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Technology Can Drive Progress Only When Democratised : PM Modi

Says AI Means 'All Inclusive' for India, Highlights Nation's Digital Transformation at Global Tech Summit

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

PARIS, JUNE 18: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday asserted that technology can become a true driver of progress only when it is democratised, emphasizing that for India, artificial intelligence stands for "All Inclusive." Addressing delegates at the prestigious VivaTech 2026 in Paris, the Prime Minister underlined India's commitment to using technology as a tool for inclusive growth, innovation and social empower-



ment. "Technology can lead to progress only when it is democratised," Modi said, highlighting India's efforts to make digital services accessible to all sections of society. He noted that the country has undergone a rapid technology-driven transformation over the past decade, creating systems that have expanded financial inclusion and improved access to essential services.

The Prime Minister pointed out that India has developed the world's largest digital identity system and one of the world's largest digital payments ecosystems. He added that technology is being deployed on a massive scale in sectors such as education, healthcare and governance, enabling greater efficiency

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12 Years of Modi Government, A Golden Era of Development and Heritage: Amit Shah

Government Highlights Cultural Preservation, Infrastructure Expansion

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JUNE 18: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday described the 12 years of the Narendra Modi-led government as a "golden era" marked by the convergence of development and heritage conservation, as the Centre showcased achievements across cultural preservation, infrastructure growth and welfare programmes.

In a post on social media platform X, Shah said that the past 12 years had witnessed significant strides in both nation-building and the protection of India's cultural legacy. He cited landmark projects such as the Shri Ram Temple, Kashi Vishwanath Corridor and Mahakal Lok in Ujjain, alongside flagship welfare and development initiatives including PM Awas Yojana, Ayushman Bharat, food security programmes, major infrastructure expansion and the Make in India campaign.

The remarks came as the government highlighted its achievements under the theme "Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi," emphasising a strategy that combines economic progress with the preserva-



tion and promotion of the country's heritage. According to an official statement, several measures have been undertaken since 2014 to conserve cultural assets while integrating heritage development with broader national growth objectives. Among the key achievements cited were the digitisation of one crore historical

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Public Engagement Essential Pillar of Effective Governance: Sakeena Itoo

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JUNE 18: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo on



Wednesday said that public engagement remains an essential pillar of effective governance, asserting that regular interaction with citizens helps ensure that government policies remain aligned with the needs and aspirations of the people.

The Minister made these remarks while interacting with public delegations and individuals at the Civil

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Ensure Safe, Comfortable Experience for Devotees: CM Omar Abdullah

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, JUNE 18: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday reviewed the arrangements for the annual Mata Kheer Bhawani Mela during a visit to the revered Mata Kheer Bhawani Temple at Tulmulla in Ganderbal district, directing all departments to ensure seamless facilities and

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CM Omar inaugurates Lavender Festival at Nunar

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, JUNE 18: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Thursday inaugurated the Lavender Festival organised by the Agriculture department Kashmir at the Model Floriculture Centre (MFC), Nunar, Ganderbal, and laid the foundation stone and inaugurated several

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45 Mountain Rescue Teams Deployed Along Amarnath Yatra Routes

DGP Nalin Prabhat Flags Off Specially Trained Units as Security and Emergency Preparedness

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JUNE 18: In a major preparedness exercise ahead of the annual Amarnath Yatra, Nalin Prabhat on Thursday flagged off 45 mountain rescue teams for deployment along the twin routes leading to the holy Amarnath cave shrine in the South Kashmir Himalayas.

The rescue teams, comprising personnel from the Jammu and Kashmir Police, State Disaster Response Force, National Disaster Response Force, Central Reserve Police Force, Sashastra Seema Bal and Border Security Force, will be stationed at 21 strategic loca-



tions along the pilgrimage routes to provide assistance and respond swiftly to emergencies.

Speaking on the occasion, SDRF Director Imtiaz Hussain Mir said the teams are specially trained to handle emergencies in mountainous terrain and have played a crucial role during previous yatras. He noted that the personnel would remain available to assist pilgrims and respond effectively in the event of any natural disaster or unforeseen incident.

Mir described the Amarnath Yatra as one of the country's most revered pilgrimages and emphasized the

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Rain, hailstorm lash J&K parts; MeT warns of flash floods, mudslides

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JUNE 18: Amid a Meteorological Department warning of flash floods and mudslides in vulnerable areas, rain, thunderstorms, gusty winds and hailstorms lashed several parts of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday evening.

An official of the MeT Centre Srinagar told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), many places across Kashmir and parts of Jammu division, including Ramban, Doda, Kishtwar, Rajouri and Poonch districts witnessed a spell of rain and thundershowers. "Weather activity was also reported along the Sonamarg-Baltal-Holy Cave axis ahead of the annual Amarnath

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Chief Secy assesses the circular economy framework for J&K

Favours transforming waste streams into resource and livelihood opportunities

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 18: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today reviewed the proposed Circular Economy framework for J&K put forth by the Housing & Urban Development Department (H&UDD), aimed at establishing a resource-efficient, low-waste and environmentally



sustainable development model across the Union Territory.

The meeting besides Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD was attended by Commissioner, JMC; CiTaG Professionals and other concerned officers.

The proposed policy envisions transforming Jammu & Kashmir

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Kathua to Get Express Corridor Connectivity, Gas Pipeline and Homeopathy College Soon: Dr Jitendra Singh

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

KATHUA, JUNE 18: Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh on Thursday announced a series of major development initiatives for Kathua, including connectivity through the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Express Corridor, a proposed gas pipeline project and the establishment of North India's first Homeopathy College, asserting that the district is emerging as a significant centre of growth in Jammu and Kashmir.



Addressing a public gathering near Khilochak Pond in the Jastora Assembly constituency, Dr

Singh said the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Express Corridor would substantially improve regional connectivity, facilitate trade and investment, and boost economic activity across the district. He also revealed that a gas pipeline project for Kathua is in the pipeline and is expected to be implemented shortly, providing cleaner and more efficient energy access to households and industries.

The Union Minister stated that the tender for the proposed Homeopathy College has

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Admin steps up Amarnath Yatra preparations, security drills intensified

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JUNE 18: The Jammu and Kashmir administration has intensified preparations for annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY) beginning July 3, 2026, with civil administration, security agencies and shrine board officials undertaking a series of measures to ensure smooth conduct of the pilgrimage and effective management of the expected influx of devotees.

Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir Anshul Garg on Thursday said all departments were working in coordination to provide necessary facilities and services to pilgrims along both the

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Technology Can.....

and wider public access. Highlighting the scale of India's digital economy, Modi said that nearly half of the world's digital transactions are taking place in the country, reflecting the growing adoption of digital platforms and services.

His remarks came at a time when global debates over access to advanced artificial intelligence technologies continue to intensify. Stressing India's approach to innovation, Modi said the country views AI as a means of ensuring inclusivity and expanding opportunities rather than creating barriers.

VivaTech, regarded as Europe's premier technology and innovation gathering, has attracted leading policymakers, entrepreneurs and technology companies from around the world. India has established the largest national pavilion at this year's event, showcasing the expanding scope for collaboration between Indian and European innovation ecosystems.

The Prime Minister's address reinforced India's position as a major digital economy and a key stakeholder in shaping the future of inclusive and responsible technological development.

12 Years of.....

records, the return of 668 stolen antiquities to India, the establishment of 11 tribal freedom struggle museums and the granting of classical language status to 11 Indian languages.

The government said sustained efforts have been made to restore historic sites, conserve temples and monuments, enhance visitor amenities and develop heritage cities and pilgrimage circuits across the country.

The statement noted that India's monuments, manuscripts, antiquities and historic sites constitute a shared national legacy that must be preserved for future generations. It added that heritage-related initiatives have also contributed to economic growth by boosting tourism, generating livelihoods and strengthening India's cultural diplomacy on the global stage.

Highlighting major achievements, the government pointed to the development of spiritual and cultural infrastructure, including the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor and the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple, as well as initiatives aimed at increasing international recognition of Indian traditions and heritage.

Officials said ongoing efforts in manuscript digitisation, pilgrimage infrastructure development and tourism connectivity are intended to safeguard and promote India's cultural legacy while supporting long-term national development.

Public Engagement.....

Secretariat in Jammu, where she listened to a wide range of concerns and assured prompt and effective redressal.

Delegations representing various regions and sectors raised issues related to healthcare infrastructure, educational facilities, social welfare programmes, public utilities and other developmental requirements. Several individuals also sought the Minister's intervention in matters affecting their local communities.

Giving a patient hearing to all representations, Itoo reiterated the Government's commitment to responsive, transparent and people-centric governance. She stressed that direct engagement with citizens provides valuable feedback for improving service delivery and strengthening administrative efficiency.

Highlighting the Government's focus on grassroots governance, the Minister said that regular public interactions offer important insights into local challenges and help the administration formulate practical and inclusive solutions. She added that strengthening last-mile delivery of services and enhancing accountability at every level remain key priorities of the Government.

Assuring the participants that their genuine concerns would receive due attention, Itoo said the administration remains committed to addressing public issues on priority and ensuring that developmental initiatives effectively reach the people.

Ensure Safe.....

a safe, comfortable experience for devotees. Accompanied by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Political Advisor Mudasar Shahmiri, Additional Chief Secretary Dheeraj Gupta and senior district officials, the Chief Minister conducted an on-site inspection of facilities being established for pilgrims and reviewed preparations related to accommodation, drinking water, sanitation, electricity, healthcare, security and traffic management.

Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal Jatin Kishore briefed the Chief Minister on the level of preparedness, including sanitation measures, uninterrupted water and power supply, healthcare services, de-silting of the nearby nallah, installation of additional mobile toilets, accommodation arrangements and langar facilities.

During the review, Omar Abdullah emphasized the religious and cultural significance of the annual mela and directed all departments to work in close coordination to ensure its smooth and successful conduct. He stressed the importance of maintaining high standards of cleanliness and hygiene in and around the shrine and called for uninterrupted delivery of essential services throughout the pilgrimage period.

The Chief Minister also assessed arrangements for medical assistance, emergency response mechanisms and transportation facilities, directing concerned agencies to remain fully prepared to promptly address the needs of pilgrims and facilitate smooth movement of devotees.

Members of the local community and representatives of various organizations who interacted with the Chief Minister expressed satisfaction over the arrangements being made for the annual event.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to preserving the region's cultural and spiritual heritage, Omar Abdullah said the annual Mata Kheer Bhawani Mela reflects Jammu and Kashmir's enduring tradi-

tions of harmony, mutual respect and communal brotherhood.

CM Omar.....

agriculture infrastructure projects aimed at strengthening the medicinal and aromatic plants sector and improving farmers' livelihoods in the district.

The festival was attended by Minister for Agriculture Production and Rural Development, Javid Ahmad Dar; Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani; Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister, Dheeraj Gupta; Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore; Senior Superintendent of Police Ganderbal, Sudhanshu Dhama; senior officers of the Agriculture Production Department, scientists from SKUAST-Kashmir and other officials.

Addressing farmers, growers and members of the local community on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that lavender cultivation in recent times has added a new dimension to the Agriculture landscape of J&K. He highlighted the economic sustainability of lavender crop and impressed upon the farmers to adopt this crop on commercial lines. He stressed adopting this climate-resilient and high-value crop can safeguard farmers' incomes in the face of changing weather patterns.

He noted that lavender cultivation offers multiple benefits, including value addition through essential oil extraction, tourism potential and employment generation. He said in coming times lavender cultivation would be extended to newer areas of J&K, adding that the lavender festival would be a regular event in coming times.

Drawing parallels with internationally renowned lavender destinations, the Chief Minister said the scenic lavender fields of Ganderbal have the potential to attract visitors and nature enthusiasts, particularly those travelling to Sonamarg. He emphasized that such initiatives can create new sources of income for local communities while promoting rural tourism.

The Chief Minister also underlined the importance of reducing excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in agriculture. He said the government, in collaboration with agricultural institutions and experts, is working to promote sustainable farming practices and create awareness about the long-term benefits of preserving soil health.

Highlighting the government's efforts under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Omar Abdullah said substantial investments are being made to modernize the agriculture sector through advanced infrastructure, mechanization, value-addition facilities and promotion of high-value crops.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for a Post-Harvest Infrastructure Project for Medicinal and Aromatic Plants at the Model Floriculture Centre, Nunar, being established under HADP/NABARD at a cost of 538.23 lakh.

The project includes development of an FPO Park with office and storage facilities, machinery for processing and e-marketing of medicinal and aromatic plant products, post-harvest management infrastructure, transportation facilities, establishment of a distillation unit, quality control laboratory, shade-net structures and other support facilities aimed at creating a comprehensive ecosystem for medicinal and aromatic plant cultivation and marketing.

The Chief Minister also reviewed infrastructure created at the centre under NABARD-funded projects, including development of a germplasm centre, strengthening of farm infrastructure, irrigation facilities, farm mechanization and establishment of essential oil distillation units.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also distributed sanction letters among beneficiaries under various agriculture and allied sector initiatives. The beneficiaries received assistance for establishment of Hi-Tech Poly Houses, Common Facilitation Centres, dairy units and breed-based farms, besides keys of tractors provided under government-supported mechanization programmes aimed at enhancing farm productivity and improving rural livelihoods.

Addressing the farmers, the Chief Minister reiterated the government's commitment towards strengthening agriculture as a viable and profitable sector. He said efforts are being made to ensure that every region benefits from development initiatives and modern agricultural interventions.

Referring to ongoing road widening works in Ganderbal, Omar Abdullah acknowledged concerns raised by affected shopkeepers and assured them that their issues would be addressed in a fair and humane manner. He said the government would work towards a suitable rehabilitation mechanism in consultation with all stakeholders.

Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Javed Ahmad Dar while addressing the event underlined the importance of HADP for the promotion of cultivation of crops like lavender. He said the department of Agriculture is working to explore Medicinal and aromatic crops (including lavender) cultivation for the socio-economic transformation of farming community of the region.

Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, also addressed the gathering and highlighted the government's continued focus on strengthening the agriculture sector through infrastructure development, technological interventions and farmer-centric initiatives.

Farmers, Agri entrepreneurs, stakeholders and childrens from different schools also enthusiastically participated in the event.

Congratulating the people of Ganderbal on the successful organisation of the Lavender Festival, the Chief Minister expressed hope that the initiative would further strengthen the district's identity as a centre of agricultural innovation, floriculture and rural tourism.

Earlier, the Chief Minister inspected stalls showcasing lavender cultivation, essential oil extraction, value-added products and other innovations in the agriculture and floriculture sectors.

45 Mountain.....

coordinated role of security and disaster response agencies in ensuring the safety and welfare of devotees arriving from across India.

He said authorities have enhanced equipment and logistical support for the rescue teams this year to improve their operational capabilities and enable them to deliver better services to pilgrims throughout the pilgrimage period.

Meanwhile, security agencies have intensified preparations across the Kashmir Valley. Officials said comprehensive mock drills are being conducted to evaluate security readiness, emergency response systems and coordination among various agencies tasked with facilitating the pilgrimage.

On Thursday, such exercises were carried out in the districts of Pulwama and Kulgam as part of broader efforts to ensure a safe and smooth conduct of the yatra.

The annual pilgrimage is scheduled to commence on July 3 and conclude on August 28, with authorities undertaking extensive security, rescue and disaster-management measures ahead of the event.

Rain, hailstorm.....

Yatra," he added. The weather office said hailstorms were reported in some areas and warned that similar conditions could occur in parts of North and Central Kashmir, including Tangdhar, Kupwara, Handwara, Budgam, Uri, Ganderbal, Shopian and Kokernag.

It also cautioned that intense rainfall at isolated places could trigger flash floods, waterlogging and mudslides, particularly in hilly and vulnerable areas of Tangdhar, Kupwara, Kukernag, Banihal and Kishtwar.

The fresh spell of rain brought a temporary relief from warm conditions in several areas, although authorities advised residents and travellers to remain cautious due to the possibility of sudden changes in weather.

The MeT Department has forecast generally cloudy weather across Jammu and Kashmir from June 19 to June 22, with one or two spells of light rain, brief intense showers, thunderstorms, lightning, hailstorms and gusty winds likely at many places.

Weather activity is expected to continue between June 23 and June 25, with partly to generally cloudy skies and light rain or brief showers at scattered locations across the Union Territory, the department said, adding that there is possibility of isolated hailstorms and intense showers during the next five days and urged people living in landslide-prone and flood-prone areas to remain alert.

As a precautionary measure, the MeT Centre advised people to stay away from loose structures, electric poles, wires and old trees during thunderstorms. It also recommended suspension of boating and shikara operations on water bodies whenever strong winds, lightning or thunderstorms occur.

