivity has expanded.

The challenge, then, is to preserve the spirit of communication even as the medium changes. We may no longer write letters, but we can still write thoughtfully. We may no longer wait for the postman, but we can still value patience. We may no longer treasure envelopes, but we can still treasure words. The art of communication lies not in the medium but in the meaning. Denmark's farewell to the mailbox reminds us that while forms change, the human urge to connect remains eternal. In the end, the mailbox's disappearance is not the end of communication but the beginning of a new chapter. It is a reminder that technology evolves, but human emotions endure. Whether through letters or emails, postcards or texts, handwritten notes or digital messages, people will continue to reach out, to share, to connect. The mailbox may say goodbye, but the conversation goes on.

Professor Ratan Bhattacharjee a multiple awardee poet and writer is a former Affiliate Faculty of Virginia Commonwealth University and a multilingual columnist cum author of short fiction *Twilight of Love* (2025) Email profatanbhattacharjee@gmail.com



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Fresh fruits and vegetables are the healthiest foodstuffs available on this earth. They are a priceless gift of nature and play a vital role in maintaining good health. Fruits are packed with essential nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants, and many other basic components that our body needs for proper growth and functioning. A balanced diet is incomplete without the regular intake of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Health is one of the most precious assets of human life. In today's fast-moving world, people are becoming more conscious about their health and lifestyle. Unhealthy eating habits, lack of physical activity, stress, and pollution have given rise to several lifestyle-related diseases. To overcome these problems, nutritionists and health experts strongly recommend the inclusion of fresh fruits and vegetables in our daily diet.

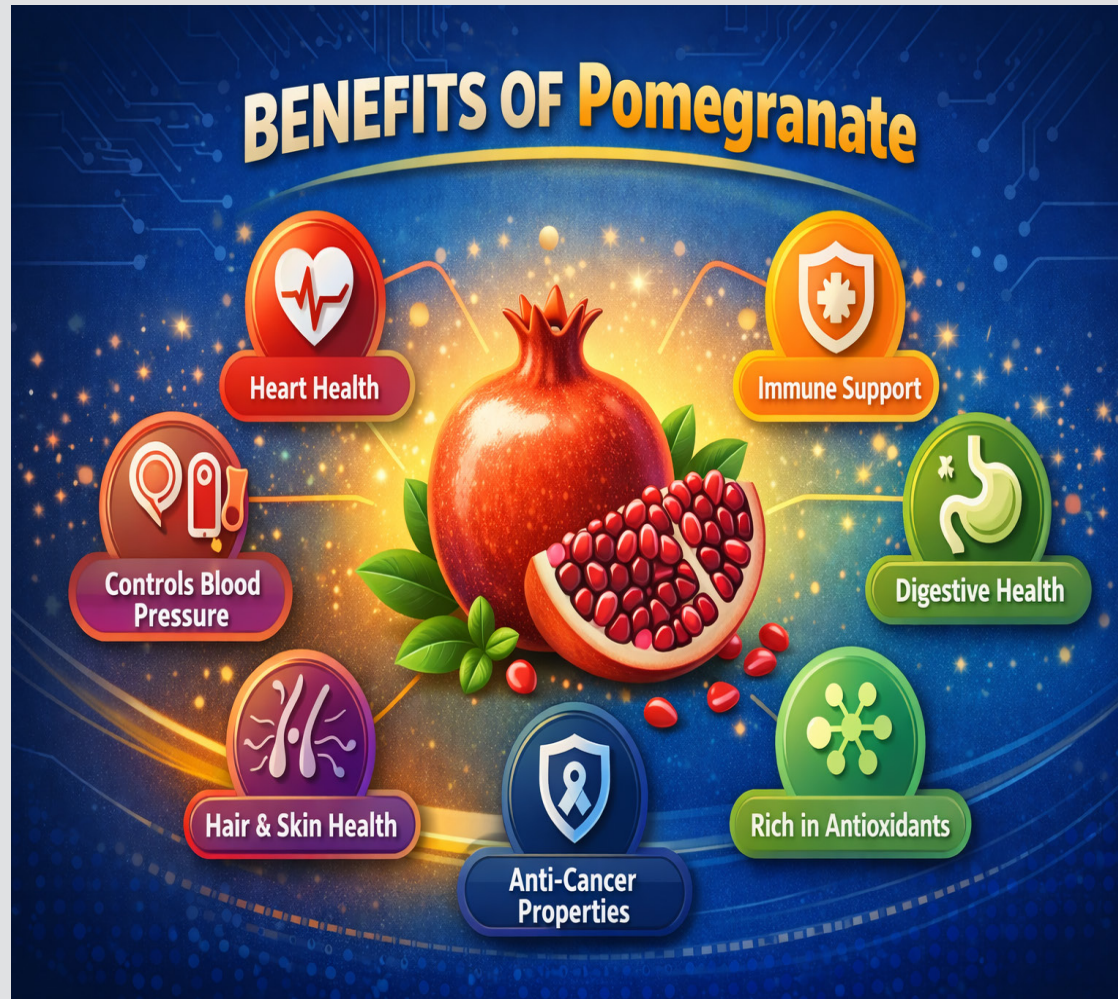
Fruits and vegetables are mostly seasonal, but nature has been very kind to us. Different varieties of fruits are available throughout the year. Some fruits are native to our region, while others are imported from neighboring countries and distant parts of the world. This availability ensures that people can enjoy nutritious food in every season. Fruits not only add taste and color to our meals but also provide protection against many diseases.

The fruit sector plays a pivotal role in uplifting the economy of a country. It provides employment to thousands of farmers, traders, transporters, and workers belonging to different age groups. From cultivation to harvesting, packaging, and marketing, the fruit industry supports the livelihood of a large population. In countries like India, horticulture has emerged as an important source of income, especially in rural and hilly areas.

In this article, I am going to explore the amazing health benefits of one of the tastiest and most popular fruits in the world—the pomegranate. This fruit is widely liked for its delicious taste as well as its powerful medicinal properties. Pomegranate is a round-shaped fruit that resembles an apple from the outside. It is mostly cultivated in the Middle East, Mediterranean regions, and parts of South Asia, but today it is grown and consumed almost all over the globe.

Pomegranate, scientifically known as *Punica granatum*, is considered one of the healthiest fruits among all fruits. It has been used since ancient times in traditional medicine for its healing properties.

Special Focus on Pomegranate



The fruit has a thick, inedible outer skin, but inside it contains hundreds of edible seeds known as arils. These arils are red, juicy, sweet, and slightly tangy in taste. The seeds and arils are the edible parts of the fruit and can be eaten raw or consumed in the form of juice, while the peel is usually discarded.

Pomegranates are rich in fiber, vitamins such as vitamin C and vitamin K, minerals like potassium, and powerful bioactive plant compounds. Although they contain natural sugar, their overall nutritional value makes them extremely beneficial for health

when consumed in moderation.

