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Syama Prasad Mookerjee's Dream Has Come True With Article 370 Abrogation: Amit Shah

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JUNE 23: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 fulfilled the dream of Syama Prasad Mookerjee, whom he described as one of the nation's greatest leaders and a tireless champion of India's unity and integrity.

Addressing a gathering at the launch of an auction portal of the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India in New Delhi on Mookerjee's death anniversary, Shah said June 23 remains an inspiring day for workers of the Bharatiya Janata Party as it commemorates the sacrifice made by Mookerjee in the cause of national unity.

Shah said Mookerjee dedicated his life to the principle of one nation under a single constitutional framework and opposed arrangements that, in his view,



undermined national integration. Recalling Mookerjee's campaign against the permit system that existed for entry into Jammu and Kashmir, the Home Minister said he was arrested after refusing to seek permission to enter what he considered an inseparable part of India.

The Home Minister also highlighted Mookerjee's role during the partition of India, stating that his efforts were instrumental in ensuring that West Bengal remained within India. He described Mookerjee as a leader whose contributions significantly shaped the country's territorial and political landscape during a critical period in history.

Referring to the constitutional changes made in 2019, Shah said the removal of Article 370 achieved the objective for which Mookerjee had long campaigned. He asserted that the move strengthened

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Every File Represents the Lives and Aspirations of Citizens: PM Modi

PM Urges Young IAS Officers to Prioritise People-Centric Governance

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JUNE 23: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday told young Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers that every government file represents the lives, concerns and aspirations of countless citizens, urging them to place people at the centre of every decision and ensure governance remains responsive, inclusive and outcome-oriented.

Addressing 183 officer trainees of the IAS-2024 batch currently serving as assistant secretaries in various ministries and departments, the Prime Minister said the responsibility of public service extends far beyond administrative procedures and requires a deep understanding of the impact government decisions have on citizens.

He stressed that the real test of an administrator begins when faced with real-life challenges, calling on the officers to discharge their duties with integrity, sensitivity and commitment. Modi urged them to measure success not by the positions they occupy but by the positive changes



they bring to people's lives.

The Prime Minister said the officers, after undergoing field training and administrative exposure, now stand at a critical stage where their decisions will influence the future of millions of citizens. He encouraged them to contribute actively to the country's long-term

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DGP Reviews Security Ahead of Amarnath Yatra 2026

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUN 23: Director General of Police, Jammu and Kashmir, Nalin Prabhat on Monday chaired a high-level security review meeting at the Police Control Room (PCR) Kashmir to assess preparedness for the forthcoming Shri Amarnathji Yatra (SANY)-2026 and review arrangements for other upcoming religious events across the Valley.

The meeting witnessed participation from senior officers of the Army, Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), Intelligence Agencies and Jammu and Kashmir Police, including top commanders and security officials from Kashmir and Jammu divisions.

During the meeting, officers briefed the DGP on the security measures and logistical arrangements put in place to ensure the smooth, peaceful and incident-free conduct of the annual pilgrimage. The DGP also reviewed facilities being arranged for the safety, convenience and welfare of the Yatri.

Emphasising the need for a robust security framework, Nalin Prabhat directed all security agencies to further strengthen the security grid at

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J&K Has Undergone Remarkable Transformation Since August 2019: LG Sinha

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 23: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said that Jammu and Kashmir has undergone a remarkable transformation since August 2019, citing improvements in security, infrastructure development and public welfare as key indicators of progress.



Sinha made the remarks during a meeting with the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, led by its Chairman, Dr. Shashi Tharoor, at Lok Bhavan in Srinagar. The Committee is currently on a four-day study visit to the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

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LG Addresses 'Seva Se Samridhi' Workshop

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 23: The Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha today addressed "Seva Se Samridhi- Panchayat-led Service Delivery" Regional Workshop organised by Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj and J&K Administration. The Lieutenant

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LG Reviews Muharram Arrangements



HT NES NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 23: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today chaired a high-level meeting to review the arrangements for Muharram across Jammu Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Shri Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Shri Nalin Prabhat, DGP; Shri Shaheen Kabra, Additional Chief Secretary, Jal Shakti Department; Shri Ashwani Kumar, Additional

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Srinagar Set for 8th Muharram Procession

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JUN 23: Srinagar City has been decked up for the 8th Muharram procession scheduled for Wednesday, with black flags, banners and religious insignia adorning several parts as authorities completed extensive preparations for the major religious event.

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PM Narendra Modi Calls On President Murmu Amid Cabinet Reshuffle Buzz

HT NEWS NETWORK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JUN 23: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday called on President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan amid buzz over a reshuffle of the Union council of ministers.

The president's office shared pictures of the meeting in a post on X.

"Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi called on President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan," the post said.

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Ensure Timely Execution of All Sanctioned Rural Road Projects: Omar Abdullah

CM Reviews PMGSY progress across J&K, stresses quality, coordination and faster connectivity to remote areas

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 23: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday directed officials to ensure the timely execution of all sanctioned rural road projects across Jammu and Kashmir, underscoring the importance of improved connectivity in enhancing the lives of people living in remote regions.



Chairing a high-level review meeting on the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), the Chief Minister assessed the progress of ongoing works, newly approved projects and pending road and bridge construction across the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder

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Observe 'Holocaust Day' to Honour Victims of 1947 Pakistan-Backed Invasion: Tarun Chugh

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JUNE 23: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National General Secretary Tarun Chugh on Tuesday called on the Jammu and Kashmir Government to institute an annual "Holocaust Day" in memory of those killed during the 1947 Pakistan-backed invasion of the erstwhile princely state.

Speaking in Srinagar, Chugh described the attacks carried out by armed raiders from across the border as a humanitarian tragedy that resulted in widespread killings, looting and violence against civilians. He said the events should be formally commemorated to ensure that the suffering of the victims is neither forgotten nor overlooked.

"The Government of Jammu and Kashmir should observe a 'Holocaust Day' to remember those who lost their lives during the 1947 invasion," Chugh said, adding that greater efforts were needed to document and preserve the historical record of the period.

He advocated the production of documentaries, publication of books and wider dissemination of archival material relating to the violence, saying future generations should be made aware of the events that shaped the region's history.

Chugh was in Srinagar to pay tribute to Syama Prasad Mookerjee, founder of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, on his 73rd death anniversary. He described Mookerjee's contributions to national unity as significant and enduring.

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General Upendra Dwivedi Assumes Honorary Colonelcy of J&K Rifles and Ladakh Scouts

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JUNE 23: Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi has assumed the appointment of Honorary Colonel of the Jammu & Kashmir Rifles and the Ladakh Scouts, reaffirming his longstanding association with two of the Indian Army's most distinguished regiments.

The appointment was formalised during a ceremonial event in which Lieutenant General M.P. Singh, the current Colonel of the Regiment, presented the ceremonial baton to General Dwivedi. The gesture symbolised the Army Chief's enduring connection with the regiments and their proud military heritage. The Indian Army said the appointment carries

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Syama Prasad.....

national unity and completed the constitutional integration of Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of the country.

Shah further noted that the political movement founded by Mookerjee evolved from the Bharatiya Jana Sangh into the Bharatiya Janata Party, which today holds a prominent position in national politics.

Speaking on agricultural reforms, the Home Minister praised NAFED's performance and said the cooperative body had undergone a remarkable transformation over the past decade. He stated that NAFED had achieved a turnover of 30,000 crore and a profit of 500 crore while extending services to millions of farmers across the country.

The newly launched auction platform, he said, would further enhance transparency and efficiency in agricultural marketing, benefiting farmers and strengthening the cooperative sector.

Every File.....

development goals through innovation, efficiency and public-focused governance.

Highlighting the need for coordinated governance, Modi said major developmental challenges cannot be addressed by individual departments working in isolation. He called for greater collaboration across government institutions to deliver effective and lasting solutions.

The Prime Minister also underscored the growing role of technology in governance, noting that digital platforms, artificial intelligence and data-driven decision-making are transforming public administration and improving service delivery. He said data should be viewed as a reflection of the realities and aspirations of citizens rather than merely a collection of numbers.

Emphasising accountability, Modi urged the officers to regularly assess whether government policies are producing tangible results on the ground and improving the lives of the people they are intended to serve.

He also welcomed the increasing participation of women in the civil services, noting that more than 40 per cent of the current IAS batch comprises women officers. He expressed confidence that their contribution would strengthen India's development journey in the years ahead.

The interaction was attended by Union Minister Jitendra Singh, senior government officials and representatives of the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration. The officer trainees also shared their experiences from field assignments and ministry attachments during the programme.

DGP Reviews.....

vulnerable locations, particularly along the twin Yatra routes and other sensitive areas. He instructed officers to revisit and reinforce security arrangements on the National Highway and railway infrastructure to prevent any security lapses.

The DGP stressed strict adherence to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and directed that daily briefings be conducted for all deployed personnel to maintain operational readiness and situational awareness. He also ordered awareness campaigns at Yatra camps to educate pilgrims about safety protocols through banners, posters and public information material highlighting important do's and don'ts.

Underscoring the importance of vigilance, the DGP said there was no room for complacency in the security setup and called upon officers to maintain the highest standards of professionalism and preparedness during the pilgrimage.

Highlighting the importance of inter-agency coordination, he directed security and intelligence agencies to ensure real-time sharing of information and work in close synergy to achieve desired security outcomes. He further instructed security forces to intensify anti-terror operations and take coordinated action against terrorists and their associates operating in the Valley.

The DGP also called for enhanced cordon and search operations around Yatra routes, National Highway stretches, railway stations and other strategically important locations to ensure a secure environment for pilgrims and the general public.

Reviewing the cyber and information security aspects, Nalin Prabhat directed officers to maintain strict surveillance on social media platforms and take prompt action against misinformation, fake narratives and rumour-mongering. He instructed that legal action be initiated against individuals found spreading false information or creating panic among the public.

The meeting also reviewed security and administrative arrangements for the upcoming Muharram observances. The DGP directed officers to ensure robust security measures while maintaining close coordination with local Shia organisations for the smooth conduct of processions and religious gatherings.

He further instructed the concerned authorities to prepare comprehensive traffic management plans and publicise procession routes well in advance to minimise inconvenience to commuters and facilitate public awareness.

The meeting concluded with all participating agencies reaffirming their commitment to ensuring the safe, secure and peaceful conduct of Shri Amarnathji Yatra-2026 and other major religious events across Jammu and Kashmir.

J&K Has.....

During the interaction, Dr. Tharoor briefed the Lieutenant Governor on the Committee's engagements and discussions held during the visit. He informed that members had visited border areas in Jammu, toured the Regional Passport Office and held detailed interactions with senior Army officials in Srinagar.

The Committee members also shared their observations and experiences from the visit and discussed

various issues relating to administration, development and public services.

Highlighting the changes witnessed over the past six years, Sinha said normal life now continues uninterrupted across Jammu and Kashmir, while growing opportunities and development initiatives have strengthened public confidence and raised aspirations among the people.

He also outlined the Union Territory's development journey, emphasizing that major infrastructure and public welfare projects are contributing to economic growth, improving connectivity and enhancing the quality of life for residents.

The Lieutenant Governor further noted that the overall security environment has improved significantly, creating conditions conducive to sustained development and investment.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee is expected to continue its engagements in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh as part of its study tour aimed at assessing key developmental, administrative and strategic issues in the two Union Territories.

LG Addresses.....

Governor highlighted historic transformations under Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the inclusive development revolution that was driven by the 3-tier Panchayati Raj system.

"In 2020, we set out to build a J&K where government reaches the citizen's doorstep. With a 'People First' approach, we revolutionized public service delivery. From just 35 online services in 2020 to more than 1,100 by 2023, UT topped the national e-service delivery rankings.

We made Panchayati Raj institutions the strongest voice and largest participants in governance. Through 'Block Diwas' and 'Back to Village' campaigns, we tried to ensure services reach doorsteps, infrastructure meets local needs, and policies flow from the grassroots up.

We put the common person's aspirations at the core of administration. By ensuring accountability and citizen participation, we have translated a commitment to multi-generational change into reality within 3 years and rebuilt a powerful relationship of trust with citizens," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor urged the participants from Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand to study the grassroots service delivery models of Jammu Kashmir including BEAMS-EMPOWERMENT, Aapki Zameen-Aapki Nigrani and "Your Mobile-Our Office" which had transformed service delivery and program implementation in villages. He highlighted the Government of India report which had observed that between 2016 and 2018 Jammu Kashmir recorded 20 million digital transactions over three years. In contrast, in the first six months of 2023 alone there were 50 Crore digital transactions - far exceeding many large states such as Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Odisha, Karnataka, and Kerala.

"More than 15,000 CSC (Common Service Centre) outlets are operational in Jammu Kashmir today. Of the 4,290 panchayats, 4,211 are connected to this network, representing an impressive 98.16 percent coverage. The remaining 79 panchayats are in very remote and border areas where connectivity remains a challenge.

We must also strengthen a culture of knowledge exchange. It is essential to share successful models, best practices, and innovations from each state and Union Territory so that service delivery at the last mile becomes more effective. I believe events like this will foster mutual learning and cooperation. A successful panchayat model in Haryana can inspire a panchayat in Karnataka. Similarly, an innovative initiative from Jammu Kashmir can open new possibilities in Jharkhand," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that the regional conference on service delivery is a reflection of three core traits of India - unity in diversity, strength through cooperation, and prosperity through service.

"I am confident these qualities together will build local governance rooted in collaboration, participation, and a spirit of change. Our objective must be clear: to develop panchayats where every citizen can access services digitally, grievances are resolved quickly, decisions are taken collectively, and accountability is systemic. We must remember that the panchayat of the future will not be merely an administrative unit. They will be a dynamic centre of innovation, equal opportunity, sustainable development, and public trust," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor shared key recommendations with the participants to implement in their respective states. The focus remains on strengthening grassroots service delivery and driving innovation across the nation.

"My first recommendation is to establish a 'Village Innovation Lab' in every panchayat. Local youth, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, and social organisations can collaborate there on low-cost solar solutions, new irrigation techniques, and other local innovations. My second recommendation is to run modern capacity-building programmes in every panchayat so leaders grow confident and capable of building self-reliant, progressive villages. My third recommendation is to institutionalise participatory budgeting in every panchayat - an initiative we had launched in Jammu Kashmir in 2021. When citizens decide how part of the panchayat fund is spent, governance becomes a powerful means of citizen participation.

My fourth recommendation is to mainstream sustainable development models like Green Jammu Kashmir, Ek Ped Maal Ke Naam, Ek Ped Beti Ke Naam, across panchayats nationwide. My fifth recommendation is to put women in leadership roles across all schemes. In Jammu Kashmir we prioritised women's leadership in campaigns against substance abuse and in ensuring access to clean drinking water, dairy, health, education, and social equity," the Lieutenant Governor said.

As part of the workshop, Panditpora Gram Panchayat from Kupwara and Shri Syed Waris Hafiz, a

dedicated CSC Village Level Entrepreneur from Budgam, J&K UT, along with outstanding Gram Panchayats and Common Service Centres (CSCs) from participating states were recognized and felicitated.

The workshop, held in collaboration with the Common Services Centre Special Purpose Vehicle (CSC-SPV), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, J&K, forms part of a sustained series of initiatives undertaken by the Ministry to facilitate improved service delivery and strengthen Ease of Living in Grameen Bharat through empowered, accountable, and responsive Panchayati Raj Institutions and Rural Local Bodies.

Representatives from civil society organisations, academic and research institutions, and organisations working in rural technology and digital public infrastructure also participated, contributing diverse perspectives on last-mile governance and service delivery.

Deliberations focused on strengthening Panchayat-led service delivery through digital transformation, citizen participation, innovation, and improved accessibility of public services at the grassroots. Panel discussions, technical sessions, and experience-sharing sessions provided a structured platform for inter-State knowledge exchange and the dissemination of scalable governance models.

Shri Javid Ahmad Dar, Minister for Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, J&K; Shri Vivek Bharadwaj, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj; Shri Saurabh Bhagat, Commissioner Secretary, Information Technology, J&K; Ms. Palka Sahni, Joint Secretary, MoPR; Shri Pravin Chandekar, Chief Operating Officer, Common Service Centres; Ms. Rehana Batul, Director General, J&K IMPARD; Shri Mohammad Aijaz Asad, Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, J&K; Shri Rajiv Omprakash, DIG CKR; Dr. GV Sundeep Chakravarty, SSP Srinagar; Shri Akshay Lalbroo, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar; Ms Anoo Malhotra, DG Rural Sanitation J&K; Panchayat functionaries, elected representatives, Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs), and senior officials attended the inaugural session.

LG Reviews.....

Chief Secretary, Power Development Department; Shri Anil Kumar Singh, Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works (R&B) Department; Shri Chandraker Bharti, Principal Secretary Home Department; Shri S.J.M. Gillani, Special DG Coordination PHQ; Shri Nitish Kumar, ADGP, CID; Dr. Mandeeq K Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor and CEO Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, Administrative Secretaries, IGP, Divisional Commissioners, Municipal Commissioners and other senior officers.

The Lieutenant Governor directed the senior officials to ensure seamless security, traffic management, law and order and availability of public amenities.

He stressed the need for close coordination among all stakeholder departments to ensure timely and effective delivery of services.

Reviewing essential services, the Lieutenant Governor directed for uninterrupted power and potable water supply, adequate sanitation and medical facilities, availability of ambulances and fire and emergency response teams at procession routes.

He directed the senior officials to remain accessible on the ground for real time monitoring and quick redressal of public grievances.

"All arrangements should be made with utmost sensitivity and efficiency. Senior Officers must remain available on the ground and maintain constant monitoring to ensure prompt response to any situation," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Shri Anshul Garg apprised the meeting of the arrangements in place by various departments for the smooth and peaceful observance of Muharram.

