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We Are Fully Prepared to Welcome Devotees: LG Manoj Sinha

LG Performs Ceremonial Prayer at Holy Cave, Says Enhanced Infrastructure and Coordinated Security Arrangements Will Ensure a Safe and Memorable Journey

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 29: Declaring that all arrangements are in place for the forthcoming annual pilgrimage, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said the administration



Leave No Stone Unturned To Improve Ease of Living: PM Modi

PM Convenes meeting of all Union secretaries on Tuesday to accelerate governance reforms, improve service delivery

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JUNE 29: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair a high-level meeting of the secretaries of all Union ministries and departments on Tuesday to review the government's reform agenda, with a renewed focus on improving governance, strengthening public service delivery and ensuring faster implementation of people-centric initiatives.

According to official sources, the meeting will assess the progress of next-generation reforms aimed at enhancing the ease of living and ease of doing business while reinforcing administrative efficiency and accountability across ministries.



Senior bureaucrats are expected to present detailed reports on the performance of their respective ministries, highlighting key reforms, policy implementation and measures undertaken to improve public services. The Prime Minister is also expected to emphasise the need for timely disposal of official work and

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CM Omar meets legislators, public delegations at Raabita

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 29: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today met several legislators, public delegations, the health-care sector among other delegations at Raabita here, during which a wide range of public welfare, developmental and issues were discussed.

A public delegation led by MLA Beerwah Shafi Ahmad Wani, comprising senior citizens, youth representatives, members of the Shia community from Magam and representatives of the Beerwah Traders Federation. The delegation projected various developmental requirements, public welfare concerns and constituency-specific issues. The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to the issues raised and assured that all genuine concerns would be addressed in a phased and time-bound manner.

The Chief Minister also met MLA Pahalgam Altaf Ahmad Wani and MLA Shangus-Anantnag East Reyaz Ahmad Khan, who represented several delegations to flag their issues before the Chief Minister.

A delegation from Seer Hamdan, representatives of the Jammu and

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Ensure Unhindered Movement of Livestock Vehicles Through Punjab: Omar Abdullah

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 29: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has urged Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann to ensure the smooth and uninterrupted movement of livestock transport vehicles through Punjab, seeking immediate intervention to stop the alleged unauthorized collection of fees from



vehicles carrying livestock to Jammu & Kashmir.

In a letter to his Punjab counterpart, Omar Abdullah raised concerns over complaints received from the All Kashmir Wholesale Mutton Dealers Union regarding the difficulties faced by livestock traders and transporters while moving consignments through Punjab.

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CM Calls for Export-Led Growth

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 29: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today inaugurated the two-day Jammu and Kashmir International Buyer-Seller Meet-2026 at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC).

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Amarnath Yatra: Multi-layer security grid in place from Punjab to J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR/JAMMU, JUN 29: Ahead of the annual Amarnath Yatra beginning July 3, security agencies have intensified preparations across the pilgrimage route from Punjab to Kashmir, conducting mock drills, activating surveillance systems and strengthening inter-agency coordination to ensure the safe movement of thousands of pilgrims.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the first batches of

pilgrims have started arriving in Jammu and Kashmir, while security forces remain on high alert with elaborate arrangements in place along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, transit camps and the twin routes leading to the holy cave shrine, nestled in Himalayas.

On the occasion of the Pratham Puja, Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) Inspector General Dr Akun Sabharwal inaugurated Medical Aid Posts at the Holy Cave and Brarimarg. He also led a plantation drive, reaffirming the

force's commitment to pilgrims' welfare and environmental conservation.

In Jammu, authorities have fully activated the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC), equipped with more than 600 high-definition CCTV cameras, including long-range Pan-Tilt-Zoom (PTZ) cameras, to monitor movement across the city. Officials said the Jammu and Kashmir Police's "Third Eye" surveillance system has also been activated to detect potential threats and facilitate immediate response.

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Sports helping youth reject drugs, divisive narratives: GOC Joshi

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

BARAMULLA, JUN 29: Asserting that growing sports culture in Baramulla is steering young people away from drugs, divisive narratives and misinformation, General Officer Commanding, Dagger Division, Major General Manoj Joshi on Monday said that sports are becoming a way of life for the youth and the people in North Kashmir.

Speaking at the inauguration of Varmul Gindo 3.0, the GOC of 19 Infantry Division, Major General Manoj

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'Diversion of 197 ha of J&K Forest Land Approved for 820-MW Power Plant'

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JUN 29: The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change advisory committee has granted 'in-principle' approval for diversion of 197.27 hectare of Forest land for construction of Kirthai-II Hydro Electric Project.

According to the news agency—

Kashmir News Observer (KNO, the official documents said that the advisory committee recommended the proposal for grant of 'in-principle' approval for diversion of 197.27 hectare of Forest land for construction of Kirthai-II Hydro Electric Project.

"The advisory committee after detailed discussion and deliberation with the DDGF (Central), Regional Office, Chandigarh and Nodal

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J&K Fire & Emergency Services Suspends Two Officials After Arrest

HT News Network / Agencies

SRINAGAR, JUNE 29: The Directorate of Fire and Emergency Services (F&ES), Jammu and Kashmir, has suspended two of its officials following their arrest by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) in connection with FIR No.01/2025 registered at Police Station ACB Central Jammu.

According to an official order issued by Director, Fire and Emergency Services J&K, Alok Kumar (IPS), the department acted after receiving an

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8 Newly-Elected MPs Take Oath As Rajya Sabha Members

HT NEWS NETWORK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JUN 29: Eight newly-elected MPs of the Rajya Sabha, including Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and BJP leader Tarun Chugh, took oath as members of the Upper House on Monday.

Rajya Sabha Chairman C P Radhakrishnan administered the oath of office to the new members.

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

We Are Fully.....

is fully prepared to receive thousands of pilgrims, backed by upgraded infrastructure, strengthened security and seamless coordination among all stakeholders.

The Lieutenant Governor made the remarks after performing the ceremonial prayer at the Holy Cave Shrine, marking the traditional commencement of the annual pilgrimage. He offered prayers for peace, prosperity, good health and the well-being of all, and invited devotees from across the country to participate in the sacred journey in large numbers.

"As the pilgrimage begins on July 3, the Administration, Shrine Board, Army, Police, Security Forces, local community, service providers and volunteers are working in complete coordination. Every stakeholder is committed to ensuring a safe, smooth and memorable pilgrimage for all devotees," Sinha said.

He said substantial improvements in infrastructure and pilgrim facilities, coupled with the wholehearted support of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, have strengthened the administration's preparedness for this year's pilgrimage.

The 57-day annual pilgrimage will commence on July 3 through both the traditional Pahalgam route in Anantnag district and the Baltal route in Ganderbal district, and will conclude on August 28.

The ceremonial prayer is organised every year by the Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board (SASB) ahead of the commencement of the annual pilgrimage, signifying the completion of preparations for one of India's largest religious events.

Senior officials accompanying the Lieutenant Governor included Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat, Principal Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor and Chief Executive Officer of the Shrine Board Dr. Mandeep K. Bhandari, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg, Inspector General of Police Kashmir V.K. Birdi, Deputy Commissioners of Ganderbal and Anantnag, and other senior civil and police officers.

Leave No.....

direct departments to eliminate delays, particularly in matters directly affecting citizens.

The review assumes significance as the government advances its long-term objective of transforming India into a developed nation by 2047, marking 100 years of the country's independence. The discussions are expected to focus on reforms that simplify governance, improve the delivery of public services and create a more business-friendly administrative framework.

The meeting is also likely to review India's recent economic performance. The country's Gross Domestic Product grew by 7.7 per cent during the 2025-26 financial year, while the economy expanded by 7.8 per cent in the January-March quarter, supported by strong domestic demand and sustained government expenditure.

The Prime Minister had outlined the government's reform priorities during a meeting of the Council of Ministers on June 21, where he called for sustained efforts to improve the quality of life of citizens, strengthen the business environment and expand opportunities for young people. Sources said a similar message will be conveyed to the country's top civil servants during Tuesday's deliberations.

The meeting is expected to be attended by the Prime Minister's Principal Secretaries, P.K. Mishra and Shakuntika Das, along with Cabinet Secretary T. V. Somanathan and the secretaries of all central ministries and departments. (Agencies)

CM Omar.....

Kashmir Nomadic Cooperative (JKNC), members of the Migrant Kashmiri Pandit community, the Taxi Stand Association, and a delegation from Ashmuqam-Tulhad. The delegations apprised the Chief Minister of various developmental requirements, infrastructure needs and public issues concerning their respective areas.

Earlier, MLA Rajpora Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Mir called on the Chief Minister and discussed developmental priorities and public welfare issues pertaining to his constituency.

MLA Sonawari Hilal Akbar Lone also met the Chief Minister and raised several constituency-related matters requiring government intervention. The Chief Minister assured all the visiting deputations that the government remains committed to addressing the aspirations of the people through sustained development initiatives.

During the day, the Chief Minister also interacted with a delegation from Warner Bros. Discovery led by Creative Director Pia Somiah Alva, along with senior company officials. The Chief Minister appreciated the interest shown by the organisation and said the government welcomes meaningful partnerships that can promote Jammu and Kashmir's creative potential and generate new opportunities.

A delegation of senior doctors from Government Medical College Srinagar, comprising Dr. Altaf Kawoosa, Dr. Iqbal Saleem, Dr. Naveed Nazir Shah, Dr. Manzoor Lateo and Dr. Syed Imran, also called on the Chief Minister.

The delegation discussed various issues concerning the healthcare sector and the

functioning of the institution. The Chief Minister assured them that the government remains committed to strengthening health-care infrastructure and improving medical services across Jammu and Kashmir.

Ensure Unhindered.....

The Chief Minister stated that livestock-laden vehicles bound for Jammu & Kashmir are reportedly being stopped by certain contractor groups linked to cattle fairs and compelled to pay unauthorized charges despite carrying all valid permits and statutory documents.

He said such interference is resulting in avoidable delays, financial losses for transporters and traders, and adverse consequences for animal welfare. He added that the disruptions are also affecting the timely supply of livestock to Jammu & Kashmir.

Citing the findings of an internal committee constituted by the Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Omar Abdullah said the committee had found that transporters were reportedly being forced to make substantial payments during transit without any apparent legal authority.

The Chief Minister further noted that livestock transportation is exempt from the Goods and Services Tax (GST), making the alleged collection of additional charges unjustified. He warned that the continued imposition of such levies is placing an unnecessary burden on the livestock trade, leading to higher meat prices and ultimately affecting consumers across Jammu & Kashmir.

Highlighting the close economic and social ties between Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir, Omar Abdullah said the two neighbouring states have long shared a relationship based on cooperation and mutual trust. He observed that any unauthorized practices affecting legitimate trade are inconsistent with that spirit and have created serious concern among the business community.

The Chief Minister also referred to reports that the tendering process for cattle fairs in Punjab is likely to begin shortly. He conveyed the apprehensions of stakeholders that, unless appropriate safeguards are introduced, the alleged unauthorized fee collection may continue under future contracts, causing recurring financial hardship to livestock traders.

Seeking prompt action, Omar Abdullah requested Bhagwant Mann to have the matter examined and to ensure that livestock carriers with valid documentation are allowed to pass through Punjab without obstruction or unauthorized charges.

Expressing confidence in the cooperation between the two governments, the Chief Minister said he was hopeful that Punjab would take the necessary steps to protect lawful trade and ensure the seamless movement of essential livestock supplies between the two states.

CM Calls.....

He reaffirmed that the government is committed to transforming Jammu and Kashmir into a globally competitive export hub by expanding market access for local artisans, women Self-Help Groups (SHGs), handicraft producers and agro-based enterprises.

The international trade event is being organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organisation (J&K TPO) in association with the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO). More than 30 international and national buyers from over 14 countries are participating in the meet, which also features over 20 live demonstrations under the 'Know Your Artisan' initiative and showcases more than 100 handicrafts, handloom and agro-food products from across Jammu and Kashmir.

The event featured dedicated pavilions established for women Self-Help Groups and the specially curated 'Know Your Artisan' initiative, aimed at creating direct engagement between buyers and the craftsmen behind the region's world-renowned products.

Earlier, after inaugurating the event, the Chief Minister inspected exhibition stalls put up by participants from different districts of Jammu and Kashmir, including women SHGs, artisans and entrepreneurs displaying traditional handicrafts, handloom products, food items, crafts and other locally manufactured products. He also visited the stalls established by foreign buyer delegations and appreciated their participation in strengthening international trade linkages with Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing a gathering of international buyers, exporters, artisans, women SHGs and entrepreneurs, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah welcomed the delegates from across the world and described the buyer-seller meet as an important platform for strengthening Jammu and Kashmir's export ecosystem.

Reflecting on the region's rich trading legacy, the Chief Minister said Jammu and Kashmir had historically been a place for export of its products, though not through conventional export channels. He observed that buyers from India and abroad have traditionally travelled to Kashmir as tourists, purchased local products and, in the process, have become ambassadors of Kashmiri craftsmanship in global markets. Many of these interactions, he noted, evolved into enduring business relationships spanning decades.

The Chief Minister, however, said changing

circumstances and a prolonged decline in tourism had disrupted this traditional model, compelling artisans and handicraft producers to actively seek markets beyond the region. He said craftsmen who once relied on buyers visiting them had to travel across the country and abroad to rebuild commercial linkages and sustain their livelihoods.

Highlighting the government's efforts to facilitate this transition, Omar Abdullah recalled that the process of organising structured buyer-seller meets in Jammu and Srinagar was initiated during his tenure in the Union Commerce and Industry Ministry to reconnect local producers with national and international markets.

He said the present edition of the buyer-seller meet marks a significant evolution by extending participation beyond traditional exporters to include women Self-Help Groups, rural entrepreneurs and artisans from remote areas who had previously remained outside such trade platforms.

Referring to the concentration of exports in only a handful of districts, the Chief Minister noted that nearly 98 per cent of Jammu and Kashmir's exports currently originate from four districts, leaving enormous untapped potential across the rest of the region. He stressed that achieving the ambitious export targets set for the coming years would require not only supporting existing exporters but also creating a new generation of exporters from rural and underserved regions.

He said buyer-seller meet such as this provides an effective mechanism for connecting emerging producers with international markets and exposing them to export opportunities that were previously beyond their reach. The Chief Minister expressed confidence that the recommendations and interactions emerging from the event would help increase export volumes while also diversifying Jammu and Kashmir's export basket by introducing products that have so far remained outside global markets.

Underscoring the significance of the international participation, Omar Abdullah said the presence of buyers from more than 14 countries offers an invaluable opportunity for local producers to better understand evolving consumer preferences and global market requirements. Such interactions, he observed, would enable manufacturers and artisans to adapt and tailor their products in accordance with international demand, thereby enhancing their competitiveness.

The Chief Minister described the introduction of the 'Know Your Artisan' initiative as one of the defining features of this year's event.

He said the initiative goes beyond showcasing finished products by enabling buyers to meet the artisans whose skill, dedication and craftsmanship bring these creations to life.

He remarked that while a handcrafted shawl or carpet tells one story, meeting the artisan behind it adds another dimension by creating a personal connection that enhances the product's value and strengthens its appeal in international markets.

Observing that this edition of the buyer-seller meet is distinguished both by the diversity of its participants and its inclusive approach, Omar Abdullah expressed optimism that the two-day event would prove mutually beneficial for buyers and sellers alike by fostering lasting commercial partnerships and opening new avenues of trade.

The event was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce, Vikramjit Singh, Chief Executive Officer, Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), Ajay Sahai, Managing Director, J&K Trade Promotion Organisation, Sudarshan Kumar, besides senior officers, exporters, artisans, entrepreneurs, women Self-Help Groups, foreign delegates and trade representatives.

Amarnath.....

"The integrated command centre will provide real-time monitoring of Yatra routes, base camps and other strategic locations to ensure effective coordination and swift response during the pilgrimage," an official said.

Security agencies also carried out a series of mock drills across Jammu and Kashmir to assess operational preparedness. A joint exercise by the Special Operations Group (SOG) and the National Security Guard (NSG) was conducted at the Raghunath Temple in Jammu to strengthen counter-terror response and inter-agency coordination.

In Budgam district, multiple agencies participated in a comprehensive security and emergency response drill aimed at testing preparedness for various contingencies during the Yatra.

On the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, security agencies conducted a large-scale convoy rehearsal involving 640 vehicles to evaluate convoy protection, traffic management and emergency response mechanisms. Officials said the exercise focused on coordination among security agencies and ensuring uninterrupted movement of pilgrims.

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) also conducted a successful trial run through the newly built 3.5-km Digdool-Panthal tunnel, with a dry-run convoy passing through one of its tubes.

