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# Rain, Thunderstorms Trigger Flash Floods and Landslides Across Parts of J&K



HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR, JULY 8:** Heavy rain and thunderstorms swept across several parts of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday evening, triggering localized flash floods, mudslides and landslides in parts of the Jammu region while disrupting normal life in several areas. The intense showers affected districts including Poonch, Rajouri, Reasi, Katra, Doda, Udhampur, Batote and parts of Ramban, where flash floods and landslides were reported following the downpour. In view of the prevailing weather conditions, people were advised to stay away from streams, water channels and landslide-prone slopes.

In North Kashmir, Kupwara district also witnessed heavy rainfall, causing disruptions to daily life in several localities.

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# Centre Will Extend Full Support to J&K: Amit Shah

Home Minister reviews rain situation with Chief Minister Omar Abdullah

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR, JULY 8:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday assured Jammu and Kashmir of the Central Government's full support after reviewing the impact of recent heavy rainfall, flash floods and cloudbursts that have caused widespread damage across the Union Territory.

During a telephonic conversation with Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Shah took stock of the prevailing situation and assessed the impact of the adverse weather on different parts of the Union Territory.

According to officials, the Home Minister assured the Chief Minister that the Central Government would provide all



necessary assistance to strengthen relief, rescue and restoration operations in the affected areas. He reiterated that the Centre stands firmly with the people of Jammu and Kashmir during the ongoing weather-related emergency.

The review comes as several districts have reported extensive damage to roads, public infrastructure and private property following heavy rainfall, flash floods and cloudburst incidents over the past two days. Government agencies and emergency response teams are engaged in rescue operations, clearing debris and restoring essential services in the affected regions.

Officials said the Central Government is maintaining close coordination with the

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# Our Commitment Is to Ensure Every Pilgrim Travels Safely and With Dignity: Northern Railways

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**JAMMU, JULY 8:** Northern Railway has significantly enhanced security arrangements and passenger amenities at Jammu Railway Station to facilitate the safe, secure and seamless movement of pilgrims during the ongoing Amarnath Yatra, officials said on Wednesday.

The Jammu Railway Division has put in place comprehensive measures to ensure the safety, convenience and comfort of thousands of devotees arriving from across the country for the

annual pilgrimage. Senior railway officers and supervisors round the clock to ensure efficient operations throughout the pilgrimage season.

Security has been intensified with additional deployment of personnel from the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) across the station premises. The railway station is under continuous 24-hour CCTV surveillance through a central control room, while joint patrols by

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# J&K Government Announces Complete Fee Waiver for Economically Weak Students

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR, JULY 8:** In a significant step towards making education more accessible for economically weaker sections, the Jammu and Kashmir Government has announced a complete waiver of institutional fees for eligible students studying in government schools and government degree colleges across the Union Territory.

The decision, which comes into effect

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# Amarnath Yatra Sees 28% Surge in Pilgrim Footfall

Over 1.42 lakh devotees offer prayers in first six days; record 9,837 pilgrims leave Jammu in largest-ever single-day batch

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**JAMMU/SRINAGAR, JULY 8:** The annual Amarnath Yatra has recorded a remarkable rise in pilgrim participation this year, with the number of devotees visiting the holy cave shrine during the first six days increasing by nearly 28 per cent compared to the corresponding period last year, reflecting growing enthusiasm for the pilgrimage.

According to official figures, 1,42,861 pilgrims had performed darshan at the holy cave shrine till 7:00 PM on Wednesday, compared to 1,11,975 devotees during the first six days of the Yatra in 2025. The increase of 30,886 pilgrims marks an approximate 28 per cent rise in pilgrim turnout.



On Wednesday alone, 29,047 devotees

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# Strict advisory issued, unregistered pilgrims told not to proceed

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, JUL 8:** The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Wednesday issued a fresh advisory for the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026, asking pilgrims to strictly follow the registration process and safety guidelines.

The daily pilgrim cap, fixed as per the Supreme Court's directions, remains in force, an official told news agency Kashmir News

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# Government Will Continue Investing in Quality Education Across J&K: CM Omar Abdullah

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, JULY 8:** Reaffirming his government's commitment to strengthening the education sector, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday announced a series of landmark initiatives, including the appointment of 117 School Lecturers, a full tuition fee waiver for students from Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families, and the inauguration of more than 2,100 education projects across the Union Territory.

Speaking at the Education Conclave 2026, the Chief Minister said the government would continue investing in educational infrastructure, institutional development and the welfare of teachers to ensure equitable access to quality education for every student in Jammu and Kashmir.

In a major employment boost for the education

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# Prepare students, teachers for AI era: CM's Advisor Wani

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

**SRINAGAR, JUL 08:** Calling education the biggest tool for progress and nation-building, Chief Minister's Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani on Wednesday stressed the need to prepare both students and teachers for the emerging era of artificial intelligence (AI), while advocating values-based learning and skill

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# CS takes stock of 'TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan'

Major milestone of 100% coverage of High-Risk Villages achieved under the Campaign

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, JULY 08:** In a review meeting of the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP), chaired by the Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today it was highlighted that Jammu & Kashmir has identified all High-Risk Villages (HRVs) to be covered under the intensive TB screening campaign.



The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, Health & Medical Education (H&ME); Director SKIMS; Mission Director, National Health Mission (NHM); Managing Director, JKMSCL; Principals of Government Medical Colleges (GMCs); Director, Health Services, Kashmir/Jammu; and Senior Faculty Members from various medical institutions

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# Foreign tourist arrivals in Ladakh nearly double in June; up 99.46%

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

**LEH, JUL 08:** The massive tourism surge in Ladakh continues to witness an impressive upward trajectory, with foreign tourist arrivals almost doubling in June this year compared to the previous year, from 3,349 foreign tourists in June 2025 to 6,680 in June 2026 - a jump of 99.46 percent - reflecting the Union Territory's increasing popularity among international travellers seeking high-altitude adventure, culture, spirituality, and sustainable tourism experiences.

According to details obtained by the news agency - Kashmir News Observer (KNO), among international visitors, Israel continues to emerge as the largest source market for Ladakh, followed

by Thailand, the United States, Vietnam, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Japan, Malaysia, Australia, Taiwan, Russia, Italy, South Korea, Spain, and several other European and Southeast Asian countries.

Apart from foreign visitors, the overall tourist arrivals in Ladakh in June 2026 have gone up to 1,07,740, representing a healthy growth of 43.48 percent over June 2025, when 75,089 tourists had visited Ladakh. In the first six months, from January to June 2026, a total of 2,25,286 tourists have visited Ladakh, including 2,11,645 domestic and 13,641 foreign tourists.

Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena said the encouraging growth in tourist arrivals

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# Safina Baig Joins National Conference, Strengthening Party's Presence in North Kashmir

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR, JULY 8:** Safina Baig, former Chairperson of the District Development Council (DDC) Baramulla and wife of former Deputy Chief Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig, on Wednesday joined the ruling National Conference in a move widely seen as bolstering the party's position in north Kashmir.

She was formally inducted into the party during a ceremony attended by National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah and Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

Welcoming Safina Baig into the party, the National Conference leadership expressed confidence that her extensive political experience and grassroots

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**CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....**

**Rain, Thunderstorms.....**

According to the Meteorological Centre, Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 33.2 degrees Celsius, which was 2.5 degrees above normal, while Jammu registered 34.5 degrees Celsius, slightly below the seasonal average.

Other maximum temperatures included 33.0°C in Kupwara, 31.0°C in Qazigund, 30.6°C in Kokernag, 25.4°C in Pahalgam, 23.4°C in Gulmarg, 29.2°C in Banihal, 28.7°C in Batote, 31.0°C in Katra and 27.0°C in Baderwah.

The minimum temperature was 19.6°C in Srinagar and 23.4°C in Jammu. Pahalgam recorded 14.6°C, while Gulmarg remained the coldest at 11.0°C, according to the Meteorological Centre's evening observations.

**Centre Will.....**

Jammu and Kashmir administration and continues to monitor the situation to ensure that all required support is provided without delay.

**Our Commitment.....**

ticket-checking staff, RPF and GRP personnel are being conducted regularly to prevent any untoward incidents.

To improve passenger services, dedicated help desks and information centres have been established to assist pilgrims with travel-related queries. Additional drinking water facilities, enhanced sanitation services and a 24-hour first-aid centre have also been arranged to cater to the needs of passengers.

Railway authorities are making regular public announcements regarding train operations and pilgrimage-related information, while passengers are also being kept informed of train delays through the public announcement system and SMS alerts.

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Jammu, Uchit Singhal, has been personally reviewing the arrangements and issuing directions to ensure high standards of passenger service.

"Our commitment is to ensure every pilgrim travels safely and with dignity. Our officers, supervisors, Railway Protection Force and Government Railway Police teams are working round the clock, and additional arrangements will be made whenever required," Singhal said.

The Jammu Railway Division has appealed to passengers to follow official railway announcements and seek assistance through the Rail Madad helpline or the station help centre whenever necessary.

The 57-day Amarnath Yatra began on July 3 and will conclude on August 28, coinciding with the festival of Raksha Bandhan.

**J&K Government.....**

immediately, will benefit students from economically disadvantaged households covered under the government's food security programme. The fee waiver applies to students enrolled in Classes IX to XII in government schools and undergraduate programmes from Semester I to VIII in government degree colleges.

The School Education Department and the Higher Education Department issued separate government orders implementing the measure, describing it as a key welfare initiative under the Budget 2026-27.

According to the orders, only students from eligible households possessing the prescribed government-issued eligibility documents will qualify for the exemption.

The government clarified that the waiver covers all fees charged by government educational institutions. However, fees payable to external statutory authorities or examination bodies will continue to be governed by existing regulations unless separately exempted by the competent authority.

For undergraduate students, the benefit will be available only to those who are not already receiving financial assistance under any other scholarship scheme.

Heads of educational institutions and Drawing and Disbursing Officers have been directed to verify the eligibility of beneficiaries before granting the exemption and to maintain proper records for audit and inspection.

The Director School Education, Jammu, the Director School Education, Kashmir, and the Director Colleges have been instructed to ensure strict implementation of the orders, including beneficiary verification, monitoring, record maintenance and submission of periodic reports.

The government said the financial implications of the scheme will be assessed by the concerned directorates and reimbursed through the Finance Department.

Issued with the concurrence of the Finance Department and approval of the competent authority, the initiative forms part of the Jammu and Kashmir Government's Budget 2026-27 welfare measures aimed at reducing the financial burden on low-income families and promoting equitable access to education.

**Amarnath.....**

paid obeisance at the shrine. The day's pilgrims included 18,362 men, 9,737 women, 404 children, 181 sadhus, 13 sadhvis, 11

transgender devotees, and 339 security personnel.

The Yatra also registered its largest-ever single-day departure from the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu, with 9,837 pilgrims leaving for the twin base camps of Pahalgam and Baltal in the seventh convoy.

Officials said the convoy consisted of 361 vehicles, including 188 vehicles carrying 5,337 pilgrims via the traditional Pahalgam route and 173 vehicles transporting 4,500 pilgrims through the shorter Baltal route.

The departing batch comprised 6,684 men, 2,730 women, 21 children, 320 sadhus, 80 sadhvis, and two transgender devotees. A heavy rush of pilgrims was witnessed at the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas from the early hours as devotees from different parts of the country assembled for the annual pilgrimage.

Meanwhile, the naturally formed ice Shivling inside the holy Amarnath cave has shrunk considerably compared to its size at the beginning of the Yatra. The visible reduction has prompted many devotees to advance their pilgrimage plans to seek darshan before further melting.

The 57-day Amarnath Yatra, which commenced on July 3, is being conducted under a comprehensive multi-layered security grid with extensive logistical support from the administration, police, Central Armed Police Forces, health services and other departments. The pilgrimage is scheduled to conclude on August 28, coinciding with Raksha Bandhan.

**Strict advisory.....**

Service (KNS). Devotees have been advised to complete advance registration and undertake the yatra only on the date mentioned in their permit.

Tatkal or on-the-spot registration is available only in limited numbers and subject to availability, the administration clarified. Unregistered pilgrims have been urged not to proceed towards the yatra route and wait for their confirmed travel date.

Registered yatis will not be allowed to travel before their scheduled date, and early arrival will not permit early movement towards the holy cave shrine, the advisory said. Unregistered pilgrims already present in Jammu and Kashmir have been requested to cooperate with authorities.

Every registered devotee will get an opportunity to perform the pilgrimage as per the prescribed procedure and daily capacity, the administration said, appealing to all pilgrims to maintain discipline and follow safety protocols the official said.

Notably, The Department of Information and Public Relations said public cooperation was vital for a safe and peaceful yatra, and adherence to norms would help in smooth movement and effective crowd management.

**Government.....**

sector, Abdullah handed over appointment letters to 117 newly selected School Lecturers, marking the first such appointments in the department after several years. He described the move as part of the government's broader effort to strengthen the academic framework and improve the quality of education.

Fulfilling a key Budget 2026 commitment, the Chief Minister also announced a complete tuition fee waiver for school and undergraduate students belonging to AAY families. The measure is aimed at removing financial barriers and ensuring that students from economically disadvantaged households can continue their education without interruption.

The Chief Minister also inaugurated 2,109 education sector projects worth more than Rs. 115 crore, including a virtual classroom studio and a modern auditorium at the Government College of Engineering Technology, Jammu, to enhance digital learning and academic infrastructure.

Highlighting the importance of teachers, Abdullah said every profession begins in the classroom and assured that his government would continue working to improve schools, strengthen institutions and enhance the service conditions of teachers and academic staff.

He also visited exhibition stalls showcasing student innovations, technological initiatives and institutional reforms, praising young innovators for developing practical solutions with the potential to benefit society.

Recognising academic excellence, the Chief Minister felicitated 67 meritorious school and college students and honoured National Award-winning teachers for their outstanding contributions to education.

Commending Education Minister Sakina Itoo for initiating key reforms, Abdullah expressed confidence in the future of the education sector and reiterated the government's resolve to create a modern, inclusive and high-quality education system across Jammu and Kashmir.

The conclave was attended by Education Minister Sakina Itoo, Agriculture Minister Javid Ahmad Dar, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, legislators, senior government officials, university vice-chancellors, academicians and students.

**Prepare.....**

development to meet the demands of the evolving job market.

Addressing an education programme here at SKICC, Wani, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said education is not merely a department but a movement that enables societies and nations to become economically and intellectually self-reliant.

He said history has shown that countries and regions which prioritised education transformed their economies and achieved remarkable progress.

Referring to Jammu and Kashmir, he said the Omar Abdullah-led government has accorded priority to the education and health sectors, describing them as the pillars of development.

Wani hailed the improving academic performance of students, saying recent outstanding examination results reflected the growing emphasis on education by the government, parents and society.

He said education should not remain confined to classrooms and textbooks, stressing the need to focus on character building, honesty, discipline, respect for elders and teachers, civic sense and awareness of laws from an early age.

"We have to prepare children for society and build their character alongside academics," he said, adding that students should be equipped with values that help them become responsible citizens.

Highlighting technological advancements, the CM's Advisor said the world has progressed from calculators and computers to the age of artificial intelligence, making it essential to train not only students but also teachers to adapt to changing times.

"We have to prepare the future generation with the skills needed for the evolving job market so they are ready to face new opportunities and challenges," he said.

Referring to the National Education Policy (NEP), Wani said the policy framework is robust but called for its effective implementation to achieve the desired results.

Expressing satisfaction over the growing participation of girls in education, he said female students are consistently outperforming boys in several areas, which, he said, is a matter of pride—(KNO)

**CS takes....**

across the UT.

Commending the sustained efforts of healthcare workers the Chief Secretary emphasized that the fight against tuberculosis requires sustained vigilance, early detection and uninterrupted treatment. He directed all districts to ensure rigorous contact tracing of every notified TB patient so that all household and close contacts are promptly identified, screened and, wherever diagnosed with tuberculosis, immediately linked to appropriate treatment under the National TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan. He stressed that timely contact investigation and initiation of treatment are critical to breaking the chain of transmission and achieving the goal of TB elimination.

