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Community Participation Is Crucial for Successful Reintegration of Drug Abuse Victims: LG Manoj Sinha

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 14: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday directed the pilot implementation of the proposed Rehabilitation and Socio-Economic Reintegration Scheme for Drug Abuse Victims, 2026 in one district each of the Kashmir and Jammu divisions, saying community participation is essential for the successful reintegration of individuals recovering from substance abuse.

Chairing a high-level meeting to review the proposed scheme, the Lieutenant Governor said the pilot project should be closely monitored so that lessons learned can be incorporated before the programme is expanded across the Union Territory.

The proposed scheme seeks to establish a comprehensive, convergence-based



framework for the rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration of people recovering from substance use disorders through coordinated efforts of multiple government departments.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Principal Secretary, Home Department Chandraker Bharti, Principal Secretary to the Lieutenant

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All Genuine Public Concerns Will Be Examined for Appropriate Action: CM Omar Abdullah

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 14: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday assured that all genuine public grievances and industry-related concerns would receive due attention, saying the government would examine every legitimate issue in consultation with the concerned departments for appropriate action.

The assurance came as the Chief Minister met several public, industrial and business delegations at the Civil Secretariat, where he listened to their demands and discussed issues affecting key sectors of the economy and public services.

A delegation of the Bat Manufacturers Association Kashmir, led by its President Fayaz Ahmad Dar, urged the government to extend support to the region's cricket bat manufacturing industry. The delegation sought policy measures to strengthen the sector, promote its growth and enhance its long-term competitiveness.

Representatives of the Srinagar International



Airport Taxi Stand Drivers Union, led by President Riyaz Thakur, also met the Chief Minister and highlighted issues concerning taxi operators serving the airport, seeking government intervention to address their concerns.

The Chief Minister later met a delegation of the Hot Mix Plant Owners Association, Kashmir, headed by Bashir Ahmad Khan. The delegation apprised him of the operational challenges facing the sector and requested measures to

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Amarnath Yatra Sets Historic Record, Crosses 3 Lakh Pilgrims Mark in Just 12 Days

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JULY 14: The annual Amarnath Yatra has achieved a historic milestone, with more than three lakh pilgrims visiting the holy cave shrine within just 12 days of the pilgrimage, marking the highest turnout recorded during the corresponding period in recent years.

Official figures released on Tuesday showed that 26,308 pilgrims offered prayers at the shrine during the day, taking the cumulative number of devotees since the pilgrimage began on July 3 to 3,01,926.

The latest figures represent a sharp increase from the 2,20,511 pilgrims who had completed the pilgrimage during the same period in 2025. The addition of 81,415 pilgrims reflects a growth of nearly 37 per cent, highlighting the growing participation in this year's pilgrimage.

Describing the achievement as historic, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha congratulated all officials, security personnel, service providers and volunteers for their commitment in ensuring the smooth conduct of the pilgrimage.

In a message, the Lieutenant Governor said

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He Put Up a Brave Fight Against the Odds

Veteran NC leader Dr Mustafa Kamal Dies at 83 After Prolonged illness

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 14: Veteran National Conference (NC) leader, former Jammu and Kashmir minister and senior party strategist Dr Mustafa Kamal passed away on Tuesday evening after a prolonged illness. He was 83.

Dr Kamal, the younger brother of National Conference president and former Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah

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LG, CM's Office, Council of Ministers grieved

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 14: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has expressed grief over the sad demise of veteran political leader

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Govt announces summer break for Degree Colleges

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 14: The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Tuesday announced summer vacations for all Government Degree Colleges in the Kashmir Division and those falling under the winter zone of the Jammu Division.

According to Government Order No. 234-JK(HE) of 2026, issued by the Higher Education Department, the vacation will be observed from July 21 to August 2, 2026.

The order states that all Government Degree Colleges in the Kashmir Division as well as those located in the winter zone of the Jammu Division shall remain closed during the notified period as part of the annual summer vacation schedule.

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CS reviews PMGSY progress in J&K

PMGSY-IV to construct 646 new roads across J&K at an investment of ₹7,790 Cr



■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 14: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of works being executed under the Prad-

han Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) across the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by senior officers including the ACS, Public Works (R&B)

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CS chairs maiden UTLSC on Vibrant Villages Programme

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 14: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired the maiden meeting of the Union Territory Level Screening Committee (UTLSC) under the Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP), convened by the Planning, Development & Monitoring Department (PD&MD), to review and finalize the

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Zeeshan Mohiuddin and Asrar Ul Haq Call on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at Lok Bhawan

SEE STORY ON PAGE 3

J&K RECORDS FLURRY OF CLOUDBURSTS - 15 IN 14 DAYS

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JUL 14: Jammu and Kashmir has recorded at least 15 cloudburst incidents in this month so far, with the events triggering flash floods, mudslides and landslides across several districts.

The incidents have damaged roads, houses, agricultural land and public infrastructure while disrupting connectivity in several parts of the Union Territory.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), one of the recent incidents was reported from the Bhalesa area of Doda district, where flash floods carried mud and debris onto roads, cutting off access to several interior villages.

North Kashmir's Tulail Valley and Gurez were also hit by several cloudbursts earlier this month, causing damage to roads and other infrastructure

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Lightning kills over 60 sheep in Poonch; no human casualties

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JUL 14: A lightning strike killed over 60 sheep, a buffalo and a dog in Poonch district on Tuesday as the Meteorological Department forecast another spell of heavy rain and warned of flash floods and landslides later this week.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the lightning struck a grazing area

in Surankote, killing more than 60 sheep belonging to a local shepherd. A buffalo and a dog also died in the incident. No human casualties were reported.

In Anantnag district, residents of Awoora village continued to grapple with the aftermath of a cloudburst that triggered flash floods, damaging at least 18 houses besides orchards, agricultural land and village

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Over 570 Sports Infrastructure Projects Underway Across J&K

Commr Secy Reviews First Quarterly Progress of YSS Expansion Programme

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 14: More than 570 sports and youth infrastructure projects with an estimated investment exceeding Rs. 650 crore are presently under various stages of planning and execution across Jammu & Kashmir during current financial year, under the Department of Youth Services & Sports, marking one of the most comprehensive infrastructure development programmes undertaken by the Department in recent years.

The progress of this ambitious programme was reviewed today by

Commissioner Secretary, Youth Services & Sports, Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, chairing the first quarterly review of the implementation roadmap initiated earlier this year.

The meeting was attended by Director General, Youth Services & Sports, Special Secretary YSS, Secretary, J&K Sports Council, FA/CAOs, JDP, senior officers of the Administrative Department, engineering agencies, Heads of Wings, District Youth Services & Sports Officers from all twenty districts and officers of the J&K Sports Council.

The review covered Capital Expenditure, Special Assistance to Capital

Investment (SASCI), Centrally Sponsored Schemes including the Khelo India Mission, Revenue Expenditure, Budget Announcements and district-wise implementation of sports infrastructure projects. The Commissioner/Secretary said that the Department's infrastructure strategy is fully aligned with the vision of the Khelo Bharat Niti, with emphasis on creating an equitable, accessible and future-ready sports ecosystem capable of serving every region and every section of society.

Dr. Choudhary observed that while significant investments have already transformed sports infrastructure

over the past few years, the current phase represents a strategic shift from isolated project execution to a planned, data-driven expansion of sports infrastructure across urban centres, rural areas, border districts, tribal habitations, remote mountainous regions and other underserved locations. He said the objective is to ensure that every young person in Jammu & Kashmir has access to quality sports facilities within reasonable proximity, while simultaneously creating centres of excellence capable of nurturing national and international sporting talent.

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Community.....

Governor Dr. Mandeep K. Bhandari, Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department Sarmad Hafeez, and other senior officials.

During the meeting, Commissioner Secretary Sarmad Hafeez presented the key features of the proposed scheme, which envisages a structured three-year rehabilitation cycle.

The first phase will focus on treatment, medical care, counselling and preparation of Individual Rehabilitation Plans. The second phase will emphasise education, skill development, employment opportunities and family reintegration, while the third phase will provide long-term follow-up, relapse prevention, community support and sustained social inclusion through coordinated departmental interventions.

Officials also informed the meeting that a dedicated Rehabilitation Monitoring Portal is being developed to facilitate digital case management, monitor individual rehabilitation plans, improve inter-departmental coordination and track rehabilitation outcomes while ensuring the confidentiality of beneficiaries.

The scheme has been prepared by a Task Force headed by the Principal Secretary, Home Department, under the directions of the Chief Secretary, with the Social Welfare Department serving as the nodal department. Representatives of all major stakeholder departments contributed to framing the rehabilitation strategy.

Appreciating the Task Force for preparing the framework, the Lieutenant Governor stressed that rehabilitation must extend beyond medical treatment and include sustained recovery, social inclusion and livelihood opportunities for affected individuals.

He directed all concerned departments to ensure effective coordination for the successful implementation of the scheme and underscored the importance of leveraging technology for transparent monitoring and evidence-based decision-making.

The Lieutenant Governor also instructed officials to identify dedicated officers to lead rehabilitation efforts and involve trained women volunteers and community groups in counselling and rehabilitation activities.

He further directed that government employees and volunteers be encouraged to actively participate in the rehabilitation process and called for the immediate launch of training and capacity-building programmes to equip rehabilitation teams with the specialised skills required for effective service delivery.

All Genuine.....

facilitate its smooth functioning.

Another delegation representing the Industrial Estate Pampore brought to the Chief Minister's notice issues affecting industrial units in the estate and sought government support for improving the business environment.

During the meetings, Omar Abdullah reiterated the government's commitment to responsive governance, assuring every delegation that their genuine demands would be examined sympathetically and taken up with the respective departments for suitable resolution.

In a separate meeting, a delegation from ICICI Bank called on the Chief Minister to discuss expanding Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives and strengthening financial inclusion across Jammu and Kashmir. The discussions focused on enhancing collaboration between the government and the banking sector to support inclusive development and community welfare.

Amarnath Yatra.....

the record reflected the collective efforts of all stakeholders whose dedication had enabled devotees to undertake the pilgrimage safely and comfortably.

Meanwhile, the 13th batch of pilgrims reached Kashmir after departing from Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu under multi-layered security arrangements during the early hours of Tuesday.

According to official data, 5,335 pilgrims travelled to the two base camps, with 1,736 proceeding via the Baltal route and 3,599 choosing the traditional Pahalgam route.

The Baltal convoy departed at 2:42 a.m., followed by the Pahalgam convoy at 3:10 a.m., under the escort of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, the Central Reserve Police Force and other security agencies.

The latest batch comprised 3,911 men, 1,288 women, 21 children, 90 monks, 24 women ascetics and one transgender pilgrim.

Authorities deployed 232 vehicles, including 138 buses, 36 medium motor vehicles, 57 light motor vehicles and one motorcycle, to facilitate the movement of pilgrims. Of these, 99 vehicles proceeded towards Baltal, while 133 moved towards Pahalgam.

The 57-day pilgrimage will conclude on August 28. The Amarnath cave shrine, located at an altitude of 3,880 metres in the Himalayas, attracts hundreds of thousands of devotees from across the country every year.

He Put Up.....

and uncle of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, breathed his last at a private hospital in Srinagar at around 5 p.m., bringing to a close a political career that spanned nearly four decades.

Announcing the demise, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah paid an emotional tribute to his uncle, recalling his determined battle against illness.

"He put up a brave fight against the odds. The doctors and hospital staff did everything possible, but God called him on his final journey," the Chief Minister said in a statement.

Dr Kamal had been undergoing treatment for several months, with his condition reportedly deteriorating over the past few days. He was unmarried.

A qualified medical doctor before entering public life, Dr Kamal earned his MBBS degree from Sawai Man Singh Medical College, Jaipur, in 1962 and began his career as a general physician in Tangmarg, where he served the local community before making his transition into politics.

His political journey began with his membership of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Council between 1983 and 1987. He was later elected to the Legislative Assembly from the Gulmarg constituency in 1987 and continued to represent the constituency until 2002.

During his long political career, Dr Kamal served as a cabinet minister in the National Conference-led governments of 1983, 1987 and 1996, holding several important

portfolios. Within the party, he later served as Additional General Secretary and was among its most prominent spokespersons.

Known for his forthright views, Dr Kamal remained one of the National Conference's most vocal leaders on constitutional and political issues relating to Jammu and Kashmir. In recent years, he consistently advocated the restoration of the region's constitutional rights following the changes introduced in 2019.

His passing has been widely mourned across political circles, with leaders describing him as a committed public servant whose contributions to healthcare, governance and public life left a lasting mark on Jammu and Kashmir.

LG, CM's.....

Dr. Mustafa Kamal.

In a condolence message, the Lieutenant Governor has said: "I am deeply saddened by the news of veteran leader Dr. Mustafa Kamal's passing away. I extend my heartfelt condolences to his family, well-wishers, and admirers. Om Shanti!"

The Chief Minister's Office expressed their heartfelt condolences to the Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, on the passing of his uncle, Dr Mustafa Kamal.

Dr Mustafa Kamal, a former Minister and senior leader of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, passed away after a brief illness at a private hospital here.

Dr Kamal was the son of the legendary leader and former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, and the brother of former Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah.

The officers and staff of the Chief Minister's Office expressed profound grief over the demise of Dr Kamal and conveyed their deepest sympathies to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and the entire bereaved family.

They prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and wished strength and fortitude to the family to bear this irreparable loss.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary expressed profound grief and sorrow over the demise of Dr. Mustafa Kamal, describing him as a seasoned political leader and a compassionate public figure.

He said that the late leader was a committed social worker whose invaluable contributions to public welfare and the political landscape of Jammu and Kashmir will be remembered with deep respect and admiration.

The Deputy Chief Minister conveyed his deepest sympathies to former Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, other members of the bereaved family and all those mourning the irreparable loss.

He prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and strength to the bereaved family to bear this immense loss with courage and fortitude.

He added that Dr. Kamal's rich legacy and selfless service would continue to inspire the generations to come.

The Deputy Chief Minister prayed that the departed soul may attain eternal peace and solace.

Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma expressed deep grief and sorrow over the demise of veteran political leader Dr. Mustafa Kamal.

Describing Dr. Kamal as a distinguished public figure who dedicated decades of his life to public service and democratic values, the Minister said his demise marks the end of an important chapter in the political history of Jammu and Kashmir. He said that Dr. Kamal earned respect across political and social spheres for his steadfast commitment to public welfare and unwavering engagement with the people.

Satish Sharma said that Dr. Mustafa Kamal's contribution to the political discourse of Jammu and Kashmir and his efforts towards strengthening the democratic institutions will be remembered for years to come. He added that his legacy of public service and dedication will continue to inspire future generations.

Expressing his heartfelt sympathies, the Minister conveyed his deepest condolences to the bereaved family, relatives, friends, colleagues, well-wishers and countless admirers of the departed leader. He prayed that the Almighty grant eternal peace to the departed soul and bestow strength and courage upon the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss.

"In this moment of profound grief, my thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved family. May the Almighty grant Dr. Mustafa Kamal the highest place in his eternal abode and give strength to all those mourning this huge loss," the Minister said.

Govt.....

The order has been issued by the Higher Education Department under the authority of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir and has been circulated to all concerned departments and college principals for necessary compliance.

Classes in the affected colleges are expected to resume after the conclusion of the vacation period unless any further orders are issued by the department.

CS reviews....

Department; Commissioner Secretary, Forests; Chief Engineer, PMGSY, Jammu/Kashmir and field functionaries connected with the implementation of the flagship rural road connectivity programme.

During the review, the Chief Secretary took a comprehensive stock of the physical and financial progress achieved under PMGSY Phases I, II and III, besides examining the implementation strategy and future roadmap for PMGSY-IV, which is the largest rural connectivity programme undertaken in Jammu & Kashmir so far.

While reviewing the implementation of PMGSY-IV, the Chief Secretary described the scale of investment envisaged under the programme as phenomenal, observing that it reflects the Government's unwavering commitment towards strengthening rural infrastructure and ensuring equitable development across Jammu & Kashmir.

He said the unprecedented investment in rural road connectivity would not only provide all-weather access to far-flung habitations but also serve as a catalyst for socio-economic transformation by improving access to education, healthcare, markets, tourism and employment opportunities.

Expressing satisfaction over the substantial progress

achieved under the PMGSY, the Chief Secretary, however, stressed that the handful of projects still pending under the earlier phases must be completed without any further delay. He directed the Public Works (R&B) Department to fix responsibility for inordinate delays wherever warranted and ensure greater accountability in project execution.

The Chief Secretary further impressed upon the Department to adopt a coordinated approach with the Divisional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners and the Forest Department for expeditious resolution of all pending bottlenecks, particularly those relating to forest clearances, land-related issues, utility shifting and other statutory approvals that have impeded the timely completion of certain projects.

Emphasising the need for close field-level monitoring, the Chief Secretary directed all Deputy Commissioners to personally review the progress of PMGSY projects in their respective districts at regular intervals and facilitate inter-departmental coordination to remove obstacles hindering execution.

