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Amarnath Pilgrimage Reflects India's Unity in Diversity: PM Modi



HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JULY 3: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has described the annual Amarnath pilgrimage as a powerful reflection of India's unity in diversity, saying the sacred journey embodies the country's rich

spiritual heritage, cultural harmony and tradition of selfless service. The Prime Minister's special message was distributed to pilgrims at the Nunwan and Baltal base camps by the Jammu and Kashmir Administration on the opening day of the pilgrimage. In his message, Modi conveyed his heartfelt greetings and best

wishes to devotees, describing participation in the pilgrimage as a deeply spiritual and fortunate experience. He said the annual pilgrimage, which begins with the first ceremonial worship, brings together devotees from every part of the country who undertake the journey with unwavering

Robust Arrangements Ensure a Safe, Smooth and Joyful Pilgrimage: Amit Shah

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JUL 3: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday assured devotees that the Centre has made comprehensive arrangements to ensure a safe, smooth and comfortable annual Amarnath pilgrimage, as the 57-day journey to the holy cave shrine commenced with the departure of the

Over 12,000 Pilgrims Visit Amarnath Shrine on Opening Day of Annual Yatra

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JULY 3: More than 12,000 pilgrims visited the Amarnath cave shrine on Friday, marking a strong start to the 57-day annual pilgrimage as thousands of devotees offered prayers at the naturally formed ice formation inside the Himalayan cave. Officials said approximately 12,100 pilgrims

Div Com Kashmir visits Nunwan Base Camp

HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, JULY 03: In order to take the stock of facilities along Pahalgam Axis of Yatra, the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Friday visited various facilities including the Frisking Point, Nunwan Base Camp, Hikers Park and the Club to inspect overall arrangements during the departure of first batch of Yatris through the route. Accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Anantnag Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, Chief Executive Officer, Pahalgam Development Authority, Additional Deputy Commissioner, SDM Pahalgam and other senior officers, the Divisional Commissioner assessed the preparedness of departments to ensure the smooth movement of pilgrims. During the visit, Garg inspected the frisking point, eKYC verification and RFID registration counters, and reviewed the overall pilgrim facilitation system. He also interacted with yatris to obtain first-hand feedback on the facilities and services being provided. Directing officers to maintain seamless coordination,

1st batch of pilgrims flagged-off from twin Base Camps

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL/ ANANTNAG, JULY 03: The Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026 commenced Friday with the ceremonial flagging-off of the first batch of pilgrims from the Baltal Base Camp in Ganderbal district amid an atmosphere of devotion and enthusiasm. The flag-off ceremony was led by Rahul Yadav, Managing Director, J&K Power Development Corporation and Nodal Officer for the Baltal Axis, along with Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore; Deputy Inspector General of Police (Armed) Kashmir, Maqsood-ul-Zaman; Senior Superintendent of Police Ganderbal, Sudhanshu Dhama, besides officers from the Civil and Police Administration. On the occasion, the officers extended their best wishes

Centre Will Closely Monitor Rainfall Deficit, Potential Drought Situation: Amit Shah

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 3: The Union Government on Friday stepped up its preparedness to address the impact of below-normal monsoon rainfall, with Union Home Minister Amit Shah directing all central ministries to remain vigilant and work in close coordination with state governments to tackle emerging drought conditions and minimise the impact on agriculture. Chairing a high-level review meeting with Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Shah said the government is continuously monitoring the rainfall

Rain, thunderstorms likely across J&K till Jul 5; Sgr records 31.7°C

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JUL 03: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday forecast light to moderate rain and thundershowers across many parts of Jammu and Kashmir

Breakthrough in Centre-Ladakh talks

Ladakh to get UT-level elected body with legislative powers

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JUL 03: In a major development, representatives of the Union Home Ministry, the Leh Apex Body (LAB), and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) on Friday finalized the minutes of the sub-committee meeting held on May 22, in which both sides reached consensus on key issues ranging from constitutional safeguards to elected governance in the Union Territory. Additional Secretary, MHA, Prashant

Responsive Governance Will Drive Inclusive Development Across J&K: Omar Abdullah

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 3: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday reaffirmed his government's commitment to responsive governance and inclusive development while meeting legislators, trade bodies and tourism stakeholders to discuss a wide range of issues concerning public welfare, infrastructure, business and economic growth. During a series of meetings



LG Saxena Launches Employment-Linked Skill Training Programme For Ladakhi Youth

HT NEWS NETWORK

LEH/JAMMU, JULY 3: Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Friday launched an employment-linked skill training programme for Ladakhi youth, under which 36 shortlisted candidates from all

seven districts of the Union Territory will undergo industry-oriented residential training in New Delhi with assured placement assistance. The first batch, comprising 34 girls and two boys, was flagged off from Leh to the GMR Varalakshmi



Centre for Empowerment and Livelihoods (CEL) in New Delhi, where they will undergo two to three months of training beginning in the first week of July, officials said. The initiative aims to enhance employability by equipping the

Highly Successful Summit; 75 Yrs Of India-Japan Ties To Be Celebrated In 2027: MEA

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JUL 3: As Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi concluded her official visit to India on Friday, the Ministry of External Affairs said it reaffirmed the commitment of the two sides to nurture a partnership pivotal to the shared growth and prosperity of both countries. The India-Japan partnership is also an anchor for promoting peace, prosperity and stability in the Indo-Pacific and beyond, the MEA said, and asserted that the 16th India-Japan annual summit here was "highly successful". "A memorable visit concludes, advancing India-Japan partnership towards shared horizons. PM@takaichi_sanae of Japan departs from India following the highly successful 16th India-Japan Annual



Summit. She was seen off by Minister of State @DrJitendraSingh, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal posted on X. He also shared some photos of the send-off in Delhi.

Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo Awarded Prestigious Chartered Scientist (CSci) Status by the Science Council, UK

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 03: Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo, Physician, Public Health Expert, Medical Educator, and Researcher from Jammu & Kashmir, has been awarded the internationally recognized Chartered Scientist (CSci) professional designation by the Science Council, United Kingdom, through



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Amarnath.....

faith. Over the years, he noted, the pilgrimage has evolved into a symbol of national unity by uniting people from diverse regions, languages and traditions in a common act of devotion.

The Prime Minister praised the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board, the Jammu and Kashmir Administration, the Indian Army, Central Armed Police Forces, Jammu and Kashmir Police, disaster response agencies, healthcare workers, sanitation personnel and civil officials for ensuring the safe and efficient conduct of the pilgrimage. He also commended the hospitality extended by the people of Jammu and Kashmir and acknowledged the voluntary efforts of local residents and organisations that operate community kitchens and service camps along the pilgrimage route, describing their contribution as a true expression of India's tradition of selfless service.

Calling on devotees to make the pilgrimage an example of responsible citizenship, Modi urged them to maintain cleanliness, strictly follow safety guidelines, support local livelihoods by purchasing locally made products, promote environmental conservation by planting trees, and contribute to national development through responsible civic conduct.

Expressing confidence that this year's pilgrimage would strengthen faith, unity and the spirit of service, the Prime Minister wished all pilgrims a safe, peaceful and spiritually enriching journey. Pilgrims welcomed the message, saying it further strengthened their resolve and enthusiasm for the sacred pilgrimage.

Robust.....

first batches of pilgrims from the Baltal and Nunwan base camps in Jammu and Kashmir.

Extending his greetings to devotees, Shah described the pilgrimage as a symbol of unwavering faith, patience, resilience and spiritual devotion. He wished all pilgrims a safe and fulfilling journey.

In a message posted on X, the Home Minister said the government has established a multi-layered security grid and significantly strengthened facilities along the entire pilgrimage route.

"The Modi government has made robust arrangements along the entire route, including a multi-layer security grid, QR code-based registration, and strengthened facilities for devotees' accommodation, healthcare services and disaster management, ensuring that every pilgrim's journey remains safe, smooth and joyful," Shah said.

He also noted that the annual pilgrimage reflects enduring values of faith, perseverance and discipline, extending his best wishes to all devotees visiting the shrine.

The pilgrimage began on Friday with the first groups of pilgrims setting out from the twin base camps at Baltal in Ganderbal district and Nunwan in Pahalgam towards the cave shrine in the south Kashmir Himalayas.

Authorities have implemented extensive security and logistical measures for this year's pilgrimage. Personnel from the Jammu and Kashmir Police, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the Indian Army have been deployed along both routes, while digital surveillance systems, RFID tracking and other technological measures are being used to strengthen security and manage pilgrim movement.

The 57-day pilgrimage is scheduled to conclude on August 28, coinciding with the festival of Raksha Bandhan.

Over 12,000.....

paid their respects at the 3,800-metre-high shrine on the first day of the pilgrimage. The visitors included around 9,350 men, 2,250 women, more than 200 children, 70 ascetics, nine transgender pilgrims, and over 260 security personnel.

The pilgrimage commenced simultaneously along the traditional 48-kilometre Pahalgam route in Anantnag district and the shorter but steeper 14-kilometre Baltal route in Ganderbal district. Pilgrims began their journey at first light from the two base camps before reaching the shrine.

Authorities had made extensive security and logistical arrangements to ensure the safe movement of pilgrims, with security forces and civil administration coordinating the operation along both routes.

The Amarnath Yatra, one of the country's largest annual religious pilgrimages, is scheduled to conclude on August 28, with hundreds of thousands of pilgrims expected to undertake the journey during the 57-day period.

A total of 12,168 pilgrims paid obeisance at the Holy Cave Shrine on the opening day of the annual Amarnath Yatra on Friday, as the pilgrimage commenced from the twin base camps of Baltal and Nunwan (Pahalgam), while the second batch of 3,865 pilgrims left Jammu for Kashmir under elaborate security arrangements.

Officials told that the pilgrimage began in the early hours from both the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route and the shorter 14-km Baltal route despite intermittent rainfall.

They said pilgrims, including men, women and sadhus, started their journey towards the 3,880-metre-high Holy Cave Shrine amid chants of "Bum Bum Bhole" after being flagged off by the respective Deputy Commissioners and Senior Superintendents of Police from the two base camps.

According to officials, 12,168 persons performed darshan at the Holy Cave till 7:00 pm

on Friday. The figure includes 9,354 male pilgrims, 2,250 female pilgrims, 219 children, 71 sadhus, nine transgender devotees and 265 security personnel.

Meanwhile, the second batch of pilgrims left the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu in two escorted convoys.

According to official figures, 1,735 pilgrims bound for the Baltal route departed at 3:13 am, while 2,130 pilgrims heading towards the Pahalgam route left at 3:38 am, taking the total strength of the second batch to 3,865.

Officials said the batch comprised of 2,965 male pilgrims, 618 women, 230 sadhus, 48 sadhvis and four children.

The pilgrims were travelling in 201 vehicles, including 83 buses, 14 medium motor vehicles (MMVs) and 104 light motor vehicles (LMVs). Of these, 115 vehicles were part of the Baltal-bound convoy, while 86 vehicles are heading towards the Pahalgam base camp, officials said. "With the departure of the second batch on Friday, a total of 8,687 pilgrims have left the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu for the Kashmir Valley over the past two days to undertake the annual Amarnath Yatra."

'UNDERTAKE PILGRIMAGE ONLY AFTER COMPLETING ADVANCE REGISTRATION'

Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir administration issued an advisory urging devotees to undertake the pilgrimage only after completing advance registration and to strictly adhere to their allotted travel dates.

The administration said that in accordance with the directions of the Supreme Court, a daily ceiling has been fixed on the number of pilgrims permitted on the Yatra routes to ensure the safety of devotees and the smooth conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

Officials said advance registration had been made available well before the commencement of the Yatra through designated bank branches across the country and online platforms, with a majority of pilgrims already availing the facility.

The administration clarified that the Tatkal or on-the-spot registration facility has only limited slots and cannot accommodate thousands of unregistered pilgrims arriving in Jammu and Kashmir. Devotees without prior registration have been requested to wait for their allotted date and travel only as per the schedule issued by the authorities.

The advisory further noted that several registered pilgrims have been reaching Jammu and Kashmir before their scheduled travel dates. Authorities reiterated that no pilgrim would be allowed to proceed on the Yatra before the date mentioned on the registration slip.

The administration assured that every registered devotee would get an opportunity to undertake the Yatra in accordance with the prescribed procedure and the daily carrying capacity. Pilgrims have been urged to maintain discipline, cooperate with the authorities and follow all guidelines for the safe and orderly conduct of the pilgrimage.

Authorities have put in place multi-tier security arrangements, with personnel from the J&K Police, CRPF and other security agencies deployed along both routes to ensure the safe and smooth conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

The 57-day pilgrimage is scheduled to conclude on August 28.

Div Com.....

the Divisional Commissioner emphasised the need to ensure efficient, hassle-free arrangements and the availability of all essential facilities for pilgrims, with special focus on their safety, comfort and convenience throughout the Yatra.

Taking note of the heavy influx of unregistered pilgrims, Garg instructed the concerned officers to streamline the on-the-spot registration process to minimise waiting time and facilitate quicker registration. He also directed officials to provide proper guidance and assistance to pilgrims requiring on-the-spot registration.

At Hikers Park, the Divisional Commissioner reviewed the token-based RFID registration facility, while at the Club he inspected the on-the-spot RFID registration and eKYC updation process. Appreciating the efforts of the RFID teams, he directed officials to ensure timely completion of the daily registration quota.

Stressing that a large number of pilgrims are expected to undertake the pilgrimage in the coming days, Garg directed all departments to keep the arrangements fully functional and responsive to ensure a safe, smooth and convenient Yatra experience for the devotees.

1st batch.....

to the pilgrims and prayed for a safe, peaceful and spiritually fulfilling pilgrimage.

The Baltal Base Camp resonated with chants of "Bam Bam Bhole" and "Har Har Mahadev" as devotees including men, women, elderly pilgrims and sadhus, began their onward journey to the Holy Cave Shrine of Shri Amarnath Ji.

The commencement of the Yatra marks the beginning of one of the country's most revered spiritual pilgrimages and reflects the coordinated efforts of the administration and all stakeholder departments to facilitate a secure, seamless and memorable pilgrimage experience for every devotee.

Meanwhile, amid jubilation and devotional fervor, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag (Yatra Officer), Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat and Senior Superintendent of Police, Amod Ashok Nagpure, jointly flagged off the Shri

Amarnath Ji Yatra 2026 along the Pahalgam Axis in the wee hours Friday from the Nunwan Base Camp, Pahalgam.

Camp Director Atul Kumar, SDM Pahalgam, Additional Camp Directors, and senior officers from the police and line departments were present during the flag-off ceremony.

Following their departure from the Nunwan Base Camp, the pilgrims were ferried in vehicles to Chandanwari via a special shuttle service provided by the Motor Vehicles (MV) Department.

To ensure a blissful and enriching spiritual experience for the Yatris, adequate arrangements have been put in place at various camps, stations and places of importance enroute the Holy Cave. All essential facilities will be provided to the pilgrims during the pilgrimage period so that it is conducted in a smooth, and successful manner. Besides, service augmentation and other necessary safety and security measures along the track were planned and executed in advance.

The Yatris expressed their satisfaction with the overall arrangements and were highly motivated as they began their spiritual journey to the Holy Cave.

Centre Will.....

deficit and the possibility of drought in several parts of the country due to the influence of El Niño.

He instructed the Agriculture Ministry and other departments to provide timely guidance to farmers on crop selection, encourage cultivation of less water-intensive crops, closely monitor water storage in reservoirs, and ensure adequate electricity supply for irrigation and other agricultural activities.

The review comes against the backdrop of a significant monsoon shortfall. India recorded an overall rainfall deficit of around 40 per cent in June, with Central India experiencing the sharpest decline at more than 50 per cent. The deficient rainfall has also affected the sowing season, with the area under seasonal crops declining by 23 per cent to 182.72 lakh hectares by June 25. Forecasts indicate that rainfall during July is also expected to remain below normal.

Shah emphasised the need to promote crops that require less water, including millets, pulses and fodder, as part of efforts to reduce pressure on available water resources. He also directed the Department of Water Resources to closely monitor reservoir levels across the country and asked the Power Ministry to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply to farmers.

Reassuring the public on food security, the Home Minister said the country has adequate stocks of essential food grains, including rice and wheat, while prices of essential commodities remain stable despite the challenging weather conditions.

The meeting was attended by senior officials from the Ministries of Home, Agriculture, Water Resources, Power, Environment, Rural Development, Consumer Affairs, Fisheries and Animal Husbandry, along with representatives of the National Disaster Management Authority, India Meteorological Department, Central Water Commission, Indian Agricultural Research Institute and National Remote Sensing Centre.

