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Every Child Deserves Access to Healthy Food: LG Sinha

Akshaya Patra Mid-Day Meal Kitchen Foundation Laid in Katra; Facility to Serve 5,000 Students Daily

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAY 21: Manoj Sinha on Wednesday said that every child deserves access to healthy and nutritious food, asserting that no student should be left behind in receiving balanced meals essential for learning and development.

The Lieutenant Governor made these remarks after laying the foundation stone of the Centralised Mid-Day Meal Kitchen of The Akshaya Patra Foundation in Katra. The facility, once operational, will provide nearly 5,000 nutritious meals daily to school children in the region.

Calling for stronger cooperation between the government and social organisations, the Lieutenant Governor said the empowerment of the younger generation depends on ensuring proper nutrition alongside



education. He observed that nutrition and education are inseparable and that a hungry child cannot fully benefit from classroom learning.

He said global research has consistently shown that children receiving balanced meals perform better academically, participate more actively in schools and develop improved concentration and learning abilities.

The Lieutenant Governor further stated that society's true legacy is reflected not only in what it creates and preserves, but also in what it provides to future generations. Stressing the importance of child nutrition, he said the food given to children today will shape the future of Jammu and Kashmir and the nation in the years ahead.

Describing children as the living
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LG Inaugurates State-of-the-Art Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Helipad at Village Hutt, Katra

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAY 21: The Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Thursday inaugurated the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Helipad at Village Hutt, Katra.

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LG dedicated the new Vaishnavi Bhawan at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine to the devotees

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAY 21: The Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today dedicated the new Vaishnavi Bhawan at the

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Police Tighten Noose Around Drug Networks Across Kashmir

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, MAY 21: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday intensified its crackdown on narcotics networks across Kashmir, arresting seven alleged drug peddlers and a terror associate in a series of coordinated operations carried out under the ongoing anti-drug campaign.

Officials said large quantities of narcotic substances, including cannabis resin, heroin and poppy straw, were seized during operations conducted in Baramulla, Anantnag and Kulgam districts. Several cases have been registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, while investigations are continuing.

In Baramulla district, police arrested a suspect in the Boniyar area after recovering a cannabis-like substance during routine patrol operations.

In Anantnag, police apprehended an alleged "most wanted" drug trafficker during a checkpoint operation in the Srigufwara area and recovered nearly five kilograms of cannabis powder-like substance from his

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PM Showcases India's Cultural Heritage Through Gifts To World Leaders

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAY 21: Prime Minister Narendra Modi showcased India's rich cultural heritage and traditional craftsmanship by presenting an array of handpicked gifts to world leaders during his recently concluded five-nation tour covering the United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy.

Among the notable gifts were a rare golden silk stole from Assam for Italian Prime Minister Giorgia

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Two Irrigation Officials Caught Accepting Rs 1 Lakh Bribe in Anantnag: ACB

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

ANANTNAG, MAY 21: The Anti Corruption Bureau on Thursday arrested two officials of the Irrigation Division Anantnag after they were allegedly caught red-handed while accepting a bribe of Rs 1 lakh in connection with a land dispute case in Anantnag.

The accused officials were identified as Nazir Ahmad Wani and

Bilal Ahmad Wagay, both posted in the Irrigation Division Anantnag. According to an official spokesperson, the Anti Corruption Bureau received a written complaint alleging that the two officials had demanded money for processing and deciding a complaint related to alleged encroachment on land at Ashajipora near Dabruna in Anantnag district.

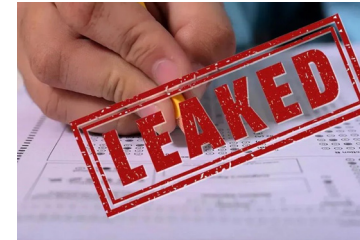
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NEET Paper Was Not Leaked Through Our System: NTA

HT News Desk / Agencies

NEW DELHI, MAY 21: The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Thursday came under intense questioning from members of Parliament over the alleged leak of the NEET-UG examination paper, with the agency maintaining that the breach did not occur through its internal system.

During a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children,



Youth and Sports, NTA Director General Abhishek Singh informed the panel that the NEET paper "was not leaked through their system" and said the Central Bu-

reau of Investigation (CBI) is probing the matter.

Several MPs reportedly challenged the agency's stand and sought clarity on how the paper leak occurred if the NTA system had not been compromised. Members also questioned the rationale behind cancelling the examination and ordering a re-test.

The parliamentary panel had summoned senior officials from the Education Ministry,

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CS Reviews Afforestation Progress

Calls for Accountability-Linked Plantation Works

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 21: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today reviewed the physical achievements and implementation progress of afforestation and ecological restoration works being undertaken across



Jammu and Kashmir under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), emphasizing sustainable restoration of degraded forests, scientific monitoring and enhanced protection of vulnerable forest

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Pulwama Attack Mastermind Burhan Hamza Killed In Muzaffarabad

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAY 21: Arjumand Gulzar alias Burhan Hamza, a designated terrorist accused of masterminding the 2019 Pulwama suicide attack on a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) convoy, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, officials said on Thursday.

Hamza was reportedly ambushed in Muzaffarabad while operating under high-security protection allegedly backed by Pakistan's intelligence establishment. Officials said he sustained critical injuries in the attack and was airlifted to the Combined Military Hospital in Rawalpindi, where he later died.

The attackers managed to escape before security personnel reached the

spot, officials added.

Originally from Pulwama district in Jammu and Kashmir, Hamza had been associated with militant groups including Al Badr and Al Baraq before allegedly developing close links with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

He was designated a terrorist under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for his alleged role in planning the February 14, 2019 suicide bombing carried out by Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad on a CRPF convoy in Pulwama. The attack killed 40 CRPF personnel and led to heightened tensions between India and Pakistan.

Following the attack, the Indian Air Force carried out air strikes on February 26, 2019, targeting a major Jaish-e-

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UMMID Programme Has Benefited Nearly 3 Lakh People: Jitendra Singh

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAY 21: Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Thursday said that the UMMID programme for rare genetic disorders has benefited nearly three lakh people through nationwide screening, counselling and diagnostic services since its launch in 2019.

Addressing an event dedicated to the national initiative, Singh said the programme has created a comprehensive public health framework integrating genetic diagnostics, prenatal and newborn screening, clinician training and commu-

nity outreach.

Supported by the Department of Biotechnology, the Unique Methods of Management of Inherited Disorders (UMMID) initiative was launched to improve early detection and treatment of inherited diseases across the country.

The minister said the programme has also led to the establishment of nearly 30 National Inherited Diseases Administration centres, providing advanced diagnostic and counselling facilities beyond metropolitan regions and improving access to specialised genomic healthcare.

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

Every Child.....

expression of the nation's aspirations, he said their education, health and confidence remain a collective responsibility of society.

The Lieutenant Governor also appreciated the humanitarian work of The Akshaya Patra Foundation, one of the world's largest organisations working in the school meal sector, currently serving more than 20 lakh children across 16 states and three Union Territories.

During the programme, the Lieutenant Governor also served meals to school students.

Among those present on the occasion were Bharatarshabha Dasa, Baldev Raj Sharma, Kuldeep Raj Dubey, senior civil and police officials, representatives of the foundation and students.

LG Inaugurates.....

The Lieutenant Governor said that the integrated aviation facility will streamline heli-operations, enhancing heli connectivity, safety and convenience for pilgrims visiting the holy shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji.

"This helipad has been developed in strict compliance with the safety and operational norms laid down by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). The facility places a paramount emphasis on passenger safety, security, and seamless travel experience, meeting the growing heli-services demand of the devotees. It will also provide a significant boost to religious tourism in the region," he said.

It is pertinent to mention that the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, in collaboration with the Shri Shiv Khori Shrine Board, has undertaken development of a modern Helipad/ Heliport at Village Hutt, Katra as well as at Shiv Khori, to ensure convenience, safety and accessibility for pilgrims undertaking helicopter travel to holy shrines.

The infrastructure is based on technical inputs from Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), and operational requirements assessed by the Board. It is capable of accommodating enhanced passenger handling and helicopter operational capacity, including future shifting of the existing Serli Helipad operations to Village Hutt.

The project includes construction of the helipad and allied aviation infrastructure, development of a 1.10 km approach road, creation of an expanded terminal building with passenger amenities such as waiting halls, ticketing and refund counters, reception areas, offices and security cabins, as well as construction of a modern hangar facility and associated operational infrastructure.

The facility also includes provision of safety, security, sanitation, parking, utility services, emergency response systems and queue management facilities necessary for efficient heliport operations.

The project aims to create sufficient operational capacity for present and future helicopter traffic while addressing safety concerns related to helicopters flying over Katra town.

It also streamlines and professionalizes heli-services through centralized management and operation by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, leveraging its long-standing expertise in heli operations. It will also facilitate integrated pilgrimage connectivity between the two shrines from a common heliport and support development of pilgrim infrastructure in the Shri Shiv Khori Shrine area through collaborative institutional arrangements and financial assistance.

The occasion also marked the inauguration of the Helipad and other related works at the Shri Shiv Khori Shrine.

The enhanced infrastructure will increase footfall at the holy shrine and make travel more convenient for pilgrims visiting Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji who also wish to undertake pilgrimage to Shri Shiv Khori.

Members of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board - Mahamandleshwar Shri Swami Vishveshvaranand Giriji Maharaj, Dr. Ashok Bhan, Shri Suresh Kumar Sharma, Shri Lalit Bhasin, Shri Kulbushan Ahuja; Dr. Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Shri Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Shri Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB; Shri Kumar Abhishek, Deputy Commissioner, Reasi; Shri Alok Maurya, Additional CEO SMVDSB; senior officials of the Shrine Board, police and District Administration and Border Roads Organization were present at the inaugural ceremony.

LG dedicated.....

holy shrine Shri Mata Vaishno Devi to the devotees.

The Lieutenant Governor said that the new facility will significantly enhance the pilgrim accommodation capacity at Bhawan, improve overall pilgrim amenities and create a modern, efficient and comfortable infrastructure designed to accommodate the growing influx of devotees.

The project was conceptualized under the comprehensive Master Plan for the Bhawan and its extended areas. Recognizing the need for enhanced infrastructure and creation of modern Yatri Accommodation facilities, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) approved the redevelopment of the Pannishalla area, which was previously used for staff quarters, into Yatri-cum-Staff Accommodation complex.

The New Vaishnavi Bhawan has been constructed over a total area of approximately 45,784 Sq. ft. The facility will provide 78 well-

furnished rooms for pilgrims.

The construction work of the building commenced in the month of February 2024 and the building was completed in a time period of two years.

The ground floor houses reception and waiting areas, Manager Office and Staff Mess with Kitchen, ensuring efficient operational management of the facility. A Bhojanalaya is also available on the terrace for catering to pilgrims and staff.

To ensure accessibility and convenience, the building is equipped with five lifts, including three passenger lifts of 26 person capacity, one service lift and one connecting lift linking the facility with Parvati Bhawan.

The Lieutenant Governor also paid obeisance at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji Shrine. He prayed for peace and prosperity of J&K UT and well-being of one and all.

Members of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board - Mahamandleshwar Shri Swami Vishveshvaranand Giriji Maharaj, Dr. Ashok Bhan; Shri Suresh Kumar Sharma; Shri Lalit Bhasin, Shri Kulbushan Ahuja; Dr. Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Shri Bhim Sen Tuti, IGP Jammu; Shri Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Shri Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB; Shri Shiv Kumar Sharma, DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range; Shri Kumar Abhishek, Deputy Commissioner, Reasi; Shri Alok Maurya, Additional CEO SMVDSB, senior officials of the Shrine Board, police and District Administration attended the inaugural ceremony.

Police Tighten.....

possession. Another suspect was arrested in Achabal after police allegedly recovered a heroin-like substance.

Kulgam district also witnessed multiple anti-drug operations. Police recovered substantial quantities of cannabis powder and poppy straw from different suspects arrested during search and checking drives in the area.

Security forces also arrested a terror associate during a joint operation conducted by police, the Army and the CRPF in Mohamadpora area of Kulgam district. Officials said two hand grenades and objectionable material were recovered from his possession. A case has been registered and further investigation is underway.

In Pulwama district, police registered a case under the Essential Commodities Act after a large quantity of urea fertilizer was allegedly found stored illegally in a warehouse without valid authorization documents.

As part of the broader anti-drug initiative, police also organised awareness rallies, road races, community meetings and intensified checking drives across several districts. Officials said illegally cultivated poppy plants were destroyed in parts of Pulwama, while inspections of medical shops and raids linked to narcotics activities were also carried out.

Police said the ongoing campaign aims to dismantle drug trafficking networks, prevent substance abuse among youth and strengthen public participation in the fight against narcotics.

PM Showcases.....

Meloni, a pure wool stole from Ladakh for Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson, and premium mangoes and pineapples for UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Officials said the gifts reflected India's diverse artistic traditions, regional crafts and agricultural richness while also symbolising cultural connections between India and the respective countries.

The Italian Prime Minister received the renowned golden silk stole from Assam, celebrated for its natural golden shade and fine texture. She was also presented with another silk stole inspired by a rare flower found in Manipur, symbolising purity and cultural pride.

Italian President Sergio Mattarella was gifted a marble inlay box along with recordings of legendary Indian classical musicians. The marble craft, officials noted, shares artistic roots with an Italian decorative tradition that flourished in Florence before gaining prominence in India.

King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands received traditional blue pottery from Jaipur, while Queen Máxima was presented with handcrafted jewellery featuring enamel and gemstone work associated with Rajasthan's royal heritage.

Dutch Prime Minister Rob Jetten was gifted a traditional folk painting from Bihar featuring fish motifs and intricate geometric patterns. Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre received pressed orchid artworks sourced from the Himalayan region, while King Harald V was presented with a finely crafted silver sailboat model inspired by Odisha's filigree art tradition. Queen Sonja of Norway received an ancient style palm leaf painting from Odisha.

The Swedish Prime Minister was also gifted handcrafted tea from Manipur and a traditional artisan-made messenger bag.

Icelandic Prime Minister Kristrún Frostadóttir received a replica of the ice axe used by mountaineer Tenzing Norgay during the historic first ascent of Mount Everest in 1953.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen was presented with a silver inlay decorative vase representing the celebrated metal craft traditions of the Deccan region.

Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo received a devotional-style painting from Rajasthan known for its intricate lotus-themed artwork.

The UAE President was gifted a traditional textile painting from Gujarat, premium mangoes from Gujarat and high-quality pineapples from Meghalaya. The UAE Crown Prince received a ceremonial dagger featuring intricate metalwork along with premium fox nuts from Bihar.

The UAE Queen Mother was presented with handwoven silk fabric from Madhya Pradesh and aromatic black rice from Manipur.

Officials said the gifts highlighted India's commitment to preserving traditional arts, crafts and agricultural heritage while strengthening cultural diplomacy with partner nations across the world.

Police Attach.....

as Balochi, who is currently detained under the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1988. Investigators stated that the assets were allegedly acquired through proceeds generated from illegal trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

Police said the attachment was carried out after an investigation identified the properties as illegally acquired assets under provisions of the law. The operation was conducted under the directions of Senior Superintendent of Police Mohita Sharma.

According to officials, Singh has been involved in four cases registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act in Kathua district over the years.