He instructed that every effort should be made to ensure completion of all balance works well before the stipulated sunset dates of the respective PMGSY phases, while simultaneously maintaining the momentum of implementation under PMGSY-IV so that the pace of progress remains steady, timely and outcome-oriented.

Speaking on the occasion, Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works (R&B) Department, Anil Kumar Singh, reiterated the Department's firm commitment towards the timely completion of all pending works sanctioned under the earlier phases of PMGSY. He made out that the focused efforts are underway to fast-track forest and statutory clearances, expedite the tendering and award of newly sanctioned works, and ensure early commencement of projects on the ground.

The ACS further stated that the Department is vigorously pursuing fresh sanctions from the Ministry of Rural Development for the remaining eligible unconnected habitations so that the objective of providing all-weather road connectivity to every eligible rural settlement in Jammu & Kashmir is achieved within the shortest possible time.

The Chief Secretary was informed that out of 3,437 roads sanctioned under PMGSY-I, II and III, as many as 3,332 roads have already been completed, representing an overall achievement of 96.9 percent. Against a sanctioned road length of 20,801.43 kilometres, a total of 19,865.36 kilometres has been completed, providing all-weather connectivity to remote and underserved rural areas across the Union Territory. Similarly, 260 Long Span Bridges (LSBs) have been completed out of 305 sanctioned under these phases.

The meeting was further informed that cumulative expenditure of over Rs. 13,526 Cr has been incurred under PMGSY-I, II and III, reflecting the scale of investment made towards transforming rural connectivity across Jammu & Kashmir.

Reviewing PMGSY-IV, the Chief Secretary noted that the programme marks a major expansion of rural road infrastructure in the Union Territory. Under the first two batches of PMGSY-IV, 646 roads with a total sanctioned length of 3,381 kilometres and an estimated cost of Rs. 7,790 Cr have been approved for connecting 792 habitations.

Elaborating it was divulged that Batch-I (2025-26) comprises 316 roads covering 1,781 kilometres at a sanctioned cost of Rs. 4,224 Cr, of which 235 works have already commenced on the ground. Expenditure of nearly Rs. 270 Cr has been incurred so far under this batch. In Batch-I (2026-27), all 330 sanctioned roads have been technically sanctioned and tendered, with the tendering process at advanced stages.

The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation of the Government's resolve to strengthen rural infrastructure and accelerate socio-economic development through enhanced connectivity in every corner of Jammu & Kashmir.

CS chairs.....

development roadmap for the identified border villages across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by the concerned Administrative Secretaries, Heads of Departments and Deputy Commissioners of the respective districts.

Taking a comprehensive review of the district-wise proposals, the Chief Secretary undertook a first-hand appraisal of the projects envisaged under the programme across the identified border villages spread over eight districts of the Union Territory. He emphasized that all developmental interventions should be implemented in a mission mode, ensuring optimum utilization of resources and coordinated execution by different departments for creating tangible improvements in the quality of life of the people residing in these remote border areas.

He observed that the Vibrant Villages Programme offers a unique opportunity to transform the socio-economic landscape of these strategically important villages through integrated planning and timely execution of projects. He called upon all departments and district administrations to ensure seamless coordination so that the benefits of various Central and UT schemes reach the targeted population in an effective and time-bound manner.

Introducing the agenda of the meeting, Commissioner Secretary, Planning, Development & Monitoring Department, R. Alice Vaz, highlighted the vision and objectives of the Vibrant Villages Programme. She informed that the programme envisages focused interventions in selected border villages aimed at creating sustainable livelihood opportunities through the promotion of tourism and cultural heritage, skill development, entrepreneurship, cooperative development, agriculture and horticulture, besides encouraging the cultivation of medicinal plants and herbs.

She further stated that the programme also prioritizes strengthening basic infrastructure by improving road connectivity to unconnected habitations, providing quality housing and village infrastructure, enhancing energy access including renewable energy, and ensuring television and telecom connectivity. The overarching objective of these interventions, she said, is to generate adequate economic opportunities and improve living standards, thereby encouraging people to continue residing in these border villages.

Giving a detailed presentation, Nodal Officer, Vibrant Villages Programme in PD&MD, Owais Ahmad, informed the Committee that the district administrations have formulated a comprehensive portfolio of development projects aligned with the thematic focus areas of the programme.

He informed that the proposed interventions include 83 projects in Baramulla, 57 in Bandipora, 526 in Jammu, 117 in Kathua, 195 in Poonch, 92 in Rajouri and 121 in Samba district, covering a wide spectrum of infrastructure creation, livelihood generation and public service delivery.

The meeting was further informed that, under PMGSY-IV, road connectivity is proposed to be extended to 24 presently uncovered villages under the programme. Additionally, 8,513 households are proposed to be provided on-grid electricity connections, while 16,702 households will be covered with Direct-to-Home (DTH) television connectivity through the provision of set-top boxes, significantly improving access to information, education and entertainment in these remote areas.

The meeting concluded with detailed deliberations on the proposed projects, with the Chief Secretary directing all the concerned departments and district administrations to ensure meticulous planning, inter-departmental coordination and timely implementation so that the objectives of the Vibrant Villages Programme are achieved in letter and spirit, making the border villages economically vibrant, socially resilient and better connected with the mainstream.

J&K records.....

On July 7, a cloudburst struck the upper reaches of Thathrin Doda district, sending floodwaters and debris into the town. Several vehicles and shops were damaged, while traffic on the Doda-Kishtwar National Highway was disrupted before restoration work was taken up.

Earlier this month, authorities also recorded a cluster of 12 localized cloudburst incidents within nearly 12 hours across parts of the Chenab Valley and adjoining high-altitude areas, triggering flash floods and landslides at multiple locations.

On July 11, two cloudbursts were reported in the forest areas of Awoora and Dehwathu in Anantnag District. The sudden rise in the water level of the Overa stream inundated nearby areas, including hotels in the Pahalgam tourist resort.

Meteorologists said such events are becoming more common across the western Himalayan region as warmer atmospheric conditions allow more moisture to accumulate before being released over a limited area.

"Cloudbursts are highly localised events, but the pattern of intense rainfall over short durations is becoming more frequent in the Himalayan region," said Sonam Lotus, Director of the Meteorological Centre, Ladakh.

A recent study published in the International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction, which analysed 68 cloudburst and heavy rainfall events across Jammu and Kashmir, identified the Shri Amarnath ji basin and Tral tehsil in Pulwama district among the most vulnerable locations. The researchers said recurring extreme rainfall has increased the risk of flash floods, debris flows and landslides in these areas.

Another study examining infrastructure vulnerability in the north-western Himalayas found that rainfall events of around 40 mm in three hours and 60 to 140 mm in a day are capable of triggering flash floods and slope failures, particularly along transport corridors such as the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway.

The researchers said the findings underline the need for improved hazard mapping, weather monitoring, land-use planning and early warning systems in mountainous regions where short-duration rainfall events are becoming more frequent.

According to Meteorological data, Jammu and Kashmir witnessed an increase in localised extreme weather events over the past decade.

It attributes the trend to rising temperatures, changing atmospheric circulation and declining glacier cover, which are altering precipitation patterns across the western Himalayas.

Experts said strengthening forecasting systems, regulating construction in vulnerable areas and improving community-level disaster preparedness would be essential to reducing the impact of future extreme weather events—(KNO)

Lightning....

infrastructure. Several affected families have been left without shelter and sources of livelihood, officials said.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said weather across Jammu and Kashmir is likely to remain generally hot and humid from July 15 to 17, with brief spells of rain or thundershowers at scattered places.

A fresh spell of wet weather is expected from July 18, with light to moderate rain and thundershowers at many places on July 18 and 19. The weather office said rainfall activity is likely to intensify between July 20 and 22, with heavy rain and brief intense shower expected at isolated places in both Kashmir and Jammu divisions.

The Met office warned of the possibility of flash floods, landslides and mudslides at vulnerable locations in the Chenab Valley, Pir Panjal range and some hilly areas of Kashmir division during the July 20-22 period. It also advised people to avoid low-lying areas and stay away from streams and seasonal water channels during periods of heavy rainfall.

According to the IMD's evening observations, Jammu recorded the highest maximum temperature in the Union Territory at 35.2 degrees Celsius, followed by Katra at 32 degrees and Qazigund at 31.5 degrees. Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 29.7 degrees Celsius, while Gulmarg registered

22 degrees Celsius.

Officials said district administrations are monitoring vulnerable areas and have asked field agencies to remain prepared in view of the forecast of heavy rainfall over the coming days—(KNO)

Over 570....

The meeting reviewed the progress of 315 CapEx projects being implemented by the Directorate of Youth Services & Sports during 2026-27, including 167 ongoing works, 140 new projects and eight non-construction initiatives, in addition to projects under SASCI, Budget Announcements and other flagship programmes. The J&K Sports Council is simultaneously implementing 263 infrastructure projects, comprising 195 ongoing works, 57 new works and 11 SASCI Disaster Component projects, reflecting an unprecedented scale of coordinated infrastructure development across the Union Territory.

A comprehensive district-wise review was undertaken of all major projects. The Commissioner/Secretary reviewed progress on development of Khel Gaon, Nagrota as a flagship multi-sport hub through establishment of a Lawn Tennis Academy, new Directorate headquarters, Strength & Conditioning Centre, Youth Hostel and remodelling of cricket infrastructure. Progress was also reviewed on major new projects including construction of Khel Bhawans and integrated residential sports facilities at Rajouri, Ramban, Samba, Srinagar, Anantnag, Kulgam, Poonch, Jammu, and Nagrota; two Border Sports Academies; the proposed Centre for Mountaineering & Skiing at Sanasar; youth hostels at Nagrota, Wazir Bagh and Government College of Physical Education, Ganderbal; multi-purpose indoor halls; mini stadiums; sports academies; and playfield development works across districts.

The review also covered major projects being executed by the J&K Sports Council, including synthetic football and hockey turfs at Bandhuraakh, Jagti, Gassu Hazratbal, Azad Gunj Baramulla and Draggad Shopian; Olympic-standard swimming infrastructure and toddler swimming facilities at Gindun Rajbagh; athletic tracks at Khour, Mendhar and Tulibal; sports stadiums at Sogam, Birpur, Panthan Thathri, Rehal Bishnah, Budgam and Bhalwal; water sports facilities at Manasbal; Sports Complex at Nilandrus; Cricket Academies at Srinagar, Jammu, Udhampur and Anantnag; Gymnastics, Archery and Shooting Centres; High Performance Taekwondo Centres; and Centre of Cricket Excellence projects presently under execution.

The meeting noted significant progress under the Playfield Development Programme, under which 108 playfields are being developed across Jammu & Kashmir this year at an estimated cost of over Rs. 39 crore, besides implementation of 118 additional sports infrastructure projects, including indoor stadiums, multipurpose halls, youth hostels, volleyball courts, badminton courts, pickleball courts, cricket practice facilities, sports office buildings and allied infrastructure aimed at strengthening grass-roots participation and community engagement in sports.

Reviewing implementation under the Khelo India Mission, the Commissioner Secretary also assessed progress relating to Khelo India Centres, procurement of sports equipment, strengthening of centres of excellence, cricket academies and athlete support infrastructure, directing that these initiatives should complement the rapidly expanding physical infrastructure to create a complete sporting ecosystem across the Union Territory.

In a significant policy direction, Dr. Choudhary reviewed the creation of the Department's first comprehensive geo-spatial inventory of sports infrastructure by geo-tagging every stadium, playfield, indoor hall, youth hostel, academy, sports complex and allied asset under both the Directorate and the J&K Sports Council. The integrated GIS-based platform will support scientific infrastructure planning, lifecycle maintenance, utilisation assessment, convergence with other development programmes and identification of infrastructure-deficit areas requiring future investment.

He further directed preparation of district-wise infrastructure gap analyses based on population, accessibility, sporting potential and regional requirements so that future investments are guided by objective assessment rather than incremental expansion. Particular emphasis, he said, should be placed on border areas, tribal regions, remote habitations, hilly districts and emerging urban settlements, ensuring balanced regional development and equitable access to sports infrastructure.

Calling for strict adherence to timelines, the Commissioner/Secretary instructed all executing agencies to expedite DPR preparation, statutory approvals, tendering and execution while maintaining the highest standards of engineering quality, transparency and financial discipline. He also directed institution of digital project monitoring, periodic field inspections and outcome-based review mechanisms to ensure timely completion of every sanctioned project.

Dr. Choudhary said that investment in sports infrastructure is ultimately an investment in the aspirations of the youth of Jammu & Kashmir. He observed that the Department's vision extends beyond construction of physical assets to creation of vibrant community spaces that encourage participation, discover talent at the grassroots, promote healthy lifestyles and enable young sports persons from every district to compete at national and international levels.

He expressed confidence that the ongoing infrastructure expansion, supported by the Khelo India Mission and the policy framework envisaged under the Khelo Bharat Niti, would lay a strong foundation for making Jammu & Kashmir a leading sporting destination while creating enduring opportunities for generations of young people.



CS reviews progress of JKCIIP with IFAD Supervision Mission

Calls for accelerating implementation, ensuring timely realization of project outcomes

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 14: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high-level review meeting with the visiting International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Supervision Mission, led by its Country Coordinator, Meera Mishra, to assess the progress achieved under the Jammu & Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project (JKCIIP), a flagship initiative jointly financed by IFAD, the Government of India and Government of Jammu & Kashmir.

The IFAD Supervision Mission, presently on a two-week visit to the Union Territory from 2nd to 14th July, 2026, is undertaking an extensive field appraisal across Jammu and Kashmir to obtain a first-hand assessment of the implementation, quality and impact of interventions executed under the project.

The meeting was attended by senior officers of the Agriculture Production Department including ACS, APD, MD, HADP, Project Management Unit (JKCIIP), and other stakeholders associated with the implementation of the project.

During the meeting, the Chief

Secretary was presented with a comprehensive overview of the project's progress, achievements and future roadmap through a detailed presentation highlighting physical and financial accomplishments, implementation status, digital governance initiatives and the Annual Work Plan and Budget for the coming financial year.

While appreciating the progress achieved, the Chief Secretary emphasized that the project should now focus on translating approvals into tangible assets and sustainable livelihoods on the ground. He directed all implementing agencies to further expedite field execution and ensure that benefits reach eligible beneficiaries within stipulated timelines.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the status of credit linkage under the project. He observed that although over 2,550 applications have been forwarded to financial institutions, the pace of loan disbursement needs more focus to improve the outcomes. Stressing the critical role of institutional finance in promoting rural enterprises, he called for close coordination with banks and financial institutions to remove procedural bottlenecks



and ensure timely sanction and release of credit to beneficiaries.

The meeting was apprised by the ACS, APD, Dr Ashish Chandra Verma that farmer registrations on the portal have increased to 58,307, while applications received have crossed 64,750. More than 39,900 applications have already been approved and 7,406 livelihood units established across the Union Territory, registering substantial growth over the previous review period.

The presentation made by the MD, HADP highlighted that the Climate Smart and Market-Led Production component continues to account for the largest share of project interventions, followed by signifi-

cant progress under support to vulnerable communities and gradual expansion of the agri-business ecosystem.

The mission was further informed that the project has already recorded notable achievements across diverse sectors. These include large-scale expansion of niche and high-value crops such as vegetables, Bhaderwah Rajmash, Mushkudji, Basmati, saffron and other specialty crops, establishment of water management infrastructure, promotion of protected cultivation, mushroom and honey production units, development of seed villages and expansion of high-density horticulture orchards.

The meeting was further

informed that the project has facilitated establishment of grading and post-harvest infrastructure, incubation of innovative agri-startups, entrepreneurship promotion, buyer-seller interactions and participation in national trade fairs to strengthen agricultural value chains and improve market access for producers.

Special emphasis has also been laid on livelihood enhancement of pastoralists and vulnerable communities through establishment of income-generating sheep units, distribution of ice boxes to fisherfolk, support for diversified enterprises, creation of milk collection centres and promotion of improved livestock breeding initiatives.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the Annual Work Plan and Budget and appreciated the strategic planning undertaken for the forthcoming financial year. He emphasized the need for timely execution of proposed activities, efficient utilization of available financial resources and strict adherence to project timelines so that intended developmental outcomes are achieved within the project period.

The IFAD delegation appreciated the progress made by the Government of Jammu & Kashmir in institutionalizing transparent digital systems for project implementation and acknowledged the substantial improvements witnessed since the previous supervision mission. The Mission also shared valuable observations and recommendations aimed at further strengthening implementation quality, sustainability of interventions and community participation.

Speaking on the occasion, IFAD Country Coordinator Ms. Merra Mishra reiterated IFAD's continued commitment towards supporting sustainable agricultural transformation, climate-resilient farming systems, inclusive rural livelihoods and entrepreneurship development in Jammu & Kash-

mir. She appreciated the efforts of the Agriculture Production Department and all implementing agencies in accelerating project implementation and expressed confidence that the recommendations emerging from the supervision mission would further enhance project outcomes.