Farmers and orchard owners have been advised to undertake spraying operations during early morning hours when weather conditions are comparatively stable.

Officials said district administrations and disaster management agencies were monitoring the situation and would remain prepared to respond to any weather-related emergency in vulnerable areas—(KNO)

Chief Secy.....

into a regenerative Himalayan economy where waste materials are going to be converted into productive resource flows safeguarding the region's ecological integrity, enhancing urban governance and generating sustainable livelihoods.

During the presentation, the Chief Secretary was informed that the policy has been conceived in response to emerging regulatory requirements under the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, judicial directives concerning waste management and environmental protection, increasing waste generation linked to tourism and pilgrimage activities, and the need to protect the UT's ecologically sensitive lakes, wetlands, forests and mountain landscapes.

The framework recognises unique circular economy opportunities of J&K owing to the large tourism foothold, extensive pilgrimage circuits, a well established horticulture economy worth nearly 12,000 Cr and the geographical realities of mountainous terrain. Accordingly, the policy proposes an implementation architecture tailored specifically to the capacities and circumstances of different urban local bodies and regions.

A key feature of the policy, as highlighted by the Commissioner Secretary, Mandeep Kaur is the adoption of a 'Differentiated Circularity Framework', under which urban local bodies will be assigned implementation responsibilities according to their operational capacity, waste generation levels and infrastructure readiness.

Under the proposed framework, she made out that the smaller and remote urban local bodies will adopt a Basic Circular Model centred on waste reduction, reuse and aggregation. These local bodies will establish ward-level Reduce-Reuse-Recycle (RRR) centres, encourage household composting, create collection systems for recyclables and rely upon cluster-level processing facilities rather than investing in expensive standalone infrastructure. The model seeks to minimise transportation costs while ensuring effective waste recovery in geographically challenging regions.

The roadmap also envisages medium-sized urban local bodies implementing the Circular+ Model, which introduces decentralised composting systems, mini material recovery facilities, small-scale biogas plants, repair-and-reuse initiatives and strengthened compliance mechanisms for bulk waste generators. The model focuses on local processing of wet waste while building stronger recycling and recovery systems.

For Jammu and Srinagar cities, the Commissioner JMC, Devansh Yadav elucidated that the policy proposes an advanced Circular++ Model, positioning both cities as regional circular economy anchors.

He revealed that the model envisages integrated

resource recovery systems comprising city-wide segregation, biomethanation and compressed biogas facilities, construction and demolition waste processing plants, bulk waste generator compliance mechanisms, wastewater reuse through sewage treatment plants, digital traceability systems and regional support functions for surrounding urban centres. The two capital cities are expected to serve as processing and market hubs for higher-order circular economy activities.

The presentation further highlighted the adoption of a Cluster-Based Circular Economy Model following a hub-and-spoke architecture wherein advanced processing infrastructure is concentrated at strategic hubs while smaller urban centres function as collection and aggregation nodes.

Seven priority circular economy clusters have been proposed, namely the Jammu Metropolitan Urban Materials and Construction & Demolition Cluster; Srinagar Valley Organics and Lake-Sensitive Circularity Cluster; Apple and Horticulture Biomass Cluster; Pilgrimage and Tourism Circular Services Cluster; Artisan, Silk and Upcycling Cluster; Mountain Decentralised Circular Livelihoods Cluster; and Urban Water Reuse and Sludge Recovery Cluster.

The framework also identifies nine priority value chains for intervention including municipal dry waste recovery, organic waste and bio-inputs, plastic and packaging recovery, horticulture biomass, tourism and pilgrimage waste management, construction and demolition waste recycling, wastewater reuse, repair and refurbishment systems, and artisan-based circular production networks.

To ensure effective implementation, the policy proposes a six-pillar architecture comprising regulatory reforms, financial mechanisms, institutional arrangements, market development systems, digital governance tools and livelihood-generation initiatives.

The implementation roadmap has been structured into four phases. The first phase will focus on institutional activation, baseline assessments, tiering of urban local bodies and infrastructure preparation for the smooth and flawless implementation of the framework.

The second phase will concentrate on pilot clusters, compliance systems and market activation. The third phase envisages scaling-up and replication across the Union Territory, while the final phase focuses on mature circular systems, cost recovery and long-term sustainability.

The Chief Secretary stressed the importance of developing a practical, technology-driven and financially sustainable framework capable of delivering measurable environmental, economic and social outcomes. He emphasised the need for strong inter-departmental coordination, effective convergence of existing schemes and robust digital monitoring systems to ensure successful implementation of the policy.

He maintained that once implemented, the framework is expected to significantly improve waste recovery rates, reduce landfill dependence, strengthen ecological protection, generate green livelihoods, promote circular enterprises and enhance overall urban governance across Jammu & Kashmir.

Kathua to.....

already been floated and that the foundation stone for the institution will be laid soon. He described the project as a major step towards strengthening the district's educational and healthcare infrastructure.

Dr Singh also announced progress on the proposed Arun Jaitley Stadium in Hiranagar, saying the process of land transfer for the project is underway. The stadium is expected to provide modern sporting facilities and encourage youth participation in sports.

Highlighting the achievements of the Narendra Modi-led government over the past 12 years, Dr Singh said the country had witnessed the emergence of transparent, accountable and development-oriented governance. He noted that welfare programmes have been implemented with a focus on inclusive development, ensuring benefits reach citizens across social and regional divides.

The Minister cited flagship schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, PMSVANidhi and the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana as examples of initiatives that have improved livelihoods, promoted entrepreneurship and expanded access to financial support.

Reviewing Kathua's development trajectory, Dr Singh said the district has evolved from a border town into a centre for industrial growth, healthcare, education, innovation and connectivity. He credited this transformation to sustained investments in infrastructure and public services under the present government.

Among the key achievements listed by the Minister were the establishment of engineering and medical colleges, a passport office, North India's first seed processing plant and a biotechnology industrial park. He said these initiatives have expanded educational opportunities, strengthened research capabilities and created new avenues for economic growth.

On healthcare, Dr Singh said the Government Medical College has significantly improved access to quality medical services and reduced dependence on facilities outside the district for advanced treatment.

The Minister also highlighted strategic infrastructure projects, including the Shahpur Kandi Project and the Ujh Multipurpose Project, describing them as vital to enhancing irrigation,

connectivity and economic development. He further noted that the introduction of two Vande Bharat Express trains in Jammu and Kashmir marks a significant milestone in modernising transportation and improving regional connectivity.

The event was attended by local legislators, district representatives and senior leaders, who reiterated their commitment to accelerating development and ensuring timely completion of key projects across the district.

Admin steps.....

Baltal and Pahalgam routes. "There is a well-established system in place for the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra. Like every year, the pilgrimage will commence on July 3, and all departments are working to provide services in a timely manner," Garg told reporters on the sidelines of an event in Srinagar.

The Div Com, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said preparations at the Baltal and Nunwan base camps were being regularly reviewed and that district administrations were coordinating with service providers to ensure seamless arrangements for pilgrims.

He said Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who is also the chairman of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB), has been continuously reviewing preparations related to pilgrim facilitation and security.

"Meetings are being held with service providers by the district administrations as well as at the divisional level. Our effort is to ensure that a maximum number of pilgrims undertake the yatra this year and receive the best possible services," he said.

Garg said all stakeholder departments, service providers and local residents were prepared to contribute towards the successful conduct of the pilgrimage.

As part of preparations, the Jammu administration has developed the Tawi Riverfront as a major on-the-spot registration and token centre for pilgrims.

Officials said the facility would help streamline registration procedures, improve crowd management and facilitate orderly movement of devotees. Similar registration and facilitation centres have also been established across Jammu city.

Preparations are also underway at the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board's Yatri Niwas in Chandernagore in Ramban district, where authorities are strengthening infrastructure and facilities to accommodate pilgrims during the yatra.

Security agencies have simultaneously stepped up preparedness along the pilgrimage routes.

In Pulwama district, police, in coordination with the CRPF and other agencies, conducted comprehensive mock drills at multiple locations to assess operational readiness and strengthen security arrangements ahead of the pilgrimage.

The exercises were carried out along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway stretch from Galander to Kandizal Crossing, as well as at Kakapora Railway Station and Ratnipora Railway Halt Station. Personnel from police, CRPF, specialised units, emergency response teams and medical services participated in the drills.

Officials said the exercises tested inter-agency coordination, communication systems, response mechanisms, area domination measures and contingency preparedness through simulated security and emergencies.

Meanwhile, security personnel intensified search and sanitisation operations at railway stations and other strategic locations. In south Kashmir's Kulgam district, police conducted extensive frisking and vehicle checks near the Navyug Tunnel in Qazigund, along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway.

Responding to a question on Muharram arrangements, the Divisional Commissioner said the administration had also initiated preparations for the observance and was coordinating with all stakeholders to ensure smooth conduct of processions.

He said Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had already reviewed the arrangements and directed officials to ensure availability of all essential services along approved procession routes.

"For the past few years, a system has been in place for Muharram processions. District administrations, in coordination with security agencies, are making arrangements at all approved routes," he said.

Garg added that field visits were underway and officials were preparing a final checklist of services in accordance with the chief minister's directions. "Our effort is to ensure that Muharram processions are held smoothly during the tourist season so that there is no inconvenience either to participants or to tourists visiting Kashmir," he said.

Earlier, Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat on Thursday flagged off 45 specialised Mountain Rescue Teams deployed at 21 locations along the Amarnath Yatra routes and the cave shrine to strengthen emergency response during the pilgrimage. Stressing the growing threat of cloudbursts and landslides in mountainous areas, he said the teams would play a crucial role in rescue operations.

Prabhat also highlighted the importance of training and lauded coordinated efforts by SDRF, police, BSF and SSB personnel.

The 38-day annual pilgrimage to the Amarnath cave shrine in south Kashmir is scheduled to commence on July 3 amid heightened security and elaborate logistical arrangements across Jammu and Kashmir—(KNO)



DC Srinagar, SSP finalize preparations for NEET-2026 examination

Emphasize seamless coordination, comprehensive logistical, security arrangements and strict adherence to prescribed guidelines

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 18: In order to finalize preparations and arrangements for the forthcoming re-examination of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET)-2026, a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex here today.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Srinagar Dr. G.V. Sundeep Chakravarty was present on the occasion.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiaz Ul Aziz, Additional Deputy Commissioner Aadil Fareed, Nodal Principal Colleges, Prof. Seema Naaz, Joint Commissioner SMC, Tahir Magray, IAS Probationer Alfred Thomas, SP Headquarter, Umar Shah, Chief Planning Officer Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Secretary SMC, Tahir Magray, SDM West, Irfan Bahadur, SDM, East, Zubair Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Umar Gulzar, Chief Education Officer, Gh Mohi-ud Din, all Tehsildars, representatives of the National Testing Agency (NTA), senior Officers of the District Administration, Traffic Police, Centre Supervisors,

During the meeting, a detailed review of all arrangements being put in place for the NEET-2026 re-examination scheduled to be held on June 21, 2026 was undertaken regarding deputation of Examination Staff including Centre Superintendents, Invigilators and supporting personnel and secure transportation, handling of examination material and conduct of mock exercise. Discussions also focused on ensuring the availability of adequate infrastructure and facilities at all designated examination centres, including uninterrupted power and water supply, proper seating arrangements, sanitation, transportation, medical assistance and deployment of requisite staff.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed the importance of meticulous planning and effective inter-departmental coordination to ensure the smooth, fair and transparent conduct of the examination. He directed all concerned departments to remain fully prepared and responsive to address any issue and ensure that candidates are provided with a conducive and hassle-free environment on the day of the examination.

The DC underscored the need for strict compliance with the



guidelines and standard operating procedures issued by the National Testing Agency and other competent authorities. He directed all stakeholders to work in close coordination and ensure

that every aspect of the examination is managed efficiently and professionally while upholding the integrity and credibility of the examination process. The DC further stressed the

establishment of a Joint Control Room for real-time monitoring of the examination process through live CCTV feeds from all examination centres. He directed the concerned agencies to strengthen CCTV surveillance mechanisms and as per the prescribed guidelines, to ensure the secure, fair, transparent and smooth conduct of the examination. He emphasized that all necessary technological and security measures must be put in place.

SSP Srinagar reviewed the security arrangements and directed the concerned Officers to implement a comprehensive security plan at all examination centres. He emphasized strict vigilance and adherence to examination protocols to prevent any malpractice and ensure the integrity of the examination process.

The meeting also reviewed traffic management plans, transportation facilities for examination personnel, emergency response mechanisms and arrangements for maintaining law and order around examination centres. Instructions were issued to ensure smooth movement of candidates and staff and to avoid any inconvenience during the conduct of the examination.

DC Ganderbal chairs Security Coordination Meeting for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, JUNE 18: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, today chaired a Security Coordination Meeting with Police and Security forces to ensure seamless coordination between security forces and to review security arrangements for the forthcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY) 2026 in the district.

At the outset, DC took a detailed review of the preparedness of various departments and security agencies regarding arrangements being put in place along the Baltal axis for the smooth conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

During the meeting, a comprehensive security plan was reviewed to ensure the safety and security of pilgrims travelling through the Baltal route. It was informed that adequate security arrangements are being put in place at all vital locations, including Base Camp Baltal, Transit Camp Manigam and along the yatra track.

The DC stressed the importance of close coordination among all agencies and directed officers to maintain heightened vigilance and ensure timely response mechanisms during the yatra period. He emphasized that all arrangements must be completed well in advance to provide a secure and hassle-free pilgrimage experience to devotees.

The meeting also reviewed traffic management and officers were directed to ensure seamless coordination among all stakeholder departments for effective management of pilgrim movement and prompt response to any emergent situation. The DC reiterated the district administration's commitment to ensuring a safe, peaceful and comfortable pilgrimage and called upon all departments and agencies to work in close coordination for the successful conduct of the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra.

Shaam-e-Shafqat Brings Colours of India's Diverse Traditions to North Kashmir

400 Students Experience India's Rich Cultural Heritage at Pattan Festival

DR. AB GAYOOM

BARAMULLA, JUN. 18: In a remarkable display of India's rich cultural diversity, Shaam-e-Shafqat 2026, a vibrant cultural festival, was held at Zorawar Hall, Pattan, bringing together the colourful traditions and artistic expressions from different parts of the country. Jointly organised by the North Zone Cultural Centre (NZCC), Ministry of Culture, Government of India, and the Indian Army, the one-day festival served as a tribute to national unity and a celebration of India's enduring cultural heritage. The event featured renowned artists from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Assam, Rajasthan and Kashmir, who enthralled the audience with captivating performances that reflected the unique traditions of their respective regions. From energetic folk dances and soulful musical renditions to traditional storytelling and vibrant costumes, the festival transformed the venue into a living representation of India's rich and diverse cultural landscape. Each performance highlighted the beauty of regional traditions while reinforcing



the spirit of togetherness that binds the nation. More than 400 students from 20 local schools and madrasas across North Kashmir participated in the programme. Besides enjoying the performances, the students gained valuable insight into the cultural richness and heritage of different parts of the country. The event attracted enthusiastic participation from students, artists and members of civil society. Continuous applause and active audience engagement reflected the appreciation for such initiatives aimed at promoting cultural understanding and social harmony. Beyond entertainment, Shaam-

e-Shafqat carried a deeper message of preserving, promoting and popularising India's cultural legacy while strengthening the bond between the youth of North Kashmir and the wider cultural fabric of the nation.

The festival stood as a powerful embodiment of India's philosophy of "Unity in Diversity", leaving behind a lasting impression of joy, pride and togetherness among all those who attended. More than just a cultural event, Shaam-e-Shafqat 2026 emerged as a celebration of India's pluralistic spirit and a meaningful step towards fostering cultural integration, mutual respect and national unity.

MP, MLAs call on Minister Javed Rana; raise public issues

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 18: Member of Parliament (MP), Chowdhary Mohammad Ramzan, MLA Banihal Sajad Shaheen, MLA Chadoora, Ali Mohammad Dar, today called on Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, in separate meetings and discussed various issues of public importance.

They apprised the Minister of several public welfare, developmental and infrastructure related issues requiring the intervention of the Minister.

During his meeting, the MP held detailed discussion on a range of issues of public importance, with particular focus on

development priorities, governance-related matters and concerns affecting the people. The exchange also covered ongoing initiatives and measures aimed at addressing the key challenges and improving public service delivery across the region.

The MP apprised the Minister of several public welfare and developmental concerns requiring attention and sought timely intervention for their resolution. Javed Rana gave a patient hearing to the issues raised and assured the MP that all genuine concerns would be examined for redress on priority.

