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Draw Strength From Diversity, March Together Towards a Prosperous Future: LG Sinha

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 2: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday called upon citizens to draw strength from the country's diversity and work collectively for a prosperous future while addressing celebrations marking Telangana Statehood Day at Jammu and Kashmir Lok Bhavan.

Describing the occasion as a symbol of India's cultural unity, the Lieutenant Governor said it was a remarkable coincidence that both Jammu and Kashmir and Telangana are regarded as sacred lands associated with Lord Shiva, reflecting the deep spiritual and cultural connections that bind different regions of the country.

Highlighting Telangana's rich literary heritage, Sinha said the region has made a lasting contribution to Indian



literature through generations of distinguished writers and poets. He noted that literary figures such as Malliya Rechanna, Atreya and Dasarathi Krishnamacharyulu played an important role in promoting social awareness and reform through their works.

The Lieutenant Governor also paid tribute to freedom fighters and tribal leaders including Ramji Gond, Komaram Bheem and Alluri Sitarama Raju, acknowledging their sacrifices and contributions to the nation's freedom struggle.

He further commended the role of Telangana's farmers, soldiers, scientists, entrepreneurs, poets and artists in strengthening the country's development and progress.

Calling for unity and collective advancement, Sinha urged citizens to

Prayers of Pilgrims Will Strengthen Peace and Prosperity: Omar Abdullah



CM welcomes first batch of Haj returnees at Srinagar Airport

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 2: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday welcomed the first batch

Kashmir Poised to Host Major Golf Events as PGTI Unveils Tournament Plans

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 2: Kashmir could

CM Omar chairs 9th Governing Body meeting of Royal Springs Golf Course

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 2: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today chaired the 9th

Srinagar Records Hottest Night of the Season at 19.2°C

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JUNE 2: Srinagar recorded its hottest night of the season, with the minimum temperature settling at 19.2 degrees Celsius, several degrees above the normal level for early June, reflecting the continuing warm weather conditions across Kashmir.

Data released by the Meteorological Department showed that night temperatures remained unusually high across most parts of the Valley, indicating a persistent rise in both day and night temperatures over the past several days.

Among other stations, Qazigund recorded a minimum temperature of 17.6°C, while Kupwara registered 15.2°C. Kokernag recorded 16.5°C and Pahalgam reported 12.4°C.

The hill resort of Gulmarg recorded a low of 10.5°C, while Sonamarg registered 11.8°C during the night.

Several other weather stations also reported above-normal minimum temperatures. Konibal, Pampore recorded 17.2°C, Srinagar Airport 17.4°C, Awantipora 17.0°C, Bandipora 17.6°C

Those With No Locus Standi Should Desist From Commenting on J&K: India

New Delhi Rejects EU-Pakistan Communiqué References, Reaffirms J&K as Integral Parts of the Country

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JUNE 2: India on Tuesday strongly rejected references to Jammu and Kashmir contained in a joint communiqué issued after the eighth round of the European Union-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue, asserting that individuals or entities with no



standing in the matter should refrain from commenting on the country's internal affairs.

Addressing the weekly media briefing, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India categorically rejects what it described as unwarranted references to issues that fall within its domestic jurisdiction.

"The Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh are integral and inalienable parts of India. Those who have no locus standi on such matters should desist from making

The Hunt Continues: White Knight Corps Chief Reviews Rajouri Anti-Terror Operation

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, JUNE 2: The General Officer Commanding (GoC) of the White Knight Corps, Lieutenant General P.K. Mishra, on Tuesday reviewed the progress of Operation Sherawali, the ongoing anti-terror operation in Rajouri district, as security forces continued their efforts to track down suspected terrorists hiding in the dense forests of the Manjakote sector.

Lt Gen Mishra, accompanied by the GoC of Counter Insurgency Force Romeo, visited the Gambhir Mughlan area to assess the operational situation on the ground and review the measures being undertaken to locate and neutralise the terrorists.

According to Army officials, the Corps Commander was briefed on the operational strategy, ongoing actions and logistical support

Admissions to Cross 55,000 by June-End, Up Nearly 20% Over Last Year: Minister

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JUNE 2: Jammu and Kashmir's Government Degree Colleges (GDCs) have registered a significant rise in student enrolment for the 2026-27 academic session, with Education Minister Sakina Itoo on Tuesday expressing confidence that total admissions will surpass 55,000 by the end of June, representing nearly



a 20 per cent increase over the previous year.

Highlighting the impact of reforms introduced in the admission process, the minister said enrolment figures have shown a marked improvement in the very first round of admissions.

"In the first round itself, admissions have reached 49,155 compared to 45,920 last year,

Litchi Farming Thrives in Jammu Under HDP

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JUN 2: Farmers in the Jammu region are increasingly turning to litchi cultivation under the high-density plantation (HDP) programme, attracted by better yields and annual earnings of around Rs 24,000 to Rs 30,000 from a kanal of land, officials said.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has set a target of converting over 3,200 kanals of conventional litchi orchards into high-density plantations over the next few years to boost

Two Cloudbursts Trigger Flash Floods, Road Blockades In Kishtwar; No Casualties

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JUN 2: Two cloudbursts struck Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district on Tuesday, triggering flash floods and road blockades in several areas, officials said. No loss of life has been reported so far, they added.

The cloudbursts occurred in Sarthal's Gahan area and Machhipal, prompting the district administration to launch restoration operations, deploy machinery for road

clearance and issue a weather advisory warning residents against venturing near vulnerable water bodies.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh said he spoke to Kishtwar Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Sharma immediately after receiving information about the incidents. "Two cloudburst incidents were reported in district Kishtwar today. The first occurred in the Gahan area of Sarthal, while the second was reported from Machhipal."

CS Pushes AYUSH Infrastructure, Wellness Tourism in J&K

Chairs Governing Body Meeting to approve Action Plan for 2026-27

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 02: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired the Governing Body Meeting of the J&K AYUSH Society under the National AYUSH Mission (NAM), during which the State Annual Action Plan (SAAP) 2026-27 was approved for onward submission to the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Commissioner Secretary, Planning;

Commissioner Secretary, Health and Medical Education; Managing Director, National Health Mission; Director, AYUSH; and other senior officers. Emphasizing the growing importance of AYUSH systems in preventive and holistic healthcare, the Chief Secretary called for the formulation of a robust wellness policy in collaboration with private stakeholders.

He observed that wellness tourism has emerged as a major attraction across the country and holds immense potential for Jammu and



Kashmir, given its globally acclaimed tourist destinations. Drawing examples from states such as Kerala, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, he stressed the need to position J&K as a prominent wellness and healthcare destination.

The Chief Secretary directed the department to ensure the availability of services under major AYUSH Public Welfare Programmes in every Medical College and District Hospital across the UT. These include the National Programme

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

Draw Strength....

celebrate India's rich cultural heritage and contribute towards building a stronger and more prosperous nation. The event commemorated Telangana's Statehood Day and showcased the spirit of national integration and shared progress.

Prayers of....

of pilgrims returning from the annual Haj pilgrimage, expressing hope that their prayers and spiritual experiences would contribute to peace, prosperity and the well-being of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the nation.

The first Haj flight from Saudi Arabia landed at Srinagar International Airport carrying 144 pilgrims, including 74 men and 70 women. Receiving the passengers at the airport, the Chief Minister congratulated them on the successful completion of one of the most significant religious journeys in Islam and extended his best wishes for their future.

Interacting with the returning pilgrims, Omar Abdullah enquired about the arrangements made during their stay in Saudi Arabia and their travel experience. He said the spiritual journey carried immense significance and expressed confidence that the prayers offered by the pilgrims would bring blessings, harmony and progress for society.

Reviewing the reception arrangements at the airport, the Chief Minister appreciated the efforts of various departments and agencies involved in facilitating the return of the pilgrims. He directed the concerned authorities to provide all necessary assistance and ensure efficient baggage handling, transportation and other support services for the passengers.

The issue of delayed baggage transportation also figured prominently during the visit. Omar Abdullah had earlier raised the matter with the Government of India and the concerned authorities, urging timely delivery and seamless handling of pilgrims' luggage. In a communication to the Union Civil Aviation Minister, he had emphasized the need to address delays and ensure a hassle-free experience for returning passengers.

Officials said that 4,641 pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir performed Haj this year. Of them, 3,952 are scheduled to return through the Srinagar embarkation point. The return flights began on June 2 and will continue until June 16.

Among those present on the occasion were Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Additional Chief Secretary Dheeraj Gupta, Deputy Commissioner Budgam Amir Athar Khan, senior civil administration officials, representatives of the Jammu and Kashmir Haj Committee, airport authorities and other concerned agencies.

Kashmir....

soon emerge as a prominent destination on India's professional golf circuit, with the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI) unveiling plans to organize golf tournaments in the Valley during a meeting with Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday.

The PGTI delegation, led by Vikas Singh, briefed the Chief Minister on proposed tournaments in Kashmir and discussed measures to promote the sport while leveraging the region's tourism potential. The delegation also highlighted its efforts to expand golf's footprint across the country and explore new venues for professional competitions.

The meeting focused on opportunities to position Kashmir as a premier golfing destination, capable of attracting players, visitors and sporting events from across India.

Earlier in the day, Reasi MLA Kuldeep Raj Dubey met the Chief Minister and raised several developmental and public welfare issues concerning his constituency. He outlined priority projects and sought government intervention for the timely resolution of key concerns.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah assured the legislator that the issues raised would be examined and given due consideration.

The twin meetings reflected the government's emphasis on both grassroots development and initiatives aimed at boosting tourism, sports and economic activity in Jammu and Kashmir.

CM Omar....

Governing Body Meeting of the Royal Springs Golf Course (RSGC) at SKICC, where a comprehensive review of the functioning, infrastructure, finances and future development plans of the premier golfing destination was undertaken.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani and members of the Governing Body which include Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary Tourism Ashish Chander Verma, Additional Chief Secretary Finance Shailendra Kumar, Commissioner Secretary Planning, Development & Monitoring Alice Vaz, Secretary Royal Springs Golf Course Haris Ahmad Handoo, Director Tourism Kashmir Syed Qamar Sajjad.

Secretary, Royal Springs Golf Course, Haris Ahmad Handoo gave a detailed presentation to the Governing Body, outlining the action taken on decisions made during previous meetings. The presentation also highlighted the Golf Course's financial and operational performance, membership profile, infrastructure requirements, and proposed strategies for its future development and growth.

The Governing Body reviewed the progress achieved and deliberated on various measures aimed at strengthening the facilities and enhancing the overall functioning of the prestigious Golf Course. The Governing Body discussed several proposals focussing on restoration and renovation of the golf course through engagement of expert consultants, enrolment of new golf playing members, construction of an aesthetically pleasing boundary wall to secure the remaining area of the Golf Course from intrusion of wild animals which is designed in harmony with the

natural surroundings, renovation of huts, solarization to promote clean energy and reduce electricity expenditure, renovation and improvement in Club facilities particularly gymnasium, swimming pool, restaurant and revision in rates to boost revenue collection for maintenance of golf course.

The Chief Minister underscored the importance of improving the overall service, other facilities and overall visitor experience at the Golf course. The Chief Minister emphasized the need to adhere to the accepted engineering standards in turf management and ensuring high quality greens, fairways to match global standards.

CM Omar Abdullah emphasized on development and upgradation of Golf Course infrastructure and amenities to enhance its attractiveness for weekend golfers, corporate groups, tourists, and golfing enthusiasts, thereby promoting the facility as a premier golfing and recreational destination.

The meeting also deliberated on proposals relating to employee welfare, service matters, recruitment rules, financial management and institutional strengthening. Various initiatives for improving operational efficiency, enhancing service delivery standards and promoting golf tourism in Jammu and Kashmir were also reviewed.

Emphasizing the importance of preserving the Royal Springs Golf Course as one of the country's finest golfing destinations, the Chief Minister directed the Tourism department and the RSGC management to prepare a comprehensive roadmap for the restoration and modernization of the golf course while maintaining its internationally recognized standards and ecological character.

He stressed the need to adopt best practices in golf course management, turf maintenance and hospitality services to further enhance the facility's appeal among domestic and international golfers. He also called for exploring sustainable revenue-generation avenues to ensure the long-term financial viability of the Golf Course while maintaining the exclusivity and quality of its services.

The Chief Minister underscored the immense potential of golf tourism in Jammu & Kashmir and directed RSGC management to formulate a strategy for attracting more national and international tournaments, strengthening promotional efforts and positioning Jammu and Kashmir as a premier golfing destination on the global tourism map.

He further directed that all future development initiatives at the golf course be guided by the principles of environmental sustainability, financial prudence and long-term institutional benefit. He also emphasized the importance of employee welfare, skill upgradation and capacity building for ensuring professional management and efficient service delivery.

The Governing Body reviewed the budget estimates and action plan for the financial year 2026-27 and discussed strategies for enhancing infrastructure, improving visitor facilities and creating additional opportunities for growth of golf tourism in Jammu & Kashmir.

The meeting concluded with detailed deliberations on the agenda items and directions for taking forward various proposals in accordance with established procedures.

Those With....

any comment on them," Jaiswal said. The statement came in response to a joint communiqué issued following talks between the European Union and Pakistan, which noted that the Pakistani side had briefed the European delegation on Jammu and Kashmir, while the EU side provided an update on developments related to the war in Ukraine.

Reiterating India's long-standing position, the spokesperson emphasized that Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh remain inseparable parts of the country and that external parties have no role in matters concerning them.

The remarks follow a similar response by New Delhi last month to references made in a joint statement issued by China and Pakistan after talks between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

On that occasion, India had also rejected comments relating to Jammu and Kashmir, maintaining that its position on the issue is clear and consistent.

The Ministry of External Affairs further reiterated its opposition to projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor that pass through territory claimed by India. Jaiswal said New Delhi firmly opposes any attempt to legitimise what it describes as Pakistan's illegal occupation of Indian territory and has repeatedly conveyed its concerns to both Islamabad and Beijing.

He also dismissed references to trans-boundary water cooperation between China and Pakistan, stating that India does not recognise the 1963 boundary agreement between the two countries.

The latest diplomatic response reflects India's continued stance against third-party references to Jammu and Kashmir in international statements, maintaining that the matter is internal to the country and not open to external commentary.

Keep Passports....

the "Preparation Document for Haj 1448 H" on May 29, 2026.

According to an official circular issued by the Haj Committee of India under the Ministry of Minority Affairs, the announcement for Haj-2027 is expected shortly. Prospective applicants have been urged to verify their travel documents well in advance to avoid delays during the application and travel process.

The circular states that passports must be machine-readable and remain valid for at least six months beyond the expected travel period, with validity extending up to December 31, 2027. The committee has also cautioned applicants seeking fresh passports not to leave the "Surname/Last Name" column blank, stressing that accurate personal information is es-

sential for visa processing and travel arrangements.

The advisory was issued by Haj Committee of India Chief Executive Officer Shanavas C., who directed all State and Union Territory Haj Committees to widely publicise the instructions so that intending pilgrims can complete the required documentation in time.

The move comes as the return phase of Haj-2026 pilgrims has commenced in Jammu and Kashmir. The first batch of pilgrims arrived at Srinagar International Airport on Tuesday after completing the annual pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia.

Officials said that 3,952 pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh are scheduled to return through the Srinagar embarkation point by June 16.

The advisory is aimed at ensuring that prospective Haj pilgrims are fully prepared when applications for Haj-2027 are opened, helping facilitate a smooth and efficient registration process.

Srinagar....

Shopian 13.2°C, Kulgam 17.6°C, Pulwama 16.5°C, and Anantnag 17.5°C.

According to the Meteorological Department, both maximum and minimum temperatures have remained above normal in many parts of Kashmir in recent days, resulting in warmer-than-usual conditions across the region.

The elevated night temperatures have reduced the normal cooling experienced after sunset, bringing discomfort to residents and signalling the continuation of an unusually warm spell at the beginning of the summer season. Authorities said weather conditions are being closely monitored as temperatures are expected to remain above seasonal averages in the coming days.

The Hunt....

arrangements sustaining troops engaged in the operation. He also reviewed the overall operational framework in the challenging forested terrain.

In a statement, the White Knight Corps said Lt Gen Mishra praised the troops for their resilience, professionalism and meticulous execution of assigned tasks. He commended personnel for maintaining high morale and unwavering focus while pursuing operational objectives under demanding conditions.

"The hunt continues," the Army said, reaffirming its commitment to ensuring peace and security through sustained operational efforts.

Operation Sheruwal was launched on May 23 following intelligence inputs regarding the presence of terrorists in the Dorimal-Gambhir Mughlan belt of Rajouri district. An encounter broke out after security forces established contact with the suspects during a search operation.

Since then, forces have intensified search operations across the area, carrying out coordinated sweeps and targeted fire assaults on suspected hideouts located in dense forests, deep gorges and natural caves. Officials said advanced weapon systems, including multi-barrel grenade launchers, have been deployed as part of the operation.

On Monday, security forces uncovered a hideout after a brief exchange of fire and found blood stains at the site, indicating that some of the fleeing terrorists may have been injured. However, no terrorist has been eliminated so far, officials said.

The review of Operation Sheruwal came a day after Lt Gen Mishra visited forward areas along the Line of Control to assess the evolving security situation and operational preparedness. During the visit, he interacted with troops and reviewed measures aimed at strengthening surveillance, enhancing precision-strike capabilities and improving readiness for future security challenges.

Army officials said the Corps Commander expressed satisfaction with the preparedness of troops and reiterated the Army's resolve to maintain a strong security posture along the Line of Control.