The Chief Secretary reiterated the Government's commitment towards successful implementation of JKCIIP and directed all stakeholder departments to maintain close coordination with the IFAD Mission for effective incorporation of its recommendations. He emphasized that the project offers a significant opportunity to transform agriculture into a competitive, climate-resilient and market-oriented sector while generating sustainable livelihoods for farmers, youth, women and vulnerable communities across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting concluded with a detailed discussion on the roadmap for the remaining project period, with emphasis on improving implementation efficiency, accelerating credit flow, enhancing convergence among departments and ensuring measurable socio-economic impact across the Union Territory.

KU, Sahitya Akademi hold seminar on Mirza Beg Arif's literary legacy

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR JULY 14: The Department of Kashmiri, University of Kashmir (KU), in collaboration with Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi organised a two-day Kashmiri seminar on "Mirza Ghulam Hassan Beg Arif", an eminent Kashmiri poet and writer which started here at the Main Campus KU on Tuesday.

The event aims to revisit the literary contributions of Mirza Ghulam Hassan Beg Arif and provide a platform for scholarly discussions on his poetry, prose and lasting influence on Kashmiri language and literature. It also seeks to encourage critical engagement with Kashmir's literary heritage and introduce younger generations to the works of one of the region's distinguished literary figures.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, said that universities have a vital role



in preserving and promoting regional languages and literary traditions.

"Our literary heritage is an invaluable cultural resource that deserves sustained academic attention. Seminars such as these help strengthen research on Kashmiri literature while inspiring students to engage with the rich intellectual legacy of our language," she said.

Convenor, Kashmiri Advisory Board, Sahitya Akademi, Prof. Shad Ramzan, highlighted the importance of Mirza Beg Arif's contribution to Kashmiri literature and called for continued scholarly engagement with the works of classical and modern Kashmiri writers.

Dr. Satish Vimal, Professor of Practice, KU, spoke about the relevance of revisiting the works of literary figures whose writings continue to shape Kashmir's cultural landscape and emphasized the need to make such literary traditions accessible to younger readers through academic and cultural initiatives.

Earlier, Head, Department of Kashmiri, KU, Prof. Aejaz Mohammed Sheikh, welcomed the guests and said that the event has brought together scholars, writers and researchers to examine the life, literary contributions and lasting relevance of Mirza Ghulam Hassan Beg Arif through informed academic discussions.

The two-day seminar includes keynote lectures, technical sessions, paper presentations and interactive discussions focusing on different aspects of Mirza Beg Arif's literary legacy and his contribution to Kashmiri language and literature.

The event proceedings of the inaugural session were conducted by Dr. Gulzar Ahmed Rather and vote of thanks was delivered by Majeed Majazi, members of Kashmiri Advisory Board, Sahitya Akademi.

Speaker reviews HDF, RKS fund utilization for strengthening healthcare services in Charar-i-Sharief

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 14: Speaker, Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, today chaired a meeting of the Hospital Development Fund (HDF) Committee of SDH Charar-i-Sharief and SDH Pakherpora falling in Medical Block Charar-i-Sharief and SDH Krenchore falling in Medical Block Khansahib to review the proposals for utilization of HDF for the financial year 2026-27.

The Speaker was apprised that the Hospital Development Fund is generated through various sources, including charges collected for pathological tests, X-ray services, hospital registration/prescription tickets and other user charges.

It was informed that the funds are utilized for payment of wages to HDF employees, procurement of essential medicines and medical equipment, minor repairs and renovation of hospital infrastructure, purchase of sanitary items and other patient-care requirements aimed at improving the quality of healthcare services.

The meeting was informed that all the three Sub-District Hospitals in Block Charar-i-Sharief have been accredited under the National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS), reflecting their commitment towards maintaining high standards of patient care and healthcare delivery.

It was also highlighted that SDH Nagam had received the prestigious Kayakalp Award for cleanliness during the previous year while SDH Pakherpora has been conferred with the same award this year with rank one in J&K. Notably, SDH Charar-i-Sharief has consistently received the Kayakalp Commendation Award for the last three consecutive years in recognition of its sustained efforts towards cleanliness, hygiene and quality healthcare services.

The Speaker also reviewed the proposed utilization of the Rogi Kalyan Samiti (RKS)

Fund for the financial year 2026-27. He examined the priorities identified for improving the healthcare facilities and patient amenities across the hospitals.

During the meeting, the Speaker stressed that every rupee available under the HDF and RKS should be utilized judiciously, transparently and strictly in accordance with the prescribed guidelines, with the primary objective of improving patient care and strengthening healthcare infrastructure.

He directed the concerned authorities to accord priority to procurement of essential medicines and modern medical equipment, maintenance of hospital infrastructure, sanitation and other facilities that directly benefit the patients.

Emphasizing accountability and efficient financial management, the Speaker instructed the hospital authorities to ensure optimum utilization of available resources, avoid unnecessary expenditure and maintain complete transparency in execution of works undertaken through these funds. He also called for periodic monitoring of expenditure and timely implementation of approved proposals so that the intended benefits reach the public without delay.

The Speaker appreciated the healthcare staff for securing quality certifications and national recognition under the NQAS and Kayakalp initiatives. He urged them to sustain these achievements by maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness, patient care and hospital management, while continuing to provide accessible, affordable and quality healthcare services to the people of the area.

The meeting was attended by CMO Budgam Dr. Gulzar Ahmad, BMO, Charar-i-Sharief, Dr. Tasavur Khan, BMO Khansahib Dr. Arshid Ahmad along with other members of the Hospital Development Fund Committees.

Zeeshan Mohiuddin and Asrar Ul Haq Call on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at Lok Bhawan



HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 14: Zeeshan Mohiuddin, Editor-in-Chief, JK Revolution, and Asrar Ul Haq, Executive Editor, JK Revolution, called on the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Shri Manoj Sinha, and held a cordial interaction on issues concerning peace, development, youth empowerment, and the role of responsible media in nation-building.

During the meeting, They appreciated the Lieutenant Governor's visionary leadership in strengthening peace, improving governance, accelerating infrastructure development, and fostering socio-economic progress across Jammu & Kashmir. They also commended the administration's sustained efforts towards ensuring a secure, stable, and prosperous future for the people.

They particularly lauded the Lieutenant Governor's "Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan", describing it as a timely and impactful initiative to protect

the youth from the menace of drug abuse. They appreciated the administration's comprehensive approach, including awareness campaigns, public participation, and strict action against drug peddling aimed at building a drug-free Jammu & Kashmir.

They reaffirmed JK Revolution's commitment to responsible and constructive journalism and expressed their resolve to continue highlighting the positive transformation, developmental initiatives, and aspirations of the people of Jammu & Kashmir. They also sought the Lieutenant Governor's guidance on further strengthening the role of local media in projecting the region's positive image at the national and international levels.

The Lieutenant Governor appreciated the role of responsible media in fostering informed public discourse and encouraged them to continue contributing towards peace, harmony, and the overall development of Jammu & Kashmir through fair and constructive journalism.

JKEDI Pulwama concludes Management Development Programmes under RAMP at Shadimarg

HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, JULY 14: The Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), Pulwama, in collaboration with NRLM successfully concluded two Management Development Programmes (MDP-9 and MDP-10) under the Raising and Accelerating

MSME Performance (RAMP) initiative at Shadimarg, Pulwama.

The programmes trained 44 women entrepreneurs, providing them with structured, high-quality training aimed at enhancing their entrepreneurial skills and strengthening their business capabilities. The valedictory ceremony was attended by Communication

Officer, Arif Khan; District Nodal Officer, JKEDI Pulwama, Raiyees Manzoor; ZEO Shadimarg, Khadim Hussain; and DPM NRLM Pulwama, Dr. Imran Ahmad among others.

While interacting with the participants, the dignitaries and faculty members highly appreciated JKEDI's efforts in organizing such

impactful capacity-building programmes in the far-flung areas of Pulwama district. They commended the enthusiasm and active participation of the women entrepreneurs and encouraged them to utilize the acquired knowledge and skills to establish sustainable and growth-oriented enterprises.

On the occasion, DNO Pulwama,

emphasized the importance of such initiatives in promoting entrepreneurship and empowering women at the grassroots level, especially in rural and semi-urban areas. Participants expressed heartfelt gratitude to the course team and JKEDI for their dedicated guidance and support in successfully organizing these programmes.

District-Level Capacity Building Workshop on PM Gati Shakti held in Budgam

DC emphasises effective use of PM Gati Shakti Portal for Integrated Planning and Infrastructure Development

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, JULY 14: A District-Level Capacity Building Workshop on the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan (PMGS-NMP) was held today at Conference hall Budgam under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan.

The workshop, attended by representatives of all line departments, was organized to enhance awareness and strengthen the capacity of district officials on the effective utilization of the PM Gati Shakti portal for integrated planning, infrastructure development, and improved inter-departmental coordination.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC highlighted the significance of the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan in enabling data-driven planning and seamless coordination among departments for timely execution of develop-



mental projects. He emphasized that effective use of the GIS-based digital platform would improve decision-making, reduce project delays, and ensure optimum utilization of available resources.

The DC directed all depart-

ments to obtain access to the PM Gati Shakti portal and ensure its effective use for planning, monitoring, and implementation of development projects. He also instructed departments to nominate suitable officials for the roles of Maker, Checker, and Ap-

prover to facilitate timely, accurate, and verified uploading of departmental data on the portal.

The PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, launched in October 2021, is a flagship initiative of the Government of India aimed

at strengthening integrated infrastructure planning through a GIS-based digital platform.

During the workshop, the technical team from the Industries & Commerce Department, the nodal department for implementation of the initiative, delivered detailed presentations on various components of the PM Gati Shakti portal. The sessions covered an overview of the National Master Plan, portal access procedures, live demonstration of portal functionalities, the Data Upload Management System (DUMS), analytical tools available on the platform, and the data management framework.

The participants actively interacted with the resource persons and discussed departmental requirements, operational challenges, and measures to strengthen the utilization of the PM Gati Shakti platform across the district.

HS Vijipara organises 'Maa Se Guft-a-Gu' Programme under Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JULY 14: Government Secondary School Vijipara on Tuesday organised the "Maa Se Guft-a-Gu" programme under the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan to raise awareness about the growing threat of drug abuse and reinforce the crucial role of mothers and families in preventing substance addiction among children.



The programme was attended by Dr. Asima Hassan, Chairperson, Child Welfare Committee, Bandipora, as the chief guest. Also present were the Headmaster of HS Vijipara, staff members, Sanjeeda Hashmi, CDPO, ICDS Project Sumbal-Hajin, officials of the ICDS Department, mothers, and a large number of students.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Asima Hassan expressed concern over the increasing incidence of drug addiction among youth and urged parents, particularly mothers, to maintain open communication with their children and closely monitor their emotional well-being and behaviour.

On the occasion, Sanjeeda Hashmi highlighted the need for coordinated efforts by families, schools, and government agencies to protect the younger generation from the dangers of substance abuse.

The Headmaster, Faculty members also addressed the gathering, stressing the importance of awareness, early intervention, and collective responsibility in combating drug addiction and building a healthy, drug-free society.

The programme concluded with all participants taking a pledge to work together towards the vision of a Drug-Free India under the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan.

Mobile TB Diagnostic Van reaches LOC villages in Kupwara to ensure 100% screening

HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, JULY 14: Special TB screening camp was held today at Budnamal village in Medical Block Kralpora, Kupwara, to improve TB detection and care in the area.

In light of objective to ensure 100 % screening in vibrant villages in the district, mobile TB screening van has been deployed in vibrant villages.

It is an initiative by District Administration Kupwara and Supported by IREDA under its CSR program. Project being implemented by TYCIA under overall supervision of District TB Center



Kupwara.

The mobile unit delivers doorstep screening and diagnostic services to underserved, hard-to-reach communities, helping ensure early detection, prompt diagnosis, and timely treatment under the National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP).

Since its flag-off by the Lieutenant Governor Jammu & Kashmir, the DTC-Mobile Medical Unit has conducted similar camps in Tangdhar, Keran, and Machil before reaching Budnamal.

The camp saw strong community turnout, with residents availing screening and diagnostic services. The District Administration and Health Department reiterated their commitment to intensified active case finding, awareness generation, uninterrupted treatment, and community-based interventions to eliminate TB across the district.

DC reviews progress of CSS, beneficiary-oriented initiatives in Udhampur

HT NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR, JULY 14: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Minga Sherpa today chaired a review meeting of officers from various line departments to assess progress of Centrally Sponsored Schemes and saturation of individual beneficiary-oriented schemes across the district.

The Deputy Commissioner conducted a sector-wise review of cen-

trally sponsored schemes and saturation of individual beneficiary-oriented schemes.

He directed all departments to work in close coordination with a strong sense of accountability to ensure effective and timely delivery of benefits to eligible beneficiaries.

He directed intensification of awareness campaigns so that people are fully informed about welfare and social security schemes,

and instructed officers to ensure schemes are implemented in letter and spirit and essential public services delivered within prescribed timelines.

The DC called upon departments to achieve set targets through effective grassroots implementation, and directed officers concerned to update progress data of Centrally Sponsored Schemes on a monthly basis for regular monitoring and timely intervention.

Commandant SDRF 2nd Battalion conducts tour of Reasi, reviews infrastructure expansion, operational preparedness

HT NEWS NETWORK

REASI, JULY 14: As part of ongoing infrastructure expansion plans of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Commandant SDRF 2nd Battalion SSP Mohammad Aslam today conducted a tour of District Reasi. He was accompanied by DySP Dinesh Gupta, Quartermaster SDRF 2nd Battalion Jammu, DySP DAR Reasi Sarbjeet Singh and other officers and officials of Team SDRF 2nd Battalion Jammu.

During the visit, the Commandant, accompanied by the team, inspected State land identified for the proposed establishment of the new SDRF Battalion Headquarters in Reasi.

He also examined a separate site for construction of a permanent building for the SDRF Component, Reasi. The visit aimed at assessing suitability

of the proposed locations to strengthen SDRF infrastructure and enhance the Force's disaster response capabilities.

Subsequently, the Commandant visited the SDRF Component Reasi, where he interacted with deployed personnel (nafri). He reviewed operational preparedness, assessed availability of essential resources and heard welfare-related grievances and suggestions of personnel. He called for maintaining a high state of readiness, professionalism and commitment to public service and assured personnel that their welfare concerns would be addressed on priority.

The Commandant also briefed officers and personnel deployed on the Monsoon Safety Advisory to be disseminated to citizens, the general public, locals and pilgrims in view of the ongoing monsoon season.

The advisory calls upon



people not to approach or enter rivers, streams, nallahs, waterfalls or other water bodies during or after rainfall and to never attempt to cross overflowing bridges, flooded roads or fast-flowing streams. People have

been asked to stay away from riverbanks, as erosion and sudden surges in water level can occur without prior warning and to avoid bathing, swimming, washing clothes or taking selfies near rivers during the monsoon.

Children should be kept under constant supervision and prevented from playing near water bodies.

People have been advised to follow weather advisories and warnings issued by the District Administration, IMD and Disaster Management authorities and not to spread or believe rumours, relying only on official information. Any emergency, rising water level, landslide or distress situation should be reported immediately to the nearest SDRF, Police or District Administration authorities. People have also been asked to cooperate with emergency responders and evacuate vulnerable areas if advised.

Pilgrims have been asked to remain on designated routes, avoid unnecessary movement near water bodies and strictly adhere to instructions issued by security and rescue agencies.

DHJ tours Government Mega Fruit Plant Nursery Chakroi

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 14: Director Horticulture Jammu Gul Sayed today undertook an inspection tour of the Government Mega Fruit Plant Nursery (MFPN) Chakroi, RS Pura. He was accompanied by District Horticulture Officer Perminder Singh. The Director reviewed ongoing activities in the Tissue Culture Laboratory and the Bio-Control Laboratory, where Technical Officers Amit Saraf and Zia-ur-Rashid apprised him of the scientific and technical operations under way. The Director appreciated the officers' efforts in adopting scientific techniques for raising fruit plants through tissue culture. The Director also attended the ongoing one-month training course on Fruit Plant Orchard/Nursery Development and Management being conducted for unemployed youth at the facility. Interacting with the trainees, he spoke of the programme's potential to enhance their technical skills in nursery operations and enable sustainable income and self-reliance. The training programme is headed by Divisional Training Officer

Virender Kumar. The Director further inspected ongoing nursery operations, including budding, grafting and layering techniques, showcased by District Horticulture Officer (In-charge, MFPN Chakroi) Perminder Singh and District Horticulture Officer Abhinav Gupta. He advised officers to promote cultivation of medicinal plants and introduce latest suitable cultivars of mango, litchi, guava and citrus, so the nursery can become a centre for diverse germplasm collection.

