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Treat Every Pilgrim as a Divine Guest: LG Sinha Reviews Amarnath Pilgrimage Arrangements



■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 15: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday directed officials engaged in the Shri Amarnath

pilgrimage to treat every pilgrim as a "divine guest" while reviewing facilities and services at Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas, stressing that ensuring a safe,

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3.24 lakh pilgrims complete Amarnath Yatra in 13 days

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JUL 15: The annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra continued to witness an overwhelming response, with 22,599 pilgrims performing darshan at the holy cave shrine on Wednesday, taking the total number of devotees who have completed the pilgrimage to 3,24,525 in the first 13 days of the Yatra.

According to official figures obtained by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer

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No Change in Statehood Protest Plan Despite Personal Loss: Omar Abdullah

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JULY 15: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday declared that the National Conference (NC) will not alter its planned protest in New Delhi over the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood, despite the recent death of his uncle and senior party leader, Sheikh Mustafa Kamal.

Addressing reporters after visiting the bereaved family to offer condolences, Abdullah said the party's programme would continue as scheduled, maintaining that the late leader himself would have wanted the campaign to go ahead.

"There will be no change in our plan," the Chief Minister said, reaffirming that the party would launch its protest in the national capital from July 20 to press for the restoration of statehood.

He recalled that Sheikh Mustafa Kamal's health had deteriorated before the party's programme in Jammu on July 12, but the National Conference



leadership had decided not to postpone the event despite being informed of his critical condition. "Kamal would never have wanted the party to suspend its programme. We did not cancel the July 12 event, and there is no question of changing our plans for Delhi," Abdullah said.

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No Cross-Border Tunnel Found After Search Near International Border in Samba

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, JULY 15: Security forces on Wednesday ruled out the presence of a cross-border tunnel after conducting an extensive search operation in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district following the discovery of a suspicious hole in an agricultural field near the International Border.

The alert led to the immediate deployment of a joint team comprising the Army, Border Security Force (BSF) and Jammu and Kashmir Police to Jarain village in the Ghagwal area. The site

was cordoned off and subjected to a detailed inspection amid concerns that the opening could be linked to an underground infiltration route.

Officials said technical experts carried out a comprehensive examination and excavation of the site to determine whether the hole was connected to a tunnel that could facilitate cross-border infiltration.

After the inspection, the security agencies concluded that the opening was merely a hole in the ground and found no evidence of any underground tunnel or infiltration route.

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LG Delivered Keynote Address at Dr Suresh Awasthi Memorial Lecture Series

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 15: Dr. Suresh Awasthi Smriti Nyas in Varanasi today organized a commemorative event to observe his 20th Panya Smriti Diwas. Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha delivered the keynote address on "AI: Effects and Side Effects". The Lieutenant Governor paid his heartfelt tribute to Dr. Awasthi, a remarkable personality who embodied knowledge and



humility. He said Dr. Awasthi was a distinguished scholar and a visionary who saw political science as a powerful instrument for shaping society and strengthening the nation. The Lieutenant Governor observed that Dr. Awasthi inspired independent thinking and his ideals remain timeless, and it is imperative that the younger generation emulate his thoughts and values, channeling them into the noble task

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All Seven Platforms at Jammu Tawi Station Now Operational

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, JUL 15: Jammu Tawi Railway Station has become fully operational with all seven platforms in service following the commissioning of newly constructed Platforms 6 and 7, marking a major milestone in the station's redevelopment and significantly enhancing its capacity to handle train operations and passenger traffic.

The Northern Railway's Jammu Division has also completed the operationalisation of Platforms 4 and 5, enabling all seven platforms at the station to function simultaneously.

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Kashmir set for hottest days of season before wet spell returns

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JUL 15: A prolonged spell of hot, dry weather is expected to grip Kashmir over the next three days, with Srinagar likely to record the season's highest temperature of 36-37 degrees Celsius.

An official of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer that the heat wave will be followed by widespread rainfall from the night of July 18.

The Meteorological Centre, Srinagar stated that J&K's summer capital Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 32.0°C on Wednesday, 1.9°C above normal, while the minimum settled at 19.0°C, 0.3°C above normal. Jammu recorded 34.7°C, 0.7°C above normal.

It said weather is likely to remain generally hot and humid with the possibility of brief spells of rain or thundershowers at a few places between July 15 and 17.

Independent weather forecaster Kashmir Weather Forecast

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Maintain high operational readiness to counter evolving security threats: DGP Nalin Prabhat

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JULY 15: Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat on Wednesday called for maintaining the highest level of operational readiness to effectively tackle evolving security challenges during a visit to the Special Operations Group (SOG) headquarters at the Cargo complex in Srinagar.

Accompanied by Inspector General of Police, Kashmir Zone, V.K. Birdi, and other senior police officers, the DGP conducted a comprehensive review of the operational preparedness, security

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MHA Invites Stakeholder Feedback on Recruitment Rules for I4C Top Posts Till August 14

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JUL 15: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has invited stakeholder feedback until August 14 on proposed recruitment rules for the posts of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Additional Chief Executive Officer (Additional CEO) in the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), a key step towards strengthening the country's cybercrime response framework.

According to an official memorandum issued by the ministry, the proposed recruitment rules provide for one CEO post at Pay Matrix Level-15, equivalent to the rank of Additional Secretary, and three Additional CEO posts at Level-14 under the Senior Administrative Grade. The number of

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CISF DG Reviews Security Arrangements For Amarnath Yatra In Jammu

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 15: The Director General of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Praveer Ranjan on Wednesday reviewed the security arrangements for the ongoing Amarnath Yatra in Jammu.

The pilgrimage has crossed the three-lakh mark footfall within 12 days of its commencement. The 57-day annual pilgrimage to the holy cave shrine is scheduled to conclude

on August 28.

The CISF chief visited the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas base camp, the Joint Police Control Room (JPCR), CCTV Control Room and the Tawi River Front, where he reviewed security measures, medical response systems, fire safety preparedness, logistics and other facilities for pilgrims, officials said.

During the visit, Ranjan interacted with security personnel and

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'Don't Judge Kashmir By Conflict Headlines': Argentine Tourists

■ HT NEWS DESK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JULY 15: An Argentine couple has challenged prevailing international perceptions of Kashmir, urging travellers across the world not to view the region solely through the prism of conflict, but to experience firsthand its natural beauty, vibrant culture and the warmth of its people.

Florencia Bernal, 37, a software

professional, and Maximiliano Gattari, 41, a restaurateur, both from Buenos Aires, said their journey to Kashmir transformed impressions shaped largely by international news coverage into an appreciation of a destination they described as welcoming, peaceful and unforgettable.

Speaking after visiting Srinagar, Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Aru Valley, Wular Lake and Jammu, the couple

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CS reviews implementation of new Labour Codes

J&K makes significant progress towards landmark labour reforms

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 15: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a review meeting to assess the preparedness of the Labour & Employment Department for implementation of the Four Labour Codes enacted by the Government of India.

The meeting besides Secretary, Labour & Employment was attended by the Commissioner Secretary, Law; DG, Codes; Labour Commissioner; and other senior officers.

During the meeting, the Department made a comprehensive presentation highlighting the status of rule-



making, institutional preparedness, digital integration, awareness initiatives and the roadmap for operationalising the new labour law regime

across the Union Territory.

The Chief Secretary observed that the Labour Codes represent a transformative reform capable of improv-

ing labour welfare, strengthening social security, promoting industrial harmony and enhancing

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Secretary RDD chairs Steering Committee on Lakhpati Didi Initiative

Calls for Mission-Mode Convergence to Transform Rural Women's Livelihoods

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 15: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, today chaired the meeting of the Union Territory Level Steering Committee on the Lakhpati Didi Initiative under the Jammu & Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission (JKRLM-UMIED), directing all stakeholder departments to adopt a mission-mode approach for transforming women Self-Help Group (SHG) members into sustainable entrepreneurs through effective convergence, skill development and financial inclusion.

The meeting was attended by Mission Director, JKRLM, Dr. Shubhra Sharma; Director, Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, J&K; Directors, Animal Husbandry, Jammu and Kashmir; Directors, Social Welfare, Jammu and Kashmir; Chief Operating Officer, Himayat (DDU-GKY), J&K; Additional Secretary RDD, Waseem Raja, Deputy Director, Fisheries, Kashmir; and other senior officers.

Addressing the meeting, the Secretary said the Government is accelerating implementation of its flagship Lakhpati Didi Initiative with a renewed focus on enabling rural women to establish sustainable micro-enterprises and achieve annual household incomes exceeding Rs. 1 lakh.

Aijaz Asad informed that 2.40 lakh women in Jammu & Kashmir have already attained Lakhpati Didi status, while the overall target for the Union Territory has been fixed at 3.64 lakh women by 2029, requiring focused efforts to cover an additional 1.24 lakh beneficiaries through convergence, enterprise development, access to credit and skill enhancement.

Emphasising convergence as the cornerstone of the initiative, Secretary directed all stakeholder

departments to integrate their flagship schemes with JKRLM and prioritise eligible SHG households under their respective programmes.

He stressed the need for preparing household-level enterprise plans, ensuring timely institutional credit, providing continuous handholding support, and facilitating market linkages for women entrepreneurs. He called upon every department to identify convergence opportunities under its schemes and communicate clear beneficiary targets and implementation strategies.

The Secretary instructed all line departments to prepare a comprehensive convergence blueprint indicating the number of beneficiaries they can support in sectors such as agriculture, horticulture, livestock, dairy, poultry, fisheries and other allied activities, ensuring coordinated implementation down to the village level.

Highlighting the importance of quality skill development, he directed the Mission to strengthen partnerships with reputed national institutions and specialised training organisations while studying and adopting best practices from leading States. He also advised organising exposure visits for officials and stakeholders to replicate successful livelihood models in Jammu & Kashmir.

Aijaz Asad further directed the Mission to engage with leading private apparel brands and manufacturers to explore outsourcing opportunities for women-led enterprises, observing that such partnerships could create sustainable employment and significantly enhance household incomes. He emphasised the need to upgrade the existing skill ecosystem to meet industry standards and improve market competitiveness.



He stressed that capacity building should go beyond classroom-based training and focus on practical, market-oriented skills that enable women to establish viable enterprises. Departments including Agriculture and Horticulture were directed to provide hands-on technical training in scientific farming, apple cultivation, vegetable cultivation, protected cultivation and other high-value agricultural activities capable of generating sustainable incomes.

The Secretary also called for expanding convergence beyond traditional sectors by involving institutions working in digital services, handicrafts, handloom, apparel manufacturing, food processing and other emerging livelihood sectors, observing that a diversified livelihood portfolio would create greater economic resilience for rural women.

The meeting was informed that the Digital Aajeevika Register (DAR) is being utilised for house-

hold identification, beneficiary tracking and progress monitoring, while the Enterprise Planning Digital Tool (EPDT) is facilitating preparation of customised enterprise plans, investment assessment and income forecasting for individual households, thereby strengthening evidence-based planning and monitoring.

Reviewing financial inclusion measures, the Secretary was informed that under the SHG Bank Linkage Programme, institutional credit worth Rs. 1,200 crore is targeted for potential Lakhpati Didis. Additionally, 4,200 women will be supported during the current financial year under the Lal Ded Stree Shakti Scheme, implemented in collaboration with J&K Bank, through individual micro-loans amounting to Rs. 42 crore.

The meeting further reviewed banking outreach initiatives under which 372 Bank Mitras and 710 Banking Correspondents are providing doorstep banking services across rural areas. Financial literacy camps and enrolment drives under various social security schemes are also being organised across all blocks to strengthen the financial security and resilience of SHG members.

Concluding the meeting, Aijaz Asad reiterated that the Lakhpati Didi Initiative is not merely an income enhancement programme but a transformative movement aimed at empowering rural women through entrepreneurship, financial independence and sustainable livelihoods.

He directed all stakeholder departments to work in close coordination with JKRLM, adopt a results-oriented approach, and ensure timely achievement of the Union Territory's targets through measurable outcomes, strong institutional convergence and sustained field-level support.

All J&K Shia Association Holds Majlis-e-Aza and Marsiya at Gungoo, Pulwama

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 15: The All Jammu & Kashmir Shia Association (AJKSA) organized a solemn Majlis-e-Aza and Marsiya at Gungoo, Pulwama, where hundreds of mourners gathered to pay tribute to the unparalleled sacrifices of Imam Hussain (A.S.) and the martyrs of Karbala.

Addressing the gathering, AJKSA President Molvi Imran Reza Ansari highlighted the steadfastness and patience of Hazrat Bibi Zainab (S.A.) and Imam Ali ibn Hussain, Imam Zain-ul-Abideen (A.S.), who carried forward the message of Karbala after the tragedy of Ashura. He said that despite enduring



captivity, immense grief, and unimaginable hardships from Karbala to Kufa and Damascus, they safeguarded the mission of Imam Hussain (A.S.) through their unwavering faith, eloquent sermons, and steadfast commitment to truth and justice. He stated that it was their sacrifices and resilience that ensured the message of Karbala would remain alive for all generations.

Molvi Imran Reza Ansari urged the faithful to draw inspiration from the lives of Bibi Zainab (S.A.) and Imam Zain-ul-Abideen (A.S.) by upholding patience, dignity, justice, and devotion to the path of Ahlul Bayt (A.S.).

The programme was also attended by AJKSA General Secretary Abid Ansari, AJKSA Spokesperson Syed Tayyab Mohammad Rizvi, Zakir Majid, and other office bearers and religious scholars.

Kulgam Police Attach Properties Worth ₹1.50 Crore of Three Alleged Drug Peddlers Under 100-Day Anti-Drugs Campaign

FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, JULY 15: Continuing its intensified crackdown under the 100-Day Campaign against drug trafficking, Kulgam Police on Tuesday attached immovable properties worth approximately Rs. 1.50 crore belonging to three alleged drug peddlers in the district.