Admissions to....

reflecting an increase of more than seven per cent," Itoo said in a post on social media platform X.

She attributed the rise in enrolment to measures aimed at simplifying and streamlining admissions in government colleges across Jammu and Kashmir, saying the initiative has helped reverse the declining trend witnessed in recent years.

The minister said the government expects admissions to continue rising as the process progresses, with total enrolment likely to cross 55,000 by the end of this month. "This encouraging response reflects the success of our efforts to make higher education more accessible, transparent and student-friendly across Jammu and Kashmir," she said, adding that the government remains committed to ensuring that every aspiring student has an opportunity to pursue quality higher education.

The improvement comes months after concerns were raised over poor enrolment in several government colleges. Official figures released earlier this year showed that a number of institutions were struggling with extremely low student strength.

Among the most striking cases were Government Degree College Chattisinghpura and Government Degree College Baghi Dilawar Khan, which had no active student enrolment and were subsequently placed under the administrative oversight of other colleges. Government data had further revealed that 13 colleges had fewer than 30 students each, while several institutions were functioning with fewer than 20 students. Twenty-four colleges had enrolment below 100 students.

The increase in admissions follows a major policy shift by the Higher Education Department, which discontinued the Common University Entrance Test (CUET)-based admission system for undergraduate programmes in all Government Degree Colleges for the 2026-27 academic session and reverted to admissions based on Class 12 merit.

The department had earlier exempted 64 Government Degree Colleges from CUET-based admissions after low participation through the entrance ex-

amination affected enrolment across several institutions.

The latest admission figures indicate that the return to a merit-based admission system, coupled with efforts to simplify procedures, has helped restore student interest in government colleges and improve enrolment prospects across the Union Territory.

Litchi Farming....

productivity and farmers' income, they noted.

"Farmers in the region are increasingly turning to the cultivation of litchi under the HDP programme. Farmers can earn an annual income of around Rs 24,000 to Rs 30,000 from a kanal (0.125 acre) of land. Apart from its profitability, litchi also has significant nutritional value," Director Horticulture Jammu Gul Syed said.

Scores of farmers have taken up the cultivation of the litchi in vast lands on the outskirts of Jammu city, officials added.

Syed said the administration would provide all necessary support to growers, including assistance in the marketing of litchi and other fruits.

He added that Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has appreciated the role of progressive farmers in encouraging small and marginal farmers to diversify towards high-value horticulture crops.

"To promote litchi cultivation and improve productivity, the Horticulture Department is extending subsidies under various schemes," he said, adding that farmers adopting high-density plantation techniques are being provided subsidies of up to 50 per cent, which has encouraged many growers to establish litchi orchards on a larger scale.

"Litchi cultivation performs best in areas with assured irrigation facilities and adequate water availability. Farmers should take up the crop in such locations to achieve better results," Syed said.

He said litchi is gaining popularity not only because of its profitability but also due to its nutritional value.

"The fruit is rich in carbohydrates, natural sugars, vitamin C, potassium and several micronutrients, besides containing antioxidants beneficial for health." "A single litchi fruit can provide nearly nine per cent of the recommended daily allowance of vitamin C," he said.

The director said the department is providing technical guidance, quality planting material and other support services to improve production and productivity.

"Micro-irrigation systems are also being promoted, alongside high-density plantation techniques." According to Syed, incentives have encouraged more farmers to adopt litchi cultivation and increase their income. Areas such as Marh and RS Pura, where irrigation facilities are readily available, are witnessing a significant expansion of litchi orchards.

He said the department is also organising training programmes on scientific litchi cultivation, orchard management, pruning and high-density plantation methods to help farmers maximise returns.

"The objective of these initiatives is to strengthen the horticulture sector and enhance farmers' income. More growers should avail themselves of these schemes and adopt modern cultivation practices," he added. (Agencies)

Two Cloudbursts....

Singh said in a post on X.

LG Manoj Sinha post on X, "Spoke with Deputy Commissioners of Kishtwar & Doda regarding the flash floods caused by heavy rainfall. Fortunately, no loss of life or property damage has been reported. Emergency response teams have been directed to remain on high alert and continuously monitor the situation. I've directed both the DCs of Kishtwar and Doda to swiftly restore roads, highways, and water pipelines. Field staff and specialized medical teams are on high alert, and damage assessments will begin as soon as field verification is complete. My sincere condolences to the bereaved family of Pinki Devi from Khuddhar Doda, who tragically passed away due to a lightning strike. The Deputy Commissioner of Doda has been directed to provide immediate relief and assistance to the family."

According to immediate field reports, there were no casualties, injuries or damage to property at either location, he said.

Deputy Commissioner Sharma told reporters in Kishtwar that a cloudburst in a forest area triggered flash floods accompanied by heavy debris flow, affecting the Vrikshshala-Trofik stretch, Vrikshshala Zero Point, Machhipal, Saroor area and particularly the Sarthal village road. "A large amount of debris has been deposited on the road and water has entered areas around residential settlements," Sharma said.

He said teams from various departments, including the National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Lt (NHIDCL), were rushed to the affected areas, while JCB machines and Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) equipment were deployed to restore connectivity and clear debris.

While no loss of life or property had been reported so far, Sharma cautioned that continuing rainfall could trigger further weather-related incidents. "We are repeatedly requesting people not to gather near nallahs, streams or other water bodies. Cloudbursts have become a recurring phenomenon over the past few years and people should avoid water bodies as such incidents can

occur at any time," he said.

The DC said the cloudburst occurred along the ridge between Drabshalla and Gujiwua, resulting in flash floods that affected roads including the Drabshalla Zero Point, Suru-Sarthal, Gahan and Machhipal routes.

Restoration work had already begun and the main highway up to Drabshalla had been cleared, he said, adding that authorities were coordinating with the general manager of NHIDCL in Doda to clear the stretch beyond Drabshalla towards Fatri.

Meanwhile, the district administration issued a weather advisory warning of light to moderate rainfall and the possibility of flash floods near riverbanks, nallahs and other vulnerable locations.

Residents, particularly those living near water bodies and loose structures, were urged to remain vigilant and take necessary precautions until weather conditions improve.

All line departments, including Revenue, PWD, PMGSY, Jal Shakti, Health, Irrigation and Flood Control, NHIDCL, BRO and power utilities, have been directed to remain on alert and keep field staff ready to provide immediate assistance if required, the administration said.

The administration has also activated its 24x7 district control room and directed all tehsildars to immediately report any weather-related damage to life or property.

Later, Union minister Singh said Additional Deputy Commissioner Pawan Kotwal had confirmed that no loss of life or property had been reported. Teams from the District Red Cross, Police and Revenue Department had been dispatched to assess the affected sites, he added. Reports of road blockades had been received and men and machinery had been pressed into service to reopen the affected roads at the earliest, the minister said.

Officials from the Revenue, Disaster Management, Police and other departments remain on alert and are maintaining continuous surveillance of the affected and adjoining areas. Mobile patrols and field staff are also in regular contact with local communities to assess conditions and provide assistance, he added.

CS Pushes....

for Prevention and Management of Osteoarthritis and other Musculoskeletal Disorders, National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS), AYUSH Maternal and Neo-natal Intervention, AYUSH Geriatric Healthcare Services, Healthy Lifestyle through AYUSH for School Children, AYUSH Palliative Services and AYUSH Mobile Medical Units. He stressed the need to substantially enhance outreach and coverage so that the benefits of these programmes reach the maximum number of people.

Calling for stronger monitoring mechanisms, Dulloo exhorted upon the Director to undertake regular visits to AYUSH healthcare facilities and educational institutions to assess their functioning and ensure quality service delivery.

He also directed the department to establish herbal gardens in government institutions and involve local Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in the processing and value addition of medicinal herbs to generate livelihood opportunities while promoting indigenous medicinal products.

The Chief Secretary further stressed expediting faculty recruitment through designated recruiting agencies to strengthen the functioning of AYUSH colleges and educational institutions thereby improving the academic standards there.

Speaking on this occasion Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar advised the department to focus on augmenting and consolidating existing facilities so that a wider range of AYUSH services could be delivered under one roof. He observed that optimal utilization of available resources would yield greater results than spreading resources across multiple initiatives with limited impact.

Highlighting the challenge posed by substance abuse, the ACS also advocated the integration of AYUSH interventions in rehabilitation efforts for drug abuse victims and urged the department to actively contribute to the ongoing Nasha Mukta Abhiyaan. He underscored the importance of a whole-of-government approach in addressing the issue effectively.

Commissioner Secretary, Health and Medical Education, M. Raju, informed the meeting about the roadmap for expansion and strengthening of AYUSH healthcare services, educational institutions and public health interventions across Jammu and Kashmir. He stated that the proposed Annual Action Plan had been formulated following extensive consultations with district-level AYUSH functionaries and heads of AYUSH medical colleges and envisages substantial investments in healthcare infrastructure, human resource development, institutional capacity enhancement and quality service delivery.

During the meeting, Director AYUSH, Dr. Ajay Kumar Tikoo, informed that while the Ministry of AYUSH has indicated a tentative resource envelope of Rs. 58,539 Cr, the UT has proposed a comprehensive action plan amounting to Rs. 91,997 Cr keeping in view the increasing demand for AYUSH facilities and the satisfactory utilization of funds under previous programmes.

He further apprised the Governing Body that the plan includes strengthening 523 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, augmentation of AYUSH units in public health institutions, uninterrupted supply of essential medicines to hospitals and dispensaries, upgradation of existing AYUSH hospitals and dispensaries and accelerated completion of new healthcare facilities in underserved areas.



DC Srinagar reviews progress under Catch the Rain Program

Directs executing agencies to come up with sustainable rain water harvesting, ground water recharging systems across district

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 02: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today chaired a meeting here at the Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex to review the progress of Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari Abhiyan 2.0 under Jal Shakti Abhiyan - Catch the Rain Campaign in the District.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner, Rifat Aftab Qureshi, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Joint Commissioner SMC, Suhail Islam, Superintendent Engineer Hydraulic, Er Ambreen Anjum, Assistant Commissioner Development, Tariq Ahmad, SDME East, Zubair Ahmad, Executive Engineers of I&FC, Water Works Division, Rural Water Works, UEED, SMC, City Drainage, SMC, LCMA and other concerned.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need for effective inter-departmental coordination to achieve the objectives of the campaign. He directed stakeholder Departments to ensure timely completion of ongoing works and stressed the importance of creating sustainable rain water harvesting systems and ground water recharg-

ing systems across the district to augment availability of water.

The DC directed the Jal Shakti Department to continue the geo-tagging of water sources and recharge structures, while extending technical support to Panchayats in identifying and implementing suitable water conservation interventions. He also emphasized the need to intensify IEC activities across the District to promote awareness on water conservation, sustainable water management and community participation in safeguarding water resources.

Emphasizing the importance of collective action, the DC stated that water conservation is a shared responsibility and called upon all Departments to adopt a coordinated and proactive approach for the successful implementation of Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari Abhiyan 2.0 throughout the District.

The DC directed the Education Department to promote rooftop rainwater harvesting structures in educational institutions and conduct awareness programmes among students. He further asked the Education Department to identify "Jal Doots" and "Student Water Champions" in Schools who can serve as ambassadors



for water conservation and help promote sustainable water management practices.

The Agriculture Department was directed to promote water-efficient farming practices,

including micro-irrigation techniques and to generate awareness among farmers about water-saving crops. The Irrigation and Flood Control Department was instructed to prioritize watershed management, rejuvenation of water bodies, desilting of canals and ponds and the creation of ground water recharge structures. The Rural Development Department was asked to leverage MGN-REGA for the development of rainwater harvesting structures, soak pits, village ponds and grey-water management facilities, while also undertaking awareness campaigns at the Panchayat level.

The Forest Department was directed to undertake extensive plantation drives, conserve water bodies within forest areas, and support geo-tagging initiatives. The Housing and Urban Development Department was asked to promote rooftop rainwater harvesting systems in urban areas, rejuvenate urban water bodies, and intensify public awareness activities on water conservation.

The ICDS Department was instructed to encourage similar interventions in Anganwadi Centres and strengthen community outreach efforts, with a special focus on enhancing the role of women in water conservation.

PROANG Urges 8th Pay Commission to Address Pay, Pension and Healthcare Issues of J&K Police Personnel

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 2: The Police Retired Officers Association (Non-Gazetted), Jammu and Kashmir (PROANG UT of J&K), on Monday submitted a detailed memorandum to the visiting delegation of the 8th Central Pay Commission at SKICC Srinagar, seeking resolution of long-pending pay anomalies, pension concerns and welfare-related issues affecting serving and retired police personnel.

The delegation, led by PROANG Chairman Gh. Hassan Zargar, highlighted what it described as decades-old disparities in the pay structure of the Non-Gazetted Executive and Ministerial Police Cadre. The association maintained that while several government departments received successive pay upgrades, similarly placed police personnel were left out despite performing duties under challenging and high-risk conditions.

According to the memorandum, the anomalies have led to cadre distortions, senior-junior pay inversion, financial stagnation and adverse impacts on pension benefits. The association also sought implementation of judicial directions relating to pay parity and pension revision.

Speaking to reporters, PROANG Chief Spokesperson Mir Niyaz Ahmad said pension commutation reform was among the key demands placed before the Commission. The association urged reduction of the pension recovery period from 15 years to 10-11 years, restoration of full pension thereafter and revision of commutation factors to provide relief to retired personnel and family pensioners.

The delegation also called for enhancement of the monthly medical allowance from Rs. 300 to Rs. 1,000, linking future revisions to medical inflation and extending CGHS-equivalent healthcare facilities to retirees, widows and family pensioners.

New Sericulture Technologies Aim to Boost Incomes and Employment in Kashmir

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 02: A significant initiative to enhance the livelihoods of farmers in central and south Kashmir through advanced sericulture technologies was launched with a one-day awareness and distribution program. Organized by the College of Temperate Sericulture (CoTS), Mirgund, under Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology-Kashmir (SKUAST-K), the event focused on a NABARD-funded project designed to uplift the socio-economic status of local communities.

The program, held on June 2, 2026, in Anantnag and Kulgam districts, showcased newly developed, low-cost sericulture technologies aimed at income augmentation and employment generation. The project's Principal Investigator, Dr. Khursheed, welcomed attendees and elaborated on the project's objectives, emphasizing its potential to create new opportunities in sericulture areas.

A large number of beneficiaries from both districts enthusiastically participated, gaining insights into the practical applications and benefits of the new technologies. Esteemed faculty members, including Prof. Mush-taq Rasool Mir (Associate Dean, CoTS, Mirgund), Dr. Nisar A. Ganie (Professor & Head, DSCI, CoTS, Mirgund), and Dr. K. A. Dar (Associate Professor,



DCCP, CoTS, Mirgund), highlighted the project's crucial role in the socio-economic upliftment of farmers.

Local agricultural officials also lauded the initiative, with the Deputy Director from Anantnag/Kulgam pledging full support for the silkworm rearers

involved. The successful event concluded with Sericulture Assistant Officers expressing their gratitude to the dignitaries and the dedicated rearers, marking the program as a grand success and a promising step forward for the region's sericulture sector.

First-of-its-kind Advanced School of Antenna 2026 concludes at KU

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 02: A first-of-its-kind three-day Advanced School of Antenna (ASA) 2026 concluded at the University of Kashmir (KU). The programme was organised by KU in collaboration with the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar, IEEE AP-S/CRFID Delhi Chapter and IEEE AP-S/MTT-S, Kolkata Chapter, on the theme "Antennas in Biomedical and Biotelemetry Devices."

The three-day programme aimed to promote knowledge exchange and advance research at the intersection of antenna

engineering and healthcare technologies by bringing together leading experts, researchers, faculty members and students from across the country.

Speaking at the valedictory session, Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, congratulated the organisers for bringing the prestigious international programme to the University and highlighted the growing importance of interdisciplinary research in addressing contemporary healthcare and technological challenges.

"ASA 2026 provided an excellent platform for researchers, faculty members and students to

engage with leading experts and emerging innovations in antenna technologies and biomedical applications," she said.

Dean, School of Engineering KU, Prof. Mohammad Tariq Bandy, and Incharge Director, NITSrinagar, Prof. Roohie Naaz, emphasized the importance of collaborative research and academic partnerships in advancing emerging technologies and fostering innovation-driven learning.

Head, Department of Electronics & Instrumentation Technology, KU, Dr. Farooq Ahmad Khanda, said that the event created valuable opportunities for par-

ticipants to interact with internationally renowned experts and gain insights into contemporary developments in antenna design and biomedical applications.

Prof. Omar Ramahi, University of Waterloo, Canada, and Prof. Mahesh Abegaonkar, IIT Delhi and Chairman, IEEE AP-S Delhi Chapter, spoke on the recent advances in antenna technologies and stressed on the need for sustained research efforts to address emerging challenges in biomedical and wireless communication systems.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Organising Secretary Dr. Javid Ahmad Sheikh, faculty at the

Department of Electronics & Instrumentation Technology, KU, outlined the objectives of the programme and highlighted its focus on bridging fundamental research with real-world healthcare applications.

The three-day programme featured keynote lectures, technical sessions and expert discussions on various dimensions of antenna engineering, biomedical devices, biotelemetry systems and emerging wireless technologies. The proceedings of the valedictory session were conducted by Organising Secretary Dr. Javid Ahmad Sheikh.