The Lieutenant Governor also directed the IGP Traffic to enforce a comprehensive traffic management plan for Muharram and the Shri Amarnathji Yatra to ensure smooth movement of processions, Yatris and the general public.

The IGP Traffic was directed to conduct meetings with field officers and strengthen coordination with all stakeholder agencies for effective implementation of the traffic management plan.

The Lieutenant Governor also directed officials to raise awareness about traffic SOPs and cut-off timings, while increasing the number of RFID card counters to better facilitate devotees of Baba Barfani.

Srinagar Set.....

The administration has intensified security measures, finalised civic arrangements and shared a comprehensive traffic management plan to ensure the smooth and peaceful conduct of the traditional procession. The 8th Muharram procession, as per the details obtained by the news agency - Kashmir News Observer (KNO), will be taken out along the traditional route from Guru Bazar to Dalgate via Budshah Kadal and M.A. Road, passing through the heart of the city amid elaborate arrangements put in place by the civil and police administration.

Officials said a coordinated mechanism involving civil and police authorities has been established to facilitate the smooth conduct of processions while ensuring public safety and maintaining law and order. Senior officers from various departments, including police, health, municipal services, fire and emergency services, power development, water supply and other essential services, have been assigned specific responsibilities.

The administration has undertaken extensive measures, including route management, deployment of adequate security personnel, traffic regulation, sanitation drives, uninterrupted electricity and drinking water supply, emergency medical facilities, installation of control rooms and round-the-clock monitoring of arrangements.

The officers have been directed to maintain close liaison with Muharram committees, religious organ-

isations, community representatives and volunteers to facilitate the smooth conduct of processions and religious gatherings.

The District Magistrate Srinagar has also granted permission to the Yaadgari Hussaini Committee, Guru Bazar, for taking out the traditional 8th Muharram procession on June 24 (tomorrow).

As per the permission order accessed by KNO, the procession will commence from Guru Bazar at 6:00 am and proceed through Budshah Kadal and M.A. Road towards Dalgate. "The tail of the procession is expected to cross Jehangir Chowk at 7:00 am and reach J&K Bank Headquarters on M.A. Road at around 8:30 am," it reads.

The administration has imposed several conditions for the procession. Only one side of M.A. Road will be used by mourners while the other carriageway will remain available for emergency service vehicles. Organisers have been directed to ensure that the procession concludes within the prescribed time frame and that participants adhere strictly to approved programmes and routes.

The order also prohibits anti-national or anti-administration speeches, provocative sloganeering and any activity that could affect communal harmony or disturb public order. Display of photographs of terrorists, symbols or flags of banned organisations has been strictly barred. Organisers have also been asked to ensure full cooperation with police and security agencies, prevent damage to public property and make available first-aid facilities in coordination with concerned departments.

The use of drones during the procession has been completely prohibited, while the use of loudspeakers and sound systems will be regulated in accordance with the prescribed rules.

Srinagar Traffic Police has issued a detailed advisory announcing restrictions and diversions on major roads leading to and around the procession route from 5:00 am till the culmination of the event.

According to the advisory, traffic movement from Karan Nagar towards Jehangir Chowk via Shaheed Gunj and Tankpora will remain suspended from 5:00 am to 8:00 am. Similarly, traffic movement on the Jehangir Chowk-M.A. Road-Dalgate-Badyari stretch will remain restricted during the procession.

Traffic coming from Batamalo, Secretariat, and Rambagh towards M.A. Road will be diverted via Hari Singh High Street and Residency Road. Vehicles from Rainawari and Nowpora will be diverted at Mamta Hotel towards SRTC Bridge, Barbarashah, Kralkhud, Habba Kadal and Karan Nagar.

Traffic from Khanyar and Ikhwan Chowk will be diverted at SRTC Bridge towards Barbarashah, Kralkhud, Habba Kadal and Karan Nagar, while motorists from Nishat, Shalimar and adjoining areas have been advised to use Boulevard Road, Gupkar Road, Radio Kashmir Road and Abdullah Bridge for onward travel.

Vehicles coming from Pantha Chowk and Sonwar will be diverted at Radio Kashmir towards Residency Road and Abdullah Bridge. Tourists and residents in and around Nehru Park have been advised to use Gupkar Road, Nishat and Foreshore Road during the procession hours.

The Traffic Police has urged commuters to avoid unnecessary movement from Karan Nagar to Dalgate via M.A. Road on Wednesday to prevent inconvenience and ensure the smooth conduct of the religious event.

For the convenience of mourners, designated parking facilities have been arranged at S.P. College Ground, Gundun Park, Batamalo Bus Stand and Coloured Park.

Authorities have also established vehicle cut-off points at Jehangir Chowk, Gaw Kadal, Mamta Crossing, Aziz Bridge and Ikhwan Chowk, beyond which no vehicular movement will be permitted during the procession.

The administration has appealed to mourners and the general public to strictly follow the advisories and guidelines issued by district authorities and police, adhere to prescribed routes and timings, observe all safety protocols and extend full cooperation to ensure the peaceful and smooth observance of Muharram - (KNO)

PM Narendra.....

The meeting, which took place soon after the civil vesting ceremony to confer Padma awards, assumes significance as political circles in the national capital are buzzing with the growing possibility of a cabinet reshuffle.

Earlier in the day, veteran BJP leader from Kerala George Kurian resigned from the Union council of ministers following the expiry of his Raja Sabha term.

Kurian (65) was Union minister of state for minority affairs and also for fisheries, animal husbandry and dairying.

President Murmu has accepted Kurian's resignation, a communique issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan said.

The BJP had decided not to renominate Kurian, whose term ended on June 21, in the recent Raja Sabha polls. Union Minister of State for Railways Ravneet Singh, whose Raja Sabha term ended on June 21, has also not been renominated by the BJP to the Upper House.

Singh, who had been a Raja Sabha member from Rajasthan since August 2024, also holds the charge as the Minister of State for the Ministry of Food Processing Industries.

Of late, a few Union ministers have been given key organisational responsibilities in their home states. Their appointment has also led to

speculation of an imminent cabinet reshuffle.

BJP national president Nitin Nabin had on May 28 appointed Union Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways Harsh Malhotra as Delhi BJP chief.

Malhotra (62) is also Union Minister of State for Corporate Affairs. He currently holds both portfolios.

Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary was in December last year named the new president of the BJP's Uttar Pradesh unit. (Agencies)

Ensure Timely.....

Choudhary, senior administrative officers and officials from the Public Works Department and other concerned departments.

Reviewing the status of PMGSY works under various phases of the programme, Omar Abdullah took stock of efforts to provide all-weather road connectivity to rural habitations and examined the roadmap for completing pending infrastructure projects.

Emphasising the transformative impact of rural road networks, the Chief Minister said better connectivity is essential for improving access to education, healthcare, markets and other public services. He directed departments to maintain high standards of quality while ensuring that projects are completed within the prescribed timelines.

The Chief Minister also stressed the need for stronger coordination among departments to resolve issues related to statutory clearances and procedural requirements that may hinder project execution. He called for regular monitoring of works to prevent delays and ensure efficient implementation.

During the review, Omar Abdullah assessed the implementation strategy for the next phase of the programme and instructed authorities to expedite preparatory works so that approved projects can be taken up without delay. He reiterated the importance of extending reliable road connectivity to eligible rural habitations, particularly in remote and border areas.

Officials presented a detailed progress report on various phases of PMGSY and outlined measures for completing the remaining works. The Chief Minister directed that all pending issues requiring inter-departmental coordination be addressed on priority to facilitate seamless execution of the programme across Jammu and Kashmir.

Observe.....

Turning to current political developments, Chugh criticised the government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and urged it to present a report card detailing its achievements since assuming office. He said the administration should focus on fulfilling commitments made to the electorate and provide a clear account of its performance.

"The people are seeking answers and expect the government to deliver on its promises," he said.

Commenting on the recent fire incident in Lucknow, Chugh termed it a tragic occurrence and said the Uttar Pradesh Government had responded promptly. He noted that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak visited the site and oversaw relief and rescue efforts.

He added that an investigation into the incident was underway and assured that those responsible, if any negligence is established, would face appropriate action.

Chugh's remarks come amid ongoing political debate over historical memory, governance and accountability in Jammu and Kashmir.

General Upendra.....

special significance as General Dwivedi had voluntarily relinquished his role as Colonel of the Regiment after taking over as Chief of the Army Staff. During his tenure as Army Chief, he chose not to hold the colonelcy of any regiment, reflecting his commitment to serving the entire Indian Army with impartiality and professionalism.

In a statement, the Army noted that General Dwivedi's decision to refrain from holding any regimental appointment while leading the force exemplified the highest standards of military leadership and reinforced his dedication to the institution as a whole.

The Jammu & Kashmir Rifles and the Ladakh Scouts are widely recognised for their distinguished service, particularly in challenging high-altitude and difficult operational environments. The honorary appointment is seen as a tribute to the regiments' legacy and the sacrifices of generations of soldiers who have served in their ranks.

The ceremony highlighted the Indian Army's emphasis on leadership, tradition and institutional unity while honouring the deep bonds that connect officers and soldiers to their regiments throughout their careers.

Meanwhile, the Government of India has appointed Lieutenant General Dhiraj Seth as the next Chief of the Army Staff. Currently serving as Vice Chief of the Army Staff, he will assume office on June 30 following the retirement of General Upendra Dwivedi.

An alumnus of the National Defence Academy and an officer of the Armoured Corps, Lieutenant General Seth brings nearly four decades of military experience, having held a range of command, staff and strategic appointments during his distinguished career. He will take over command of the Indian Army upon General Dwivedi's retirement later this month.



DC Srinagar attends 74th Raising Day of Zila Sainik Welfare Board Srinagar

District Admin committed to addressing concerns and ensuring welfare of veterans and war widows: DC

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 23: Zila Sainik Welfare Board Srinagar today observed its 74th Raising Day at Sainik Bhawan Srinagar for the welfare and resettlement of ex-servicemen, war widows and their wards, of South and Central Kashmir.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo who is also the President Sainik Board Srinagar was the chief guest on the occasion.

The programme witnessed the participation of senior officers from the Army, Police and Civil Administration, besides a

large gathering of ex-servicemen, war veterans, veer naris, war widows and their family members from across South and Central Kashmir.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner lauded the invaluable contributions and sacrifices made by the armed forces in safeguarding the nation's sovereignty and integrity. He reiterated the commitment of the District Administration towards ensuring the welfare and well-being of ex-servicemen, Veer Naaris, and their families, and emphasized the importance of extending all possible support to those who have served the nation



with distinction.

During an interactive session, war veterans and war widows expressed their gratitude for the various welfare initiatives and support measures undertaken by the District Administration for the benefit of the ex-servicemen community and their dependents.

As part of the celebrations, wheelchairs were distributed among specially-abled wards of ex-servicemen to facilitate their mobility and improve their quality of life. Veer Naaris were also felicitated in recognition of their courage, resilience, and sacrifices.

Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo to Start OPD Services Soon in Anantnag

HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, JUN 23: Renowned physician Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo will soon commence his Outpatient Department (OPD) services in Anantnag, further expanding access to quality healthcare for the people of South Kashmir.

Dr. Itoo, brings with him extensive clinical experience in internal medicine, diabetes care, and preventive healthcare. Over the years, he has earned recognition for his contributions to patient care,



medical education, public health awareness, and clinical research.

The upcoming OPD in Anantnag aims to provide comprehensive physician consultations, management of acute and chronic medical illnesses, diabetes, hypertension, thyroid disorders, infectious diseases, and preventive health services, with a strong emphasis on evidence-based and patient-centered care.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Itoo said, "I am delighted to extend my clinical services to the people of Anantnag and surrounding areas. My goal is to provide accessible, compassionate, and high-quality medical care while promoting better health outcomes through prevention, early diagnosis, and appropriate treatment."

The exact OPD location, consultation timings, and appointment details will be announced shortly.

Veteran Technician Sheikh Abdul Majeed Passes Away After Brief Illness

Father of Dr. Sheikh Tariq and Father-in-law of Suhail Bhat Mourned Across Kashmir for his Dedicated Service

AABID HUSSAIN RATHER

SRINAGAR, JUNE 23: Veteran technician Sheikh Abdul Majeed, a respected and widely admired figure known for his decades-long service in Ganderbal, passed away on Tuesday after a brief illness at his native residence in Nowshara, Soura. He was the father of renowned plastic surgeon Dr. Sheikh Tariq and father-in-law of Editor-in-Chief of AIR Suhail Bhat.

His demise has been met with profound grief among relatives, friends, colleagues, and members of the public who remember him as a sincere professional and a man of exemplary character. Sheikh Abdul Majeed was regarded as one of the most experienced technicians in the region and earned immense respect through his dedication, expertise, and commitment to serving the people.

Throughout his long career, he remained known for his humility, honesty, and willingness to assist others. Those who worked with him described him as a hardworking and compassionate individual whose contributions extended far beyond his professional responsibilities.

As news of his passing spread, condolence messages poured in from various sections of society, including medical professionals, social activists, public representatives, and community leaders. Many paid rich tributes to his life and legacy, recalling his valuable services and noble qualities.

A large number of mourners attended his funeral prayers and burial, offering prayers for the departed soul and expressing solidarity with the bereaved family.

Sheikh Abdul Majeed is survived by his family, including his daughters, sons-in-law, grandchildren, and other relatives. His passing has left a deep void that will be felt by all who knew him.

May Almighty Allah grant him the highest place in Jannat-ul-Firdous and bestow patience upon his family. Ameen.

Road Connectivity Reaches Gujjarpati, GujjarNar Hamlets After Decades-Long Wait

DR. AB QAYOOM

KUPWARA, JUN 23: Residents of Gujjarpati and GujjarNar hamlets in Nagri Malpora of Trehgam constituency in Kupwara district celebrated a historic milestone on Monday as the area finally received road connectivity after a wait spanning several decades. The inaugural ceremony was organised by the R&B Division Handwara and attended by MLA Trehgam, Mir Siafullah, local residents, and officials from the department. The newly constructed road is expected to bring significant relief to the inhabitants of these remote hamlets by improving transportation facilities, easing access to essential services, and boosting socio-economic development in the area. Speaking



on the occasion, residents expressed their gratitude to MLA Mir Siafullah and Executive Engineer R&B Handwara, Farooq Ahmad Shah, for fulfilling a long-pending promise and

addressing a genuine public demand that had remained unresolved for years. Locals said the absence of proper road connectivity had posed numerous challenges, particu-

larly during medical emergencies, transportation of agricultural produce, and access to educational institutions and government services. They described the project as a major milestone in the development of the area and said it would positively impact the lives of hundreds of families residing in these hamlets. Residents also expressed hope that more public welfare and infrastructure projects would be undertaken in the future to further improve living conditions in remote villages of the constituency. The event concluded with people appreciating the efforts of the administration and the Roads and Buildings Department for turning a long-cherished dream into reality.

CEO Aharbal Development Authority Inaugurates Digital Information Board at Wanpoh

FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, JUNE 23: In a significant move aimed at enhancing tourist facilitation and public convenience, Chief Executive Officer, Aharbal Development Authority, Rouf-ul-Rehman (JKAS) inaugurated a state-of-the-art Digital Information Board at Wanpoh.

The initiative is expected to strengthen public information services and improve the overall experience of tourists and local residents by providing easy access to real-time information through modern digital technology. The inauguration ceremony was attended by a large number of officers, members of the Auqaf

committee Wanpoh, senior citizens, traders, local shopkeepers, and members of the public, reflecting strong community participation and support for the initiative. The newly installed digital board has been designed to provide real-time information and guidance to visitors as well as the general public. It will display details related to tourist activities, important way directions, digital time, temperature updates, and various public information messages. In addition, the board will feature visual presentations and informative videos aimed at creating public awareness and enhancing visitor convenience.

Speaking on the occasion, Rouf-



ul-Rehman (JKAS) described the initiative as a progressive and timely step towards modernizing public information systems and improving service delivery. He said the use of digital technology in public spaces would help visitors access important information more efficiently while also benefiting local residents.

He further stated that such initiatives contribute significantly to improving connectivity, accessibility, and the overall visitor experience, thereby supporting the promotion of the region as a tourist-friendly destination. He emphasized that the Aharbal Development Authority remains committed

to adopting innovative measures that enhance tourism infrastructure and public services.

The installation of the Digital Information Board at Wanpoh is expected to serve as an important public utility, enabling residents and tourists to access essential information at a single point while also supporting tourism promotion and public awareness efforts in the region.

The initiative has been widely appreciated by local stakeholders, who expressed hope that similar technology-driven facilities would be introduced at other key locations to further strengthen tourism and public service infrastructure across the district.

SKUAST-K Holds Apple Leaf Blotch Miner Awareness Programme at Handwara

Experts Stress Scientific Pest Management to Protect Apple Orchards

DR. AB QAYOOM

HANDWARA, JUN 19: In a significant step towards promoting sustainable horticulture and strengthening scientific pest management practices among orchardists, an awareness programme on the management of Apple Leaf Blotch Miner (ALBM) was organised at Sheikh-ul-Alam Environment Hall, Handwara, in north Kashmir's Kupwara district. The programme was organised by the Division of Entomology, Faculty of Horticulture, SKUAST-Kashmir, in collaboration with the Department of Horticulture, Kupwara, under the Holistic Agriculture Development Pro-

gramme (HADP) projects "Minimizing Pesticides" and "Organic Farming." Around 150 apple growers from different horticultural zones of Kupwara district participated in the programme, reflecting the increasing concern among farmers regarding emerging pest threats and the need for scientific interventions. The event was attended by Professor-cum-Chief Scientist and Programme Coordinator Dr. Sajad Mohiuddin Mir, District Horticulture Officer Kupwara Iftikhar Ahmad, Prof. Tariq H. Askarey, Dr. Mudasar Gani, Dr. Faisal Ahmad Bhat from KVK Kupwara, Dr. Khurshheed Habib, Horticulture Development Offi-

cers, field functionaries and other officials. Addressing the gathering, Dr. Sajad Mohiuddin Mir delivered a detailed presentation on Apple Leaf Blotch Miner, highlighting its identification, biology, seasonal occurrence, nature of damage and economic significance. He emphasised the importance of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices, including orchard sanitation, conservation of natural enemies, regular monitoring, pheromone-based technologies and the need-based use of registered insecticides. He stressed that timely intervention is crucial to minimise crop losses and protect the livelihoods of apple growers.