The action was carried out by Police Station Kulgam in coordination with the Revenue Department under the directions of the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Kulgam. According to police, the attached properties comprise three residential houses belonging to Ikhlaz Mubarak, son of Mubarak Ahmad Nengroo, a resident of Amnool; Aqib Mubarak Dar, a resident of Brazloo, Kulgam; and Showkat Ahmad Rather, son of Wali Mohammad Rather, a resident of Ashmuji, Kulgam.



Police said the properties were attached in accordance with the relevant legal provisions following orders issued by the competent authority as part of the ongoing campaign to dismantle the infrastructure supporting drug-related activities.

Officials stated that the action reflects the Jammu and Kashmir Police's commitment to targeting the proceeds of crime and ensuring that properties linked to unlawful activities are dealt with strictly in accordance with the law. Reaffirming its resolve to make Jammu and Kashmir drug-free, the police said it will continue taking stringent legal action against individuals involved in narcotics-related offences and other activities prejudicial to public order and the security of the Union Territory.

The police also appealed to the public to cooperate by sharing information about drug trafficking and other unlawful activities in their respective areas, saying community participation is essential to strengthening peace, security and the rule of law.

Lubaab Publications and Headlines Today Condoled Tragic Death of Senior Lecturer Shabir Ahmad Dar

Chief Patron Syed Sad-ud-Din Saidi Visits Bereaved Family at Gofbal Kunzar

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 15: Chief Patron of Lubaab Publications Group and the English daily Headlines Today, Syed Sad-ud-Din Saidi, on Tuesday visited the residence of the bereaved family at Gofbal, Kunzar, to offer condolences on the demise of Senior Lecturer Shabir Ahmad Dar, who lost his life in a tragic road accident three days ago.

During the visit, Saidi met the family members, including noted poet Mumtaz Gofbali, brother of the deceased, and expressed his heartfelt sympathies over the irreparable loss. He described the late Shabir Ahmad Dar as a dedicated educationist whose commitment to teaching and service to society had



earned him widespread respect.

Praying for eternal peace to the departed soul, Saidi supplicated that Almighty Allah grant the deceased the highest place in Jannat and bless the bereaved family with strength, patience and fortitude to endure the profound loss.

He said the untimely demise of Shabir Ahmad Dar had created a void in the academic fraternity and among all those who knew him for his humility, integrity and devotion to his profession. The bereaved family thanked Syed Sad-ud-Din Saidi for personally visiting their residence and sharing their grief during this difficult time. The condolence meeting concluded with special prayers for the departed soul.

Langate's Public Park and the Tiranga Stand as a Symbol of Patriotism and Peace

DR. AB QAYOOM

HANDWARA, JULY 15: The replacement of the National Flag atop the historic 108-foot flag mast at Langate Public Park by the Indian Army, in coordination with the Municipal Committee Langate, has been widely appreciated by local residents, who described the initiative as a proud expression of patriotism and a reflection of the peaceful atmosphere prevailing in the area.

The newly installed 20x30-foot Tricolour was hoisted with the assistance of Army personnel and civil administration officials in the presence of local residents and visitors. What has become a biannual exercise ahead of Independence Day and Republic Day is now eagerly awaited by the people of Langate, who view the occasion as a moment of collective pride and national unity.

Residents said the towering National Flag has become much more than a landmark. For them, it represents the aspirations of a region that has witnessed difficult times but is now steadily embracing peace, development and greater public participation in civic life. The flag replacement ceremony, they said, reinforces these values and strengthens the emotional bond people share with the



nation.

Langate Public Park itself has a significant history. Historical records state that in May 1976, Maqbool Bhat and his associates attempted to rob a cooperative bank near the present-day park, during which a bank official was killed. Local residents reportedly assisted the police in surrounding the area, leading to Bhat's arrest.

In later years, the site came to be referred to by some separatist elements as "Maqbool Park." However, as public sentiment evolved and the region moved away from separatist symbolism, the place gradually came to be officially and popularly known as Langate Public Park, reflecting its identity as a public recreational space

for all sections of society.

Many residents recalled that decades of militancy, shutdowns and violence had severely affected education, trade, tourism and development. They observed that the improving security situation in recent years has encouraged people to participate more actively in community life while allowing development and normalcy to take deeper roots.

A defining moment in the park's history came on October 14, 2022, when the 108-foot National Flag mast was dedicated to the people of Langate by the then Divisional Commissioner, P.K. Pole, in the presence of senior officers of the civil administration, police, the Indian Army and local citizens. The

installation was carried out under the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign as part of the Government of India's Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations, with support from the Civil Administration, the Indian Army, the Flag Foundation of India and local residents.

Since then, the towering Tricolour has become one of the most recognisable landmarks of Langate, attracting visitors and serving as a powerful symbol of unity, patriotism and peace.

The latest replacement of the National Flag once again demonstrated the close cooperation between the Indian Army, Municipal Committee Langate, civil administration and the local community in maintaining this iconic landmark. The initiative received overwhelming appreciation from residents, many of whom described it as a fitting tribute to the National Flag and a reminder of the values of unity, sacrifice and national pride.

Today, Langate Public Park stands not only as a recreational destination but also as a symbol of the region's growing confidence, stability and patriotic spirit. The towering Tricolour fluttering above the park continues to inspire residents and visitors alike, reflecting the people's commitment to peace, progress and the nation.

DC Srinagar inspects key ongoing development works at Children's Hospital Bemina and Revenue Complex Shalteng

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR JULY 15: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, on Tuesday conducted an extensive inspection of the ongoing development works on the Foot Over Bridge (FOB) near Children's Hospital Bemina and the Attendant Sarai/Accommodation being constructed within the hospital premises.

He also took onsite review of the works on construction of Revenue Complex Shalteng.

The visit was aimed at reviewing the progress of these key public infrastructure projects and ensuring their timely completion.

At Children Hospital Bemina, the Deputy Commissioner inspected the ongoing construction of the Foot Over Bridge (FOB) near the hospital. He reviewed the physical progress of the project and stressed the need to expedite the works so that the bridge can be made operational at the earliest. He noted that the FOB, equipped with escalators, will provide a safe and convenient passage for pedestrians, particularly patients, attendants and local residents, while also helping regulate traffic movement in the busy hospital area.

The DC also inspected



the construction site of the Attendant Sarai at Children's Hospital Bemina and reviewed the status of the facility being developed to provide comfortable accommodation and essential amenities for attendants accompanying patients from different parts of the Kashmir Valley. He directed the executing agency to ensure the timely completion of the project so that the facility can be dedicated to the public at the earliest.

Earlier, at the Revenue Complex, Shalteng, the

Deputy Commissioner inspected the construction of the new Tehsil Office and the Office building of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) West. He assessed the quality of construction works and the pace of work being carried out by the executing agency.

On the occasion, the DC was apprised that the upcoming Tehsil Office will house key functional spaces, including the Tehsildar's Room, Tehsildar's Courtroom, Waiting Area, Naib Tehsildar's Room, Staff

Room, Meeting Room, Computer Room, Establishment Section, and Record Room, among other facilities. He was informed that the building is nearing completion and will soon be ready for official use. The DC also inspected the proposed construction site for construction of Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) West, being constructed adjacent to the new Tehsil Office.

The DC emphasized the importance of expediting the construction works and directed the executing

agency to accelerate the pace of work while ensuring strict adherence to quality standards. He underscored that the project is vital for enhancing public service delivery and strengthening the revenue administration in the area. He observed that the new Revenue Complex will significantly strengthen the administrative infrastructure by providing modern office space and improved facilities for Government Officials as well as the general public.

While interacting with the Officers and Engineers on site, the Deputy Commissioner instructed them to maintain close coordination for the smooth execution of all projects. He stressed strict adherence to approved construction specifications and safety protocols while ensuring the efficient utilization of public resources. He further urged all executing agencies to maintain the momentum of work and complete the projects within the prescribed timelines for

the benefit of the public.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, Joint commissioner SMC, Nuzhat Khurshid, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Superintendent Engineer, R&B, Shabir Ahmad, SDM West, Irfan Bahadur, Executive Engineer PCD-Ist, Nasir Ahmad, Executive Engineer R&B, Yasir Ahmad, Medical Superintendent Children Hospital, Dr A.R Para and other concerned Officers.

DDC Kupwara, MD Mission Yuva review status of implementation of Mission Yuva in district

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, JULY 15: District Development Commissioner (DDC), Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, and the Mission Director, Mission YUVA, Harvinder Singh, jointly chaired a review meeting today with concerned officers and stakeholders to assess progress under Mission YUVA and to review its implementation across Kupwara district. It was informed during the meeting that the district has received 6,405 applications under Mission YUVA, of which 4,794 applications have been approved by the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC).

The meeting reviewed the programme's overall performance for both the previous and the current financial years. Detailed deliberations were held on key components, including sanction and disbursement rates; action taken on pending credit applications; monitoring of unit establishments; recruitment of personnel for Small Business Development Units (SBDUs) and Business Help Desks (BHDs); Udyam Jagriti activities; outreach to Lakhpati Didis; and capacity building initiatives.

The DDC emphasised the importance of effective inter departmental coordination and timely disposal of applications at bank level to ensure that eligible youth derive maximum benefit from Mission YUVA. He urged all implementing agencies to work proactively for the successful implementation of the Mission across the district.

Mission Director underscored the need for co-ordinated, results oriented efforts by all stakeholders to achieve the desired outcomes within the stipulated timeframe. He directed concerned officers to intensify outreach and implementation efforts in border areas, including the Vibrant Villages, to facilitate youth entrepreneurship and create sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The Lead District Manager (LDM) was directed to visit banks with the highest number of pending cases to resolve issues promptly and thereby increase the credit disbursement rate. The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Handwara; General Manager, District Industries Centre (DIC), Kupwara; Additional Commissioner Revenue (ACR), Kupwara; Sub Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) of Lolab and Karnah; Additional Collector Development (ACD), Kupwara; Assistant Director, Employment; Lead District Manager; Cluster Head, J&K Bank; representatives of DIC; District Project Manager, NRLM; SBDU Lead; and BHD Leads of the district.



World Youth Skills Day celebrated at Biotech Park, Kathua;

Director IIIM inspires young entrepreneurs

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA, JUL 15: BioNEST Bioincubation Centre, Industrial Biotech Park (IBTP), Ghatti, Kathua, operating under the CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM), Jammu, celebrated World Youth Skills Day 2026 with a day-long programme themed "Skills for a Future Youth."

The event brought together students, faculty members, scientists, industry experts and senior dignitaries to promote skill development, innovation and entrepreneurship among the youth.

A total of 130 students and seven faculty members participated in the programme, including the students and five faculty members from Sri Sai Group of Colleges, Pathankot, and students along with two faculty members from RD College of Pharmacy, Kathua.

The Chief Guest, Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, Director, CSIR-IIIM Jammu and Chairman, BioNEST-IBTP, Kathua, delivered the keynote address and called upon

the youth to embrace innovation, strengthen their entrepreneurial capabilities and confidently pursue entrepreneurship as a viable career pathway.

While talking about Industrial Biotech Park facility, he informed the audience that the state-of-the-art facility has been created under the mentorship of Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister for S&T and Vice President CSIR with a primary focus to provide the industry ready skilling and incubation support to the startup.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Ahmed underscored the importance of continuous skill development and capacity building in today's rapidly evolving socioeconomic environment.

He said that the future belongs to young people who continuously upgrade their knowledge, adapt to emerging technologies and develop innovative solutions to address societal and industrial challenges.

Stressing the need for greater industry readiness, Dr. Ahmed urged students to make effective use of the incubation facilities,

mentorship opportunities and startup support mechanisms available at the Industrial Biotech Park, Kathua, to transform innovative ideas into successful enterprises.

He emphasized that entrepreneurship, supported by innovation and scientific research, has the potential to generate employment and contribute significantly to the region's economic development.

The programme commenced with the registration of participants, followed by a formal welcome and introduction by Dr. Aijaz Mir, CEO, BioNEST-IBTP, who highlighted the role of the incubation centre in fostering innovation, entrepreneurship and industry-academia collaboration in the biotechnology sector. Delivering an expert lecture on "Bridging Skills and Startups: An Entrepreneurship Development Approach," Dr. Saurabh Saran, Senior Principal Scientist, CSIR-IIIM Jammu, emphasized the importance of aligning academic learning with entrepreneurial opportunities and innovation-driven skill de-

velopment to prepare youth for emerging industries and contribute to regional economic growth. The programme also featured an Industry-Academia Meet aimed at building a future-ready workforce. Industry experts from Associated Biopharma & Healthcare Pvt. Ltd., including Mr. Chaten Verma, Manager, interacted with students and shared valuable insights into industry expectations, biotechnology careers, startup opportunities and the importance of practical skills in today's competitive environment.

Representatives from the Jammu & Kashmir Rural Livelihood Mission (JKRLM), District Kathua, also participated in the interaction, highlighting livelihood opportunities, entrepreneurship support programmes and avenues for youth engagement in innovation-led rural development.

As part of the programme, students were taken on a guided tour of BioNEST-IBTP's advanced facilities, including the Fermentation Unit and the Solvent Extraction Unit, where they

received first-hand exposure to modern bioprocessing technologies, industrial research infrastructure and startup incubation facilities.

To encourage scientific thinking and innovation, BioNEST-IBTP organized three engaging competitions—a Poster Presentation, Science Quiz and Ideathon—under the coordination of Dr. Divya Sharma, Business Manager, BioNEST-IBTP.

The competitions witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, who showcased their scientific aptitude, creativity and problem-solving abilities. Winners were felicitated by the Chief Guest and other dignitaries during the prize distribution ceremony. Delivering the vote of thanks, Dr. Aijaz Mir expressed gratitude to the Chief Guest, distinguished speakers, industry partners, faculty members and participating students for their enthusiastic participation and valuable contributions in making the event a grand success.