JKAACL Organises 'Meet the Eminent Writer' Programme in Honour of Dr. Satish Vimal

- Literary, Cultural and Media Fraternity Gather at Akashvani Srinagar Auditorium
- Dr. Satish Vimal's Contributions to Literature and Broadcasting Celebrated.
- JKAACL Organises 'Meet the Eminent Writer' Programme Honouring Dr. Satish Vimal

JAMEEL ANSARI

SRINAGAR, JUNE 2: The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) organised a special literary programme titled "Meet the Eminent Writer" in honour of renowned poet, writer, translator, researcher, critic and broadcaster Dr. Satish Vimal at the Auditorium of Akashvani Srinagar on Monday.

The programme was presided over by Padma Shri



awardee and eminent writer-scholar Prof. Shafi Shouq, while Shri Gurbinder Singh, Director, Prasar Bharati and Head of Akashvani Srinagar, attended as the Chief Guest. Among others present on the dais were Additional Secretary, JKAACL Ideel Saleem, noted scholar and researcher Ghulam Nabi Haleem, Dr. Satish Vimal, and Editor, English, JKAACL Dr. Abid Ahmad.

Welcoming the guests, Additional Secretary Ideel Saleem said that the Academy remains committed to highlighting the contributions of distinguished literary, cultural and intellectual personalities of Jammu and Kashmir and introducing younger generations to their work and ideas. He observed that programmes such as "Meet the Eminent Writer" provide an effective platform for interaction between writers and readers and contribute significantly to the promotion of literature and culture.

On the occasion, renowned scholar and researcher Ghulam Nabi Haleem presented a comprehensive paper on the life, literary journey, research contributions, critical insights and achievements of Dr. Satish Vimal. He highlighted Dr. Vimal's multifaceted contributions to poetry, criticism, translation, research and broadcasting.

The programme also featured a musical presentation by noted singer Munir Ahmad Mir, who rendered selections from Dr. Satish Vimal's poetry, earning appreciation from the audience.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Satish Vimal expressed gratitude to the Academy for organising the event in his honour. He said that literature has remained the most significant aspect of his life and that he has always sought to promote the values of humanity, love and social harmony through his writings. Recalling his literary journey, broadcasting experiences and interactions with writers from different linguistic backgrounds, he described creative writing as a continuous process of learning, introspection and self-discovery.

Chief Guest Gurbinder Singh said that Akashvani and Dr. Satish Vimal share a long and meaningful association spanning several decades. He noted that Dr. Vimal has made valuable contributions both as a broadcaster and as a literary figure, helping to enrich public discourse and cultural awareness.

In his presidential address, Prof. Shafi Shouq described Dr. Satish Vimal as one of the most respected names in contemporary Kashmiri literary circles. He said that Dr. Vimal's significant contributions to poetry, criticism, translation and broadcasting have earned him a distinguished place in the literary world. He further remarked that Vimal's writings reflect human values, cultural consciousness and contemporary sensibilities, making them a source of inspiration for younger generations.

An interactive question-and-answer session formed an important part of the programme, during which members of the audience asked Dr. Vimal questions about his life, literary career, creative experiences and broadcasting services. Responding to the questions, he spoke about his early literary influences, his inclination towards poetry and translation, his association with Akashvani and his interactions with several eminent literary personalities. He also encouraged young writers to cultivate the habit of reading and to use literature as a means of promoting human values and social harmony.

The proceedings of the programme were conducted by noted broadcaster Rashid Nizami.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks presented by Dr. Abid Ahmad, Editor, English, JKAACL, who thanked the distinguished guests, speakers, writers, poets, journalists and audience members for their participation. He reiterated the Academy's commitment to organising similar literary and cultural programmes in the future.

The event was attended by a large gathering of writers, poets, scholars, students, journalists and literature enthusiasts from across the Valley.

Javed Rana reviews developmental issues of Trehgam Constituency

Directs officers to ensure timely execution of projects, effective public service delivery

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 02: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana today chaired a meeting at Civil Secretariat here to review developmental issues and ongoing works pertaining to the Assembly Constituency Trehgam represented by MLA Mir Saifullah.

The meeting was convened to assess the progress of various infrastructure and public welfare projects in Trehgam, Kupwara and to discuss measures for expediting developmental initiatives in the constituency. Detailed deliberations were held on issues related to water supply, road connectivity, public infrastructure



and other sectoral requirements raised by the concerned legislator. During the meeting, the Minister took a comprehensive review of ongoing and proposed works being executed by different departments. He stressed the need for close inter-departmental coordination to ensure timely completion of projects and prompt resolution of issues affecting the

public. Javed Rana underscored the government's commitment towards balanced and inclusive development, stating that the aspirations and genuine concerns of the people must be addressed in a time-bound manner. He directed the officers to identify bottlenecks hindering the progress of developmental works and take immediate corrective measures

for their resolution.

The Minister emphasized that public welfare remains the top priority of the government and called for greater responsiveness, accountability and efficiency in service delivery. He instructed the concerned departments to maintain regular monitoring of projects and ensure that developmental benefits reach the people at the grassroots level without delay.

MLA Mir Saifullah highlighted several issues and developmental requirements of his constituency and sought early intervention of the concerned departments for their redressal.

The meeting was attended by senior officers of the concerned departments.

Doda gears up to host 2-day Lavender Festival 2026; DC reviews preparations

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

DODA, JUNE 02: Deputy Commissioner Doda Krishan Lal along with Director CSIR-IIIM Jammu Dr. Zabeer Ahmed today chaired a meeting to review arrangements for 2-day Lavender Festival 2026 scheduled to be held on June 6 and 7 at Government Degree College (GDC) Baderwah.

Experts, scientists, aroma industry professionals and stakeholders from across the country would participate in the festival and share valuable knowledge with farmers and visitors. The event being held on the College Campus would also witness active participation from students.

Baderwah has been hosting the event since 2022 for it being the birthplace of the Lavender Mission in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Doda, Additional Deputy Commissioner Baderwah, ASP Headquarters, Programme Officer ICDS, Superintending Engineer Jal Shakti Department, Principal GDC Baderwah, Divisional Forest Officer Baderwah, Chief Planning Officer, Chief Executive Officer Baderwah Development Authority, Joint Director Education, district officers and representatives from line departments.

Reviewing the preparations, the Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments to ensure the timely completion of arrangements and work in close coordination for the successful conduct of the festival. Agriculture, Horticulture, Floriculture and other allied departments were asked to actively participate in the festival and set up stalls showcasing respective schemes, innova-



tions and services.

The meeting finalized arrangements related to sanitation, water and power supply, medical facilities, transportation, security and safety measures. The DC directed the stakeholder departments to formulate meticulous plans to complete the arrangements well in advance. The ADC Baderwah was designated as the Nodal Officer for overall coordination and management of the festival.

The Director CSIR-IIIM Jammu gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation, highlighting the potential of lavender cultivation in transforming the rural economy of the district.

He noted that the lavender farmers of Doda have played a vital role in promoting aromatic crop cultivation and strengthening rural livelihoods. He expressed hope that the lavender sector would continue to boost the district's economy and create new opportunities for entrepreneurship and employment.

A short documentary highlighting the success stories and achievements of previous Lavender Festivals was also screened.

All J&K Lecturers Association calls on Education Minister at Srinagar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 02: A delegation of All J&K Lecturers' Association called on Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo at Civil Secretariat here today and submitted a detailed representation highlighting several long-pending issues affecting the Lecturer fraternity across Jammu and Kashmir.



During the interaction, the delegation apprised the Minister about prolonged stagnation faced by lecturers due to the non-implementation of the Assured Career Progression (ACP) Scheme, delay in finalization of Gazetted Recruitment Rules, regular Annual Transfer Drive as well as large number of vacancies in the School Education Department adversely affecting academic functioning in Higher Secondary Schools.

The delegation urged the Minister to expedite the implementation of ACP, which has remained pending from a long time, as well as redressal of other genuine issues.

Interacting with the delegation, the Minister gave them a patient hearing and acknowledged the genuineness, legitimacy and importance of the issues projected by the Association. She assured the delegation that the Government is committed to addressing the concerns of the teaching community.

The Minister also assured them that the department is working on a comprehensive and transparent Transfer Policy, which is likely to be finalized shortly.

Special Secretary SED, Ghulam Rasool Mir was also present during the interaction.

J&K BOSE extends dates for submission of Bi-Annual exam forms

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JUNE 02: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (J&K BOSE) has notified extension of dates for the submission of permission cum examination forms for Class 11 Annual (Private)/Bi-Annual 2026 examinations for Kashmir and Jammu Division

(both winter and summer zone areas) of UTs of J&K and Ladakh. As per the notification, the revised cut off date for submission of permission cum examination forms for Class 11 (both online and offline) on payment of normal prescribed fee is June 06 and the revised cut off date with a late fee is June 09.

MLA Sham Lal launches "Khet Bachao Abhiyan" at Purkhoo

Calls upon youth to lead Farmer Awareness Movement

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JUNE 02: Member Legislative Assembly Jammu North Sham Lal Sharma today formally launched the month-long Khet Bachao Abhiyan during a farmers' awareness programme here at Village Purkhoo in Sub-Division Marh.

The programme was attended by Joint Director Agriculture (Farms/SLUB) Aman Jyoti Sharma; District Agriculture Officer Vinod Khajuria; SMS (DL) Sham Khajuria and Sub-Divisional Agriculture Officer (SDAO) Khalid Hassan Tantray, along with officers and field functionaries of the department.

More than 300 farmers, members of JKCIIP Youth Clubs, NATS Krishi Veers, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) participated enthusiastically in the campaign. Prominent youth clubs, including Baba Birfa Nath Youth Club Kanger, Ganpati Youth Club Ghainik, Eco Warrior Youth Club Purkhoo and Jai Shiv Shanker Youth Club Bhalwal, actively participated in the programme.

Addressing the gathering,

Sham Lal Sharma emphasized that youth are the future of the nation and have a pivotal role in transforming the agricultural sector. He appreciated the spirit of the youth clubs being promoted and supported by the Agriculture Department Jammu. He encouraged them to visit villages and spread awareness among farmers regarding modern, scientific and sustainable agricultural practices.

"Khet Bachao Abhiyan needs to be promoted as a comprehensive mass movement connecting farms, farmers and villages. The campaign aims to protect agricultural land, reduce cultivation costs and ensure timely, need-based technical guidance to farmers through direct field-level interactions," he emphasised.

"Minimizing the indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides will be one of the key objectives of the campaign," the MLA highlighted. Farmers would be sensitized about the balanced use of fertilizers and other agricultural inputs based on soil testing, he informed. He emphasized that special efforts would be made to motivate farm-



ers to adopt green manures, organic inputs and bio-products for improving soil health and ensuring long-term agricultural sustainability.

Sham Lal Sharma also emphasized the importance of educating farmers about the benefits of Natural Farming and other sustainable agricultural practices.

Joint Director Agriculture (Farms/SLUB) said that the Department of Agriculture is com-

mitted to take scientific and need-based advisory services directly to farmers' doorsteps. "Under the Khet Bachao Abhiyan, field officers and extension staff will regularly interact with farmers to create awareness and provide field-specific advisories. Saving farms, improving soil health and reducing cultivation costs are the central objectives of the campaign," he highlighted. He further informed that the saturation drives under the Kisan

Credit Card (KCC) and PM-KISAN schemes would be undertaken to ensure that all eligible farmers are covered and receive benefits under these flagship programmes.

The awareness programme also featured expert lectures and interactive sessions by Naresh Kumar from IFFCO, Ranjeet Kumar, Progressive Farmer, Dr. Nazeem Khan, Horticulture Development Officer, Deepali Chavi, Young Entrepreneur Suraj Parkash from Ganpati Youth Club, Sonam Kotwal, representative of Mission YUVA, NATS Krishi Veers Athrav and Priyanka and officers from Agriculture Department. The speakers highlighted the importance of scientific farming, judicious and balanced use of fertilizers, entrepreneurship, youth participation and sustainable agricultural development.

Awareness and display stalls were also set up by Mission YUVA, Self Help Groups (SHGs), Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and IFFCO, showcasing various agricultural interventions, entrepreneurship opportunities, innovative technologies and farmer-centric schemes.

Labour Commissioner reviews Registration of Service Providers for smooth conduct of SANJY-2026 in Ganderbal

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, JUNE 02: Labour Commissioner, J&K, S. Charandeep Singh today undertook an extensive tour of Ganderbal district, including Kangan, Hariganiwan and Sonamarg, to review the registration of service providers for the smooth and successful conduct of the forthcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY)-2026. During the visit, the Labour Commissioner inspected registration camps established by the Labour Department and reviewed the progress achieved in the registration of various service providers associated with the Yatra, including Ponywalas, Palkiwalas, Pithuwalas and Hawkers. He interacted with the registered beneficiaries and assessed the arrangements put in place for facilitating a hassle-free registration process.

A total of 12,545 Service Providers have been registered as of 02-06-2026. The Labour Commissioner expressed satisfaction over the progress achieved and directed the field officers to further expedite the registration process to en-

sure that all eligible service providers are covered well before the commencement of the Yatra.

On the occasion, RFID cards were distributed among registered service providers, and the Labour Commissioner directed the field functionaries to ensure the timely distribution of RFID cards to all registered beneficiaries. He emphasized that RFID-enabled registration is essential for efficient management, safety and seamless coordination during the pilgrimage. S. Charandeep Singh stressed the importance of maintaining updated records of all service providers and instructed officers to extend every possible assistance to stakeholders. He called upon the field staff to work in close coordination with all concerned agencies to facilitate the smooth conduct of the Yatra. Reiterating the commitment of the Labour Department towards the welfare and facilitation of service providers, the Labour Commissioner said that all necessary measures are being taken to ensure a safe, organized and successful Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026.

Awareness, Sports, Outreach Activities continue across Pulwama under NMBA

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, JUNE 02: As part of the ongoing 100-day intensive campaign under the Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, a series of awareness, outreach and sports activities were conducted today across district Pulwama to educate people about the harmful effects of substance abuse and to promote a healthy and drug-free society. Awareness programmes were organised at Pinglish Tral, Noorpora Awantipora and Dandgerpora Pulwama, where participants were sensitised regarding the ill effects of drug abuse and the importance of collective efforts in preventing substance abuse. Various activities including awareness sessions, pledge ceremonies, signature campaigns, plantation drives and padyatras were conducted to encourage community participation and strengthen the message of a drug-free society.

Meanwhile, Self Help Group (SHG) members organised aware-

ness and counselling sessions along with a padyatra at Dadsara to educate the local population regarding the adverse consequences of drug abuse and to mobilise community support for the objectives of the campaign.

As part of the awareness initiatives being undertaken in educational institutions under the campaign, educational institutions across the district organised peer leader selection programmes aimed at promoting student leadership and encouraging a drug-free lifestyle. Students participated in group discussions on peer pressure, substance abuse and healthy decision-making. Selected peer leaders were encouraged to serve as role models and spread awareness among their peers regarding the importance of staying away from drugs and adopting positive life choices. Furthermore, the Drug Control Department Pulwama conducted inspections across Pulwama to verify the operational status of Comput-



erised Billing Systems and CCTV surveillance systems at medical establishments in order to strengthen regulatory oversight and ensure compliance with the prescribed norms.

Meanwhile, the Department of Youth Services and Sports (YSS) Pulwama continued its activities under the campaign by organising a wide range of sports and fitness programmes across various educational institutions of the district.

The events commenced with pledge ceremonies wherein participants resolved to promote a physically fit, mentally sound and drug-free society. Speakers on the occasion highlighted the harmful effects of drug abuse and its far-reaching impact on individuals,

families and society.

Under the campaign, Zone Pulwama organised pledge ceremonies, running, jumping and physical fitness activities at HSS Karimabad and other institutions. Zone Tahab conducted running, jumping and exercise sessions at UPS Grawgund and UPS Ladermar. Zone Pampore organised sports workshops, essay competitions, yoga sessions, running, jumping and physical activities across several institutions. Similarly, Zone Tral conducted awareness programmes along with running, jumping and exercise sessions at HS Mandoora and other institutions. Zone Shadimarg organised zonal-level competitions in Volleyball, Kabaddi and Badminton at Indoor Stadium Rajpora. People from different sections of society participated in the activities with enthusiasm and appreciated the continued efforts being undertaken under the campaign to create a healthy, aware and prosperous society.

Bandipora witnesses series of awareness programmes under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JUNE 02: A series of awareness and outreach programmes were organised across Bandipora district under the ongoing Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) to spread awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and to promote a healthy and drug-free society.

At HKM Degree College Bandipora, the NSS Youth Club in collaboration with the Department of Kashmiri organised an Essay Writing Competition on the theme "Ill Effects of Drug Addiction on Youth." The programme was conducted under the supervision of Convener, NCORD Cell, Prof. Irfan Ahmad Wagay.

The competition aimed to create awareness among students regarding the adverse effects of drug addiction on youth, families and society. A large number of students participated enthusiastically and expressed their views through thoughtful and informative essays. The programme encouraged students to reflect upon the importance of leading a healthy and drug-free life and contributed towards the objectives of the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan.

Meanwhile, under the aegis of the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, the Red Ribbon Youth Club in collaboration with the NSS Youth Club of HKM Degree College Bandipora organised a rally on drug abuse awareness. Students and faculty members participated enthusiastically in the rally and raised slogans high-



lighting the harmful effects of substance abuse and the importance of building a drug-free society. The rally aimed to sensitize the youth about the growing menace of drug addiction

and encourage them to adopt a healthy and responsible lifestyle.

As part of the prelude to the 12th International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2026, an Awareness-cum-Yoga Session was organised at

Ummar Public Secondary School Malangam. During the session, awareness was imparted regarding the significance of Yog Asanas, pranayama, meditation and Yog Nidra in combating addiction.

