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World-Class Infrastructure Will Be Provided for Para Athletes: LG Manoj Sinha

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JULY 22: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday reaffirmed the Jammu and Kashmir Administration's commitment to strengthening support for persons with disabilities, announcing that world-class infrastructure and comprehensive assistance would be provided to nurture the potential of para athletes across the Union Territory.

The assurance came during his visit to the Voluntary Medicare Society (VMS) in Srinagar, where he interacted with para athletes, children with special needs, rehabilitation experts, coaches and office bearers of the organisation. The Society has been serving persons with disabilities across Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh for more than five decades through healthcare, education, rehabilitation, livelihood support and community inclusion.

Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Government of India remains committed to ensuring equal opportunities

● Turn on Page 2



This Heinous Act Will Not Go Unpunished: LG Manoj Sinha

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JULY 22: A Jammu and Kashmir Police head constable was martyred in a terrorist attack in Anantnag on Wednesday, prompting an extensive counter-terror operation across four districts of south Kashmir. The attack, the first to target a Jammu and Kashmir Police personnel this year, has led to intensified security measures and the detention of dozens of suspected underground workers.

Head Constable Ashiq Hussain Qureshi of the IRP 3rd Battalion was deployed on security duty for the annual Amarnath Yatra when a lone

● Turn on Page 2

Restore Essential Services Within 24 Hours : Omar Abdullah



■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JULY 22: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday directed all departments to restore essential services, particularly electricity and drinking water supply, within 24 hours, while intensifying relief, rescue and restoration efforts across Jammu and Kashmir in response to incessant rains and flash floods.

Chairing a high-level review meeting at the Civil Secretariat, the Chief Minister reviewed the progress of restoration works,

● Turn on Page 2

CM Omar Reviews Beerwah Flood Damage, Assures Relief

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, JULY 22: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today visited Beerwah in Budgam district to take stock of the damage caused by incessant rainfall and the overflowing of Nallah Sukhnag.

● Turn on Page 2

Things Have Taken a Positive Turn in CCTV Installation at Police Stations: SC

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 22: The Supreme Court on Wednesday expressed satisfaction over the progress made in installing CCTV cam-



eras in police stations across the country, observing that the nationwide exercise has "taken a positive turn" in recent months and is moving in the right direction.

A Bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta made the observation

● Turn on Page 2

Cop Martyred in Anantnag Terror Attack; Operation Launched

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JUL 22: In the first terror attack targetting Jammu and Kashmir Police personnel this year, a lone terrorist shot dead a head constable deployed on Amarnath Yatra security duty in Anantnag on Wednesday, triggering a massive anti-terror operation and the detention of dozens of suspected underground

workers (OGWs). Travel Guides & Travelogues The attack on the policeman took place around 12.30 pm at Lal Chowk in Anantnag, the officials said.

Head Constable Ashiq Hussain of the IRP 3rd Battalion, who was posted on Amarnath Yatra security duty, was critically injured after being shot and rushed to the Government Medical College

● Turn on Page 2

Weather Situation to Remain Critical Across J&K Today, Improvement Expected From Tomorrow: Sonam Lotus

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JUL 22: Jammu and Kashmir will continue to witness a critical weather situation throughout Wednesday, with conditions expected to improve from Thursday, renowned meteorologist Sonam Lotus said while urging people to remain cautious and strictly adhere to official advisories.

Speaking amid widespread rain-



fall across the Union Territory, Lotus said the ongoing wet spell has brought exceptionally heavy precipitation to several districts, although Srinagar and many parts of South Kashmir have recorded comparatively lower rainfall than other regions.

"Today remains a crucial day. People should remain vigilant and follow all official advisories.

● Turn on Page 2

DGP Nalin Prabhat Personally Reviews Security Operations in Anantnag

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JULY 22: Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat on Wednesday personally reviewed the security situation in Anantnag, visiting the town to assess the ongoing anti-terror operation launched after the killing of a Jammu and Kashmir Police constable in a terrorist attack.

Accompanied by Special Director

● Turn on Page 2



Future Wars Cannot Be Fought by Individual Services : Air Chief Marshal A P Singh

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

KARWAR (KARNATAKA), JULY 22: Air Chief Marshal A P Singh on Wednesday asserted that future conflicts will require the Army, Navy and Air Force to operate as a single, integrated force, saying no individual military service can fight and win future wars on its own.

● Turn on Page 2

Water Supply Restored In 22 Hamlets of Flood-Hit Kargil Through Temporary Measures

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KARGIL/JAMMU, JUL 22: The administration in a swift action has restored drinking water supply in 22 most flash flood-affected areas of Kargil district through temporary arrangements while permanent restoration of damaged infrastructure is underway on a war footing, officials said. South Asians & Diaspora

The recent flash flood caused

extensive damage to infiltration galleries, collection chambers, pipelines and headworks, disrupting gravity-based water supply schemes across several villages in the district on Monday and Tuesday.

Officials said the public health engineering department, with the support of local residents and field staff, restored water supply through emergency measures, including submersible pumps, temporary

● Turn on Page 2

Budha Amarnath Yatra Begins Aug 16; Arrangements Reviewed

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 22: With the 12-day-long annual Buddha Amarnath yatra set to begin August 17, Jammu Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar and Inspector General of Police (IGP), Jammu Zone, Bhim Sen Tuti on Wednesday visited Poonch district to review arrangements for the pilgrimage.

The yatra, based in Poonch dis-

trict, will see the first batch of pilgrims depart from the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu on August 16. It will conclude August 28 on the occasion of Rakshabandhan, while the traditional Chhari Yatra will be taken out August 26.

The ancient Baba Budha Amarnath shrine is located in the Loran Valley along the Pulsata river, about 4,600 feet above sea level. It is

● Turn on Page 2

CS reviews implementation strategy for BHAVYA Scheme

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 22: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high-level meeting to review the implementation strategy for the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana (BHAVYA), a flagship Government of India initiative aimed at developing next-generation Plug-and-Play Industrial Parks across the country and positioning Jammu & Kashmir as a preferred investment destination.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), PDD; ACS, Finance; Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department; Managing Director, SIDCO; besides other senior officers of the



concerned departments.

Reviewing the proposals in detail, the Chief Secretary undertook an assessment of the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) prepared for the proposed Plug-and-Play Industrial Parks at Pekhari, Samba and Nowgam, Srinagar.

Stressing the need for meticulous

planning and technical robustness, he directed that the DPRs be thoroughly vetted by the Power Development Department and the Public Works (R&B) Department to ensure their technical feasibility, engineering soundness and conformity with the prescribed standards before their submission to the Government of

India for consideration under the BHAVYA Scheme.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the status of the land identified for establishment of the proposed industrial parks and sought details regarding the process of transfer and vesting of the land in favour of the implementing agency in accordance with the applicable legal and administrative provisions. He instructed the concerned departments to expedite all necessary procedural formalities so that the projects are taken forward without avoidable delays.

Dulloo further examined the proposed institutional and

● Turn on Page 2

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Javed Rana, Satish Sharma assess flood damage in Rajouri

Asks for speedy restoration of essential services, timely relief for affected families

HT NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI, JULY 22: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology, Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, along with Minister for Youth Services & Sports, Transport, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, today visited the flood-affected areas of Rajouri district to assess the damage caused by the recent flash floods and review the ongoing relief, rescue and restoration operations.

MLA Thanamandi Muzaffar Iqbal Khan, MLA Rajouri Iftikhar Ahmed and other officers accompanied the Ministers during their visit.

The Ministers visited the worst-affected localities, interacted with the affected families and took stock of the damage to houses, public infrastructure, drinking water supply and other essential services.

They visited Bella Colony, Darhali which witnessed flash floods following incessant rainfall, causing the Darhali, Khandli, Suktoh and Jamola streams to overflow and inundate several low-lying areas. The Darhali river has breached the flood



protection wall near Bela Colony, resulting in severe flooding of the new bus stand causing extensive damage to dozens of vehicles.

Javed Rana said the flash floods have caused extensive damage to public infrastructure, including roads, water supply and power supply systems, necessitating collective and immediate action for restoration. He said several rural areas have been cut off due to the damage while irrigation schemes, flood

protection bunds and residential houses have also suffered significant losses, underscoring the need for swift restoration measures and timely assistance to the affected families.

Javed Rana directed the district administration and line departments to work in close coordination to expedite restoration of essential services, particularly drinking water supply, road connectivity and other public utilities, on war footing. He stressed the need for a time-

bound assessment of damage to houses, agricultural land and public infrastructure to facilitate prompt disbursement of relief and compensation.

Javed Rana also stressed the need to restore power supply expeditiously, stating that several water supply schemes have been severely affected due to the non-availability of electricity. He directed the Power Development Department to ensure the earliest possible restoration of electricity so that drinking

water supply to the affected areas is resumed without delay.

Interacting with the affected people, the Ministers assured them that the government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, stands firmly with them and will extend all assistance for their relief, rehabilitation and early restoration of normalcy.

"Every possible effort will be made to provide timely relief, restore essential services and ensure early rehabilitation of the affected families. Our priority is to respond swiftly to the needs of the people, minimise their hardships and ensure that assistance reaches every deserving family without delay," Rana said.

Satish Sharma said that our immediate priority is to restore the essential services, support affected families and ensure that relief and rehabilitation measures reach every deserving household promptly through coordinated efforts of all departments.

The Ministers also appealed to the public to strictly adhere to weather advisories and avoid venturing into flood-prone areas until conditions improve.

KU's CCAS begins national seminar on India's foreign policy and Central Asia

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR JULY 22: The Centre of Central Asian Studies (CCAS), University of Kashmir (KU), commenced a two-day national seminar on 'The Political Dimensions of India's Foreign Policy: State, Society and Cultural-Economic Relations with Central Asia' in collaboration with Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR-NWRC) at the Main Campus.

The seminar aims to examine the changing dynamics of India's engagement with Central Asia



by exploring the social, cultural and economic dimensions of these relationships. It seeks to provide a platform for academics, researchers and policymakers to deliberate on contemporary developments and emerging opportunities in India's ties with the region.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan while referring to the theme of the seminar said that the study of foreign policy requires continuous academic engagement in view of evolving regional and global realities.

"Universities have an important responsibility to facilitate informed discussions on issues of regional and international significance. Such academic forums encourage research, dialogue and a deeper understanding of India's engagement with neighbouring regions and beyond," she said.

Dean Academic Affairs KU, Prof. Shariefuddin Pirzada, said that Central Asia continues to occupy an important place in India's strategic and cultural outlook and interdisciplinary research can contribute to a better understanding of the historical and contemporary dimensions of these relationships.

Registrar KU, Prof. Naseer Iqbal, said that such seminars provide valuable opportunities for scholars and students to engage with diverse perspectives on global affairs.