One of the most important health benefits of pomegranate is its ability to lower blood pressure. High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is one of the leading causes of heart attacks and strokes worldwide. Several studies have shown that people suffering from hypertension experienced a significant reduction in their blood pressure after consuming pomegranate juice regularly. The antioxidants present in pomegranate help improve blood circulation and reduce damage to blood vessels.

Pomegranate is also highly beneficial for people suffering from arthritis. Arthritis is a condition that involves inflammation of the joints and causes pain, stiffness, and reduced mobility. There are different types of arthritis, but inflammation is a common factor in most of them. Research has found that pomegranate possesses strong anti-inflammatory properties. These properties help reduce joint inflammation and may slow down the progression of arthritis, providing relief to patients.

Another major benefit of pomegranate is its role in reducing the risk of heart diseases. Heart disease is currently the world's most common cause of premature death. It is a complex disease influenced by factors such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity, and unhealthy lifestyle choices. Pomegranate helps lower bad cholesterol (LDL) levels and prevents oxidation of cholesterol, which is a key factor in the development of heart disease. Regular consumption of pomegranate juice may contribute to better heart health.

Pomegranates contain two unique plant compounds that are responsible for most of their medicinal benefits. These compounds are punicalagins and punicic acid. Punicalagins are extremely powerful antioxidants found in pomegranate juice and peel. They help neutralize harmful free radicals in the body and protect cells from damage. Punicic acid, found in pomegranate seed oil, has anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties.

Due to its high antioxidant content, pomegranate is also believed to help improve immunity and protect the body against infections. Antioxidants strengthen the immune system and reduce oxidative stress, which is linked to aging and many chronic diseases. Pomegranate may also support digestive health because of its fiber content, which aids in smooth digestion and prevents constipation.

In the Kashmir Valley, especially during winter, fresh fruits often become expensive and difficult to find in large quantities. Due to harsh weather conditions and transportation challenges, fruit availability is limited during this season. However, people who understand the importance and health benefits of fruits make sure to include them in their diet despite the high cost. They enjoy not only the taste but also the long-term health benefits that fruits provide.

In conclusion, fresh fruits and vegetables are essential for a healthy and balanced life. Among them, pomegranate stands out as a super fruit due to its exceptional nutritional and medicinal properties. From lowering blood pressure and reducing inflammation to protecting heart health and boosting immunity, pomegranate offers numerous health benefits. Including pomegranate and other fresh fruits in our daily diet can help us lead a healthier, happier, and disease-free life. Nature has given us everything we need to stay healthy; it is our responsibility to make wise choices and respect this precious gift.

sahilmanzoor411990@gmail.com

Importance Of Sprouts In Nutrition



■ DR. (H.C) SURINDERPAL SINGH

Sprouts represent one of the most biologically active and nutritionally dense forms of food available to humans. Produced through the controlled germination of seeds, legumes or grains, sprouts transform stored nutrients into highly bioavailable forms that support growth, tissue repair and disease prevention. In an era increasingly marked by lifestyle disorders, micronutrient deficiencies and digestive ailments, sprouts emerge as a low-cost, sustainable and scientifically validated dietary intervention. Human nutrition has gradually evolved from merely fulfilling calorie requirements to emphasizing nutrient density, bioavailability and preventive health. Unfortunately, modern diets dominated by refined carbohydrates and processed foods often fail to meet physiological needs for vitamins, minerals, enzymes and dietary fiber. Against this backdrop, sprouts—consumed traditionally across cultures worldwide—have gained renewed scientific attention for their superior nutritional profile and therapeutic potential. From a medical perspective, sprouts function as true "functional foods," offering benefits that extend beyond basic nourishment by positively influencing metabolism, immunity and cellular health.

Sprouts are young shoots that emerge when seeds, pulses, legumes or grains are exposed to water, oxygen and suitable temperature conditions. Common edible varieties include legume sprouts such as green gram, black gram, chickpea and lentils; seed sprouts like fenugreek, mustard and alfalfa; and grain sprouts including wheat, barley and brown rice. The sprouting process activates dormant enzymes within the seed, triggering biochemical transformations that enhance nutrient availability while reducing antinutritional factors such as phytates and



enzyme inhibitors.

The preparation of sprouts follows a simple yet biologically significant process. Clean, unbroken seeds are first washed thoroughly and soaked in potable water for several hours, allowing hydration to initiate germination. The soaking water is then discarded to remove leached antinutrients. Seeds are kept in a moist, breathable environment for one to three days, during which they sprout. Regular rinsing prevents microbial growth, and

once the desired length is achieved, sprouts are best refrigerated. Medical guidelines strongly emphasize hygiene, as warm and moist conditions can favor bacterial contamination. For vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, pregnant women and immunocompromised individuals, lightly cooked sprouts are preferable to raw consumption.

Nutritionally, sprouts surpass their unspouted counterparts due to enzymatic

activation during germination. Protein digestibility improves as complex proteins are broken down into amino acids, including essential ones such as lysine, leucine and valine, making sprouts particularly valuable for vegetarian diets. Carbohydrates undergo partial hydrolysis into simpler sugars, resulting in a lower glycemic load compared to cooked pulses, which is beneficial for individuals with diabetes when consumed in moderation. Sprouts are naturally low in total

fat but provide beneficial unsaturated fatty acids, with some seed sprouts contributing small amounts of omega-3 and omega-6 fats.

Micronutrient content also increases significantly during sprouting. Vitamin C levels rise markedly, while B-complex vitamins essential for nerve function and energy metabolism are present in abundance. Sprouts also supply vitamin K for blood coagulation and bone health, along with beta-carotene in green varieties. Mineral absorption improves due to reduced phytate levels, enhancing the bioavailability of iron, calcium, magnesium, zinc, selenium and potassium. Their high dietary fiber content supports gut motility, cholesterol reduction and glycemic control, while a high water content promotes hydration and satiety.

In terms of consumption, adults can safely include about 50 to 100 grams of sprouts daily, while children may consume smaller quantities. Therapeutic diets may allow higher intake under supervision. Sprouts can be eaten raw in salads, lightly steamed or sautéed, mixed with curd or soups, or ground into doughs and porridges. Light cooking often improves digestibility without significant nutrient loss.

Medically, sprouts support digestive health through enzyme activity and fiber, aid metabolic disorders by improving insulin sensitivity and lipid profiles, and promote cardiovascular health by reducing oxidative stress and supporting blood pressure regulation. Improved iron absorption helps prevent nutritional anemia, while vitamins and antioxidants enhance immune function. Their role in bone health, muscle repair and even preventive oncology further underscores their value.

From a public health and medical standpoint, sprouts are a powerful yet underutilized nutritional resource. When prepared hygienically and consumed in appropriate quantities, they function not merely as food but as a preventive health strategy. Incorporating sprouts into daily diets can significantly improve metabolic balance, immune resilience and overall well-being, reaffirming the age-old principle that food, when chosen wisely, truly becomes medicine.