MLA Chadoora, Ali Mohammad Dar, apprised the Minister of several issues of public importance pertaining to his constituency,



with special emphasis on urgent restoration of the irrigation canal at Madbal, Chadoora, which was damaged during last year's floods.

The MLA informed the Minister that the canal serves as a vital source of irrigation for agricultural lands in several villages, including Doyan, Durbugh, Yarikalan, Checkpora, Buchroo and

Wathoor. He expressed concern over the hardships being faced by the farmers and sought immediate intervention for restoration and rehabilitation of the canal to ensure timely water availability during the ongoing agricultural season.

Besides the irrigation issue, the MLA also raised several other

matters concerning the public welfare, development and civic amenities in different parts of the constituency and requested for their early resolution.

MLA Banihal, Sajad Shaheen also raised constituency specific issues and requested the personal intervention of the Minister to address the bottlenecks in order to ensure smooth implementation of welfare schemes and measures in his constituency. The Minister assured that all the genuine issues projected during the meeting would be taken up expeditiously for speedy redress.

The Ministers assured the MP and MLAs that the concerns projected by them would receive due attention and appropriate action.

Chief Secretary directs rationalization of departmental cadres and timely conduct of DPCs

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 18: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high-level meeting of Administrative Secretaries to review the status of updation of Recruitment Rules (RRs) across departments and assess the progress made in holding Departmental Promotion Committees (DPCs) for government employees.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary undertook a comprehensive department-wise review of the Recruitment Rules pertaining to both Gazetted and Subordinate Services and emphasized the need for their timely revision in line with evolving administrative requirements and technological advancements.

Observing that the nature of governance and service delivery has undergone significant transformation over the years, the Chief Secretary stressed the importance of aligning departmental structures with contemporary needs. He underscored the necessity of identifying posts that have become redundant over time and strengthening those that are critical for efficient functioning of departments.

To carry forward this exercise in a structured manner, the Chief Secretary directed the constitution of a core team under the leadership of the Commissioner Secretary, ARI & Trainings Department, with representatives from the General Administration Department (GAD), Finance Department, Law Department and the concerned departments. The team shall undertake a comprehensive review of departmental cadres and manpower requirements in the coming weeks to ensure optimum utilization of human resources across government departments.

The Chief Secretary further emphasized that updated Recruitment Rules are essential for enhancing administrative efficiency, ensuring transparent career progression for employees and creating opportunities for induction of skilled manpower possessing qualifications suited to modern governance requirements. He called upon all departments to expedite the process of revising and finalizing their Recruitment Rules within stipulated timelines.

Reviewing the status of Departmental Promotion Committees, the Chief Secretary stressed the importance of conducting DPCs sinatimely and regular manner to facilitate career advancement of employees and maintain motivation within the workforce. He directed all department store move bottle necks and ensure that eligible employees receive promotions without undue delay.

The meeting also deliberated on the framework and skill sets required for recruitment of Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS). Discussions were held regarding the work being undertaken by the committee constituted earlier by the General Administration Department to examine the issue and formulate suitable recommendations for future recruitment.

Speaking during the discussions on recruitment of Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS), Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department, Shailendra Kumar, advised all Administrative Secretaries to clearly articulate the nature of skills and competencies required from MTS personnel in their respective departments.

He observed that such an exercise would help in discerning the evolving role of MTS employees across departments and facilitate informed decision-making regarding their recruitment, deployment and capacity building.

Commissioner Secretary, General Administration Department, M. Raju, informed the meeting about the number of DPCs conducted by various departments across different cadres and presented details of employees promoted since October 2025. He also highlighted key challenges affecting timely conduct of DPCs, including pending litigations and delays in updating seniority lists, which have impacted the promotion process in several departments.

Earlier, Commissioner Secretary, ARI & Trainings Department, Shabnam Kamili, gave a detailed presentation on the status of Recruitment Rules currently under examination in the department. She apprised the meeting about cases that had been referred back to departments for compliance with observations and urged the concerned departments to resubmit the revised proposals at the earliest for expeditious processing.

The meeting also reviewed the functioning of the online portal developed for processing Recruitment Rules. It was informed that several departments have already submitted proposals through the portal and that all technical issues affecting its operation have been successfully resolved.

The meeting was further apprised that extensive capacity-building measures have been undertaken for departmental officers to facilitate effective use of the portal and ensure smooth, transparent and time-bound updation of Recruitment Rules across the Government.

The Chief Secretary reiterated the Government's commitment towards modernizing human resource management practices, streamlining service structures and ensuring timely promotions, thereby enhancing administrative efficiency and improving service delivery to the people.

Bandipora finalizes arrangements for International Yoga Day 2026

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JUNE 18: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, on Thursday chaired a meeting to review and finalize arrangements for the observance of International Yoga Day 2026 across the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the preparedness of various departments and stressed the need for close coordination to ensure the smooth and successful conduct of the event. Arrangements related to venue management, participation of students and youth, sanitation, drinking water, medical facilities, transportation, and security were discussed in detail.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments to complete the assigned tasks well in advance and ensure foolproof arrangements for the celebrations. She emphasized that



International Yoga Day serves as an important platform to promote a healthy lifestyle and raise awareness about the physical, mental, and emotional benefits of yoga among people of all age groups.

The District Nodal Officer, AYUSH, and the Youth Services & Sports Department were directed

to work in close coordination with all line departments for the seamless conduct of yoga sessions and related activities across the district. The Deputy Commissioner also called for maximum public participation to make the event a grand success.

It was informed during the

meeting that the main district-level celebration of International Yoga Day will be held at S.K. Stadium Bandipora on June 21. Similar programmes and yoga sessions will be organized simultaneously at the sub-divisional headquarters of Sumbal and Gurez, besides other designated locations across the district, to ensure wider participation and outreach.

International Yoga Day is observed annually on June 21 across the globe to promote health, wellness, and harmony through the practice of yoga.

Among others, Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Zaffar Husson Shawl; Assistant Commissioner Revenue Bandipora, Shabir Ahmad Wani; Chief Education Officer, Chief Medical Officer, District Information Officer, District Nodal Officer AYUSH, Block Development Officers, and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

MP Ruhullah Mehdi convenes Public Darbar at Awantipora

HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, JUNE 18: Member of Parliament, Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency, Agha Syed Ruhullah Mehdi today convened a Public Darbar at Town Hall Awantipora to hear public grievances and developmental concerns of the people.

During the interaction, delegations from various areas of Awantipora and adjoining regions, besides representatives of trade bodies, social organizations, welfare & development forums, Auqaf committees, senior citizens and other stakeholders participated in the event. The suggestions and demands put forth during the Public Darbar pertained to various sectors.

Addressing the gathering, the Member of Parliament assured the participants that issues requiring policy-level intervention would be taken up at appropriate forums, including forthcoming sessions of Parliament.

On the occasion, he also directed officers of the concerned departments to take prompt action on genuine grievances and issues raised during the interaction and ensure their timely re-



dressal.

The Public Darbar witnessed participation from the public and various stakeholders. District and sectoral officers from different departments were also present on the occasion.

DC Kupwara reviews preparedness for IPPI-2026

HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, JUNE 18: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, today chaired a meeting of the District Task Force (DTF) to review and finalize preparations for the upcoming Intensified Pulse Polio Immunization (IPPI)-2026 programme, scheduled to be conducted on June 28, 2026.

The meeting reviewed the district's preparedness, implementation strategy, logistics management and inter-departmental coordination to ensure the smooth and successful conduct of the immunization drive.

The Deputy Chief Medical Officer (Dy CMO), Kupwara, gave a detailed presentation highlighting the district action plan, deployment strategy, vaccine logistics and targets fixed under the programme. He informed that 130,085 children in the 0-5 years age group have been identified as the target population across the district.

To ensure comprehensive coverage, 766 vaccination booths have been established, while 158 supervisors have been deployed for effective monitoring and supervision. A total workforce of 3,088 personnel, comprising health workers, ASHAs, Anganwadi workers, supervisory staff and other support personnel, has been mobilized for the successful implementation of the campaign.

Reviewing the preparedness, the Deputy Commissioner directed the Health Department to strengthen field-level monitoring, ensure the effective functioning of all vaccination booths and maintain an uninterrupted cold chain to preserve vaccine potency and ensure availability of other logistics. He stressed that no eligible child should be left uncovered during the campaign.

The Deputy Commissioner also emphasized the need to pay special attention to transit and migratory populations, particularly nomadic families residing in higher reaches and remote areas of the district, to ensure universal immunization coverage.

Highlighting the importance of public participation, he called for intensified Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities through ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, educational institutions and other stakeholders to create greater public awareness and encourage maximum community participation in the immunization drive.

The meeting was attended by Chief Medical Officer Kupwara, Dr. Zaffar; Deputy CMO, Chief Education Officer Kupwara, Medical Superintendent, Government Medical College Handwara, Medical Superintendent, SDH Kupwara, Zonal Education Officer Kupwara, Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Committee Kupwara, Block Medical Officers, Child Development Project Officers and other concerned officers.

District Admin Kulgam felicitates Winners of District-Level Competitions under 100-Day Special Campaign against Drug Abuse

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, JUNE 18: District Administration Kulgam today organized a grand Felicitation Ceremony at the Auditorium Hall, Kulgam, to honour the winners and outstanding participants of various competitions conducted under the aegis of the 100-Day Special Campaign against Drug Abuse under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA).

The event celebrated the achievements of students and youth who participated in district-level competitions held across schools, blocks and municipal areas, including Essay Writing, Painting, Speech and Slogan Writing Competitions, as well as Sports Tournaments, Marathon Events and the District Ideathon.

The competitions witnessed enthusiastic participation from thousands of students and youth across the district and served as a powerful medium to spread awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse while promoting creativity, healthy



lifestyles, sportsmanship and community engagement.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, congratulated all the winners and participants for their remarkable performances and appreciated their contribution towards strength-

ening the movement for a drug-free society.

He emphasized that the fight against drug abuse requires active participation of youth, educational institutions, parents and civil society and highlighted that such initiatives help channelize the energy and talent of young

people towards constructive pursuits.

The Deputy Commissioner further stated that the District Administration remains committed to creating platforms for youth engagement through sports, innovation, cultural activities and awareness pro-

grammes. He urged the youth to become ambassadors of the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan and play an active role in spreading the message of a healthy, drug-free and progressive society.

During the ceremony, cash prizes, certificates, trophies and mementos were presented to winners and top performers from various competitions. Special recognition was also accorded to participants of the District Ideathon for their innovative ideas and contributions.

The event was attended by officers from various departments, representatives of educational institutions, teachers, students, parents and members of civil society.

The felicitation ceremony marked another significant milestone in the district's ongoing efforts under the 100-Day Special Campaign against Drug Abuse, reaffirming the collective resolve of the people of Kulgam towards building a Nasha Mukht Kulgam and a Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir.

Mega Yoga Session organized under 100-Day Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan at Shalimar

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 18: In connection with the 100-Day Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) and under the directions of District Ayush Officer Srinagar, Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Payer, a Mega Yoga Session was organized at the Government Floriculture Garden Shalimar.

During the event, an awareness lecture on drug addiction and its harmful effects was delivered by Dr. Nusrat Kawoosa, Medical Officer. Another informative lecture was delivered by Mohammad Younis, Yoga Instructor and De-Addiction expert, highlighting the role of Yoga and a healthy lifestyle in preventing



substance abuse and promoting mental well-being.

The programme was conducted with the active participation and support of Dr. Masrat Pandith, along with Yoga Instructors of District Srinagar.

A large number of students and members of the public participated enthusiastically in the yoga session and benefited from the awareness lectures. The participants actively performed various yoga practices and appreciated the initiative aimed at promoting a drug-free society and healthy living.

The session concluded successfully with a strong message of health, wellness, and freedom from.

District Admin Bandipora organizes NMBA Awareness Activities across Educational Institutions

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JUNE 18: As part of the ongoing Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) and the 100-Day Anti-Drug Campaign, a series of awareness activities were organized across educational institutions in Bandipora district on Thursday to sensitize students about the harmful effects of substance abuse and promote a drug-free society.

Art competitions were organized at Higher Secondary School Gadakhud, Higher Secondary School Koragbal, Higher Secondary School Ketson, Higher Secondary School Nowgam, Higher Secondary School Alosa, High School Panar and PM Shri Government High School Odina. Students participated enthusiastically and expressed their commitment towards a drug-free India through creative paintings, drawings and posters highlighting the social, mental and physical consequences of drug abuse. At HSS Gadakhud, students showcased their artistic talent through paintings depicting the adverse impact of substance abuse. The best performers were awarded certificates of appreciation by the school administration.

At PM SHRI GHS Odina, the programme concluded with the NMBA pledge, wherein students and staff reaffirmed their commitment to staying away from drugs and contributing towards a healthy and addiction-free India. Meanwhile, the NCORD Cell of HKM Government Degree College Bandipora organized a Future Roadmap and Sustainability Planning Workshop under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan. The programme focused on strengthening awareness initiatives and developing sustainable strategies for long-term efforts towards a drug-free society. The workshop witnessed active participation from students and staff who deliberated on future plans and collaborative measures for sustaining anti-drug awareness campaigns. Dr. G. M. Khan, Faculty, Department of English, delivered an insightful lecture on the harmful effects of drug addiction.

ADC Kulgam reviews arrangements for International Yoga Day

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, JUNE 18: In connection with the upcoming International Yoga Day, the additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kulgam, Vikar Ahmad Giri chaired a meeting to review and finalize the arrangements for the district-level celebration of International Yoga Day to be observed on June 21.

During the meeting, the ADC directed all concerned officers to ensure comprehensive arrangements for the smooth and successful conduct of the event across the district. Stressing the importance of Yoga in promoting physical, mental and emo-

tional well-being, the ADC emphasised the need for maximum public participation and awareness. He directed that International Yoga Day will be celebrated at Tehsil/Block headquarters and in all Government and Private Schools, Colleges, all Ayushman Arogya Mandirs across Kulgam district to ensure the message of healthy living reaches every section of society.

The ADC further instructed Nodal officer Ayush to actively coordinate and supervise Yoga Day celebrations at respective Tehsil/ block headquarters in collaboration with line departments, educational institutions and local stakeholders to ensure



enthusiastic participation at the grassroots level.

The meeting reviewed arrangements relating to sanitation,

drinking water, seating, medical aid, security, transportation, logistics, publicity and other essential facilities.

The district-level celebration on June 21 will witness participation from government officers/officials, students, NCC, civil society members, healthcare workers, Yoga enthusiasts and members of the general public, collectively promoting the message of fitness, wellness and a healthy lifestyle. The ADC urged all departments to work in close coordination to ensure flawless arrangements and make International Yoga Day celebrations a grand success throughout Kulgam district.

JKAACL organize seminar on 'Life and Literary Contributions of Harbhajan Singh Sagar' at Srinagar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 18: Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL), in collaboration with the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, today organized one day seminar at Tagore Hall, Srinagar, on the life, works and literary contributions of eminent Punjabi short story writer Harbhajan Singh Sagar.

The event brought together noted literary personalities, scholars, writers, researchers and readers to remember the rich legacy of one of the most distinguished contemporary voices in Punjabi fiction.

The event was attended by Dr. Rawail Singh, Convener, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi; Khalid Hussain, Member, Sahitya Akademi; Harvinder Kour, Secretary, JKAACL; Lal Chand, Additional Secretary, JKAACL; Popinder Singh Paras, Editor, Sheeraza Punjabi; and Sandeep Kour, Assistant Editor, among other distinguished guests.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Rawail Singh elaborated on the various initiatives being under-

taken by the Sahitya Akademi for the promotion of Punjabi literature, language and culture across the country. He particularly highlighted programmes aimed at encouraging young writers and fostering literary engagement among the younger generation. He underscored the importance of collaborative efforts among literary institutions to preserve India's diverse linguistic heritage.

Delivering the keynote address, Khalid Hussain presented a comprehensive overview of the life, literary journey and creative achievements of Harbhajan Singh Sagar. He emphasized the author's unique narrative style, deep humanism and commitment to portraying the realities of contemporary society through his fiction. He observed that Sagar's writings continue to inspire readers and emerging writers through their artistic excellence and social relevance.

In her address, Harvinder Kour, Secretary, JKAACL, spoke in detail about the Academy's ongoing efforts to promote lit-



erature and recognize eminent literary personalities through a variety of programmes, including the popular "Meet the Eminent" series. She paid rich tributes to Harbhajan Singh Sagar, describing him as a significant contributor to Punjabi literature whose writings have earned wide appreciation and recognition in literary circles.