The event was coordinated by Dr. Vidushi Abrol, Dr. Shefali Chib and Dr. Divya Sharma.

Chandraker Bharti inspects proposed site for NDRF Battalion Headquarters at Bela Manohar, Samba

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SAMBA, JULY 15: Principal Secretary, Home and Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (DDMRRR), Chandraker Bharti, today visited Village Bela Manohar, Samba, to inspect the land identified for establishment of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) Battalion Headquarters.

During the visit, Chandraker Bharti undertook a detailed inspection of the proposed site and reviewed the status of land availability, connectivity and other infrastructure requirements essential for establishment of the Battalion Headquarters. He stressed the importance of timely completion of all requisite formalities to facilitate early commencement of the project.

Deputy Commissioner, Samba, Senior Superintendent of Police, Samba, Commandant, NDRF, officials of the National Highways Authority of India

(NHAI), the concerned Executive Engineer (XEN) and other senior officers of the district administration were present on the occasion.

The concerned officers briefed the Principal Secretary on the present status of the project, land-related issues, road connectivity and other infrastructure requirements.

The Principal Secretary emphasized close coordination among all stakeholder departments. He directed the concerned officers to resolve all pending issues in a time-bound manner to ensure expeditious establishment of the NDRF Battalion Headquarters.

The proposed NDRF Battalion Headquarters at Village Bela Manohar, Samba, is expected to significantly strengthen the disaster preparedness and emergency response capabilities in the Jammu region, enabling a more efficient and coordinated response to natural and man-made disasters.

DC Kishtwar holds Block Diwas at Bounjwah, directs time-bound redressal of public grievances

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KISHTWAR, JULY 15: The weekly Block Diwas programme was held today at Block Bounjwah under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Pankaj Kumar Sharma.

Local residents gathered in large numbers and raised grievances regarding roads, health services, water supply, school staffing and infrastructure and delays in MGNREGA payments, among other issues. The Deputy Commissioner issued on-the-spot directions to the departments concerned for early redressal.

Various departments set up stalls to share details of government schemes and encouraged residents to avail welfare benefits.

Addressing the participants, the DC said almost all grievances have been resolved and pending issues will be redressed on a priority basis. He directed officers to submit project reports for pending infrastructure works, said all applications received would be diarised for disposal

by the departments concerned and informed that pending demands requiring funding including a Government Degree College for Bounjwah, had been projected to higher authorities.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner visited Shri Jwala Mata Temple, Devigol, inspected ongoing MPLAD work and interacted with the Devasthan Raksha Committee, assuring them of support.

Among those present were SSP Kishtwar Naresh Singh, ADC Kishtwar Pawan Kotwal, PO ICDS Kishtwar Rishi Kumar Sharma, CEO KDA Kishtwar Kaiser Bhawani, CPO Kishtwar Akhil Thakur, DSWO Kishtwar Tariq Parveez Qazi, Tehsildar Bounjwah Tejinder Sharma, CDPO Bounjwah Dr Kuldeep Kumar, ALC Kishtwar Mamta Sudershan, BDO Bounjwah Aijaz Ahmad, DNO Ayush Kishtwar Dr Vikram Singh Jamwal, CEO Kishtwar Sanjay Dogra and CAO Kishtwar Kushal Chandel, besides Executive Engineers of PMGSY, JPDC and PWD (R&B) Kishtwar, BMO Kishtwar, other district and sectoral officers, ex-PRI representatives, prominent citizens and local residents.

DC Srinagar reviews preparations for upcoming Chinar Book Festival 2026

HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, July 15: To ensure successful conduct of 3rd edition of upcoming "Chinar Book Festival" scheduled from July 18 to July 26, 2026, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo chaired a comprehensive meeting here today at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

The nine-day event is organized jointly by the National Book Trust (NBT) and the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL).

The Book Festival is being organized through the collaborative efforts of the National Book Trust, India (Ministry of Education, Govt of India), National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL) and the District Administration Srinagar at Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC).

At the outset, the DC reviewed the detailed arrangements and preparations being put in place for the literary festival ensuring that the literary festival is orga-

nized in a well coordinated manner and provide an engaging platform for readers, authors, publishers, artists, and students from across the country, while promoting a vibrant reading culture and encouraging greater participation among literary enthusiasts.

On the occasion, the DC stressed timely coordination among line departments, particularly regarding participant mobilization, transportation, sanitation, etc to ensure the seamless and smooth conduct of the literary festival. He highlighted the festival's potential to inspire youth towards reading, writing, and cultural engagement, while also promoting Jammu & Kashmir's rich literary heritage on a global stage.

During the meeting, it was informed that the 2026 edition of the Chinar Book festival is expected to offer a rich tapestry of book launches, author meet-and-greets, panel discussions, poetry recitations and storytelling sessions. In addition,



the festival will showcase local literary talent, children's activities, cultural performances and workshops aimed at promoting reading and writing among youth.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, Aadil Fareed, Additional Secretary Culture Academy, Adeel Saleem, Joint commissioner SMC, Nuzhat Khurshid, SP Headquarter, Umar Shah, Additional CEO SCCL, Suhail ul Islam, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Programme Officer ICDS, Bureeda Majid, Officers from Higher Education, School Education, Principles of Government Polytechnic Colleges & Industrial Training Institutes, Medical Superintendents, Executive Engineers, concerned District Officers and others.

Chief Convenor Chinar Book Festival, Amit Wanchoo, Coordinator National Book Trust, Shobha Kapoor and other concerned also participated in the meeting.

DDC Kulgam chairs comprehensive review meeting of District Capex Budget 2026-27

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, JULY 15: District Development Commissioner (DDC), Kulgam, Shahzad Alam today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress of works proposed under the District Capex Budget 2026-27.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Planning Officer (CPO), Executive Engineers, District Officers, and representatives of the concerned



executing agencies.

At the outset, the Chief Planning Officer, Kulgam briefed the Chair about the status of the District Capex Budget and informed that around 1,500 new works have been taken up during the current financial year across various sectors aimed at strengthening public infrastructure and improving service delivery in the district.

Reviewing the progress, the District Development Commissioner directed all concerned departments to ensure that the estimation process for all the new works is completed within one week's time without any delay.

He stressed that timely preparation and approval of estimates is essential for the early commencement of developmental works.

He further instructed all executing agencies to immediately initiate execution of works after the completion of the estimation process and make every effort to complete the works within one month. He emphasized that no laxity or unnecessary delay would be tolerated in the implementation of development projects.

Highlighting the importance of close monitoring and accountability, the DDC informed the officers that work-wise weekly review meetings will be conducted to assess the physical and financial progress of each project.

He directed all executing agencies to maintain regular coordination with the Chief Planning Officer's office and ensure timely updating of progress so that bottlenecks, if any, are resolved promptly.

The DDC underscored the need to maintain the highest standards of quality in execution while strictly adhering to the approved specifications and timelines. He urged all departments to work in close coordination and ensure that the benefits of the District Capex Budget reach the people without delay through the timely completion of all developmental works.

22-year-old Ibadat becomes first athlete from North Kashmir to Complete 119-km Solo Run

HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, JULY 15: In a remarkable feat of endurance, 22-year-old athlete Ibadat wali of Baramulla became the first athlete from North Kashmir to complete a 119-kilometre solo run from Lal Chowk, Anantnag to the Deputy Commissioner Office, Baramulla, covering the distance in an impressive 10 hours and 55 minutes.

The run was undertaken to spread the message of the Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan, encouraging people, particularly the youth, to stay away from drug abuse and embrace a healthy, disciplined,



and active lifestyle.

On his arrival at the DC Office premises, Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Baramulla, Pranjal J. Hazarika, received the athlete and congratulated him on his outstanding achievement. He lauded Ibadat's determination and appreciated his efforts in promoting the cause of a drug-free society through sports.

The ADDC said such inspiring initiatives motivate young people to pursue fitness, resilience, and positive values while strengthening the message of the Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan. He urged the youth to actively participate in sports and join the collective effort towards building a healthier and drug-free Jammu & Kashmir.

ADDC Shopian chairs Block Diwas at Chitragam

HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, JULY 15: Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone today presided over the Block Diwas programme at Block Chitragam, where an extensive public outreach programme was conducted to hear and address the grievances and developmental concerns of local residents.

At the outset, a Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan pledge was administered to all participants, reaffirming their commitment to building a drug-free society.

The attendees pledged to abstain from the use of drugs and intoxicants, spread awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse and actively support the vision of a healthy and drug-free India.

During the programme, people from different panchayats projected demands relating to road connectivity in Chitragam, drinking water, power supply, healthcare, education, irrigation,

sanitation, widening and macadamization of roads, shifting of electric poles, resolving of pipeline leakage issues, illegal mining, seizing of vehicles operating without number plates, removal of encroachments, establishment of dumping sites, desilting of streams and other essential public services.

The ADDC gave a patient hearing to every issue and directed the concerned officers to ensure prompt redressal within stipulated timelines.

He directed the concerned officers present on the occasion to take immediate action for on the spot redressal of the issues needing urgent attention, while instructing that other matters be taken up on priority and resolved at the earliest.

Interacting with the gathering, the ADDC reaffirmed the District Administration's commitment to transparent, accountable and people-centric governance. He emphasized that Block Diwas serves as an effective platform for strengthening public participation, ensuring

doorstep governance and accelerating development at the grassroots level.

The ADDC also reviewed the implementation and progress of various flagship government schemes and developmental projects in the block. He instructed officers to maintain close coordination, improve service delivery and ensure that the benefits of welfare schemes reach every eligible beneficiary without delay.

District and sectoral officers briefed the ADDC about the status of ongoing development works and public welfare initiatives in their respective sectors.

Necessary directions were issued for expeditious disposal of public grievances and timely completion of all ongoing projects.

The programme was attended by GM, DIC, Shurjil Naik; SDM Zianapora, Bilal Ahmad; Tehsildar, Chitragam, district and sectoral officers, Exens, local representatives and a large number of residents from the area.

DC Kulgam presides over Public Outreach Programme at Frisal

Listens to Public Grievances and Developmental demands

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, JULY 15: Under the Public Outreach Initiative aimed at taking governance to the doorsteps of the people, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, today visited Frisal and presided over a Public Outreach Programme to hear the grievances and developmental demands of the local population.

During the programme, residents of Frisal and adjoining areas projected several public issues and developmental demands.

These included upgradation

of the Primary Health Centre (PHC), proper solid waste management, repair and restoration of street lights in the market, establishment of Fire & Emergency Services Station, desilting of Lakti Kul, construction of a footbridge over Badi Kul to facilitate farmers' access to their agricultural land, strengthening of flood protection bunds, construction and macadamization of link roads, enhancement of PHH/BPL ration quota, ensuring adequate and uninterrupted irrigation water through canals, provision of filtered drinking water, and deployment of doctors at Kujjar Hospital and other de-



velopmental requirements of the area.

During the interaction, officers of the concerned departments also briefed the gathering on the issues raised and informed them about the measures being taken for their resolution.

The Deputy Commissioner patiently listened to all the grievances and demands and assured the public that every genuine issue would be examined and taken up with the concerned departments for timely redressal.

He directed the officers to address issues falling within their jurisdiction on priority and ensure prompt follow-up and effective implementation of decisions.

Emphasizing the importance of sanitation, the Deputy Commissioner instructed the concerned authorities to ensure proper collection and scientific

disposal of solid waste.

He added that the Public Outreach Initiative is aimed at strengthening people-centric governance by promoting direct interaction with citizens, ensuring transparency, accountability and the timely delivery of public services.

The programme was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Viqar Ahmed Giri, JDP, ACD and other district and sectoral officers and a large number of local residents.

Later, the DC inaugurated a volleyball tournament at Badroo held under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan.

SKUAST-K launches Three-Day Drone Technology Training for Forestry Students

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, JULY 15: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Kashmir (SKUAST-K) on Tuesday commenced a three-day training program on "Drone Technology and Data Capturing for Natural Resource Management" at the Faculty of Forestry, Benhama, Ganderbal.

The program, organized in collaboration with the Erasmus+ funded ENTER (Environmental Open Data for Engaging Curricula and Research Training) Project, aims to equip under-

graduate students with both theoretical understanding and practical skills in drone-based applications for natural resource management.

The initiative has been organized in line with the vision of Vice Chancellor Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, who has consistently championed the integration of emerging technologies into agricultural education to prepare students with future-ready skills. His emphasis on experiential learning, innovation, and technology-enabled education continues to strengthen SKUAST-K's academic and research

ecosystem.

Inaugurating the program, Prof. A. H. Mughal, Dean, Faculty of Forestry, underscored the growing role of drone technology in sustainable natural resource management. He described drones as transformative tools for forestry, precision agriculture, disaster assessment, and environmental monitoring, and encouraged students to build expertise in this rapidly evolving field, highlighting its immense potential for innovation, employment, and entrepreneurship.

As part of the technical



sessions, Dr. Akhlaq Amin Wani, Professor and Head, Division of Natural Resource Management, and Coordinator of the program, delivered lectures on "Emerging Technologies in Natural Resource Management" and "Drone Technology and its Applications in Natural Resource Management," introducing students to the latest technological advancements transforming the sector.

The three-day program features dedicated demonstration sessions for undergraduate students, covering drone components, operational pro-

ocols, flight planning, and aerial data acquisition. Participants will also witness live drone demonstrations and receive hands-on training, enabling them to operate drones under expert supervision and gain practical experience with this emerging technology.

The program reflects SKUAST-K's continued commitment to technology-driven education and capacity building by exposing students to advanced tools that are increasingly shaping the future of agriculture, forestry, and natural resource management.