The Chief Secretary also laid special emphasis on the effective utilisation of the 'Khushi Chatbot' integrated with the TB Mukht Bharat App, observing that the platform serves as an important digital companion for TB patients by providing ready access to authentic information, treatment guidance and counselling.

He noted that the availability of information in local languages greatly enhances awareness, addresses misconceptions and encourages treatment adherence among patients and their families, thereby strengthening community participation in the fight against tuberculosis. He directed the concerned officers to maximise enrolment of patients on the application and ensure its wider use across all districts.

The review meeting assessed the progress made under Phase-II of the TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan and noted substantial improvements across several key indicators over the past three weeks, reflecting the focused efforts of the Health & Medical Education Department, district administrations, and field-level healthcare workers.

The meeting was further informed that 6.85 lakh individuals residing in High-Risk Villages have already been screened under the campaign, representing a significant increase in community outreach over the past three weeks. The intensified field activities have substantially improved active case finding, particularly in vulnerable and underserved populations.

A major milestone highlighted by the Commissioner Secretary, H&ME, M.Raju during the meeting was the successful conduct of 1,525 Nikshay Shivirs covering all 1,518 identified High-Risk Villages, thereby achieving 100 percent geographical coverage under the campaign.

To further strengthen field diagnostics, he divulged that 11 additional hand-held digital X-ray machines have been deployed in districts including Reasi, Doda, Rajouri, Ramban, Baramulla, Srinagar and Kupwara through support from the Central TB Division and Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, significantly enhancing the diagnostic capacity in remote and difficult areas.

Considerable improvement was also recorded in the use of digital chest X-ray screening. The number of vulnerable individuals undergoing chest X-ray examination increased from 1.72 lakh to over 3.15 lakh, resulting in the overall X-ray examination rate increasing from 70 percent to nearly 79 percent. Several districts including Baramulla, Kupwara, Srinagar and Budgam have achieved exceptionally high X-ray coverage, reflecting improved compliance with national screening protocols.

The review further noted encouraging progress in molecular diagnostics. A total of 95,810 microbiological investigations have been carried out, of which 91 percent were conducted using rapid molecular tests (NAAT), ensuring early and accurate diagnosis while reducing dependence on conventional microscopy.

Moreover the implementation of TB Preventive Treatment (TPT) also witnessed notable progress. The proportion of eligible household contacts initiated on preventive therapy increased from 34 percent to 65 percent, representing a substantial advancement towards preventing the progression of latent TB infection into active disease.

Additionally it was made out that the nutritional support to TB patients has also expanded considerably under the TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan. Distribution of Poshan Kits increased from 54.5 percent to 86 percent, with nearly 3,930 patients receiving nutritional assistance. Several districts have now achieved near-universal coverage among consenting beneficiaries, reinforcing the programme's emphasis on holistic patient care.

The review further highlighted that Jammu & Kashmir continues to perform well in TB surveillance and diagnosis. During the first six months of the current year, over 3.19 lakh presumptive TB diagnostic tests have been conducted across the Union Territory, substantially exceeding the national benchmark of 3,000 tests per lakh population, with all districts remaining on track to achieve their annual diagnostic targets.

A particularly encouraging outcome presented during the review was the substantial reduction in TB-related mortality. While 88 TB deaths were recorded in the Nikshay portal during January-June 2026, no death has been confirmed as attributable to tuberculosis following detailed TB Death Audits, indicating significant improvement in diagnosis, treatment adherence and patient management.

Reviewing the progress made on previous directions, the meeting was informed that the proposal for providing Free Diagnostics under Differentiated TB Care has already received approval from the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, with financial assistance of Rs. 117 lakh. The process for constituting Block Level Committees to strengthen monitoring and implementation of the TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan has also been initiated across the Union Territory.

The Chief Secretary reiterated that the Government of Jammu & Kashmir remains fully committed to achieving the national vision of a TB-Mukht Bharat, through coordinated action, community participation, technological innovation and timely delivery of quality health-

care services.

**Foreign.....**

reflected the success of the Administration's sustained efforts to position Ladakh as a premier tourism destination while ensuring sustainable and responsible development of the sector.

"Tourism is one of the strongest pillars of Ladakh's economy and a vital source of livelihood for thousands of our people. The remarkable increase in tourist arrivals this year is a reflection of our sustained efforts to position Ladakh as a premier, year-round tourism destination while ensuring that development remains sustainable and environmentally responsible," he said.

He said it is heartening to see this growth bringing renewed confidence and economic opportunities for our hoteliers, guest house owners, homestay operators, tour operators, transporters, trekking guides, artisans, entrepreneurs, and local communities whose livelihoods depend on tourism.

The LG attributed the tourism surge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's push for domestic tourism and the massive infrastructure boost in Ladakh, accelerating tourism, the local economy, and employment creation.

Under Saxena's leadership, the administration has undertaken several transformative reforms, including simplifying regulatory procedures, reducing compliance burden, granting Industry Status to hotels and guest houses, improving tourism infrastructure, strengthening air and road connectivity, expanding visitor amenities, promoting responsible tourism, and encouraging private investment.

The Ladakh administration has also focused on diversifying Ladakh's tourism offerings beyond the conventional summer season by actively promoting winter tourism, adventure tourism, high-altitude trekking, wildlife tourism, rural tourism, wellness tourism, cultural tourism, spiritual tourism, and astro-tourism.

Several national and international sporting events, cultural festivals, and tourism promotion campaigns have further contributed to extending the tourist season and increasing Ladakh's visibility in domestic and global tourism markets—(KNO)

**Safina Baig....**

connect would strengthen the organisation and contribute to its outreach across the region.

Safina Baig has previously served as Chairperson of the District Development Council, Baramulla, and has remained actively associated with public affairs.

Her entry into the National Conference is regarded as a notable political development, particularly in north Kashmir, where Muzaffar Hussain Baig has maintained considerable political influence over the past several decades. A founding member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), he served as Deputy Chief Minister during the PDP-Congress coalition government.

Political observers believe the development could have an impact on the evolving political landscape of north Kashmir as parties continue to consolidate their support base ahead of future electoral engagements.

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## CS calls for large-scale capacity building to combat cyber-enabled financial frauds

Chairs 37th UT Level Coordination Committee meeting of RBI

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, JULY 08:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired the 37th Union Territory Level Coordination Committee (UTLCC) meeting convened by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Jammu, and called for a comprehensive, coordinated and technology-driven strategy to curb the growing menace of cyber-enabled financial frauds and other unregulated financial activities in Jammu and Kashmir.

Emphasising the need for strengthening institutional capacities, the Chief Secretary urged regulatory bodies including the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), National Stock Exchange (NSE) and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) to undertake large-scale capacity building programmes for prosecution and investigation officers to enhance their ability to effectively investigate and prosecute cyber-enabled financial crimes.

The UTLCC, constituted by the Ministry of Finance, Govt serves as a statutory coordination forum to promote close cooperation among financial regulators and enforcement agencies, curb unauthorised deposit-taking and other unregulated financial activities, and facilitate timely sharing of market intelligence.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Regional Director, RBI, Jammu; Principal Secretary, Home Department; Inspector General of Police, Crime; Commissioner Secretary, Law Department; Director, Industries & Com-



merce, Kashmir; Joint Director (Headquarters), Information Department; General Manager, RBI; Registrar, Cooperative Societies; representatives of the Market Intelligence Unit of RBI, SEBI and ICAI, besides other senior officers.

During the deliberations, the Chief Secretary underscored the importance of creating widespread financial awareness and enhancing institutional preparedness against emerging financial crimes. He urged SEBI and NSE to jointly undertake awareness and training programmes targeting nearly 50,000 participants, while asking ICAI to strengthen the capacities of around 20,000 stakeholders, including teachers, students, Self Help Group (SHG) members, community influencers, law enforcement personnel and officers involved in prosecution.

Highlighting the need for stronger enforcement mechanisms, Dulloo called for the formulation of a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in consultation with the Principal Secretary, Home

Department. He observed that a well-defined SOP would create greater deterrence against financial offenders by clearly delineating the responsibilities of various departments and agencies, ensuring seamless coordination and facilitating swift action against fraudsters.

The Chief Secretary also directed the Finance Department to expedite the finalisation of the Chit Fund Rules to strengthen the regulatory framework and effectively curb unauthorised deposit-taking and fraudulent investment schemes in the Union Territory.

Expressing concern over the rapid evolution of technology-driven financial crimes, he stressed the need to intensify efforts against emerging frauds, particularly crypto currency related scams and other sophisticated cyber-enabled offences.

He called for identifying the masterminds behind phishing messages, fraudulent emails and similar cyber frauds, besides advocating stringent non-kinetic measures such as cancellation of driving licences, passports and

vehicle registration certificates, along with attachment of properties under relevant legal provisions against those involved in cheating people of their hard-earned money.

Earlier, Regional Director, RBI, Jammu, Chandra Shekhar Azad, made a detailed presentation on the initiatives undertaken by the Reserve Bank of India to strengthen the country's financial fraud prevention ecosystem.

He highlighted the deployment of the Financial Fraud Risk Adapter tool by RBI to banks for strengthening fraud detection and prevention. He also elaborated on several other technological and regulatory interventions, including the Artificial Intelligence-based Mule Hunter tool for identifying mule accounts, mandatory adoption of the "bank in" domain by banks operating in India, standardisation of 1400 and 1600 series telephone numbers for promotional and customer awareness calls respectively, tokenisation of card details to secure online transactions, and customer-enabled options for disabling selected features of

debit/credit cards and internet banking services to enhance account security.

The Regional Director further informed the meeting that RBI has significantly intensified financial literacy and awareness campaigns across Jammu and Kashmir. He stated that more than 113 awareness programmes have been organised across various districts and institutions, benefitting government employees, students, traders, business establishments and members of the general public.

Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, and Principal Secretary, Home Department, also shared valuable suggestions for strengthening the Union Territory's response to cyber-enabled financial frauds. They emphasised the need for introducing distinct call signatures for whitelisted and other entities, while advocating sustained public awareness campaigns on the modus operandi adopted by cyber fraudsters, reporting mechanisms and preventive tools available to safeguard citizens against online financial crimes.

## Div Com Kashmir chairs Multi-Disciplinary Meeting on Traffic Management

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, JULY 08:** Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, today chaired a multi-disciplinary meeting to review traffic management initiatives and monitor the progress of key road infrastructure projects aimed at improving traffic flow and urban mobility across Srinagar.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Vice Chairman Srinagar Development Authority (SDA), Regional Transport Officer (RTO) Kashmir, SSP Traffic Srinagar, and senior officers from the Roads & Buildings (R&B) Department, Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL), and other concerned departments.

During the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner reviewed the status of several major projects,



including the Natipora Crossing-Chanapora Bridge road, T-junction at Natipora, Shalteng-Parimpura Flyover, Foot Over Bridge at JVC, underpasses at Nowgam and Mominabad, the road along the Doodganga bank from Barzulla to Sanatnagar, painting of zebra crossings and stop lines, establishment of an e-charging station at Batamalo, development of bus stops, removal of traffic bottlenecks across the city, and identification of no-honking zones.

Officers from the R&B Department and SSCL briefed the chair on the current status of the projects, progress achieved so far, and the timelines for their completion.

The Divisional Commissioner stressed the importance of inter-departmental coordination and directed the concerned agencies to ensure the timely execution of all projects to enhance traffic management and commuter convenience in the city.

## Food Safety Department Conducts Market Inspection Drive in Kulgam, DH Pora

### FAROOQ RATHER

**KULGAM, JULY 08:** The Food Safety Department, Kulgam, on Wednesday conducted a comprehensive market inspection drive in Kulgam town and DH Pora to ensure compliance with food safety standards and safeguard public health.

The inspection was carried out by Food Safety Officer Mr. Inderjeet Singh under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner, Food Safety, Kulgam, Syed Nighat Hassan.

During the drive, several food business establishments, including retail shops, bakeries, restaurants, and other food outlets, were inspected to verify adherence to the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act. Food Business Operators (FBOs) were sensitized about maintaining hygiene, proper food handling, storage practices, and overall compliance with food safety regulations.

Commodity-wise food samples were collected from various establishments for laboratory analysis to assess their quality and safety. Officials said the sampling was part of the department's regular surveillance mechanism to ensure that food products sold in the market meet prescribed safety standards.

During the inspection, various violations were detected, and the erring Food Business Operators were compounded under the relevant provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act.

Assistant Commissioner, Food Safety, Syed Nighat Hassan, reiterated the department's commitment to ensuring the availability of safe and wholesome food for consumers. He urged all Food Business Operators to strictly follow food safety norms and maintain hygienic conditions, warning that strict legal action will continue against those violating the law. The Food Safety Department stated that similar inspection and awareness drives will continue across the district to strengthen enforcement of food safety regulations and protect consumer health.

## Deputy Chief Minister inspects development works in Udhampur, Katra

Visits injured soldier at Northern Command Hospital

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**KATRA, JULY 08:** Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today conducted an extensive tour of Udhampur and Katra to inspect the ongoing developmental works and review progress of key infrastructure projects. During his visit to Udhampur, the Deputy Chief Minister visited the Northern Command Hospital to enquire about the health of Subedar Rakesh Kumar of 1st JAKLI, who is undergoing treatment.

The Deputy Chief Minister interacted with the attending doctors and reviewed the medical condition of the injured soldier. He directed the hospital authorities to make every possible effort to ensure the best medical care and facilitate his early recovery. He also met the family members of Subedar Rakesh Kumar and assured them of the government's full support in providing quality medical treatment and all necessary assistance during the course of his treatment. He hoped for the soldier's speedy recovery and appreciated the dedicated services being rendered by the medical team.

Later, the Deputy Chief Minister inspected the ongoing construction of the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Express-



way, particularly the Domail-Katra stretch and reviewed the pace and quality of the work. He stressed the need for timely completion of the prestigious project while maintaining the highest standards of quality and safety. He said that the expressway will significantly improve the connectivity, boost tourism and promote economic development in the region.

During the tour, the Deputy Chief Minister also held public outreach programmes at various locations in Katra, where he patiently listened to the grievances, issues and demands raised by the people. He assured the public that all genuine concerns would be addressed in a time-bound manner and directed the concerned

officers to take prompt action for their resolution.

Reiterating the government's commitment to transparent, accountable and people-centric governance, the Deputy Chief Minister said that regular field visits and direct interaction with the public are essential for ensuring effective implementation of developmental works and timely redressal of public grievances.

Among others accompanying the Deputy Chief Minister were the Engineer-in-Chief, Superintending Engineers, Executive Engineers of various engineering wings, senior officers of the district administration and former Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) representatives.

## Emotional Farewell For CO 4RR Col Chauhan In Bhadarwah

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**BHADERWAH, JULY 08:** Civil administration officials, security top brass and several local residents on Wednesday gathered here to accord an emotional and grand farewell to Colonel Yogesh Chauhan, the outgoing Commanding Officer of 4 Rashtriya Rifles (RR), marking the end of his highly

acclaimed tenure in the region. The farewell organized by the Youth Action Committee (YAC) Bhaderwah turned highly emotional as speakers recounted the officer's pivotal role in counter insurgency operations, disaster relief and youth engagement.

"The affection shown by the people of Bhaderwah will always remain close to my heart. I sin-

cerely pray that I may return to serve this beautiful region again in a higher rank," an emotional Col. Chauhan said.

He extended his gratitude to the civil administration, police, CRPF and local volunteers for their seamless cooperation during his command. "I am highly thankful to the entire Youth Action Committee for giving me such a warm and mem-

orable farewell," the officer added. Speakers at the event, which included the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Bhaderwah, Commanding Officer of the CRPF, BMO and senior officers of the civil administration hailed Col. Chauhan as a "people's officer" who successfully bridged the gap between the military and civilians. "The people of Bhaderwah will

always remember his dedicated service with gratitude and respect," said Naseer Mehboob, Chairman of the Youth Action Committee.

Highlighting the officer's humanitarian interventions, YAC Advisor Taraq Ahmad Butt recalled the Army's swift response during the devastating cloudburst at Bheja under Col. Chauhan's direct leadership.

dignitaries.

The appointment of Gupta as Member of the J&K Water Resources Regulatory Authority marks another significant step towards further strengthening the institutional framework for water resources governance in the Union Territory.