She noted that such seminars provide an important platform for critical engagement with the works of leading writers and contribute to strengthening literary discourse.

Highlighting the collaborative efforts of JKAACL and Sahitya Akademi in organizing the seminar, Popinder Singh Paras remarked that Harbhajan Singh

Sagar's literary contributions have greatly enriched Punjabi literature. He particularly referred to Sagar's acclaimed short story collections *Diary*, *Yatri* and *Bandh Darwaze Da Birtant*, noting that these works reflect a profound understanding of human emotions, social realities and contemporary concerns. He further informed

the gathering that *Yatri* and *Bandh Darwaze Da Birtant* were honoured with the Best Book Award by JKAACL, a recognition of their literary excellence and enduring relevance.

A number of scholarly papers examining various dimensions of Sagar's life, literary philosophy, narrative techniques and contribution to Punjabi fiction were presented by Popinder Singh Paras, Dr. Pritam Singh, Rattan Singh Kanwal, Amanpreet Kour and Gurpreet Kaur, among other scholars and researchers. The presentations generated meaningful discussions and critical insights into the thematic richness and artistic significance of Sagar's writings.

While speaking on the occasion, Sandeep Kour highlighted the significance of literary seminars in preserving and promoting regional languages and literary traditions. She expressed gratitude to the JKAACL, Sahitya Akademi and all participants for their contribution towards making the programme a meaningful literary gathering.

In his remarks, Ajit Singh Mastana offered a critical appraisal of the papers presented during the seminar. Reflecting upon Harbhajan Singh Sagar's literary journey, he highlighted the writer's creative vision, narrative strength and commitment to depicting the complexities of human experience. He observed that Sagar's stories occupy an important place in contemporary Punjabi literature and continue to resonate with readers across generations.

A large number of writers, scholars, students, readers and literary enthusiasts attended the seminar, making it a vibrant and meaningful celebration of Punjabi literary heritage.

The event concluded with a renewed commitment by the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages and the Sahitya Akademi to continue working together for the promotion, preservation and dissemination of Punjabi language, literature and culture through collaborative literary initiatives and scholarly engagements.

DIPR's Cultural Unit conducts Drug Awareness Programme in Srinagar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 18: Cultural Unit of the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), Kashmir, organized an awareness programme under the *Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan (NMJKA)* at Greenland Paramedical College, Sangeen



Darwaza, Hawal, Srinagar.

The programme aimed at sensitizing students about the harmful effects of drug abuse and the importance of leading a healthy, addiction-free life. Students actively participated in the event and delivered insightful speeches highlighting the ill effects of substance abuse on individuals, families, and society.

A short play depicting the dangers of drug addiction was presented by the artists of Mehak Dramatic Club. The impactful and engaging performance received enthusiastic applause from the audience for effectively conveying the anti-drug message.

Student speakers who participated in the programme were felicitated for their contribution and awareness efforts.

Speaking on the occasion, AECO, Cultural Unit Kashmir, Syed Shakeel Shan, stressed the vital role of parental care and guidance in preventing substance abuse among youth. He also gave a detailed briefing on the ongoing *Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan* and emphasized the collective responsibility of society in combating the menace of drugs.

The Principal and staff of Greenland Paramedical College expressed their gratitude to the Cultural Unit, DIPR, for organizing such meaningful awareness programmes and creating awareness among students about the dangers of drug abuse.

The programme concluded with a pledge by participants to support the vision of a drug-free Jammu and Kashmir.

Sweet Screen Productions Showcases Traditional Rouff Dance at GMS Arigam in Budgam

■ GULFAM BARI

BUDGAM, JUNE 18: Sweet Screen Productions, Graital Nawakadal Srinagar, organized a vibrant performance of the traditional Kashmiri folk dance Rouff at Govt. Girls Middle School Arigam, Budgam, under the Repertory Grant (Guru Shishya Parampara) Scheme approved by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

MLA Khansahib Saif-ud-Din Bhat attended as the Chief Guest, while Sarah Banoo Principal of Govt. Higher Secondary School Arigam was

the Guest of Honour. ZEO Mehraj-ud-Din Shah, teachers, students and local residents were also present. The artists presented an impressive performance highlighting Kashmir's rich cultural heritage. Speakers emphasized the importance of the Guru Shishya Parampara Scheme in preserving traditional folk arts and connecting younger generations with their cultural roots. The programme concluded with appreciation for the artists and a call for more such cultural initiatives to promote and preserve Kashmir's traditional art forms.



Indian Army Hosts Cultural Festival 'Shaame-Shafqat 2026' in Pattan

■ JOHN WANI

PATTAN, JUNE 18: The Indian Army, in collaboration with the North Zone Cultural Centre, organised *Shaame-Shafqat 2026* at Zorawar Hall, Pattan, on Thursday. The cultural event celebrated India's diverse traditions and highlighted the importance of cultural harmony, national integration, and artistic heritage.

According to Jk News Network, the festival featured acclaimed folk artists from Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Manipur, and Odisha, who captivated the audience with vibrant performances representing the unique cultural traditions of their respective states.



The programme showcased a rich variety of folk dances, traditional music, and cultural performances, offering the audience an opportunity to experience the diversity of India's cultural landscape. The performances reflected the country's rich heritage and reinforced the message of unity in diversity.

The colourful presentations and lively atmosphere filled the venue with enthusiasm and patriotic spirit. Besides entertaining the audience, the festival aimed to encourage appreciation of India's cultural heritage and inspire younger generations, particularly in North Kashmir, to value and preserve the nation's traditional art forms.

The event also highlighted the importance of cultural exchange, mutual understanding, and national unity through the universal language of art and music.

Students, local residents, and members of civil society from different parts of North Kashmir attended the programme in large numbers.

Ministry of Culture
Government of India

राष्ट्रीय नाट्य विद्यालय
NATIONAL SCHOOL OF DRAMA
(An Autonomous Institution of the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India)

J&K ACADEMY OF ART, CULTURE & LANGUAGES

NATIONAL SCHOOL OF DRAMA
(An Autonomous Institution of Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India)
THEATRE IN EDUCATION CENTRE, SRINAGAR
In collaboration with
J&K ACADEMY OF ART, CULTURE & LANGUAGES

ORGANISES

SUMMER CHILDREN THEATRE WORKSHOP

WITH SCHOOL CHILDREN DURING SUMMER VACATION

The National School of Drama, Theatre in Education Centre, Srinagar in collaboration with J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages is going to organize two separate 15 days Theatre / Drama in education summer workshops with school children during summer vacation.

THE WORKSHOP AIMS TO:

- ★ Develop and strengthen life skills
- ★ Explore latent potential of the students

ELIGIBILITY

School children of age group
8 -12 & 12 -16 years
as on **20th June 2026.**

Interested aspirants may collect the application forms from NSD, TIE Centre, Srinagar, Cultural Academy Campus, Lal Mandi, Srinagar from **10th June 2026** between **11:00am to 4:00pm** before the announcement of summer vacation.

"REGISTER YOUR NAME BEFORE SUMMER VACATION STARTS"

FREE ADMISSION IS TOTALLY FREE.

AFTER THE COMPLETION OF WORKSHOP CERTIFICATES WILL BE AWARDED TO ALL THE PARTICIPANTS.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED:

1. Copy of Aadhar Card & identity card issued by school authorities.
2. Consent from parent /guardian

For further information contact Director

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HT EDITORIAL

Dark Clouds and the Hard Lessons

The thunder, rain and hail that swept across parts of Jammu and Kashmir during last few days were more than a passing weather event. They were a reminder of how quickly nature can change its mood and how vulnerable communities remain when the weather turns hostile.

From Kashmir's plains to the mountainous districts of Jammu, sudden downpours, strong winds and thunderstorms disrupted normal life. While the rain brought welcome relief from the heat, it also carried a warning. Meteorological experts have cautioned that intense showers in the coming days could trigger flash floods, landslides and mudslides in several vulnerable areas.

This is no longer an unusual occurrence. Every year, changing weather patterns are making extreme events more frequent. A few hours of heavy rainfall can flood roads, damage homes, disrupt transport and put lives at risk. Mountain regions, in particular, face the greatest danger, where a small weather disturbance can quickly turn into a major emergency.

The concern is especially important at a time when thousands of pilgrims are preparing for the annual Amarnath Yatra. Weather conditions along the pilgrimage routes can change rapidly, making preparedness and timely warnings crucial for the safety of travellers and local residents alike.

The impact is also felt in fields and orchards. Farmers and fruit growers depend on stable weather, but hailstorms and sudden rains can destroy crops and affect livelihoods. For many families, a single spell of bad weather can mean significant financial losses.

Fortunately, weather forecasts today provide valuable early warnings. But forecasts alone are not enough. Their true value lies in how seriously they are taken. People must remain alert, avoid risky travel during severe weather and follow official advisories. Authorities, meanwhile, must ensure that emergency services remain ready to respond at short notice.

The latest spell of rain should not be viewed merely as a change in weather. It is a reminder that preparedness has become an essential part of life in a region increasingly exposed to climate-related risks.

Nature often gives advance notice before it strikes. The responsibility now is to listen, prepare and act before warnings become tragedies.

The Twelve-Year Horizon: Assessing the Modi Era and the Weight of a Long Mandate



■ MOHAMMED AMIN SHAH

In the grand course of Indian history, certain tenures are marked not merely by the passage of time, but by a fundamental shift in the nation's gravitational pull. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi completes an unprecedented 12-year stretch at the helm of the world's largest democracy, the country finds itself at a juncture that demands both reflection and rigorous analysis. With his tenure crossing the 4,399-day mark surpassing the long-standing record of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, we are forced to confront the reality that the "Modi Years" have become a definitive study in transformation, polarity, and an unyielding drive toward a redefined national identity.

■ The Architecture of a New State

To understand the significance of this 12-year milestone, one must first look at the sheer scale of the administrative overhaul initiated under Mr. Modi. Early in his tenure, the government signaled a move away from the traditional, bureaucratic processes of the past. The abolition of the requirement for gazetted-officer attestation and the shift toward self-attestation were early, symbolic steps that signaled a move toward a "trust-based" governance model.

This ethos of digitisation spearheaded by the Digital India initiative has been the defining characteristic of this decade-plus era. The rapid proliferation of 5G services, the formalisation of the economy through the Goods and Services Tax (GST), and the massive push for financial inclusion via the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana have fundamentally altered the mechanics of the Indian state. Where once the common citizen navigated a maze of intermediaries, the direct-benefit transfer system now attempts to bypass the leakages that once plagued India's welfare architecture. By linking billions of Aadhaar-verified bank accounts to welfare schemes, the administration claims to have reached the last mile, providing pucca houses, clean water, and free medical coverage to millions who were previously invisible to the state.

■ The Aspirational Surge

Supporters of the Prime Minister often point to a psychological transformation, a transition from a culture of entitlement to one of aspiration. Government ministers and party officials have frequently invoked this "mindset change," arguing that the youth of India, particularly in Tier-II and Tier-III cities, now believe in the possibility of success through merit rather than patronage.

The numbers provided by the state, at least on the surface, offer a compelling narrative of scale. A startup ecosystem that has ballooned from a few hundred entities in 2014 to over 2.3 lakh today, the emergence of a robust space economy, and the expansion of infrastructure, from Vande Bharat trains to vast highway corridors, provide the physical evidence of this "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India) vision. It is a narrative of confidence, projecting an India that is no longer a bystander on the global stage, but a proactive player in the geopolitical arena. This "Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi" (Development and Heritage) philosophy has been central to his tenure, blending the modernization of India with a distinct, culturally resonant nationalism that has galvanized a significant cross-section of the



electorate.

■ The Road to 2047

As we observe this 12th anniversary, it is clear that Mr. Modi has succeeded in moving the goalposts of Indian politics. He has replaced the old paradigms with a new vocabulary of governance, one that blends high-tech administrative efficiency with a potent, culturally resonant nationalism. Whether one views this as a renaissance or a retreat, the sheer longevity of his leadership has ensured that the "Modi imprint" is now woven into the very structure of the Indian state.

The challenge for the years ahead, as the administration sets its eyes on the 2047 horizon, will be reconciling these two Indias: the one that is digitising, innovating, and rising on the global index, and the other that is grappling with economic anxiety, social division, and a yearning for a more inclusive definition of progress.

Twelve years on, the verdict remains as dynamic as the Prime Minister's own political style. There is no doubt that the India of 2026 is vastly different from the one that existed in 2014. The nation has seen peace accords in the North-East, the dismantling of the old budgetary calendar, and an assertive shift in foreign policy. Yet, the essential task of a democracy is to balance the speed of execution with the depth of consensus. As the dust settles on this milestone, the nation stands at a crossroads: to build upon the infrastructure of efficiency while ensuring that the heartbeat of democratic dissent and social harmony remains strong.

The question that remains, as the nation moves forward, is not just what has been achieved, but what kind of foundation has been laid for the generations to follow. In the final estimation, history will judge this era not merely by the number of days spent in office, but by the resilience of the institutions that were entrusted to its care.

■ Modi as a mass leader

At the core of this twelve-year tenure lies a leadership style that has redefined the traditional boundaries of Indian executive power. Mr. Modi represents a rare synthesis of a grassroots organizational background and a high-modernist, technocratic vision, operating with a decisiveness that has consistently unsettled the established political status quo. His approach is characterized by an acute attention to optics and narrative, transforming governance into a performative act of nation-building, while simultaneously maintaining a centralized, top-down control that prioritizes speed and scale. Critics perceive this as an increasingly

authoritarian impulse that bypasses established institutional mediation, yet for his supporters, this same "no-nonsense" executive firmness is the very mechanism required to break the inertia of India's systemic complexities. By effectively blending a messianic, nationalist rhetoric with the precise, data-driven delivery of welfare, he has cultivated a unique personal brand that transcends traditional party politics, positioning himself not merely as a head of government, but as the primary architect of a new, assertive Indian consciousness.

Vishwaguru India

The aspiration for India to emerge as a Vishwaguru, a global teacher or world leader, has served as both a rhetorical anchor and a strategic vision throughout Prime Minister Narendra Modi's tenure. At its core, this concept transcends mere economic metrics, seeking to position India as a unique moral and intellectual compass for a world grappling with geopolitical flux, environmental crises, and the search for sustainable development models. Mr. Modi has framed this vision by tapping into a civilizational memory, invoking India's ancient heritage, philosophical inquiry, and tradition of pluralistic wisdom as essential contributions to modern global governance.

In practice, this Vishwaguru narrative has been operationalised through what many analysts term "civilisational diplomacy." By promoting initiatives like the International Yoga Day, globalising the reach of Ayurveda, and positioning India as the "Voice of the Global South," the administration has sought to convert India's cultural depth into tangible "soft power." This strategy was perhaps most vividly on display during India's G20 Presidency, where the government utilized the global stage to project an image of a nation that is "future-ready" yet deeply rooted in its traditions, a nation capable of bridging the divide between the developed and developing worlds. For the current administration, the Vishwaguru mantle is not just a title; it is a claim that India's solutions to its own challenges, such as digital public infrastructure, large-scale financial inclusion, and diverse social management, are scalable templates for the rest of humanity. While critics caution that this vision must be balanced with the hard realities of domestic institutional health and economic inclusivity, the Vishwaguru narrative has undeniably succeeded in crafting a new, assertive identity for India, one that demands a seat at the high table not merely as a rising market, but as a civilization with a constructive, guiding role to play in the 21st-century order.

■ A Leader of Unyielding Purpose

At the heart of this twelve-year journey is a leader whose connection to the pulse of the nation is peerless. Mr. Modi's leadership style is a unique synthesis of grassroots pragmatism and a grand, visionary ambition. He has successfully replaced a culture of entitlement with one of aspiration, where the youth of Tier-II and Tier-III cities now look at the future with the firm conviction that merit is the only currency that matters.

His tenure has been a relentless pursuit of "Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi", progress coupled with the preservation of our rich heritage. He has given the nation a new vocabulary of governance, one that is data-driven, decisive, and deeply patriotic. For millions of Indians, these twelve years have provided something that was once in short supply: a sense of national self-belief and a clear, well-lit path toward becoming a developed nation by 2047.

Twelve years on, the trajectory is clear. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has not just changed; it has been rediscovered, confident, digital, and undeniably rising. History will remember this era as the time when India finally stopped waiting for the world to notice its potential and instead began to shape the world's destiny.