HT EDITORIAL

A Major Boost to Medical Education in J&K

The administration's decision to approve 50 additional MBBS seats each for Government Medical College (GMC), Srinagar, and Government Medical College (GMC), Jammu, is a landmark step towards strengthening healthcare and medical education in Jammu and Kashmir. The addition of 100 new seats, taking the combined annual intake of the two premier medical colleges to about 500 MBBS seats, reflects a clear commitment to building a stronger healthcare workforce and expanding opportunities for aspiring doctors across the Union Territory.

For decades, limited medical seats have forced thousands of talented students from Jammu and Kashmir to seek admission outside the Union Territory, often at enormous financial cost to their families. While many have gone on to establish successful careers elsewhere, the region has continued to grapple with an acute shortage of doctors, particularly in district and rural hospitals. The latest expansion addresses both these challenges by creating more opportunities for local students while laying the foundation for a larger pool of home-grown medical professionals.

Equally significant is the balanced nature of this decision. By increasing seats at both GMC Srinagar and GMC Jammu, the administration has ensured that the benefits of this expansion are shared across both regions of the Union Territory. Healthcare development must be inclusive, and strengthening the two premier medical institutions simultaneously sends a positive message that medical education and healthcare infrastructure are receiving equal attention.

The approval granted by the National Medical Commission also deserves special mention. Such approvals are not automatic; they follow rigorous assessments of faculty strength, teaching facilities, hospital infrastructure, and clinical exposure. The increase in seats therefore reflects the growing academic and institutional capacity of both medical colleges and assures students that expansion has not come at the expense of quality.

The long-term implications of this decision extend far beyond medical classrooms. Doctors trained within Jammu and Kashmir are better acquainted with the region's unique geographical conditions, disease patterns, cultural sensitivities, and healthcare challenges. Their familiarity with local communities can strengthen public trust and improve healthcare delivery, particularly in underserved and remote areas where experienced medical professionals are often in short supply. However, increasing MBBS seats is only the first step. The administration must now focus on creating a robust ecosystem that encourages these future doctors to serve within the Union Territory. Timely recruitment, transparent career progression, improved working conditions, incentives for rural service, and expanded postgraduate and super-specialty training opportunities will be essential to retaining this valuable talent. Without such measures, the region risks continuing the cycle of losing its brightest medical graduates to opportunities elsewhere.

The addition of 100 MBBS seats at GMC Srinagar and GMC Jammu is therefore much more than an academic expansion. It is a strategic investment in the health and future of Jammu and Kashmir. If complemented by sustained improvements in hospitals, medical education, research, and public health infrastructure, this initiative can significantly strengthen the healthcare system and ensure that quality medical care reaches every corner of the Union Territory. It is a welcome decision that deserves appreciation and continued policy support.

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Public Recruitment and Democratic Governance: The Case for Transparency in J&K



AAMIR HUSSAIN

1. Recruitment as a Democratic Institution

Public recruitment is more than an administrative exercise; it is a measure of democratic governance. The manner in which governments select public servants reflects their commitment to fairness, equality, and accountability. A transparent recruitment system strengthens the relationship between citizens and the state by ensuring that public offices are filled through objective and impartial procedures.

2. Constitutional Foundations

The constitutional vision of public employment is anchored in Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India, which guarantee equality before the law and equality of opportunity in public employment. These provisions require recruitment authorities to uphold procedural fairness, non-arbitrariness, and equal access for all eligible candidates. Transparency, therefore, is not simply a matter of good administration but a constitutional obligation.

3. Meritocracy and Institutional Excellence

Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy emphasises that modern public institutions function effectively when appointments are based on merit rather than patronage or personal influence. Merit-based recruitment promotes administrative competence, professionalism, and impartial decision-making. Institutions that value merit are better equipped to deliver efficient public services and implement public policy.

4. Public Trust and Democratic Legitimacy

Public confidence is the foundation of democratic institutions. Transparent recruitment enhances institutional legitimacy by assuring citizens that appointments are determined through fair competition and objective evaluation. When recruitment processes are credible, they strengthen respect for public institutions and reinforce the principles of democratic governance.

5. The Jammu and Kashmir Context

In Jammu and Kashmir, public employment continues to be an important avenue for economic security and social mobility. Thousands of qualified young people compete for government positions each year. Given these aspirations, recruitment authorities carry a significant responsibility to ensure that recruitment

PUBLIC RECRUITMENT & DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

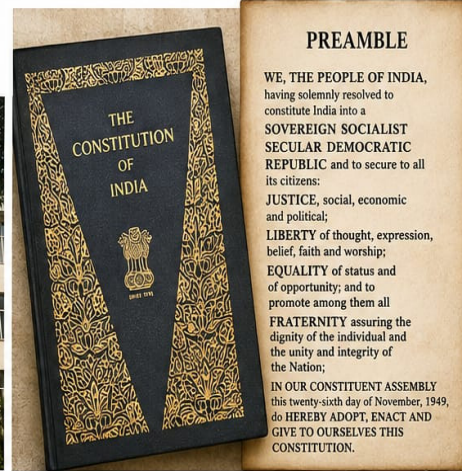
THE CASE FOR TRANSPARENCY IN JAMMU & KASHMIR



1. Recruitment Institutions: The backbone of merit-based selection



2. Transparent recruitment builds trust in public institutions



3. Constitutional promise: Articles 14 & 16 ensure equality and equal opportunity in public employment



4. Judicial oversight safeguards fairness and upholds the rule of law



5. Aspirations of youth: Fair opportunities, stronger institutions, better governance



6. Technology and transparency: Timely information, accountability and ease of access



processes remain transparent, efficient, and accessible. Public confidence grows when institutions demonstrate consistency, impartiality, and accountability.

6. Contemporary Challenges

Despite continuous efforts to strengthen public recruitment, several structural and administrative challenges continue to affect its efficiency and credibility. One of the most significant concerns is the delay in completing recruitment cycles. Prolonged intervals between the advertisement of vacancies, conduct of examinations, declaration of results, and final appointments often create uncertainty for candidates and can affect the functioning of public institutions due to unfilled posts.

Another challenge is procedural complexity. Recruitment processes frequently involve multiple stages of verification, evaluation, and approval. While these procedures are intended to ensure fairness and legal compliance, inadequate coordination and administrative inefficiencies can lead to avoidable delays and increased costs for both candidates and recruiting agencies.

Litigation also presents a considerable challenge. Recruitment processes may become subject to judicial scrutiny over questions relating to eligibility criteria, reservation policies, examination procedures, or selection methods. Although judicial review is an essential safeguard in a constitutional democracy, prolonged legal

proceedings may delay appointments and create uncertainty for successful as well as aspiring candidates.

Effective communication is equally important. Candidates benefit when recruitment authorities provide timely notifications, clear procedural guidelines, transparent evaluation criteria, and regular updates regarding the progress of recruitment. A lack of consistent communication can give rise to confusion, speculation, and diminished public confidence, even where recruitment is conducted fairly.

Finally, the credibility of recruitment institutions depends not only on legal compliance but also on public perception. Transparent procedures, objective evaluation, institutional accountability, and timely completion of recruitment collectively reinforce citizens' trust in public institutions. Addressing these challenges through administrative reforms, technological innovation, and strengthened institutional capacity is essential for promoting efficient governance and safeguarding democratic legitimacy.

7. Transparency Through Digital Governance

Digital governance has transformed public recruitment by improving accessibility and procedural transparency. Online applications, digital document verification, structured recruitment calendars, timely notifications, and accessible

grievance-redress mechanisms contribute to more efficient and accountable recruitment systems. Technology, however, should complement strong institutional ethics and effective administrative oversight.

8. Policy Imperatives

Strengthening recruitment systems requires sustained institutional reform. Priority should be given to publishing annual recruitment calendars, ensuring time-bound selection processes, standardising recruitment procedures, enhancing public communication, and strengthening grievance-redress mechanisms. Regular institutional review can further improve transparency and administrative effectiveness.

Conclusion

Transparent public recruitment is not merely about filling vacancies; it is about strengthening democratic institutions. Recruitment systems founded on constitutional values, merit, and accountability promote public trust and institutional legitimacy. For Jammu and Kashmir, where public employment remains central to the aspirations of many young people, a transparent and efficient recruitment system is essential for advancing good governance and reinforcing democratic values. Ultimately, the credibility of public institutions depends not only on the services they provide but also on the fairness of the processes through which they recruit those entrusted to serve the public.

Moral decline in society:
A matter of Serious concern



MUSHTAQ BHAT

People often say that times have changed, but sometimes it feels that along with time, our behaviour and values have also changed for the worse. We see better roads, bigger buildings, smart phones in every hand and access to everything within seconds, yet peace of mind and social responsibility seem to be disappearing slowly from society.

Every other day we come across shocking incidents — drug addiction among youth, crimes against women and children, disrespect towards parents, online abuse and increasing intolerance in daily

life. Such incidents are not just news headlines; they reflect the condition of society and the mindset we are unknowingly creating around us.

Earlier, families were considered the first schools of character. Children learned manners, patience and compassion from elders. Today, many families hardly sit together even for a single meal. Mobile phones have occupied the place where conversations once existed. People are more connected online but emotionally distant in real life.

Another worrying trend is that success is now judged mostly by money, status and appearance. In this race, honesty and humanity are often ignored. Many youngsters grow up under pressure to "show" a perfect life rather than live a meaningful one. Social media has added to this problem by creating unhealthy comparison, artificial lifestyles and emotional frustration.

The growing menace of drugs among youth is perhaps one of the clearest signs that society is struggling internally. Unemployment, lack of guidance and emotional isolation push many young people towards destructive habits. Families suffer silently while society often reacts only after tragic

edies occur.

Educational institutions too need to rethink their role. Producing degree holders alone is not enough. A student must also learn empathy, discipline and social responsibility. Character building is equally important as career building.

Blaming one section of society alone will not solve the problem. Parents, teachers, religious leaders, media and society all share responsibility. We need to create an atmosphere where kindness is respected, truth is valued and humanity comes before selfish interests.

A society does not collapse suddenly; it weakens slowly when moral values begin to fade. If we ignore these warning signs today, future generations may inherit a world with progress in machines but poverty in human values. The need of the hour is not only development but also moral awakening.

The author is a prominent Trade Union Leader representing Teaching fraternity and is currently District President JK Teachers Association Baramulla and can be contacted on www.mushtaqbhat1312@gmail.com

PM Modi's New Zealand Visit: Recalibration of Global Partnership



■ DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

PM Modi's visit to New Zealand unfolds as a moment dense with symbolism, diplomacy, and the quiet recalibration of global partnerships in an era when geography matters less than shared aspirations. It is not merely a bilateral engagement; it is a narrative of two democracies discovering new reasons to walk together across oceans, strengthening a bridge that has long existed but rarely carried the full weight of strategic cooperation. In many ways, this visit becomes a saga of global cooperation because it arrives at a time when the Indo-Pacific is no longer a distant abstraction but the very theatre where the future of trade, climate resilience, technology, and security will be negotiated. India and New Zealand, separated by vast waters yet connected by democratic values, multicultural societies, and a growing economic complementarity, find in this moment an opportunity to redefine their relationship with a clarity that earlier decades did not demand.

The historical foundation of India-New Zealand ties rests on Commonwealth linkages and a shared commitment to parliamentary democracy. Yet for decades, the relationship remained modest, shaped largely by trade in dairy products, educational exchanges, and cultural interactions. New Zealand's foreign policy traditionally leaned toward Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, while India's diplomatic priorities focused on its immediate neighbourhood and major global powers. As a result, the partnership grew slowly, without the urgency or strategic weight seen in India's ties with other Indo-Pacific nations.

This dynamic began to shift in the early twenty-first century. India's economic rise, its expanding global footprint, and its leadership in forums such as the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure encouraged New Zealand to view India as a long-term partner. Meanwhile, New Zealand's reputation for transparency, environmental stewardship, and ethical diplomacy resonated strongly with India's own aspirations for inclusive development and climate justice. The relationship gradually broadened beyond trade, evolving into a multidimensional engagement that reflects the changing realities of the Indo-Pacific.

Economically, India offers New Zealand a vast and rapidly growing market. With a population exceeding 1.4 billion and a rising middle class, India's demand for high-quality food products, technology, education, and services aligns well with New Zealand's strengths. While dairy remains a sensitive issue in India's domestic market, both nations have explored diversification. Cooperation in agri-tech, food safety, renewable energy, digital governance, and climate-resilient agriculture has gained momentum. India's digital public infrastructure—admired globally for its scale and inclusivity—presents a model that New Zealand can adapt for public service delivery. Conversely, New Zealand's expertise in sustainable farming and green technologies offers India valuable insights as it seeks to modernize its agricultural sector.

The Indian diaspora in New Zealand forms one of the most vibrant bridges between the two nations. Numbering over 240,000, the community contributes significantly to healthcare, education, entrepreneurship, and public service. Their cultural festivals, linguistic diversity, and social engagement enrich New Zealand's multicultural fabric. This diaspora acts as a living conduit of goodwill, strengthening bilateral ties through everyday interactions. Leaders from both nations frequently acknowledge the diaspora's role in shaping a relationship that is not merely diplomatic but deeply human. Education remains a cornerstone of India-New Zealand relations.



Thousands of Indian students pursue higher studies in New Zealand, attracted by its world-class universities, safe environment, and research opportunities. Over time, the relationship has evolved from a transactional model to one emphasizing collaboration. Joint research in marine science, agriculture, public health, and artificial intelligence has emerged as a promising frontier.

As India expands its own network of global-standard institutions, academic partnerships with New Zealand are expected to deepen further. Climate cooperation forms another vital pillar. Both nations face environmental vulnerabilities—India with its extreme weather events and New Zealand with its fragile ecosystems and rising sea levels. Their shared commitment to sustainability has led to collaboration in solar energy, wind power, geothermal research, and conservation science. India's leadership in climate justice resonates strongly in New Zealand, where environmental ethics shape public policy. Together, they contribute to global climate diplomacy by advocating equitable solutions that balance development with ecological responsibility.