In neighbouring Punjab, police have put in place a multi-layered security plan as thousands of pilgrims are expected to pass through Pathankot, the key transit district connecting Punjab with Jammu and Kashmir, between July 3 and August 28.

PUNJAB SPECIAL DGP CHAIRS HIGH-LEVEL INTER-STATE COORDINATION MEETING

Punjab Special Director General of Police (Law and Order) Arpit Shukla chaired a high-level inter-state coordination meeting to review security arrangements with officials from various agencies.

According to Punjab Police, the security grid covers the 65-km Yatra route in the state through five security sectors and includes a dedicated Command and Control Centre at Madhopur, round-the-clock monitoring, strengthened checkpoints, route domination, CCTV surveillance, drone monitoring and emergency response vehicle patrols.

The security plan also provides for joint operations involving the Indian Army, Border Security Force (BSF), Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), Himachal Pradesh Police and Jammu and Kashmir Police, besides the deployment of police quick reaction teams, Army QRTs, Special Operations Group personnel and bomb disposal squads.

Officials said anti-sabotage checks and enhanced second-line border security have also been incorporated into the security architecture.

"Over 800 police personnel and multiple response teams have been deployed to ensure a safe, secure and peaceful pilgrimage. Pilgrims are requested to stay vigilant, follow the designated routes and cooperate with security personnel," Punjab Police said.

Officials said the extensive security arrangements, surveillance systems and coordinated deployment of forces reflect the preparedness of agencies across states to ensure the smooth and peaceful conduct of this year's Amarnath Yatra—(KNO)

Sports helping.....

Joshi, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Sports have emerged as a catalyst for change in the district and are playing a vital role in shaping the future of its youth. The multi-discipline sports festival will witness the participation of nearly 3,700 athletes competing in 23 sporting disciplines."

Highlighting the changing atmosphere in the district, the GOC referred to the Baramulla Marathon held on Sunday and said the public response reflected a remarkable shift in people's attitude towards sports.

"I have never seen Kashmir awake for sports at 4.30 am before. Hundreds of people had gathered during the early morning hours for the marathon. It shows that sports are becoming a way of life for the youth and the people of Baramulla," he said.

The GOC expressed confidence that if the present momentum continues, Baramulla has the potential to emerge as a sports city.

He said sporting activities are bridging social gaps and providing young people with meaningful opportunities to channelise their energy in a positive direction. "Sports are helping youth reject drugs and divisive narratives", he added.

Referring to the recent rumours circulated on social media about an alleged terrorist attack in Baramulla and claims regarding the suspension of the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra, the GOC said such misinformation was aimed at disturbing peace and creating fear among the public.

He said sports provide a constructive alternative by promoting unity, resilience and hope, while discouraging propaganda spread by enemies of peace.

"Sports channelise the energy of our youth into positivity. They help build stronger individuals and a more developed society," he added.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by the MLAs of Baramulla, Wagoora Kreeri and Gulmarg, senior Army officers, civil administration officials and other dignitaries. The event also witnessed enthusiastic participation from athletes, students and members of the public—(KNO)

'Diversion of.....

Officer from J&K after going through the facts of the proposal, the Committee recommended the proposal for grant of 'in-principle' approval for diversion of 197.27 ha. of Forest land (Reserved Forest: 191.95 Ha and Others: 5.32 Ha) for construction of Kirthai- II Hydro Electric Project (820 MW) by Chenab Valley Power Projects Limited (CVPL) on Chenab river within the jurisdiction of Kishtwar Forest Division, District- Kishtwar in Jammu & Kashmir," it reads.

The clearance however has been subjected to general, standard and

specific conditions wherein the 'State Government' has informed that applications for 02 clay quarries and 04 rock quarries are under process with the Department of Geology & Mining, UT of J&K.

"However, approval for quarrying and the Mining Plans have not yet been obtained. As per Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan Rules, 2023, the approved Mining Plan is required to be submitted along with the compliance report of Stage-1 approval," reads the documents.

The advisor panel has further informed that all the muck dumping sites are located near the banks of the River Chenab, the State Government will take appropriate engineering and biological measures to prevent erosion, siltation, and any adverse environmental impacts on the river ecology.

"The project site is located within a high mountainous gorge along the river Chenab characterized by moderate to steep slopes. The User Agency (UA) needs to exercise special caution during project implementation, as activities such as rock cutting and earthwork may lead to soil erosion. To mitigate these impacts, the User Agency is required to take appropriate measures to prevent soil erosion," it reads.

The documents further said that the trees proposed to be felled in the project area would affect the ecosystem in general, especially in terms of increased run-off and soil erosion that may lead to landslides. "Therefore, the State Government should take necessary mitigation measures and put in place necessary safety and monitoring measures."

It also said that the 'State Government' shall ensure implementation of the Site-Specific Wildlife and Biodiversity Management Plan, duly approved by the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW), at the cost of the User Agency.

"The State Government shall ensure implementation of the duly approved CAT Plan at the cost of the User Agency. The requisite funds shall be deposited by the User Agency in the account of National CAMPA," reads the document—(KNO)

J&K Fire &.....

official communication from the Anti-Corruption Bureau regarding the arrest of the two officials.

The suspended officers have been identified as Bilal Ahmad Shah, Divisional Fire Officer (DFO), presently posted at the Range Office Srinagar and attached with the Command Office Ganderbal, and Younis Ahmad Ganie, Fireman (2195), posted at the Fire and Emergency Services Headquarters Srinagar and currently deployed at the Medical Unit, Srinagar.

The order states that, in accordance with Rule 31(2) of the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1956, both officials shall be deemed to have been placed under suspension with effect from June 26, 2026, the date of their detention, pending further orders.

During the suspension period, both officials will be entitled to receive subsistence allowance as admissible under the relevant service rules.

The suspension order has been forwarded to the Principal Secretary, Home Department, the Anti-Corruption Bureau, senior officers of the Fire and Emergency Services Department and other concerned authorities for information and necessary action.

The Anti-Corruption Bureau is continuing its investigation into the case, while departmental proceedings will be initiated and pursued in accordance with the outcome of the investigation and applicable service rules.

8 Newly-Elected.....

While Kharge took the oath separately in Radhakrishnan's chamber, the seven other members took oath in the Rajya Sabha chamber.

Apart from Kharge and Chugh, the six other new members included Jitendra Meghijbhai Kanziariya and Mansingh Meraman Parmar (Gujarat), M Nagaraja (Karnataka), Rajendra Hiralal Jain (Maharashtra), Adhikarimayum Sharda Devi (Manipur) and Alka Singh (Rajasthan).

Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh, Leader of the House J P Nadda, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijjiu and Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal were present at the oath-taking, both inside the chairman's chamber as well as in the House.

Kharge took oath in Hindi while holding a copy of the Constitution in his hand.

Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi and MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra were present during his oath-taking.

Radhakrishnan congratulated and welcome the new members into the House. (Agencies)



Commissioner SMC reviews major capacity augmentation project at WTP Nishat

Directs timely completion to strengthen Srinagar's portable water supply

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 29: Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Faz Lul Haseeb, today conducted a comprehensive inspection of the ongoing Development of Allied Infrastructure for the 3 MGD Rapid Sand Filtration Plant (RSFP) at the Water Treatment Plant (WTP), Nishat, and reviewed the progress of the project aimed at enhancing the city's potable water supply infrastructure.

During the inspection, the Commissioner was briefed by officers of the Water Works Division on the scope and progress of the project, which is being executed at an approved cost of 406.00 lakh under the Sustainable Infrastructure Fund (SMC CapEx).

The Water Treatment Plant, Nishat, commissioned in 1895, is Srinagar's most vital water supply facility, presently serving nearly 6.38 lakh population across major residential, commercial, institutional, administrative and tourism areas. The plant currently has an installed treatment capacity of 19 Million Gallons per Day (MGD) through five Rapid Sand Filtration Plants commissioned between 1935 and 2000.



Given the rapid urban expansion and increasing water demand across the city, the Commissioner observed that augmentation of the plant's treatment capacity has become essential to bridge the existing supply gap and ensure reliable drinking water services for the growing population.

The project includes the commissioning of a 3 MGD Rapid Sand Filtration Plant, laying and restructuring of supply and trunk

mains, strengthening of treated water conveyance systems, upgradation of electro-mechanical equipment, and construction of allied infrastructure, including protection walls and sluice chambers. Upon completion, the project will enhance the treatment capacity of WTP Nishat from 19 MGD to 22 MGD, marking the first major capacity augmentation of the facility in 26 years.

The upgraded infrastructure

will significantly improve potable water supply to the existing command areas of Nishat, Brein, Boulevard, Gupkar, Sonwar, Shivpora, Lal Chowk, Karan Nagar, Babarshah, Munawarabad, Khayam, Khanyar, Rainawari, Saidakadal, Dal habitations, Mir Behri, Dal Bund and other adjoining localities. Besides augmenting water supply to the existing 6.38 lakh population, the project will bring nearly one lakh additional

population under the ambit of safe and reliable potable water supply with improved service levels.

The Commissioner emphasized that the project will substantially strengthen Srinagar's water supply network by improving both the reliability and efficiency of drinking water services. He directed the executing agency to maintain the highest standards of quality and workmanship while ensuring timely completion of all components of the project within the stipulated timeframe.

The Commissioner reiterated that strengthening essential urban infrastructure remains a key priority of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation. He stated that the Corporation is committed to developing resilient and sustainable public utility systems capable of meeting the city's growing needs and ensuring uninterrupted access to safe drinking water for residents, institutions, tourist destinations, government establishments, security installations, and other critical service areas.

Senior officers of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation and the Water Works Division accompanied the Commissioner during the inspection.

Dr. Itoo Organizes Free Health Check-up Camp for the Poor and Underprivileged

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 29: Eminent physician, Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo on Sunday organized a free health check-up camp at his residence aimed at providing essential healthcare services to poor and underprivileged members of the community. The initiative focused on promoting preventive healthcare and improving access to medical services for



those who may otherwise face barriers to treatment. During the camp, participants received free medical consultations, blood pressure and blood sugar screening, health education, and counselling on lifestyle modification and disease prevention. Patients requiring further evaluation or specialized care were advised on appropriate follow-up.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Itoo emphasized that quality healthcare should be accessible to everyone, regardless of socioeconomic status, and highlighted the importance of regular health screening for early detection and management of diseases.

The camp was well received by the local community, with many beneficiaries expressing appreciation for the free medical services and health awareness provided. The initiative reflects Dr. Itoo's ongoing commitment to community service, public health awareness, and improving healthcare access for underserved populations.

DPIIT Evaluation Team Visits Kulgam to Assess Garlic-Based ODOF Initiative for National Awards

FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, JUNE 29: A high-level evaluation team from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Government of India, on Monday visited Kulgam to conduct on-ground verification and assess the implementation of the One District One Product (ODOF) initiative, under which garlic has been identified as the district's flagship product.

The visiting team was led by Pankaj Kumar, Deputy Secretary, DPIIT, and included Sonia Duhan, Senior Vice President, ODOF, and Neelam Garery, Assistant Manager, ODOF. The team was accompanied by Chief Agriculture Officer Kulgam, Shah Nawaz Ahmed Shah, along with other officials from the Agriculture Department.

As part of the evaluation, the team visited the Fruit and Vegetable Mandi at Jablipora, where they interacted with vendors and progressive farmers to understand the marketing mechanisms, supply chain, and challenges associated with garlic cultivation and trade. The delegation also toured several garlic-producing villages, including Frisal, Budroo, H.S. Bugh, Yaripora, and Tarigam, where they held detailed interactions with progressive farmers and agricultural dealers. Discussions focused on measures to enhance garlic production, improve marketing facilities, and strengthen value addition under the ODOF initiative.

Over 4.49 lakh Stakeholders participate in 4th Round of mass PTMs across Kashmir

STRONG COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION REINFORCES SCHOOL-PARENT PARTNERSHIP ACROSS VALLEY

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 29: Directorate of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) today organized the fourth round of Valley-wide Mass PTMs, witnessing a significant participation of 4,49,141 stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers and community members.

Expressing sincere gratitude to parents and the wider community for their active and enthusiastic participation, Director School Education Kashmir, Naseer Ahmad Wani, lauded the successful conduct of the fourth round of Mass Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) held across all schools in the Kashmir Division.

Held as per the academic calendar for the session 2026, a total of 5,333 PTM events were conducted simul-

aneously across the Valley.

According to official figures, participation included 3,10,890 students, 1,05,673 parents and community members and 32,578 teachers and school heads, reflecting a strong and growing commitment towards collaborative educational development.

The impressive turnout across districts highlights the strengthening bond between schools and communities and underscores the increasing trust in the education system. The PTMs served as an effective platform for meaningful interaction between parents and teachers, focusing on students' academic progress, behavioural aspects and overall well-being.

Senior officials, including Chief Education Officers (CEOs), actively monitored and participated in the

meetings, engaging directly with parents, addressing their concerns and ensuring timely redressal of issues.

Reiterating his appreciation, Director School Education Kashmir, thanked all stakeholders for their continued support and cooperation in building a responsive, inclusive and progressive education system. He further directed all officers and teaching staff to act promptly on the feedback and suggestions received during the PTMs, ensuring accountability and sustained improvement.

The successful conduct of the fourth round of Mass PTMs reaffirms the Directorate's commitment to transparency, community engagement and continuous reform in the education sector across the Kashmir Valley.

JJB Shopian conducts inspection of Juvenile Observation Home Harwan Srinagar

HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, JUNE 29: In a significant step toward reinforcing the protective framework for children in conflict with the law, the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) Shopian led by Principal Magistrate, Bazila Bashir, conducted a comprehensive, unannounced inspection of the Juvenile Observation Home (JOH) at Harwan, Srinagar today.

The inspection delegation comprised a multi-disciplinary team of legal and welfare professionals, including Rafie Ahmad Ganie, Chief Legal Aid Defence Counsel, Shopian; Amir Ayoub, Assistant Legal Aid Defence Counsel; Farooq Ahmad, Special Juvenile Police Officer, and Sumaira Imtiaz, Legal-cum-Probation Officer.

The visit was meticulously organized in strict compliance with the provisions and mandates

of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, along with the model rules. The primary objective was to conduct a rigorous, ground-level assessment of the living conditions, rehabilitative measures, and procedural adherence at the observation home, thereby ensuring that the rights and well-being of every juvenile resident remain inviolable.

Upon arrival, the Superintendent of the Observation Home facilitated an exhaustive, room-by-room tour of the facility. The inspection team methodically evaluated all critical infrastructure components, including residential dormitories, educational and vocational training classrooms, indoor and outdoor recreational spaces, and the in-house medical unit.

Special attention was devoted to assessing the standards of

hygiene and sanitation, nutritional quality of the kitchen and meal preparation areas, structural integrity of the buildings, and robustness of existing safety and emergency response protocols, including fire safety equipment and child-proofing measures.

In a particularly poignant segment of the visit, the Principal Magistrate and her team engaged in extended, empathetic, one-on-one conversations with the juvenile residents. These confidential interactions were designed to elicit unfiltered feedback on their daily treatment, the progress of their individual rehabilitation and reintegration plans, and their actual access to essential support systems. The team probed into the availability of legal counsel, the continuity of educational instruction, the regularity of psychological counseling sessions,

and the quality of healthcare services extended to each child.

Concurrently, the visiting team undertook a painstaking, desk-by-desk verification of all legal and administrative records pertaining to every juvenile currently housed in the facility. This exhaustive audit was aimed at cross-verifying strict adherence to statutory procedures, including the timely production of juveniles before the JJB, prompt disbursement of legal aid through the Legal Services Authority, proper maintenance of individual case histories, and timely disposal of pending proceedings as mandated by law.

Speaking on the occasion, Principal Magistrate, JJB Shopian, Bazila Bashir, stated, "This surprise inspection is a reflection of the Board's unwavering zero-tolerance stance towards any form of negligence, indifference,

or procedural lapse in the care of juveniles. We are not merely inspectors; we are the custodians of their future. Every child residing in this observation home is entitled to dignity, compassionate protection, and meaningful rehabilitative support—precisely as enshrined in the Juvenile Justice Act."

At the conclusion of the inspection, the Board issued a detailed set of on-the-spot directives to the Observation Home administration, emphasizing the urgent need for enhanced recreational infrastructure, strengthened psycho-social counseling frameworks, and improved coordination with the District Child Protection Unit to ensure seamless after-care support. The Board has also scheduled a follow-up review within the next thirty days to verify the implementation of its recommendations.

Society Must Work Together To Keep Youth Away From Drugs, Harmful Social Media: Devyani

HT NEWS NETWORK

NAGROTA, JUNE 29: Emphasising that nurturing the next generation is a shared responsibility, Nagrota MLA Devyani Rana on Sunday called for a collective societal effort to guide young people towards community engagement, spiritual values and constructive pursuits while protecting them from the growing menace of drug abuse and the harmful influence of social media.