Subsequently, a yoga session was conducted by Mir Shabreena, Yoga Instructor, AHWC Kehnoosa. Around 200 participants attended the programme.

In another programme, a Special Yoga Session-cum-Awareness Programme was conducted at Ummar Public Secondary School Malangam for selected student demonstrators under the vision of Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan and the Directorate of Ayush J&K's commitment to preventive healthcare. The session aimed to train students as demonstrators so that they could showcase the physical and mental benefits of yoga among their peers and the wider community. During the programme, students were guided through structured yoga practices with emphasis on stress management, physical fitness and drug abuse prevention. The session highlighted yoga as an effective tool to counter peer pressure, reduce anxiety and build inner discipline for a drug-free and stress-free future.

The Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) Bandipora also organised a series of awareness activities among fresh driving licence seekers at Trial Ground Nasoo under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan. The activities included an awareness programme, anti-drug pledge ceremony, signature campaign, pasting of awareness stickers on vehicles and a bike rally to spread awareness about the ill effects of drug abuse and the importance of responsible behaviour among youth.

Peer Selection, Pledge Ceremonies held across Bandipora under NMBA

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JUNE 02: Various educational institutions across district Bandipora on Tuesday organised peer selection programmes, pledge ceremonies and awareness activities under the ongoing Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) to promote anti-drug awareness and student leadership.

At Government High School Naidkhai, a peer selection programme titled "Leaders" was organised under NMBA to identify responsible students who would promote anti-drug awareness among their peers. Similar awareness activities were conducted at High School Koragbal and High School Ketson, where students participated in programmes highlighting the harmful effects of substance abuse



and the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

At HSS Quilmuqam, a Peer Selection, Leader Selection and Pledge Taking Ceremony was organised in which students and staff members actively participated. The selected peer leaders pledged to uphold the values of leadership, responsibility, discipline and teamwork.

Meanwhile, under the 100-days Anti-Drug Campaign, HSS Gadakhud organised a peer leader selection programme through a voting process. Selected student leaders were entrusted with promoting anti-drug awareness and discouraging substance abuse within and outside the institution.

A pledge ceremony against substance abuse was also organised at HSS Chuntimulla, while HSS Nowgam conducted a Peer Selection-Leaders programme under NMBA.

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

Secretary DLSA Budgam conducts inspection visit to Legal Aid Clinic

Soibugh Daharmunah

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, JUNE 02: As part of the calendar of activities, Secretary, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Budgam conducted an inspection visit to the Legal Aid Clinic at Soibugh Daharmunah, Budgam.

The inspection was carried out under the supervision of O.P. Bhagat, Chairman, District Legal Services Authority, Budgam.

The primary objective of the visit was to assess the functioning of the Legal Aid Clinic, evaluate the accessibility of legal aid services to the public, and review the availability of infrastructure and furniture at the clinic.

During the inspection, the Secretary interacted with the Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) posted at the clinic and inquired about the number of aid seekers visiting the centre, the nature of grievances brought before them, and the assistance and remedies being provided. She also reviewed the infrastructure and facilities available at the clinic for the effective discharge of duties.

The Secretary emphasized the crucial role of PLVs in ensuring access to justice and advised them to continue discharging their responsibilities with dedication and commitment for the welfare of the general public and legal aid seekers in particular.

Upon reviewing the overall functioning of the Legal Aid Clinic, the Secretary expressed satisfaction with its performance and appreciated the efforts of the PLVs in providing legal assistance and awareness to the community.

Mass awareness activities conducted across Shopian under NMJKA

HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, JUNE 02: As part of the ongoing 100 Day Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan (NMJKA), a series of awareness and outreach activities were conducted across various educational institutions, business establishments, workplaces, and public spaces in Shopian district to spread awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and to promote a healthy, addiction-free society. The awareness programmes witnessed active participation from students, teachers, shopkeepers, cold store workers, employees, and members of the local community. During the activities, participants were sensitized about



the social, economic, and health-related consequences of substance abuse and were encouraged to play an active role in preventing drug addiction within their families and communities.

Awareness rallies, yoga sessions, pledge-taking ceremonies, interactive sessions, distribution of awareness material, and community outreach programmes were organized at different locations.

The participants collectively pledged to remain vigilant against the menace of drugs and to contribute towards creating a safer and healthier environment for future generations. The campaign highlighted the vital role of awareness, education, and community engagement in addressing the challenge of substance abuse. Participants were encouraged to act as ambassadors of change and spread the message of a drug-free society within their respective communities.

Controller LMD conducts extensive tour of Baramulla

HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, JUNE 02: Controller Legal Metrology Department (LMD) J&K Shiv Kumar Gupta conducted an extensive tour of district Baramulla today.

He chaired an awareness camp conducted by LMD Baramulla in collaboration with the University of Kashmir North Campus at the Auditorium of Kashmir University North Campus Deline Baramulla.

The awareness camp was attended by the Director Kashmir University North Campus, Dr. Sheikh Ghulam Mohammad, representatives from different trade bodies, faculty members and students of the campus.

During the camp, consumers and traders were made aware of their rights and responsibilities. Controller LMD J&K stressed on the need to create awareness in consumers and traders about the role of Legal Metrology De-

partment in light of the Jan Vishwas reforms.

Speaking on the event, the Director Kashmir University North Campus highlighted the importance of consumer awareness with regard to various aspects of LPG, MS, HSD and food commodities. The Controller Legal Metrology Department J&K also visited the Food Park Doabgah Sopore where the association of Industrial Units interacted with the Department

and shared vital inputs with the Department about the recently launched Jan Vishwas reforms.

Pertinently, the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2026 has come into force from May 01, 2026 with respect to the amendments of the Legal Metrology Act, 2009. Jan Vishwas reforms are aimed at building trust in trade and commerce. Under the Jan Vishwas reforms, several offences have been decriminalized including some

offences punishable under the Legal Metrology Act, 2009. Jan Vishwas 2.0 has amended 784 Sections of 79 Central Acts including 26 Sections of the Legal Metrology Act, 2009. The concept of improvement notices has been introduced for first offences punishable under several Sections of the Legal Metrology Act, 2009. These reforms are intended to create Ease of Doing Business and Ease of Living by shifting to a trust-based mechanism.

DC Bandipora reviews Mission YUVA; DLIC Approves 134 Cases

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JUNE 02: A review-cum-District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) meeting under Mission YUVA was held today in Bandipora under the chairpersonship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC), Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib.

During the meeting, the Assistant Director Employment, Dr. Amil Khateeb, briefed the chair on the status of various Mission YUVA parameters in the district and the measures being undertaken to improve performance indicators.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the timely processing of cases, proper handling of beneficiaries, and close coordination



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

A total of 134 cases were placed before the DLIC for consideration.

After thorough scrutiny and deliberations, 134 cases were approved.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments and banking institutions to work in close coordination to ensure the timely disbursement of sanctioned cases and facilitate aspiring entrepreneurs in establishing sustainable ventures.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Director Employment Bandipora, ARTO Bandipora, Lead District Manager, J&K Bank, Cluster Head, J&K Bank, Functional Manager DIC Bandipora, District Nodal Officer JKEDI Bandipora, Employment Officer Bandipora, SBDU Lead, and BHD Leads of Bandipora, Sumbal, and Gurez.

Central Kashmir Excise Range destroys Poppy cultivation at multiple locations

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 02: Central Kashmir Excise Range intensified its crackdown against the illicit cultivation of Narcotic crops (Poppy) under the Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan and destroyed illegal poppy cultivation at multiple locations across the Srinagar-Budgam-Ganderbal Excise Range in collaboration with Police, Revenue and Agriculture Department.

The FIR was lodged under the relevant sections of NDPS Act at the concerned Police Stations and all legal formalities including seizure, Sampling and destruction were reportedly completed on spot. In this regard, Case FIR No. 47/2026 and



U/S/18 NDPS Act has been registered at Police Station Kangan, Ganderbal and investigation has been taken up.

The enforcement action exemplifies the commitment of the Excise

Department to curbing illegal activities and upholding the rule of law under the supervision of the Excise Commissioner and the Deputy Excise Commissioner (Executive), Kashmir.

HT EDITORIAL

A Sacred Journey Deserves a Smooth Homecoming

The successful completion of this year's Hajj pilgrimage by thousands of devotees from Kashmir stands as a testament to what efficient planning, institutional coordination and public service can achieve. At a time when managing large pilgrim contingents across international borders presents enormous logistical challenges, the arrangements made for Kashmiri Hajis were widely appreciated. From departure procedures to on-ground facilitation in the holy land, the overall experience reflected a commendable level of preparation and commitment by the Haj Committee and other agencies involved in the exercise.

For weeks, reports from pilgrims painted a reassuring picture of a well-organised pilgrimage. Facilities, guidance and support mechanisms functioned smoothly, allowing pilgrims to focus on the spiritual purpose of their journey rather than administrative concerns. Such positive feedback is not only encouraging but also indicative of the dedication of officials who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure a successful pilgrimage season.

However, every major undertaking is ultimately remembered by its final chapter. Regrettably, what should have been a smooth and joyous homecoming has been clouded by uncertainty over baggage transportation and travel arrangements for returning pilgrims. The issue has emerged as an unwelcome blemish on an otherwise exemplary exercise.

For pilgrims returning from the holy cities, luggage carries significance beyond its material value. It contains personal belongings, medicines, religious articles and gifts carefully chosen for family members waiting back home. Delays or confusion regarding baggage transportation naturally create anxiety, particularly among elderly pilgrims who constitute a large segment of the Hajj contingent from Kashmir. After completing a physically demanding spiritual journey, they should not be burdened with concerns over missing or delayed belongings.

The situation becomes more troubling when coupled with reports of alternative travel plans involving the routing of pilgrims through Ahmedabad and their onward movement by road. Such arrangements may appear practical from an operational standpoint, but they overlook the realities faced by many returning Hajis. Most pilgrims are senior citizens who have already endured long flights, crowded transit points and the rigours of pilgrimage. Subjecting them to additional travel uncertainty and lengthy road journeys can only add to their exhaustion and discomfort.

A pilgrimage of this magnitude requires sensitivity not only during the journey to the holy land but also during the return home. The final leg of the journey is often the most anticipated, as families eagerly await the arrival of their loved ones. Any disruption at this stage inevitably causes inconvenience not only to pilgrims but also to the families making preparations to receive them.

What makes the present situation particularly unfortunate is that it risks overshadowing months of meticulous planning and successful execution. The overwhelming success of the pilgrimage arrangements deserves recognition. Yet the difficulties being experienced at the conclusion of the exercise serve as a reminder that logistical planning must extend seamlessly from departure to homecoming.

The need of the hour is constructive intervention rather than blame. The Jammu and Kashmir administration must work closely with the Union Civil Aviation Ministry, airlines and other stakeholders to find an immediate and practical resolution. Timely transportation of baggage, direct travel arrangements wherever possible and transparent communication with pilgrims can go a long way in restoring confidence and preventing unnecessary hardship. The larger lesson is equally important. Future Hajj operations should incorporate stronger contingency plans for baggage handling and return logistics so that pilgrims are spared avoidable inconvenience. The experience gained this year can serve as a valuable guide for improving future arrangements.

The people of Kashmir have rightly applauded the excellent facilities provided to pilgrims throughout the Hajj season. It is now imperative that the authorities ensure an equally efficient and dignified conclusion to the journey. A pilgrimage that began with meticulous planning and unfolded with remarkable success should not be remembered for difficulties encountered at its final stage.

Those who undertook this sacred journey deserve a homecoming marked by comfort, certainty and peace of mind. Resolving the present issues swiftly and amicably will ensure that the spirit of service which defined this year's Hajj remains intact until the very end.

Degrees Without Jobs: India's Biggest Youth Crisis



■ SYED YUNIS BUKHARI

India is often celebrated as the "youngest nation in the world," with millions of ambitious students graduating every year from schools, colleges, and universities. Degrees are distributed in large numbers, educational institutions are expanding rapidly, and families continue to invest their life savings in the hope of securing a brighter future for their children. Yet, behind this optimistic picture lies a painful reality: a growing number of educated youth remain unemployed, underpaid, or directionless. The crisis of "degrees without jobs" has become one of the most serious challenges facing modern India.

For decades, Indian society has treated academic degrees as the ultimate symbol of success and security. Students are taught from childhood that good marks and higher qualifications guarantee employment and respect in society. As a result, lakhs of young people pursue undergraduate and postgraduate degrees every year. However, many graduates eventually discover that possessing a degree does not necessarily mean possessing employable skills. The gap between education and industry requirements has widened dramatically.

One of the primary reasons behind this crisis is the outdated nature of the education system. In many institutions, learning still revolves around memorization, theoretical examinations, and textbook-based teaching rather than practical understanding, innovation, and problem-solving skills. Students often graduate with-



out gaining real-world exposure, communication abilities, technical competence, or industry experience. Employers today seek candidates who can adapt, think critically, and work efficiently in practical environments, but many graduates are not adequately prepared for these demands.

Another major factor is the intense competition for limited opportunities. Every year, millions of applicants compete for a small number of government jobs because these positions are viewed as stable and prestigious. This unhealthy dependence on government employment has created frustration, anxiety, and disappointment among youth. At the same time, private sector jobs often fail to provide financial security, work-life balance, or fair salaries, leading many educated individuals to feel trapped between unemployment and exploitation.

The rapid advancement of technology and artificial intelligence has further transformed the employment landscape. Traditional jobs are disappearing while new skill-based roles are emerging. Unfortunately, many educational institutions have failed

to update their curriculum according to modern industry needs. Degrees that once guaranteed employment now struggle to provide career security in a highly competitive and technology-driven world.

The psychological impact of unemployment among educated youth is equally alarming. Many young people experience stress, depression, low self-esteem, and social pressure after repeated failures in securing employment. Families invest emotionally and financially in their children's education, expecting stability and success in return. When these expectations remain unfulfilled, frustration spreads not only among students but throughout society.

This crisis also raises serious questions about the commercialization of education in India. In recent years, numerous institutions have emerged promising quality education and successful careers, yet many fail to deliver meaningful skill development or placement opportunities. Education should empower individuals with knowledge, confidence, and practical competence, not merely provide certificates.

To address this issue, India must

urgently reform its education and employment systems. Skill-based learning, vocational education, internships, entrepreneurship training, digital literacy, and industry collaboration should become central parts of academic programs. Students must be encouraged to develop creativity, communication skills, leadership qualities, and practical expertise alongside academic qualifications. Career counseling and mental health support should also be strengthened in educational institutions to help students navigate uncertainty and pressure.

Moreover, society itself must change its mindset regarding success. Every student cannot follow the same path or secure the same type of job. Skilled trades, entrepreneurship, freelancing, and innovation should receive equal respect and encouragement. True education is not merely about earning degrees; it is about building capability, confidence, and contribution to society.

India possesses immense youth potential, but this demographic advantage can become a burden if employment opportunities and skill development do not improve. The nation must act before frustration among educated youth turns into a larger social and economic crisis. Degrees should open doors to opportunities, not become symbols of disappointment. The future of India depends not only on how many students graduate, but on how meaningfully they are prepared for life and work.

About the Author
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Career Planning Beyond Government Jobs



■ FAHEEM UL ISLAM

A few weeks ago, after a career counselling session, I sat with a group of students discussing their future plans. Most of them were graduates. Some had completed postgraduate studies. Almost everyone was preparing for one government examination or another. Out of curiosity, I asked a simple question: Suppose the government job does not come. What is your alternative plan? The students looked at one another. After a brief silence, one young man replied, "Sir, I have never thought about anything else." His response was honest. More importantly, it reflected a reality that exists across Kashmir today.

Walk into any coaching centre in Srinagar, Pulwama, Anantnag or Baramulla or any other corner of Kashmir and you will find hundreds of young people preparing for government examinations. Visit a roadside tea stall near a college campus and the discussion is often the same: recruitment notifications, examination dates, vacancies and selection.

There is nothing wrong with that dream. In fact, the attraction is understandable. Government jobs offer stability, security, a regular income and social respect. Parents feel reassured when their children secure such employment. In a place that has experienced economic uncertainties for decades, a secure job naturally becomes the preferred choice. The business sector has suffered a lot in Kashmir as compare to other states of India because of such uncertainties parents always prefer government job for their wards.

According to official figures presented in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly earlier this year, more than 3.7 lakh educated youth are registered as unemployed. The number is alarming. Behind every statistic is a real person a graduate waiting for an opportunity, a family hoping for financial stability, and a young individual trying to build a future among all such chaos.

Every year, thousands of students graduate from colleges and universities across Jammu and Kashmir. Yet government vacancies remain limited. Even if recruitment drives are conducted regularly, they

cannot absorb every educated young person entering the job market. We need to understand this circle also. Every educated or I can say graduate can not be accommodated in government sector.

As someone who often interacts with students, I have noticed that many young people can clearly tell you the designation they want whether teacher, lecturer, police officer, JKAS/IAS officer or clerk. However, very few can explain what they would do if those opportunities do not materialise. Rather, it is because our society has spent years defining success in a very narrow way. Society has always given prestige to those serving at public govt posts at different levels.

Today, scenario has changed. A young person from a village in Kashmir can work remotely for a company located hundreds or even thousands of kilometres away. Many are earning through digital marketing, graphic designing, content writing, software development, online tutoring and freelance services. These opportunities were uncommon a decade ago but have become increasingly accessible through technology and internet connectivity. Unfortunately, many of our young people either remain unaware of these possibilities or hesitate to pursue them because they do not carry the same social prestige as government employment.