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The Earth and Leap Year

■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

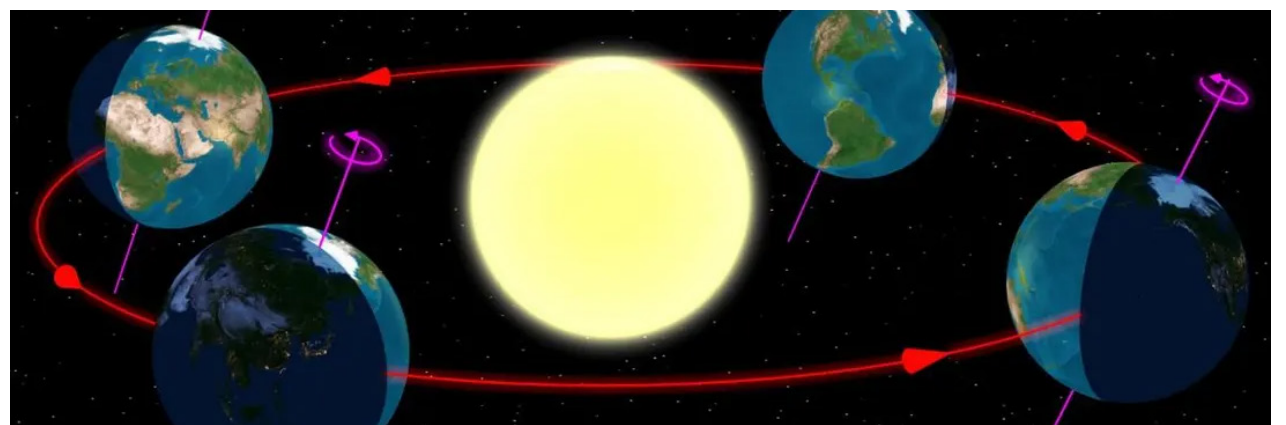
All the planets revolve around the Sun. Traditionally, there were nine known planets: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. However, since 2006, Pluto has been classified as a dwarf planet by the International Astronomical Union (IAU).

Every planet has two types of motion: rotation and revolution.

Revolution is the movement of a planet around the Sun along its orbit. Different planets take different amounts of time to complete one revolution around the Sun.

Rotation is the spinning of a planet on its own axis. Most planets rotate in the same direction, but some, such as Venus and Uranus, rotate differently.

Earth is a very special and unique planet because it supports life. The presence of water, oxygen, a suitable



atmosphere, and plants makes life possible on Earth.

What is a Leap Year?

A leap year is a year that contains 366 days instead of the usual 365 days. Earth takes approximately 365 days and 6 hours to complete one revolution around the Sun. These extra 6 hours accumulate each year, and after four

years they add up to about 24 hours, or one full day.

To account for this extra day, one day is added to the month of February every four years. Therefore, February has 29 days instead of 28 days in a leap year.

The year 2024 was a leap year and consisted of 366 days.

Time is very precious. Every second, minute, hour, and day is important. As time passes, the world continues to change. Therefore, we should use our time wisely and live a disciplined life.

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BOOK REVIEW

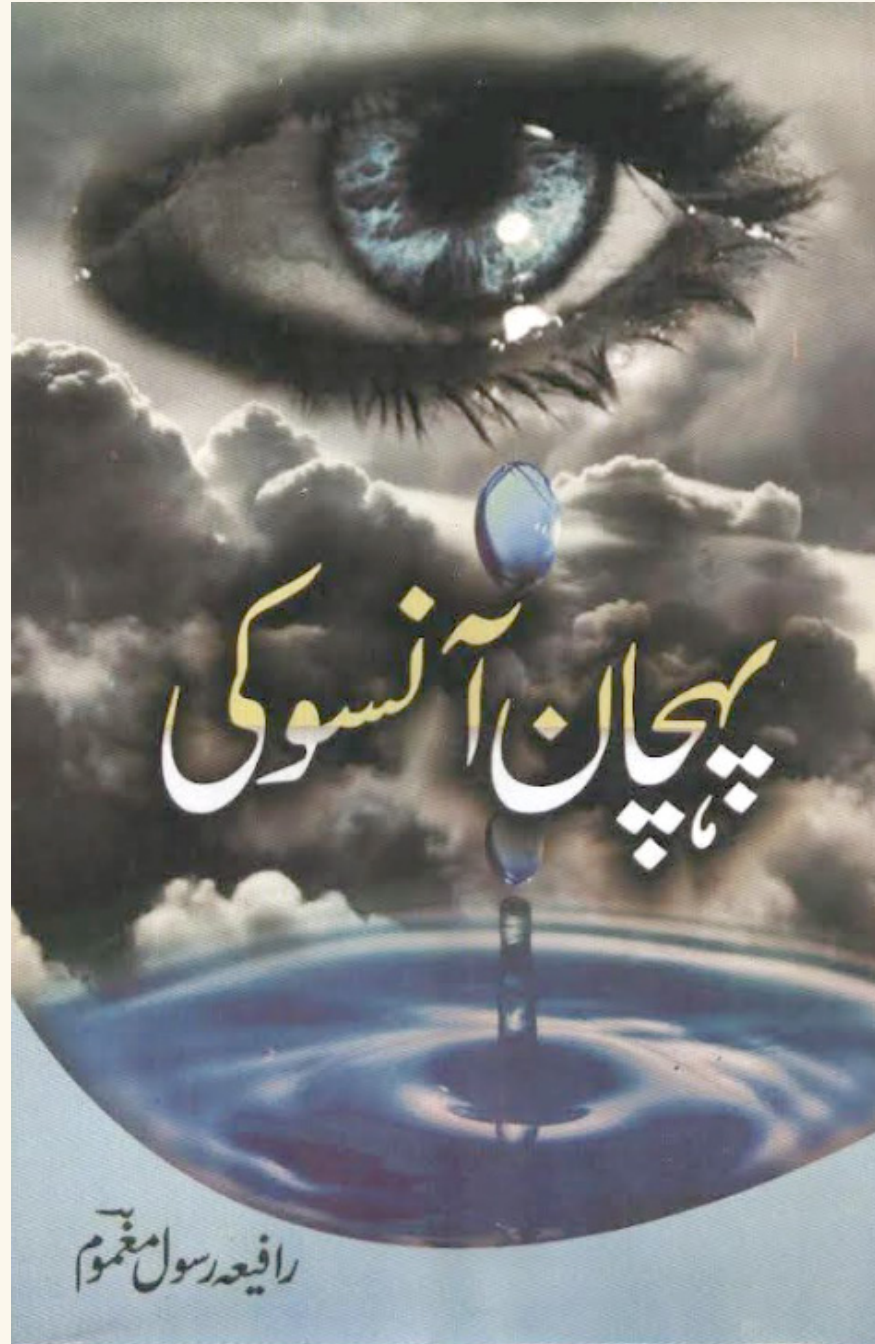


RAYEES AHMAD KUMAR
Writer is a columnist
based in Qazigund Kashmir

Pehchan Aansoo Ki — Novel by Rafia Rasool Magmoom

Rafia Rasool Magmoom is among those few women writers who have established a distinct identity in the world of fiction within a short period of time. Primarily known as a cartoonist and journalist, she has successfully ventured into literature and earned a prominent place in Urdu literary circles. Hailing from Buchwara, Dalgate, Srinagar, this talented and well-known writer once dreamed of becoming a doctor, but destiny had different plans. Today, she is recognized as a successful cartoonist, journalist, and author. Pehchan Aansoo Ki is her first literary work. Comprising 96 pages, the novel is a thoughtful and emotionally moving creation dedicated to cancer patients who departed from this world and to the memory of her late father. The publication of the book was supported financially by the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages. In the introductory note titled Harf-e-Chand, noted writer Dr Farid Parbati observes that the novel's language is simple, fluent, and engaging, much like contemporary fiction. The author also pays a heartfelt tribute to her father and, under the section Apne Bare Mein, recounts her educational journey and professional experiences, explaining how circumstances led her from a dream of medicine to cartooning, journalism, and ultimately literature. The story revolves around two close friends, Qainat and Ghazala, who studied together from school through college. Ghazala, brought up with great affection and luxury, possessed extraordinary beauty but was equally proud and self-centered. She was admired by almost every young man in college, yet she remained indifferent to all attention. Qainat, in contrast, was a sensible and compassionate young woman. Having lost her parents in a road accident and been raised by her maternal uncle, she carried within her a deep sense of empathy and kindness. Her dream was to become a doctor. Salim, a brilliant and

hardworking student one year senior to them, fell deeply in love with Ghazala. One day, at a coffee house, he finally confessed his feelings and expressed his wish to make her his life partner. Ghazala, however, rejected him harshly, humiliating him with the remark that he should have considered his "status" before making such a proposal. Despite Qainat's later advice to forget Ghazala and focus on his future, Salim continued to cherish his love for her. As time passed, Salim became a successful physician, Qainat fulfilled her dream of becoming a doctor, and Ghazala pursued engineering. Their paths diverged, and Ghazala gradually disappeared from the lives of her friends. Years later, fate brought them together again under tragic circumstances. A critically ill and unconscious woman was admitted to a hospital where Dr Qainat was serving. To her astonishment, the patient turned out to be Ghazala, though greatly changed by suffering, illness, and the hardships of life. When Ghazala regained consciousness, she narrated the painful story of her life. During her engineering studies, she had fallen in love with a senior student named Wasim. Their friendship blossomed into a deep relationship, and eventually Wasim expressed his love through a letter. Ghazala, equally devoted, believed she had found the companion of her dreams. They exchanged promises of lifelong loyalty and envisioned a future together. However, after graduating, Wasim abruptly distanced himself from her. He neither met her nor showed any concern for her wellbeing. His indifference shattered Ghazala's dreams and plunged her into despair. Despite medical consultations and family support, she found no relief from her emotional wounds. She rejected every marriage proposal, unable to erase Wasim from her heart. Eventually, through Wasim's friend Aamir, she learned the devastating truth, Wasim had married a close relative at the insis-



tence of his parents. The news struck her like a thunderbolt. Soon afterward,

her parents also passed away, leaving her utterly alone. The combined burden of loneliness, grief, and failed love reduced her to a state of physical and emotional collapse. While caring for Ghazala, Dr Qainat unexpectedly discovered that Salim was still unmarried and continued to hold affection for her. She began to hope that Ghazala might finally find companionship and happiness. Yet fate had another twist in store. During a visit to the hospital, Salim's sister-in-law passed away. Amid the mourning crowd, Ghazala suddenly recognized someone and exclaimed in shock, "This is Wasim!" The story then moves toward an even more tragic conclusion. A month later, when Dr Salim returned to meet Dr Qainat, he learned that she had succumbed to cancer. Standing silently beside her grave, he reflected on how life often takes away the very things people hold most dear. In the stillness of the graveyard, dreams, loves, and unfulfilled hopes seemed forever buried beneath the earth. Rafia Rasool Magmoom's novel is not merely a tale of love and loss; it is also a powerful reflection on materialism, declining human values, and the emotional struggles of modern life. The novel demonstrates that the women fiction writers of Kashmir possess remarkable creative depth, artistic maturity, and intellectual insight. Through graceful language, effective storytelling, and strong characterization, the author succeeds in keeping readers engaged from beginning to end. Her command over language and narrative technique is evident throughout the work. The simplicity, fluency, and emotional strength of her prose enhance the novel's appeal and make it a valuable contribution to contemporary Urdu literature. Such quality literary creations deserve appreciation and encouragement, for they not only enrich literature but also inspire future generations of writers and readers alike.

Unfair Grade: When The System Betrays Hard Work



MOOL RAJ

There is a quiet tragedy unfolding in Indian classrooms, not in the form of crumbling infrastructure or absent teachers, but in something far more insidious: the gradual erosion of a child's belief that hard work truly matters.

Consider a scenario that is no longer hypothetical. A fifteen-year-old studies with the same dedication, the same late nights, and the same anxious anticipation as any other student in the country. Under one board, his efforts earn him 52 per cent. Under another, the same child, the same intellect and the same ambition secure 96 per cent and a scholarship. Nothing has changed except the system measuring him. Yet we ask him to carry the weight of that number for the rest of his life.

India has always embraced diversity in education. A nation with dozens of languages and hundreds of dialects was never going to function through a single textbook or curriculum. Diversity is not the problem. The problem arises when diversity of syllabus translates into inequality of opportunity and is then justified in the name of federalism. When a student



can score 96 per cent under one board and 52 per cent under another, we are not witnessing educational diversity; we are witnessing a failure of standardisation with national consequences.

In India, grades are more than academic markers. They determine access to colleges, scholarships, jobs and, too often, self-worth. A student who receives 52 per

cent does not simply receive a lower grade; he often receives a social judgement.

Alongside this disparity lies another growing concern: the silent breakdown of digital evaluation systems. Students and parents across the country increasingly report blurred scanned answer sheets, unexpected score reductions and opaque assessment processes despite claims of

technological advancement. This is the particular cruelty of poorly implemented digital reform. It introduces the detached indifference of a machine into an already unequal system.

A human evaluator, despite personal biases, can be questioned and held accountable. An algorithm that produces a score without explanation offers no such pos-

sibility. Technology does not automatically create fairness. Without transparency, it merely accelerates injustice.

Perhaps the most overlooked aspect of this debate is its psychological impact. When students begin to believe that sincere effort cannot guarantee a fair outcome, something fundamental is damaged. Education ceases to be a contract between effort and reward. It becomes a lottery.

Mental health professionals working with adolescents increasingly observe that examination-related stress has changed in nature. Students are no longer afraid only of failure. Many fear that success itself may not matter because the system cannot be trusted. That is a far more dangerous anxiety to grow up with. India does not need a uniform curriculum, a single language of instruction or a standardised cultural framework. The richness of its educational diversity must be preserved. What India urgently requires is agreement on one non-negotiable principle: fairness.

This means robust moderation mechanisms that account for variations across boards, transparent and auditable digital assessment systems, effective grievance-redressal procedures, and institutional recognition that examination scores represent far more than data points. They shape how young people see themselves and their futures. The real issue is not marks, but trust. If hard work is not fairly rewarded, the education system fails its most important test.

THE AUTHOR IS A REGULAR COLUMNIST AND FREELANCE WRITER



Weight Loss: Know How To Do Bicycle Crunches Correctly For Toned Abs

A crunch is a classic core exercise that especially works on your abdominal muscles. It helps in toning your muscles around the abs, pelvis, back and sides of the trunk. Many perform this exercise on day to day basis. To make it more interesting, different variations of the crunch are usually practised. One of the variations is bicycle crunches. This form works on both abs and obliques. It also helps in toning the thighs and side abdominal muscles. Some might make a few mistakes while performing this exercise that can not only affect the results but may lead to strain or injuries too. Recently, fitness expert Kayla Itsines took to Instagram and

shared a video to elaborate common mistakes you should be avoiding while performing ab bikes.

How to do ab bikes correctly? Here are some common mistakes you should avoid

The caption of the video reads, "This is an easy one to get wrong. So, if you do Ab Bikes often, I want you to take the time to learn how to get them right!"

- Some do's and don'ts she listed are-
- Do's
 - Rest hands in front of ears
 - Rotate at the torso
 - Bring knees in close to the chest

Extend your legs in a push and pull motion
Elevate your shoulders

- Don'ts
- Pull your neck up with your hands behind your head
 - Do small in and out motions with your legs
 - Curve your back away from the floor

The fitness expert explains-

1. Do not use your hands to push your upper body- Usually, people keep their hands behind their neck and bring their knees close to the elbows. Pulling your neck this way can lead to tension in the neck. So, keep your hands in front of

your ears.

2. Pull the other leg-

Many also keep both the legs in the same position through the exercise. While bringing your one knee closer to the upper body, extend the other leg and push it.

Avoid these mistakes and ace the bicycle crunch!

Disclaimer: This content including advice provides generic information only. It is in no way a substitute for qualified medical opinion. Always consult a specialist or your own doctor for more information. NDTV does not claim responsibility for this information. **Courtesy EMJ**

Weight Loss: Prepare Your High Protein, Post-Workout Drink With This Desi Superfood

Protein is an essential macronutrient that plays an important role in maintaining and building tissues. It is crucial to add the required amount of protein to daily diet. One such food item that takes care of the requirement of protein and other minerals in the body is the good, old sattu (roasted chana flour). Considered a powerhouse of energy, it is consumed especially during summer. Recently, life coach Luke Coutinho shared an Instagram video about the benefits of this healthy form of flour and how it can add to your daily protein intake.

High protein post-workout drink with sattu
In the post, Luke described the power of sattu, saying it was his favourite protein shake that can be easily made at home. Since there are restrictions in most areas, this homemade recipe for a pure vegetarian source of nutrition is very useful.