Addressing a gathering on the occasion of Kabir Jayanti at Kattal Battal, Nagrota, in the presence of Sant Sudarshan Ji Maharaj Ji, Rana said that the teachings of Sant Kabir Ji remain a guiding light for building a compassionate, disciplined and harmonious society.

The gathering was sensitised about the 100-Day Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan, launched by Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha Ji under the visionary guidance of the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji. Devyani Rana appealed to the public to actively support the campaign by spreading awareness against substance abuse, encouraging community participation, and working collectively towards building a healthier, drug-free Jammu and Kashmir.

She said that society has a vital responsibility in ensuring that young people remain connected with their cultural and spiritual roots by encouraging them to actively participate in community and religious activities. Such engagement, she said, helps instil values, strengthens character and keeps youth away from social evils, particularly the growing threat of drug addiction.

Expressing concern over the impact of digital platforms, the MLA stressed that parents and guardians must remain vigilant about the content children and adolescents consume on social media. "The values and ideas our youth are exposed to today will shape the society of tomorrow. Families must maintain open communication and guide children towards positive and responsible use of technology," she said.

Rana also highlighted the importance of mental well-being, saying that emotional health deserves the same attention as physical health. She urged families, educational institutions and society to create a supportive environment where young people feel heard, understood and encouraged to seek help whenever needed.

Paying tributes to Sant Kabir Ji, Rana said his timeless message of truth, equality, humanity and communal harmony continues to inspire generations and is especially relevant in today's world.

Javid Dar attends Rashtriya Gramin Vikas Sammelan, seeks enhanced Central support for rural development in J&K

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI, JUNE 29: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Cooperatives and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, today participated in the Rashtriya Gramin Vikas Sammelan 2026, organised by the Union Ministry for Rural Development.

During the event, the Rural Development Ministers from States and Union Territories deliberated on strengthening the rural infrastructure, housing, livelihoods and inclusive development under various flagship programmes.

The two-day national conclave, chaired by Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, provided a platform for reviewing the progress of flagship rural development schemes and strengthening the Centre-State cooperation for achieving the vision of a devel-



oped rural India.

During the deliberations, Javid Ahmad Dar projected the key concerns and developmental priorities of Jammu and Kashmir. He sought enhanced support from the Government of India for effective implementation of rural development programmes across the Union Territory.

The Minister called for early clearance of pending MGNREGA liabilities to ensure uninterrupted execution of development works and timely payment of wages. He also sought enhanced support under PMGSY, particularly for maintenance of completed road assets and improved connectivity to eligible habita-

tions located in difficult and remote terrain.

Highlighting the unique geographical, climatic and topographical conditions of Jammu and Kashmir, the Minister stressed the need for greater flexibility in implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes to enable better outcomes on the ground.

He also urged the Government of India to continue extending support for strengthening the rural livelihoods, promoting self-employment through Self Help Groups and rural enterprises besides expanding the rural housing and basic infrastructure in remote and border areas.

Javid Dar reiterated that the Jammu and Kashmir government remains committed to transparent, accountable and result-oriented implementation of all rural development programmes. He said the focus of the government is to create sustainable rural infrastructure, generate

livelihood opportunities and ensure that the benefits of welfare schemes reach every eligible household.

The Minister also emphasised the need for greater convergence among the flagship programmes and stronger grassroots institutions to maximise developmental outcomes and accelerate inclusive growth in rural areas.

Expressing gratitude to the Union Government for organising the Sammelan, the Minister said such interactions provide an important opportunity for States and Union Territories to exchange experiences, share best practices and collectively shape policies for rural transformation.

He expressed confidence that the issues projected by Jammu & Kashmir would receive positive consideration from the Government of India, further strengthening the Centre's continued support for the holistic and sustainable development of the Union Territory's rural landscape.

Mandeep Kaur reviews Vibrant Villages Programme-II in border villages of RS Pura

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

RS PURA, JUNE 29: Commissioner Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department, Mandeep Kaur, today conducted a comprehensive field visit to the border villages of Abdullian and Badyal Brahmana in block RS Pura to review implementation of the Vibrant Villages Programme-II (VVP-II).

Among those present were Member Legislative Assembly Suchetgarh Prof Gharu Ram Bhagat besides other sectoral officers.

The review focussed on assessing the development plans prepared under the Vibrant Villages Programme-II and ensuring their timely and effective implementation through coordinated efforts of all stakeholder departments.

During the visit, a detailed sector-wise review of the proposed development plans was undertaken. It was informed that development works amounting approximately 6 crore have been proposed for Village Badyal Brahmana while projects worth around 2.50 crore have been planned for Village Abdullian under the programme.

The Commissioner Secretary reviewed the proposals in detail and directed all the concerned departments to ensure timely execution of the approved works with regular monitoring and effective inter-departmental coordination.

Interactive Gram Sabhas were also held at Amisha Palace, Badyal Brahmana and the Community Hall, Abdullian, where Mandeep Kaur interacted with the public representatives, former Sarpanches and local residents. She encouraged the people to participate actively in the planning process.

She directed that all genuine pending developmental requirements be projected through the line departments concerned so that they may be incorporated under the Vibrant Villages Programme-II for consideration and implementation.

Emphasising the importance of convergence among all departments, the Commissioner Secretary stressed adherence to project timelines, transparent implementation and continuous public participation to ensure the successful execution of the programme. She reiterated the government's commitment to transform the border villages into vibrant, resilient and economically self-sustaining communities through comprehensive infrastructure development and improved public services under the Vibrant Villages Programme-II.

J&K H&UD Dept bars stray dog relocation, notifies guidelines on feeding spots, animal welfare

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 29: The Housing and Urban Development Department, Jammu and Kashmir, today said that it is committed to implement the Supreme Court's directions in *Suo Motu Writ Petition (Civil) number 5 of 2025* concerning the welfare, protection and management of the stray animals.

Clarifying the rules for citizens, RWAs and animal welfare groups, the Department said feeding of community dogs is not prohibited but must be done only at designated feeding spots. It added that the additional feeding spots are being identified and notified across urban areas of J&K based on the population of community dogs in each ward.

The department has urged the residents to cooperate with their Municipal Corporation, Council or Committee in creating these designated spots, preferably away from the children's parks or market areas in open and clean spaces so that hungry animals do not attack the children or passersby.

According to an official communique issued here in this regard, the department stressed that the relocation or removal of stray dogs by the individuals, groups or Residents' Welfare Associations is strictly prohibited and constitutes an offence under applicable laws and the directions of the Supreme Court. It added that areas for relocation are being identified in every municipality. Until then, RWAs, citizen associations and NGOs should help feed the stray animals at designated spots and assist with sterilization and vaccination at nearby veterinary facilities. The Department said that "little support coming from each citizen group will go a long way in addressing this menace in a humane and compassionate manner." "Harassing, assaulting, injuring or inflicting cruelty upon stray animals is illegal and will attract appropriate legal action under the relevant provisions of law", maintained the department.

Appealing to all the citizens, animal welfare organizations and RWAs to act with compassion for the mutual coexistence of all living beings, the department said the measures are in the interest of both the public safety and animal welfare.

For further assistance, the residents can contact their respective Municipal Corporation, Municipal Council, Municipal Committee or officials of the Animal Husbandry Department. UNI

DC Baramulla, MD Mission Yuva jointly review implementation of Flagship Scheme, Mission YUVA in district

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, JUNE 29: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, S.F Hamid and Director Employment/Mission Director (MD), Mission YUVA, Harvinder Singh, jointly chaired a review meeting at the DC Office Baramulla to assess the implementation and progress of the Mission YUVA flagship initiative in district Baramulla.

The meeting focused on the implementation and current status of the programme, progress achieved, challenges faced in execution, and measures to ensure effective outreach and timely de-

livery of benefits to aspiring entrepreneurs and youth.

Speaking during the meeting, the DC directed the concerned officers to lay special emphasis on creating employment opportunities through the apple industry under the One District One Product (ODOP) initiative.

The DC directed the concerned officers to intensify awareness campaigns at the grassroots level to ensure that maximum eligible youth are informed about the opportunities available under Mission YUVA and are encouraged to avail the benefits of the scheme.

Meanwhile, the MD directed

the concerned officers to closely monitor not only the applications that have been sanctioned and disbursed but also those that have been rejected, emphasizing the need to identify the reasons for rejection, provide necessary guidance and handholding support to the applicants and facilitate the resubmission of eligible applications.

Furthermore, the MD instructed the concerned officers to conduct large-scale awareness and outreach campaigns under Udyam Jagriti 5.0 by involving Mission YUVA Motivators and Yuva Doots across the district.

Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather reviews comprehensive development plan for Yousmarg Tourism OCircuit

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 29: Speaker Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, today chaired a detailed meeting with senior officers of the Tourism Department to review and discuss a comprehensive development plan aimed at transforming Yousmarg into one of the premier tourist destinations of Jammu and Kashmir.

During the meeting, extensive deliberations were held on strengthening tourism infrastructure, enhancing visitor amenities, and fully harnessing the immense tourism potential of Yousmarg, Drugtolen, Bargah, and Haijan.

The Speaker stressed the need for a planned and sustainable approach to ensure that these picturesque destinations are developed while preserving their natural beauty and ecological balance.

Emphasizing the importance of improved public amenities, the Speaker called for the provision of reliable mobile connectivity and the installation of an ATM facility at Yousmarg to facilitate tourists and local residents alike.

He also advocated for the installation of a ski drag lift to support ski trainees and promote winter sports activities, thereby enhancing Yousmarg's appeal as a year-round tourism destination.

The meeting also reviewed

the development of the scenic Nilnag Lake.

The Speaker directed that the lake and its surrounding areas be developed into an attractive tourist destination with appropriate infrastructure while maintaining its pristine environment. He stressed that de-weeding of the lake should be undertaken on priority to preserve its cleanliness and natural charm.

Highlighting the need for better connectivity, the Speaker emphasized for the early completion of the sanctioned bridge over the Doodh Ganga River connecting Haijan with Yousmarg. He observed that the project would significantly improve accessibility, boost tourist inflow, and provide substantial

socio-economic benefits to the local population.

The Speaker further underscored the importance of developing cable car projects linking Yousmarg-Nilnag, Yousmarg-Drugtolen, Yousmarg-Haijan, and Yousmarg-Bargah. He noted that Yousmarg being near-tourist destination to Srinagar has immense potential to emerge as a major tourism hub.

He observed that these projects would not only strengthen adventure and leisure tourism but also promote a unique pilgrimage tourism circuit, as the route passes through the revered shrine of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani (RA) at Charar-i-Sharif and the shrine of Hazrat Syed Ali Aalibalki (RA) at Pakher-

pora.

The Speaker also stressed the need for the early completion of the remaining portion of the road to Haijan, stating that improved road connectivity is essential for unlocking the tourism potential of the area and ensuring ease of access for visitors and local communities.

The meeting concluded with a commitment from the Tourism Department to examine the proposals in a time-bound manner and take necessary steps for the phased development of the Yousmarg tourism circuit, with the objective of strengthening tourism, generating employment, and promoting sustainable economic growth in the region.

CEC Shri Gyanesh Kumar visits Budgam, lauds dedication of BLOs towards strengthening electoral process

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 29: Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), Shri Gyanesh Kumar today visited District Budgam and interacted with Booth Level Officers (BLOs), EROs, AEROs and other field functionaries of Election Department at National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), appreciating their dedication and commitment towards strengthening the electoral process at the grassroots level.

The interaction was held as a part of the CEC's three-day official visit to Jammu and Kashmir, aimed at reviewing electoral process, engaging with field functionaries and stakeholders across the UT.

The CEC was accompanied by Chief Electoral Officer, J&K, Sanjeev Verma and District Election Officer (Deputy Commissioner), Budgam, Athar Amir. Senior officers of the District

administration and Election Department were also present during the interaction.

During the interaction, Shri Gyanesh Kumar described BLOs as the backbone of India's electoral democracy and acknowledged their crucial role in ensuring accurate electoral rolls, voter facilitation and inclusive participation.

"BLOs truly are the backbone of our electoral process," remarked the CEC, while highlighting that the credibility of elections begins with a robust, accurate and transparent electoral roll.

The CEC appreciated the role of BLOs as the first point of contact between the Election Commission and electors, stating that their field-level engagement plays a vital role in ensuring that every eligible citizen is enrolled and every voter is facilitated.

The CEC emphasized the importance of maintaining the purity and accuracy of electoral

rolls through continuous updation and verification. He also highlighted the significance of technology-enabled initiatives such as ERO Net, which have strengthened electoral roll management by improving efficiency, transparency and accessibility.

Interacting with the BLOs, Shri Gyanesh Kumar urged them to continue discharging their duties with dedication, impartiality and a service-oriented approach.

He further advised the BLOs to remain focused on facts, official processes and their responsibilities towards electors, and not get influenced by misinformation or narratives that may create confusion among citizens.

He underlined the importance of voter awareness, informed participation and public trust in the democratic process.

Speaking about India's electoral framework, the CEC stated that India leads the world's major democracies in ensuring a transparent electoral process. He highlighted that every stage of the election process — from preparation of electoral rolls to polling and counting — is subjected to regular scrutiny and audit by political parties and candidates, reinforcing transparency and credibility.

Shri Gyanesh Kumar also encouraged BLOs to maintain regular engagement with citizens, address their concerns effectively and ensure that electors remain aware of their rights and responsibilities.

The interaction formed part of the CEC's ongoing visit to Jammu & Kashmir aimed at reviewing electoral preparedness, engaging with stakeholders and taking feedback from election functionaries at the grassroots level.

DC Bandipora reviews Road Safety Measures, seeks Time-Bound ATR from Departments

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JUNE 29: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, Monday chaired a meeting of the District Road Safety Committee (DRSC) at the Mini Secretariat here, pressing departments for stricter accountability and time-bound action on pending road safety directives.

Reviewing the status of Action Taken Reports (ATRs) from concerned departments, the DC underscored the need for closer inter-departmental coordination and directed all line departments to ensure prompt implementation of road safety measures to reduce accidents and protect commuters.

She sought comprehensive details of road safety works executed during 2025-26 and called upon departments to furnish projections for works proposed in the current financial year 2026-27, enabling the district to review and monitor its road safety action plan

more effectively. The DC directed the Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B) Circle Bandipora (Member Secretary DRSC), to consolidate ATRs from all line departments within one week. The SE was also instructed to circulate an online reporting link to facilitate timely submission and monitoring.

Stressing that road safety is a shared responsibility, the DC urged all stakeholder departments to ensure swift execution of committee directives, with particular focus on infrastructure upgrades, identification of vulnerable road stretches, and implementation of preventive measures.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Education Officer; Executive Engineers of R&B and PMGSY; Assistant Regional Transport Officer; CEO Municipal Council Bandipora; Executive Officers of Municipal Committees Sumbal and Hajin; representatives of BRO and NHAI; and other concerned officers.

Grand Finale of One-Month Children's Folk Dance Workshop Held at Shrine of Wahab Sahib (RH) Khrew Shar

HT NEWS NETWORK

KHREW, JUNE 29: The Kashmir Damali Dance Centre, (KDDC) Gopalpora Zalowa, Chadoora, Budgam successfully organized the grand finale of its one-month Children's Folk Dance Workshop on 28 June 2026 at the historic Shrine of Wahab Sahib (RH) Khrew Shar. The workshop was conducted with the support of the Ministry of Culture, Govt, of India under the "CFPGS" Scheme, with the aim of preserving and promoting the rich folk dance traditions of J&K among the younger generation. The concluding cultural programme featured colourful and energetic performances by the young participants

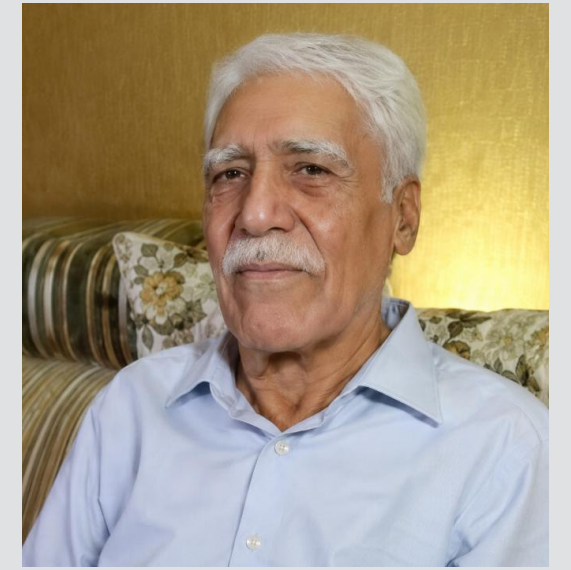


who confidently showcased the skills they had acquired during the month-long training. Their impressive presentations were warmly appreciated by the audience. A large number of pilgrims and local residents attended the event and thoroughly enjoyed the folk dance performances. They applauded the dedication of the young artists and appreciated the organisers' efforts to preserve and promote Kashmir's rich cultural heritage and traditional performing arts. The organisers expressed their sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Culture, the Shrine authorities, participants, parents, volunteers and all those who contributed to the successful completion of the workshop and its grand finale.

