

Srinagar
Friday
July 10 | 2026
24 Muharram 1448 AH
Issue No: 164
Volume: 16
Pages: 12
Price: Rs 02/-

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World Witnessed India's Defence Capability During Operation Sindoor: PM Modi



HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

MELBOURNE, JUL 9: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the world witnessed the capability and credibility of India's defence platform during Operation Sindoor, asserting that the military operation against terrorist infrastructure across the border showcased the country's growing defence strength and determination to combat terrorism.

Addressing the Indian diaspora at the "Melbourne Meets Modi" event, which was also attended by Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Modi said the operation reflected the effectiveness of India's armed forces and defence capabilities.

"The world is witnessing the capability and credibility of our defence sector. You saw

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Driven by Vision, India Marches Towards Viksit Nation

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

MELBOURNE, JUL 9: India, driven by the vision of "Grow More, Achieve More", is working towards the goal of becoming a developed nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday, underlining that the foundation of the country's big dreams and great aspirations is its people.

Speaking at an Indian diaspora event, 'Melbourne meets Modi', also attended by Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, PM Modi said he was delighted that the partnership between the two countries in the areas of education, skills and innovation is deepening and strengthening.

"India of the 21st century is working towards the goal of becoming a developed nation... This is an India that believes in 'Grow More, Achieve More,'" PM Modi said, amid cheers from the audience in a packed stadium.

Modi said the mantra of "Nagrik Devo Bhava" has become the guiding principle of governance in India.

"The foundation of India's big dreams and

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No Pilgrim Should Face Any Inconvenience: LG Manoj Sinha

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 9: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday directed officials to ensure that every pilgrim undertaking the annual pilgrimage receives round-the-clock care, asserting that no devotee should face any inconvenience from registration to accommodation, food and other essential services.

During his visit to the Yatra Transit Camp and Pilgrim Accommodation Centre at Pantha Chowk in Srinagar, the Lieutenant Governor reviewed the arrangements for the ongoing pilgrimage and interacted with officials and pilgrims to assess the facilities on the ground.

Addressing the officials, Sinha said ensuring a safe, comfortable and hassle-free experience for every pilgrim must

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Pilgrim count nears 2 lakh; 8,150 arrive in Kashmir

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JUL 09: The annual Amarnath Yatra is all set to cross the 2-lakh pilgrim mark on Friday, with 28,583 devotees paying obeisance at the holy cave shrine on Thursday.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the eighth batch of 8,150 pilgrims arrived at twin base camps after leaving from Jammu towards Kashmir under tight security

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CS Reviews Amarnath Yatra Arrangements

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 09: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the arrangements put in place for the ongoing Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026 and issued directions for further strengthening the facilities and services being provided to the pilgrims to ensure the safe, smooth and hassle-free conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

The meeting was attended by senior officers from the Civil Admin-

istration, Shrine Board, and security establishment, including Administrative Secretaries, senior officers of Police, CAPFs, BRO/BEACON, Heads of Departments, Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Deputy Commissioners/SSPs of Anantnag and Ganderbal; Director Information; besides other concerned officers.

Reviewing the progress of the Yatra, the Chief Secretary took note of the extensive arrangements made and their further augmentation

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Need to develop J&K as a sustainable Tourism Destination: CM

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 09: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today called for a paradigm shift in Jammu and Kashmir's tourism strategy, urging policymakers, industry stakeholders and local communities to move beyond volume-driven tourism towards a value-based and sustainable tourism model that safeguards the region's fragile ecology while ensuring long-term economic prosperity.

Addressing the inaugural session of the Conclave on Sustainable Tourism Planning—Designing Tourism for Tomorrow, organised by the Department of Tourism at SKICC, the Chief



Minister said sustainable tourism is no longer a choice but an imperative for preserving Jammu and Kashmir's environment

and securing the future of one of its most vital economic sectors.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Gulmarg Pirzada Farooq Ahmad Shah, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta and Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism, Ashish Chandra Verma were present on the occasion.

Managing Director J&K Tourism Development Corporation Shreya Singhal, Director SKICC Mufti Mohammad Farid-ud-Din, Director Tourism Jammu Vikas Gupta, Secretary Royal Springs Golf Course Haris

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Remain Mission-Focused and Operationally Agile: Army Chief

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, JULY 9: Chief of Army Staff General Dhiraj Seth on Thursday reviewed the security situation and operational preparedness along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Pir Panjal region, a day after assessing the overall security environment in Kashmir.

During his visit to forward areas in Poonch, Rajouri and Sunderbani, the Army Chief received a comprehensive briefing from the White Knight Corps on the prevailing security situation, operational deployments and the counter-insurgency framework along the LoC.

Senior commanders apprised General Seth of the surveillance architecture, field-level innovations, integrated operational readiness and the



progress of infrastructure development in the forward areas. He also reviewed initiatives aimed at strengthening connectivity and improving civic facilities in border villages, along with

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ACB Registers Corruption Case Over Illegal Attestation of 162 Land Mutations

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JUL 9: The Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has registered a corruption case against the former Tehsildar of Bijbehara, the former Naib Tehsildar, a Patwari and others for their alleged involvement in the illegal attestation of 162 land mutations involving nearly 1,050 kanals of land between 2022 and 2024, following an inves-

tigation that found prima facie evidence of abuse of official position, criminal conspiracy and criminal misconduct.

According to the ACB, the case originated from a source-based complaint alleging that the accused officials, acting in collusion with others, processed land mutations without the execution of registered transfer deeds and without the payment of

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Heat persists across J&K as MeT predicts heavy rain from Jul 11

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JUL 09: The Meteorological (MeT) Centre Srinagar on Thursday said Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness hot and humid weather over the next few days, while warning of heavy rainfall, flash floods and landslides in vulnerable areas of the Jammu division between July 11 and 12.

According to details shared by the

MeT department to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the weather is expected to remain generally hot and humid on July 9 and 10, with scattered spells of rain and thundershowers across the Union Territory. A few places in the Jammu division may also experience brief but intense heavy showers.

On July 11 and 12, many places are likely to receive one or two spells

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Concerted Action Against Terrorists Essential: India, Russia Condemn Pahalgam, Red Fort Attacks

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JUL 9: India and Russia have jointly called for concerted international action against terrorists and terrorist organisations while strongly condemning terrorism in all its forms, including the attacks in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, and near Delhi's Red Fort.

The commitment was reiterated during the 14th India-Russia Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism meeting held in New Delhi, where both countries reviewed the evolving global and regional security environment and pledged to deepen cooperation in combating terrorism.

The meeting was co-chaired by Sibi George, Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs, and Dmitry Lyubinsky, Deputy Minister

of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Senior representatives from relevant ministries and security agencies of both countries also participated.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the two sides unequivocally condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including cross-border terrorism. They strongly denounced the April 22, 2025 terrorist attack in Pahalgam, which claimed the lives of 26 people, mostly tourists, and the November 10, 2025 terror incident near Delhi's Red Fort that left 15 people dead.

India and Russia called for coordinated international efforts against terrorists, terrorist organisations, and entities designated under the

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Over 6,600 Students to Appear for Merit Scholarship Examination Across J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 9: More than 6,600 students from across Jammu and Kashmir will appear for the National Merit-cum-Means Scholarship Scheme (NMMSS) examination today at 97 centres established across the Union Territory, with the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (BOSE) putting in place comprehensive arrangements to ensure a smooth and transparent conduct of the examination.

According to BOSE, the examination will be held in strict adherence to the prescribed Standard Operating Procedures to safeguard the integrity of the scholarship selection process. A multi-tier monitoring mechanism involving Chief Education Officers,

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

World Witnessed.....

this during Operation Sindoor," the Prime Minister said.

He said the explosions at terrorist hideouts were not only a decisive military action but also carried a message that resonated around the world.

"The explosions were taking place at the terrorists' hideouts, and their echoes were reverberating across the world," he said, asking the gathering whether they felt proud of the action taken against terrorist camps. The audience responded with loud applause.

Operation Sindoor was launched by India on May 7 in response to the terrorist attack in Pahalgam that claimed the lives of 26 civilians. During the operation, Indian forces carried out precision missile strikes on nine terrorist camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, targeting terrorist infrastructure.

The military action was followed by four days of hostilities between India and Pakistan before both sides reached an understanding to halt military operations on May 10.

Highlighting India's growing defence capabilities, Modi said the success of Operation Sindoor had enhanced the credibility of the country's defence platform and reinforced its commitment to taking firm action against terrorism.

(Agencies)

Driven by.....

great aspirations is its people... We, the People," he said, adding that the government's policies are centred on citizens' welfare.

"Today, from chips to ships, India is developing a new manufacturing ecosystem," he said, adding that India is working on 6G technology.

Prime Minister Modi also mentioned 'Operation Sindoor,' saying the world has witnessed the capability and credibility of India's defence platform.

"You must have seen the demo during 'Operation Sindoor'. Explosions were taking place at the terrorists' hideouts, and the echo was reverberating across the world," he said, amid cheers from the audience.

Modi said India has more than 200,000 registered start-ups and more than 4,000 new start-ups are being registered every month.

He said hundreds of start-ups are working in sectors such as defence and space. These sectors were opened to private entrepreneurship only a few years ago, and today, India's first private space start-up is set to launch a satellite on its own rocket very soon, he said.

"You are all aware of Chandrayaan's landing on the Moon's south pole. No country, other than India, has been able to achieve this. But India is not satisfied with this. As we say, 'Grow more. Achieve More.' Now India will send Gaganyaan, and we are working towards the goal of building our own space station," Modi said.

Recalling the recent earthquakes that struck Venezuela, PM Modi said India launched an operation for relief and rescue and sent help as quickly as possible.

"We didn't look at how far the distance was. India considered Venezuela's pain as its own pain. When India helps, it doesn't look at passports. It doesn't look at the colour of passports. That's why the world places immense trust in India," he said.

Modi, who arrived in Australia on Wednesday on the second leg of his three-nation tour, said this is his third visit in the last 12 years.

"It's a hat-trick. This shows that India-Australia relations have strengthened. The most important role in this has been played not by me, but by all of you, the Indian diaspora," he said, amid cheers from the gathering. (Agencies)

No Pilgrim.....

remain the collective responsibility of all departments involved in the management of the pilgrimage.

He conducted a comprehensive review of accommodation, sanitation, healthcare, security, drinking water, electricity supply, firefighting preparedness and other essential services put in place for the pilgrims.

The Lieutenant Governor said the number of pilgrims during the first week of this year's pilgrimage had exceeded the corresponding period last year, describing the increased turnout as a positive indicator for both the region's spiritual heritage and its tourism sector.

He said the growing influx of pilgrims would provide fresh momentum to the local economy and called for promoting Jammu and Kashmir's handicrafts and handloom products among visitors so that local artisans benefit from the pilgrimage season. He added that wider promotion of these products would also strengthen the One District One Product initiative while showcasing the region's cultural heritage across the country.

Praising the coordinated efforts of the district administration, the shrine management, police, security forces and other departments, Sinha stressed the need to maintain close coordination for effective crowd management, smooth registration procedures and timely dissemination of information to pilgrims throughout the pilgrimage.

He also directed the authorities to take strict legal action against anyone found involved in fraudulent registration practices.

Senior civil and police officers, including Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat, Chief

Executive Officer of the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board Dr. Mandeep K. Bhandari, Inspector General of Police Kashmir V. K. Birdi, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg and Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Akshay Labroo, accompanied the Lieutenant Governor during the visit.

Pilgrim.....

arrangements this morning.

Official figures revealed that 28,583 pilgrims paid obeisance at the shrine on Thursday, taking the total number of devotees since the commencement of the pilgrimage on July 3 to 1,71,501.

Among those who performed darshan were 17,004 men, 10,766 women, 298 children, 187 sadhus, 25 sadhvis, besides 303 security personnel.

Meanwhile, 8,150 pilgrims departed from the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu in a convoy of 334 vehicles comprising 175 buses, 55 medium motor vehicles (MMVs) and 104 light motor vehicles (LMVs).

Of the total, 3,445 pilgrims are travelling via the Baltal route, while 4,705 pilgrims are heading through the traditional Pahalgam route.

The batch includes 5,663 men, 1,960 women, 15 children, 432 sadhus, 77 sadhvis and three transgender devotees. The Baltal convoy left Jammu at 2:50 am, followed by the Pahalgam convoy at 3:38 am under elaborate security arrangements.

With thousands of pilgrims continuing to arrive in Jammu and fresh batches proceeding towards the Valley every day, officials expect the total number of devotees performing darshan to cross the two lakh mark on Friday, subject to favourable weather and smooth movement along both routes.

The 57-day pilgrimage, which began on July 3, is scheduled to conclude on August 9 on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan—(KNO)

CS Reviews.....

in view of the unprecedented response from pilgrims this year. It was informed that the pilgrimage has witnessed an overwhelming turnout since the commencement of yatra this year.

The meeting held detailed deliberations on the recommendations presented by the Chief Executive Officer, Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board, Dr. Mandeep K. Bhandari based on the reports of various committees constituted to assess the status of arrangements on the ground. The discussions focused on identifying additional measures required to make the arrangements more robust, reliable and responsive to the needs of the pilgrims.

The meeting reviewed the status of infrastructure and facilities at Yatra camps, langars and along both the Baltal and Pahalgam routes. It was highlighted that the recommendations include complete tiling of the pilgrimage track up to the Holy Cave Shrine to enhance the safety of pilgrims, widening of narrow stretches of the track and bridges at vulnerable locations to prevent overcrowding, construction of retaining walls in landslide-prone areas, augmentation of rain shelters and waiting sheds, installation of iron barricades for effective queue management, and ensuring adequate availability of palakis and stretchers for prompt evacuation during medical emergencies.

The meeting also comprehensively reviewed the availability of essential public amenities across the Yatra camps and holding areas. These included adequate toilet and bathing facilities, uninterrupted drinking water supply, regular sanitation and cleanliness of camps, scientific waste management, and efficient functioning of first-aid and medical facilities.

Moreover the need for installation of additional digital display boards for dissemination of advisories, strengthening fire fighting infrastructure, and enhancing disaster preparedness through adequate mitigation equipment and emergency response mechanisms was also discussed.

During the meeting concerned heads of the departments presented updates regarding the facilities created by their respective departments and informed the meeting about the progress achieved in implementing the recommendations made by the committees.

The Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, along with the Deputy Commissioners of Anantnag and Ganderbal, apprised the meeting of the overall conduct of the Yatra and the arrangements made on the ground.

Emphasising the need for continuous monitoring and timely corrective action, the Chief Secretary directed all the line departments to constitute dedicated audit teams to undertake regular inspections of facilities and infrastructure along both the Yatra routes. He instructed these teams to identify any deficiencies or implementation gaps and ensure their immediate rectification.

Stressing the importance of seamless coordination among all stakeholder departments and agencies, the Chief Secretary called for prompt resolution of issues through effective inter-agency coordination. He asserted that there should be no scope for delays, complacency or lackadaisical approach in the discharge of responsibilities, reiterating that the safety, security and convenience of every pilgrim remain the highest priority of the administration.

Need to.....

Ahmad Handoo, Director Tourism Kashmir Syed Qamar Sajad, senior officers of the Tourism Department, Chief Executive Officers of various Tourism Development Authorities, tourism stakeholders and experts also participated in the conclave.

In his keynote address, the Chief Minister said that tourism devoid of sustainability inevitably leads to long-term decline.

"Tourism without sustainability is an unqualified disaster. It may survive for a few years, but it cannot endure in the long run unless sustainability is built into its very foundation," he said.

He said the conclave had been organised at a crucial juncture when Jammu and Kashmir was reassessing its tourism vision and determining whether its future lay in attracting ever-growing visitor numbers or creating greater value from a more sustainable tourism economy.

"We have to decide whether we wish to earn by charging one hundred tourists one rupee each or by creating an experience where one tourist is willing to pay one hundred rupees. The answer to that question must shape all our future tourism master plans," the Chief Minister remarked. He said he welcomed surge in number of tourists visiting J&K but for future the tourist flow may need to be regulated so that not only the tourist resorts are protected but the tourists also enjoy in serene environment rather than having to go through harrowing experience of traffic jams, poor facilities and over-crowding at these tourist spots.

Reflecting on Jammu and Kashmir's tourism journey over the past three decades, Omar Abdullah observed that the region had understandably pursued a volume-based approach to demonstrate normalcy after years of conflict. However, he said the recent fluctuations in tourist arrivals had once again exposed the vulnerability of the tourism ecosystem.

The Chief Minister remarked that last year before the Pahalgam incident, we were dealing with traffic congestion caused by huge tourist inflow. Soon afterwards, we were worried because hotels and destinations had become empty. This reminds us how fragile tourism can be in Jammu & Kashmir where a single incident can affect the whole season.

The Chief Minister underlined that sustainable tourism planning must comprehensively address critical issues including traffic regulation, parking infrastructure, waste management, water conservation, building regulations, carrying capacity and community participation.

Expressing concern over recurring traffic congestion at popular destinations, he said infrastructure creation alone would not solve the problem unless accompanied by effective utilisation and scientific traffic management.

He cautioned against introducing unplanned regulatory measures without adequate stakeholder consultation, citing recent experiences where traffic management decisions adversely affected tourists and transport operators.

"Sustainability cannot be based on knee-jerk reactions. Every intervention must be well-planned, thoroughly discussed with stakeholders and capable of delivering long-term solutions," he said.

The Chief Minister also laid strong emphasis on scientific solid waste management, saying environmental degradation cannot simply be attributed to tourists.

Referring to ongoing waste removal efforts in Dal Lake, he observed that a significant portion of waste originates from local habitations, making community participation equally important.

He also stressed the need to eliminate single-use plastic and promote responsible civic behaviour.