Dean, School of Social Sciences KU, Prof. Sa-beha Mufti, emphasized the need for sustained research on India's evolving relations with Central Asia, noting that academic institutions have an important role in generating evidence-based scholarship on regional and international issues.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Director, CCAS KU and Convenor of the seminar Prof. Wahid Nasaru, outlined the objectives of the seminar. He said the event has brought together scholars from different parts of the country to deliberate on the cultural and economic dimensions of India's engagement with Central Asia and to promote meaningful academic exchange in the field.

The two-day seminar features keynote lectures, research paper presentations, panel discussions and interactive sessions focusing on various aspects of India's foreign policy and its relations with Central Asia.

The latest edition of 'Central Asian Digest' was also released on the occasion.

The proceedings of the inaugural session were conducted by Dr. Zohra Batul, faculty at CCAS KU and the vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. Parvane Bhatt, faculty at CCAS KU.

DSW, KU Holds First Students' Council Meeting of The 2026 Session

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 22: Reinforcing its commitment to student-centred governance and participatory leadership, the Department of Students' Welfare (DSW), University of Kashmir, today organised the First Meeting of the Kashmir University Students' Council (Class Representatives) for the Academic Session 2026 at Gandhi Bhawan. The meeting was attended by more than 200 Class Representatives from the University's teaching departments and satellite campuses, providing them with a common platform to engage directly with the University's leadership on issues concerning student welfare, academic excellence, leadership and campus development.

The meeting was presided over by the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Nilofer Khan, and attended by Dean Academic Affairs, Prof. Pirzada Shariefuddin; Registrar, Prof. Naseer Iqbal; Dean Students' Welfare, Prof. Seema Singh; Controller of Examinations, Prof. Majid Zaman Baba; University Provost (Girls), Prof. Aneesa Jan; University Provost (Boys), Prof. Showkat Ahmad Shah; Coordinator, Physical Education & Sports, Dr. Surjeet Singh; Coordinator, University Health Centre, Dr. Khalid Nazir Tarzan; University Cultural Officer, Dr. Shahid Ali Khan, besides officers of the University.

In her presidential address, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Nilofer Khan, described the Class Representatives as key partners in the University's institutional growth and highlighted their vital role in strengthening the relationship between students and the University administration. Urging them to lead with responsibility, she called upon them to uphold the values of integrity, inclusiveness, empathy, discipline and accountability while representing the interests of their fellow students. She encouraged the representatives to become ambassadors of positive change by promoting academic excellence, harmony, innovation, and constructive dialogue across the campus. Reaffirming the University's commitment to maintaining an open, responsive, and student-centric administration, she assured the representatives that their ideas, feedback, and aspirations would continue to guide the University's efforts towards academic excellence and institutional development.

An engaging interactive session followed, during which the Class Representatives shared valuable suggestions and raised issues relating to student welfare, academic facilities, infrastructure, hostel facilities, digital services, cultural and literary activities, sports, student support services, and overall campus life. The University leadership appreciated the thoughtful feedback and assured the participants that all genuine suggestions would receive due consideration.

DC Pulwama chairs District Level Telecom Committee Meeting

Reviews Telecom Infrastructure, 4G Saturation and BharatNet progress in district

HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, JULY 22: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom today chaired a meeting of the District Level Telecom Committee (DLTC) at the Administrative Complex here to review the status of telecom infrastructure, mobile network coverage, BharatNet implementation and other connectivity-related issues across the district.

During the meeting, a detailed presentation highlighting the progress achieved under various telecom connectivity initiatives being implemented in the district was presented. Discussions focused on mobile tower saturation, augmentation of signals, phase-wise coverage network status, Right of Way (RoW) issues and the progress of the BharatNet project.

The Deputy Commissioner took a detailed review of the project-wise status of mobile tower installations and the progress of BharatNet & BSNL 4G Saturation Project across the district. He also reviewed the status of signal augmentation, coverage in



underserved and shadow areas, and issues related to pending sites, including power connectivity, land availability and other logistical requirements necessary for their timely completion.

Dr. Qayoom directed all stakeholder departments and telecom service providers to work in close coordination for the timely completion of ongoing projects and resolution of pending issues. He emphasized

the importance of strengthening digital connectivity, particularly in remote and underserved areas, to facilitate improved access to communication services, online platforms and digital governance initiatives.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Pulwama; Officers from R&B, KPDC, Rural Development, PMGSY; SDO BSNL, Pulwama and representatives of various telecom service providers.

DC Kulgam visits Qaimoh, Kudwani areas

Takes on-ground assessment of rainfall scenario

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, JULY 22: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, today visited Qaimoh and Kudwani areas to take an on-ground assessment of the prevailing rainfall scenario and review the preparedness of the flood management authorities.

During the visit, the DC inspected vulnerable locations, including flood-prone low lying areas, river banks and reviewed precautionary measures being taken by the concerned departments.

The Deputy Commissioner

interacted with the local residents and also informed that men and machinery have been deployed across the vulnerable locations to keep check on water levels.

The DC also directed the concerned departments to supervise the working of beat teams deployed to keep round the clock vigil over the flood gauge levels and extend assistance to vulnerable populations.

The DC appealed to the public to avoid venturing near rivers, streams and other water bodies during the ongoing spell of rainfall and to strictly



follow advisories issued by the administration.

He further directed the concerned officers to ensure the timely shifting of nomadic families from vulnerable locations to safer rescue centers and to remain prepared for any emergency response.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by Tehsildar Qaimoh, Executive Engineers of Irrigation & Flood Control Departments, and officers of other concerned departments, who briefed him about the preparedness measures and the ground situation.

Deputy Chief Minister visits flood hit Bella, reviews restoration works in Rajouri

HT NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI, JULY 22: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today visited the flood-affected area of Bella in Rajouri to assess the ground situation following the recent flash floods.

During the visit, the Deputy Chief Minister interacted with the officers and field functionaries deployed on the spot. He directed them to expedite restoration works, including clearance of damaged road stretches and restoration of essential services, so that normalcy is restored at the earliest.

Later, the Deputy Chief Minister chaired a review meeting in Rajouri to review the progress of restoration works and emergency response measures following the recent flash floods. He reviewed the preparedness and response of all concerned departments and directed officers to ensure speedy restoration of essential services and effective relief measures for the affected population.

The meeting was informed that the district administration,

along with all line departments, has been undertaking rescue, relief and restoration works on war footing. It was informed that four persons were initially reported missing in the flash flood incident, of whom three bodies have been recovered, while search operations are continuing to trace the remaining missing persons. Besides, multi-agency rescue operations involving the SDRF, NDRF, Police, Indian Army and other departments are being carried out in close coordination, while the administration continues to work round the clock for the safety and welfare of the affected people.

Reviewing the status of infrastructure restoration, the Deputy Chief Minister directed the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) to ensure proper drainage along NH-144A and expedite road works wherever progress is slow. He stressed that scientific drainage management is essential to prevent future damage.

The meeting was informed that 157 PMGSY roads were damaged due to the flash floods.



Officers of PWD, PMGSY and BRO were directed to restore connectivity on priority and ensure that all damaged public infrastructure is repaired at the earliest.

Reviewing the Jal Shakti Department, the officers informed that 131 water supply

schemes had been affected. Drinking water is presently being supplied through water tankers in affected areas until normal services are restored. It was further informed that of the 150 power feeders affected, all except 30 had been restored and the remaining

feeders would be made functional by the evening.

The Deputy Chief Minister also reviewed the availability of essential commodities and directed the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department to ensure there is no black marketing or hoarding. He

instructed the officers to maintain an uninterrupted supply of ration and other essentials, particularly for stranded labourers and vulnerable families. He was informed that dry ration kits and packed food are being distributed in the affected areas. The meeting was further informed that 76 schemes of the Irrigation and Flood Control Department have suffered damage.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed the department to prepare a comprehensive proposal for flood protection works in the Bella area to minimise the risk of such incidents in the future. Taking serious note of delays in repairing roads within the defect liability period, the Deputy Chief Minister directed that contractors who failed to fulfil their contractual obligations be identified and blacklisted in accordance with the rules.

He also reviewed the assessment of losses in the Agriculture, Horticulture, Education and other sectors. He directed the concerned departments to conduct a compre-

hensive and transparent assessment so that relief and rehabilitation measures are implemented without delay.

Appreciating the prompt response of the district administration and the coordinated efforts of all rescue agencies, the Deputy Chief Minister commended the officers and field teams for their dedication during the crisis. He called for continued coordination among all departments to ensure early restoration of normalcy and effective rehabilitation of the affected population.

The meeting was attended by MLA Rajouri Iftkhar Ahmed, MLA Thanamandi Muzaffar Iqbal Khan, Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma, Chief Engineer PWD (R&B), ADDC Malikzada Sheraz-ul-Haq, PO ICDS Harpal Singh, ACR Mohammad Jahangir Khan, SE PWD (R&B) Manzoor Ahmed, CPO Maqsood Ahmed, SE Jal Shakti Sunil Kumar Bhat, ACD Auqil Nuvaid, ACP Mohammad Rafique, DSEO Sandeep Sharma, DDE, Mohammad Nawaz Choudhary, ARTO, Ashiq Rafiq Malik and other officers.

Continuous Rainfall: District Disaster Management teams intensify field monitoring across Baramulla

HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, JULY 22: In view of the continuous rainfall across Baramulla district, the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Baramulla is on high alert and conducting field inspections to assess the situation in their respective jurisdictions.

Various sectoral officers visited vulnerable locations, monitored water levels in rivers and nallahs, reviewed flood preparedness measures, and assessed the availability of essential resources to ensure prompt



response in case of any emergency.

At Sopore, Additional Deputy Commissioner, S.A. Raina, accompanied by a team of officers, visited Mahrajpora, Tarzoo, Ningli and Sheer Colony to monitor the water level of the River Jhelum and inspect vulnerable points along the embankments. He informed that adequate sandbags are available to strengthen the bunds, if required, and stated that the situation is presently under control.

At Uri, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Prince Kumar, accompanied by a team of officers, inspected Nambla, Bela Salamabad, Machikrand, Bandi, Trikanjan, Boniyar, Mayan, Hapat Nallah and Hajipeer Nallah. The inspection revealed that water levels at all locations were within the normal range and no untoward incident was reported.

At Pattan, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Gulzar Ahmad visited Matipora, Singhpora, Hanjiveera and other vulnerable spots to monitor water levels in the River Jhelum and local nallahs. During the inspection, engineers from the Flood Irrigation Division, Narbal, apprised the SDM about the availability of adequate sandbags for emergency response. The SDM also inspected various health institutions to review the availability of medical staff, essential medicines and emergency preparedness, besides interacting with attendants to obtain feedback on healthcare services.

At Tangmarg, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Mir Jalil, accompanied by a team of officers, inspected Nallah Ferozpora to monitor the water level and review flood preparedness in the area.

DDMA Baramulla is maintaining close surveillance across all sub-divisions. All concerned departments have been directed to remain fully prepared, ensure round-the-clock monitoring of vulnerable locations, and respond promptly to any emergency.