AMK Condoles the Demise of Prof. Amar Malmohi, Key Visionary Behind Its Founding

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 29: Adbee Markaz Kamraz (AMK) expresses deep grief over the demise of eminent Kashmiri and Urdu writer, dramatist and educationist Prof. Amar Malmohi, who passed away in Pune yesterday. Though Prof. Malmohi was not formally a member of AMK, he was among the key intellectuals who conceptualized its creation in 1972. His deep association and deliberations with stalwarts like Prof. Mohi-ud-Din Hajini, Prof. Rashid Nazki, and Mohammad Ahsan Ahsan were instrumental in shaping



the vision and mandate of AMK as the premier literary body of north Kashmir. Prof. Malmohi's contribution to AMK's intellectual life continued beyond its founding. He authored a landmark theme paper for one of AMK's conferences in the 1970s, which helped define the organization's literary and cultural direction during its formative years.

A revered college teacher at Sopore, Prof. Malmohi mentored generations of writers. His Kashmiri novel *Trash ta Tarpan* is considered a masterpiece of modern Kashmiri fiction. He won First Prize in All India Radio's National Radio Play Writing Competition 1987, bringing national recognition to Kashmiri drama. His Urdu novels *Kuchle Phool* 1965 and *Zafran Zaar* 1971 remain important works. Despite migration, he remained anchored to Kashmir. He was a regular visitor to the Valley and maintained lifelong bonds with AMK's leadership. He shared a very personal relationship with present AMK President M. Amin Bhat, who recalls him as a mentor and guiding force.

AMK considers his demise an immense loss to Kashmiri letters. The organization stands with his family, students, and admirers across the literary world.

We pray to Almighty Allah to grant him *Jannatul-Firdous* and give strength to the bereaved family and literary fraternity.

GDC Ganderbal organizes annual College Road Race

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUN 29: The Department of Physical Education and Sports of Government Degree College (GDC) Ganderbal, successfully organized the Annual College Road Race for boys and girls under the theme "Nasha Mukht Bharat" on Monday. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from more than 80 students, including NSS volunteers, NCC volunteers, and students from various academic departments of the college.

The road race was aimed at promoting physical fitness, healthy living, and creating awareness about the importance of a drug-free society. Participants displayed remarkable endurance, discipline, and sportsmanship throughout the event.

In the girl's category, Insha Fayaz of 4th semester secured the 1st position, followed by Uzma Khurshid of 4th Semester in 2nd position and Reeba Jan of 2nd Semester in 3rd position. In the boy's category, Aaqib Ahmad Ganie of 6th Semester secured the 1st position, Zahid Maqbool Khan of 1st Semester secured the 2nd position, while Fajid Ahmad Bijard of 2nd Semester secured the 3rd position.

To encourage sporting excellence, medals were awarded to students securing 1st to 10th positions



in both categories. The winners securing 1st, 2nd, and 3rd positions were also presented with trophies, certificates, and cash prizes, while participants securing 6th to 10th positions were awarded medals and certificates.

Principal of the College, Prof. Fouzia Fatima, congratulated the winners and appreciated all participants for their enthusiastic involvement. She commended the efforts of the Department of Physical Education and Sports and appreciated the dedication and hard work of the Director of Physical Education and Sports, Dr. Ravinder Kour, Convener Sports Committee, Dr. Shabana Aslam, APTI Deedar Singh, and other staff members of the Sports Department for the successful organization of the event. She emphasized the role of sports in fostering discipline, fitness, and awareness against drug abuse among youth.

The programme was moderated by Dr. Ulfat, Head, Department of Psychology, while the vote of thanks was presented by Dr. Jamsheeda, Head, Department of Urdu and NSS Officer. The event concluded with the distribution of prizes and certificates among the winners and a renewed commitment towards promoting the message of a healthy and drug-free society under the *Nasha Mukht Bharat* Abhiyan.

The Annual College Road Race served as an important platform for encouraging students to adopt a healthy lifestyle, participate in constructive activities, and contribute towards building a drug-free and physically active society.

PSA Delegation Meets CEO Budgam, Seeks Stronger Coordination for Quality Education

FAROQ RATHER

BUDGAM, JUNE 29: A delegation of the Private Schools' Association (PSA), led by its Director Media & Communications and District President Budgam, Dr. Owais Mattoo, on Monday called on the newly appointed Chief Education Officer (CEO), Budgam, Bashir Ahmad Ganai, to welcome him and discuss key issues concerning private schools and student welfare in the district. The delegation presented bouquets to the CEO as a gesture of goodwill and extended their best wishes for a successful and people-oriented tenure. The delegation included Tariq Ahmad Chopan (Zonal President Magam), Shameem Ahmad Bhat (Zonal President Charar-i-Sharief), Altaf Raja (Zonal President Narbal), Myser Ahmad, Sheeraz Ahmad Raina, Bilal Ahmad Dar, Altaf Hussain Shah, and other members of the Association. During the meeting, the members held a detailed discussion on various administrative and academic issues affecting private educational institutions in Budgam. They highlighted the need for timely redressal of genuine concerns, greater coordination between the Education Department and private schools, and effective implementation of student-centric policies to improve the quality of education. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Owais Mattoo welcomed Bashir Ahmad Ganai on assuming charge as CEO Budgam and



expressed confidence in his leadership. He said education is a shared responsibility that requires mutual trust and continuous cooperation between the Education Department and private institutions. He assured the Association's full support in initiatives aimed at strengthening the education sector, improving academic standards, and creating a more student-friendly learning environment across the district.

Responding to the delegation, CEO Budgam Bashir Ahmad Ganai thanked the members for their visit and appreciated the constructive role played by private educational institutions. He reaffirmed that his office remains committed to addressing all genuine issues of private schools in accordance with rules and regulations. He said government and private educational institutions are equal partners in nation-building

and both contribute significantly to the intellectual and social development of students. He also stressed the importance of maintaining an open, transparent, and cooperative relationship with all stakeholders for the overall improvement of education in Budgam.

Other members of the delegation also emphasized the need for regular dialogue, institutional coordination, and active participation of private schools in government-led educational programmes, awareness campaigns, and student welfare initiatives.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, with both the PSA delegation and the Chief Education Officer reaffirming their commitment to work together for strengthening the education sector, enhancing academic outcomes, and ensuring the overall welfare of students across Budgam district.

KU, Intel inaugurate two-day Digital Readiness Workshop to build AI-ready institutions

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 29: In a significant initiative aimed at fostering digital transformation in higher education, the University of Kashmir (KU) in collaboration with Intel, inaugurated a two-day Digital Readiness Workshop for Academic Leaders on the theme "Building AI-Ready Institutions" which started here at KU on Monday.

The workshop has been designed to equip academic leaders with the knowledge and strategic insights required to effectively integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) into teaching, learning, research and institutional governance.

The programme focuses on key areas including Digital Mindset and Leadership, AI for Academic Excellence, Institutional Readiness and Transformation, and AI Tools, Platforms and Integration, with an emphasis on preparing institutions for an AI-driven future.

The two-day workshop is being attended by faculty members, officers and academic leaders of the University who will engage in intensive deliberations on leveraging AI for institutional excellence.

Addressing the gathering, Vice Chancellor KU Prof. Nilofar Khan Chief Patron of the workshop said, "We must acknowledge the paradigm shift that has taken place in the entire teaching-learning

pedagogy with the advent of Artificial Intelligence and the way modern institutions of higher learning and research are evolving. Academic institutions can no longer remain passive observers of this transformation but must actively embrace technological innovation to remain relevant and globally competitive."

Reiterating the University's commitment to promoting digital literacy and innovation, Prof. Khan observed that the purpose of such capacity-building initiatives should extend beyond merely understanding Artificial Intelligence. She stressed that the real objective is to enable educators and academic administrators to utilize AI productively and responsibly in delivering meaningful, efficient and impactful solutions to contemporary academic and administrative challenges while nurturing an innovation-driven academic ecosystem.

In his address, Commissioner Secretary, Department of Information Technology, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, Shri Saurabh Bhagat (IAS) who was chief guest on the occasion underscored the importance of strengthening collaboration among academia, industry and government to fully harness the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence. "The future of higher education lies in meaningful partnerships where academic institutions, technology leaders and govern-



ment work together to create innovative and sustainable solutions. AI has the potential to significantly enhance the productivity, efficiency and decision-making capabilities of academic leaders and institutions," he said.

Referring to the growing adoption of AI across governance and public service delivery, Shri Bhagat highlighted several interventions undertaken by the Government of Jammu & Kashmir in sectors such as medical diagnosis, agriculture, urban governance, infrastructure development and disaster mitigation, where AI-enabled tools and chatbot-based platforms are now being designed to deliver effective and citizen-centric solutions.

Speaking on the occasion, Registrar, KU Prof. Naseer Iqbal said

that the University has already positioned itself at the forefront of AI-driven academic innovation by introducing programmes in Artificial Intelligence, Data Science and Robotics, besides integrating AI-related courses across various B.Tech programmes offered at different campuses. He said the University is committed to mentoring the next generation of AI professionals through contemporary curricula, interdisciplinary learning and the progressive integration of AI into academics, research and institutional practices.

In his remarks, Director Colleges, Higher Education Department, Government of Jammu & Kashmir and Dean Academic Affairs, IUST, Prof. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, emphasised the need to introduce AI-oriented academic

interventions at the college level so that students are exposed to emerging technologies from the very beginning of their higher education journey. He observed that AI should be viewed as an enabling tool capable of strengthening academic governance, teaching-learning processes and institutional management, adding that academic leaders must acquire the necessary competencies to effectively integrate AI into educational administration and classroom practices.

In her remarks Shatarupa Dasgupta, National Program Manager, Intel Digital Readiness Programs, provided valuable insights into the essential elements of building AI-ready institutions, including visionary leadership, skilled human resources, strategic roadmaps and comprehensive digital readiness. She observed that Artificial Intelligence is no longer a distant or futuristic concept but has become a practical force shaping every profession. She noted that in the near future, professionals across disciplines will increasingly be evaluated by their ability to effectively understand and utilise AI tools within their respective domains, making digital readiness an indispensable institutional priority.

Dr. Javid Ahmad Sheikh conducted the proceedings of the inaugural session, while Dr. Manzoor Chashoo proposed the vote of thanks on the occasion.

HT EDITORIAL

Enough of War, Let Humanity Breathe

As peace talks remain on the table and fresh hostilities return to the headlines, the world deserves actions that end conflict not words that deepen uncertainty.

Just when the world began to believe that diplomacy might finally replace confrontation in West Asia, fresh tensions have once again cast a shadow over the region. Reports of an attack on a ship near the Strait of Hormuz, renewed warnings from the United States to Iran, and the continuing face-off between Iran and Israel have reminded everyone how easily a fragile truce can unravel. Yet, amid these troubling developments, US President Donald Trump has maintained that the scheduled peace talks with Iran will go ahead. The contrast could not be more striking. On one hand, there is the promise of dialogue. On the other, there are threats, military posturing and incidents that keep the possibility of another dangerous escalation alive. Such mixed signals do not inspire confidence—they fuel uncertainty.

Today, it is not only the nations directly involved that are living with the consequences of this crisis. Every new warning, every military strike and every retaliatory move sends shockwaves through the global economy. Oil prices fluctuate, financial markets turn volatile, shipping costs rise and inflation becomes an unavoidable burden for ordinary families. The world's economy has, in many ways, become hostage to changing political and military statements.

The Strait of Hormuz is far more than a narrow stretch of water. It is one of the world's most vital trade routes, carrying a substantial share of global energy supplies. Any disruption there affects businesses, industries and households across continents. Countries like India, which depend heavily on energy imports from the Gulf and have millions of citizens working in the region, are especially vulnerable to prolonged instability.

The greatest tragedy of every conflict is that those who suffer the most are often those who have no role in starting it. It is the common citizen who pays the price through higher living costs, shrinking opportunities, uncertainty about the future and, in many cases, the heartbreaking loss of loved ones. Behind every geopolitical headline are millions of ordinary people simply trying to live normal lives.

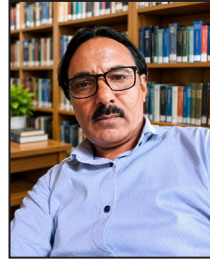
There is nothing weak about choosing peace. On the contrary, genuine leadership is measured not by the ability to wage war but by the courage to prevent one. If negotiations are indeed scheduled, they must be pursued with sincerity and consistency. Diplomatic efforts cannot succeed if they are repeatedly overshadowed by military actions and inflammatory rhetoric. The United States, Iran and Israel all have responsibilities that extend beyond their national interests. Their decisions influence global stability, international trade and the lives of billions of people. The world is watching—not for stronger threats, but for stronger commitments to peace.

History has shown that wars are easy to begin but painfully difficult to end. The victories they promise are often overshadowed by the destruction they leave behind. No nation emerges truly stronger from a conflict that devastates economies, displaces families and deepens human suffering. This is the moment for wisdom to prevail over anger, dialogue over confrontation and statesmanship over military brinkmanship. The opportunity for peace still exists, but it cannot survive on contradictory messages or intermittent truces. The people of the world have waited long enough. They do not ask for miracles. They ask for stability, security and the simple right to live without the constant fear of another war.

It is time to silence the guns, honour the negotiating table and allow humanity to breathe again. Peace should never become the casualty of politics.

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The Great Sacrifice of Imam Hussain (AS) for the Survival of Humanity



JAMEEL ANSARI

Was Imam Hussain (AS) martyred only for the preservation of Islam? Did he sacrifice his life for power, wealth, or worldly glory? Was his journey to Karbala driven by the desire to establish a kingdom? As the beloved grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), could Imam Hussain (AS) not have pledged allegiance and lived a life of comfort? Why then did he choose the path of immense hardship, suffering, and martyrdom? What was the objective that compelled him to stand firmly against the tide of his time and ultimately emerge victorious despite his apparent military defeat?

The sacrifice of Imam Hussain (AS) on the plains of Karbala was not merely for the protection of Islam; it was a sacrifice for the survival of humanity, justice, dignity, and moral values. After years of patience and restraint, Imam Hussain (AS) witnessed the degradation of human values and the distortion of Islamic teachings under the rule of Yazid. As the grandson and rightful heir to the legacy of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), he could not remain silent while oppression and corruption threatened the very essence of Islam.

When pressure was exerted upon him in Madinah to pledge allegiance to Yazid, Imam Hussain (AS) refused without hesitation. His refusal erected an unbreakable moral barrier that forever exposed the illegitimacy and tyranny of Yazid's rule. Had Imam Hussain (AS) sought political power, he could have mobilized thousands of supporters from Madinah and Makkah. Instead, he discouraged many from accompanying him and even advised some followers to return, while personally inviting only those whom he believed were destined to share in the supreme sacrifice of Karbala. These actions clearly demonstrate that his mission was not to wage a political war or seize authority, but to safeguard the principles of truth and justice.

Had Imam Hussain (AS) accepted Yazid's authority, he would have enjoyed every worldly privilege that rulers could offer. However, he refused



because Yazid represented a system that openly violated the teachings of Islam. According to the Shi'a understanding of history, Yazid's rule symbolized moral corruption, injustice, and disregard for the sanctity of religion. Islam itself seemed to be crying for rescue, and Imam Hussain (AS) responded by offering everything he possessed—his family, his companions, his young son Ali Asghar (AS), his brave son Ali Akbar (AS), and ultimately his own life to preserve the true message of Islam.

Determined to protect the faith, Imam Hussain (AS) departed from Makkah before completing the Hajj pilgrimage after learning of assassination plots against him within the sacred sanctuary. He converted his pilgrimage into Umrah to preserve the sanctity of the Kaaba and proceeded towards Karbala, fully aware of the immense trials that awaited him.

Islam is not a religion of violence or coercion. It is a faith founded upon morality, justice, compassion, and respect for human dignity. Muslims are instructed to win hearts through righteous conduct rather than hatred

or oppression. Since Imam Hussain (AS) embodied these divine values, every step he took reflected the highest standards of Islamic ethics.

Faced with relentless oppression, he responded with patience, steadfastness, and unwavering faith rather than revenge or aggression.