The Authority is entrusted with promoting transparent, equitable and sustainable management of water resources through effective regulation, policy guidance and scientific planning.



## DC Budgam reviews Road Safety Measures at DRSC Meeting

Stresses coordinated efforts for safer roads across District

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, JULY 08:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today chaired a meeting of the District Road Safety Committee (DRSC) at the Conference Hall, Budgam to review the implementation of road safety measures and assess the Action Taken Reports (ATRs) submitted by various stakeholder departments on the decisions taken during the previous meeting.

The meeting reviewed the progress achieved by various departments in strengthening road safety infrastructure, enforcement, emergency response, public awareness and institutional coordination across the district. The District Road Safety Action Plan 2026-27 was also reviewed, with emphasis on the timely execution of identified interventions by the concerned departments.

The DC stressed the need for sustained coordination among all stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of road safety measures and directed the departments to expedite the execution of all pending decisions in a time-bound manner.

He instructed the concerned departments to prioritise the rectification of accident-prone



locations through appropriate engineering interventions, including installation of road safety signage, crash barriers, street lighting and other essential safety infrastructure.

He also directed that identified black spots be addressed through improved road geometry, proper road markings, pedestrian crossings and other traffic-calming measures.

The DC further directed the Roads & Buildings Department and other executing agencies to undertake regular road safety audits and remove obstructions

along roads that contribute to accidents or create hindrances, particularly during the winter season, to ensure safe and uninterrupted movement of traffic.

Emphasising the safety of school children, the DC instructed Chief Education Officer Budgam to conduct a comprehensive audit of all school buses to ensure strict adherence to prescribed safety guidelines, including the installation and proper functioning of CCTV cameras and other mandatory safety features.

The DC also directed the Traf-

fic Police and ARTO to intensify enforcement drives on the Humama-Budgam-Doodhpatri Road, ensuring zero tolerance for traffic violations on the stretch.

He further instructed the concerned departments to verify that vehicles whose registrations or permits have been suspended are not operating on the roads and to initiate strict action against violators.

The DC emphasised strict enforcement of traffic regulations, strengthening surveillance, regular inspection of public transport vehicles and school

buses, and intensified awareness campaigns to promote responsible road behaviour. He further directed all departments to actively conduct Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns within their respective sectors to create greater public awareness regarding road safety measures, traffic rules and responsible road usage, thereby encouraging community participation in accident prevention.

The DC also directed all departments to submit timely Action Taken Reports and ensure close monitoring of road safety initiatives. He called for strengthening emergency response systems, promoting the Good Samaritan initiative and adopting a proactive and coordinated approach to reduce road accidents and fatalities across the district.

The meeting was attended by the Joint Director Planning Budgam, Superintendent Engineer R&B Circle Budgam, Chief Medical Officer, District Forest Officer, Chief Education Officer, ARTO Budgam, Executive Engineers of R&B, PMGSY and Irrigation Departments, Deputy SP Traffic, Deputy SP Headquarters, Executive Officers of Municipal Committees, officers from Fire & Emergency Services and other concerned departments.

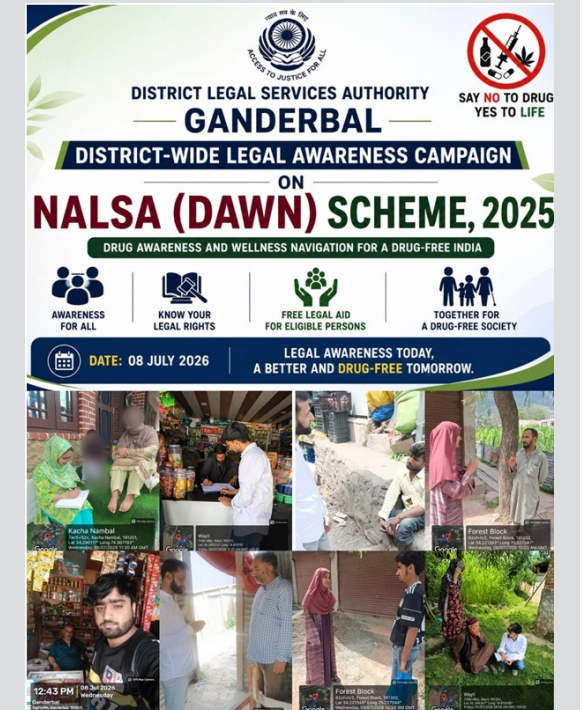
## DLSA Ganderbal launches district-wide door-to-door Legal Awareness Campaign on NALSA 2025

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**GANDERBAL, JULY 08:** District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Ganderbal, conducted a district-wide door-to-door Legal Awareness Campaign on the NALSA (DAWN - Drug Awareness and Wellness Navigation for a Drug-Free India) Scheme, 2025 today across various areas of the district.

The awareness was conducted by the Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) of DLSA Ganderbal in several areas including Wayil, Kachnambal, Kurhama, Manigam, Surfraw and Kangan.

The campaign was conducted under the supervision of Abdul Nasir, Chairman, District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal, and under the guid-



ance of Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal.

The initiative aimed to create awareness regarding the ill effects of drug abuse, promote a drug-free society, and ensure effective dissemination of information about free legal services available to eligible persons.

During the awareness programmes, the Para Legal Volunteers visited households, local markets and public places, where they interacted with students, youth, parents, shopkeepers and members of the general public. The participants were sensitized about the harmful consequences of substance abuse on individuals, families and society and were encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle while promoting the message of "Say No to Drugs, Yes to Life."

The PLVs also explained the objectives and salient features of the NALSA DAWN Scheme, 2025, including awareness on prevention of drug abuse, counselling, de-addiction and rehabilitation services, and the legal support available to affected individuals and their families.

Information was disseminated regarding the constitutional and statutory right to free legal aid, the categories of persons entitled to free legal services under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, and the procedure for availing legal aid, legal representation, mediation, Lok Adalat and other legal services through the Legal Services Institutions.

The Para Legal Volunteers further appealed to the community to actively participate in anti-drug initiatives and work collectively towards building a healthy and drug-free society.

The awareness campaign received an encouraging response from the local residents, who appreciated the initiative of the District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal, and actively participated in the awareness sessions. UNI

## District Red Cross Society Budgam organizes Drug De-Addiction Awareness Program at GDC Khansahib

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, JULY 08:** District Red Cross society Budgam in collaboration with Government Degree College (GDC) Khansahib, today organised a seminar on Drug de-addiction awareness programme.

The event aimed to sensitize the younger generation about the catastrophic socio-economic and medical consequences of drug addiction. It witnessed enthusiastic participation from hundreds of college students, faculty members, and dedicated volunteers of the Red Cross Society.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Khansahib, Jahangir Giri attended the event as the chief guest. He said that there is a need for early intervention, vigilant parenting, and aggressive community level participation.

"Youth are the backbone of our nation, and we cannot allow drug abuse to derail their future. The administration is adopting a zero-tolerance pol-



icy against drug trafficking, but enforcement must be met with community awareness. Every student here must act as an ambassador for a drug-free society," the SDM stated.

The Principal of GDC Khansahib, who was also a key speaker, welcomed the initiative taken by the District Red Cross Society. Highlighting the role of educational institutions, the Principal emphasized that academic spaces must foster resilience and offer psychological support to vulnerable students. The Principal urged the student body to channel their energy into sports, creative arts, and social work through platforms like the Red Cross.

Representatives and members of the District Red Cross Society also spoke on the occasion, highlighting the various counseling resources, rehabilitation pathways, and support systems available in the district for individuals seeking a way out of addiction.

## DC Kulgam chairs mega Block Diwas at Yaripora

Listens to Public Grievances and Demands

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**KULGAM, JULY 08:** Deputy Commissioner (DC), Kulgam, Shazad Alam, visited Yaripora, today and presided over the Block Diwas public outreach programme.

During the programme, the Deputy Commissioner conducted an interactive public grievance hearing, providing the local populace with an opportunity to present their issues, demands, and developmental concerns.

The grievances raised by the public mainly pertained to road connectivity, drinking water supply, electricity, healthcare facilities, education, sanitation, irrigation, revenue matters, and other civic amenities.

The Deputy Commissioner heard each grievance patiently and directed the concerned departmental officers to address the issues promptly in accordance with the applicable rules and within the stipulated time frame.

Matters requiring immediate intervention were resolved on the spot, while the remaining issues were referred to the respective departments for necessary action and follow-up.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized responsive governance, transparency, accountability, and



timely redressal of public grievances. He instructed all officers to maintain close coordination with the local administration and ensure effective implementation of government welfare schemes and ongoing developmental projects. He also urged the public to actively participate in developmental initiatives and make optimum use of government schemes.

The Block Diwas programme was conducted smoothly and served as an effective platform for direct interaction between the district administration and the public. The

visit strengthened public confidence in the administration and facilitated the identification and resolution of local issues through coordinated departmental action.

The event was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Chief Planning Officer, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Kulgam, Assistant Commissioner Development Kulgam, Exens, District and Sectoral officers, Tehsildar Yaripora, BDO Behibagh, EO, representatives of various government departments and a large number of local residents.

## DC Budgam reviews PMAY-U in District

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, JULY 08:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan today chaired a meeting at the Conference Hall, DC Office Complex Budgam to review Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) and PMAY-U 2.0.

The DC reviewed the status of cases under the scheme and took their detailed assessment for timely disposal. He directed the concerned officers to expedite verification, processing and approval of all pending cases strictly in accordance with the prescribed guidelines. He further instructed officers to ensure prompt resolution of bottlenecks and timely disposal of pendency.

The DC also stressed adherence to the directions issued by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to ensure uniform and transparent implementation of the programme.

He directed the concerned officers to strengthen monitoring at the field level and ensure that all eligible beneficiaries are provided timely assistance after completion of due verification and other requisite formalities.

He directed officers to maintain regular follow-up on pending cases and



submit periodic progress reports so that the scheme is implemented effectively and within the prescribed timelines across all Urban Local Bodies of the district.

The meeting was attended by all Tehsildar's, Chief Executive Officer Municipal Council Budgam, all Executive Officers of Municipal Committees, Project Officer PMAY and other concerned officers.

## Vehicle seized for performing Dangerous Stunts in Budgam

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, JULY 08:** Acting on the directions of the Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, the Assistant Regional Transport Office (ARTO), Budgam, has taken prompt action against a vehicle found performing dangerous stunts in the Hajjan Brenwar area of the district.

Following the receipt of information, the vehicle bearing registration number DL4CNB7704 was traced, seized, and taken into custody by the ARTO Budgam for violations of the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act and Rules.

The Transport Department Budgam stated that performing stunts on public roads poses a serious threat to the safety of the driver, passengers, and other road users. It reiterated that reckless driving and activities endangering public safety will not be tolerated, and strict legal action will be taken against violators in accordance with the law.

The seized vehicle has been kept in the custody of the ARTO Office, Budgam, and further legal proceedings have been initiated as per the applicable provisions of law.



The ARTO Budgam appealed to all motorists, particularly young drivers, to drive responsibly, strictly adhere to traffic rules, and refrain from performing dangerous stunts on public roads. It also urged the public to cooperate with the authorities in ensuring safer roads across the district.

# 'Nun Chai Talks' encourages Bandipora youth to Dream Big as Entrepreneur Jibran Khan shares Inspiring Journey

## HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, JULY 08:** Stories of perseverance, ambition and resilience took centre stage at the latest edition of Nun Chai Talks, organised by the District Administration Bandipora at the Waqar Knowledge Centre, Mini Secretariat, where young participants had the opportunity to interact with Local entrepreneur Jibran Khan, founder of the renowned restaurant chain Zero Miles.

Bringing together students from HKM Degree College Bandipora, HSS Mantrigam and youth from across the district, the session created a vibrant platform for open conversations on entrepreneurship, career choices and the importance of believing in one's potential.

In a candid interaction, Jibran Khan spoke about the humble beginnings of his professional journey, recalling how he worked in different jobs before taking the bold step of starting

his own venture. He shared the setbacks, uncertainties and lessons that shaped his path, telling participants that success is rarely achieved overnight but is built through patience, hard work and the courage to keep moving forward despite challenges.

Encouraging the youth to think beyond conventional career paths, he urged them to see entrepreneurship not merely as a business opportunity but as a way to create employment and contribute to society. He advised aspiring entrepreneurs to remain innovative, embrace challenges with confidence and make effective use of the support available through various government schemes.

Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Bandipora, Dr. Suhaib wani also addressed the gathering and encouraged participants to strengthen their skills, remain focused on their goals and take advantage of government initiatives that promote innovation, self-employment and



sustainable livelihoods.

Adding to the discussion, resource person from Waqar Knowledge Centre, Dr. Zulfi,

familiarised the participants with the services and opportunities available at the Waqar Knowledge Centre. He explained

how young entrepreneurs can benefit from mentorship, capacity-building programmes, skill development initiatives and

financial assistance to transform their ideas into successful enterprises.

The interaction remained

lively throughout, with students and young participants raising questions on business planning, overcoming initial hurdles, accessing financial support and identifying opportunities in the changing economic landscape.

The speakers responded with practical suggestions and real-life experiences, making the discussion both informative and inspiring. Speaking on the occasion, BDO Aloosa and Nodal Officer, Waqar Knowledge Centre, Ulfat Ali, thanked Jibran Khan for sharing his remarkable journey and motivating the youth to pursue their aspirations with confidence. She said that the 'Nun Chai Talks' initiative has emerged as an important platform where young people can learn directly from individuals who have transformed determination into success, while reaffirming the District Administration's commitment to organising more such interactive sessions for the youth of Bandipora.

## DC Bandipora presides over Block Diwas at Bonakoot

Reviews Public Grievances, issues directions

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, JULY 08:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, on Wednesday chaired Block Diwas at Bonakoot Block, hearing public grievances and reviewing developmental issues of the area.

The programme was attended by Program Officer ICDS, ACD, ACP, CEO, CMO, and Tehsildar Bandipora, along with Executive Engineers of R&B, PDD, PHE and PMGSY/REW, other district and sectoral officers, and a large gathering of the public.

Public issues spanned healthcare, roads, drinking water, irrigation, power supply, sanitation, banking facilities, education infrastructure, playgrounds,



public transport, tourism promotion and livelihood generation. The DC directed concerned departments to examine grievances on priority, conduct field inspections where required, and ensure timely, coordinated redressal.

On healthcare, she directed the CMO to strengthen services, ensure regular RBSK outreach, and address concerns around the Health and Wellness Centre and Anganwadi facilities in tribal areas. On infrastructure, engineering departments were told to prepare estimates and feasibility reports, expedite pending proposals, pursue clearances and ensure timely completion of works. On power, she sought timelines for RDSS works and directed inspection of vulnerable locations with damaged infrastructure or pole shortages.

Specific local issues raised included the non-functional maternity hospital, implementation of the Forest Rights Act, drinking water supply at Yali Pethkoot, mobile connectivity at Chandaji, road macadamisation, construction of a bus stop, and inclusion of more tribal villages under the Aadi Karmayogi initiative. Former DDC Member, Abdul Gani Wani raised irrigation concerns, with the DC directing the Assistant Engineer (REW) to prepare an estimate for further processing.

The DC urged people to support the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, reaffirming the administration's commitment to prevention, awareness and rehabilitation support. She also highlighted youth livelihood initiatives viz. Knowledge Centre at the Mini Secretariat for skill development and career progression, and a proposed Rural Mart with parking facilities at Lal Qilla, Bonakoot, to support tourism and skill-based training.

She reiterated that Block Diwas offers a direct platform for public interaction with the administration, and assured that all genuine issues would be addressed in a phased, time-bound manner.