Residents of the area welcomed the action, describing it as a significant step in curbing narcotics-related activities. Police reiterated their commitment to dismantling drug trafficking networks and targeting properties allegedly built through proceeds of the illegal drug trade as part of efforts to make the district free from narcotics.

Two Irrigation.....

During verification, the complainant informed investigators that the officials had initially demanded nearly Rs 4 lakh, equivalent to the market value of one marla of land, to settle the matter in his favour. The amount was later allegedly reduced to Rs 1 lakh after negotiations.

Refusing to pay the bribe, the complainant approached the Anti Corruption Bureau and sought legal action against the accused officials.

The bureau stated that preliminary verification revealed the disputed property was privately owned land belonging to the complainant and not government land. The inquiry also confirmed the allegations of bribery against the officials.

Following the verification, the ACB registered FIR No. 05/2026 under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, as amended in 2018, at Police Station ACB Anantnag and initiated an investigation.

Aspecial trap team was subsequently formed and successfully apprehended both officials while they were allegedly receiving the bribe amount. The cash was recovered on the spot in the presence of independent witnesses, officials said.

The ACB also conducted searches at the residences of the accused officials in the presence of Executive Magistrates and independent witnesses.

Further investigation into the case is in progress.

NEET Paper.....

including Education Secretary Vineet Joshi, along with NTA Chairperson Pradeep Kumar Joshi and Director General Abhishek Singh. The officials presented details on the implementation of recommendations made in the Radhakrishnan Report aimed at reforming the examination system.

Sources said opposition members demanded that the findings of the CBI investigation be shared with the committee. However, members from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party opposed the demand, arguing that the investigating agency should be allowed to complete its inquiry independently.

The NTA informed the panel that nearly 70 percent of the short-term reforms recommended in the Radhakrishnan Report have already been implemented. Officials said efforts are underway to build a more secure and fool-proof examination mechanism to prevent future irregularities.

Among the key reforms under consideration is the proposal to conduct future NEET examinations through a computer-based testing platform instead of the conventional pen-and-paper format. Officials also stressed the importance of involving credible and experienced professionals in paper-setting and distribution processes.

Members of Parliament additionally raised concerns over manpower shortages within the NTA. The agency acknowledged that it is facing a staff shortage of nearly 25 percent and stated that steps are being taken to fill vacancies systematically to improve efficiency and plug loopholes.

After the meeting, committee chairperson Digvijaya Singh said members had expressed serious concerns over the alleged paper leak but declined to reveal detailed proceedings, citing parliamentary confidentiality.

The NTA also informed the panel that de-

tailed standard operating procedures and breach-management protocols for both pen-and-paper and computer-based examinations have been circulated among stakeholders. Coordination with state and district administrations has also been strengthened, while social media platforms are being actively monitored for reports of malpractice.

According to the agency, the NEET-UG 2026 examination was conducted on May 3 at 5,432 centres across 565 cities, including 14 overseas locations. More than 22.7 lakh candidates had registered for the examination, while over 22.05 lakh appeared.

The examination was later cancelled amid allegations of a paper leak, and a re-test has been scheduled for June 21.

CS Reviews.....

landscapes across the UT.

The review was held during the 27th meeting of the Steering Committee of J&K CAMPA and was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Commissioner Secretary, Forests; PCCF (HoF); Chief Wildlife Warden; CEO, CAMPA and other senior officers of the Forest Department.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary directed the Forest Department to ensure complete digitization of forest maps and boundary pillars for effective demarcation and protection of forest land. Stressing the need for improving the survival rate of plantations, he called for linking payments to contractors with the survival of planting material and directed the Finance Department to vet future tenders for incorporation of suitable clauses in this regard. He also instructed the department to ensure greater field presence of staff up to the rank of Rangers for safeguarding forests and enhancing green cover across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed year-wise trends in forest diversion and compensatory afforestation. The presentation revealed that diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes has sharply declined after 2020, while the area treated under afforestation and ecological restoration programmes has nearly doubled in recent years, reflecting the administration's increasing emphasis on ecological conservation and restoration.

Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar stressed upon recreating missing forest records on the pattern of the Revenue Department and advocated staggered payments linked with survival of planting material in phases of growth for ensuring accountability and better outcomes.

Commissioner Secretary, Forests, Sheetal Nanda highlighted the sustained plantation efforts undertaken by the department over the years and informed the meeting that a robust mechanism of monitoring and multilayer evaluation has been institutionalized to ensure efficient execution of works on the ground.

The meeting was informed that since inception of CAMPA activities in 2010-11, more than 1,06,023 hectares of degraded forest area across Jammu and Kashmir has been treated through afforestation, assisted natural regeneration and ecological restoration measures. During the same period, nearly 746.65 lakh saplings have been planted across different forest divisions, reflecting sustained expansion in plantation activities over the years.

Meanwhile the PCCF (HoF), Sarvesh Rai, informed the meeting that during the financial year 2025-26, nearly 2,952 hectares of area was treated under different CAMPA components across the Union Territory. He stated that over 12.65 lakh running feet of fencing was completed along with 19.32 lakh patch sowing and dibbling interventions were carried out, while 68.70 lakh saplings were raised in nurseries and maintenance of more than 164 lakh nursery saplings was undertaken during the year.

He further apprised that the department executed 37,001 cubic metres of soil and moisture conservation works, constructed 108 water harvesting structures and ponds, completed 27 check dams and established more than 14,940 boundary pillars during the year for strengthening forest protection and ecological restoration efforts.

CEO, CAMPA, K. S. Jayachandran informed the meeting that plantation activities have witnessed a major surge after 2020, with annual plantation figures increasing substantially. Against an average annual plantation of nearly 46.60 lakh saplings during the last sixteen years, more than 67 lakh saplings were planted during 2020-21 and consistently high plantation targets have been maintained thereafter.

He further informed that during the financial year 2025-26 alone, over 40.35 lakh saplings and planting bags were utilized for afforestation and ecological restoration works. Elaborating on soil and moisture conservation interventions,

he stated that since 2010-11, more than 5.13 lakh cubic metres of Dry Rubble Stone Masonry (DRSM) works and over 30,927 cubic metres of crate structures have been executed under CAMPA activities for slope stabilization and improving water retention capacity in fragile forest landscapes. Additionally, 1,732 water harvesting structures and ponds have been constructed for moisture conservation and groundwater recharge in vulnerable areas.

The presentation further highlighted that extensive fencing and protection measures have been undertaken for safeguarding newly established plantations and regeneration sites. Over 374.78 lakh running feet of fencing has been erected and 1,47,623 boundary pillars installed across Jammu and Kashmir for demarcation and protection of forest land.

The Chief Secretary was also informed that extensive catchment area treatment and biodiversity management works are being carried out in hydroelectric project areas including Pakal Dul Hydroelectric Project, Kiru Hydroelectric Project, Kwar Hydroelectric Project, Ratle Hydroelectric Project and Shahpur Kandi Project.

These interventions include afforestation, slope stabilization, pasture development, fire prevention measures, wildlife habitat improvement, eco-development activities and construction of inspection paths, bridges and biodiversity parks.

The meeting was further apprised that wildlife conservation infrastructure has also been significantly strengthened under CAMPA through expansion of rescue centres, development of biodiversity parks, construction of visitor interpretation centres, anti-poaching infrastructure and improvement of wildlife habitats in ecologically sensitive regions including Kishtwar High Altitude National Park.

The presentation also highlighted that substantial infrastructure has been created for strengthening field-level forest management and protection mechanisms. This includes construction of 42 Range Offices, 56 Block Offices, 22 Check Posts, 48 Guard Huts, 12 Chowkidar Huts and 17 Inspection Huts in remote forest areas for improving mobility, monitoring and protection capabilities of frontline staff.

The Chief Secretary was informed that monitoring of CAMPA works is being undertaken through geo-tagging of projects, public disclosure on e-Green Watch portals, regular inspections and third-party evaluations. The third-party evaluation conducted for works executed during FY 2022-23 recorded an overall survival rate of more than 51 percent across plantation sites in Jammu and Kashmir.

While acknowledging the physical achievements registered by the Forest Department under CAMPA, the Chief Secretary emphasized the need for further improving survival rates of plantations, strengthening scientific monitoring mechanisms and enhancing community participation in afforestation programmes.

He directed the department to focus on sustainable ecological restoration, protection of degraded and vulnerable forest landscapes and creation of durable ecological assets for ensuring long-term environmental resilience in Jammu and Kashmir.

Pulwama Attack.....

Mohammad training facility in Bala-kot.

Officials said Hamza, who also used the alias "Doctor", had been residing in the Cheela Bandi area near Muzaffarabad with extensive security arrangements that included armed commandos, a bullet-resistant vehicle and an escort convoy.

Sources alleged that he maintained operational links with individuals involved in cross-border militancy, narcotics trafficking, counterfeit currency networks and arms smuggling. Investigators also claimed that Hamza worked closely with former militant commander Farooq Qureshi from an industrial compound in Muzaffarabad and maintained regular contact with senior ISI operatives.

Officials further said that Hamza had recently strengthened his network through close associations with former militants currently based in Pakistan.

UMMID.....

Highlighting the future of precision medicine, Singh said the experience gained under the initiative would play a vital role in developing personalised treatment protocols for diseases such as diabetes, heart ailments and cancer based on patients' genetic profiles.

"Genetic medicine and nuclear medicine are emerging as two major frontiers that could redefine healthcare in the coming decades," Singh said.

He added that the initiative reflects the government's commitment to strengthening scientific innovation and expanding quality healthcare services for patients suffering from rare and inherited disorders nationwide.



Div Com Kashmir reviews preparations for SANJY-2026

Stresses to expedite registration of Service Providers, Timely execution of Developmental Works

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 21: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, today chaired a high-level meeting to review the preparedness for the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY-2026).

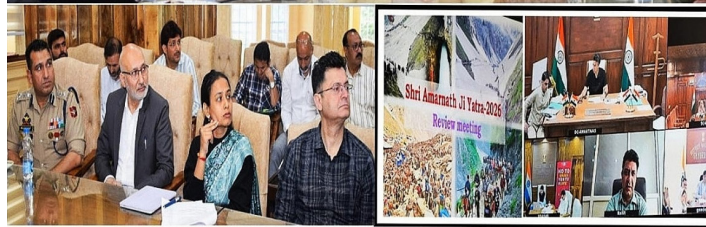
The meeting was attended by the Deputy Commissioners of Anantnag, Srinagar, Ganderbal and Bandipora, Commissioner SMC, besides Heads of Departments from Rural Sanitation, ULB, Health, FCS&CA, BEACON, KPDC, PHE, R&B, Animal Husbandry and Labour Departments. Representatives from telecom service providers including BSNL, Jio, Airtel and G-Max were also present.

Reviewing the registration process of service providers, the Divisional Commissioner emphasized on expediting registrations to meet the target of 28,000 service providers besides ponies. He directed concerned authorities to ensure timely generation of RFID cards for all registered service providers by May 30.

The Divisional Commissioner also reviewed the development of pony stands and was informed that essential infrastructure works including fencing and development of sheds has already been completed. He further instructed officials to conduct health check-ups of ponies and ensure adequate availability of fodder along the yatra routes.

Taking stock of telecom connectivity and bandwidth availability at base camps and along the yatra axes up to the Holy Cave, the Divisional Commissioner directed telecom companies to ensure uninterrupted and efficient network services during the pilgrimage period. Chief Engineer KPDC was asked to provide uninterrupted power supply to telecom installations.

The meeting also reviewed snow clearance operations, construction of gabion and breast walls, and ongoing repair works along the yatra tracks. Deputy Commissioners were directed to personally inspect the repair and maintenance works being



undertaken along the axes.

To facilitate smooth movement and convenience of pilgrims, the Divisional Commissioner called for augmentation of staff at yatri registration counters. He also instructed rationalization of registration counters across the three districts in view of the direct railway connectivity to Srinagar.

Regarding the installation of tents at base camps, the Divisional Commissioner reviewed the allotment process and directed concerned committees to conduct mandatory fire safety audits.

Besides, he reviewed the progress of developmental works being executed by the PHE, KPDC, R&B, I&FC, SDA, PDA, Tourism Department, ULB and other allied agencies.

Preparations related to SDRF, Information Department, Health Services, Transport Department, FCS&CA, sanitation and other essential services were also comprehensively reviewed during the meeting.

Secretary RDD stresses 'quality jobs' for rural youth under DDU-GKY 2.0

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 21: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD), and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, on Thursday chaired a review meeting of Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) under the HIMAYAT Scheme (DDU-GKY 2.0) to assess the implementation and progress of the programme across Jammu & Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Chief Operating Officer, Himayat, Rajneesh Gupta, State Project Manager, Sajad Choudary, officers of the Himayat Mission Management Unit (HMMU), and representatives of various Project Implementing Agencies.

During the meeting, the performance of each PIA engaged under the first phase of DDU-GKY 2.0 (HIMAYAT 2.0) was reviewed in detail, with particular focus on training completion, placement performance, retention, and the quality of employment opportunities being offered to rural youth.

The Secretary observed that while most PIAs had substantially achieved their training targets, the immediate priority now remains achieving the mandated placement targets under the scheme.

The meeting was informed that under DDU-GKY

Department of Rural Development Government of Jammu and Kashmir



2.0, a total target of 2,248 candidates has been sanctioned for the financial year 2025-26, against which 1,615 candidates have already been trained, while 650 candidates have been placed so far.

Emphasizing that HIMAYAT is fundamentally a placement-linked programme aimed at generating sustainable livelihoods, the Secretary directed all PIAs to make focused and result-oriented efforts toward ensuring quality placements for trained candidates.

While appreciating the efforts of agencies in commencing training programmes and generating placements, he stressed the need to further improve training quality and ensure sustainable employment outcomes. Aijaz Asad emphasized that placement should not be limited to the issuance of appointment letters, but should ensure that candidates remain employed, perform effectively, and sustain their livelihoods over time.

Highlighting the importance of reducing attrition among placed candidates, he directed agencies to provide proper counselling, continued support, and conducive facilities to trainees.

Calling for greater accountability, the Secretary stated that the credibility and reputation of implementing agencies would ultimately depend on the successful completion of training programmes and the long-term success of candidates in the workforce.

Aijaz Asad further urged agencies to maintain high standards in hostel facilities, training infrastructure, and overall trainee welfare.

The Secretary directed all agencies to work in close coordination with the Himayat Mission Management Unit (HMMU) and ensure timely achievement of targets with a sustained focus on quality skilling, placement retention, and youth empowerment across Jammu & Kashmir.

School Education Dept Kupwara Launches ATAL Tinkering Labs Awareness Campaign in Handwara

DR. AB QAYOOM

HANDWARA, MAY 21: The Department of School Education Kupwara on Wednesday organized an Awareness Campaign and Mashal Launch Programme under the prestigious ATAL Tinkering Labs Initiative in Education Sub Division Handwara.

The programme was held under the guidance of the Chief Education Officer Kupwara through the District Nodal Officer, ATAL Tinkering Labs, and was inaugurated by the Additional Deputy Commissioner Handwara in the presence of edu-



cation officials, principals, headmasters, technical experts, and students from various educational institutions.

The campaign aimed to create awareness among students and teachers regarding innovation, robotics, coding, artificial intelligence, entrepreneurship, and scientific learning under the ATAL Innovation Mission framework.

Speaking on the occasion, the Additional Deputy Commissioner Handwara appreciated the efforts of the education department in promoting innovation-driven learning and stressed the importance of modern technological platforms in nurturing young talent.