The renowned revolutionary poet Josh Malihabadi beautifully expressed the unmatched courage displayed at Karbala:

"Kaat Sakta Hay Rage Gardan Say Khanjar Aadmi
Lashkaroo Ko Roond Saktay Hain Bahattar Aadmi"

Karbala witnessed tyranny in its most brutal form. Yazid's forces attempted to extinguish the light of truth through overwhelming military strength, denying water even to innocent children. Yet Imam Hussain's (AS) extraordinary patience transformed apparent defeat into an eternal moral victory. The blockade of water demonstrated the cruelty of the oppressors, while Imam Hussain (AS) taught the world that depriving human beings of life's most basic necessity is a grave injustice.

According to Islamic belief, water is a divine blessing granted freely to all humanity. Imam Hussain (AS), despite possessing unmatched spiritual rank, never sought divine punishment against his enemies. Instead, he endured unimaginable suffering with remarkable patience and trust in Allah. His steadfastness became an everlasting example of faith under the harshest circumstances.

The military battle of Karbala concluded on the afternoon of Ashura, but its message had only begun. After the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS), the responsibility of preserving and conveying the truth fell upon his sister, Lady Zainab (SA), and his son, Imam Ali Zain al-Abidin (AS). Where swords had spoken in Karbala, eloquence, truth, and courage now became the weapons in the courts of Kufa and Damascus.

The powerful sermons delivered by Lady Zainab (SA) shook the palace of Yazid and exposed his crimes before the public. Likewise, the addresses of Imam Zain al-Abidin (AS), despite his illness and captivity, revealed the true objectives of Imam Hussain's mission. Through their courage, sacrifice, and unwavering faith, the message of Karbala spread far beyond the battlefield and awakened the conscience of humanity. According to Shi'a history, Hazrat Zainab (SA) addressed the people of Kufa in a manner reminiscent of her father, Imam Ali (AS), reminding them of their broken promises and moral failure. In Damascus, despite humiliation, chains, and captivity, she stood fearlessly before Yazid's court and transformed what was intended as a display of victory into a lasting indictment of tyranny.

The sacrifice of Imam Hussain (AS) ensured that truth would never be silenced by oppression. His martyrdom continues to inspire millions across religions, cultures, and nations who see in Karbala the timeless struggle between justice and injustice, freedom and tyranny, dignity and humiliation. The remembrance of Imam Hussain (AS) has transcended geographical boundaries. His message belongs not to one nation or one community alone, but to all humanity.

The tragedy of Karbala remains an eternal symbol of sacrifice, moral courage, and unwavering commitment to justice. Imam Hussain (AS) did not merely sacrifice his life for his own generation; he offered it for every generation that seeks truth, freedom, and the preservation of human dignity.

Vanishing Lifelines: Kashmir is Running Out of Water



JAVOID BHAT

Once celebrated as the Paradise on Earth, Kashmir is now witnessing a silent environmental tragedy. Crystal-clear springs, majestic lakes, meandering streams and wetlands that have sustained generations are shrinking at an alarming pace. The region's lifeline, water is disappearing before our eyes, raising serious concerns for agriculture, drinking water and ecological balance.

The reasons are evident yet alarming. Unplanned urbanization, indiscriminate dumping of waste, untreated sewage and plastic pollution have severely contaminated our precious water bodies. Encroachments on wetlands and the destruction of natural catchment areas have further weakened Kashmir's water security.

Adding to the crisis is the growing impact of climate change. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, reduced snowfall and the rapid melting of glaciers have disrupted the Valley's natural water cycle. Springs that once flowed throughout the year are drying up, while rivers experience fluctuating water levels. Farmers are struggling as irrigation water becomes scarce, threatening food production and rural livelihoods.



The solution lies not only with governments but also with every citizen. Protecting lakes, restoring wetlands, harvesting rainwater, conserving groundwater, preventing pollution and planting more trees must become a people's movement. Every household, institution and community has a role in safeguarding this priceless resource.

Water is not an unlimited gift, it is a shared

responsibility. The choices we make today will determine whether future generations inherit flowing rivers and thriving ecosystems or barren landscapes marked by scarcity.

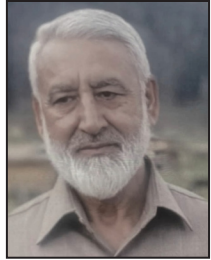
Saving water is no longer an option, it is the only way to secure Kashmir's future.

"When the springs fall silent, the future of a civilization begins to dry up."

HT - TRAVELOGUE

Paradise on the Edge: A Journey Through Kashmir's Splendour and Neglect

From the sacred serenity of Shahdra Sharif to the untapped beauty of Pir Ki Gali, a journey that celebrates nature while confronting the urgent need for conservation, accountability, and sustainable development.



■ SGM ANDRABI

There are journeys that simply take us from one destination to another, and there are journeys that leave us with questions long after the road has ended. My recent visit from Srinagar to the revered shrine of Hazrat Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah (RA) at Shahdra Sharif via the historic Mughal Road was one such experience—a journey through some of the most breathtaking landscapes in Jammu and Kashmir, but also through the harsh realities of neglect, environmental degradation, and missed opportunities.

The title of this article borrows inspiration from John Milton's Paradise Lost. Yet this is not about a literary masterpiece; it is about the paradise of Jammu and Kashmir itself—a paradise whose unmatched natural beauty continues to inspire awe, even as human neglect threatens to diminish its glory.

The Mughal Road stands as one of the most significant infrastructural achievements in Jammu and Kashmir. By reconnecting the Kashmir Valley with the border districts of Rajouri and Poonch, it has shortened distances, strengthened social and cultural bonds, facilitated trade, and improved access to education and healthcare. Though now designated as National Highway-444 and entrusted to the Border Roads Organisation, the highway still requires considerable upgrading to match the standards expected of a modern national highway.

Maintaining a road that traverses rugged mountain terrain is no easy task. Heavy snowfall, avalanches, landslides, and extreme weather conditions present formidable engineering challenges. Nevertheless, this strategic corridor deserves sustained investment and meticulous maintenance, not only because it serves as a vital transport link but because it has become a gateway to some of the most captivating landscapes in the Himalayas.

One aspect of the journey that deserves immediate attention is the condition of the forests along the route. Large quantities of naturally fallen timber lie scat-



tered across forested slopes, having been brought down by snow, glacial movement, or landslides. Much of this valuable resource is simply left to decay.

A scientific and transparent mechanism for extracting and utilising such timber could generate significant revenue for the government while making affordable timber available to nearby communities. Similar conditions prevail in many forest areas across Jammu and Kashmir, suggesting that a valuable natural resource remains largely underutilised.

The spiritual destination of Shahdra Sharif presents a more encouraging picture. The shrine of Hazrat Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah (RA) continues to evolve into one of the Union Territory's foremost pilgrimage centres. Renovation of the Jama Masjid, restoration of dormitories, construction of guest houses, and improvements in the internal road network reflect commendable efforts by the shrine management and the authorities.

Yet, the increasing number of pilgrims demands a corresponding expansion of public facilities. The water supply system requires strengthening, additional toilets and bathing facilities are urgently needed, and pedestrian infrastructure within the shrine complex should be further improved to ensure safety and convenience for the thousands of devotees who visit every day.

Equally important is the issue of cleanliness.

Despite sincere efforts by the shrine

administration, littering by visitors continues to undermine the sanctity of this revered place. Plastic bottles, disposable plates, polythene bags, and other waste have become an unfortunate feature not only of pilgrimage centres but also of tourist destinations across Jammu and Kashmir.

The success of public campaigns against drug abuse demonstrates that behavioural change is possible when government and society work together. A similarly determined movement is now needed to combat plastic pollution and irresponsible littering. Public awareness must be complemented by strict enforcement, including penalties for those who pollute public spaces. Preserving the environment is no longer merely a civic duty; it has become an economic and ecological necessity.

If Shahdra Sharif reflects gradual progress, Pir Ki Gali tells a very different story.

Situated at an altitude of nearly 11,500 feet, Pir Ki Gali is among the most spectacular locations along the Mughal Road. Its lush alpine meadows, sweeping mountain vistas, and refreshing climate attract thousands of visitors each year. Yet the area remains remarkably devoid of even the most basic public amenities. During my visit, I could not locate a single functional public toilet, bathroom, or washroom. What I did encounter were heaps of plastic waste and discarded disposable materials scattered across one of nature's finest landscapes.

Perhaps the greatest irony lay in discovering a commemorative plaque mark-



ing the inauguration of an Eco Park by the then Forest Minister and present Member of Parliament, Mian Altaf Ahmad. The plaque survives, but little else. No eco-park exists. No ecological infrastructure is visible. No meaningful tourism facilities have materialised. Instead, the site stands as a silent reminder of unfulfilled promises.

This neglect is difficult to comprehend. Pir Ki Gali possesses enormous potential to emerge as a premier eco-tourism destination capable of generating employment, promoting local entrepreneurship, and contributing significantly to the regional economy. Small seasonal food stalls already provide livelihoods to local residents. With proper planning, environmentally sensitive infrastructure, and sustainable tourism policies, the area could become one of the crown jewels of Himalayan tourism.

The Mughal Road itself was conceived under the visionary leadership of the late Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, who envisioned not merely a road but an engine of economic transformation for the entire Pir Panjal region. While the physical road has been completed, the broader developmental vision that accompanied it remains only partially realised.

The proposed tunnel beneath Pir Ki Gali will undoubtedly enhance all-weather connectivity. However, the construction of the tunnel should not reduce the importance of preserving and maintaining the existing mountain road. The scenic route itself is a tourism

asset and should continue to attract travellers seeking to experience the unmatched beauty of the Pir Panjal range.

During conversations with local residents, I was informed that a visitor from Punjab had reportedly donated one lakh rupees for constructing public bathroom facilities. Yet no one appeared to know how these funds had been utilised. Such concerns deserve transparency, accountability, and prompt clarification.

Jammu and Kashmir has long been celebrated as "Paradise on Earth." But paradise cannot be sustained by natural beauty alone. It demands responsible governance, visionary planning, environmental stewardship, and an informed citizenry committed to protecting what nature has so generously bestowed.

The preservation of this paradise is a shared responsibility. Governments must build and maintain infrastructure, institutions must ensure accountability, and citizens and visitors alike must embrace civic responsibility. Only through such collective commitment can we ensure that future generations inherit not a paradise diminished by neglect, but one enriched by thoughtful conservation and sustainable development.

S G M Andrabi is Consultant Editor, Headlines Today and a retired Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) of the Jammu & Kashmir Police. His writings focus on governance, public policy, environmental conservation, and issues of social and public importance.

Basic Sciences Struggling to Survive in India: The Backbone of Innovation in Need of Revival



■ DR. NAVJOT SANDHU

Science has always been the foundation of human progress. Every technological revolution, medical breakthrough, engineering achievement, and industrial innovation has its roots in the basic sciences—Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, and Earth Sciences. These disciplines seek to understand the fundamental laws of nature, often driven by curiosity rather than immediate commercial gain. Yet, despite providing the knowledge that powers modern technologies, basic sciences in India are steadily losing ground to application-oriented disciplines.

The relationship between basic and applied sciences is inseparable. Applied sciences transform scientific knowledge into practical solutions, but that knowledge originates from years of fundamental research. Quantum mechanics laid the foundation for semiconductors and modern electronics, organic

chemistry enabled life-saving pharmaceuticals, while mathematical theories now underpin artificial intelligence, cryptography, and data science. Without sustained investment in basic sciences, the pipeline of future innovations inevitably weakens.

Unfortunately, India's educational landscape has increasingly shifted toward professional and vocational programs. Engineering, medicine, management, computer science, and artificial intelligence dominate student preferences because they promise quicker employment and higher salaries. Universities, too, often highlight placement records rather than research achievements. As a result, undergraduate programs in Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Biology are witnessing declining enrollments, leading some institutions to reduce seats or even consider closing departments. This creates a cycle of reduced funding, weaker infrastructure, and declining academic excellence.

Career uncertainty remains one of the biggest deterrents for students interested in basic sciences. Unlike professional courses that often provide direct entry into industry, careers in scientific research usually require postgraduate studies, doctoral research, and years of academic training before stable employment becomes available. Young researchers frequently face temporary positions, intense competition for research fund-

ing, and limited faculty opportunities. Faced with these realities, many talented students choose financially secure professions over research despite their passion for science.

Public perception further compounds the problem. Basic sciences are often viewed as pathways only to teaching careers, while professions in engineering, medicine, finance, and technology enjoy greater prestige. This overlooks the fact that scientists contribute to pharmaceuticals, environmental protection, advanced materials, space research, defence technology, biotechnology, and national policymaking. Society celebrates technological products but rarely recognizes the decades of scientific research that made them possible.

Research funding presents another major challenge. Although India has expanded investment in science and technology, funding priorities increasingly favour projects promising immediate commercial applications, patents, and start-ups. While translational research is important, excessive emphasis on short-term outcomes risks neglecting curiosity-driven investigations whose applications may emerge decades later. History repeatedly demonstrates that transformative discoveries often arise from research with no immediate commercial objective. Fundamental science requires patience, freedom, and sustained support.

Many universities also struggle with outdated laboratories, delayed procurement of scientific equipment, insufficient maintenance budgets, vacant faculty positions, and bureaucratic hurdles that slow research progress. Scientists often spend more time dealing with administrative procedures than conducting experiments. Meanwhile, growing pressure to publish frequently and secure grants sometimes encourages quantity over originality, leaving little room for the long-term exploration that fundamental discoveries demand.

These challenges have contributed to the migration of talented researchers abroad, where stronger research ecosystems, better infrastructure, greater funding, and stable career opportunities offer more favourable conditions. While international collaboration benefits science, the continued loss of highly skilled researchers weakens India's capacity for indigenous innovation and scientific leadership.

Ironically, India is currently pursuing ambitious goals in artificial intelligence, semiconductor manufacturing, biotechnology, renewable energy, quantum technology, precision medicine, and space exploration. Every one of these strategic sectors depends fundamentally on advances in Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, and Materials Science. Artificial intelligence relies on mathematical algorithms, semi-

conductor technology depends on solid-state physics, renewable energy advances through chemistry and materials science, while modern medicine increasingly draws upon molecular biology and genomics. Without strong basic sciences, these aspirations cannot be sustained.

Reviving basic sciences therefore requires coordinated efforts from government, universities, funding agencies, industry, and society. Greater investment in research infrastructure, sustained support for curiosity-driven research, transparent faculty recruitment, attractive career pathways for young scientists, and simplified administrative processes are essential. Educational institutions must encourage inquiry-based learning instead of rote memorization, inspiring students to appreciate the excitement of scientific discovery. Industry should also recognize that investment in fundamental research is a long-term investment in future technological competitiveness.

The author is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Chemistry at Chandigarh University, Mohali. She is actively engaged in teaching and research in the field of chemistry and has contributed to several scholarly publications. She can be reached at navjotsandhuchemistry@gmail.com.

Coffee not a carcinogen, but 'very hot' drinks may cause cancer: WHO

The World Health Organization's research arm has downgraded its classification of coffee as a possible carcinogen, declaring there isn't enough proof to show a link to cancer.

But the International Agency for Research on Cancer, or IARC, also announced in a report published on Wednesday that drinking "very hot" beverages of any kind could potentially raise the cancer risk, and it classified them as "probably carcinogenic" to humans.

In particular, it cited countries including China, Iran and those in South America, where teas such as the bitter herbal infusion mate are traditionally drunk at extremely high temperatures — above 65 or 70 degrees Celsius (150 or 160 Fahrenheit) — considerably hotter than drinks would normally be served in cafes across North America and Europe.

Experts convened by the Lyon-based IARC concluded that there was inadequate evidence to suggest coffee might cause cancer, according to a letter

published in the Lancet Oncology. "I'm not really sure why coffee was in a higher category in the first place," said Owen Yang, an epidemiologist at Oxford University who has previously studied the possible link between coffee and cancer. He was not part of the IARC expert group. "The best evidence available suggests that coffee does not raise the cancer risk," he said.

Drinking very hot beverages, however, just might.

Dana Loomis, deputy head of the IARC program that classifies carcinogens, said they began to look into a possible link after seeing unusually high rates of esophageal cancer in countries where drinking very hot beverages is common. He said that even at temperatures below 60 degrees Celsius (140 Fahrenheit), hot beverages can scald the skin, and that consuming drinks at even higher temperatures could be harmful.

Loomis said very hot beverages might cause a "thermal injury" in the throat that could eventually promote



the growth of tumours, but that evidence was limited. He said there wasn't enough evidence to suggest if eating very hot food might also be risky.

Other experts said that people should remain focused on the leading causes of cancers including of the oesophagus and that there were more important changes they could make other than waiting for their drinks to cool.