Dr. Mudasar Gani demonstrated various technologies for early

detection and effective management of the pest. Practical dem-

onstrations on the installation and use of pheromone traps were conducted, providing farmers with hands-on experience in pest monitoring and control. Speaking on the occasion, DHO Kupwara Iftikhar Ahmad, Dr. Khurshheed Habib and HDO Suhail Ahmad highlighted the importance of coordinated efforts between scientists, extension workers and farmers for effective pest management and improved orchard productivity. As part of the awareness initiative, technical pamphlets, extension literature and pheromone traps were distributed among the participating farmers to encourage scientific monitoring and

sustainable pest management practices. The participating growers appreciated the initiative and called for more such awareness and capacity-building programmes in the future.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Horticulture Development Officer Suhail Ahmad, who expressed gratitude to all scientists, officials, apple growers and stakeholders for their active participation and support. The event underscored SKUAST-Kashmir's commitment to promoting sustainable horticulture and strengthening the linkage between scientific research and farming communities across Kashmir.

Javid Dar holds meeting with Legislators; reaffirms commitment to responsive governance

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 23: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperatives and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, today held a meeting with the legislators at the Civil Secretariat, Srinagar, during which a wide range of developmental and public welfare issues concerning their respective constituencies were discussed.

Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Science & Technology, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports and ARI & Trainings, Satish Sharma, was also present during the meeting.



The legislators who called on the Minister included Muzaffar Iqbal Khan, Hasnain Masoodi, Peerzada Feroze Ahmad Shah, Irshad Rasool Kar and Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Mir.

The legislators apprised the Minister of various developmental requirements and public issues in their constituencies. They projected demands related to strengthening rural infrastructure, improving public services, augmenting agricultural support systems and expediting the implementation of ongoing developmental and welfare initiatives.

Responding to the legislators, Javid Ahmad Dar assured them that all issues and concerns projected during the meeting would be examined and taken up with the concerned departments for appropriate action.

The Minister reiterated the government's unwavering commitment towards balanced and inclusive development across

Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized that sustained engagement with the elected representatives remains crucial for addressing the public grievances and ensuring effective delivery of services at the grassroots level.

He maintained that the government is focused on accelerating the developmental activities, strengthening institutional mechanisms and ensuring that the benefits of welfare and development programmes reach every section of society.

The Minister further assured the legislators of his full support and cooperation in resolving genuine public issues and addressing developmental aspirations of the people in their respective constituencies.

DDC Rajouri reviews progress of PWD R&B sector

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI, JUNE 23: District Development Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma today chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of developmental works executed by the Public Works Department R&B. The meeting focussed on expediting ongoing projects, ensuring quality execution and addressing bottlenecks affecting timely completion.

The review covered the status of works under PWD R&B, including projects executed for other departments, NABARD-funded schemes, District Capex Budget, permanent restoration of roads and Revival, Restoration, Preservation and Maintenance of Heritage Sites and Monuments.

During the meeting, the Superintending Engineer PWD R&B Circle Rajouri Manzoor Ahmed briefed the Deputy Commissioner about the physical and financial progress of various schemes and projects. The Deputy Commissioner conducted a detailed division-wise review of road connectivity, building infrastructure and heritage conservation works.

The Deputy Commissioner directed officers concerned to maintain the highest standards of quality and ensure strict adherence to project timelines. He also directed them to regularly monitor the progress of works and take proactive measures to avoid delays, with special focus on expediting projects under Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan to improve infrastructure for tribal communities.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed forest-related issues affecting developmental works and directed departments concerned to resolve such issues on priority through coordinated efforts to prevent hampering of ongoing projects.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for early allotment of pending tenders for NABARD-funded projects wherever the process is incomplete. He issued similar directions for projects under the District Capex Budget to ensure speedy allotment, timely commencement of works and judicious utilisation of funds.

The meeting also reviewed the progress of restoration and preservation works at important heritage sites, including Shahi Masjid Nowshera, Channi Prat Temple, Radha Krishna Temple, Khamba Fort, Shiv Temple Khamba, Raghunath Temple Channi Prat and Bawli Lower Khara. The Deputy Commissioner directed officers concerned to accelerate the pace of work while ensuring proper conservation standards.

The Deputy Commissioner directed officers concerned to maintain proper records of all developmental works and strengthen inter-departmental coordination for implementation of projects. Among those present were Additional Deputy Commissioner Ravi Kumar Sihag, Chief Planning Officer Maqsood Ahmed, Superintending Engineer PWD R&B Circle Rajouri Manzoor Ahmed, Executive Engineer PWD R&B Rajouri, Executive Engineer PWD R&B Nowshera, Executive Engineer PWD R&B Koteranka, Executive Engineer PWD R&B Thanamandi and Executive Engineer PWD R&B Kalakote.

Deputations, legislators call on Satish Sharma; highlight public issues, development concerns

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 23: Several deputations, public representatives and legislators today called on Satish Sharma and apprised him of various public issues, developmental requirements and sector-specific concerns from their respective constituencies.

Among those who met the Minister was a deputation from Kulingam, Kupwara, which projected several issues concerning the Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department, augmentation of sports infrastructure, improvement of transport facilities and execution of various developmental works in the area. The deputation sought early intervention to ensure better public service delivery and accelerated development. A deputation of Rehbar-e-Khel also called on the Minister and raised issues related to their regularization, service conditions and other long-pending service matters. The members urged the government to take a sympathetic view of their genuine demands and ensure an early resolution.

Another deputation representing the J&K Wholesale Meat Dealers Association highlighted issues concerning the inter-state transportation of meat, including logistical and regulatory challenges affecting the smooth movement and supply of meat into Jammu and Kashmir. They requested for appropriate measures to streamline the process and safeguard the interests of traders while ensuring uninterrupted supplies to consumers.

Legislators who called on the Minister included the MLAs from Kupwara, Langate, Beerwah, Lal Chowk, Chadoora, Khansahib, Rajpura and Sonawari. They projected a wide range of constituency-specific issues. They sought the Minister's intervention for early completion of key infrastructure projects, strengthening of essential public services, augmentation of transport facilities, improvement of sports infrastructure and effective implementation of welfare and development schemes. They also stressed the need for coordinated efforts among various departments to address the aspirations of the people.

Giving a patient hearing to all the deputations and legislators, Satish Sharma assured them that every genuine issue would be examined on priority and appropriate directions would be issued to the concerned departments for prompt action. He reiterated that the government is committed to transparent, responsive and people-centric governance, with special emphasis on timely grievance redressal and equitable development across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister directed the concerned officers to maintain close coordination with the public representatives and stakeholders, regularly monitor the progress of developmental works and ensure time-bound resolution of public grievances. He stressed that strengthening public service delivery, improving infrastructure and addressing the concerns of all sections of society remain among the government's foremost priorities. The deputations and legislators expressed gratitude to the Minister for assuring expeditious consideration of the issues and demands projected during the meeting.

Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan intensifies across Budgam with Awareness, Plantation, Student Outreach Programmes

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, JUNE 23: As part of the ongoing Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA), a series of awareness and community outreach programmes were organized across Budgam district on Tuesday, reaffirming District administration's commitment towards building a drug-free society through active public participation.

At Higher Secondary School BK Pora, a seminar on drug abuse was organized in which students were sensitized about the harmful effects of substance abuse. The programme encouraged young participants to adopt healthy lifestyles and become ambassadors of a drug-free society by spreading awareness among their peers and communities.

In another significant initiative, officials of Sukhnag Forest Range organized a plantation drive-cum-awareness programme under the banner of Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan at Zugo Panchayat. Participants were sensitized about the importance of protecting both the environment and society from harmful influences, highlighting the shared responsibility of citizens in promoting a healthy and drug-free future.



The day's activities witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, officials, and members of the local community. Speakers emphasized the need for collective efforts, community vigilance, and sustained awareness to effectively combat the menace of drug abuse.

District Administration Budgam reiterated its resolve to continue organizing such awareness campaigns across educational institutions and public spaces, encouraging every citizen to contribute towards the vision of a healthier, safer, and drug-free Budgam under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan.

Committee on Subordinate Legislation holds meeting at Assembly Secretariat

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 23: A meeting of the Committee on Subordinate Legislation was held today at the Assembly Secretariat under the chairmanship of its Chairman, MLA Muzaffar Iqbal Khan.

Legislators Hilal Akbar Lone, Dr. Bharat Bhushan, Peerzada Feroze Ahamad, Khurshed Ahmad Sheikh and Aga Syed Muntazir Mehdi were present in the meeting.

The Chairman highlighted the important role of the Committee in scrutinizing the subordinate legislation and ensuring that the rules framed by various departments are consistent with the provisions and intent of the parent legislation. He emphasized the sig-

nificance of the Committee's work in strengthening legislative oversight and promoting transparency and accountability in governance.

Muzaffar Iqbal Khan urged all members of the Committee to actively participate in its proceedings and contribute constructively towards identifying and resolving the discrepancies in departmental rules and regulations.

The members deliberated on various matters pertaining to the functioning of the Committee and discussed the roadmap for future examination of departmental rules.

The Committee decided that the rules pertaining to the Health Department shall be taken up for detailed examination in its next meeting.

MLA Farooq Shah chairs meeting of Committee on Petitions

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 23: A meeting of the Committee on Petitions of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly was held today under the Chairmanship of MLA Peerzada Farooq Ahmad Shah Assembly Secretariat, Srinagar.

The meeting was attended by Legislators Mir Mohammad Fayaz, Javid Riyaz (Bedar), Sheikh Ahsan Ahmad (Paradesi), Shagun Parihar besides Additional Chief Secretary, PDD Ashwini Kumar, Commissioner Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department Mandeep Kour along with other concerned officers.

The Committee deliberated in detail on two petitions including non-

compliance of the Court Order regarding fixation of Junior Engineers (Electrical) and post-retirement recovery from a retired Assistant Plumber.

During the meeting, the Committee held detailed discussion on both matters and sought comprehensive information and relevant records from the concerned departments. It directed the departments to furnish complete details and factual reports pertaining to the issues raised in the petitions for consideration in its next meeting.

The Committee emphasized the need for timely submission of the requisite information to facilitate effective examination and disposal of the petitions.

District Judiciary Baramulla mourns demise of Mother of Acting Chief Justice

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, JUNE 23: A condolence meeting was held today at the District Court Complex, Baramulla, under the chairmanship of the Principal District & Sessions Judge, Baramulla, to mourn the sad demise of Smt. Shakti Devi, revered mother of Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Acting Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority, who passed away on June 20, 2026.

The meeting was attended by all Judicial Officers, officials posted at the District Court Complex,

Baramulla, and members of the Bar.

The participants expressed profound grief and sorrow over the irreparable loss suffered by the bereaved family and conveyed their heartfelt condolences.

On the occasion, rich tributes were paid to the departed soul, remembering her life and values. The gathering observed a moment of silence and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

The participants also prayed for strength, courage and fortitude for the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss with patience and resilience.

Divisional Admn finalizes comprehensive arrangements for Peaceful Observance of Muharram Processions

General public, mourners asked to follow advisories for smooth, peaceful observance of Muharram

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 23: Ahead of the observance of 8th Muharram, the Divisional Administration has put in place elaborate arrangements to ensure the smooth, peaceful, and orderly conduct and observance of Muharram processions.

In a coordinated effort, Civil and Police administration have put in place all necessary arrangements and established effective mechanism to facilitate the peaceful observance

of Muharram processions while maintaining public safety and law and order.

Senior officers from the administration, police, health, municipal, fire and emergency services, power, water supply, and other concerned departments have been detailed with responsibilities for the execution of arrangements.

The administration has undertaken extensive measures including route management, deployment of adequate security personnel, traffic regulation, sanitation drives, unin-

terrupted power and water supply, emergency medical assistance, installation of control rooms, and round-the-clock monitoring.

Civil and police administrations have also been instructed to maintain close liaison with Muharram committees, religious organizations, community representatives, and local volunteers to facilitate the smooth conduct of processions and religious gatherings.

The general public has been requested to strictly follow the advisories and guidelines

issued by the District Administration and Police Department and adhere to prescribed routes and timings for processions.

Organizers and participants are requested to observe all safety protocols, maintain communal harmony, and avoid any activity that may disrupt public order or inconvenience during the procession and are also requested to extend full cooperation and support for the peaceful and smooth observance of Muharram processions.

LG Vinai Kumar Saxena Inaugurates Pratham Sindhu Kumbh

HT NEWS NETWORK

LEH, JUN 23: Lieutenant Governor, Vinai Kumar Saxena, today inaugurated the Pratham Sindhu Kumbh on the banks of the sacred Indus River, marking a historic celebration of India's civilisational heritage, spiritual traditions and national unity.

The festival commemorates the 30th Sindhu Darshan Yatra and has brought together thousands of devotees, spiritual leaders, scholars, cultural representatives and international dignitaries on the banks of the revered Sindhu (Indus) River in Leh. The landmark gathering witnessed participation from ambassadors and high commissioners of eight countries, including Fiji, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Ecuador, Chile and Ireland, reflecting the growing international significance of the event.

Highlighting the significance of the Indus River, L-G Saxena observed that the Sindhu is among the oldest known rivers in human history and nurtured the Indus Valley Civilisation, one of the world's earliest and most significant cradles of civilisation. He noted that the river occupies a profound place in India's civilisational consciousness and continues to live in the nation's traditions and collective memory. He remarked that the very name "India" is derived from the word Sindhu, underscoring how deeply the river is intertwined with the identity and heritage of the nation.

Saxena recalled that the Sindhu Darshan initiative, launched in 1997,



was conceived as a visionary movement to revive and strengthen the cultural and spiritual bond of the people of India with the iconic river. Over the years, it has evolved into the Sindhu Darshan Mahakumbh, marked by greater participation and richer cultural expression.

Referring to the unique tradition of devotees bringing water from rivers across the country and ceremonially merging it with the Sindhu, he said the practice beautifully symbolises the confluence of India's diverse identities into one unified national stream.

L-G Saxena stated that the Sindhu Darshan Mahakumbh is a living expression of the vision of "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat" envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and provides a unique platform where India's many languages, traditions and customs come together to celebrate a shared civilisational heritage.

Emphasising the ecological significance of the Indus River, Saxena said the Sindhu stands not only as a

profound spiritual symbol but also as a vital ecological asset that reminds humanity of its dual responsibility—to revere and protect.

"At a time when climate change and environmental degradation are increasingly threatening fragile Himalayan ecosystems like Ladakh, spirituality must go hand in hand with sustainability. True reverence for nature must find expression in conscious and responsible actions. Rivers must be viewed as living entities deserving respect, protection and mindful care," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor underlined the need to promote responsible and sustainable tourism, conserve precious water resources and safeguard Ladakh's unique biodiversity. He observed that Ladakh is steadily emerging as a hub of sustainable tourism, a centre of spiritual and cultural heritage and a region of strategic and ecological importance. Events such as the Sindhu Darshan Mahakumbh, he noted, play a significant role in strengthening local

economies through tourism, showcasing Ladakhi art and traditions and enhancing Ladakh's global visibility as a destination associated with peace and spiritual reflection.

Envisioning a larger role for the event, Saxena said the Sindhu Darshan Mahakumbh has the potential to evolve into a globally recognised spiritual congregation comparable to the world's great gatherings of faith and emerge as a vibrant platform for intercultural dialogue and exchange.

Reaffirming the UT Administration's commitment to sustainable and ecologically sensitive development, the Lieutenant Governor called upon governments, local communities, cultural institutions and participants to work together to shape the Sindhu Darshan Mahakumbh into a model of inclusivity, sustainability and responsible cultural celebration.

On the occasion, Saxena informed devotees about the UT Administration's recent decision to impose a

strict ban on single-use plastics and littering across Ladakh and urged all visitors to maintain the sanctity of the sacred Sindhu River by ensuring cleanliness and avoiding littering while enjoying the unparalleled beauty of Ladakh.

In a deeply symbolic gesture reflecting the universal appeal of the Sindhu civilisation, water collected from water bodies of 156 countries was ceremonially immersed in the sacred Indus River by L-G Saxena.

Mata Vaishno Devi Yatra Sees 50 Lakh Pilgrims Till June, Up 27 Per Cent YoY

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JUN 23: The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Yatra has achieved a significant milestone in the current calendar year, with the number of pilgrims paying obeisance at the revered cave shrine in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district crossing the 50-lakh mark on June 22.

This represents an impressive increase of over 27.3 per cent compared to the 39.84 lakh pilgrims who visited the shrine during the corresponding period last year, an official said on

Tuesday. "During the same period in 2025, approximately 39.84 lakh pilgrims had visited the holy Shrine, whereas the Yatra during the current year has recorded 50.70 lakh pilgrims, reflecting a substantial increase of 10.86 lakh devotees," a spokesperson of the Shrine Board said.