The Director appreciated the officers and staff for maintaining scientific rigour at the nursery, and reiterated the Department's commitment to strengthening tissue culture, bio-control and skill-development initiatives across Jammu division. The Director later visited the Government Fruit Plants Nursery, Miran Sahib, Maralian, accompanied by Horticulture Development Officer Dheeraj Sharma. He inspected nursery activities and issued directions to officers and staff for effective implementation of departmental programmes, maintenance of quality planting material and improvement of nursery infrastructure.

FCS&CA, Legal Metrology conduct joint market inspection in Greater Kailash; violations detected, penalties imposed

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 14: On the directions of Director Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) Jammu Rajesh Kumar Shavan, a joint enforcement team headed by Deputy Director Food & Rationing Sham Abrol, along with officers of the FCS&CA Department and officials of the Legal Metrology Department, today conducted a comprehensive market inspection drive in the Greater Kailash area of Jammu.

The joint team inspected a large number of grocery (Karyana) shops, electrical shops, food establishments and other commercial outlets to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act, Legal Metrology Act, Consumer Protection Act and other relevant laws. The in-

spection focused on display of rate lists, accurate weighing and measuring instruments, quality of commodities, MRP compliance, expiry dates, billing practices and consumer rights.

During the inspection, several violations were noticed, including non-display of rate lists, non-calibration of weighing and measuring instruments, deficiencies in mandatory disclosures and other irregularities. The erring establishments were penalised, with fines amounting to approximately 62,000 imposed. The violators were also issued strict warnings to ensure compliance in future, failing which stringent legal action shall be initiated.

Director FCS&CA Rajesh Kumar Shavan reiterated that the Department is committed to



safeguarding consumer interests by ensuring fair trade practices, transparency in pricing and availability of quality commodities. He said no trader or business

establishment would be allowed to indulge in unfair trade practices, overcharging or any activity prejudicial to consumer welfare.

The Department has appealed to traders and business establishments to strictly adhere to statutory provisions relating to price display, correct weighing and measuring practices, quality standards, hygiene and consumer rights.

Such market inspection drives will continue across Jammu division on a regular basis to protect consumers and maintain transparency in the market. The Assistant Director (ADs) have been asked to personally supervise market inspections and seek assistance of allied agencies as per guidelines issued by the Government.

Kashmiri Play "Naad" Staged Successfully at Government Degree College Uri

Mehboob Cultural Society Baramulla Organises Thought-Provoking Theatre Performance with Support from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India

■ JAMEEL ANSARI

URI, JULY 14: With financial support from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, Mehboob Cultural Society (MCS), Baramulla, successfully staged the acclaimed Kashmiri play "Naad", written by renowned playwright Mohammad Amin Bhat, at Government Degree College (GDC) Uri.

The programme was organised with the wholehearted cooperation of Government Degree College Uri, which provided its auditorium for the event. The performance was attended by faculty members, students, literary and cultural personalities, intellectuals, and a large number of theatre enthusiasts. The powerful presentation, compelling dialogues, and impressive performances kept the audience engrossed throughout.

The Principal of Government Degree College Uri, Prof. Abdul Majeed Chakoo, attended the event as the Chief Guest. Addressing the gathering, he congratulated the Ministry of Culture, Mehboob Cultural Society, and playwright Mohammad Amin Bhat for presenting such a meaningful production. He observed that organising literary and cul-



tural programmes in border areas is highly commendable, as theatre serves as an effective medium for nurturing creativity, social awareness, and a deeper connection with language and culture among young people.

He further stated that preserving the Kashmiri language and cultural heritage is a shared responsibility. Such programmes not only promote the performing arts but also strengthen the values of peace, communal harmony, mutual respect, and social cohesion.

The play "Naad" explores several contemporary social issues, including identity, the collective voice of society, social responsibility, mutual trust, the importance of dialogue, and communal harmony, all presented within the rich context of Kashmiri culture and traditions. Through his distinctive writing, Mohammad Amin Bhat conveys the message that social conflicts and complex challenges can be resolved not through violence but through dialogue, tolerance, understand-

ing, and unity.

The cast delivered remarkable performances, bringing the story to life with convincing acting and emotionally powerful dialogues. The audience highly appreciated the realistic portrayal of characters and praised the play for its relevance, thought-provoking content, and constructive social message.

The performance featured talented artists including Mehja-been Inksari, Shabir Ahmad Hak-kak, Ashraf Nago, and Ghulam Din Bahar, who received warm

applause for their outstanding performances.

An interactive session was also held during the programme, providing students with an opportunity to engage directly with the director and the artists. Students asked questions about the significance of theatre, the tradition of Kashmiri drama, the art of acting, and the role of performing arts in bringing about positive social change. The panel responded with detailed and inspiring insights.

At the conclusion of the programme, Mehboob Cultural Society Baramulla presented mementoes to the Chief Guest and other individuals who had contributed to the successful organisation of the event. The Principal and faculty members of Government Degree College Uri expressed their gratitude to the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, Mehboob Cultural Society Baramulla, playwright Mohammad Amin Bhat, the director, and the entire theatre team. They expressed hope that many more literary, cultural, and theatrical programmes of this nature would be organised in the future to inspire young people and further promote Kashmir's language, culture, artistic traditions, and social values.

DC Kathua reviews implementation of TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyan

Directs intensified screening through TB Ni-kshay Shivirs

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA, JULY 14: Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma today chaired a meeting of officers concerned to review implementation and progress of the TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyan. District Tuberculosis Officer Dr Radha Krishan presented an overview of the district's performance under the TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyan. The meeting reviewed progress of key interventions, including TB Ni-kshay Shivirs, active case finding, engagement of Ni-kshay Mitras and implementation of the Ni-kshay Poshan initiative for nutritional support to TB patients.

The Deputy Commissioner directed officers concerned to roll out a comprehensive schedule of TB Ni-kshay Shivirs across the district for systematic screening of the population. He instructed ADCs and SDMs to ensure wide dissemination of information about screening camps to achieve maximum public participation and enable eligible individuals to avail free chest X-ray screening and other diagnostic facilities.

The District TB Elimination Committee will closely monitor the pace of implementation and ensure comprehensive coverage in screening, case detection, contact tracing, treatment adherence and patient monitoring. The Deputy Commissioner stressed sustained inter-departmental coordination and regular field-level monitoring to achieve the objectives of the Abhiyan. Among those present were Additional Deputy Commissioner Kathua Mahima Madan, Chief Planning Officer Ranjeet Thakur, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Hiranagar Phulail Singh, Chief Medical Officer Kathua Dr Vijay Raina, Assistant Commissioner Development Akhil Sadotra and other officers concerned.

J&K Staffing Chasm

Govt Schools Stuck Below 5 Teachers, Private Surge Past 13

Private sector's 74K workforce outshines Govt skeletal 91K staff

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JUL 14: In Jammu and Kashmir, a striking disparity emerges wherein the government-run schools average less than five teachers per school and on the contrary private schools average more than 13 teachers per institute respectively—thus raising a question on quality of education being imparted to students.

The official figures revealed by the Ministry of Education (MoE) said that in the academic year 2025-16, Jammu and Kashmir sees government schools average with just 4.8 teachers per school.

However, on the contrary, private schools in J&K as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) on an average have recorded 13.7 teachers per school.

It also reveals that despite having a dominance of 18,787 schools, the government is functioning the School Education Department with just 91,569 teachers and on the contrary, Jammu and Kashmir's 5,397 private schools exert a huge human resource

of 74,226 teachers.

Furthermore, the MoE figures said that despite having only 5,397 private schools in Jammu and Kashmir, the private sector is educating nearly fifty percent of the total student enrolment with 12.89 lakh out of 26.53 lakh total enrolled students.

As per the fresh figures revealed by the MoE, private schools in Jammu and Kashmir average 239 students per institution.

The government-run schools on the contrary, despite having 18,852 infrastructures, the department is managing only 51.4 percent students with 13.63 lakh students—averaging a mere 72 students per school.

As already reported, in Jammu and Kashmir, 1,544 schools are being run by single teachers each wherein more than 33,537 students are enrolled.

The Union Territory is also functioning with 188 such schools that are having zero student enrolments. Interestingly, 87 teachers are still deployed to these empty institutions, drawing salaries while teaching no one.

These figures were recently released by the Department of School Education and Literacy for the Ministry of Education (MoE) wherein the ministry has said that 1544 schools in Jammu and Kashmir are functioning with single teachers.

It has learnt that there are 33,537 students enrolled in those 1544 schools that are functioning with single teachers.

Furthermore, MoE has said that 87 teachers are posted in such schools that are having zero enrolments and 188 schools are without any student enrolled.

Earlier this news agency reported that MoE in a meeting of Project Approval Board (PAB) for considering the Annual Work Plan & Budget (AWP&B) 2026-27 has said that in Jammu and Kashmir at least 146 schools have reported functioning without any student enrolled and over 1355 other schools are functioning with single teachers.

"141 primary schools and five upper primary schools were reported with zero enrolment," MoE said—(KNO)

Secretary RDD undertakes Two-Day inspection of entire Shri Amarnathji Yatra Route, Reviews Sanitation along Pahalgam and Baltal Axis

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BALTAL/CHANDANWARI, JULY 14: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Muhammad Aijaz Asad, today concluded a comprehensive two-day end-to-end-on-foot inspection of the Shri Amarnathji Yatra route, traversing both the traditional Pahalgam axis and the Baltal axis to review sanitation arrangements and ensure the highest standards of cleanliness, hygiene and waste management throughout the pilgrimage corridor.

The inspection commenced from the Nunwan Base Camp on the Pahalgam axis and culminated at the Baltal Base Camp after covering the entire Yatra route upto the Holy Cave. Undertaken entirely on foot across the challenging Himalayan terrain, the inspection enabled the Secretary to personally assess sanitation facilities, cleanliness, waste management systems and the functioning of field

teams at every major transit point, camp and halt along both Yatra routes.

On the Pahalgam axis, the Secretary inspected sanitation arrangements at Nunwan Base Camp, Chandanwari, Pissu Top, Zojibal, Nagarkoti, Sheshnag, Wavbal, MG Top, Poshpathri, Dardkot, Kelnar, Panjarni, Sangam Top, Lower Holy Cave and Upper Holy Cave.

During the inspection, he thoroughly reviewed the condition and maintenance of toilet and bathing facilities, waste collection and disposal systems, cleanliness of camps, deployment of sanitation workers and the overall upkeep of sanitation infrastructure established for the Yatra. He also interacted extensively with sanitation personnel on the ground and issued necessary directions to ensure uninterrupted sanitation services despite the difficult terrain, adverse weather conditions and heavy pilgrim footfall.

After completing the inspection of the Holy Cave area, the Secretary descended via the Baltal axis, continuing the inspection on foot through Kalimata Track, Y Junction, Brarimarg, Rail Pathri, Domail Camp and Baltal Base Camp. At each location, he examined the functioning of toilets and bathing units, reviewed solid waste management systems, monitored the cleanliness of camps and assessed the deployment of sanitation personnel to ensure that the Baltal route was being maintained to the highest standards of hygiene.

Throughout the two-day journey, Muhammad Aijaz Asad interacted with Yatriss, Langar operators, sanitation workers and field officials to obtain first-hand feedback regarding the facilities being provided and valuable suggestions for further improvement from the Yatriss on track. The Secretary assured them that administration is fully committed

to make the best experience for every Yatri.

During the inspection, the Secretary issued on-the-spot directions to officers and executing agencies for top notch sanitation arrangements. Stressing that cleanliness is integral to the success of the pilgrimage as well as the protection of the fragile Himalayan ecosystem, he directed field functionaries to ensure uninterrupted sanitation services throughout the Yatra.

He emphasised that all toilet and bathing facilities must remain fully functional, waste should be collected, transported and scientifically disposed of in a timely manner, and sanitation workers should remain deployed round the clock at all designated locations. He further instructed the concerned agencies to maintain the highest standards of hygiene and cleanliness despite the challenging terrain and increasing pilgrim influx.

The Secretary also reviewed sanitation arrangements at the Holy Cave, where he took stock of the facilities available for pilgrims and directed the concerned officers to ensure continuous monitoring and immediate response to any sanitation-related issues.

Warning against any negligence, he made it clear that any lapse in maintaining sanitation facilities during the Yatra would be viewed seriously and appropriate action would be taken against the officials responsible.

The Secretary said that the purpose of the exhaustive two-day on-foot inspection was to ensure that both the Pahalgam and Baltal Yatra routes remain clean, hygienic and environmentally sustainable, enabling pilgrims to undertake the sacred pilgrimage in safe, dignified and comfortable manner while preserving the pristine Himalayan environment.

Rang Tarang-2026 Commences at IIM Jammu with a Grand Celebration of Music, Dance and Theatre

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 14: Rang Tarang-2026, a spectacular three-day mega festival celebrating music, dance and theatre, commenced today with great enthusiasm at the Mandapam Auditorium of IIM Jammu. The festival was inaugurated with the traditional lighting of the ceremonial lamp by the Director of IIM Jammu, Prof. B. S. Sahay, in the august presence of Padma Shri Balwant Thakur, Director of Natrang.

Organised as a vibrant confluence of the performing arts, Rang Tarang-2026 will continue till July 16, 2026, featuring 18 captivating presentations, including 12 theatre productions, three dance performances and three musical concerts. Conceived and curated by Padma Shri Balwant Thakur, the festival is being executed with the support of Natrang's creative team led by Neeraj Kant (Theatre), Suraj Singh (Music) Pawan Verma/Mohd Yasin (Allied



creative departments) and Sunny Mujju (Dance).

Addressing the gathering, Padma Shri Balwant Thakur elaborated on the vision behind introducing performing arts as an integral part of the learning experience for IIM students. He emphasised that management education must go beyond academics to nurture confidence, creativity and emotional intelligence. Highlighting the transformative potential of theatre, music and dance, he explained that the specially designed programme seeks to empower students with self-confidence, effective public speaking, communication skills, critical thinking and collaborative leadership—qualities essential for future managers and entrepreneurs.

Balwant Thakur expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Prof. B. S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, for providing Natrang with the opportunity to conceptualise and conduct this unique performing arts initiative. He appreciated the Director's visionary leadership and unwavering support in integrating theatre, music and dance into the academic environment, stating that such initiatives not only enrich campus life but also play a vital role in nurturing well-rounded, confident and socially conscious future leaders.

In his address, Prof. B. S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, appreciated the initiative and underlined the importance of integrating performing arts with management education. He observed that such creative engagements enrich students' personalities, foster innovation, enhance leadership qualities and contribute significantly to their holistic development.

The inaugural session began on a spiritually uplifting note with a soulful rendition of Saraswati Vandana presented by a chorus of forty singers. The audience was then enthralled by a vibrant presentation of Raas Leela, depicting the enchanting and playful episodes from the divine love of Radha and Krishna through graceful choreography and expressive performances.

The opening day also witnessed the staging of four engaging plays "The Monkey's Paw," "Mughal Darbar Ka Raaz," "Dukhi Ram Ki Katha," and "Yeh Laash Kiski Hai." The performances received an overwhelming response from students, faculty members and invited guests, reflecting the festival's success in creating a lively and intellectually stimulating cultural environment.

With an exciting lineup of theatre, music and dance over the next two days, Rang Tarang-2026 promises to be a unique celebration of artistic excellence while reinforcing the role of performing arts in shaping confident, creative and socially aware future leaders.

HT EDITORIAL

When Convenience Can Turn Into A Health Hazard

Summer is a season of vibrant markets, bustling streets and an increased appetite for cold drinks and ready-to-eat snacks. Yet, it is also the time of year when food safety demands the greatest attention. The recent advisory issued by health experts is not merely a seasonal caution—it is a reminder that negligence in food hygiene can have serious consequences for public health.

Across towns and cities, roadside food stalls remain a preferred choice for thousands of people because they are inexpensive, accessible and often serve popular local delicacies. However, soaring temperatures accelerate the growth of bacteria in food that is improperly cooked, inadequately stored or left exposed to the environment. What may appear to be a harmless meal can quickly become the source of food poisoning or life-threatening infections.

The challenge is not confined to the quality of food alone. Poor personal hygiene among food handlers, unsafe water, unclean utensils, exposure to dust and flies, and unhygienic surroundings collectively create conditions that allow disease to spread. These are preventable risks, yet they continue to endanger public health every summer.

The burden of food-borne illnesses extends beyond individual suffering. Hospitals witness an increase in patients with diarrhoeal diseases, dehydration, typhoid and hepatitis A during the warmer months, placing additional pressure on an already stretched healthcare system. Children, older adults and people with weakened immunity often bear the brunt of these preventable illnesses.

This is where civic responsibility and institutional accountability must go hand in hand. Food vendors have a duty to uphold basic standards of cleanliness, while regulatory authorities must ensure regular inspections, enforce food safety laws and educate vendors about hygienic food handling. Public awareness campaigns should become a routine feature of the summer season rather than an occasional response to health concerns. Consumers, too, cannot remain passive. Every purchase is a choice that either encourages safe practices or rewards negligence. Choosing freshly prepared food, drinking safe water and avoiding visibly unhygienic outlets are simple decisions that can protect both individuals and families from avoidable disease.