"Government has a responsibility to manage waste, but citizens too have an equal responsibility. Unless we begin treating Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Sonamarg and Dal Lake as we treat our own homes, sustainability will remain elusive," he said.

Highlighting the growing challenge of water scarcity, Omar Abdullah said sustainable tourism cannot be achieved without long-term water management strategies, particularly as visitor numbers continue to increase.

The Chief Minister also stressed the importance of strict enforcement of building regulations and tourism master plans.

"A master plan is only as good as its implementation. Selective enforcement breeds resentment and weakens public confidence. Tourism planning cannot be confined to offices; it must be prepared in consultation with local communities who have lived in these destinations for generations," he observed.

Calling for scientific assessment of the carrying capacity of individual tourist destinations, he said each location possesses unique ecological sensitivities that must determine future visitor management strategies.

"Srinagar may comfortably accommodate far more visitors than ecologically fragile destinations such as Gulmarg or Gurez. We cannot adopt a uniform approach for every destination," he said.

The Chief Minister said Jammu and Kashmir's greatest tourism asset is its unmatched natural beauty rather than artificial attrac-

tions.

"We are not selling Disneyland, Universal Studios or Las Vegas. What attracts people here is our rivers, lakes, mountains, glaciers and landscapes. Protecting these natural assets must remain the central objective of every tourism master plan," he asserted.

He also spoke about the increasing influx of tourist vehicles from outside Jammu and Kashmir. While acknowledging that their arrival had helped restore confidence about Kashmir's reopening as a tourism destination, he said such trends also placed additional pressure on local infrastructure and adversely affected the livelihoods of local transport operators.

"We have to ensure that tourism generates greater benefits for our own people. The objective should be to move steadily up the value chain rather than simply chasing higher tourist numbers," he said.

Advocating premium tourism experiences, the Chief Minister said value-based tourism enables destinations to earn more while reducing environmental stress and improving visitor experiences.

"Value tourism is sustainable tourism. Our responsibility is to create conditions where local people earn better incomes while ensuring that tourism remains environmentally and economically sustainable for generations to come," he added.

The Chief Minister expressed hope that the deliberations of the conclave would contribute meaningfully towards framing a long-term sustainable tourism roadmap for Jammu & Kashmir and guide future policy interventions.

Advisor to the CM Nasir Aslam Wani & Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo also spoke on the occasion underlining the need for master planning of Tourist destinations, development of new destinations, environmental protection, strengthening of Tourism Development Authorities and for enhancing visitor experience.

Earlier, Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism, Ashish Chandra Verma delivered a comprehensive presentation outlining the Government's new initiative for preparing tourism master plans for destinations across Jammu and Kashmir.

He presented an overview of the tourism sector, the vision for sustainable tourism and the need for rethinking the existing tourism development strategy. He emphasised the transition from conventional urban planning to tourism-led destination planning through a structured, long-term framework.

Highlighting existing challenges such as fragmented infrastructure development, inadequate waste management, traffic congestion and the absence of integrated destination planning, he outlined a tier-based categorisation approach for planning tourism destinations according to their ecological sensitivity, tourism potential and infrastructure requirements.

The Additional Chief Secretary also elaborated on the objectives of the workshop, which include facilitating strategic and sustainable tourism planning, developing destination-specific master plans, promoting balanced tourism growth and ensuring greater stakeholder participation in the future of Jammu and Kashmir's tourism sector.

Remain.....

ongoing community development programmes in the region.

The visit followed General Seth's review of the security situation in the Kashmir Valley on Wednesday at the headquarters of the Srinagar-based Chinar Corps. During the briefing, he assessed operational preparedness along the LoC and in the hinterland, combat readiness, counter-terrorism operations, inter-agency coordination and security arrangements for the ongoing Amarnath Yatra.

The Army Chief also reviewed measures to enhance operational capability through technology induction and integrated combat preparedness across operational theatres.

Commending the troops for their professionalism and dedication under challenging conditions, General Seth urged them to remain mission-focused, operationally agile and maintain the highest standards of operational excellence.

As part of his visit, the Army Chief also called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in Srinagar to discuss the prevailing security situation and related matters.

ACB Registers.....

the mandatory registration fee and stamp duty, causing substantial financial loss to the State exchequer.

The bureau said its verification, supported by reports from the Departmental Vigilance Officer (Revenue), departmental inquiry committees and expert opinion, revealed serious viola-

tions of revenue laws and Standing Order 23-A.

The investigation found that documents presented as relinquishment deeds were, in fact, sale transactions allegedly structured to evade registration requirements and stamp duty. The ACB also alleged that payments linked to these transactions were routed through intermediaries and multiple bank accounts to conceal their nature.

Based on the evidence collected, the bureau said a prima facie case had been established against the accused officials and others.

Accordingly, FIR No.06/2026 was registered at the Anti-Corruption Bureau Police Station in Anantnag under Sections 7 and 13 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, and Section 120-B of the Indian Penal Code.

Immediately after the registration of the case, the ACB carried out simultaneous searches at the residences of the accused after obtaining search warrants from the Court of the Special Judge, Anti-Corruption Bureau, Anantnag.

The Anti-Corruption Bureau said further investigation into the case is in progress.

Heat persists.....

of rain and thundershowers, with isolated heavy rainfall and intense showers expected over the Chenab Valley and Pir Panjal range of Jammu division.

The weather is expected to remain largely hot and humid from July 13 to 16, although scattered rain and thunder-shower activity is likely, particularly in parts of the Jammu division.

The Met department has advised people to stay away from nallas, streams and landslide-prone areas, warning that heavy rainfall during the afternoon and early morning hours on July 11 and 12 could trigger flash floods, landslides and mudslides at vulnerable locations in the Chenab Valley and Pir Panjal region.

Meanwhile, temperatures remained above normal across most parts of Kashmir on Thursday. Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 32.6 degrees Celsius, 1.9 degrees above normal, while Qazigund and Kupwara registered 31.0 degrees Celsius and 33.5 degrees Celsius, respectively. Pahalgam recorded 27.0 degrees Celsius, Gulmarg 23.0 degrees Celsius, and Jammu city 35.5 degrees Celsius, close to the seasonal average.

The Met said residents should remain alert and follow weather advisories, particularly in flood- and landslide-prone areas—(KNO)

Concerted Action.....

United Nations Security Council 1267 Sanctions Committee, as well as their proxy groups and affiliates.

The discussions also focused on emerging security challenges, including violent extremism, radicalisation, terror financing, and the growing misuse of digital financial systems and emerging technologies by terrorist organisations. Both countries agreed to strengthen cooperation in addressing these evolving threats by sharing expertise and best practices.

Reaffirming their shared commitment to combating terrorism, India and Russia agreed to further enhance cooperation through bilateral mechanisms and multilateral platforms, including the United Nations, BRICS, the Eurasian Group, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

The two sides also agreed to hold the next meeting of the Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism in Russia on a mutually convenient date.

(Agencies)

Over 6,600.....

Heads of Institutions, Board officials and invigilators has been deployed to maintain fairness and transparency at every examination centre.

A total of 1,068 scholarships have been allocated to Jammu and Kashmir under the Central Government's flagship scheme. Successful candidates will receive an annual scholarship of Rs. 12,000 for four years, beginning from Class IX, providing crucial financial support to students from economically weaker sections.

BOSE said the scholarship programme has played a significant role in encouraging academically talented students to continue their education and pursue higher goals. Many beneficiaries of the scheme have gone on to qualify prestigious national-level competitive examinations, including the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) and the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), underscoring the scheme's contribution to promoting academic excellence.

The Board expressed confidence that the elaborate arrangements made for the examination would ensure its smooth, fair and credible conduct across all centres in the Union Territory.



CS sets monthly targets for PM Surya Ghar Yojana, Solarization Mission in J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 9: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress achieved under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana and the ongoing Solarization of Government Buildings Programme across the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Power Development Department; Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir; Managing Director, JPDCL/KPDCL; CEO, JAKEDA besides representatives of several other concerned departments.

While taking this review the Chief Secretary emphasized the need to achieve the targets assigned to both the Power Distribution Companies (DISCOMs) within the stipulated timelines. He directed the concerned agencies to ensure installation of all the rooftop solar (RTS) systems pertaining to nearly 57,000 beneficiaries where vendor agreements have already been executed, so that these consumers receive the benefits of the scheme without any delay.

Stressing the importance of timely implementation, the Chief Secretary instructed the

concerned departments to prepare a well-defined timeline for achieving the targets considerably before the sunset date of the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, thereby ensuring that Jammu & Kashmir fully utilizes the opportunity provided under the flagship programme of the Government of India.

Reviewing the progress of the Solarization of Government Buildings, the Chief Secretary called upon the Science & Technology Department and JAKEDA to expedite execution and ensure that all identified government buildings are brought under rooftop solar coverage in a mission mode.

He directed that over 1,400 more government buildings under the CAPEX mode and around 1,300 buildings under the RESCO mode be targeted for completion by the end of July 2026. He also stressed the simultaneous completion of smart metering in all commissioned buildings to ensure effective net metering, accurate energy accounting and optimum utilization of the installed solar assets.

Speaking during the meeting, Additional Chief Secretary, Power Development Department, Ashwani Kumar, outlined the roadmap for bridging the



existing implementation gaps and highlighted the measures being taken to further streamline execution. He elaborated upon the strategy to strengthen inter-agency coordination, simplify operational processes and accelerate the pace of implementation so that the targets under both the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana and the Solarization of Government Buildings Programme are achieved within the prescribed timelines.

Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar, while appreciating the progress made under the scheme, suggested that districts demonstrating outstanding perfor-

mance should be suitably recognized to encourage healthy competition among the implementing agencies.

He particularly commended the exemplary work carried out in the Kupwara and Shopian districts in the implementation of this Yojana, and recommended that the officers and field functionaries responsible for these achievements be appropriately appreciated to motivate similar performance across the Union Territory.

The meeting was informed by the MD, KPDC, Mehmood Ahmad Shah that under PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, the Government of India has

fixed a national target of one crore residential rooftop solar installations by 31st March 2027. In line with this, Jammu & Kashmir has set a target of 83,500 residential consumers for itself, comprising 39,500 consumers under JPDCL and 44,000 consumers under KPDC.

Reviewing the implementation status, the Chief Secretary was further informed that as on 07 July 2026, rooftop solar systems had been installed for 37,138 residential consumers across Jammu & Kashmir with a cumulative installed capacity of 133.40 MW. These installations have enabled beneficiaries to receive Central Financial

Assistance amounting to Rs 291.38 crore, while the Union Territory has additionally extended Rs 10.50 crore as UT subsidy, thereby significantly reducing the financial burden on consumers and encouraging wider adoption of rooftop solar systems.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the progress achieved under the ambitious programme for Solarization of Government Buildings, being implemented through JAKEDA under both CAPEX and RESCO modes.

The meeting was informed by CEO, JAKEDA, PN Dhar that Jammu & Kashmir has emerged as one of the leading performers in the country in this sector. The Union Territory presently ranks 3rd among all States and Union Territories in the number of government buildings solarized, with 8,131 government buildings already equipped with rooftop solar power systems, representing 36.14 per cent of the 22,494 identified government buildings across the UT.

Additionally under the CAPEX mode, against an allocated capacity of 65 MW covering 5,500 government buildings, rooftop solar systems have already been installed on 3,338

buildings with a cumulative installed capacity of 46.30 MW. Besides these completed works, material has already been supplied for 1,462 additional buildings, while material for another 800 buildings is currently under transit, indicating substantial progress towards completion of the remaining works.

The meeting was further informed that under the RESCO model, the Government has envisaged development of 175 MW rooftop solar capacity covering approximately 8,000 government buildings. Work orders have already been issued for 1,360 buildings, with competitively discovered tariffs ranging between Rs 4.19 and Rs 5.27 per unit, ensuring economical and sustainable power generation for public institutions.

The Chief Secretary instructed all implementing agencies to maintain close inter-departmental coordination, ensure strict adherence to project timelines and continuously monitor district-wise performance. He further directed that progress under both the residential rooftop solar programme and government buildings solarization initiative be reviewed regularly so that Jammu & Kashmir achieves its mission of solarization within the stipulated timeframe.

Kulgam Police Attach Property Worth Rs. 1 Crore Under 100-Day Campaign Against Crime

FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, JULY 9: In a major action under the ongoing 100 Days Campaign, Kulgam Police, in coordination with the Revenue Department, have attached an immovable property worth approximately Rs. 1 crore as part of their sustained efforts to dismantle the infrastructure supporting unlawful activities in the district.

According to an official statement, the action was carried out by Police Station Yaripora under the directions of the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Kulgam. The attached property comprises a residential house belonging to Tariq Ahmad, a resident of Tungdnoo, and has been attached in



accordance with the relevant provisions of law following the orders of the competent authority.

Police said the attachment forms part of the intensified drive launched under the 100 Days Campaign to ensure that properties and assets linked to unlawful activities are dealt with strictly in accordance with legal procedures. The initiative is aimed at preventing the use of such assets for activities that threaten public peace and security.

Officials stated that the action reflects the Jammu and Kashmir Police's firm commitment to combating crime by targeting the proceeds and infrastructure associated with illegal activities while ensuring strict adherence to the rule of law. Reiterating its resolve, Kulgam Police said it will continue to take stringent legal action against individuals found involved in activities prejudicial to public order and the security of the Union Territory. The police also appealed to the public to extend full cooperation by sharing credible information about any unlawful activities in their respective areas. They emphasized that community participation remains vital in strengthening collective efforts to maintain lasting peace, security, and the rule of law across the district.

J&K Higher Education Council Executive Committee meets at KU, deliberates on DYD, AI integration, innovation & NEP-2020 roadmap

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 9: The Executive Committee Meeting of the Jammu and Kashmir Higher Education Council (JKHEC) was held at the University of Kashmir, on Thursday, bringing together eminent academicians, policymakers and heads of higher educational institutions from J&K to deliberate on transformative initiatives aimed at strengthening the higher education ecosystem of Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was chaired by Prof. Dinesh Singh, Vice-Chairman, J&K Higher Education Council, who emphasised the need for promoting innovation-driven, interdisciplinary and learner-centric approaches in higher education institutions in accordance with the vision and spirit of the National Education Policy (NEP)-2020.

Addressing the members, Prof. Singh underlined the importance of reimagining higher education through creativity, flexibility,

experiential learning and problem-solving.

He stressed on taking forward the Design Your Degree (DYD) programme as an innovative academic initiative aimed at enabling students to explore multidisciplinary learning pathways and develop skills suited to contemporary challenges.

Prof. Singh said universities and colleges must evolve as dynamic centres of ideas, innovation and research where students are encouraged to think independently, undertake meaningful projects and engage with real-world challenges.

He also highlighted the significance of integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into academics, teaching-learning processes and research, enabling institutions to remain responsive to emerging global developments.

Earlier, Prof. Nilofer Khan, Vice-Chancellor, University of Kashmir, in her remarks highlighted the University's commitment towards advancing academic

excellence, research, innovation and student-centric reforms.

Prof. Khan said the University of Kashmir remains committed to achieving the objectives envisioned under NEP-2020 by strengthening collaboration among universities, colleges and government institutions. She said the J&K Higher Education Council has created an important platform for collective thinking and developing a shared roadmap for transforming higher education across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Committee reviewed the progress achieved on decisions taken during previous meetings of the Higher Education Council and held detailed deliberations on strengthening the implementation of the Design Your Degree initiative, promoting undergraduate research, entrepreneurship and innovation-led education.

Prof. Shobha Bagai, Director, Cluster Innovation Centre, University of Delhi, shared her insights on multidisciplinary education, innovation ecosys-

tems and experiential learning models. She emphasised the need to encourage creativity, research aptitude and entrepreneurial thinking among students from the undergraduate level and highlighted the importance of designing academic frameworks that connect classroom learning with practical problem-solving.

The Executive Committee also discussed the integration of Artificial Intelligence in teaching, learning and research programmes across higher educational institutions. Members deliberated upon strategies to leverage AI for enhancing academic practices, improving research outcomes and preparing students for future opportunities.

The meeting also reviewed initiatives related to entrepreneurship and innovation, proposed programmes under the Higher Education Council framework, and discussed budgetary provisions and other academic matters.

The meeting was attended by

Shri Ram Niwas Sharma (IAS), Principal Secretary to Government, Higher Education Department, J&K; Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice-Chancellor, University of Jammu; Prof. Shakil A. Romshoo, Vice-Chancellor, Islamic University of Science and Technology; Prof. Mohammad Mobin, Vice-Chancellor, Cluster University Srinagar; Prof. K. S. Chandrasekar, Vice-Chancellor, Cluster University of Jammu; Prof. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, Director Colleges, J&K; Prof. (Dr.) Seema Naz, Nodal Principal, Government College of Education (IASE); Dr. Naveen Anand, Principal, Government College for Women, Parade Ground Jammu; and Dr. Gunet Singh Sudan, OSD to Vice-Chairman, J&K Higher Education Council, among others.

Prof. Pragati Kumar, Vice-Chancellor, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU), and Prof. B. N. Tripathi, Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST-Jammu, joined the meeting through online mode and participated in the deliberations.

Several delegations call on CM Omar Abdullah at Raabita, seek resolution of public issues

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 09: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today met several public delegations at Raabita and listened to their grievances and demands concerning various public and sector-specific issues. A delegation of the Industrial POP Association, Khunmoh, called on the Chief Minister and highlighted the challenges confronting the Plaster of Paris (POP) industry in Kashmir due to the non-availability of gypsum.

The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to the delegation and assured its members that the matter would be examined in consultation with the concerned departments to explore a sustainable solution.

Later, a delegation of the Khidmat Centre Association met the Chief Minister and submitted a proposal concerning them.

The Chief Minister assured the delegation that its representation would be examined on merit in consultation with the concerned departments.