He said the remarkable growth in pilgrim footfall is a testimony to the unwavering faith and devotion of pilgrims from across the country and abroad towards the revered shrine. "The sustained increase

in the number of pilgrims also reflects the confidence reposed by devotees in the arrangements made by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board and the coordinated efforts of all stakeholders associated with the management of the Yatra," the spokesperson said.

Under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, the Shrine Board has undertaken extensive measures to facilitate a smooth, safe and comfortable pilgrimage experience for devotees. "Continuous improvements in infrastructure,

accommodation facilities, sanitation, crowd management systems, healthcare services, battery car operations, ropeway services, disaster management preparedness and digital initiatives have significantly enhanced pilgrim convenience and overall service delivery," he said.

The spokesperson said the crossing of the 50-lakh mark at this stage of the year is indicative of the growing enthusiasm among devotees and augurs well for the continued progress of the Yatra during the remaining months of the year.

SSP Kulgam Reviews Yatra Security Arrangements

FAROQ RATHER

KULGAM, JUNE 23: In preparation for the smooth and secure conduct of the forthcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026, Senior Superintendent of Police Kulgam, Shri Anayat Ali Chowdhary (IPS), chaired a comprehensive security review meeting at the District Police Office Kulgam. The meeting was attended by the Commanding Officer (CO) of 18th Battalion CRPF, serving as the nodal officer, CO 46 Battalion CRPF, CO 163 Battalion CRPF, BSF Nodal Officer, Additional Superintendent of Police Kulgam, Additional SP NHW Qazigund, all ad hoc Commanding Officers of BSF units deployed in Kulgam, DySP Headquarters Kulgam, SDPO Qazigund, DySP PC Kulgam, and DySP PC Mirbazar.

During the meeting, a detailed review of the overall security arrangements and deployment plans for the annual pilgrimage was undertaken. Discussions focused on strengthening inter-agency coordination, area domination measures, anti-sabotage operations, traffic regulation, quick response mechanisms, communication systems, and contingency planning to ensure the safe and hassle-free movement of pilgrims through the district.

Addressing the officers, SSP Kulgam stressed the importance of seamless coordination among all security agencies and emphasized the need for maintaining a high level of alertness and operational preparedness throughout the Yatra period. He directed all officers to remain vigilant, ensure strict adherence to established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and work in close coordination to address any security challenges effectively. He further underscored that every possible effort must be made to provide a secure, peaceful, and pilgrim-friendly environment during the annual pilgrimage. The participating officers shared operational inputs and discussed various security-related aspects to further strengthen preparedness. They reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining robust security arrangements and ensuring the successful and incident-free conduct of the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026. The meeting concluded with a collective resolve by all stakeholders to work in a coordinated manner to ensure the safety and security of pilgrims and the smooth conduct of one of the country's most significant annual religious pilgrimages.

Kulgam Police Arrest Drug Peddler, Seize Over 1.1 Kg Ganja During Nasha Mukta Abhiyan

FAROQ RATHER

KULGAM, JUNE 23: Continuing its intensified drive against drug trafficking under the ongoing Nasha Mukta Abhiyan, Kulgam Police arrested a drug peddler and recovered approximately 1.187 kilograms of a Ganja-like substance from his possession in the jurisdiction of Police Station Kulgam. According to police, a special checking naka was established by a team of Police



Station Kulgam at Chattabal Crossing in Kulgam. During the checking process, a person carrying a bag attempted to flee after noticing the police party. However, the alert police personnel chased and apprehended him tactfully. Upon searching the bag, police recovered approximately 1.187 kilograms of a Ganja-like contraband substance along with an aluminium foil allegedly used for storing narcotic substances. The accused has been identified as Md Rokib, son of Md Mofajul, a resident of Chandbita, Lalkumri, Uttar Dinajpur, West Bengal. He was taken into custody on the spot, while the recovered contraband and other incriminating material were seized.

Police have registered a case under FIR No. 111/2026 under relevant sections of the NDPS Act (8/20 NDPS Act) at Police Station Kulgam. Further investigation into the matter has been initiated.

Kulgam Police reiterated its commitment to combating drug abuse and narcotics trafficking and urged the public to cooperate with law enforcement agencies in making society drug-free.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR Office of the Executive Engineer Sewerage & Drainage Division No. IInd Srinagar GIST OF E-NIT NO :- 04_S&D IIND OF 2026-27 DATED: 20 - 06 - 2026

For and on behalf of the Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation, e-tenders are invited on Percentage basis from the Registered PWD Civil Contractors whose registration cards are valid in terms of standing rules, for the below mentioned works strictly as per the terms and conditions given hereunder:-

Sl. No.	Name of work	Estt. Cost of work incld. Depttl. materials (Amount in lacs)	E/M	Class	Time	T.D Cost
1.	Construction of Storm Water Drain near H/O Mohammad Ramzan Bhat up to Main Drain near Milk Shop at Manz Mohalla Khawaja Bagh Maloora	Rs.18.74	Rs.37480/-	BEE/CEE	30 Days	Rs.600/-
2.	Construction of Drainage Network at Gousia Mohalla Maloora Phase II	Rs.38.20	Rs.76400/-	AAY/BEE	45 Days	Rs.1200/-
3.	Construction of Storm Water Drain including Manholes rom H/O Bilal Ahmad Dar at Alnoor Colony Chattabal	Rs.1.79	Rs.3580/-	DEE	15 Days	Rs.100/-
4.	Repair of Drainage at Galib Abad Shalteng Lane 1	Rs.1.85	Rs.3700/-	DEE	15 Days	Rs.100/-
5.	Construction of Storm Water Drain for Lanes near H/O Late Mohd Yousuf Guru up to Main drain, near H/O Fayaz Ahmad Bhat up to Main Drain, near Al Musawir Disposal Shop at Khawaja Bagh Maloora	Rs.11.47	Rs.22940/-	BEE/CEE/DEE	25 Days	Rs.400/-
6.	Construction of Lateral Storm water drain at Usman Abad Lane No. 3 near Masjid Usman at Maloora	Rs.3.29	Rs.6580/-	DEE	15 Days	Rs.100/-
7.	Construction of Storm Water Drain for the Lane near H/O Ali Mohammad Bhat, Ab. Samad Parray opposite G.M Timber Traders Maloora Srinagar	Rs.18.74	Rs.37480/-	BEE/CEE	30 Days	Rs.600/-
8.	Construction of Drainage Network at Shah Naqshband Colony phase III	Rs.38.35	Rs.76700/-	AAY/BEE	45 Days	Rs.1200/-
9.	Construction of Storm Water Drain near H/O Shabir Ahmad Sofi, H/O Mohd Iqbal at Barhana Parimpora Srinagar	Rs.20.00	Rs.40000/-	BEE/CEE	30 Days	Rs.600/-
10.	Construction of Storm Water pipe drain from the H.O Riyaz Ahmad Shah up to H/O M. Sidiq Kaloo near main drain Rampora Al Noor Colony Chattabal Sgr	Rs.2.19	Rs.4380/-	DEE	15 Days	Rs.100/-
11.	Construction of Storm Water drain near H/O Mohd Maqbool Bhat, H/O Gulam Mustafa Bhat at Gazi Mohalla Gund Hassi Bhat	Rs.10.05	Rs.20100/-	BEE/CEE/DEE	20 Days	Rs.300/-
12.	Construction of RCC pipe drain including manholes at Muntazir Mohalla Gund Hassi Bhat	Rs.12.99	Rs.25980/-	BEE/CEE/DEE	20 Days	Rs.400/-
13.	Construction of Storm Water Drain near H/O Sher Ali Parray to Main Drain at Gund Hassi Bhat Srinagar	Rs.4.95	Rs.9900/-	DEE	20 Days	Rs.150/-

Head of Account: Capex 2026-27

The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per the schedule of dates given hereunder:-

01.	Date of issue of Tender Notice	20.06.2026
02.	Period of down loading of bidding documents	20.06.2026 from 04.00 P.M to 04.07.2026 up to 4.00 PM
03.	Bid Submission Start Date	20.06.2026 from 04.30 AM
04.	Bid Submission end Date	04.07.2026 up to 4.00 PM
05.	Date & time of opening of Bids on line	06.07.2026 at 11.30 PM in the office of Executive Engineer, Sewerage & Drainage Division No. II, SMC, Daresah Kadal Srinagar or any subsequent date convenient date to the tender Opening Authority
06.	List of soft copies to be uploaded	Scanned copy of Treasury challan (cost of tender document) with Sl. No. of NIT/ Name of the work (without overwriting). Scanned copy of CDR/ FDR/BG (Earnest Money) (without Over writing). Scanned copy of GST Registration with latest clearance and PAN Card. Scanned copy of JKPWDOMS Registration card with latest renewal on JKPWDOMS PORTAL, Cell No./ e-mail ID and correspondence address. NIT (Terms and conditions) duly signed by the bidder. BOQ.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- In case the bids are found unbalanced / abnormally low bid price, the Successful bidder has to produce/ deposit additional performance security in shape of FDR/CDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer Sewerage & Drainage Division 2nd. SMC Srinagar within three days after opening the bids, as per the circular instructions of the Finance Department Circular No. FD-Code/441/2021-02-158 Dated:- 08.08.2025. The additional performance security shall be released after the successful completion of work till Defective Liability (DLP) period is over
- Where the bid price is below 10% but not below 20% of the Advertised cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee / security percentage shall be incremented by 0.1% for every percentage of Bid Price Below 10% of advertised cost put to bid starting at 11% with the additional bid performance guarantee being 0.1% and this Additional Performance Guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid Price.
- Where the Bid Price is 20% or more below the advertised cost put to bid the Additional Performance Grantee percentage shall be incremented by 0.28% for every percentage of Bid Price Below 20% of project cost put to bid in addition to 0.1% of the bid price and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.
- Additional Performance Security shall be treated as part of Performance Security.
- In addition to above the successful bidder has to produce/ deposit Performance security i.e. 05% (Five Percent) of the value of contract in shape of FDR/CDR pledged to Executive Engineer Sewerage & Drainage Division 2nd. SMC Srinagar within three days after opening the bids. The performance security shall be released after the Defective Liability (DLP) period of the work
- In case of tie bids the department shall identify the tied bidder and shall select the L1 based on the draw lots, in presence of tied bidders, if they chose to be present
- The Successful Bidder has to produce Hard Copies within three days after opening of Bids.
- Bidders are advised to read the NIT carefully before participate in the Bidding process.
- Treasury Challan (Tender Document Fee) should be a fresh i.e. between the date of issue of tender notice & bid submission end date.
- The Contract shall be awarded only after obtaining Administrative Approval from Competent Authority and release of funds on BEAMS portal by the Finance Department.
- The payment of work on account of work done shall be made under rules subject to availability of funds under the prescribed head of account.
- The tender receiving authority reserves the right to accept or reject or cancel any bid / tender / NIT or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
- In terms of Government order Circular No.01 (Adm) FD of 2025 Dated:- 08.07.2025 that "Every participating supplier/ contractor to mandatory disclose the bank account number which is linked with their GSTIN at the time of bid submission. No payment shall be released by the Government Department /Agency to any other bank account except the one linked with the GST registered number of the successful bidder"

No: S&D-II/1097 | Dated: 20-06-2026

Sd/- Executive Engineer, S&D Division IInd, Srinagar

DIPK: 2457/26 | Dated: 23-06-2026

HT EDITORIAL

Ensuring a Safe and Successful Amarnath Yatra

As Jammu and Kashmir prepares to host the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra, the focus once again turns to the extensive arrangements required to ensure the safe, orderly and successful conduct of one of the country's most significant religious pilgrimages. Every year, lakhs of devotees undertake the arduous journey to the holy cave shrine, making the Yatra not only a spiritual event of immense importance but also one of the largest logistical and security operations in the region.

The successful conduct of the pilgrimage depends on meticulous planning and the coordinated efforts of multiple agencies. Security forces, civil administration, health departments, disaster management authorities and other stakeholders work in close collaboration months in advance to create a secure environment for pilgrims. Their task is made even more challenging by the difficult terrain, high-altitude routes, unpredictable weather conditions and the sheer scale of human movement involved.

Over the years, security agencies have developed a comprehensive and multi-layered framework to safeguard the pilgrimage. Continuous surveillance, route security, access control measures, intelligence-based monitoring, anti-sabotage checks and rapid response mechanisms have become integral components of Yatra management. Such preparedness is essential not only to address potential security threats but also to ensure swift responses to emergencies arising from natural or medical causes.

The role of modern technology has also assumed growing significance. Advanced communication systems, surveillance equipment, real-time monitoring and improved coordination among various agencies have strengthened the overall security architecture. These measures help authorities maintain situational awareness and respond effectively to any challenge that may arise during the pilgrimage.

Equally important is the emphasis on the welfare and convenience of devotees. Medical facilities, emergency services, sanitation arrangements, accommodation, traffic management and disaster preparedness form the backbone of a successful pilgrimage experience. The objective is not merely to secure the routes but to ensure that pilgrims can undertake their spiritual journey with confidence and peace of mind.

The people of Jammu and Kashmir have historically played a vital role in the Yatra's success. Local residents, service providers and volunteers contribute significantly through their support, hospitality and cooperation. Their participation reflects the region's long-standing tradition of welcoming pilgrims and strengthening the spirit of communal harmony and mutual respect.

The Amarnath Yatra is a remarkable example of how faith, administration and public cooperation can come together to achieve a common objective. Its smooth conduct is a testament to the dedication of thousands of personnel who work tirelessly behind the scenes, often under demanding circumstances.

As preparations gather momentum, it is imperative that all stakeholders maintain the highest standards of vigilance, professionalism and coordination. A secure and well-managed pilgrimage not only protects the lives and well-being of devotees but also reinforces confidence in the institutions entrusted with this important responsibility. With comprehensive planning, robust security measures and collective commitment, the forthcoming Amarnath Yatra can once again emerge as a symbol of devotion, resilience and efficient public administration, ensuring a memorable and spiritually fulfilling experience for every pilgrim who undertakes the sacred journey.



SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Libraries play a vital role in shaping the intellectual, moral, and professional growth of society. In today's fast-changing world, knowledge has become the strongest tool for personal development and national progress. To meet the growing educational demands, it is essential that all ten districts and tehsils of the Kashmir Valley have full fledged public libraries that function 24x7, especially for aspirants preparing for competitive examinations. Such libraries should be equipped with modern books, digital resources, electronic gadgets, printing facilities, and expert librarians. A well developed public library system can become a strong foundation for learning, innovation, and success.

Nowadays, public libraries have become a pressing demand among students and aspirants. Many young people openly discuss the urgent need for such facilities. Libraries can serve as a common knowledge hub where students from different backgrounds gather under one roof with a shared purpose to learn and to achieve their goals. In a world where education is recognized as the key to empowerment, it is impossible to ignore the importance of libraries.

Today's world is full of advanced and incredible technologies. From artificial intelligence to digital learning platforms, technology has transformed how we gain knowledge. Giant machines, smart devices, and innovative tools surround us everywhere. The question arises: why

should education lag behind when every other sector is progressing rapidly? The reason for discussing these technological advancements here is clear education must move alongside modern innovations. From an educated person to an illiterate one, everyone now understands the value of education. As rightly said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which can change the world." Education never discriminates; it empowers everyone equally.

When we understand the demands of the present time, why should we hesitate to implement meaningful changes? Why should genuine demands like public libraries not be placed before higher authorities? Education plays a pivotal role not only in an individual's personal life but also in the overall development of a nation. Across the world, education is highly appreciated, and it has produced eminent scientists, doctors, engineers, and innovators. Every day, new discoveries and inventions take place, contributing to human welfare. All of this is possible because of strong educational foundations, where libraries act as silent contributors.

Public libraries are especially essential for youth preparing for competitive examinations such as civil services, banking, defense, and other national-level tests. Most aspirants face numerous challenges, including lack of study space, limited access to books, poor internet connectivity, and an unhealthy study environment at home. A well equipped library can solve many of these problems by providing a peaceful atmosphere, updated study material, and access to digital resources.

In the Kashmir Valley, the education sector has always played a crucial role in identifying and nurturing talent across all age groups. Educational institutions provide a platform where students can share ideas related to social, economic, educa-

tional, environmental, moral, ethical, health, and technological issues. Such interaction helps in developing critical thinking and broad perspectives. Unfortunately, since 1989, the valley has been passing through difficult and uncertain circumstances due to ongoing tensions. These challenges have directly or indirectly affected the education sector.

Whenever uncertainty arises, educational institutions are often the first to face closures. Orders from state, district, or tehsil-level administrations frequently disrupt academic activities. As a result, students suffer academically and mentally. In such situations, public libraries can act as alternative learning spaces. Even if schools and colleges are closed, libraries can continue to function and ensure continuity in education.

Another major concern is that a large portion of the population in the Kashmir Valley lives in villages and small hamlets where basic facilities are still inadequate. While it is fortunate that the government provides the fundamental right to education, implementation remains challenging. The Right to Education Act, introduced through the 86th Constitutional Amendment in 2002, inserted Article 21-A, which guarantees free and compulsory education for children aged six to fourteen years. However, providing education under uncertain conditions and without proper infrastructure remains a serious challenge.

In the present era, we often talk about education, knowledge, moral values, and personality development, but we ignore essential support systems like libraries. Without proper facilities, it becomes difficult to achieve educational goals. Education does not only mean classroom teaching; it requires access to books, research materials, and a healthy learning environment.

Due to the lack of facilities, many students from Kashmir prefer to move

outside the state for competitive exam preparation. Delhi has emerged as a major hub for aspirants. Students leave their homeland and face numerous hardships related to accommodation, finances, and emotional well-being. The question is: why are they forced to leave? The answer is simple better facilities, cooperative administration, and a supportive environment.