Shah also directed the Ministry of Home Affairs to immediately deploy an Inter-Ministerial Central Team to assess the damage caused by recent floods, flash floods and landslides in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, where severe weather has disrupted normal life.

Rain.....

over the next three days, with the possibility of heavy rainfall at a few places that could trigger localised flash floods and landslides.

According to the Meteorological Centre, Srinagar, one or two spells of light to moderate rain and thundershowers are likely at many places from July 4 to 5, mainly during the late afternoon, evening, and late night or early morning hours. Heavy rainfall or brief intense showers accompanied by thunderstorms are expected at a few locations.

According to the forecast, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), from July 6 to 9, the weather is expected to remain generally hot and humid, although many places may continue to witness brief spells of light to moderate rain and thundershowers, with isolated intense showers.

The MeT department advised people to stay away from nallas, streams, and landslide or mudslide-prone areas, warning that heavy rainfall at vulnerable locations could lead to localised flash floods and landslides.

During the past 24 hours, Udhampur recorded the highest rainfall at 85 mm, followed by Kathua ARG with 41.5 mm and Rajpura ARG with 27 mm, while light to moderate rain was reported from several other stations.

Despite the rain forecast, temperatures remained above normal in most parts of the Valley and Jammu region.

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 31.7 degrees Celsius, which was 2.1 degrees above normal, while the minimum settled at 19.3 degrees Celsius, two degrees above normal.

Qazigund recorded 30.6 degrees Celsius, Pahalgam 25.1 degrees Celsius, Kupwara 30.7 degrees Celsius, Kokernag 29.9 degrees Celsius, and Gulmarg 20.2 degrees Celsius.

In the Jammu region, Jammu city recorded

a maximum of 37.3 degrees Celsius, Banihal 31.7 degrees Celsius, Katra 33.7 degrees Celsius, Batote 28.2 degrees Celsius, and Baderwah 29.6 degrees Celsius.

The MeT department said humidity levels remained high across the region, adding to the prevailing hot and humid conditions, particularly in the Jammu division—(KNO)

Breakthrough.....

Lokhande, today met representatives of LAB and KDA to finalize the minutes of the sub-committee constituted by the high-powered committee set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

As per the minutes of the meeting signed by both sides, Ladakh will have a UT-level elected body with executive, financial, and legislative powers.

"After detailed deliberations, it was unanimously decided that while statehood would remain the long-term aspiration of Ladakh, in the present situation, as a first step, an appropriate customized model of governance by establishing a UT-level elected body with executive, financial, and legislative powers would be established," the document, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) reads.

The minutes further state that, in terms of functions and civil servants for the subjects under the purview of the UT-level elected body, control and supervision—including the Annual Performance Appraisal Report—will be exercised by the elected executive body. Further details will be finalized in future meetings as per the Transaction of Business Rules, the minutes state.

According to the minutes, a customized sui generis model will be adopted for Ladakh.

"During the meeting, the model of constitutional safeguards under Article 371 was also discussed. There have been instances of invoking Article 371(A to J), and it was agreed that a customized sui generis model most suitable for Ladakh would be adopted. It was decided that a draft proposal covering the powers and functions (executive, financial, and legislative) of this UT-level elected body, in harmonious relation with the PRIs, would be prepared for further discussion and fine-tuning," the document states.

The sub-committee also noted "the substantial support extended by the Government to Ladakh in recent years through dialogue initiatives, protective legislation in terms of domicile criteria and reservations, employment measures, developmental interventions, infrastructure expansion, cultural recognition, and administrative reforms."—(KNO)

Responsive.....

held at Raabita, the Chief Minister interacted with MLAs Rajiv Jasrotia, Shamima Firdous and Mehraj Malik, who presented the developmental priorities and public welfare concerns of their respective constituencies.

The legislators highlighted issues related to infrastructure development, delivery of public services, implementation of ongoing projects and other constituency-specific requirements aimed at improving the quality of life of residents. The Chief Minister assured them that all genuine concerns would be examined for appropriate action.

In separate meetings, a delegation led by Mohammad Yaseen Khan raised issues affecting the trade and business community, while another delegation headed by Zahoor Ahmed Karnai discussed measures to strengthen Kashmir's tourism sector.

The tourism delegation proposed initiatives to increase tourist arrivals, expand promotional outreach and enhance the overall tourism ecosystem. The Chief Minister appreciated the constructive suggestions and reiterated that the government would continue regular engagement with public representatives, trade organisations and other stakeholders to promote responsive governance, inclusive development and sustained economic progress across Jammu and Kashmir.

LG Saxena.....

youth with market-oriented skills aligned with industry requirements while creating pathways for sustainable livelihoods in organised sectors, they said.

Officials said the programme is particularly significant as most of the selected candidates are travelling outside Ladakh for the first time.

The trainees include two from Leh, seven each from Kargil and Drass, six from Zaskar, eight from Sham, five from Nubra and one from Changthang, they said.

They will receive training in advanced computing and data visualisation, cargo and logistics, customer service, beauty and spa, business banking, food production and service, and front office operations.

The UT administration is facilitating

transportation of the trainees to New Delhi, while the entire cost of boarding, lodging and training is being borne by GMR under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, they said.

On successful completion of the programme, the trainees will receive placement assistance through the foundation's network of industry partners, including Schneider Electric, Voltas, CELBI and Relaxo.

Officials said another batch of 50 students from Ladakh would be sent for vocational training in the next phase.

Calling the youth the "greatest strength" of Ladakh, Saxena said empowering them with industry-relevant skills was one of the most meaningful investments for the region's future.

"Our priority is to ensure that the youth of Ladakh are not only educated but also equipped with practical skills that match the evolving needs of industry and the modern economy. By providing quality, employment-linked training and facilitating placement opportunities, the administration is creating pathways for sustainable livelihoods, promoting self-reliance and building a skilled, confident and future-ready workforce," he said.

The trainees expressed gratitude for the opportunity, saying the programme would help them acquire industry-relevant skills and improve their employability.

The Lieutenant Governor also thanked GMR Group Chairman G.M.Rao for bearing the entire cost of the programme and said the curriculum, with nearly 65 per cent emphasis on practical learning, would help trainees acquire workplace competencies and industry-ready skills.

Highly Successful.....

Takaichi visited the country at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, from July 1 to 3 for the 16th India-Japan annual summit.

The two leaders held talks at the Hyderabad House here on Thursday to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

India and Japan unveiled a raft of landmark initiatives, including an economic partnership framework, a defence pact to co-develop military hardware and steps to enhance energy ties to tackle oil shocks, as Prime Minister Modi held summit talks with his Japanese counterpart Takaichi, focusing on enhancing mutual trust to effectively navigate global uncertainties.

"The visit reaffirmed the commitment of both sides to nurture a partnership pivotal to the shared growth and prosperity of both countries and an anchor for promoting peace, prosperity and stability in the Indo-Pacific and beyond," Jaiswal posted.

The Japanese prime minister was on Thursday morning accorded a warm ceremonial welcome at the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Prime Minister Modi was present on the occasion.

This was Takaichi's first official visit to India.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Thursday told reporters at a briefing that overall the visit was "extremely successful", and cited the "exceptional breadth and depth" in the outcomes of the summit.

He also said the two leaders talked about the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries next year, adding that 2027 will be commemorated as the India-Japan Year of Shared Horizons.

Jaiswal in a post on X on Thursday said, "Taking forward a partnership anchored in trust, shared values and strategic convergence".

On Wednesday, the MEA said that the visit marked an "important step" in taking forward the Special Strategic and Global Partnership between India and Japan. (Agencies)

Dr. Tasaduk.....

the Royal Society of Biology (RSB). The Chartered Scientist (CSci) designation is one of the United Kingdom's highest professional registrations for scientists, recognizing excellence in scientific knowledge, professional competence, ethical practice, leadership, and commitment to continuing professional development.

The certificate, issued on 2 July 2026, bears the signatures of Delta Freeth, Chief Executive of the Science Council, and Dr. Doug Brown CBIol FRSB, Chief Executive of the Royal Society of Biology.

Dr. Itoo said that this recognition is a significant milestone in his professional journey and reflects his continued commitment to advancing evidence-based medicine, medical education, public health, and scientific excellence. He dedicated the achievement to his mentors, colleagues, family, and well-wishers who have supported him throughout his career.

With this achievement, Dr. Itoo continues to strengthen his international professional profile and remains committed to improving healthcare delivery, promoting public health awareness, and contributing to scientific research and medical education at both national and international levels.



Satish Sharma hears Public Grievances, Assures Time-Bound Redressal

Pampore Industrial Estate, Fair Price Shop Association, Kerosene Dealers and Other Delegations Call on Minister

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 3: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, today met several public delegations from different parts of Jammu and Kashmir and patiently heard their grievances and developmental concerns, reaffirming the government's commitment to responsive, transparent and people-centric governance.

A core group of the Brick & Tile Factory Industrial Estate, Pampore, led a delegation of 118 leasees and apprised the Minister of the prolonged delay in the handing over of possession of industrial land. The delegation informed the Minister that despite completing the required formalities, the matter has remained unresolved for nearly four years, causing immense hardship to entrepreneurs and adversely affecting industrial growth and employment generation in the region.

Giving a patient hearing to the delegation, Satish Sharma assured the members that the issue would be taken up at the highest level



and that every possible effort would be made to settle the issue. He said that the government is committed to promoting entrepreneurship, creating employment opportunities and ensuring that genuine investors and industrial stakeholders are not made to suffer because of procedural delays.

The Minister observed that industrial development plays a crucial role in strengthening the economy of Jammu and Kashmir and emphasized that genuine concerns of entrepreneurs deserve timely attention. He assured the delegation that the government would work in close

coordination with the concerned departments to facilitate an expeditious settlement of the issue within the framework of rules.

The Minister also met a delegation of the Fair Price Shop Association, which raised issues pertaining to the functioning of ration depots, timely release of commissions and other operational matters concerning the Public Distribution System. Satish Sharma assured the association that their genuine demands would be examined sympathetically and appropriate steps would be taken to further strengthen the delivery mechanism of essential commodities

across the Union Territory.

A delegation of the Kerosene Dealers Association also called on the Minister and highlighted various issues affecting dealers and consumers. The Minister assured them that the concerns raised would be discussed with the concerned authorities to arrive at practical solutions in the larger public interest.

Representatives of the NYCs also met the Minister and submitted a memorandum regarding issues concerning their welfare and functioning. Satish Sharma assured them that the government remains committed to constructive engagement with youth

and would examine their demands on merit.

Besides these, several other delegations and individuals from different districts of Jammu and Kashmir met the Minister and projected issues relating to public infrastructure, civic amenities, sports facilities, consumer affairs, road connectivity, drinking water, electricity and other developmental matters.

Interacting with the delegations, Satish Sharma reiterated that the Omar Abdullah-led Government is committed to ensuring responsive governance by maintaining direct engagement with the people. He said that public grievances are being addressed on priority and every effort is being made to ensure timely redressal through coordinated action among departments.

The Minister assured all the delegations that each issue brought to his notice would be taken up with the concerned departments for appropriate action. He reiterated that the government remains dedicated to safeguarding public welfare, promoting inclusive development and ensuring that the benefits of governance reach every section of society.

Dosti Discussion' held at Nadihal under Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JULY 03: As part of the ongoing 100-Day Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan and on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, the District Administration Bandipora on Friday organised a "Dosti Discussion" interactive awareness session at Boys Higher Secondary School, Nadihal, to educate students about the ill effects of drug abuse and encourage informed life



choices.

District Information Officer, Aadil Manzoor Wani, attended the programme as the Chief Guest and administered the anti-drug pledge to the students at the outset, reaffirming their commitment to stay away from narcotics and contribute towards a drug-free society.

Addressing the gathering, the District Information Officer urged students to carefully examine their choices before making decisions and to embrace whatever is beneficial while rejecting what is harmful. He said that developing the habit of evaluating one's decisions at the very beginning and remaining steadfast on the right path helps build sound judgement and character among young people.

Highlighting the importance of self-improvement, he emphasized that skills are developed through consistent practice and perseverance. He encouraged students to make productive use of their time, strengthen their abilities and remain focused on achieving their goals.

He also called upon the youth to actively support the administration's efforts against drug abuse by staying vigilant within their communities, spreading awareness and collectively resisting the menace of narcotics.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students and school staff and concluded with an interactive discussion, reflecting the District Administration's continued commitment to creating a drug-free Bandipora through sustained awareness, community participation and youth engagement under the 100-Day Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan.

Transfer is a welcome step, but Rehbar-e-Taleem teachers should not be ignored, Peak time to implement transfer policy in favour of RREts:

Tahir Ahmad Sofi

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 03: Welcoming the government's move on transfers, General Secretary Teachers Forum Mr. Tahir Ahmad Sofi has demanded immediate implementation of the transfer policy for Rehbar-e-Taleem Teachers (RREts) in the upcoming Annual Transfer Drive (ATD).

In a press statement issued today, Mr. Sofi stated that RREts have been serving in the same schools for decades without a transfer, which has caused stagnation and professional distress. "Transfer is a welcome step, but Rehbar-e-Taleem should not be ignored. It is peak time and the need of the hour to implement the transfer policy which has already been committed by the government," he said.

Mr. Sofi emphasized that the Honourable Education Minister is highly competent to address this chronic issue. He recalled that a committee was already constituted to frame the transfer policy for RREts, yet implementation remains pending.

"Hundreds of RREts are posted far from their homes for 15-20 years. This violates the spirit of equity and rationalization. A comprehensive transfer policy will not only end their suffering but also improve the overall academic atmosphere," Mr. Sofi added.

The Teachers Forum headed by Chairman Mr Showkat Ali Beigh urged the School Education Department to include RREts in the upcoming ATD and honour the commitments made earlier. The Forum said that justice delayed is justice denied, and RREts cannot be left to serve indefinitely at one place while other cadres benefit from regular transfers.

Teachers Forum has expressed hope that the Honourable Education Minister will take a compassionate view and issue necessary orders without further delay.

District Admin Bandipora strengthens Anti-Drug Drive through 'Dosti Discussion'

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JULY 03: As part of the ongoing 100-Day Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, the District Administration Bandipora on Friday organised a series of "Dosti Discussion" programmes across educational institutions to raise awareness among students about the harmful effects of drug abuse and encourage them to lead healthy and responsible lives.

The programmes were conducted in accordance with the directions of the Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, at Government Boys Higher Secondary School Nadihal, Government Boys Higher Secondary School Dawar, Government Higher Secondary School Naidkhai, Government Higher Secondary School Quilmuqam and Government Higher Secondary School Nowgam, with officers interacting with students.

At Government Boys Higher Secondary School Nadihal, District Information Officer, Aadil Manzoor Wani, administered the anti-drug pledge and urged students to make informed choices, stay focused on education, develop their skills and actively support the campaign against substance abuse.

At Government Higher Secondary School Quilmuqam, Principal, HKM GDC Bandipora, Prof. Suresh Kumar Dogra, Faculty members highlighted the importance of a drug-free society, the role of family and friendship in preventing substance abuse and motivated students to adopt healthy and responsible lifestyles through an interactive discussion.

At Government Higher Secondary School Nowgam, the Functional Man-



ager, District Industries Centre (DIC), Bandipora, interacted with students and stressed the importance of discipline, awareness and collective responsibility in building a drug-free society.

At Government Higher Secondary School Naidkhai, Chief Education Officer Bandipora, Mohammad Rafiq Mir, attended the programme as the Chief Guest and sensitised students about the harmful consequences of drug abuse. He urged them to remain committed to education, uphold moral values, make informed life choices and contribute actively towards building a drug-free society.

Similar awareness programme was also held at Government Boys Higher Secondary School Dawar where the officers sensitised students about the ill effects of drug abuse and encouraged them to become ambassadors of the anti-drug movement in their schools and communities.

The programmes witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, teachers and school authorities, reaffirming the District Administration Bandipora's commitment to building a drug-free, healthy and progressive society through sustained youth engagement under the Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan.

Ensure Uninterrupted Fruit Transport During Amarnath Yatra, KVFG Union Urges Traffic Police

■ FAROOQ RATHER

SRINAGAR, JULY 3: A delegation of the Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers Cum Dealers Union (KVFG), led by its Chairman Bashir Ahmad Basheer, on Friday met Inspector General of Police (Traffic) M. Suleman Choudhary (IPS) to seek uninterrupted movement of fruit-laden trucks on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway (NH-44) during the ongoing Shri Amarnath Yatra.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Inspector General of Police (Traffic) Haseeb-Ur-Rehman (IPS). The delegation included Fayaz Ahmad Malik, President Fruit Association Sopore; Mudassir Ahmad Bhat, President Buyers-Sellers Association Sopore; Mohammad Ashraf, President Fruit Association Shopian; Nazir Ahmad Mir, General Secretary Fruit Association Shopian; Abdul Majeed Wani, General Secretary Fruit Association Pulwama; and

Ali Mohammad Reshi, Chairman Transport, Fruit Association Parimpora.