High Court Judges inspect New High Court Complex site in Srinagar; stress timely, quality completion

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 9: Justice Sanjay Dhar, Chairman of the Building and Infrastructure Committee, along with Justices Rahul Bharti, Moksha Khajuria Kazmi, Member of the Building and Infrastructure Committee and Justice Shahzad Azeem, on Thursday visited the site of the new High Court Complex, Srinagar to review the progress and pace of construction work.

On the occasion, the Executive Engineer, R&B Project Division-I Srinagar, delivered a detailed presentation on the status of the ongoing project. He apprised the Judges of the various phases of construction completed so far and outlined the new works scheduled to be taken up in the future.

During the on-spot inspection, the Judges reviewed all aspects of the construction work. They directed the concerned authorities and executing agencies to expedite the pace of work and ensure timely completion of the project, while underscoring the need



to adhere to quality and the highest standards of workmanship.

Registrar Judicial, Srinagar, Joint Registrar Judicial, Srinagar, Registrar Infrastructure and other officers of the R&B Department accompanied the Judges during the visit.

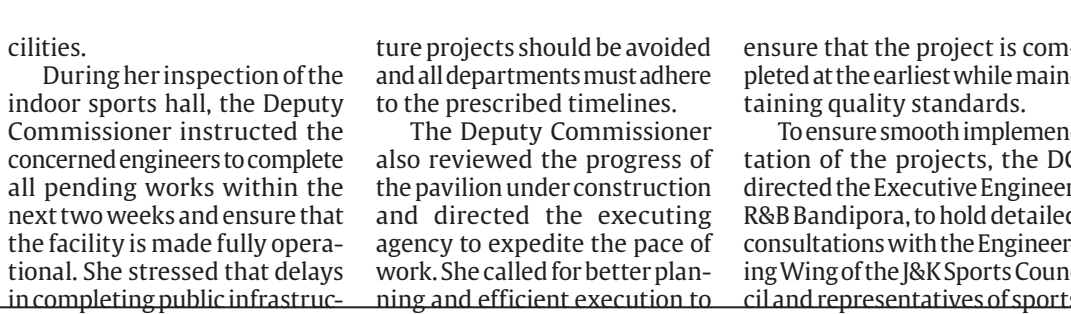
DC Bandipora Reviews Stadium Works, Sets Timelines for Completion

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JULY 09: In a bid to accelerate the development of sports infrastructure in the district, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, on Thursday conducted a comprehensive inspection of S.K. Sports Stadium, Bandipora, and reviewed the progress of various ongoing developmental works. During the visit, she issued strict timelines for the completion of key projects and stressed the need for coordinated efforts to make modern sports facilities available to athletes at the earliest.

The Deputy Commissioner inspected different components of the stadium, including the playfield, indoor sports hall and pavilion, and held a detailed review meeting with concerned officers, engineers, contractors and representatives of sports associations to assess the status of the works.

Reviewing the development of the playfield, the DC directed the executing agency to complete the filling and levelling work within one month, emphasizing that the ground should be made ready for sporting activities without unnecessary delay. She said timely completion of the work would enable local players to benefit from improved fa-



During her inspection of the indoor sports hall, the Deputy Commissioner instructed the concerned engineers to complete all pending works within the next two weeks and ensure that the facility is made fully operational. She stressed that delays in completing public infrastruc-

ture projects should be avoided and all departments must adhere to the prescribed timelines. The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the progress of the pavilion under construction and directed the executing agency to expedite the pace of work. She called for better planning and efficient execution to

ensure that the project is completed at the earliest while maintaining quality standards. To ensure smooth implementation of the projects, the DC directed the Executive Engineer, R&B Bandipora, to hold detailed consultations with the Engineering Wing of the J&K Sports Council and representatives of sports

associations. She said better coordination among all stakeholders would help resolve project-related issues promptly and prevent delays in execution.

Interacting with the contractors at the site, the Deputy Commissioner urged them to mobilise adequate manpower, machinery and other resources to speed up the pace of construction. She also instructed them to maintain the highest quality standards while ensuring that all ongoing works are completed within the stipulated time frame.

Reiterating the district administration's commitment to strengthening sports infrastructure, the Deputy Commissioner called upon all concerned departments and executing agencies to work in close coordination and fulfil their responsibilities efficiently.

She said the timely completion of the projects would provide improved infrastructure for sportspersons and encourage greater participation in sporting activities across the district.

Among those present during the visit were Executive Engineer, R&B Bandipora; Executive Engineer, PDD Bandipora; Assistant Engineer and Junior Engineer of the J&K Sports Council; Tehsildar Bandipora; concerned contractors; and representatives of various sports associations.

Chairman DLSA Pulwama flags off Multi-utility Vehicle for Legal Aid Outreach

HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, JULY 09: In a significant step towards strengthening legal aid services in remote areas, the Chairman, District Legal Services Authority (Principal District & Sessions Judge), Pulwama today flagged off a newly allotted Mahindra Bolero Neo from the District Court Complex, Pulwama.



The Multi-Utility Vehicle has been allotted to DLSA Pulwama by the J&K Legal Services Authority. The allotment aims at enhancing the outreach of legal services and ensuring effective delivery of justice, particularly to tribal, marginalized and far-flung areas of the district.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman said that the vehicle will play a vital role in bridging the gap between Legal Services Institutions and the people residing in remote areas of District Pulwama. He stated that the vehicle will be extensively used for conducting legal awareness campaigns and participation in mega legal services camps.

Emphasizing on accountability and proper utilization, the Chairman directed that the vehicle shall be used strictly in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) issued by National Legal Services Authority. He further instructed the Secretary, DLSA Pulwama that the vehicle is utilized exclusively for public welfare and legal aid purposes. "The objective is to take justice to the doorsteps of those who need it the most."

This vehicle will help our Panel Lawyers and PLVs to reach tribal communities and inform them about their rights, government welfare schemes, and free legal aid available to them," the Chairman added.

The Judicial Officers, Secretary, DLSA Pulwama, Legal Aid Defense Counsels, Panel Lawyers, Para Legal Volunteers and staff members of DLSA were present during the flag-off ceremony.

The gathering expressed gratitude to the J&K Legal Services Authority for providing the much-needed mobility support to strengthen legal aid delivery in the district.

District Admin Budgam strengthens NMBA through Awareness, Pledge and Plantation Drives

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, JULY 09: District Administration Budgam today strengthened its ongoing efforts under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) by organizing a series of awareness, pledge and plantation programmes across the district, reaffirming its commitment towards building a healthy and drug-free society.

An awareness programme and pledge ceremony under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan was organized at the District Police Lines, Budgam, where participants pledged to remain committed to the fight against drug abuse and to spread awareness about its harmful consequences. The programme emphasized the importance of collective responsibility in safeguarding society, particularly the youth, from the menace of substance abuse.

In another significant initiative, the Forest Range Budgam organized a pledge ceremony-cum-awareness programme at Sheikh-ul-Alam Hall, Budgam under the banner of the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan. The programme focused on sensitizing participants about the ill effects of drug addiction, promoting preventive measures and inspiring citizens to actively contribute towards the mission of a drug-free Budgam.



Adding an environmental dimension to the campaign, a plantation drive was conducted today at Government Degree College (GDC), Magam. The initiative highlighted the importance of environmental conservation alongside social well-being while reinforcing the message of adopting a healthy, drug-free lifestyle. Students, faculty members and officials actively participated in the plantation drive and reiterated their commitment to the objectives of the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan.

The programmes witnessed enthusiastic participation from officials, students and members of the public, reflecting the growing community support for the nationwide campaign against drug abuse. The District Administration Budgam reiterated its unwavering commitment to further strengthening the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan through sustained awareness campaigns, community participation and inter-departmental coordination, urging all sections of society to actively join the mission of making Budgam a drug-free district.

DC Shopian reviews TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyan Urges coordinated action to make Shopian TB-free

HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, JULY 09: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta today chaired a review meeting of TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyan here at Mini Secretariat, Shopian to assess the progress of tuberculosis elimination efforts across the district.

During the meeting, the DC reviewed the status of TB case detection, treatment outcomes, follow-up mechanisms and awareness initiatives being undertaken in the district. He stressed the need for intensified screening, early diagnosis, timely treatment and coordinated efforts to achieve the objective of a TB-free



Shopian.

The DC directed the Health Department to strengthen community outreach, ensure regular monitoring of patients, enhance

public awareness regarding TB prevention and treatment and maintain close coordination among all stakeholders for effective implementation of the TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyan.

He emphasized that sustained efforts, active public participation and efficient healthcare delivery for achieving the national goal of eliminating tuberculosis within the stipulated timeline.

The meeting was attended by CMO, Shopian, Dr. Saima Bhat; MS, DH, Shopian, Dr. Arshid Qadri; DTO, Dr. Aijaz Patloo, BMOs, besides Senior Treatment Supervisors (STS) and Senior Treatment Laboratory Supervisors (STLS).

DC Budgam reviews progress on demarcation of Hokersar Wetland

Stresses on time bound completion of demarcation process

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, JULY 09: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan today chaired a meeting to review the progress of the ongoing demarcation of Hokersar Wetland, a designated Ramsar Site.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Budgam, Afroza Bano; SDM (West) Srinagar, Irfan Bahadur; Divisional Forest Officer, DFO Wild

life, Mohd Altaf, Photo Interpretation Division J&K, Divisional Forest Officer, Settlement & Demarcation Srinagar, Range Officer Hokersar, Tehsildar Budgam, Naib Tehsildar, Regional Director, Survey & Land Records Srinagar, Settlement Assistant, Regional Director Survey & Land Records Srinagar, besides other concerned officers.

During the meeting, the DC took detailed review of the progress achieved in the demarcation



process.

He assessed the status of field verification, boundary assessment, geo-referenced mapping, and the availability of relevant revenue and survey records required for the exercise.

The DC said that scientific and accurate demarcation is imperative for its long-term conservation and protection. He stressed that the exercise should be carried out with precision and in accordance with the prescribed norms.

The DC underscored the importance of close coordination among the Revenue, Forest and Survey & Land Records departments to ensure smooth execution of the demarcation process.

The DC Stresses on time bound completion of the demarcation process, submit regular progress reports, and ensure completion of the demarcation exercise within the stipulated timeframe.

The DC said that clear identification of the wetland boundaries is essential to prevent encroachments and strengthen conservation measures aimed at preserving the ecological integrity and biodiversity of the Ramsar Site.

DECC organises job fair at Rajouri

HT NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI, JULY 09: The District Employment and Counselling Centre (DECC) today organised a mega job fair at PWD Dak Bungalow, Rajouri, providing a platform for unemployed youth to explore employment opportunities in the private sector.

The event was presided over by MLA Thanamandi Muzaffar Iqbal Khan.

The District Employment Officer briefed the gathering on objectives of the mega job fair and the Mission YUVA initiative, highlighting employment and self-employment opportunities being facilitated through the DECC.

MLA Muzaffar Iqbal Khan encouraged unemployed youth to make full use of such initiatives and strive to become job creators rather than job seekers, saying Mission YUVA and similar programmes aim to empower young people through skill development, entrepreneurship and



enhanced access to livelihood opportunities.

More than 20 private companies and recruiting agencies set up recruitment stalls, interacting with aspiring candidates and offering opportunities across different sectors. Over 500 unemployed candidates participated, with a large number submitting resumes and completing registration.

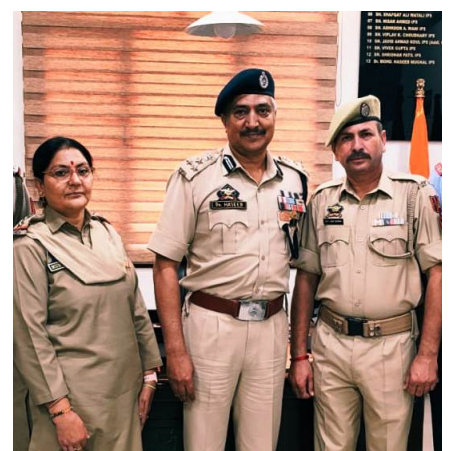
Pipping ceremony of newly promoted head constables held at RTHQ Jammu

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 09: A pipping ceremony of newly promoted head constables of Traffic Police was held at Range Traffic Headquarters (RTHQ) Jammu, where Sgt Santok Singh, Sgt Suraj Kumar Bhat and Sgt Sanjeev Kumar were pinned the rank of head constable.

Dr Mohd Haseeb Mughal, DIG Traffic Range Jammu, along with Ramesh Kataria, Superintendent of Police (S)/Principal Private Secretary, formally decorated the officials with their new ranks. Among those present were Voonesh Sangotra (Sr PO, RTHQ), Inspr Ruby Dhar (PA), SI Sham Lal, ASI (S) Nagesh Sharma and other staff members.

The DIG Traffic Range Jammu congratulated the officials on their promotion, earned on the strength of clean and unblemished service records and expressed



confidence in their future performance. He underlined the importance of integrity, hard work and a sense of responsibility in upholding the efficiency and dignity of the force.

Satish Sharma secures breakthrough on mutton dealers' issues during meetings in Punjab

HT NEWS NETWORK

CHANDIGARH, JULY 9: In a significant step towards resolving the long-pending issues faced by the mutton dealers, Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, today held a series of meetings with the Punjab Government, resulting in immediate directions for addressing the concerns of the trading community.

The Minister held detailed discussions with the Punjab's Animal and Sheep Husbandry Minister, the Chief Secretary of Punjab, the Secretary, Science & Technology and the Secretary, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj.

The primary focus of the meetings was to find an immediate and practical resolution to the issues affecting the mutton dealers, which have been causing hardships to the traders and impacting the smooth movement of livestock.

During the marathon deliberations, Satish Sharma strongly projected the concerns of the mutton dealers. He emphasized the need for coordinated action between the governments of Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab to facilitate hassle-free movement



of livestock while ensuring compliance with all regulatory requirements.

Responding positively to the Minister's intervention, the Punjab Government issued on-the-spot instructions to the concerned departments to take immediate steps for resolving the issues. The decisions taken during the meetings are expected to significantly ease the difficulties being faced by the mutton dealers and ensure

smoother coordination between Punjab and J&K.

Expressing satisfaction over the outcome of the meetings, Satish Sharma said that safeguarding the interests of traders and ensuring uninterrupted supply of essential commodities remains a priority of the Government. He said the positive response from the Punjab Government reflects the spirit of cooperative federalism and inter-

state coordination in resolving issues affecting the livelihoods of thousands of people.

The meetings also featured extensive discussions on strengthening cooperation in the field of animal husbandry. Both sides explored measures to improve livestock management, disease control, scientific breeding practices and veterinary services through greater collaboration and exchange of best

practices.

In separate discussions with the senior officials, the Minister also reviewed opportunities for enhanced cooperation in the fields of Science & Technology, innovation, digital governance and research. He stressed the need to leverage technology for improving public service delivery and promoting sustainable development.

The growing menace of drug abuse also figured prominently during the discussions. Satish Sharma held detailed deliberations with the senior Punjab officials on the state's comprehensive anti-drug strategy, particularly its community-based model involving Village Defence Committees and a dedicated 24x7 monitoring mechanism. He said these initiatives have shown encouraging results and would be examined for suitable adoption in Jammu and Kashmir to strengthen the fight against drug abuse and protect the youth from the scourge of narcotics.

The Minister thanked the Punjab Government for its prompt response and assured the mutton dealers that the Jammu and Kashmir Government would continue to work closely with all the stakeholders to ensure that their genuine concerns are addressed in a time-bound manner.

Colourful Dhamali Dance Programme Held at Kutbal, Chadoora Budgam

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, JUNE 9: Shukur Shah Dambali Dance Centre "SSDDC" Gopalpora Chadoora organized a vibrant cultural programme featuring the traditional Kashmiri folk dance Dhamali at Kutbal, Chadoora Budgam under the Repertory Grant Scheme (Guru Shishya Parampara) of the Ministry of Culture Govt. of India New Delhi. The programme showcased captivating performances by the artists of the "SSDDC" who enthralled the audience with their energetic presentation, colourful costumes and authentic depiction of Kashmir's rich folk dance



tradition. A large number of local residents, students and culture enthusiasts attended the event and appreciated the efforts being made to preserve and promote the region's traditional performing arts through such initiatives. The programme was directed by Manzoor Ahmad Shah, President of Shukur Shah Dambali Dance Centre "SSDDC" who reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to safeguarding and promoting Kashmir's rich cultural heritage through regular cultural performances and training programmes.

DIPR organises Drug Awareness Programme at GDC Ganderbal

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, JULY 09: The Cultural Unit Kashmir of the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), in collaboration with Government Degree College (GDC) Ganderbal, organised a Drug Awareness and Prevention Programme on the theme "Drug-Free Jammu & Kashmir: Challenges and the Way Forward" at the college auditorium.

The programme was coordinated by Dr. Wasia and Dr. Jamsheeda Akhter, while Prof. Fouzia Fatima, Principal, GDC Ganderbal, highlighted the role of educational institutions in creating awareness



against drug abuse and promoting healthy lifestyles among youth.

Dr. Mohammad Zubair Ahmad Lattoo, Deputy Director (Hqrs), DIPR, who attended as Chief Guest, stressed the need for collective efforts to combat drug addiction and urged students to become ambassadors of awareness in their communities.

While AECO, Cultural Unit DIPR, Syed Shakeel Shan encouraged students to channel their energies towards education, sports, culture and creative pursuits, and spread awareness against drug abuse.

The programme featured a seminar and a skit highlighting the harmful effects of drug addiction. In the speech competition, Lubna Jan secured first position, followed by Rukaya Batool and Mohammad Shadab. The skit presentation by students received appreciation for its impactful message.

Certificates were distributed among participants and winners by the dignitaries. The programme concluded with a collective pledge to work towards a Drug-Free Jammu & Kashmir.