District Admin Kupwara bids adieu to outgoing DIO Iftakhar Naseem, welcomes Aadil Manzoor Wani

HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, JULY 22: District Administration Kupwara today accorded a warm farewell to the outgoing District Information Officer (DIO), Iftakhar Naseem, while extending a cordial welcome to the newly posted District Information Officer, Aadil Manzoor Wani.

Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse conveyed his sincere appreciation for the dedicated services rendered by Iftakhar Naseem during his tenure in the district. He lauded his professionalism, commitment, and valuable contribution towards strengthening public



communication and dissemination of government initiatives. The Deputy Commissioner wished him continued success and excellence in his future assignments.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner also welcomed Aadil Manzoor Wani as the new District Information Officer, expressing confidence that he

would carry forward the responsibilities with dedication and work closely with the district administration to further enhance public outreach and information

dissemination.

The farewell-cum-welcome function was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kupwara, Gulzar Ahmad Khan; Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR), Peerzada Mumtaz Ahmad; Chief Planning Officer (CPO), Parvaiz Ahmad; Accounts Officer, Javaid Ahmad; and other officers and officials of the District Administration Kupwara. The officers present extended their best wishes to the outgoing DIO for his future endeavors and welcomed the new incumbent, expressing hope for a productive and successful tenure in Kupwara.

Pre-Potential Linked Plan for FY 2027-28 discussed at Shopian

HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPAIN, JULY 22: A meeting of officers was held today to discuss the Pre-Potential Linked Plan (PLP) for the financial Year 2027-28, here at Mini-Secretariat Shopian. During the meeting, CPO, Mudasir Ahmad Dar emphasized the crucial need for all line departments to provide timely, accurate information and to conduct extensive public awareness drives regarding the plan.

Speaking on the occasion, District Development Manager (DDM) NABARD, Zubair Ahmad, briefed participants on

the objectives of the potential plan and highlighted its role in strengthening the district's agriculture and allied sectors. The plan aims to promote sustainable agriculture, improve livelihoods and facilitate better access to institutional credit for farmers and allied activities. He also highlighted key aspects and strategic directions of the Potential Linked Plan, stressing its role in boosting sector-wise growth and rural credit flow across the district.

GM, DIC, Sharjeel Ali Naik, LDM, Farooq Ahmad Dar, CHO, CAO, and other concerned officers were present.

Aadil Manzoor Wani assumes charge as DIO Kupwara

HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, JULY 22: Aadil Manzoor Wani today assumed the charge of District Information Officer (DIO), Kupwara.

He took over the charge from Iftakhar Naseem, who was also present on the occasion and extended his best wishes to the incoming officer for a successful tenure.

Speaking on the occasion, the DIO said that the district information setup shall be further strengthened for timely and effective dissemination of information regarding government initiatives,

developmental activities and public welfare schemes among the masses.

He said that close coordination with the media fraternity and all concerned stakeholders shall remain a priority so that the benefits of government programmes reach every section of society, particularly in far-flung areas of the district.

The DIO also appreciated the services rendered by his predecessor and expressed confidence that the pace of information dissemination in the district shall be carried forward with renewed vigour.

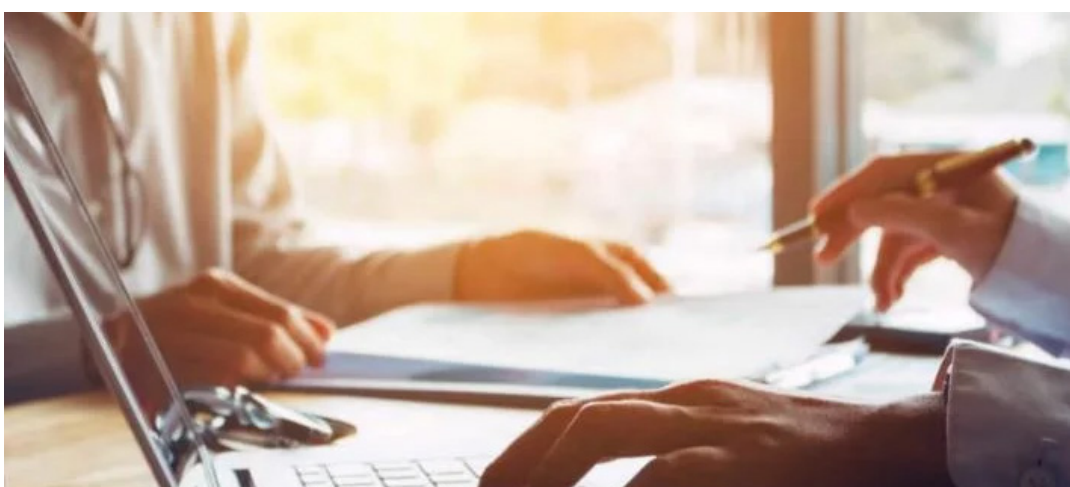
JKLFC extends relief to Borrowers under Settlement Scheme-2026

Six NPA Accounts settled, Rs. 3.36 crore interest waived

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 22: The Settlement Committee of the Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh Finance Corporation (JKLFC) met under the chairmanship of the Managing Director to consider settlement of seven Non-Performing Asset (NPA) loan accounts under the Settlement Scheme-2026 (SS-2026).

The Committee approved settlement proposals in respect of six NPA loan accounts involving a total settlement amount of approximately Rs. 84.43 lakh, subject to the borrowers depositing the approved settlement amounts within the stipulated period and fulfilling all the provisions of the scheme. One settlement proposal was deferred pending submission of an updated legal status report and



legal opinion.

The Board of Directors, in its 247th meeting held on 31st December 2025, had approved the introduction of the Settlement Scheme-2026 (SS-2026). The scheme came into force with

immediate effect and shall remain in operation up to 30th September 2026.

The scheme has been introduced as a One-Time Settlement (OTS) mechanism to facilitate recovery of long-pending Non-

Performing Assets by providing eligible borrowers an opportunity to liquidate their outstanding loan liabilities on concessional terms, thereby improving recoveries and reducing the Corporation's NPA

portfolio.

The Managing Director emphasized that the scheme is an important initiative to recover long-pending dues, facilitate closure of stressed loan accounts, and safeguard the financial interests of the Corporation. He directed all Branch Heads and District Officers to expedite identification of eligible cases and ensure prompt processing and submission of settlement proposals.

The Corporation reiterated its commitment to strengthening its recovery mechanism and improving the quality of its loan portfolio through effective implementation of the Settlement Scheme-2026.

Eligible borrowers have been advised to avail the benefits of the scheme before its expiry on 30th September 2026.

Audience Applauds ICF Anti-Drug Performance at Chinara Book Festival 2026 in SKICC

■ GULFAM BARJI

SRINAGAR, JULY 22: As part of the ongoing cultural programmes at the Chinara Book Festival 2026 being held at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) on the banks of Dal Lake Indar Cultural Forum Sumbal presented a thought-provoking Kashmiri short play titled "Nasha Chu Barbaadi" under the direction of the Forum's President Saleem Yusuf. The play highlighted the



growing menace of drug abuse and its devastating impact on society. Through compelling

performances and realistic portrayal, the artists conveyed a strong message urging the younger generation to stay away from narcotics and adopt a healthy lifestyle. The performance received an enthusiastic response from the audience, who appreciated the play's meaningful theme, effective direction, and the impressive acting of the performers. The presentation was widely praised for using theatre as a powerful medium to spread awareness against drug abuse.

Weather alert: DC Bandipora urges people to stay away from water bodies amid prevailing weather conditions

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JULY 22: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, on Wednesday appealed to the public to stay away from water bodies in view of the prevailing weather conditions and rising water levels.

Addressing the media during her field visit to Sonerwani, Bonar Nallah and other adjoining areas, the Deputy Commissioner advised residents not to venture near water bodies and to strictly adhere to all safety advisories issued by the district administration and other concerned agencies.

She also called upon parents and guardians to closely monitor their children and ensure they do not go near water bodies, stressing that extra vigilance is essential during the prevailing weather conditions.

Emphasising that no work or activity is worth risking one's life, she said, "If life is safe, everything else can be achieved," while asking people to prioritise their safety above all else.

She appealed to the public to remain vigilant and immediately report any emergency to the District Control Room on 7006526985 or 7006328689 for prompt assistance.

The Deputy Commissioner further called for public cooperation with the administration, asking residents to avoid movement near water bodies and remain alert until the weather situation improves

DC Budgam visits Jhelum embankment at Zonipora, reviews flood preparedness

Directs round-the-clock monitoring

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, JULY 22: Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today visited the Jhelum embankment at Zonipora, Rakh Shalina, to review flood preparedness and precautionary measures following incessant rainfall.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the preparedness of the concerned departments and directed officers to remain on high alert, ensure round-the-clock monitoring of the embankment, and maintain close coordination for timely response to any eventuality. He stressed the importance of taking all necessary preventive measures to safeguard lives and property and instructed the concerned departments to remain fully equipped with men, machinery and other essential resources.

The Deputy Commissioner also interacted with local residents and assured them that the district administration is closely monitoring the situation and taking all necessary



steps to ensure public safety. He urged the public to remain vigilant and cooperate with the administration.

The DC further directed the concerned departments to ensure uninterrupted irrigation facilities for farmers and advised people not to place irrigation pipes beneath the embankment, as it could weaken its structural stability.

He instructed officers to take stringent action against offenders

and ensure strengthening of embankments.

Among others, Additional District Development Commissioner Budgam, Vivek Agarwal; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Taufeeq Ahmad Gazi; Chief Planning Officer; Superintending Engineers; Executive Engineers of various engineering departments; the concerned Tehsildar; and other district officers accompanied the Deputy Commissioner during the visit.

DC Udhampur chairs NCORD meeting, calls for stronger coordination to combat drug menace

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR, JULY 22: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Minga Sherpa today chaired a meeting of the District-Level Narco Coordination Centre to review drug control measures and discuss restructuring of the NCORD mechanism for strengthening anti-narcotics efforts. Among those present were Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh, Additional Superintendent

of Police Sandeep Bhat and senior officers from various line departments.

The meeting reviewed key aspects of drug prevention and control, including identification and rehabilitation of drug addicts, progression PIT-NDPS cases, action against erring pharmacies, installation of CCTV cameras, measures to curb illicit cultivation of narcotic crops, inspection of de-addiction centres, block-wise data on drug abusers,

identification of drug hotspots, surveillance of educational institutions, implementation of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns, mass awareness programmes, computerised billing systems in pharmacies, Nasha Mukti Panchayats and cases registered under the NDPS Act.

The DC directed agencies concerned to strengthen efforts to identify and apprehend individuals involved in drug trafficking, mon-

itor abuse-prone areas and promote community-based rehabilitation and awareness initiatives and instructed all departments to intensify counselling services and strengthen IEC activities to sensitise the public, particularly the youth, about the harmful effects of drug abuse.