## Theatre in Education Workshop Conducted at GMS Kristwar in Budgam

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, JULY 8:** Valley Folk Theatre "VFT" Hanjigund Wathoora, Chadoora, organized a one-day Theatre in Education Workshop at Government Middle School Kristwar Zone Nagam, Budgam under the "Guru Shishya Parampara Repertory Grant Scheme" supported by the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India. The workshop witnessed active participation from students and teachers. It

was aimed at fostering creativity, self-confidence, and experiential learning among students through theatre, Kashmiri folk music, and the region's rich cultural heritage. Headmaster Mohammad Shafi Jahra appreciated the initiative of Valley Folk Theatre and lauded its efforts in promoting cultural education among school children. During the workshop, theatre artists imparted practical training in the traditional Kashmiri folk theatre Bhand



Patner and folk music, encouraging students to understand and preserve their cultural roots. Speaking on the occasion, Director and Secretary of 'VFT' Fayaz Ahmad Rather said that such educational programmes play a vital role in connecting the younger generation with Kashmir's traditional performing arts and cultural heritage. The workshop concluded with an interactive question-and-answer session followed by a vote of thanks.

## From Kashmir to Parliament: KU shines on national stage

Varsity contingent secures first position in National Youth Parliament Competition

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR JUL 08:** The University of Kashmir (KU) has secured first position at the National Level in the 17th National Youth Parliament Competition 2024-25 for Universities and Colleges, organised by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. The University was awarded the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Running Parliamentary Shield and Trophy by Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Law and Justice; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, during a ceremony held at the Parliament House Complex, New Delhi.

The KU team impressed the judges with its understanding of parliamentary procedures, constitutional values, and democratic traditions. The students also presented a repeat performance of their acclaimed Youth Parliament Sitting before dignitaries and participants from across the country.

Congratulating the team, Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, said, "This achievement is a matter



of immense pride for the University and reflects the intellectual ability, preparation, and confidence of our students. Their performance shows a strong understanding of democratic institutions and constitutional values, which are essential for responsible citizenship."

Registrar KU, Prof. Naseer Iqbal, appreciated the students and the Department of Students' Welfare (DSW) for their dedicated efforts, noting that the achievement highlights the University's continued focus on academic and co-curricular excellence.

Dean, DSW KU, Prof. Seema Singh, said that the competition provided students with a valuable platform to develop leadership, communication, and parliamentary skills, and added that their national-level success would inspire more students to participate in such academic forums.

The University congratulated the winning team and its mentor, Dr. Shahid Ali Khan, Cultural Officer, DSW, KU, for their dedication and efforts in preparing the award-winning Youth Parliament presentation, which brought national recognition to the University and the Union Territory.

## Kashmir holds special place; it's my 'nanihaal': Huma Qureshi

Thanks audiences for 'Baby Do Die Do' response

### HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

**SRINAGAR, JUL 08:** Bollywood actress Huma Qureshi on Wednesday visited Srinagar along with the cast of her latest film 'Baby Do Die Do', saying Kashmir holds a special place in her heart as it is her 'nanihaal' (maternal home) and thanking the people of the Valley for the love shown to the film.

Speaking to reporters during the promotional visit to the INOX Srinagar movie theatre, Qureshi, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the entire cast had travelled to Srinagar to express gratitude to audiences in person.

"First of all, my entire cast is here. We just came to say thank you to Kashmir because our film is playing over here, and we are getting so much love. So we wanted to come and thank you ourselves," she said.

Huma mentioned her maternal roots in Kashmir, describing the Valley as her 'nanihaal' and saying that every visit brings back cherished family memories.

'Baby Do Die Do', directed by Nachiket Samant, is a crime-comedy thriller starring Huma Qureshi in the lead alongside Sikander Kher, Chunky Panday, Seema Pahwa and others. The film, released on July 3, has been receiving a positive response from audiences and is currently screening in cinemas across the country, including Jammu and Kashmir—(KNO)

## CS assesses preparations for first-ever household enumeration to identify multidimensionally poor families across J&K

### HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, JULY 08:** In a major policy initiative aimed at further strengthening inclusive governance and ensuring that government welfare schemes reach the most deserving families, the Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today chaired a meeting of Planning, Development & Monitoring Department (PD&MD) to have first hand appraisal of the proposed household-level enumeration of multidimensionally poor families across J&K.

The meeting was attended by the concerned Administrative Heads including ACS Finance;

Commissioner Secretary, PD&MD; Commissioner Secretary, FCS&CA; Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare; Secretary, RDD; HoDs of the Planning Department and other concerned officers. Deputy Commissioners attended the meeting through video conferencing.

Speaking on the proposed initiative, the Chief Secretary maintained that the proposed household enumeration represents the next logical step in our development journey. He remarked that this initiative seeks to identify the actual households that continue to experience multiple deprivations with an objective to

create a scientifically validated and technology-enabled database that will help Government departments deliver welfare benefits with greater precision, improve inter-departmental convergence and ensure that no deserving family is left behind.

He further stated that the proposed exercise is the first step towards data-driven governance, transparency and inclusive development, and would provide an institutional framework for identifying and addressing pockets of deprivation across Jammu & Kashmir.

He impressed upon the Deputy Commissioners to work out

the human resource requirements in coordination with the Planning Department. He also directed the Department to frame capacity building programmes for these resources so that the exercise is taken up after the culmination of the 2 phases of the Census operations across the UT including the pastoral population of J&K.

The proposal, presented by the Commissioner Secretary, Planning, Development & Monitoring Department, R Alice Vaz lays down a scientifically designed framework for identifying households experiencing multiple deprivations across health, edu-

cation and living standards as per the GoI norms.

She added that the proposal is founded on the National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) framework developed by NITI Aayog in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), while adapting it for household-level identification of poor families within Jammu & Kashmir. Unlike sample-based national surveys that provide only macro-level poverty estimates, the proposed exercise seeks to identify the actual households behind the statistics, thereby facilitating direct and targeted government intervention.

HT EDITORIAL

Removing Financial Barriers to Education

Fee Waiver for AAY Students : A Significant Step Indeed

The Jammu and Kashmir Government's decision to grant a full fee waiver to students from Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families studying in Government Schools and Government Degree Colleges is a commendable welfare initiative that reinforces the principle that no child should be denied education because of financial hardship.

The policy, which covers students of Classes IX to XII in government schools and undergraduate students enrolled in Government Degree Colleges, offers meaningful relief to some of the most economically vulnerable households in the Union Territory. At a time when the cost of education continues to strain family budgets, even modest institutional fees can become a significant obstacle. By removing this burden, the government has taken a practical step towards improving access to education and reducing the risk of students discontinuing their studies due to financial constraints.

Education remains one of the most effective instruments for breaking the cycle of poverty. Families covered under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana represent the poorest sections of society, and extending financial support to their children is not merely an act of welfare but an investment in the future human capital of Jammu and Kashmir. The measure has the potential to improve enrolment, enhance retention rates and encourage students to pursue higher education with greater confidence.

The government's decision also reflects its commitment to inclusive development. Ensuring that deserving students are able to continue their education without worrying about institutional fees promotes social justice and creates a more equitable educational environment. Such initiatives contribute directly to the broader objective of empowering disadvantaged communities through knowledge and opportunity.

However, the success of this policy will depend largely on its implementation. The directions issued to school heads and college principals to verify eligibility, maintain transparent records and ensure proper monitoring are essential safeguards. At the same time, the verification process should remain efficient and student-friendly so that deserving beneficiaries are not subjected to unnecessary procedural delays.

The provision for reimbursement of the waived fees through the Finance Department is equally important. Educational institutions should receive timely compensation to ensure that their routine academic and administrative activities remain unaffected. Delays in reimbursement could place an avoidable financial burden on institutions that are already operating within limited resources. The exclusion of fees payable to statutory examining bodies, unless separately exempted, is understandable from an administrative standpoint. Nevertheless, policymakers may consider examining whether these charges also merit support for the poorest students in future, as examination fees can still present a financial challenge for many families.

Overall, the fee waiver for AAY students is a progressive and compassionate policy that deserves appreciation. If implemented efficiently and supported with timely financial reimbursements, it can become a powerful instrument for expanding educational opportunities and ensuring that economic disadvantage does not stand in the way of academic aspirations. In strengthening access to education, the government is investing not only in individual students but also in the long-term social and economic development of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Devaluation of the Classroom Architect



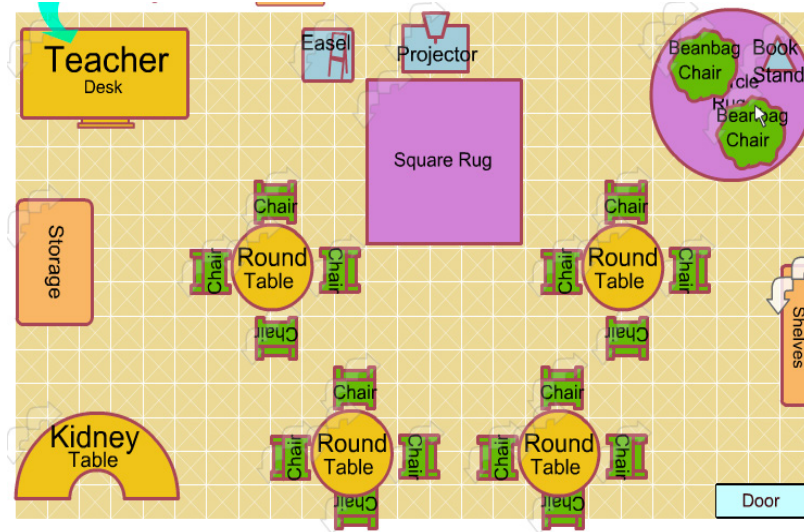
AAMIR HUSSAIN

There was a time in Jammu and Kashmir when a teacher was considered a beacon of wisdom whose words carried absolute respect. Today, that respect is rapidly eroding, replaced by systemic exploitation and public devaluation. While private schools across the region thrive, expanding their campuses and charging high fees, the qualified professionals working inside them find themselves trapped in a thankless cycle. They are caught between demanding parents on one side and profit-driven management on the other, both of whom have increasingly relegated the status of an educator to that of a household servant.

An Era of Transactional Entitlement

For many parents, paying high tuition fees has inadvertently created an attitude of transactional entitlement. Instead of seeing teachers as mentors guiding their children's intellectual growth, they view them as hired help who must comply with every whim.

Unfair Blame: Teachers are routinely blamed for any academic or behav-



ioral shortcomings of the student.

Public Humiliation: Educators frequently face aggressive questioning and disrespect during parent-teacher interactions.

Hyper-Scrutiny: Parents expect individual, round-the-clock attention for their wards, discarding standard boundaries.

Management Exploitation: Cogs in a Profit Machine

On the other hand, the school management often views these highly qualified individuals—many of whom hold post-graduate and B.Ed. degrees—as mere sales representatives or corporate cogs. Apart from their heavy teaching workloads, private school educators are routinely forced into administrative duties,

admission marketing, fee collections, and event management without any additional pay.

Pittance Wages: Investigation reports from The Kashmir Images show that a majority of private teachers get an average monthly salary of just Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 9,000.

Job Insecurity: The lack of formal employment contracts leaves teachers vulnerable to arbitrary termination if they voice concerns.

Muted Freedom: Institutional pressure forces teachers into silence, denying them basic professional agency.

The Systemic Undervaluing of Educators

The disregard for private sector teachers extends beyond school walls

and penetrates official narratives. The Private Schools' Association of Jammu and Kashmir (PSAJK) and political groups recently called out institutional rhetoric that unfairly undermined the credentials of private sector staff. Political commentary published by Kashmir Life countered these narratives, affirming that despite working under highly challenging conditions and modest pay scales, private educators are the primary force sustaining the region's educational progress.

A Call for Immediate Structural Reform

When a society reduces its nation-builders to the status of servants, it actively compromises its own future. If the very people responsible for shaping the moral and intellectual foundation of Jammu and Kashmir's youth are stripped of their basic human dignity and financial stability, the entire educational framework collapses from within.

The Labour Department and the Directorate of School Education must move past being mute spectators. Immediate interventions must be established:

Enforce strict legal wage floors tailored to qualifications.

Mandate formal, legally binding employment contracts.

Establish anonymous grievance cells to report management harassment.

The author is a Scholar of History.

Forests: Homes for Wildlife, Not Sports Stadiums



SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

The forests of Kashmir are among the Valley's greatest natural treasures. They enhance its breathtaking beauty, regulate the climate, protect water resources, prevent soil erosion, and provide habitat for countless endemic and endangered species. Forests are not merely collections of trees; they are living ecosystems that sustain biodiversity and human life by absorbing carbon dioxide, releasing oxygen, conserving water, and maintaining ecological balance. They are nature's lifeline, supporting every form of life that depends upon them.

Kashmir is blessed with magnificent forests dominated by majestic coniferous trees such as deodar, kail, fir, spruce, and pine. These forests shelter diverse wildlife, including the endangered Hangul, Himalayan black bear, leopard, musk deer, red fox, Himalayan monal, koklass pheasant, and numerous other birds, mammals, reptiles, and insects. Every tree, stream, and meadow forms part of a delicate ecological network that has evolved over thousands of years. Disturbing this balance can have consequences far beyond what is immediately visible.

In recent years, a worrying trend has emerged across several forested areas of Kashmir. Many meadows and forest clearings have gradually been converted into informal cricket grounds, especially during weekends and holidays. While I wholeheartedly support cricket and all other sports, I strongly believe that forests are not the appropriate places for such activities. Sports are essential for a healthy society, but they should be played in designated playgrounds and sports complexes rather than in ecologically sensitive habitats.

Sports play a vital role in promoting physical fitness, mental well-being, teamwork, discipline, and protecting our youth from drug abuse and other social evils. The Government has invested significantly in developing sports infrastructure, and these efforts deserve appreciation. However, encouraging sports should never come at the cost of environmental degradation. Instead of allowing forests to become recreational playgrounds, authorities should continue establishing and improving sports facilities in towns, villages, and educational institutions where such activities can be conducted safely and sustainably.

On 4 July, while visiting Haijjan Branwar on a local picnic, I witnessed a large number of people playing cricket inside a forest area. The surroundings were littered with plastic bottles, disposable cups, snack wrappers, and other waste. Wooden stumps had been hammered into the ground,

repeated trampling had damaged vegetation, and loud cheering echoed through the peaceful forest. What should have been a tranquil natural landscape had begun to resemble an open sports stadium. The sight raised serious concerns about the long-term impact of such activities on this fragile ecosystem.

The environmental damage caused by repeated sporting activities is often underestimated. Continuous foot traffic compacts the soil, reducing its ability to absorb rainwater and affecting the growth of grasses, herbs, and young plants. Delicate wildflowers are crushed before they can bloom, while seedlings fail to regenerate naturally. Over time, the vegetation cover becomes sparse, leaving the soil exposed to erosion during heavy rainfall and snowfall.

Wildlife suffers equally from such disturbances. Forest animals rely on peace and undisturbed habitats for feeding, breeding, and raising their young. Constant human presence, shouting, whistles, and loud music force animals and birds to abandon their natural habitats in search of quieter places where food and shelter may be limited. Ground-nesting birds are particularly vulnerable because their nests and eggs can easily be destroyed by people walking or running across meadows. Many animals alter their movement patterns to avoid human activity, increasing stress and reducing their chances of survival.

Another serious concern is littering. Plastic bottles, food packaging, disposable plates, and other non-biodegradable waste remain in forests for years. Such waste pollutes streams, contaminates soil, harms wildlife that accidentally consumes it, and destroys the pristine beauty that attracts tourists in the first place. Responsible tourism means leaving no trace behind except footprints, yet many visitors leave behind piles of garbage that become a burden for nature.

Many of Kashmir's meadows also serve as traditional grazing grounds for shepherds and tribal communities, including the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities, whose livelihoods have depended on these landscapes for generations. These communities move seasonally with their livestock and have historically maintained a close relationship with nature. Their rights, livelihoods, and traditional grazing routes should not be compromised by unregulated recreational activities. Sustainable forest management must respect both biodiversity and the people who have responsibly lived alongside these ecosystems for centuries.

Forests provide countless benefits to society that are often taken for granted. They prevent soil erosion, reduce the risk of flash floods and landslides, regulate the water cycle, recharge groundwater, improve air quality, absorb greenhouse gases, moderate local temperatures, and help combat climate change. Forests also provide medicinal plants, fuelwood, fodder, timber, and numerous non-timber forest products that support rural livelihoods. They sustain pollinators essential for agriculture and contribute significantly to tourism, one of Kashmir's most important economic sectors.

Healthy forests are therefore essential not only for wildlife but also for human prosperity and well-being.