In the video, Luke says he has just finished his leg workout and now needs 22-24 grams of



protein. "How do I get it?" He then lists a few non-vegetarian sources of protein but adds that he would go with his favourite sattu shake, which will have calcium, magnesium, zinc, phosphorus in addition to proteins.

How to prepare this drink

He takes six tablespoons of sattu in a beaker and adds a tablespoon of beetroot powder, which dilates the blood vessels to allow more blood flow to the muscles for their repair after a workout and keep the heart rate normal. He then adds water, shakes the beaker and the sattu shake is ready (as easy as that). He suggests carom seeds (ajwain) and cumin seeds (jeera) can be added for flavour and this shake can be taken once or twice a day.

Luke, however, urged people to make an informed decision and consult their doctors before starting any new diet plan. Also, he said in the video that if sattu caused gas to form in the stomach then avoid it or reduce its intake amount (3 teaspoons instead of 6).

Apart from being a powerhouse of energy, sattu is high on insoluble fibre, making it good for the intestines. It's also low on the glycemic index, which makes it beneficial for diabetics. Apart from these benefits, sattu has generous proportions of iron, manganese, and magnesium, and is low on sodium as well.

If you don't want to have sattu in the form of a protein shake, you can consume it in a variety of other ways such as laddoos, paranthas, and chilla.

Disclaimer: This content including advice provides generic information only. It is in no way a substitute for qualified medical opinion. Always consult a specialist or your own doctor for more information. NDTV does not claim responsibility for this information. **EMJ**

Looking For A Leg Workout? This Shilpa Shetty's Exercise Routine Is Worth A Try

Lockdowns, online classes, and work-from-home have kept many of us stuck to our chairs and beds. We cannot even go to our regular gyms for our daily or weekly workouts, and even our home exercises are getting repetitive and, as a result, boring. Overall motivation to get up from our chairs and do a new workout routine gets even lower when you realise it's a Monday. But actress and fitness enthusiast Shilpa Shetty Kundra's latest Instagram Reels is here to give us just the kick of motivation to get us on our workout mats, ready to start sweating.

Monday Motivation: Try this routine by Shilpa Shetty Kundra

Dressed in her usual chic workout attire, Shetty can be seen sweating it out with a powerful lower body workout, as was recommended to her by trainer Yashmeen Chauhan. So, what's the workout, you ask. It's fairly simple but oh-so effective. The actress calls it the "open and close squat challenge".

You first stand straight with your feet together and your arms diagonally up in a V shape. Then you step your right foot to the right side, squat, and take your arms down, crossing them in front of your waist. Step your foot back to the centre and stand straight, and repeat it on the other leg.

Do one set slow, then the next two sets in double the speed. Then do the fourth set slow again, and pick up the pace for the next two sets. Remember to inhale when you're up and exhale when you squat. Keep your back straight and your abs engaged in every squat.

According to her caption, this exercise will work on your cardio-respiratory endurance, your lower body muscles, shoulders, speed, agility, brain and body, and arm and leg coordination.

In all likelihood, we will probably be sweating through what Shetty might be pulling off effortlessly, smiling and glowing, but there's no doubt that this workout will give us a perfect kickstart to the week.

This is not the first time Shetty's Instagram has inspired us to get up and moving. We vividly remember this Instagram video where she showed us a potent yoga flow to fire up the abdomen and hamstrings, comprising the Gatyatmak Utthita Padahasthasana and Naukasana.

With that flow, she taught us a way to boost core strength, get a hamstring stretch, tone our abs, and also strengthening our arms, shoulders, and thighs.

Courtesy Healthline

Stop eating these food items before sleeping to keep obesity at bay!

Obesity has become a major health hazard. With COVID-19 restrictions, more and more people are staying at home and leading a sedentary lifestyle, which is not at all good for your health. The lockdown has also led people into binge eating - a cause of great worry as it can lead to obesity. Another major factor that leads to weight gain is eating a heavy dinner. This is because there is not much physical activity that you undertake between your last meal and before sleeping. Thus the fat from food is not burned and is rather stored in the body.

According to diet experts Dr.

Ranjana Singh, dinner should be eaten about 3 hours before sleeping.

Dr Ranjan also lists some food items that should preferably not be consumed before sleeping. They are:

NOODLES

If you eat noodles at night, then the carbs and fats found in it can spoil your health. There is absolutely no fiber in it and due to all these reasons your weight can increase rapidly.

CHOCOLATES

Chocolates have high sugar content along with caffeine - both of which are bad for sleep as you can get a sugar rush and caffeine can take away your sleepiness. High

sugar content in them can lead to weight gain. It is better to abstain from eating chocolates after dinner.

FRIED FOOD ITEMS

Fried food can increase your weight rapidly, because fried food contains carbs and fatty acids, which work to increase your stomach acidity and weight. So try to eat light food at night which can be easily digested.

SODA

Some people like to drink soda to digest dinner, but they contain high sugar content which works to increase belly fat rapidly. Therefore it is better to soda drinks before sleeping. **Courtesy Healthline**

Cabbage: Here's Why This Leafy Vegetable Is A Perfect Alternative To Kale

Have you jumped on the kale bandwagon yet? Healthy eating enthusiasts have recently been going gaga over kale - a leafy, green, cruciferous vegetable that is rich in nutrients. It can be eaten raw or cooked, in salads, in the form of chips, as well as by adding it as an ingredient in pasta sauces, soups, and smoothies. So many celebrities have also declared kale as one of their favourite healthy foods. However, in India, this "super vegetable" is a little hard to find and thus also quite expensive. Does that mean we'll have to go without its nutritional benefits? Celebrity nutritionist Pooja Makhija disagrees.

Perfect Indian alternate to kale

In an Instagram Reels, Pooja talks about how nutritious kale is as a vegetable. No wonder she calls kale a "multivitamin wonder", thanks to oxidants like vitamin C and flavonoids, as well as its high content of beta-carotene, lutein,

zeaxanthin, as well as the presence of fibre.

Cabbage health benefits: This winter vegetable is loaded with several essential nutrients. It is a good source of vitamin C which boosts immunity. Read here to know some amazing health benefits of cabbage. Cabbage helps in removing the toxins from the body because of the high amounts of vitamin C and sulphur present in them.

But Pooja knows our struggles in being able to procure kale, mentioning how in India, it sells for anything between 200 to 700 rupees per kilogram. Don't worry, Pooja also leaves us with a handy alternative. Guess what? Cabbage. Yes, according to the nutritionist, cabbage, which is widely abundant in the Indian farms and markets, comes from the same cruciferous family and boasts of all the nutritional perks that kale became famous for. The best part? It is so much more accessible and affordable.

Pooja mentions how kale is definitely richer in flavonoids than cabbage, but mixing up another antioxidant-rich veggie like carrots with the cabbage will render something that she says is "cooler than kale". The perks of cabbage are plenty: "Cheap, available all year round, every city and town, easier to store, and stays fresh longer". Her caption also highlights other Indian superfoods that you should be incorporating into your diet as well, like amaranthus, mustard, radish and beetroot greens, Malabar spinach, moringa leaves, palak and gongura, and colocasia.



Courtesy EMJ

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

Subject: Application of UMER JAVID SOFI S/O JAVID AHMAD SOFI R/O KAKOTHAL Tehsil KREERI for issuance of RBA certificate in favour of self for the issuance of RBA in his own favor

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of RBA in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of KAKOTHAL of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the SOFI community having annual income 95000// the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1..JAVID AHMAD SOFI Father 44 years Labour
- 2..SARA BAGUM Mother 47 years House wife
- 3...UMER JAVID SOFI self 22 years student

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

NAIB TEHSILDAR KALANTRA

Public Notice

FOR TRANSFER OF KPDC ELECTRICITY AGREEMENT

It is notified for the information of the general public that the electricity agreement/consumer connection bearing Consumer ID No. 0212040008296 is presently registered in the name of Late Ghulam Mohammad Dar S/o In-law Ahmad Dar, R/o Saloosa, Tehsil Kreeri, District Baramulla.

The said consumer has expired and his son Bashir Ahmad Dar S/o Late Ghulam Mohammad Dar, R/o Saloosa, Kreeri, Baramulla has applied before the AEE, KPDC Sub Division Wagoora for transfer of the said electricity agreement/consumer connection in his favour as the legal heir of the deceased.

Therefore, any person having any objection, claim, lien, dispute or interest regarding the transfer of the said electricity agreement/ consumer connection may file the same in writing before the office of the AEE, KPDC Sub Division Wagoora within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice.

In case no objection is received within the stipulated period, the electricity agreement/consumer connection shall be transferred in favour of Bashir Ahmad Dar and no claim or objection shall be entertained thereafter.

Bashir Ahmad Dar, S/o Late Ghulam Mohammad Dar R/o Saloosa, Kreeri, Baramulla Consumer ID: 0212040008296

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

Subject: Application of AADILAHMAD DARS/O GH MOHAMMAD DAR R/O SHEIKHPORA Tehsil KREERI for issuance of RBA certificate in favour of self for the issuance of RBA in his own favor

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of RBA in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of SHEIKHPORA of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the DAR community having annual income 2,60000// the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1..GH MOHAMMAD DAR Father 58 years Farmer
- 2...HAJIRA BAGUM Mother 57 years House wife
- 3...AADIL AHMAD DAR self 31 years student

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

NAIB TEHSILDAR KALANTRA

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir
Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application of QURAT UL AIN D/O FAYAZ AHMAD MIR R/O SHEIKHPIRA 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 SHEIKHPORA of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the MIR community having annual income 1,64000// the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1...MOHD AKBAR MIR Grand Father 73 years Farmer
- 2..SARA BEGUM Grand Mother 63 years HouseWife
- 3... FAYAZ AHMAD MIR Father 46 years Labour
- 4...FAHMEEDA Mother 40 years H/W
- 5...QURAT UL AIM self 20 years student
- 6...AITSHAN HUSSAIN Brother 14 years student

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

Naib Tehsild Kreeri

Public Notice

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that I, Shabir Ahmad Lone S/o Abdul Ahad Lone, R/o Puthar Reshipora, Tehsil Kreeri, District Baramulla, have applied before the office of the AEE, KPDC Wagoora for transfer of the electricity connection/agreement bearing Consumer ID No. 0212040014363, which stands in the name of my deceased father.

Any person having any objection, claim, right, title, interest, or dispute regarding the transfer of the aforesaid electricity connection/agreement in my favour may submit the same in writing along with supporting documents to the office of the AEE, KPDC Wagoora within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

In case no objection is received within the stipulated period, it shall be presumed that there is no objection from any quarter, and the concerned authorities may proceed with the transfer of the said electricity connection/agreement in favour of the undersigned as per rules.

Shabir Ahmad Lone S/o Abdul Ahad Lone R/o Puthar Reshipora, Tehsil Kreeri

Public Notice

My name has been wrongly written as HAJAM KHAZIR MOHAMMAD in my passport bearing passport No..K0678371 while my correct name is KHAZIR MOHD HAJAM S/O GHULAM NABI HAJAM as per aadhaar record Which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the passport office shrinagar within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name....KHAZIR MOHD HAJAM S/O...GHULAM NABI HAJAM , R/O...DOLIPORA KREERI , Dist.... BARAMULLA

Public Notice

In the school record the mother's name of my children has been mentioned as ROHI BEGUM instead of REHANA BEGUM . Now I am applying for its correction if anybody having any objection in this regard he / she may file same to the PRINCIPAL ISLAMIA PUBLIC SCHOOL DUNGARA within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name....ABDUL HAMEED GANAIE R/O DUNGARA

Government of Jammu & Kashmir (U T)
Office of the Executive Engineer Machinery Division Kashmir, Mechanical & Hospital Engineering Department, Kashmir.

Fax No: 0194-2497093
website: www.medkashmir.org

Corrigendum 01 for Date Extension

Name of work: - Annual maintenance Contract of Air conditioners installed in various Offices of MHED Complex Shalteng Srinagar and workshop Pampore.

Reference: - This office e-NIT No.: - MDSK/TS /2026-27/04 Date:08-06-2026 (Tender ID: 2026_PWDJK_311815_1)

Due to poor response, the critical dates of the above referred e-NIT is extended as under:

S.No.	Description	Previous Dates	New Dates.
01.	Last date of downloading/ submission of bids	17-06-2026 upto 06:55PM	24-06-2026 upto 06:55PM
02.	Date of opening of bids online	18-06-2026 at 02:00 PM	25-06-2026 at 02:00 PM

All other terms, conditions and specifications as stipulated in the e-NIT shall remain unchanged.

No: MDSK/TS/1011-14 | Date: 18-06-2026.

Sd/ Executive Engineer Machinery Division, Kashmir

DIPK: 2309/26 | Dated: 18-06-2026

Public Notice

This is for the information general public that MAQSOOD AHMAD LONE S/o: ABDUL GAFFAR LONE R/o: KACHWA MUQAM Tehsil WAGOORA district BARAMULLA expired on 1st of March 2026. Now the family of deceased including SHAHID MAQSOOD LONE (son), MUHAMMAD ASIF LONE (son), DILSHADA AKHTAR (daughter), BISMA MAQSOOD (daughter), REHANA MAQSOOD (daughter) & SHAMEEMA BEGUM (wife) , want to apply for issuance of dependent certificate of the deceased. Anyone having any objection in this regard may contact ACR Office baramulla within 7 days from the publication of this notice. After the lapse of 7 days period no objection will be accepted.

SHAMEEMA BEGUM W/O: LATE MAQSOOD AHMAD LONE,, R/o :KACHWA MUQAM,, Tehsil: WAGOORA BARAMULLA.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER IRRIGATION DIVISION PULWAMA

NOTICE INVITING TENDER FRESH E- NIT NO. (05) OF 2026-27 (E-TENDERING)

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of J&K U.T, e-Tenders are invited on percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt. for the following works.

S. No.	Name of work	Adv. Cost	T.D Cost	E/M	Time	Class
1.	Construction of P/bund near various orchards along Hanji khul Shal nad at Rajpora.	10.00	1000	20000	25 days	CEE/ DEE

Head of Account: Disaster Management, Relief Rehabilitation and Re construction (DMRRR)
Position of Funds: Budgetary Provision.
Position of AAA: Accorded vide Deputy Commissioner, Pulwama's order No. DCP/2025-26/SDRF/PUL/2421-427 Dt. 15-01-2026 and endorsed by Superintending Engineer, Hydraulic circle Pulwama HQ. Shopian's letter No. 6739-40 dt. 19-01-2026.
Position of T/S: TS/DMRRR/06 of 01/2026 Dt. 28-01-2026.

The Bidding document consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, set of terms and conditions and other details can be seen/ downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:

01	Date of issue of Tender Notice	11-06-2026 (06:00 pm)
02	Date of start of downloading	11-06-2026 (06:00 pm)
03	Bid submission start date Technical/ Financial.	11-06-2026 (06:00 pm)
04	Bid submission end date	25-06-2026 (06:00 pm)
05	Date & Time of opening of Bids (online)	26-06-2026 (10:00 am)

Terms and Conditions

1. Bids must be accompanied with proof of cost of tender document in shape of Treasury receipt/e-challan under (MH: 0702-PWD Remittance) in favour of Executive Engineer Irrigation Division Pulwama (tender inviting authority), and Earnest Money/ Bid Security in shape of CDR/ FDR from any schedule or nationalized bank pledged to Executive Engineer Irrigation Division Pulwama (Tender Receiving Authority).
2. The date and time of opening of Technical Bids shall be notified on departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Financial Bids of responsive bidders shall be opened on same web site in the office of the Executive Engineer Irrigation Division Pulwama (Tender Receiving Authority).
3. The bid for the work shall remain valid for period of 90 days from the date of opening of bid.
4. Bidders are advised to use the (My Documents) area in their user on www.jktenders.gov.in portal to store, the required documents as given below:
 - a. GST, Aadhaar Card, 16- Digit Bank Account No. GST linked and PAN No.
 - b. Registration card with latest renewal.
 - c. Treasury challan (0702)
 - d. Scanned copy of EMD.
 - e. Card verification letter.
 - f. Registered mobile number and E-mail ID in the shape of Bidders address form.
 - g. BOQ.
 - h. Acknowledgment/ certificate w.r.t. filing of GST returns of previous quarter.
 - i. Acknowledgment/ certificate w.r.t. filing of Income Tax returns of Previous financial year.
 - j. The successful bidder is bound to register himself with Assistant Labour Commissioner, Pulwama for CESS Registration after issuance of allotment.
5. The earnest money shall be forfeited if: -
 - a. Any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modification in terms and conditions of the bid.
 - b. Failure of successful bidder to execute the agreement within 07 Days after fixation of contract.
6. Instruction to bidders regarding e-Tendering process: -
 - 5.1. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on web site www.jktenders.gov.in acquaint bid submission process.
 - 5.2. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get "Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)" as per information Technology Act, 2000. Bidders can get Digital Certificate from any approved vendor.
 - 5.3. The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with Digital Signature. No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
 - 5.4. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para- 3.
 - 5.5. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with bid.