If similar facilities were available within the state, students would not need to migrate. The government and society must work together to encourage local talent. Providing well-established libraries at district and tehsil levels would greatly reduce the burden on aspirants. These libraries should offer uninterrupted electricity, high-speed internet, updated books, newspapers, journals, online databases, and guidance from trained librarians.

A public library is not just a building filled with books; it is a center of enlightenment. It promotes self-study, discipline, and intellectual curiosity. It also encourages inclusivity, as students from different economic backgrounds can access the same resources. In this way, libraries contribute to social equality and national integration.

In conclusion, libraries are a comprehensive way to learn, grow, and achieve life goals. For the youth of Kashmir, especially competitive exam aspirants, public libraries can become a ray of hope. Establishing 24x7 libraries in every district and tehsil is not a luxury but a necessity. Such an initiative will strengthen the education system, empower youth, reduce migration, and contribute to nation-building. It is time for policymakers to recognize this need and take concrete steps toward building a knowledgeable and progressive society.

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The Crisis of Credibility: Journalism Between Truth and Attention



TAWHEED SHEIKH

Journalism has traditionally been regarded as the fourth pillar of democracy. Alongside the legislature, executive and judiciary, the press serves as an essential institution that informs citizens, exposes wrongdoing and holds those in power accountable. At its best journalism is a public service built on facts, verification, balance and integrity. Yet in recent years, a growing number of people have begun questioning whether modern journalism is fulfilling that role or drifting away from it.

The rise of smartphone journalism, social media platforms and the relentless competition for attention has fundamentally changed the media landscape. News no longer waits for the evening bulletin or the next morning's newspaper. Information spreads instantly, often without verification. In this environment, being first has become more valuable than being accurate. As a result, many media organizations and online commentators appear increasingly willing to sacrifice caution for speed and sensationalism.

A journalist's responsibility is to report facts, provide context and present verified information to the public. However, many contemporary media personalities have expanded their role far beyond reporting. They investigate, interpret, prosecute, judge and sometimes even pronounce a social sentence before any official inquiry has reached a conclusion. Through dramatic headlines, emotionally charged debates and one-sided narratives, individuals are often portrayed as guilty long before the legal system has examined the evidence.

This phenomenon, commonly referred to as a "media trial," poses a serious challenge to the principles of justice. In any democratic society, presumption of innocence is a cornerstone of the legal system. Every citizen has the right to a fair investigation and an impartial hearing before being judged. When media organizations effectively conduct public trials, they risk undermining this principle and influencing public opinion in ways that may be impossible to reverse.

History has repeatedly demonstrated that public perception can be more enduring than legal verdicts. Even when individuals are ultimately cleared of allegations, reputational damage inflicted by relentless

media scrutiny often remains. Careers can collapse, families can suffer social stigma and years of hard-earned credibility can disappear almost overnight. In many instances, corrections and retractions receive only a fraction of the attention given to the original accusations.

The problem is further amplified by social media algorithms. Digital platforms reward content that generates strong emotional reactions—anger, outrage, fear, or shock. Nuanced reporting rarely becomes viral, while sensational claims spread with remarkable speed. Consequently, journalists and content creators face growing pressure to produce emotionally charged narratives rather than carefully researched reporting. The distinction between journalism, entertainment and activism becomes increasingly blurred.

Another significant development is the rise of citizen journalism and self-proclaimed media experts. While the democratization of information has expanded public participation in public discourse, it has also created an environment where opinions are frequently presented as facts. Many individuals operate without editorial oversight, ethical standards, or professional training. Although some contribute meaningfully to public understanding, others fuel misinformation, rumor, and character assassination.

Television journalism has likewise undergone a profound transformation. Prime-time debates often resemble theatrical courtroom proceedings more than genuine efforts to inform the public. Anchors frequently dominate discussions, interrupt opposing viewpoints, and present personal interpretations as definitive conclusions. The objective shifts from fostering understanding to generating engagement, ratings, and advertising revenue.

The consequences extend beyond individual cases. Constant exposure to sensational and emotionally charged news can have a profound effect on public mental well-being. Citizens increasingly find themselves trapped in a cycle of outrage, controversy and anxiety. Rather than cultivating an informed public, such reporting often contributes to exhaustion, cynicism and distrust.

Furthermore, sensational journalism can deepen social polarization. Complex issues are frequently reduced to simplistic narratives of heroes and villains, leaving little room for nuance or thoughtful debate. Citizens retreat into ideological echo chambers, trusting only information that confirms their existing beliefs. Journalism, which should ideally serve as a bridge between competing perspectives, instead risks becoming an accelerant of division.

Underlying many of these developments is the economic reality of modern media. The digital attention economy rewards visibility, engagement and immediacy. Clicks, views and shares have become critical measures of success. In such an environment,

controversy is profitable. Outrage drives traffic, traffic drives revenue and revenue becomes the dominant incentive. Unfortunately, truth, complexity and careful analysis often struggle to compete within this system.

Yet acknowledging these challenges does not require abandoning faith in journalism itself. Across the world, dedicated reporters continue to uncover corruption, expose abuses of power and bring important stories to public attention. Investigative journalism remains one of democracy's most valuable safeguards. The profession continues to produce work of immense public value, often under difficult and dangerous circumstances.

The challenge therefore is not to weaken journalism but to strengthen its ethical foundations. Media organizations must recommit themselves to accuracy, fairness, transparency and accountability. Reports should clearly distinguish between verified facts, analysis and opinion. Corrections should be given prominence rather than buried in obscurity. Most importantly, journalists must resist the temptation to become judges and instead remain faithful to their primary responsibility: informing the public.

Governments and regulatory institutions also have a role to play. They should encourage professional standards and transparency while safeguarding freedom of expression. Efforts to address irresponsible journalism must never become instruments of censorship. A free press remains indispensable to democratic life, even when it falls short of its ideals.

Citizens, too, bear responsibility. Media literacy has become an essential civic skill in the digital age. Audiences must learn to evaluate sources critically, seek multiple perspectives, and resist the impulse to share unverified information. An informed public is the strongest defense against misinformation and manipulation.

Ultimately, democracy depends on informed citizens, and informed citizens depend on trustworthy journalism. When journalism abandons facts for spectacle, society suffers. When it prioritizes outrage over truth, public trust erodes. And when it assumes the roles of investigator, prosecutor, judge and jury, it risks becoming part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

The future of journalism will be shaped not only by technological change but also by the choices made by journalists, media institutions, policymakers and citizens. If journalism is to regain and preserve public trust, it must reaffirm its fundamental purpose: the disciplined pursuit of truth in service of the public interest. In an age saturated with information, credibility remains journalism's most valuable asset and its most fragile one.

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Zam Zam and Hippocrene: Culturally Resonant Waters



■ DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

Water has long served as a powerful symbol across civilizations, representing life, purity, inspiration, and divine intervention. Among the world's most culturally resonant waters are Hippocrene, the mythic fountain of poetic inspiration in Greek tradition, and Zam Zam, the sacred well of Mecca central to Islamic belief and ritual. Though separated by geography, theology, and historical context, both waters occupy profound symbolic roles within their respective cultures. In Greek mythology, Hippocrene ("Horse's Fountain") is said to have sprung forth when the winged horse Pegasus struck Mount Helicon with his hoof. This miraculous act created a spring that became sacred to the Muses, the divine patrons of poetry, music, and the arts. The origin of Hippocrene is therefore rooted in mythopoetic imagination, emphasizing the Greek belief that artistic inspiration descends from divine forces.

In Islamic tradition, the well of Zam Zam emerged in the barren valley of Mecca when Angel Jibril (Gabriel) struck the ground to provide water for Hajar and her infant son Ismail, who were on the brink of death from thirst. This event is not mythic but sacred history, forming part of the narrative that precedes the establishment of Mecca as a spiritual center. Zam Zam's origin emphasizes divine mercy, providence, and the fulfillment of prayer. Hippocrene became a symbol of poetic genius. Writers from Hesiod to Keats invoked it as a metaphor for the creative spark. The spring's association with the Muses made it a pilgrimage site for poets seeking inspiration. Its significance lies primarily in literary culture, shaping Western conceptions of creativity as a divine gift. Zam Zam, by contrast, plays an active role in Islamic religious practice. Pilgrims performing Hajj and Umrah drink from it, wash with it, and carry it home as a bless-

ing. The Prophet Muhammad's statement—"The water of Zam Zam is for whatever it is drunk for"—elevates it to a medium of spiritual intention and supplication. Its significance is therefore devotional, communal, and ritualistic, not merely symbolic.

Scientific studies have revealed that Zam Zam water has a distinct mineral composition. It contains higher levels of calcium, magnesium, and fluoride compared to ordinary groundwater. These minerals contribute to its taste, its perceived healing properties, and its long shelf life. Unlike other waters that stagnate or develop microbial growth over time, Zam Zam water remains fresh even when stored for years. Researchers have attempted to explain this phenomenon through its mineral balance and natural sterilization properties, yet the complete explanation remains elusive. The water seems to resist decay, as if protected by the very story that gave it birth. The mystery deepens when one considers the sheer volume of water extracted daily. During peak pilgrimage seasons, millions of liters are pumped, bottled, and distributed. The well is monitored with modern technology, including sensors that track water levels, flow rates, and purity. Despite this heavy usage, the water level drops only slightly and quickly returns to normal.

Hydrologists have noted that the well responds almost instantly to extraction, as if the underground channels are constantly pushing water toward the surface. This behavior is unlike typical wells, which show gradual depletion and slow recovery. Zam Zam's resilience challenges conventional hydrological models, suggesting that its underground network is far more complex than previously understood. Yet the scientific fascination with Zam Zam cannot be separated from its spiritual significance. For believers, the well is not merely a geological anomaly; it is a living symbol of divine generosity. Pilgrims drink from it with reverence, believing that their intentions are carried into the water. The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said, "Zam Zam water is for whatever purpose it is drunk." This belief transforms the act of drinking into a ritual of hope. People drink for healing, for strength, for clarity, for blessings. They carry bottles home to distant lands, sharing the sacred water with family and friends. In many house-

holds, a few drops of Zam Zam are mixed with ordinary water to extend its blessing, a practice that reflects both devotion and the desire to hold onto something eternal.

The well's location adds another layer to its mystery. It sits within the Masjid al-Haram, near the Kaaba, the spiritual center of Islam. The proximity of the well to the holiest site in Islam reinforces its symbolic power. Pilgrims often drink Zam Zam water after completing the Tawaf, the ritual of circling the Kaaba. The act becomes a merging of physical and spiritual nourishment—movement around the sacred center followed by the intake of sacred water. The well thus becomes part of a larger choreography of devotion, a rhythm that has been repeated for centuries.

The historical continuity of the Zam Zam Well is itself astonishing. Over thousands of years, civilizations have risen and fallen, empires have expanded and collapsed, yet the well has remained. It has survived droughts, floods, wars, and the massive urban development of Mecca. When the city expanded and modern infrastructure was built, engineers took great care to preserve the well's integrity. Today, it is enclosed in a protected chamber, with water pumped to distribution points throughout the mosque. The physical structure has changed, but the source remains untouched. This continuity reinforces the sense that the well exists outside the ordinary flow of time, anchored in a sacred narrative that transcends history.

To decipher the mystery of the Zam Zam Well, one must consider not only the physical water but also the symbolic water—the water that flows through stories, rituals, and collective memory. Water has always been a powerful symbol in human cultures. It represents life, purification, renewal, and transformation. In the context of Zam Zam, water becomes a bridge between the human and the divine. It is a reminder that life can emerge from barrenness, that hope can spring from despair, that sustenance can appear where none is expected. The well thus becomes a metaphor for resilience, a lesson in trust, and a testament to the enduring power of faith.

Yet the mystery is not only spiritual or scientific; it is also emotional. For millions of people, Zam Zam water carries personal stories—stories of healing, of answered prayers, of moments of clarity.

A pilgrim who drinks from the well may feel a sense of connection to Hajar's struggle, to the ancient desert, to the millions who have stood at the same spot across centuries. The water becomes a vessel of memory, carrying the weight of countless human experiences. In this sense, the well is not just a physical source of water but a reservoir of collective emotion.

The unending flow of Zam Zam water also invites reflection on the nature of miracles. In a world governed by scientific laws, the idea of a miracle often seems incompatible with rational understanding. Yet the Zam Zam Well occupies a unique space where science and faith coexist. Scientists study its geology, believers honor its sacredness, and both acknowledge that something extraordinary is at work. The well challenges the assumption that miracles must defy natural laws. Instead, it suggests that miracles can operate through natural processes, that the divine can manifest through the ordinary, that the boundary between the natural and the supernatural is more porous than we imagine. The well also raises questions about sustainability and the relationship between humans and natural resources. In an age where water scarcity threatens many regions, the continuous flow of Zam Zam stands as a reminder of the preciousness of water. It invites reflection on how humanity uses, preserves, and respects natural resources.

The reverence with which pilgrims treat Zam Zam water contrasts sharply with the wastefulness often seen in modern societies. The well teaches that water is not merely a commodity but a gift, one that must be cherished and protected. The mystery of the Zam Zam Well cannot be fully deciphered by science alone, nor can it be explained solely through spiritual narratives. It exists at the intersection of both, a phenomenon that invites wonder rather than definitive answers. Its unending flow is a reminder that some mysteries are meant to be experienced rather than solved. The well continues to flow because it is sustained not only by underground channels but by the faith of millions, by the story of a mother's endurance, by the belief that divine mercy can transform the harshest desert into a source of life.

To drink Zam Zam water is to participate in a story that began thousands of years

ago and continues to unfold. It is to taste history, faith, geology, and mystery in a single sip. The well stands as a testament to the resilience of the human spirit, the generosity of the divine, and the enduring power of stories that shape our understanding of the world. Its water flows not only through the earth but through the hearts of those who believe in its blessing. And perhaps that is the greatest mystery of all—that a simple well in the desert has become a symbol of unending hope, a reminder that even in the driest places, water can flow, life can flourish, and miracles can happen.

Hippocrene symbolizes: i) artistic creativity, ii) intellectual elevation and iii) imagination and beauty. It reflects the Greek world view that human excellence—*arête*—is achieved harmony with divine forces that inspire the mind. Zam Zam symbolizes: i) divine compassion ii) spiritual nourishment iii) endurance and answered prayer. It embodies the Islamic belief that God sustains life even in the harshest conditions, transforming a desert into a sanctuary. Although a real spring exists on Mount Helicon, its cultural power lies in myth, not physical properties. It is a metaphorical fountain, invoked in poetry rather than consumed in ritual. Zam Zam is a continuously flowing well, scientifically studied and consumed by millions annually. Its physical presence reinforces its spiritual meaning, making it both material and sacred. Hippocrene and Zam Zam illustrate how different civilizations use water to express their deepest values. Hippocrene reflects the Greek celebration of art, imagination, and intellectual beauty, while Zam Zam embodies the Islamic ideals of faith, endurance, and divine compassion. One inspires the mind; the other sustains the body and spirit. Together, they demonstrate the universal human impulse to locate meaning in the natural world and to elevate water—life's most essential element—into a symbol of the sacred.

International Tagore Awardee Dr Ratan Bhattacharjee is a former Affiliate Faculty of Virginia Commonwealth University USA & multilingual poet cum columnist prof@ratanbhattacharjee@gmail.com

Courage Beyond the Battlefield



■ M S NAZKI

Courage is often associated with soldiers carrying weapons and confronting enemies on the battlefield. Yet true courage extends far beyond combat. It is the strength to stand firm in difficult circumstances, to uphold values under pressure, and to serve people with dedication and compassion. Few organizations embody this spirit better than the Assam Rifles, India's oldest paramilitary force, proudly known as the "Sentinels of the Northeast" and the "Friends of the Hill People."

This spirit of courage was reflected during the visit of Lieutenant General V. M. Bhuvana Krishnan, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Command, to the Headquarters Directorate General Assam Rifles at Laitkor, Shillong, on June 14, 2026. During his visit, he interacted with Lieutenant General Vikas Lakhera, AVSM, SM, Director General Assam Rifles, and senior officers of the force.

The General Officer was briefed on the prevailing security situation across the Northeast, operational preparedness, border management responsibilities, counter-insurgency operations, civic action initiatives, and developmental programmes undertaken by the Assam Rifles. Discussions also focused on the force's role in maintaining peace, promoting stability, strengthening community ties, and implementing human resource and training

initiatives. Appreciating the professionalism, dedication, and commitment of all ranks, Lt Gen Krishnan emphasized the need for sustained vigilance, operational readiness, and continuous engagement with local communities to address evolving security challenges.

Lt Gen V. M. Bhuvana Krishnan is among the most distinguished officers of the Indian Army. An alumnus of Sainik School Amaravathinagar, the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla, and the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, he has also attended the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, and the National Defence College, New Delhi. Commissioned into the Dogra Regiment in 1988, he has served in numerous command, staff, and instructional appointments, including command of infantry formations in Jammu and Kashmir and along India's northern borders. Before assuming command of the Eastern Command on April 1, 2026, he served as Quartermaster General of the Indian Army. His distinguished service has earned him the Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, and Yudh Seva Medal.

The Assam Rifles have long stood as a symbol of resilience and service. Their primary responsibility remains the security of the 1,643-kilometre Indo-Myanmar border, where they play a critical role in preventing cross-border crimes, illegal migration, arms trafficking, and narcotics smuggling. Simultaneously, they remain at the forefront of counter-insurgency operations, supporting the Indian Army in maintaining peace and security across the Northeastern states.

However, the force's contribution extends beyond military operations. Assam Rifles personnel are deeply engaged with local communities, acting as a bridge between security and development. Through medical camps, veterinary ser-



vices, educational support programmes, and humanitarian assistance, they help address the needs of people living in remote and often inaccessible regions. During times of ethnic tensions and social unrest, they frequently serve as neutral peacekeepers, helping communities restore trust and stability.