The Chief Education Officer and college principals were instructed to organise regular awareness programmes and anti-drug campaigns

in educational institutions.

The Deputy Commissioner called for decisive action against drug trafficking, effective seizure of illicit substances and sustained efforts to protect the youth from the menace of drugs and directed departments concerned to enhance their overall performance, ensure timely submission of reports and work in close coordination to make the district drug-free under the Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyan.

Sakeena Itoo conducts surprise inspection of GMC & Associated Hospital Anantnag

Reviews healthcare preparedness amid incessant rainfall; directs round-the-clock emergency response, uninterrupted patient care

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, JULY 22: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today conducted a surprise inspection of Government Medical College (GMC) and Associated Hospital, Anantnag, to assess the institution's preparedness and response mechanism in view of the prevailing weather situation caused by incessant rainfall.

During the visit, the Minister inspected the Emergency ward, medical and surgical wards, diagnostic facilities and other critical care units. She reviewed the availability of essential medicines, emergency equipment, oxygen supply, power backup, ambulance services and other healthcare facilities to ensure that the hospital is fully equipped to meet any weather-related exigency.

Interacting with doctors, patients and attendants, Sakeena Itoo took first-hand appraisal of the functioning of the hospital and directed the administration to ensure uninterrupted healthcare services, particularly emergency and trauma care. She stressed the need for maintaining optimum manpower, adequate medical supplies and seamless coordination among all departments to effectively respond to any emergency.

The Minister instructed the hospital authorities to remain on high alert and ensure that all emergency response systems remain fully operational. She emphasised that no patient should face inconvenience due to the prevailing weather conditions and directed the administration to strengthen monitoring mechanisms for prompt and efficient delivery of healthcare services.

Calling for strict adherence to sanitation and hygiene standards, Sakeena Itoo directed the concerned officers to ensure proper cleanliness across the hospital premises and maintain effective drainage systems to prevent water logging. She also instructed the authorities to keep adequate stocks of life-saving drugs, blood, oxygen and other essential consumables available at all times.

Reaffirming the Government's commitment towards safeguarding public health, the Minister said that all healthcare institutions, particularly those located in vulnerable areas, have been directed to remain fully prepared to deal with any eventuality arising out of the ongoing spell of heavy rainfall. She added that the Health Department is closely monitoring the situation and all necessary measures are being taken to ensure uninterrupted and quality healthcare services across the region.

The Minister directed the officers to maintain close coordination with the district administration and other line departments to ensure swift response to any emergency. She reiterated that safeguarding the health and well-being of the people remains the Government's highest priority.

CS reviews measures to strengthen cybercrime prevention framework

Stresses effective JK4C functioning, stakeholder coordination and timely assistance to victims

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 22: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a meeting of the Home Department to review the measures undertaken for prevention of cybercrimes in the Union Territory, with particular focus on safeguarding citizens against emerging cyber threats, including Digital Arrest scams, phishing, online financial frauds, cyber slavery, identity theft and other cyber-enabled offences.

The meeting also reviewed the Action Taken Report (ATR) on the directions issued during the previous review and assessed the progress achieved in strengthening the institutional framework, investigative capacity, public awareness and inter-agency coordination for combating cybercrime in Jammu and Kashmir.

Those who attended the meeting includes Principal Secretary, Home; Commissioner Secretary, IT; Commissioner Secretary, GAD; Commissioner Secretary, Law; Scientists from NIC and officers from the Department of Public Grievances.

Chief Secretary while chairing this meeting observed that while the Government has created a comprehensive institutional framework to combat cybercrime in the Union Territory, its success would lie in its effective implementation and its ability to provide timely relief to citizens affected by cyber frauds.

Emphasising the need for sustained oversight, the Chief Secretary directed the Principal Secretary, Home, to undertake regular and comprehensive reviews of the functioning of the cybercrime prevention and response framework to ensure that all stakeholder departments and agencies work in close coordination. He stressed the importance of fostering seamless synergy among the Police, banks, financial institutions, telecom service providers, Information Technology Department and other concerned agencies to strengthen preventive mechanisms, expedite response to cyber incidents and safeguard citizens' hard-earned money from organised cyber fraudsters.

Referring to the recently



established Jammu & Kashmir Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (JK4C), the Chief Secretary said that the institution has been envisioned as the nodal mechanism for coordinated action against cybercrime in the Union Territory and should emerge as a robust, technology-driven platform for prevention, intelligence sharing, investigation, capacity building and inter-agency coordination.

He directed that the JK4C, headed by an Inspector General of Police and supported by senior police officers and technical experts, be provided with the requisite space and support to enable it to function

to its fullest potential and effectively discharge its mandate in the service of the people.

Emphasising continuous capacity building, the Chief Secretary directed all Law Enforcement Agencies to ensure time-bound completion of CyTrain courses by police personnel and expedite the exposure visits of officers to States having established best practices in cybercrime prevention and investigation.

He observed that continuous upskilling of investigators and adoption of modern investigative techniques would significantly enhance the effectiveness of cybercrime in-

vestigations.

He expressed confidence that a well-equipped and efficiently functioning JK4C, working in close coordination with all stakeholders, would significantly strengthen the Union Territory's capacity to prevent cybercrime, improve investigation and recovery of defrauded amounts, and instil greater public confidence in the Government's ability to protect citizens in the digital domain.

Reviewing the awareness initiatives undertaken across the Union Territory, the Chief Secretary was informed by Principal Secretary, Home, Chandraker Bharti that cyber

safety awareness programmes have been integrated into Police-Public meetings at the police station level, with awareness campaigns being continuously redesigned on the basis of analysis of cybercrime complaint trends.

Additionally the meeting was informed that twenty-three Cyber Police Stations have been established across all police districts in Jammu and Kashmir, significantly strengthening the cybercrime investigation network in the Union Territory.

Reviewing the progress made in strengthening institutional mechanisms, the Chief Secretary was apprised that the Government has notified the establishment of the Jammu & Kashmir Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (JK4C) to provide an integrated framework for prevention, investigation and coordination in cybercrime cases.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the implementation of the e-Zero FIR mechanism for cyber financial frauds involving amounts of Rs. 1 lakh and above. He observed that prompt registration of complaints coupled with seamless

integration of the mechanism with the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) would considerably improve the capacity of law enforcement agencies to initiate immediate action for freezing fraudulent transactions and recovering defrauded amounts.

The meeting also reviewed the utilisation of advanced cyber investigation platforms including Sahyog, Samanvaya and Pratibimb for interstate coordination, hotspot mapping, content takedown and investigation of organised cybercrime networks.

Reiterating that prevention through awareness remains the most effective strategy against cybercrime, the Chief Secretary called upon all departments to work in close coordination and adopt a whole-of-government approach to protect citizens from cyber threats. He further stressed the need to strengthen institutional mechanisms, improve intelligence sharing, leverage technological innovations and maintain sustained public outreach to build a resilient cyber security ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir.

HT EDITORIAL

The Price of False Promises

Job scams continue to exploit desperation and by and by demanding stronger vigilance from both authorities and the public at large. Filing of a charge-sheet by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW), Kashmir, in the alleged Airports Authority of India recruitment scam is a welcome step towards bringing those accused of exploiting unemployed youth to justice. The case, involving allegations that job seekers were duped of substantial amounts of money on the false promise of government employment, is not an isolated incident. Rather, it is another reminder of a disturbing trend that has repeatedly surfaced across Jammu and Kashmir over the past several years.

The region has witnessed the emergence of numerous individuals and dubious organisations claiming to have influence in government departments, public sector undertakings, or security agencies. They lure desperate job aspirants with assurances of guaranteed appointments in return for hefty payments. In almost every instance, the promises prove to be fraudulent, leaving victims not only financially ruined but also emotionally devastated.

The persistence of such rackets raises important questions about preventive mechanisms. While law enforcement agencies have acted in several cases after complaints were lodged, there is an equally pressing need for stronger surveillance, quicker detection of fraudulent networks, and sustained public awareness campaigns. Fraudsters thrive when they believe they can operate for months, or even years, without attracting official attention.

At the same time, society must also acknowledge an uncomfortable reality. Many victims fall prey despite repeated warnings from government agencies, the media, and law enforcement that no genuine government job can be purchased. Recruitment to public services follows transparent procedures, and any individual claiming to secure appointments through personal influence or monetary consideration should immediately invite suspicion.

Before handing over money or personal documents, every job seeker must verify the credentials of the person or organisation making such claims. Official recruitment notifications are published only through authorised government channels. A simple verification with the concerned department can prevent the loss of hard-earned savings and spare families immense distress.

Unemployment undoubtedly creates vulnerability, and fraudsters exploit that vulnerability with calculated precision. But desperation should never replace due diligence. Every successful scam encourages more criminals to target innocent people, while every informed and cautious citizen weakens their network.

The latest prosecution should therefore serve not merely as a legal action against a few accused individuals but as a public lesson. The fight against job scams cannot be won by law enforcement alone. It requires a partnership between vigilant authorities, responsible media, and an informed public. Only when fraudsters find no willing victims and no space to operate will such rackets finally lose their grip on society.

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The Teacher Who Built My Foundation

A Tribute to Master Syed Ziya-ud-Din Bukhari



■ DR. MOHIUDIN ZORE KASHMIRI

"The influence of a good teacher can never be erased by time."

Every magnificent building stands firmly because of the strength of its foundation. However impressive its architecture may appear, without a solid base it cannot withstand the test of time. Human life follows the same principle. Every successful individual, regardless of profession or status, owes much of his or her achievements to the quality of the education received during the formative years. The earliest teachers shape not only the intellect of a child but also his character, values, discipline, and vision for life. Looking back over my own educational journey, I realize that whatever I have achieved today rests upon the strong educational foundation laid by a few remarkable teachers. Among them, one personality shines brighter than all others, Master Syed Ziya-ud-Din Bukhari, my beloved teacher, mentor, and guide.

I consider myself exceptionally fortunate that destiny placed me under the guidance of Master Syed Ziya-ud-Din Bukhari during one of the most important stages of my education. He taught me Social Science from Class VIII until my matriculation during the academic years 1986-1987 at Government High School, Wahabpora, Budgam, Kashmir. Nearly four decades have passed since then, yet the memories of his classroom remain as fresh as if they belonged to yesterday. Time has faded many faces and many events, but it has failed to diminish my admiration for this extraordinary teacher.

People often romanticize the past by assuming that everything was better in earlier times. My experience tells me otherwise. Our school, like every educational institution, had teachers of different abilities and attitudes. Some were sincere and dedicated, while others treated teaching merely as a government job. A few were influenced by political ideologies, some carried religious prejudices into the classroom, and others lacked professional commitment altogether. Nevertheless, there were shining exceptions. Our respected Headmaster, Mr. Hundu Sahib, and Master Syed Ziya-ud-Din Bukhari represented the highest ideals of the teaching profession. They were true academicians whose only mission was the education and overall development of their students.