Saurabh Bhagat chaired review meeting on J&K SAMADHAN

Directs Migration to MeghRaj Cloud and Initiation of J&K SAMADHAN 3.0

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 9: Commissioner Secretary, Department of Public Grievances, Saurabh Bhagat today chaired a review meeting to assess the functioning and performance of J&K SAMADHAN, the Union Territory's flagship grievance redressal and monitoring platform.

During the meeting, a comprehensive review of J&K SAMADHAN was undertaken covering grievance registration, disposal trends, departmental performance, citizen feedback mechanisms and overall system functionality.

Commissioner Secretary emphasized the importance of strengthening the grievance redressal ecosystem to ensure timely, transparent and effective resolution of public grievances and to further enhance citizen satisfaction.

The meeting was informed that J&K SAMADHAN is proposed to

be migrated to the MeghRaj Government Cloud infrastructure. The migration is expected to provide a secure, scalable and reliable hosting environment, improve system availability, strengthen disaster recovery capabilities and align the platform with the Government of India's cloud adoption framework. Shri Saurabh Bhagat directed the concerned officers to take necessary steps for migration of the platform to MeghRaj Cloud in a time-bound manner to ensure enhanced performance, security and operational efficiency.

Commissioner Secretary also directed the concerned officers to initiate the development of J&K SAMADHAN 3.0, envisaged as a next-generation citizen engagement and governance platform for the Union Territory. He emphasized that the proposed platform should build upon the strengths of the existing J&K SAMADHAN system while incorporating advanced technologies

and best practices from successful citizen governance platforms implemented across the country.

Saurabh Bhagat observed that J&K SAMADHAN 3.0 should evolve beyond a conventional grievance redressal platform and serve as a comprehensive citizen-government interaction ecosystem. The proposed platform shall integrate citizen engagement, grievance redressal, service delivery monitoring, governance analytics, Artificial Intelligence, GIS-enabled monitoring and decision support systems into a unified digital framework.

Commissioner Secretary further directed that the proposed platform should leverage emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), AI-powered Voicebots and Chatbots, multilingual citizen interfaces, predictive analytics, governance dashboards and intelligent decision-support tools. The platform shall provide seamless access to citizens through mul-

iple channels including web portals, mobile applications, toll-free helplines, WhatsApp, SMS, email and other digital interfaces to ensure inclusive and accessible governance across Jammu & Kashmir.

During the meeting, Saurabh Bhagat emphasized the need to replicate successful grievance redressal models adopted by other States within the JK Samadhan framework. In this regard, it was directed that the feasibility of adopting and suitably customizing proven best practices from other States be examined for implementation in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, with a view to expediting the development of a modern, efficient, and citizen-centric governance ecosystem.

Commissioner Secretary further directed that Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N) may be considered as the Technology Partner for J&K

SAMADHAN 3.0 for providing technical expertise in platform integration, customization, localization, GIS integration, dashboard development, interoperability with departmental systems and implementation support. The proposed collaboration is expected to facilitate adoption of a proven governance framework while reducing development timelines, implementation risks and overall project costs.

Saurabh Bhagat directed the Department of Public Grievances, State e-Mission Team (SeMT) Department of Information Technology to work in close coordination for preparation of a detailed roadmap, technical architecture and implementation strategy for the development and rollout of J&K SAMADHAN 3.0.

The meeting was attended by officers of the Department of Public Grievances, Department of Information Technology, State e-Mission Team (SeMT) and other concerned stakeholders.

Committee on Ethics discusses code of conduct; proposes orientation, institutional outreach

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 09: A meeting of the Committee on Ethics of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly was convened today under the Chairmanship of MLA Nizam-Ud-Din Bhat.

The meeting was attended by legislators Salman Sagar, Peerzada Feroze, Kuldeep Raj Dubey, Satish Kumar, Surinder Kumar and Arvind Gupta, alongside senior officers from the Assembly Secretariat.

The Committee initiated deliberations on establishing a foundational framework to encourage public confidence in parliamentary institutions and their members. Acknowledging contemporary challenges faced by

the legislative bodies, the members unanimously emphasised the necessity of upholding stringent norms, ethical standards and core values to guide the public conduct and responsibilities of representatives. To this end, the Committee resolved to formulate a comprehensive Code of Conduct to serve as an institutional guide for members.

Recognizing the vital role of ethical values in public life, the Committee decided to organize an orientation programme for all members of the Legislative Assembly.

This initiative will include a comparative study of the operational frameworks of ethics committees across various State

Legislatures, as well as the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. To adopt best practices, the Committee emphasized the necessity of undertaking study tours to witness the practical functioning of these institutional mechanisms outside the Union Territory.

In a bid to institutionalize the evolving ethical standards, the Committee resolved to broaden its scope of engagement. The members proposed expanding outreach to external academic and civic institutions, including universities. This external consultation aims to gather diverse inputs on public expectations and define contemporary benchmarks for the conduct of public representatives both within and outside the House.

Legislators call on Javid Dar; discuss development priorities of Pampore, Sopore

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 9: MLA Pampore Justice (Retd.) Hainain Masoodi and MLA Sopore Irshad Rasool Kar today called on Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperatives and Election Department at the Civil Secretariat here and apprised him of various developmental issues and public welfare concerns pertaining to their respective constituencies.

During the meeting, the legislators projected several constituency-specific demands, with emphasis on strengthening the public infrastructure, improving essential services and expediting developmental works. They sought the Minister's intervention for timely resolution of issues aimed at enhancing the quality of life of the people.

MLA Pampore, submitted a memorandum seeking the transfer of land from the Rural Development Department to the Health Department for upgradation and expansion of the Sub-District Hospital (SDH), Pampore. He requested the Minister to issue necessary directions to the concerned authorities to facilitate the transfer at the earliest so that the long-pending health infrastructure project could be taken up for implementation, ensuring improved healthcare facilities for the residents of Pampore.

The legislators also highlighted the issues related to road connectivity, public infrastructure, rural development, civic amenities and other constituency-specific developmental works, seeking government's intervention for their early redressal.

The Minister gave a patient hearing to the legislators and held detailed deliberations on all the issues projected during the meeting. He assured them that every genuine demand would be examined on merit and that necessary directions would be issued to the concerned departments for their prompt and time-bound resolution.

Sustainable tourism key to J&K's future: CM's Advisor Wani

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JUL 09: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's Advisor, Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the rise in tourist arrivals has brought greater responsibility to preserve destinations. "We have achieved remarkable success in tourism promotion, but now we must preserve our destinations. If we fail to protect them, we risk losing both our identity and tourist foothold," he

said. He called for the preparation and timely implementation of realistic master plans for tourist destinations, saying delays have resulted in unregulated construction and infrastructure gaps.

Wani said the government should develop new tourism destinations instead of concentrating visitors at a few traditional hotspots.

"We should identify and develop greenfield destinations with proper road connectivity and infrastructure so that tourist flow is distributed across Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Wani stressed that tourism infrastructure must include adequate parking, food courts, public amenities and designated spaces for local stakeholders such as pony owners, guides and vendors.

Highlighting the growing waste burden at tourist spots, Wani said scientific garbage disposal systems are essential to preserve the Valley's natural assets.

He also pitched for regulating the carrying capacity of tourist destinations and improving traffic management to prevent congestion.

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HT EDITORIAL

Steadfast Vigilance
Must Sustain the Spirit of Holy
Pilgrimage, Amarnath Yatra

With nearly a week of the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra having passed peacefully, there is every reason to acknowledge the remarkable efforts that have gone into ensuring the smooth conduct of one of the country's most demanding annual pilgrimages. The successful progress of the Yatra so far reflects not only meticulous planning but also the unwavering commitment of the Jammu and Kashmir administration, security forces and countless personnel working tirelessly behind the scenes. The real challenge, however, is not merely to begin the pilgrimage successfully but to sustain the same level of efficiency, vigilance and public service until the last pilgrim returns home safely. Every passing day brings fresh logistical and operational demands. Weather conditions remain unpredictable, the mountainous terrain continues to test both pilgrims and administrators alike, and the steady movement of thousands of devotees requires constant monitoring and coordination.

The administration under Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha deserves credit for maintaining a proactive approach. Regular field inspections, close monitoring of facilities and continuous review of security and civic arrangements have demonstrated that the focus remains firmly on ensuring that no aspect of the pilgrimage is left to chance. Such direct oversight sends a reassuring message to devotees and reinforces confidence in the institutional mechanisms managing this complex exercise.

Equally commendable has been the seamless coordination among security agencies, civil administration, health services, disaster response teams and municipal bodies. Their collective effort has ensured that essential services continue to function efficiently despite the demanding circumstances. Medical assistance, sanitation, traffic regulation, accommodation and emergency response systems have all contributed to creating an environment where pilgrims can undertake their spiritual journey with confidence.

The role of the security establishment remains particularly significant. Maintaining a secure atmosphere without disrupting the spiritual character of the pilgrimage requires professionalism, restraint and constant alertness. The peaceful conduct witnessed during the first week underlines the effectiveness of the elaborate security framework that has been put in place. Nevertheless, experience teaches that complacency is the greatest risk in any large-scale operation. Vigilance must therefore remain uncompromising throughout the remainder of the pilgrimage.

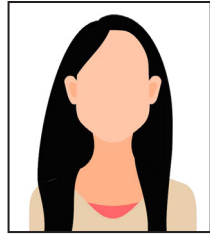
The people of Jammu and Kashmir have once again upheld their long-standing tradition of hospitality. Local residents, service providers and volunteers have extended invaluable support to pilgrims, reminding the nation that the Valley's spirit of warmth and coexistence continues to remain one of the strongest pillars of the Yatra's success. Their cooperation complements official efforts and strengthens the atmosphere of mutual respect and harmony. As the pilgrimage enters its next phase, the administration faces the equally important task of maintaining consistency. Large public events are judged not only by how they begin but by how they conclude. Every pilgrim who returns home safely becomes an ambassador of the experience, carrying with them memories of both the sacred journey and the quality of public services they received along the way.

The encouraging beginning of this year's Yatra should therefore serve as motivation rather than a reason for satisfaction. Sustained coordination, uninterrupted essential services, continued security preparedness and compassionate public administration will determine the ultimate success of the pilgrimage. The first week has demonstrated that careful planning and dedicated execution can overcome even the most formidable challenges. The responsibility now is to carry that momentum forward with the same determination, ensuring that the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra concludes with the same efficiency, dignity and devotion with which it has progressed so far.

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From the Living Room to the Day of Judgement

The Terrifying Weight of Raising Sons



UZMA NAZIR

Parenting is not a personal lifestyle choice; it is a sacred trust, an amanah, for which parents are directly accountable before Allah. Every time a horrific headline shatters our collective conscience—whether it is a brutal assault case in Kashmir, shocking exploitation cases from Rajasthan, or similar moral crises across the world—society follows a predictable, reactive script. We demand swift legal action. But courts are reactive; true prevention begins in our living rooms. As Frederick Douglass wisely said, "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."

In Islam, this responsibility is made even clearer. Allah says: "O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones" (Surah At-Tahrim 66:6). This verse shows that parenting is not only about providing food, clothing, and education; it is about protecting faith, character, and moral direction.

The High Cost of Busy Parenting

We live in a tragic modern irony: we work harder than ever to provide material comfort, yet we leave our children unattended in the lawless wilderness of the internet. When parents are too busy, a dangerous psychological vacuum forms. This vacuum is quickly filled by toxic digital algorithms, gaming group chats, and harmful influences that gladly do the teaching before parents do.

Islam reminds us that children are shaped by their environment and by what their parents model. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Every child is born upon fitrah..." meaning a natural pure state, and it is the parents who influence the child's development. This means the home is the first classroom, and what happens there shapes the future.

Islam and the Duty to Raise Men of Adab

Islam commands men to lower their gaze. Respect and consent are not optional social preferences; they are religious obligations. Allah says: "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their chastity" (Surah An-Nur 24:30). This command is

deeply relevant to raising sons in a world where entitlement, lust, and violence can be normalized.

Parents must treat children as an amanah. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said that no father can give his child anything better than good manners and noble character. This is why a son must understand that he is never entitled to another person's time, attention, or body. True masculinity must be anchored in emotional control, empathy, and the protection of the vulnerable, never in dominance, arrogance, or physical aggression.

This is also why parental example matters so deeply. As James Baldwin observed, "Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them." Boys do not only learn from lectures; they learn from the way fathers speak to mothers, how adults handle anger, and whether home teaches respect or entitlement.

The Moral Duty to Examine Ourselves

Parents often blame external influences—modern media, the West, bad friends, or the internet—for a child's moral decay. But before blaming the world, we must ask what our own homes are teaching. As Carl Jung warned, "If there is anything we wish to change in the child, we should first examine it and see whether it is not something that could better be changed in ourselves."

Islam strongly supports this principle of self-correction. The Prophet ﷺ said: "He is not one of us who does not show mercy to our young and respect to our elders." This hadith reminds parents that good character begins with mercy, gentleness, and humility inside the home. If we want sons who respect women, we must first model respect in the home. If we want children to use screens wisely, we must also show discipline in our own screen use.

The Hysterical Proof of Present Parenting

History repeatedly shows that great minds are often shaped by highly intentional and present parents.

Imam al-Bukhari was raised by a widowed mother who personally guided his education and helped shape history's greatest master of hadith. Imam al-Shafi'i learned under hardship because his mother refused to let poverty excuse parental duty. Thomas Edison, once dismissed by school, was transformed by a mother who believed in him and educated him at home.

These stories are not sentimental decorations. They are proof that presence, discipline, and sacrifice in parenting can shape the course of history. Islam honors this effort, because raising righteous

children is one of the greatest forms of worship.

The Blueprint: Three Stages of Parenting

Parents must balance emotional security with strict boundaries. A child's moral development does not happen by accident; it requires deliberate stages of guidance.

Age 0 to 7 (play): Flood with Love

Children must be surrounded by affection, safety, and warmth so they never seek validation from predators online. In Islamic terms, this is a time to nurture fitrah, mercy, and attachment to goodness.

Age 7 to 14: Discipline and Tarbiyah

This is the stage for teaching boundaries, manners, internet safety, privacy, and the absolute law of consent. This is also the time to teach the commands of modesty, lowering the gaze, and respectful behavior, so that moral formation is being laid early.

Age 14 to 21 (friendship): Be a Trusted Advisor

Teenagers need guidance without humiliation. Parents should become non-judgmental advisors so children can openly report peer pressure, harmful influences, or moral confusion without fear of being crushed by shame. Islam encourages wisdom, mercy, and sincere advice, not harshness that closes hearts.

Why Prevention Must Begin at Home

Our streets cannot be cleaned until our homes are reformed. Safety begins with the moral boundaries we instill today. A society that tolerates aggression in boys as a "passing phase" is a society that quietly manufactures future harm.

The goal is not merely to raise successful sons, but righteous ones. Sons who know that strength means self-control. Sons who understand that women are not to be consumed, mocked, or violated. Sons who carry adab as part of their identity.

From the Living Room to the Day of Judgment

Every correction, every silence, every example in the living room carries weight that will echo into eternity. The choices parents make today—whether to guide, protect, correct, or ignore—will be answered before Allah. And it may become one of the greatest acts of worship a parent can perform...

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I Saw People With Nothing



SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Most of us move from villages to cities due to hardship, weaving dreams. Different minds have different dreams; some achieve them while others remain regretful. Later, we realize the same truth: enjoy your time nothing is permanent. Not every wish becomes reality.

One thing I have experienced is that we should never judge people by their intellectual potential, behaviour, will-power, or energy. I have seen people with nothing no big dreams who were satisfied with a few belongings, and now they are leading those who were energetic, smart, and full of potential. This is the reality of life: do your best and trust your destiny. In fact, the most successful person is the one who remains satisfied and calm throughout life. Life teaches you and me lessons every day; simply learn, try to be happy, and keep others happy.

There was a time when our minds were filled with countless hopes. Life is truly a blessing from Allah (SWT). People hold different opinions and views about life. Our perception of life changes with time the past felt different from the present, and the future remains beyond our anticipation.

Our surroundings the abiotic components of the environment such as air, water, and soil are deeply connected to our daily lives. Life seems to exist within these elements. This is not just poetic imagination; it also has scientific grounding.

People with a poetic mindset often see these elements as symbols of emotion. "This air," they say, "touches my

face and reminds me how mesmerizing it is. I wish I could feel the touch of my beloved's long, flowing black hair in its breeze." Or, "This water reminds me of someone calling my name, as if my beloved still lingers around me." Even the trees seem to whisper, "Where is the one who once gave meaning to your life."

Life carries different meanings for different people. Some are mischievous, some stern, others light-hearted or serious. Some turn away from worldly attractions and seek renunciation. Some are poetic, some scientific, and others political. Some love reading books, while others enjoy driving or going on adventurous journeys.

And then there are those who fall in love for no clear reason at all.

Why do we fall in love with strangers without knowing their intentions, attitudes, or true nature? Love is natural. Good-hearted people often fall in love without bias or judgment. Love is an extraordinary and indescribable feeling. It makes you feel as though the whole world belongs to you, as if you are steering its course. Love removes hatred and gives birth to kindness and generosity. It lifts your mind into another dimension and fills your heart with warmth.

I had an unforgettable circle of friends during my school and college days. A few of them left a lasting impact on me people I will never forget. I want them to know that their love and kindness still live in my heart.

We used to sit on the same bench for more than five years. On that bench, we dreamed together and shared countless hopes. We discussed the priceless treasures life offers and planned our futures with excitement and innocence. That bench was not just a piece of wood and iron; it was a witness to our laughter, secrets, arguments, and dreams.

Even now, when I pass by that bench, it seems to call out to me:

"Hey buddy, how are you? Will you come again this evening to share new ideas?"