Strategically, India's growing engagement with the Pacific Islands has opened new avenues for cooperation with New Zealand. As a nation deeply connected to Pacific communities, New Zealand serves as a gateway for India to expand humanitarian assistance, disaster management, and development partnerships in the region. Issues such as sustainable fisheries, climate adaptation, and maritime security dominate Pacific discourse, and India's experience in these areas complements New Zealand's regional expertise. This convergence strengthens the Indo-Pacific narrative, making it more inclusive and representative.

Culturally, India and New Zealand share a commitment to diversity, social harmony, and indigenous heritage. India's civilizational depth and New Zealand's Maori traditions create a dialogue of cultures that enriches both societies. Yoga, Ayurveda, Indian classical arts, and cinema enjoy enthusiastic audiences in New Zealand, while Maori art, language, and philosophy inspire Indian scholars and artists. Cultural diplomacy thus becomes a powerful tool, reinforcing the idea that cooperation is not only about policies but also about shared stories and shared values. In global governance, both nations advocate

fairness, transparency, and multilateralism. India's leadership in representing the Global South and New Zealand's reputation for ethical diplomacy create a natural alignment. They collaborate in forums such as the United Nations, East Asia Summit, and Commonwealth, promoting equitable development, peacekeeping, and climate resilience. Their partnership underscores the belief that global cooperation must be broad-based and inclusive.

Security cooperation, though modest, is steadily expanding. Dialogue on maritime safety, cybersecurity, and counterterrorism reflects shared concerns in an increasingly interconnected world. New Zealand's commitment to peacekeeping and India's experience in maritime security create a foundation for meaningful collaboration. While neither nation seeks military alliances, they recognize the importance of maintaining open sea lanes and protecting digital infrastructure.

In essence, India-New Zealand relations represent a modern Indo-Pacific partnership—rooted in democracy, enriched by diversity, and guided by a shared commitment to a stable and sustainable world. As both nations continue to navigate global uncertainties, their relationship offers a model of cooperation built not on rivalry or dominance but on mutual respect and complementary strengths. It is a partnership still unfolding, shaped by the belief that nations grow stronger when they walk together across oceans, cultures, and aspirations.

The significance of PM Modi's visit to New Zealand lies first in the shifting global context. The Indo-Pacific has emerged as the world's most contested and consequential region, and India's role within it has expanded dramatically. New Zealand, traditionally oriented toward Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom, has increasingly recognized that its long-term stability and prosperity depend on deeper engagement with Asian powers. Modi's arrival in Wellington therefore signals India's readiness to embrace a more active role in shaping regional norms, while New Zealand acknowledges India as a partner whose demographic strength, economic dynamism, and diplomatic credibility can no longer be peripheral. This is why the visit is framed not as a ceremonial gesture but as a strategic alignment, a recognition that cooperation is no longer optional but

essential. At the heart of the visit is the economic conversation. India, with its vast market and rapidly expanding middle class, offers New Zealand opportunities that far exceed traditional trade patterns. Dairy, education, and tourism have long been the pillars of New Zealand's engagement with India, but Modi's visit pushes the dialogue toward diversification. Technology, renewable energy, digital governance, agricultural innovation, and climate-smart infrastructure become new frontiers.

India's digital public infrastructure—admired globally for its scale and inclusivity—presents a model that New Zealand can adapt in its own way. Meanwhile, New Zealand's expertise in sustainable farming, food safety, and green technologies aligns perfectly with India's push toward climate-resilient agriculture. The visit thus becomes a platform for exploring complementarities that were always present but never fully articulated.

The diaspora forms another emotional and cultural thread in this saga. The Indian community in New Zealand has grown rapidly, becoming one of the most vibrant and influential diasporas in the country. Modi's interactions with them reaffirm India's commitment to its global citizens, while also acknowledging the role they play in strengthening bilateral ties. Their contributions to New Zealand's economy, healthcare, education, and entrepreneurship create a living bridge between the two nations. The diaspora's cultural festivals, linguistic diversity, and social engagement enrich New Zealand's multicultural fabric, making the relationship not just diplomatic but deeply human. Modi's visit celebrates this shared cultural space, reminding both nations that cooperation is not only negotiated in conference rooms but lived in everyday interactions.

Climate change emerges as a central theme, binding India and New Zealand in a shared struggle. Both nations face environmental vulnerabilities—India with its extreme weather events and New Zealand with its fragile ecosystems and rising sea levels. Modi's emphasis on climate justice and sustainable development resonates strongly in a country that prides itself on environmental stewardship. The visit encourages collaboration in renewable energy, particularly solar and wind, where India has made remarkable strides. New Zealand's innovations in geothermal energy and conservation science offer India valuable

insights. Together, they can shape a model of climate cooperation that blends technological innovation with ethical responsibility. In this sense, the visit becomes a call to action, urging both nations to lead by example in a world where climate diplomacy is increasingly intertwined with economic and strategic interests.

Education and knowledge exchange form another pillar of the visit. New Zealand's universities have long attracted Indian students, but the relationship has often been transactional. Modi's discussions aim to elevate it into a partnership of research, innovation, and intellectual collaboration. Joint programs in marine science, artificial intelligence, agriculture, and public health can redefine the academic engagement between the two nations. India's expanding network of world-class institutions and New Zealand's emphasis on quality education create a fertile ground for collaboration. The visit encourages both nations to imagine education not merely as a service but as a shared investment in human capital.

In the realm of security, the visit encourages dialogue on maritime cooperation, cybersecurity, and counterterrorism. The Indo-Pacific's security architecture is evolving, and both nations recognize the importance of maintaining open sea lanes, protecting digital infrastructure, and combating extremist ideologies. Modi's visit does not seek military alliances but emphasizes shared responsibility. New Zealand's commitment to peacekeeping and India's experience in maritime security create a foundation for meaningful collaboration. This security dialogue enhances trust and prepares both nations to navigate future challenges with greater coordination.

The emotional resonance of the visit lies in its narrative of friendship. Modi's interactions, speeches, and gestures reflect a warmth that transcends formal diplomacy. New Zealand's hospitality, its recognition of India's global role, and its respect for Indian culture create an atmosphere of mutual admiration. The visit becomes a celebration of partnership, a reaffirmation that cooperation is not merely strategic but rooted in genuine goodwill.

In the larger arc of India's foreign policy, the visit to New Zealand marks a new chapter. It signals India's readiness to engage with nations across the spectrum, not only major powers but also middle powers whose contributions to global stability are significant. It reflects India's belief that global cooperation must be broad-based, inclusive, and grounded in shared values. For New Zealand, the visit represents an opportunity to diversify its partnerships, strengthen its Indo-Pacific engagement, and embrace a future where India plays a central role.

Ultimately, PM Modi's New Zealand visit becomes a saga of global cooperation because it captures the essence of contemporary diplomacy: the blending of economic interests, cultural connections, strategic alignment, and ethical responsibility.

It is a reminder that in a world of uncertainty, partnerships built on trust and shared vision can illuminate new pathways. The visit does not claim to solve all challenges, but it lays the foundation for a relationship that can grow, adapt, and inspire. It invites both nations to imagine a future where cooperation is not an occasional gesture but a continuous journey. As India and New Zealand step into this new chapter, the ocean between them becomes not a barrier but a vast blue corridor of possibilities. The visit stands as a testament to the power of dialogue, the promise of partnership, and the enduring belief that nations, like individuals, grow stronger when they walk together. It is a saga still unfolding, shaped by the hopes of two democracies and the shared conviction that global cooperation is the only path toward a more stable, sustainable, and harmonious world.

Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee, a multilingual Columnist and Writer is a former Affiliate Faculty of Virginia Commonwealth University Richmond and may be reached at prof.ratanbhattacharjee@gmail.com

WHO raises global alarm as Cancer cases may nearly double by 2050



■ MOHAMMAD HANIEF

The World Health Organization (WHO) has recently sounded a global warning over the rapidly growing burden of cancer, projecting that the number of new cases could rise to nearly 35 million annually by 2050 unless countries take urgent and coordinated action to strengthen prevention, early detection and equitable access to treatment. The warning comes in the WHO Global Status Report on Cancer 2026, prepared jointly with the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), which presents a comprehensive assessment of the world's progress in tackling one of the leading causes of death.

The report estimates that approximately 20.6 million people are diagnosed with cancer every year, while nearly 10 million lose their lives to the disease. This translates into more than 26,000 deaths every day, making cancer the second leading cause of mortality worldwide after cardiovascular diseases. Although remarkable advances have been made in scientific research, early diagnosis and treatment, the report concludes that these benefits continue to be distributed unevenly, leaving millions without access to essential services.

According to WHO, the projected increase in cancer cases is being driven by a combination of population growth, ageing, urbanisation and the increasing prevalence of preventable risk factors such as tobacco use, obesity, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, alcohol consumption and environmental pollution. Unless these underlying causes are addressed through sustained public health measures, the burden of cancer is expected to grow substantially over the coming decades.

A central concern highlighted in the report is the widening gap between countries with strong health systems and those with limited healthcare infrastructure. Survival rates for several common cancers vary dramatically depending on where a patient lives. Breast cancer illustrates this disparity clearly. While women diagnosed in high-income countries have significantly

cantly higher survival rates because of widespread screening programmes, timely diagnosis and access to advanced treatment, women in low-income countries continue to face much poorer outcomes due to delayed detection, shortages of specialised care and limited treatment facilities.

The report also notes that comprehensive cancer care remains beyond the reach of millions. Less than one-third of countries currently include cancer services within their universal health coverage packages, leaving many patients to bear enormous out-of-pocket expenses. Access to essential cancer medicines remains particularly inadequate in low- and lower-middle-income countries, where the availability of priority medicines is far below that seen in wealthier nations. The shortage of diagnostic equipment, radiotherapy facilities, oncology specialists and pathology services further compounds the challenge.

Beyond its medical consequences, cancer continues to impose a profound social and economic burden on families and communities. WHO's first global survey involving people affected by cancer reveals that the disease often results in severe financial hardship, psychological distress and long-term disruption to family life. Nearly half of those surveyed reported experiencing financial difficulties arising from treatment costs, loss of income and related expenses. Mental health concerns, including anxiety and depression, were reported by more than half of respondents, while caregivers described considerable physical, emotional and social strain as they struggled to balance caregiving responsibilities with employment and household obligations.

The report makes it clear that cancer is no longer solely a health issue but also a major development challenge affecting economic productivity, household stability and social well-being. Families frequently face catastrophic health expenditures, and many patients discontinue or delay treatment because they cannot afford prolonged medical care.

Regional variations in the global cancer burden remain striking. Asia accounts for more than half of all cancer cases and deaths worldwide, largely because it is home to the largest share of the global population. Europe, despite representing only a small proportion of the world's population, carries a disproportionately high share of both cancer cases and deaths. In contrast, many countries across Africa



and parts of Asia continue to record comparatively lower incidence rates but much higher mortality because cancers are often detected at advanced stages and treatment facilities remain inadequate or inaccessible.

Among individual cancers, lung cancer continues to be the leading cause of cancer-related deaths worldwide. It remains one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers among men, alongside prostate and colorectal cancers. Among women, breast cancer continues to account for the largest share of cases, followed by lung and colorectal cancers. These patterns underline the continuing need for effective screening programmes, improved awareness and strengthened preventive measures.

The report estimates that nearly four out of every ten cancer cases worldwide are linked to preventable risk factors. Tobacco remains the single largest avoidable cause, while alcohol consumption, obesity, unhealthy diets and lack of physical activity continue to contribute significantly to the growing disease burden. Infections such as human papillomavirus (HPV), hepatitis B and C viruses and Helicobacter pylori also account for a substantial proportion of cancers, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. WHO stresses that expanding vaccination programmes, promoting healthier lifestyles and reducing exposure to environmental risks could prevent millions of future cancer cases.

Despite the grim projections, the report

also documents encouraging progress in several areas. Global tobacco use has declined significantly since 2010, contributing to reductions in lung cancer incidence in countries that have implemented comprehensive tobacco-control policies. Expanded vaccination against HPV and hepatitis B has begun to reduce infection-related cancers, while improvements in water, sanitation and infection control have further strengthened prevention efforts.

Political commitment towards cancer control has also improved over the past decade. More than four-fifths of countries now have national cancer control plans, compared with only half in 2010. Screening programmes for breast and cervical cancer have expanded considerably in many high-income countries, allowing cancers to be detected at earlier and more treatable stages. Scientific innovation has accelerated as well, with a steady increase in cancer-related clinical trials leading to the development of more effective diagnostic tools, targeted therapies and personalised treatment approaches.

Nevertheless, WHO cautions that scientific progress alone will not reduce the global cancer burden unless these advances become accessible to all populations. Many low-income countries continue to lack even the most basic cancer services, creating profound inequalities in survival and quality of life. The organisation argues that future investments must focus not

only on developing new technologies but also on ensuring that existing lifesaving interventions reach those who need them most.

The report advocates a fundamental shift towards a people-centred approach to cancer control. Such an approach places individuals and families at the heart of health systems by integrating prevention, early diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, palliative care and psychosocial support within universal health coverage. It also recognises that effective cancer care extends beyond hospitals and requires social protection measures that reduce the financial burden on patients while ensuring dignity throughout the course of illness.

WHO has called upon governments, international organisations, academic institutions, civil society and the private sector to work together in strengthening health systems and addressing persistent inequalities. Greater investment in health-care personnel, cancer registries, laboratory services, screening programmes and affordable medicines is considered essential if countries are to cope with the anticipated increase in cases over the coming decades.