During the meeting, the delegation highlighted the challenges being faced by the horticulture sector due to traffic restrictions on NH-44 following the commencement of the Shri Amarnath Yatra. The Union informed the traffic authorities that the harvesting season of plums, early apple varieties, pears and other highly perishable fruits

is currently at its peak, requiring immediate transportation to markets across the country. Chairman Bashir Ahmad Basheer said that while the fruit growers wholeheartedly welcome the annual Shri Amarnath Yatra, uninterrupted transportation of fresh produce is equally essential as even a brief delay can result in significant financial losses for growers. He also pointed out that fruit and vegetable supplies arriving in the Valley from outside

Jammu and Kashmir also require smooth movement.

The delegation appreciated the Traffic Police for facilitating the movement of fruit-laden trucks during previous Yatras and requested that the same arrangements continue this year. It also noted that growers have already suffered losses due to recent adverse weather conditions and natural disasters, making timely transportation of produce even more critical.

Shama Roohi Takes Charge as DFO Kulgam, Vows to Strengthen Forest Conservation and Eco-Tourism

■ FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, JULY 3: Shama Roohi on Friday assumed charge as the new Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Kulgam, succeeding Mohd Ashraf. She was accorded a warm welcome by officers, employees, civil society members and local residents at a joining function organised by the Special Forest Division Kulgam.

The event was attended by forest officials, employees and several local delegations, who extended their best wishes to the new DFO and expressed confidence that her leadership would further strengthen forest conservation, environmental protection and sustainable development initiatives across the district. Addressing the gathering, Shama Roohi thanked the officers, employees and the people for the warm reception and reaffirmed her commitment to safeguarding Kulgam's rich forest resources. She said that the protection of forests, coupled with sustainable development, would remain her foremost priority. Highlighting her vision for the Forest Division, she said special emphasis would be laid on the development of forest areas surrounding major tourist destinations to promote eco-tourism while maintaining ecological balance. She also stressed the need for effective implementation and close monitoring of projects being executed under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) to boost afforestation, forest conservation, habitat improvement and infrastructure development.

Speaking on the occasion, forest employees described Shama Roohi as a dedicated, honest and people-friendly officer with an impressive professional record. They expressed optimism that the Forest Division Kulgam would achieve new milestones in environmental conservation and sustainable forest management under her leadership. The programme concluded with the felicitation of the new DFO, as officers, employees and members of civil society wished her a successful and productive tenure in Kulgam.

DC Ramban reviews SANJY-2026 arrangements at Lamber Yatra Camp, Yatri Niwas Chanderkote

HT NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN, JULY 03: Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan, today conducted a comprehensive inspection of the Lamber Yatra Camp at Banihal and Yatri Niwas Chanderkote to review the arrangements put in place for the smooth conduct of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY) 2026 and to assess the services being provided to the pilgrims. The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Arun Gupta; Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Varunjeet Singh Charak; Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Banihal, Mohammad Naseeb Bajraan; SDM Ramsoo, Sayed Mazahir Hussain Shah and other concerned officers.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner carried out a detailed inspection of the registration counters, RFID issuance facilities, accommodation arrangements, sanitation and cleanliness measures, drinking water supply, medical services, security deployment, power, traffic management, lighting and other essential facilities established for the pilgrims.

Reviewing the services and facilities in Yatra Camp, the DC stressed that every service must be delivered with the highest



standards of quality, efficiency and responsiveness. He directed all officers to ensure that pilgrims receive prompt, courteous and hassle-free assistance at every service point. The Deputy Commissioner also interacted with the devotees and took firsthand feedback regarding the facilities

and services available at the camp. He enquired about their travel experience, registration process, accommodation, sanitation, medical facilities, security arrangements and overall comfort during their stay.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned officials

to issue RFID cards only after proper verification of all prescribed documents. He further instructed the officers to maintain continuous monitoring of all facilities and remain available round the clock to address any grievance or requirement of the pilgrims without delay.

The Deputy Commissioner called upon all stakeholder departments to work in close coordination, remain vigilant and ensure the timely delivery of every essential service so that pilgrims experience a smooth and spiritually fulfilling journey through district Ramban.

DC Kulgam visits Eklavya Model Residential School; Reviews developmental works

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, JULY 03: Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam who is also the Chairperson of Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS), today visited the EMRS campus and reviewed the progress of various infrastructure and developmental works being undertaken at the institution.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner inspected the facilities available at the school and took stock of the ongoing works aimed at strengthening residential and educational infrastructure.

He directed the concerned departments to complete all pending necessities in the Boys Hostel within ten days to facilitate the shifting of students, staff and mess facilities.

He also reviewed the provision of furniture for the Boys Hostel and the Principal's quarters and instructed the concerned authorities to ensure its timely availability.

Emphasising the need for timely completion of projects, he directed that the construction work on the Girls Hostel be completed by October 2026.

He further stressed the need for early completion of landscaping and development of the school playground.

The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the proposal for installation of a hybrid solar power system at the institution and directed the concerned department to expedite the process. He further instructed the concerned authorities to issue and install a dedicated electricity meter for the school.

The DC was accompanied by CEO, Aharbal Development Authority, Mohd Rouf Rehman; JDP, Malik Suhail; SDM D H Pora, Bashir-ul-Hassan, Executive Engineers from Jal Shakti R&B, Tehsildar D.H. Pora and other concerned officers.

JKSCST Corporation organizes Awareness camp at Gurez

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JULY 03: The JK Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes & Backward Classes Development Corporation Ltd., organised an Awareness Camp at Dawar, Gurez, in collaboration with the National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation, New Delhi.

The event witnessed large participation from diverse communities, with large presence of individuals belonging to Scheduled Tribes. The primary aim of the event was to raise awareness about the self-employment schemes undertaken by Corporation.

Nazir Ahmad Gurez, MLA attended the event as Chief Guest and appreciated the officials of Corporation for organising the event and encouraged the gathering to avail benefits of Schemes.

Ashok Kumar Thukaan, Financial Advisor of the corporation highlighted various low interest loans schemes offered by the Corporation implemented to support marginalised section of society,



particularly those designed for Scheduled tribe categories with special emphasis on education loan Schemes.

Mehmood-ul-Haq Gundroo, Deputy General Manager of the Corporation reaffirmed the Corporation's unwavering commitment to empowering individuals.

He urged the attendees to avail benefits of schemes and actively spreading awareness to ensure broader reach and impact.

Ashiq Ahmad Dar, Director NIELIT and Principal Boys Higher Secondary School, Gurez were present on the occasion, shared their views and encouraged participants to take advantage of Schemes while promoting awareness to ensure wider reach and benefit to many.

SKUAST-K conducts Animal Healthcare Programs in Gurez to promote Indigenous Animal Genetic Resources

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JULY 03: Reinforcing its commitment to sustainable livestock development and conservation of indigenous animal wealth, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) organized a series of Awareness-cum-Input Distribution and Animal Healthcare Programs at Gurez.

The programs were organized by the Division of Animal Genetics & Breeding, Faculty of Veterinary Sciences & Animal Husbandry, Shuhama, under the ICAR-NBAGR Network Project on Animal Genetic Resources, in collaboration with Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Gurez, and the Department of Animal Husbandry.

The initiative aimed to promote conservation of indigenous animal genetic resources, improve livestock productivity, and strengthen the livelihoods of tribal farming communities in the region.

Held under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor, Prof. (Dr.) Nazir Ahmad Ganai, the outreach program brought together scientists, veterinary experts, ex-

tension professionals, and livestock farmers to promote scientific livestock management and climate-resilient farming practices.

Dr Ravinder Kumar, Principal Scientist at ICAR-Central Institute for Research on Cattle, attended as chief guest and highlighted the immense value of indigenous livestock genetic resources in ensuring sustainable livestock production, climate resilience, and nutritional security. He emphasised the need to adopt scientific and innovative livestock technologies to improve productivity and contribute to the vision of a "Viksit Gurez".

Guest of Honour, Dr Mahesh Dige, Senior Scientist at ICAR-National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources, stressed the importance of conserving local animal genetic resources and appreciated SKUAST-K's sustained efforts in strengthening the livestock sector through scientific interventions, farmer awareness, and capacity-building initiatives in remote tribal areas.

Earlier, Prof. (Dr) Syed Shanaz Shafi, Professor & Head, Division of Animal Genetics & Breeding,



underscored the urgent need for scientific conservation and sustainable management of indigenous animal genetic resources. She noted that native livestock and poultry breeds are invaluable genetic assets naturally adapted to the harsh agro-climatic conditions of the Kashmir Himalayas and are critical for sustainable livelihoods, biodiversity conservation, and climate-resilient farming systems.

A major highlight of the program was the distribution of livestock inputs to beneficiaries. A total of 100 indigenous Kashmiri poultry birds were distributed under the ICAR-NBAGR Network Project to promote the conservation and multiplication of indigenous poultry germplasm.

Additionally, 300 Keystone Golden birds were distributed under the ICAR-All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on Poultry under the guidance of Dr Azmat Alam, Principal Investigator, to encourage backyard poultry farming, particularly among women's Self-Help Groups, thereby improving livelihood opportunities and household nutritional security.

Further strengthening animal health interventions, around 50 livestock farmers received deworming medicines and mineral mixtures free of cost to improve animal health and productivity.

During the technical session, Dr. Shahid Ahmad Shergojry, Associate Professor, Division of Animal Genetics & Breeding, sensitized farmers on the im-

portance of conserving indigenous poultry breeds, scientific breeding strategies, genetic improvement, and sustainable livestock management. He highlighted the significant role of native poultry in improving household nutrition, strengthening rural livelihoods, and generating supplementary income for tribal farming families.

Scientists also conducted practical demonstrations and provided expert guidance on scientific feeding, breeding, healthcare, disease prevention, and climate-resilient livestock production practices. Farmers actively participated in interactive discussions, sharing their experiences and seeking scientific solutions to challenges affecting livestock production.

The program was attended by Dr. Izhar Ahmad, BVO Gurez; Dr. Ishaq Ahmad, VAS; Dr. Jauhar Rafeeq; Dr. Shahada; scientists and officials from KVK Gurez; officers from the Department of Animal Husbandry; and a large number of progressive livestock farmers and women beneficiaries from across Gurez Valley.

Shaleen Kabra reviews water supply infrastructure along Pahalgam Axis

HT NEWS NETWORK

PAHALGAM, JULY 03: Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Jal Shakti Department, Shaleen Kabra conducted an extensive tour of the Pahalgam Axis of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra to review the water supply infrastructure and flood mitigation measures for the ongoing Holy Yatra.

During the visit, the ACS inspected key transit and base camps, including Chandanwari, Pissu Top, Zojibal, Sheshnag, Mahagunas Top, Poshpathri, Panjtarni, Holy Cave and Baltal, to assess the operational readiness of the Jal Shakti Department's installations and progress of works.

He reviewed several permanent infrastructure works completed to strengthen water supply arrangements, including nine service reservoirs (one SR of 1.0 lakh gallon capacity at Holy Cave, one SR of 0.10 lakh gallon capacity at MG Top and seven SR's of 0.30 lakh gallons capacity at other stations), five store sheds-cum-staff

accommodations and a lift station at Mahagunas Top at an altitude of about 14,500 feet.

Shaleen Kabra also reviewed the projects aimed at augmenting future capacity, including safety storage tanks for fire and emergency purposes, a service reservoir at Panjtarni, a dedicated raw/supply main for Nunwan Base Camp, and store shed-cum-operator quarters at Panjtarni and Chandanwari.

The Additional Chief Secretary expressed satisfaction over the installation of Reverse Osmosis (RO) plants and the provision of water supply connections to all toilet units along the Yatra route, in accordance with the directions of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board.

Shaleen Kabra directed the engineering wing to ensure all pipelines, pumping installations and distribution networks remain fully functional and capable of withstanding adverse weather conditions so that uninterrupted drinking water supply is maintained throughout the Yatra period.

DC Budgam reviews implementation of PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana in District

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, JULY 03: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan today chaired a review meeting to assess the implementation of the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana across the district.

The meeting was attended by the Additional District Development Commissioner, Superintending Engineer KPDC, Executive Engineer, Electric Division Budgam, Lead District Manager (LDM), Deputy CEO JAKEDA and empanelled regional vendors.

During the meeting, the DC reviewed the physical and financial progress achieved under the scheme besides assessing consumer registrations, rooftop solar installations, disbursement of Central Financial Assistance (CFA), status of government building solarisation, cases sanctioning and installation progress.

The DC was apprised that the district has registered encouraging progress under the scheme across all subdivisions of the District. He was further informed that the scheme has witnessed significant

public response, resulting in substantial clean energy generation and direct CFA benefits to eligible consumers.

The DC was also informed that identified government buildings have been solarised.

Taking stock of the implementation, the DC directed the concerned officers to ensure early installation of smart meters at all solarised government buildings and expedite completion of the remaining pending sites.

Reviewing the banking component of the scheme, the DC instructed the Lead District Manager to facilitate prompt disposal of pending applications and resolve rejected cases in coordination with the concerned banks to ensure hassle-free consumer onboarding.

The DC further directed the empanelled vendors to clear all pending installations within the stipulated timeline. He stressed coordination among KPDC, JAKEDA, banks and vendors to remove bottlenecks, expedite implementation and achieve targets within this financial year.

Two-Day Cultural Workshop on Kashmiri Traditional Arts Concludes in Srinagar

■ GULFAM BARI

SRINAGAR, JULY 3: A two-day Cultural Workshop aimed at promoting Kashmiri traditional and folk arts concluded successfully at Govt, Boys Higher Secondary School Gulab Bagh Srinagar. The workshop was organized by the Lotus Cultural Group with the financial support of the Sangeet Natak Akademi "SNA" New Delhi, under the Finan-

cial Assistance for Cultural Organizations Scheme (2023-24), and was held on July 1 and 2. The workshop focused on preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of Kashmir through training in traditional folk art forms, including Rouf dance, Wanwun, Laddi Shah and theatre. At the concluding sessions the participants presented practical demonstrations of the skills they had acquired during the

workshop earning appreciation from the audience. The Principal of Govt, Boys Higher Secondary School Gulab Bagh Ms. Ausia Jabeen, attended the valedictory function as the Chief Guest. In her address, she appreciated the efforts of the Lotus Cultural Group in promoting Kashmir's cultural heritage and emphasized that such initiatives play a vital role in connecting the younger generation with their

traditional arts and cultural identity. She expressed hope that more such programmes would be organized in the future. The Head of the LCG thanked the school administration for its cooperation and reaffirmed the organization's commitment to organizing similar educational and cultural programmes in the future to preserve and promote Kashmiri folk traditions among students and youth.



DIG Jammu-Samba-Kathua Assures Amarnath Pilgrims, Urges Patience Amid Token Waiting

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 3: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police, Jammu-Samba-Kathua Range, Shridhar Patil, on Friday visited several locations where Shri Amarnath Yatra pilgrims are being accommodated while awaiting their turn to proceed towards the holy cave shrine.

Interacting with the pilgrims, the DIG-P praised people for their cooperation and appealed to devotees to remain patient while waiting for their turn. He assured them that the administration and security agencies are fully committed to facilitating the pilgrimage in a safe and orderly manner.

"We assure you that we are trying our best to make every pilgrim get an opportunity to undertake the yatra and pay obeisance at the holy cave shrine. We request all devotees to cooperate with the authorities and maintain patience. With your support, we will ensure that every pilgrim reaches the holy cave safely," Patil said while addressing the gathered pilgrims. His visit was aimed at reviewing the arrangements for the pilgrims and boosting their confidence as authorities continue to manage the movement of yatis in accordance with the prescribed daily limits and security protocols.

Career Defence School Concludes Two-Day Career Seminar in Leh & Kargil, Opening Doors to IIT, NDA for UT Ladakh Students

■ KHAN JAHANGEER

LEH, JULY 03: A transformative two-day career seminar, aimed at guiding students from the Union Territory of Ladakh towards premier institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the National Defence Academy (NDA), concluded successfully on Friday.

The event, held across two separate towns in Leh and Kargil, drew a large and enthusiastic turnout of students from across the UT.