Public health is built on prevention, not treatment. The safest meal is not always the most attractive or the cheapest, but it is the one prepared and served under hygienic conditions. As temperatures continue to climb, the message deserves to be heard loudly and clearly: food should nourish, not endanger. A culture of hygiene, shared by vendors, consumers and authorities alike, is essential to ensuring that the pleasures of summer are not overshadowed by preventable illness.

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Divorce in Islam: A Divine Framework of Justice, Mercy and Human Dignity



■ BISMA ASHRAF LONE

Few events affect individuals, families, and society as profoundly as divorce. While marriage is one of Islam's most cherished institutions, the religion also acknowledges that some relationships reach a point where living together becomes impossible. In such circumstances, Islam neither condemns divorce outright nor leaves it without regulation. Instead, the Holy Quran provides a comprehensive legal and ethical framework that seeks to balance justice with compassion, rights with responsibilities, and individual freedom with the welfare of the family.

Contrary to many misconceptions, divorce in Islam is not intended to be an impulsive act driven by anger or emotion. It is a carefully regulated process designed to minimise harm, encourage reconciliation, and preserve the dignity of everyone involved. The Quranic guidance found primarily in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:228–242) and complemented by Surah At-Talaq reflects remarkable concern for fairness, transparency, and human welfare.

One of the defining features of the Islamic approach is that divorce unfolds in stages rather than through an irreversible declaration made in a moment of rage. After the first and second pronouncements of divorce, the marriage remains revocable during the prescribed waiting period (Iddah). This interval allows emotions to settle, encourages dialogue, and offers both spouses a genuine opportunity to reconsider their decision. If reconciliation is achieved, the marriage continues without stigma. If not, separation should occur peacefully and honourably.

The Quran emphatically prohibits using divorce as a means of revenge or manipulation. A husband is forbidden from retaining his wife merely to cause emotional suffering or deprive her of her rights. Likewise, he cannot reclaim gifts, dowry (Mahr), or financial entitlements already given to her. Such protections reflect Islam's commitment to safeguarding women's dignity and economic security even after marital breakdown.

Equally significant is Islam's recognition of a woman's right to seek dissolution of the marriage through Khula when the relationship becomes

genuinely unbearable and reconciliation proves impossible. This provision demonstrates that Islamic family law provides avenues for justice to both spouses. Marriage in Islam is a partnership built on mutual respect, and when that foundation irretrievably collapses, the law offers a dignified path for separation.

The Quran also underscores the seriousness of divorce by stipulating that after the third valid pronouncement, the marriage is permanently dissolved. Former spouses cannot simply remarry each other at will. The woman must first enter into a genuine marriage with another man, and only if that marriage naturally ends through death or lawful divorce may the former couple consider remarrying. This rule was revealed to discourage the casual misuse of divorce and to ensure that marital commitments are treated with the seriousness they deserve. It does not sanction arranged or temporary marriages intended solely to legalise remarriage, a practice that is explicitly condemned in Islamic teachings.

The waiting period (Iddah) imposed after divorce serves profound legal and social purposes. Lasting three menstrual cycles in most cases, it provides clarity regarding pregnancy and protects the lineage and legal rights of any unborn child. During this period, honesty is paramount. If pregnancy is discovered, both former spouses are expected to act responsibly in safeguarding the child's welfare and considering, where appropriate, the possibility of reconciliation.

Islamic teachings repeatedly emphasise that rights within marriage are reciprocal. The Quran declares that women have rights comparable to those expected of them, while men are entrusted with greater responsibility for maintaining and protecting the family. This responsibility is not a licence for domination but a heavier moral obligation before Allah. Leadership in the family is measured not by power but by justice, compassion, patience, and accountability.

Perhaps nowhere is the Quran's compassion more evident than in its treatment of children after divorce. The marital bond may end, but the responsibilities of parenthood never cease. Children's physical, emotional, educational, and financial well-being remains a shared obligation of both parents.

The Quran encourages mothers to breastfeed their children for up to two complete years where possible, recognising the immense physical and emotional benefits this provides. Nevertheless, parents may mutually agree upon earlier weaning if they believe it better serves the child's interests. They may also appoint a wet nurse, provided she

receives fair and appropriate compensation. Such flexibility demonstrates that Islamic law combines principle with practical wisdom.

The father bears the primary financial responsibility for the child's maintenance, including food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, and other reasonable needs according to his means. At the same time, the Quran repeatedly reminds believers that no soul should be burdened beyond its capacity. If the father dies or is genuinely unable to fulfil these obligations, responsibility transfers to the child's legal heirs.

The Quran further advocates consultation rather than conflict. Decisions concerning childcare, guardianship, education, and upbringing should be made through mutual discussion with the child's best interests at heart. When disagreements arise, families are encouraged to seek the assistance of knowledgeable scholars, experienced mediators, or trusted elders capable of delivering fair and balanced guidance.

These teachings also protect parents themselves. A mother should not suffer undue hardship because she cares for her child, nor should a father be subjected to impossible financial burdens. Islamic law consistently strives to balance responsibilities while ensuring that children remain secure, loved, and protected.

Ultimately, the Quran reminds believers that its legal boundaries are expressions of divine wisdom rather than arbitrary restrictions. They exist to preserve justice, protect vulnerable family members, prevent exploitation, and promote social harmony. Those who observe these principles uphold not merely legal obligations but moral and spiritual responsibilities entrusted to them by Allah.

In a world where family disputes often become bitter legal battles, the Quran's guidance remains strikingly relevant. It calls upon believers to approach even the painful reality of divorce with patience, dignity, compassion, and unwavering commitment to justice.

Marriage is sacred. Divorce, when unavoidable, should be honourable. Above all, children should never become casualties of broken relationships, and every decision should reflect the Quranic values of mercy, fairness, and human dignity.

The author is pursuing an M.Sc. in Biotechnology. She has a keen interest in exploring the intersection of science, ethics, and Islamic teachings, with a particular focus on family, society, and moral values. She can be reached at bismaashraf1one@gmail.com.

Scorching heat



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has announced the summer vacation for schools from 6 July to 19 July. School students are thrilled to enjoy this well-deserved break. During the scorching summer, many people from cities travel to the higher reaches to spend their vacations in the cool and pleasant climate.

As we enjoy the beauty of summer, we must also remain cautious. I sincerely request every parent to safeguard their beloved children from drowning incidents. Keep a close watch on them, especially near rivers, streams, lakes, and other water bodies, and educate them about the dangers these places can pose. If you are planning a picnic or any outing, always accompany your children and ensure their safety.

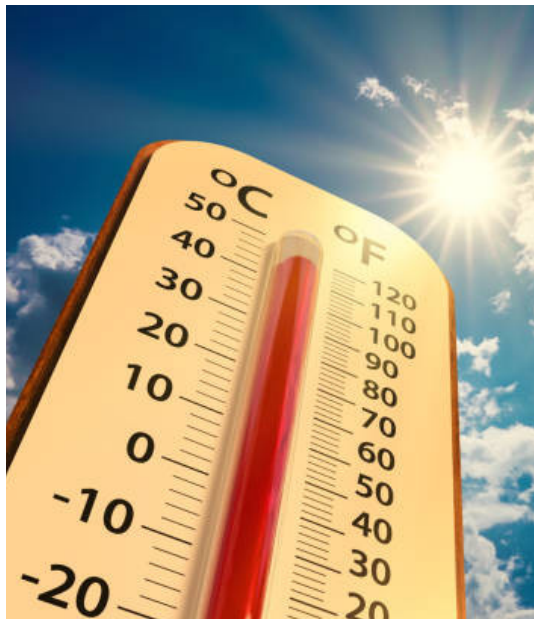
Summer is also the season to focus on good health. Keep children indoors during the hottest hours of the day and provide them with plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables, curd, fresh juices, and sufficient drinking water to keep them hydrated.

The phenomenon of day and night is caused by the rotation of the Earth. A full day begins at midnight (12:00 a.m.) and ends at 11:59 p.m., making a total of 24 hours. Besides rotating on its axis, the Earth also revolves around the Sun, completing one revolution in approximately 365 days and 6 hours. This is why every fourth year is a leap year, consisting of 366 days.

The Earth's revolution gives rise to the four seasons:

Spring: March 21 – June 21

Summer: June 22 – September 21



Autumn: September 22 – December 21

Winter: December 22 – March 20

Nature's beauty lies in these changing seasons. We experience rain, snow, heat, and cold, each bringing its own charm. The Kashmir Valley, situated in the northern Himalayas, enjoys a pleasant climate for most of the year, making it one of the world's most admired tourist destinations. During summer, thousands of local and international tourists visit the valley to experience its breathtaking landscapes. The dense forests of the Pir Panjal Range help keep many tourist destinations cool even during the hottest months.

One remarkable feature of nature is its balance. The Almighty has created a world where natural processes sustain life and offer countless opportunities to admire and learn from His creation.

Staying Fit and Healthy During Summer

Stay Hydrated

Drink plenty of clean water throughout the day. Proper hydration:

Boosts energy.
Aids digestion.
Keeps the skin healthy.
Helps prevent heat-related illnesses.
Eat Hydrating Foods
Include fresh fruits and vegetables in your daily diet.

Watermelon contains about 92% water and is rich in fibre, vitamins A and C, potassium, magnesium, and B vitamins. It aids digestion, keeps you full, and helps maintain hydration.

Lemon is an excellent source of vitamin C. Lemon water supports hydration, digestion, and immunity.

How to prepare lemon water:
Squeeze half a lemon into a glass of water for a refreshing drink.

Many people also enjoy warm lemon water after a morning walk as part of a healthy lifestyle. While it may support hydration and encourage healthy habits, it should not be considered a guaranteed method for weight loss.

Stay Cool and Safe
Avoid going outdoors during the hottest part of the day.

Schedule outdoor activities for the morning or evening.

Wear light-coloured cotton clothes.
Apply sunscreen before prolonged sun exposure. Bathe regularly to stay fresh.

Exercise during the cooler hours of the day.
Drink fresh juices and other healthy beverages.

Summer in Kashmir is a season of beauty, greenery, and joy. By following simple health precautions, eating nutritious foods, staying hydrated, and ensuring children's safety, we can make the most of this wonderful season.

Enjoy your summer vacation responsibly, protect yourself from the heat, stay away from dangerous water bodies without proper supervision, and continue appreciating the magnificent wonders of nature.

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Wordsworth Loved Daffodils, But Not Roses



■ DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

Wordsworth loved daffodils, not roses. But why he loves the Serenity of Daffodils in place of the rose the most romantic passionate flower symbol in literature the mystery is yet not fully explored. The ten thousand daffodils that he saw with his sister Dorothy enthralled him and his imagination caught fire. The Romantic imagination found its deepest expression not in monuments or cities but in nature's quiet offerings. Among these offerings, flowers especially roses held a special place. They were symbols of innocence, renewal, and emotional truth. Yet within this floral universe, each poet gravitated toward a particular bloom that mirrored his inner world. Shelley adored the sensitive mimosa, Keats leaned toward the sensuous musk-rose, and Blake saw visions in the sunflower. But William Wordsworth—perhaps the most nature-intoxicated of the Romantics—chose the humble, golden daffodil as his emblem of serenity.

This choice was not accidental. It was a philosophical preference, a spiritual alignment, and an aesthetic declaration. Wordsworth loved daffodils not roses because roses belonged to the world of passion, desire, and human drama, whereas daffodils belonged to the world of quiet joy, reflective solitude, and the healing rhythms of nature. Roses were the flowers of romance; daffodils were the flowers of remembrance. Roses bloomed in gardens; daffodils bloomed in the wild. Roses demanded cultivation; daffodils arrived as gifts of spring. In choosing daffodils, Wordsworth chose serenity over passion, simplicity over grandeur, and the Lake District over the cultivated gardens of aristocratic England. His daffodils were not merely flowers—they were companions in solitude, teachers of joy, and symbols of the restorative power of nature.

The Romantic poets lived in an age when industrial smoke began to darken the skies of England. Factories rose where forests once stood, and machines replaced the rhythms of rural life. In this changing world, flowers became more than botanical objects—they became symbols of resistance, reminders of innocence, and anchors of emotional truth. To the Romantics, flowers were: 'Symbols of purity untouched by industrial corruption, 'Messengers of emotion' expressing what words could not, 'Companions of solitude' offering comfort in moments of introspection and 'Emblems of transience' reminding poets of life's fragile beauty

Roses, with their intoxicating fragrance and velvety petals, represented passionate love, sensuality, and human desire. They appeared in courtly poetry, in Shakespearean metaphors, and in the gardens of nobility. Their beauty was dramatic, their symbolism intense.

Daffodils, by contrast, were flowers of the countryside. They grew in clusters, danced in the wind, and carried the freshness of early spring. Their beauty was simple, unpretentious, and democratic. They belonged to shepherds, wanderers, and solitary souls. Thus, when Wordsworth encountered a "crowd" of daffodils along the shores of Ullswater, he found not a romantic symbol but a spiritual revelation. The famous walk took place in April 1802. Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy were strolling near Glencoyne Bay when they came upon a long belt of daffodils "beside the lake, beneath the trees."

Dorothy's journal recorded the moment with delicate precision, noting how the flowers "tossed and reeled and danced." Wordsworth transformed this simple experience into one of the most beloved poems in English literature. But beyond the poem's lyrical charm lies a deeper truth: the daffodils offered him a moment of pure, unmediated joy. They were not symbols imposed by culture; they were revelations offered by nature. The daffodils danced not for human admiration but because the wind moved through them. Their beauty was spontaneous, unself-conscious, and free. Wordsworth saw in them a model for human happiness—joy that arises not from possession or passion but from harmony with the natural world.

Roses, though beautiful, belonged to a different emotional universe. They were associated with:

Romantic desire, Human passion, Courtly love traditions, and Cultivated beauty. Wordsworth's poetry, however, was built on: Solitude, Memory, Nature's moral power, and Spiritual quietude. Roses were too dramatic, too cultivated, too tied to human emotion. Wordsworth sought a flower that embodied the quiet rhythms of rural life. Daffodils, with their gentle sway and golden glow, offered exactly that. They were flowers of the Lake District—his home, his muse, his spiritual sanctuary. Daffodils as Teachers of Serenity. Wordsworth believed that nature was not merely beautiful but morally instructive. It taught patience, humility, and inner peace. The daffodils, in their endless dance, taught him: joy in simplicity, Harmony with the natural world, The healing power of memory, The serenity of solitude. The most profound lines of his poem reveal this philosophy: "And then my heart with pleasure fills, And dances with the daffodils." This is not the ecstasy of romantic passion; it is the serenity of spiritual alignment. The daffodils become part of his inner landscape, a memory that restores him whenever "vacant or pensive mood" overtakes him. Roses cannot perform this function. Their beauty is too tied to human desire. Daffodils, how-



ever, offer a joy that is independent of human drama.

Wordsworth's love for daffodils cannot be separated from his love for the Lake District. The region's rolling hills, quiet lakes, and pastoral charm shaped his imagination. The daffodils were part of this landscape—wild, free, and abundant. The Lake District offered: Solitude for contemplation, Natural beauty untouched by industrialization, and Pastoral harmony that nourished poetic imagination. Wordsworth's preference for daffodils reveals his entire philosophy of life. He believed that serenity came not from external achievements but from internal harmony. The daffodils symbolized this harmony. They taught him:

To find joy in small things to, trust the rhythms of nature, to cultivate inner peace, to value memory as a source of

strength. In a world increasingly dominated by machines, Wordsworth offered a counter-vision: a life rooted in nature, simplicity, and quiet joy.

Wordsworth loved daffodils not roses because he sought a flower that reflected his deepest values—simplicity, serenity, and spiritual joy. The daffodils of the Lake District offered him a moment of pure happiness that became immortal through poetry. They were not symbols of romantic passion but companions of solitude. They were not cultivated beauties but wild dancers. They were not flowers of desire but flowers of memory.

In choosing daffodils, Wordsworth chose a philosophy of life that continues to inspire readers today: a life where joy arises from nature, serenity from solitude, and beauty from simplicity.