Climate change has already made mountain ecosystems increasingly vulnerable. Rising temperatures, irregular snowfall, prolonged dry spells, and extreme weather events are placing additional pressure on Kashmir's forests. Under such circumstances, every effort should focus on protecting natural habitats rather than increasing human disturbance. Conservation today is an investment in the safety, health, and prosperity of future generations.

Therefore, I believe that organized cricket and similar recreational activities should not be promoted in ecologically sensitive forest areas. The Forest Department, local administration, educational institutions, environmental organizations, and civil society should work together to protect these fragile ecosystems. Sensitive locations such as Haijjan, Palmidan, Sotchalpathri, and other forest meadows deserve careful monitoring and conservation. Wherever environmental laws are violated, appropriate legal action should be taken to discourage activities that threaten biodiversity.

Public awareness is equally important. Schools, colleges, community organizations, and the media should educate people about responsible behaviour in forests. Visitors should carry reusable water bottles, avoid single-use plastics, dispose of waste responsibly, respect wildlife, and stay on designated paths. Recreational activities should be planned in locations specifically developed for sports rather than inside protected natural habitats.

Social media influencers and content creators also have an important responsibility. Their photographs and videos often inspire thousands of people to visit the same places. Instead of promoting cricket matches and other sporting activities inside forests, they should encourage environmental awareness, responsible tourism, tree plantation, cleanliness drives, and respect for nature. Positive influence can become a powerful tool for conservation.

We have a moral responsibility to preserve our forests for future generations. Once damaged, these ecosystems take decades, and sometimes even centuries, to recover. No cricket match, picnic, or recreational activity is more valuable than the survival of Kashmir's unique natural heritage. Sports can be played almost anywhere, but ancient forests cannot simply be recreated once they are destroyed.

Let us enjoy nature without destroying it. Let us ensure that our forests remain peaceful homes for wildlife rather than becoming sports stadiums. Protecting forests today means protecting clean air, clean water, biodiversity, climate stability, and the future of Kashmir itself.

Save Forests. Save Biodiversity. Save Kashmir's Natural Heritage.

The author from Bhatti Mohallah, Doodhpathri. sahilmanzoor9419@gmail.com

# J&K Private University Bill 2026 to Shape New Future in Higher Education



■ DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

The introduction of the Private University Bill in Jammu and Kashmir in 2026 has emerged as one of the most significant developments in the region's educational and socio-economic landscape, representing a decisive shift toward a more self-reliant, modern, and opportunity-driven future at a time when the demand for quality higher education has been rising faster than the capacity of existing public institutions. For decades, Jammu and Kashmir has relied primarily on a network of public universities that, despite their historical contributions and academic achievements, have struggled to keep pace with the growing aspirations of the region's youth, who increasingly seek specialized programs, advanced research opportunities, and globally competitive learning environments.

Private universities and Public universities represent two distinct models of higher education in India, each shaped by different governance structures, funding mechanisms, academic cultures, and long-term objectives, and understanding their differences is essential for evaluating how they contribute to the country's educational landscape. Central universities are established by an Act of Parliament and funded directly by the Government of India, which ensures stable financial support, standardized regulations, and a mandate to promote national integration, academic excellence, and inclusive access. They typically offer subsidized fees, strong research ecosystems, and diverse faculty drawn from across the country, making them attractive to students seeking high-quality education at an affordable cost. Their curricula often undergo rigorous academic scrutiny, and their degrees carry significant national and international recognition.

However, public universities sometimes face bureaucratic delays, overcrowding, limited seats, and slower adaptation to emerging disciplines due to administrative constraints. In contrast, private universities operate under state legislation and are funded primarily through tuition fees, private investment, and institutional revenue, giving them greater flexibility in designing courses, updating curricula, and introducing industry-aligned programs in fields like data science, biotechnology, business analytics, and design. Their autonomy allows quicker adoption of new technologies, modern infrastructure, and collaborations with industry partners, which can enhance employability and innovation. Yet, this flexibility comes with challenges: high fees often restrict access for economically weaker students, and the quality of private universities varies widely, with some institutions excelling in research and teaching while others struggle with inadequate faculty, limited research output, or profit-driven practices. Central universities generally emphasize academic depth, public service values, and long-term research, whereas private universities tend to focus on professional skills, market relevance, and rapid expansion. Another key difference lies in accountability; central universities are subject to national oversight bodies and parliamentary review, while private universities rely on state regulatory frameworks that may differ in strictness and enforcement. Despite these contrasts, both types of institutions play complementary roles in India's higher-education ecosystem: central universities uphold academic standards and equity, while private universities expand capacity, diversify programs, and reduce pressure on public institutions. The challenge lies in ensuring that private universities maintain quality and affordability while central universities continue to innovate and modernize. Together, they form a dual system that, if balanced effectively, can meet the diverse aspirations of India's growing student population and strengthen the nation's educational future.



Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences & Technology of Jammu (J&K)

There is a large-scale educational migration, with thousands of students leaving the region each year to pursue degrees in engineering, medicine, management, law, and emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and data science in other parts of India or abroad. This outward movement not only places a heavy financial burden on families but also contributes to a long-term brain drain, as many students do not return after completing their studies, thereby depriving the region of skilled professionals who could otherwise contribute to its development. Against this backdrop, the Private University Bill seeks to create a more diversified and dynamic higher-education ecosystem by allowing credible private organizations, educational trusts, and reputed academic groups to establish universities within Jammu and Kashmir under a regulated framework designed to ensure quality, transparency, and accountability.

Supporters of the bill argue that it represents a forward-looking step that aligns with broader national goals of expanding educational access, fostering innovation, and promoting regional development through knowledge-based growth. They believe that private universities, if properly regulated, can introduce modern infrastructure, industry-linked curricula, advanced laboratories, and interdisciplinary programs that respond to the evolving needs of the global economy. Such institutions often have the flexibility to design new courses, collaborate with international universities, and attract faculty with diverse academic and professional backgrounds, thereby enriching the overall learning environment. In a region like Jammu and Kashmir, which possesses unique geographical, ecological, and cultural characteristics, private universities could also play a transformative role in promoting research in areas such as mountain ecology, climate resilience, horticulture, tourism management, renewable energy, and sustainable development. These fields hold immense potential for local innovation and economic growth, and the presence of specialized research centers could position the region as a hub for scientific inquiry and applied knowledge.

Furthermore, the establishment of private universities is expected to generate significant employment opportunities, both directly through academic and administrative positions and indirectly through the growth of local businesses that support university ecosystems, including housing, transportation, food services, and technology infrastructure. This multiplier effect could contribute to broader economic revitalization, particularly in districts that have historically lacked large-scale educational or industrial institutions. However, the bill has also sparked debate and raised concerns among various stakeholders who caution that the entry of private players into the higher-education sector must be managed with strict oversight to prevent commercialization, exploitation, or dilution of academic standards.

Critics argue that private universities, if not properly regulated, may prioritize profit over educational quality, leading to high fees that could exclude students from economically weaker backgrounds.

**The condition of higher education in Kashmir reflects a complex blend of progress, potential, and persistent challenges, shaped by decades of socio-political shifts, infrastructural limitations, and the aspirations of a young population seeking meaningful academic and professional opportunities. Kashmir's higher-education system is anchored by public universities such as the University of Kashmir, the Central University of Kashmir, and various degree colleges spread across districts, which have played a crucial role in expanding access to education, especially for students from rural and economically weaker backgrounds. However, despite these achievements, the sector continues to face structural constraints that limit its ability to meet the growing demand for quality, diversity, and modern academic exposure**

They emphasize the need for transparent fee structures, scholarship programs, and inclusive admission policies to ensure that the benefits of privatization do not bypass the very communities the bill aims to empower. Additionally, concerns have been raised about the potential emergence of substandard institutions that lack adequate infrastructure, qualified faculty, or research capacity, a problem that has been observed in some parts of India where rapid privatization occurred without sufficient regulatory safeguards. To address these issues, the bill includes provisions for mandatory accreditation, periodic audits, and strict compliance with academic and infrastructural norms, but the effectiveness of these measures will depend on consistent enforcement and the willingness of authorities to hold institutions accountable.

Another dimension of the debate revolves around the cultural and social

implications of privatizing higher education in a region with a long tradition of public-sector leadership in academia. Some observers worry that the rapid expansion of private universities could shift the educational culture toward market-driven priorities, potentially undermining values of equity, public service, and community-oriented learning that have historically shaped the region's academic identity. Balancing modernization with cultural continuity will therefore be essential to ensure that the new institutions contribute positively to the region's social fabric. Despite these concerns, the Private University Bill also opens the door to transformative possibilities that could reshape Jammu and Kashmir's long-term development trajectory.

The condition of higher education in Kashmir reflects a complex blend of progress, potential, and persistent challenges, shaped by decades of socio-political shifts, infrastructural limitations, and the aspirations of a young population seeking meaningful academic and professional opportunities. Kashmir's higher-education system is anchored by public universities such as the University of Kashmir, the Central University of Kashmir, and various degree colleges spread across districts, which have played a crucial role in expanding access to education, especially for students from rural and economically weaker backgrounds. However, despite these achievements, the sector continues to face structural constraints that limit its ability to meet the growing demand for quality, diversity, and modern academic exposure. Overcrowded classrooms, outdated curricula in several disciplines, faculty shortages, and limited research facilities remain significant hurdles, often preventing institutions from offering the kind of specialized and industry-aligned programs that students increasingly seek in fields like technology, management, environmental sciences, and healthcare.

As a result, a large number of Kashmiri students migrate to other states each year, not only for professional courses such as engineering and medicine but also for undergraduate programs that promise better infrastructure, placement opportunities, and exposure to national academic networks. This outward migration, while expanding individual opportunities, contributes to a long-term brain drain, as many students do not return after completing their studies, thereby weakening the region's talent pool. Another challenge lies in the uneven distribution of educational resources, with urban centers like Srinagar having better access to colleges and facilities compared to remote districts where students often struggle with limited connectivity, fewer course options, and inadequate infrastructure. Research output from Kashmiri institutions, though improving, remains modest due to limited funding, lack of advanced laboratories, and insufficient collaboration with national and international universities. At the same time, the region's unique geography and cultural richness offer immense potential for research in areas such as mountain ecology, climate change, horticulture, tourism, and conflict studies, fields that could position Kashmir as a hub for specialized

academic inquiry if properly supported.

Recent years have seen efforts to modernize the sector through digital initiatives, new colleges, and proposals for private universities, but the pace of reform remains slower than the needs of the student population. Despite these challenges, the resilience and academic enthusiasm of Kashmiri youth stand out as a powerful force for change, reflected in rising enrollment rates, competitive exam achievements, and growing interest in entrepreneurship and innovation. The future of higher education in Kashmir depends on sustained investment, curriculum modernization, faculty development, and stronger research ecosystems that can transform institutions into centers of excellence. With thoughtful planning, equitable resource distribution, and a commitment to quality, Kashmir has the potential to build a higher-education system that not only meets local aspirations but also contributes meaningfully to the broader academic and economic landscape of the country.

By expanding access to quality education within the region, the bill has the potential to reduce outward migration, retain local talent, and create a more skilled workforce capable of contributing to sectors such as technology, healthcare, agriculture, tourism, and environmental management. The presence of multiple universities—public and private—could foster healthy academic competition, encouraging institutions to improve their standards, update curricula, and adopt innovative teaching methods. Public-private partnerships could further enhance the region's academic ecosystem by enabling collaborative research projects, faculty exchanges, joint degree programs, and shared use of specialized facilities. Such collaborations could help bridge gaps between theory and practice, ensuring that students receive education that is both academically rigorous and professionally relevant. Moreover, the bill aligns with broader national and global trends that emphasize the importance of knowledge economies, where education, research, and innovation serve as key drivers of growth. In an increasingly interconnected world, regions that invest in higher education are better positioned to attract investment, foster entrepreneurship, and participate in global networks of research and development. Jammu and Kashmir, with its strategic location, natural resources, and youthful population, stands to benefit significantly from such a shift if the bill is implemented thoughtfully and responsibly.

The vision of a self-reliant future embedded in the Private University Bill is not merely about building new campuses or increasing the number of degrees awarded; it is about creating an environment where education becomes a catalyst for empowerment, stability, and progress. It is about ensuring that young people have the opportunity to pursue their dreams without leaving their home region, that families can access quality education without financial hardship, and that the region can cultivate a generation of thinkers, innovators, and leaders who contribute to its long-term prosperity. Achieving this vision will require sustained commitment from policymakers, educators, communities, and private stakeholders alike. Regulatory bodies must remain vigilant, institutions must uphold the highest standards of academic integrity, and society must remain engaged in shaping the direction of educational reform. If these conditions are met, the Private University Bill of 2026 could become a cornerstone of transformation, marking the beginning of a new chapter in Jammu and Kashmir's journey toward self-reliance and educational excellence. It represents both an opportunity and a responsibility—a chance to build a future where knowledge becomes the foundation of growth, resilience, and hope for generations to come.

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A new study found that most people who experienced major cardiovascular events had modifiable risk factors.

These findings contradict the claim that heart disease often strikes without warning.

Over 99% of people had at least one risk factor at a suboptimal level before their illness.

Experts say the research demonstrates the value of keeping risk factors well within healthy ranges.

# Cardiovascular Disease: At Least One Risk Factor Present in 99% of Cases

A large study from researchers in Korea and the United States has found that virtually everyone who experiences a heart attack, stroke, or other major cardiovascular event had at least one key risk factor beforehand, even if it wasn't bad enough to trigger a formal medical diagnosis.

The findings, published on September 29 in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, challenge claims that heart disease often strikes without warning in people with no traditional risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high blood sugar, or smoking history.

Instead, this research shows that more than 99% of people with cardiovascular disease had at least one of these risk factors at suboptimal levels before their illness.

Per the authors, this highlights the importance of keeping these values well within a healthy range.

## Examining cardiovascular disease risk factors

To uncover just how often cardiovascular disease occurs without warning signs, the researchers analyzed data from two large, long-running health studies that track participants over time.

One was the Korean National Health Insurance Service (KNHIS) database, a nationwide collection of health records that includes nearly every adult in South Korea. This study followed 9,341,100 adults aged 20 and older who took part in a routine government health screening in 2009.

The screenings measured blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar, and asked people about their smoking history.

The researchers also reviewed prescription records for medications to lower blood pressure, cholesterol, or blood sugar.

Participants were tracked for 13.3 years to see who developed cardiovascular disease, using hospital records and death registries to confirm diagnoses.

The other dataset came from the Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis (MESA), a U.S. study of 6,803 adults aged 45 to 84 with no known heart disease at the start. MESA participants underwent repeated in-person exams to measure the same traditional risk factors — blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar — and reported whether they smoked.

The team tracked them for 17.7 years, recording heart attacks, strokes, heart



failure, and related deaths through medical record reviews by physician experts.

It was noted that the researchers didn't just look for whether someone had been diagnosed with hypertension, diabetes, or high cholesterol. They also included "nonoptimal" levels — readings above the ideal range but below the threshold for a formal diagnosis.

For example, systolic blood pressure of 120–139 mm Hg was counted as non-optimal even if it wasn't high enough to be labeled hypertension.

The definition of "nonoptimal" stems from the "ideal cardiovascular health" framework established by the American Heart Association (AHA), which sets stricter targets than most clinical guidelines.

The team examined five types of events separately: coronary heart disease (including fatal and non-fatal heart attacks), heart failure, stroke, myocardial infarction (a specific type of heart attack), and "total cardiovascular disease," meaning any of those conditions.

The analysis determined the percentage of people who had at least one nonoptimal risk factor before their event and the percentage with two or more such risk factors.

Most people had at least one risk factor

The researchers found that in both countries, and across all types of cardiovascular events, the vast majority — 99% of people — had at least one nonoptimal risk factor before getting sick.

In Korea's KNHIS data, 99.7% of people who developed coronary heart disease had at least one nonoptimal traditional risk factor. The numbers were similar for other conditions: 99.8% for myocardial infarction, 99.4% for heart failure, and 99.3% for stroke. The pattern was nearly identical in the U.S. MESA study, with 99.5% to 99.7% of participants having at least one nonoptimal risk factor before their illness.