"Quitting smoking and reducing alcohol consumption are much more significant for reducing cancer risk than the temperature of what you're drinking," said Dr Otis Brawley, chief medical officer of the American Cancer Society. Brawley said the cancer risk posed by drinking hot beverages was similar to that posed by eating pickled vegetables.

Still, he welcomed the news that coffee would no longer be deemed a possible carcinogen.

"As a heavy coffee drinker, I have always enjoyed my coffee guilt-free," he said. "But now there is scientific evidence to justify that." (SCIAM)

Migraine can put women at higher risk of heart diseases

Women who suffer from migraine headaches have an increased risk of developing cardiovascular disease in later life, says a study.

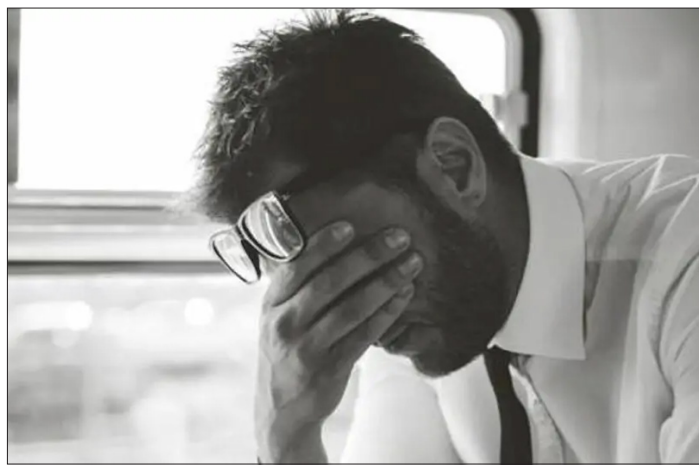
The findings showed that women with migraine have a higher risk of stroke or heart attacks than those without the condition.

"Our analysis suggests that migraine should be considered an important risk marker for cardiovascular disease, particularly in women," said lead researcher Tobias Kurth, Head of the Institute of Public Health (IPH) at Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin, a teaching hospital in Germany.

Their findings are based on an analysis of data collected as part of the US-based Nurses' Health Study II.

A team of US and German researchers analysed data from more than 115,500 women enrolled in the Nurses' Health Study II.

The participants were aged between 25 and 42 years at baseline and free from cardiovascular disease and, of them, 17,531 reported a physician's diagnosis of IANS



migraine.

Between 1989 and 2011, cardiovascular events were observed in 1,329 of these women; 223 died as a result.

"The risk of developing cardiovascular events was shown to be 50 per cent higher in women with a diagnosis of migraine," Kurth said.

"When compared to women unaffected by the condition, the risk of developing a heart attack was 39 per cent higher for women with migraine, the risk of having a

stroke 62 per cent higher, and that of developing angina 73 per cent higher," Kurth explained.

The results were published in the British Medical Journal.

The researchers said that further research would be necessary in order to identify the underlying causes responsible for the links between migraine and cardiovascular diseases.

The question of whether male migraine sufferers also have an increased risk of cardiovascular disease remains to be elucidated.

Want to live longer? Include whole grains in your daily diet

Including three servings of whole grains in everyday diet can increase your longevity while cutting the risk of death from heart disease and cancer, claim researchers.

For each 16-gram serving of whole grains, public health researchers at Harvard University noted a seven percent decrease in overall risk of death, including a nine percent decline in risk of heart disease death and five percent decline in risk of cancer-related death.

Upping whole grain intake to three servings per day, or 48 grams, brought about a 20 percent drop in overall risk of death, including a 25 percent decline in risk of heart disease death and 14 percent decline in risk of cancer-related death.

For their research, scientists analysed results of more than 12 previous studies conducted between 1970 and 2010 in the United States, Britain and Scandinavian countries, involving 786,076 male and female participants.

"These findings further support current dietary guidelines that recommend at least three daily servings (or 48 grams) of whole grains to improve long-term health and pre-

vent premature death," senior author Qi Sun of Harvard's Department of Nutrition said in a statement.

He warned against popular low-carbohydrate diets that ignore the benefits of whole grains, saying they should be "adopted with caution" because they may be linked to higher risk of heart disease and death.

Whole grains include foods such as whole wheat, oats, brown rice and quinoa. They contain fibre, which may improve cholesterol levels and lower the risk of heart disease, stroke, obesity and type two diabetes.

Whole grains also provide nutrients like B vitamins and minerals that are lost during the refining process.

The American Heart Association recommends a diet rich in fruit and vegetables, and says least half of grain consumption should be whole grains.

Among the participants in the combined studies, there was a total of 97,867 deaths, including 23,597 deaths from cardiovascular disease and 37,492 deaths from cancer.

The study was published online in Circulation, the journal of the American Heart Association. (AFP)

When fasting helps you kick the butt

Some people fast to seek God's blessings, others fast because of compulsion imposed by their elders and now, a few people have started fasting to quit smoking. You read right. While observing fast during the month of Ramadan, one is also supposed to abstain from smoking and this has been helping a large number of youngsters kick the butt. "I've been trying to quit smoking for the last five years, but did not succeed. But last year, on my friend's suggestion, I observed fast for 15 days during Ramadan and it really helped. I didn't quit completely, but I am not a chain smoker anymore. This year, I am planning to fast the whole month and hope it will help me quit," says Ajay Pal Singh. "In a country where Tobacco-related diseases kill over 300,000 people every year, and 87 per cent of the fatal lung cancer cases are caused by smoking, this can be positive change," says Ajay's mother, who is happy with her son's efforts.

Dr Vinay Manchaliwar believes that fasting is a good way to beat the habit of smoking, and has also helped a few of his patients who attempted the same. "More than 80 per cent smokers want to quit but cannot because of the nicotine addiction. There are nearly 90-95 per cent who quit on their own. It all depends on the will power of the individual. My only advice is that you should start gradually. If you are smoking 10 cigarettes a day, don't cut it down to zero suddenly as it can have bad side effects. Initially, fast on alternate days, then gradually increase. As most relapses occur within the first three months, one should be very careful during this time," he says.

For Minal Jain (name changed), fasting proved to be helpful when quitting was getting difficult. "I took five years of fasting during Ramadan for me to finally quit smoking. Nobody at home knew about my smoking habit, so I could not seek their help. When you are a chain smoker and don't smoke for a whole day suddenly, it affects your health very badly. But this is not the case during Ramadan. At the end of the day you are filled with so much positive energy and that helps in overcoming the withdrawal symptoms. I fasted for four consecutive years. Initially, when my parents noticed that I was fasting they thought that I was getting spiritual and were happy about it," smiles Minal, a student.

"It is true that we fast to seek forgiveness for our sins, but if some are fasting to quit smoking there's nothing offensive about it. On the contrary, it is good news because, according to me, smoking is an evil habit just like stealing or any other. Even I was a chain smoker in my teens and after years of fasting, I quit by the time I reached my twenties. My only advice to such people is that after quitting smoking, one should avoid a relapse. For this you must consult a doctor or check on the internet," says Ashraf Khan, a retired school teacher who hopes that more people quit smoking this Ramadan. (TNN)

Herbal extracts holds promise to heal women bone fractures in 7 days, say experts

Natural extracts from the leaves of Dalbergia sissoo or the Indian rosewood tree (also called the shesham), and Ulmus wallichiana or the Himalayan elm, have the potential to treat bone loss in women soon after menopause and also heal fractures quite efficiently. The nutraceutical extracts were under tests at central drug research institute (CDRI), Lucknow and now the technology has been transferred to a Petlad based herbal pharmaceutical manufacturing company in Anand district to manufacture it as a herbal drug.

The herbal extracts have the ability to reduce the healing time for bone fractures from 21 days to seven days, CDRI scientist Ritu Trivedi told Nature magazine.

Both the extracts have the potential to offer an alternative treatment to bone loss during osteoporosis, which is a 'porous bone' condition. This happens when bones lose proteins and minerals, especially calcium, in excessive quantities. It sets in women after menopause—a state when their ovaries stop producing the hormone estrogen.

Till date, medical practitioners suggest human parathyroid hormone (PTH), which is an 'anabolic' substance to treat bone fractures. The hormone helps cells build bone tissue. But PTH is costly, and has the potential to cause bone cancer. (TNN)

EAT CRANBERRIES TO KEEP URINARY INFECTIONS AT BAY

If you are one of those who often suffer from urinary tract infections (UTIs), then you must start having cranberries, as a new study has found that it can be nutritional approach for reducing symptomatic UTIs.

Weber Shandwick Worldwide researchers have found that drinking an eight-ounce (240 ml) glass of cranberry juice a day reduces symptomatic UTIs by nearly 40 percent in women with recurrent UTIs, reducing the burden of UTIs and reducing the antibiotic use associated with treating recurrent UTIs.

Dr. Kalpana Gupta, infectious disease specialist and Professor of Medicine at Boston University's School of Medicine, said currently, the primary approach to reducing symptomatic events of UTI is the use of chronic antibiotics for suppression, an approach associated with side effects and development of antibiotic resistance.

She added that the research has proved that consuming one eight-ounce (240 ml) of cranberry juice a day reduces the number of times women suffer from repeated episodes of symptomatic UTIs and avoid chronic suppressive antibiotics.

Dr. Gupta believes that cranberries can help reduce the worldwide use of antibiotics and significantly improve the quality of life for women, who suffer from recurrent UTI symptoms.

Researchers set out to find whether recurrent (or repeat) UTI sufferers could be protected from repeat infections by drinking cranberry juice. Participants were all healthy women with an average age of 40, who had experienced at least two UTIs within the past year.

During the study, participants were ran-



domly chosen to drink a daily dose of eight ounces (240 ml) of either cranberry juice or a "placebo" beverage without cranberries.

The rate of UTIs decreased significantly among the cranberry drinkers, with just 39 diagnoses during the six-month study compared with 67 in the placebo group.

According to Gupta, those who suffer from UTIs can feel confident that this nutritional approach is a potential solution, further validating more than 50 years of well-documented cranberry research.

The study is published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition journal. (TOI)

Diet tips to beat the bloat for a lighter summer

Tummy troubles often turn us into fart and burp factories. Now, you can beat the bloat with these expert nutrition tips.

Extreme heat can aggravate gastrointestinal problems and so, Dr Rakesh Tandon, Head of Gastroenterology and Medical Director, PSRI Hospital, New Delhi, has shared some remedies that can provide quick and easy relief.

He said, "If you do not take enough water and get exposed to hot sun, you may suffer heat exhaustion or heat stroke and faint. So, keep yourself well hydrated with drinking water, lime water, cold beverages and fresh fruits."

Dr Tandon suggested taking cool drinks and food items that are known to beat the heat, like dahi, raita and other milk preparations like butter milk and 'Chhach', coconut water, mango, 'pana', 'Sattu' made of barley, wheat and gram, watermelons, cherries, corns, tomatoes, cold coffee and fresh fruits and greens.

Taking too much of non-vegetarian preparations and excessive amounts of coffee and not balancing that with adequate amounts of salad, green vegetables and fruits and drinking water and clear liquids can give you a hard time during summer, noted Dr Tandon.

He added, "Heat does lead to early putrefaction of cooked or uncooked food. It is therefore essential to check before eating if the eatables have not become stale. Consuming stale food may result in acute gastroenteritis i.e. diarrhea and vomiting or infective diarrhoea."

Dr Tandon said, "Scarcity of water in summers may compromise cleanliness, resulting into increased occurrence of enteric and other infections. It is therefore very important that you go an extra mile in maintaining personal hygiene albeit using water judiciously. Extra care is needed to ensure proper washing and cleaning of vegetables and fruits." (ANI)

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

Subject: Application of MOHD ISMAIL GOJER DEADER for the issuance of ST (SCHEDULE TRIBE Gujar and Bakerwal) in favour of self ,JABEENA BANO ,FAYAZ AHMAD GOJER DEADER , MOHAMMAD RIZWAN GOJER ,ASMAT BANO

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above, the applicant has submitted the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of ST . in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in village BANDI BALLA and belongs to the ST caste and GOJER DEADER community, having annual income is 150000 the details of the family of the applicant are as follows

- 1...MOHD ISMAIL DEADER self 50 years Govt employee
- 2.... JABEENA BANO Daughter 27 years student
- 3...FAYAZ AHMAD GOJER DEADER son 22 years student
- 4...ASMAT BANO Daughter 18 years student
- 5...MOHAMMAD RIZWAN DEADER son 14 years student
- 6...NASEEMA BEGUM wife 50 years H/W

The applicant has applied for Issuance of ST (SCHEDULE TRIBE Gujar & Bakerwal) certificate in favour of Self

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

NAIB TEHSILDAR KALANTRA

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that I am intending to applying for the registration of a Tour And Travel license under the name MOUNTAIN JOURNEY TOUR & TRAVEL located at CHANDOOSA District Baramulla, at the office of Assistant Director Tourism Gulmarg. If anyone has any objections regarding in this regard, they may file their objection at the Department of Tourism office of the Assistant Director Tourism Gulmarg, within 15 days from the date of publication, of this notice. After this period, no objections will be entertained.

OWNERS NAME ...TANZILA NAAZ W/O SHAMEEMA ANWAR BAIGH R/O MASJID ANGAN KACHWAMUQAM Baramulla. contact number.. 9622414653

Public Notice

My name has been wrongly written as SHAOIB AHMAD BHAT in my Bank Account bearing Account No.,0486040100006724 while my correct name is SHAOIB MOHAMMAD BHAT 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 KREERI within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name... SHOIB MOHAMMAD BHAT S/O Gh MOHAMMAD BHAT R/O TILAGAM TANGMARG ACCOUNT NO..0139040100011913

Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on the name FAROOQ AHMAD PARRAY. Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040010425 wants to be registered on my name TAHIR MANZOOR S/O Late Manzoor Ahmad Zargar... .If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name.TAHIR MANZOOR S/O LATE MANZOOR AHMAD ZARGAR R/O KREERI

Public Notice

I am applying for fertilizer License under the title of MALIK FERTILIZERS & related items. situated at TILAGAM KREERI Baramulla. In this regard if anybody is having any objection may file the same to Chief Agriculture Officer Baramulla a within the time period of 07 days from the date of Publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Name...SAJAD AHMAD MALIK S/o ALI MOHD MALIK R/o.TILAGAM KREERI Distt....BARAMULLA

Public Notice

My daughters name has been wrongly written as SALEEMA BANO in her Bank account while her correct name is SALEEMA QADIR which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of J & K BANK DELINA BARAMULLA within seven days from the Publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name...GH QADIR DAR , F/ O. SALEEMA QADIR R/O...MAHALLA BATPORA DELINA, Distt ..BARAMULLA

Government of Jammu and Kashmir
Office Of The Child Development Project Officer Poshan Project Boniyar

ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE SAHAYIKAS (AWHs)

Applications on prescribed proforma (Annexure-1) are hereby invited from the eligible female candidates of the Panch wards shown against the below mentioned Panchayat Halqas, for the engagement of Sahayikas(AWHs) "preferably married" for the Anganwadi Centres of POSHAN Project Boniyar on "Honorarium basis". The applications along with required documents shall be deposited in the Office of the undersigned i.e Child Development Project Officer Boniyar within 15 days from the date of publication of the said notice against proper receipt.

| S.NO | NAME OF THE DISTRICT | NAME OF THE PROJECT | NAME OF PANCHAYAT | VACANCY OF SANGINIS (ANGANWADI Helpers) | |
|------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---|----------------------|
| | | | | NO. OF PANCH WARD | NAME OF AWC |
| 1 | Baramulla | BONIYAR | Ijara | 03 | Najar Mohalla Ijara |
| 2 | Baramulla | BONIYAR | Maidanan | 09 | Chotali B |
| 3 | Baramulla | BONIYAR | Bemiyar | 05 | Pathgran A |
| 4 | Baramulla | BONIYAR | Limber A | 09 | Suchan |
| 5 | Baramulla | BONIYAR | Limber B | 07 | Langer Basti |
| 6 | Baramulla | BONIYAR | Pringle warikha | 03 | Pringal Bala |
| 7 | Baramulla | BONIYAR | Ijara | 06 | Shamaswari Payeen |
| 8 | Baramulla | BONIYAR | Naganari | 02 | Naganari |
| 9 | Baramulla | BONIYAR | Naganari | 04 | Sheikhpora Chacken B |

Criteria for Selection of Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helpers) shall remain as envisaged in the Govt. Order No: 103 JK (SWD) OF 2023 Dated 28.4.2023 i.e.

Women candidates in the age group of 18-37 years shall be considered for the post (age shall be calculated on the 1st day of calendar year).

The candidate should be a domicile of the UT of J&K.