Officials highlighted the role of ATAL Tinkering Labs in developing creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills among students and emphasized the effective utilization of ATL resources in schools.

The programme concluded with interactive sessions, technical demonstrations, and discussions on strengthening ATL activities across schools in Education Sub Division Handwara.

SKUAST-K, KVK Kupwara Organise Scientific Farming Outreach in Machil

70 Quintals Potato Seed Distributed Among Machil Farmers

DR. AB QAYOOM

KUPWARA, MAY 21: A comprehensive awareness-cum-training programme on vegetable cultivation, potato production, vermicomposting, and natural farming was organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendra Kupwara in collaboration with the Division of Olericulture, Faculty of Horticulture at the far-flung border area of Machil in district Kupwara.

The programme witnessed overwhelming participation of around 300 farmers, including a large number of youth and women farmers from the area. The main objective of the programme was to create awareness among the farming community regarding scientific vegetable cultivation, natural farming, vermicompost preparation, and livelihood generation through agriculture and allied sectors.

During the programme, a large quantity of agricultural inputs was distributed among the farmers to encourage vegetable cultivation and improve farm productivity in the region. Around 70 quintals of high-quality potato seed were distributed among selected farmers. Besides this, plastic buckets, vermicompost units, and seeds of 16 different vegetable varieties were also provided for the promotion of kitchen gardening and nutritional security.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. G.M. Bhat highlighted the importance of sustainable and eco-friendly farming practices. He elaborated on the preparation and benefits of vermicompost and stressed the adoption of natural farming techniques for maintaining soil fertility, reducing input costs, and producing healthy food. He said that integrated vegetable cultivation and natural farming can significantly improve the socio-economic condition of rural



farmers, especially in remote border areas like Machil.

Dr. Ashfaq Abidi delivered an informative lecture on scientific potato cultivation practices and explained various aspects related to seed treatment, sowing methods, nutrient management, disease control, irrigation, and harvesting techniques for achieving higher productivity under local climatic conditions.

Dr. Faheema spoke in detail about scientific vegetable cultivation and management practices. She guided farmers regarding seasonal vegetable cultivation, nursery management, pest and disease control, balanced fertilizer application, and protected cultivation for enhancing vegetable production and farm income.

Among others, Dr. Ummia Masoodi emphasized the need for scientific cultivation of agricultural crops for livelihood generation and highlighted the importance of adopting modern farming technologies for improving the rural economy and employment opportunities.

Scientists from the Division of Vegetable Science and KVK Kupwara also interacted with the farmers and provided practical guidance regarding improved farming technologies,

vegetable production, entrepreneurship opportunities, and rural employment generation. The experts encouraged unemployed youth to adopt agriculture and vegetable farming as a profession and become self-reliant through modern scientific farming practices.

Dr. G.M. Bhat thanked the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir and Director Extension Education for their continuous support and cooperation. He stated that the programme was organized in the remote border area as per the directions of the Vice-Chancellor with the objective of extending scientific agricultural technologies to the farming community at their doorstep.

The participating farmers appreciated the efforts of SKUAST-K and KVK Kupwara for organizing such a beneficial programme in the remote border area and expressed gratitude for providing quality seed material, vermicompost units, and technical guidance. The programme concluded with an interactive session where farmers raised various field-related issues and received expert advice from the scientists.

Joint Market Inspection Drive Conducted in Pahloo Area of Kulgam

FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, MAY 21: A joint market inspection drive was conducted on Wednesday in the Pahloo area of Kulgam district to ensure strict implementation of food safety and hygiene standards in the mar-

ket.

The inspection was carried out by a joint team comprising Assistant Commissioner Food Safety Kulgam Syed Nighat Hassan, officials from the Revenue Department, Food Department and personnel from the Police Department.

During the drive, various food business establishments were inspected to assess the quality of food items, sanitation and hygiene conditions, display of rate lists and compliance with other mandatory food safety regulations.

The inspection team direct-

ed food business operators to strictly adhere to the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act and maintain proper hygienic conditions in their establishments to safeguard public health.

Officials also warned that strict action would be taken

against those found violating food safety norms or indulging in unfair trade practices.

Locals appreciated the initiative and called for regular market inspection drives to ensure the availability of safe and hygienic food items for consumers across the district.

Sakeena Itoo inaugurates PGRP Conclave-2026 at GDC Srinagar

Says research-based learning essential for addressing emerging health challenges

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 21: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today inaugurated the Post Graduate Research Programme (PGRP) Conclave-2026 at Government Dental College (GDC) Srinagar.

Addressing a large gathering of doctors, academicians, researchers and students on the occasion, the Minister underscored the importance of research and innovation in strengthening the healthcare sector and improving patient care. She said that platforms like the PGRP conclave provide an opportunity for young medical professionals and scholars to showcase



their research work, exchange ideas and contribute towards advancements in medical science.

Sakeena Itoo lauded the efforts of the faculty, students and organisers for conducting the conclave and encouraging a culture of scientific inquiry and academic excellence. She said that research-based learning is essential for addressing emerging health challenges and ensuring quality healthcare services for the people.

"Doctors play a pivotal role in society and the profession of medicine is one of the noblest professions meant to serve humanity with dedication, compassion and commitment," the Minister said.

The Minister urged young

doctors and researchers to remain committed to ethical medical practices and continue striving for excellence in patient care and scientific research. She also highlighted the government's commitment towards strengthening healthcare infrastructure, promoting medical education and encouraging research activities across the Union Territory.

Speaking on the occasion, Principal GDC Srinagar, presented the brief outline about the objectives of the conclave.

During the event, the Minister also interacted with students and faculty members and appreciated their contribution towards academic and healthcare excellence. She also released the Newsletter on Research Conclave -2026.

DLSA Ganderbal organises Awareness Programme on Child Rights, Domestic Violence at GBHS Shuhama

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, MAY 21: Under the Chairmanship of Abdul Nasir, Chairman District Legal Services Authority Ganderbal and under the guidance of Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary, District Legal Services Authority Ganderbal, an awareness programme on Child Rights and Domestic Violence Laws was organised at Govt. Boys High School (GBHS) Shuhama.

Romani Syed, Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel, served as the resource person and delivered a lecture on constitutional safeguards and child protection laws. She highlighted Articles 21A, 24, 39 and 15(3) of the Constitution of India and emphasized the importance of education, dignity, protection from exploitation, and a safe environment for children.



She also discussed the provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 and explained the role of Juvenile Justice Boards and Child Welfare Committees in ensuring care, protection, and rehabilitation of vulnerable children.

Special emphasis was laid on domestic violence and its adverse impact on children and families, particularly on the mental and emotional well-being of children growing up in violent or unsafe environments.

The programme concluded with active participation and interaction from students and staff members.

Stress Management Sessions, Pledge Ceremonies held across Bandipora under Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, MAY 21: Awareness and outreach activities under the ongoing Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan continued across district Bandipora on Thursday with stress management sessions, coping skills programmes, pledge ceremonies, awareness lectures, and motivational activities organised at various educational institutions.

Educational institutions including Govt High School Garoora, PM SHRI GHS Odina, HSS Quilmuqam, HSS Budoab, HSS Gadakhud, H/S Ketson, HS Panar, HSS Koragbal, PM SHRI Girls High School Sumbal, GHS Naidkhai, HS Jurniyal, and HSS Sum-



bal organised different awareness activities under the Nasha Mukht Abhiyan action plan focusing on stress management, emotional well-being, coping skills, and prevention of substance abuse.

At Govt High School Garoora, students and staff collectively took the Nasha Mukht pledge, reaffirming their commitment towards keeping society free from the menace of drug abuse. Similar pledge ceremonies and awareness activities were conducted at several institutions across the district.

Special lectures on "Stress Management and Coping Skills" were delivered by teachers and resource persons at various schools, highlighting the importance of maintaining mental well-being, positive thinking, emotional balance, self-discipline, and healthy coping strategies to deal with stress and challenges in daily life.

Speakers also emphasised the role of awareness, patience, confidence, and constructive decision-making in preventing drug abuse among youth.

The programmes witnessed enthusiastic participation of students and staff members across the district, reflecting the continued commitment of educational institutions towards strengthening awareness and preventive outreach under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan.

District Finale of Three-Tier Essay Competition held at Bandipora

30 Sub-Division Qualifiers take Centre Stage

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, MAY 21: District Administration Bandipora today hosted the District-Level Finale of the Essay Writing Competition under the Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, marking the culmination of a structured three-tier competition conducted as part of the ongoing 100-Day Campaign.

The competition followed a three-tier format, with Block-Level and Sub-Division-Level rounds held on May 15 and May 18 respectively. The top 10 participants from each of the district's 12 blocks progressed to the Sub-Division stage, while 10 students each from Bandipora, Sumbal, and Gurez qualified for today's District-Level Finale, bringing to-



gether 30 finalists.

The finalists presented their written perspectives on the menace of drug abuse, its impact on society, and the collective responsibility of youth in building a drug-free future.

The examination was conducted under the supervision of Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora,

Yaar Ali Khan, and District Information Officer, Aadil Manzoor Wani, who commended the participants for their thoughtful contributions and highlighted the importance of engaging young minds in preventive awareness initiatives.

They reiterated the administration's commitment to youth-centric outreach and awareness programmes under the Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir campaign.

The District Administration acknowledged the active support of students, teachers, and education authorities across all three Sub-Divisions in ensuring the successful conduct of the competition and reaffirmed its resolve to continue promoting awareness-driven interventions aimed at fostering a drug-free and healthy society.

"No Option Left But To Increase Newspaper Printing Charges": Kashmir Printers Association

Rising global tensions, soaring material costs and supply disruptions push Valley's printing industry into financial distress

■ HT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MAY 20: The Kashmir Printers Association on Tuesday said that newspaper printing charges may have to be increased as the local printing industry continues to face mounting financial pressure due to rising costs of raw materials and disruptions in supply chains triggered by global geopolitical tensions.

The announcement came during an important meeting of the Association chaired by its president, Bilal Qureshi, which was attended by printing press owners and members from across the Valley. The meeting focused on the growing challenges confronting the newspaper printing and publishing sector. Participants expressed serious concern over the sharp increase in the prices of paper, printing plates, ink and other essential materials required for newspa-



per production. They said that supply chains have been severely affected in recent months, leading to shortages and escalating operational costs for printing presses.

The Association said that increasing expenses related to electricity, transportation and raw materials have made newspaper printing significantly more expensive, placing the industry

under severe financial strain. Addressing the meeting, Bilal Qureshi said the impact of ongoing global tensions is being directly felt by the local printing sector. He stated that the unpre-

cedented rise in the cost of printing materials has left printing presses with no alternative but to revise newspaper printing charges.

The Association warned that if the present situation continues, many small and medium-sized printing establishments may struggle to continue operations.

During the meeting, members unanimously appealed to newspaper owners across the Valley to cooperate with printing presses during the difficult period to protect the interests of both the newspaper industry and the printing sector.

The participants also expressed hope that the current crisis could be managed through collective efforts and coordinated planning. The meeting concluded with a commitment to continue working jointly to address the challenges facing the printing industry in Kashmir.

1483 HADP, 1193 JKICIP cases sanctioned by DLIC Anantnag

ADC emphasis enhancing coverage under flagship initiatives

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, MAY 21: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Anantnag, Vikas Ahlawat today chaired the meeting of District Level Implementation Committee of HADP and JKICIP schemes to review the progress of the district under these flagship initiatives.

The meeting was attended by GM DIC, CAO, CAHO, DD Fisheries, DSO, DHO, AMO, representative of DSHO, AEOs, LDM and other officials.

During the proceedings, department-wise application status,



unit establishment, fund utilisation, approval rate, tracking, farm registration and measures to im-

prove credit score and approval rates under these flagship initiatives were reviewed.

Addressing the meeting, the ADC stressed on enhancing coverage, unit establishment, registration of farms and real-time tracking of units on OTA besides ensuring swift disbursement of loan and subsidy components to the beneficiaries. He directed the CAO and LDM to examine the reverted cases and reconcile the cases properly so that correct figures are maintained adding that the pending applications at banks be expedited to extend the benefits

of the schemes to the eligible beneficiaries.

On the occasion, the DLIC approved 1483 cases under HADP and 1193 cases under JKICIP taking the district tally to 40317 and 4272 respectively. Out of the 1483 HADP cases, 1319 are in Agriculture and 108 in Animal Husbandry Departments while as 1148 cases in JKICIP are from Agriculture Department.

Further, against 40317 HADP approved cases, 15590 units (38.66%) stand established while among 4272 JKICIP approved cases, 560 units (13.10%) have been established so far.

Awareness Programme on POSH Act 2013 held at Budgam

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, MAY 2026: SANKALP - Hub for Empowerment of Women, Mission Shakti Budgam, under the supervision of the District Social Welfare Office, Budgam and the aegis of the District Administration Budgam, organized an Awareness Programme on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act, 2013 to promote safe, dignified, and gender-sensitive workplaces. The programme aimed to sensitize participants about the key provisions of the POSH Act, 2013 and strengthen awareness regarding the rights and protections available to employees against sexual harassment at the workplace. The session emphasized the collective responsibility of institutions and individuals in fostering an environment

of respect, equality, and professional integrity. During the programme, Afroza Ahad, District Mission Coordinator, Mission Shakti Budgam, highlighted the objectives and significance of Mission Shakti in empowering women through awareness, support services, and institutional mechanisms that ensure their safety, security, and socio-economic development. She emphasized the importance of creating gender-sensitive workplaces where women can work with dignity and confidence. Latief Ahmad, Legal Aid Defence Counsel, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam, delivered an informative session on the POSH Act, 2013, elaborating on its legal framework, objectives, and provisions for prevention, prohibition, and redressal of sexual harassment at workplaces.

Surinder Choudhary Highlights NC's Developmental Agenda During Handwara Visit

DR. AB QAYOOM

HANDWARA, MAY 21: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on People's Conference Chairman and MLA Handwara Sajad Gani Lone during his visit to Handwara Bus Stand, alleging that the former minister failed to address key public issues despite remaining in power alongside the BJP for several years.

Addressing media persons and party workers, the Deputy Chief Minister said that Sajad Gani Lone remained an ally of the BJP for nearly 12 years but did not struggle for the development of Handwara Bus Stand or other major public demands. He questioned why the BJP-led Central Government did not respond to Lone's demands at that time, while criticizing the National Conference government for approaching Prime Minister Narendra Modi for developmental projects in Jammu and Kashmir.

He said that the National Conference led government under Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is committed to ground-level development and public welfare across Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in both areas of Handwara and Kupwara.

Referring to the bridge inaugurated at Drugmulla, Surinder Choudhary said the project had remained pending for the last 14 years and was completed within



a year after the formation of the NC government in the Union Territory. He termed it an example of the "work culture" of the National Conference government.

The Deputy CM also accused the PDP and People's Conference of being responsible for the erosion of Jammu and Kashmir's special status due to their alliance with the BJP. He said the NC has made immense sacrifices for the nation and does not need a certificate of nationalism from

anyone. Highlighting developmental works, he cited the completion of the Kamerwari-Srinagar bridge as another major achievement of the Omar Abdullah-led government. He assured the public that all promises mentioned in the National Conference election manifesto would be fulfilled.