Kashmir itself offers enormous opportunities if we are willing to look beyond conventional thinking. One of our economy's most robust industries is still tourism. The Valley's unmatched beauty draws tourists from all over the nation and the world each year. In addition to hotel owners and tour operators, this opens doors for photographers, travel planners, internet marketers, transportation companies, tour guides, and content producers.

Similarly, our horticulture sector continues to be a backbone of the economy. Kashmir's apples reach markets across India, yet there is tremendous scope in packaging, branding, processing and exports. Young educated people can contribute significantly to these areas through innovation and entrepreneurship. The dynamic Italy apple has also become a source of livelihood for many educated youth who serves from installation of poles till harvesting. I have witnessed this change in our local area of SIDCO industrial area in Jassipora Pulwama where hundreds of young educated minds have started their own business with the help of government schemes and provide livelihood to others too.

Our handicraft sector presents another example. Kashmiri carpets, shawls and paper mache products enjoy global recognition. With proper use of digital platforms, social media and e-commerce, local artisans

and entrepreneurs can access markets far beyond the Valley. We already have examples of young Kashmiris creating their own paths, from Delivery apps to self help groups. There are many stories across Kashmir, though they often receive less attention than government recruitment announcements. Young entrepreneurs are running online businesses, promoting local products, developing tourism ventures and offering digital services. Their success may look different, but it is success nonetheless.

Exams and degrees have been the main focus of our educational system for far too long. Academic credentials are still crucial, but businesses are increasingly seeking candidates with digital literacy, problem-solving capabilities, communication skills, and practical expertise. Colleges should promote internships, expand career counseling, and introduce students to new industries. Students should be made aware of both the evolving nature of employment and exams.

Parents, too, have an important responsibility. Wanting a secure future for one's child is natural. However, encouraging children to explore entrepreneurship, private-sector careers or skill-based professions should not be seen as lowering expectations. A successful entrepreneur creating employment for ten people contributes as much to society as any public servant.

The conversation about employment in Kashmir needs to become broader and more realistic. We cannot continue measuring success through a single yardstick. Government jobs will remain important and desirable, but they cannot be the only destination for every young person.

Our youth possess intelligence, creativity and resilience. What they need is confidence to explore different possibilities and the support to pursue them. I urge government offices to organise more and more scheme awareness programs in different districts to reach mass audience of educated youth. It can play a vital role of bridging the gap and making transparency among such schemes.

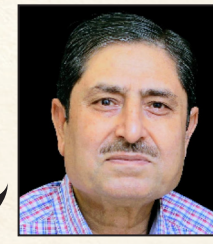
For years, we have asked how many jobs the government can provide. Perhaps it is time to ask another question as well: how many opportunities can our young people create for themselves and for others?

The answer to that question may determine the future of an entire generation.

About the Author
Faheem ul Islam is an Author, Public Speaker and Post Graduate student of International Politics from Aligarh Muslim University.



BOOK REVIEW



Rajinder Premi

"KASHMIR... Shrines and Temples"
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A Monumental Chronicle of Kashmir's Sacred Heritage

KASHMIR... Shrines and Temples (By Chander M. Bhat)
Book Reviewed by Rajinder Premi

In an era when cultural memory is increasingly vulnerable to the forces of neglect, conflict, and the passage of time, a remarkable literary and historical endeavour has emerged as a beacon of preservation. KASHMIR... Shrines and Temples, a four-volume work by noted researcher and heritage documentarian Chander M. Bhat, stands as one of the most comprehensive attempts ever made to record and preserve the sacred heritage of Kashmir.

Spanning more than three decades of painstaking research and fieldwork, the series documents hundreds of temples, shrines, sacred springs, caves, lakes, and other places of religious significance spread across the Valley. More than a collection of historical records, the work is a detailed exploration of Kashmir's spiritual landscape and its deep-rooted traditions that have shaped the region's cultural identity for centuries.

The project was conceived in October 1990, during one of the most turbulent periods in Kashmir's recent history. At a time when uncertainty and instability overshadowed everyday life, Bhat embarked on an ambitious mission to document sacred sites that faced the risk of deterioration, abandonment, or even disappearance. His journeys took him to remote villages, mountain slopes, forests, and isolated settlements in search of places that held historical, religious, and cultural significance.

The four published volumes collectively document more than 300 sacred sites, while the larger project covers over 661 shrines and temples throughout Kashmir. Each entry provides historical background, geographical details, religious importance, associated legends and folklore, architectural features, and observations on the current state of preservation. The books thus serve as

both a historical archive and a guide to understanding the rich spiritual traditions of the region.

What makes this work particularly noteworthy is the dedication behind its creation. Documenting sacred sites in difficult and often sensitive circumstances was not without challenges. During his field visits, Bhat frequently encountered suspicion and resistance while photographing and recording information about religious landmarks. Yet he persisted with his mission, driven by a belief that preserving cultural heritage was essential for future generations.

The volumes cover a broad spectrum of Kashmir's sacred traditions, including ancient temples, Devi shrines, Shaivite centres, sacred springs, and natural sites associated with religious beliefs. In doing so, they highlight the unique relationship between faith and nature that has long

been a defining feature of Kashmiri civilization.

Another distinctive aspect of the series is the inclusion of scholarly forewords by eminent academicians, historians, and literary figures. These contributions provide valuable insights into the significance of the project and place it within the broader context of Kashmir's historical and cultural studies. The books also feature dedicated sections containing reflections and testimonials from readers, scholars, and devotees, offering a range of perspectives on the importance of documenting and preserving sacred heritage.

Heritage experts often stress that monuments and sacred sites are more than physical structures; they are repositories of collective memory and identity. In this regard, KASHMIR... Shrines and Temples performs an invaluable service. It preserves knowledge about

sites that may otherwise have faded from public consciousness and provides a reliable reference for researchers, historians, students, and pilgrims alike.

As concerns grow about the conservation of historical and religious landmarks across the region, works such as Bhat's acquire even greater significance. They not only record the past but also encourage a sense of responsibility towards preserving cultural treasures for the future.

With four volumes already published and further documentation expected, KASHMIR... Shrines and Temples has established itself as a landmark contribution to the study of Kashmir's religious and cultural history. Above all, it stands as a testament to the vision, perseverance, and scholarship of Chander M. Bhat, whose lifelong dedication has ensured that an important part of Kashmir's spiritual heritage will remain accessible to generations to come.

Loss Of childhood In The Rat Race Of Marks



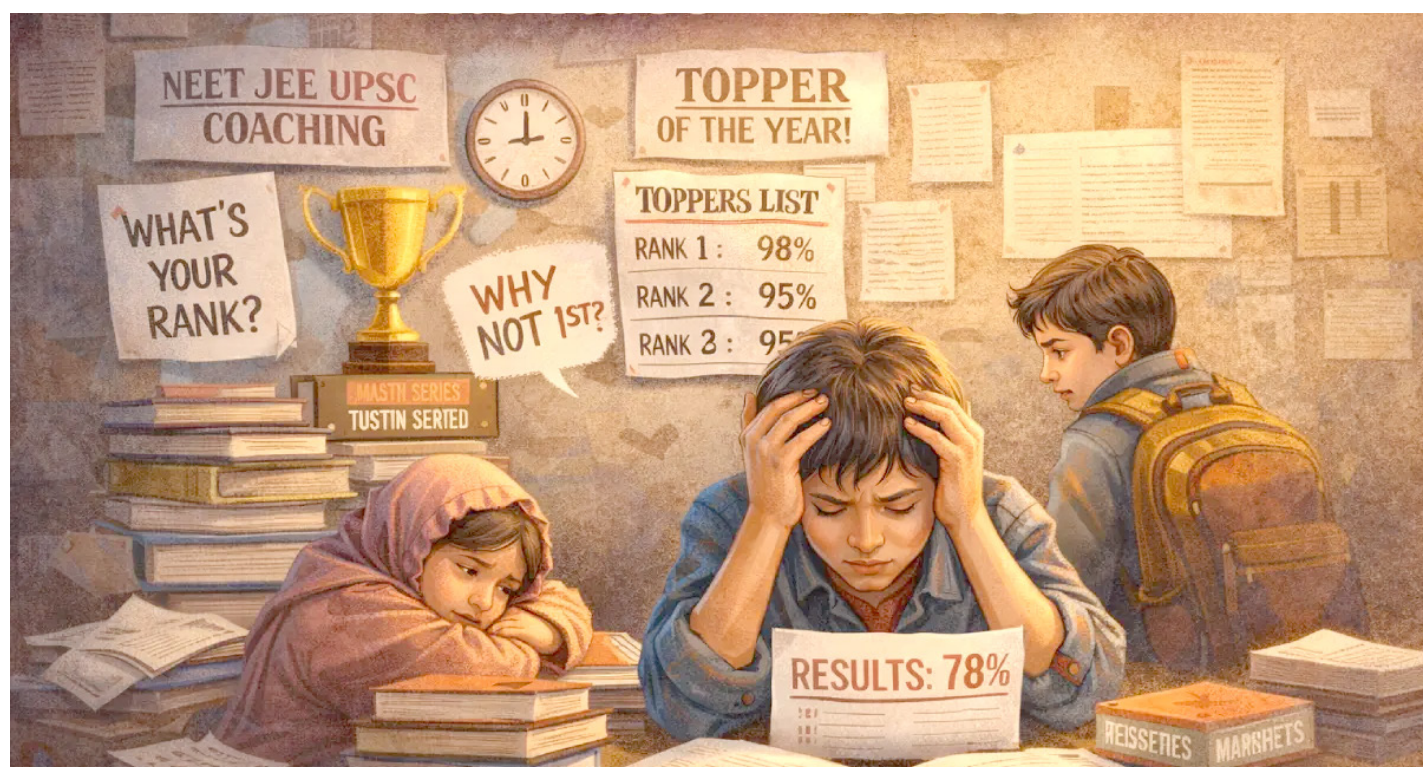
MOOLRAJ

Little attention is paid to the child's interests, abilities, and pursuits. The primary concern becomes marks and rank.

In a developing country like India, education has always been considered a means of respect and progress. Education not only provides knowledge, but also provides understanding of life, social awareness, and direction for a better future. However, over time, the nature of education has changed, and today, the situation has become such that education is simply about scoring high marks and outdoing the competition. Children are evaluated not on their personality, behavior, creativity, or sensitivity, but on their marksheet percentage. As a result, childhood is groaning under the burden of pressure, stress, and expectations.

Today, every parent wants their child to top the class, score the highest marks, and achieve a prestigious position in society. This desire is natural, as every parent wants a bright future for their children. The problem begins when this desire becomes an expectation, and this expectation gradually turns into pressure. Little attention is paid to the child's interests, abilities, and pursuits. The primary concern becomes marks and rank.

The current education system has made children's lives highly competitive. In addition to schoolwork, coaching, tuition, online classes, and assignments have taken up most of their day. Earlier, children played in the fields in the evenings, climbed trees, and laughed and ran with friends, but today their childhood is confined between books and screens. The playground has been reduced to a mobile screen, and worry about results has replaced free-spirited laughter.



Every year, after exam results are announced, society's behavior further impacts children's mental health. Children who score high marks are often labeled "brilliant" by society, while those who score relatively low are often seen as inferior. This comparison creates a sense of inferiority in children. Many become overwhelmed with stress, depression, and fear. Sadly, some children even resort to suicide due to exam failure. This situation indicates a failure not only of the education system, but of society as a whole.

Today, the biggest impact on children is "comparison." "Look how much Sharmaji's son studies," "He got 98 percent, why didn't you?"—such statements deeply hurt children's minds. Comparison never inspires; instead, it weakens self-confidence. Every child is unique in their abilities, thinking, and talents. Some may excel in music, some in sports, some in painting, and some in writing. But our education system and social thinking consider success to be limited to becoming a doctor, engineer, or

administrative officer.

Another important question is whether simply scoring high marks guarantees success in life. Both history and the present bear witness to the extraordinary achievements of many great individuals despite mediocre educational attainments. Success comes not from mere bookish knowledge, but from courage, patience, creativity, sensitivity, and hard work. If education fails to transform a person into a good human being, it is incomplete.

Today's children are technologically astute, but they are becoming increasingly isolated emotionally. With both parents working, the breakdown of joint families, and the rise of mobile phone culture, children are receiving less communication and emotional support. They are unable to openly share their problems. Consequently, the pressure of exams and the future breaks them from within. Instead of being a joyful environment, the educational environment is becoming one of fear. The growing culture of coaching insti-

tutes has also exacerbated this problem. Big advertisements showcasing the faces of toppers create the impression in children and parents that success is only achieved through fierce competition and persistent study. Children are being trained like machines. Their creativity and independent thinking are gradually being eroded. Education is no longer a learning process, but rather a marks-making factory.

The most tragic situation is when children feel burdened by their parents' dreams. They fear that if they get low marks, they will disappoint their family. This fear weakens them mentally. Sometimes, parents unwittingly make their children feel that their love depends on their marks. What children need most is unconditional acceptance and emotional security.

We must understand that the true purpose of education is not just to get a job. The goal of education should be to develop humanity, sensitivity, morality, and self-confidence. If a child learns to help others, respect their parents, become responsible

towards society, and remain mentally healthy, that is true education.

Children should be allowed to pursue their interests. If a child enjoys music, they should be allowed to pursue it. If someone is interested in sports, acting, writing, art, or any other field, they should be respected. Every talent is important. Society must understand that the world isn't just run by doctors and engineers, but also by artists, teachers, farmers, writers, scientists, musicians, and athletes.

Parents and teachers have a greater responsibility here. Instead of scolding and scaring children, it's essential to understand and motivate them. If a child fails, they should be reassured that failure isn't the end, but an opportunity to learn. Sometimes, life's greatest successes are born from failures.

Schools should also move beyond exam-centric education and focus on personality development, creative activities, and moral education. Children should be encouraged to think and understand rather than simply memorize. Education should inspire curiosity and joy, not fear and stress.

The government and society must also be serious about children's mental health. Schools should strengthen counseling systems. Parents also need to be periodically educated about the harmful effects of putting unnecessary pressure on children.

Today, we need to redefine education and success. We should see children not just as marks-making machines, but as sensitive and creative human beings. We should make them realize that their value is far greater than their marksheet.

If we truly want to raise the next generation to be happy, healthy, and confident, we must break away from the blind pursuit of grades. Let children play, dream, fail, and then get back up and move on. Because life isn't just about test scores, it's a beautiful amalgamation of experiences, struggles, emotions, and relationships.

Ultimately it would be appropriate to say that— "Good marks are not important, the person who becomes great is important."

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Beyond Silence: Menstrual Hygiene Challenges Facing Women in J&K



■ SHAHNAWAZ NAZIR

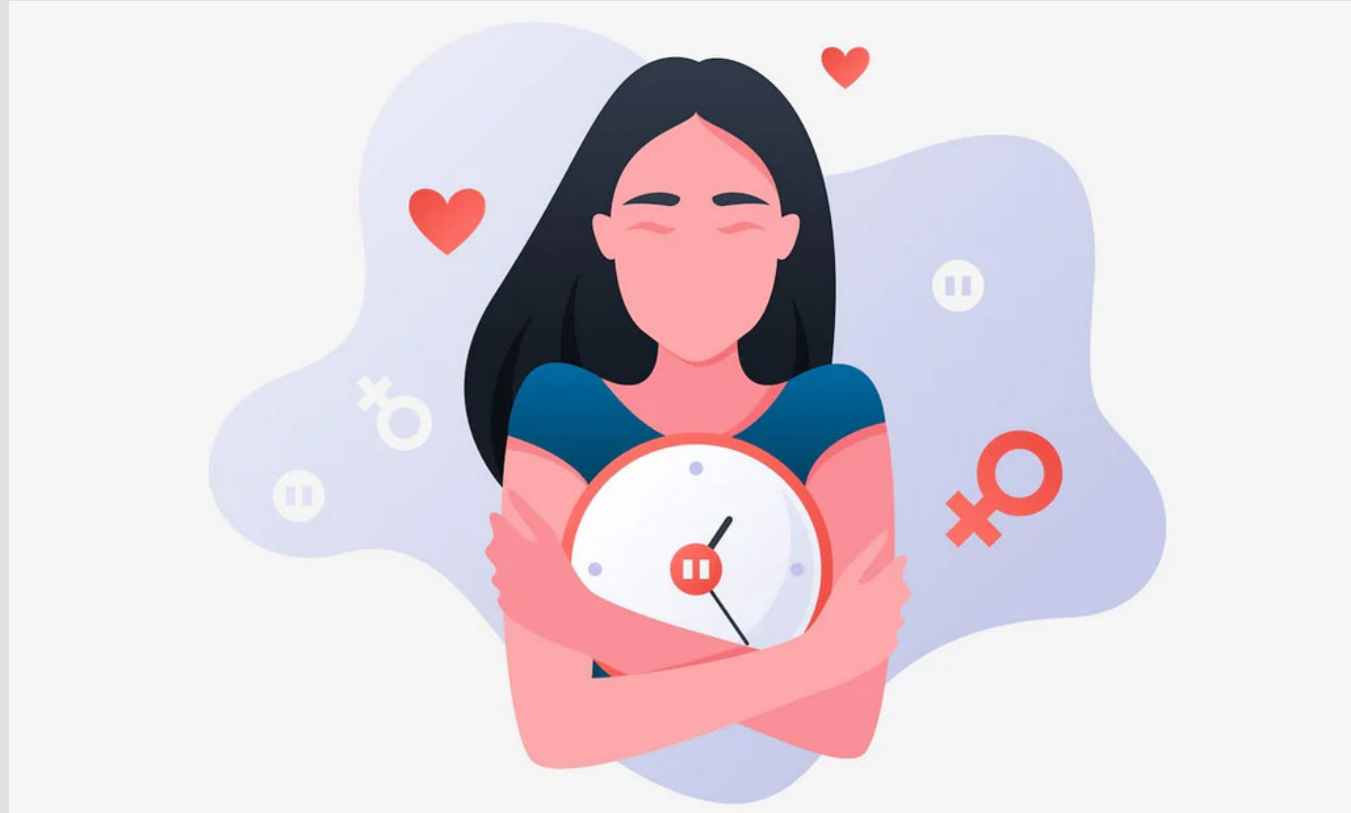
A recent revelation by doctors and health experts that nearly 60 percent of women in Jammu & Kashmir still use cloth during menstruation has once again brought attention to a silent yet deeply important public health issue. While periods are a natural biological process, the social stigma surrounding menstruation continues to force countless women and girls into unsafe and unhygienic practices. Behind this statistic lies a larger story of poverty, lack of awareness, limited accessibility, and the silence imposed by tradition.