The candidate should be a resident of Electoral Ward where Anganwadi Centre is located.

Minimum qualification for Anganwadi Helper shall be Matriculation.

In case no matriculate candidate is available in the panch Ward, candidates with qualification not less than 8th standard shall be considered.

The committee shall select the most destitute/needly married women of the ward as helper from amongst those who fulfill the qualification criteria. In case no married candidate is available, unmarried candidate may be considered.

The candidate should be a resident of the Electoral Ward where AWC is situated. Name in the voter list for the ward shall be considered as the proof of residence of the candidate. In case the name of the candidate appears in voter list along with her parents then she must provide certificate of being unmarried issued by the concerned Tehsildar. Wherever there is any dispute as to residence for any reason then a residence proof certifying the ward of residence from the concerned SDM/ACR shall be considered.

In case eligible candidate is available within the family of retiring AWW/AWH the said candidate shall qualify for additional two percent points.

Self-attested copies of documents to be attached with the application form: -

Panch Ward Certificate /present /continuous, ward residence certificate based on the voter list of the ward certificate issued by BDO concerned as per format enclosed, (in case of any dispute as to residence for any reason then the residence proof certifying the ward of residence from the concerned SDM/ACR shall be considered).

Domicile Certificate issued by Tehsildar concerned.

Date of Birth Certificate.

Academic Qualification Certificates with Marks card of 10th.

Non employment Certificate from a Gazetted Officer.

All applicants to submit affidavit stating following facts duly attested by 1st class Magistrate:

- Documents submitted are correct, without any mismatch, scanning, duplicate or fallacious in nature. If found incorrect or in any of the above stated situation the candidature of deponent may be cancelled and liable to action under law.
- Maximum qualification is Class 10th for Anganwadi Helper and this is as per the facts and onus of proving it to be true lies with the deponent.
- The deponent has read the HR policy no. 222-JK(SWD) of 2022 dated: 30.11.2022 and is well versed with all salient features of the policy and shall be applicable to the deponent in case of selection as Anganwadi Helper.

Note: Prescribed Application Proforma can be had from the undersigned office "Free of Cost".

(ANNEXURE-I) S.NO: APPLICATION FORM FOR ENGAGEMENT OF SAHAYIKA (ANGANWADI HELPER)

- Name of the District: - Baramulla
- Name of the ICDS Project: BONIYAR
- Name of the Anganwadi Centre for which engagement sought.....
- Panch Ward/MC Ward..... Panchayat Halqa.....
- Name of the Candidate (In Block Letters)
- Fathers Name (In Block Letters)
- Marital Status: - Married /Un Married
- Husbands Name (if married)
- Place of Permanent Residence.....
Mohalla.....Village.....
Panch Ward Constituency & Number.....
Name of the Panchayat Halqa.....
House No..... (As per latest Panchayat Ward Electoral)
Block:.....
- Address for Correspondence.....Mobile No:.....
- Date of Birth.....

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| D | D | M | M | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| | | | | | | | |
- Age as on 01-01-2026.....
- Academic Qualification

| S.No | Examination passed | Board/School | Year of passing | Marks Obt. | Max. Marks | %age |
|------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------|------------|------|
| 1 | Matric | | | | | |
| 2 | Middle | | | | | |
- Do candidate belong to family of retired AWH (Yes/No).
- Documents attached.
- Panch Ward Certificate /present /continuous, ward residence certificate based on the voter list of the ward certificate issued by BDO concerned (in case of any dispute as to residence for any reason then the residence proof certifying the ward of residence from the concerned SDM/ACR shall be considered).
- Domicile Certificate issued by Tehsildar concerned.
- Date of Birth Certificate.
- Academic Qualification Certificates with Marks card of 10th.
- Non employment Certificate from a Gazetted Officer.
- If candidate belongs to family of retired AWH, then copy of e-ration card/ any other valid proof.

Signature of Candidate

I.....D/o,W/o.....R/o..... do hereby certify that the contents of the application given above are correct and true to the best of my knowledge. In case any of the above contents is found incorrect, the selection committee shall have the right to reject my application and similarly revoke my engagement order.

Signature of Candidate.

FORMAT FOR PANCH WARD CERTIFICATE TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

This is to certify that the candidate namely.....D/o,W/o.....R /o..... is residing in Panch Ward of Panchayat Halqa.....

It is further certified that her name is enlisted in electoral / voter list of the panch ward at S. No.....

No: Dated: Signature of Block Development Officer

No: CDDP/POSHAN/Adv/102-118 Dated: 29-06-2026

Sd/- Child Dev. Project Officer Poshan Boniyar

DIPK: 2648/26 | Dated: 29-06-2026

JKSHC
JAMMU & KASHMIR STATE HAJ COMMITTEE

Government of India
Ministry of Minority Affairs
Haj Committee of India

HAJ 2027 (1448 H) IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

- PASSPORT VALIDITY**
Passport must be valid till **31 December 2027**.
Passport must be valid on the date of application.
- COVER / GROUP**
A group can have maximum **5 members**.
Minimum age - **18 years** on the date of application.
- COVER HEAD**
Cover Head must be a **male member**.
Minimum age - **18 years** on the date of application.
- MOBILE NUMBER & WHATSAPP**
Cover Head must use his own mobile number.
WhatsApp must be active on the same number.
- 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.
- NOMINEE**
Nominee: Son / Daughter / Parents / Spouse (Legal heir preferred)
Only one nominee who will perform Haj in your place.
- 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.

Timely Updates | Guidance & Support | Important Information | Deadlines & Reminders

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<https://chat.whatsapp.com/Lxp9Sdes7r0Ad0RmRdcAfm?sz=qt&npa&mlu=1>

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For Haj 2027 Updates

Bait-ul-Hujaj (Haj House), Bemina, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, India - 190017
+91 194 249 5365
<https://www.jkshc.org/>

Aapki Tairyari - Aapka Aaram - Hamari Zimmedari

Space Devoted by Headlines Today, Purely in Public Interest

Javed Rana inaugurates ICICI bank branch with ATM facility at Mendhar

Reiterates Govt's commitment to financial inclusion irrespective of location

HT NEWS NETWORK

MENDHAR, JUNE 26: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today inaugurated an ICICI Bank branch along with a 24x7 ATM facility at Mendhar, marking a significant step towards extending the modern banking services to the remote and border areas of Pir Panjal region.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister underscored the government's unwavering commitment to ensure the financial inclusion for every citizen, regardless of their geographic location. He said that the residents of far-flung and border areas deserve the same access to banking facilities as those living in urban centres.

"The government is ensuring that no citizen is left behind merely because of where they live. Whether it is a remote village or a border belt, banking services must reach every doorstep," asserted the Minister.

Rana said that the opening of the branch would directly address the longstanding hardship faced by the people of Mendhar and adjoining areas who were earlier compelled to travel to distant



towns for even basic banking needs. He said the new branch, equipped with a full suite of banking services and round-the-clock ATM

access, would save precious time and resources for local traders, farmers, pensioners, students and the general public alike.

"This branch is not just a banking outlet, it is a gateway to economic empowerment for the people of this region. I urge every resident, trader, farmer and youth to walk in and explore the full range of services now available at their doorstep," he added.

The Minister thanked the officers and management of ICICI Bank for their initiative in extending banking services to remote and border belts like Mendhar.

Senior officials of ICICI Bank, local representatives, prominent citizens and people from Mendhar and surrounding areas were present at the inaugural ceremony.

The bank also announced special account opening schemes tailored for the farmers, government employees and pensioners. In a significant initiative aimed at enhancing employment opportunities for local youth, the bank has started campus recruitment drives, which are expected to provide jobs to educated youngsters in the region.

DC Budgam chairs 48th NCORD meeting

Reviews 100-Day Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan in District

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, JUNE 29: 48th District-Level NCORD (Narco Coordination) Committee meeting was convened today at the DC Office Budgam under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Athar Aamir Khan, alongside SSP Budgam Hariprasad KK.

The meeting reviewed the ongoing anti-drug measures, rehabilitation initiatives, and awareness activities being undertaken across District Budgam.

At the outset, the committee reviewed the action taken on the decisions made during the previous NCORD meeting.

The DC stressed that drug abuse is not merely a law enforcement issue but a grave social challenge affecting families and communities.

He underscored that District administration is firm and uncompromising against drug peddlers, traffickers, and cultivators, while extending full support for the treatment, rehabilitation, and reintegration of victims of drug addiction.

The DC laid emphasis on the rehabilitation of drug victims, directing the Health Department and all concerned agencies to ensure timely counselling, treatment, and sustained rehabilitation support to help affected individuals return to a normal and productive life. He also highlighted the need for stronger enforcement, sustained awareness, and accessible rehabilitation.

The DC stressed that sustained Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities, youth outreach programmes, and community participation are essential to prevent drug abuse and encourage early intervention.

The DC further directed all line departments to intensify efforts against narcotics cultivation and drug peddling, ensuring that roadsides, embankments, and other vulnerable areas remain free from cannabis and poppy cultivation through coordinated action.

The DC reiterated that 100% CCTV coverage and Computerised Billing Systems (CBS) must be ensured in all chemist shops, with regular inspections and strict action against violations.

The Drug Inspector was directed to ensure the availability of CCTV footage and billing records, while the Excise De-

partment was asked to work in close coordination with the Police, Revenue, and Agriculture Departments for the identification and destruction of illicit crops.

On the healthcare front, the DC directed that the Addiction Treatment Facility (ATF) at District Hospital Budgam remain fully functional round the clock and that the Drug De-Addiction Centre be further strengthened for effective patient intake, counselling, treatment, rehabilitation, and follow-up care.

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) was directed to maintain strict vigil against drug peddlers operating in and around railway stations.

Reviewing the progress of the 100-day Intensive Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, the DC stressed the need to scale up its impact at the grassroots level.

He called for intensified IEC campaigns, wider youth engagement, and measurable outcomes in terms of counselling, treatment, rehabilitation, and community mobilisation.

"The campaign must translate into visible behavioural change and community ownership. Every stakeholder must contribute towards making Budgam a truly drug-free district," the DC added.

The DC stated that the district administration will continue to take decisive action against drug networks while simultaneously adopting a compassionate and rehabilitative approach towards individuals affected by substance abuse.

On the occasion, SSP Budgam, while addressing the meeting, called for stronger inter-departmental coordination and greater focus on counselling and rehabilitation of victims at the Drug De-Addiction Centre. He also emphasised intensified enforcement measures against drug peddlers and traffickers to dismantle the narcotics network operating in the district.

The meeting was attended by the ADC Budgam, SDM Khansahib, ACP, CMO, DSWO, DIO, Medical Superintendent District Hospital Budgam, Principals of Government Degree Colleges, Executive Officers of Municipal Committees, Principals of Higher Secondary Schools, ZEOs, and other concerned officers.

DC Reasi inaugurates annual Baba Aghar Jitto Mela

HT NEWS NETWORK

REASI, JUNE 29: Deputy Commissioner Reasi Kumar Abhishek today inaugurated the annual Baba Aghar Jitto Mela at village Aghar Jitto.

The festival draws large gatherings of devotees, visitors and local residents, making it an important occasion for social and cultural unity.

A major attraction was the exhibition of departmental stalls set up by government departments including Health, Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry and other allied sectors. The stalls showcased Centrally Sponsored Schemes and UT Government welfare initiatives aimed at public welfare, rural development and socio-economic upliftment, providing visitors with de-



tailed information on schemes and services and helping them avail benefits.

The Deputy Commissioner inspected the stalls and interacted with officials to review information dissemination and public outreach. He called for effective awareness generation so that eligible beneficiaries can fully avail government schemes.

The Deputy Commissioner distributed letters of appreciation and authorisation to progressive farmers and orchardists in recognition of their contribution to the development of the horticulture sector.

Students and local artists from Palthyar Nehru Youth Club Garhi presented a cultural programme featuring traditional items and a play depicting the life and sacrifices of Baba Jitto, which the audience widely appreciated.

DSEO Office Rajouri celebrates National Statistics Day

HT NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI, JUNE 29: The District Statistics & Evaluation Office (DSEO), Rajouri today celebrated National Statistics Day to highlight the role of statistics in evidence-based planning, policy formulation and effective governance.

The event highlighted the importance of statistics in socio-economic development, monitoring of government schemes and informed decision-making. The par-

ticipants paid tributes to Professor Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, the eminent statistician and father of modern Indian statistics, whose birth anniversary is observed every year as National Statistics Day.

On the occasion, the District Statistics & Evaluation Officer underlined the role of statistical personnel in the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of accurate data for effective planning and evaluation of developmental programmes.

Directorate of Economics & Statistics observes 20th National Statistics Day

Robust data key to effective governance, says Commissioner Secretary R Alice Vaz

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUNE 29: The Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Jammu and Kashmir, celebrated the 20th National Statistics Day at its Bemina office today as part of the nationwide programme held by the Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

The day marks the birth anniversary of Professor P. C. Mahalanobis, father of Indian statistics.

Commissioner Secretary, Planning, Development and Monitoring Department, R. Alice Vaz, inaugurated the programme.

In her address, she highlighted the role of statistics in planning, governance and sustainable development. She stressed the critical importance of robust statistical systems for evidence-based policymaking, improving service delivery and enabling targeted development interventions.

The Commissioner Secretary called upon the officers and field staff to ensure timely, ac-

curate and reliable data collection, stressing that quality statistics form the backbone of effective monitoring and evaluation. She said the department is committed to adopt modern tools and technology to strengthen the statistical framework across Jammu and Kashmir and make data accessible for the planners, researchers and the citizens.

On the occasion, Director General, Economics & Statistics, J&K, Riyaz Ahmad Romshoo, emphasized the vital role of young statisticians and new entrants to the service in strengthening the department.

During the celebration, messages from the Lieutenant Governor, Chief Minister and Chief Secretary were also read out to the gathering, underscoring the importance of statistics in evidence-based governance and inclusive development.

Regional Director, Evaluation & Statistics, Jammu, Ashu Gupta; Regional Director, Evaluation & Statistics, Kashmir, Sheikh Shavaiz Ahmad and former Director General, Economics &



Statistics, J&K, G A Qureshi also addressed the event.

The technical sessions of the programme featured insightful presentations by the departmental officers, trainees from the

School of Applied Economics & Statistics (SAES) and postgraduate research scholars. These deliberations focused on "Unlocking the Potential of Administrative Data" and highlighted

the evolving role of official statistics in strengthening the evidence based policymaking and governance.

The discussions particularly highlighted the need to strengthen the administrative data systems for greater reliability and integration. Enhance statistical literacy among youth and practitioners to build a culture of informed decision making and leverage official statistics as a foundation for inclusive and sustainable growth.

The event was attended by the officers and officials of J&K Economics & Statistics Service, along with dignitaries from the statistical and academic community.

A similar programme was also organized at the DES Camp Office Janipur Jammu which was attended by Deepa Sharma, Principal SAES, Jammu and Shoba Rani, Joint Director (Surveys), DES J&K besides other officers and officials of Directorate, office of the Regional Director, Evaluation & Statistics, Jammu and School of Applied Economics & Statistics, Jammu.

DLSA Ganderbal conducts Awareness Programme on J&K Road Safety Policy 2025 at Wayil

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, JUNE 29: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Ganderbal in collaboration with the District Administration Ganderbal and Assistant Regional Transport Office (ARTO) Ganderbal, organized an Awareness Programme on the J&K Road Safety Policy, 2025 at Wayil Sumo Stand, Ganderbal.

The programme was conducted under the Chairmanship of Abdul Nasir, Chairman, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Ganderbal, and under

the guidance of Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary, DLSA Ganderbal.

The programme was organized with the objective of creating awareness among the general public, commuters, transport operators and drivers regarding the provisions and objectives of the J&K Road Safety Policy, 2025, road safety measures, traffic regulations and the legal consequences arising from violations of traffic laws. The initiative aimed at promoting responsible road usage, prevention of road accidents and fostering greater public con-

sciousness towards the protection of human life and public safety.

Assistant Legal Aid Defence Counsels (LADCs), DLSA Ganderbal, participated in the programme and sensitized the participants regarding various aspects of road safety, the importance of compliance with traffic regulations and the legal framework governing road usage. Awareness pamphlets and informative material relating to the J&K Road Safety Policy, 2025 and road safety measures were distributed among drivers, commuters and members of



the public.

The campaign emphasized strict adherence to traffic rules, mandatory use of helmets and seat belts, prevention of rash and negligent driving, avoidance of over-speeding, drunk driving, use of mobile phones while driving and compliance with the provisions of the Motor Vehicles laws.

During the programme, emphasis was also laid on the importance of legal awareness in safeguarding the rights and safety of citizens and on the role of Legal Services Institutions in promoting access to justice

and dissemination of legal literacy among the masses. Participants were also informed about the availability of free legal aid and the various public welfare initiatives undertaken by the Legal Services Authorities.