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

Ganaie Assumes Charge as ACD Kupwara, Vows Transparent and People-Centric Governance

■ DR.AB QAYOOM

KUPWARA, MAY 04: Abdul Rashid Ganaie (JKAS) on Monday formally assumed charge as Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) of Kupwara, marking a significant administrative development at a time when multiple rural projects are underway in the district.

Soon after taking over, Ganaie outlined his vision of strengthening rural development initiatives and ensuring the effective implementation



of government schemes at the grassroots level. Emphasising transparency, accountability, and efficiency, he stressed the importance of timely execution of developmental works across all blocks of the district.

In his first address to officials and the public, Ganaie highlighted the need for a "green revolution" at the local level, calling for sustained cleanliness drives in every Panchayat. He urged people to actively participate in maintaining sanitation, protecting water resources, and improving their surroundings, asserting that public cooperation is essential for sustainable development.

Officials of the Rural Development Department welcomed the new ACD and assured full cooperation in achieving developmental targets. Sources said Ganaie is expected to focus on expediting ongoing projects, enhancing public service delivery, and addressing key rural challenges with a proactive approach.

Ganaie brings with him a strong administrative track record, having previously served as Block Development Officer (BDO) in Langate and Qaziabad. During his tenure, both Rural Development Department blocks witnessed notable progress, with improved implementation of schemes and strengthened grassroots governance under his leadership.

People across district, particularly from Langate, have expressed optimism over his appointment, hoping his experience and commitment will translate into greater administrative efficiency and improved delivery of public services across Kupwara.

His appointment assumes added significance as the district continues to witness the rollout of key developmental programmes, with expectations running high for impactful and people-oriented governance under his leadership.

Public Notice

It is hereby notified that my son DOB has been wrongly mentioned in adhar regards bearing aadhar no 7308 7290 6727 DOB 01/06/2009 instead of DOB 01/06/2011 as for School regards now I have applying for it's correction of the same if any person have any objection in this regards may file the same to the office of the Block Development Office Handwara/concerned authority /Adhar seva within the period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice After that no objection shall be entertained.

**TAWQEER AMIN DOB 01/06/2011
S/O MOHAMMAD AMIN BHAT
R/O BUDAKOOT MACHIPORA TEHSIL HANDWARA
DISTRICT KUPWARA**

Public Notice

It is hereby notified that i Muneer Ahmad Magray has applied for the death certificate of my Mother namely Late Habli, Begum w/o Abdul Raziq Magray, his date of death is 14/06/2025, r/o Kandi khass, now I have applied for his death certificate. if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection at BDO Natnussa within a period of 07 day's after that no objection will be accepted.

**Name: Muneer Ahmad Magray
S/O: Abdul Raziq Magray
R/O : kandi Khass**

Public Notice

IT is hereby notified that my daughter's applying Birth certificate in chief executive officer municipal council Baramullah namely Ayesha Shabir DOB 15/11/2017 ANEESA SHABIR DOB 10/08/2022 Prantage Shabir Ahmad Dar, R/o Duligund Rafiabab Tehsil Dangiwachha District: Baramullah. Bron at GMC Baramullah if anybody having any objection in this regards he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the chief executive officer municipal council Baramullah within 07 days .After that no objection shall be entertained.

**AYESHA SHABIR
DOB 15/11/2017 ANEESA SHABIR DOB 10/08/2022
PRANTAGE SHABIR AHMAD DAR
R/o DULIGUND RAFIABAD TEHSIL DANGIWACHA
DISTRICT BARAMULLAH**

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application MEHAQ BASHIR S/O BASHIR AHMAD BANDAY R/O KREERI Tehsil KREERI for Issuance of EWS Financially weakened section in favour of his Words

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of (Ews) in favour of MEHAQ BASHIR S/O BASHIR AHMAD BANDAY this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of KREERI of Tehsil KREERI and having annual income 120,000 // the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1..BASHIR AHMAD BANADAY Father 51 years shopkeeper
- 2... REHANA BEGUM 50 years H/W
- 3...MEHAQ BASHIR self (applicant) 24 years student
- 4....MURSLIEN BASHIR sister 22 years student

According to report of patwari concerned that applicants family has not more than 5 acres of Land and does not have greater 1000 residential House...

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

Naib Tehsildar Kreeri

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application of BILAL AHMAD TELI S/O GH RASOOL TELI R/O KREERI Tehsil KREERI for the issuance of OBC (Other Backward classes) in his/her their favor

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of OBC in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of KREERI of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the TELI community having annual income 262000// the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1...GH RASOOL TELI Father 56 Labour 72000
- 2...RAJA BEGUM Mother 53 years H/W
- 3... RIFAT RASOOL sister 33 years student
- 4....NASIR AHMAD TELI Brother 33 years Imam
- 5...BILAL AHMAD TELI Applicat 26 years student
- 6....AMIR AHMAD TELI Brother 24 years labour 120,000
- 7...ABDUL HANAN son in law 6 years student

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

Naib Tehsildar Kreeri

Public Notice

It is hereby notified that my Name and cost spelling has been wrongly mentioned in service records as Gh Mohi ud din S/O Gh Mohd Gojri R/O Handwara instead of Gh Mohe ud din Geogry S/O Gh Mohd Geogry R/O Handwara as per All regards now I have applying for it's correction of the same if any person have any objection in this regard may file the same to the Concerned authority .within the period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice After that no objection shall be entertained.

**GH MOHE UD DIN GEOGRY
S/O GH MOHD GEOGRY
R/O HANDWARA TEHSIL HANDWARA
DISTRICT KUPWARA**

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified for information of the general public that the Block Development Officer (BDO) pattan has forwarded the case file for issuance of date of Birth certificate in favour of MISRA BEGUM D/O GH QADIR MALIK R/O PALHALLAN A/P DOWLATPORA with Date of Birth 16/01/1967 Objection if any regarding the details furnished by the applicant may be submitted in writing in the office of the Naib Tehsildar PALHALLAN within seven days from the date of publication of this notice

If no objection are received within the stipulated time, the case shall be processed for issuance of the Birth certificate as per rules in vogue.

Public Notice

It is hereby informed to the general public that I, Naseema Hassan, wife of Ghulam Hassan Ganie, resident of Kalantra Pain, Tehsil Kreeri, District Baramulla, UT of Jammu & Kashmir, am the registered consumer of electricity connection bearing Consumer ID: 0212040017492 under the jurisdiction of AEE, JKPDD Sub-Division Watergam Wagooora.

In the official electricity records, my husband's name has been incorrectly recorded as "GH Rasool Wani" instead of the correct name "Ghulam Hassan Ganie." I have applied for correction of the same.

Any person having an objection he/she may file his/her objection in office of the AEE, JKPDD Sub-Division Watergam Wagooora within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. After this period, no objection shall be entertained.

Sd/-Naseema Hassan

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that I intend to apply for the registration of an Adventure Tour Operator (ATO) license under the name SANG E SAFED ADVENTURES, located at Kalantra Bala, Tehsil Kreeri, District Baramulla, at the Office of the Assistant Director Tourism, Gulmarg.