Surinder Choudhary announced that the Handwara Bus Stand would be macadamized within the next seven days and

directed the concerned departments to ensure quality work along with timely completion. He further stated that the Labour Department would identify a suitable location for the construction of a long passenger shed for commuters.

In a direct jibe at MLA Handwara Sajad Gani Lone, the Deputy Chief Minister alleged that Lone never approached or invited the government for developmental works in Handwara.

However, he assured that all genuine public issues of the constituency would be resolved through the efforts of Rajya Sabha Member Choudhary Mohammad Ramzan.

The Deputy CM claimed that Rs 70 to 80 crore have been sanctioned by the National Conference leadership for various developmental projects in Handwara constituency.

Rajya Sabha Member Choudhary Mohammad Ramzan also criticized the developmental approach of the MLA Handwara, alleging that public issues were being ignored while visits were limited to formal engagements. He reiterated that the National Conference remains committed to the welfare and development of the people of Handwara.

Earlier, the Deputy Chief Minister visited the residence of Member of Parliament Sheikh Abdul Rashid and MLA Langate Khursheed Ahmad Sheikh to offer condolences following the demise of their father. He was accompanied by Member of Parliament Choudhary Mohammad Ramzan and Uri MLA Sajjad Shafi.

Choudhary described the visit as a personal and humanitarian gesture, saying political leaders often stand with one another in times of grief irrespective of political affiliations. He prayed for peace to the departed soul and strength to the bereaved family to bear the loss.

Chairperson TSEED visits KVK Bandipora

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, MAY 21: Krishi Vigyan Kendra Bandipora-1 today hosted Swami Suryanil, Chairperson, Total Start Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Developers (TSEED), during his visit to the Kendra where he interacted with Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), tribal farmers, Agri entrepreneurs and rural youth regarding entrepreneurship development, sustainable agriculture and livelihood generation.

The visit was organised to promote entrepreneurship ecosystems in rural areas and create awareness among farmers regarding value addition, Agri based enterprises, market linkages and innovative farming models for sustainable income generation.

During the interaction programme, Swami Suryanil held discussions with FPO members, tribal farmer entrepreneurs and young Agri innovators on opportunities related to entrepreneurship, branding, collective marketing and rural enterprise development. He emphasized the need for promoting community driven entrepreneurial models for strengthening rural economies and enhancing farmers' income.

The visiting expert appreciated the innovative initiatives and demonstration units established at KVK Bandipora-1, particularly in the areas of Natural Farming, protected cultivation, integrated farming systems and vegetable cultivation. He also visited various demonstration units, lotus cultivation areas and Natural Farming based crop models established at the KVK.

Swami Suryanil highlighted the importance of integrating innovation and entrepreneurship with agriculture for developing resilient and self-sustainable farming systems. He encouraged farmers and rural youth to explore opportunities in value addition, food



processing and Agri based enterprises.

Dr. Tariq Sultan, Head KVK Bandipora-1, briefed regarding various extension, training and farmer welfare initiatives being undertaken by the KVK. He highlighted the role of Krishi Vigyan Kendras in promoting scientific agriculture, entrepreneurship development and sustainable livelihood opportunities among farming communities.

Dr. Tahir Saleem, SMS Vegetable Science, KVK Bandipora-1, provided an overview of the vegetable based demonstration units and protected cultivation technologies established at the KVK. He highlighted the importance of scientific crop management and climate resilient vegetable production practices for improving productivity and farmers' income.

Dr. Mohammad Iqbal Bhat, Coordinator Upscaling Collectivization, JKICIP, also interacted with FPO members, tribal farmers and rural entrepreneurs regarding collective farming approaches, farmer institutional development and sustainable livelihood opportunities. He emphasized the importance of strengthening farmer collectives, market linkages and community based agricultural enterprises for improving rural economy and farmers' income. The programme concluded with an interactive discussion and field visit aimed at strengthening collaboration for promotion of entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable agricultural development in the district.

DC Srinagar reviews disaster preparedness, hands over rescue equipment

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 21: In order to assess and strengthen the district's emergency response mechanism, the District Administration Srinagar on Wednesday organized a Table-Top Exercise on disaster-related equipment to review fire and flood disaster preparedness at the DC Office premises here. The exercise was followed by a comprehensive practical demonstration of emergency response equipment and rescue operations.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, who is also the Chairman of the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), presided over the event.

The programme was attended by Director, Disaster Management J&K Aasish Kumar Additional District Development Commissioner Srinagar Rifat Aftab Qureshi, Additional Deputy Commissioner Mir Imtiaz Ul Aziz, Additional District Magistrate and Chief Executive Officer DDMA Srinagar Aadil Fareed, Commandant SDRF Masroor Ahmad, Additional CEO Srinagar Smart City Suhail ul Islam, SDM West Irfan Bahadur, SDM East Zubair Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Umar Gulzar, Deputy Director Fire & Emergency, Dr Aaqib, Executive Engineer of R&B, Abdul Qayoom, all Tehsildars and other concerned officers.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC/Chairman DDMA stressed the importance of conducting Table top preparedness exercises to strengthen disaster response capabilities and ensure prompt action during emergencies. He emphasized that coordinated planning and efficient deployment of resources are essential to minimizing risks and safeguarding lives and property during disasters.

The DC said that disasters often occur without any prior warning and that preparedness in terms of manpower, machinery, and emergency response capacity is the only effective way to minimize losses and respond efficiently during crisis situations. He emphasized that conducting Table-Top Exercises and practical demonstrations is of immense significance in enhancing coordination, strengthening preparedness mechanisms, and building the capacity of departments and field functionaries to deal effectively with disasters and other emergencies.

During the event, the DC/Chairman DDMA handed over disaster-related equipment kits to all Tehsildars of the district to strengthen preparedness at the Tehsil level. In addition, four high-end rescue boats were also placed at the disposal of the District Administration Srinagar and Srinagar Smart City, with two boats allotted to each for emergency rescue operations.

The exercise was also aimed to evaluate preparedness levels, coordination among departments and operational readiness in the event of fire and flood emergencies. During the practical demonstration, teams displayed the functioning and handling of various disaster-response equipment used in rescue and relief operations. The demonstration also highlighted the importance of timely response, inter-agency coordination, and public safety measures during natural and man-made disasters.

The Table-Top Exercise and practical demonstration witnessed participation from teams of the National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force, Fire & Emergency Services, Civil Defence and other concerned agencies.

Jal Shakti department issues clarification on drowning of monkeys inside GSR at Shiv Khori

Reservoir thoroughly cleaned, disinfected as per prescribed SOPs: EX-En

HT NEWS NETWORK

REASI, MAY 21: The Jal Shakti Department Division Reasi has issued clarification on news circulating on social media regarding the unfortunate drowning of three monkeys in the 1.00 lakh gallons Ground Service Reservoir (GSR) at Shiv Khori.

The Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) has clarified that the incident occurred due to unavoidable natural circumstances arising from damage caused by heavy rains, flash floods, and landslides during the year 2025.

During the flash floods of 2025, the dome slab of the said GSR sustained partial damage due to landslides in the area. The matter was immediately reported to the higher authorities through a formal damage report. As a temporary preventive measure, the damaged opening was covered with tin sheets and secured with wire mesh to restrict access and prevent any entry into the GSR until permanent restoration could be undertaken.



The proposal for permanent restoration has already been included in the DPR submitted to higher authorities under SASCI for flood restoration works.

As reported by the field staff, routine pumping operations were carried out on the evening of 18-05-2026, after which the tank was properly secured and insulated. However, during the routine inspection conducted the following morning, the staff found that three monkeys had drowned inside the GSR. The matter was immediately brought to the notice of higher authorities and, as a precautionary

measure to avoid any public health concern, the water supply from the said tank was stopped forthwith.

Subsequently, the Deputy Commissioner Reasi visited the site and issued necessary directions for immediate cleaning and sanitization of the GSR.

Accordingly, the reservoir was thoroughly cleaned and disinfected in accordance with prescribed SOPs, including the use of bleaching powder and other required sanitization measures. After completion of the cleaning process, water quality testing was conducted and, upon confirmation that the water was fit for consumption, the water supply was restored in the evening.

In view of the above facts, it is evident that the unfortunate incident resulted from damage caused by natural calamities and not due to any negligence, omission, or deliberate lapse on the part of the departmental officials or field staff, who acted promptly and responsibly immediately after the incident came to notice.

Nasha Mukt Abhiyan: DC Ganderbal chairs NCORD meeting, reviews Anti-Drug measures

Calls for stronger enforcement and rehabilitation effort

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, MAY 21: A meeting of the District Level NCORD Committee meeting was today held under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore to review anti-drug enforcement, awareness activities, rehabilitation measures and inter-departmental coordination across the district.

A detailed review of actions taken by concerned departments was conducted, with focus on inspections of drug stores, IEC activities, rehabilitation services, tobacco control, monitoring of illicit cultivation of poppy and prosecution of offenders involved in narcotics-related cases.

The DC directed the Drug Control Officer to significantly enhance field inspections and sample collection across the district.

On preventive enforcement,

officials informed the meeting that naka checking as well as random inspections of warehouses had been undertaken in order to prevent transportation of drugs through couriers. The Excise Department was instructed to continue surprise checks and improve monitoring mechanisms.

Emphasising a victim-centred approach, the DC directed the Health Department to strengthen counselling, and ensure sustained rehabilitation support for affected individuals. The functioning of the Addiction Treatment Facility (ATF) in District Hospital, Ganderbal, availability of trained staff as well as availability of medicines was also reviewed, with directions issued to address operational gaps and improve service delivery.

The meeting also discussed enforcement under tobacco control regulations. Concerned departments were asked to



intensify action against tobacco sale and consumption near educational institutions and public spaces.

Inter-departmental coordination on verification and monitoring of offenders was also reviewed. The progress on cancellation of driving licenses, vehicle registration, passport, Aadhaar and contractor card of individuals involved in narcotics-related cases was also reviewed. Officials were directed to strengthen data sharing and clear pending cases in a time-bound manner as per the laid down SOP.

The committee further reviewed destruction of illicit cultivation and field surveillance. It was informed that illicit poppy crop had recently been destroyed on various parcels of land in the district. Concerned departments were directed to continue surveys, strengthen ground monitoring

for identification of vulnerable locations.

Progress under community-based anti-drug initiatives, IEC activities and progress on drug-free panchayat programmes was also assessed.

Calling for a coordinated approach, the DC directed departments to intensify awareness campaigns, and try to provide victims of the drug menace with livelihood opportunities through government schemes like Mission Yuva as well as counselling support.

The meeting was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police, Sudhanshu Dhama; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Kangana, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Deputy Director Prosecution, officers from Agriculture, Health, Education, Excise, Drug Control, Social Welfare and other concerned departments.

HT EDITORIAL

Srinagar becomes hot spot of suicides in Kashmir valley

Over the past few years Srinagar has become a hot-spot for suicide attempts mostly carried out by the youth. People, especially youth, take the extreme step of ending their lives after facing odds on multiple fronts. These people usually chose Srinagar for this step and for the same they take plunge into the river Jhelum while diving from the sideways of any bridge of the summer capital of Jammu & Kashmir.

Even though the authorities covered the sides of most of the bridges of the city with iron fencing some of the bridges have been left as they were. It is due to this reason that reports of suicide come from these bridges and in most of the cases the person who takes the extreme step is found dead. In some of the cases it takes days together for the people at helm to recover the body with the affected families being at the receiving end.

It is high time that the government completes the fencing of the uncovered bridges and this needs to be done at the earliest. This would act as a deterrent for the people who want to end their lives by taking the extreme step. Once these people have limited options of carrying out suicide there are chances that they might give up on their plan of ending their life. In such a manner precious lives can be saved and that would be great at the end of the day.

It is important that people, especially the experts, delve into the reasons that force a person to end his or her life. At the same time the parents and other family members need to be in constant touch with their children and they should not be neglected at any cost. Once there is neglect in the families then there are problems. The children need to be encouraged to take part in extracurricular activities and this would ensure that the children don't fall in the net of anti-social activities.

The youth need to be counselled in the right direction and the same is possible only when there is support from all the quarters. It must be made clear to the youth that they should take up the challenges of life and come out with the solutions to the same at their own end. And in case they are not able to do so the family members are there to help them in every situation.

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Have we understood the message behind sacrificing of Animal?

■ RAQIF MAKHDOOMI

Muslims all around the world are all set to perform "Qurbani". All those Muslims who can afford a sacrificial animal are under obligation to sacrifice an animal as prescribed by the Islam. Most of the people see this ritual merely associated with money. No doubt the money plays an important role in it. But it's not about money it's something way beyond.

Let's go back to from where it emerged. Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) had no child upto the age of 86. But he used to pray to Allah to grant him a child. When we look at science, it's impossible to have a child at this age. When Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) used to pray for a child at this age his wife Hazrat Sarah (ra) used to wonder how at this age they can become parents. But Allah isn't bound by any restrictions. At the age of 86 Allah blessed Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) with first son. At the time of Ismail's birth, Ibrahim's wife, Sarah, was unable to bear children, so Ibrahim had married her handmaiden, Hajar (Hagar), who became Ismail's mother. Later, when Ibrahim was 100 years old, his second son, Prophet Is'haq (Isaac), was born to Sarah. A very important thing to note. Not only at the 86 but at the of 100 Allah blessed Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) with a child. This must be a clear understanding for all those waiting for a miracle to happen. When you have firm belief anything can happen. But the condition is that your belief should be only and only on Allah no one else.

When Allah blessed Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) with Hazrat Ismail (AS). He was put to test by Allah. Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) was asked to leave his wife Hajar and his infant son Ismail (Ishmael) in the barren, uninhabited valley of Makkah (in the Arabian Peninsula). At the time, this location was an empty desert with no water or vegetation. He left them with only a small leather bag of dates and a skin of water before returning to Palestine. This faithful act eventually led to the settlement of Makkah and the construction of the Kaaba. When Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) completed the construction of Kaaba. He was asked to call people to come for Hajj. Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) seeing the barren land and no one around asked "Ya Allah who will hear my call". Allah replied "You do it and leave rest to me". It's said the lakhs of people who go to perform Hajj is in the response of the same call. And the same call shall be responded till the day of Judgement.

Muslims who have gone to Perform Haj shall have to run between the mountains of Safa and Marwa. One of the essentials of Haj. The running be-



tween the mountains is linked to event when Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) left his son and his wife alone on the order of Allah. She ran between the mountains when they ran out of water. It's from where the Zamzam water has originated.

We need to pause here and think. Father gets a son after 86 years of wait. And he's being asked to let the same son at the place where there's no one other than them. What do we grasp from the event? Allah tests to check the level of Imam. And that tests are not for those who Allah is annoyed with. But for those who Allah loves.