Organized by the Career Defence School, the seminar was spearheaded by founder and CEO Er. Vinay Rai, alongside Administrative Officer Er. Gagan Wadhwa. The program was coordinated by Khan Jahangeer, Amir Suhail ensuring the sessions resonated with the unique aspirations of Ladakh's youth.

The Leh segment of the seminar was graced by ADC to Lieutenant Governor, Shiekh Adil, alongside the District Planning

Officer, DIET Principal S.D. Namgail, and Anchay Yagdol HOD DIET. In Kargil, the event saw the participation of President of the Private Schools Association, Murtaza Khaleli, and In-charge Chief Education Officer, Dr. Sarwar Shahzad (KAS) who attended as esteemed guests.

Addressing the students in Leh, Shiekh Adil delivered an inspiring address, stating, "Failures are not the end; after every hardship, there is success. If hardships become your excuse, the first casualty will be your goal." He emphasized the growing importance of competitive education and advised students to build confidence, improve communication skills, and remain consistent in their efforts.

DIET Principal S.D. Namgail lauded the initiative, calling it a "meaningful program" that would equip students with the necessary awareness to compete on national platforms and seize career opportunities they



might not have otherwise considered.

In Kargil, Murtaza Khaleli stressed the need for dedication, hard work, and moral values in student life. He highlighted the importance of education, discipline, and critical thinking, urg-

ing students to channel their energy toward constructive goals and stay away from negativity.

Speaking to the media, Er. Vinay Rai expressed his confidence in the potential of Ladakhi students. "Students from Leh

and Kargil possess immense talent. They only require proper guidance, discipline, and exposure to shine on the national stage," he said. "Career Defence School is fully committed to preparing students for competitive exams like JEE Mains, NEET, RIMC, and NDA, while simultaneously focusing on personality development, leadership, and nation-building."

The seminar featured detailed question-and-answer sessions in both locations, during which students actively raised queries regarding NDA eligibility, IIT entrance preparation, hostel facilities, scholarships, physical fitness requirements, and the growing influence of Artificial Intelligence in modern career paths.

The career awareness sessions were conducted in close collaboration with the Education Department of the Union Territory, underscoring a collective effort to empower the youth of Ladakh.

Children Reimagine the Future Through Creativity at Natrang Theatre Camps-2026

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 3: An extraordinary wave of imagination, innovation, and creative energy is sweeping through Natrang's Summer Theatre Camps-2026, where young participants are discovering new dimensions of self-expression, confidence, and artistic excellence. Witnessing an overwhelming response from parents and children alike, Natrang has, for the first time, organized two simultaneous theatre camps, creating opportunities for a much larger number of young minds to experience its internationally acclaimed theatre training programme.

Guided by Padma Shri Balwant Thakur and supported by a dedicated team of six to seven accomplished theatre professionals, this year's camp has evolved into a vibrant laboratory of creativity. Employing cutting edge techniques in personality transformation, human development, and creative learning, the camp is inspiring children to think beyond conventional boundaries and unlock their limitless potential.

The defining feature of Theatre Camp-2026 is the personal involvement of Balwant Thakur, who has conceptualized, designed, and is closely monitoring every aspect of the programme. Drawing upon his vast international experience of working with children's theatre institutions in England, Germany, South Africa, Mauritius, Italy, China, Singapore, the UAE, and the USA, he has introduced globally tested, innovative methodologies that offer participants an unmatched opportunity to experience theatre as a powerful medium of self-discovery and personal growth.

Every day at the camp unfolds as a journey of exploration, where children are encouraged to experiment, innovate, collaborate, and communicate through theatre. The programme opens new horizons of creativity by introducing alternative methods of self-exploration, enabling participants to develop confidence, emotional intelligence, leadership qualities, and artistic sensitivity.

Since 1990, Natrang has been organizing its prestigious 45-day Summer



Theatre Camps, making it one of the longest-running and most professionally designed children's theatre initiatives in the country. Over the last 36 years, it has emerged as Jammu's most significant creative platform for children, offering a rare environment where imagination, aesthetics, culture, innovation, and performing arts come together to nurture young talent. Beyond theatrical skills, the camp helps children identify and develop their hidden strengths while building confidence, discipline, communication skills, and social awareness.

Speaking about the philosophy behind the initiative, Balwant Thakur, Director of Natrang, observed that while creative activities for children have become increasingly common, genuine creativity cannot be developed through casual or routine engagements. At Natrang, every exercise, activity, and performance is carefully designed and strategically executed by professionally trained experts to ignite originality, imagination, and independent thinking among children.

He remarked that while many children spend their leisure hours glued to television screens or smartphones, the participants at Natrang Theatre Camp are investing their time in acquiring life-changing skills. Theatre, he emphasized, is not merely about acting; it is a transformative educational process that develops confidence, intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, communication skills, emotional resilience, teamwork, and leadership qualities that remain invaluable throughout life.

Natrang proudly stands as the only theatre organization in the country running a regular year-round Children's Theatre Club, where children undergo continuous training in personality development, public speaking, self-organization, creative expression, and self-exploration through theatre.

Building upon this remarkable legacy, Natrang is now preparing to launch an ambitious year-long theatre training programme aimed at helping children achieve self-actualization through a structured curriculum developed by experts. The comprehensive programme has been conceptualized and designed by Padma Shri Balwant Thakur, whose pioneering contributions have transformed children's theatre in India through landmark productions such as "Rang Badalti Duniya," "Bhag Beta Bhaag," "Hum Hain Naa," "Udaan," "Mere Hise Ki Dhoop Kahan Hai," and "Aap Hamare Hain Kaun."

Over the years, Natrang has invited distinguished experts from premier national and international institutions, including the National School of Drama, New Delhi, and the London International School of Performing Arts, to mentor young participants. The regular faculty includes National Award-winning theatre practitioner Sumeet Sharma, who holds a Master's degree in Dramatics; Neeraj Kant, a veteran theatre artist with over 35 years of experience working with children; and Gauri Thakur, an accomplished theatre director with a Master's degree in English Literature specializing in Drama.



Government of Jammu & Kashmir
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE

CONTENT CREATION COMPETITION

Under
NASHA MUKT J&K ABHIYAN

SAY NO TO DRUGS "Choose the stage of life, not the trap of drugs"

Create • Inspire • Influence •

Substance abuse among youth has emerged as a serious social and public health concern in J&K. To strengthen awareness and encourage youth participation in the nationwide "NASHA MUKT J&K ABHIYAN", the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages invites Higher Secondary and College Students to participate in the Content Creation Competition.

<p>COMPETITION CATEGORIES</p> <p>A) SLOGAN WRITING</p> <p>B) AUDIO-VISUAL CONTENT</p> <p>i) Song (Max. 2.5 to 3 Minutes) ii) Animation Film (Max. 2.5 to 3 Minutes) iii) Short Film (Max. 2.5 to 3 Minutes) iv) Short Documentary (Max. 2.5 to 3 Minutes) v) Cartoon vi) Logo Design on the Theme</p>	<p>THEMES FOR CONTENT CREATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Say No to Drugs Youth Against Substance Abuse Healthy Lifestyle & Mental Wellness Impact of Drugs on Family and Society Role of Youth in Building Drug-Free India Rehabilitation and Hope Drug-Free Campus Movement 	<p>ELIGIBILITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open to students of recognized Higher Secondary Schools, Colleges, Universities, and Professional Institutions. Age Group: 17 - 23 Years. Individual Participation: Slogan Writing & all AV Content Categories. Group Participation: Only for Animation Film, Short Film & Short Documentary Categories (Max. 3 members). Valid College/Institution ID Card or Bonafide Certificate from institute is mandatory.
<p>IMPORTANT GUIDELINES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All entries must be original and unpublished. Copyright violations will lead to disqualification. Entries may be submitted in English, Hindi or any official Languages of J&K. Only one entry per participant per category. All generated entries shall be rejected. Only Original and Creative ideas welcome. 	<p>SUBMISSION</p> <p>Submit entries through:</p> <p>e-mail: sec-jkaacl@jk.gov.in</p> <p>Cut-off Date for receiving entries 07 July, 2026 upto 5:00 PM</p>	<p>SELECTION PROCESS</p> <p>A Committee constituted by JKAACL shall evaluate all entries in a fair and transparent manner.</p>
<p>AWARDS & RECOGNITION</p> <p>1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes in each competition categories.</p> <p>Winning entries shall be showcased during District, Divisional, and UT-level events and future official campaigns.</p>		
<p>NASHA MUKT J&K ABHIYAN Organised by JAMMU & KASHMIR Academy of Art, Culture and Languages</p> <p>Space Devoted by Headlines Today, Purely in Public Interest</p>		

HT EDITORIAL

When Faith Meets Hospitality : The True Strength of the Amarnath Yatra

The peaceful commencement of the annual Amarnath Yatra, marked by more than 12,000 devotees offering prayers at the Holy Cave Shrine on the opening day, is much more than a successful logistical exercise. It is a reaffirmation of Kashmir's enduring legacy of hospitality, the administration's preparedness and the collective resolve of all stakeholders to ensure that one of the country's most revered pilgrimages is conducted with dignity, safety and devotion.

Every year, the Amarnath Yatra presents a formidable challenge. Thousands of pilgrims traverse difficult mountainous terrain, unpredictable weather and high-altitude conditions. Ensuring their safety demands meticulous planning, seamless coordination and unwavering vigilance. The elaborate multi-layered security grid established by the Jammu and Kashmir administration, supported by the security forces and civil agencies, reflects the seriousness with which this responsibility has been undertaken. Their dedication deserves the highest appreciation.

Yet, the success of the pilgrimage cannot be measured by security arrangements alone. The true soul of the Amarnath Yatra lies in the people of Kashmir, whose unmatched hospitality has remained its defining feature for generations. From the pony owners and porters to transporters, traders, hoteliers, volunteers and local residents, thousands of Kashmiris work tirelessly to ensure that every pilgrim feels welcomed, cared for and safe.

This tradition of extending warmth and compassion to visitors is deeply embedded in Kashmir's social fabric. It transcends religious identities and political narratives, reflecting the Valley's timeless culture of coexistence and mutual respect. Every helping hand offered to a pilgrim strengthens Kashmir's image as a land where humanity remains the highest virtue.

The pilgrimage also carries immense economic significance. For thousands of families across the Valley, the Yatra provides seasonal employment and sustains livelihoods linked to tourism, transport, hospitality and local trade. A peaceful and successful pilgrimage therefore benefits not only the devotees but also the broader economy of Jammu and Kashmir, creating opportunities for inclusive growth and reinforcing confidence in the region.

The administration's advisory urging pilgrims to adhere strictly to their allotted travel dates and complete advance registration is both timely and prudent. The daily carrying capacity of the Yatra routes has been determined keeping in view safety considerations, environmental sustainability and judicial guidelines. Compliance with these measures is essential to prevent overcrowding and ensure that every registered pilgrim undertakes the pilgrimage safely and with dignity.

As the Yatra progresses over the coming weeks, sustained coordination among the administration, security agencies and local communities will remain crucial. Equally important is the responsibility of pilgrims to cooperate with authorities, respect established protocols and preserve the fragile Himalayan environment through responsible conduct.

The Amarnath Yatra has always stood as a powerful symbol of faith overcoming adversity. But it is equally a celebration of Kashmir's generosity, resilience and spirit of service. Every peaceful Yatra strengthens confidence, promotes tourism, supports local livelihoods and reinforces the message that Kashmir's greatest strength lies in its people.

The challenge now is to sustain this momentum. Continued investment in infrastructure, better medical facilities, environmentally sustainable practices, efficient crowd management and deeper community participation will further enhance the pilgrimage experience in the years ahead. At the same time, the people of Kashmir should continue to remain the gracious ambassadors of the Valley's centuries-old tradition of hospitality.

A safe, peaceful and successful Amarnath Yatra is not merely an administrative achievement it is a collective triumph. When faith is safeguarded by effective governance and embraced by the warmth of Kashmir's people, the pilgrimage becomes more than a religious journey; it becomes a powerful testament to unity, harmony and hope.

Revitalizing Government Educational Institutions in Kashmir: Bridging Degrees and Employability



■ BIN AZIZ MOHAMMAD ALTAF

There are moments when a single conversation exposes the deep flaws of an entire system. I experienced one such moment during an interaction with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at a programme organised by the Kashmir Writers Association. While discussing the rising crisis of educated unemployment, I recalled the heartbreaking sight of a young PhD scholar selling bananas on the roadside to make ends meet.

The Lieutenant Governor paused before replying, "Without skills, what else could he do?"

His straightforward response captured a bitter truth confronting thousands of youth in Jammu and Kashmir. Degrees alone no longer ensure employment. The central question is not whether students are studying diligently, but whether our government educational institutions are equipping them for the realities they will face after graduation.

Government educational institutions remain the primary source of education for children from economically weaker sections. They should symbolise equality, opportunity, and hope. Yet many have come to represent systemic neglect outdated teaching practices, inadequate infrastructure, prolonged academic disruptions, limited technological integration, and a curriculum that emphasises rote memorisation over critical thinking, creativity, and practical application.

■ Infrastructure Deficiencies and Academic Disruptions

A visit to many government educational institutions across Kashmir reveals the stark challenges. Dilapidated buildings with leaking roofs, cracked walls, overcrowded classrooms, and poorly equipped or non-existent laboratories are commonplace. Libraries, intended to nurture a love for reading, often remain locked rooms housing outdated books.

Learning begins with dignity and comfort. A child studying in a cold, leaking, or uncomfortably hot classroom struggles to concentrate. Kashmir's extreme climate intensifies these issues. Institutions frequently suspend classes for extended periods during harsh winters due to snowfall, freezing temperatures, and lack of proper heating. Students and teachers alike endure numb fingers and discomfort, making quality education nearly impossible.

Equally damaging are the long summer vacations. What should be a period of rest and rejuvenation

often stretches into months of academic disconnection. Students lose momentum, forget substantial portions of learned material, and return to classrooms demotivated. When combined with winter closures, these prolonged breaks severely fragment the academic calendar, widen learning gaps, and disproportionately affect children from underprivileged backgrounds who lack access to books, guidance, or supplementary support at home.

In countries such as Finland, Norway, and Sweden facing even harsher winters educational institutions rarely shut down for months. They invest in climate-resilient infrastructure, effective insulation, heating systems, and digital alternatives to maintain continuity. Kashmir continues to rely on seasonal closures rather than sustainable, long-term solutions. This is not merely an infrastructure shortfall; it is a fundamental educational failure.

Reliable electricity has reached more institutions in recent years, yet in the twenty-first century, this should be a basic expectation, not a milestone. Without consistent power, computers, internet access, projectors, smart boards, and virtual learning tools remain unavailable.

■ The Technology and Skills Gap

While private institutions adopt smart classrooms, coding labs, and digital platforms, many government educational institutions continue depending on traditional blackboards and chalk. Globally, students are engaging with programming, robotics, machine learning, and digital design from early stages. In Kashmir, large numbers of students complete their education without meaningful exposure to these tools.

This divide is silently creating two separate futures. Employers increasingly demand analytical thinking, technological proficiency, communication skills, and adaptability not just examination scores. Yet the prevailing system rewards memorisation: students commit definitions and textbook content to memory, reproduce them in exams, and often forget them afterward. Practical skills such as financial literacy, entrepreneurship, basic coding, research, and public speaking receive limited emphasis.

The consequences are visible in countless stories the PhD holder selling bananas, the engineering graduate driving a taxi, postgraduates endlessly preparing for competitive examinations, and talented youth migrating in search of opportunities. Intelligence was never the issue; practical preparation was.

■ Teachers, Policy Implementation, and the Road Ahead

Teachers in government educational institutions deserve genuine appreciation. Many serve in remote areas under difficult conditions. However, they are frequently diverted to non-academic duties such as election responsibilities, surveys, and administrative tasks, reducing precious classroom time.

The National Education Policy 2020 rightly stresses vocational education, multidisciplinary approaches, digital literacy, and experiential learning. Implementation, however, remains uneven. Sustained investment, regular maintenance, and strict accountability are essential. Newly constructed facilities often deteriorate due to inadequate upkeep.

Students should be encouraged to undertake local research on agriculture, tourism, biodiversity, climate change, and entrepreneurship. Kashmir's unique environment its forests, rivers, mountains, and orchards offers an exceptional living laboratory that remains largely untapped.