The Assistant Regional Transport Office (ARTO) Ganderbal, being the Nodal Officer for the District Road Safety Committee, extended full cooperation for the successful conduct of the awareness programme by providing road safety awareness material, informative pamphlets and technical assistance,

thereby contributing significantly to the success of the initiative.

The participants appreciated the joint initiative undertaken by DLSA Ganderbal, the District Administration and ARTO Office Ganderbal and actively participated in the awareness programme.

The programme concluded with a collective pledge to strictly adhere to the provisions of the J&K Road Safety Policy, 2025 and traffic laws and to continue promoting road safety, legal awareness and responsible citizenship in the larger public interest.

GI-tagged Rewa Sundarja mangoes reach UAE in first commercial export, boost farmer earnings

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUNE 29: In a boost to India's agricultural exports, the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has facilitated the first commercial export of Geographical Indication (GI)-tagged Rewa Sundarja mangoes from Madhya Pradesh to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), opening overseas markets for the state's premium mango variety.

As per Commerce Ministry, the inaugural consignment, comprising one metric tonne of Rewa Sundarja mangoes, was shipped to the UAE on June 26 by Salt Range Foods Pvt. Ltd. The export marks the first commercial overseas shipment of the GI-tagged fruit and is expected to pave the way for regular exports in the coming years.

The mangoes were sourced from Seondha Farmer Producer Company Limited and progressive farmer Sonu Gupta of Govindgarh in Rewa district. After harvesting, the produce underwent grading, sorting and export-quality packaging at an APEDA-facilitated pack house operated by Trisagar Farmer Producer Company in Bhadohi, Uttar



Pradesh, before being airlifted from Varanasi to the UAE.

According to APEDA, the commercial export is the result of months of coordination with the Madhya Pradesh Department of Horticulture, exporters, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs),

pack house operators and overseas buyers to establish export linkages for the premium mango variety.

The initiative has also translated into higher returns for farmers. While Rewa Sundarja mangoes currently fetch

around 100-110 per kg in local markets, the exporter procured the fruit at 150 per kg, offering growers a premium of 40-50 per kg.

Officials said the higher price realisation demonstrates the benefits of integrating farmers

into export-oriented value chains and is expected to encourage wider adoption of quality production and post-harvest practices among growers.

Known for its exceptional sweetness, rich aroma, fibreless pulp and distinctive flavour, the Rewa Sundarja mango received GI recognition for its unique regional identity. APEDA said the successful export underscores the importance of GI registration in creating niche global markets for India's indigenous agricultural products.

A flag-off ceremony was organised on June 26 to mark the milestone, attended by representatives of APEDA, the Madhya Pradesh government, exporters, FPOs and farmers.

APEDA said it will continue to support exports of GI-tagged and value-added agricultural products by strengthening export infrastructure, facilitating compliance with international quality standards and expanding market access for Indian produce.

The successful launch of Rewa Sundarja mango exports is expected to enhance the global profile of the variety while positioning Madhya Pradesh as an emerging exporter of premium mangoes. UNI

Industrial growth is about livelihoods, not just investments: Telangana Dy CM Bhatti

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, JUNE 29: Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka on Friday said industrial growth for the Congress government is not merely about attracting investments but about creating sustainable livelihoods for people.

Inaugurating the Industrial Innovation & Technology Expo 2026 at HITECH here, Bhatti said the Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI) serves as a vital bridge between the government and industry.

Describing the expo as more than a showcase of machinery and products, Bhatti said it provides an ideal platform for exchanging ideas, enabling small businesses to reach new customers, manufacturers to access advanced technologies, and startups to connect with potential buyers.

He said Telangana has earned the confidence of investors and registered strong industrial growth since the formation of the state, while Hyderabad has emerged as a globally recognised hub for information technology, pharmaceuticals and life



sciences.

However, he stressed that the state's growth should not remain confined to the services sector and called for increasing the contribution of manufacturing, particularly Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), to the state's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Manufacturing, he said, is crucial for generating employment and strengthening the rural economy.

Reiterating that industrial growth is about improving people's livelihoods rather than merely attracting investments, Bhatti said the government's vision is to ensure that the Ease of Doing Business benefits not only large industries but also MSMEs, women entrepreneurs and rural entrepreneurs.

To facilitate continuous engagement with industry, he announced that he would dedicate every Friday to meeting MSME associations and representatives of the industrial sector to discuss their concerns and suggestions.

Paying tribute to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, he recalled his pioneering role in ushering India into the computer age.

Micron briefly surpasses Meta, Tesla in market value

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUNE 29: Micron Technology briefly overtook Meta Platforms and Tesla by market capitalisation on Thursday after the US memory-chip maker delivered stronger-than-expected quarterly guidance, reinforcing investor confidence in the artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure boom and soaring demand for memory chips.

Shares of Micron surged as much as 18.4 percent during intraday trade following its earnings announcement, temporarily pushing its market value above both Meta and Tesla, according to a Reuters report. The stock eventually closed 15.8 percent higher.

By the end of the session, Micron's market capitalisation stood at USD 1.37 trillion, just below Meta's USD 1.38 trillion and Tesla's USD 1.41 trillion.

The rally was driven by the company's upbeat fourth-quarter outlook. Micron forecast revenue of around USD 50 billion for the quarter ending August, significantly higher than Wall Street estimates of USD 43.2 billion, signalling that demand for AI-related memory products remains robust despite concerns over the sustainability of heavy AI spending by major technology companies. Adding to the optimism, Micron revealed that customers have committed USD 22 billion in advance orders to secure future supplies of memory chips, underlining the strong appetite for high-bandwidth memory (HBM) and other AI-focused semiconductor products. Chief Executive Officer Sanjay Mehrotra said the company sees no immediate relief from supply constraints, noting that demand continues to outpace production. Speaking to analysts, Mehrotra said there is "no line of sight" for supply catching up with demand, with market tightness expected to persist beyond 2027 and meaningful improvement likely only in 2028, according to Bloomberg.

The latest earnings have extended Micron's stellar run in 2026. The stock has surged about 326 percent year-to-date and gained more than 15 percent since the earnings release. Micron crossed the \$1 trillion market-cap milestone in late May, joining an elite club of technology giants benefiting from the global AI investment cycle.

The upbeat results also lifted the broader semiconductor sector. The Philadelphia Semiconductor Index climbed 3.2 percent on Thursday and remains on track for its strongest quarterly performance on record, according to LSEG data.

Wired Wisdom: Best phones of 2026 thus far, featuring Xiaomi, Samsung and more

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUNE 29: A policy intervention where necessary, and this was necessary. The UK government has set in motion a sweeping social media ban for individuals under the age of 16 years.

This is squarely aimed at protecting children from online harms and preventing addiction, the ban targets platforms like Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and X. Before you call this as some sort of an outreach, I'm reminded to tell you about a BBC article that pointed out something rather interesting (Big Tech of course

won't answer).

Zoe Kleinman narrates a conversation with her 12-year old son. "Everyone's really upset mum - loads of them have got their own YouTube channels," he says.

Interesting enough, the minimum age of making any sort of 'channels' on YouTube and Instagram is 13 years—so how do children as young as 12 already have footprints on these social media platforms—and clearly the sustained efforts have paid off, in terms of views and followers, for this level of distress.

"Tech giants had their chance and failed," the clear words of

UK's former Prime Minister Keir Starmer, in what now becomes one of the last big policy measures he implemented whilst in office. He's not wrong, by any stretch of the imagination. I've a child who is almost 9 years old, and fast approaching the years where any lure of social media would be hard to dismiss.

Its purely a matter of when and not if—the path will be easier for her if we transition towards neglected parenting (that's certainly not happening), and somewhat difficult if we set the rules for when we're looking. I'd love a similar policy intervention.

Holistic approach to sustainability need of the hour: Visakhapatnam MP Sriharat

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 29: Visakhapatnam MP M. Sriharat on Friday called for a holistic approach to sustainability that integrates environmental protection, economic growth and public participation, saying it is the need of the hour for achieving long-term development.

Addressing the Second Edition of the CII Andhra Pradesh Sustainability Summit 2026, organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) here, the MP said sustainability extends beyond climate action to include food security, soil health, water conservation, urban planning and responsible industrial development.

He stressed the need to eliminate food adulteration through stronger monitoring mechanisms

while promoting sustainable agricultural practices to improve soil health.

Water conservation, he said, should become a national priority through wastewater recycling, filtration and rainwater harvesting.

Highlighting the challenges of rapid urbanisation, Sriharat underlined the importance of scientific urban planning for growing cities such as Visakhapatnam, with greater focus on air quality, emissions management and effective waste segregation.

He also called for minimising pollution around ports and industrial clusters while ensuring environmentally responsible economic development.

Referring to Andhra Pradesh's strategic advantages, the MP said green logistics, cleaner maritime fuels, sustainable ports and in-

tegrated rail connectivity would play a key role in positioning the state as a leading manufacturing and logistics hub.

He said the development of ports at Ramayapatnam, Machilipatnam, Mulapeta and Kakina, supported by improved transport infrastructure, would boost economic growth.

He also urged Indian companies to significantly increase investments in research, innovation and technology while advocating streamlined governance and stronger collaboration among stakeholders to promote sustainable development.

CII Visakhapatnam Chairman G. Krishna Mohan said sustainability had become central to industrial growth, with regulatory frameworks such as Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR), ESG disclosures, climate finance and

sustainability-linked lending encouraging industries to integrate sustainability into their core business strategies.

CII Andhra Pradesh Vice Chairman Dr G. Sambasiva Rao said Andhra Pradesh's extensive coastline, expanding port infrastructure and logistics ecosystem provided a unique opportunity to emerge as a leader in sustainable industrial growth and low-carbon value chains.

Delivering the theme address, Dr Paravasthu Rambabu, Director and Chief Sustainability Officer of Greenko Group, said the future of sustainable industrial growth would be driven by three interconnected pillars—clean electrons, digital technologies and green molecules.

He highlighted the role of renewable energy, green hydrogen, green fuels and AI-driven digital infrastructure in accel-

erating India's transition to a low-carbon economy.

He also stressed the need for developing green ports, cleaner maritime fuels such as green ammonia and green methanol, and expanding renewable energy, pumped storage and energy storage systems to support sustainable industrialisation.

In his concluding remarks, CII Visakhapatnam Vice Chairman Nilesh Agarwal said sustainability begins with individual responsibility and urged people and organisations to conserve water, reduce waste and use resources judiciously.

The summit featured four technical sessions focusing on green hydrogen and fuel switching, green data centre ecosystems, low-carbon logistics and maritime trade, and sustainable innovation for enterprises. UNI

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The upbeat results also lifted the broader semiconductor sector. The Philadelphia Semiconductor Index climbed 3.2 percent on Thursday and remains on track for its strongest quarterly performance on record, according to LSEG data. Among industry peers, Sandisk jumped 22 percent, Western Digital gained 7.4 percent, Seagate Technology rose 4.3 percent, while Qualcomm advanced after outlining ambitious plans to expand its AI-focused data centre business. UNI

Apple hikes product costs by 20-42%: Check full list of new prices for MacBooks, Ipad

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUNE 29: Apple has hiked the prices of its products, including Macs and iPads, across the globe, including in India. While announcing the increase in prices, which range between 20 per cent to 42 per cent up from their original prices, the tech giant cited an increase in the cost of memory chips as the reason.

"The rapid expansion of AI data centres has created an extraordinary surge in demand for memory and storage. We have never seen a component price increase this much, this quickly," Apple said in a statement, adding that it had now "shielded" its customers but could not continue to do so.



We have now reached a point where we need to begin raising prices on a number of products, including today's increases for iPad and Mac. We know this is not welcome news, and we are working tirelessly to find solutions," the company said. The cost of iPhones, Apple's main source of revenue, remains unchanged for now. UNI



Ben Stokes to retire from international cricket after third Test

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

TRENT BRIDGE: Ben Stokes has announced a shock retirement from international cricket on the penultimate day of England's Test series decider against New Zealand. His decision will bring a 15-year England career and a four-year tenure as Test captain to a close at the end of the ongoing third Test at Trent Bridge.

Stokes told his team-mates and the ECB his decision on Sunday morning, before the start of play. He was visibly emotional and choked up when he spoke in the dressing room, imploring his team-mates to "go out there and f***ing give absolutely everything for another two days", and was given a standing ovation by England's players and coaching staff.

Stokes told his team-mates that "reason can wait [as to] why" he had retired, but his decision comes after he missed the second Test at The Oval on disciplinary grounds. He was not considered for selection while the ECB and the Cricket Regulator investigated his celebrations following England's win at Lord's, and he was later cleared of any serious wrongdoing.

The ECB announced the news shortly before tea on the fourth day at Trent Bridge, shortly after Stokes had completed the 10th over of a second mammoth spell. He received a rousing ovation from the crowd when he returned for an 11th, and immediately had Zak Foulkes caught at second slip off the following delivery. Stokes' decision leaves England's Test team in a deepening crisis. They had won two of their last nine Tests heading into this series decider, and will need to chase more than 300 in the fourth innings in Nottingham to avoid a first defeat in a home series of three or more Tests since 2012.

His returns with the bat have declined in recent years but he has been their best bowler over the past 12 months and they missed him badly in their heavy defeat last week. Nor is there an obvious successor: Joe Root deputised at The Oval and could fill an interim role, while Harry Brook is his vice-captain but was overlooked last week.

Stokes' dynamic with head coach Brendon McCullum was tested by their 4-1 defeat in Australia last winter and though both men insisted that they remain close, their approaches have clearly diverged. His relationship with ECB "suits" has long been frosty and was further tested by his perception of their handling of the recent nightclub saga. Stokes was not quoted in the ECB's statement announcing his retirement, which featured comments from chair Richard Thompson and chief executive Richard Gould.

Padikkal fifty, Sudeera five-for before India A, SL A settle for draw

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

DHARAMSALA: Devdutt Padikkal's half-century and left-arm spinner Dilum Sudeera's five-wicket haul were the highlights on day four as the first unofficial Test between India A and Sri Lanka A petered to a draw. India A declared for the second time in the game after setting Sri Lanka A a target north of 300, but were only able to take two wickets in the 15 overs they managed to get in.

India began the day on 48 for no loss and a lead of 170, although B Sai Sudharsan had retired hurt on the third day. Padikkal and Aayush Pandey added 42 runs on the fourth morning before Sudeera removed the latter for 38 for his first wicket. Two balls later, Ravindu Fernando trapped Raturaj Gaikwad for 1 off 2.

Chaudhary's last-ball six wins it for Freedom after Hosein's hat-trick

Mitchell Owen set up Freedom's chase with 77 off 35 before the match hurtled towards a chaotic finish

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

OAKLAND: A last-ball six from Australia allrounder Nikhil Chaudhary gave Washington Freedom a one-wicket win over Texas Super Kings (TSK), capping a dramatic final over in which Akeal Hosein had put TSK on the brink of victory with a hat-trick.

The over began with Freedom needing six runs, with four wickets in hand. Hosein began with a dot ball, before ripping through Freedom's lower order with his left-arm spin, taking out Marco Jansen, Amila Aponso and Asif Mehmood off successive deliveries. This left Freedom needing six off two balls with No. 11



Lockie Ferguson on strike; a scrambled leg bye that also featured an lbw appeal and a failed review by the bowling side brought the game to its final act. Chaudhary, batting on 21 off

18 balls, had watched all this action from the non-striker's end. Now, with five to get from one ball, he finished the game with the third six of his innings, pulling Hosein flat over the mid-

wicket boundary.

This finish came exactly a year after the only other match-winning last-ball six in MLC so far: Shimron Hetmyer off Kieron Pollard to seal victory for Seattle Orcas over MI New York.

Freedom's chase of 186 had begun in much smoother circumstances, with Mitchell Owen and Steven Smith putting on 91 in just 7.5 overs. When Owen fell for a 35-ball 77 in the 12th over, their task looked straightforward: 66 off 51 balls with seven wickets in hand. But even as Freedom chipped away at the target, they kept losing wickets, ultimately opening the door for a wild finish.

Earlier, after choosing to bat, TSK lost Faf du Plessis early, but made steady progress through a 48-run second-wicket stand between Rilee Rossouw and Saiteja Mukkamalla. They struggled for impetus through the first three-fourths of their innings, however, and were 110 for 4 at the 15-over mark. Wiaan Mulder and Donovan Ferreira then made sure they got to a competitive total, putting on an unbroken 75 off just 31 balls for the fifth wicket, including 56 off the last three overs of the innings. Chaudhary also made an impact with the ball for Freedom, picking up 2 for 29 with his legspin.

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