It's mentioned in Quran multiple times that those who are the believers are tested by Allah so that their rewards are increased. Same was done with Hazrat Ibrahim (AS). He was first made to wait for 86 years before he was blessed with a child and then he was asked to abandon the same son alone with his wife at a place where there was human being living. It was just Hazrat Ismail (AS) and Hazrat Hajira

(ra). For Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) the tests weren't over. There was much more to come. Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) had a dream and in the dream he was asked to sacrifice his son Hazrat Ismail for the sake of Allah. When he woke up in the morning, he went to his son Hazrat Ismail (AS) and told him about the dream. To which he said "If it's from Allah I am ready." It's reported that Shaitan went to Hazrat Hajira (ra) and told her that "Your husband had a dream where he got command from Allah to sacrifice Ismail for me". To which she replied "When it's from Allah, I have no problem. I won't stop them". There are many stories associated to the event of Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) and Hazrat Ismail (AS) but all at the end lead to same goal and that's the trust of Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) on Allah. The only thing that Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) had in his mind was that how shall his actions please Allah and no one else. When Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) made Hazrat Ismail lay down and tried to make a cut on his neck the knife

failed to it. After many attempts he with angry threw the knife which hit a stone and it broke into two. After a brief time Allah sent an animal and asked Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) to sacrifice it. Is it that the only purpose of sacrificing an animal is to fulfil the requirements? No, the basic fundamental purpose of it's to teach us that when it's an order from Allah you have to sacrifice your most loved thing. And that too without giving it a second thought. As Allah has mentioned it clearly in Holy Quran that if you love your wealth, your hard earned wealth, your cultivated lands, your children, your parents and your wives more than me. The wait till I send down trouble for you.

It's very important to understand we as Muslims should have order of Allah the most important and beloved for us and that's what the sacrificing of animals teach us.

The author is a law student and a human rights activist.

Attractions of Doodhpathri



■ SAHIL MANZOOR

Raiyar-Ich is an emerging village in Tehsil Khansahib in the district of Budgam. The village comprises Bhatti Mohallah, Dinda Mohallah, Tantray Mohallah, Sheikh Mohallah, Khan Mohallah, etc. The people are very cultured, follow the teachings of great scholars, and have been living in a friendly environment for decades. The village has been developing rapidly for the last two decades since the famous tourist destination Doodhpathri came into the eyes of the world. Doodhpathri and other picturesque places of the district, like Mujpathri, Sotchal Pathri, Arizal, and many small attractions, enhance the beauty of the district and attract tourists from all corners of the world.

■ An Endowed and Peaceful Hamlet in District Budgam

There are ten districts in the Kashmir Valley. Every district has its own unique and special history, and Budgam is one of them. Budgam district is 12 km from the heart of Srinagar's Lal Chowk. In the past, many popular areas that are now part of Srinagar district were once included in Budgam. Therefore, Budgam and Srinagar have

shared close ties for decades.

Budgam is one of the most mesmerizing and picturesque districts in the Kashmir Valley. The shrine of Sheikh-ul-Alam (RA) in Charar e Shareef is very special to the district. It has beautiful tourist places like Doodhpathri, Tosamaidan, Sotchal Pathri, and Sukhnag, and many more places will be explored in the future.

Today, in this article, I am going to explore the mesmerizing beauty of Raiyar Ich.

■ About Raiyar Ich

Raiyar Ich is an emerging village in terms of rapid development. It is a Panchayat Halqa with nine Panch wards and beautiful topography.

Raiyar Ich is a picturesque hamlet and a resting place for tourists from different parts of the world. According to local legend, the name "Raiyar" comes from two Kashmiri words: "Rai" meaning lost and "Yaar" meaning friend. The name was given by the mystic Kashmiri Sufi saint Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Wali (RA). It is said that when he reached this village from the forests of Pir Panjal, he sent his friends to different parts of Kashmir to spread the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and continued his journey alone towards the Dreygam cave.

■ Why Raiyar is Attractive for Tourists

The village is blessed with rich culture and lush green forests. During late nights, the cool breeze brings peace of mind to everyone. The soothing sound of the Sukh-Nag River feels like soft music from a guitar. The people of the village are innocent and humble and live peacefully with their inherited culture. Raiyar is famous for rajma

(kidney beans), maize bread, and walnuts.

■ Sources of Income for Locals

It is very fortunate for the locals that Doodhpathri has gained a place on the tourist map. It is one of the emerging tourist destinations in Khansahib tehsil and Budgam district and provides employment to thousands of unemployed local youth.

■ What Locals Demand

Higher Secondary School: As Raiyar Ich has become a central hub for nearby villages, locals demand the upgradation of the high school into a higher secondary school. Many families cannot afford to send their children to Khansahib and have to spend Rs 50 on travel daily.

Sports Stadium: A well equipped sports stadium for emerging local sports talent.

Children's Park: A park with safe play equipment for children.

Grazing Area: Locals have grazed cattle for centuries and depend on it for their livelihood and the district's economy.

Computer Skill Centres: Centres under centrally sponsored schemes are important for unemployed youth who want to achieve goals in fields like medicine and teaching.

Stay Home Scheme: All households should be covered so families can improve their livelihood and upgrade their homes.

Road Connectivity: Bhatti Mohallah Tangnar road connectivity should be prioritised. During harsh winters, tourist flow can be diverted via TRC Tangnar so tourists can experience local culture and locals can earn income.

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Dogri Theatre: A Timeless Cultural Legacy Finding New Voices

■ RAHUL SINGH

In an era when regional identities across India are being rediscovered and celebrated, Dogri theatre stands as both a remarkable cultural achievement and a troubling example of neglect. Rich in folklore, music, performance traditions, and social resistance, Dogri theatre has travelled a long journey from obscurity to national recognition. Yet, despite its artistic depth and historical relevance, it continues to struggle for institutional support, wider audiences, and sustained cultural preservation.

The story of Dogri theatre is not merely about stage performances. It is the story of a people reclaiming their language, dignity, and cultural memory after decades of marginalisation. At the heart of this cultural awakening was the formation of the Dogri Sanstha in 1944 under the leadership of Prof. Ram Nath Shastri. At a time when Dogri-speaking people were made to feel culturally inferior and their language had been pushed aside by official preference for Urdu and Persian, the Sanstha emerged as a revolutionary movement. It sought not only to revive Dogri literature but also to restore pride among Dogras.

The conditions before Independence were bleak. Dogri literature was almost non-existent in written form, and educated Dogras often hesitated to speak their mother tongue publicly. Folk traditions survived in villages, but they remained ignored by mainstream cultural institutions. Against this backdrop, the pioneers of Dogri literature and theatre performed a historic task. They transformed a neglected language into a powerful medium of artistic and social expression.

The evolution of Dogri theatre after Independence mirrors the cultural journey of Jammu and the larger Duggar region. Writers and theatre practitioners realised early that literature alone could not fully capture the emotional and social realities of Dogra life. Theatre became the living bridge between language and people. Through



plays, folk forms, songs, and storytelling traditions, Dogri theatre carried the voices of farmers, labourers, women, and ordinary citizens onto the stage.

Yet Dogri theatre developed under difficult circumstances. Unlike many established theatrical traditions of India, Dogri theatre lacked a continuous institutional structure. Political turmoil, repeated wars, displacement, and the partition of the region disrupted cultural continuity. Many traditional forms either weakened or disappeared entirely. The region that once nurtured vibrant folk traditions became divided geographically and psychologically after Independence.

Despite these challenges, Dogri theatre retained its creative spirit through folk forms such as Geetru, Kud, Karak, Bhakh, and Tudd. These traditions may not fit neatly into classical definitions of theatre, but they contain powerful dramatic elements. The solo narrative strength of Tudd, the musical storytelling of Geetru, and the emotionally charged ballads of Karak demonstrate that Dogri performance culture possessed remarkable theatrical potential. The problem was never artistic weak-

ness; it was the absence of sustained patronage and cultural stability.

Perhaps no production symbolises the strength of Dogri theatre more than the legendary play Bawa Jitto. Written by Prof. Ram Nath Shastri and later transformed into a landmark production by Balwant Thakur and the theatre group Natrang, Bawa Jitto gave Dogri theatre national and international visibility. Based on the story of a peasant saint who sacrificed his life against feudal oppression, the play resonated deeply with audiences because it connected folklore with contemporary concerns of justice and dignity.

More importantly, Bawa Jitto revived several fading folk traditions by integrating them into modern theatre. Art forms such as Jatar, Karak, Geetru, Kud, and Bhakh found new life on stage. What was once dismissed as rural performance suddenly became a source of cultural pride. Through more than 150 performances across India, the production demonstrated that regional theatre could speak a universal language without losing its roots.

The success of Bawa Jitto also challenged a long-standing misconception

that regional theatre cannot travel beyond its linguistic boundaries. In truth, audiences respond to emotional honesty and artistic authenticity far more than to language barriers. Dogri theatre succeeded whenever it remained rooted in local realities while addressing universal human concerns.

Another important pillar in the development of Dogri theatre has been the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages. Since its establishment in 1958, the Academy has played a crucial role in promoting local theatre through financial assistance, drama festivals, and institutional support. Its annual drama festivals introduced audiences to a wide range of Dogri plays and adaptations, helping local artists sustain theatrical activity in difficult times.

Over the decades, Dogri theatre has produced an astonishing body of work. From Vishwanath Khajuria and Dinu Bhai Pant to Narsingh Dev Jamwal, Mohan Singh, Kumar A. Bharti, Rattan Doshi, and Balwant Thakur, generations of playwrights enriched the language with social dramas, historical narratives, political satire, and experimental

productions. Adaptations of Shakespeare, Tagore, Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar, and Sophocles into Dogri further proved the creative flexibility of the language.

Yet despite this rich heritage, Dogri theatre remains under-recognised nationally. Regional theatre groups continue to face financial insecurity, shrinking audiences, and inadequate infrastructure. Young artists often migrate towards cinema, television, or digital platforms because theatre offers little economic stability. Cultural policies frequently celebrate diversity in speeches while failing to invest seriously in regional arts.

This neglect would be a tragic mistake. Dogri theatre is not merely entertainment; it is a living archive of history, memory, resistance, and collective identity. At a time when cultural homogenisation threatens India's linguistic diversity, preserving regional theatre traditions becomes essential for the country's democratic and cultural health.

The future of Dogri theatre depends on more than nostalgia. It requires active intervention. Educational institutions must include Dogri dramatic literature in curricula. Government bodies should establish dedicated repertory companies, grants, and touring circuits for regional theatre. Digital archiving of scripts and performances is urgently needed before valuable material disappears. Most importantly, younger generations must be encouraged to engage with their language not as a relic of the past but as a creative force for the future.

Dogri theatre has survived invasions, partition, political instability, and cultural neglect. Its resilience itself is extraordinary. The question now is whether India is willing to recognise and nurture this cultural inheritance before another generation of artistic memory fades into silence.

The writer is a Scholarship and Fellowship Holder from Ministry of Culture, Government of India in the field of Theatre

Exploiting The Hidden Beauty Of Chinta Valley



■ MOOL RAJ

The Chinta Valley in Bhadarwah is located about 200 kms away from Jammu having an altitude around 3000 mts from mean sea level (MSL). It is kaleidoscopically a picturesque spot perched amidst the surrounding hills to north east of Bhadarwah town itself. The serene and scenic beauty of Bhadarwah and its surroundings are equalizing the vale of Kashmir, a paradise on earth. Bhadarwah as well is nomenclaturised as Chhota Kashmir in so far as its beauty, climate and culture is concerned. The valley is bounded by the ends of spurs from the ridges of forests specked by cultivable land at their different levels. The bottom of this Valley is flat and at certain points sloppy. The terraced lands are thickly studded with small and big villages covered by grand black deodars, kail, Chir, fir and spruce at higher altitude. And still at higher elevation are vast carpet-like meadows covered with green grass and multihued, multi-colored flowers, herbs, shrubs of mutimedical uses. Literally speaking, Chinta Valley has an ancient name Chintan, a sansrit word meaning self-introspection but with rolling wheel of time the word Chintan de-praved into Chinta. The enchanting Valley of Chinta falls around 18 to 20 kms away from the Bhadarwah town itself. From Bhadarwah, the road passes through various villages shrouded by thickly coniferous forests areas. The valley depicts multihued social and cultural heritage



akin to neighboring Himachal Pradesh, UP and other Himalayan states of India. The higher elevation abounds in multihued hills having specks of tourists spots Viz-suwardhar, Rowdal, Fukklandhar, Loirudhar with grassy meadows and towering pine trees which give pleasant whiffs and hum in gentle breeze far to distant apart. And a head about 5 kms to 8 kms on foot, the spot gives panoramic view of varied venues of solace and marry making all around the Chinta Valley and down below Bhadarwah town as if one is airily viewing the enchanting scenario far away of what we see Chita Valley. Towards the east of Chinta valley is another Charming and enchanting Valley by name Jai surrounded by thick and dark Deodars, Kail

and chir forests which of course are connected by Kacha and pacca inter-linkages facilitating varied avenues for picnics, riding, climbing and fishing in small rivulets of Jai. Climacterically Speaking, the valley is temperate particularly during summer thus providing a comfortable and pleasant resting place for the tourists and other visitors like. Economically, the area is congenitally sound despite the fact that agriculture is the main stay of the people. The local are also involved in government and other jobs owing to high literacy. The locals are most hospital, peace loving and of jovial nature, always espousing religious cause, tolerance and fraternity insofar as religious faith is concerned, the Naga cult is the prominent creed and

features of the vicinity. One of the most prominent pilgrimage is to Kailash (Kaplash) kund and abode of Vasukai Nag raja which begins every year in the month of Bhadaron August on 12th day of Krishanapaksh. The yatra starts from Vasukai Nag temple ghata just at the entrance of Bhadarwah town. The pilgrimage takes the same traditional route which was taken by shri Vasukai Nag ji to reach KailashKund at the time when Garudji wanted to kill Vasukhi Nag ji. Instead of having a fight with Garudji, Shree Vasukhi Nag ji ran away to avoid fight in order to obey the promise he had made to his mother Vanita as both Gaud Ji and Vasukhi Nag ji were the sons of great saint Maharishi Kashyap. Kailash in Bhadarwah is also called kablas.

It is a big lake situated at a height rounding 15k feet from (Mean Seal Level) msl. The lake is beautiful, pure having crystal clear water which is icy cold. The lake is surrounded by high mountains and glaciers. It is most attractive and enthralling spot which had been the abode of Lord Shiva who provided shelter to Vasukhi Nag ji when he was being chased by Garudji. Lord Shiva after handing over Kailash Kund to Vasukui Ji proceeded Manimahesh in HP. There are two other holy shrines atop ChintaJai. Sheshnag (Sabarmag) at sabardhar and other Tara Bhuja at Roshira at a distance of 3 kms to 5 kms and are located midst of forests of Chinta Valley. It is believed that both the scared shines are oldest in Bharawah. There are multihued sared spots vizgurt Ganga ad joining Neerurivulet where there is a temple of Lord Shive with huge Shiv lingam and parnali of water keeps of soothing Shivlingam since the existence of this temple. The Shivlingam is reported to have been brought from Manchester, Neeru Nala. To propitiate the local diets, lot of faresand festivals are celebrated in the month August and September when it is a slack in Bhadarwah to prominent colorful dances/ Melasare most prominent. Dhaku dance and Patt Mela are most reverentially celebrated in Bharadarwah Valley. Now that the government has proclaimed a Tourists development Authority of bhadarwah and with the passage of time, this shall boost the tourist potential of the area for multihued development activities to attract and enchant tourists from India and abroad to have a charming glimpse of beauty, cultural heritage and above all the serene, scenic beauty of the area and its surrounds apart from invigorating local economy- the clarion call of the day. (The author is former Conservator of Forests J&K).