One government middle school in north Kashmir operated without a functional science laboratory for years. After receiving basic equipment, student engagement in science exhibitions improved noticeably. In another instance, a graduate from Kupwara acquired skills in computer hardware and digital services through a short-term programme. He soon established a repair centre in his hometown, generating employment for himself and two others. These examples highlight the transformative power of practical infrastructure and skill training.

Parents must play a more active role through regular engagement, career counselling, and community participation. Above all, government educational institutions must regain public trust so that no child feels inferior due to their background or uniform.

■ A Call for Urgent Transformation

The future of Kashmir will not be defined solely by physical infrastructure projects. It will be shaped within classrooms and laboratories, by the capabilities and confidence we instil in our youth.

Education without skills breeds frustration. Prolonged vacations without structured support destroy academic momentum. Infrastructure without maintenance becomes wasted investment. Policies without effective implementation remain mere documents.

Real reform must begin with the fundamentals: safe, climate-resilient buildings equipped for all seasons; uninterrupted electricity and digital access; teachers focused on teaching; robust vocational programmes; research opportunities; and a learning environment that fosters creativity, problem-solving, and real-world readiness rather than examination-centric rote learning.

The youth of Kashmir deserve educational institutions where seasonal disruptions do not derail progress, where technology is accessible to all, and where every graduate emerges not only with a degree but with the skills and confidence to build a meaningful future.

This transformation is long overdue and it cannot be delayed any further.

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Students Are Learners, Not Tools for Publicity



■ JAVAID BHAT

Students are among the most powerful and valuable assets of any nation. They represent hope, innovation, and the promise of a brighter future. Their talents, achievements, and aspirations should inspire society not become tools for personal publicity or media sensationalism.

Recently, a disturbing video of a young boy has emerged where social media channels and content creators record and circulate video primarily to increase viewership, attract followers, or generate publicity. While showcasing young talent and academic excellence is commendable, using a student as a means to achieve personal or commercial gains is both unethical and irresponsible.

Schools devote immense effort to nurturing confidence, creativity, and discipline among learners. Educational institutions provide opportunities for students to express themselves through academic, cultural, and extracurricular activities. However, when students are filmed outside the school environment and their moments are captured merely to boost screen ratings or social media engagement, the focus shifts from



celebrating their growth and achievements to serving someone else's publicity and personal gain.

Children have a right to dignity, privacy, and protection. Every photograph or video featuring students should be shared only with appropriate consent and for a genuine educational or public-interest purpose. Their innocence should never become

a commodity in the race for online visibility.

The media plays a vital role in informing society and highlighting positive stories. With that role comes an equally important responsibility to uphold ethical standards, especially when dealing with children. Responsible journalism celebrates achievement without compromising the rights

or dignity of young learners.

Students are not content. They are individuals with dreams, emotions, and immense potential. Let us celebrate their accomplishments with integrity and ensure that every camera pointed at a child reflects respect rather than self-interest. A nation's future deserves protection not exploitation.

Hazrat Maulana Sayyid Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi (R.A)



MAHMOOD DAWAR BHAT

During the twentieth century, Muslim India has produced great Islamic theologians, interpreters of the Quran, scholars of Hadith, Islamic jurists, historians, propagators of the faith, social reformers and educationists, but one cannot name another Islamic scholar whose concerns covered the entire spectrum of the collective existence of the Muslim Indians as a living community in the national and international context, who, for decades, enjoyed universal respect, and who was accepted by the non-Muslims, at the highest level, as the legitimate spokesman for the concerns and aspirations of the entire community. Maulana Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi was indisputably one of the greatest exponents of Islam in the second half of the twentieth century and because of his command over Arabic, through his writings and speeches, he had a wide area of influence extending far beyond the Subcontinent, particularly in the Arab World.

His exposition of Islam was marked by moderation. He was not a fanatic in any sense of the term but he believed in Islam as a blessing for mankind and as a positive and creative factor in human history. In a sense Islam was perceived by him as a civilization force which retained its relevance in the modern age as a viable counterpoint to the Western civilization with all its excesses.

The Maulana's forte was his extraordinary grasp of Islamic history. It is this historic sense of the rise and fall of Islam in different ages and regions, which prompted him ever to take a long term rather than a short-term, a broad rather than a narrow, view of the problems the contemporary community faced. The Maulana was the very anti-thesis of the media image of the fire-eating, narrow-minded Mullah. Orthodox as he was, he was far from being conservative in his approach. Ummaconscious as he was, his love for the motherland knew no bounds. He never preached 'Jihad' to restore Muslim dominance; He stood for mutual respect, for peaceful coexistence, for human values, for establishing a social

ambience based on tolerance and harmony in India and in the world at large. The Maulana understood the spirit of the age. He appreciated the role of Democracy and Nationalism. With his deep insight into the Quran and his understanding of the personality of the Holy Prophet, he understood the implications of a multi-religious world, a global village divided into multi-religious States.

Scion of an illustrious family which has produced scholars and spiritual preceptors like Shah Alamullah Naqshbandi and Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed, the Maulana's father, Hakim Sayyid Abul Hai, was an eminent scholar of his time, immortalized by his encyclopedic work, Nuzhatul Khawatir, (in eight volumes) containing about 5,000 biographical notes on Muslim scholars, theologians, jurists, etc. of India, apart from other notable works.

Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali was born in 1333 A.H. (1914 A.D.). Having lost his father at the age of nine, he was brought up by his elder brother, Dr. Sayyid Abul Ali Hasani who practiced medicine at Lucknow. He specialized in Arabic literature at Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow, studied Hadith under Sheikh Husain Ahmed Madni at Darul Uloom, Deoband and Tafseer under Maulana Ahmad Ali of Lahore where he came in touch with Iqbal whose poetry left an abiding impression on him. Besides literary and theological studies, Maulana developed keen interest in Islamic history and also learnt English in order to keep himself abreast of contemporary thought. He taught Arabic literature and Tafsir at the Nadwatul Ulama for ten years.

After the demise of his elder brother, he became the Secretary of Nadwatul Ulama and subsequently as Rector he supervised both its academic and administrative management. In 1947, the Maulana could have followed his mentor Sayyid Suleiman Nadwi and migrated to Pakistan but he did not. In his formative years, the Maulana was associated with the Jamaat-e-Islami for a few years after its establishment by Maulana Abul Ala Maudoodi. Then he turned to the Tablighi Jamaat founded by Maulana Ilyasi's. But the Maulana's genius demanded a wider horizon for its unfolding. Spiritually disciple of Maulana Abdul Qadir Raipuri, the Maulana belonged to the Sufi Siilsila Qadiriya Naqshbandia. Apart from his long association with Nadwa (as student, teacher, Secretary and Nazim), he served on the Shura of the Darul Uloom, Deoband, chaired the Managing Committee of Darul Musannefin, Azamgarh and



established the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications at Lucknow.

A prolific writer his works have been prescribed in the courses of study in a number of Arab Universities. His notable Arabic work Maza Khasera al-Alamb'in hitat-il-Muslimeen was not only widely acclaimed but also carved out a place for him in the literary circles of the Arab world. Several of his works have since been translated into Arabic, English, Turkish, Bhasha Indonesia, Persian, Tamil and some other languages. Karvaane-e-Zindagi, his autobiography in 8 volumes, and Purane-Chiragh (life sketches of contemporary personalities), his biography of Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed, his biography of Hazrat Ali (KW) and his Tarikh-e-Dawat-o-Azimat are his permanent contribution to Urdu literature. He was an Honorary Member of the Academy of Arts and Letters, Damascus and Academy of Arabic Language, Amman and served as Visiting Professor in a number of Arab universities. Internationally recognized, he was one of the Founder Members of the Rabita at-Alam-alls-lami, Makkah, (1963), and served on the Higher Council of the Islamic University, Madinah, the Executive Committee of the Federation of Islamic Universities, Rabat, and as the Chairman of the Board for the Centre of Islamic Studies of the Oxford University. The lectures he delivered at Indian, Arab and Western Universities have been highly appreciated as original contribution to the study of Islam and on Islam's relevance to the modern age. In 1980, he received the Faisal International Award, followed by the Brunei Award and the UAE Award in 1999. A great scholar, the Maulana was not confined to the cloister. Not involved in active politics, he never participated

in party or electoral politics. He did not even join the All India Muslim Majlis, established by his protégé Dr. A.J. Faridi in 1967, as it took to electoral politics.

The Maulana was one of the founders of the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (1964), the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (1972) and the All India Dini Talimi Council. He presided over the Milli Convention in 1979. He also extended his patronage to the Islamic Fiqh Academy and the All India Milli Council when they were established. To promote communal harmony, the Maulana became one of the founders of FOCUS which was later transformed into Society for Communal Harmony. He also established a movement 'Pyam-e-Insaniyat' to preach the gospel of universal love and brotherhood. The Maulana valued the Constitution and the secular order as a guarantor of the Islamic identity of the Muslim community and of non-discrimination against the various spheres of life. But he clearly saw the historic process of assimilation at work in India and the long-term objective of Hindu Nationalism to absorb the Muslim Indians into the Hindu fold. That explains his firm stand on the question of Muslim Personal Law against any interference through legislation or through judicial pronouncement and on introduction of Saraswati Vandana in Schools in UP.

In the last decade of his life the Maulana served as the final arbiter, the last word, the Marja', the ultimate point of reference, on any intra-communal differences, even if he did not play any active role in resolving them. He counseled commitment with patience and wisdom, movement within the framework of democracy and rule of law, and dignity and not rhetoric in utterances. With his off-repeated commitment to the principles of Democracy, Secularism and Nonviolence as the only viable foundation for the Indian polity, his constant endeavour for interreligious dialogue and for reconciliation and harmony, he commanded universal respect for his moderation, learning and integrity, for his influence in the Muslim community and for his outreach in the Islamic world.

Assiduously sought by eminent political personalities from Indira Gandhi to Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Maulana acted as the bridge between the government and the national parties, on one hand, and Muslim community, on the other. The Maulana, it has been correctly observed, stood for social reform, religious revival and political awakening but

not for Islamic Revolution. He was realistic enough not to chase mirages or instant solutions. He saw clearly that the destiny of Muslim Indians was intertwined with that of the Indian people as a whole and that, in the age of democratic pluralism, an Islamic Revolution or the restoration of Islamic power was out of the realm of possibility but it was possible for the Muslim Indians to lead an Islamic life and at the same time participate in managing the affairs of the country and contribute to its progress and development. This was the basis of his efforts to reduce the distance between the Muslims and the Hindus, to demolish the wall of distrust between them and to create bonds of understanding and cooperation in rebuilding relations on the terms of common moral values of the society which he saw as being engulfed by dark forces of hatred and violence. All his active life, with Lucknow as his base, he wandered ceaselessly, not only within the country but in the Arab-Islamic world and the West, in a constant search; it seems to me, for reconciliation between Islam and the West, between rival ideologies in the Arab-Islamic world, between India and Pakistan and between the Hindu and Muslim Indians. Cautious in taking positions, he always looked beyond the turbulence of the time, through the flames of the current controversy. Even when he took part, his role was that of a mediator, of counseling patience, of avoiding confrontation, of appealing to reason. A man who personified Islamic values, soft-spoken, cultured and courteous to the core, humility and modesty, patience and tolerance, moderation and balance, generosity and compassion – all Islamic values – marked his personality. Neither a politician, nor a publicist, essentially a scholar, a man of religion, a spiritual person, a modern Dervish, a Mard-e-Momin who combined in himself the highest values of the Shariah and the Tariqat, of orthodoxy and Sufism and who commanded respect for his transparent sincerity, for his simple living and for his selfless devotion to the common cause of the Community and the Nation, a man who lived for Allah alone and who wanted nothing but the good of all is no more.

His demise is the end of an era in the history of the Muslim India and has created a void impossible to fill in the foreseeable future.

May his soul rest in eternal peace, Ameen!

HT SATURDAY-GOSSIP

The Court of Beasts



YOUSUF MIR

A vast stretch of dense, green forests lay nestled among towering mountains. Peace and the fragrance of nature filled the air. Every creature in the forest lived freely and fearlessly according to its own natural rhythm. Lions walked with dignity, elephants rested beneath the shade of trees, herds of deer raced across lush meadows, monkeys swung from branch to branch, squirrels gathered seeds, peacocks spread their feathers in dance, cuckoos awakened the woods with their melodious calls, nightingales scattered songs into the air, and countless birds filled the silence with their cheerful chirping. There was no fear, no distrust. Everywhere there was harmony, freedom, and coexistence.

One morning, before the sun had fully risen, an unfamiliar creature entered the forest. Its eyes were restless, wandering as though searching for prey. Yet

there was no hunger in them. Something else lurked behind that gaze.

Not far away, a young fawn had wandered a little distance from its mother, chasing butterflies with innocent delight. It had no idea that the creature entering the forest was not a hunter in search of food, but something far more terrifying.

Suddenly, a heart-rending scream echoed through the trees. Even the wind seemed to tremble. Birds shivered upon their branches, and for a moment the entire forest stood frozen.

"Papa... save me!"

It was not merely a cry; it felt as though the whole valley had shaken.

The cuckoo fell silent. The nightingale ceased its song. The peacock folded its feathers. Monkeys climbed hurriedly to the highest branches. Elephants halted in their tracks, while herds of deer scattered in confusion.

At that very moment, the lion, king of the forest, let out a mighty roar that echoed from mountain to mountain. It was a warning, a call to gather.

Within moments, every creature assembled in a vast clearing. Elephants, bears, wolves, foxes, zebras, wild horses, deer, monkeys, peacocks, eagles, cuckoos, nightingales, and countless birds stood in solemn silence.

Perhaps for the first time in the history of the forest, all wildlife had gathered

not because of a hunter, a famine, or a raging fire, but because of the anguished cry of an innocent being.

Standing atop a great rock, the lion surveyed the assembly. Anger burned in his eyes, but beneath it lay sorrow.

"Today," he declared, "someone has shattered the peace of our forest. Tell me, which beast has committed this atrocity?"

For a few moments, it seemed as though even the wind had stopped moving.

Then an old elephant stepped forward slowly. Bowing his head respectfully, he spoke.

"Your Majesty, I do not believe this could be the deed of a beast."

The lion looked at him in surprise. "If not a beast," he asked, "then whose act is it?"

The old elephant drew a deep breath.

"Your Majesty, the world calls us beasts, yet even our savagery has its limits. We hunt to satisfy hunger. We fight to survive. But we do not turn the helplessness of an innocent creature into a source of desire. What happened today was done by someone who bore the shape of a human, but had long abandoned humanity."

Silence engulfed the gathering.

No one had a word to say. The old elephant stepped forward

again.

"In my long life, I have seen hunters. I have witnessed bloodshed and fire. But what happened today has forced me, for the first time, not to question our own wildness, but to mourn the loss of human humanity."

The bear lowered his head. Moisture gathered in the wolf's eyes.

A doe stood clutching her little fawn close to her chest, while silent tears rolled down her face.

The old elephant continued in a low yet powerful voice.

"If hunger were savagery, then we would all be guilty. But lust is a fire that burns away the human within a human being."

Once again, silence descended upon the field.

The lion slowly rose. The roar in his voice had faded; only grief remained.

"Today," he said, "this court does not pass judgment upon a single criminal, but upon a mindset that crushes innocence beneath its feet."

After a brief pause, he continued:

"When one of our kind strays into human settlements and attacks someone, the world immediately cries, 'A beast has come!' Yet the creature that entered our forest today has done what no beast would ever do."

The lion looked across the assembly.

"From this day onward, let it be known throughout the forest that every being who appears in human form is not necessarily human in spirit. Protect your children not only from hunters, but also from those faces whose hearts have long been emptied of humanity."

No one applauded. No slogans were raised.

The court dispersed in silence.

The elephant's steps seemed heavier than before.

For the first time, helplessness could be seen in the lion's stride.

The peacock did not spread its feathers. The cuckoo remained silent.

The nightingale's songs had vanished. The doe stood for a long time, holding her little one close against her chest.

Slowly, evening descended behind the mountains.

A gentle breeze passed through the trees.

Leaves rustled softly.

And somehow, every creature present felt as though a faint voice still lingered in the air—

"Papa... save me!"

(A symbolic short story that raises a profound question about the fading boundaries between humanity and brutality.)

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Why Are My MUSCLES SORE After a Workout?

Types of muscle soreness

There are two types of muscle soreness. The first is acute muscle soreness. This happens while you are working out. It's from metabolites building up in your muscles during intense exercise. Typically, this type disappears as soon as you stop working out.

The second type is called delayed onset muscle soreness, also known as DOMS. According to the American College of Sports Medicine, "delayed soreness typically begins to develop 12 - 24 hours after the exercise has been performed and may produce the greatest pain between 24 - 72 hours after the exercise has been performed".