If anyone has any objection in this regard, they may file their objection at the Department of Tourism, Office of the Assistant Director Tourism, Gulmarg, within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. After this period, no objections will be entertained.

**DANISH MEHRAJ
S/o MEHRAJ-UD-DIN THOKER
R/o KALANTRA BALA, KREERI, BARAMULLA**

Public Notice

My daughter's name has been wrongly written as HOORAB BINT ISHFAQ in her Date of Birth certificate bearing Registration no. B202501004310000270 while her correct name is ABEHA FATIMA BINTI ISHFAQ which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may file his/her objection in the office of SDH/BMO office kreeri within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

**Name.....ISHFAQ AHMAD DAR
F/O ...ABEHA FATIMA BINTI ISHFAQ
R/O...DOLIPORA KREERI**

Public Notice

I, Ashiq Hussain Chopan, S/o Ghulam Qadir Chopan, R/o Kalantra Bala, Tehsil Kreeri, District Baramulla, J&K, hereby notify that in the Birth Certificate of my daughter Ruta Ashiq (Registration No. B-2023:1-05261-000093 dated 21-02-2023, issued by the Registrar, Births & Deaths, Wagooora), my name has been erroneously recorded as Ashiq Ahmad Chopan instead of Ashiq Hussain Chopan.

I intend to correct my name in my daughter's records. If any person has any objection to this correction, he/she may file the same with the Office of the Registrar, Births & Deaths, Block Development Office, Wagooora, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after the stipulated period.

**Sd/-
Ashiq Hussain Chopan**

Public Notice

I, Khazir Mohammad Malik, S/o Mohammad Subhan Malik, R/o Dandmooch, Tehsil Kreeri, District Baramulla, J&K, hereby notify that in the Birth Certificate of my daughter Anaya Jaan (Registration No. B202401052610001327 dated 10-12-2024, issued by the Registrar, Births & Deaths, Block Wagooora), the mother's name and address have been erroneously recorded.

The correct particulars are: Name: Anaya Jaan Father's name Khazir Mohammad Malik
Mother's Name: Sakeena Begum
Address: Dandmooch, Tehsil Kreeri, P.O. Sultanpora, District Baramulla, J&K, PIN 193101

If any person has any objection in this regard, he/she may file the same with the Office of the Registrar, Births & Deaths, Block Development Office, Wagooora, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after the stipulated period.

**Sd/-
Khazir Mohammad Malik**

Public Notice

It is hereby informed to the general public that I, TALIB HUSSAIN BEIG S/o MOHAMMAD HUSSAIN BEIG, R/o FAQIR BAGH CHANDOOOSA, having Consumer No. 0212040015633 installed at a shop in FAQIR BAGH CHANDOOOSA under PDD Sub-Division Watergam Wagooora, am transferring my electricity connection to my son, DANISH HUSSAIN BAIG S/o TALIB HUSSAIN BAIG, R/o *FAQIR BAGH CHANDOOOSA 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 Wagooora, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after the stipulated period.

**Sd/-
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Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION TANGMARG

FRESH NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER (CIVIL WORKS)

Fresh NIT No: 07/R&B of 2026-27 | Dated: 04-05-2026

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

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Earnest money (In Rupees)	Time of completion	M.H of Account	Class of Contractor	Project Authority	Tender call
1	Permanent Restoration of Various spots GT Road.	19.96	800/-	39920/-	45 days	UT Sector	C/B	R&B Deptt.	2 nd

Position Of AAA: Accorded
Position of T.S: Accorded
Position of funds: Assured

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

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	04-05-2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	05-05-2026
3	Bid submission Start Date	05-05-2026
4	Bid Submission End Date	12-05-2026 4:00 PM
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	13-05-2026 11:00 AM

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan (Dated between bid submission start date and bid submission end date) with NIT No. , Serial No. and name of work to be deposited in M.H. 0059 in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender inviting authority)

- All the bidders must upload Earnest money /Bid security equal to 2% of advertised cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender receiving authority) (The Date of earnest money/Bid security should be between the Bid Submission start date and Bid submission End date, otherwise bids shall be rejected).

- The Successful bidder will have to provide performance security within 03 days @ 5% of contract value in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender receiving authority) as per rule-171 (I) of GFR 2017. The earnest money/ Bid security @2% shall be released to the successful bidder only on receipt of Performance Security @ 5% of Contract value which shall be released after successful completion of DLP /maintenance period.

- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in

**Sd/- Executive Engineer
(R&B) Division Tangmarg**

DIPK: 1026/26 | Dated: 04-05-2026



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DDC Bandipora reviews SBM-G, NMBA, District Plan

Directs Strict action against waste dumping in Water Bodies

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, MAY 04: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, today chaired a review meeting at the VC Room of Mini Secretariat Bandipora to discuss implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G), Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA), functioning of youth clubs and District Plan status.

During the meeting, the DDC stressed proper waste management practices including source segregation, waste collection and efficient utilisation of SBM-G funds. The meeting was informed that segregation sheds and vermicompost pits have been established across blocks.

The DDC directed that SBM activities should be planned and implemented effectively at Panchayat level with active involvement of field functionaries and local stakeholders. She also stressed better utilisation of segregation



sheds and directed officers to ensure proper waste segregation mechanisms on ground.

Expressing concern over waste being dumped into water bodies in Gurez, Athwato and other areas, the DDC directed officers to take strict action against violators and intensify awareness drives. She further directed that people found throwing garbage in open

spaces will be penalised as per norms. BDO Gurez informed that sensitisation campaigns are being conducted among people residing near the Kishanganga river.

The DDC also directed that user fees under SBM-G will be made mandatory to ensure sustainability of waste management systems and directed BDOs to hold regular meetings with field function-

aries while strengthening sanitation infrastructure.

Reviewing youth club activities, the DDC urged members to play a proactive role in awareness generation and community development.

The meeting also reviewed implementation of NMBA at Panchayat level. The DDC said religious leaders are also extending support to social awareness initiatives.

Regarding District Plan formulation, the meeting was informed that Gram Sabhas have been conducted. The DDC directed officers to ensure efficient, inclusive and need-based development planning.

The meeting was attended by District Programme Officer ICDS Bandipora, Yaar Ali Khan; Assistant Commissioner Development, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Block Development Officers, District Programme Manager (NRLM) and other concerned officers, while officers from Gurez joined virtually.

District Admin Bandipora intensifies Anti-Drug Awareness Campaign with Counselling, IEC Activities

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, MAY 04: The ongoing 100-Day Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyaan continued across Bandipora district on Monday with a series of mental health counselling sessions, IEC activities, awareness programmes and pledge ceremonies organised in educational institutions to spread awareness about substance abuse and mental well-being.