Today educational planners proudly advocate multidisciplinary learning, experiential education, critical thinking, multilingual instruction, and student-centred pedagogy. These concepts appear frequently in modern educational policies and teacher-training programmes. Yet, when I compare these modern theories with the teaching practices of Master Ziya-ud-Din Bukhari nearly forty years ago, I realize that he had already been practising these principles long before they became fashionable educational terminology.

His Social Science classes were never limited to the textbook. Every lesson became an intellectual journey. While explaining geography, he would connect it with history, economics, agriculture, climate, and the daily lives of ordinary people. A lesson on history naturally led to discussions about culture, civilization, politics, ethics, and human behaviour. Current affairs frequently entered his classroom, making us understand that education was not something confined to examinations but an instrument for understanding the world around us.

Although most students belonged to rural backgrounds, he confidently delivered much of his lectures in English and Urdu while frequently explaining difficult concepts in our local language whenever necessary. Instead of memorising facts mechanically, we learnt to understand ideas. This multilingual approach improved both our subject knowledge and our language skills without us even realizing it.

His classroom was a theatre of learning. One could never imagine him sitting lazily behind a desk. He remained in constant motion throughout the period. Holding the textbook in one hand, he walked briskly from one corner of the classroom to another. His expressive body language, energetic gestures, changing tone of voice, and lively facial expressions transformed every lecture into a memorable performance. Sometimes he spoke softly to encourage us; at other moments his powerful voice echoed across the classroom as he emphasized an important concept. He drew diagrams on the blackboard, wrote key words, prepared rough sketches, asked spontaneous questions, corrected our notebooks with his red pen, and ensured that no student remained passive. Every minute of his class was intellectually alive.



Looking back now as an educationist myself, I understand that his teaching was based on active learning long before educational researchers formally defined the concept. He never allowed students to become silent spectators; he made each one of us participants in the learning process.

Morning assemblies were another opportunity for him to educate us. His speeches often dealt with history, literature, morality, science, citizenship, and national development. At that age many of us could not fully grasp the depth of his ideas. Only years later did I realize the wisdom hidden in those inspiring addresses.

Perhaps the most valuable part of my education took place outside the classroom.

Master Ziya-ud-Din Bukhari lived in the village of Daharmunah and walked nearly five kilometres every day to reach Government High School, Wahabpora. My own village, Farashgund, lay almost halfway along that route. Consequently, I had the privilege of accompanying him to school on countless mornings.

Those daily walks became moving classrooms. As we crossed fields, hills, streams, and village paths, he discussed almost every aspect of life. He spoke about honesty, discipline, education, agriculture, history, literature, religion, human dignity, and social responsibility. Unlike ordinary conversations between teacher and student, these discussions shaped my thinking and broadened my understanding of society.

One unforgettable lesson still guides my conduct today.

The pathway to school was rough, uneven, and often covered with stones, broken glass, sharp thorns, or other dangerous objects. Whenever Master Sahib noticed anything that could injure a passer-by, he quietly stopped, removed the obstacle, and threw it safely aside. There was no audience to appreciate his action, no publicity, and no expectation of reward. One day he told me that every responsible citizen should leave the road safer than he found it.

This simple act became one of the greatest moral lessons of my life.

He taught me that service to humanity is not always performed through grand speeches or expensive charity. Sometimes genuine service means quietly removing a thorn from another person's path.

As I belonged to a farming family and my parents had never received formal education, I was the first-generation learner in my family. My parents valued education but lacked the experience to guide me academically. Master Ziya-ud-Din Bukhari filled that gap. He personally counselled my parents regarding my future education and encouraged them to allow me to continue my studies beyond the level they had imagined possible.

He constantly motivated me to pursue higher education and cultivate intellectual curiosity. Throughout my academic journey I continued to seek his advice and sincerely tried to follow it. Looking back today, I can confidently say that many of the milestones in my educational and professional career were possible because he encouraged me to dream beyond the limitations of my social and economic background.

Not every teacher appreciated my progress. Some developed prejudice against me and subjected me to unnecessary criticism and harassment. Such behaviour could easily have discouraged an ordinary student. Fortunately, Master Ziya-ud-Din Bukhari always supported me with wisdom and dignity. He never entered into unnecessary conflicts, yet his calm guidance protected my confidence and allowed me to continue my studies without losing hope.

Educational excursions organized by our school became another extension of his classroom. While other teachers often regarded these tours merely as recreational outings, Master Sahib transformed every excursion into an educational experience. Whether we visited historical monuments, archaeological sites, rivers, mountains, or towns, he carefully explained their historical significance, geographical features, cultural importance, and social relevance.

Some teachers attempted to influence students through political opinions or religious dogmas. Master Sahib consciously avoided such distractions. His objective was never indoctrination but education. He wanted us to become thoughtful, knowledgeable, rational, and compassionate human beings capable of facing the challenges of the twenty-first century with confidence.

Years passed. I completed my education and entered professional life. Many relationships naturally weakened with time, but my relationship with Master Syed Ziya-ud-Din Bukhari remained strong. I continued visiting him and maintained close contact with his family. His children and grandchildren have always treated me with affection and proudly acknowledge me as one of the devoted students of their father and grandfather.

Such relationships demonstrate that true education creates lifelong bonds extending far beyond classrooms and examinations.

In the year 2000, Master Syed Ziya-ud-Din Bukhari retired from government service after an illustrious career that culminated in his service as Zonal Education Officer (ZEO). Subsequently, he was associated with DIET Beerwah, where he continued contributing to teacher education.

His retirement was an emotional occasion for me. To express my gratitude, I wrote a tribute that was published in the newsletter of the Directorate of School Education, Kashmir. At that time, publishing an appreciation article on the retirement of a teacher was almost unheard of in our society. It was a small but heartfelt attempt to acknowledge the immense contribution of a man whose influence extended far beyond official service.

Today Master Sahib is in the evening of his life. Most of his time is devoted to prayers, reflection, and recitation of the Holy Qur'an. Whenever anyone known to me visits him, he inquires about my well-being, blesses me, and expresses happiness over whatever little service I have been able to render to society. Nothing gives me greater satisfaction than knowing that my teacher is pleased with his student.

As years continue to pass, my respect for him only grows stronger. Many teachers educate for examinations; a few educate for life. Master Syed Ziya-ud-Din Bukhari belonged to the latter category. He shaped minds, built character, inspired dreams, and transformed lives. His lessons extended beyond books into every aspect of human existence.

If today I possess confidence, commitment to education, social responsibility, and the courage to pursue knowledge, much of the credit belongs to the teacher who quietly laid the foundation of my life nearly forty years ago.

Buildings may stand because of concrete foundations, but human lives stand because of great teachers.

For me, Master Syed Ziya-ud-Din Bukhari will always remain that foundation.

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■ MOHAMMAD HANIEF

The summer of 2026 brought more than seasonal change to Jammu and Kashmir—it brought a series of devastating cloudbursts, flash floods and extreme weather events that left behind a trail of destruction across the Himalayan region. From the rugged mountains of Kishtwar and Doda to the picturesque landscapes of Pahalgam and vulnerable settlements across the Jammu and Kashmir divisions, sudden torrents of rain transformed mountain streams into destructive floods within minutes. Roads were buried under debris, homes and agricultural land were washed away, and thousands of residents found their lives disrupted by a changing climate that is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore.

The disasters witnessed this year are not isolated incidents. Rather, they are part of a disturbing climatic trend that has gradually emerged across Jammu and Kashmir over the past decade. The increasing frequency of cloudbursts, flash floods, landslides, prolonged dry spells, unprecedented heat waves and erratic rainfall patterns reflects the growing climate sensitivity of the western Himalayas. Climate change is no longer a distant possibility for the region—it is a lived reality unfolding across one of the world's most fragile mountain ecosystems.

A cloudburst is an intense spell of rainfall concentrated over a very small geographical area, usually lasting less than an hour. During such an event, rainfall can exceed 100 millimetres within a short period, overwhelming the land's ability to absorb water. The result is a sudden surge of runoff that races downhill with enormous force, carrying mud, boulders, uprooted trees and debris. In the steep valleys of Jammu and Kashmir, these torrents rapidly transform into destructive flash floods capable of sweeping away everything in their path.

The geography of Jammu and Kashmir makes it particularly vulnerable to such disasters. The Himalayan slopes are steep, rivers are fast-flowing and numerous villages are located close to mountain streams and flood-prone areas. Roads frequently cut through unstable hillsides, while settlements have increasingly expanded along riverbanks and natural drainage channels. When intense rainfall strikes, water gathers momentum almost instantly, triggering landslides and debris flows that can isolate entire communities within minutes. In mountain regions where accessibility often depends upon a single road network, even minor disruptions can have serious humanitarian and economic consequences.

The cloudbursts and intense rainfall events witnessed during 2026 demonstrated this vulnerability with alarming clarity. Multiple incidents affected districts including Kishtwar, Doda, Ramban, Reasi, Poonch and parts of the Kashmir Valley. Flash floods damaged homes, washed away roads and bridges, disrupted power and communication networks, inundated agricultural land and cut off remote villages from essential services. Important highways connecting mountainous districts were repeatedly blocked by landslides, delaying rescue and

Cloudbursts and the Changing Climate of J&K



relief operations. In several areas, residents were forced to evacuate their homes as floodwaters inundated settlements and caused extensive damage to public infrastructure.

For local communities, the destruction extended far beyond damaged buildings. Agricultural fields were buried beneath mud and stones, irrigation channels were destroyed and livestock was swept away by raging waters. Farmers lost standing crops, while orchards and vegetable farms suffered severe damage. For families whose livelihoods depend upon agriculture and livestock, these disasters erased months of hard work within a matter of minutes. In mountain economies where climatic stability remains central to livelihoods, the consequences of such disasters often persist long after floodwaters recede.

The tourism sector, one of Jammu and Kashmir's principal economic pillars, has also become increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of extreme weather events. Cloudbursts, flash floods, landslides and prolonged spells of heavy rainfall have repeatedly disrupted transportation networks and public services, highlighting the growing challenge of ensuring safety and resilience in mountainous regions. Such events affect not only infrastructure but also the livelihoods of thousands of people engaged directly and indirectly in tourism-related activities. The increasing unpredictability of weather patterns underscores the urgent need for climate-resilient infrastructure,

effective disaster management strategies and environmentally sustainable planning that can withstand the realities of a changing climate.

What makes the events of 2026 particularly significant is that they are not isolated occurrences. Over the past decade, Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed a noticeable increase in extreme weather events. While cloudbursts have always occurred in the Himalayan region, they were once relatively infrequent and generally confined to isolated mountain pockets. Today, reports of cloudbursts, flash floods, landslides and episodes of intense rainfall are becoming increasingly common across both the Jammu and Kashmir divisions. Their frequency and geographical spread suggest that these disasters are emerging as recurring manifestations of a changing climate rather than exceptional occurrences.