Contrary to popular belief, DOMS is not due to lactic acid

risk of heart attacks, strokes, or gastrointestinal bleeding.

Opt for self-massage. You can use your hands, a foam roller, or self-massagers. Focus on the sore areas, such as your calves, arms, and glutes. Consider using oils or creams to target sore muscles.

Focus on increasing your circulation. Sending oxygen and nutrient-rich blood to your healing muscles will wash away the pain. You can also improve your circulation by increasing warmth or wearing compression clothing.

Take a bath. A 10 - 15 minute cold bath or a long soak in a warm tub with Epsom salts are both helpful in easing DOMS. The magnesium in the salt will reduce your soreness and can improve your muscle function.

Keep moving. Try light stretching, gentle yoga, or low-



accumulation. It's a side effect of your muscles repairing themselves.

To take it further, if you exercise too much or too fast, the pain can move beyond your muscles.

Your tendons, which attach your muscles to your bones, can become irritated. This can result in tendonitis or stress fractures in your bones. If untreated, this can result in the breaking of your bones over time.

You can also experience swelling in your joints from your cartilage wearing down. Cartilage is the white tissue on the ends of your bones that allows them to slide over one another. Functional problems in your joints can arise, such as swelling and pain as the cartilage wears down.

What causes muscle soreness?

When force is applied to your muscles, they lengthen, causing muscle soreness. This will create tiny tears in your muscle fibers. Your body will respond with:

- Increased inflammation
- Stiffness in your joints
- Tenderness to touch
- Redness

Examples of exercises that can cause muscle soreness to include strength training, jogging, and jumping.

This can also happen when you start a new exercise for the first time, increase your workout intensity, or do not take a rest break while performing an activity repeatedly.

Consult medical treatment from a professional if your DOMS symptoms last longer than 7 days, if the pain becomes unbearable or if you experience serious swelling. If your urine becomes abnormally dark, seek medical attention immediately.

Getting rid of muscle soreness

Anyone and everyone can experience muscle soreness, including elite athletes. So what do you do when it happens to you?

Listen to your body. Give your body a chance to heal. You can apply ice or heat, take anti-inflammatory medicine, or get a gentle massage. Avoid NSAID-type pain relievers. These are nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs that may increase your

impact movements.

Sleep is imperative. Aim for at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep to recover after an intense workout. Sleeping is when your body can restore and rebuild.

How to prevent muscle soreness

While muscle soreness is not entirely preventable, there are steps you can take to make it less intense.

If it hurts, stop doing it. Discontinue the movement until your body has had proper time to heal. Switch your focus when you feel pain or discomfort. For example, if your lower body is sore, the next day, focus on upper-body workouts.

Always stay hydrated. Water flushes the toxins out of your body, regulates your body temperature, and transports nutrients into your cells. Your muscles are also more susceptible to soreness and tension when dehydrated.

Warm-up using dynamic stretching. This means working through your joint's full range of motion through active movements before adding additional weight.

Start slow. Work your way into a new workout program. Slowly increase your intensity and use self-care while your body is healing.

Other options are eating within a half hour of an intense workout, getting adequate sleep, and trying a light workout the day after.

Do not let muscle soreness deter you from working out or trying a new exercise. Listen to your body. Take care of yourself and practice self-care when you experience muscle soreness.

As your muscles adapt and it will get easier with time!

Courtesy Healthline



The Best Yoga Poses for Back Pain

Yoga is a healthy and natural way to take care of your spine from top to bottom. Many people turn to yoga when traditional methods have failed to alleviate their pain. Let's look at some of the best yoga poses that might help.

How does yoga help to relieve back pain?

Firstly, yoga is a form of movement that focuses on the correct structural alignment of the body. When your alignment is optimal, your body can perform at its best. Secondly, yoga increases awareness of the movements of the body. With regular practice, you'll notice the habitual ways you use your body - and how you might improve to reduce the risk of further pain.

According to Harvard Medical school, yoga can be beneficial to the muscles that support the back and spine.

Paraspinal muscles - help to bend your spine

Multifidus muscles - stabilize your vertebrae

Transverse abdominis - stabilize and support your spine

It's essential to keep these muscles strong and supple to enable them to perform their correct functions and support your spine effectively.

There are yoga poses that work specifically to target these areas, and performing them regularly can contribute to a reduction in back pain. It's important to remember that as you begin a journey with yoga for back pain, you must do so under the guided supervision of a trained professional. And always go slowly to reduce the risk of further injury or discomfort.

What are some of the best beginner yoga poses for back pain?



1. Downward-facing dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana)

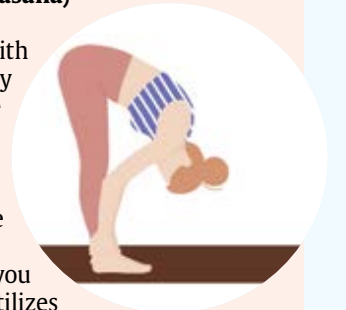
To get into this posture, begin in a tabletop position on all fours. Tuck your toes under and push yourself up and back, directing your hips to the ceiling. Your body should form the shape of an upside-down 'V'.

This is a great full-body posture that stretches all the muscles in the back body. It's great for loosening tightness in the back of the hips and lower back.

2. Standing forward fold (Uttanasana)

To get into this posture, stand with your feet hip distance apart and gradually fold forward, allowing the head to be heavy and pointing towards the ground. Don't worry if your hands don't come to the floor; that will happen with enough time and practice. Make sure your knees are soft and not locked.

This pose is particularly good if you spend a long time sitting at a desk. It utilizes gravity to allow the spine to lengthen and the surrounding muscles to stretch. You could even do this pose once every hour or so as a break from sitting down. Your back will thank you!



3. Cat pose (Marjaryasana) / Cow pose (Bitilasana)

This is a wonderful pose and uses movement to explore the range of motion in the spine. Begin on all fours in a tabletop position with a neutral flat spine. Take a deep inhalation and as your belly fills, move into 'cow pose', lifting your tailbone to the sky. You can look upwards, being mindful not to strain your neck. As you exhale, draw the belly in and arch the spine upwards, creating an arch. This is a 'cat pose'. Repeat this sequence for a minute or two, synchronizing breath and movement.

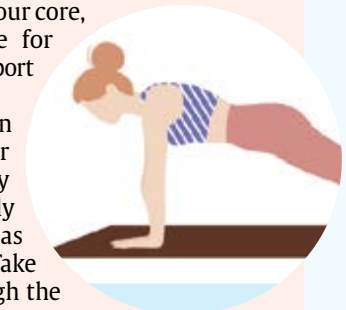


Woman doing yoga pose cow Cat/Cow is excellent for spine mobility and health. The pose releases tension, and the coordination of breath and movement relaxes the nervous system.

4. Plank pose (Dandasana)

Your back is closely linked with your core, and the plank pose is incredible for strengthening the core muscles that support the spine.

To move into plank posture, begin in a tabletop position and move your legs out behind you so that your body is parallel to the floor. Draw your belly up and in, feeling the muscles tense as you gaze down between your hands. Take long, slow breaths in and out through the nose.



5. Seated spinal twist (Ardha Matsyendrasana)



Twists are great for releasing the spine, stretching the muscles that support it, and improving flexibility. To move into a seated spinal twist, begin with your legs in front of you. Bend the right leg and cross it over the left with your right foot planting into the floor. Twist your body to the right, crossing the left arm across the bent right knee to increase the stretch. Take a few deep breaths, release the posture and move to the other side.

Courtesy Healthline

Sakeena Itoo conducts extensive visit of Tangmarg

Inaugurates Maternity & Child Care Block at SDH Tangmarg, School Auditorium at Tarhama, NTPHC at Lalpora

HT NEWS NETWORK

TANGMARG, JULY 03: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today held extensive tour of Tangmarg area of Gulmarg Constituency and inaugurated various projects of public importance, including Maternity & Child Care Block and Operation Theatre at Sub-District Hospital Tangmarg, Auditorium at Higher Secondary School Tarhama and New Type Primary Health Centre (NTPHC) at Lalpora.

Member Legislative Assembly Gulmarg, Peerzada Farooq Ahmad Shah; HoDs of various departments, senior officers of district administration Baramulla and other concerned officers were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering after inaugurating the Maternity & Child Care Block and Operation Theatre at SDH Tangmarg, the Minister said that the Government is committed to ensuring that quality healthcare reaches every citizen, particularly women, children and people living in remote areas.

Sakeena Itoo added that the newly inaugurated facilities will significantly improve maternal and neonatal healthcare, enhance emergency medical services and reduce referrals to tertiary hospitals, ensuring timely treatment closer to home.

The Minister further said that the Government is continuously investing in modern healthcare infrastructure, advanced medical equipment and better facilities across the Union Territory. She emphasized that development is being carried out with a people-centric approach, adding that strengthening healthcare and education remains among the Government's top priorities. She assured the people that every genuine public concern would continue to receive focused attention.

Later, Sakeena Itoo inaugurated the newly constructed Auditorium at Higher Secondary School Tarhama and said that quality education is the foundation of a progressive society. She noted that modern educational infrastructure provides students with opportunities to develop academically as well as culturally and creatively. She

expressed hope that the new auditorium would become a vibrant centre for learning, innovation and extracurricular activities.

The Minister also inaugurated the New Type Primary Health Centre (NTPHC) at Lalpora in presence of former Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah.

Addressing the public on the occasion, the Minister stated that the new health facility will improve access to quality primary healthcare for the local population and reflects the Government's resolve to provide better healthcare services at the grassroots level. She urged the people to make full use of the upgraded health infrastructure and

assured them that efforts to further strengthen public services would continue.

Speaking on the occasion, Peerzada Farooq Ahmad Shah thanked the Government for fulfilling long-pending public demands by establishing key healthcare and educational infrastructure in the constituency. He said the newly inaugurated projects would significantly improve public service delivery and benefit thousands of people. He also reaffirmed his commitment to pursuing the developmental aspirations of the people and ensuring that ongoing projects are completed in a timely manner.

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that my name has been wrongly mentioned in my Aadhaar Card bearing Adhaar No 6738 7638 8708 Now I want to change my name from TABISH RASHID (Old Name) to TABISHTA RASHID (New Name). In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he or she may approach the concerned authorities within a period of seven days. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

**Name: TABISHTA RASHID
D/O: ABDUL RASHID DAR
R/O: GURTANG NARKARA, BUDGAM Jammu
And Kashmir - 190018**

Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Bemina Srinagar

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

**NIT No.28/EE/R&B/BM/CS/3172-80 of 2026-27
DATED: 03.07.2026**

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:

S.No	Name of work	Adv. Cost (In lacs)	T.D Cost (In Rs)	E/M (In Rs)	Time	Class
1	Annual Stage contract (Civil Works) for the year 2026-2027 at Hajj House Bemina Srinagar	10.00	600/-	20000/-	2026-27	BEE/ CEE/ DEE

Position of AAA: Accorded by Executive Officer J&K Hajj Committee, Vide order no. Haj/2026/650/637 Dated: 27.06.2026

Position of funds: Available

Project Authority: Executive Officer J&K Hajj Committee

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

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	03.07.2026.
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	04.07.2026 from 10.00 AM
3	Bid submission Start Date	04.07.06.2026 from 10.00 AM
4	Bid Submission End Date	09.07.2026 upto 16.00 PM.
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	10.07.2026 at 12.00 PM in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Bemina Srinagar.

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan under M.H-0059 in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Bemina Srinagar (tender inviting authority) (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date) pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Bemina Srinagar (tender receiving authority).

2.At the time of tendering, all the bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR pledged to the tender receiving authority i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Bemina Srinagar (The date of Earnest money should be between Date of Start of bid and bid submission End date). The successful bidder will have to provide Performance security @ 5% of Allotted cost in shape of CDR/FDR at the time of contract award. The earnest money/bid security of 2% will be released to the successful bidder only after the submission of performance security of 5% of the total allotted cost which will be released after successful completion of the DLP.

3. Abnormally Low Bid Price:

As per the Circular instructions of Finance Deptt. Vide No. FD-Code/441/2021-02-158 Dated: 08.08.2025, which is reproduced as:

a. Where the bid price is below 10% but not below 20% of the project cost put to bid, the additional 0.1% and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.

b. Where the bid price is 20% or more below of the project cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee percentage shall be incremented by 0.2% for every percentage of bid price below 20% of the project cost put to bid in addition to 1% of the bid price and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.

c. The additional performance security shall be treated as part of the performance security. Additional performance Security shall be taken only after approval of next Higher authority.

The bidder declared as L1 has to provide additional performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG as per the break up given above at the time of allotment.

4. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Bemina Srinagar (tender receiving authority).

5.The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids.

6.Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

a) Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.

b) To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved Vendor.

c) The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No bid will be accepted in physical form.

d) Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.

e) Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the technical bid.

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

7. The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.

8. Scanned copy of cost of tender document in shape of Treasury Challan in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Bemina Srinagar (The date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date) pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Bemina Srinagar must be uploaded with the documents of the bid. The original Treasury Challan (cost of tender document), and other relevant bid documents shall be obtained from the lowest bidder before the fixation of contract.

9. Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually.

10. Bidders should note that if the documents uploaded/submitted on the basis of which the contract has been awarded are found fake/not genuine at any time, the contract shall be cancelled and the contractor/bidder shall be blacklisted for participation in this division for a period of five years besides the performance security deposited for the said work shall be forfeited.

11. Any item/items of work found necessary during execution of work though not in the BOQ shall have to be got executed and shall be paid At Par the %age quoted by the bidder, after proper authorization from the Competent Authority.

12. Any addendum issued shall be the part of NIT.

13. Price escalation and Taxes:- The %age quoted by the bidder shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes upto completion of the work. Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.

14. Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on R&B e-Tendering portal to store such documents as are required.

15. In case of CRF and any other specified project, the relevant guidelines / standard bidding document shall be followed.

No: EE/R&B/BM/CS/3172-80 | Dated: 03-07-2026

**Sd/- Executive Engineer,
R&B Division Bemina Srinagar.**

DIPK: 2842/26 | Dated: 03-07-2026

Office of the Executive Engineer Mechanical and Hospitals Division Srinagar

**Gist of e-tender | NIT No: M&HDS/TS/2026-27/31/e-tendering
Dated: 03.07.2026 | (SHORT TERM)**

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders are invited on percentage basis from Original Equipment manufacturers or registered/reputed/experienced firms with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work: -

Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	T.D Cost	Time
SITC of Inverter Type Hot & Cold AC units in Radiology/Orthodontics Sections & Ceiling Fans in Girls Hostel at GDC&H, Srinagar.	2.4228	100	10

AA Accorded Vide No: Order No:-225-GDC of 2026 Dated: 01.07.2026

TS No: M&HDS/TS/17 of 07/26

Earnest Money: 5% of the estimated cost

Position of Funds: Available with intending Department

Downloading of Bids:- The NIT consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from 03.07.2026(18.00hrs)and can be downloaded from 03.07.2026 (18.00hrs)

1. Uploading: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site 03.07.2026 (18.00hrs) to 14.07.2026 (13:00hrs) in two (02) covers.

2. Opening of Bids :- The bids received upto due date and time shall be opened on 14.07.2026 at 15.00(hrs)

No: M&HDS/ 1840-44 | Dated: 03.07.2026

**Sd/- Executive Engineer,
M&H, Srinagar**

DIPK: 2847/26 | Dated: 03-07-2026



JAMMU & KASHMIR STATE HAJ COMMITTEE



**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
Ministry of Minority Affairs
Haj Committee of India**

HAJ 2027 (1448 H)

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

1 PASSPORT VALIDITY

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

2 COVER / GROUP

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

3 COVER HEAD

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

4 MOBILE NUMBER & WHATSAPP

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

5 FORM SUBMISSION

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

6 NOMINEE

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

7 BANK DETAILS (ACCOUNT HOLDER MUST BE COVER HEAD)

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

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR HAJ - 2027 (1448 H)

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

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

JOIN VIA WHATSAPP LINK
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/Lxp9Sdes7r0Ad0RmRdcAfM?sz=qt&p=s&mlu=1>

SCAN QR CODE TO JOIN

JOIN OUR OFFICIAL WHATSAPP GROUP
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

Secretary RDD visits Baltal Base Camp, Takes First-Hand Feedback from Yatris on Sanitation Arrangements

Inspects SWM Plant, sanitation assets and Langars; reviews green initiatives for SANJY-2026

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BALTAL, JULY 3: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, on Friday visited the Baltal Base Camp to undertake a comprehensive review of sanitation and solid waste management arrangements for the ongoing Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY)-2026. During the visit, he took first-hand feedback from Yatris on sanitation, cleanliness and other civic facilities while inspecting the preparedness of key sanitation infrastructure, including the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Plant, sanitation

assets and the Tent City. The visit coincided with the commencement of the annual pilgrimage, with the first batch of devotees proceeding from the Baltal and Nunwan Base Camps to the Holy Cave Shrine. Interacting with Yatris at various locations across the base camp, the Secretary welcomed the pilgrims and sought their feedback on the facilities being provided. He also interacted with Langarwallas and sought their suggestions for further improving sanitation and civic arrangements. He reaffirmed the administration's commitment to ensuring a



clean, safe and seamless pilgrimage experience.