Community engagement remains one of the strongest pillars of the Assam Rifles. Regular interactions with village authorities, tribal councils, civil society groups, and women's organizations create platforms for dialogue and confidence-building. These initiatives not only address local concerns but also help counter misinformation and strengthen communal harmony. The induction of women riflemen has further enhanced the force's ability to connect with local women, particularly influential groups such as the Meira Paibis of Manipur.

Recognizing the importance of youth in

shaping the future of the region, the Assam Rifles actively invest in youth empowerment programmes. Sports tournaments, self-defence workshops, skill-development initiatives, and mentorship programmes encourage young people to pursue constructive opportunities. National Integration Tours expose youth from remote areas to different parts of India, fostering cultural exchange, educational awareness, and a stronger sense of national unity.

Training and human resource development form the backbone of the force's operational effectiveness. The Assam Rifles Training Centre and School conducts extensive programmes focusing on jungle warfare, tactical operations, survival skills, and leadership development. Modern training modules increasingly incorporate emerging technologies, including drones, artificial intelligence-enabled platforms, and advanced communication systems. The force also runs pre-recruitment and

mentorship programmes to prepare youth from the Northeast for opportunities in the Armed Forces and the Agniveer scheme.

Equally important is the welfare of personnel and their families. Structured promotion systems ensure career progression across all ranks, while welfare programmes honour retiring personnel and support families through healthcare, vocational training, and community initiatives. The Assam Rifles Wives Welfare Association plays a significant role in enhancing the quality of life for serving personnel and their dependents.

The leadership of Lt Gen Vikas Lakhera has further strengthened the force's capabilities. Commissioned into the Indian Army in 1990, he has extensive experience in the Northeast and has held several key command and staff appointments. A graduate of the Defence Services Staff College and the Royal College of Defence Studies in London, he brings a wealth of operational expertise to the Assam Rifles.

Today, the Assam Rifles continue to exemplify courage in its truest sense—not merely through battlefield achievements but through unwavering service to the people. Their efforts in safeguarding borders, combating insurgency, empowering youth, promoting development, and fostering trust among communities make them a unique institution within India's security framework.

As one reflects on the spirit of the Assam Rifles, the essence of courage becomes clear. Courage is not only about facing danger; it is about pursuing a vision despite challenges, standing by principles despite opposition, and serving others despite hardship. It is the willingness to lose sight of familiar shores in search of new horizons. For the officers and men of the Assam Rifles, courage remains not just a virtue but a way of life.

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This happens to your body when you eat ginger every day for a month

Ginger
Ginger is a spice with a very strong taste. Ginger is not only very tasty, but also has a lot of good qualities. Ginger contains gingerol, shogaol, zingiberene and a whole range of vitamins and minerals. It is therefore not surprising that ginger has a long medicinal history. Centuries ago, ginger was used to cure all kinds of ailments. In addition, eating ginger regularly also helps to keep your body healthy.

Good qualities
Ginger contains gingerol, a bio-active substance that helps to reduce symptoms such as nausea and vomiting. This substance also helps to reduce swollen joints. Ginger also contains shogaol, a substance with an analgesic effect that also helps against cancer and heart disease. Zingiberene in ginger is particularly good for digestion. But not only this: ginger also has an anti-diabetic effect and improves brain function and the immune system. Wondering what happens to your body when you eat ginger every day for a month? **Ginger every day**
Are you planning to eat ginger every day for a month? Then we will not stop you!



Eating ginger daily has many health benefits. Side note: you do not have to nibble on a piece of ginger every day. Cut a large piece – about 1.5 centimeters – into small pieces and mix it with your smoothie, tea or Asian dish. Wondering what this does to your body? We will explain it to you.

It does this to your body:
Anti-inflammatory: Inflammation in the body is reduced faster. This is due to the anti-inflammatory effect of ginger. Nausea disappears: are you often nauseous in the morning? We bet that eating ginger every day will help you! By eating ginger

daily, the nausea will soon subside. Tip: Especially pregnant women and people undergoing chemotherapy can benefit from this. Reduction of muscle pain: Do you have muscle pain or pain in the limbs? Eating ginger can have a good influence on this. Consuming ginger daily will gradually ease the pain. Promotes bowel movements: Eating ginger on a daily basis does a lot of good for your bowel movements. Do you regularly suffer from constipation? Then this might help you. Menstrual pain: Are you in constant pain during this time of the month? Then eating ginger daily may help you. The spice is similar to taking pain medications, which can help relieve acute abdominal pain. Lowers cholesterol: Eating ginger every day for a month can help lower "bad" cholesterol in the body. The amount of triglycerides in the blood is reduced by the substances in ginger. **Boosts the Immune System:** The anti-inflammatory properties in ginger strengthens the immune system. Have you already been affected by a cold or virus? Then ginger can help you recover faster.

New study reveals grape consumption may protect skin against UV damage

WASHINGTON: A recent human study published in the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology found that the consumption of grapes protected against ultraviolet (UV) skin damage.

Study subjects showed increased resistance to sunburn and reduction in markers of UV damage at the cellular level. Natural components found in grapes known as polyphenols are thought to be responsible for these beneficial effects.

The study, conducted at the University of Alabama, Birmingham and led by principal investigator Craig Elmets, M.D., investigated the impact of consuming whole grape powder, equivalent to 2.25 cups of grapes per day, for 14 days against photodamage from UV light.

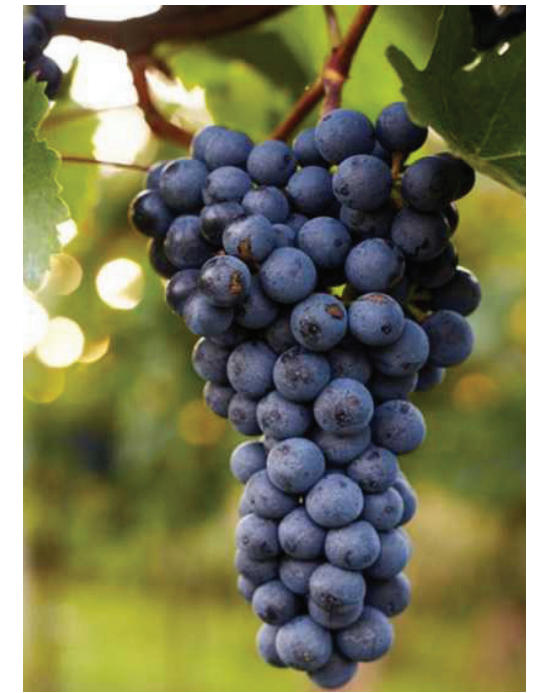
Subjects' skin response to UV light was measured before and after consuming grapes for two weeks by determining the threshold dose of UV radiation that induced visible reddening after 24 hours, the Minimal Erythema Dose (MED). Grape consumption was protective and more UV exposure was required to cause sunburn following grape consumption, with MED increasing on average by 74.8 per cent.

Analysis of skin biopsies showed that the grape diet was associated with decreased DNA damage, fewer deaths of skin cells, and reduction in inflammatory markers that if left unchecked, together can impair skin function and can potentially lead to skin cancer.

It is estimated that 1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer by the age of 70. Most skin cancer cases are associated with exposure to UV radiation from the sun, about 90 percent of nonmelanoma skin cancers and 86 percent of melanomas, respectively. Additionally, an estimated 90 percent of skin ageing is caused by the sun.

We saw a significant photoprotective effect with grape consumption and we were able to identify molecular pathways by which that benefit occurs – through the repair of DNA damage and downregulation of proinflammatory pathways," said Dr. Elmets.

"Grapes may act as an edible sunscreen, offering an additional layer of protection in addition to topical sunscreen products," added Dr. Elmets.



Courtesy Healthline

Soothe teeth sensitivity in easy ways

Oral health is a window to a person's overall health and well-being and amongst that teeth sensitivity is one of the main problems that can range from slight discomfort to severe pain -- so make sure you are taking care of it properly.

Ajay Kakar, a Periodontist, shares some simple tips to ease teeth sensitivity:

* The quickest and easiest way would be to switch to a specialised toothpaste formulated to take care of sensitive teeth.

* Change your brushing habits. If you're not using a soft toothbrush and if you're scrubbing your teeth vigorously, you might worsen the condition. Hard brushing can wear away the enamel, increasing the sensitivity in your teeth.

* Keep a check on acidic food and drinks as they might wear down the teeth enamel. Limit the consumption of these foods and drinks, and try to brush about 20 minutes after eating them (not earlier, or the brushing may hurt your enamel further).

* Teeth whitening treatments or alcohol-based mouthwash can make things even worse, so steer clear of them.

* In case your problem continues even after these changes then you must visit your dentist.

Tarun Kumar Giroti, BDS, MDS - Conservative Dentist and Endodontist also shares tips to tackle this oral condition.

* Individuals with gastric activity problems or gastric reflux should be treated with appropriate antacids as acid reflux leads to demineralization action resulting in dental enamel erosion. **EMJ**

Scientists identify the root of nicotine addiction, may lead to new treatments

Scientists have identified specific chemical changes deep in the brain that help drive nicotine addiction, an advance that may lead to new treatments for the condition.

In the research published in the journal PNAS, scientists were able to halt these changes in mice and discover potential targets for drugs to treat tobacco dependence.

Nicotine is a stimulant that works by binding to receptors widely distributed throughout the brain, causing neurons to release a variety of neurotransmitters including dopamine, which triggers feelings of pleasure.

In a search for the brain cells that transmit this response, researchers at the Rockefeller University in the US investigated how nicotine affects two midbrain structures, the interpeduncular nucleus (IPN) and the medial habenula (MHb).

While these brain regions are ancient in evolutionary terms and are found in all vertebrates, including humans, they have not received much attention from scientists until recently, researchers said.

Working with mice, Jessica L Ables,



first author of the study, found that chronic nicotine consumption alters the functions of a particular population of neurons inside the IPN.

These altered brain cells, which she dubbed Amigo1, appear to promote nicotine addiction by disrupting the communication between the habenula and the IPN.

Normally, these brain structures have a system in place to curtail nicotine addiction.

The habenula responds to a given dose of nicotine by sending an aversion signal to the IPN that decreases the reward of the drug, an effect that ultimately limits the urge to consume nicotine.

After chronic exposure to nicotine, however - the mice used in the study drank nicotine-laced water for six weeks - the Amigo1 cells compromise this "braking effect" by releasing two chemicals that reduce the response of

the IPN to the aversion signal from the habenula.

In other words, the stop-smoking message does not get delivered.

The result is a "pro-addiction" response to nicotine, which the mice displayed in a behavioural test designed to measure the motivational properties of the drug.

In the test, called conditioned place preference, the mice chose to spend time in a chamber where they had previously received nicotine.

"If you are exposed to nicotine over a long period you produce more of the signal-disrupting chemicals and this desensitises you. That is why smokers keep smoking," said Ines Ibanez-Tallon, a scientist in the lab of Nathaniel Heintz, a professor at the Rockefeller University.

In other experiments, her group was able to confirm that these mice's response to chronic nicotine was indeed influenced by Amigo1 neurons.

When the researchers silenced these neurons using a genetic engineering technique, this eliminated the "nicotine preference" of the mice, strongly suggesting that those neurons play a role in the addictive behaviour. **EMJ**

Adding VITAMIN C

in diet can help cure bleeding gums, finds study

A new study explores added advantages of Vitamin C consumption and advocates that adding it to our daily diet could work wonders in healing bleeding gums. If your gums bleed, make sure you are brushing and flossing twice a day because it could be a sign of gingivitis, an early stage of periodontal disease.

However, you should also check your intake of vitamin C, as per the study. The findings of the study led by the University of Washington, were published in the journal 'Nutrition Reviews'.

"When you see your gums bleed, the first thing you should think about is not, I should brush more. You should try to figure out why your gums are bleeding. And vitamin C deficiency is one possible reason," said the study's lead author Philippe Hujuel, a practicing dentist and professor of oral health sciences in the UW School of Dentistry.

Hujuel's study analysed published studies of 15 clinical trials in six countries, involving 1,140 predominantly healthy participants, and data from 8,210 U.S. residents surveyed in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Health and Nutrition Examination Survey.

The results showed that bleeding of the gums on gentle probing, or gingival bleeding tendency, and also bleeding in the eye, or retinal hemorrhaging, were associated with

low vitamin C levels in the bloodstream. And, the researchers found that increasing the daily intake of vitamin C in those people with low vitamin C plasma levels helped to reverse these bleeding issues.

Of potential relevance, said Hujuel, who is also an adjunct professor of epidemiology in the UW School of Public Health, both a gum bleeding tendency and retinal bleeding could be a sign of general trouble in one's microvascular system, of a microvascular bleeding tendency in the brain, heart, and kidneys.

The study does not imply that successful reversing of an increased gingival bleeding tendency with vitamin C will prevent strokes or other serious health outcomes, Hujuel stresses. However, the results do suggest that vitamin C recommendations designed primarily to protect against scurvy, a deadly disease caused by extremely low vitamin C levels, are too low and that such a low vitamin C intake can lead to a bleeding tendency, which should not be treated with dental floss.

Consequently, Hujuel does recommend people attempt to keep an eye on their vitamin C intake through the incorporation of non-processed foods such as kale, peppers, or kiwis into your diet, and if you can't find palatable foods rich in vitamin C to consider a supplement of about 100 to 200 milligrams



a day.

If someone is on a specialised diet, such as a paleo diet, it's important that they take a look at their vitamin C intake, Hujuel said. "Vitamin C-rich fruits such as kiwis or oranges are rich in sugar and thus typically eliminated from a low-carb diet."

This avoidance may lead to a vitamin C intake that is too low and is associated with an increased bleeding tendency. People who exclusively eat lean meats and avoid offal, the vitamin-rich organ meats, may be at particularly high risk for a low vitamin C

intake. The association between gum bleeding and vitamin C levels was recognized more than 30 years ago. In fact, two studies co-authored by the former dean of the UW School of Dentistry Paul Robertson (published in 1986 and 1991) identified gum bleeding as a biological marker for vitamin C levels. However, this connection somehow got lost in dental conversations around bleeding gums.

"There was a time in the past when gingival bleeding was more generally considered to be a potential marker for a lack of vitamin

C. But over time, that's been drowned out or marginalized by this over-attention to treating the symptom of bleeding with brushing or flossing, rather than treating the cause," Hujuel said.

Hujuel's literature review also determined that "retinal hemorrhaging and cerebral strokes are associated with increased gingival bleeding tendency, and that (vitamin C) supplementation reverses the retinal bleeding associated with low (vitamin C) plasma levels."

So, missing the possible connection between gum bleeding and low levels of vitamin C has the potential to have serious health consequences. The study authors wrote, "A default prescription of oral hygiene and other periodontal interventions to 'treat' microvascular pathologies, even if partially effective in reversing gingival bleeding as suggested in this meta-analysis. So, missing the possible connection between gum bleeding and low levels of vitamin C has the potential to have serious health consequences."

"A default prescription of oral hygiene and other periodontal interventions to 'treat' microvascular pathologies, even if partially effective in reversing gingival bleeding as suggested in this meta-analysis, is risky because it does not address any potential morbidity and mortality associated with the systemic microvascular-related pathologies," they added. **Courtesy Healthline**

DC Kupwara's Intervention Brings Relief to Vodhpura Farmers; Canal Restoration Underway

70% of Blocked Vodhpura Irrigation Canal Restored Following Public Outcry

DR. AB QAYOOM

HANDWARA, JUN.23: A ray of hope has emerged for the farming community of Vodhpura village in north Kashmir's Kupwara district as the Flood Irrigation Division Handwara on Monday began restoration work on the blocked irrigation canal near Vodhpura crossing on the Handwara Kupwara Highway.

The canal is a vital source of irrigation for nearly 1,500 kanals of agricultural land in the area and had remained blocked for months, causing immense hardship to local farmers.

The development comes a day after local farmers staged a peaceful protest against the Beacon authorities and the Flood Irrigation Department over the delay in restoring the damaged canal. Protesters alleged that despite repeated requests and several written applications, no concrete action had been taken to address the issue.



Farmers said the prolonged disruption of irrigation facilities had severely impacted agricultural activities and accused the sub-district administration Handwara of failing to resolve their genuine concerns in time. They had warned of intensifying their agitation and blocking the Handwara Kupwara Highway if immediate action was not taken.

Following the intervention of Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, the Executive Engineer (Exn) of Flood Irrigation Division Handwara, along with his team, launched a restoration drive on a war footing.

According to officials, nearly 70 percent of the blocked canal stretch was restored by Monday evening with the help of manpower and machinery. Locals alleged that portions of the canal had been illegally occupied during road construction activities.

Residents and members of the farming community expressed gratitude to the Deputy Commissioner for his prompt intervention and also appreciated the efforts of the Executive Engineer and his team.

However, farmers said they would judge the success of the exercise only after irrigation water is fully restored to their fields.

"We believe in actual work, not photo opportunities. For the past two months, we have seen promises without results. The real achievement will be when water reaches our agricultural land again," the farmers said.

The Executive Engineer of Flood Irrigation Division Handwara appealed to the local farming community to cooperate with the department and assured them that the restoration work would be completed by Tuesday evening.

"We are continuously working on the project and are committed to fully restoring the canal and resuming irrigation water supply at the earliest," he said.

Public Notice

It is information for all general public through this notice i m mehraj ahmad sofi S/o mohd ibrahim sofi R/o diver yakhanpora. I have correction in my higher secondary documents such as marksheet discharge certificate now i want to change my mothers name from kulsooma to saleema as my primary school records if any body have any objection plzz contact jammu and kashmir board of school education office bemina.