The organisation believes that the projected rise in cancer cases is neither inevitable nor irreversible. Evidence from countries that have implemented comprehensive prevention policies demonstrates that substantial reductions in cancer incidence and mortality are achievable through sustained public health interventions. Expanding vaccination coverage, reducing tobacco and alcohol use, promoting healthier lifestyles, improving environmental conditions and ensuring timely access to quality healthcare remain among the most effective strategies for reducing the future burden of the disease.

As cancer continues to affect millions of individuals and families across every region of the world, the report serves as a reminder that the decisions governments make today will determine health outcomes for future generations. Closing the gap between scientific advances and equitable access to care, strengthening prevention efforts and placing people at the centre of health systems will be crucial in changing the trajectory of one of the world's most pressing public health challenges.

The author is a senior analyst and environmentalist. Feedback can be sent to m.hanief@gmail.com.
Twitter/X: @haniefmha

Bridal Skincare Tips For The Monsoon

■ SHAHNAZ HUSAIN

Clouds impregnated with love, and soft, flowery breezes announce the dawn of monsoons.

As the raindrops fall and love fills the air, There's nothing more romantic than exchanging your wedding vows at the time of the year when the weather is pleasing and enchanting.

Monsoon and romance go hand in hand. The season of love, as they call it gets even better when rain makes an appearance. Furthermore, what is more, marvelous than the idea of a monsoon wedding?

The thought of having a monsoon wedding sounds romantic and exciting. Those cold breezes, unannounced downpours, and droplets of water make it the best time of the year for romance, love, happiness, and joy.

The romance of a monsoon wedding outweighs its practicality. While monsoon offers a slew of challenges when it comes to wedding preparations, it appears that this season is the ideal time to tie the knot.

Monsoon weddings bring a unique charm and a touch of romance to the celebration.

The rain is a reality, especially if we are getting married in the monsoon season. How can we do that?

While a monsoon wedding gives a major romantic feel it is also extremely adventurous as there are some crucial things that you need to plan to avoid discomfort and unexpected troubles that can prevent you from enjoying your wedding.

Looking beautiful on the wedding day is not merely a matter of make-up and dress. It needs weeks of care. If a skin care program is followed four to six weeks before the wedding, it can really help to reinvent your beauty. The skin type and the season should be taken into consideration. For instance, a Monsoon bride, with oily or combination skins, may face a real

problem. Oily skins look even more oily and dull, due to sweat and oil secretions being deposited on the skin. Indeed, during the Monsoons, high humidity poses a problem. Sweat on the skin also attracts dirt and pollutants from the atmosphere more easily.

Water Proof Makeup

This is crucial. The constant threat of rain showers and humidity can easily ruin your carefully applied makeup.

I will suggest all brides to choose waterproof makeup products over regular ones during the monsoon wedding. Be it rain showers or tears, the waterworks are bound to get flowing, which will create a landslide on your face if you're wearing products that aren't waterproof.

Get a makeup trial done with waterproof cosmetics and splash some water to check if the makeup stays on or not. This will help you check with your makeup can withstand the humidity of the day. Also, if you have frizzy hair, check with your hairstylist on how you can tame them in the humidity. To ensure your makeup stays in place, set it with a translucent powder. This will help absorb excess moisture and oil, keeping your foundation intact.

Cleanse your face thoroughly to remove any impurities, and follow it up with a lightweight, oil-free moisturizer. This will help create a smooth canvas for your makeup application. Work in setting powder in light layers and build coverage gradually as you go for a soft, natural glow that will also blur pores and give you a flawless, ready-to-click complexion.

Similarly, choose power-based blushes, bronzers, and eyeshadows for they're not only waterproof but also last longer than cream-based ones.

Footwear

If you're having an outdoor monsoon wedding, it is critical to select footwear that provides a solid grip and prevents slipping when you move around on the mucky ground and slippery floors.

Walking in heels is no cakewalk and when it's all muddy and the grass is squishy, it is more difficult to walk than we thought off as there are high chances of slipping and getting your heels stuck in the wet grass. No matter how much you love tip-toeing in those gorgeous heels, it is best to pick shoes or sneakers under your lehenga.

If you want heels, pick kitten heels or wedges instead of pointy stilettos.

Wear some classy juttis which look very stylish and they will go perfectly well with your outfit and at the same time be hassle-free and comfortable. You can even go for Punjabi juttis as they are highly comfortable and fashionable.

Wedding Outfits

Amidst the joyous celebration, one crucial aspect to consider is the choice of fabric for wedding attire. Choosing the right fabric for monsoon wedding attire can make a big difference in keeping you comfortable and stylish throughout the event.

Opt for lighter fabrics such as net, chiffon, georgette, crepe, and satin which are water sustainable. Not only will they dry faster but will also make you feel airy and more comfortable. They will not get ruined by rainwater and hence, are a wonderful choice.

One of the biggest mistakes that the brides make while choosing outfits for their monsoon weddings is choosing heavy fabrics like velvet, brocade, raw silk, etc as rainwater might react with it and spoil the intricate embroidery.

Silk is a luxurious fabric that offers a very convenient option for monsoon weddings. Silk has a beautiful drape, which adds elegance to any outfit. Just be sure to choose lighter-weight silk, like crepe, to stay cool in the heat. A silk dress can keep you looking glamorous and chic, while still being comfortable for a monsoon wedding.

The author is an international fame beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India

DR TASADUK HUSSAIN ITOO

PHYSICIAN

MBBS, PGDFM(CMC Vellore), B.Sc, FRCP(London, UK),
FRSPH(London, UK), CBIOL(UK), CSci(UK), MRSB(UK),
MAcadMed(UK)

FELLOW, INTERNATIONAL DIABETES FEDERATION
(IDF FELLOW, BELGIUM)

MEMBER, AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
(ACP, USA)

ACADEMIC LIFE MEMBER, RESEARCH SOCIETY
FOR THE STUDY OF DIABETES IN INDIA (RSSDI)

JKMC REGD. NO. 15414

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NEAR PETROL PUMP, MATTAN K.P ROAD, ANANTNAG

CRPF ASI dies of cardiac arrest in Kulgam

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

KULGAM, JUL 15: A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Assistant Sub-Inspector, died after suffering a cardiac arrest in south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Wednesday morning, officials said. Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the ASI, posted with the 18th Battalion of the CRPF in Kulgam, suffered a fall while on duty. He was shifted to Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag, where octors declared him dead on arrival and said he had suffered a cardiac arrest. He was later identified as Jai Prakash, a resident of Haryana.

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that the name mentioned in the Aadhaar Card is incorrectly printed as Arjamand Khan. However, my correct and official name, as per school records and other valid documents, is Arjumand Khan.

The details are as follows:
Incorrect Name in Aadhaar Card: Arjamand Khan
Correct Name: Arjumand Khan
Father's Name: Showkat Ali Khan
Date of Birth: 15/02/2003
Address: Hanji Shart, Kupwara, Jammu & Kashmir – 193302.
Any Objection to this correction should be brought to the attention of the UIDAI and their Seva Kendra Offices within 7 days from the date of Publication of this notice.

If no objection is received within the stipulated period, the necessary correction procedures may be undertaken.

Office of the Executive Magistrate 1st class Narbal District Budgam

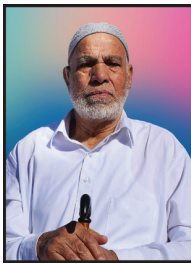
It is notified that the applicant namely Mohammed Sultan Khanday S/o Mohammed Subhan Khanday R/o Checki _ Kawoosa TEH Narbal District Budgam has applied for the insurance of Death Certificate of his Mother Namely Taja D/o Mohammed Ramzan Bhat . The applicant intends to register the Date of Death of Taja as per Masjid Committee Mohalla / Chokidar 12/03/2017. If any body has objection in that regard . He / she may approach the office of the under signed within a period of seven days , After completion of said , No objection will be entertained.
15/07/2026

DEMISE

With deep sorrow, we announce the sad demise of

Ghulam Hassan Dar
S/O: Late Abdul Rashid Dar
R/o Habba Kadal

who left for his heavenly abode on 15th July, 2026.



FATEHA KHAWANI

Shall be held on

DAY & DATE : FRIDAY, 17th JULY, 2026

TIME : 02:30 PM

LOCATION : Chota Bazar,
Near Kashapa School, Srinagar.

Shahnawaz Ahmad Dar (Son)
BEREAVED +91 96227 22007

Public Notice

I, Areeb Nazir Malik, father of Haiyaan Malik (Date of Birth: 09 July 2009), who has passed the Class X examination through CBSE, hereby declare that my name has been incorrectly mentioned as Areeb Malik in my son's educational records.

My correct and full name, as appearing in all my valid official documents, is Areeb Nazir Malik. I hereby declare that Areeb Malik and Areeb Nazir Malik refer to the same person. Henceforth, my name should be read and recorded as Areeb Nazir Malik in all records and for all official purposes.

This notice is being published for the information of the general public and all concerned authorities. R-1074

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HT - NEWS

Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION PATTAN

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS | DOUBLE COVER SYSTEM

ENIT NO: 36/ /2026-27/RNB/PATTAN | DATED: 15.07.2026

For and on behalf of the President of India, e-tenders are invited on %age basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works. The Contractors should mandatorily be registered on JKPWDOMS for making online payment to the agency as per Govt. Order No.: 186-PW(R&B) of 2023 dated 08-05-2023:

S.No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	T.D Cost	E/M	Time	Class
1	Revival Restoration, Preservation and Maintaence of Imambargh Goom Ahmadpora (Excluding Electrification)	273.13 lacs	Rs. 5500/-	546260/-	365 days	AAY
2	Restoration and Renovation of Markazi Imambaragah Zainabia Hanjiwera Pattan (Excluding Electrification)	269.97 lacs	Rs. 5500/-	539934/-	365 days	AAY

Time & Date of Opening of tender (Technical Bid): 05-08-2026

Major Head of Account = (4202-Archives)

Position of AAA = Accorded

Position of TS = Sanctioned

Position of funds = Available

Project Authority = Director Archives and Archology

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	15.07.2026
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 16.07.2026 to 04.08.2026, 4.00 P.M
3.	Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting	23.07.2026 From 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Baramulla.
4.	Bid submission Start Date	16.07.2026 From 11.00 A.M.
5.	Bid Submission End Date	04.08.2026 upto 4.00 P.M
6.	The 1st lowest bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of Contract value as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/ BG in favour of Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Baramulla.	As per time specified in SBD.
7.	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	05.08.2026 at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Baramulla.
8.	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed.

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

Note: The Bidders are advised to read all conditions laid down in the NIT/SBD carefully before uploaded softcopy any short fall found in the soft copy the tender shall be rejected.

1.1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document (as mentioned above) in shape of Treasury Challan/ e-challan (in revenue head 0059) in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Pattan.

1.2. 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/BG pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Baramulla. Besides that, the successful bidder will have to provide Performance Security @ 5% 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 Contract value, which will be released after successful completion of the DLP/Maintenance Period.

1.3. Un Balanced Bid:- In case bid of the lowest bidder is found unbalanced the bidder shall have to produce additional performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG within a week's time before issuance of contract allotment as Circular instructions issued by the Govt. vide No: FD-Code/441.2021-02-158 dated: 08.08.2025. The additional performance security shall be treated as part of the performance security

2. The 1st lowest bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of Contract Value as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/ BG in favour of Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Baramulla within 07 days after the date of receipt of letter of acceptance and shall be released after successful completion of DLP. The Bank Guarantee should be valid for 28 days beyond bid validity.

3. Bidders can resubmit/withdraw the bids as specified.

4. The date and time of opening of Financial-Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Financialbids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online in the Office of Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Baramulla._The date for same shall be intimated separately.

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

6. The earnest money shall be forfeited, If:

a) Any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.

b) Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within specified time period issue of letter of intent.

c) In case contractor fails to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

7. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

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

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

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

7.4. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-2.

7.5. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents mentioned in NIT and SBD with technical bid. Documents which has/have not been uploaded shall not be entertained in form of hard copy. However, in case of any clarification the bidders shall have to produce original documents in support of soft copies if need arises.

8. All bidders shall upload Enlistment Registration Card Verification Certificate from concerned Chief Engineer /Superintending Engineer.

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

No: 1725-30 | Dated: 15.07.2026

Sd/- Executive Engineer R&B Division Pattan

DIPK: 3322/26 | Dated: 15-07-2026

Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI WATER SUPPLY MASTER PLAN DIVISION

GIST OF E-NIT No.11/WSMP of 07-2026 | Date: 13/07/2026

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of J&K e-tenders (in Single Cover System) are invited from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K Union Territory Govt., for the following Work.