Reviewing the functioning of the SWM Plant, Aijaz Asad assessed the systems for waste collection, segregation, pro-

cessing and scientific disposal. He also inspected sanitation assets deployed across the Yatra route to ensure their operational readiness and the uninterrupted delivery of sanitation

services throughout the pilgrimage.

While interacting with sanitation workers and field functionaries, the Secretary appreciated their dedicated efforts and directed the concerned officers to maintain the highest standards of cleanliness and hygiene, stressing that efficient sanitation and waste management are critical to the safety, convenience and well-being of pilgrims.

Aijaz Asad also visited the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Exhibition Centre, where he reviewed several environmentally sustainable initiatives

introduced for this year's Yatra. These included the Bartan Bank, promoting the use of reusable utensils to reduce single-use plastic; the Akhand Jyot, powered by biogas generated from mule dung; and the SANJY Tableau, showcasing the Department's model for sustainable pilgrimage management.

At the Tent City, the Secretary inspected sanitation arrangements and reviewed the availability and operational status of sanitation machinery, equipment and consumables. He directed officials to ensure adequate deployment and op-

timum functioning of all sanitation assets throughout the pilgrimage to maintain the highest standards of hygiene and cleanliness.

Emphasizing environmental stewardship, Aijaz Asad said that efficient solid waste management and green initiatives are integral to making the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra environmentally responsible and sustainable. He reiterated the Department's commitment to maintaining exemplary standards of sanitation and environmental protection so that devotees can undertake the sacred pilgrimage in a clean, safe and eco-friendly environment.

Commissioner SMC holds high-level review to Fast-Track CAPEX Works

Directs for timely tendering

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 03: In a significant move to accelerate infrastructure development and ensure the timely execution of public works, Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Faz Lul Haseeb, today chaired a high-level review meeting to comprehensively assess the tendering status of Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) works across the city.

The meeting was attended by the Financial Advisor/Chief Accounts Officer, Executive Engineers, and officials responsible for uploading Notices Inviting Tenders (NITs) on the e-Procurement Portal from all Engineering Divisions. A detailed division-wise review was undertaken, during which officers presented the progress achieved in the tendering process and the status of ongoing and proposed CAPEX works.

The Commissioner carried

out a comprehensive assessment of works already tendered, projects awaiting tendering, tenders opened, and newly sanctioned works requiring immediate initiation of the tendering process. He critically reviewed the reasons for pendency and directed the concerned officers to remove procedural bottlenecks, streamline the tendering process, and adhere to clearly defined timelines to ensure that all pending works are tendered without delay.

Emphasizing that timely tendering is fundamental to the successful execution of developmental projects, Haseeb, instructed all Engineering Divisions to undertake daily monitoring of the tendering process and ensure strict adherence to Government guidelines and established procedures while framing and issuing NITs. He stressed that efficient and transparent tendering is essential for the



timely delivery of quality civic infrastructure and public services.

The Commissioner further directed all Executive Engineers to closely monitor the progress

of works within their respective jurisdictions and ensure that all tender documents, records, and e-Procurement processes remain updated, transparent, and fully compliant with the prescribed norms. He called upon the Engineering Divisions to maintain close coordination and adopt a proactive approach to achieve the developmental targets within the stipulated timelines.

Reaffirming SMC's unwavering commitment to transparency, accountability, and efficient governance, the Commissioner emphasized that expediting the implementation of CAPEX works remains a top priority of the Corporation. He reiterated that timely completion of developmental projects will not only strengthen Srinagar's civic infrastructure but also enhance the quality of urban services and significantly improve the quality of life for the citizens of Srinagar.

Boating facility inaugurated at Tawi River Front to welcome Shri Amarnath Yatra Pilgrims

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 03: As the annual Shri Amarnath Yatra 2026 gathers momentum with thousands of pilgrims arriving in Jammu every day, Jammu Smart City Limited (JSCL) inaugurated the much-awaited boating facility at the Tawi River Front, adding a new recreational attraction for devotees, tourists and local residents.

The boating service was formally inaugurated by Chief Executive Officer Jammu Smart City Limited and Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) Dr Devansh Yadav in presence of senior officers of JSCL, officials from the district administration, representatives of various departments and members of the public.

The launch marks another milestone in the transformation of the Tawi River Front into a vibrant urban destination under the Smart Cities Mission, offering visitors a unique opportunity to experience the scenic beauty of the Tawi River.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Devansh Yadav said Jammu serves as the gateway to the holy Amarnath Cave Shrine and welcomes lakhs of pilgrims every year. He said the introduction of the boating facility is aimed at enriching the overall experience of pilgrims visiting the city by providing them with a safe, enjoyable and memorable recreational activity during their stay.

Dr Devansh Yadav said the initiative reflects Jammu Smart City's vision of creating world-class public spaces that combine tourism, recreation, environmental sustainability and quality urban infrastructure. He added that the Tawi River Front has rapidly emerged as one of the city's most popular destinations, and the boating facility will further strengthen its appeal among visitors.

Following the inauguration, the first batch of pilgrims, tourists and locals enjoyed boating on the Tawi River amid picturesque surroundings. The launch generated enthusiastic response from visitors, many of whom described the experience as a refreshing addition to Jammu's tourism landscape.

The boating facility will be open to visitors daily from 10:00 AM to 7:00 PM from July 3 onwards. Each boating session will last 15 minutes and is priced at Rs 100 per person. Visitors can choose from Paddle Boats, Rafts, Motor Boats and Shikaras.

Jammu Smart City has also introduced an online booking system, allowing pilgrims, tourists and local residents to reserve their boating slots in advance through the portal tawiboating.myjammu.in.

Officials said comprehensive safety arrangements have been put in place to ensure secure boating operations. All passengers are provided with life jackets, while trained boat operators and rescue personnel have been deployed.

Acceptance Testing of newly established Kisan Helpline Centre conducted at Jammu

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 03: As part of the nationwide rollout of the revamped Kisan Helpline Centre (KHC) under the Government of India's KHC RFP-2025 initiative, the Acceptance Testing (AT) of the newly established Kisan Helpline Centre, Jammu was conducted today at the Directorate of Agriculture Krishi Bhawan Talab Tillo Jammu under the supervision of Joint Director Agriculture (Extension) Jammu Sanjay Anand.

The Acceptance Testing was undertaken in compliance with the directions issued by the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India, to assess the operational readiness of the newly established Kisan Helpline Centre. The exercise involved a comprehensive evaluation of the Centre's infrastructure, information technology systems, communication facilities, software applications and service delivery mechanisms to ensure adherence to the prescribed technical specifications and service standards.

The revamped Kisan Helpline Centre has been established to replace the erstwhile Kisan Call Centre with an integrated, technology-enabled platform providing farmers with a single-window facility for agricultural advisories, grievance redressal and information on government schemes and services.

During the inspection, Sanjay Anand reviewed the overall functioning of the Centre and expressed satisfaction with the arrangements made for delivering prompt and effective services to the farming community.

Speaking on the occasion, Sanjay Anand said that the Kisan Helpline Centre would play a vital role in strengthening the agricultural extension system by ensuring timely dissemination of expert advisories, efficient grievance redressal and easy access to various government programmes through a modern digital platform. He expressed confidence that the initiative would significantly enhance the quality and outreach of extension services across the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

The Joint Director also urged all Chief Agriculture Officers (CAOs) and district-level officers to create widespread awareness about the Kisan Helpline Centre at the grassroots level, particularly through Panchayats, Farmer Awareness Programmes and extension activities. He appealed to the field functionaries to actively promote the toll-free helpline number 1800-180-1551 so that a larger number of farmers could avail themselves of the advisory and grievance redressal services offered through the Centre.

DC, SSP Anantnag flag off Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026 along Pahalgam Axis from Nunwan Base Camp

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, JULY 03: Amid jubilation and devotional fervor, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag (Yatra Officer), Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat and Senior Superintendent of Police, Amod Ashok Nagpure, jointly flagged off the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2026 along the Pahalgam Axis in the wee hours today from the Nunwan Base Camp, Pahalgam.

Camp Director Atul Kumar, SDM Pahalgam, Additional Camp Directors, and senior officers from the police and line departments were present during the flag-off ceremony.

Following their departure from the Nunwan Base Camp, the pilgrims were ferried in vehicles to Chandanwari by a special shuttle service provided by the Motor Vehicles (MV) Department.

To ensure a blissful and enriching



spiritual experience for the Yatris, adequate arrangements have been put in place at various camps, stations and places of importance enroute the Holy Cave. All essential facilities will be provided to the pilgrims during the pilgrimage period so that it is conducted in a smooth, and successful manner. Besides,

service augmentation and other necessary safety and security measures along the track were planned and executed in advance.

The Yatris expressed their satisfaction with the overall arrangements and were highly motivated as they began their spiritual journey to the Holy Cave.

DDC Doda reviews progress of Financial Inclusion Saturation Campaign

Stresses timely achievement of 100 percent saturation across Gram Panchayats, Urban Local Bodies

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

DODA, JULY 03: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Doda Krishan Lal today chaired a review meeting to assess the progress achieved under the Financial Inclusion Saturation Campaign being implemented across all Gram Panchayats (GPs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) of the hilly States/UTs from June 15 to July 15, 2026, in accordance with the directions of the Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

The meeting comprehensively reviewed the implementation status and achievements

under various financial inclusion initiatives being carried out as part of the campaign. These included enrolment of eligible beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY), conversion of inoperative Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) accounts into operative accounts, generation of pending Central KYC (C-KYC) IDs, updating of nominations in savings bank accounts, Re-KYC of existing PMJDY and other savings accounts and opening of PMJDY accounts for left-out eligible adults.

Reviewing the progress, the

DDC stressed the need to achieve 100 percent saturation of all identified financial inclusion services within the stipulated campaign period. He directed all Block Development Officers (BDOs) to ensure complete saturation in every Gram Panchayat, while Executive Officers (EOs) of Urban Local Bodies were instructed to achieve 100 percent saturation in their respective municipal areas by July 15, 2026.

Emphasizing timely completion of the campaign, the DDC directed all concerned departments, banks and field-level functionaries to work in close coordination so that no eligible beneficiary is left uncovered. He

called for focused efforts to achieve the prescribed targets well within the campaign timeline through effective planning, continuous monitoring and co-ordinated field action.

To maximize public participation, the DDC instructed the concerned officers to intensify awareness campaigns across rural and urban areas through field outreach, public meetings and Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities so that every eligible citizen is informed about the benefits of the schemes and motivated to enrol. He further directed all implementing agencies to closely monitor the campaign and

submit progress feedback on alternate days to facilitate regular review and timely resolution of bottlenecks. The DDC also instructed that the final saturation list of beneficiaries be compiled and submitted by July 15, 2026, ensuring accurate documentation and verification of achievements.

The meeting was attended by the Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B); Chief Planning Officer (CPO); Chief Medical Officer (CMO); Assistant Commissioner Panchayat (ACP); concerned Executive Engineers; Block Development Officers (BDOs); Executive Officers of Municipal Committees.

PAI URGES INDIA TO FOCUS ON AI APPLICATIONS, NOT COSTLY LLM RACE

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

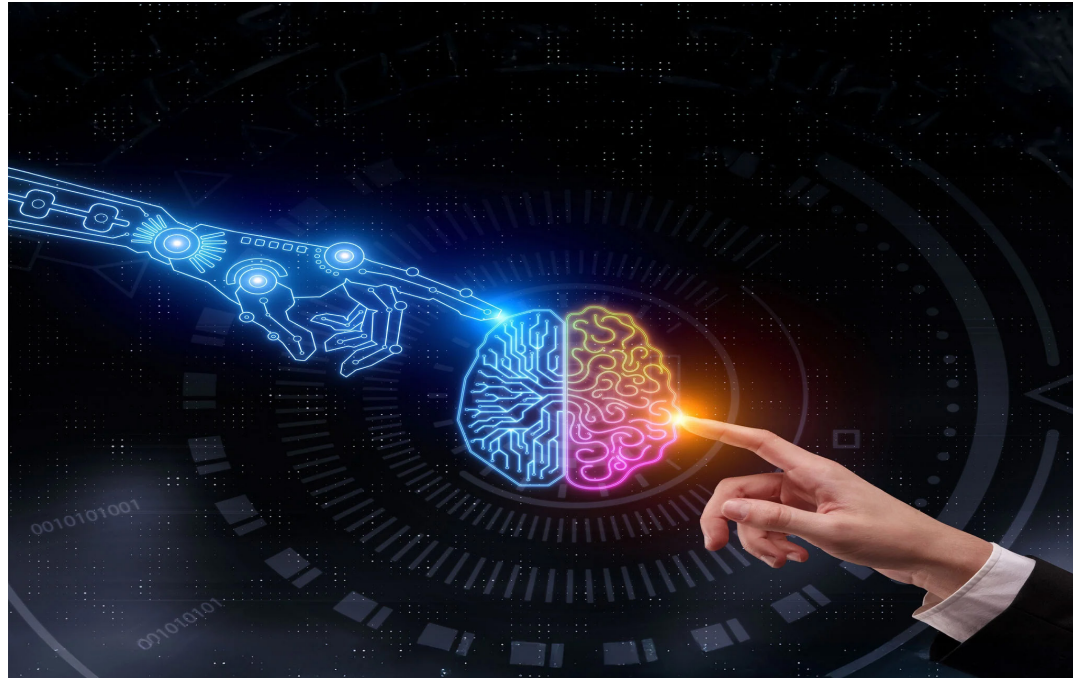
BENGALURU, JULY 3: Former Infosys CFO and Aarin Capital Chairman Mohandas Pai on Thursday said India should focus on deploying artificial intelligence (AI) to solve real-world problems and improve productivity rather than chasing the expensive race to build frontier large language models (LLMs), arguing that the country's current constraints in capital and computing infrastructure make practical AI adoption the more sensible priority.

Speaking at the launch of ToneTag's voice-first merchant banking platform eKosha, Pai said public discourse on AI had become overly focused on whether India was building LLMs, without recognising the enormous investments and infrastructure such efforts require.

"We see so many criticisms in this country by people who suddenly become experts about AI and technology saying, 'Why are you not building LLMs? Why are you not doing this?' To build LLMs costs USD 35-40 billion and nobody is writing that cheque in this country," he said.

Pai said developing frontier AI models is not merely about writing software but also requires access to massive hyperscale computing infrastructure.

"To create AI, you need hyper cloud. We just have two gigawatts of capacity. The US has 40, and



the US is investing nearly USD 3 trillion over the next two years. We are still to start the voyage," he said.

He cautioned against making simplistic comparisons between India and the United States, noting that India is currently a USD 4-trillion economy while the US economy is nearly nine times larger.

"The comparison is odious and it's important for us to understand that," he remarked.

Pai argued that India's comparative advantage lies in applying AI to improve the productivity of businesses, workers and public services rather

than attempting to immediately match the scale of AI investments being made by advanced economies.

He said the two pillars of sustained economic growth are the productivity of labour and the productivity of capital, adding that India's relatively high cost of capital makes efficiency gains even more important.

"The two things that determine how we all live and grow in any economy are the productivity of work and the productivity of capital," he said.

Pai said technologies such as the Unified Payments Interface

can speak and get things done," he said.

He said advances in speech recognition, speech-to-speech translation and small language models are rapidly changing the AI landscape, making voice interfaces increasingly practical across Indian languages.

Pai also observed that AI and robotics are likely to automate a significant share of human activities in the coming years, making it essential to equip India's more than 60 million MSMEs with affordable technologies that improve productivity and competitiveness.

Referring to ToneTag's eKosha platform, he said voice-driven AI could reduce operating costs, improve financial inclusion and enable merchants to access banking services more easily.

Emphasising that innovation must be driven by user needs, Pai said technology should solve real problems rather than exist merely because it is technologically possible.