The devastating floods of September 2014 marked a turning point in public awareness regarding climate-related disasters in Jammu and Kashmir. Although those floods resulted from prolonged heavy rainfall rather than a cloudburst, they exposed the vulnerability of urban planning, drainage systems and settlements constructed along floodplains and riverbanks. Since then, almost every monsoon season has witnessed incidents of flash floods, landslides or intense rainfall somewhere in the region. More recently, Jammu and Kashmir has experienced unprecedented summer heat waves, shrinking snow

cover, changing precipitation patterns, unusually warm winters and erratic monsoonal behaviour—all of which point towards significant climatic transformations occurring across the western Himalayas.

Scientists attribute this trend to a combination of climatic and human-induced factors. Rising global temperatures have increased the atmosphere's capacity to retain moisture. When moisture-laden winds encounter the Himalayan ranges, they rise rapidly, cool and release enormous volumes of rainfall over small geographical areas. The interaction between monsoonal systems and western disturbances further enhances the possibility of intense precipitation across the western Himalayan region. Climate scientists have repeatedly warned that mountain ecosystems are warming faster than many lowland regions, making the Himalayas particularly susceptible to extreme weather phenomena.

Human activities have significantly amplified the impact of these natural events. Rapid urbanisation, indiscriminate road cutting, deforestation, quarrying and construction along riverbanks have weakened the fragile Himalayan ecosystem. Forests that once absorbed rainfall and stabilised mountain slopes have diminished, while encroachments upon natural drainage channels have restricted the free flow of floodwaters. Consequently, rainfall that might once have caused limited damage now results in devastating floods, landslides and widespread disruptions. Development undertaken without adequate ecological assessments has further heightened the vulnerability of mountain communities to climate-induced disasters.

The recurring disasters underline the urgent need for stronger disaster preparedness. Although weather forecasting has improved considerably, predicting the precise location and timing of a cloudburst remains extremely difficult because such events develop rapidly over very small areas. Expanding Doppler weather radar coverage, installing additional automatic weather stations and strengthening community-based early warning systems can provide valuable time for evacuation and emergency response. Equally important is the dissemination of timely and accessible weather advisories that enable communities to respond effectively during emergencies.

Infrastructure planning must also adapt to the realities of a changing climate. Roads, bridges, drainage systems and public buildings in mountainous regions should be designed to withstand extreme rainfall and landslides. Environmental regulations that discourage construction in ecologically sensitive and flood-prone areas must be strictly enforced, while forests, wetlands and natural drainage systems should be protected and restored as indispensable ecological buffers against climatic extremes.

The lessons of 2026 extend far beyond disaster response. They compel us to rethink how development is pursued within one of the world's most fragile mountain ecosystems. Sustainable land-use practices, afforestation, watershed conservation and scientifically planned infrastructure must become central to policymaking in Jammu and Kashmir. Local communities should be empowered through disaster awareness programmes, regular evacuation drills and emergency response training so that they are better prepared when nature strikes.

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

Sports Craze in the Valley

Rising Sports Enthusiasm Among Valley Youth



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Sports are not just games; they are the heartbeat of lakhs of people in our nation. They provide a great platform to face challenges, build confidence, and develop leadership qualities. Sports activities keep us mentally, physically, and socially active. Great sportsmen never give up until the last moment and always follow the true spirit of the game. Sports bring joy, peace of mind, and immense pleasure while also improving our overall health and fitness.

Nowadays, the culture of sports has changed significantly. It has been observed that when educated, civilized, socially aware, and physically fit people take part in sports activities, more youth become attracted towards them. Today, IAS officers, senior officials, and politicians are

inaugurating sports events, organizing tournaments, and encouraging Valley youth to participate and showcase their talent at different levels. Such opportunities help young players bring laurels to their families and society.

Every positive step in the sports sector is highly appreciable, and the administration has left no stone unturned in addressing youth-related issues. The youth of today need encouragement, sympathy, motivation, and hope. When we uplift and support them, they are less likely to move towards harmful activities. Valley youth are full of talent, energy, loyalty, and determination, but they still need a healthy environment where they can shine like the sun. It is our collective responsibility to recognize their potential and provide them with proper facilities such as playgrounds, quality equipment, trained coaches, and a motivating atmosphere. Such efforts are often more effective than counseling and legal action alone.

The environment plays a vital role in shaping the younger generation. Success is admired and respected by everyone, and when young people are provided with opportunities to succeed, they



naturally move away from negative influences. A positive atmosphere can guide youth towards discipline, dedication, and excellence. Therefore, every governing body should work sincerely for the upliftment and welfare of society.

Public awareness is also essential in tackling serious issues like drug abuse. The government's campaign launched on 15 August 2020 by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment aimed to make India drug-free and free from substance addiction. The campaign focuses on spreading awareness about the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol, motivating youth to stay away from addiction, promoting counseling, and or-

ganizing seminars and rallies in schools, colleges, and universities. Such initiatives educate people about the dangerous effects of drugs on health, education, families, and society.

A healthy and successful life comes through dedication, consistency, perseverance, and a positive mindset. Strong minds never choose laziness or unlawful activities when they have opportunities for growth and success. Youth should use their talent and energy for the betterment of society and always strive to bring pride to the nation.

Why We Need Proper Academies

The Valley needs proper cricket academies, football academies, gyms, and

modern sports facilities in both urban and far-flung areas. Every talented youth deserves encouragement and equal opportunities. Modern technology and advanced training methods should also be introduced in the sports sector.

Sports academies can help players learn professional techniques and improve their performance. Playing any game without proper guidance and training can limit a player's growth and confidence. Therefore, the government should establish academies where youth can receive quality training before implementing their skills on the field. This will also generate employment opportunities for coaches, trainers, and other sports staff.

Government-constructed stadiums should be maintained properly so that people can enjoy sports in a disciplined environment. These facilities are valuable assets for future generations, and it is our duty to protect and preserve them responsibly.

Stay healthy, stay fit. Say no to drugs and yes to happiness, life, and success.

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Monsoon Travel Tips You Should Not Skip



■ SHAHNAZ HUSAIN

Monsoon in India isn't just a season—it's a feeling. The hills wrap themselves in mist, waterfalls roar back to life, and the scent of wet earth stirs up nostalgia and promise.

As everything slows down, monsoons also bring lush landscapes, romantic rain showers, and refreshing escapes.

Travelling during the monsoon season can be a magical experience.

It's one of those lovely times when surroundings take all your worries away and you are reduced to a mute spectator, basking in the glory of the moment.

Monsoon season is one of the best times of year for travellers to explore a rainforest, a beachside town or a hilly city which offers ecstasy, beauty, and divine delight.

As a traveller, you must be careful while wandering around during the monsoon due to extreme weather conditions. The wet season can make travel more complicated.

If you're planning a trip during this rainy season, the constant temperature shifts can take a toll on your skin and leave it irritated and oily. The high humidity can affect skin health negatively.

Like any trip to a faraway destination, preparation is key. The following practical tips explain how to travel during the rainy season:

■ Eat Healthy

It's OK to splurge on vacation, but maintaining balance is a good idea.

Hitting the road or catching a flight for a monsoon trip this year? Travelling can be tough on healthy habits.

If you're trying to eat healthy, dining while travelling and away from home can derail even the best of intentions. Whether you find yourself famished at the airport or are tempted by fast food joints along the interstate, the challenges are there.

Prioritise steaming-hot cooked foods, peelable fresh fruits, and safe hydration. Avoid raw vegetables, street vendor



items, and tap water.

If you're selecting food from a buffet or salad bar, make sure the hot food is steaming and the cold food is chilled.

Avoid eating raw foods. Fruits or vegetables may be safer to eat if you can peel them yourself or wash them in bottled or disinfected water.

Carbonated drinks in bottles or cans, such as sodas or sparkling water, are typically safe because the bubbles indicate that the bottle was sealed at the factory and not tampered with. Avoid drinks that have ice. Hot coffee or tea should be safe if it is served steaming hot.

Do not drink coffee or tea that is served warm or at room temperature.

■ Use Waterproof Sunscreen

Despite the rain and cloud cover during the monsoon season, UV rays can still harm our skin, even on overcast days.

Sun is barely visible in this season, so people tend to skip the sunscreen, thinking their skin will not get damaged as the weather is cloudy and rainy. However, UV radiation can be higher during cloudy days because the clouds can reflect and scatter the UV rays, increasing their intensity.

The weather is humid, and the thick formulation of sunscreens can make your skin oily, sticky, and prone to sweating all day.

So it would be a good idea to pick something that's gel-based, lightweight and does not end up clogging your pores. For the monsoon season, one must opt for water-resistant sunscreen. A single application will not protect your skin the entire day. Sunscreen must be reapplied every three hours for the best result and strictly to reapply after prolonged sun exposure, heavy sweating, swimming, or heavy exercising.

■ Keep it Minimal

Applying makeup can be challenging during humid weather during travelling as they might have a chance of melting in the rain.

In the monsoon season, less is always more. So, you may want to consider pausing the usage of heavy moisturisers and facial oils for skin prep.

Embrace a minimalistic approach to your makeup routine. Opt for a natural, dewy look with gel-based moisturisers and lightweight serums enriched with hyaluronic products that enhance your features rather than masking them. For your base, you can also substitute

a foundation with a BB or CC cream to even out your complexion, followed up with a hydrating concealer to cover up any blemishes

■ Antifungal Treatment

A jump in a puddle in the rain might satisfy your inner child, but this could cause a host of fungal infections for you.

High levels of humidity in the air allow bacteria and infections to multiply with ease, which leads to problems like itching, swelling, and a foul smell. The air is saturated with moisture during the rainy season, which makes it an ideal breeding season for bacteria, viruses and fungi.

In humans, fungal infections happen when an attacking fungus takes over a part of your body, and your immune system is not capable enough to ward it off.

Lotion-based moisturisers are better than cream-based ones in this season. Pure coconut oil provides instant relief. In its unheated form, coconut oil works as a potent antifungal agent. Applying it over the skin makes it a good, safe topical medicine.

Neem oil is considered a natural antifungal. Neem is easily available and

works as one of the best treatments for fungal infections. Washing the infected area with neem water helps in treating fungal infections. To make neem water, boil neem leaves in water for a few minutes and let it cool. It can be used to massage the feet and can be applied to the toes. Lightly dab the neem oil onto the area using a cotton swab or cotton ball, and allow it to soak in for up to 30 minutes. Wash off the oil with warm water.

Dry and crush some neem leaves. Add this powder to sandalwood powder and make it a paste with rose water. Now apply this paste to the area where you have the infection. In feet and nails

Don't forget your rainy day essentials.

A signature fragrance makes everything better, especially on grey days. Carry a soft fabric wipe or mini handkerchief misted with your signature scent. It gives your preparation a feminine and unforgettable touch.

A raincoat is an essential item you should always keep in your vehicle's seat compartment for maximum protection during a downpour.

Create a playlist of songs that match your rainy season mood and relax as you listen to the rain outside.