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THE JAMMU AND KASHMIR BOARD OF SCHOOL EDUCATION NEW CAMPUS, BEMINA SRINAGAR

ATTENTION PLEASE



The candidate whose photograph is above reports that she has lost her qualification certificate having the following description.

Roll No. : 509761
Class: 10th
Year & Session: March-April 1985
Registration No. 20141-PC-IX-83
Name: Rohini Bhan
Father's Name: Vijay Kumar Bhan
Mother's Name: Raj Dollahi Bhan
Date of Birth: 19-03-1969
Residence: Shiv Niwas Exchange Road Srinagar-190001

Now the candidate has applied for issuance of DUPLICATE QUALIFICATION CERTIFICATE. Before the case will be processed under rules, if somebody have any kind of objection in this regard he/she shall approach the office of the undersigned within 07 days from the date of publishing of this notice after expiring date no objection shall be entertained.

(Besides the losted QUALIFICATION CERTIFICATE Bearing Serial No.3481 is be treated as CANCELLED
No:F(Certs-KD-DQC)B/KD/22 Dated: _____
Sd/ Deputy Secretary Certificates, KD.

Public Notice

I, Ishfaq Ahmad Mir, S/o Abdul Gani Mir, R/o Bangdara Reshipora, Tehsil Kreeri, District Baramulla, J&K, hereby inform the general public that I have lost my Discharge Certificate issued by Government Higher Secondary School, Authoora Reshipora.

The particulars of the lost certificate are as follows:
Admission No.: 1646
Certificate No.: 168
Date of Issue: 25/09/2009

Despite thorough searches, the said certificate could not be traced and is presumed to have been lost permanently.

Through this public notice, I request that if anybody finds or possesses the above-mentioned certificate, he/she may kindly return it to the undersigned. If any person has any objection regarding the issuance of a duplicate certificate in my favour, he/she may contact the undersigned within 7 days from the publication of this notice. Otherwise, no objection shall be entertained thereafter, and I shall proceed to obtain a duplicate certificate from the concerned authorities.

Ishfaq Ahmad Mir
S/o Abdul Gani Mir
R/o Bangdara Reshipora, Kreeri
District Baramulla, J&K

Public Notice

My name has been wrongly written as SHAHNAZA GANI in my Bank Account bearing Account No. 0486040100006724 while my correct name is SHAHEENA GANI as per Adhaar record which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may contact with J&K BANK WAGOORA within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name...SHAHEENA GANI
ACCOUNT NO..0486040100006723

Public Notice

This is for the information general public that MOHMAD SHAREFF SHAH S/o: NOOR SHAH R/o: KACHWA MUQAM Tehsil WAGOORA district BARAMULLA expired on 06 of April 2026. Now the family of deceased including BILAL AHMAD SHAH (son), GOUSIA SHAREEF (daughter), SHAZIA SHAREEF (daughter), & SHAHMEEMA 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.

SHAHMEEMA BEGUM
W/O: LATE.MOHMAD SHAREFF SHAH
R/o :KACHWA MUQAM,
Tehsil: WAGOORA BARAMULLA.

Public Notice

FOR TRANSFER OF KPDCL 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, KPDCL 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, KPDCL 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.

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

Public Notice

My daughter's date of Birth has been wrongly written as 05/09/2016 while her correct date of Birth is 04/02/2018 which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he / she may file his/her objection in the office of GREENLAND ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOL DOWLATPORA ATHOORA within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name...RAYEES AHMAD MIR
F/O...AAYAT RAYEES
R/O...SALOOSA KREERI

Public Notice

It is hereby notified that my daughter' DOB has been wrongly mentioned in adhar regard bearing aadhar no 5460 0251 9233 DOB 03/01/2007 instead of DOB 05/02/2009 as for School record now I have applying for it's correction of the same if any person have any objection in this regard may file the same to the office of the Municipal committee handwara/ Tehsil office Handwara within the period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice After that no objection shall be entertained.

ASMAT ALI , DOB 05/02/2009 , D/O ALI
MOHAMMAD MIR , R/O BRARIPORA TEHSIL
HANDWARA, DISTRICT KUPWARA

GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR Office Of The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt. Ground Water Division Srinagar

Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar.

E-mail: hakeemmushtaq.75316@jk.gov.in | Tel./FaxNo:-0194-2411285

Extension Notice 1st of Re-Tender Notice/ Corrigendum 2nd.

Subject: 1. Installation of Bore Well near Tantray House at Check Saidpora Shopian. . (Sl.no.2)
Tender ID No. 2026_PHE_307452_13.
2. Construction of hand pump/Bore Well near Bajard Mohalla Jewan Shab Ladhoo Pampore Pulwama along providing fitting of Sub. Pump and allied works (110m Depth). . (Sl.no.3)
Tender ID No. 2026_PHE_307452_14.
3. Construction of Machine Drilled Well with motor and NHO Younis Khan for community benefit at Galan Khiram. . (Sl.no.4)
Tender ID No. 2026_PHE_307452_15.
4. Construction of Bore Well with allied works at Lane 04 Friends Colony Humhama District Budgam. . (Sl.no.6)
Tender ID No. 2026_PHE_307452_16.
Reference: 1. This office Re-Tender Notice/ Corrigendum 2nd issued vide endorsement No: -JS- PHE/ GWDS /26-27/Camp./ 2204-21, Dated: 08-06-2026, Bearing Tender ID No. 2026_PHE_307452_9_10_11_&_11.
2. This office e-NIT No. 05/JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2026-27, issued vide endorsement No: JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/ Camp/97-111, dated: 03-04-2026. Bearing Tender ID No. 2026_PHE_307452_8_9_10_11_&_11.
Due to "NO Response" for the above mentioned works advertised vide e-NIT No. & Re-Tendered Corrigendum 2nd under Tender ID No's under reference. Which was scheduled to be downloaded till 22-06-2026 Up-to 02:00 PM.

S.No.	Item	Fresh Date
1.	Last date & Time of submission of bids	02-07-2026 Up-to 02:00 PM
2.	Date & Time of opening of tenders	03-07-2026 02.00 PM

NOTE:
All other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the aforesaid e-NIT issued vide above referred endst: nos.
No: JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/Camp./3014-30
Dated: 23-06-2026.

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.
Ground Water Division Srinagar

DIPK: 2465/26 | Dated: 23-06-2026



JAMMU & KASHMIR STATE HAJ COMMITTEE

HAJ 2027 (1448 H)

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

1 PASSPORT VALIDITY

- Passport must be valid till **31 December 2027**.
- Passport must be valid on the date of application.

2 COVER / GROUP

- A group can have maximum **5 members**.
- Minimum age – **18 years** on the date of application.

3 COVER HEAD

- Cover Head must be a **male member**.
- Minimum age – **18 years** on the date of application.

4 MOBILE NUMBER & WHATSAPP

- Cover Head must use his own mobile number.
- WhatsApp must be active on the same number.

5 FORM SUBMISSION

- Fill the form yourself.
- Do not let anyone else fill the form using your mobile number.
- Do not share your OTP with anyone.

6 NOMINEE

- Nominee: Son / Daughter / Parents / Spouse (Legal heir preferred)
- Add only one nominee who will perform Hajj in your place.

7 BANK DETAILS (ACCOUNT HOLDER MUST BE COVER HEAD)

- Account must be in the name of the Cover Head.
- Provide correct & active bank account details.
- Account must be active.



ANNOUNCEMENT FOR HAJ – 2027 (1448 H)

- The Haj Committee of India invites applications from eligible intending pilgrims for Haj – 2027 through the online Haj Application Form available at <https://www.hajcommittee.gov.in> or HAJ SUVIDHA mobile app.
- The application window shall remain open from **22.06.2026 to 20.07.2026** (up to 11:59 PM). After Qurbah (Digital Random Selection) process to be conducted in the last week of July, each provisionally selected pilgrim shall be required to deposit an advance amount of **₹1,52,300/-** on or before **10.08.2026**. No relaxation or extension in these timelines shall be feasible.
- Applicants must carefully read the Guidelines and Undertakings to ensure their eligibility and upload scanned copies (not photographs) of the following:
 - Front and back pages of machine-readable Indian Passport (1200 x 800 px, JPG/JPEG, 100–500 KB), issued on or before the application closing date and valid up to at least 31.12.2027;
 - Passport-size photo with white background (480 x 640 px, JPG/JPEG, 5–20 KB);
 - Bank passbook or cancelled cheque (590 x 750 px, JPG/JPEG, 80–250 KB); and
 - Address proof (590 x 750 px, JPG/JPEG, 80–250 KB).
- Cancellation of a Haj seat is strongly discouraged, as it causes operational difficulties. Accordingly, cancellation shall attract substantial penalties in accordance with the Guidelines for Haj 2027. Intending pilgrims are advised to apply only after careful consideration of their preparedness and firm commitment to undertake the pilgrimage.

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CMYK

Sakeena Itoo reviews functioning of SMHS, Super Speciality Hospital Srinagar

Directs strict maintenance of hygiene standards in Wards, other facilities

■ **HT NEWS NETWORK**

SRINAGAR, JUNE 23: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today chaired a meeting and took comprehensive review of the functioning of SMHS Hospital and Super Speciality Hospital, Srinagar, assessing patient care facilities, healthcare delivery mechanisms and overall hospital management.

The meeting was attended by Principal GMC Srinagar, Medical Superintendents of SMHS Hospital and Super Speciality Hospital, HoDs of various super specialities and other concerned officers.

During the meeting, the

Minister held detailed assessment of diagnostic facilities and other critical services available at these facilities. She also held deliberations on quality of medical services, availability of medicines, sanitation and staff responsiveness.

Reviewing the overall functioning of these prestigious medical institutions, the Minister stressed the need to ensure that patients receive timely, efficient and compassionate healthcare. She directed the hospital administration to maintain the highest standards of cleanliness and hygiene across all wards, corridors and public spaces, emphasizing that a clean hos-



pital environment is fundamental to quality healthcare and infection prevention.

Sakeena Itoo instructed officials to strengthen sanitation protocols through regu-

lar monitoring, prompt waste disposal and periodic inspections to ensure that hygiene standards are consistently maintained. She also called for special attention to patient

waiting areas, washrooms and common facilities so that visitors and attendants experience a safe and dignified environment.

The Minister underscored

the importance of coordinated teamwork among doctors, nursing staff, paramedics and support personnel in delivering seamless healthcare services. She urged hospital authorities to remain responsive to patients' concerns and address operational challenges without delay.

Reviewing infrastructure and service delivery, the Minister directed the concerned officers to identify gaps requiring immediate intervention and expedite measures aimed at improving efficiency, reducing inconvenience to patients and enhancing the overall healthcare experience.

She reiterated the Govern-

ment's commitment to strengthening tertiary healthcare institutions across Jammu and Kashmir through improved infrastructure, modern medical facilities and patient-centric governance.

The Minister emphasized on continuous monitoring and accountability to ensure public health institutions meet the expectations of the people.

During the meeting, Hospital administrators and senior officers briefed the Minister on the functioning of various departments, patient inflow, availability of medical equipment, manpower position and ongoing initiatives to improve healthcare services.

IEI J&K State Centr

celebrates International Women in Engineering Day 2026

Honours outstanding Women Engineers

■ **HT NEWS NETWORK**

SRINAGAR, JUNE 23: Institution of Engineers (India), Jammu & Kashmir State Centre today celebrated International Women in Engineering Day (INWED) 2026 with a one-day seminar on the theme "Engineering Intelligence" and sub-theme "J&K's Daughters, Architects of Tomorrow" at its Srinagar Centre.

The programme brought together engineers, academicians, researchers, students, policymakers and industry professionals to recognize and celebrate the invaluable contributions of women engineers towards technological advancement, infrastructure development, innovation and public service.

FIE, Chairman, IEI J&K State Centre, Er. Ferdous Ahad Bhat, highlighted the growing role of women engineers in shaping a resilient, innovative and sustainable future. He also emphasized the importance of participating in technical events and encouraged young engineers to obtain membership of IEI as a means of fostering their professional growth and development.

MIE, Honorary Secretary, IEI J&K State Centre, Er. Irfan Ahmad Reshi, provided an overview of the programme and its objectives. A series of interactive sessions were held during the seminar, featuring emerging women engineers, retired engineering pioneers and women leaders from diverse engineering disciplines who shared their experiences, challenges, achievements and insights with the participants.

The valedictory session was graced by Ahsan Pardeesi, MLA, Lal Chowk Constituency and Dilafrose Qazi, Vice Chairperson, SSM College of Engineering, who lauded the contributions of women engineers and emphasized the need for greater participation of women in engineering professions.

A major highlight of the programme was the presentation of the IEI J&K Women in Engineering Awards 2026 instituted by Institution of Engineers (India), J&K State Centre to recognize outstanding achievements, leadership, innovation and professional excellence among women engineers of Jammu & Kashmir.

Under the Emerging Woman Engineer Award category, Gold Award was conferred upon Dr. Fatima Jalid; Silver Awards upon Er. Hishma and Dr. Janani L.; and Bronze Awards upon Inhas Ashraf and Dr. Neelam Saleem Khan. Under the Woman Engineering Leadership Award category, Gold Award was conferred upon Er. Anbreena Anjum; Silver Award upon Er. Raveeza Din; and Bronze Award upon Er. Hur-e-Yasrab.

Likewise, under the Distinguished Woman Engineer Award category, Gold Award was conferred upon Er. M. Aaqub Sultana Waheed Deva; Silver Award upon Er. Jahan Ara; and Bronze Award upon Er. Nazia Nazir Zahid.

The awardees were recognized for their exemplary contributions in the fields of engineering education, research, power systems, water resource management, public infrastructure, healthcare engineering, transportation engineering, information technology, innovation and public service.

Speaking on the occasion, the dignitaries congratulated the award recipients and appreciated the initiative of IEI J&K State Centre in creating a platform that celebrates excellence, inspires future generations and highlights the growing contribution of women engineers to nation-building and societal development.

Two-day workshop on Implementation of HPC begins at JKBOSE

JKBOSE committed to implement assessment reforms in full: Secretary

■ **HT NEWS NETWORK**

JAMMU, JUNE 23: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) commenced a two-day workshop on the implementation of Holistic Progress Card (HPC) for the Secondary Stage in PM SHRI Schools of Kashmir Division from 23 to 24 June, 2026.

The workshop aims to build the capacity of educators for adopting NEP 2020-aligned competency-based, learner-centric and multidimensional assessment practices at the secondary stage. The participants are being oriented on the philosophy, structure and implementation modalities of the Holistic Progress Card, which seeks to move beyond marks-based evaluation and provide a comprehensive picture of learners' progress across curricular, co-curricular and socio-emotional domains.

Technical sessions during the workshop will focus on understanding the various components of the HPC, docu-

menting learner achievements, integrating self-assessment, peer assessment, parental and teacher observations and utilizing assessment evidence through strategies for maintaining learner profiles and ensuring meaningful reporting of student progress in accordance with national assessment reforms.

Addressing the inaugural session, the Secretary JKBOSE Gh Hassan Sheikh emphasized the importance of transforming assessment practices in line with NEP 2020 and underscored the need for schools to adopt holistic approaches that recognize the diverse capabilities and potential of every learner. The Secretary said that JKBOSE is committed to implementing NEP 2020 in Jammu & Kashmir, maintaining that the whole assessment system in the Union Territory will witness a complete turnaround within the next two years. He said that the HPC, upon full implementation, will ease students' examination stress, enabling them to achieve learning



targets in a congenial, stress-free environment.

Director School Education Kashmir Naseer Ahmad Wani lauded JKBOSE for taking the lead in implementing assessment reforms envisioned under NEP 2020. He urged PM SHRI schools

to emerge as model institutions in adopting learner-centred assessment practices and showcasing best practices for the wider school system.

Delivering the keynote address virtually, Head & CEO, PARAKH, NCERT Prof Indrani

Bhaduri highlighted the transformative potential of the HPC as a tool to promote competency-based learning and foster all-round development of learners. She appreciated JKBOSE's initiative in organizing the workshop and expressed confidence that the implementation of HPC in PM SHRI schools would serve as an important milestone in advancing the objectives of NEP 2020. Director Academics Dr Parveen Singh in his welcome address stated that the workshop marks an important step towards operationalizing assessment reforms in the educational reforms of Jammu & Kashmir, adding that the rollout of the HPC in the PM SHRI schools is a prelude commitment of JKBOSE in this direction.

He expressed confidence that the training would equip educators with the necessary knowledge and skills for effective implementation of the HPC and contribute towards creating a more inclusive, learner-centred and growth-oriented school environment in JKUT.

Higher Education Department notifies Spot Round for UG Admissions 2026-27

■ **HT NEWS NETWORK**

SRINAGAR, JUNE 23: Higher Education Department, J&K, has notified the conduct of the Spot Round for Undergraduate/Integrated PG admissions in Government Degree Colleges of J&K for the Academic Session 2026-27, for filling up the vacant seats remaining after completion of Round-2 admission formalities.

The Spot Round shall be conducted through two parallel streams. Programmes having substantial vacant seats have been placed under the Walk-in Admissions category, where eligible aspirants shall report directly to the concerned colleges for admission. Other programmes shall be filled through Round-3 / Direct System Allotment on the Centralised Admission Portal, <https://jkadmissions.in>, strictly on the basis of 10+2 merit, preferences submitted by candidates, eligibility, and availability of vacant seats.

As per the notified schedule, fresh registration on the admission portal for candidates who had not registered earlier, along with submission of fresh college/programme preferences for Round-3 programmes, shall remain open from 23-06-2026 to 26-06-2026. This preference submission window is open to all eligible candidates, including fresh aspirants, candidates seeking walk-in admission, and candidates already admitted in earlier rounds who wish to seek upgradation to another college or

programme.