Awareness and Counseling sessions under Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyaan were conducted at BHS Onagam, High School Ahamisharief, HS Tarabal, HS Achoora, HS Jurniyal, PM SHRI GHS Odina, HS Wanpora, HSS Chuntimulla and Govt HSS PTL Gurez. Experts and teachers highlighted the importance of mental well-being, stress management and the harmful effects of substance abuse on individuals and society.

Government Degree College Ajas, in collaboration with the Department of Ayush Bandipora, organised a session on mental health and stress management under the 100-Day Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyaan. Dr. Irfan from Ayush Department delivered an awareness lecture accom-

panied by Dr. Iftikhar from Ayush Dispensary Ajas.

At HSS Gadakhud, lectures on mental health and substance abuse were delivered by students and teachers, who highlighted the psychological effects of drug addiction and stressed the importance of counselling and therapy.

IEC and awareness programmes under Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyaan were also organised at Bonkoot C, Vijpara and Nadihal A Panchayat. PM SHRI HSS Shadipora organised an awareness session and mass pledge ceremony, wherein students and staff pledged to stay away from drugs.

Meanwhile, the Headmaster of Govt High School Garoora conducted an inspection of local shops near the school to ensure compliance with tobacco control regulations and sensitised shopkeepers against sale of tobacco products near educational institutions.

The activities witnessed enthusiastic participation of students, teachers and community members, reflecting the collective commitment towards building a drug-free and mentally healthy society under the Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyaan.

DMD NABARD reviews RBIC progress at SKUAST-K

Launches 'Ruralpreneur' newsletter

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 4: Deputy Managing Director (DMD), National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Dr AK Sood, Monday visited Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir, Shalimar campus to conduct a review of the Rural Business Incubation Centre (RBIC).

The visit was aimed to assess the progress of infrastructure creation under RBIC for fostering agri-business and rural entrepreneurship across the region. RBIC at SKUAST-K has been created with the support and funding of NABARD to foster rural entrepreneurship in Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh.

At the outset of the visit, Dr Sood held a meeting with Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai, who detailed the university's approach for modernising agriculture



with the help of new age technologies.

Prof Ganai briefed the visiting dignitary about the RBIC's hub and spoke model with Shalimar campus acting as a central hub, while the university's specialized technical units, including the dairy processing facility,

biofertilizer production centre, fur processing unit, and mushroom production wing, serve as practical spokes that provide incubatees with essential support.

Dr Sood lauded these efforts, noting that the integration of academic facilities with business

incubation is vital for advancing the agriculture sector and modernising the technological landscape of Jammu and Kashmir. He offered full support from NABARD for further strengthening the incubation framework to ensure the long-term success of the startup ecosystem.

The occasion was marked by the official release of Ruralpreneur, the inaugural newsletter of the RBIC. Launched jointly by Dr Sood and Prof Ganai, the publication provides a detailed account of the centre's achievements over its first six months, highlighting the growth of its startup portfolio and its impact on rural communities.

Meanwhile, Dr. Sood was accompanied by a senior delegation from NABARD, including General Manager and Office Incharge for J&K Vikas Mittal, Deputy General Manager Surrinder Singh, and Assistant General Manager Kanav Sharma, for an interactive session with the RBIC manage-

ment team at the Discovery Building.

During this session, Dr Jameel Ahmad Khan, CEO, RBIC, delivered a presentation on the centre's operational pipeline and its extensive outreach activities.

Prof Haroon Naik emphasized the RBIC's mission to extend its reach into the most remote areas of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh to identify untapped talent. He also shared insights into future infrastructure plans, specifically the development of a dedicated Techno Park aimed at providing world-class facilities for emerging ventures.

The visit concluded with a tour of the Innovation Building, where Dr Sood inspected the newly developed co-working pods, conference halls, and dedicated offices designed to provide a professional environment for the region's next generation of agri-entrepreneurs.

District Admin Bandipora conducts Awareness Programmes on Census 2027 at Hajin

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, MAY 04: As part of the ongoing awareness campaign regarding Census 2027, the District Administration Bandipora on Monday organised awareness programmes on Self-Enumeration at Government Degree College Hajin and Government Higher Secondary School Hajin.



The programmes were aimed at sensitising students and public about the importance of Census 2027 and the process of Self-Enumeration.

During the programmes, participants were informed that the House Listing and Housing Census Operations (HLO), constituting the first phase of Census 2027, shall be conducted across District Bandipora from June 1 to June 30, 2026, while the Self-Enumeration facility shall remain available from May 17 to May 31, 2026 through the official portal. Officials highlighted the significance of the census exercise in planning and implementation of developmental programmes, welfare schemes and policy formulation.

Participants were also encouraged to spread awareness among family members and the general public regarding the Self-Enumeration facility. The programmes witnessed active participation of students, faculty members and officials, who also appealed to the public to cooperate with census officials and ensure maximum participation in Census 2027.

DC Kulgam reviews functioning of RDD, MGNREGA implementation

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, MAY 04: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam today reviewed the functioning of the Rural Development Department (RDD) with a special focus on the implementation of MGNREGA across the district.

During the meeting, the DC emphasized the need for proper identification and registration of all eligible workers under MGNREGA to ensure that the benefits of the scheme reach every deserving household. He directed the concerned officers to intensify awareness and outreach efforts to cover left-out beneficiaries.

Highlighting the importance of sustainable development, the DC stressed the creation of du-



erable and productive public assets under MGNREGA.

The DC also instructed officers to maintain transparency in execution, ensure timely payment of wages to workers, and improve the overall quality of works on the ground.

The meeting was attended by ACD, Bilal Ahmad Kamgar and other officers.

DC Kathua distributes insulated ice boxes among fishermen under JKICIP

HT NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA, MAY 04: Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma today distributed insulated ice boxes among fishermen and fish farmers under the Jammu & Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project (JKICIP) at a function held at DC Office complex.

In Kathua district, five blocks viz Barnoti, Billawar, Bani, Kathua and Lohai Malhar have been selected under the project for focused interventions in the fisheries and allied sectors.

As part of the programme, 146 fishermen were selected for distribution of insulated ice boxes, while one beneficiary was pro-

vided a vending cart to strengthen direct market access and improve livelihood opportunities. DC Rajesh Sharma formally started the distribution of 50-litre and 25-litre capacity ice boxes among the fishermen of Kathua and Barnoti blocks.

The provision of insulated ice boxes aims to maintain the freshness and quality of fish by minimizing spoilage and ensuring hygienic handling during storage and transportation, thereby reducing post-harvest losses and enabling better price realization for the fishermen.

The DC highlighted that such interventions are aimed at strengthening the traditional fishing community by providing essential in-

frastructure support and improving their economic sustainability. He emphasized that the project would help in enhancing shelf life of fish produce, improving market linkages and empowering fishermen with better income-generating opportunities.

Worthwhile to mention here that, JKICIP is an IFAD-funded initiative aimed at increasing rural household incomes by improving agricultural productivity, climate resilience and market access for around 3 lakh households across Jammu and Kashmir, with special focus on agriculture and allied sectors.