"Technology cannot be something that we create and thrust down somebody's throat. It has to be suited for the purpose and solve actual use cases," he said.

He added that India's AI success would ultimately be measured not by the number of frontier models it builds, but by how effectively AI improves the lives and productivity of ordinary citizens, entrepreneurs and small businesses.

ToneTag bets on voice AI to turn every merchant counter into a bank branch

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

BENGALURU, JULY 3: Betting that the next phase of digital banking will be driven by voice-enabled artificial intelligence rather than mobile applications alone, deep-tech firm ToneTag on Thursday launched eKosha, a platform designed to transform every merchant counter into an always-on banking touchpoint for India's more than 80 million micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

The Bengaluru-based company said eKosha enables banks to deliver a range of banking services directly through merchants' payment devices, allowing shopkeepers to access customer support, loans, credit, government schemes and business insights using natural voice conversations in their preferred language without downloading applications or investing in new infrastructure.

Powered by ToneTag's proprietary analog edge-compute architecture and Small Action Language Model (SALM), eKosha performs AI inference locally instead of relying primarily on cloud connectivity, enabling real-time voice interactions even in areas with limited internet access. The platform supports UPI, UPI 123Pay and Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) transactions while functioning as an extension of banks' merchant banking channels.

Founder and CEO Kumar Abhishek said the merchant counter, traditionally used only for accepting payments, could now become the centre of everyday banking.

"The merchant counter has always been at the centre of India's commerce. With eKosha, we are reimagining it as the centre of merchant banking," he said.

Abhishek said the company was founded on the belief that technology creates meaningful impact only when it is simple enough for everyone to use. Voice, he said, removes barriers such as app downloads and digital literacy, making AI and banking services accessible to millions of small businesses.

He said India's MSMEs contribute around 30 per cent of the country's GDP and would play a critical role in its journey towards becoming a USD 10-trillion economy. Addressing information and data asymmetry through AI, he added, could improve productivity, strengthen credit access and help small businesses grow faster.

According to ToneTag, eKosha continuously engages merchants through voice interactions, generating richer business intelligence that enables banks to make better lending decisions, accelerate loan origination and strengthen customer relationships while reducing dependence on third-party aggregators.

The company claimed banks deploying the platform could reduce merchant servicing costs by up to 60 per cent, double cross-selling opportunities per merchant and lower merchant churn from 15-20 per cent to 6-9 per cent through continuous engagement.

Unlike conventional AI platforms that depend heavily on cloud computing, eKosha uses on-device analog computing to process requests locally, reducing latency and enabling reliable operation even in low-connectivity environments, the company said.

ToneTag said the platform requires no change in merchant behaviour and no additional digital skills, allowing banks to extend their services directly to shop counters that already serve as the primary interface between merchants and customers.

Headquartered in Bengaluru, ToneTag develops AI, blockchain and sound-based financial technology solutions. Its platform powers millions of merchants and handles tens of millions of daily interactions across smartphones, POS terminals, soundboxes, wearables and connected devices. UNI

Adani Enterprises, Abu Dhabi's IHC Group to invest Rs 1.08 lakh cr in Odisha Aluminium project

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUL 3: Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL) and Abu Dhabi-based International Resources Holding (IRH), an IHC Group company, on Thursday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Odisha government to set up an integrated aluminium project in the state with a proposed investment of \$11.5 billion (around Rs 1.08 lakh crore).

The project, to be developed through a 50:50 joint venture between AEL and IRH, is being billed as India's largest foreign direct investment (FDI) proposal in the mining and metallurgy sector and the biggest-ever FDI proposal for Odisha.

The investment is expected to strengthen Odisha's position in the global aluminium supply chain while supporting India's ambition to become a global hub for value-added aluminium manufacturing. The proposed greenfield project will include a four-million-tonnes-per-annum (MTPA) alumina refinery, a two-MTPA aluminium smelter, a 4,000-megawatt captive power plant and a one-MTPA downstream manufacturing park, making it one of the world's largest integrated aluminium manufacturing complexes.

The investment will be executed in two phases, with around 66,000 crore allocated for the first phase and 42,000 crore for the second. Once operational, the project is expected to generate approximately 53,500 jobs, including 35,000 during the construction phase and another 18,500 across mining, refining, smelting and downstream manufacturing operations.

Odisha, which holds nearly half of India's bauxite reserves and is already the country's largest producer of alumina, has been focusing on attracting investments that move beyond raw material extraction into value-added manufacturing. The proposed project is expected to integrate the entire aluminium value chain—from mining and refining to finished products—within the state, boosting industrial output, value addition and employment.

The downstream manufacturing park is expected to attract companies producing aluminium components for sectors such as automobiles, railways, aerospace, power transmission, renewable energy, construction, packaging and advanced engineering. Apart from direct employment, the project is expected to create thousands of indirect jobs across logistics, transportation, engineering services, fabrication, maintenance and ancillary industries, while providing a significant boost to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

The investment also deepens the strategic partnership between the Adani Group and IHC. Earlier this year, IHC Group company ePointZero entered into a joint venture with Adani Green Energy to develop renewable energy projects across India. The proposed aluminium venture marks the partnership's entry into the mining and metals sector. UNI

Incuspace names Hyderabad South India hub, targets Rs 1,000 cr revenue ahead of FY29 IPO

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, JULY 3: Flexible workspace solutions provider Incuspace announced on Thursday that Hyderabad would be its strategic hub for South India, following a funding round in which it raised Rs 150 crore, led by Bharat Value Fund and other financial institutions.

The company also unveiled plans to reach Rs 1,000 crore in revenue within the next three years and to prepare for an Initial Public Offering (IPO) in FY29.

The company also announced the acquisition of iKeva, strengthening its presence across Hyderabad and Bengaluru and accelerating its enterprise, Global Capability Centre (GCC) and managed workspace growth strategy.

Addressing a media interaction here, Sanjay Choudhary, Founder and CEO of Incuspace, said Hyderabad would play a central role in the company's regional expansion owing to its thriving ecosystem of global enterprises, GCCs, technology firms and startups.

Following the acquisition, Incuspace now operates more than 80



centres across the country. The addition of iKeva brings 18 centres and over five lakh sq. ft. of workspace in Hyderabad and Bengaluru.

In Hyderabad alone, the company currently manages over five lakh sq. ft. of workspace and plans to double its footprint to one million sq. ft. by the end of FY27.

Choudhary said the company aims to build a category-defining enterprise workplace platform and achieve Rs 1,000 crore in revenues through organic growth, strategic acquisitions and deeper engagement with enterprise customers.

Sanjay Chatrath, Managing Partner-India, Incuspace Solutions Private Limited, said South India has emerged as a preferred destination for multinational corporations and GCCs, and the company is well positioned to meet the growing demand for flexible, scalable and enterprise-grade workspace solutions.

He said the fresh capital would be used to strengthen its presence in key commercial markets, invest in technology and pursue further acquisitions as it prepares for a public listing over the next 24 to 36 months. UNI

India's coal imports fall 13 pc in April as captive mining gains momentum

NEW DELHI, JULY 3: India's coal imports declined nearly 13 per cent year-on-year in April 2026 as higher domestic production and improved availability reduced reliance on overseas supplies, while output from captive and commercial mines continued to grow, according to data released by the Ministry of Coal on Thursday.

Total coal imports fell to 21.13 million tonnes (MT) in April from 24.27 MT in the same month last year, a decline of 3.14 MT or 12.95 per cent.

The sharpest reduction was recorded in imports by the power sector, which dropped 24.89 per cent to 3.51 MT from 4.67 MT a year ago. The ministry attributed the decline to improved domestic coal linkages and reduced dependence on imported coal for blending.

Imports by imported coal-based power plants declined 27.45 per cent to 2.88 MT from 3.97 MT, while imports by domestic coal-based plants for



blending fell 11.26 per cent to 0.63 MT from 0.71 MT.

As a result, coal imports as a share of total domestic consumption narrowed to 19.68 per cent in April 2026 from 21.69 per cent a year earlier.

However, coking coal imports, primarily used by the steel industry, remained largely unchanged, rising 1.34 per cent to

6.01 MT from 5.93 MT. The ministry said the increase reflects continued growth in domestic steel production and the limited availability of indigenous coking coal.

The ministry said the sustained decline in imports reflects measures aimed at boosting domestic coal production, strengthening first-mile connectivity, improving coal evacuation infrastructure, ensuring adequate supplies to thermal power plants and close coordination with Coal India Ltd (CIL), its subsidiaries and the Ministry of Railways.

The Coal Ministry also said India's captive and commercial coal mining sector continued its growth momentum during June,

supported by improved mine operations and higher capacity utilisation.

Coal production from captive and commercial mines rose 14.9 per cent year-on-year to 17.88 MT in June 2026 from 15.56 MT in the corresponding month last year. Dispatch during the month stood at 18.55 MT.

During the April-June quarter of FY27, cumulative coal production from captive and commercial mines increased 5.35 per cent over the year-ago period, while dispatch grew 1.70 per cent.

Coal production from captive and commercial mines has recorded a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of around 10.7 per cent between FY25 and FY27, reflecting a steady increase in domestic output.

During the quarter, three coal mines, Urtan, Dhirauli and Birkram, commenced production, adding a combined peak rated capacity of 7.51 million tonnes per annum (MTPA).

Varmul Gindun 3.0 – Cricket, 2026 St. Joseph School Baramulla and Affarwat-XI Sports Club Baramulla Register Victories



■ HT SPORT DESK

BARAMULLA: Exciting cricket action continued in Varmul Gindun 3.0, with St. Joseph School Baramulla and Affarwat-XI Sports Club Baramulla emerging victorious in their respective matches.

In the first match, Army Goodwill School Nowgam batted first and posted 53 runs in the allotted overs. In response, St. Joseph School Baramulla successfully chased down the target in the final over to register a hard-

fought victory.

In another match, Chinar Strikers Kawcheck batted first and scored 41 runs in their allotted overs. Affarwat-XI Sports Club Baramulla produced a disciplined performance and comfortably chased down the target in 6.3 overs, winning the match by 5 wickets.

Both winning teams displayed excellent teamwork, determination, and composure to begin their Varmul Gindun 3.0 campaign on a winning note.

Varmul Gindo 3.0 Inaugurated in Baramulla, Uniting Youth Through Sports and The Spirit Of Peace

■ HT SPORTS DESK

BARAMULLA: The third edition of Varmul Gindo 3.0, Baramulla's largest and most prestigious sports festival was inaugurated today with great enthusiasm at Showkat Ali Stadium, Baramulla, marking the beginning of a month long celebration of youth, sportsmanship and community harmony. Organised by the Dagger Division of the Indian Army in collaboration with the J&K Sports Council, District Youth Services & Sports Department and Baramulla Sports Association, the mega sporting event aims to provide a vibrant platform for young talent from across the district.

The grand opening ceremony was graced by the General Officer Commanding, Dagger Division, as the Chief Guest. The occasion was attended by the MLA Baramulla, MLA Gulmarg, Commander TMG Brigade, Ms Rupali Patel Singh, Arjuna Awardee, senior officials from the J&K Sports Council, civil administration, military officers, sports persons, students and members of the local community.

Held under the inspiring theme "Tarjuman-e-Aman" (Messenger of Peace), Varmul Gindo 3.0 reflects the aspirations of Wadi-e-Tarjuman, promoting peace, unity, inclusivity and youth empowerment through the transformative power of sports. This year's edition is expected to witness participation of nearly 3,000



young athletes, including boys and girls representing all major tehsils of Baramulla district.

The festival will feature competitions in more than 20 sporting disciplines, including Football, Tennis Ball Cricket, Volleyball, Rugby, Hockey, Handball, Kabaddi, Basketball, Kho-Kho, Athletics, Karate, Wushu, Chess, Table Tennis, Snooker and several other indoor and outdoor events. Competitions will be conducted across over 15 venues throughout the district, ensuring widespread participation and community engagement. The festival was ceremonially flagged off with an exciting Rugby match, symbolising strength, teamwork and determination while setting the tone for the month-long sporting extravaganza. Addressing the gathering, the General Officer Commanding, Dagger Division, highlighted the significance of sports as a catalyst for

positive social change. He stated that "Varmul Gindo 3.0 is much more than a sporting event. It is a celebration of the aspirations, talent and resilience of the youth of Baramulla. Through sports, we aim to nurture discipline, teamwork, leadership and confidence while strengthening the bonds of peace, unity and national integration across the Valley."

The MLA Baramulla and MLA Gulmarg appreciated the initiative and commended the collaborative efforts of the Indian Army, civil administration and sporting bodies in providing meaningful opportunities for the youth. They emphasised that such initiatives inspire young people to pursue excellence, adopt healthy lifestyles and contribute positively towards society.

Ms Rupali Patel Singh, Arjuna Awardee, while interacting with the participants, encouraged the young athletes to pursue their sporting

dreams with dedication and perseverance. She emphasised that discipline, hard work and determination remain the cornerstones of success and urged the participants to make the most of the platform provided by Varmul Gindo 3.0.

The competitions will be conducted under the supervision of recognised sports federations and technical officials, ensuring professional standards and fair play throughout the tournament. Besides identifying emerging sporting talent, the festival aims to strengthen social cohesion and foster lasting bonds among the youth of Baramulla.

As the competitions commence, Varmul Gindo 3.0 promises to be another landmark chapter in Baramulla's sporting journey, celebrating excellence, inclusivity and the enduring message of peace, progress and unity across the Kashmir Valley.

Galle and Colombo to host India for two Tests in Aug 2026

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

BENGALURU: Galle and Colombo will host India's two forthcoming Tests in Sri Lanka, between August 15 and 27. Although the Sinhalese Sports Club ground recently had floodlights installed, this series will not feature a day/night match - both games set to start at the usual time of 10am.

This will be India's first Test tour of the island in nine years, their last trip having been in 2017. India have won five consecutive Tests in Sri Lanka, and have not lost a series there since 2008. No tour matches have been officially announced, although earlier versions of the proposed itinerary had included a four-day warm-up match in Colombo. These Tests will also be the first World Test Championship matches these teams play in Sri Lanka. India are in need of points after they were swept 2-0 by South Africa in their most recent WTC series. They sit fifth on the table with four wins, four losses and a draw, while Sri Lanka have slipped to sixth following their innings defeat to West Indies last week.

Netravalkar, Owen bowl Washington Freedom to big win

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

POMONA: It was an abject batting display from Los Angeles Knight Riders, not for the first time this season, and while Washington Freedom had their own struggles with the bat, they were only chasing 109, and got there with 17 balls to spare in their MLC 2026 game on Wednesday.

MLC action shifted from Oakland to Pomona after a two-day gap, and the first glimpse of the new venue suggested tough times for batters over the next few days - Pomona is hosting seven games.

It has started with a game where 218 runs were scored for the loss of 14 wickets in 37.1 overs, with Knight Riders rolled over for 108 by the combination of Saurabh Netravalkar, Ben Dwarshuis, Mitchell Owen and Ian Holland. Up top, Colin Mun-

ro scored 25 but took 31 balls to get them - after scoring 33 in 36 balls in Knight Riders' previous game - and Matthew Tromp scored 21 in 20 from No. 3. All they had after the powerplay was 40 for 1.

And, if anything, it was poorer after that, with the scoreboard reading 59 for 3 after ten overs. The wickets kept falling, Netravalkar sending back Jason Holder and Andre Russell in the 13th to effectively scuttle Knight Riders' hopes of getting somewhere safe. There was a bit of a scrap from Rovman Powell, who hit two fours and two sixes in his 19-ball 30, but absolutely nothing around him.

Netravalkar and Owen, who also had a double-wicket over, picked up three wickets each, while Dwarshuis and Holland had two apiece.



It was a good opportunity for Steven Smith to find some form, and he might have done a little

bit of that, scoring an unbeaten 40 in 44 balls to make sure Freedom got home. The slowness of

his innings didn't do much for his strike rate, though, which is still 106.83 after six innings.

But he had a job to do after Sunil Narine sent back Owen and Andries Gous inside three overs to give Knight Riders a bit of hope, and Mark Chapman was a good partner to help Smith along. The two added 62 runs for the third wicket, taking 54 balls to get them, and took Freedom to within sight of the target before Chapman fell for a 30-ball 34.

Nikhil Chaudhary fell too for a 12-ball 15, before Smith and Lahiru Milantha finished the job.

The win lifted Freedom to fourth place on the table - level on points with the top three of San Francisco Unicorns, Seattle Orcas and Texas Super Kings but well behind on net run rate - while Knight Riders slipped to the bottom.

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