And I reply silently in my heart:

"Though those times have passed, the memories remain. The only difference is that I no longer have you all by my side to sit and dream together."

Sometimes it feels as if everything has vanished like children who were once playing happily but suddenly disappeared with the setting sun. The laughter that once filled the air has faded into silence. Strangers now walk along those same paths, speaking gently and carrying the rare fragrance of floral perfumes that linger briefly before disappearing.

That bench holds my love and my most cherished memories.

I cannot change the past, but I can relive the beautiful moments I shared with my friends. I know I cannot bring back those exact days, yet I can preserve them in my heart. Memories are powerful; they remind us of who we were and how far we have come.

There is one thing that remains forever unchanged: time.

Time cannot be reversed. It shapes our fate, influences our destiny, and leads us through the journey of life from childhood to youth, from youth to adulthood, and finally to our last chapter. Time teaches us lessons that no classroom ever can. It shows us the value of relationships, the importance of patience, and the reality of change.

As children, we longed to grow up quickly. We thought adulthood would bring complete freedom and happiness. But as adults, we often look back at our childhood with longing. We miss the simplicity of those days—the carefree laughter, the small dreams, and the strong friendships that felt unbreakable.

Life is a journey of constant transformation. Friends part ways, circumstances change, and priorities shift. Some friendships fade not because of hatred, but because of distance and

responsibilities. Yet true connections never disappear; they remain alive in memories and prayers.

Whenever I think of those days, I realize how blessed I was to have such genuine companions. They taught me the meaning of loyalty, trust, and unconditional support. Together, we faced academic pressure, personal struggles, and moments of confusion about our futures. But we also celebrated small achievements and shared countless jokes that still bring a smile to my face.

The bench still stands there, silent and steady, as if guarding the stories of our youth. It reminds me that places can hold emotions just as deeply as people do. It reminds me that dreams may evolve, but hope never dies.

Today, life has taken each of us in different directions. Some are pursuing careers, some are building families, and others are chasing new ambitions. The world has become faster and more demanding. Yet deep within, a part of me remains seated on that bench laughing, dreaming, and believing that the future holds endless possibilities.

If I could speak to my younger self sitting on that bench, I would say:

"Value these moments. Cherish these friends. Time will move faster than you think. One day, these ordinary days will become extraordinary memories."

The bench of hopes is not just a physical place; it is a symbol of youth, friendship, love, and dreams. It represents a chapter of life that shaped my personality and strengthened my heart. Though the pages of that chapter have turned, its words remain engraved in my soul.

And whenever I walk past that bench, I smile not with sadness, but with gratitude.

Because some places do not just hold memories.

They hold pieces of our hearts.

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The 'River' in Hermann Hesse's Siddhartha



■ DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* is a 1922 novel that deals with the spiritual journey of self-discovery of a man named Siddhartha during the time of the Gautam Buddha. The book, Hesse's ninth novel, was written in German, in a simple, lyrical style. It was published in the United States in 1951 by New Directions Publishing and became influential during the 1960s. Hesse dedicated the first part of it to the French writer Romain Rolland and the second part to Wilhelm Gundert, his cousin. The story takes place in ancient India, where Siddhartha, the handsome son of a Brahmin, decides to leave his home in the hope of gaining spiritual illumination by becoming an ascetic Samana. Joined by his best friend Govinda, Siddhartha fasts, becomes homeless, renounces all personal possessions, and intensely meditates. Siddhartha crosses a river and the ferryman, whom Siddhartha is unable to pay, predicts that Siddhartha will return later to compensate him in some way. But interestingly enough, this river becomes a central metaphor in the novel.

The river in Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* stands as one of the most luminous symbols in modern spiritual literature. It is not simply a geographical feature through which the protagonist passes; it is the novel's beating heart, the teacher that speaks without words, the mirror in which Siddhartha finally sees the truth of existence. Hesse, drawing from Indian philosophy, Buddhist thought, and his own lifelong search for inner harmony, shapes the river into a metaphor of astonishing depth. It becomes the embodiment of time, the voice of unity, the dissolver of ego, and the reconciler of opposites. In Siddhartha's long and winding journey—from Brahmin youth to wandering ascetic, from lover and merchant to ferryman—the river remains the one constant, waiting patiently for him to return, to listen, and to understand.

To explore the river is to explore Siddhartha's awakening itself. The river is not a symbol that appears once; it evolves,

deepens, and transforms as Siddhartha's consciousness expands. It is a dynamic metaphor, revealing different truths at different stages of his life. In this way, the river mirrors the human condition: always flowing, always changing, yet always the same. Hesse's genius lies in making the river speak—not through mystical abstraction, but through the simple, elemental language of nature. The river's voice is the voice of life itself. The River is the first threshold, a mirror of Siddhartha's inner turmoil. When Siddhartha first encounters the river, he is not yet ready to understand it. He has left the Samanas, rejected the teachings of Gotama Buddha, and stands at a crossroads.

The river at this stage is a threshold—a boundary between the life he has known and the life he has yet to discover. Siddhartha crosses it physically, but not spiritually. He sees the water, hears its sound, but does not yet listen. The river reflects his inner state: restless, searching, fragmented. This early encounter is crucial because it establishes the river as a silent witness to Siddhartha's journey. It is present before his fall into worldly desire, before his despair, before his rebirth. The river is patient. It waits. It knows that Siddhartha will return when he is ready to hear its message. In this sense, the river symbolizes the ever-present possibility of enlightenment. It is always there, flowing beside the path of human life, but only those who are prepared to listen can understand its teachings. Siddhartha's inability to grasp the river's meaning at first reflects the universal truth that wisdom cannot be taught; it must be experienced.

The river is not a doctrine—it is a living reality. The river is the Voice of Timelessness, the collapse of Past, Present, and Future. One of the most profound revelations Siddhartha receives from the river is the nature of time. Hesse uses the river to dissolve the linear structure of past, present, and future. When Siddhartha sits by the river as a ferryman, he begins to hear its many voices: the laughter of children, the cries of lovers, the mourning of the dying, the chants of monks. All these voices exist simultaneously within the river's flow. This is the moment when Siddhartha realizes that time is an illusion. The river does not flow from past to future; it exists in an eternal present. Every moment is contained within it. The river teaches him that life is not a sequence of events but a unity in which all experiences

coexist. This insight is central to Siddhartha's enlightenment. His suffering had arisen from his belief in time—from regret over the past, longing for the future, and dissatisfaction with the present. The river frees him from this bondage. It shows him that every moment is necessary, every experience sacred, every path part of the whole.

Hesse's portrayal of time through the river echoes the Indian philosophical concept of *kalachakra*, the wheel of time, in which all moments are interconnected. It also resonates with Buddhist teachings on the eternal now. But Hesse does not present these ideas abstractly; he embodies them in the river's flow. The river becomes a teacher more powerful than any scripture because it reveals truth through direct experience. The River is the Teacher of Unity, the Reconciliation of Opposites. The central lesson Siddhartha learns from the river is the unity of all things. Throughout the novel, Siddhartha struggles with dualities: pleasure and pain, success and failure, spiritual and material, self and world. He seeks purity, rejects impurity, embraces asceticism, then embraces sensuality. His life is a pendulum swinging between extremes. The river teaches him that these opposites are illusions. In its waters, Siddhartha hears the laughter of the child he once was, the sorrow of the man he became, the wisdom of the ferryman he is now. All these selves coexist. The river does not judge. It accepts everything. This acceptance becomes the foundation of Siddhartha's enlightenment. He realizes that the world is not divided into sacred and profane, spiritual and worldly. Everything is part of the same flow. The river's unity dissolves his ego, his pride, his desire to be separate or superior. He becomes humble, open, receptive.

Hesse's river thus symbolizes the non-dualistic philosophy found in the Upanishads and in Buddhist thought. But again, Hesse avoids doctrinal exposition. Instead, he lets the river embody unity through its natural flow. The river does not choose its waters; it accepts rain, tears, blood, and blossoms alike. Siddhartha learns that enlightenment is not escape from the world but acceptance of it. The river is the Voice of Compassion: healing Siddhartha's wounds.

Siddhartha's greatest suffering arises from his relationship with his son. After years of spiritual growth, he finds himself tormented by attachment, longing, and heartbreak. His son rejects him, mocks him, and eventually runs away.

Siddhartha is devastated. He feels the same pain his own father once felt when Siddhartha left home. It is the river that heals him. The river teaches Siddhartha compassion—not through words, but through its gentle, continuous flow. It shows him that love does not possess; it allows. It shows him that suffering is part of the human experience, not a failure. It shows him that his son's departure is not a tragedy but a necessary part of the boy's own journey. In listening to the river, Siddhartha learns to let go. He learns to love without clinging. He learns to forgive himself and his son.

The river becomes a balm for his wounds, a reminder that all pain flows into the great unity of life. This aspect of the river's symbolism is deeply human. It shows that enlightenment is not merely a philosophical insight but a transformation of the heart. Siddhartha becomes compassionate because he understands the interconnectedness of all beings. The river teaches him that to love is to allow others to follow their own life.

The culmination of Siddhartha's spiritual journey occurs when he hears the river speak the sacred syllable *Om*. This moment is the climax of the novel, the instant when Siddhartha attains complete enlightenment. *Om* represents the unity of all things, the eternal sound of creation, the vibration underlying the universe. When Siddhartha hears *Om* in the river, he realizes that the river is not merely water—it is the voice of existence itself. It contains all joys and sorrows, all beginnings and endings, all lives and deaths. It is the cosmic sound that dissolves all dualities. In this moment, Siddhartha becomes one with the river. He transcends the ego, the self, the illusion of separateness. He sees the world as a single, unified whole. He understands that enlightenment is not escape from life but immersion in it. Hesse's use of *Om* is significant because it connects Siddhartha's personal journey to universal spiritual traditions. But again, Hesse avoids dogma. *Om* is not presented as a religious formula but as a natural sound arising from the river's flow. It is the river's final gift, the key to Siddhartha's awakening.

While the river is the ultimate teacher,

Vasudeva the ferryman plays a crucial role as the human guide who helps Siddhartha interpret the river's messages. Vasudeva is not a preacher or philosopher; he is a listener. His wisdom comes from his ability to hear the river without imposing his own interpretations.

Vasudeva embodies the ideal spiritual mentor: humble, patient, compassionate, and free of ego. He does not teach Siddhartha through lectures but through example. He shows Siddhartha how to listen, how to observe, how to surrender to the river's wisdom. In this sense, Vasudeva represents the human dimension of enlightenment. The river may be the cosmic teacher, but humans need human guides. Siddhartha's relationship with Vasudeva is one of the most beautiful aspects of the novel because it shows that spiritual growth is not solitary. It requires companionship, humility, and shared silence. When Vasudeva finally departs into the forest, Siddhartha understands that he has absorbed all the lessons the ferryman could offer. The river remains, but Siddhartha is now ready to hear it fully.

At the end of the novel, Siddhartha becomes the river. He embodies its wisdom, its unity, its timelessness. He no longer seeks, no longer struggles, no longer divides the world into categories. He has returned to the source—not the physical river, but the inner river of consciousness. The river symbolizes Siddhartha's final realization: that life is a continuous flow, that all beings are interconnected, that time is an illusion, and that enlightenment lies in acceptance. Siddhartha's smile at the end of the novel reflects the river's serenity. It is the smile of one who has understood the essence of existence.

The river in *Siddhartha* is one of the most powerful symbols in modern literature. It is a teacher, a healer, a mirror, a scripture, and a cosmic voice. Through the river, Hesse expresses profound truths about time, unity, compassion, and enlightenment. The river's flow becomes the flow of life itself, and Siddhartha's awakening becomes a universal human possibility.

To read *Siddhartha* is to sit by the river with him, to listen to its many voices, to feel its timeless presence. The river invites us to let go of our illusions, to embrace the unity of existence, and to discover the peace that lies within. In the end, the river is not only Siddhartha's teacher—it is ours.

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The Legendary Military Lt General has done it all



■ MS NAZKI

Rugged, Raw and full of courage? This story is of that Lt General Pratik Sharma! The legendary Military Lt General has done it all Oscar-winning actor famously known for his deep voice and shaved head in *The King* and *The Ten Commandments*, left behind a mix of iconic movie lines, introspective life advice, and poignant public health warnings.

Some of his most memorable quotes include: *Life and Philosophy* "We are born alone, we live alone, we die alone. Everything in-between is a gift."

When you feel that you have arrived, you are dead. (Brynner even noted he wanted this phrase on his tombstone to avoid the complacency of resting on one's laurels). People don't know my real self, and they're not about to find out..... Lt General Pratik Sharma!

So let it be written. So let it be done. On stage I portray the King; he takes me over. I am only an adroit actor..... The extract of the story went something like this:

Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, Army Cdr NC visited the forward s of the Krishna Ghati and Poonch Sectors to review operational preparedness & security measures. During interaction with the troops, the Army Commander commended them for their alertness, untiring efforts to maintain operational readiness and resolve to safeguard the nation's frontiers under challenging conditions. He urged all ranks to

remain mission focused & to continue upholding the highest standards of operational excellence in the service of the Nation. The Krishna Ghati (KG) sector is a highly sensitive forward area along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir. Heavily guarded by the Indian Army's White Knight Corps, the region remains on high alert due to frequent infiltration attempts and cross-border ceasefire violations from across Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Because this is an active militarized zone near the border, access is strictly restricted. The Indian Army regularly conducts operations and maintains strict surveillance in the area to secure the frontiers and intercept intruders.

The Krishna Ghati (KG) sector in the Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir is a highly sensitive and strategic stretch along the Line of Control (LoC).

Historically, it has been a frequent flash-point for cross-border firing, infiltration attempts, and military standoffs between India and Pakistan since the 1947-1948 Kashmir War. Key Historical and Geopolitical Context: The 1947-1948 Conflict: The Poonch region—and by extension the approaches near Krishna Ghati—saw intense fighting during the Indo-Pak War of 1947. Indian forces and local militias fiercely defended the area against tribal raiders and the Pakistani military, carving out the historical Poonch bulge.

Infiltration Route: Due to its dense forests, rugged mountainous terrain, and proximity to the LoC, the KG sector has historically been a preferred route for Pakistan-backed militants and Border Action Team (BAT) units trying to infiltrate into Indian territory.

Ceasefire Violations: The sector has regularly witnessed heavy mortar shelling and ceasefire violations. Even following

the historic 2003 India-Pakistan ceasefire agreement, and its subsequent reaffirmation in 2021, the KG sector has remained volatile with recurrent escalations.

Anti-Infiltration Operations: Indian Army formations (such as the Krishna Ghati Brigade) maintain a heavy operational footprint here to conduct area domination, defuse landmines, and thwart cross-border terror plots.

The Indian Army's Krishna Ghati Brigade leads comprehensive civil-military engagement and youth outreach in the remote border villages of Poonch, along the Line of Control. Core initiatives under Operation Sadbhavana include Project Udaan (coaching for military schools), skill development for women, National Integration Tours, and the Krishna Ghati Premier League (KGPL).

The Indian Army's youth and community outreach in the Krishna Ghati (KG) sector of Poonch focuses on several targeted, actionable programs:

1. Education and Career Counseling Project Udaan: A flagship educational initiative designed to mentor talented students from isolated border areas. It provides free, quality coaching to prepare children for entrance examinations to prestigious institutions like Sainik Schools, Rashtriya Military Schools (RMS), and the Rashtriya Indian Military College (RIMC). Career Seminars: The Krishna Ghati Brigade regularly conducts career-focused lectures in local educational institutions. For instance, motivational sessions are held to educate young female students on the Career Opportunities for Women in the Indian Army.

2. Vocational Training and Women Empowerment Kaushal Vikas Kendra: In villages like Degwar and Bagial Dara, the Army operates vocational centers offering professional courses in fields such as tailoring and beautician training.

This outreach enables local women to

acquire market-oriented skills to establish their own businesses.

3. Sports and Community Engagement Krishna Ghati Premier League (KGPL): A major sporting event that draws massive participation from local youth, promoting physical fitness, talent identification, and community unity. The tournaments frequently run alongside anti-drug awareness campaigns and environmental drives.

Winter Festivals: Army units frequently host regional events (such as the Pir Panjal Winter Festival) in the district, featuring tournaments, local arts, and cultural performances.

4. National Integration Tours (NIT) The Poonch Brigade sponsors educational and exposure tours for students from remote areas (such as those from Shri Krishan Chander Government Degree College) to visit major cities. These delegations often visit historical sites and even interact with national dignitaries, including the President of India. 5. Civic Action Programs The Army routinely conducts free medical and veterinary camps in remote villages near the Line of Control.

They also establish community assets such as parks, Ekta Sthal (places for community gatherings), and install towering National Flags to boost local development and tourism.

The Krishna Ghati Brigade, headquartered in the Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, has played a pivotal role in several defining battles and numerous border skirmishes. Its primary historical and modern military engagements include:

Battle of OP Hill (1965): Fought from November 2-3, 1965, this remains one of the most fierce engagements in the Krishna Ghati sector. Troops from battalions including 2 DOGRA, 5 Sikh LI, 7 Sikh, and 2 Garhwal Rifles engaged in hand-to-hand combat to repulse Pakistani troops threat-

ening Mendhar. Indo-Pak War of 1971: The brigade participated in the fierce defense of the Poonch and Krishna Ghati (KG) sectors against a major two-brigade Pakistani offensive aimed at severing Poonch.

Battle of Nangi Tekri: Fought by the 21 PUNJAB regiment in the Krishna Ghati sector, this offensive successfully captured dominating enemy features (Nangi Tekri and Jugle Tekri). Ongoing Border Conflicts: The brigade actively defends the Line of Control (LoC) and repulses recurring unprovoked firing, ceasefire violations, and infiltration attempts, such as significant engagements in May 2026 and April 2025.