IAS Probationer Nidhi, AD Fisheries Kathua Pawan Sharma, besides local beneficiaries were also present.

DDC reviews progress of Heritage Restoration Projects in Kishtwar

HT NEWS NETWORK

KISHTWAR, MAY 04: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kishtwar Pankaj Kumar Sharma chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of ongoing works and discuss new project proposals for Revival, Restoration, Preservation and Conservation of Architecture & Heritage of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir Scheme.

The Deputy Commissioner undertook a detailed review of the physical and financial progress of ongoing heritage restoration projects under the J&K Architecture & Heritage Scheme works under the UT CAPEX and CSS schemes.

These schemes included the

development and beautification of Shri Sarthal Mata Temple; construction of Ghonkhan at Gompa Guldharpatti, Padder; development of Shri Machail Mataji Temple Padder and beautification works at Astan Bala Shah Farid-ud-Din Sahib Bagdadi and Astan Pain (Shah Asrar-ud-Din Sahib Bagdadi) in Kishtwar town. The DC emphasized the timely completion of these works while ensuring quality and adherence to approved plans.

The meeting also deliberated on new heritage and religious infrastructure projects submitted to the Directorate of Archives, Archaeology & Museums, J&K, for sanction and approval. These include preservation of Sai Draman Heritage Site at Bhaguna



Panchayat, Block Nagseni; preservation of Bhatan Dimji Buddhist Site at Nagseni; renovation and restoration of Devigoljwala Mata Temple along with the holy spring at Bunjwah; revival and restoration of Raghunathji Temple at

Kishtwar; construction of a Dharamshala at Haloti (Machail), Padder and construction of Shiv Mandir at Sranwan with installation of a marble idol in Block Thakraie.

Further, the DC reviewed the

proposal for development and beautification of Hud Mata, Dachhan, which is being revisited for refinement of the Detailed Project Report (DPR). He also directed to submit DPR for the preservation, development and beautification of Shiv Mandir Sranwan Thakraie.

The DC directed the concerned departments, particularly PWD (R&B) to ensure that tenders are floated with appropriate eligibility conditions, including prior experience in executing similar nature of works. He stressed that all projects must strictly adhere to traditional architectural patterns and historical aesthetics to preserve the authenticity and cultural significance of the heritage sites.

India bets on mega manufacturing hubs to power growth, jobs and competitiveness

■ United news of india

NEW DELHI, MAY 4 : India is rapidly reshaping its industrial landscape with a decisive shift towards large, integrated manufacturing hubs—an approach that promises to lower costs, boost efficiency and firmly position the country as a global production powerhouse.

In a significant policy push, the government is moving away from the traditional model of scattered industrial units to holistic, infrastructure-led manufacturing ecosystems.

These hubs are being designed as self-sufficient clusters where production, logistics, supply chains and support services are seamlessly integrated, enabling industries to scale faster and compete globally.

This transformation is being powered by an unprecedented surge in public investment. Capital expenditure has witnessed a steep rise over the past decade, laying the foundation for world-class infrastructure—from industrial corridors and logistics parks to multimodal connectivity networks.

The aim is clear: reduce logistics costs, eliminate inefficiencies and create a manufacturing environment that rivals the best in the world.

India's manufacturing sector, currently contributing around 16-17pc to GDP, is being positioned as the engine of long-term economic growth.

With the country targeting developed nation status by 2047, the government is aiming to raise manufacturing's share to about



25pc of GDP—an ambitious leap that could unlock millions of jobs and significantly expand industrial output.

The new strategy focuses on scale, specialization and integration. Instead of isolated factories operating in silos, the emphasis is on creating interconnected industrial ecosystems where manufacturers, suppliers and service providers operate in close proximity, benefiting from shared infrastructure and streamlined processes.

A series of large-scale initiatives is driving this shift on the ground. Among them are the PM MITRA textile parks, envisioned as end-to-end apparel manufacturing hubs that bring together spinning, weaving, processing and garmenting un-

der one roof.

Similarly, the development of chemical parks is expected to strengthen cluster-based production in the chemicals sector, improving efficiency and safety standards.

The government is also pushing for expansion of MSME clusters and common facility centres, ensuring that smaller enterprises are not left behind but instead become integral parts of these larger ecosystems.

In the high-value segment, initiatives like the Biopharma SHAKTI programme aim to build cutting-edge capabilities in pharmaceutical manufacturing, reinforcing India's position as a global healthcare supplier.

India's push comes at a time when global manufacturing is

undergoing a fundamental shift. Companies across the world are increasingly prioritising supply chain resilience, reliability and diversification, creating an opportunity for India to emerge as a preferred alternative manufacturing destination.

The country is already gaining traction, ranking among the top global manufacturing destinations.

More importantly, its industrial base is evolving beyond low-cost production, with medium- and high-technology sectors contributing an increasing share to manufacturing value.

This transition signals a move towards more sophisticated production, including electronics, machinery and advanced materials—sectors that are

critical for long-term competitiveness.

At the heart of this transformation lies India's vast network of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

With millions of enterprises contributing a significant share to manufacturing output, MSMEs are being integrated into these emerging hubs as key suppliers, innovators and job creators.

By embedding MSMEs within larger industrial ecosystems, the government aims to enhance their productivity, improve access to technology and ensure that growth remains inclusive and employment-intensive.

The integrated hub model is closely aligned with broader initiatives focused on infrastructure and logistics connectivity. Efforts to streamline transportation, digitise supply chains and improve coordination across sectors are expected to further strengthen India's manufacturing competitiveness.

As these hubs take shape, they are expected to do more than just produce goods. They will serve as centres of innovation, skill development and economic activity, attracting investment, fostering entrepreneurship and creating large-scale employment opportunities.

With a clear focus on scale, efficiency, and global integration, India's manufacturing push marks a decisive step towards transforming the country into a leading industrial powerhouse—one that not only meets domestic demand but also plays a central role in global supply chains.UNI

South Central Railways GM flags off 'Aushadhi Express' reefer train to boost pharma cold-chain logistics

■ United news of india

HYDERABAD, MAY 4 : South Central Railways (SCR) General Manager Sanjay Kumar Srivastava flagged off an inaugural refrigerated container (reefer) rake, branded as "Aushadhi Express," from Inland Container Depot (ICD), Sanatnagar here on Saturday, marking a major step in strengthening cold-chain logistics for pharmaceutical transport.

The service, operated by Container Corporation of India Limited (CONCOR) in association with Maersk Line, will run up to Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNP), SCR said in a release here.

CONCOR Chairman and Managing Director Sanjay Swarup and senior railway officials were present on the occasion.

The "Aushadhi Express" is specially designed for transporting life-saving medicines and other temperature-sensitive cargo.

The consignment is carried in advanced refrigerated containers equipped with diesel power packs to ensure uninterrupted cooling throughout the journey.

Officials said the initiative would significantly strengthen cold-chain connectivity and improve efficiency in India's pharmaceutical supply chain.