When the researchers looked at specific risk factors, elevated blood pressure was the most common. In Korea, 95.6% to 96.1% of people with cardiovascular disease had blood pressure above the ideal range before their event. In the U.S., 93.0% to 96.8% did. Elevated cholesterol was next most common, affecting 75.8% to 84.7% in Korea and 70.7% to 77.8% in the U.S.

Elevated blood sugar — even if not high enough to qualify as diabetes — was found

in 72.8% to 77.7% of Korean participants and 53.8% to 60.3% of Americans.

Past or current smoking was also frequent, ranging from 47.9% to 68.1% in Korea and 54.1% to 63.3% in the U.S.

Having multiple risk factors was the norm. In both studies, more than 93% of participants had two or more nonoptimal risk factors before their event. For example, in the KNHIS cohort, only 0.3% of people with coronary heart disease had none of the four risk factors, while 42.8% had all four: elevated blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, elevated blood sugar, and a history of smoking.

Even when researchers used stricter cutoffs, 90% to 95% of participants still had at least one risk factor. And among those without any clinically high readings, most still had one or more risk factors above the optimal range.

The near-universal presence of risk factors also held true across sexes and ages.

These results suggest that heart disease, strokes, and heart failure rarely strike people who are truly in the healthiest ranges for blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, and smoking status, and that keeping these numbers well within opti-

mal limits may be key.

Healthy habits protect against heart disease

Yanting Wang, MD, director of both the Women's Heart Program and the Cardio-Obstetrics Program at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, said that lifestyle changes don't have to be complicated. Wang wasn't involved in the study.

"The most effective steps are often simple: eat a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats; avoid smoking; and limit alcohol intake," she told Healthline.

Wang additionally suggested that staying active — even as little as 30 minutes a day — can help keep blood pressure, cholesterol, and weight in check.

She further noted the value of stress management, explaining that mindfulness, deep breathing, and getting a good night's sleep can all contribute to a healthy heart.

"Taken together, these small changes can protect your heart and boost overall well-being," said Wang.

She also stressed the importance of working with your personal physician to keep an eye on your risk factors. "Remember to schedule regular checkups with your doctor to monitor blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, and other important indicators of heart health," she said. If any abnormalities do show up, Bradley Serwer, MD, an interventional cardiologist and chief medical officer at VitalSolution, said it's necessary to treat them and then continue to keep your blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes under control. Serwer wasn't involved in the new study.

"Work closely with your primary care providers to ensure you are reaching your goals," Serwer told Healthline, noting that lifestyle modifications like those described by Wang are first-line treatments.

"If these lifestyle modifications don't adequately treat the risk factors, medication may be required," he said.

Serwer additionally noted that treatment goals are based on several factors and should be developed with the help of a trained medical professional. "Lifestyle changes are not meant to be undertaken for a few weeks and then overlooked," he added. "Making enduring and manageable changes to ensure lifelong health is the key."

The Healthline

## Breakthrough Blood Test Detects Head and Neck Cancer up to 10 Years Before Symptoms

■ Ryan Jaslow  
■ Mass General Brigham

**LONDON:** Mass General Brigham's HPV-DeepSeek test enables much earlier cancer detection through a blood sample, creating a new opportunity for screening HPV-related head and neck cancers.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is responsible for about 70% of head and neck cancers in the United States, making it the most common type of cancer linked to the virus. Rates of these cancers continue to rise each year. Unlike HPV-related cervical cancers, which have established screening options, there is currently no test to detect HPV-associated head and neck cancers.

As a result, most cases are diagnosed only after tumors have already expanded to billions of cells, causing symptoms and often spreading to nearby lymph nodes. Developing screening tools that can identify these cancers much earlier would allow patients to begin treatment sooner and improve outcomes.

In a newly funded federal study published in the *Journal of the Na-*



tional Cancer Institute, researchers at Mass General Brigham demonstrated that their liquid biopsy test, called HPV-DeepSeek, can detect HPV-related head and neck cancers as early as 10 years before symptoms develop. According to the study's authors, diagnosing these cancers earlier could increase treatment success rates and reduce the need for aggressive therapies.

"Our study shows for the first

time that we can accurately detect HPV-associated cancers in asymptomatic individuals many years before they are ever diagnosed with cancer," said lead study author Daniel L. Faden, MD, FACS, a head and neck surgical oncologist and principal investigator in the Mike Toth Head and Neck Cancer Research Center at Mass Eye and Ear, a member of the Mass General Brigham healthcare system.

"By the time patients enter our clinics with symptoms from the cancer, they require treatments that cause significant, life-long side effects. We hope tools like HPV-DeepSeek will allow us to catch these cancers at their very earliest stages, which ultimately can improve patient outcomes and quality of life."

HPV-DeepSeek relies on whole-genome sequencing to identify tiny fragments of HPV DNA that separate from tumors and circulate in the blood. Earlier studies by the same research group demonstrated that the test could reach 99% specificity and 99% sensitivity in diagnosing cancer at a patient's initial clinic visit, performing better than existing diagnostic approaches.

To determine whether HPV-DeepSeek could detect HPV-associated head and neck cancer long before diagnosis, researchers tested 56 samples from the Mass General Brigham Biobank: 28 from individuals who went on to develop HPV-associated head and neck cancer years later, and 28 from healthy controls.

Sci Tech Daily

## 117-Year-Old Woman's Diet Could Help Us All Live Longer

■ Rachel Woods

When María Branyas Morera died in 2024 at the age of 117, she left more than memories. She left science a gift: samples of her microbiome.

Researchers discovered her gut was as diverse as someone decades younger: rich in beneficial bacteria linked to resilience and longevity. Her daily yogurt habit and Mediterranean diet may have helped.

While we can't all inherit "lucky genes", nurturing our microbiome may be one way to support lifelong health.

In a recent paper in *Cell Reports Medicine*, researchers presented what may be the most detailed scientific investigation of a supercentenarian (a person aged 110 or older). Before her death, Branyas agreed to participate in research aimed at uncovering how she lived such a long and healthy life. When scientists compared her samples with those of people who had not reached such exceptional ages, the genetic results were unsurprising: Branyas carried protective variants that guard against common diseases.

But they also looked at something over which we have more control — the gut microbiome. This microbiome is the vast community of bacteria, fungi, and other microorganisms that live in the intestines. They

help digest food, produce vitamins, influence our immune system, and even communicate with the brain. While our genes play only a small role in shaping our microbiome, diet and lifestyle are far more important. Normally, as people age, gut microbiomes lose diversity — the variety of microbial species — and beneficial microbes such as *Bifidobacterium* decline. This reduction in diversity has been linked to frailty.

Branyas's gut told a different story. Her microbiome was as diverse as that of a much younger adult and was especially rich in the bacterial family *Bifidobacteriaceae*, including the genus *Bifidobacterium*. In most older people, these bacteria decline, but Branyas's levels matched previous reports of elevated *Bifidobacterium* in other centenarians and supercentenarians. The researchers concluded that this unusually youthful microbiome may have supported her gut and immune health, contributing to her extraordinary longevity.

*Bifidobacteria* are among the first microbes to colonise an infant's gut and are generally considered beneficial throughout life. Studies link them to supporting immune function, protecting against gastrointestinal disorders, and helping regulate cholesterol.

The Conversation

# NIA raids 20 places in 9 States in online terror radicalisation case

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**NEW DELHI, JUL 8:** The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday carried out searches at 20 places across nine states in connection with an online terror radicalisation case aimed at establishing an Islamic state in India through violent 'jihad' against the democratically elected government by promoting the ideology of ISIS and AQIS terrorist organisations.

Of the 20 places, the agency carried out searches at five locations in Uttar Pradesh, four in Andhra Pradesh, three in Maharashtra, two in Delhi, and one each in Bihar, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Gujarat, Telengana and West Bengal as part of the ongoing investigation in the case (RC-01/2026/NIA/VSKP).

NIA said the searches led to the seizure of several digital devices, which will be forensically examined for further clues into the radicalisation conspiracy.

NIA's Visakhapatnam branch registered the FIR on May 13 this year after taking over the case from Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh) Police. Eleven accused and one juvenile have so far been arrested in the case.

The Vijaywada Police had originally registered the case in March following a search at the residence of key accused Rehmatullah Sharif Mohammad that resulted in the recovery of incriminating materials related to the banned terrorist organisations AQIS (Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent) and ISIS (Islamic State).

NIA said, "The locations searched today were chosen on the basis of detailed technical analysis of the digital devices seized earlier, along with connectivity analysis of the arrested accused and other investigation findings."

NIA, which is working to identify others involved in the plot to destabilise the country and establish a 'Caliphate', has found that the arrested accused and their aides were engaged in indoctrination of vulnerable youth across the country through violent jihadi content and misinformation.

As per the anti-terror agency, the accused were also in online contact with their foreign handlers to propagate the "jihadi ideology" and promote the anti-India conspiracy. (Agencies)

## Public Notice

My Son's name has been wrongly written as MOHAMMAD ZEYAN SOFI S/O ZAHOOR AHMAD SOFI bearing Registration No B-2023 : 1-05261000410 in his Date of Birth certificate while his correct name is MOHAMMAD ZAIN SOFI S/O ZAHOOR AHMAD SOFI which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he / she may file his/her objection in the office of SDH/BMO office kreeri within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

**Name...ZAHOOR AHMAD SOFI  
F/O...MOHAMMAD ZAIN SOFI  
R/O... BANDIPAYEEN KALANTRA**

## Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application of IRSHAD AHMAD TALI S/O MOHAMMAD SULTAN TALI R/O DANDMOOH Tehsil KREERI for the issuance of OBC ( Other Backward classes in his/her their favor

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of OBC in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of DANDMOOH of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the TALI community having annual income 4,40,000/- the details of family of the applicant are as follows:

- 1..MOHAMMAD SULTAN TALI Father 65 years FARMER
- 2.ATIQA BEGUM Mother 60 years H/W
- 3... RAHEENA BANO sister 24 years student
- 4...IRSHAD AHMAD TALI self 20 years student

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

**Naib Tehsild Kreeri**

## Public Notice

Notice is hereby given that the following educational documents issued by Islamic University of Science and Technology in the name of AATIYA HAFIZ, Registration No. IU0118010872, have been lost/misplaced and are not traceable despite diligent search:

**Transcript – Serial No. 1014890  
Provisional Certificate – Serial No. 72719**

The undersigned intends to apply to the University for issuance of duplicate copies of the above-mentioned documents. Any person having any claim, objection, or information regarding these documents is requested to contact the undersigned within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, the University may proceed with the issuance of duplicate documents.

If the original documents are found at any time in the future, they shall be surrendered to the University immediately.

**Name: AATIYA HAFIZ  
Registration No.: IU0118010872  
Date: 01/07/2026**

## Government of Jammu and Kashmir Office of the Child Development Project Officer Poshan Project Trial

cdpoicdstral@gmail.com | 01933-451975

### NOTICE

It is hereby notified that the advertisement Notice No: CDPO/POSHAN/TRAL/Estt/Adv/2026/235-49 dated: - 19.06.2026 for engagement to the posts of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and advertisement no: -CDPO/POSHAN/TRAL/Estt/Adv/2026/250-61 dated: -19.06.2026 for the posts of the Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs), the last date for submission of application forms is hereby extended up to 15/07/2026.

All the eligible candidates who have not applied so far are once again requested to submit their application forms along with requisite documents in the office of the undersigned within the extended timeline during office hours.

The other terms and conditions contained in the original advertisement notice shall remain unchanged.

**No: CDPO/Poshan/Estt/T/2026-27/ 298-319 | Dated: 04 .07.2026**

**Sd/- Child Development Project Officer  
Poshan Project Trial**

**DIPK: 3020/26 | Dated: 08-07-2026**

## Government of Jammu & Kashmir Office of the Executive Engineer Mechanical & Hospitals Division Baramulla

e-mail-id: xenmhd.bla@jk.gov.in

### Notice Inviting e-Tender

**NIT No: M&HDB/TS/2026-27/23/888-93 | Date: 06-07-2026**

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir UT, Executive Engineer, Mechanical & Hospitals Division Baramulla, invites online e-bids in Two Cover system (Technical and financial) on Percentage basis from OEM or Registered firms/agencies/contractors having experience for execution of below mentioned work:

Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	T.D Cost (In Rs.)	E/M (In Rs.)	Time
Comprehensive Maintenance of PSA Technology based Oxygen Generation Plant (300 LPM Oxywise make) including all the Electrical Equipment and Operation of PSA Technology based Oxygen Generation Plant by way of engagement of 03 (three) semi-skilled Operators (01 in each shift) for round the clock operation of the OGP at Sub-District Hospital Charar-i-Sharief for a period of One year.	13.074	1000/-	26148/-	12 months

### Note:

- Project Authority: - Director Health Services Kashmir Srinagar.
- AAA: -Administrative Approval accorded by Director Health Services Kashmir Srinagar vide No. 18/DHSC of 2026 Dated: - 30-06-2026.
- Technical Sanction: - Technical Sanction Accorded by Executive Engineer Mechanical & Hospital Division vide No. 11 of 07/2026 Dated: - 06-07-2026
- Executing Agency: - Executive Engineer, Mechanical & Hospitals Division Baramulla.
- Contract shall be valid for a period of one year

1.	Date of issue of Tender Notice	06-07-2026
2.	Period of downloading of the bidding document	From 07-07-2026 to 15-07-2026
3.	Bid Submission Start Date	From 07-07-2026 (10:00 HRS)
4.	Bid Submission End Date	15-07-2026 (18:55 HRS)
5.	Date of Opening of Cover 1st	16-07-2026 (13:00 HRS)

01. Instructions to Bidders: - The Bids shall be deposited in electronic format with digital Signature on the official website www.jktenders.gov.in in two covers viz., (Technical Bid) & (Financial Bid).

A. Cover-I shall contain:

01.	Tender Fee	Tender Fee equivalent to Rs. 1000.00 (Rupees One thousand Only) has to be deposited in the Departmental Common Pool Account maintained in Jammu & Kashmir Bank, Branch Residency Road Srinagar, under Account No: 0005010200000355 (IFSC Code: JAKA0CHINAR). Proof of the said Electronic / Digital Transfer has to be uploaded in Cover-I documents.
02.	EMD	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) equivalent to 02% of value of the advertised cost has to be deposited in the Departmental Common Pool Account maintained in Jammu & Kashmir Bank, Branch Residency Road Srinagar, under Account No: 0005010200000355 (IFSC Code: JAKA0CHINAR). Proof of the said Electronic / Digital Transfer has to be uploaded in Cover-I documents.
03.	Terms & Conditions	Scanned copy of the Annexure- "A", "B" & "C" duly accepted by the bidder.
04.	Tax Clearance	Latest Tax Clearance Certificate of Sales Tax Department quoting GST Number
05.	GST	Scanned copies of PAN Card / GST Registration / Latest GST clearance certificate or acknowledgement of latest returns.
06.	Non - Blacklisting Declaration	Undertaking as per Annexure "D" that the bidder has not been blacklisted or debarred by any department
07.	Financial Turnover	Average Annual financial turnover of the bidder during the last three (03) years, ending March, 2026 shall not be less than 200% of the estimated / advertised cost of the instant work duly certified by a registered Chartered Accountant with proper UDIN number for the issued certificate.
08.	Eligibility / Work Experience certificate	OEM or experienced firms having following documentary proof: a. Profile the client lists in case OEM (Oxywise make) is participating in the tendering process. or b. Firms having Technical / Spare Part Support Certificate from OEM of Oxywise make plants and having at least 01-year experience during last five years in CMC and Operation of Oxygen Plants of more than 300 LPM capacity installed in Government / Semi-Government Institutions / Organizations. The bidder shall upload the necessary Technical / Spare Part Support Certificate from OEM of Oxywise. or c. Firms having experience in CMC and Operation of Oxywise make Oxygen Plants of more than 300 LPM capacity installed in Govt. / Semi govt. Institutions / Organizations at least for a period of one (01) year during last five (05) years. The bidder shall upload experience certificate / Satisfactory Performance Certificate of above-mentioned work issued by competent authority not below the rank of Executive Engineer / DGM of Unit / equivalent.
09.	Contractor Registration	Scanned copy of valid Contractor Registration on JKPWDOMS of PWD J&K.