Styling during the monsoon isn't about staying dry. It is about staying divine while staying dry.

Whether you've got caught in a downpour or you've been forced to walk through an unavoidable puddle, Waterproof boots are rightfully beloved for their ability to shield your feet from the discomfort of damp conditions.

So Waterproof shoes are essential for maintaining comfort and dryness during rainy season travelling. Choosing the right pair of waterproof shoes can be a daunting task for travellers. It's critical to try shoes before you buy them whenever possible to ensure the upper fits the way you like. Preferably buy sneakers that are comfortable to walk in and are skid-free.

Invest in a pair of popular brand waterproof, windproof and breathable socks that live up to their name.

Not only will they keep your feet safe from dirty water and slippery paths, but they also make for a great statement piece for your outfits!

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

THE FOOD ALLERGY



■ SURINDERPAL SINGH

Food is the foundation of life, health and happiness. It nourishes the body, strengthens immunity and brings people together. However, for millions of people around the world, certain foods can trigger harmful immune reactions known as food allergies. Even a small amount of an allergenic food may cause mild discomfort or, in severe cases, a life-threatening emergency. With food allergies becoming increasingly common among children and adults, understanding their causes, effects and prevention has become an important public health priority.

A food allergy occurs when the body's immune system mistakenly identifies a harmless food protein as a dangerous substance. Instead of tolerating the food, the immune system produces antibodies and releases chemicals such as histamine, leading to an allergic reaction. This is different from food intolerance, which mainly affects digestion and does not involve the immune system. For example, lactose intolerance causes digestive discomfort, while a milk allergy can trigger

hives, breathing problems, or even anaphylaxis.

Some of the most common allergy-causing foods include peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish and sesame. However, almost any food has the potential to trigger an allergic reaction in sensitive individuals.

Several factors contribute to the development of food allergies. Genetics play an important role, as children with allergic parents are more likely to develop allergies themselves. Environmental pollution, changing dietary habits, excessive consumption of processed foods, reduced exposure to beneficial microbes during early childhood and alterations in gut microbiota may also increase the risk. Researchers believe that a combination of genetic susceptibility and environmental influences is responsible for the rising prevalence of food allergies worldwide.

The symptoms of food allergies vary from person to person. Mild reactions may include itching, skin rashes, hives, swelling of the lips or face, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. Moderate reactions can involve coughing, wheezing and difficulty breathing. In severe cases, anaphylaxis may develop, causing a sudden drop in blood pressure, swelling of the throat, loss of consciousness and, if untreated, death. Prompt medical attention is essential whenever severe allergic symptoms occur.

Food allergies affect more than phys-



ical health. They also influence emotional well-being, education and quality of life. Constant fear of accidental exposure can create anxiety in both children and parents. School-going children often require special precautions during meals and school activities. Adults may face challenges while eating at restaurants, travelling, or attending social gatherings. The financial burden of medical consultations, emergency medications and specialized diets can also be significant.

Although food allergies cannot always be prevented, several natural and practical measures can reduce the risk and help individuals manage them safely.

The first step is early identification. Individuals should observe any unusual reactions after eating and consult a qualified healthcare professional for proper diagnosis. Self-diagnosis and unnecessary food restrictions should be avoided.

A balanced diet rich in natural foods supports overall immune health. Fresh

fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts (when not allergic), seeds and fermented foods such as yogurt or traditional fermented preparations promote a healthy gut microbiome, which plays an important role in immune regulation.

Breastfeeding during infancy, when possible, provides valuable immune-supporting nutrients and may reduce the likelihood of certain allergic conditions. Current evidence also suggests that introducing common allergenic foods to infants at the appropriate age under medical guidance may help lower the risk of developing allergies in some children.

Maintaining good gut health is another important strategy. A diverse diet rich in dietary fibre nourishes beneficial intestinal bacteria that help regulate immune responses. Avoiding unnecessary use of antibiotics, unless prescribed, also helps preserve the natural balance of gut microbes.

People with known allergies should carefully read food labels, ask about ingredients when eating outside the home, and avoid cross-contamination during food preparation. Families, schools and workplaces should be informed about severe allergies so that emergency assistance can be provided quickly if required.

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

DC RAMBAN REVIEWS RESTORATION WORKS

Essential services and emergency response preparedness following heavy rainfall

HT NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN, JULY 22: Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan today chaired a high-level review meeting to assess progress of restoration works, availability of essential services and supplies and preparedness of departments to deal with weather-related and other emergencies.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed seamless inter-departmental coordination, prompt restoration of essential services and continuous field monitoring to minimise public inconvenience and safeguard lives and property during the ongoing monsoon season.

Reviewing restoration works, the Deputy Commissioner directed NHAI to ensure NH-44 remains traffic-worthy from Nashri to Banihal by deploying adequate manpower and machinery at vulnerable locations for immediate clearance of landslides, mudslides and debris and instructed PWD, PMGSY and BRO to expedite restoration of traffic on affected roads under their respective jurisdictions and keep men and machinery ready to respond swiftly to any disruption.

Taking an area-wise review, the Deputy Commissioner directed all SDMs and Tehsildars to remain in the field, closely monitor the situation, supervise restoration works and maintain constant coordination with field agencies to ensure prompt response to any emergency. He instructed the Chief Medical Officer



to ensure uninterrupted healthcare services and keep medical teams, ambulances and essential medicines ready to tackle any health-related emergency.

The Chief Education Officer was directed to conduct safety audits of all government and private schools before they reopen after summer vacation, the Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti to ensure regular monitoring of drinking water quality and take preventive measures against contamination during the rainy season and the Chief Agriculture Officer, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer and District Sheep Husbandry Officer to assess losses, if any, extend timely assistance to affected farmers and livestock owners and ensure availability of essential agricultural and veterinary services.

The Deputy Commissioner further directed SDMs, Tehsildars and officers concerned to remain alert,

ensure immediate response to public grievances, submit timely situation reports and maintain close coordination with the District Control Room.

SSP Ramban Arun Gupta advised departments concerned to ensure that workers and machine operators engaged in restoration works are equipped with proper safety gear and that prescribed safety protocols are strictly followed in vulnerable and landslide-prone areas.

Among those present were ACR Shokat Hayat Mattoo, CPO Dr Shakeeb Ahmed Rather, Executive Engineers of PWD, PMGSY, Jal Shakti and JP-DCL, representatives of NHAI, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Education Officer, Executive Officer Municipal Council Ramban, Chief Agriculture Officer, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, District Sheep Husbandry Officer, Tehsildars and officers from various line departments.

Public Notice

I, Shazia Ashraf, daughter of Mohammad Ashraf Bhat, resident of #75 near masjid shareef Dardsun, Kralpora, Kupwara, Kashmir, PIN code 193224, and currently residing at 17 Bathurst Street, Toronto, Ontario, PIN code M5V 0N1, hereby declare that I have changed my name from Shazia Ashraf to Ziya Shaw Ashraf with immediate effect. If anybody has any objections regarding the same, He/She may file the objection in the Passport Office, Toronto, within seven days; after that, no objection will be entertained.

Name: Shazia Ashraf,
D/o: Mohammad Ashraf Bhat
R/o: 75 Near Masjid Shareef Dardsun, Kralpora
District: Kupwara

Laptop Care House

Wholesale Dealer Of New And Pre Used Laptops

DEALS IN ALL KINDS OF LAPTOPS AND ACCESSORIES

REPAIRING OF: ALL TYPES OF LAPTOPS & DESKTOPS



GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR, OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER, KASHMIR, SRINAGAR

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: Rejection/Cancellation of Long-Pending Applications for Transfer of Ownership.

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that a large number of online applications for Transfer of Ownership submitted through the VAHAN Portal are lying pending in this office due to discrepancies, incomplete documents, or non-compliance with the prescribed requirements for a considerable time. The continued pendency of such incomplete applications hampers the efficient disposal of cases, leads to accumulation of backlog, and adversely affects the overall functioning of this office.

All applicants whose Transfer of Ownership applications are pending are advised to remove the deficiencies and complete the requisite formalities within 15 (fifteen) days from the date of publication of this notice.

Failure to comply within the stipulated period shall result in the rejection/cancellation of the pending application(s), without any further notice, in accordance with the applicable rules and procedures. Upon such rejection/cancellation, the application shall be treated as cancelled/disposed. The fee, if any, already paid for availing the service shall stand forfeited/nonrefundable. However, the applicant may submit a fresh application in accordance with the prescribed procedure, along with the prescribed fee and subject to fulfilment of all applicable requirements.

No: RTOK/PS/2026/288-91

Dated: 22-07-2026

Sd/- (Qazi Irfan), JKAS
Regional Transport Officer, Kashmir

DIPK: 3600/26 | Dated: 22-07-2026

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DIVISION, BIJBEHARA

e-mail: xenphe.bij@jk.gov.in

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS | (Yatra Works)

e-NIT No.-: 28/PHE/BIJ/ of 2026-27 (e-Tendering)

Issued under endorsement No. PHE/BIJ/4480-4503 Dated: 20.07.2026

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, J&K Union Territory e-tenders (in Single Cover System) are invited on percentage basis from approved and registered Govt. contractors, for the works mentioned below: -

S.No.	Name of work	Adv Cost (Rs in lacs)	E/M (In Rupees)	T.D Cost (in Rs.)	Time
1.	Hire Charges of 4x4 Vehicle and normal vehicle for monitoring of water supply scheme during Amarath Ji yatra for the year 2026...27.	0.765	2295	200	Yatra Period

Class of Contractor: Registered Tour and Travel Agencies

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

02. Bids must be uploaded on Jktenders.gov.in with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Receipt/e-Challan in favour of Executive Engineer PHE Division Bijbehara (Tender receiving authority).

03. Earnest Money equivalent to 3% of Adv. Cost shall have to be uploaded by the tenderer in shape of CDR/FDR/BG without which the tender shall not be entertained.

04. The quantity of items in the BOQ are purely on tentative basis just to arrive at a genuine / exact comparative cost. The quantity items in the BOQ can increase or decrease and shall not be mentioned in the allotment order.

05. The successful bidder shall have to respond within the minimum possible time (not more than 03 hours) to execute the requisite job failing which the Engineer In-charge or the authorized supervisory staff shall be at liberty to get the job executed / completed through any other means on the risk and cost of the allottee. If the allottee will fail to respond in time continuously for 03 turns his contract shall be deemed to have been cancelled and the job shall be put to fresh tenders after forfeiting of his performance security and shall be debarred for a period of 3 years in SANJY Works.

06. The tenderer shall have to satisfy himself regarding all aspects like topography of the area, climatic conditions, geographical conditions within the peripherals of the area, before tendering for the NIT of the particular area at his own expenses.

07. The tenderers have to submit the tender online without any addition or alteration in the rate schedule items or any conditions thereof. No conditional tender whatsoever shall be entertained even if the rates shall be lowest one.