Security challenges in the Poonch/Krishna Ghati sector are driven by frequent infiltration bids, ceasefire violations, and rugged terrain that terrorists exploit.

The Indian Army's White Knight Corps maintains high operational readiness, often thwarting cross-border intrusions. Specific challenges in the sector include:

Terrain Exploitation: The dense forests, deep ravines, and mountainous topography provide natural cover and complicate border surveillance, making it easier for armed groups to attempt incursions.

Infiltration and Ceasefire Violations: Heavily armed infiltrators, often with cover fire from across the Line of Control (LoC), frequently attempt to breach the border. Recent incidents include foiled infiltration bids and direct firings. Proxy Warfare and Radicalization: Handlers and militant groups based across the LoC continuously attempt to sustain unrest in the Jammu region by pushing operatives across, demanding constant area-domination patrols by security forces.

During his interaction with the troops, Lt Gen Sharma commended them for their alertness, dedication and relentless efforts in maintaining operational readiness under challenging conditions.

MONSOON SKINCARE TIPS FOR BABIES



■ **SHAHNAZ HUSAIN**

If you've noticed redness in your baby's skin folds or small rashes that don't seem to go away, you're not alone.

When the skies open up and the monsoon brings in cooler weather, it also brings increased humidity, dampness, and skin issues for your little one.

The moist air and the varying humidity levels can irritate a baby's delicate and sensitive skin far more easily than adult skin.

Many parents notice sudden rashes, prickly heat, redness in skin folds, or dryness that seems to appear overnight.

While people of all ages are susceptible to these, infants are particularly vulnerable as their immune systems are underdeveloped and weak. If they do catch an infection, it can lead to complications quickly.

The answer lies in the unique needs of your baby's skin. It requires a specifically formulated cream, as gentle and tender as their delicate skin demands.

The skin of a newborn is tender and soft. Baby skin is untouched and pure, just as nature intended it to be.

Selecting the ideal baby face cream for your baby is crucial to maintaining their delicate skin health. It involves meticulously considering various factors to ensure your baby's skin remains healthy and nourished.

Well, here are some key recommendations to help you find the right baby care products this Monsoon

■ **Gentle Bathing: How Often Is Enough?**

Are you nervous about bathing your newborn baby?

Bath time can be slightly tricky in the initial months. However, as you begin understanding your baby's needs, it can prove to be a fun session with your little one. Bathing a slippery baby may feel daunting at first, but with a little practice, you'll start to feel more comfortable at bath time.

Bathing your baby too much can dry out your baby's skin. Babies' skin is 20 times thinner and more sensitive than that of an adult.

You can bath Newborns (0-2 months) 2-3 times a week, while Older babies & toddlers can have a bath once daily, especially if sweaty. Use a mild, soap-free baby cleanser, as using adult soaps can disrupt the skin's natural barrier. Bath time should be short (5-10 minutes)

A bathing routine every night before bedtime can be OK as long as parents are adding a moisturising routine as well.

If you bathe your baby after a feeding, consider waiting an hour for your baby's tummy to settle a bit first because moving may cause vomiting.

Make sure that you have a nonslip mat or pad and a bath thermometer (optional) to make your baby feel safe, warm, and comfortable.

Measure the temperature of the water to avoid overheating or chilling. Always use lukewarm, not cold or hot, water for baby baths.

Warm water can leave a child's skin dry. There should be a fixed time for the bath, which will help the baby to form a habit of an orderly schedule

■ **Choose clothing that supports skin health**

Also, dress your baby in full and light clothing, preferably made of soft, breathable cotton fabrics. Avoid overdressing

your baby; Change clothes if your baby sweats excessively, especially during naps or outdoor travel.

Avoid synthetic fabrics during humid months—they trap sweat and increase friction.

Avoid overheating your child by dressing them in light colours and soft, breathable clothing that reflects heat.

Heavy and synthetic materials can lead to excessive sweating, which in turn causes rashes.

Make sure to dry baby clothes thoroughly – never put damp clothes on your baby. Drying them in the sun is best, although it may not always be possible during the rains. Cotton remains the best fabric choice during the monsoon. Look for: Soft cotton clothes, Loose-fitting outfits, and Lightweight layers.

Avoid Denim: Wet denim stays damp for long periods, causing discomfort and rashes.

Leaving your infant in wet clothes or a dirty diaper during monsoons is a recipe for rashes and infection. Change diapers often and use super absorbent ones. Always carry an extra set of clothes when you're out.

■ **Look for gentle ingredients**

With their extra-sensitive systems, babies need gentle ingredients free from harsh chemicals and irritants.

One of the main purposes of baby skincare products is to prevent dryness. You should always read the ingredient label before making any purchase for your baby. It is very important to know what ingredients are safe for your baby and can help nourish their delicate skin. Make sure the products you buy for your baby are free from synthetics of any kind. While all products have different compositions, there is no substitute for gentle ingredients. So look for organic ingredients in the product before buying it for your baby.

For instance, Aloe Vera serves as a natural source of moisture, soothing a baby's dry skin. Aloe Vera is a natural coolant which is rich in vitamins and amino acids with healing properties.

Look for creams enriched with ingredients like shea butter, almond oil, coconut oil, mullethi, and cocoa butter. Natural oils not only nourish, hydrate, and condition your baby's hair and scalp but also possess soothing and anti-inflammatory properties that will prevent infections and inflammation by stopping the growth of harmful microbes on the skin.

Pick moisturisers that contain mild and natural ingredients known for their hydrating properties, such as shea butter or milk cream.

■ **Choose Organic Products**

As a new parent, you may feel overwhelmed with decision-making, including what products to choose for the delicate and sensitive nature of a newborn's skin. The way you care for your baby's skin is important to their health. It can take two to four years for a child's skin to undergo the full maturation process. During critical periods of development, like infancy, what goes on in our baby's skin can go into our baby's body and have an effect.

With organic products, you can protect your baby from harmful chemicals that can cause rashes, eczema, acne and other skin irritations. So, opt for organic instead of natural products to provide the safest and purest care to your little bundle of joy.

Nowadays, organic products are more easily available than earlier, and if you can get your hands on organic baby products, that's the best you can do for your little one's health and safety. Organic skincare products for babies contain ingredients that are grown without any kind of chemicals, whether fertilisers or

pesticides. Opting for natural and toxin-free baby care products is paramount in ensuring the utmost safety and protection for your little one. Choose wisely to provide gentle and effective care for your newborn's delicate skin.

■ **Sun-Safe Babies**

Sun protection is important at every stage of life, including infancy, no matter how dark or light your baby's skin tone is. Keep newborns and babies under 6 months old out of direct sunlight, especially during the peak time of sun exposure when UV rays are strongest. Take the baby for an early morning or later afternoon/evening walk instead. Avoid using sunscreen because infants are at greater risk than adults of sunscreen side effects, such as a rash. Baby's young skin can't metabolise and excrete chemicals often found in sunscreens. Look for natural shade, such as under a tree. Or create your shade under a beach umbrella, a pop-up tent, or a stroller canopy. Always protect your baby with a wide-brimmed hat to shield the face, ears, head and back of the neck. Use stroller shades and umbrellas. A baby who wears a hat during the first few months will get used to having it on. Make sure your baby wears a broad-brimmed, bucket, or legionnaire hat that provides shade to their face, neck, and ears.

It's also best to dress your baby regularly in lightweight clothing that covers as much skin as possible. Rely on protective clothing rather than using sunscreen to avoid sun exposure. Dress your baby in cool, comfortable clothing such as long lightweight cotton pants and long-sleeve shirts that cover the body. You should not apply insect repellent at all to infants under 2 months of age.

The author is an internationally famous beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India

Being socially isolated may put you at diabetes risk

A study has found that men and women who are not active socially and remain isolated may be at an increased risk of developing diabetes than individuals with larger social networks.

The findings showed that a lack of social participation was associated with 60 per cent higher odds of pre-diabetes and 112 per cent higher odds of Type 2 diabetes in women compared to those with normal glucose metabolism.

Men who lack social participation in clubs and groups had a 42 per cent higher risk of Type 2 diabetes, while those living alone had 94 per cent higher risk.

"The study is the first to determine the association of a broad range of social network characteristics -- such as social support, network size or type of relationships -- with different stages of Type 2 diabetes," said lead author Stephanie Brinkhues, from the Maastricht University Medical Centre, in the Netherlands.

"As men living alone seem to be at a higher risk for the development of type 2 diabetes, they should become recognised as a high risk group in health care. Social network size and participation in social activities may eventually be used as indicators of diabetes risk," added co-author Miranda Schram, from the varsity.

For the study, published in the journal BMC Public Health, the team involved 2,861 men and women aged 40 to 75 years.

Early changes in glucose metabolism may cause non-specific complaints such as tiredness and feeling unwell, which may explain why individuals limit their social participation.

Promoting social integration and participation may be a promising target in prevention strategies for type 2 diabetes, the researchers suggested.

"Our findings support the idea that resolving social isolation may help prevent the development of Type 2 diabetes," Brinkhues added.

Courtesy Healthline

Here's What You Should Eat When On Antibiotics

Being on medication is never a picnic, and being on antibiotics is certainly not. Antibiotics are taken to fight bacterial infections in the body. The effect of these medicines are not limited to fighting infections in the body; it may even go far enough to take a strong toll on your health if not taken correctly or coupled with the wrong diet. Yes, side effects of antibiotics can be triggered and worsened when they are taken with the wrong sort of food. Here's a list of foods you must take when on antibiotics.

1. Plenty of probiotics
One of the many side effects of antibiotics is that it causes diarrhea. Probiotics help in restoring the balance of the gut bacteria which gets disturbed when on antibiotics. They also help the body in recovering from all the bacterial alterations faster.
2. Fill your body with Vitamin K
When you need to be on antibiotics for a prolonged period of time, you must go for Vitamin K supplements. This is because excess consumption of such medication can disturb the good bacteria in your body and may even harm Vitamin K levels making you deficient in it. So you need to compensate for the loss by taking foods rich in Vitamin K like green leafy vegetables, green tea, asparagus or beef liver. You may also try taking Vitamin K supplements.
3. Vary your diet

Antibiotics may at times trigger or increase the growth of yeast in your body and excess of it can lead to yeast infections and an upset stomach,

citric acid, tomato ketchup, chocolates and aerated drinks make antibiotics react on your body. This is because of their ability to prevent the body from

growth of good bacteria in the gut which prevent the body from the assault of antibiotics and heal faster. It also protects the body against diarrhea which is a



Courtesy EMJ

sometimes even a vaginal yeast infection. You can try onion and garlic to reduce the discomfort. Besides this, antibiotics disturb Vitamin B levels in the body. So to make up for the loss, you can add green vegetables like broccoli to your diet.

Besides these, you must know what kind of food should be avoided when on antibiotics. Take a look.

1. Acidic food and beverages
Taking acidic foods like lemon, oranges, strawberries, Vitamin C foods, high in

absorbing medication.
2. Dairy products other than yogurt and iron supplements

Dairy products are healthy, but not when coupled with antibiotics. This is because of the calcium content of these foods which prevent the body from absorbing medication. But this is not the case with yogurt. Yogurt is exempted from this list because it contains probiotics. Probiotics are strongly recommended for people taking antibiotics because they promote the

common side effect of such medication. So is the case with iron supplements. They prevent the body from absorbing the benefits of antibiotics.

3. High-fibre foods
High-fibre foods are healthy, but not when you are on antibiotics. When on medication, fibrous foods slow the rate of food absorption in the body which is good when you are trying to lose weight but not when the body is becoming resistant to medication. These include grains, beans and lentils.

PM Vishwakarma Capacity Building Programme held at Bandipora

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JULY 09: Branch MSME DFO Srinagar, under the Ministry of MSME, Government of India, in collaboration with the District Administration Bandipora, organised a PM Vishwakarma Capacity Building Programme at the DC Office, Bandipora on Product Packaging, QR Code Generation and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The programme was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Zaffar Shawal as chief guest, Joint Director and General Manager, DIC



Bandipora, as guests of honour. Joint Director/HoO MSME DFO J&K & Ladakh, AK Tamaria also graced the occasion.

The ADC highlighted the need to integrate traditional crafts with modern technology to enhance the competitiveness of Kashmir's rich artisan sector. The Joint Director reviewed the implementation and progress of the PM Vishwakarma Scheme in Jammu & Kashmir and addressed the issues faced by the Vishwakarma beneficiaries.

The General Manager appreciated the efforts of artisans and assured continued institutional support through schemes implemented by DIC for eligible beneficiaries.

Saheel Alaqband, Assistant Director, Branch MSME DFO Srinagar, highlighted the importance of the PM Vishwakarma Scheme in strengthening the skilled artisan workforce through capacity building.

Experts from the banking sector, IUST and the State Level PMU conducted technical sessions on product packaging, QR code generation and the use of AI for business growth.

Public Notice

It is for the information of the public at large that my name has been inadvertently recorded as Sofiya Gulzar in my Aadhaar Card. My actual and correct name is Safiya Bano, which I intend to use for all future purposes and official documentation. If any person or authority has any objection to this correction, they may file their objection in writing with the office of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) / local Aadhaar Enrollment Center within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice.

Safiya Bano
W/o: Late Gulzar Ahmad Chiken
R/o: Rahim bagh colony, Mahjoor Nagar,
Natipora, Srinagar

Public Notice

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that Mrs. Shubeena Akhter, wife of Late Nisar Ahmad Yatoo, resident of Duroo, Tehsil Khansahib, District Budgam, Jammu & Kashmir, has applied to the concerned authority for the issuance of a Duplicate Death Certificate of her late husband.

- The particulars of the deceased are as follows:
- Name of Deceased: Late Nisar Ahmad Yatoo
 - Father's Name: Ghulam Rasool Yatoo
 - Residence: Duroo, Tehsil Khansahib, District Budgam
 - Date of Death: 02 July 2014
 - Death Certificate Registration No.: 172-172
 - Registration Date: 11 July 2014

The applicant has stated that the original death certificate has been lost and is therefore seeking the issuance of a duplicate certificate.

Any person having any objection or claim regarding the issuance of the duplicate death certificate may submit the same, along with supporting documentary evidence, to the concerned authority within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, the concerned authority may proceed with the issuance of the duplicate death certificate as per the applicable rules.

Sd/-
Shubeena Akhter
W/o Late Nisar Ahmad Yatoo
R/o Duroo, Tehsil Khansahib
District Budgam, Jammu & Kashmir

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7006083461

Office Of The Executive Engineer Irrigation & Flood Control Division Kupwara

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

E-NIT NO: IFCDK/ 02 OF 2026-27 | DATED: 09-07-2026.

For and on behalf of Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, e-tender (in Single Cover System) on Percentage (%) basis is invited from approved and eligible contractors for the following works to be opened in the office of Executive Engineer Irrigation & F C Division Kupwara:

(Amount in ₹)

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost	Earnest Money or Bid Security	T.D Cost	Time	Class	T.S No & Date
01.	Construction of headworks and control gates for Brandogger Khul at Trehgam.	₹990895.00	₹19818.00	₹600.00	25 Days	CEE/DEE	This office No. 02/ TS/ Kup/ 2026-27 Dated: 06-07-2026
02.	Construction of Toe protection crates and laying of DI pipe on Lastiyal Khul at Madmadow Kalaroose.	₹956790.00	₹19136.00	₹600.00	25 Days	CEE/DEE	This office No. 03/ TS/ Kup/ 2026-27 Dated: 06-07-2026
03.	Construction of Crossing across Lastiyal Khul at RD 4400.	₹134926.00	₹2698.00	₹200.00	13 Days	DEE	This office No. 04/ TS/ Kup/ 2026-27 Dated: 06-07-2026
04.	Replacement of 02. No. winch machines and other allied works for control gate at head site of Dehgam Khul at Saiwan.	₹262692.00	₹5254.00	₹200.00	15 Days	DEE	This office No. 05/ TS/ Kup/ 2026-27 Dated: 06-07-2026
05.	Construction of breast wall on Sogam Khul near stone crusher at Bedibera.	₹184701.00	₹3694.00	₹200.00	15 Days	DEE	This office No. 06/ TS/ Kup/ 2026-27 Dated: 06-07-2026

MH of Account: District-Capex (Regular)

Position of AAA: Accorded vide District Development Commissioner Kupwara's order No. 141-DDCK of 2026, Dated: 01-07-2026 issued vide endst. No. DDCK/Capex/AA/2445-53 Dated.01.07.2026.

Position of Funds: Approved under current years (2026-27) District-Capex (Regular) Plan.

The Bidding document consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, set of terms and conditions and other details can be seen/ downloaded on e-procurement portal <https://www.jktenders.gov.in>, as per schedule of dates given below:

01.	Date of issue of Tender Notice	09-07-2026
02.	Date of start of downloading bid	09-07-2026 from 16:00 Hrs.
03.	Bid submission start Date Technical/ Financial	09-07-2026 from 16:00 Hrs.
04.	Bid Submission end date	31-07-2026 upto 16:30 Hrs.
05.	Date and time of opening of Tender	01-08-2026 at 11:30 AM

Note: The Department shall not be responsible for any delay in the online submission of bids due to any reason whatsoever. Prospective bidders are advised to thoroughly read and understand the instructions provided in Annexure-A as well as the General Conditions of Contract detailed in Annexure-B prior to submitting their bids. Submission of the tender shall be deemed as conclusive evidence that the bidder has read, understood, and accepted all terms and conditions stipulated therein.