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Civil Component)	T.D Cost	Class	Time
1.	Augmentation of Water Supply at Wagay Mohalla Zainakote by means of Providing, Laying and Fitting of 25mm dia Pipes. (UNDER District CAPEX).	Rs.106000/-	Rs. 100/-	DEE	10 Days
2.	Improvements to Water Supply at Bhat Mohalla / Gali No. 3 (Tengpora) by means of providing, laying and fitting of 40/25mm dia GI Pipes. (UNDER District CAPEX).	Rs.127000/-	Rs. 100/-	DEE	10 Days
3.	Improvements to Water Supply at Nund Rehi Colony, Tengprora, Muslimabad by way of Realigning 100mm dia Pipeline Passing across the Culvert at 2 spots. (under District CAPEX)	Rs.138000/-	Rs. 100/-	DEE	10 Days
4	Providing Water Pipeline to Yawar Mohalla Zewan (UNDER District CAPEX).	Rs.366000/-	Rs. 200/-	DEE	15 Days

EMD Cost in Rupees: 2% of Advertised Cost

Major Head of Account: District CAPEX

The E-NIT consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, bill of quantities (BOQ), terms and conditions of contract can be seen/downloaded from the departmental web site (jktenders.gov.in) as per the dates shown below: -

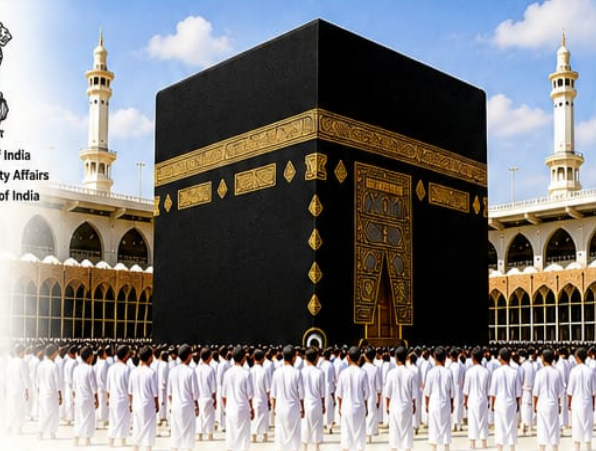
S. No.	Description	Date		
		DD	MM	YYYY
1	Publishing date of ENIT	13	07	2026
2	Download start date	13	07	2026
3	Bid submission start date	13	07	2026
4	Bid submission end date	27	07	2026
5	Bid opening date	28	07	2026

No: WSMP/CC/3260-67

Dated: 13-07-2026

**Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Jal Shakti WSMP Division Srinagar**

DIPK: 3337/26 | Dated: 15-07-2026



HAJ 2027 (1448 H) IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

1

PASSPORT VALIDITY

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

2

COVER / GROUP

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

3

COVER HEAD

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

4

MOBILE NUMBER & WHATSAPP

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

5

FORM SUBMISSION

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

6

NOMINEE

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

7

BANK DETAILS (ACCOUNT HOLDER MUST BE COVER HEAD)

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

Pay Rupees **CANCELLED**

A/c No. 12345678901234

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR HAJ – 2027 (1448 H)

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

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DC Anantnag visits Shiva Bhagwati Asthapan Akingam, reviews arrangements for Shiva Bhagwati Jayanti

Emphasises seamless facilities for smooth, hassle free celebrations

HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, JULY 15: Ahead of the auspicious Shiva Bhagwati Jayanti (Ashad Ditya), the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, today visited Shri Shiva Bhagwati Asthapan, Akingam to take first hand stock of the arrangements and review the facilities that have been put in place for smooth celebration of the religious event.

The DC was accompanied by SDM Kokernag, ACR, senior officials from Health, PHE, PDD and other line departments.

During the visit, the DC took a detailed assessment of the facilities, for providing a smooth experience to the scores of devotees expected to arrive for paying obeisance and participating in the rituals. He issued several key directions to the concerned departments like PDD, Jal Shakti and Health regarding provision of hassle free services during the festive days. He instructed them to ensure uninterrupted electricity, clean drinking water supply and dedicated healthcare services throughout this period.

Dr. Bilal called for carrying out



intensive sanitation drives inside and around the temple premises, installing dustbins and deploying adequate cleaning staff. He asked

the concerned authorities to regulate the traffic properly besides establishing parking spaces for visiting devotees.

While assessing the preparations, the DC interacted with the members of the Shri Shiva Bhagwati Asthapan Akingam Trust, who expressed satisfaction with the district administration's proactive approach for seamless celebrations. He assured them of the district administration's full support, emphasizing the importance of harmony, plural ethos and smooth celebration of traditional, cultural and religious events.

Inspecting the under construction Dharmashala (Pilgrim Rest House) at the temple site, the DC instructed the concerned officials to expedite construction work while ensuring quality and durability of the structures. He said the district administration is committed to renovating and preserving such places of cultural heritage besides fully upgrading the infrastructure and facilities.

Concluding the visit, the Deputy Commissioner extended his warm greetings to the devotee community on the eve of Shiva Bhagwati Jayanti, advising them to coordinate with the deployed staff for immediate redressal of any issues.

DDC Kupwara, MD Mission Yuva review status of implementation of Mission Yuva in district

HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, JULY 15: District Development Commissioner (DDC), Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, and the Mission Director, Mission YUVA, Harvinder Singh, jointly chaired a review meeting today with concerned officers and stakeholders to assess progress under Mission YUVA and to review its implementation across Kupwara district.

It was informed during the meeting that the district has received 6,405 applications under Mission YUVA, of which 4,794 applications have been approved by the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC).

The meeting reviewed the programme's overall performance for both the previous and the current financial years.

Detailed deliberations were held on key components, including sanction and disbursement rates; action taken on pending credit applications; monitoring of unit establishments; recruitment of personnel for Small Business Development Units (SBDUs) and Business Help Desks (BHDs); Udyam Jagriti activities; outreach to Lakhpati Didis; and capacity building initiatives.

The DDC emphasised the importance of effective inter departmental coordination and timely disposal of

applications at bank level to ensure that eligible youth derive maximum benefit from Mission YUVA. He urged all implementing agencies to work proactively for the successful implementation of the Mission across the district.

Mission Director underscored the need for coordinated, results oriented efforts by all stakeholders to achieve the desired outcomes within the stipulated timeframe.

He directed concerned officers to intensify outreach and implementation efforts in border areas, including the Vibrant Villages, to facilitate youth entrepreneurship and create sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The Lead District Manager (LDM) was directed to visit banks with the highest number of pending cases to resolve issues promptly and thereby increase the credit disbursement rate.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Handwara; General Manager, District Industries Centre (DIC), Kupwara; Additional Commissioner Revenue (ACR), Kupwara; Sub Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) of Lolab and Karnah; Additional Collector Development (ACD), Kupwara; Assistant Director, Employment; Lead District Manager; Cluster Head, J&K Bank; representatives of DIC; District Project Manager, NRLM; SBDU Lead; and BHD Leads of the district.

District Admin Kupwara holds Mega Anti-Drug Awareness Programme at GDC Handwara

HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, JULY 15: As part of the ongoing efforts to combat drug abuse and promote a drug-free society, the District Administration Kupwara today organized a Mega Anti-Drug Awareness Programme at Government Degree College (GDC) Handwara.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Handwara, Javed Naseem Masoodi, presided over the programme. Principal, GDC Handwara, Prof. Aijaz Ahmad, Honorary Secretary, Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) J&K, G. A. Qureshi, officers and representatives from various departments, faculty members, and a large number of students attended the event.

Addressing the gathering, the ADC underscored the need for collective efforts to eradicate the menace of drug abuse from society. He emphasized that awareness, community participation, and active involvement of educational institutions are essential in safeguarding the younger generation from the harmful effects of narcotic substances. He urged students to become ambassadors of the anti-drug campaign and spread awareness among their peers and communities.

Speaking on the occasion, Principal GDC Handwara, highlighted the vital role of educational institutions in shaping responsible and informed citizens. He encouraged students to adopt healthy lifestyles and remain vigilant against the dangers of substance abuse.

Honorary Secretary, IRCS J&K, G. A. Qureshi, also addressed the participants and stressed the importance of counselling, awareness, and community support in preventing drug addiction. He called upon all stakeholders to work together to build a healthier and drug-free society.

The programme featured expert lectures, awareness sessions, and interactive discussions aimed at sensitizing students about the physical, psychological, social, and legal consequences of drug abuse. Participants also pledged to contribute towards making their communities drug-free.

The District Administration reaffirmed its commitment to intensifying awareness initiatives across the district to effectively tackle the menace of drug abuse and promote a healthy and responsible society.

SKUAST-K promotes Tribal Livelihoods through Backyard Poultry Program at KVK Budgam under ICAR-AICRP

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, JULY 15: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Kashmir (SKUAST-K), under the All India Coordinated Research Project (ICAR-AICRP) on Poultry Breeding, organized an awareness-cum-distribution program for tribal farmers at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Budgam, under the DAPST (Tribal Sub-Plan).

The initiative aimed to promote scientific backyard poultry farming as a sustainable livelihood option and to encourage the production and consumption of safe, residue-free organic eggs.

Prof. Rehana Habib Kanth, Director Research, SKUAST-K, attended the program as the Chief Guest. She highlighted the potential of backyard poultry to enhance nutritional security, generate supplementary income, and strengthen rural livelihoods. Stressing the rising demand for fresh, residue-

free organic eggs, she encouraged farmers to adopt sustainable backyard poultry integrated with value addition, organic manure production, and entrepreneurship. She also called for reducing excessive use of chemical pesticides and promoting organic, eco-friendly farming to ensure food safety and environmental sustainability.

Earlier, Prof. (Dr.) Azmat Alam Khan, Registrar, SKUAST-K, and Principal Investigator, ICAR-AICRP on Poultry Breeding, outlined the objectives of the DAPST (Tribal Sub-Plan). He explained how improved backyard poultry breeds can significantly enhance egg and meat production under village conditions and described scientific backyard poultry farming as a low-investment, high-potential enterprise capable of generating self-employment and strengthening rural livelihoods. He urged farmers to adopt improved management practices to produce high-quality organ-



ic eggs and establish profitable backyard poultry units.

Welcoming the participants, Prof. Bilal Ahmad Lone, Head, KVK Budgam, introduced the activities of the Krishi Vigyan Kendra and highlighted its farmer-centric programs and developmental initiatives. He underscored the importance of integrating poultry farming with other agricultural enterprises to improve farm income and livelihood resilience.

The technical sessions featured Dr. Zulfqarul Haq and Dr. Kavita Rani, who delivered practical lectures on scientific backyard poultry management, covering housing, feeding, brooding, vaccination, disease prevention, biosecurity, and flock health. The interactive sessions also addressed farmers' queries and provided practical guidance for successful poultry rearing under local conditions.

As part of the DAPST initia-

tive, 300 improved backyard poultry chicks were distributed among 30 tribal farmers, with each beneficiary receiving 10 chicks and 5 kg of poultry feed to support the establishment of backyard poultry units. The intervention is expected to improve household nutrition, promote the production of fresh organic eggs, and create sustainable livelihood opportunities for tribal families.

The program witnessed enthusiastic participation from tribal farmers across Budgam district. Beneficiaries expressed their gratitude to ICAR-AICRP on Poultry Breeding and SKUAST-K for providing scientific know-how and quality poultry germplasm.

The program concluded with an interactive discussion, reaffirming the university's commitment to promoting sustainable, entrepreneurship-driven backyard poultry farming for the socio-economic upliftment of rural and tribal communities.

SMC reaches out to coaching centres to support education of sanitation workers' children

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 15: The Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) has reached out to coaching institutions across the city to explore a collaborative framework for extending scholarship-based coaching and academic support to meritorious children of its sanitation workers.

Chairing an interaction with representatives of coaching institu-

tions, the Commissioner, SMC, Faz Lul Haseeb, called upon the city's educational community to partner with the Corporation in creating meaningful educational opportunities for children of sanitation workers, who remain at the frontline of maintaining Srinagar's cleanliness, sanitation and public health.

The proposed programme envisages voluntary participation by coaching institutions, which may earmark a limited number of seats

for deserving students and extend educational scholarships and other academic support, including study material, test series, mentoring and career guidance.

The Commissioner said the initiative was part of the Corporation's broader efforts to strengthen the welfare of its sanitation workforce, with an emphasis on education as a means of long-term empowerment and inter-generational social mobility.

ARTO Bandipora conducts intensive Enforcement Drive on Bandipora-Gurez Route; 40 Vehicles Compounded

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JULY 15: On the directions of the Transport Commissioner, J&K, Vishesh Pal Mahajan, and the Deputy Commissioner, Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, the ARTO Bandipora conducted an intensive enforcement drive on the Bandipora-Gurez route to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act and to enhance road safety.

During the drive, a total of 112 vehicles were checked, out of which 40 vehicles were compounded under various provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, with an expected fine realization of 40,000.

The enforcement team laid special emphasis on the fitment and proper functioning of Speed Limiting Devices (SLDs) in passenger transport vehicles to curb overspeeding and improve passenger safety.

Drivers were advised to strictly adhere to prescribed speed limits and other road safety regulations.

In addition, cab drivers and other passenger vehicle operators were sensitized about Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and the importance of proper waste management.

They were urged to discourage littering and actively contribute towards maintaining the pristine environment of the Gurez Valley by ensuring responsible disposal of plastic and other waste.

District Admin Bandipora organises first-ever Extended Producer Responsibility Convention in Gurez

Valley sets to become complete No-Plastic Zone

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JULY 15: In a landmark step towards environmental conservation and sustainable tourism, the District Administration Bandipora on Wednesday organised the first-ever Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Convention at the Auditorium, Government HSS Dawar, Gurez, bringing together senior functionaries of the

Government of India, district administration, Indian Army, leading national brands and civil society on a single platform.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, presented a detailed proposal on the roadmap to make Gurez a complete No-Plastic Zone. She said the convention had been organised to bring together companies whose products generate plastic waste like bottles,

cans, chips packets, biscuit wrappers and other packaged materials, so that they actively participate in managing the waste generated from their products.

Observing that the growing influx of tourists has made waste management a major challenge, she cautioned camping tent owners, hoteliers and business establishments that strict action shall be initiated under the relevant rules in case of failure to

discharge their statutory obligations. Invoking the enduring legacy of Habba Khatoon, the DC urged businesses and shopkeepers to extend wholehearted support to the administration in preserving the pristine character of the valley, and announced that informative signboards highlighting Gurez's medicinal, ecological and heritage values would be installed en-route to promote responsible tourism.

In her virtual address, the Joint Secretary, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti and Mission Director, Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin), emphasised that all stakeholders must act as the true owners of their home and preserve every aspect of it. She highlighted the provisions of the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, particularly the responsibilities cast upon Bulk Waste Generators.

Wholesale price inflation climbs marginally to 9.87 pc in June

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JULY 15: The wholesale price inflation in June rose slightly to 9.87 per cent from 9.68 per cent in May, as per the data released by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry. The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation is primarily driven by higher prices of food articles, mineral oils, basic metals, and chemicals and chemical products.

The data further showed that the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) for all commodities stood at 110.2 in June, compared with 109.9 in May.