The Author is a columnist and freelance writer



The Silent Poison: How Overuse of Antibiotics is Breaking Kashmir's Health System



■ BIN AZIZ MOHAMMAD ALTAF

I still remember the day I earned my pharmacy degree back in 2013. Like many fresh graduates, I was full of hope about contributing to better healthcare. But what I have witnessed in the years since has left me deeply worried. In Kashmir, the way antibiotics are handed out in primary health centres, private clinics, and especially medical shops has become deeply alarming. What was once meant to be a life saving medicine is slowly turning into a silent poison for many people. It provides quick but temporary relief, weakens the body's natural defences, and leaves patients dependent on stronger and stronger drugs. Diseases often return worse than before, sometimes becoming life threatening.

Let me be clear from the start. Antibiotics are wonderful medicines when used properly. They have saved countless lives from serious bacterial infections. But in our part of the world, they are being misused on a massive scale. From small clinics in Srinagar to remote villages across the valley, patients walk out with prescriptions or even direct purchases of powerful antibiotics without proper tests and without confirming whether the infection is even bacterial. I see this every single day in my work and through conversations with colleagues.

Think about a common situation. Someone develops a mild fever, cough, or stomach upset. Instead of waiting, examining properly, or carrying out basic investigations such as blood tests or cultures, many doctors or chemists quickly suggest a course of azithromycin, amoxicillin, or ofloxacin. These are among the most overused antibiotics not only in Kashmir but across India. The patient feels better after a couple of days because the symptoms are temporarily suppressed. However, the root cause often remains untreated. The illness returns stronger, and by then the bacteria may already have started developing resistance against the drug.

This is not merely a personal observation. Studies and reports from across India paint a deeply worrying picture. Our country is one of the largest consumers of antibiotics in the world, and Kashmir is no exception. In primary healthcare settings, antibiotics are prescribed far too frequently, even for conditions that do not require them, such as viral infections. Patients standing in long queues at government hospitals become exhausted and often turn to nearby private clinics or medical shops for quick fixes. The result is the same: unnecessary medicines that cause more harm than good in the long run.

■ The Business Angle

One of the saddest aspects of this issue is how deeply it has become tied to business interests. In many medical shops, antibiotics are sold over the counter without any prescription. A customer walks in complaining of body aches or loose motions, and within minutes leaves with strips of strong antibiotics. Why? Because it brings repeat business. Temporary relief ensures that the patient returns when symptoms recur. Stronger medicines follow, and the cycle continues.

Private clinics also attract more patients when they provide instant relief. Government hospitals, already overburdened with huge patient loads, sometimes indirectly push people toward private options because of long waiting times. Desperate patients then seek shortcuts.

I have spoken to many pharmacists and doctors who privately admit this problem. One senior chemist in a busy Srinagar market once told me, "If I start demanding prescriptions for everything, customers will simply go to the next shop." This attitude is dangerous. It treats healthcare as a business commodity rather than a serious social responsibility.

■ How Antibiotics Weaken Immunity

The real tragedy lies in what happens inside the body. Every time antibiotics are taken unnecessarily, they do not only target harmful bacteria; they also destroy many of the beneficial bacteria living in the gut. These friendly microbes are essential for digestion, vitamin production, and most importantly, for supporting and training the immune system. When they are repeatedly destroyed, the body's

natural defences weaken.

As a result, infections that the body could once fight naturally now require medicines. Over time, many people become dependent on drugs even for minor illnesses.

Doctors have noticed that patients who previously recovered easily from seasonal colds now suffer from prolonged illnesses. Children are particularly vulnerable. Frequent exposure to antibiotics at an early age can affect their gut health and immune development for years. In Kashmir's cold climate, where respiratory illnesses are already common, this misuse is increasing the burden of chronic health problems.

Antibiotic resistance is the other side of this crisis. Bacteria are evolving faster than we can develop new medicines. Diseases that were once simple to treat, such as urinary tract infections or pneumonia, are becoming increasingly difficult and expensive to manage. Reports from India already show high resistance rates against commonly used antibiotics. In some cases, even last resort drugs are losing effectiveness. If this trend continues, we risk returning to a time when even minor cuts or infections could become deadly.

■ Stories from the Ground

I have witnessed families suffer because of this misuse. There was a middle aged man from a village near Pulwama who regularly visited our pharmacy with recurring chest infections. Each time, he received a few days' worth of antibiotics from a nearby shop. The relief was always temporary. Eventually, his condition worsened severely, and when he finally reached a proper hospital, doctors discovered resistant bacteria. Treatment became complicated, lengthy, and expensive. His family struggled emotionally and financially.

Young mothers often bring children with fever and immediately seek antibiotics without hesitation. Viral fevers that would normally improve with rest and supportive care are unnecessarily treated with strong medicines. The child then develops diarrhoea or other side effects as the natural gut balance is disturbed. This pattern repeats itself across households. In government hospitals, doctors work under enormous pressure, often seeing hundreds of patients every day. There is little time for detailed examinations or investigations. Prescribing anti-

biotics becomes the fastest way to move to the next patient. Unfortunately, this approach is creating far bigger health problems in the future.

■ Why Kashmir is Particularly Vulnerable

Kashmir faces unique healthcare challenges. The cold climate, rising pollution levels in urban areas, poor sanitation in certain regions, and limited access to quality diagnostic facilities all contribute to the problem. Many people self medicate based on advice from neighbours or previous prescriptions. Awareness about the difference between viral and bacterial infections remains very low.

During flu seasons or outbreaks of gastroenteritis, antibiotic sales rise sharply despite the fact that many of these illnesses do not require them at all.

The use of antibiotics in livestock and agriculture also contributes to resistance. Antibiotics mixed in animal feed eventually enter the food chain, adding to the larger problem. However, the biggest driver remains human misuse in healthcare settings.

■ What Needs to Change

We cannot continue like this. First, strict enforcement of prescription only sales for antibiotics is essential. Medical shops must stop acting as the first point of treatment. Pharmacists should serve as responsible gatekeepers rather than medicine distributors. Proper training and incentives for ethical practices can help achieve this.

Doctors working in primary care also need better support. This includes faster access to basic laboratory facilities, clear guidelines about when antibiotics are genuinely needed, and continuous education on antimicrobial stewardship. Institutions such as Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences have already initiated some efforts, but such programmes must reach every corner of Kashmir.

Public awareness campaigns are equally important. People must understand that not every fever or cough requires antibiotics. Completing the full prescribed course is important, but avoiding unnecessary use is even more critical. Schools, mosques, and community gatherings can play a major role in spreading awareness about hygiene, proper rest, nutrition, vaccination, and responsible medicine use.

Regulatory authorities must take strict action against over the counter sales of antibiotics. Heavy penalties, regular inspections, and stronger monitoring of pharmacies can help reduce misuse. At the same time, improving the primary healthcare system is necessary so that patients do not feel compelled to seek shortcuts.

More research and local data collection on antibiotic resistance patterns in Kashmir are urgently needed. At present, much prescribing is empirical and based more on guesswork than evidence.

■ A Call for Collective Responsibility

As someone who has observed this crisis unfold since 2013, I feel a deep sense of urgency. This is not just a medical issue. It is a public health emergency that threatens our families, our economy, and our future. Every unnecessary prescription adds to the problem. Every medical shop that sells antibiotics without proper guidance contributes to it.

Patients also have a role to play. Trust your doctor when they say antibiotics are not necessary. Do not pressure healthcare providers for instant relief. Instead, focus on prevention through clean water, balanced nutrition, exercise, hygiene, and vaccination wherever available.

The medical community must lead by example. Long term patient health should always take priority over short term satisfaction or business interests. Government and private healthcare sectors must work together on stewardship programmes that monitor antibiotic use and promote rational prescribing.

I still believe deeply in the power of medicines when they are used wisely. But if we fail to act now, the antibiotics that once transformed healthcare into a miracle of modern science may soon become ineffective. The silent poison we are creating through overuse will haunt future generations. The people of Kashmir deserve better healthcare, not a cycle of temporary relief, resistance, and dependence.

It is time to move from alarm to action before it becomes too late. Our immune systems, our children, and the future of our community depend on it.

The Author from Poshwan Zachaldara, Handwara, Kashmir.
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Benefits of Lemon



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Lemon is one of the tastiest and most beneficial citrus fruits. It contains great health benefits such as reducing belly fat and playing an important role in the proper functioning of our kid-

neys. Lemon is packed with Vitamin C, which boosts our immunity and offers tremendous health advantages. During scorching heat, lemon juice is consumed in large quantities as it hydrates the body, gives a natural glow to the skin, and improves digestive health.

Lemon juice is an effective way to lose weight as it raises the metabolic rate. Obese individuals use lemon juice on an empty stomach, which often results in weight loss. Adding lemon to a glass of lukewarm water has many health benefits. Lemon contains Vitamin B-complex, nutrients, vitamins, calcium, magnesium, potassium, and

fibre.

■ Benefits of Lemon:

Lemon detoxifies your mouth and gives you fresh breath. It also helps relieve toothache.

Lemon helps in weight loss due to the presence of pectin fibre, which combats hunger cravings.

Lemon reduces inflammation. When consumed regularly, it may decrease various diseases and detoxify the body in many ways.

Lemon juice provides energy and keeps the body hydrated for hours.

Lemon juice is known to help relieve anxiety and depression.



Lemon juice has anti-viral properties and helps keep the body disease-free.

How to Use Lemon Water:

Squeeze half a lemon using a lemon squeezer and add it to a glass of water for those who want to lose weight. If you are overweight, squeeze a whole lemon into a glass of water and drink it in the morning. Add half a lemon to lukewarm water and drink it after a 30-minute walk. Repeat this for 30 days—you may experience surprising and excellent results.

sahilmanzoor0401@gmail.com

SSP Kulgam Honours Youth for Presence of Mind in Helping Police Trace Accident Accused

■ FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, MAY 21: Senior Superintendent of Police Kulgam Anayat Ali Chowdhary (IPS) on Wednesday felicitated a local youth for displaying exemplary civic sense and assisting police in tracing an accused involved in a road accident case.

According to police officials, in connection with FIR No. 102/2026 registered under Sections 281, 125(a) and 106 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), one Usman Ansari, son of Mohammad Saleem Ansari and resident of Kurigam, showed remarkable bravery and presence of mind immediately after the accident.

Despite the chaotic situation at the spot, Usman Ansari intelligently noted down the registration number of the offending vehicle on his forearm, which later proved crucial in tracing the vehicle involved in the incident and apprehending the accused person.

Police said that his timely action and alertness significantly assisted the Jammu and Kashmir Police in making swift progress in the investigation.

In recognition of his commendable act and cooperation with law enforcement agencies, SSP Kulgam Anayat Ali Chowdhary (IPS) suitably rewarded and appreciated Usman Ansari for his exemplary civic responsibility and assistance to police.

Public Notice

I have changed my name from Ab Hamid Mir (old name) to Abdul Hamid Mir (New Name). In future I will be known as Abdul Hamid Mir

If anybody has objection in this regard, he or she may contact Passport Office Srinagar concerned within 7 days, after 7 days no objection shall be entertained

Abdul Hamid Mir
S/o: Assadullah Mir
R/o: Veth Para Pandrethan, Bagandar
Srinagar-191101

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that the electricity connection bearing Consumer ID No. 0200010013354, presently standing in the name of Late Ab Ahad Dar, is intended to be transferred in favour of his grandson, Gulzar Ahmad Dar S/o Late Gh Qadir Dar R/o Narkara, Budgam.

If anybody has any objection regarding the said transfer, he/she may contact the concerned office of KPDC Sub Division Budgam within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After expiry of the stipulated period, no objection shall be entertained and the case shall be processed accordingly.

Gulzar Ahmad Dar S/o Late Gh Qadir Dar,
R/o Narkara, Budgam, M:7006880180

Public Notice

This is to notify the general public that the name recorded in the Aadhaar database is incorrect. Name shown in Aadhaar: Aimana Jan

Correct name: Ayman Jaan, Fathers name : Showkat Ahmad Mir

Address: Humpora Kralgund Kupwara Jammu and Kashmir 193302. The above mentioned person (Aimana Jan) hereby declares that the name printed on the Aadhaar is incorrect and that her correct and legal name is Ayman Jaan. Any objection to this correction should be brought to the attention of the UIDAI Aadhaar Seva Kendra, Office Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, the necessary correction procedures may be undertaken.

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KALANTRA / KREERI

Subject: Application of TABASUM.NABI D/O GH NABI BHAT R/O SHEIKHPORA Tehsil KREERI for issuance of RBA certificate in favour of self for the issuance of RBA in his own favor

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of RBA in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of SHEIKHPORA of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the BHAT community having annual income 603936// the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1..GH NABI BHAT Father 59 years Govt employee
- 2...NASEEMA BAGUM Mother 54 years H/W
- 3...SABREENA NABI sister 24 years student
- 4...TABASUM.NABI self 21 years student
- 5.. HAIFA NABI sister 14 years student
- 6.... ABIROO NABI sister 10 years student

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

NAIB TEHSILDAR KALANTRA

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that the name mentioned in the Aadhaar Card of my daughter is incorrectly printed as Sheikh Mehnor. However, her correct and official name, as per school records and other valid documents, is Mahnoor Hilal Sheikh. The details are as follows: Incorrect Name in Aadhaar Card: Sheikh Mehnor

Correct Name: Mahnoor Hilal Sheikh, Father's Name: Hilal Ahmad Sheikh, Date of Birth: 09/11/2011, Address: Hanji Shart, Kupwara, Jammu & Kashmir - 193302. Any Objection to this correction should be brought to the attention of the UIDAI and their Seva Kendra Offices within 7 days from the date of Publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, the necessary correction procedures may be undertaken.

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that I, Peerzada Jasarat, son of Pir Atiqullah, resident of Behnipora, Tehsil Zachaldara, District Kupwara (Jammu & Kashmir), intend to change my name as recorded in my passport. My present name in the passport is, Peerzada Jasarat

I wish to change it to, Pir Jasarat Atiq, Reason for change: To reflect the correct name as per family and academic records. If any person has any objection to the above proposed change of name, they may raise the same within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice.

Public Notice

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that the name of the consumer recorded in the electricity records of JKPC Wagoor under Consumer ID No. 021204000298 has been entered wrongly as Gulshan Mir S/o Mohd Abdullah Mir R/o Soripora Kreeri.

The correct name of the consumer is Ghulam Mohammad Mir S/o Mohammad Abdullah Mir R/o Soripora Kreeri.

Now, therefore, objections, if any, regarding the correction/change of name should be conveyed to the office of JKPC Wagoor within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained and the concerned department shall proceed with the correction accordingly.