No: IFCDK/CS/1349-61
Dated: 09-07-2026

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Irrigation & F C Division Kupwara

DIPK: 3066/26 | Dated: 09-07-2026

Office of the Child Development Project Officer Poshan Project Singhpora

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE

Applications on prescribed proforma (Annexure-I) are hereby invited from the eligible female candidates of the Panch wards/ Municipal Wards shown against the below mentioned Panchayat Halqa/Municipal Ward, for the engagement of Sangini (AWW) for the Anganwadi Centre of POSHAN Project Singhpora on "Honorarium basis". The applications along with required documents shall be deposited in the Office of undersigned i.e. the Child Development Project Officer Singhpora by or before 22 July, 2026 against proper receipt.

S.No	Name of the District	Name of the Project	Name of Panchayat / Municipality Ward	Vacancy of Sangini (Anganwadi Worker)
1	Baramulla	Singhpora	Hanjiwera Payeen B	No. of Panch Ward / MC Ward 04 Name of AWC Trikolbal A

Criteria for Selection of Sanginis (Anganwadi Workers) Shall remain as envisaged in the Govt. Order NO 103 JK(SWD) OF 2023 Dated 28.04.2023 i.e.

Women candidates in the age group of 18-37 years as on 01-01-2026 shall be considered for the post.

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

The candidate should be a resident of the Electoral Ward where AWC is located.

Minimum Education qualification should be 10+2 pass and maximum graduation.

Weightage shall be given on the basis of marks obtained in 10+2 and selection shall be granted purely on academic merit basis & there shall not be any interview.

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

Candidates with qualification higher than graduation shall not be considered.

In case of tie in merit of the eligible candidate, candidate with higher age will be preferred.

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

Panch Ward Certificate /present /continuous, ward residence certificate issued by BDO and duly countersigned by ACR/SDM in case of any issue.

Domicile Certificate issued by Tehsildar concerned.

Date of Birth Certificate.

Academic Qualification Certificates with Marks card of 10th.

Ration card/ e ticket.

Marital status certificate.

In case the applicant is unmarried certificate from the concerned Tehsildar certifying the same.

Non employment Certificate from a Gazetted Officer.

Affidavit from first class magistrate stating following facts.

All duplicate Documents submitted are correct, without any mismatch, scanning, duplicate or fallacious in nature. If found incorrect or in any of the above stated situation the candidature of deponent may be cancelled and liable to action under law.

Maximum qualification is Graduation for vacancy of Sanginis (AWWs) and this is as per facts and onus of proving it to be true lies with the deponent.

The deponent has read the HR policy no. 222-JK(SWD) of 2022 dated: 30-11-2022 and is well versed with all salient features of the policy and shall be applicable to the deponent in case of selection as Sangini (AWW).

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

No: CDPO/ICDS/Sing/Estt/2026/223

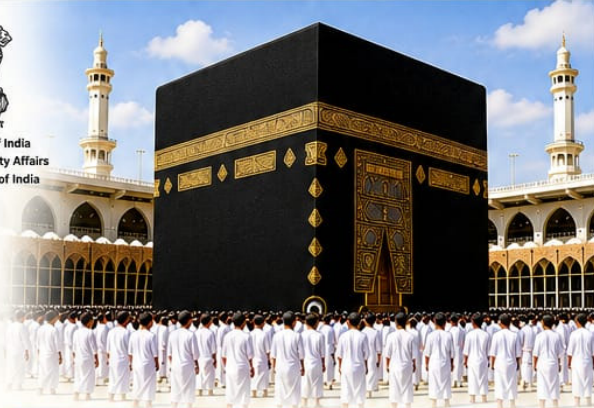
Dated: 09-07-2026

Sd/- Child Development Project Officer
Poshan Project Singhpora

DIPK: 3062/26 | Dated: 09-07-2026

JKSHC

JAMMU & KASHMIR STATE HAJ COMMITTEE



HAJ 2027 (1448 H) IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

1 PASSPORT VALIDITY

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

2 COVER / GROUP

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

3 COVER HEAD

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

4 MOBILE NUMBER & WHATSAPP

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

5 FORM SUBMISSION

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

6 NOMINEE

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

7 BANK DETAILS (ACCOUNT HOLDER MUST BE COVER HEAD)

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

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR HAJ - 2027 (1448 H)

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



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Space Devoted by Headlines Today, Purely in Public Interest

DC Kulgam reviews digitization of land records, AgriStack progress at Devsar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, JULY 09: To review the progress of digitization of land records and AgriStack data entry, the Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam today visited Tehsil Office Devsar and inspected the functioning of Patwar Khana Sopat Tangpora, Patwar Khana Bon Devsar and Patwar Khana Qasba Devsar.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner undertook a comprehensive review of the ongoing digitization of

revenue records and the progress achieved under the AgriStack initiative.

He inspected the quality of digital records, assessed the pace of data entry, and took stock of the measures being adopted to ensure accuracy and timely completion of the assigned tasks.

Additionally, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the progress of the construction of the sports stadium at Sopat, emphasizing the importance of timely completion to provide better sports infrastructure for the local youth.

Interacting with the revenue officers and field functionaries, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized that digitization of land records and creation of a reliable AgriStack database are key initiatives aimed at enhancing transparency, improving governance and ensuring efficient delivery of farmer-centric services.

He directed the concerned officers to maintain the highest standards of accuracy while updating records and to complete all pending work within the prescribed time-



lines.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for close monitoring of daily progress and instructed the officers to address technical and operational issues promptly so that the digitization process is completed in a seamless manner. He also underscored the importance of coordinated efforts among all revenue officials to achieve the objectives of the Digital Agriculture Mission.

The Deputy Commissioner appreciated the efforts of

the revenue staff and urged them to continue working with commitment and dedication for the successful implementation of the programme.

He reiterated that the district administration is committed to strengthening digital governance in the revenue sector and ensuring better public service delivery through modern technology.

The visit was attended by Tehsildar Devsar, Naib Tehsildars, Girdawars, Patwaris and other concerned officials.

DC Udhampur reviews functioning of ICDS Department, emphasises strengthening of Anganwadi services

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR, JULY 09: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Minga Sherpa today chaired a review meeting to assess functioning of the ICDS Department in the district.

The meeting was attended by Programme Officer Poshan Subash Dogra, Chief Planning Officer Uttam Singh, all CDPOs and other officers concerned.

At the outset, Programme Officer Poshan gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation on the status and functioning of Anganwadi Centres across the district, highlighting their performance and key



developmental initiatives.

The DC also reviewed Aadhaar enrolment status under PMMVY, infrastructure available at Anganwadi Centres and achievements made under the developmental deliverables of Mission Poshan.

The DC directed all CDPOs and supervisors to undertake regular visits to Anganwadi Centres to monitor functioning and ensure effective delivery of quality services.

CDPOs were also instructed to conduct regular inspections of Anganwadi Centres and organise awareness camps in their areas to increase public awareness and ensure effective implementation of welfare schemes.

PO Poshan was further directed to prepare a comprehensive list of all Anganwadi Centres in the district and submit a detailed report for effective monitoring and future planning.

VC LCMA inspects Khushalsar-Gilsar Lake System

Reviews conservation and demarcation measures

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 09: Vice Chairman, J&K Lake Conservation & Management Authority (LCMA), Khurshid Ahmad Shah, today conducted an extensive inspection tour of the Khushalsar Gilsar lake system, covering Gil Kadal, Sazgaripora, Saidapora, and other adjoining areas in and around the waterbodies to review the progress of conservation and protection measures being undertaken by the Authority.

The Vice Chairman was accompanied by the Superintending Engineer, Collector, all Executive Engineers, Assistant Executive Engineers (AEEs), Junior Engineers (JEs), Revenue officials, and other officers and officials of the Authority.

During the visit, the Vice Chairman undertook a comprehensive on the spot review of the demarcation exercise being carried out by the field teams. He inspected the identified land

parcels and assessed the progress achieved in the field.

Stressing the importance of clearly establishing the boundaries of the water bodies and their protected areas, he directed the demarcation teams to expedite the pegging and marking of all identified land to ensure proper identification, protection, and effective monitoring of these ecologically significant assets.

Interacting with the field staff, the Vice Chairman emphasized the need for sustained vigilance and coordinated efforts in carrying out conservation activities. He instructed the concerned officers to ensure that the demarcation work is completed in a time bound manner while maintaining complete accuracy and transparency. He further directed that regular inspections be conducted to prevent any encroachment or unauthorized activity within the demarcated areas.

Reviewing the condition of



the water body, the Vice Chairman directed that the Water Master and barge be mobilized and shifted to the Khushalsar Gilsar water body on priority today itself so that cleaning and other restoration activities can be intensified without any delay. He emphasized that all necessary logistical arrangements should be made im-

mediately to ensure that the machinery becomes operational at the earliest.

The Vice Chairman also reviewed the existing protective measures along vulnerable stretches of the Khushalsar Gilsar water bodies. Recognizing the need for strengthening the physical protection of the lake boundaries, he directed the En-

gineering Wing of LCMA to immediately prepare a detailed proposal for installation of chain link fencing around the identified vulnerable locations. He observed that appropriate fencing would help secure the demarcated land, discourage encroachments, and support the long-term preservation and restoration of the water bodies.

Reiterating the Authority's commitment towards conservation of the Khushal Sar Gilsar lake system, the Vice Chairman stated that LCMA remains dedicated to protecting these important urban wetlands through scientific management, continuous monitoring, infrastructure development, and active field level interventions. He emphasized that the restoration and safeguarding of these water bodies is vital for maintaining ecological balance, improving the urban environment, and preserving the natural heritage of the Kashmir Valley for future generations.

ADDC Baramulla reviews PMAY-U

Directs timely disposal of PMAY 2.0 Cases

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, JULY 09: Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Baramulla, Pranjali J. Hazarika, today chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) in the district.

The meeting reviewed the physical and financial progress achieved under the scheme, the status of beneficiary verification, the progress of PMAY 2.0, and the recovery of funds from beneficiaries who have failed to commence construction despite receiving the first installment under PMAY-U.

The ADDC directed the concerned officers to expedite the



recovery process in accordance with the prescribed guidelines and ensure strict monitoring of such cases.

Reviewing the implementation of PMAY 2.0, the ADDC directed all concerned officers to complete and process all pending cases for sanction within one month. He

emphasized timely verification of applications and close coordination among the concerned departments to ensure that eligible beneficiaries receive the benefits of the scheme without delay.

Tehsildars, Executive Officers of Municipal Councils and Municipal Committees, along with other concerned officers, attended the meeting and presented updates on the progress of PMAY-U and PMAY 2.0 in their respective jurisdictions.

The ADDC instructed all concerned officers to regularly monitor the implementation of the scheme, dispose of pending cases in a time-bound manner, and ensure the effective implementation of PMAY-U across all Urban Local Bodies in the district.

SHD organizes Scientist-Sheep Breeders Interaction Programme under ATMA

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 09: A one-day Scientist-Sheep Breeders Interaction Programme-cum-Exposure Visit for progressive sheep breeders from Budgam was organized at the Mountain Research Center for Sheep & Goat (MRCSS&G), SKUAST-Kashmir, on Thursday by the Sheep Husbandry Department (SHD), Kashmir, under the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA).

The program focused on strengthening the technical knowledge and practical skills of sheep breeders through expert lectures and field demonstrations on scientific nutrition, breeding, disease prevention, flock health management, and modern housing practices. Scientists highlighted innovative technologies to improve sheep productivity and farm profitability.



As part of the program, participants visited the Center's research and livestock farms, where they observed improved sheep breeds, scientific management practices, fodder production systems, and ongoing research. Live demonstrations provided hands-on exposure to modern sheep farming technologies.

An interactive session enabled farmers to discuss field-level challenges with scientists and receive practical, science-based solutions for effective flock management.

The program was led by Dr Parvaiz Ahmed Reshi, Senior Scientist & Head, MRCSS&G, along with Dr Muzamil Abdullah, Dr Abul Qayoom Mir, and Dr Zulfiqar-ul-Haq from MRCSS&G. Dr Muzamil Bashir and Dr Asma Khan from the Sheep Husbandry Department also interacted with the participants.

The farmers appreciated the initiative, describing it as a valuable platform for learning scientific sheep-farming practices and for strengthening collaboration between researchers and the farming community.

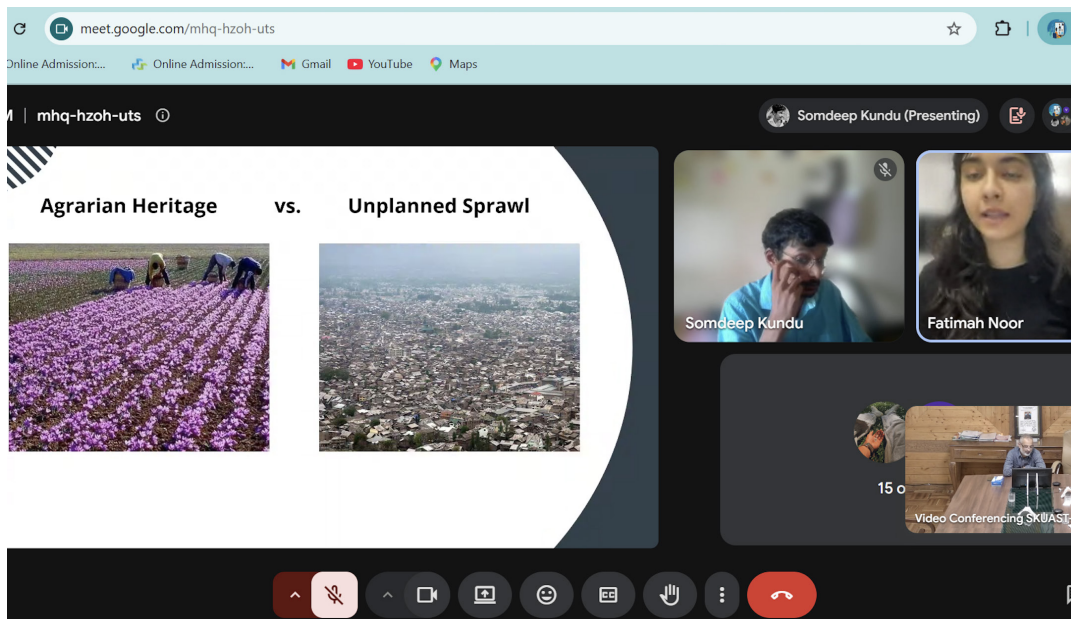
SKUAST-K reviews Mid-Term Progress of First IIT Bombay RuDRA Internship Cohort

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 09: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) on Wednesday reviewed the progress of its first batch of students undergoing a one-month internship at IIT Bombay under the Center of Excellence for Rural Data Research & Analysis (RuDRA), an initiative supported through HADP-19 and HADP-20.

The program is designed to equip students with advanced technological skills, research exposure, and interdisciplinary learning at one of India's premier institutions, enabling them to develop innovative, data-driven solutions for agriculture and rural development in Jammu & Kashmir.

The review was chaired by Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai in the presence of Prof. Masood Saleem Mir, Principal Investigator, HADP-20; Prof. Shabir Ahmad Bangroo, Principal In-



vestigator, HADP-19; Prof. Irfan Ahmad Bisati, Co-Principal Investigator, HADP-20; and IIT Bombay faculty members Dr. Pennan Chinnasamy; Dr. Mohammad Kasim; and Dr. Somdeep Kundu.

The internship is a key outcome of the Memorandum of Understanding signed be-

tween SKUAST-K and IIT Bombay to strengthen collaboration in sustainable agriculture, environmental management, and rural development.

As part of the partnership, SKUAST-K has established the Center of Excellence for Rural Data Research & Analysis (RuDRA), in collaboration with IIT

Bombay's RuDRA Lab, to advance decision-support systems for rural development and to promote joint research, curriculum development, knowledge transfer, faculty and student exchange, and internship programs.

The inaugural cohort comprises 14 students from differ-

ent faculties and academic programs, making it the university's first interdisciplinary batch under the initiative. During the review, the students presented the progress of their projects at IIT Bombay, highlighting work on geospatial technologies, data analytics, digital agriculture and AI-enabled decision-support systems for agriculture and rural planning.

Addressing the interns, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai urged them to maximize the opportunity by acquiring cutting-edge technological expertise that can be adapted to address the evolving needs of farmers and rural communities in Jammu & Kashmir.

The internship program is expected to build a pool of skilled professionals capable of translating advanced technologies into practical solutions for sustainable agriculture, rural livelihoods, and evidence-based rural governance in Jammu & Kashmir.

Vedanta reports record quarterly pig iron output; Goa, Odisha drive production growth

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JULY 9: Vedanta Iron and Steel Limited (VISL) reported its highest-ever quarterly pig iron production for the quarter ended June 30, 2026, marking a strong operational start after its demerger and listing.

The company, which operates iron ore mining, processing and steel manufacturing through Sesa Iron Ore, ESL Steel and Western Cluster Limited, produced 291 kilo tonnes (KT) of pig iron during the June quarter, up 8 per cent from 269 KT a year ago and 5 per cent higher than the previous quarter. The record output was driven by improved operational performance across its businesses.

Goa emerged as a key growth driver during the quarter. Iron ore production from the state's mines surged 166 per cent year-on-year to 0.6 million dry metric tonnes from 0.2 million dry metric tonnes a year earlier, although it declined from 0.9 Mn DMT in the preceding quarter.

Hot metal production at the Goa plant rose 12 per cent year-on-year and 11 per cent sequentially to a record 238 KT, sup-



ported by increased mining activity and expanding processing capacity. Odisha operations also delivered strong performance, with saleable iron ore production rising 59 per cent year-on-year and 78 per cent quarter-on-quarter to 1.2 Mn DMT. Higher operational efficiency helped Odisha account for nearly half of VISL's total saleable iron ore output of 2.6 Mn DMT, which increased 4 per cent from the year-ago period.

In contrast, iron ore production

in Karnataka declined 46 per cent year-on-year and 28 per cent sequentially to 0.9 Mn DMT. The company attributed the fall to mine planning initiatives aimed at supporting higher production in the coming quarters.