In this context I would like to refer to

Professor Antony Johae's insightful justification for my choice of oleander in my poetry collection *Oleander Blooms* which in his opinion adds a profound critical dimension to my poetic symbolism. His observation that oleander possesses a bipolar connotation—embodying both beauty and poison—perfectly aligns with my thematic exploration of love's dual nature. Oleander, unlike the rose, does not remain confined to the vocabulary of romantic passion. It carries within its petals the paradox of affection: the melody of tenderness and the malady of emotional wounds. This duality makes oleander an intellectually richer symbol. Roses have long dominated the poetic tradition as emblems of desire, courtship, and sensuality. Their beauty is lush, their fragrance intoxicating, and their cultural associations deeply rooted in romance. But roses, as Professor Johae rightly notes, are unipolar—they rarely transcend the boundaries of passion. Oleander, on the other hand, stands at the intersection of allure and danger. Its blossoms are delicate, almost ethereal, yet the plant itself is toxic. This contradiction mirrors the lived experience of love: the sweetness of intimacy intertwined with the vulnerability of heartbreak. In my book my poetic choice thus breaks away from conventional romantic imagery and enters a more philosophical terrain. Oleander becomes a metaphor for the ambivalence of human emotions, the way love can nourish and wound, uplift and unsettle. It is a flower that refuses simplification, much like the complex relationships your poems portray. Wordsworth's preference for daffodils over roses thus strikes me as an illuminating parallel. Wordsworth, too, deviated from traditional romantic symbols. Instead of choosing the rose—the emblem of passion—he embraced the daffodil, a flower of serenity, simplicity, and spiritual joy. The daffodil's golden radiance and gentle dance in the Lake District winds offered him a vision of emotional equilibrium rather than romantic intensity. Just as oleander allowed me to articulate the duality of love, daffodils allowed Wordsworth to articulate the purity of joy. Both choices represent a conscious departure from the rose's dominance in poetic symbolism. Both flowers carry meanings that transcend romance and enter the realm of philosophical reflection.

Thus, oleander and daffodil stand together as literary symbols of deviation—flowers chosen not for tradition but for truth, not for passion but for depth, not for convention but for clarity of vision.

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THE FALL OF THE PRINT MEDIA!

■ SURINDERPAL SINGH

For more than three centuries, newspapers and magazines have been among the most trusted sources of information, education and public discussion. They have recorded history, exposed corruption, inspired reforms, promoted literature and shaped public opinion. Every morning, millions of people once began their day by reading a newspaper with a cup of tea, while magazines provided thoughtful analysis, entertainment and knowledge on a wide variety of subjects. Today, however, the once-thriving print media industry is witnessing an unprecedented decline. The rapid rise of smartphones, social media, online news portals and artificial intelligence has transformed the way people consume information, leaving newspapers and magazines struggling to retain their readers.

The decline of print media is not merely a business concern; it reflects a profound change in society's reading habits and information culture. The challenge before us is not only whether newspapers and magazines can survive but also whether society can preserve the values of credible journalism in an increasingly digital world.

The primary reason for the decline is the digital revolution. The internet has made information available instantly and in most cases, free of cost. News that once took a day to reach readers now spreads across the world within seconds. Mobile applications,

websites, and social media platforms provide continuous updates, making printed newspapers appear outdated by the time they reach readers the next morning. Convenience has become the greatest advantage of digital media.

Another significant factor is the changing lifestyle of modern society. People today lead busy lives and have shorter attention spans. Many prefer reading brief headlines, watching short videos, or listening to podcasts instead of spending time reading lengthy newspaper articles or magazine features. Young people, in particular, have grown up in the digital era and often rely on social media as their primary source of news and information.

Challenges have further accelerated the decline. Printing newspapers and magazines requires substantial expenditure on paper, ink, printing presses, transportation and distribution. Rising production costs combined with declining circulation have reduced profitability. At the same time, advertisers increasingly prefer digital platforms that allow them to target specific audiences and measure advertising effectiveness. As advertising revenue declines, many publications are forced to reduce staff, cut pages, or even cease publication.

The COVID-19 pandemic also dealt a severe blow to the print media industry. During lockdowns, newspaper distribution was disrupted and many readers shifted permanently to digital editions. Numerous maga-

zines suspended publication or reduced their frequency because of falling demand and financial losses. The pandemic accelerated a transition that had already begun years earlier.

Environmental concerns have also influenced readers' preferences. Many people believe that digital reading helps reduce paper consumption and protects forests, although digital technology also has its own environmental costs, including electricity consumption and electronic waste. Nevertheless, environmental awareness has encouraged some readers to adopt paperless alternatives.

Despite these challenges, newspapers and magazines continue to possess strengths that digital platforms often struggle to match. Professional newspapers usually follow rigorous editorial standards, fact-checking procedures and ethical guidelines before publishing information. In contrast, social media frequently allows rumours, misinformation, manipulated images and sensational content to spread rapidly. In an age of fake news, trustworthy journalism has become more valuable than ever.

Magazines also provide depth and perspective that are often missing in fast-moving online content. Investigative reports, detailed interviews, analytical essays, scientific discussions, literary works and carefully edited opinion pieces require time, expertise and editorial discipline. Such content encourages critical thinking rather than impulsive

reactions.

Reading printed material also offers psychological and educational benefits. Research suggests that many readers retain information better when reading from paper than from screens. Print reading reduces digital distractions caused by constant notifications and advertisements. It allows readers to concentrate deeply and develop patience, comprehension and analytical skills.

The decline of newspapers has broader implications for democracy. A free and responsible press serves as the watchdog of society by exposing corruption, questioning those in power, and informing citizens about important issues. If quality journalism weakens because of financial difficulties, democratic accountability may also suffer. Society must recognise that reliable journalism is not merely another business; it is a vital public service.

However, the future of newspapers and magazines is not necessarily bleak. Rather than competing directly with instant digital news, print publications can redefine their purpose. Many successful newspapers now offer both printed and digital editions, subscription-based journalism, podcasts, newsletters and multimedia content. Magazines are focusing more on specialised subjects such as science, business, health, education, culture, travel and technology, attracting readers who seek detailed and reliable information rather than superficial updates. Governments, educational institutions

and society also have an important role to play. Schools should encourage newspaper reading to improve language skills, general knowledge and critical thinking. Libraries should continue subscribing to newspapers and magazines so that students and citizens have access to credible sources of information. Readers, too, should understand that paying for quality journalism is an investment in an informed society.

Ultimately, newspapers and magazines may never regain the enormous circulation they once enjoyed, but their relevance need not disappear. Their survival depends on innovation, adaptability, editorial integrity and public trust. While technology will continue to evolve, society will always require accurate information, balanced reporting and thoughtful analysis.

The decline of print media should therefore not be viewed as the end of journalism but as the beginning of its transformation. Whether delivered on paper or through digital screens, the enduring mission of journalism remains unchanged: to inform truthfully, educate responsibly and strengthen democracy. If newspapers and magazines can preserve these values while embracing modern technology, they will continue to serve society with dignity and purpose for generations to come.

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The Importance of Healthy Food and the Benefits of Bananas



■ SAHIL MANZOOR

Our body needs plenty of healthy food to grow, stay active, and remain free from diseases. A balanced diet includes rice, meat, fish, eggs, vegetables, fruits, and other foods that contain the right amount of nutrients for proper growth and development. In today's world, we are fortunate to have enough knowledge to understand what kind of food is good for our health and what kind is harmful. Along with healthy food, our body also needs regular exercise, hygienic eating habits, medical check-ups, and fresh air to live a fit and happy life.

For fitness and good health, we need different food items that must be fresh, clean, and rich in nutrients. Nature has blessed us with many delicious fruits and vegetables that provide us with energy and protect us from illness. Among these fruits, the banana is one of the most popular and nutritious fruits that everyone should eat regularly. It is affordable, easily available, and full of essential vitamins and minerals.

■ Bananas and Kidney Health

Bananas are rich in potassium, a mineral that plays an important role in controlling blood pressure and supporting healthy kidney function. Proper potassium intake helps the kidneys remove waste and excess fluids from the body. Studies suggest that eating bananas several times a week may reduce the risk of kidney disease. This makes bananas a simple yet powerful addition to our daily diet.

■ Bananas as an Energy Booster

Bananas are often called the perfect food for athletes. This is because they

contain natural sugars, carbohydrates, and minerals that provide quick and lasting energy. They are easy to digest and help the body recover after physical activity. Eating a banana before or after exercise can reduce muscle cramps and soreness. Many people experience muscle cramps due to lack of minerals, especially potassium and magnesium, both of which are found in bananas.

■ Heart Health and Blood Pressure

Bananas are an excellent source of potassium, which is essential for heart health. A potassium-rich diet helps maintain healthy blood pressure levels by balancing the effects of sodium in the body. Research shows that people who consume enough potassium have a lower risk of heart disease. Bananas also contain magnesium, another mineral that supports the proper functioning of the heart and muscles. By including bananas in our diet, we can take a simple step toward protecting our heart.

■ Bananas Help You Feel Full

Another important benefit of bananas is that they help control hunger. Bananas contain a special type of carbohydrate called resistant starch, especially when they are slightly unripe. Resistant starch works like fiber and helps the digestive system function properly. It also slows down digestion, which makes us feel full for a longer time.

Ripe bananas contain soluble fiber called pectin, which also helps control appetite. Both resistant starch and pectin reduce hunger and prevent overeating. This makes bananas a healthy snack for people who want to maintain a healthy weight.

■ Bananas and Digestive Health

Bananas are gentle on the stomach and easy to digest. They help maintain a healthy digestive system and prevent problems such as constipation. The fiber in bananas supports the growth of good bacteria in the gut, which improves

THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHY FOOD

Eat Healthy, Live Healthy

Healthy food fuels our body, supports growth, boosts immunity and protects us from diseases. Good eating habits today lead to a better and stronger tomorrow.

THE BENEFITS OF BANANAS

A Small Fruit with Big Benefits!

WHY HEALTHY FOOD MATTERS

- Provides Energy**
Healthy food gives us the energy to work, study and play.
- Boosts Immunity**
Nutrients, vitamins and minerals strengthen the body's defense against illnesses.
- Supports Growth**
Good nutrition is essential for proper growth and development in children and teens.
- Improves Brain Function**
Nutritious food enhances concentration, memory and overall mental well-being.
- Helps Maintain Healthy Weight**
A balanced diet keeps the body fit and helps prevent lifestyle diseases like diabetes and heart disease.

TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING

- Eat a variety of foods
- Eat more fruits, vegetables and whole grains
- Drink plenty of water
- Limit junk food, sugary drinks and oil
- Eat on time and don't skip meals

GOOD FOOD TODAY, A BETTER TOMORROW.

- Right
- Stay Active
- Stay Healthy

Rich in Energy

Bananas are a great source of natural carbohydrates that provide instant and lasting energy.

Good for Heart

High in potassium, bananas help regulate blood pressure and support heart health.

Aids Digestion

Bananas are high in dietary fiber, helping to keep the digestive system healthy and prevent constipation.

Supports Muscle Function

The potassium and magnesium in bananas help in proper muscle function and recovery.

Boosts Brain Power

Bananas contain vitamin B6, which supports brain function, improves mood and reduces stress.

Strengthens Immunity

Packed with vitamins and antioxidants, bananas help strengthen the immune system and fight diseases.

Improves Mood

Bananas contain tryptophan, which the body converts into serotonin, helping to improve mood and promote relaxation.

DID YOU KNOW?

A banana is naturally fat-free, cholesterol-free and low in sodium. It's a perfect snack for all ages!

overall digestion and strengthens immunity. Eating bananas regularly can keep the digestive system strong and active.

■ Bananas and Insulin

Sensitivity
Insulin resistance is a major risk factor for serious diseases such as type 2 diabetes. Some studies suggest that resistant starch found in unripe bananas may

improve insulin sensitivity. This means the body can use sugar more effectively, reducing the risk of diabetes. Although more research is still needed, bananas remain a safe and healthy fruit that can be part of a balanced diet.

■ A Convenient and Affordable Superfood

One of the best things about bananas is that they are convenient and affordable. They require no preparation and can be eaten anytime and anywhere. Whether it is breakfast, lunch, or a snack, bananas fit perfectly into any meal plan. They are especially helpful for students, workers, and athletes who need quick energy throughout the day.

■ Healthy Lifestyle Matters

While bananas are highly nutritious, good health depends on a complete lifestyle. Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables, drinking enough water, exercising regularly, and maintaining hygiene are all important. Medical check-ups also help detect health problems early and prevent serious diseases.

Healthy eating habits should start at home. Families should encourage children to eat fresh fruits and vegetables daily. Schools and communities can also play a role by spreading awareness about the importance of nutrition and fitness.

■ Conclusion

In conclusion, our body needs balanced nutrition, exercise, and proper care to stay healthy. Among all fruits, bananas stand out as a simple, affordable, and powerful food. They support kidney health, improve heart function, boost energy, aid digestion, and help control hunger. Including bananas in our daily diet is a small step that can lead to big health benefits.

By choosing healthy foods and maintaining a balanced lifestyle, we can build a stronger, happier, and healthier future for ourselves and our families.

sahilmanzoorbhati786@gmail.com

The Impact of Microwave-Cooked Food



■ SURINDERPAL SINGH

In today's fast-paced world, convenience has become one of the defining features of modern living. Busy work schedules, changing lifestyles and the growing demand for quick meal preparation have made microwave ovens a common appliance in homes, offices, schools and restaurants. Within minutes, a frozen meal can be transformed into a hot dish, making microwave cooking one of the greatest time-saving innovations of the modern kitchen. However, while microwave technology offers undeniable convenience, it has also raised important questions regarding its long-term impact on human health, food quality and the environment.

The discussion surrounding microwave-cooked food has attracted the attention of nutritionists, food scientists, environmental experts and public health researchers. Although microwave ovens are generally considered safe when used correctly, excessive dependence on microwave-cooked food—particularly heavily processed ready-to-eat meals—may have consequences that deserve thoughtful consideration.

Microwave ovens heat food by generating electromagnetic waves that excite water molecules within the food, producing heat rapidly. Unlike conventional ovens, microwaves cook

food from the inside by molecular vibration rather than external heating. Scientific evidence indicates that microwave radiation does not remain in food after cooking and properly functioning microwave ovens do not make food radioactive. Nevertheless, the nutritional quality of microwave-cooked food depends largely on the type of food being prepared, the cooking method employed and the containers used.

One of the greatest advantages of microwave cooking is the preservation of nutrients. Since microwave cooking requires shorter cooking times and often uses less water than boiling, several vitamins, especially water-soluble nutrients such as vitamin C and certain B vitamins, may be retained more effectively. Vegetables cooked briefly in a microwave can often preserve more of their nutritional value compared to prolonged conventional cooking methods.

Microwave ovens also encourage healthier cooking practices by reducing the need for excessive oil and fat. Foods can be steamed, reheated, or cooked with minimal added fats, helping individuals reduce calorie intake and support healthier dietary habits.

Another important benefit is food safety. Proper microwave heating can eliminate many harmful microorganisms, provided food reaches the recommended internal temperature and is heated evenly.

While microwave technology itself is considered safe, certain practices associated with microwave cooking may pose health concerns. One major issue is the widespread consumption of processed microwave-ready meals. These products are often high in sodium, saturated fats, preservatives, refined

carbohydrates and artificial additives. Regular consumption of such foods has been associated with obesity, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. The concern, therefore, lies more with the food itself than with the microwave oven.

Improper heating can also create problems. Microwaves may heat food unevenly, leaving cold spots where harmful bacteria can survive, particularly in meat, poultry and leftovers. Stirring food during heating and ensuring adequate cooking temperatures are essential for food safety.

Another concern involves the use of unsuitable plastic containers. Heating food in plastics that are not labeled microwave-safe may cause certain chemicals to migrate into food, especially when heating fatty or acidic meals. Health experts recommend using microwave-safe glass, ceramic, or certified microwave-safe containers to minimize this risk.

Excessive reheating of food may also reduce the concentration of certain heat-sensitive nutrients. Although nutrient loss occurs with almost every cooking method, repeated reheating can further diminish food quality and nutritional value.

Compared with conventional electric ovens, microwave ovens generally consume less electricity because they cook food faster and more efficiently. This lower energy consumption can contribute to reduced household electricity usage and lower greenhouse gas emissions, particularly when replacing long-duration cooking methods.

THE AUTHOR IS A FACULTY IN SCIENCE DEPARTMENT SRI AMRITSAR SAHIB PUNJAB.

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MEMBER, AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS (ACP, USA)

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9

Hospital entrances in Kashmir severely congested; vendors, vehicles block gates

Patients, doctors seek regulation, say traffic chaos delays ambulances, inconveniences visitors

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JUL 14: The main entrances of several major hospitals in Kashmir, particularly tertiary care institutions - SMHS Hospital, SKIMS Soura, Lal Ded (LD) Hospital and Bone and Joint Hospital - have become severely congested due to the unchecked presence of roadside vendors, e-rickshaws, auto-rickshaws and other vehicles, raising serious concerns over patient safety and emergency healthcare access.

Patients, attendants, doctors and ambulance drivers told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the lack of regulation outside hospital gates has resulted in daily traffic bottlenecks, making it difficult for ambulances, emergency vehicles and even healthcare workers to enter or exit the hospital premises without delay.

According to them, hospital entrances remain crowded throughout the day as vendors occupy portions of the roadside while e-rickshaws and auto-rickshaws are parked haphazardly, reducing the available space for smooth traffic movement.

Shahnaza Bano, a patient from Baramulla undergoing treatment at SMHS Hospital, said the entrance to the hospital resembles a busy marketplace rather than a healthcare facility.

"The gate remains heavily congested from morning till evening. E-rickshaws are parked in multiple rows, auto drivers continuously call out to passengers and roadside food vendors occupy parts of the road. It



becomes extremely difficult for patients to reach the hospital comfortably," she said.