No EMD exemption shall be given to bidders.

B. Cover-II shall contain:

01. Price bid, as per BOQ uploaded by this department. In no case, financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
02. The bids for the work shall remain valid for 180 days and the contract shall be valid for one complete year, starting from the date of allotment of the said contract.
03. The complete bidding process will be online.
04. The Financial bid of only qualifying bidders shall be opened online in the Office of the Executive Engineer M&HD Baramulla after evaluation of technical bid and decision thereof.
05. Bidder shall be penalized as per tender conditions if they withdraw their bid during the period of bid validity or make any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
06. 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. The BOQ downloaded should be used for filling the rate below %age inclusive of all taxes and it should be saved with the same name as it contains.
07. The cost of tender documents is non-refundable and the tender shall in no case be accepted if submitted by any firm other than the purchaser.
08. Any tender found to have been submitted by the firm by furnishing false information to the department shall be cancelled and the firm shall be penalized as and when it comes to the notice of the Department even during the currency of the contract. The department reserves the right to debar /blacklist such firm(s).
09. Conditional tenders shall not be entertained.
10. The tenders should be addressed to the Executive Engineer M&HD Baramulla.

Only the documents uploaded online by the bidder at the time of bid submission shall be considered for evaluation. In case of any shortfall or deficiency, clarification shall be sought/accepted only with respect to the documents submitted online

**NOTE:** All bidders are required to submit a fresh tender fee for this e-NIT. Receipts of previously submitted tender will not be accepted for this e-NIT.

**No: M&HDB/TS/e-tender-23/888-93 | Dated: 06-07-2026**

**Sd/- Executive Engineer Mechanical & Hospitals Division Baramulla**

**DIPK: 3009/26 | Dated: 08-07-2026**



**JAMMU & KASHMIR STATE HAJ COMMITTEE**



Government of India  
Ministry of Minority Affairs  
Haj Committee of India

## HAJ 2027 (1448 H)

### IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

- PASSPORT VALIDITY**  
• Passport must be valid till **31 December 2027**.  
• Passport must be valid on the date of application.
- COVER / GROUP**  
• A group can have maximum **5 members**.  
• Minimum age – **18 years** on the date of application.
- COVER HEAD**  
• Cover Head must be a **male member**.  
• Minimum age – **18 years** on the date of application.
- MOBILE NUMBER & WHATSAPP**  
• Cover Head must use his own mobile number.  
• WhatsApp must be active on the same number.
- FORM SUBMISSION**  
• Fill the form yourself.  
• Do not let anyone else fill the form using your mobile number.  
• Do not share your OTP with anyone.
- NOMINEE**  
• Nominee: Son / Daughter / Parents / Spouse (Legal heir preferred)  
• Add only one nominee who will perform Hajj in your place.
- BANK DETAILS (ACCOUNT HOLDER MUST BE COVER HEAD)**  
• Account must be in the name of the Cover Head.  
• Provide correct & active bank account details.  
• Account must be active.

**ANNOUNCEMENT FOR HAJ – 2027 (1448 H)**

- The Haj Committee of India invites applications from eligible intending pilgrims for Haj – 2027 through the online Haj Application Form available at <https://www.hajcommittee.gov.in> or HAJ SUVIDHA mobile app.
- The application window shall remain open from **22.06.2026 to 20.07.2026** (up to 11:59 PM). After Qurbah (Digital Random Selection) process to be conducted in the last week of July, each provisionally selected pilgrim shall be required to deposit an advance amount of **₹1,52,300/-** on or before **10.08.2026**. No relaxation or extension in these timelines shall be feasible.
- Applicants must carefully read the Guidelines and Undertakings to ensure their eligibility and upload scanned copies (not photographs) of the following:
  - Front and back pages of machine-readable Indian Passport (1200 × 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 × 640 px, JPG/JPEG, 5–20 KB);
  - Bank passbook or cancelled cheque (590 × 750 px, JPG/JPEG, 80–250 KB); and
  - Address proof (590 × 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=a&mlu=1>

SCAN QR CODE TO JOIN



Bait-ul-Hujaj (Haj House), Bemina, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, India - 190017

+91 194 249 5365  
<https://www.jkshc.org/>

Aapki Tayyari – Aapka Aaram – Hamari Zimmedari

Space Devoted by Headlines Today, Purely in Public Interest

# Commissioner SMC reviews Urban Greening Initiatives during Inspection of Hari Parbat Range

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, JULY 08:** Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Faz Lul Haseeb, today conducted a comprehensive inspection of the Hari Parbat Range under the Urban Forestry Division to review the progress of on-going afforestation, landscaping, and urban greening initiatives aimed at enhancing the city's environmental sustainability.

During the inspection, the Commissioner reviewed the survival rate of plantations, maintenance of green spaces,

progress of beautification works, and the overall condition of the area. He directed the concerned officers to adopt scientific plantation management practices, ensure timely irrigation, safeguard newly planted saplings, and optimize the use of available resources to maximize the survival and healthy growth of plantations.

Emphasizing the critical role of urban forests in improving air quality, mitigating the impacts of climate change, and strengthening the city's ecological resilience, the Commissioner instructed the field



functionaries to maintain the highest standards of cleanliness, landscape management, and environmental stewardship. He further directed that all ongoing works be executed in a time-bound manner while ensuring quality, sustainability, and long-term maintenance of the developed green assets.

The Commissioner also underscored the need to intensify plantation drives and further strengthen Srinagar's green infrastructure in line with the Corporation's commitment to developing a cleaner, healthier, greener, and

climate-resilient city.

During the visit, officers of the Urban Forestry Division briefed the Commissioner on the progress of various plantation programmes, maintenance schedules, survival monitoring mechanisms, and the operational challenges being encountered in the field.

Appreciating the dedication and sincere efforts of the field staff, the Commissioner urged them to continue working with renewed commitment towards transforming Srinagar into a model of sustainable urban forestry and environmental conservation.

## Vice Chancellor inaugurates RAMP Programme at KU North Campus

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BARAMULLA, JULY 08:** Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir, Prof. Neelofer Khan, today inaugurated a Management Development Programme (MDP) under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) initiative at the University of Kashmir, North Campus, Delina, Baramulla. The programme is one of the two MDPs launched in Baramulla under the RAMP initiative, with a total participation of 44 aspiring and exist-



ing entrepreneurs.

Addressing the inaugural session, Prof. Neelofer Khan appreciated the efforts of the Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) in organizing such developmental programmes and emphasized that promoting entrepreneurship is the need of the hour. She said entrepreneurship not only provides financial independence to youth but also fosters innovation and encourages them to explore ventures aligned with emerging opportunities and market needs.

Director, North Campus, Prof. Sheikh Ghulam Mohammad, also addressed the participants and encouraged them to think innovatively, embrace entrepreneurship and create their own legacy through enterprise and self-reliance.

Assistant Professor and Programme Coordinator, Dr. Ulfat, also spoke during the inaugural session, highlighting the importance of entrepreneurial skill development and capacity building among aspiring entrepreneurs.

District Nodal Officer (DNO), Baramulla, Imtiyaz Ahad Malla, presented a detailed overview of the RAMP scheme and JKEDI's role in promoting entrepreneurship and strengthening the MSME ecosystem. The inaugural session was followed by technical training sessions conducted by the designated resource persons.

The initiative aims to equip aspiring and existing entrepreneurs with the knowledge, skills and managerial competencies required to establish and successfully manage sustainable business enterprises.

## MSME organizes Capacity Building Programme on Branding and Marketing for PM Vishwakarma Artisans in Srinagar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, JULY 08:** The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India, Branch MSME-DFO Srinagar, organised a Capacity Building Programme on Branding and Marketing under the PM Vishwakarma Scheme at Kashmir Government Polytechnic College, Srinagar, exclusively for registered PM Vishwakarma artisans.

The programme was organised under the guidance of Amit Kumar Tamaria, IEDS, Joint Director, Ministry of MSME, Government of India, and coordinated by Mohammad Tariq Ishtiaq, IEDS, Assistant Director,

Branch MSME-DFO Srinagar.

The programme witnessed participation of more than 100 registered PM Vishwakarma artisans. The event was attended by the Principal, Kashmir Government Polytechnic College, Srinagar; Assistant Commissioner Panchayat (ACP), Srinagar; and officials from District Industries Centre (DIC), Srinagar.

The programme aimed to strengthen the branding, marketing, and entrepreneurial capabilities of registered PM Vishwakarma artisans through awareness on modern marketing practices, digital tools, financial literacy, and market linkages.

Sessions were conducted on



"Leveraging Artificial Intelligence for Product Branding and Market Promotion" by the SL PMU Team,

"Product Packaging, Branding and Marketing" by faculty members from Islamic University of

Science and Technology (IUST), and credit facilitation, banking awareness, QR code generation, and financial literacy by the Lead District Manager (LDM), Srinagar.

Addressing the participants, IEDS, Assistant Director, Branch MSME-DFO Srinagar, emphasised the importance of branding, quality improvement, and effective marketing strategies for enhancing the visibility and market value of artisan products.

The programme concluded with a commitment of the Branch MSME-DFO Srinagar, Ministry of MSME, Government of India, towards empowering PM Vishwakarma artisans through continuous capacity-building initiatives and improved market access.

## Abdul Rahim Rather reviews tourism development works at Yousmarg

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, JULY 08:** Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, today convened a high-level meeting to review the progress of ongoing development works, their execution and the new initiatives proposed under the Special Area Sustainable Community-Centred Initiative (SASCI) at Yousmarg, Haijan, Nilnag, Nagbal and adjoining areas.

The meeting also focused on resolving issues pertaining to the Forest Department that have been affecting the timely execution of various developmental projects in these tourist destinations.

During the meeting, Chief Executive Officer, Yousmarg Development Authority (YDA), Riyaz Ahmad, gave a detailed presentation on the developmental profile of the area, highlighting prominent trekking destinations, ongoing and proposed projects, beautification initiatives,

parking facilities, tourism infrastructure, winter tourism potential and various adventure tourism activities. He apprised that Rs 357 lakh have been sanctioned for 21 ongoing and new works in 2026-27, of which, more than 85 lakhs have already been released.

The Speaker emphasized the need to develop a network of trekking trails connecting Yousmarg-Drugtolen, Yousmarg-Burgah, Yousmarg-Nilnag, Yousmarg-Haijan, Yousmarg-Fresnag and Yousmarg-Sang-e-Safaid, stating that these scenic routes would provide tourists with a unique and memorable experience while promoting eco-tourism in the region.

Emphasising the importance of coordinated efforts, the Speaker called for greater interdepartmental coordination and effective liaison among all stakeholder departments to ensure the timely completion of projects. He directed the concerned officers to resolve all bottlenecks,

particularly those related to forest clearances and other procedural issues, at the earliest so that developmental works are not delayed and inconvenience to tourists and the local population is avoided.

The Speaker further instructed the executing agencies to complete all projects within the stipulated timeframe without compromising the quality of work. He reiterated that creation of durable and high-quality infrastructure should remain the foremost priority.

Highlighting the immense potential of Yousmarg as a year-round tourist destination, the Speaker stressed the need to explore and promote winter tourism activities in the area.

He observed that the development of winter sports and adventure tourism would not only attract more visitors but also create sustainable livelihood opportunities for the local youth and contribute significantly to the regional economy.

## Hasnain Masoodi chairs Privileges Committee meeting

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, JULY 08:** The Committee on Privileges of the J&K Legislative Assembly, chaired by Justice (Retd.) Hasnain Masoodi, on Wednesday examined two alleged breach of privilege cases and directed both the officers concerned to submit the supplementary written replies.

The Committee considered a notice submitted by MLA Ali Mohammad Dar against the Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Chadoora, Budgam and another notice submitted by MLA Mian Mehar Ali against then Assistant Commissioner Development, Ganderbal. Both the officers were summoned and heard separately by the Committee.

While examining the case related to then Assistant Commissioner Ganderbal, the officer submitted that the issue had arisen in connection with the preparation and submission of the list of works under the MGNREGA scheme, wherein certain works recommended by the Member could not be included. He also placed his version of the facts before the Committee.

During the deliberations, the Committee took a serious view of the allegation that the officer had not been responsive to the telephone calls of the Member. The Committee observed that Members of the Legislative Assembly are elected representatives of the people and are entitled to due courtesy and prompt responsiveness from public officials to enable them to effectively discharge their legislative responsibilities.

In response, the officer submitted that he had always endeavoured to respond to the communications of the Member and expressed regret if, on any occasion, he had inadvertently failed to do so. After detailed deliberations, the Committee decided to grant the officer further time to submit a supplementary written reply. The matter shall be considered further in the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee thereafter examined the case related to the alleged breach of privilege notice submitted by Ali Mohammad Dar against the Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Chadoora, Budgam. The officer appeared before the Committee and submitted his statement.

After hearing the officer, the Committee expressed its displeasure over the conduct attributed to him during the incident in question. The Committee observed that despite issuance of government instructions emphasizing that due courtesy and respect should be extended to Members of the Legislative Assembly, such instances reflect adversely on the functioning of the Executive and warrant serious attention.

The Committee decided to afford the officer one final opportunity to submit a supplementary written reply. The matter shall thereafter be taken up for consideration and appropriate decision in the next meeting of the Committee, to be notified separately.

## DC Kupwara reviews progress under HADP, JKCIP and functioning of KKGs

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**KUPWARA, JULY 08:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, today chaired a review meeting to assess the functioning of Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKG) in the district and the progress achieved under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) and the Jammu and Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement Project (JKCIP).

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the operational status of Kisan Khidmat Ghar Centres, with particular emphasis on Common Service Centre (CSC) onboarding, capacity building of Krishi Udyamis (KUs), delivery of services and revenue generation.

A detailed review was also conducted of the district's performance against the prescribed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) under HADP and JKCIP



including course completion by enrolled farmers, establishment of approved units, tracking of established units through the OTA application, utilisation of released funds, farmer and farm registration under KKG Level-2, completion of e-KYC under KKG Level-3, daily reporting compliance by Krishi Udyamis, credit disbursement against sanctioned cases, sanc-

tion of credit applications, JKCIP coverage in selected blocks and approvals under JKCIP.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments to achieve the prescribed targets under each performance parameter through a coordinated and result-oriented approach. He instructed the officers to expedite farmer and farm registration, ensure

timely completion of e-KYC of all eligible beneficiaries, improve daily reporting compliance by Krishi Udyamis, strengthen credit linkage and maintain accuracy and real-time updation of data on the designated portal for effective monitoring and evaluation. He further directed the departments to review the performance of Krishi Udyamis on a

daily basis and take prompt corrective measures wherever required.

The Committee reviewed the implementation status of various interventions being undertaken under the two flagship programmes.

Stressing convergence among implementing departments, the Deputy Commissioner directed the officers to ensure timely execution of approved interventions, undertake regular field-level monitoring and maximise outreach so that the intended benefits reach the farming community in a transparent and time-bound manner.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Planning Officer, Assistant Commissioner Development, Lead District Manager, Chief Horticulture Officer, Chief Agriculture Officer, District Agriculture Officer, District Sheep Husbandry Officer, Assistant Director Fisheries and other concerned officers.

## Better roads, stronger power supply and modern sewer network: Haryana clears Rs 340 crore infrastructure package

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**CHANDIGARH, JULY 8:** Thousands of residents across Haryana can expect better roads, stronger electricity infrastructure and improved sewerage facilities after the state government approved a massive Rs 340.84-crore package of development and procurement projects aimed at upgrading essential public infrastructure.

The approvals were cleared during meetings of the High Powered Purchase Committee (HPPC) and the High Powered Works Purchase Committee (HPWPC) chaired by Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini. The decisions are expected to accelerate several long-pending civic projects while ensuring better value for public money.

In a notable achievement, the government also reduced project costs by Rs 15.11 crore after detailed negotiations with contractors and suppliers before finalising the contracts, underscoring its emphasis on fiscal prudence.

The projects span key sectors that directly affect citizens' daily lives, from improving urban roads and strengthening electricity distribution to expanding sewerage networks and increasing sewage treatment capacity in rapidly growing cities.