Note: Scan all the documents on 100dpi with black & white option.

No: PID/CS/ 1012-23 | Dated: 18-06-2026

Sd/- Executive Engineer Irrigation Division Pulwama

DIPK: 2314/26 | Dated: 18-06-2026

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IMPORTANT DATES

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

COMMENCEMENT OF CLASSES

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

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Space Devoted by Headlines Today in Public Interest

Deputy CM emphasizes greater vibrancy in KVIB to spur employment, economic growth; urges aggressive outreach, reforms

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 18: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today called for infusing greater vibrancy into the Jammu and Kashmir Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB) to generate sustainable employment opportunities and strengthen the Union Territory's economic landscape.

The Deputy Chief Minister made these remarks while chairing a comprehensive review meeting regarding functioning of KVIB at the Civil Secretariat, Srinagar.

During the meeting, he reviewed the progress achieved under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)

and the Jammu and Kashmir Rural Employment Generation Programme (JKREGP) besides assessing establishment of units under both schemes during the current financial year.

Emphasizing the need for wider outreach, the Deputy Chief Minister directed the Board to launch an extensive awareness campaign through all available mediums, including social media platforms, to ensure maximum participation of the aspiring entrepreneurs under these schemes. He stressed the importance of organizing awareness camps in schools, colleges and rural areas across Jammu and Kashmir so that people, especially youth and women, are fully informed about the benefits



and opportunities available under various self-employment initiatives.

The Deputy Chief Minister instructed the officials to involve local public representatives in these awareness pro-

grammes and ensure their participation in outreach camps to strengthen the public engagement and awareness at the grassroots level.

Calling for institutional reforms, he urged the Board

to revamp its functioning by implementing tangible and result-oriented measures aimed at improving the efficiency, transparency and service delivery.

"Our objective is to create

employment opportunities and economic resources for the people who are willing to work, become self-reliant and emerge as job providers rather than job seekers," the Deputy Chief Minister said.

He directed the officers and employees to maintain the highest standards of transparency and accountability to ensure that the benefits of government schemes reach the deserving beneficiaries effectively and without delay.

The Deputy Chief Minister also emphasized the need for adopting best practices from successful implementation models in other regions to enhance the effectiveness and impact of KVIB programmes.

Special focus was laid on

ensuring greater participation of women in entrepreneurship and self-employment initiatives, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to economic development and financial empowerment.

The meeting also reviewed the functioning and progress of Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) Clusters, with directions issued for their further strengthening to support the traditional industries, artisans and rural enterprises.

Commissioner Secretary Industries and Commerce, Vikramjit Singh and other senior officers of Khadi and Village Industries Board and other concerned departments were present during the meeting.

Kathua administration reviews Amarnath Yatra 2026 arrangements

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA, JUNE 18: Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma today chaired a meeting to review preparedness and arrangements for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2026 in the district. SSP Kathua Mohita Sharma was also present.

Discussions were held on the progress of various executing agencies regarding establishment of facilities and service points at the Lakhanpur Yatri Facilitation Centre. The meeting also reviewed arrangements for RFID and E-KYC counters, a 10-bedded healthcare unit, drinking water points,



lavatory units and other basic amenities for Yatris. The DC directed all agencies concerned to expedite work and ensure timely completion of barricading, road BT works, removal of weeds, lighting arrangements and other allied infrastructure. Departments concerned were directed to ensure adequate manpower, resources and inter-departmental coordination for effective implementation of arrangements.

Preparedness of Lodgement Centres and the contingency plan for any exigency during the Yatra period were also discussed. The meeting deliberated on transit of Yatris through the district and protocols for smooth movement of Yatra vehicles towards the Jammu Base Camp.

It was informed that a mock drill will be conducted on June 25, 2026 to assess preparedness and coordination among all stakeholders ahead of the Yatra. Among those present were Additional Deputy Commissioner Kathua Mahima Madan, Chief Planning Officer Ranjeet Thakur, SDM Hiranagar Phulail Singh and other officers from the district administration.

Special enforcement drive against illegal sale of habit-forming drugs conducted across Jammu province

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JUNE 18: The Drugs & Food Control Organisation, J&K, under the Nasha Mukti J&K Abhiyan, conducted special enforcement drives across the districts of Doda, Kishtwar and Udhampur.

The drives aimed to identify establishments operating in violation of legal and regulatory requirements and to prevent the unauthorised sale and misuse of psychotropic substances and prescription medicines.

Surprise inspections of pharmacies and drug sale establishments were carried out by Drugs Control Officers, Munish Gupta at Doda and Imtiyaz Ahmed at Kishtwar, with support from respective district administrations, to ensure compliance with the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

The operations of 14 retail drug sale establishments were disallowed on the spot under Section 22(d) of the Act, four in Kishtwar and ten in Doda, for violations including non-maintenance of mandatory sale re-

ords, impersonation and other regulatory irregularities. Stocks of habit-forming formulations containing Tapentadol and Pregabalin, valued at approximately 2 lakh, were confiscated under Section 23 of the Act.

Preliminary investigations revealed that certain individuals are clandestinely procuring such drugs through online channels and that some establishments have been sourcing habit-forming formulations containing Pregabalin-300 mg and Tapentadol directly from suppliers outside the Union Territory in violation of departmental guidelines.

In Udhampur, action was initiated after Police Station Udhampur recovered 100 capsules of Pregabalin IP 300mg (Roadwell) from an individual during investigation. Subsequent enquiry led to further recoveries and revealed an alleged supply chain originating from Nath Medicos, Battal Ballian Road, Sailan Talab, Udhampur.

A joint inspection of the premises found stocks of Pregabalin-based formulations, including

Gabarutin-300 Capsules. The proprietor failed to produce requisite sale and purchase records. The recovered stocks were formally seized under the Act and the operations of Nath Medicos have been disallowed with immediate effect pending further investigation.

In Kishtwar, acting on information from Senior Superintendent of Police Kishtwar, the Department conducted a detailed investigation into the recovery of Schedule H1 drugs from Adnana Ali S/o Amjad Ali Mir, resident of Malipeth Kishtwar and Mohsin Sarwar S/o Sajjad Hussain Mir, resident of Link Road Kishtwar. Schedule H1 drugs valued at approximately 1,17,700 were seized and legal proceedings initiated.

Notices have been issued to the individuals concerned seeking details of procurement, purchase, sale and distribution of the recovered formulations and to the pharmaceutical companies and marketing firms associated with the seized products to ascertain the com-

plete supply chain.

Investigations across the three districts have resulted in the following regulatory actions: cancellation of the retail drug sale licence of M/s Iyana Pharmacy, Baderwah, Doda; disallowing the operations of M/s Hidayat Medicate, Kishtwar, pending investigation into procurement of habit-forming drugs through suppliers outside the Union Territory via online channels; and investigation into the suspected use of forged or fake licences in connection with drug procurement by a Srinagar-based entity.

Additionally, supply chain inquiries arising from the Kishtwar investigation led to the suspension of operations of M/s Tawi Enterprises, Bhatindi, Jammu along with seizure of drug stocks and issuance of a Show Cause Notice.

State Drugs Controller J&K Rajesh Kumar reiterated that no person or firm shall procure lesser-known brands of drug formulations containing habit-forming ingredients from suppliers outside the Union Terri-

tory through online platforms, courier services or speed post and that all drug sale establishments are duty-bound to maintain complete transparency in the procurement and sale of prescription medicines with abuse potential.

He warned that any violation shall invite strict action under the Union Territory's zero-tolerance policy, including cancellation of licences and prosecution wherever warranted.

Commissioner FDA J&K Khalid Jahangir stated that these actions reflect the Department's commitment to safeguarding public health and curbing drug misuse and that enforcement drives and intelligence-based inspections shall continue across the Union Territory to identify and act against individuals and establishments involved in illegal drug distribution networks.

The public is requested to report instances of unethical practices involving the sale, diversion or misuse of prescription drugs to the department at jk.drugscontroller@jk.gov.in.

DC Shopian reviews RDD developmental activities

Stresses timely execution, effective monitoring

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, JUNE 18: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta today chaired a review meeting to discuss various issues related to the functioning of the Rural Development Department and assess the progress of developmental activities being implemented across the district under various flagship government schemes.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the status of ongoing developmental works, implementation of government schemes, progress achieved under various flagship programmes and the overall functioning of field-

level offices.

Special focus was laid on addressing operational and administrative issues affecting the smooth execution of departmental works. Various issues and concerns raised by the BDOs and Panchayat Secretaries were discussed in detail.

The DC directed the concerned to resolve the issues and ensure seamless implementation of developmental works. Emphasizing the need for regular monitoring of works, the DC instructed all field staff and supervisory authorities

to discharge their duties with dedication and responsibility and ensure strict adherence to departmental guidelines viz a viz quality

and durability of works.

He also directed that all completed and ongoing works be promptly uploaded on the designated online portals to facilitate effective monitoring and real time tracking of progress.

The DC directed the Block Development Officers to enhance person-days (PD) generation under MGNREGA and expedite the completion of all ongoing works in a time bound manner before the transition of the programme to VB-G RAM G.

Reviewing the pendency of works in different blocks, the DC called upon the officers to accelerate the pace of execution and achieve tangible progress on the ground.

Arrangements finalised for International Day of Yoga at Baderwah

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BHADERWAH, JUNE 18: A meeting to finalise arrangements for the 12th International Day of Yoga was convened today in the office chamber of Additional Deputy Commissioner Baderwah Sunil Kumar Bhutyal.

The ADC emphasised coordination among all departments for an inclusive and impactful observance. The main celebration will be held at Gatha Park, Baderwah, with concurrent yoga sessions at government degree colleges, identified tourist destinations, schools and government departments.

The ADC urged all departments to mobilise maximum public participation, particularly from



school children, college students, youth clubs, Self Help Groups and civil society members.

Discussions were held on logistics including sanitation, security, medical facilities, electricity, drinking water, traffic, parking, sound system setup and media coverage.

Among those present were Principal Degree College Baderwah, CEO Baderwah Development Authority, Tehsildar Baderwah/Bhalla, SDPO Baderwah, BDO Baderwah/Bhalla, BMO Baderwah, AE PDD, CDPO Baderwah and ZEO Baderwah. Dr Iftikhar Ahmed, AYUSH Department Baderwah, was designated as Nodal Officer.

DDC Reasi reviews progress of PWD and PMGSY development projects

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

REASI, JUNE 18: District Development Commissioner Reasi Kumar Abhishek today chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of road connectivity and infrastructure projects being executed by the Public Works Department (R&B) and Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) across the district.

The meeting focussed on the physical and financial progress of ongoing projects under NABARD, CRIF, bridge projects, UT Capex and PMGSY. The DDC took stock of key road and bridge projects in Reasi, Katra and Mahore divisions, with officials reporting significant progress and a number of works already completed.

Progress of PMGSY projects was also reviewed. Under PMGSY-III, several projects have been completed with work on the remaining progressing steadily. Under PMGSY-IV, new road projects covering remote and far-flung areas have been sanctioned to further strengthen rural connectivity.

The DDC directed executing agencies to expedite work on projects facing delays due to forest clearances, land-related issues and contractor-related constraints and to address bottlenecks through close coordination with departments concerned.

Among those present were Chief Planning Officer Reasi, Superintending Engineers of PWD and PMGSY, Executive Engineers and other officers concerned.

DC Udhampur reviews progress of DILRMP, SVAMITVA, PSGA, land acquisition and court cases

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR, JUNE 18: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Minga Sherpa today convened a meeting of Revenue Officers to review progress of the Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP), SVAMITVA, Public Services Guarantee Act (PSGA), land acquisition matters and court cases in the district.

Discussions covered the status of digitisation and freeing of Jamabandis, disposal of grievances, updation of backlog mutations, recreation of Mussavies, progress under the SVAMITVA Scheme, utilisation of funds under FCR Capex and UT Capex Budget 2026-27, issuance of Fards, court cases and quality checks of updated Jamabandis.

The DC directed Revenue Officers to expedite updation of Jamabandis on a



mission mode and conducted a tehsil-wise review of backlog mutations, emphasising accuracy and quality in land records digitisation. He instructed officers concerned to provide services within timelines prescribed under the PSGA and directed SDMs and Tehsildars to ensure early disposal of all pending court cases and revenue matters.

Among those present were Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Dr Umesh Shan, Sub-Divisional Magistrates and all Tehsildars.

India's first exclusive monitor brand store: BenQ opens a category-defining experiential space at Mumbai's Lamington Road

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI, JUN 18: BenQ, the world's leading monitor brand, opened India's first exclusive monitor brand store at Lamington Road, Mumbai, in partnership with Nexus Infosys, on Wednesday. The company segments its entire portfolio by user type rather than specifications and sells through more than 5,000 retail points across India, making it the dominant force in the country's monitor market.

The new Lamington Road store showcases 8 purpose-built monitor categories, all under one roof, in a format that has never existed before in Indian retail for this category.

The store arrives at a moment when the gap in India's large-format retail (LFR) is particularly stark. The dominant electronics chains have built their floor space around televisions - monitors, if present at all, are allocated a shelf or two at best, with most of the range invisible to the shopper. This is not a display problem alone. It reflects a structural reality - organised IT retail in India has never developed



the kind of depth that the category requires.

Every large electronics chain has dozens of TV models across every size and price point, but the monitor aisle, by contrast, offers a handful of units, rarely representing more than a fraction of what brands actually make. For a high-consideration category where panel technology, colour accuracy, and ergonom-

ic design vary significantly across use cases, this absence of a dedicated experiential environment has long been a barrier to informed purchase decisions.

BenQ has felt this gap acutely and is now moving to close it directly. Rather than wait for the LFR format to evolve, the company is establishing its own branded experiential infrastructure, beginning with this Lam-

ington Road store and with an intent to expand the model to other markets. The Lamington Road location is deliberate: it is where India's IT-literate enthusiast community already congregates, making it the most relevant first address for a store built around product understanding rather than impulse purchase.

BenQ is the only mainstream monitor brand globally that seg-

ments its portfolio not by screen size or refresh rate but by the type of user - designers, content creators, esports athletes, gamers, programmers, Mac users, and home-office professionals. Each category is purpose-built with distinct panel technologies, colour profiles, aspect ratios, and software features, making hands-on evaluation essential before purchase. The store puts all of that under one roof, giving the category the space and seriousness it has long been denied.

"India's organised retail has never given the monitor category the space or the seriousness it deserves. In a typical large-format electronics store, IT products occupy a fraction of the floor, and within that, monitors are often reduced to two or three units on a shelf. That is simply not enough for a consumer to understand why a colour-accurate design monitor is different from a gaming panel, or why a programmer needs a 3:2 display. The category demands demonstration, and demonstration demands dedicated space," said Rajeev Singh, Managing Director, BenQ India and South Asia. UNI

KTR inaugurates Ozrit's new facility in Hyderabad, commends innovation-driven growth

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, JUNE 18: BRS Working President and former Minister K. Taraka Rama Rao (KTR) on Wednesday inaugurated the new facility of technology solutions company Ozrit at Gachibowli in Hyderabad.

During the inauguration, KTR formally opened the facility, unveiled the company logo, interacted with employees, and held discussions with the company's leadership, including Founder and CEO Bharath Gupta and Co-Founder and COO Vivekanand Reddy.

The founders expressed their gratitude to KTR for his vision and efforts in transforming Telangana into one of India's leading technology and



innovation destinations.

They said Telangana's rapid growth as a technology hub had inspired companies like Ozrit to establish and expand their operations in the state.

"KTR's focus on innovation, entrepreneurship and employment generation has motivated companies like ours to build and grow in Telangana. We are committed to contributing to this ecosystem by creating opportunities, expanding into Tier-2 cities, and growing our team to more than 1,000 professionals in the coming years," the founders said.

Ozrit is a technology solutions and digital transformation company offering services in web and mobile application development, artificial intelligence, enterprise software, cloud solutions, UI/UX design, automation and digital innovation.