Ambulance drivers said the situation becomes particularly alarming during medical emergencies, as precious time is lost while attempting to clear the way through the congested entrance.

"We often spend several minutes requesting vendors and vehicle operators to move aside before an ambulance can enter the hospital. In emergencies such as cardiac arrests, strokes or serious accidents, every minute is crucial and these delays can directly affect patient outcomes," said Fayaz Ahmad, an ambulance driver at SMHS Hospital.

Doctors also expressed concern,

saying the persistent congestion affects not only patients but also medical professionals who need to reach hospitals without delay.

A senior surgeon at SMHS Hospital said there have been several occasions when doctors themselves struggled to enter the hospital because of blocked access roads.

"Hospital entrances should remain free for emergency movement. Congestion outside the gates hampers timely medical care and creates unnecessary stress for patients, attendants and healthcare workers," the doctor said.

Similar scenes are witnessed outside LD Hospital, where roadside food stalls attract large crowds while auto-rickshaws, e-rickshaws and private

vehicles remain parked indiscrimi-

nately, leaving little room for ambulances and other vehicles.

Masrat Jan, a pregnant woman from Anantnag who recently visited LD Hospital, said she was forced to get out some distance away from the hospital gate because the vehicle could not move through the traffic. "I had to walk through a crowded entrance despite being in pain. It was a very difficult and uncomfortable experience," she said.

Patients and doctors clarified that they are not opposed to the livelihood of vendors or transport operators but stressed that proper regulation around hospital premises is essential to ensure unhindered access to healthcare facilities.

Health officials acknowledged the issue and said they have repeatedly taken up the matter with the concerned civic and traffic authorities.

"We have written several times requesting regulation of traffic,

removal of unauthorised vendors and better management of the areas surrounding hospital gates. The present situation poses a serious challenge to emergency healthcare services," an official said.

Patients, attendants and healthcare workers urged the administration to declare hospital entrances as strict no-vending and no-parking zones, create designated parking spaces for public transport vehicles away from the gates, and ensure dedicated corridors for ambulances and emergency vehicles.

They said hospitals should remain easily accessible at all times as they cater to critically ill patients and medical emergencies round the clock.

"The authorities must act without further delay. Hospitals are meant to provide timely healthcare, and their entrances should never become obstacles to saving lives," they added—(KNO)

GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR

Office Of The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt. Ground Water Division Srinagar

Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar

E-mail: hakeemmushtaq.75316@jk.gov.in | Tel./Fax No: 0194-2411285

EXTENSION NOTICE 5TH

Subject: Construction of Gravel Packed Production Tube Wells at Nundresh Colony Gabarpora, Pulwama.

Reference: This office e-NIT No. 14/JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2026-27, issued vide endorsement No: JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/Camp/1636-47, dated: 18-05-2026. Bearing Tender ID No. 2026_PHE_310256_1.

Due to "NO Response" for the above mentioned works advertised vide e-NIT No. and Tender ID No's under reference. Which was scheduled to be downloaded till 14-07-2026 Up-to 02:00 PM are extended as per the details given below: -

S. No.	Item	Fresh Date
1.	Last date & Time of submission of bids	25-07-2026 Up-to 01:00 PM
2.	Date & Time of opening of tenders	27-07-2026 01.00 PM

NOTE:

All other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the aforesaid e-NIT issued vide above referred endstt: nos.

No: JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/Camp./4562-74

Dated: 14-07-2026

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

DIPK: 3270/26 | Dated: 14-07-2026

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir,

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION KRALPORA

E tendering NIT No 21/RnB/Kralpora of 2026-27 | Dated: 13-07-2026

For & on behalf of the Lt. Governor Jammu & Kashmir (UT), e-tenders are being invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with the J&K UT Government, CPWD, Railways, and other State/Central Governments for the following works

S.No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (In Lacs)	T.D Cost (In Rupees)	E/M	Time
1.	Maintenance/ Lifting of Mobile Toilets from Kupwara to Lokut and Bud Bangus and vice-versa (For 03 Months)	5.99	300/-	11980	3 Months

Date and time of opening: 24-07-2026 (12:00 AM)

Major Head: UT Capex LBDDA

Position of funds: Available

No: Div-KRLP/1434-48

Dated: 13-07-2026

Class of Contractor: CEE/DEE

Position of AAA/ TS: Accorded

1. The bidding documents, which will include qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications/drawings, a bill of quantities (B.O.Q), a set of contract terms and conditions, and other details, can be viewed/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in on the dates tabulated below:

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	13-07-2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	13-07-2026 (5:00 PM) to 23.07.2026 (6:00PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	13-07-2026 (5:00 PM)
4	Bid Submission End Date	23.07.2026 (6:00PM)
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	24.07.2026 (12:00 AM) In the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Kralpora.

Upload/Disclose the bank account number which is linked with the GSTIN and Mapped with JKPWDOMS along with proof. No payments shall be released by the department to any other bank account except the one linked with the GST registered number of the successful bidder.

2. Bids must be accompanied with Cost of Tender Document in the shape of Treasury Challan (dated between the bid start date and the Bid Submission End date) deposited in M.H. 0059 in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Kralpora (tender inviting authority). Treasury Challan must be written boldly and clearly with Name of Work, Name of the Contractor along with Contact No, NIT No and Serial No of Work on NIT (if any).

3. At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Kralpora. Besides that, the successful bidder will have to provide Performance Security @ 5% of the allotted Cost in the form of CDR/FDR at the time of contract award, strictly in accordance with the Government's circular instructions from time to time. The earnest money/bid security of 2% will be released to the successful bidder only after the submission of a Performance Security of 5% of the allotted cost, which will be released after successful completion of the DLP/Maintenance Period.

11. All other Conditions shall remain same as per the DETAILED TENDER NOTICE No 01/RnB/Kralpora of 2025-26 E-tendering Dated:- 16-04-2025 issued under No. Div-KRLP/123-37 dated 16-04-2025 and PWD Form 25 (Double agreement Form)

12. Bidders should be fully cognizant that if the documents uploaded/submitted on the basis of which the contract was awarded are later discovered to be fake/not genuine, the contract will be cancelled and the Contractor/bidder will be blacklisted from participating in this Division/ Department for a period of three years, in addition to the performance security deposited for the said work being forfeited.

Sd/- Executive Engineer R&B Division Kralpora

DIPK: 3255/26 | Dated: 14-07-2026

JKSHC
JAMMU & KASHMIR STATE HAJ COMMITTEE

Government of India
Ministry of Minority Affairs
Haj Committee of India

HAJ 2027 (1448 H)
IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

1

PASSPORT VALIDITY

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

31 DECEMBER 2027

2

COVER / GROUP

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

GROUP HEAD

3

COVER HEAD

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

COVER HEAD

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.

OTP

6

NOMINEE

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

NOMINEE

PHOTOGRAPH

- Clear, White Background

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.

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DC Srinagar conducts onsite inspection of ongoing road upgradation works along Dr Ali Jan Road, directs executing agencies to complete works expeditiously

Emphasises quality execution, timely completion and seamless coordination among departments to decongest Eidgah-SKIMS Soura corridor

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR JULY 14:- Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Tuesday conducted an onsite inspection of the ongoing road upgradation works along Dr Ali Jan Road to assess the progress of the project aimed at improving traffic flow on the busy stretch leading to SKIMS Soura.

The DC was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Superintending Engineer R&B North Circle, Shabir Ahmad, Executive Engineer R&B, Arif Hazari, Executive Engineer UEED, Shabir Ahmad, Tehsildar Eidgah, Mo-

hammad Iqbal and other concerned Officers.

On the occasion, the DC took stock of the ongoing road upgradation measures along the 425-meter road stretch adjacent from Aali Masjid including augmentation of drainage network system. He also took stock of the possible traffic decongestion measures on the road connecting Eidgah-SKIMS Soura corridor aimed at decongesting the area and improving connectivity to ensure smooth vehicular movement, particularly for ambulances in and around the hospital.

During the inspection, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the progress of the ongoing



upgradation works on the 425-metre road stretch adjacent to Aali Masjid, Eidgah, where civil works are underway to decongest the key Eidgah-SKIMS Soura corridor and im-

prove connectivity, ensuring smoother vehicular movement, particularly for ambulances and other emergency services. He also inspected the augmentation of the drainage network being developed alongside the road to facilitate efficient drainage and prevent waterlogging on the stretch, especially during heavy rainfall.

On the occasion, the DC was informed about the status of the work, the execution timeline and the measures being taken to minimise inconvenience to commuters during the construction phase. He emphasised the importance of maintaining the quality of work while ensuring that the project progresses within the

stipulated timeframe.

The DC directed the concerned executing agencies to ensure close coordination among all Departments for the timely completion of the project. He stressed that all works, including road upgradation, drainage improvement and allied infrastructure development, should be carried out in a synchronised manner to avoid delays and repeated excavation without hampering traffic movement on the road.

The DC further instructed the Officers to adopt effective traffic management measures during the execution of the project so that the public do not face any inconvenience.

Director Extension SKUAST-K concludes Three-Day visit to Gurez

Reviews farm interventions and promotes Tribal Women Empowerment

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JULY 14: The Director Extension, SKUAST-Kashmir, Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, concluded a three-day visit to Gurez and held a series of fruitful discussions with farmers, farm women and budding entrepreneurs while visiting all three regions of Gurez, including Bagtore, Gurez and Tulail.

During the extensive programme, the Front-Line Demonstrations (FLDs) and On-Farm Trials (OFTs) laid by KVK Gurez during 2026-27 were monitored and reviewed, including trials on Wheat (SW-03) provided by KVK Gurez through the NSP, SKUAST-Kashmir over 70 hectares, covering 700 farm families across Gurez and Tulail, including Chakwali.

The visit was followed by inspections of the Potato Seed Village at Badugam, Maize Village at Tarbal and Buckwheat Seed Village at Dangan (Bagtore).

Under the leadership of



the Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST-Kashmir, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, KVK Gurez has been directed to put in place very sincere and serious efforts for the revival of heri-

tage crops, introduction of novel technologies of SKUAST-Kashmir to enhance production trends, generate income avenues and improve the quality of life of tribal

farmers, the Director Extension said.

She lauded the efforts of KVK Gurez in attaining the assigned targets with significant results and informed

that KVK Gurez is striving hard and marching towards achieving excellence.

She further stated that the United Nations has declared 2026 as the International Year of the Women Farmer (IYWF-2026) and informed that SKUAST-Kashmir, the fourth best Agriculture University in the country, is committed to working towards gender empowerment through reduction of farm drudgery, facilitating women to take farm decisions, besides ensuring their social and financial security.

In this endeavour, fifty tribal farming families, the majority of them being farm women from the far-flung Banjaran area of Bagtore Block, Gurez, were provided free of cost, high-quality farm inputs under TSP-ICAR.

Receiving feedback from a few of the beneficiaries on the occasion, the farmers expressed gratitude to KVK Gurez for the efforts being made towards the betterment of the farming community across Gurez Valley.

HSS Ajas hosts 'Maa Se Guftagoo' to strengthen Mothers' Role in Anti-Drug Campaign

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JULY 13: As part of the ongoing Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan, a "Maa Se Guftagoo" session was today held at Government Higher Secondary School (HSS) Ajas Bandipora. The programme, chaired by Block Development Officer (BDO) Aloosa, Ulfat Ali, brought together local women particularly Anganwadi workers for an open discussion on the role of mothers in preventing drug abuse among the youth.



Interacting with the participants, Ulfat Ali said that the fight against the drug menace begins at home. She emphasized that mothers, through their love, care and constant support, are often the first to notice changes in their children's behaviour. By remaining alert and maintaining a healthy relationship with their children, they can play a decisive role in preventing them from substance abuse, she added.

Highlighting the role of parent-child conversation, she stressed that regular conversations between parents and children help build trust and confidence. She encouraged mothers to create an atmosphere where children can speak freely without fear of being judged.

On the occasion, one participant shared how she uses YouTube videos and educational content on her mobile phone to explain the harmful effects of drugs to her child.

Highlighting the initiatives taken by the District Administration, Ulfat Ali also spoke about the District Knowledge Centre and Nun Chai Talks. She said these platforms have been created to help people cope with stress, encourage healthy activities, and provide positive spaces where young people can engage constructively instead of falling into the trap of drugs.

DC Kulgam presides over DLC Meeting on PMAY-U 2.0 Beneficiary Scrutiny

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, JULY 14: A meeting of the District Level Committee (DLC) for scrutiny and verification of beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) 2.0 was held today, under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner, Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, in his office chamber.

The meeting was attended by Altaf Ahmad Khan, Additional District Development Commissioner, Kulgam; Reyaz Ahmad Shah, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Kulgam; District Social Welfare Officer, Kulgam; Tehsildar Kulgam; Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Council, Kulgam; Executive Officer, Municipal Committee Devsar; and Executive Officer, Municipal Committee Yaripora.

During the meeting, the District Level Committee reviewed the status of applications received under PMAY-U 2.0 and examined the eligible cases placed before it in accordance with the scheme guidelines.

After detailed scrutiny and deliberation, the Committee approved 10 Beneficiary-Led Construction (BLC) cases for further processing under PMAY-U 2.0. Of these, seven cases pertain to Municipal Committee Yaripora and three cases pertain to Municipal Committee Devsar.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned officers to ensure the timely completion of all remaining formalities, including geo-tagging, documentation, and preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs), so that the approved beneficiaries receive the benefits of the scheme without delay. He emphasized transparency, accountability, and strict adherence to the PMAY-U 2.0 guidelines during the implementation process.

The meeting concluded with a commitment from all concerned departments to expedite the implementation of PMAY-U 2.0 and ensure that the benefits of the flagship housing scheme reach all eligible beneficiaries in a transparent and time-bound manner.

MVD Kishtwar cracks down on e-autos without fare meters; 15 e-autos seized

HT NEWS NETWORK

KISHTWAR, JULY 14: On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Pankaj Kumar Sharma, the Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) Kishtwar, under supervision of ARTO Tasleem Wani, today conducted a surprise enforcement drive near Government Industrial Training Institute (ITI) Kishtwar.

During the naka checking, Motor Vehicle Inspector (MVI) Imran Choudhary led the inspection team and seized 15 electric auto-rickshaws (e-autos) for operating without mandatory fare meters, in violation of Motor Vehicles Rules.

The enforcement drive was launched to ensure public transport operators adhere to prescribed norms and to safeguard passengers from arbitrary fare charges. The absence of fare meters often leads to disputes over fares and causes inconvenience to commuters.

The department reiterated that installing and using functional fare meters is mandatory for public transport vehicles wherever applicable, and strict action will continue against violators.

Vehicle owners and drivers were advised to comply with all legal requirements, including proper documentation and mandatory safety

standards, to avoid penalties and seizure of vehicles.

The department further appealed to commercial vehicle operators to follow traffic and transport regulations in letter and spirit, and said similar enforcement drives will continue to improve transparency, discipline and passenger safety in the public transport system.

The department also urged commuters to cooperate with enforcement agencies and report violations related to overcharging, absence of mandatory documents or other transport-related irregularities.

DC Ramban reviews implementation of Mission YUVA

HT NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN, JULY 14: Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Aliyas Khan today chaired a review meeting to assess the district's progress under Mission YUVA and directed all stakeholders to accelerate implementation through focused action on the mission's four pillars - Culture, Credit, Capacity and Connectivity.

The Deputy Commissioner directed departments concerned to foster an entrepreneurial culture by mobilising fresh Mission YUVA applications, particularly from Self Help Group (SHG) members and other aspiring entrepreneurs, and to intensify awareness and outreach activities to identify and motivate eligible

youth for self-employment ventures.

On Capacity Building, the Deputy Commissioner instructed departments concerned to complete pending hybrid-mode training of all eligible candidates on priority, to ensure they acquire the skills required before establishing their ventures.

On Connectivity, the Deputy Commissioner directed immediate onboarding of all eligible shops and establishments onto the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) platform. He instructed YUVA Doots and Motivators to regularly guide applicants, monitor progress of established units and facilitate daily onboarding of shops onto the platform to enhance their market access.



On Credit, the Deputy Commissioner expressed concern over pending cases at bank branches and directed all banks to expedite sanctioning and disbursement of eligible applications within the prescribed timelines.

He also instructed officers concerned to maintain close coordination with banks and implementing agencies for effective monitoring and timely resolution of bottlenecks.

Additional Deputy Commis-

sioner Varunjeet Singh Charak, who is also District Nodal Officer for Mission YUVA, directed officers concerned to reprocess all applicant-level pending cases without delay. He instructed Business Help Desk (BHD) staff to regularly visit training centres, bank branches and awareness camps to strengthen field-level facilitation and outreach, and to submit detailed visit reports for effective monitoring.

Among those present were Assistant Commissioner Revenue Shokat Hayat Mattoo, Assistant Labour Commissioner Amit Kumar and other officers concerned. Sub-Divisional Magistrates, district officers of line departments, bank officials and YUVA Doots, Motivators participated virtually.