For many women living in rural and economically weaker sections of Jammu & Kashmir, sanitary pads remain either unaffordable or inaccessible. In remote villages, shops often do not stock menstrual hygiene products regularly, and even when they are available, many women hesitate to buy them openly due to social embarrassment. As a result, generations of women have continued to rely on old cloth pieces during menstruation.

Medical experts warn that using unclean or improperly dried cloth can lead to serious health complications, including urinary tract infections, reproductive tract infections, skin irritation, and other gynecological problems. However, doctors also clarify that cloth itself is not necessarily dangerous if it is cleaned properly, dried under sunlight, and changed regularly. The problem arises when shame and secrecy prevent women from maintaining proper menstrual hygiene.

In many homes across Kashmir, menstruation is still treated as a taboo subject. Young girls often grow up without receiving proper education about periods before experiencing them for the first time. Many are left frightened, confused, and emotionally distressed because conversations about menstruation remain hidden behind cultural discomfort. Mothers themselves, shaped by generations of silence, often struggle to explain menstrual health openly to their daughters.

The impact of poor menstrual hygiene



goes beyond physical health. It directly affects education, confidence, and dignity. Many school-going girls miss classes during their menstrual cycle due to the lack of sanitary products or proper washroom facilities in schools. Some eventually lose interest in education altogether because managing periods becomes a monthly burden. In conservative societies, this silence can slowly limit opportunities for girls and reinforce inequality.

The situation is particularly difficult in remote areas of Kashmir where healthcare awareness programs rarely reach communities effectively. Mountainous terrain, harsh winters, and limited medical infrastructure make access to health services more challenging. While government schemes have improved menstrual hygiene awareness over the years, much more work remains to be done. Distribution of free or subsidized sanitary pads in schools and rural health centers is a positive step, but sustainable awareness campaigns are equally necessary.

What the Government Should Do
The government must treat menstrual hygiene as a public health priority rather than merely a social issue. First, sanitary pads should be made affordable and accessible in every district, especially in far-flung rural areas. Free pad distribution programs in government

schools, colleges, and primary health centers should be expanded further so that no girl is forced to miss education because of her periods.

Authorities must also improve sanitation infrastructure in schools. Clean washrooms with water supply, disposal facilities, and privacy are essential for maintaining menstrual hygiene. Many schools in rural areas still lack proper facilities, making menstruation difficult for students.

The government should launch regular awareness campaigns in local languages through schools, healthcare workers, mosques, community centers, and media platforms. Menstrual education should become part of the school curriculum so that girls understand their health scientifically and confidently.

Another important step would be encouraging women-led self-help groups to manufacture low-cost sanitary pads locally. This would not only create employment opportunities for women but also ensure affordable menstrual products reach remote communities. Mobile medical units and female healthcare workers can further help spread awareness in villages where women may hesitate to seek information openly.

What Parents Should Do
Parents have perhaps the most important role in breaking the silence sur-

rounding menstruation. Mothers and fathers alike should create an environment where daughters feel safe discussing their health without fear or embarrassment. Menstruation must be explained as a natural biological process rather than something shameful or impure.

Girls should be educated about periods before they experience them for the first time. Proper guidance regarding hygiene, nutrition, emotional changes, and safe menstrual practices can reduce fear and confusion. Mothers should teach daughters how to maintain cleanliness during menstruation and explain the importance of changing pads or cloth regularly.

Fathers also need to become part of the conversation. In many households, menstruation is treated solely as a "women's matter," which reinforces stigma and silence. When fathers show understanding and support, girls feel emotionally secure and respected.

Parents should also avoid imposing unnecessary restrictions on girls during menstruation. In many societies, girls are prevented from participating in daily activities because of myths and misconceptions. Such practices can negatively affect confidence and mental well-being.

Most importantly, parents must listen to their daughters with empathy. Men-

struation can be physically and emotionally challenging, especially during adolescence. Compassionate communication can help young girls feel supported rather than isolated.

What Jammu & Kashmir needs today is not merely a health campaign but a social transformation. Menstrual health must become part of everyday conversation rather than a hidden topic associated with shame. Schools should include comprehensive menstrual education programs for both girls and boys so that future generations grow up with understanding rather than stigma. Educating boys is equally important because social attitudes cannot change if only women carry the burden of silence.

Religious scholars, community elders, teachers, and local influencers also have an important role to play. In a society where public opinion is deeply shaped by cultural and spiritual voices, awareness efforts become more effective when respected figures speak openly about health and dignity. Menstruation should never be treated as impurity or weakness. It is part of the natural cycle of life itself.

Encouragingly, change is slowly emerging. Social media campaigns, healthcare workers, women activists, and educators across Jammu & Kashmir are increasingly speaking about menstrual hygiene awareness. Younger generations appear more willing to challenge old taboos and create spaces for honest discussion. In urban areas, awareness has significantly improved compared to previous decades. Yet the real challenge lies in reaching remote villages where silence still dominates.

The statistic that 60 percent of women in Jammu & Kashmir continue using cloth during menstruation should not merely become another headline that disappears after a few days. It should serve as a wake-up call for society, institutions, and policymakers alike. Menstrual hygiene is not a luxury. It is a basic right linked to health, education, and dignity.

A society progresses not only through economic development or technological advancement but also through how it treats its women and addresses their most fundamental needs. Breaking the silence surrounding menstruation is not just about health awareness—it is about restoring dignity, compassion, and equality to countless women whose struggles often remain unseen.

Only when menstruation is discussed openly, without shame or fear, can real change begin.

Iodised Salt: A Small Addition, A Big Difference



■ SURINDERPAL SINGH

Salt is one of the most indispensable ingredients in human nutrition. Present in almost every kitchen across the world, it not only enhances the flavour of food but also plays a vital role in maintaining various bodily functions. However, ordinary salt alone cannot meet all the nutritional needs of the human body. To address one of the most widespread micronutrient deficiencies globally, scientists and public health experts introduced iodised salt, a simple innovation that has transformed the health of millions of people. Iodised salt is ordinary table salt that has been fortified with a small quantity of iodine, an essential mineral required for human growth and development. The process of adding iodine to salt is known as salt iodisation. Since the human body cannot produce iodine naturally, it must be obtained through food and dietary sources. Unfortunately, iodine is found in limited quantities in many soils and foods, particularly in inland and mountainous regions. As a result, large sections of the population historically suffered from iodine deficiency. Adding iodine to a commonly consumed food item such as salt became an effective, affordable and

practical solution.

The primary component of iodised salt is sodium chloride, which constitutes about 97 to 99 percent of its composition. Small amounts of iodine compounds such as potassium iodate or potassium iodide are added to ensure adequate iodine intake. Potassium iodate is generally preferred because it remains stable under hot and humid conditions. Some manufacturers may also include anti-caking agents to prevent clumping. Despite these additions, iodised salt looks, tastes and functions almost exactly like ordinary table salt.

The importance of iodine lies in its role in the production of thyroid hormones, namely thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3). These hormones regulate metabolism, growth, brain development, body temperature, energy production and reproductive health. Without sufficient iodine, the thyroid gland cannot function properly, leading to a range of health complications.

One of the most significant benefits of iodised salt is its ability to prevent goitre, a condition characterized by the enlargement of the thyroid gland. Before the introduction of iodised salt, goitre was common in many regions where iodine deficiency was widespread. Regular consumption of iodised salt has dramatically reduced the occurrence of this condition and helped maintain healthy thyroid function. Iodine is particularly important during pregnancy and childhood. Adequate iodine intake supports proper brain development and cognitive function in growing children. Scientific studies have shown that severe iodine deficiency can lead

to developmental delays, learning disabilities, reduced intelligence and impaired mental growth. Through universal salt iodisation programmes, millions of children worldwide have been protected from these consequences and given a better chance of reaching their full intellectual potential.

Maternal health also depends heavily on sufficient iodine intake. Pregnant women require higher amounts of iodine to support the growth and development of the unborn child. Adequate iodine consumption helps reduce the risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, congenital abnormalities and developmental disorders. For this reason, health experts continue to emphasize the importance of iodised salt as a key component of maternal nutrition.

In addition to supporting brain development and thyroid function, iodine contributes to healthy metabolism. Thyroid hormones regulate how the body converts food into energy. When iodine intake is adequate, individuals are more likely to maintain healthy energy levels, proper weight regulation and overall metabolic balance.

The consequences of iodine deficiency can be serious. In children, deficiency may result in poor mental development, reduced learning ability, growth retardation and lower IQ levels. Adults may experience fatigue, weight gain, thyroid enlargement, reduced productivity and hypothyroidism. In pregnant women, iodine deficiency can lead to pregnancy complications and long-term developmental problems in children. Health experts regard iodine deficiency as one of the leading preventable causes of

intellectual disability worldwide.

While iodine is essential, excessive intake can also create health concerns. Very high levels of iodine consumption may contribute to hyperthyroidism, thyroid inflammation or thyroid dysfunction in sensitive individuals. However, the quantity added to iodised salt is carefully regulated and is considered safe for the vast majority of the population.

In recent years, iodised salt has once again become a topic of global discussion. One reason is that iodine deficiency continues to affect millions of people despite decades of public health efforts. Another factor is the growing prevalence of thyroid disorders, which has increased interest in understanding iodine intake and nutritional balance. Changing dietary habits have also contributed to the debate. Many consumers now prefer gourmet salts, Himalayan pink salt, sea salt and other specialty products, some of which contain little or no added iodine. This trend has raised concerns among health professionals regarding adequate iodine consumption.

At the same time, public health campaigns worldwide encourage people to reduce their salt intake to lower the risk of hypertension and cardiovascular disease. As salt consumption declines, experts are exploring ways to ensure sufficient iodine intake without increasing sodium consumption. Global organizations also continue to highlight the importance of iodine for maternal and child health, particularly because it remains essential for fetal brain development and healthy childhood growth.

Several misconceptions about iodised salt

persist. Some people believe that iodised salt causes serious diseases, yet there is no scientific evidence to support such claims when consumed in recommended amounts. Others assume that natural salts automatically contain adequate iodine. In reality, most natural salts contain only small and inconsistent amounts of iodine unless they have been specifically fortified. Another common myth is that only children need iodine. In fact, people of all ages require iodine, although pregnant women and growing children have particularly high nutritional needs. Apart from iodised salt, iodine can be obtained from foods such as fish, seafood, seaweed, dairy products and eggs. However, these foods may not be consumed regularly in many regions, making iodised salt one of the most reliable dietary sources of iodine.

The story of iodised salt demonstrates how a small nutritional intervention can produce enormous public health benefits. By adding a tiny quantity of iodine to a universally used food product, governments and health organizations have prevented millions of cases of iodine deficiency, thyroid disorders and developmental disabilities. As the world faces changing diets, evolving health challenges and ongoing nutritional concerns, iodised salt continues to play a vital role in protecting human health. Its success serves as a powerful reminder that some of the most effective solutions to major health problems can be remarkably simple.

The author is a Faculty,
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CS Calls for Investment Ready Industrial Parks Under BHAVYA Scheme

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 2: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today reviewed the preparedness of the Industries & Commerce Department for participation in the Government of India's flagship Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana (BHAVYA), a national initiative aimed at developing world-class plug-and-play industrial parks across the country to promote industrial growth, attract investments and generate employment opportunities.



The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, I&C; Director, Industries, Kashmir/Jammu; MD, SIDCO/SICOP and other concerned officers of the department.

Highlighting the transformative potential of the BHAVYA scheme for Jammu and Kashmir, the Chief Secretary directed the Industries & Commerce Department to expedite the process of finalizing the most suitable land parcels in both Jammu and Kashmir divisions for submission under the scheme.

He observed that the initiative presents a unique opportunity for the Union Territory to establish modern industrial ecosystems capable of attracting large-scale investments, generating employment opportunities and promoting balanced regional economic development.

The Chief Secretary stressed the need for meticulous planning, he called for the preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for each shortlisted land parcel in conformity with the scheme guidelines. He further emphasized that the proposed industrial estates should be developed as fully integrated plug-

and-play facilities equipped with all requisite infrastructure, utilities, logistics and support services, enabling industrial units to commence operations immediately upon allotment without facing procedural or infra-structural bottlenecks.

During the meeting, Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce, Vikramjit Singh, presented a detailed overview of the scheme and the steps being taken by the Department to secure inclusion under the ambitious programme notified by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

Elaborating further he stated that the scheme aims to establish 100 plug-and-play industrial parks across the country in a phased manner over six years from 2026-27 to 2031-32, with a total financial outlay of about Rs. 33,660 crore. Up to 50 industrial parks will be taken up in the first phase through a challenge-based competitive selection process.

Reviewing the progress made so far, the Chief Secretary was apprised that a land parcel measuring about 725 kanals at Vijaypur in Samba district has been identified as a potential site for development of an industrial park under the scheme. Similarly for

Kashmir division, feasibility assessments are being undertaken for several identified land parcels, including sites at Anantnag, Budgam and Srinagar districts, to evaluate their suitability for development of plug-and-play industrial parks in accordance with the scheme guidelines.

Moreover the Chief Secretary was apprised that the first application window under the scheme has opened from June 1 and will remain active till July 31, 2026, during which proposals from eligible states and Union Territories will be considered for approval.

Concluding the Chief Secretary directed all the stakeholders to work in mission mode to ensure timely completion of all procedural requirements and submission of a comprehensive, competitive and technically robust proposal within the stipulated timelines.

He further stressed that participation in the scheme would provide a significant impetus to investment, entrepreneurship, employment generation and overall economic growth in the region, and called upon all concerned to leave no stone unturned in leveraging this landmark national initiative for the benefit of Jammu and Kashmir.

Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my father's name MOHAMMAD AKBAR BHAT R/O BANDI PAYEEN Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040016208 wants to be registered on my name BASHIR AHMAD BHAT S/O MOHAMMAD AKBAR BHAT R/O BANDI PAYEEN .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...BASHIR AHMAD BHAT
S/O ...MOHAMMAD AKBAR BHAT
R/O .. BANDI PAYEEN

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application of IRSHAD AHMAD DEADER S/O SAIEN MOHD DEADER R/O BANDIBALA for the issuance of LEGAL HEIR certificate

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above in this context a report sought from patwari halqa concerned and the Death certificate issued by the competent authority reveals that PATHANI BEGUM W/O SAIEN MOHD DEADER has passed away on 25/04/2026 . The report of the patwari further depicts that the deceased has left behind following dependent as tabulated below

- 1... ABDUL HAMID son 43 years labour married
- 2... PARVEENA BEGUM daughter 46 years H/W married
- 3...SHAMEEMA BEGUM daughter 37 years //
- 4...SHAHNAZ BEGUM // 27 years //
- 5...IRSHAD AHMAD son 26 years Labour unmarried

The applicant has applied for Issuance of Legal heir certificate in favour of Self

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

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Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application of MEEMA BEGUM D/O ZAHOOR AHMAD BHAT R/O ATHOORA RESHIPORA for the issuance of LEGAL HEIR certificate

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above in this context a report sought from patwari halqa concerned and the Death certificate issued by the competent authority reveals that ZAHOOR AHMAD BHAT S/O MOHD MAQBOOL BHAT has passed away on 14/05/2026 .The report of the patwari further depicts that the deceased has left behind following dependent as tabulated below

- 1... MEEMA BEGUM wife 41 years widow
- 2... WASIF ZAHOOR son 17 years student unmarried
- 3...LUKMAN ZAHOOR Son 13 years student unmarried
- 4...SALMAN ZAHOOR Son 09 years student unmarried
- 5...MOHD MAQBOOL MIR Father 70 years Farmer married
- 6...SITARA BEGUM Mother 63 years H/W married

The applicant has applied for Issuance of Legal heir certificate in favour of Self

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

Naib Tehsild Kreeri

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of OBC in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of KREERI of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the TELI community having annual income 1009764// the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1...NAZIR AHMAD TELI Father 49 Govt Employee
- 2...NAGEENA BEGUM Mother 41 years H/W
- 3... ARSALAN NAZIR applicant 18 years student
- 4...ZEENAT NAZIR sister 16 years student
- 5...FARHAN NAZIR Brother 10 years student

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

Naib Tehsild Kreeri

Poonch Brigade Introduces Technology-Driven Initiatives for Welfare of LoC Border Residents

HT NEWS NETWORK

POONCH, JUNE 02: Demonstrating its unwavering commitment to the welfare and development of border communities, the Indian Army's Poonch Brigade has introduced a series of innovative, technology-driven initiatives at Line of Control (LoC) gates in Poonch district. These measures are aimed at enhancing the ease of living for residents residing in villages located across the border fence while ensuring efficient and secure movement through the gates.