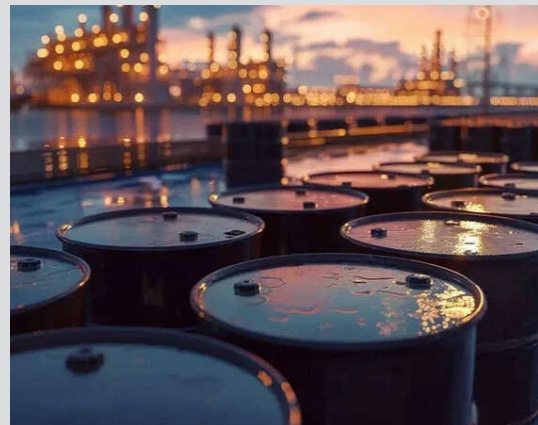
The company serves clients across India and international markets, helping organizations accelerate growth through technology-driven innovation and digital transformation. UNI

Crude oil prices continue to ease, hover below USD 77 a barrel

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUNE 18: The crude oil prices have continued to ease down after the announcement of peace agreement between US and Iran, coming down to a three-month low. Prices have gone down sharply by nearly 16 per cent with the US benchmark West Texas Intermediate was trading close to USD 77 a barrel.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude oil futures for the July delivery slipped by Rs 63, or 0.88 per cent, to Rs 7,061 per barrel in a business turnover of 4,004 lots.



In its latest Oil Analyst report, Goldman Sachs has cut its Brent crude oil price forecast for the fourth quarter of 2026 to USD 80 per barrel from USD 90 earlier. The research has cited an expected faster recovery in Middle East oil supply following a deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

It said it is reducing its price outlook after US President Donald Trump's announcement of an interim agreement that would lift the US blockade and reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

"We reduce our oil price forecast following President Trump's announcement of an interim deal that would lift the US blockade and reopen the Strait of Hormuz," the report said.

Since the onset of Iran War, that began on February 28, Brent crude had surged past \$126 a barrel.

The Indian Stock Markets also continue to cheer the peace agreement. Nifty breached 24,000 mark at opening.

Even amid the easing crude oil prices, analysts believe that the fuel prices for consumers may take several weeks or months to fully normalise.

Uncertainties around the implementation of the peace deal could continue to drive volatility in energy markets. UNI

Adani Ports expands tie up with Kaleris to drive AI transformation

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI, JUN 18: Adani Ports & Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ), officially announced here on Tuesday that it has expanded a major multi-year expansion of its strategic alliance with US-based supply chain software provider Kaleris, in order to deploy an artificial intelligence-augmented, plug-and-play operating platform across APSEZ's vast maritime and logistics network, for next-generation automated port management. According to the company statement, Kaleris will implement its foundational N4 Terminal Operating System (TOS) along with

advanced AI-augmented container handling solutions, under the new agreement. The deployment will cover 15 container terminals across nine domestic and international ports managed by Adani Ports, building directly upon a successful Phase 1 framework executed across six ports.

The collaboration forms a major part of Adani Port's broader strategic vision leading up to FY31, which details a \$850 million capital commitment toward technology modernization and decarbonisation.

Out of this total outlay, up to \$100 million has been earmarked specifically for a two-phase rollout to accelerate automation and opera-

tional optimization via Kaleris' specialised logistics architecture.

"AI-enabled automation will define the next frontier of competitiveness in ports and logistics. While APSEZ has already deployed an end-to-end digital platform from shore to door, the Kaleris operating system integration will enhance productivity, improve turnaround time, and consistently deliver a superior customer experience," Adani Ports Whole-time Director & CEO Ashwani Gupta said.

Commenting on the development, Kaleris President & CEO Kirk Knauff said, "At Kaleris, we measure success by customer outcomes. UNI

High borrowing costs undermining development across the global south: UNCTAD

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUN 18: Developing countries are being forced to pay a steep financial penalty simply because they are developing economies, with excessive borrowing costs draining hundreds of billions of dollars that could otherwise be invested in schools, hospitals, infrastructure, and clean energy, according to a new report released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) here on Wednesday.

The report, "Financing Development: External Flows of Financial Capital to Developing Countries and Their Cost," paints a troubling picture of a global financial system in which poorer nations face persistently higher borrowing costs than advanced economies, leaving them trapped in a cycle of rising debt-servicing obligations and shrinking fiscal space.

At a time when the world is already falling behind on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNCTAD argues that the cost of capital has emerged as one of the biggest obstacles preventing developing countries from financing their development ambitions.

The findings come against a backdrop of slowing progress on the SDGs. According to the report, only 35 per cent of global SDG targets are currently on track or showing moderate progress, while many others have stagnated or moved backwards. Rising interest costs are playing a significant role in that deterioration.

Between 2018 and 2024, 99 developing countries—home to approximately 5.5 billion people—experienced a decline in the share of government revenues available for development spending because a growing proportion of public resources had to be diverted towards servicing debt.

The report estimates that developing countries received nearly USD 1.5 trillion in new external financial inflows in 2024. These inflows consisted of foreign direct investment, portfolio investment, loans, and official transfers from governments and multilateral institutions.

At first glance, the figure appears substantial. Yet it represents only a small fraction of the financing required by developing economies to sustain growth and achieve development goals.

UNCTAD estimates that developing countries invested approximately USD 13.4 trillion in 2024. However, to remain on track for achieving the SDGs by 2030, annual investment needs would have to rise to nearly USD 17.7 trillion, leaving a financing gap of around USD 4.3 trillion every year.

Closing that gap would require both domestic and external financing to increase by almost one-third from current levels.

The challenge, however, is that external finance is not expanding—it is shrinking.

While domestic financing in developing countries increased by 60 per cent between 2014 and 2024, external financial inflows declined by 18 per cent during the same period. This means developing nations are increasingly being forced to rely on their own resources even as development needs continue to grow.

One of the report's most striking findings is the stark disparity in access to international capital.

Developed economies received the equivalent of 38 per cent of their investment financing from external sources in 2024.

Developing countries, by contrast, received only 11 per cent.

The divide is even more visible at the regional level.

Many low-income economies remain largely excluded from international capital markets and continue to depend on loans from multilateral institutions and bilateral creditors. According to the report, roughly half of all developing countries still lack meaningful access to international bond markets.

As a result, financing opportunities are heavily concentrated among a relatively small group of emerging market economies.

The report emphasizes that external capital is not free money.

Every dollar that enters a country as investment or lending eventually creates financial obligations in the form of profit repatriation, royalty payments, or interest payments.

In 2024, developing countries paid approximately USD 1.07 trillion to foreign investors and creditors in the form of profits, royalties, and interest.

This means that a large portion of incoming financial flows eventually returns to investors in advanced economies.

The accumulated stock of external liabilities held by developing countries has now reached approximately USD 30.7 trillion, reflecting years of borrowing and foreign investment.

While foreign direct investment continues to account for the largest share of these liabilities, debt has become the principal source of concern.

UNCTAD's analysis shows that debt-servicing costs are rising much faster than the underlying debt itself.

Between 2014 and 2024, the cost of servicing external debt increased more than twice as fast as the growth in debt stocks, indicating that countries are paying significantly more to maintain access to international finance.

According to UNCTAD, the average cost of servicing portfolio investments—which include sovereign bonds—was more than double in developing countries compared with developed nations during the past decade.

Frontier market economies faced some of the highest financing costs of all, often paying significantly more than both advanced economies and larger emerging markets. UNI

Industry writes to govt, RBI on measures to strengthen Rupee, seeks GIFT City push

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUN 18: Industry body ASSOCHAM has submitted a detailed representation to the Government of India and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) with recommendations aimed at strengthening the Indian Rupee and positioning it as a preferred currency for international trade settlements.

ASSOCHAM has highlighted two key measures to accelerate the internationalisation of the Indian currency, trans-

forming GIFT City into a global financial hub and completing the operational framework for Rupee-based international trade settlement.

The industry body has recommended the creation of a dedicated policy and regulatory framework to attract global family offices to establish investment, treasury, and wealth management operations at GIFT City. According to ASSOCHAM, global family offices collectively manage trillions of dollars in investible assets and can provide stable,

long-term capital inflows. ASSOCHAM said attracting a meaningful share of these institutions to GIFT City could deepen India's financial markets, strengthen foreign exchange reserves, and contribute to the structural stability of the Rupee.

The second recommendation focuses on developing a globally competitive Corporate Treasury Centre framework at GIFT City to attract multinational corporations' treasury operations, including cash pooling, foreign exchange

management, and trade finance activities, which are currently concentrated in financial centres such as Singapore, Dubai, London, and Hong Kong.

Assocham President, Nirmal K. Minda, said that a strong Indian Rupee is not merely an economic objective; it is a statement of India's confidence in itself as a global economic power. GIFT City is India's single most important instrument for attracting the long-term global capital that will structurally strengthen the Rupee.

He highlighted that today, the treasury operations of global corporations and the investment structures of the world's great family offices are managed from Singapore, Dubai, and Hong Kong. There is no compelling reason—economic, regulatory, or strategic—why they should not be managed from GIFT City.

"We urge the Government to give GIFT City the competitive framework it deserves, benchmarked against the world's best international financial centres, to make this

a reality without further delay," Minda said.

The industry body said the absence of clarity is leading authorised dealer banks to avoid cross-country Rupee settlement transactions and continue with dollar-based settlements due to regulatory uncertainty.

The ASSOCHAM has urged the RBI to issue a clarificatory circular allowing INR balances accumulated in Special Rupee Vostro Accounts to be used for settling export and import obligations across countries, subject to existing KYC, AML,

and documentation norms.

The industry body also recommended bringing Merchanting Trade Transactions under the Rupee settlement framework, ensuring export benefits for Rupee-settled transactions, and expanding bilateral Rupee settlement arrangements with key trading regions.

It further suggested that NITI Aayog set up an inter-ministerial working group on Rupee internationalisation and place the matter before the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council. UNI

BCCI Secy Urges Focus on Game Amid Sooryavanshi Incident



■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

DAMBULLA: BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia has urged India A's players to "concentrate on their game" and not get distracted by "collateral issues" following the altercation between Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and Sri Lanka A's Vishen Halambage during a heated tri-series match in Dambulla on Monday.

Words exchanged between the players at the conclusion of a tense contest, which Sri Lanka A won via the Super Over, escalated into physical contact, with Sooryavanshi and Halambage shoving each other at one stage and having to be separated. "India A is playing a major tournament, all the upcoming players who can stake their claim for the Indian senior team, they are in the midst of a very big tournament, a tri-nation series, so they should concentrate on their game rather than getting distracted from [sic.] any collateral issues," Saikia told The Times of India.

"They should not focus on that, they should concentrate on their game and they should give their best performance so that India can come out with a victory in the tri-nation series. That is our only concern now."

The 15-year-old Sooryavanshi has been in the spotlight for his precocious, record-shattering rise as well as a small history of disciplinary issues - during the final of last year's Under-19 Asia Cup against Pakistan, he pointed towards his shoe after being dismissed.

Saikia said the BCCI had not spoken to Sooryavanshi or any of the other players.

"It is not our duty to speak to the players for any reason," he said. "The players are only concentrated with [sic.] their games and the support staff and the coaches who are present with them, nothing else. So nobody interferes in their game and their strategy and their preparation for that big series, which is presently going on."

"We will follow this policy that during a major tournament, when they are playing for the country, they should not get distracted by any other secondary issues, which are not of paramount importance."

Australia's spinners dominate to hand visitors 1-0 series lead

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHATTOGRAM: Australia's spinners combined to take nine wickets to power their side to a four-wicket win in the first T20I in Chattogram. It is the first time that Australia's spinners took nine wickets in a T20I innings, as legspinner Adam Zampa's three wickets took him to 150 scalps in the format, while debutant Joel Davies, the left-arm spinner, also took three wickets on debut to get his career started in style.

It is also the first time that spinners took nine wickets together in a T20I innings in Bangladesh. Player of the match Zampa became the first from Australia to reach the landmark of 150 wickets in T20Is, while he is also the fifth legspinner after Rashid Khan, Ish Sodhi, Adil Rashid, Wanindu Hasaranga.

Australia later made light work of Bangladesh's 132-run target. Cooper Connolly top scored with 47 off 27 balls, his highest T20I score, while Tim David brought out some big hits as they won with ten balls to spare. It was however the visitors' bowling, particularly their spinners who dominated Bangladesh.

Saif Hassan tonked Spencer Johnson with a whip over square-leg in the first over, before Xavier Bartlett went for two fours when he opened the bowling from the other end. Johnson though had the last laugh when Tanzid hit one straight to Bartlett at extra cover.

Saif struck his third boundary off Matt Renshaw, but he fell trying another slog later in the over, with Mitchell Marsh taking a simple catch at mid-off. Stand-in captain Towhid Hridoy and Soumya Sarkar, returning to the T20I side after 18 months, struck one boundary each, as Bangladesh made 52 for two, their highest score in the first power-play against Australia.

Zampa got into the act in the seventh over, when he cleaned up Hridoy's stumps, as the batter played all over a googly. Soumya fell in Zampa's next over when he spliced to deep cover where debutant Nikhil Chaudhary took a tumbling catch.

Davies' second ball in international cricket fetched him a wicket when Parvez Hossain Emon top edged his slog sweep, comfortably taken in the boundary by Connolly. Renshaw returned to get Shamim Hossain caught behind for one, before Davies had fellow debutant Abdul Gaffar Saqlain with a catch at long-off.

Chaudhary, who took Saqlain's catch too, then had Rishad Hossain caught in the same place for three. Zampa and Davies cleaned up Bangladesh's tail amidst some belated hitting from Mahedi Hasan, who made an unbeaten 29. Mahedi was left frustrated, particularly the way Shoriful Islam and Rishad got out flaying at the ball.

Shoriful continued his wicket-taking spree from his 6 for 48 in the third ODI, when he bowled Josh Inglis who gifted him the wicket. Inglis missed with a scoop in the third over, falling for five runs. Connolly though went after Shoriful for the rest of the over, hitting him for three fours in a row.

Mustafizur Rahman gave Bangladesh a breather when he had Australia captain Mitchell Marsh caught at short third-man in the fifth over. Marsh made 13 off 14 balls.

Da Silva and Jangoon earn recalls for West Indies' Tests against Sri Lanka

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

SYDNEY: Joshua Da Silva and Amir Jangoon have earned recalls to West Indies' squad for the two-match World Test Championship series at home against Sri Lanka starting later this month, while the two Josephs, Alzarri and Shamar, are back after missing the tours of India and New Zealand late last year because of injuries.

Tevin Imlach had kept wicket when West Indies last played Test cricket, in New Zealand last December, but Da Silva, 33 Test matches old, has returned after scoring 996 runs across the last two seasons of the West Indies Championship. Imlach, who failed with the bat in New Zealand with a total of 81 runs across six innings - after scoring 33 runs in his only Test in India - has been named captain of a West Indies Select XI to play the Sri Lankans

in a four match in Coolidge from June 18 to 21. Roston Chase will continue to captain the Test side.

Jangoon, dropped after only one Test appearance, in Multan in January 2025, where he scored 0 and 30, has returned to the side following a fruitful WI Championship in which he scored 411 runs in seven innings. He finished second on the scorers' table there, only behind Da Silva, who scored 413 in seven outings. The highlight of Jangoon's season was the 203 not out he scored for Trinidad & Tobago against Leeward Islands.

The pair of Alzarri Joseph and Shamar Joseph, meanwhile, last played Test cricket during the home series against Australia in mid-2025. "Every Test series is an opportunity for us to grow as a team and strengthen our identity," Daren Sammy, the head coach, said in a Cricket West Indies statement. "Sri Lanka are



a quality side, so we know we'll have to be at our best, but we're excited about the challenge ahead.

"For us, it's about playing with discipline, showing character when the game gets tough, and representing the West Indies with pride. The players have been putting in the work, and we're looking forward to putting on a strong display for our fans across the Caribbean."

Some of the squad members are currently participating in a high-performance training camp in Antigua, which began on June 12 and will run till June 22. The members of the Test squad who were also part of the white-ball series against Sri Lanka - West Indies lost the ODIs and won the T20Is - will join the camp on June 15. The Tests will be played in

North Sound from June 25 to 29 and July 3 to 7. "This is a key component of our preparations heading into the series, providing players and coaches with valuable time to enhance and improve the skills we want to see sharpened, based on the areas we need to focus our attention on when facing this opponent," Sammy said about the camp. "It also gives us the opportunity to put clear objectives and plans in place for the conclusion of the summer against Pakistan."

"Additionally, the four-day warm-up game prior to the series provides the chance for some of our Test hopefuls to play in high-intensity action and create the avenue for more competition within the squad ahead of the upcoming and future series."

West Indies are currently bottom of the nine-team WTC table, having lost seven of their eight games in the ongoing cycle.

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