Foreign selling in Indian equities likely over: Goldman Sachs

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUL 14: Foreign selling in Indian equities is likely behind us, with sentiment expected to turn incrementally favourable as India's domestic outlook improves and overseas investor positioning remains exceptionally light, according to Goldman Sachs' July India Strategy note.

The global investment bank expects the benchmark Nifty 50 index to climb to 26,500 by June 2027, implying an upside of around 10 per cent from current levels, despite the likelihood of continued market volatility due to renewed geopolitical tensions in West Asia.

"Sentiment should turn incrementally favourable toward Indian equities due to an improved domestic outlook and ultra-light foreign positioning," analysts led by Timothy Moe wrote in the report, co-authored with Amorita Goel and Sunil Koul.

The July outlook marks a significant shift from Goldman Sachs' stance in May 2026, when it had described the risk-reward equation for Indian equities as "less attractive" compared with North Asian markets.



At the time, the brokerage had also said foreign investors were unlikely to return to India quickly, even if crude oil prices softened.

In its May note, Goldman Sachs had highlighted concerns that

the potential impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on India's services sector was weighing on investor sentiment toward Indian equities.

According to the latest report, global equity investors used India as a funding market during the first half of 2026, offloading a record USD 30 billion worth of Indian equities over just three-and-a-half months. However, the trend has started reversing since

mid-June, with overseas investors turning modest net buyers and bringing in around USD 2 billion, largely into financial stocks.

The improved outlook comes even as foreign institutional investors (FIIs) remain net sellers on a fiscal-year basis.

According to market data, FIIs have recorded a net outflow of Rs 1.28 trillion from Indian equities so far in FY27.

In June alone, overseas investors withdrew Rs 49,340 crore from Indian equities. The trend, however, reversed in July, with FIIs investing a net Rs 15,157 crore in Indian stock markets, according to NSDL data.

Goldman Sachs believes the combination of improving domestic macroeconomic conditions, easing foreign underweight positions and a gradual return of overseas flows could provide support to Indian equities over the coming year, although geopolitical developments are expected to keep markets volatile in the near term. UNI

Satya Nadella coins 'Reverse Information Paradox', warns enterprises of AI knowledge leak

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JULY 14: As enterprises accelerate the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI), they risk giving away their most valuable proprietary knowledge to AI providers, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella has warned, introducing a new concept he calls the "Reverse Information Paradox."

In a post on X, Nadella argued that in the AI era, businesses effectively pay for intelligence twice—first with money and then with something far more valuable: their proprietary knowledge.

"In the age of AI, you pay for intelligence twice: once with money, and again with something even more valuable: the proprietary knowledge you must reveal to make that intelligence useful," Nadella wrote. "The better you want the model to perform, the more of that knowledge you have to feed it."

Nadella drew parallels with Nobel laureate Kenneth Arrow and his well-known "Information Paradox," which states that the value of information cannot be determined until it is disclosed, but once revealed, the buyer effectively acquires it without paying for it.

According to Nadella, AI has inverted this dynamic. Instead of sellers disclosing information to buyers, enterprises now disclose their own proprietary knowledge to AI systems to make them more useful.

He explained that over time, this creates an imbalance in which AI providers continuously learn from enterprise interactions—including prompts, workflows, evaluations and corrections—while customers gain little visibility into how providers benefit from that knowledge.

"The seller learns more and more about the buyer through prompts, interactions and usage, while the buyer learns very little about what the seller is learning in return," Nadella said.

He stressed that the issue extends well beyond data privacy. AI models, he said, continuously learn from "ex-

haust" generated during usage, including prompts, tools used by AI agents and, most importantly, the corrections users make when models produce inaccurate results.

"Every correction is distilled into institutional know-how. It's the kind of knowledge a competitor could never buy, and the kind that leaks almost imperceptibly—trace by trace, correction by correction, eval by eval," he wrote.

"In consuming intelligence, you are creating intelligence. And what you create should belong to you."

Nadella also questioned the current AI ecosystem, where developers are allowed to improve their models using customer interactions while often restricting enterprises from distilling or fine-tuning models for their own long-term benefit.

If this asymmetry persists, he warned, an increasing share of AI-generated economic value will accrue to AI infrastructure providers rather than the enterprises generating the underlying knowledge.

"The Reverse Information Paradox needs its own equivalent" to patents, Nadella said, arguing that organisations require a trusted boundary to ensure their institutional knowledge remains under their control.

"That is why enterprises need a real trust boundary for their human capital and token capital to compound. It is where an organisation's data, traces, evals, adapted weights, and memory accumulate and improve together," he added.

To address the challenge, Nadella proposed five principles for enterprise AI adoption: maintaining ownership of organisational data and institutional knowledge; creating private environments where AI systems learn exclusively from enterprise interactions; avoiding dependence on a single AI model or provider; optimising costs through flexible AI infrastructure; and establishing a continuous learning loop that enables AI investments to generate compounding value over time. UNI

Hyderabad Airport ranked world's 4th most family-friendly airport

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, JULY 14: GMR Hyderabad International Airport (GHIAL) on Monday announced that the Hyderabad International Airport has been ranked the 4th Most Family-Friendly Airport in the world by UK-based travel experience provider AttractionTickets.com, making it one of only two Indian airports to feature in the prestigious global list.



The recognition comes under AttractionTickets.com's Happiest Airports Ranking, which evaluated more than 140 airports worldwide across nine family-centric parameters, including children's play areas, family security lanes, baby-changing facilities, stroller services, rest zones, Wi-Fi quality, accessibility for neurodivergent passengers, and overall passenger experience.

Hyderabad Airport secured an impressive score of 18.5 out of 20.

Welcoming the achievement, GHIAL CEO Kadhira Kadhira said the ranking reflects the airport's commitment to providing an inclusive, seamless and comfortable travel experience for families through child-friendly facilities, personalised assistance and continuous innovation.

Hyderabad Airport offers dedicated kids' play areas, family rooms, baby care rooms, complimentary strollers, trained passenger service associates, therapy dogs, a yoga room, and a wide range of family-friendly retail and dining options, reinforcing its position as a global benchmark for passenger-friendly airport infrastructure, a GHIAL statement said. UNI

India's retail inflation rises to 4.38 per cent in June

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUL 14: India's retail inflation increased to 4.38 per cent for the month of June, said government data released here today. The year-on-year food inflation in June was 5.32 pc, said the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) data.

Corresponding inflation rates for rural and urban region were 4.74 and 3.92 pc, respectively.

The housing inflation for the previous month was recorded at 2.10 pc.

According to the data, the top five key



items with low inflation for the month of June were potatoes, peas, motor car and jeep, cumin and motor cycle and scooter. UNI

Consultations in right direction, don't see any challenge: Commerce Secy on India-US trade deal

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUL 14: Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal on the India-US trade deal said Consultations are progressing in the right direction, and both sides remain positive.

"We don't see any challenge in India-US trade deal negotiations. Consultations are progressing in the right direction, and both sides remain positive. The India-US framework trade deal is ready for signing at an appropriate time. Trade ties continue to strengthen, including energy imports from the US," he said.

Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal also said India and

the US teams are fully engaged for a trade pact that is balanced, commercially meaningful, and delivers tangible benefits for businesses, farmers, workers, and consumers.

He said that he had a meeting with US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer here last month.

"Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to an agreement that is balanced, commercially meaningful, and delivers tangible benefits for businesses, farmers, workers, and consumers in both countries. Our teams remain fully engaged in achieving this objective," Goyal said in a social media post.

Last month, a delegation led by the US Trade Representative



(USTR), Jamieson Greer, held a meeting with the Indian negotiators amid ongoing discussions on an interim deal and the broader Bilateral Trade Agree-

ment (BTA).

Ambassador Greer was accompanied by the US Ambassador to India, Sergio Gor, and a senior American trade delegation

for the high-stakes discussions, an official account on X said.

Commerce Minister Goyal met the US Trade Representative, and both sides sought to conclude an interim trade pact before July 24, when Washington's temporary 10 per cent tariff on imports from trading partners is due to expire.

Greer was in India on a two-day visit coming after the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump held their first meeting in more than a year on the sidelines of the G7 summit in France on June 17, injecting fresh momentum into trade negotiations that both sides see as critical to strengthening economic ties.

Stock markets recover from early losses, IT stocks gain

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUL 14: Indian Stock Markets on Monday recovered smartly from early losses to close marginally higher. Gains were recorded in information technology stocks. At close, the Sensex was up 47.01 points or 0.06 per cent at

77,616.40, while the Nifty was up 4.10 points or 0.02 percent at 24,211. Further, Nifty Midcap 100 and Nifty Smallcap 100, ended on flat note.

Among the sectors, Nifty IT surged 3.59%, Nifty Media closed with a healthy gain of 2.09% while Nifty Consumer Durables rose by 1.15%. Further, Nifty Bank, PSU Bank and

Private Bank indices ended 0.15%, 0.11%, and 0.25% higher, respectively. On the other hand, Nifty FMCG fell 1%, and Metal pack declined by 0.69%.

Among the top gainers on the Nifty, TCS led the rally with a gain of 5.4%, followed by HCLTech, Tech Mahindra, Infosys.

Trade deficit widens to five-month high of USD 30.43 bn in June

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUL 14: India's trade deficit widened to a five-month high of USD 30.43 billion in June, compared to USD 19.10 billion the same month last year, according to the data released by the Ministry of Commerce on Monday.

The trade deficit expanded as India's goods imports jumped 31 per cent year-on-year to USD 70.84 billion in June. The surge in imports is due to the price effect in commodities such as crude oil and gold.

Among key sectors, gems and jewellery exports jumped 34.64 per cent year-on-year to USD 2.41 billion, while engineering goods exports rose 20.74 per cent to USD 11.48 billion. Exports of organic and inorganic chemicals also registered robust growth of 19.42 per cent to USD 2.77



billion.

During the April-June quarter of FY27, India's combined merchandise and services exports rose 11.37 per cent year-on-year to an estimated USD 232.73 billion.

Merchandise exports increased 15.92 per cent to USD 129.32 billion during the quarter from USD 111.57 billion in the corresponding period last year. Non-petroleum exports also grew 12.44 per cent year-

on-year to USD 106.30 billion, indicating broad-based strength across manufacturing sectors.

The government said export growth in June was driven by strong performance in engineer-

ing goods, gems and jewellery, electronic goods, organic and inorganic chemicals, and rice.

On the import side, growth was primarily driven by crude petroleum, electronic goods, coal and coke, gold, and vegetable oils, reflecting continued domestic demand and industrial activity.

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said, "The higher imports of petroleum, gems, and jewellery are largely due to higher global prices. The increase does not necessarily reflect a proportional rise in import volumes."

India's dependence on Chinese imports continued to increase as the data showed that the imports from China rose to USD 38.04 billion in the first quarter of FY27, compared with USD 29.73 billion during the corresponding period last year.

Adani in race to acquire Polaris Smart Metering

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI, JULY 14: Adani Energy Solutions is among the companies which have reached the second round of negotiations in the race to purchase smart metering company Polaris Smart Metering, market sources said here on Monday.

The other companies in the race are Apraava Energy and private equity fund Actis. Due diligence scrutiny of Polaris Smart Metering is on and binding bids are expected by early August, sources said.

Presently, the controlling shareholder of Polaris Smart Metering is the US-based infrastructure fund I Squared Capital (via the ISQ Growth Markets Infrastructure Fund). Additionally, the UK's development finance institution, British International Investment (BII), holds a major financial stake through a recent Rs 7,100-million debt-equity financing deal.

However, I Squared Capital, which holds the majority controlling stake in Polaris Smart Metering, is seeking an exit from the smart metering company by selling its stake.

In April, I Squared Capital had appointed boutique investment bank Impact Infracap to initiate the sale process.

Any potential deal could peg the enterprise value of Polaris at around Rs 1,892 crore, according to market sources.

Earlier in February 2023, I Squared Capital had invested \$150 million to buy a controlling majority stake in Polaris through its ISQ Growth Markets Infrastructure Fund (ISQGMIF).

Last month, Adani Energy Solutions signed a Rs 3,050-crore deal to acquire smart metering company IntelliSmart Infrastructure, with 22 million electricity meters installed in Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Assam. UNI



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UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHENNAI: Stephen Fleming has stepped down as head coach of Chennai Super Kings (CSK), bringing an end to a decorated tenure during which the franchise won five IPL and two Champions League T20 (CLT20) titles.

The CSK franchise said on Monday that they had parted ways mutually, "bringing to a close one of the most successful and enduring partnerships in IPL history. The decision was reached with respect and gratitude, following a series of open and honest discussions between Fleming and the Super Kings management."

Fleming also ended ties with Super Kings' other franchises - Joburg Super Kings (SA20) and Texas Super Kings (MLC) - where he was head coach. The announcement came barely a few hours after TSK finished last in MLC 2026. The JSK team had also not made a SA20 final in four seasons.

Speculation over Fleming's future as CSK coach has been rife ever since the team ended their third successive IPL season without a title. CSK finished eighth in IPL 2026 following on from a last-placed finish in 2025. After their final league game this year, Fleming had said that his future with the franchise was the "management's call, not mine."

"Eighteen years is a lifetime in sport, and I leave with nothing but gratitude," Fleming said in a statement. "My time with Chennai Super Kings has been the privilege of my coaching career. I am proud of everything we have achieved. Together, we celebrated unforgettable victories, overcame difficult moments, and built memories that will stay with me forever. CSK will always be close to my heart, and I will be cheering the team on for years to come."

Fleming joined CSK as a player ahead of IPL 2008 and took over as head coach the following season. He formed a formidable working relationship with MS Dhoni and helped the team enter the playoffs a record 12 times. They also made a record ten appearances in the final, and won titles in 2010, 2011, 2018, 2021 and 2023. They won the Champions League title in 2010 and 2014. "Stephen Fleming has been the heartbeat of our coaching unit for almost the entire journey of this franchise," CSK owner Rupa Gurunath said. "For nearly two decades, he has helped shape our identity, vision, and pursuit of excellence. While our journey together on the field comes to a close, he will always remain an integral part of the team's legacy."

Hetmyer replaces injured Greaves for second and third NZ ODIs

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

KINGSTON: Shimron Hetmyer has replaced the injured Justin Greaves in West Indies' squad for the second and third ODIs against New Zealand. Greaves suffered a back injury that ruled him out of the first ODI in Providence and has returned to Barbados to continue his rehabilitation, Cricket West Indies said in a statement. Hetmyer, who last played an ODI in June 2025, was recalled to the ODI squad during West Indies' three-match series against Sri Lanka in June, but he didn't get a game. He was initially left out of their squad for the first three ODIs against New Zealand to allow him to complete his MLC stint with Seattle Orcas. However, Orcas finished fifth in the league stage of the MLC and did not qualify for the knockouts, freeing Hetmyer up to join the West Indies squad. Hetmyer scored 164 runs in ten games, striking at 136.66 in the MLC this year. CWI said that Greaves will be reassessed ahead of the final two ODIs against New Zealand and the two-match Test series against Pakistan that follows. Greaves scored 180 in the last Test he played.

India crush England to claim historic victory in the first women's Test at Lord's

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

LORD: India's spinners made light work of England on the final day of the first ever women's Test at Lord's, wrapping up a 270-run victory within 95 minutes. Sophie Ecclestone scored a defiant maiden international half-century but when she was bowled by Sneha Rana, giving the offspinner her fourth wicket for the innings and sixth for the match, India claimed the fourth-highest margin of victory by runs in women's Tests.

Amy Jones added just two more runs to her over night score of 52 before she picked out Shafali Verma at midwicket on the 18th ball of the fourth day, giving Rana her third wicket for the innings and exposing the England tail.



On Sunday, India had asked England to chase a mammoth 457

runs in the fourth innings, thanks largely to Yastika Bhatia's century

which put her on the Lord's Test batting honours board, alongside team-mate Kranti Gaud, who had already inked her name on the bowler's board on day two.

Ecclestone, whose five-wicket haul in India's second innings had put her name next to Gaud's on the famed honours board, resumed the day on 1 with her side 130 for 6 and still needing 327.

She reached her fifty off 61 balls but saw off only four more deliveries before she fell, failing to keep out one that dropped and turned between bat and pad to rattle the stumps. Lauren Filer, who picked up the first wicket of this match, remained unbeaten, having faced 22 balls for a solitary boundary. Issy Wong faced 33 balls for just 1 before Deepti Sharma

struck with her fifth delivery of the day, beating Wong's forward defence and clattering the stumps.

Lauren Bell defied the abdominal soreness which kept her off the field for a good part of India's innings on day three to join Ecclestone at the crease. But her stay was brief as Deepti claimed a second wicket in the space of seven balls, spinning one back sharply through the gate to ping the top of off stump.

Heather Knight, the former England captain, and opening batter Tammy Beaumont, were denied a fairytale farewell after announcing their international retirements before the match, dismissed for 13 and a golden duck respectively in England's second innings on day three.

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