Residents of Gurugram will benefit from the construction of a new master road and service



road between Sectors 78 and 80, a project expected to improve connectivity and ease traffic movement in one of the city's fast-developing corridors.

In Faridabad, the government approved six micro sewage treatment plants along with associated infrastructure for parks and green belts spread across several sectors. The initiative is expected to improve wastewater management, support urban greenery and contribute to a cleaner environment.

For Sonapat, multiple civic infrastructure projects have been cleared, including new

sewer lines and manholes in Kundli, storm-water drainage works in Kharkhoda, widening of the 65-metre road connecting GT Road with Diwan Farm, and construction of a 7.5 MLD sewage treatment plant with a main pumping station. These projects are expected to improve sanitation, reduce waterlogging and strengthen urban infrastructure in the rapidly expanding region.

Panchkula has also received approval for a series of major sewerage projects, including a 20MLD sewage treatment plant, a 50MLD main pumping station,

expansion of an existing treatment plant from 15 MLD to 30 MLD, strengthening of the existing pumping infrastructure and a new 10MLD sewage treatment plant for the Pinjore-Kalka urban complex. The projects are aimed at meeting the growing demands of urbanisation while improving sanitation services.

The meeting also approved procurement of modern electrical equipment for the state's power distribution companies, including Dakshin Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam (DHBVN) and Uttar Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam (UHBVN). The upgraded equip-

ment is expected to enhance the reliability of the power distribution network and improve service delivery to consumers.

In another decision, the government approved procurement of laboratory equipment for the Haryana Dairy Development Cooperative Federation Limited under the National Programme for Dairy Development, strengthening quality testing facilities for the dairy sector.

Chief Minister Saini directed all departments to ensure that every project adheres to prescribed quality standards and is completed within the stipulated time so that citizens receive the intended benefits without delay.

The cost-saving exercise was another key highlight of the meeting. While proposals worth Rs 355.95 crore were placed before the two committees, negotiations with bidders brought the final approved value down to Rs 340.84 crore, resulting in savings of Rs 15.11 crore for the state exchequer without reducing the scope or quality of the works.

The meeting was attended by Haryana Education Minister Mahipal Dhanda, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Vipul Goel, Cooperation Minister Arvind Sharma, and Public Works (Buildings & Roads) Minister Ranbir Gangwa, along with senior government officials. UNI

## DXC deepens India AI bet with flagship Bengaluru innovation hub

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**BENGALURU, JULY 8:** DXC Technology on Tuesday deepened its India artificial intelligence (AI) strategy with the launch of a flagship Customer Experience Centre in Bengaluru, underscoring the country's growing role as a global hub for enterprise AI engineering and digital transformation.

The 200,000-square-foot facility, one of the company's largest global delivery hubs, is aimed at helping enterprises move beyond AI experimentation to largescale deployment by bringing together consulting, engineering, cybersecurity and cloud capabilities under one roof.

The investment comes as multinational technology companies increasingly expand AI engineering and innovation capabilities in India to meet rising global demand for enterprise AI solutions. Bengaluru, home to hundreds of Global Capability Centres (GCCs), has emerged as a preferred destination for developing next-generation AI technologies.

The new centre features DXC's flagship AI Hub, where customers will work alongside the company's engineers to design, prototype and deploy AI-powered solutions integrated with existing enterprise systems. It also houses Customer Experience Zones, Co-Creation Labs, Ideation Studios and collaboration spaces designed to accelerate innovation.

Supporting infrastructure includes a Cyber Range, Forensics Labs, Security Operations Centre and Network Operations Centre, enabling enterprises to build, test, secure and monitor AI applications throughout their lifecycle.

"Our new Customer Experience Centre brings together our engineering talent in a collaborative environment where we can co-create, engineer and scale AI-powered solutions that address complex business challenges," said Ramnath Venkataraman, President, Consulting & Engineering Services, DXC Technology.

He said the facility would enable customers to accelerate the transition from AI concepts to measurable business outcomes through closer collaboration with DXC's engineering teams.

Rob Le Busque, President, Asia Pacific & Japan, DXC Technology, said the centre reflects the company's long-term commitment to helping organisations build AI-enabled enterprises.

"By bringing together our consulting, engineering and operations expertise in one environment, we're helping customers accelerate AI adoption and create connected enterprises where people work alongside AI agents to engineer and run mission-critical business systems," he said.

DXC said the Bengaluru hub will showcase its capabilities across AI, consulting, engineering, cloud, cybersecurity and network transformation, reinforcing India's strategic importance in the company's global innovation and delivery network as enterprises accelerate investments in AI-driven transformation. UNI

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He said the facility would enable customers to accelerate the transition from AI concepts to measurable business outcomes through closer collaboration with DXC's engineering teams.

Rob Le Busque, President, Asia Pacific & Japan, DXC Technology, said the centre reflects the company's long-term commitment to helping organisations build AI-enabled enterprises.

"By bringing together our consulting, engineering and operations expertise in one environment, we're helping customers accelerate AI adoption and create connected enterprises where people work alongside AI agents to engineer and run mission-critical business systems," he said.

DXC said the Bengaluru hub will showcase its capabilities across AI, consulting, engineering, cloud, cybersecurity and network transformation, reinforcing India's strategic importance in the company's global innovation and delivery network as enterprises accelerate investments in AI-driven transformation. UNI

## Telangana to set global benchmark for responsible AI: Bhatti Vikramarka

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**HYDERABAD, JULY 8:** Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Tuesday said the State is emerging as a global leader in responsible Artificial Intelligence (AI) by promoting sustainable growth, environmental protection and inclusive development alongside technology.

Inaugurating the two-day Green Growth Economic Summit - The Hyderabad Collective at HICC along with Industries and IT Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Bhatti said Telangana was not merely attracting AI investments but also shaping glob-

al standards for responsible AI development.

He said AI development should not be limited to cloud computing and data centres but must also focus on the sustainable use of electricity, water, land and human resources.

Stressing that Telangana welcomes investments with environmental and social responsibility, he said industries should use clean energy, recycled water, create local employment and enhance the skills of the local workforce.

The Deputy Chief Minister said the State had introduced the concept of "People's Credit", ensuring that AI investments contribute to rural

employment and skill development in addition to economic growth.

He asserted that technology should never compete with agriculture or the water needs of people and that Telangana would prioritise AI systems adopting responsible water-use practices.

Bhatti said Hyderabad is evolving into a global hub for responsible AI, backed by investor-friendly policies, transparent governance and human-centric development.

Under the leadership of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, Telangana aims to become a global benchmark for ethical and sustainable AI development, he added. UNI

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## AI to fuel tech jobs, India growth: DXC

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**BENGALURU, JULY 8:** Rejecting fears that generative artificial intelligence (AI) will trigger widespread job losses in the technology sector, global IT services major DXC Technology on Tuesday said AI will create more opportunities than it eliminates, while positioning India at the centre of its global AI growth and innovation strategy.

Replying to UNI questions at the inauguration of the company's AI-first Customer Experience Centre here, DXC President, Consulting & Engineering Services, Ramnath Venkataraman said AI would increasingly automate existing work but simultaneously create new "value pools" that would generate higher-value opportunities for technology professionals.

"Will existing work increasingly be driven through AI? Yes. Will this create more opportunities for us to focus on where value pools are? That's an absolute and resounding yes," he said, adding that organisations must strike the right balance in AI adoption to avoid either over-investing or falling behind.

Venkataraman said AI would fundamentally reshape the nature of software engineering rather than eliminate it, making continuous reskilling essential as the industry shifts from efficiency-driven work towards innovation and business value creation. He said companies need to remain in what he described as the "Goldilocks zone"—neither investing too far ahead of technology nor lagging behind—as AI adoption accelerates across industries. The company also dismissed concerns that AI would diminish the role of technology services firms, saying enterprises would continue to rely on partners to identify use cases, select appropriate AI platforms, moder-

nise legacy systems, build governance frameworks and execute large-scale digital transformation programmes.

Emphasising India's growing strategic importance, DXC said the country has evolved beyond its traditional role as a global technology delivery centre to become a major hub for AI-led innovation.

"For the longest time, India has been known as a great location for skills and technology talent. It has also been recognised as a global capability and delivery centre. What has fundamentally changed is that India is now a hotbed of innovation. The combination of skills, scale and innovation makes India central to everything we are doing globally," the company said. DXC said India, with nearly 138,000 employees, is its largest workforce anywhere in the world and plays a pivotal role in the company's global transformation strategy. The company said India now combines talent, engineering expertise, delivery scale and innovation, making it central to developing next-generation AI solutions and delivering them to customers worldwide.

Outlining its India roadmap, DXC said the newly inaugurated Bengaluru AI-first Customer Experience Centre is part of a nationwide investment programme spanning seven cities. The company said it has upgraded engineering centres, delivery facilities and customer engagement capabilities across the country as part of a long-term strategy to strengthen its technology footprint.

It identified banking and financial services, insurance, manufacturing, travel and transportation as the sectors that will anchor its future growth in India. The company added that the capabilities being built in India would support customers not only in the domestic market but also across Asia-Pacific and other global regions. UNI

## Only 25 pc Indian firms say workforce is AI-ready: Kyndryl report

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**BENGALURU, JULY 8:** India Inc is accelerating its adoption of artificial intelligence (AI), but only one in four organisations believe their workforce is adequately prepared to harness the technology effectively, according to the latest People Readiness Report released by Kyndryl on Tuesday.

The report found that just 25 per cent of Indian organisations consider their workforce AI-ready, marking a sharp 12-percentage-point decline from 2025 and highlighting a widening gap between AI ambitions and employee preparedness.

Based on a global survey of 1,100 senior business and technology leaders across eight countries, including India, the report said enterprises are rapidly integrating AI into their operations but continue to struggle with equipping employees with the skills, governance frameworks and organisational structures needed to realise its full potential.

It said 81 per cent of business leaders in India are concerned that the rapid pace of AI advancement is outstripping their workforce capabilities, governance frameworks and operating models.

To bridge the gap, 69 per cent of organisations have redesigned roles within or across business functions to support AI adoption, reflecting a significant shift in workplace structures as companies prepare for AI-driven operations.

However, only 33 per cent of organisations have established formal budgets and proactive upskilling programmes, indicating that investments in workforce



development are yet to match the pace of technology deployment.

The report noted that AI success is increasingly being determined not merely by technology adoption or the number of AI use cases, but by how effectively organisations redesign work, manage organisational change and build trust through robust governance and operating models.

Commenting on the findings, Lingraju Sawkar, President, APXJ, Kyndryl, said India has consistently demonstrated leadership in technology adoption, with enterprises moving rapidly to integrate AI across business operations.

He said that while organisations continue to invest in AI technologies and expand use cases, achieving meaningful business impact at scale would require companies to rethink how work is organised, redesign roles, develop new capabilities and establish governance frameworks that promote trust and responsible AI adoption.

The report suggests that although AI deployment is accelerating across Indian enterprises, long-term success will depend on whether organisations can prepare their workforce to work alongside AI as effectively as they are investing in the technology itself. UNI



# Shapoor Zadran dies after prolonged illness

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NAPIER:** Former Afghanistan fast bowler Shapoor Zadran has died one day short of his 39th birthday after spending his last months battling Hemophagocytic Lymphohistiocytosis (HLH) in hospital in Delhi.

The news was confirmed by his younger brother Ghamai Zadran, who was with Shapoor since he was moved to Delhi for treatment in January. Shapoor was suffering from an advanced stage of HLH, a rare disease in which the immune system starts failing.

Shapoor was one of the most recognisable faces of Afghanistan's cricket during their rise in the 2000s and 2010s. 6'2" tall, sprinting in of a long run, his long hair flowing as he did. He had, as the Afghanistan Cricket Board said in a statement, a foundational impact on the game there, playing 44 ODIs and 36 T20Is between 2009 and 2020, and taking a total of 80 international wickets. He shone especially in the 2015 ODI World Cup - the only World Cup he played - ending up as Afghanistan's leading wicket-taker in Australia and New Zealand with 10 wickets.

He played in four T20 World Cups from 2010 to 2016, taking nine wickets in nine matches.

Shapoor was widely known among contemporaries for his generosity and kindness and was a mentoring figure to several younger players, including Rashid Khan. Rashid, former Afghanistan captain Asghar Afghan, and several other prominent cricketers were in touch with Shapoor through his treatment. When Afghanistan toured India in June, their captain Hashmatullah Shahidi, head coach Richard Pybus, and players Qais Ahmed and Zia Sharif visited him in hospital.

"With profound grief and deep sorrow, the Afghanistan Cricket Board mourns the passing of former Afghanistan fast bowler Shapoor Zadran," the board said in a statement. "Shapoor Zadran was one of the foundation-laying figures of Afghanistan cricket, whose dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment played a vital role in the rise and development of the game in our country. He was among the proud cricketers who stood at the heart of Afghanistan's early cricket

journey and helped build the path that brought Afghan cricket to the international stage.

"Throughout his career, Shapoor served Afghanistan cricket with honor, courage, and pride. His contributions and achievements will always remain an important part of the history of Afghanistan cricket, and his efforts in the service of the national team will never be forgotten.

"Beyond his achievements on the field, Shapoor Zadran was a true source of inspiration for many young Afghan cricketers and for cricket followers across the world. His fighting spirit, determination, and love for the game gave hope to many and encouraged a generation to dream bigger and believe in the future of Afghanistan cricket.

"The Afghanistan Cricket Board extends its heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to his family, friends, loved ones, former teammates, and the entire Afghan cricket community. His loss is deeply felt, and his memory will forever remain alive in the hearts of the people of Afghanistan and the cricketing world."

## It's Australia's world; the other teams just rent space in it

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**MANCHESTER:** And so it ends. Australia have done what Australia are known for, and left everyone else in their wake. Before your memory goes to the men's teams of the late-1990s and early-2000s, stop. The Australian women's team had already achieved more even before this tournament. To have won six out of the eight previous editions of T20 World Cups makes it fitting to say Barcelona are Australia-eque and not the other way around. Australia's women are the dominant force in the global game, and though they did not come into this tournament as defending champions, their win - without dropping a game - was barely a surprise. That no one pushed them harder is the real story of this World Cup. India came closest when they set Australia the highest chase in a T20 World Cup match. Australia won it with an over to spare.

## Alexandra Eala provides a 'ray of hope' for the Philippines despite Wimbledon exit

■ AGENCIES

**LONDON:** Despite falling short of reaching the quarterfinals, Alexandra Eala still made a lasting impact at Wimbledon.

The 21-year-old Filipina had ousted defending champion Iga Swiatek but couldn't solve Jasmine Paolini on Monday, losing 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 on Centre Court.

For Filipino fans - both at watch parties back home and at the All England Club - it's not always about wins and losses.

"She's like a ray of hope for the Philippines," fan Roberto Ocampo Jr. said Monday at Wimbledon. "Especially at her age. She made history. That's one thing that we

can tell to the next generation." Eala, who lost in the first round a year ago in her Wimbledon debut, became the first player from the Philippines to reach the fourth round of a Grand Slam singles tournament in the Open era, the women's professional tour said. "Setting foot here is already a big achievement," said Ocampo, a London-based nurse.

The left-handed Eala talked this week about Filipino pride and being a role model for kids back home. But she also made it clear that she has big plans for her tennis career. In dissecting her loss to Paolini, she pointed to problems with her serve. "But I have days like that.



Everyone has days where they don't play their best tennis," said Eala, who trained at the Rafael Nadal Tennis Academy in Spain

as a teenager. "I understand that's part of the job. I don't think I'm going to be playing the best tennis of my life every single day.

"With that being said," she added, "I'm really proud of how I handled things. I just have to kind of move forward and continue with my progress." Eala, who made a breakthrough in March 2025 by reaching the Miami Open semifinals, has elevated her stardom at Wimbledon, both on and off the court.

Eala met Kate, the princess of Wales, and took a photo with her. A photo of Eala diving for a ball in the match against Swiatek also has made the rounds, with edits showing Eala wearing a cape and "Superwoman" outfit.

The Philippines Embassy in the U.K. has tracked her progress and posted congratulatory notes.

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