Among the major initiatives is the introduction of an Aadhaar-based entry and exit system, which has transformed the process of civilian movement across LoC gates. The digital verification mechanism enables swift and accurate authentication of individuals, significantly reducing waiting times and eliminating cumbersome manual procedures. The system has brought considerable relief to local residents who regularly cross the gates for farming, livelihood activities, and other essential needs. To further enhance security and convenience, Poonch Brigade has also installed modern X-ray baggage screening machines at various LoC gates. These advanced systems facilitate rapid and effective screening of luggage and personal belongings, ensuring high security standards while minimizing inconvenience to civilians. The initiative has streamlined gate operations and improved the overall experience of commuters. The adoption of modern technology reflects Poonch Brigade's forward-looking approach towards border management and public service. By integrating digital solutions with existing security mechanisms, the Brigade has created a more efficient, transparent, and citizen-friendly system that benefits thousands of border residents.

Beyond security-related measures, Poonch Brigade has consistently undertaken numerous initiatives for the welfare of local communities. Through various outreach programmes, infrastructure support projects, educational assistance, healthcare initiatives, and community engagement activities, the Brigade has played a vital role in improving the quality of life in remote border areas. These efforts have strengthened the bond of trust between the Indian Army and the people residing along the LoC. The latest technological interventions stand as another milestone in Poonch Brigade's continued efforts to address the challenges faced by border residents. By combining innovation with public welfare, the Brigade has set an example of how modern technology can be effectively utilized to improve service delivery in sensitive and strategically important regions. These initiatives underscore the Indian Army's dedication not only to safeguarding the nation's borders but also to ensuring the well-being, convenience, and development of the communities living in frontier areas. Through such people-centric measures, Poonch Brigade continues to foster confidence, strengthen civil-military cooperation, and contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic progress of border populations.

Khyber Cement Named J&K's Top Cement Brand

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 02: Khyber Cement has been once again honoured as the Best Cement Brand of Jammu & Kashmir at the Jammu Kashmir Business Conclave 2026, held at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC), Srinagar.

The conclave, organised under the theme "Kashmir Ek Nayee Umeed", brought together leading entrepreneurs, industry stalwarts, and business leaders to celebrate organisations contributing significantly to the economic and industrial growth of Jammu & Kashmir. The event was graced by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, Mr Omar Abdullah, as the Chief Guest.

The award was received by Manzoor Ahmad Mir and Wasim Ahmed Khan on behalf of Khyber Cement and was presented by Hon'ble Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in recognition of the company's enduring contribution towards infrastructure development, industrial progress, quality manufacturing, and economic growth in the region.

For decades, Khyber Cement has remained a household name across Jammu & Kashmir, earning the trust of generations through its unwavering commitment to quality, reliability, and excellence. As one of the region's pioneering industrial enterprises, the company has played a vital role in supporting the development of Jammu & Kashmir.

Beyond its manufacturing excellence, Khyber Cement has consistently demonstrated its commitment towards the socio-economic development of the region through initiatives focused on education, healthcare, youth empowerment, sports, community welfare, and sustainable growth. The company's contribution extends beyond cement production, reflecting its vision of creating long-term value for the people and communities it serves.

Commenting on the recognition, Mr Umar Trambo, Director Corporate & Strategy, Khyber Cement, said:

"This recognition is a proud moment for the entire Khyber family and a reflection of the trust that the people of Jammu & Kashmir have placed in our brand over the years. Khyber Cement's journey has always been closely linked with the growth and progress of the region. As we look towards the future, we remain committed to driving innovation, strengthening our contribution to industrial development, creating opportunities for local communities, and continuing to deliver the quality and reliability that have defined our legacy for generations."

Manzoor Ahmad Mir Head Commercial's Legal & Regulatory Affairs at Khyber Cement added:

"This award is not merely a recognition of our achievements as a company; it is a recognition of the collective efforts of our employees, partners, customers, and stakeholders who have been instrumental in shaping the Khyber story. We are honoured by this recognition and remain committed to building a stronger, more prosperous Jammu & Kashmir."

This honour further reinforces Khyber Cement's position as the leading cement brand of Jammu & Kashmir and stands as a testament to the confidence and trust placed in the company by customers, partners, and communities across the region. As Jammu & Kashmir continues its journey of growth and transformation, Khyber Cement remains committed to building the foundations of progress and contributing meaningfully towards the region's economic, industrial, and social development.

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2nd Merit List	09 June 2026
Admission (2nd Round)	10 June - 15 June 2026
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DC Budgam chairs meeting of Revenue Officers

Reviews Digitisation, Land Records, PM SVAMITVA, JK Samadhan, Public Service Delivery

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, JUNE 02: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today chaired a meeting of Revenue Officers at the Conference Hall of the DC Office Complex Budgam to assess tehsil-wise progress on key revenue matters and the delivery of revenue-related services across the district.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Budgam, All SDMs, Collector Land Acquisition Budgam, all Tehsildar's and other concerned officers.

At the outset, the DC reviewed the status of various revenue initiatives being implemented across Budgam district.

He emphasized the need to maintain the pace of work and



ensure timely completion of all pending tasks and reforms.

During the meeting, the DC was informed that Budgam district comprises 503 revenue

villages, each having its own Jamabandi record. These records are being uploaded on the designated portal as part of the ongoing digitisation process

aimed at enhancing transparency, accessibility and efficiency in revenue administration.

The DC directed that registers be maintained in every village for recording grievances and objections raised by residents regarding revenue records.

While reviewing the implementation of the online revenue grievance portal, jkzameensudar.jk.gov.in, the DC stressed the importance of prompt disposal of grievances registered by citizens and directed officers to clear all pending cases at the earliest to ensure responsive and citizen-centric service delivery.

The meeting also reviewed the progress achieved under the PM SVAMITVA Scheme and the ongoing process of sub-parcelization of mother maps in the district.

The DC directed concerned officers to complete targets under these initiatives in a time-bound manner and ensure effective coordination at all levels for their successful implementation. He urged officers to continue working with dedication, professionalism and accountability to strengthen public confidence in the Revenue Department.

The DC also reviewed JK SAMADHAN, and offline and online grievances related to revenue matters. He stressed that all revenue services should be delivered in a transparent, efficient and citizen-friendly manner within the prescribed timelines under the Public Services Guarantee Act (PSGA), ensuring better governance and improved service delivery across Budgam district.

Commissioner SMC reviews progress of AMRUT 2.0 Water Infrastructure Projects, Calls for timely completion

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 02: Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Faz Lul Haseeb, today conducted a comprehensive inspection of key water supply infrastructure projects being executed under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme AMRUT 2.0, reviewing the progress of works aimed at strengthening and modernizing Srinagar's urban water distribution network.

During the inspection, the Commissioner visited the under-construction Overhead Water Tanks (OHTs) at Jenab Sahib, Soura and Behrar Baghwanpora, Lal Bazar, where he assessed the pace of execution, quality standards, and overall physical progress of the projects. He reviewed the status of ongoing civil works and held detailed discussions with engineers and project officials regarding project timelines and implementation challenges.

Emphasizing the strategic importance of the projects, Haseeb stated that the new water storage infrastructure will substantially improve the city's water supply system by enhancing storage capacity, strengthening distribution efficiency, and ensuring a more dependable supply of potable water to residents of the beneficiary areas.

The Commissioner directed the executing agencies to accelerate the pace of work and ensure completion of all components within the prescribed timelines without compromising quality. He stressed that timely delivery of public infrastructure projects remains a priority and called for strict adherence to technical specifications and approved project standards.

While interacting with field engineers and officials, Haseeb underscored the need for robust supervision, regular monitoring, and close inter-departmental coordination to ensure smooth execution of works. He instructed the concerned officers to proactively resolve any bottlenecks and maintain sustained momentum to avoid delays in project completion.

Reaffirming SMC's commitment to strengthening urban infrastructure under AMRUT 2.0, the Commissioner observed that the scheme is contributing significantly to the development of resilient civic infrastructure and the enhancement of essential public services. He noted that the ongoing investments in water supply infrastructure are expected to deliver long-term benefits by improving service delivery, supporting future urban growth, and enhancing the overall quality of life for citizens.

The inspection was attended by the Joint Commissioner (Works), SMC, Executive Engineers of the Public Health Engineering Department, and other senior officials associated with the implementation of AMRUT 2.0 projects.

DC Udhampur chairs DLTFC meeting under JKREGP

HT NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR, JUNE 02: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Minga Sherpa today chaired a meeting of the District Level Task Force Committee meeting under the Jammu & Kashmir Rural Employment Generation Programme.

A total of 39 applications were placed before the Committee for consideration. After detailed scrutiny, 35 applications were approved for sponsorship to banks for further processing and finan-



cial assistance.

The DC emphasized the need to bring more unemployed educated youth of the district under the ambit of government-sponsored self-employment schemes to maximize employment generation. He urged bankers to ensure speedy disbursement of sanctioned cases so that aspiring entrepreneurs can establish their units without delay and create sustainable employment opportunities.

Highlighting the importance of self-reliance, the DC encouraged unemployed educated youth to come forward and avail themselves of the benefits offered under the flagship government schemes to earn their livelihood with dignity and honour, while also contributing to employment generation in the district.

The DC also directed the concerned departments to intensify awareness activities regarding the government-sponsored schemes. He stressed the need to organize awareness camps in both rural and urban areas so that aspiring entrepreneurs and unemployed youth are adequately informed about the available schemes, their benefits and the procedures for availing assistance.

DC Budgam reviews progress on Census-2027 related activities in District

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, JUNE 02: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam Athar Aamir Khan who is also the Principal Census Officer of the district, on Tuesday chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of Census 2027 related activities in the District.

During the meeting the DC was apprised about the timelines, digital tools, and roles and responsibilities of various census functionaries.

The DC was also informed about the key aspects including the two phases of Census 2027 viz House Listing and Housing Census (HLO) and Population Enumeration as well as the use of digital platforms such as mobile applications and the Census Management and Monitoring



System (CMMS) for efficient data collection and monitoring.

The DC took a detailed charge-wise review of the progress with regard to formation and mapping of Houselisting Blocks (HLBs), appointment of enumerators and supervisors, and readiness of logistics and digital infrastructure.

The DC stressed the importance of a systematic approach for smooth conduct of census.

Furthermore, the DC directed proper utilization of the CMMS portal for real-time monitoring and reporting, and asked officers to ensure seamless coordination among all stakeholders.

He further directed officers to intensify awareness initiatives, including promotion of self-enumeration, to ensure maximum public participation and accuracy of data.

The DC also directed the Charge Officers to establish helpdesks at the charge level to address technical and operational issues promptly.

Besides, ADC Budgam, DESO Budgam, and concerned Charge officers attended the meeting.

MP Ghulam Ali Khatana holds Public Outreach Programme at Banihal, reviews developmental, public issues

HT NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN, JUNE 02: Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) Ghulam Ali Khatana today visited Banihal and convened a public outreach programme to listen and address the grievances and developmental concerns of people from various parts of the Sub-Divisions of Banihal and Ramsoo.

A large number of residents from across Panchayats, Municipal Committee Banihal and adjoining areas participated in the programme and projected a wide range of public issues and demands.

Addressing the gathering, the MP emphasized the need for proactive, transparent and people-centric governance, particularly in far-flung and underserved areas of district Ramban. He urged officers to

view public service as an opportunity to uplift marginalized sections of society and ensure that government welfare schemes reach the poor and deserving without delay.

The MP assured the public of full support from the Union Government in resolving genuine grievances and accelerating developmental initiatives. He stressed that bottlenecks hampering key infrastructure projects must be identified and addressed on priority to ensure their timely completion.

Among the issues raised by the public were completion of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) projects, meeting shortage of staff in schools, upgradation of educational institutions, road connectivity, ambulance facilities for Khari and Mangit, posting of doctors in health centres,



strengthening of healthcare services, development of tourism infrastructure in Neel, establishment of Degree Colleges for Khari and Pogal-Paristan, release of pending PMAY payments, repair of Pan-

chayat Ghar Chamalwas and expediting Mission YUVA loan applications.

The MP directed the concerned officers to address public grievances in a time-bound manner and sought on-the-spot

response from the departments concerned. He also instructed the Health Department to ensure rotational deployment of doctors in remote and underserved areas.

Highlighting the importance of youth empowerment, the MP stressed employment generation and directed officers to intensify awareness regarding self-employment and livelihood schemes. He also spoke about the growing menace of drug abuse and called for collective efforts to protect the youth from substance abuse.

Among those present were SDM Mohammad Naseeb Bajaan, ACD Sheraz Ahmad, CMO Dr. Kamal Zadoo, Executive Engineers of PMGSY, PWD, PDD and Jal Shakti Departments, SDPO, Tehsildar and other district officers and officials.

DC Rajouri reviews implementation status of 18 Central Schemes

Stresses 100% saturation, timely delivery of benefits

HT NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI, JUNE 02: Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma, today chaired a Sub-Division-wise review meeting to assess the implementation status of 18 major Central Government flagship schemes in the district.

The meeting reviewed the progress achieved under PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM), Pradhan Mantri Matya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Atal Pension Yojana, Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, HADP/JKCIP, Jal Jeevan Mission, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), Pradhan Mantri

Awaz Yojana (Urban and Gramin), PM Vishwakarma, Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin and Urban) and VB-G RAM-G.

Taking a detailed review of the implementation of schemes subdivision-wise, the Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned officers to ensure 100 percent saturation of targets and timely delivery of benefits to all eligible beneficiaries. He emphasized the need to identify and address field-level bottlenecks on priority to improve implementation and expand coverage.

Highlighting the transformative impact of these flagship schemes on socio-economic development, the Deputy Commissioner stressed the importance of maximizing outreach and ensuring that no eligible benefi-



ciary is left out. He also directed officers to intensify efforts under social security schemes and increase enrolment of eligible citizens.

Reviewing the progress under the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) scheme, the Deputy Commissioner instructed the concerned departments to organize dedicated awareness and registration camps for covering left-out beneficiaries. He further directed officers to fix subdivision-

wise targets, undertake regular monitoring and ensure effective implementation at the grassroots level.

The DC underscored the importance of close inter-departmental coordination, continuous monitoring and proactive field engagement for achieving the desired outcomes under all schemes. Among others, ADCC Malik Zada Sheraz-ul-Haq, ADC Ravi Kumar Sihag, CPO Maqsood Ahmed, ACR Mohd Jahangir Khan, ADC Auqil Nuavid, ACP Mohd Rafeeq, DSHO Dr. P.P. Sagotra, CAO Rajesh Verma, ALC Pradyot Gupta and AD Fisheries attended the meeting. ADC Sunderbani Ramkesh Sharma, ADC Nowshera Pritam Lal Thapa, ADC Koteranka Dil Mir and SDM Thanamandi Abid Hus-sain Shah participated through virtual mode.

DC Ramban inspects facilities along yatra route, Reviews preparedness

HT NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN, JUNE 02: Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan today conducted a comprehensive inspection of National Highway-44 and reviewed accommodation and other facilities at Ramban and adjoining locations in preparation for the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026. Senior Superintendent of Police Arun Gupta, Additional Deputy Commissioner Varunjeet Singh Charak and other district officers accompanied the Deputy Commissioner during the inspection. During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner inspected various sites along NH-44 and assessed the arrangements being put in place by different departments for pilgrims and security personnel to ensure the smooth conduct of the annual pilgrimage. He reviewed the status of essential services and infrastructure, including power and lighting facilities, drinking water supply, provision of sanitation & toilet blocks,

medical facilities, drainage systems and accommodation arrangements.

The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the security preparedness in consultation with the Senior Superintendent of Police. He inspected locations proposed for strengthening surveillance and security measures, including the installation of CCTV cameras and other facilities aimed at ensuring the safe and hassle-free movement of pilgrims during the Yatra period. Emphasizing the importance of timely completion of all preparatory works, the Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned departments to expedite ongoing works and ensure that all facilities are made operational well before the commencement of the pilgrimage. The Deputy Commissioner further instructed all stakeholder departments to maintain close coordination and ensure the availability of all essential services well in advance so that pilgrims undertaking Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026 are provided with a safe, smooth.

Amazon boosts delivery speeds and local seller growth in Bihar

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

PATNA, JUN 2: Amazon India on Monday announced the impact of its expanded operations network in Bihar following the launch of its first fulfillment center (FC) in July 2024.

According to a release, the fulfillment center, located in Simli Murarpur near Patna, offers a storage capacity of 2.2 lakh cubic feet. Since becoming operational, the facility has enhanced Amazon's ability to serve customers across Bihar more efficiently.

With the addition of the fulfillment center, Amazon's operations network in Bihar now comprises one fulfillment center, three sort centers, and more than 100 last-mile delivery stations spread across key cities, including Begusarai, Bhagalpur, Darbhanga, Gaya, Mu-



zaffarpur, and Purnia.

The release said the expanded infrastructure has enabled up to three times faster same-day or next-day deliveries in several parts of the state, improving the overall customer experience and ensuring quicker access to a wide range of products.

The release said Amazon also said the investment has contributed to local economic growth by creating employment opportunities across logistics, warehousing, and delivery operations.

The release stated that since the launch of the Patna fulfillment center, more than 1,000 new sell-

ers from Bihar have joined its marketplace, helping local businesses reach customers across the country more effectively.