The partnership with Maersk, which is providing high-quality reefer containers, is expected to enhance logistics capabilities at ICD Sanatnagar.

Hyderabad, widely regarded as India's "Pharma Capital," houses major pharmaceutical hubs such as Genome Valley, Jeedimetla, Patancheru, and Mucherla.

The Hyderabad-JNPT corridor plays a crucial role in connecting these industrial zones with one of the country's busiest ports.

Railway authorities said the introduction of dedicated reefer rake services would reduce transit time, lower logistics costs, and improve supply chain reliability for exporters and domestic distributors.

It is also expected to minimise wastage, improve price realisation, and open new opportunities for pharmaceutical exporters.

The initiative aligns with the Government of India's vision under PM Gati Shakti to promote efficient, sustainable, and eco-friendly freight transportation systems.UNI

Adani power to invest in international projects

■ United news of india

MUMBAI, MAY 4 : Adani Power Ltd plans to invest in international power projects in the thermal, hydel as well as electricity transmission sectors whenever opportunities arise, according to a company official.

"We are expanding our area of focus beyond Indian territory. We will evaluate international projects in the thermal, hydro and transmissions sector and invest in attractive opportunities that qualify. We recently incorporated an SPV in Bhutan for a 520 MW hydroelectric power plant with this aim. We are also aligning ourselves to the emerging long-term opportunities in the power sector, such as nuclear power. We have incorporated several special purpose vehicles (SPVs) in India for our nuclear power projects. We are identifying lands for these projects and seeking necessary approvals," Adani Power Ltd CEO S B Khyalia said.

The company is also preparing for significant capital expenditure (capex) over the next few years, for both its conventional as well as emerging energy portfolio. It has envisaged a Rs 25,000-crore capex in FY27, with spending expected to increase further to more than Rs 33,000 crore in FY28, reflecting ongoing expansion and project pipeline execution.UNI

Flipkart, Axis Bank & PayU rolls out biometric authentication for card payments

■ United news of india

NEW DELHI, MAY 4 : Flipkart, Axis Bank and PayU today announced the launch of biometric authentication for card payments to tackle frauds like SIM-Swap or OTP-based replaces.

Flipkart is India's homegrown eCommerce marketplace and Axis Bank is country's leading Private sector Bank.

On the other hand, PayU is India's leading diversified fintech platform.

This rollout offers users to authenticate transactions using their face ID on any compatible device either Android or iOS. It eliminates the need of One-Time Password (OTP).

This service is initially available to Axis Bank cardholders through their issuer-level biometric authentication.

This renewed function also reduces the risk of SIM-swap or OTP-based fraud. This technology replaces SMS-based OTPs with a faster and more secured mechanism from which smartphone users are already



familiar.

The biometric authentication is set to deal with India's alarming digital payment fraud landscape.

According to RBI data, fraud values surged more than five-fold to cross Rs 1,400 crore in FY2024. Taking cognisance of this matter, RBI issued a circular 'Authentication Mechanisms for Digital Payment Transactions Directions 2025', encouraging the adoption of biometric and risk-based authentication over SMS OTPs.

Speaking on the launch, Gaurav Arora, Vice President Payments and Supercoins at Flipkart said, "At Flipkart our

approach to innovation is anchored around robust compliance and customer trust. The integration of the biometric authentication feature reflects our commitment to building safety to consumer payments at a time when digital fraud risks are becoming increasingly sophisticated."

"By leveraging secure biometric credentials, we are delivering a payment experience that is intuitive and seamless, while meeting the highest standards of consumer protection. As digital commerce continues to scale, our focus remains on enabling faster transactions while reinforcing the regulatory rigour

and ecosystem-wide trust that secure payments demand" he added.

Undoubtedly, this launch is a step forward in India's transition away from OTPs, offering a more smoother to pay while following high standards of compliance and control.

Echoing same view, Hemang Dattani, Chief Business Officer, PayU Payments, said, "As digital commerce continues to scale in India, simplifying payments without compromising on security is critical. At PayU, we are proud to partner with Flipkart to enable a biometric authentication experience for card payments, helping customers move past long-standing friction associated with OTP-based verification.

"By combining biometric authentication with enhanced security controls, this partnership marks a meaningful step towards building a faster, more secure and frictionless digital payments experience for Indian consumers" he added.

Arnika Dixit, President & Head

of Cards, Payments and Wealth Management, Axis Bank, said, "At Axis Bank, we are constantly working to reinforce trust and security across every digital touchpoint."

She noted that customers today expect digital payments to be not only safe but effortless, and biometric authentication delivers exactly that by enabling a secure, one touch approval experience.

"We are delighted to introduce this enhanced capability for our cardholders through our collaboration with Flipkart and PayU.

Dixit believed that "this rollout reflects the strength of our long standing partnership and our shared commitment to elevating industry standards in both security and customer experience."

"As digital commerce continues to evolve, we remain focused on bringing innovations that make payments simpler, stronger and future ready for our customers" she concluded. UNI

Federal Bank to acquire select credit card portfolio from Standard Chartered Bank

■ United news of india

KOCHI, MAY 4 : Federal Bank has announced that it will acquire a select credit card portfolio from Standard Chartered Bank, India, in a strategic move to strengthen its retail credit franchise and expand its footprint in key urban markets.

The proposed transaction, expected to be completed within calendar year 2026, will significantly boost Federal Bank's credit card base and deepen its presence in Tier-1 cities by adding a high-quality, seasoned customer portfolio.

The acquisition aligns with the bank's strategy to accelerate growth in its retail lending segment, particularly in the non-co-branded credit card space.

The portfolio comprises up to around 4.5 lakh credit cards, com-



pared to Federal Bank's existing base of 8 lakh non-co-branded cards and 13 lakh co-branded cards.

Following the acquisition, the bank's non-co-branded credit card receivables are expected to rise by nearly 90 percent. However, the final number of cards transferred will depend on customer consent and the timing of the transfer.

Valued at approximately 1.5 to 1.6 times implied equity, the final consideration will be linked to actual balances at the time of transfer.

A major strategic advantage of the deal lies in its geographic concentration, with nearly 75 percent of the acquired portfolio located in India's top eight cities. This is expected to more than double Federal Bank's presence in these high-value urban markets, enhancing its access to financially active consumers.

Federal Bank Managing Director and CEO KVS Manian described the acquisition as a compelling addition to the bank's retail credit portfolio, noting that it brings in a strong base of active and experienced credit card users aligned with the bank's growth strategy.

National Head of Consumer Banking at Federal Bank Virat Sunil Diwanji said the bank is committed to ensuring a seamless transition for incoming customers while offering them ac-

cess to its full range of products and services.

Meanwhile, Aditya Mandloi, MD and Head of Wealth & Retail Banking at Standard Chartered Bank India & South Asia, said the move is part of the bank's strategy to focus on deeper, multi-product relationships, particularly in the affluent segment, while continuing to invest in its wealth platform.