Walk-in admissions and document verification at colleges shall be held from 25-06-2026 to 02-07-2026, subject to availability of vacant seats. Candidates seeking walk-in admission must be registered on the Centralised Admission Portal before reporting to the concerned college. Admission fee for such admissions shall be deposited online through the portal only.

Furthermore, Candidates allotted seats in the Round-3/ Direct System Allotment List, that shall be published on the Centralised Admission Portal on 29-06-2026, shall deposit the prescribed admission fee online on or before 01-07-2026 and shall report to the allotted college for physical verification of original documents from 29-06-2026 to 02-07-2026.

The department has informed that candidates who have not secured admission in any previous round, candidates who were allotted seats earlier but did not complete admission formalities, candidates already admitted but seeking a different college or programme, and candidates whose applications were rejected during verification due to correctable issues may participate in the Spot Round, subject to fulfilment of eligibility conditions. However, candidates who voluntarily cancelled their confirmed admission shall not be eligible to participate.

Fresh applicants shall submit their application online on <https://jkadmissions.in> and pay the prescribed non-refundable application fee of 200. Candidates who had already applied earlier are not required to submit a fresh application or pay any additional application fee. All candidates are advised to carefully verify their mobile number and email address on the portal to ensure timely receipt of admission-related communications.

Higher Education Department has also advised aspirants to visit the counselling and facilitation centres established at Degree Colleges for assistance in form submission and preference filling. Candidates may also explore course offerings and subject combinations available in different colleges through the Directorate of Colleges website <https://directorcollegesjk.in> under the Courses/Colleges section.

Director Colleges J&K, Dr. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, appealed to all eligible aspirants to utilise the Spot Round opportunity and complete all admission formalities strictly within the notified time-limits. He further advised candidates to regularly check the JK Admissions Portal and follow the official WhatsApp Channel for Admissions 2026-27, linked on the portal, for updates, notices, allotment lists, and schedules.

The allotment of Minor, SEC, MD and other course components shall be done after commencement of classwork as per the notified circular.

Kupwara Women's Volleyball League 2026

kicks off at BHSS Kupwara under Roshan

Mustaqbil Initiative

■ **HT NEWS NETWORK**

KUPWARA, JUNE 23: Kupwara Women's Volleyball League 2026, organized by the Indian Army in collaboration with the District Youth Services & Sports Department (DYSS), Kupwara, under the banner of "Roshan Mustaqbil", commenced today at Government Boys Higher Secondary School (BHSS), Kupwara.

The tournament was inaugurated by Colonel Namrata Rathore, who declared the league open and encouraged the participating athletes to showcase their talent, sportsmanship, and determination throughout the competition.

The opening ceremony was graced by several distinguished dignitaries, including Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kupwara, Syed Al Tahir Gilani, District Youth Services & Sports Officer (DYSSO) Kupwara, District Education Planning Officer (DEPO) Kupwara, and Principal, BHSS Kupwara, who attended as special guests and appreciated the efforts being made to promote women's participation in sports.

The league is being conducted on a league format basis and features eight women's volleyball teams representing different parts of the district.

Nearly 100 players are participating in the three-day sporting event, scheduled from 23 June 2026 to 25 June 2026.

A large number of spectators, sports enthusiasts, students, and local residents gathered at the venue to witness the opening matches and cheer for the participating teams, creating an energetic and encouraging atmosphere.

The tournament aims to promote women's empowerment through sports, provide a platform for young athletes to demonstrate their abilities, and strengthen community engagement through healthy competition.

Ambuja Cements ties up with UK-based Leilac to make low-carbon cement

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI, JUN 23: Ambuja Cements, the cement and building materials company of the Adani Group, officially announced here on Monday that it has partnered with Leilac Limited, a UK-headquartered clean technology company to build a major low-carbon cement project in Gujarat.

According to the company statement, the partnership marks an important step in Ambuja Cements' broader decarbonisation strategy and supports its Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi)-validated net zero target for 2050.

As the Company advances the electrification of cement manufacturing to increase the use of renewable energy, backed by nearly 1 GW of captive green power, it is laying the groundwork to scale breakthrough solutions such as carbon capture.

Importantly, this collaboration is expected to improve the economics of carbon capture, strengthening the business case for large-scale deployment of carbon capture and utilisation.

Adani-owned Ambuja Cements Ltd is the ninth largest building materials solutions company globally, with a cement



capacity of 109 MTPA across 24 integrated manufacturing plants and 22 grinding units.

The commercial demonstration project at Ambuja Cements' 6.6 MTPA Sanghi plant in Sanghipuram, Kutch, will evaluate the integration of Leilac's carbon

capture and hybrid electric heating technology to support lower-emission cement production through greater use of renewable electricity and the capture of unavoidable process carbon dioxide. The technology is designed to enable a pathway where coal

consumption can be reduced to zero, while allowing alternate fuels to be used flexibly, according to the statement.

Subject to successful demonstration, the project, positioned as the largest industrial-scale plant of its kind globally, could

be scaled up by 7x to 8x to capture more than one million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, helping establish a scalable pathway for low-carbon cement production in India and beyond, as per the company statement.

Commenting on the development, Ambuja Cements Director Karan Adani said, "The cement industry's transition to a lower-carbon future will require bold thinking, technological innovation and collaboration across the value chain. Our partnership with Leilac reflects our commitment to evaluating next-generation technologies that can reduce process emissions while improving energy efficiency and supporting long-term sustainable growth. This initiative aligns with our vision of building world-class manufacturing operations for the future".

UK-based Leilac Limited CEO Daniel Rennie said, "Ambuja Cements operates one of the world's largest and most advanced cement manufacturing networks. We're delighted to begin this collaboration to deliver a commercial-scale project for low-cost, low-carbon cement production. Together, we aim to demonstrate an economic, replicable and future-proof solution for the global cement industry".UNI

Stock Markets stage strong recovery, Nifty closes above 24,100

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUN 23: Indian Stock Markets on Monday staged a strong recovery with Nifty closing above the 24,100 mark. At close, the Sensex was up 291.17 points or 0.38 per cent at 77,094.07, and the Nifty was up 89.80 points or 0.37 per cent at 24,102.90.

Among the sectors, barring Nifty FMCG, which was down by 0.41 per cent, and Consumer Durables, down by 0.55 per cent, all sectoral indices ended higher. Nifty Media, Pharma, and Healthcare indices rose by over 1 per cent each, while Oil and Gas and IT rose by up to 1 per cent, and Nifty Bank and Financial Services rose by 0.43 per cent and 0.58 per cent, respectively.



Aurobindo Pharma USA receives FTC Nod for \$250 Million Lannett Acquisition

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, JUNE 23: Aurobindo Pharma USA, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Aurobindo Pharma, has received approval from the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to proceed with its acquisition of Lannett Company for \$250 million on a cash-free, debt-free basis, including normalized working capital.

The transaction is expected to be completed before the end of June 2026. Hyderabad based pharma company said in a release here on Monday.

Pennsylvania-based Lannett develops and commercialises a diversified portfolio of complex, non-opioid controlled-substance generic medicines.

The acquisition is expected to strengthen Aurobindo USA's presence in this segment while adding a manufacturing facility in the United States to its network.



Lannett's manufacturing plant in Seymour, Indiana, has the capacity to produce nearly four billion doses annually, significantly enhancing Aurobindo USA's domestic manufacturing capabilities.

The expanded footprint is expected to support ongoing efforts in the United States to strengthen pharmaceutical supply chains and boost local drug manufacturing.

The acquisition is projected to be immediately accretive to the Aurobindo Group's earnings per share and is expected to generate operational efficiencies, SG&A synergies and integration benefits. It will also broaden the company's portfolio through a differentiated pipeline of complex generic medicines and controlled substances, supporting long-term growth.

Swami S. Iyer, Chief Executive Officer of Aurobindo Pharma USA, said the acquisition represents a strong strategic and financial opportunity that will accelerate revenue growth, strengthen U.S.-based manufacturing capabilities and expand the company's position in complex, non-opioid controlled substances.

"We are confident it will deliver immediate earnings accretion while creating long-term value for our shareholders through operational synergies and pipeline expansion," he added.

Tim Crew, Chief Executive Officer of Lannett, said the partnership would help expand access to affordable medicines by combining Lannett's legacy in generic pharmaceuticals with Aurobindo's global reach and resources.

He said the transaction marks the beginning of a new phase of growth for the company and would enable broader access to its portfolio of medicines for patients across markets.UNI

India adds record 2.7 GW of rooftop solar capacity in Q1

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUNE 23: In the first quarter of the Calendar Year 2026 (January-March), India added a record 2.7 GW of rooftop solar capacity, marking the sector's strongest-ever quarterly performance.

According to a report by Mercom India Research, installations surged 125 per cent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) with India's cumulative rooftop solar installations reached 23.5 GW at the end of March 2026.

It said the surge in rooftop solar installations was largely driven by robust residential demand under the PM Surya Ghar scheme and rapid adoption across large states, including Uttar Pradesh.

The residential segment accounted for nearly 82 per cent of the total rooftop installations in the March quarter, demonstrating the role of households in driving India's clean energy transition.

The industrial, commercial, and government segments followed at 11 per cent, 7 per cent, and 0.4 per cent of the quarterly additions, re-



spectively, the report showed.

Installations during the quarter were driven by subsidy-backed systems, simplified approval processes, and increasing state-level implementation support under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, the Mercom India report stated.

The top 10 states accounted for 80 per cent of cumulative rooftop solar installations as of March 2026. These included Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Haryana.

Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat led rooftop solar installations

during the March quarter, accounting for more than 17 per cent, 16 per cent and 15 per cent of installations, respectively. In terms of cumulative installed rooftop solar capacity, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh continued to lead, accounting for approximately 24 per cent, 16 per cent, and 9 per cent of total installations, respectively. Meanwhile, Assam recorded the highest compounded quarterly growth rate at nearly 40 per cent between Q1 2025 and Q1 2026. This was followed by Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh at over 22 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively.UNI

Vedanta Aluminium begins independent journey with NSE, BSE listing after historic demerger

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 23: Vedanta Aluminium Metal Limited has officially begun trading as an independent listed entity on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) and Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) from June 15, following the successful completion of Vedanta Group's landmark demerger, which became effective on May 1, the company sources on Monday said.

The listing marks a significant milestone in the company's transformation, positioning it as a focused, pure-play aluminium business with greater strategic flexibility and stronger long-term growth prospects.

Entering this new phase, Vedanta Aluminium stands as India's largest aluminium producer and one of the world's leading integrated aluminium companies.

The company is also aiming to strengthen its position as a major aluminium producer across key global markets, including the United States, Europe, the Middle East, Australia and Africa.

Driven by its vision to double production capacity to 60 lakh tonnes per annum, Vedanta Aluminium plans to leverage deep backward integration and structural cost advantages to



achieve among the world's lowest production costs while maintaining high quality standards.

The expansion is expected to support rising demand from infrastructure, automotive, electrification, aerospace and advanced manufacturing sectors.

Commenting on the development, Vedanta Aluminium CEO Rajesh Kumar said the independent listing marks a defining moment in the company's growth journey.

"Becoming an independent listed entity marks a significant milestone in the evolution of Vedanta Aluminium and accelerates our vision of building a leading metals company dedi-

cated to unlocking the full potential of aluminium—the metal of the future," Kumar said.

He added that the company remains focused on creating a resilient, technology-driven and cost-efficient business aligned with the demands of a rapidly transforming global economy.

"With aluminium playing a central role in the global energy transition and advanced innovation, we are strongly positioned to deliver long-term value while contributing to India's emergence as a global manufacturing powerhouse," he said.

Vedanta Aluminium is currently positioned within the first quartile of the global aluminium

cost curve and is working towards achieving first-decile cost competitiveness through enhanced backward integration, captive raw material sourcing, operational efficiencies and economies of scale.

The company operates one of the world's largest alumina refineries at Lanjigarh and one of the world's largest aluminium smelters at Jharsuguda in Odisha, along with Bharat Aluminium Company Limited (BALCO) at Korba in Chhattisgarh.

Its operations are supported by captive bauxite and coal resources and nearly 4.5 GW of captive power generation capacity, alongside a growing down-

stream manufacturing ecosystem.

According to company sources, Vedanta Aluminium currently contributes nearly 50 per cent of India's aluminium production and serves customers across more than 60 countries.

The company also offers one of the industry's widest aluminium product portfolios through Vedanta Metal Bazaar, described as the world's largest online superstore for primary aluminium, while continuing to expand value-added products.

Among its sustainability initiatives is Restora, India's first low-carbon aluminium range, developed to meet increasing global demand for sustainable aluminium solutions and decarbonised supply chains.

Additionally, Vedanta Aluminium is strengthening India's downstream aluminium ecosystem through the Vedanta Aluminium Park initiative in partnership with the Odisha government.

The project is expected to enable MSMEs and downstream manufacturers to establish units near its plants and access direct 'hot metal' supply, helping reduce logistics costs, remelting losses and energy consumption while generating employment and promoting regional industrial growth.UNI



Jaiswal misses out on ODI squad for England tour despite Afghanistan ton

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

BENGALURU: Yashasvi Jaiswal has missed out on a place in India's squad for the three-match ODI series in England next month despite having scored a century in his most recent match in the format, an unbeaten 110 in the third ODI against Afghanistan on Saturday. It was his second hundred in just his sixth ODI, but it couldn't seal him a place in the 15-man squad for England, in a reflection of India's batting riches in white-ball cricket. Virat Kohli returns to the squad subject to a fitness clearance; Jaiswal had been called up for the ODIs against Afghanistan as a replacement for Kohli, who was ruled out with a hamstring injury.

It is understood Kohli will undergo his fitness assessment at the BCCI's Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru over the coming week.

With India building up towards the 2027 World Cup in South Africa, they named a full-strength squad for the England series, with Axar Patel and Jasprit Bumrah returning to the squad. Bumrah has not played an ODI since the 2023 World Cup final due to workload-management reasons, while Axar had been out of the ODI squad for India's last three series - all at home against South Africa, New Zealand and Afghanistan.

Bumrah takes the place of Prince Yadav in India's pace attack while Axar comes back as a straight swap with left-arm spin allrounder Harsh Dubey. Both Prince and Dubey made their ODI debuts against Afghanistan.

Hardik Pandya has not been included in the squad either. The allrounder was originally picked for the ODIs against Afghanistan but was ruled out after suffering a leg strain while training at the CoE. The three ODIs on the England tour are scheduled to take place in Birmingham (July 14), Cardiff (July 16) and at Lord's (July 19).

India pay the price for another middle-order stumble

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MANCHESTER: Three for 14 against Pakistan, 3 for 6 against Netherlands, 3 for 29 against South Africa. In their first two games of this T20 World Cup, India's middle-order stutters were masked either by cameos from Richa Ghosh or by the lack of firepower in the opposition line-ups, and India won both games comfortably. But as soon as India ran into South Africa, the stiffest opposition of their campaign so far, their middle-order wobble, combined with the two catches they dropped of Marizanne Kapp, cost them the game. They are now in precarious must-win territory if they are to reach the semi-finals, especially with their final league game looming against the mighty Australians.

J&K Olympic Association Celebrates Olympic Day 2026 with Enthusiastic Olympic Run in Jammu

■ GULFAM BARJI

JAMMU, JUNE 23: Olympic Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and sporting spirit by the J&K Olympic Association (JKOA) on 23-06-2026. To mark the occasion, an Olympic Run was organized from Mandato M.A. Stadium, Jammu, witnessing enthusiastic participation from students, athletes, sports lovers, members of various sports associations, and the general public. The run was flagged off by Mr. Dushyant Sharma, President, J&K Olympic Association, in the presence of Mr. Yudhvir Sethi, MLA Jammu

East, Mr. Ashutosh Sharma, Former President, J&K Olympic Association and other esteemed members of Association. A large



number of participants, particularly sports person, former sports person, young students, members of JKOA and other associations viz Mr. Ajay Vaid General secretary JKOA, Mr. Yudhvir Singh - Treasurer JKOA, Mr. Vijay Saraf (Wushu Association), Mr. Bhupinder Singh Tirthi (Kho Kho Association), Mr. Kuldeep Magotra (Volleyball Association), Mr. Vinod Bhatia (Yoga Association), Mr. Jai Bharat (Wrestling Association), Mr. Tarseem Sharma (Taekwondo Association), Mr. Rajesh Dutta (Bodybuilding Association), Mr. Supinder Singh (Hockey Association), Mr. Suraj Sharma (Judo Association), Mr. Ravinder Singh (Athletics), Mr. Danesh Sharma (JU-JITSU Association), Mr. Vikram Sharma (Rope skipping association) and Mr. Amit Singh, besides several other senior members of JKOA took part in the event with great zeal and enthusiasm, making the celebration vibrant and memorable. Members of Brahma Kumaris Ashram, Rehari, also participated in the run and added to the spirit of the occasion. The participants displayed the true Olympic spirit throughout the run and demonstrated their commitment to fitness, unity, friendship, and sportsmanship. Speaking on the occasion, Mr.

Dushyant Sharma, President, J&K Olympic Association, congratulated all participants and members of the Association for their overwhelming participation and contribution to the success of the event. He encouraged the youth to actively engage in sports and physical activities, uphold Olympic values in their daily lives, and strive for excellence in every field. He expressed confidence that such initiatives would further strengthen the sporting culture in J&K and inspire future generations of athletes. The event concluded successfully with a renewed commitment towards promoting sports, fitness, and the Olympic movement across the Union Territory, leaving participants motivated and inspired towards a brighter sporting future.

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