Applicant:
Ghulam Mohammad Mir
S/o Mohammad Abdullah Mir
R/o Soripora Kreeri
Consumer ID: 021204000298

Public Notice

I have lost Number plate of my vehicle (Bike) bearing No JK05 G4588 at somewhere Now I am applying for its duplicate if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may contact with ARTO SOPORE within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name....AADIL AHMAD KHAN
S/O ...SHABIR AHMAD KHAN
R/O ...HAIL JAGIR KREERI
Dist...BARAMULLA

Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my father's name Lt BASHIR AHMAD GANAI Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040000007 wants to be registered on my name ADIL BASHIR S/O BASHIR AHMAD GANAI If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name....ADIL BASHIR
S/O...Lt BASHIR AHMAD GANAI
R/O ...KREERI
BLOCK.... WAGOORA

Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my husband's name HASSAN MIR Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040002609 wants to be registered on my name HAFIZA BEGUM W/O HASSAN MIR If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name....HAFIZA BEGUM
W/O...HASSAN MIR
R/O...KALANTRA BALA
BLOCK.... WAGOORA

Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my Father's name MALLA MOHDA (GHULAM MOHI UD DIN MALLA) Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040002549 wants to be registered on my name MANZOOR AHMAD MALLA S/O late MALLA MOHDA If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name....MANZOOR AHMAD MALLA
S/O ...LATE MALLA MOHDA
(Ghulam Mohi ud Din Malla)
R/O...KALANTRA BALA
BLOCK.... WAGOORA

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

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

NIT No: 19/EEA/R&B of 2026-27/1349-59 | Dated: 21-05-2026

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	T.D Cost	Time	Class
1.	Construction of office complex near Town Hall Building MC Awantipora. (Walling & Balance Work) Civil Part.	30.37	1100/-	45 days	AA, BEE

Earnest money (In Rupees) : 2% of Adv. Cost

M.H of Account: FC-Grants-2021-22

Project Authority: MC Awantipora

Position of AAA: Accorded vide No: MC/Awnt/12 of 2021 Dated: 29.06.2021 and Executive Officer Municipal Committee Awantipora Letter No. MC/AWP/Works/2026/880-83 Dated: 07-04-2026.

Position of funds: Committed.

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	21-05-2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	21-05-2026
3	Bid submission Start Date	22-05-2026
4	Bid Submission End Date	03-06-2026 4:00 PM
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	04-06-2026 12:00 PM

1. Every participating contractor to mandatorily disclose the bank account number which is linked with their GSTIN at the time of bid submission. No payments shall be released by the Government Department/Agency to any other bank account except the one linked with the GST registered number of the successful bidder. (As per circular No. 01(ADM) FD of 2025 Dated 08-07-2025 of J&K Finance Department)

(The participating contractor may disclose his Bank Account as per the format, devised as Annexure- A of the NIT and submit/upload the same accordingly at the time of submission of the bid).

2. 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 Awantipora (tender inviting authority)

3. 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 Awantipora (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).

4. The Successful bidder will have to provide performance security @ 5% of contract value in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Awantipora (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.

All other terms and conditions shall be available in website www.jktenders.gov.in.

Sd/- Executive Engineer
R&B Division Awantipora

DIPK: 1510/26 | Dated: 21-05-2026



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IMPORTANT DATES

Event	Date
Registration & Preference Filing	09 May - 27 May 2026
1st Merit List	30 May 2026
Admission (1st Round)	01 June - 06 June 2026
2nd Merit List	09 June 2026
Admission (2nd Round)	10 June - 15 June 2026
Spot Round	18 June - 25 June 2026

COMMENCEMENT OF CLASSES

- Winter Zone Colleges: 15 June 2026
- Summer Zone Colleges: 15 July 2026

FOR DETAILS

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ADMISSION COORDINATOR: Dr. Khurshed Wani (9682169453)

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Mubarak Gul Tours Eidgah Constituency, Reviews Achan Saidpora Dumping Site

Says Rs. 361 Crore Approval Reflects Seriousness of Omar Abdullah Government

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 21: Senior Jammu & Kashmir National Conference leader and MLA Eidgah Haji Mubarak Gul today conducted an extensive tour of Noorbagh, Bakshipora, Kreshbal, Sangam, Danmar, Saidpora & Wanganpora areas of Eidgah Constituency to assess developmental works and take stock of public grievances on ground.

During the visit, the MLA also inspected the Achan Saidpora dumping site and reviewed the ongoing process for clearance of legacy waste. He interacted with the concerned officials on site and sought details regarding the progress, mechanism and timeline being adopted for scientific waste management and disposal.

The MLA was accompanied by Tehsildar Eidgah, Chief Education Officer Srinagar, Chief Medical Officer Srinagar, Chief Enforcement Officer SMC, En-

forcement Officer JKLCMA, ZMO MR Gunj, Engineers of R&B Core, R&B Bemina, PHE Rural Water Works, PHE Water Works Srinagar, PHE Masterplan Srinagar, PMGSY, City Roads, RRWD, LRWD, KPDCL, PMGSY, Flood & Irrigation Department and other officials.

During the tour, the MLA also visited schools in Kreshbal and Sangam where he interacted with students and enquired about their academic and infrastructural needs from both the school administration and students. He directed the concerned authorities for immediate fulfillment of the genuine requirements raised during the interaction.

The visit was aimed at establishing direct interaction with the people, listening to their grievances firsthand and ensuring on-the-spot assessment of civic and developmental issues. Officers accompanying the MLA also interacted with residents and assessed



the ground realities in various localities.

During the tour, locals raised several issues related to drainage, roads, sanitation, water supply, electricity, healthcare, education and unregulated

constructions. Taking immediate note of the grievances, Gul directed the concerned departments to ensure timely redressal of genuine public issues.

While interacting with the people, Mubarak Gul said that

the government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is committed towards responsive governance and public welfare. He stated that the approval of Rs. 361 crore for resolution of the long-pending Achan Said-

pora dumping site issue reflects the seriousness and commitment of the present government towards addressing major environmental and public health concerns affecting Srinagar.

He said that despite the issue remaining neglected for years under previous governments, the present dispensation has demonstrated the political will and administrative intent required for a comprehensive and lasting solution. He added that the scientific disposal and clearance of legacy waste at Achan will significantly benefit the local population and improve the overall environmental conditions of the area.

Mubarak Gul reiterated that continuous field visits and direct public outreach will remain an important part of his public service approach so that developmental priorities and public grievances are addressed effectively at the grassroots level.

Residents of the areas appreciated the visit of the MLA along with departmental officers and expressed hope that the issues projected during the tour would be resolved at the earliest.

Startup India, DPIIT, JKEDI, Distt Admin B'la collaborate to organize TEJAS Workshop in Baramulla

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, MAY 21: In a significant initiative aimed at strengthening the startup and entrepreneurial ecosystem in the district, the TEJAS (Transforming Entrepreneurial Journeys Across States and Districts) Workshop was organised today at Dak Bungalow Baramulla by Startup India, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Govt. of India in collaboration with JKEDI and District Administration Baramulla.

The event was inaugurated by the Director JKEDI, Mohd Younis Malik in the presence of Additional Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Syed Altaf Hussain Musvi, Chief Planning Officer Baramulla, Nisar Ahmad, General Manager DIC Baramulla and resource persons from Startup India and several other officers.

The workshop also brought

together aspiring entrepreneurs, innovators, students, startup founders, industry experts and government representatives on a common platform to promote innovation-driven entrepreneurship and economic growth in the district.

Speaking on the occasion, Director JKEDI, Mohd Younis Malik, highlighted the immense entrepreneurial potential of the youth of Baramulla and stressed the need to create a robust ecosystem that supports innovation, enterprise creation and sustainable livelihoods.

He further said that the government is committed to creating an enabling environment for startups and innovators and through Startup India and JKEDI initiatives so that the youth can become job creators rather than job seekers.

Later in the day, the DC Baramulla also visited the workshop and assured full support from the District Administra-



tion to aspiring entrepreneurs and innovators and said every possible assistance would be extended to help youth transform their ideas into commercially viable ventures capable of generating employment and contributing to the local economy.

The DC further congratulated JKEDI for creating this culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, highlighting that

such platforms help in nurturing ideas, refining innovations and ultimately commercialising them to bring them into the market.

Resource persons from Startup India, conducted detailed technical sessions during the workshop and provided comprehensive insights into the startup journey in India, the evolving entrepreneurial ecosystem and various government schemes designed to support innovation-driven enterprises.

The experts elaborated on different initiatives and support mechanisms available for startups and innovators, including incubation support, funding opportunities, mentorship programmes, intellectual property facilitation, market linkages and policy incentives.

They also guided participants on the process of availing benefits under Startup India and related schemes, registration procedures, eligibility criteria

and institutional support available for transforming innovative ideas into viable business ventures.

The workshop further featured sessions on innovation and design thinking, intellectual property awareness, entrepreneurship culture and promotion of district-specific products under the One District One Product (ODOP) initiative.

Interactive discussions on business model development, financial planning, investment readiness and founder interactions were held, enabling participants to engage directly with experts and gain practical insights into entrepreneurship and enterprise development.

Earlier, the guests of honour inspected various stalls set up by successful and budding entrepreneurs from across the district, where a wide range of innovative and market-ready products were showcased.

Jan Bhagidaari -Sabse Door-Sabse Pehle

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KISHTWAR, MAY 21: In continuation to the 7-day "Jan Bhagidaari Sabse Door-Sabse Pehle" IEC Campaign, the District Administration Kishtwar today organised series of awareness and benefit saturation Camps in different parts of the District.

The Camps were held at Panchayat Kabban in Block Paddar, Panchayat Udil Gojran in Block Indarwal and Panchayat Chamoti in Block Drabshalla to facilitate inclusive service outreach to tribal communities.

The initiative aimed to reinforce last-mile implementation of government schemes and enhance public awareness in remote tribal belts.

The camps witnessed enthusiastic participation from officers, officials, local inhabitants, public representatives and other stakeholders, enabling direct engagement between the tribal population and the government departments.

The camps provided multiple services, including on the spot registrations under financial inclusion schemes. The departmental stalls set up by Animal Husbandry, Horticulture, FCS&CA, Education, J&K Bank, Lead Bank Office, Fisheries, Forest, PDD, ICDS, Health, Agriculture, Youth Services & Sports and Revenue Departments disseminated information regarding respective schemes and citizen-centric services among the tribal population.

Public grievances redressal sessions were also organised during the camps, ensuring swift resolution of public concerns and strengthening outreach in far-off areas.

Beneficiaries were sensitized to flagship welfare schemes including PMJJBY, PMSBY, Mission YUVA, PM Ujjwala Yojana and PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana along with other UT and Centrally Sponsored welfare initiatives.

Awareness sessions under the 100 Day Nasha Mukti J&K Abhiyan were also held at all three locations to educate youth and local residents about the adverse effects of substance abuse.

Gram Sabhas convened during the programme encouraged participatory governance and deliberations on local developmental priorities and public welfare concerns.

Javid Dar visits Mawar to condole demise of Baramulla MP Engineer Rashid's father

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 21: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar today visited Mawar, Langate to offer condolences at the residence of Baramulla Member of Parliament Engineer Rashid on the demise of his father, Haji Khazir Mohammad

Sheikh. The Minister expressed deep sorrow over the passing away of the deceased and conveyed his heartfelt sympathies with the bereaved family. He prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and strength to the family to endure the immense loss.

The Minister described Haji Khazir Mohammad Sheikh as a respected and dignified elder

whose contributions and values earned him immense regard in the community.

He said the demise has created a void not only for the family but also for the people who knew him closely.

MLA, Baramulla, Javid Hassan Beig and MLA Sonawari Hilal Akbar Lone also accompanied the Minister during the condolence visit and offered prayers for the departed soul.

DC Doda reviews arrangements for Eid-ul-Azha 2026

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

DODA, MAY 21: Deputy Commissioner Doda Krishan Lal today chaired a meeting here in the Conference Hall-DC Office Complex to review the arrangements for the Eid-ul-Azha.

The meeting was convened to ensure smooth celebration of the festival and to review the preparedness of the stakeholder departments for providing essential services to the public across the district.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed arrangements related to uninterrupted water and power supply, sanitation, traffic regulation, healthcare facilities, availability of essential com-

modities, transportation, market checking and fire and emergency services. Stressing coordinated efforts by all departments, the DC emphasized to facilitate peaceful, hygienic and hassle-free celebration of Eid-ul-Azha throughout the district.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the Jal Shakti Department to ensure uninterrupted drinking water supply at Eidgahs, mosques, community centres and other major congregation places during the festive days. The Power Development Department/JPDCL was instructed to maintain uninterrupted electricity supply across the district to avoid inconvenience to the public. The Executive Officer Mu-

nicipal Committee Doda was directed to intensify sanitation drives, fogging operations, drainage clearance and cleanliness measures around mosques, Eidgahs, market areas and other public places. The EO was further instructed to impose heavy fines on owners of stray animals to maintain sanitation and public convenience in the town.

Traffic Police, Police Department and Transport authorities were asked to ensure proper traffic regulation and smooth public movement, especially in busy market areas and near major prayer venues. The enforcement departments were asked to remove wrong parking and encroachments from the town

to avoid traffic congestion during the festival. The Police was directed to deploy adequate security personnel at sensitive locations to maintain law and order during Eid celebrations.

The Health Department was instructed to keep medical teams, ambulances and emergency healthcare services on alert in every block of the district during the festival period. The Chief Medical Officer was directed to ensure availability of medicines and necessary healthcare facilities at all health institutions.

The Deputy Commissioner also directed the Food Safety, Legal Metrology and FCS&CA Departments to intensify market inspections to check over-

pricing, hoarding, food quality and use of standard weighing measures. The department was instructed to ensure adequate availability of essential commodities and uninterrupted supply of LPG gas during the festive season. Tehsildar Doda was asked to monitor the availability and distribution of essential commodities across the district, while flying squads were directed to work in close coordination with concerned departments for effective market checking.

The Animal and Sheep Husbandry Departments were directed to ensure adequate supply of quality mutton during the festival.

India Stone & Tech Expo 2026 to be held in Hyderabad from May 29

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, MAY 21: India Stone & Tech Expo 2026, a major trade exhibition focused on the stone, machinery and surface technology sectors, will be held at the HITEX Exhibition Centre here from May 29 to 31.

The expo is being organised by Incent Media and is expected to serve as a platform for networking, technology exchange and business collaborations.

The expo assumes significance for Telangana as the two Telugu-speaking States together form the country's largest natural stone-producing region. Nearly 80 per cent of Telangana's granite production is export-oriented, underlining the State's strong presence in international markets, the organisers said in a release here on Wednesday.

Positioned as South India's



leading stone industry trade show, the expo is designed as an integrated business platform bringing together raw material producers, stone processors, machinery manufacturers, tooling companies and finished-surface brands under one roof.

The event aims to facilitate collaboration and business opportunities across the entire

stone ecosystem by connecting stakeholders from manufacturing, processing, tooling and design segments.

A key attraction at the expo will be the dedicated machinery and technology segment featuring advanced cutting, polishing, shaping and finishing solutions, along with abrasives, adhesives, chemicals, CNC technologies and

other processing consumables.

The exhibition will also showcase India's rich stone craftsmanship heritage through displays by master artisans, sculptors, idol makers and custom stone creators, blending traditional artistry with modern industrial innovation.

In a release, Organisers said Hyderabad's emergence as a

major centre for construction, infrastructure, real estate and MICE activities makes it an ideal venue to attract architects, developers, builders, fabricators and buyers from across South India and other parts of the country.

Among the confirmed exhibitors are SRAI Granite, Shri Bhagwati Machines Pvt. Ltd., Granite India (Wanlong), FIGSI, Concord Gears & Motors, Diabu Diamond Tools, Fusion CNCTech-systems LLP, Technoline Machines, Sigma Machine Tools, Stone Plus and SVG International, besides international participants from China.

The event will focus on stone-processing technologies, machinery innovation, tooling solutions, natural stone products and artisanal craftsmanship, providing a comprehensive sourcing and knowledge-sharing platform for the industry. UNI

TSF Investments posts 28.66 pc increase in consolidated net profit

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHENNAI, MAY 21: TSF Investments Limited has registered a consolidated net profit of Rs 530.21 crores for the year ended 31st March 2026, which includes gain of Rs 40.99 crores from fair valuation of previously held equity interest in Axles India Limited on account of business combination, as compared to Rs 412.09 crores registered in the previous financial year, resulting in an increase of 28.66%

The increase in consolidated net profit is partly because of Axles India Limited, becoming a subsidiary during the year on account of TSF group acquiring shares held by Dana Global Products Inc. for a consideration of Rs 365.37 crores.