The transaction does not require regulatory approvals, and both banks have stated that they will work closely to ensure a smooth transition for customers.

Advisors to the deal include Arpwood Capital Private Limited as exclusive financial advisor to Federal Bank, Khaitan & Co as legal counsel, KPMG as due diligence advisor, and Trilegal as legal counsel to Standard Chartered Bank India.UNI

DFS convenes colloquium to accelerate disposal of cases in tribunals

■ United news of india

NEW DELHI, MAY 4 : Department of Financial Services (DFS) today convened a colloquium to focus on key issues such as reducing pendency and accelerating the disposal of cases.

This colloquium was attended by Chairpersons of Debt Recovery Appellate Tribunals (DRATs) and Presiding Officers of Debt Recovery Tribunals (DRTs).

The DFS secretary highlighted the departmental thrust on deepening digitisation to ease tribunal processes.

In this high-level meeting, key areas of discussion were centred towards strengthening oversight and monitoring mechanisms within the banking system.

It will allow recoveries from DRTs, prioritisation of high-value cases for optimal recovery outcomes, leveraging Lok Adalats as an effective alternative to dispute resolution and advancing procedural reforms.

It was also decided to undertake measures like training programmes for presiding officers, registrars, Asst. registrars, recovery officers and other staff of tribunals.

Apart from these measures, to further tackle pendency, it was suggested to identify the cases for mediation in respect of pending and fresh cases.

The meeting also discussed technological aspects to streamline the resolution process, like mandatory e-filing, hybrid hearing facilities and continuous enhancements under e-DRT 2.0, which are contributing to improved efficiency and transparency.

The revamped BAANKNET e-auction platform is further facilitating better asset visibility and value realisation.

BAANKNET (Bank Asset Auction Network) is a centralised, state-of-the-art e-auction platform launched by the government last year to facilitate the sale of distressed properties (Non-Performing Assets - NPAs) from all 12 Public Sector Banks (PSBs).UNI

Rabada rises to No. 3 on Purple Cap table; Abhishek takes back Orange Cap



■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD: There's a change at the top of the Orange Cap table, and a fast-moving wicket-taker is up to No. 3 on the Purple Cap table at IPL 2026 at the end of the Sunday double-header, where the favourites - Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) and Punjab Kings (PBKS) - lost to Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and Gujarat Titans (GT) respectively.

Orange Cap leaderboard
The gaps are so small at the top of the Orange Cap table that even if you don't do particularly well, like Abhishek Sharma against KKR, you can cause big changes. Abhishek scored just 15, but that was enough to take a seven-run lead over KL Rahul of Delhi Capitals (DC) and claim back the No. 1 spot.

With Heinrich Klaasen also missing his opportunity, Rahul is safe at No. 2 at the moment, with 433 runs (Abhishek has 440). Klaasen got 11 against KKR and has 425 runs. Followed by Vaibhav Sooryavanshi of Rajasthan Royals (RR) with 404, and then a new entrant in the top five: B Sai Sudharsan, the GT opener, continued his recent surge with a 41-ball 57 to get to 385 runs.

Shubman Gill, Prabhsimran Singh, Jos Buttler and Shreyas Iyer didn't get a lot of runs on Sunday either, but Ishan Kishan did, 42 of them, and moved to the ninth spot with 354 runs, while Travis Head also continued his recent rise, his 61 off 28 balls lifting him to 12th.

Purple Cap leaderboard
Kagiso Rabada has picked up 12 wickets in his last six matches now, and moved up quickly to get to No. 3 with 16 wickets, just one behind the leaders, Bhuvneshwar Kumar of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) and Anshul Kamboj of Chennai Super Kings (CSK).

Prasidh Krishna had to sit out again, Esan Malinga didn't get a wicket, Rashid Khan got just one, but Mohammed Siraj and Kartik Tyagi had good days, picking up two wickets each, and that took their tallies for the season to 11, well behind the leaders, but in the top ten.

Cricket binds India, Jamaica in ties 'written in runs, respect, friendship': Jaishankar

■ AGENCIES

KINGSTON: Cricket serves as a bridge between India and Jamaica, fostering a relationship "written in runs, respect and friendship", External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said as he dedicated a digital scoreboard, gifted by New Delhi, to the Caribbean nation.

Speaking at the unveiling of the scoreboard at the iconic Sabina Park cricket stadium in the Jamaican capital Kingston on Sunday, Jaishankar highlighted the unifying role of sports, particularly cricket, which he said is followed passionately by over a billion people in India.

"Sports bring nations together by creating shared experiences and fostering mutual respect. And cricket, in particular, has a special meaning for India and Jamaica," he said.

Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness was also present at the event.

Sabina Park is the home of the Jamaica cricket team and is the only Test cricket ground in the island nation.

Recalling the historic significance of Sabina Park, Jaishankar noted that the ground holds special memories for Indian cricket, including a century by legendary cricketer Rahul Dravid and the start of Virat Kohli's Test career in 2011.

Describing these moments as symbolic of the India-Jamaica connection, he said the relationship between the two countries is "written in runs, respect and friendship".

Jaishankar said the state-of-the-art electronic scoreboard would enhance the viewing experience for cricket lovers in Jamaica and stands as a testament to the enduring cricketing partnership between the two nations.

Highlighting Jamaica's rich cricketing legacy, he said the country commands immense respect globally for producing great players such as George Headley, Michael Holding, Courtney Walsh, Chris Gayle and Andrew Richardson.

Jamaican cricketers receive enthusiastic support from Indian fans, including in the Indian Premier League (IPL), Jaishankar said.

As nations cooperate and compete globally, India and Jamaica will always continue to seek "special connections that define our ties, and cricket is very much one of them", he said.

Calling the scoreboard a symbol of solidarity, Jaishankar expressed hope that it would witness many memorable innings, including those reflecting the growing friendship between India and Jamaica.

"May the scoreboard count many great innings to come. Among them, that of India-Jamaica friendship," he said.

Hardik Pandya misses MI's clash against LSG due to back spasm, Rohit returns

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI: An out of form Mumbai Indians' captain Hardik Pandya on Monday missed his team's must-win Indian Premier League match because of a back spasm while Rohit Sharma returned after an injury layoff.

India T20I skipper Suryakumar Yadav came out for the toss and informed that he was "going into the shoes" of an unwell Pandya.

A team statement said, "Hardik Pandya is unwell with back spasm, hence Suryakumar Yadav is captain for today's game."

Pandya has had a forgettable IPL 2026 as captain and player, as



Mumbai Indians are on the brink of elimination after finishing fourth in the group stage last year. Mumbai have two wins and seven defeats from their nine matches so far.

Pandya has scored 186 runs and taken four wickets in this IPL so far.

An indisposed Pandya had earlier missed an away game against Delhi Capitals with Suryakumar leading the side.

Meanwhile, Rohit was listed in the team sheet among the five impact sub players. Rohit is returning to the team for the first time since April 12 when he had suffered a hamstring injury during MI's contest against Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

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