The output includes 0.5 Mn DMT of banded hematite quartzite (BHQ), which is expected to be processed after the commissioning of a beneficiation plant, providing an additional growth lever.

Across its steel business, over-

all hot metal production increased 3 per cent year-on-year to 601 KT, while saleable steel production rose 4 per cent to 582 KT. Billet production more than tripled compared with the corresponding quarter last year to 20 KT, while pig iron output rose 8 per cent.

However, the product mix remained mixed. TMT bar production declined 2 per cent, wire rod output remained broadly unchanged, and ductile iron pipe production fell 28 per cent during the quarter. Hot metal production at the Bokaro operations also slipped 2 per cent year-on-year to 363 KT.

VISL was demerged from Vedanta Limited during the first quarter of FY27. The company presented production figures for the full quarter based on the businesses that now form part of VISL to enable comparison with historical performance.

The June quarter marks VISL's first production update since becoming a separately listed entity, with the record pig iron output and strong growth in Goa and Odisha highlighting the company's improving operational efficiency and expansion trajectory. UNI

WhatsApp unveils Meta Business Agent for businesses in India

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

BENGALURU, JULY 9: WhatsApp on Wednesday announced the launch of Meta Business Agent, an artificial intelligence-powered assistant designed to help businesses engage with customers round the clock, while also unveiling the Meta Business Agent Platform for large enterprises to build and deploy customised AI agents at scale.

The announcements were made at the third edition of WhatsApp's annual Business Summit held in Mumbai.

The Meta Business Agent is designed to automate customer interactions by answering business-specific queries, recommending products from business catalogues, booking appointments, qualifying leads, assisting with sales and handling over conversations to human agents whenever required. The AI assistant also provides businesses with summaries of missed conversations and customer insights to help improve operations and customer engagement.

Speaking at the summit, Arun Sriniwas said India has emerged as one of the world's most dynamic markets for conversational business, with messaging becoming the preferred way for consumers and businesses to connect. He said the Meta Business Agent marks the next phase of AI-driven business transformation by helping companies strengthen customer relationships, improve efficiency and drive growth.

Meta also introduced the Meta Business Agent Platform for larger enterprises, enabling businesses to build and customise AI-powered agents while integrating them with existing business systems such as Shopify, Zendesk and Shopee. The platform works alongside the WhatsApp Business Platform and offers enterprise-grade scalability, controls and performance measurement.

The company said early adopters, including Swiggy, Madhulika Enterprises and Kaizen Adventours, are already using the platform to improve customer engagement and automate business operations.

According to Meta, Swiggy is using the AI agent to simplify onboarding of delivery partners through WhatsApp, while Madhulika Enterprises reported a 25-30 per cent increase in conversions and a significant reduction in repetitive customer queries. Kaizen Adventours said the AI assistant has helped reduce response times and manage peak-season customer enquiries more efficiently.

WhatsApp also announced new discovery features that will soon allow users to search for businesses by name directly within WhatsApp Search and share business contacts with friends and family, making it easier to connect with verified businesses.

The company said businesses interested in enabling Meta Business Agent can join the waitlist through Meta's business platform. UNI

TATA MOTORS TARGETS 1.2 MILLION PASSENGER VEHICLE SALES BY FY30, RS 40,000 CRORE INVESTMENT

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JULY 9: Tata Motors has unveiled an ambitious five-year roadmap for its passenger vehicle business, targeting annual sales of more than 1.2 million units by FY30, a 20 per cent market share in India's passenger vehicle market, and revenues of Rs 1.4 lakh crore, backed by investments of nearly Rs 40,000 crore in products and manufacturing.

Speaking at the company's 81st Annual General Meeting (AGM), Chairman Natarajan Chandrasekaran said Tata Motors aims to achieve a tenfold increase in passenger vehicle volumes over the decade from FY20 to FY30.

"Looking ahead in the next five years, the company has a big ambition. Between FY20 and FY30, we want to achieve a 10x growth in volumes with an ambition of over 1.2 million



vehicles and a market share of 20 per cent from the current 14.2 per cent," Chandrasekaran said.

To support this growth, the automaker plans to introduce six new nameplates and undertake more than 20 product refreshes, while targeting double-digit EBITDA margins. Electric vehicles (EVs) are expected to account for over 30 per cent of Tata Motors' passenger vehicle

sales by the end of the decade as the company strengthens its position in the fast-growing EV segment.

Managing Director and CEO Shailesh Chandra said Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles (TMPV) is aiming to achieve Rs 1.4 lakh crore in revenue by FY31, along with double-digit EBITDA margins, an EBIT margin of over 5 per cent, and profit before tax (PBT) that is more than five times

the current level. "By FY31, TMPV aspires to Rs 1.4 lakh crore in revenues, double-digit EBITDA margins and over 5 per cent EBIT margin, driving PBT to over five times the current level," Chandra said.

The company plans to invest nearly Rs 40,000 crore in expanding its product portfolio and manufacturing capacity over the next five years, while also targeting Rs 10,000 crore in free cash flows.

At the consolidated level, Tata Motors has set an aspiration of becoming a significantly larger and more profitable business, targeting USD 60 billion in revenue, a 10 per cent EBIT margin, and USD 5 billion in profit before tax.

For its passenger vehicle business, the company plans to expand its portfolio to 15 nameplates by FY31 and enter new vehicle segments, while aiming to capture 25 per cent

market share in every segment it operates in. Achieving the FY31 volume target would require Tata Motors to nearly double passenger vehicle sales from the 640,000 units sold in FY26.

The growth strategy comes as competition intensifies in India's passenger vehicle market, with automakers stepping up investments in SUVs, electric vehicles, and alternative powertrain technologies to tap rising consumer demand.

During the AGM, Tata Motors also highlighted the impact of the cyberattack at its British luxury vehicle arm, Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), in FY26. The attack disrupted production for nearly two months, contributing to an 8 per cent decline in consolidated revenue to Rs 3.36 lakh crore, while consolidated volumes slipped 1 per cent to 949,501 units during the financial year. UNI

SEBI shifts FPI fee payments to rupee-based system; allows six-month transition

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JULY 9: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has notified amendments to the Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPI) Regulations, replacing the existing US dollar-denominated fee structure with a rupee-based payment system for foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) and foreign venture capital investors (FVCIs). The revised framework will come into effect in six months, providing overseas investors and intermediaries with adequate time to transition to the new regime. Under the amended regulations, the existing fee of US \$1,000 has been replaced with Rs 90,000 in eligible foreign exchange equivalent, according to a notification issued by Sebi.

The market regulator has also revised the registration fee for Category-I FPIs and FVCIs from US \$2,500 to Rs 2.3 lakh. In addition, late fees and continuance fees have been recalculated under the new rupee-denominated structure. As part of the revised framework, designated depository participants (DDPs), which process FPI registrations and facilitate foreign investors' access to Indian markets, will be required to remit the fees collected to Sebi within five working days of granting registration. In another compliance-related change, Sebi has expanded the common application form for FPI registration to include the applicant's date of birth or date of incorporation. The amendment is aimed at facilitating Permanent Account Number (PAN) applications in line with the Central Board of Direct Taxes' (CBDT) notification issued in March.

According to SEBI, it collected \$12.98 million, including GST, during FY26 through registration, continuation and other fees paid by FPIs and FVCIs.

The regulator said the move to a rupee-based fee structure is expected to simplify operations by eliminating manual accounting and invoicing associated with US dollar payments. The existing system often resulted in delays in accounting, limited real-time visibility of fee receipts and slower financial reporting.

Sebi has also revised the fee payment mechanism for custodians, replacing the current annual payment of Rs 10 lakh with a monthly payment of Rs 85,000, a move intended to improve operational efficiency and streamline fee collection. Separately, the regulator has amended the Mutual Fund Regulations to allow mutual funds to avail of intraday borrowing to bridge temporary funding mismatches arising from differences in pay-in and pay-out settlement timings, foreign exchange settlements and other transactions. The facility will be in addition to the existing provision that permits mutual fund schemes to borrow up to 20 per cent of their net assets to meet temporary liquidity requirements, such as redemption payouts. SEBI said asset management companies (AMCs) will be responsible for ensuring that intraday borrowings are repaid by the end of the day. In cases where such borrowings extend beyond the same day, AMCs will have to comply with the regulatory provisions governing overnight borrowing under the Mutual Fund Regulations. UNI

Nationwide opens first international campus in Hyderabad, to expand global operations

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, JULY 9: US-based Nationwide, one of the largest and strongest diversified insurance and financial services organizations, on Wednesday announced the opening of its first international campus, Nationwide Global Services Center Private Limited, in Hyderabad.

The new centre, named Nationwide India, will join the company's existing locations in Columbus, Ohio; Des Moines, Iowa; and Scottsdale, Arizona, as part of its strategy to expand operations globally, the company said in a release here.

Vikas Jaswal will lead the Hyderabad campus and oversee operations, recruitment, and capability development in India.

The company said Nationwide India will play a key role in its global 24/7 operating model by building critical capabilities, supporting business functions, and accelerating innovation, decision-making, and productivity across the organisation.

Telangana Minister for Information Technology and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu welcomed Nationwide's expansion into Hyderabad, stating that the city has emerged as a leading destination for banking, financial services, insurance, and capital markets innovation.

"Nine of the world's top ten BFSI giants are driving innovation and advanced product engineering from Hyderabad," Sridhar Babu said, adding that the entry of Nationwide further strengthens Telangana's growing ecosystem of Global Capability Centres.

Nationwide India's Managing Director Vikas Jaswal said Hyderabad's skilled talent pool and established technology ecosystem made it an ideal location for expanding the company's global workforce. UNI

Oil jumps as US-Iran clashes revive fears over Gulf energy supplies

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JULY 9: Oil prices climbed sharply on Wednesday as the United States and Iran renewed attacks in the Gulf of Hormuz region, reigniting fears that energy and fertiliser supplies from the Gulf will be choked after weeks of easing crude prices and freer transiting of ships.

Brent crude, the global benchmark, rose more than 3 per cent to USD 76.48 a barrel by Noon, the highest since 23 June, ending a period of declining crude prices brought in by a tentative ceasefire that had calmed markets. The latest escalation has cast doubt over the durability of that truce, which looked like an almost done deal. US President Donald Trump last night declared that the peace memorandum with Iran was "over", although he also added that talks would continue.

The renewed tensions also weighed on equity markets across the globe. India's benchmark Sensex extended losses throughout Wednesday's session, ending 2.16 per cent lower as higher crude prices and fears of prolonged instability undermined investor sentiment.

Top officials in the Ministry of Commerce said that for India, the immediate concern extends beyond crude oil. "Fertiliser imports, which had only recently begun to recover after vessels carrying contracted shipments of urea, sulphur and potash were delayed by earlier disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz, could once again face interruptions just as supplies are required for the peak monsoon sowing season," they pointed out. "Any prolonged disruption could threaten the timely availability of key agricultural inputs and could add to pressure on food prices," admitted Prof Biswajit Dhar, former WTO Chair at the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade.

A renewed conflict in the Gulf would once again expose India's massive dependence on energy imports, which account for 80 per cent of all crude consumed by the coun-

try. A substantial chunk of that crude oil and liquefied natural gas imports transit the Strait of Hormuz, leaving the country acutely exposed to any disruption in maritime traffic.

"Indian exports rely heavily on shipping routes through the Gulf and logistics hubs such as Dubai. Any disruption to air or sea freight would increase insurance premiums and transport costs, while delaying shipments of both imports and exports," said Prof Dhar.

The conflict also carries implications for millions of Indian workers across the Gulf. Around 10 million Indians live and work in the region, sending back some USD 40 billion a year. Any prolonged downturn in Gulf economic activity or large-scale evacuations could affect both employment and remittance inflows.

The latest escalation followed US strikes on multiple Iranian targets and Washington's decision to reinstate sanctions on Iranian oil exports, as also retaliatory strikes by Iran. UNI

The successful handover of nearly 1,000 hectares of land by Maharashtra Airport Infrastructure Ltd (MIL) on June 25 and the declaration of the Commercial Operations Date (COD), enabling GMR Nagpur International Airport Ltd (GNIAL) to commence operations and execute its long-term expansion plans, the Airports said in a release here.

The acquisition strengthens GMR Airports' footprint in India's growing aviation sector and aligns with its strategy of developing high-potential airport assets with strong passenger, cargo, and commercial growth prospects.

The first phase of the project, to be implemented over the next eight years, will focus on upgrading passenger facilities, expanding operational capacity, and positioning Nagpur as a key aviation and logistics hub for

the Vidarbha region.

GMR Airports plans to increase the airport's passenger handling capacity from the current three million passengers annually to 30 million passengers during the 30-year concession period, with the potential to scale up to 50 million passengers annually in the future.

The company also plans to develop Nagpur into a major cargo and logistics hub with a

long-term cargo handling capacity of 150,000 metric tonnes per annum, leveraging the city's strategic location at the geographical centre of India and its proximity to the MIHAN project.

Nearly 100 hectares of the land parcel have been earmarked for Aerocity development, which is expected to create commercial opportunities, generate employment, and support regional economic growth. UNI

GMR Airports unveils expansion roadmap for Nagpur Airport; plans Rs 300 Cr initial investment

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI/HYDERABAD, JULY 9: GMR Airports Ltd on Wednesday unveiled a multi-phase modernisation and expansion roadmap for Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport, Nagpur, with an initial investment of about Rs 300 crore, following the completion of the airport's privatisation process. The development plan follows

growing aviation sector and aligns with its strategy of developing high-potential airport assets with strong passenger, cargo, and commercial growth prospects.

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Gambhir says he has given Samson 'clarity' on omission

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: Sanju Samson has the clarity he needs after he was left out from the playing XI and then from the squad that tours Zimbabwe for three T20Is, India head coach Gautam Gambhir has said. Samson was the Player of the Tournament in the T20 World Cup in March with scores of 97 not out, 89 and 89 in the last three matches. He also scored two centuries in the IPL, but following scores of 5, 0 and 1 on the tours of Ireland and England, he was left out for the 15-year-old prodigy Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. While Samson remains a part of the squad in England where India now trail 2-0, he has been left out entirely from the squad for the Zimbabwe T20Is later this month. "The clarity that should have been given to Sanju Samson, he has got from me," Gambhir said after the third T20I at Trent Bridge. "And that conversation is between a head coach and a player. That contents of the conversation we will obviously not tell you about. "As far as clarity goes, we are absolutely clear that Sanju... what he had done for India during the World Cup has been phenomenal, and sometimes you just have to look at the form as well of a certain player. And there is no hard and fast rule that he cannot make a comeback in this series. "And more importantly, ultimately international cricket is about results. Whatever we feel is the best combination to give us the results, we play that combination, we play that playing XI. That is what I've always been a big be-

liever of: that everyone needs to earn their place. Everyone needs to earn the right to play for India." The pressure on the selectors and team management has mounted after they have left out both the captain, Suryakumar Yadav, and the Player of the Tournament from that World Cup-winning squad. They have also lost all four of their completed matches since the World Cup, including a 2-0 clean sweep against Ireland, an opposition they had never previously lost an international match to. Gambhir said that while India needed to get better at game awareness and adaptability to conditions, the results were also indicative of the time that the T20I side needs given they are hitting reset after a dominant run. Before the setbacks in Ireland and England, India had gone unbeaten for 16 consecutive series or tournaments culminating in the first successful defence of a T20 World Cup by any team. "Conditions matter a little but if you see there are changes in the T20 side," Gambhir said. "When you go to reset a side, sometimes you get such performances. There are a lot of changes from the XI that played the T20 World Cup final to now. Be it the captain, be it the opening batsman. There is no Hardik Pandya, there is no Jasprit Bumrah. "When you go for that reset, it takes a bit of time. If you see, a 15-year-old is opening, Prince Yadav is in his second T20I, Harshit Rana is coming back from an injury. We ultimately look only at results, and no doubt results are important in international cricket, but we have to be practical as well.

Injured Rawal out of Lord's Test against England; Punia named replacement

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

PERTH: India's top-order batter Pratika Rawal has been ruled out of the Lord's Test against England starting Friday. Priya Punia has been drafted in as a replacement and is available for selection immediately. Rawal sustained the injury while fielding during last week's second one-day against England A in Taunton. She didn't subsequently come out to bat in India A's chase of 300. Head coach Amol Muzumdar said Rawal had a "cut on her knee which required some stitches" while also confirming Punia's addition to the squad. Uncapped in Test cricket, Punia struck two half-centuries in the three-match A series.

Indian Super League secures full season after clubs win rights deal

■ AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: India's top-flight football competition will return with a full season after a year of uncertainty, with clubs taking control of its commercial operations under a new agreement announced Wednesday.

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) said it would retain administrative authority over the Indian Super League (ISL), while its 14 clubs would manage sponsorship, marketing and other commercial rights. "We are giving the clubs

the commercial rights for this league and the AIFF will hold on to the administrative and all the important aspects," AIFF deputy general secretary M. Satyanarayan told reporters in New Delhi.

"We are committed to make this league the best in Asia and we have been getting cooperation from the clubs and the sports ministry," he added.

The 2026-27 ISL season is scheduled to kick off on September 4 and will be played in its usual home and away format.

Launched in 2014 with



backing of international stars including former Italy striker Alessandro Del Piero, the fran-

chise-based ISL was designed to revitalise Indian football and attract new audiences.

The league was thrown into turmoil last year after the expiry of a rights agreement between the AIFF and Football Sports Development Limited, the company that had operated the competition since its launch.

But the competition has struggled to maintain momentum, with television ratings falling and sponsorship interest weakening in recent years.

The challenges have mirrored the fortunes of India's national men's team, which is ranked a dismal 138th in the latest FIFA standings.

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