TSF Investments operates as a core investment company, investing in a portfolio of automotive businesses including foundries and manufacturers of wheels, brakes, turbo chargers, axles and distribution of spare parts.

As a result, dividend from portfolio companies forms a substantial part of the financial results. Dividend received from portfolio companies is Rs 207.67 crores for the year ended 31st March 2026.

Reflecting the consolidation of the T.S. Santhanam Family group, Sundaram Finance Holdings Limited has been renamed TSF Investments Limited with effect from

23 September 2025. This change reaffirms the group's strategic alignment and century-old legacy, a company release said.

The Board of Directors have recommended a final dividend of Rs 4.45 per share (89%) for FY 25-26. This together with the Interim Dividend of Rs 6.70 per share (134%) paid during February 2026 aggregates to a total dividend of Rs 11.15/- per share (223%) for the FY 25-26.

As part of the company's strategy to exit from non-core investments and invest the proceeds in the core investments in group companies, the company had during the financial year 2025-26 exited the TVS Holdings Limited (partial exit); Fettle Tone LLP (partial exit); Sundaram Composite Structures Private Limited.

The realized gain (net of tax) on the exit of these investments was Rs 461.18 crores which was transferred from OCI to retained earnings. UNI

Meta to lay off nearly 8,000 employees, starting with Singapore

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAY 21: The parent company of Facebook, Meta Platforms, is set to lay off nearly 8,000 employees and has alerted thousands of workers that they are being laid off. The company said the move is part of a restructuring aimed at improving efficiency and reducing costs while continuing heavy investments in Artificial Intelligence (AI). Meta has started notifying employees, with staff in its Asian hub, Singapore, receiving notices at 4 am local time. Employees based in Europe and the United States are also expected to receive notifications early in their respective time zones, according to an internal memo.

Further, Meta is encouraging staff to work from home while the company cuts roughly 8,000 roles



globally. The job cuts are expected to particularly affect Meta's engineering and product teams, and additional layoffs could come later in the year, reports said. "We're now at the stage where many orgs can operate with a flatter structure, with smaller pods/cohorts that can move faster and with more ownership," Meta's Head of People, Janelle Gale, said in the memo.

"We believe this will make us more productive and make the work more rewarding."

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg addressed employees and said AI automation is not the main reason behind the upcoming layoffs.

Zuckerberg said he believes AI has made small teams more efficient. He also explained Meta's controversial plan to monitor employee keystrokes and mouse movements, clarifying that humans are not directly watching staff activity and that the data is being abstracted to improve AI models.

Meta had more than 78,000 employees on its payroll at the end of 2025. UNI

T'gana CM Revanth Reddy calls for world-class 'Net Zero' Bharat Future City

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, MAY 21: Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Wednesday directed officials to develop the proposed 'Bharat Future City' as a world-class "Net Zero City" with international-standard infrastructure and said the project should emerge as a global hub for industries, technology, data centres, and innovation.

Reviewing the Industries Department at the MCR Human Resource Development Institute, the Chief Minister stressed that there should be no compromise on infrastructure

standards and instructed officials to study globally renowned cities and adopt best practices while planning the project.

Revanth Reddy said land allocations in Bharat Future City should be made only after the trunk infrastructure is fully developed. He also emphasised the need to attract international-level organisations and industries to the project.

The Chief Minister directed officials to allocate 500 acres within the Future City for public representatives, civil servants, and journalists. He also instructed officials to ensure that the Health Cluster an-

nounced by the Central Government is established within Bharat Future City and said the state government was prepared to approach Prime Minister Narendra Modi, if necessary, to secure the project.

Revanth Reddy further directed that the foundation stone for industries proposed in the Future City Industrial Park should be laid in June and said industries allotted land must immediately begin construction activities. To boost investments, the Chief Minister ordered the establishment of a dedicated "Invest Telangana" cell with a separate office, logo, and website. UNI

MANN HUMMEL to invest over Rs 100 crore in India, launches Karnataka innovation hub

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

BENGALURU, MAY 21: MANN HUMMEL, a global leader in filtration technology, on Wednesday announced investments exceeding Rs 100 crore in India with the launch of its new Global Technology & Innovation Center in Karnataka and plans for a new manufacturing facility in Pune.

The company inaugurated its state-of-the-art Global Technology & Innovation Center at Tumkur in Karnataka, describing it as MANN HUMMEL's largest development centre outside Germany and a major milestone in its global growth and innovation strategy.

The new facility is aimed at accelerating global product development and customer-centric innovation by bringing together advanced research laboratories, testing infrastructure, digital engineering, and data analytics under one roof.

According to the company, the centre will support the development of next-generation filtration solutions across mobility, industrial applications, clean air technologies, and water pu-

rication systems while enabling faster time-to-market and closer collaboration with customers worldwide.

Speaking at the launch, Kurt Wilks, President and CEO of MANN HUMMEL Group, said India had emerged as one of the company's most important engineering and innovation destinations globally.

"The new Global Technology & Innovation Center in India marks a significant milestone in MANN HUMMEL's global innovation journey.

India stands at the forefront of engineering talent and technological advancement, making it a natural choice for our largest development hub outside Germany," he said.

Wilks said the new centre would accelerate innovation capabilities and help the company deliver scalable and sustainable filtration solutions globally.

Sudeesh Karimbingal, Managing Director of MANN HUMMEL India, said the facility reflected India's growing role as a strategic engineering and growth hub for the company.

"For more than two decades,



our Indian engineering team has contributed significantly to global product development. This centre marks India's transition from a support hub to a strategic engineering powerhouse driving innovation for both local and global markets," he said.

The company also announced plans to establish a new manufacturing facility in Pune, which will cater to automotive passenger vehicles, heavy-duty on-road and off-road applications, and industrial segments through an integrated manufacturing setup for advanced filtration solutions.

MANN HUMMEL said the combined investment in the

Tumkur innovation centre and the proposed Pune facility is expected to exceed Rs 100 crore, reaffirming its long-term commitment to the Indian market.

The company currently employs around 1,250 people across its India operations and expects to create an additional 300 to 400 jobs over the next 12 months.

With manufacturing operations already present in Tumkur in Karnataka and Bawal in Haryana, along with its Global Technology & Innovation Center in Bengaluru, the company said the Pune expansion would further strengthen its manufactur-

ing and customer support capabilities in the country.

MANN HUMMEL said India is among its fastest-growing markets and currently houses more than one-third of the company's global R&D workforce.

As part of its sustainability-focused strategy, the Tumkur facility will work on energy-efficient filtration systems, reduction of lifecycle emissions, circular manufacturing solutions, use of recycled materials, and environmentally friendly product design.

The company said the centre would also contribute towards addressing environmental challenges such as air pollution, industrial emissions, water purification, and access to clean water.

Headquartered in Ludwigsburg, Germany, MANN HUMMEL develops intelligent filtration and separation solutions for transportation and life sciences and environment sectors. Founded in 1941, the family-owned company employs more than 20,000 people across over 80 locations worldwide and reported sales of EUR 4.2 billion in 2025.

Eurobank to open Mumbai office in push to deepen India-Europe economic corridor

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI, MAY 21: In a move reflecting the growing strategic and financial connectivity between India and Europe, Eurobank will inaugurate its representative office in Mumbai on Thursday in the presence of Nikos Christodoulides, marking the first physical presence of a Greek and Cypriot bank in India.

The development is being viewed as part of the broader effort to strengthen trade, investment and financial linkages between India and the European Union, particularly under the emerging India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) and the recently accelerated India-

EU economic engagement.

Addressing media persons here today, Eurobank chief executive officer Fokion Karavias said the bank was "very excited" about opening its India office.

"We are becoming the first Greek and Cypriot bank with a physical presence here in India," Karavias said, adding that the Mumbai office would serve as a hub for building business relationships, attracting investments and supporting Indian companies looking to expand into Europe.

The official inauguration ceremony of the office will be held at the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in Mumbai on May 21 during the state visit of Cyprus President Nikos Christodoulides to India. Senior



diplomatic representatives from Greece, Cyprus and India, along with business leaders and government officials, are expected to attend the

event. Bank officials said the initiative builds upon the momentum created by the India-EU free trade discussions and

aims to position Greece and Cyprus as strategic gateways for Indian businesses seeking access to European markets. The move is also expected to strengthen Eurobank's participation in IMEC, the ambitious connectivity and trade corridor linking India with Europe through the Middle East.

In another significant development, Eurobank has activated a cross-border remittance service from Greece to India using India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) platform in collaboration with National Payments Corporation of India International Payments Limited (NIPL).

With this, Eurobank becomes the first Greek and Cypriot bank — and the first

European bank — to facilitate cross-border remittances to India through UPI.

Officials said the service, currently operational in Greece and expected to be extended to Cyprus later, covers the full transaction lifecycle, including initiation, clearing, reconciliation and dispute management, thereby improving financial connectivity between the two regions.

The initiative follows a memorandum of understanding signed between Eurobank and NIPL and highlights India's growing influence in the global digital payments ecosystem through UPI, which has increasingly attracted international partnerships over the past few years.

The establishment of the

Mumbai office and the launch of the UPI-linked remittance platform are also being seen as indicators of the deepening India-Europe strategic partnership, reinforced by high-level political engagements, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visits to Greece and Cyprus and the European Union's renewed focus on strengthening ties with India amid changing global trade and geopolitical dynamics.

Eurobank will be represented at the inauguration by CEO Fokion Karavias, Deputy CEO Stavros Ioannou, Eurobank Cyprus CEO Michalis Louis and Mumbai Country Head and Chief Representative Officer Tridib Saha, among other senior executives. UNI

RCB opener Phil Salt set to return to IPL later this week

It remains to be seen if he will be available for the SRH game on Friday



■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI: Phil Salt is set to return to India later this week after a month sidelined from the IPL with a finger injury.

Salt, the England and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) opener, damaged a finger on his left hand while diving to save a boundary during a defeat to Delhi Capitals on April 18. He has not featured since and flew home last month to spend time with his young family while his finger healed.

In his absence, RCB have secured qualification for the playoffs and are highly likely to reach Qualifier 1 in Dharamsala next Tuesday barring a substantial Net Run Rate swing. It remains to be seen if Salt will be available to play in RCB's final league-stage match against Sunrisers Hyderabad on Friday, but they are unlikely to take any risks so close to the playoffs.

Salt's international team-mate Jacob Bethell has deputised as Virat Kohli's opening partner over the past month but has struggled to make an impact, scoring 96 runs in seven innings with a top score of 27. Bethell's place may come under pressure even if Salt is unavailable on Friday, after Venkatesh Iyer made 73 not out in their win over Punjab Kings in Dharamsala on Sunday.

Iyer was playing in place of Rajat Patidar, RCB's captain, who did not travel to Dharamsala after he was struck on the helmet by a sharp bouncer from Kolkata Knight Riders' Kartik Tyagi last week. Stand-in captain Jitesh Sharma said after RCB's victory that Patidar was "doing really well" and that he would return for Friday's match in Hyderabad, creating a potential selection dilemma.

Rayudu: Jurel has 'extraordinary potential'

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

JAIPUR: Ambati Rayudu lauded Dhruv Jurel's "extraordinary potential" after the wicketkeeper-batter's 53 not out off 38 balls helped Rajasthan Royals (RR) seal a chase of 221 against Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in Jaipur.

Jurel is having his most productive IPL season. He has scored 420 runs, and five fifties, in 13 innings at a strike rate of 150.00. Only Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (579) has more runs for RR this year.

"I think he has at least four or five levels to unlock in his batting," Rayudu said on ESPNcricinfo Time Out. "He is one guy I feel who has extraordinary potential. He is so clean, so neat. He has such a good technique. He just needs to free up his bat swing a little bit. I'm sure he will work with coaches during the off-season or whenever he gets



time and becomes a much better ball striker than he is right now.

"His temperament is top-class. His play against pace, he is so comfortable. There are so many good things - he steps out, he plays the spin well, reads the length well, he runs well between the wickets, I think he is a complete package that just needs to be properly unlocked and probably trained."

Rayudu's co-panellist Saba Karim praised Jurel's match-awareness while chasing but said he needed to show more intent when batting first. Jurel's strike rate in the chase this season has been 157.37 but it drops to 144.30 when batting first.

"I feel that there are two phases in his batting," Karim said. "One is when he is batting first and the other when he is batting second. When he bats second, it seems he is in complete control of the situation, match awareness, the ability to take the game down right til the end, wants to finish the game, which is a special quality."

"But when he bats first - and I love to get those numbers - his strike rate from zero to ten balls is slightly on the lower side. That's when I want him to free himself, to back his talent, to back his skill, and play the big shots in the first ten deliveries and to kick-start his innings. I think that will help him boost his confidence and also accelerate his strike rate."

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi at No. 1 in Orange Cap race

■ AGENCIES

JAIPUR: It was a dramatic night in Jaipur when it comes to the Orange Cap race at IPL 2026, with Mitchell Marsh and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi playing innings to remember in the Rajasthan Royals (RR) vs Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) game. Here's what happened.

Orange Cap leaderboard
Marsh, nowhere near the top of the run-scorers' table a week ago, smashed 96 off 57 balls against RR, after hitting 111 and 90 in two of his three previous innings, to rise to the top of the ladder with 563 runs for the season.

He had reason to be pleased with his effort as it lifted LSG to 220 for 5 in what has been a season of discontent for them, but the high didn't last too long.

And that was because Sooryavanshi chose the night to do the sort of Sooryavanshi things that he hasn't done since April 25, when he smashed 103 in 37 balls against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH), also in Jaipur, in a game RR lost. This time, his haul was 93 off 38 balls. And RR won a match they had to win to stay



in the playoffs race.

It was one of his slower innings to start with. He was on 25 off 16 balls after eight overs, and was struggling against Moh-

sin Khan in particular. But the big hits started flowing after that, and he got to his half-century in 23 balls - again, not one of his fastest - and he seemed to

pull sixes out of everywhere after that. Two of them came in the ninth over against Akash Singh - he had hit just two before that - and then one against

Digvesh Rathi, then two off Prince Yadav, two more off Mayank Yadav, one more off Rathi, taking his tally for the game to ten, before a Mohsin slower delivery got the better of him.

At the end of it, Sooryavanshi was No. 1 on the table with 579 runs. Marsh was second with 563. And then the table-toppers from Monday night: SRH's Heinrich Klaasen with 555 runs, B Sai Sudharsan of Gujarat Titans (GT) with 554, his opening partner Shubman Gill with 552 runs followed, and then the rest.

Purple Cap leaderboard
Prince Yadav, the most successful LSG bowler of the season, went wicketless for the third game in a row, leaving him stuck at 16 wickets, but Jofra Archer did send back Ayush Badoni in the first innings to get his haul for the season up to 18, and with that, the fourth spot on the table. The top three of Bhuvneshwar Kumar of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB, 24 wickets), GT's Kagiso Rabada (21 wickets) and Anshul Kamboj of Chennai Super Kings (CSK, 20 wickets) were not disturbed.

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