On a year-on-year (YoY) basis, the inflation rates for major groups such as Primary Articles, Fuel and Power, and Manufactured Products stood at 7 per cent, 27.41 per cent, and 7.48 per cent, respectively, in June, compared with 4.99 per cent, 30.33 per cent, and 7.48 per cent, respectively, in May.

"Rising energy, petrochemical,



and metal prices point to renewed cost-push inflation, with broad-based acceleration. Inflation in Fuel and Power increased to 27.41 per cent, Manufactured Products to 7.48 per cent, and Primary Articles to 7 per cent. Persistent increases in wholesale prices, particularly in upstream industries, could gradually pass through to downstream manufacturing and consumer prices with a lag, unless

offset by productivity gains or lower input costs," said Rajeev Juneja, President of PHDCCI.

"Higher prices of petroleum products primarily reflect increased crude oil inventory and refining costs. Since petroleum products constitute a major input for freight transportation, logistics, aviation, power generation, and industrial production, sustained increases are expected to raise operating costs

across multiple sectors," he added.

A day earlier, the government had also released retail inflation data. Retail inflation accelerated to 4.38 per cent in June, up from 3.89 per cent in May, driven by a sharp increase in food prices.

Food inflation, measured by the Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI), also rose to 5.32 per cent in June from 4.78 per cent in the previous month, indicating renewed price pressures in essential commodities.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation remained within the Reserve Bank of India's medium-term target band of 2-6 per cent, although the latest reading marked a reversal after inflation had eased in recent months.

According to the data, rural inflation stood at 4.74 per cent, while urban inflation was lower at 3.92 per cent in June. Food inflation was also higher in rural areas at 5.45 per cent, compared with 5.09 per cent in urban India. UNI

MRF ranked among World's top three, India's most valuable, strongest tyre Brand

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHENNAI, JULY 15: MRF Tyres, India's largest tyre manufacturer, has been ranked as India's Most Valuable and Strongest Tyre Brand, also featured as the 3rd Strongest Tyre Brand in the World and among the Top 50 most valuable brands in India across all industries - from Automobiles, Hospitality, Banking, Foods, Oil and Gas categories - in the Brand Finance India 100- 2026 report.

The report, unveiled at Mumbai on Monday under the theme "Powering India's Global Ascent," recognises the country's most influential and valuable brands, with the combined value of the Top 100 crossing USD 236.5 billion this year.

A company statement here today said the recognition caps a defining year for the brand. In Brand Finance's dedicated global Tyres

2025-26 report, MRF was named amongst the Top 3 strongest tyre brand in the world, with a Brand Strength Index score of 87.7 out of 100. In India, MRF continues to stand unmatched as the country's Most Valuable and Strongest Tyre Brand, a position built on decades

of consumer trust, product performance and engineering excellence.

"This recognition belongs to every Indian who has trusted MRF. To be named as India's Most Valuable and Strongest Tyre Brand in India, amongst India's Top 50 brands across all sectors, and among the world's Top 3 Strongest tyre brands, is both an honour and a responsibility.

It reaffirms our commitment to safety, innovation and the everyday journeys of millions of families and businesses across the country," K. M. Mammen, Chairman and Managing Director MRF Tyres Chennai, said.

Brand Finance's methodology, grounded in international standards (ISO 10668 and ISO 20671), evaluates brands on both financial brand value and brand strength - assessing consumer trust, familiarity, reputation, marketing investment and business performance. MRF's strong showing was attributed to its expansive distribution network, deep OEM relationships, Brand Reputation built over the years with World class Products, Involvement with Cricket and motorsport pedigree, and consistently high recall and loyalty among consumers.

Adani in race to acquire Polaris Smart Metering

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI, JULY 15: 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.

The smart metering sector is viewed as a promising market prospect since smart meter penetration in India is only around 6%, which is far lower than the global average market penetration of 43%.

Besides, the government is rapidly advancing its Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) which aims to install 250 million prepaid smart meters by 2027 in order to reduce total technical and commercial losses.

The government RDSS scheme involves an estimated investment of Rs 1.35 lakh crore and its implementation and related opportunities are expected to last until 2035, which has made Polaris Smart Metering an attractive proposition for Adani Energy.

Additionally, Polaris Smart Metering has received smart meter installation contracts in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. In Uttar Pradesh, Polaris is working with Madhyanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam to install 51 lakh smart meters in Lucknow and Ayodhya clusters, while in West Bengal, it has received a contract to install 22 lakh smart meters. UNI

Google's AI bet on Bengaluru

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

BENGALURU, JULY 15: As the global race for artificial intelligence supremacy accelerates, Bengaluru is emerging as a crucial testing ground where India's scale, diversity and digital ecosystem could shape the next generation of AI solutions for the world.

At Google I/O Connect India 2026, the technology giant made a strong case for India not just as a major consumer market but as a global innovation hub where AI systems can be developed, tested and refined for real-world challenges.

Google India Vice President and Country Manager Preeti Lobana said the company's approach was centred on building AI "with India, for India, and potentially for the world," highlighting the country's unique position in driving largescale AI adoption.

"If you can solve for India, you can solve for the world," Lobana said, summing up Google's India AI strategy.

The message from the event was clear: India's complexity — multiple languages, diverse communities, varied economic conditions and massive digital adoption — could become a competitive advantage in the global AI race.

Google showcased how its AI platforms, including Gemini and Gemma, are being integrated into solutions addressing everyday challenges.

The company highlighted applications such as Redbus using Gemini to improve customer interactions for non-English users and AISteth using MedGemma to develop smart healthcare tools that can support frontline health workers in rural areas.

The company said AI's next phase would depend not only on advanced models but also on partnerships involving developers, startups, researchers, academic institutions and governments.

"Scaling impact of this magnitude requires more than breakthrough technology. It requires a truly collaborative and active ecosystem," Lobana said.

Bengaluru's position as India's technology capital has made it a natural centre for this transformation. With a strong software ecosystem, thousands of startups and a deep pool of engineering talent, the city is being positioned as a hub where AI ideas can move from experimentation to largescale deployment.

The Karnataka government has outlined an ambition to make the state a leading AI destination by focusing on talent creation, research and infrastructure. Plans include strengthening AI education, creating innovation platforms and expanding digital infrastructure to support emerging technologies.

The city's own challenges are also being viewed as opportunities for AI-driven solutions. Rapid urban growth, increasing mobility demands and pressure on public services have created a need for intelligent systems in areas such as transportation, healthcare, education, agriculture and climate management.

Google's expanding presence in India further strengthens Bengaluru's role in the AI ecosystem. The company's workforce, developer network and partnerships have made the city a key base for its India operations.

The larger message from I/O Connect India 2026 was that the future of AI will not be determined only by who builds the most powerful models, but by who can make those technologies useful, accessible and scalable.

Stock markets recover from early losses, IT stocks gain

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUL 15 : 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 percent 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 and Bajaj Auto. On the losing side, Grasim Industries emerged as the biggest laggard, declining 2%, followed by Tata Steel, Nestle India, InterGlobe Aviation (IndiGo) and Eternal.

Nearly 185 stocks hit their 52-week highs while 78 stocks hit their 52-week lows in intraday trade on the BSE.

Those on the highs were Federal Bank, JSW Infrastructure, FSNE-Commerce Ventures (Nykaa), Oracle Financial Services Software (OFSS), One97 Communications (Paytm), The Phoenix Mills, and Torrent Pharmaceuticals. On lows were Elitecon International, National Standard (India), and TechN Vision Ventures.

Among key IT stocks, TCS jumped 5.4%, Newgen Software Technologies surged 13.3%. Sonata Software, Zensar Technologies, Birlasoft, Tech Mahindra, Infosys, Mphasis, Cyient, eClerx Services, Coforge, Persistent Systems, and Netweb Technologies, rallied between 2.5% and 11%. UNI

Piyush Goyal begins Spain visit, to explore opportunities in manufacturing, green energy

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUL 15 : Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal began the Spain leg of his overseas visit with a series of meetings aimed at expanding bilateral trade, investment, and industrial cooperation between the two countries. The visit coincides with the celebration of 70 years of diplomatic relations between the two nations and the India-Spain Dual Year of Culture, Tourism and Artificial Intelligence 2026.

Goyal held talks with Spain's First Vice-President and Minister of Economy, Trade and Business, Carlos Cuerdo Caballero, focusing on boosting trade and investment, improving market access, strengthening supply chains and enhancing collaboration in sectors such as renewable energy, green hydrogen,



advanced manufacturing, digital technologies, and infrastructure.

The two sides also exchanged views on the proposed India-EU Free Trade Agreement and agreed to make greater use of the Fast Track Mechanism to facilitate investments.

The minister also met Spain's Minister of Industry and Tourism, Jordi Hereu Boher, to discuss cooperation in clean energy, mobility, automotive, railways, smart infrastructure and sustainable manufacturing. Both sides highlighted the

C-295 aircraft programme as a successful example of industrial collaboration under the Make in India initiative.

Addressing the India-Spain Business Forum, Goyal invited Spanish companies to expand their presence in India, highlighting opportunities across manufacturing, infrastructure, renewable energy, digital technologies and innovation.

He also met officials of Spain's investment promotion agency, ICEX, to explore ways to increase bilateral investment and technology partnerships before interacting with members of the Indian business delegation to review opportunities emerging from the visit.

The engagements reaffirmed both countries' commitment to strengthening economic ties through greater trade, investment and industry collaboration. UNI

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

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUL 15 : 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 engineering 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. UNI

Varmul Gindun 3.0 Continues with Thrilling Multi-Sport Action Across Baramulla



HT SPORTS DESK

BARAMULLA, JULY 15: The ongoing Varmul Gindun 3.0, North Kashmir's premier multi-sport festival, witnessed another exciting day of competition as football, volleyball, snooker, handball, kabaddi and Penchak Silat events attracted enthusiastic participation from players and spectators across the

district.

In the football matches played at Showket Ali Stadium, Baramulla, Young FC registered a victory over Najibatan FC, while S Old Town FC outplayed UFC Ushkara to advance in the tournament.

The snooker competitions at Snooker B Town also produced exciting contests, with Tahir defeating Arshad and Yousuf overcoming

Rashid to book their places in the next round.

In the men's volleyball event at HSS Kreeri, Nougam defeated Syed Romi, Star Saloosa overcame Nice Rafiabad, Uri Star defeated Warpora, and Kim Bagh emerged victorious against Pattan VBC. Organisers announced that the remaining volleyball fixtures have been postponed.

The Penchak Silat championship witnessed remarkable participation from boys and girls, with 68 bouts conducted successfully. Officials said the results are being compiled, while seven categories are currently in progress at Showket Ali Stadium.

The tournament also featured the Kabaddi final between Handwara Club and Nowpora Academy at BHSS

Sopore, while the Girls' Handball final saw KIC Sopore face Red Hawk at Showket Ali Indoor Stadium. The Boys' Handball final between Almurad and KIC was scheduled later in the evening.

Organisers have also announced the fixtures for July 15, with football, volleyball and snooker competitions set to continue at their respective venues, alongside the ongoing

Penchak Silat events.

Varmul Gindun 3.0, organised with the support of the Indian Army's Dagger Division, the Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council, the District Administration Baramulla, and various sports associations, continues to promote sporting excellence, youth participation and community spirit across North Kashmir.

Lennox stars with five wickets as New Zealand level ODI series

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

GUYANA: Jayden Lennox took the third-best figures by a New Zealand spinner in men's ODIs as the visitors leveled the series with a five-wicket victory on a tricky surface offering turn. West Indies lost all ten wickets for 75 as they collapsed to 138, with Lennox taking 5 for 19, and while the chase wasn't always straightforward, Tom Latham guided New Zealand to an ultimately comfortable win. Lennox, who had not taken more than two wickets in his previous six ODIs, went through West Indies' middle order with the first four of his successes being bowled. His final return left him behind just Ish Sodhi's 6 for 39 and Daniel Vettori's 5 for 7 among New Zealand spinners. After Henry Nicholls and Will Young knocked off a decent chunk of the chase with a 35-run opening stand, New Zealand lost 3 for 17 including the run out of Mark Chapman for a second-ball duck when Vitel Lawes produced a sharp piece of fielding at cover. Young had been lbw to Alzarri Joseph and Nicholls top-edged a sweep.

Women's cricket shortchanged again as men's Test binfire sucks up the oxygen

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

LORD: They were queuing round the block at the back of the Lord's pavilion - four or five people deep, straining with their cameras primed, eager for a glimpse of the women cricketers within. Suffice to say, however, there was only one team that these particular fans were hankering for.

It was India's day on the fourth day of a historic women's Test at Lord's. It had been India's day on each of the previous two, to be fair, but this time it was official. A free-entry crowd, for what turned out to be barely 90 minutes of cricket, brought out the families and hard-core fans, to create similar vibes to that famous fifth day of the men's Test in 2011, when



they had queued down the Wellington Road to see Sachin Tendulkar in the flesh.

These numbers weren't quite the equivalent, but they weren't

to be sniffed at either: a new women's Test record of 37,846 across the whole game. And when, in the moments after the trophy lift, Kranti Gaud carried her

newly-earned silverware across to the Grandstand to parade it before a sea of India shirts, the roars of acclaim confirmed the degree of cut-through that the

visitors, in particular, have achieved during a momentous few weeks for women's cricket in this country.

But how's that cut-through been for the hosts? Despite England's unbeaten (and occasionally inspired) run to the T20 World Cup final, closely followed by this symbolic scratching of one of the longest-lasting sores in the game, has their month in the midsummer limelight really been everything that it could possibly have been?

"I'll take that one, Nat!" said Heather Knight, gamely choosing to spare her captain, Nat Sciver-Brunt, first dibs at an awkward topic in the minutes after the conclusion of her 320th and final England appearance.

MARUTI SUZUKI **NEXA**

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