According to the release, the expansion is part of Amazon India's broader strategy to strengthen its supply chain network in emerging markets and improve service delivery in tier-II and tier-III cities. It said that the company is committed to supporting small businesses, enhancing customer convenience, and investing in infrastructure that drives digital commerce growth in Bihar.

The growing network has not only accelerated deliveries but also provided local entrepreneurs with improved access to e-commerce opportunities, enabling them to expand their businesses beyond regional markets, claimed the release.UNI

Vembu Technologies launches XDRShield, expands Cyber Resilience portfolio into extended detection and response

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHENNAI, JUNE 2: Vembu Technologies has announced the global launch of XDRShield, an extended detection and response (XDR) platform designed to help organisations detect, investigate, and respond to advanced cyber threats.

The platform is now generally available worldwide as a standalone offering, marking a strategic expansion of Vembu's portfolio beyond backup and recovery into proactive endpoint threat detection and operational response.

It enables IT and security teams to move from alert-driven monitoring to coordinated investigation and incident response, a company statement said here today.

Building on the momentum of BDRShield, Vembu's enterprise-grade backup and cyber resilience platform, XDRShield addresses a critical

gap in how IT and security teams manage the threat lifecycle.

Security operations today are characterised by high alert volumes, fragmented workflows, and growing endpoint complexity, conditions that increase the time between detection and meaningful response.

XDRShield is designed to close that gap by providing centralised visibility across endpoints, correlating security and operational signals to surface suspicious activity early, and connecting investigation, response, and accountability workflows within a single platform.

The platform is built for mid-market enterprises, lean IT security teams, and managed service providers (MSPs) that require practical detection and response capabilities without the cost and operational overhead associated with traditional SIEM or SOC-centric deployments. UNI

GST collections rise to Rs 1.94 lakh cr in May; import revenues boost growth

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUN 2: India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections rose to Rs 1.94 lakh crore in May 2026, registering a 3.2 per cent increase over the same month last year, driven largely by strong growth in import-related revenues.

Gross GST revenue stood at Rs 1,94,184 crore during the month, compared with Rs 1,88,172 crore in May 2025. Collections from imports surged 19.1 per cent to Rs 59,654 crore, reflecting robust trade activity. Net GST revenue, after refunds, increased 3.3 per cent to Rs 1,66,904 crore. Total



refunds issued during the month stood at Rs 27,281 crore, up 2.6 per cent from a year ago.

The government said the growth figures were affected by a one-time payment of around Rs 10,000 crore made by a telecom operator in May 2025 towards spectrum allocation. Excluding this exceptional receipt, gross GST collections in May 2026 recorded an adjusted growth of about 9 per cent, while adjusted net collections grew 10.1 per cent. Domestic GST collections stood at Rs 1.35 lakh crore during the month. Although domestic revenues showed a decline on a headline basis due to the high base effect, the adjusted figures pointed to continued strength in consumption and business activity. Among the states, Uttar Pradesh recorded a strong 13 per cent growth in GST collections during May, while Haryana and Telangana posted increases of 8 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively. Collections in several other major states remained stable. For the first two months of the current financial year, gross GST collections reached Rs 4.37 lakh crore, registering a growth of 6.2 per cent over the corresponding period last year. Net GST revenue during April-May stood at Rs 3.78 lakh crore, up 5.5 per cent.

The latest numbers indicate that GST revenues continue on a steady growth path, supported by improved compliance, resilient economic activity, and strong import tax collections.UNI

Commerce was a way of life, today we formalised that way of life between India-Oman: Piyush Goyal

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUNE 2: Describing commerce as a "way of life" that has linked India and Oman for over five millennia, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Monday said the India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which entered into force today, formalises a historic trading relationship and is poised to give fresh momentum to bilateral economic ties.

Addressing a presser on the conclusion of India-Oman CEPA negotiations here, the Minister said, "The sea doesn't ask where you come from; it simply carries you forward. India and Oman have been carried by the Arabian Sea for over 5,000 years now. Commerce was a way of life. Today, we have formalised that way of life between India and Oman."

Calling the CEPA "not simply a trade agreement but a state-

ment of civilisational trust," the Minister expressed confidence that the pact would usher in a new phase of economic cooperation between the two countries.

Under the agreement, India will secure duty-free access from day one on 98 per cent of Oman's tariff lines, covering more than 99 per cent of India's exports to the Gulf nation.

"I am happy to note that more than ten consignments from different parts of India have already been shipped to Oman availing preferential duty access," Goyal said.

He noted that Indian workers, MSMEs and exporters in sectors such as textiles, sportswear, gems and jewellery, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, engineering goods, agricultural products, meat, plastics, automobiles and marine products would benefit from preferential market access in Oman, gaining an advantage over competing suppliers.



Highlighting four major outcomes of the agreement, Goyal said Oman has committed to lifting its decade-old ban on the export of unpolished marble blocks, enabling craftsmen in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh to access the raw material directly.

He further said that Indian

generic medicines approved by the US FDA, European Medicines Agency (EMA) or the UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) would now receive market authorisation in Oman within 90 days, ensuring faster access to affordable medicines for Omani patients.

For the first time, India has secured a binding commitment for the protection of Indian workers employed in non-service sectors in majority Indian-owned enterprises in Oman, he added.

The Minister also said Oman would recognise India's National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) certification, opening its market to Indian organic products. Both sides will additionally work towards a Mutual Recognition Agreement for halal certification.

Reiterating the government's export ambitions, Goyal said India is targeting exports worth USD 1 trillion in the current year and USD 2 trillion over the next five years.

He added that India is simultaneously negotiating free trade agreements with several partners, including Israel, Chile, Canada, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Peru and the EFTA bloc, among others.UNI

India's manufacturing activity strengthens in May; PMI hits three-month high of 55.0

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUNE 2: India's manufacturing sector gained momentum in May, with the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rising to a three-month high of 55.0, according to data compiled by S&P Global.

The latest reading was higher than April's 54.7 and exceeded the flash estimate of 54.3 released last month. The PMI is a composite indicator based on new orders, output, employment, suppliers' delivery times, and stocks of purchases. A reading above 50 signals expansion in manufacturing activity, while a figure below 50 indicates contraction. Despite the stronger performance, cost pressures remained



elevated due to the ongoing conflict in West Asia. Input cost inflation stayed among the highest levels recorded in the past four years, driven by rising energy, fuel, raw material, and transportation expenses. However, output price inflation moderated during the month, suggesting that manufacturers faced continued pressure on profit margins. "India's final manufacturing PMI points to another month of possible

precautionary stockpiling as the West Asia conflict remains unresolved. Output growth accelerated, while purchasing activity and stocks of finished goods increased at a faster pace," said Pranjal Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC.

The report also highlighted sustained job creation across the manufacturing sector, with firms continuing to expand their workforce in response to growing demand.

While business confidence slipped to its lowest level since February, overall sentiment remained positive. Manufacturers expressed optimism that input cost pressures would ease later in the year, supporting further growth in production and demand. UNI

Myanmar's President calls for expanding bilateral between India-Myanmar through multi-sectoral collaboration

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUNE 2: Myanmar's President U Min Aung Hlaing has called for enhanced bilateral trade and investment between two countries.

He invited Indian businesses to invest in Myanmar's growing sectors such as agro-processing, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy and digital economy. He was chairing high-level India-Myanmar Trade & Investment Discussions here.



Dr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Co-chair of International Council at Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) advocated for a direct Rupee-Kyat trade settlement mechanism to bridge the current gap in bilateral Commerce.

"India and Myanmar must trade in rupee to reduce unnecessary transaction costs and eliminate delays caused by routing payments through third countries like Singapore," he said.

Sahney noted that direct currency settlement could help scale bilateral trade from the current level of approximately USD 2 billion to USD 5 billion within the coming years.

"India is keen to increase imports of pulses from Myanmar including pigeon peas and black gram, while Myanmar possesses significant reserves of critical minerals like dysprosium and terbium essential for electrical vehicles, wind turbines and advanced electronics."

He also commented India's Act East Policy and underscored the transformative potential of regional connectivity projects like India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and Kalamandla Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project in enhancing trade flows and regional integration.UNI

Aditya Birla Health Insurance launches Activ Yuva: Wellness-First Health Insurance Plan for Young India in UP

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

LUCKNOW, JUN 2: Aditya Birla Health Insurance Co. Ltd. (ABHICL), the health insurance arm of Aditya Birla Capital, on Monday announced the launch of Activ Yuva, a health-focused insurance plan designed for the evolving lifestyle and wellness needs of young Indians in Uttar Pradesh.

As part of the offering, a comprehensive wellness programme has been introduced that builds on ABHICL's HealthReturns proposition, rewarding individuals for everyday healthy behaviours across nutrition, fitness, and recovery.

ABHICL has been redefining health insurance as health assurance through its HealthReturns model, rewarding healthier living through activities like

walking 10,000 steps or more per day or burning 300 calories in one single exercise session. Customers with consistent activity levels and a strong Healthy Heart Score can earn up to 100 per cent of their annual premium back.

The new Activ Yuva plan enhances this proposition with a broader behaviour-linked rewards programme built on three pillars: Eat, Move, and Heal, which rewards holistic healthy habits beyond physical activity for customers meeting the minimum Active Day criteria.

- Eat: Users who log any two meals a day for 21 days in a month on the app can unlock a 10 per cent boost in their monthly HealthReturns

- Move: Users maintaining a monthly average of over 7,500 steps or burning 250 calories

can earn 4 Bonus Active Dayz each month

- Heal: Users maintaining 7-8 hours of sleep for 21 days in a month can unlock up to a 15 per cent boost in monthly HealthReturns

Speaking on the launch of Activ Yuva, Mayank Bathwal, Chief Executive Officer, Aditya Birla Health Insurance Co. Limited, said here on Monday that, "Health insurance must evolve with changing consumer lifestyles and wellness habits.

Younger consumers today actively invest in their well-being as part of their daily lives. This creates a clear opportunity to make insurance more relevant to how they live.

Key highlights include Unlimited sum insured: Continuous financial protection for hospitalisation and treatment

without worrying about exhausting coverage within a policy year; Yuva Credit - sum insured grows up to 11x in 11 years: Coverage expands over time in line with changing life stages and responsibilities; OPD cover (up to 5X): Covers consultations, diagnostics, medicines and wellness-related expenses; and Income protection: Fixed payout during extended hospitalisation to support recovery.

It also includes Worldwide maternity cover: Allows individuals to start the waiting period early and carry forward benefits as life progresses; and ON/OFF feature: Flexibility to pause policy during extended travel abroad while retaining continuity.

He further said, "Over the last decade, we have focused on supporting customers

throughout their health journey, beyond the point of claims.

That experience shows that growth in this category will increasingly come from staying relevant between claims, not just responding to them. Activ Yuva is built for this shift, making insurance an active part of everyday life, throughout the year, and not just during medical emergencies."

While consumer attitudes towards health are becoming more proactive and continuous, insurance is still perceived as a one-time, transactional product with little role in daily life. Activ Yuva responds to this shift by connecting everyday health behaviours with tangible benefits, making insurance more relevant, flexible, and engaging for young consumers, he added.UNI

Patidar on RCB's encore: 'We didn't just play but we dominated'



■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD: When Rajat Patidar finally entered the press conference room in Ahmedabad shortly after 1am on Monday with the IPL trophy, there was a broad smile on his face. For a man who rarely gives much away, it was as telling as any words could be. The occasional glance and feel of the trophy next to him reflected the satisfaction of a captain who had just led Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) to a second straight title. The timing made the moment even sweeter. It was now his 33rd birthday.

"I'm feeling great... it's a great feeling. It's my birthday. There can't be a better gift than this," he said. "The individual that I am, I always focus on living in the present. We have won back-to-back, we'll celebrate but the focus will be how we can now do this three in a row. It can't get better than this. When you win trophies, you don't look at individual performances. Nothing is bigger than this." Asked to compare the two journeys to the title, Patidar felt 2026 had a stamp of inevitability because of their dominance through the group stages.

"Last year was a lot of pressure," he said. "[This year] I was more calm. The way we played through the tournament, we didn't just play but we dominated. I was confident if we played like this, we could win the second title for RCB.

"As a captain, I'm not very expressive, but at the same time I'm aware of game situations. Of course you need backing, there was a lot of it from the management and players." One of the things he worked doubly hard on was to compartmentalise his batting and captaincy. The ground work on his batting was done in the off-season with Dinesh Karthik, which handsomely

paid off during the season - Patidar finished with 501 runs at a strike rate of 192.69. These are his best returns in a single season since his debut in 2021.

"The [team] culture has changed. I don't know what it was before 2021. But from when I've come in, there have been a lot of changes in the mindset of players. All credit to the coaching staff, the way they've been handling the players. Especially the new players who are also an important part of the team. The coaching staff treats every player equally - that's a big change"

"I took a lot of learnings as captain and batter," he said. "I look at how much time I give myself to bat, I spent a lot of time at the nets before the season... just me and the bowlers. There was a lot of communication with DK bhai, regarding my trigger movements and some technical adjustments. When I came to the IPL, I continued that and was able to execute. That gave a lot of clarity to me as a batter. As captain, I learnt a lot [from] Faf du Plessis, how he presents himself, how his body language is always confident. That has taught me a lot."

Patidar was also extremely appreciative of Omkar Salvi's efforts as bowling coach. In a team that has a star-studded coaching panel, Salvi has often flown under the radar, but Patidar spoke of his influence as key. Particularly on their younger players, like Rasikh Salam, who enjoyed a terrific season - picking up 19 wickets, second-best for the team behind Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

"I've seen Omkar Salvi sir from my first Ranji season [in 2015]," Patidar said. "He spends a lot of time one-on-one with every bowler. There is a lot of hard work that Salvi sir has done for the team. You won't see him in the meeting room, he spends time one-on-one with the bowlers."

Sooryavanshi wins Orange Cap, MVP and Emerging Player awards in IPL 2026

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD: Vaibhav Sooryavanshi might have missed winning the IPL 2026 trophy, but has won everything else he could: the Most Valuable Player (MVP), the Orange Cap (for most runs), and Best Emerging Player. All after becoming the talk of the tournament for his 776 runs in 16 innings at a strike rate of 237.30. And all at 15 years of age.

Gujarat Titans (GT) quick Kagiso Rabada won the Purple Cap for topping the wickets' chart. He took 29 wickets from 17 games at an economy rate of 9.68. This was his second Purple Cap, having won it previously in 2020 when he took 30 wickets for Delhi Capitals. Bhuvneshwar Kumar of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) was a close second with 28 wickets.



Sooryavanshi, 15, is the first player to win both the MVP and Emerging Player awards in the same season. He was the first since Chris Gayle in 2011 to top both the runs and strike rate charts (min. 20 balls faced) in the same season. Sooryavanshi hit 72 sixes in IPL 2026, breaking Gayle's record of most sixes (59) in an IPL season, and played a key role in RR making it to the playoffs. They eventually lost to GT in Qualifier 2 in New Chandigarh.

"It feels nice, but there is pressure because I am doing interviews. It is a proud moment and I will try and do well next season too," Sooryavanshi said after collecting his awards at the end of the final. "I try to back my game and if the ball is there to be hit, I go all out for it and just try to play that way."

"How to play the pressure game, how to change myself every game, you can't play every game in one mode, you need to read the game situation and play according to the team's requirements. These are my learnings from this season. [On fitness] Yes, my focus is on that. If I have to play long, I have to stay clear of injuries and work on my fitness and have to focus more."

Kohli has 'let himself go and he's having fun,' says Moody

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD: Virat Kohli had a strike rate of 165.85 in IPL 2026. Not quite Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, but only six batters who scored upwards of 500 runs this season had a higher strike rate than him. It has been a different Kohli over the past two IPL seasons, and while Tom Moody puts it down to Kohli "having fun", Varun Aaron thinks it's mainly got to do with the stronger middle order Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) have assembled - "there's a reason he's having more fun because he has a middle order that he can rely on" - which has freed Kohli up.

Back in 2016, when he had his record-breaking season of 973 runs, Kohli scored his runs at a strike rate of 152.03. That's the only time before IPL 2026 that his strike rate for a season had gone past 150 - past 144.81, in fact.

Part of the change has been about his attacking instinct. In IPL 2026, he has attempted to hit a boundary against 47% of the balls he has faced in the powerplay and 46% overall - that's almost every second ball.

"The thing that stands out for me about Kohli this year is that he's batting and having fun," Moody, Lucknow Super Giants' global director of cricket, said on ESPNcricinfo's TimeOut show after Kohli hit an unbeaten 75

in 42 balls to take RCB to their second title in as many years. "I think in previous years, he's batting as a business. And he is managing that business. Now, this season, I just see someone just letting everything go and having fun, and everyone's benefiting - from RCB to the fans, to the game."

It's not just what's changed in Kohli but what's changed in the RCB line-up, Sunrisers Hyderabad bowling coach Aaron argued. For the longest time, RCB

had been top-heavy with Chris Gayle, AB de Villiers and Kohli. But now, with Rajat Patidar and Devdutt Padikkal in the upper-middle order, Tim David and Krunal Pandya in the middle order, and the likes of Phil Salt and Venkatesh Iyer chipping in with impactful performances, Kohli has less of a burden.

"Now he knows that even if he gets out [there are others]," Aaron said. "We've all spoken about his intent in the powerplay, but his false-shot percentage is also quite high. It's above 30% [24.82%; it has been higher only in two out of the last ten seasons]. So, as an opposition, you know he's also going to give you a chance."



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