08. The tenderer has to understand fully the nature of work or works as per proper nomenclature of items of work in rate/ quantity schedule in the form of BOQ.

09. The tenderer has to sign a deed at the time of allotment and has to give full details of men and machinery available with him or he has to give a written bond duly stamped as per norms of providing men and machinery as required for execution of any of the work or works allotted to him.

10. The successful bidder has to remain in close liaison with the Divisional Office and subordinate sub divisional office of PHE Division Bijbehara till the expiry of the contract, besides the tenderer shall have to remain available (24x7) round the year as such have to maintain his residence near Head Quarter of the respective sub division, so as to remain available during night hours also.

11. The contractors who wish to put their tenders for the Yatra works should bear in mind that the works under tendering needs day and night operations and has to execute the work or works in all conditions of weather or any untoward situations.

12. The execution shall be made as per actual requirement at site, however the upper ceiling cost in any case shall not exceed the approved ceiling cost.

13. The agency shall have to dump material required at site except (G.I / HDP) to Sub Divisional store against proper receipt within 10 days positively after issuance of L.O.I. In case of failure by the agency, additional security deposit / earnest money shall be forfeited.

14. Since the Yatra works are of emergent nature, therefore, in order to execute works/jobs are to be carried out during day and night hours.

15. The Payment to the concerned agency shall be made as per availability of funds.

16. Work done claims have to be supported with pre, during and post photographic evidence.

The 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	Time
		DD	MM
1	Publishing date of NIT	20	07
2	Download start date	20	07
3	Bid submission start date	20	07
4	Bid submission end date	25	07
5	Bid opening date	25	07

Documents Required for Online	
01 Earnest Money in shape of CDR / FDR / BG pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti PHE Division Bijbehara	Scanned Copy
02 Treasury Receipt (T.R) deposited to MH: 0215 as cost of tender document pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti PHE Division Bijbehara.	Scanned Copy
03 (Registered Tour & Travels) and (Registered Transport Company) -----	Scanned Copy
04 Latest GST Clearance/Pan card/Adhar Card/Bidders Address of the agency/driver	Scanned Copy
06 HMV/LMV License of the driver/ Registration / permit / hill license / ownership.	Scanned Copy

1. All other terms, conditions are as per the PWD form 25 (Double agreement form) /Master NIT.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
J.S PHE Division Bijbehara

DIPK: 3594/26 | Dated: 22-07-2026

JAMMU & KASHMIR STATE HAJ COMMITTEE

Government of India
Ministry of Minority Affairs
Haj Committee of India

HAJ 2027 (1448 H)

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

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

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR HAJ – 2027 (1448 H)

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

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

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<https://chat.whatsapp.com/Lxp9Sdes7r0Ad0RmRdcAfm?sz=qt&p=a&mliu=1>

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For Haj 2027 Updates

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

Aapki Tayyari – Aapka Aaram – Hamari Zimmedari

Space Devoted by Headlines Today, Purely in Public Interest

Sakeena Itoo conducts extensive tour of South Kashmir districts, reviews situation following incessant rainfall

Chairs meetings at district headquarters, Calls for round-the-clock monitoring in flood-prone areas

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 22: On the directions of Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today visited various South Kashmir districts and took stock of the prevailing situation following incessant rainfall.

During her visit, the Minister chaired separate review meetings at the district headquarters with the respective Deputy Commissioners and senior officers from the line departments to assess the preparedness and response measures being undertaken in view of the adverse weather conditions.

The Minister took a comprehensive review of the situation, including flood preparedness, functioning of emergency response mechanisms, restoration of essential services, availability of healthcare facilities, road connectivity, power and water supply, and arrangements for evacuation and relief, wherever required.

At Kulgam, the Minister chaired a comprehensive review meeting to evaluate the readiness of the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) for potential weather induced emergencies.

MLA Devsar, Peerzada Feroze Ahmad Shah; Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam; ADC, Kulgam, Vikar Ahmad Giri, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Assistant Commissioner Development and other district and sectoral officers of concerned departments were present in the meeting.

Reviewing the flood protection and mitigation measures undertaken by various departments and agencies, the Minister directed all concerned officers to maintain a high level of preparedness and ensure the close monitoring of

water levels in rivers to effectively respond to any emergency. She stressed on early identification of weaker spots and strengthening the flood protection and mitigation measures along the vulnerable areas of Veshow, Vethyatra and other streams.

Sakeena Itoo underscored the need for taking up immediate flood mitigation works as well as long term proposals of flood mitigation in low lying and vulnerable areas of the district.

MLA Devsar also put forth vital observations and suggestions on the weather conditions and preparations for flood mitigation.

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner Kulgam and ADC, Kulgam presented a detailed overview of the district's preparedness, highlighting department-wise mitigation strategies and the operational readiness of relief, rescue, and rehabilitation mechanisms.

At Shopian, Sakeena Itoo chaired a review meeting with the district administration and concerned officers to take stock of the prevailing weather conditions and the preparedness of various departments to deal with any eventuality at the Mini-Secretariat.

During the meeting, the Minister reviewed the availability of essential commodities, the status of power and drinking water supply, availability of medicines and other emergency stocks, and the preparedness of the concerned departments. She stressed the need to ensure uninterrupted essential services and directed officers to remain vigilant, particularly in vulnerable areas.

The Minister said that the government is closely monitoring the situation and is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of the people. She directed all departments to remain on high alert,



maintain close coordination and ensure prompt response in case of any emergency.

The Minister also urged the public to follow official advisories, avoid unnecessary travel to vulnerable locations, and cooperate with the administration during the prevailing weather conditions.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta; Additional District Development Commissioner, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz, Chief Planning Officer, Chief Medical Officer, Executive Engineers of Jal Shakti and KPDCL, Irrigation, besides officers from the Revenue, Police, Health, R&B, Municipal, Food, Disaster Management and other concerned departments.

At Pulwama, Sakeena Itoo also chaired a meeting to review the district's preparedness for any flood-like situation in view of the

ongoing rainfall across Jammu and Kashmir.

MLA Pampore Justice (Retd.) Hasnain Masoodi; Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom; other senior officers of Health Department, Food & Civil Supplies, R&B, Irrigation & Flood Control and KPDCL were present during the meeting.

During the meeting, the Minister conducted a comprehensive review of the district's disaster preparedness, including the functioning of emergency response mechanisms, deployment of rescue teams, availability of rescue equipment, identification of vulnerable areas, flood mitigation measures, status of embankments, dewatering arrangements, stock of essential commodities, uninterrupted drinking water and power supply, healthcare preparedness, road connectivity, communication systems and functioning of designated relief and rescue centres.

Addressing the officers, Minister Sakeena Itoo said that the months of July, August and September remain crucial from the disaster management perspective. She directed all departments to remain in a state of complete readiness and ensure close coordination for an effective response to any eventuality.

The Minister emphasised the timely identification and relocation of vulnerable families, particularly nomadic communities and those living in low-lying areas, to safer locations whenever required. She directed the concerned departments to strengthen vulnerable embankments, maintain adequate stocks of essential medicines, ensure availability of doctors and paramedical staff, keep ambulances and emergency medical teams on standby and ensure uninterrupted healthcare services.

At the outset, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, apprised the Minister about the overall preparedness of the district. He informed that the District Emergency Operations Centre has been made operational round the clock, while Tehsil and Zonal Level Control Rooms have also been activated for prompt response. He added that weather advisories are being issued regularly, inter-departmental coordination has been strengthened and adequate arrangements have been put in place to ensure uninterrupted essential services, including power and drinking water supply.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Pampore Justice (Retd.) Hasnain Masoodi stressed the need for strengthening embankments at vulnerable locations, removing encroachments along water bodies, improving drainage infrastructure and ensuring sustained preventive measures to minimise

future risks.

Later, at Anantnag, the Minister held detailed assessment of disaster related preparations and availability of essential supplies in the district.

Emphasising on the need for utmost vigilance, Sakeena Itoo directed the district administration to maintain round-the-clock monitoring of flood-prone and vulnerable areas and ensure timely dissemination of weather advisories and alerts among the public. She instructed the officers to keep men and machinery in complete readiness to deal with any emergency arising due to the continuing rainfall.

The Minister directed the officers to shift nomadic families living near river banks to safer locations. She stressed that the safety and well-being of the people should remain the highest priority and asked all departments to work in close coordination for swift response in case of any eventuality.

She directed that emergency control rooms should remain fully functional and adequately staffed to address public grievances and facilitate immediate assistance.

She also directed the Jal Shakti department to rectify drinking water pipelines in cloudburst-hit Awoora area immediately and keep drinking water through tanker supply readily available for the local population.

The Minister also directed the CMO Anantnag to maintain duty roster in all hospitals in letter and spirit, and also keep ambulances available in all flood prone areas to deal with any kind of exigency.

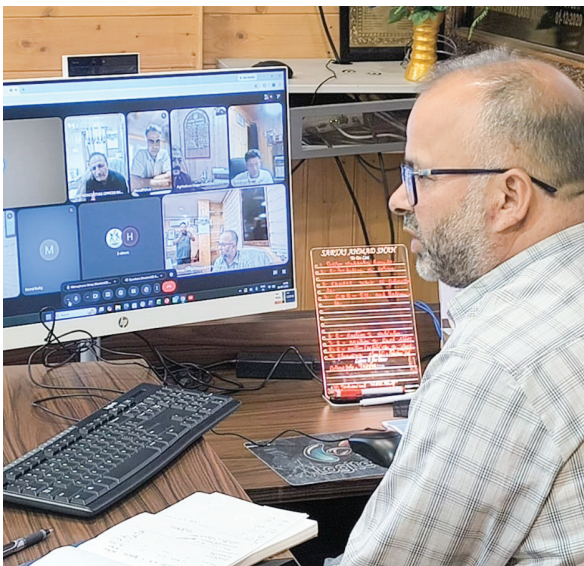
Among others, the meeting was attended by ACR, CPO, SEs of PWD, KPDCL & Jal Shakti/Hydraulics, CMO, CEO, AD FCS&CA, DD F&ES, DySP SDRF and other senior officers of various line departments.

Director Agriculture Kashmir reviews flood preparedness of department

Directs all field functionaries to remain on high alert

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 22: Director Agriculture Kashmir, Sartaj Ahmad Shah, today chaired a virtual review meeting with all Chief Agriculture Officers (CAOs) of the Kashmir Division to assess the prevailing flood situation and review the preparedness of the Agriculture Department in view of the inclement weather conditions.



During the meeting, the Director took a detailed district-wise assessment of the situation, including reports on waterlogging, crop damage, and the preparedness of field staff to respond promptly to any eventuality. He instructed all Chief Agriculture Officers to maintain close coordination with the district administrations and ensure continuous monitoring of vulnerable agricultural areas.

Sartaj Ahmad Shah directed all Chief Agriculture Officers to keep the entire field machinery on high alert and ensure that all officers and officials remain available in the field for timely response. He emphasized that immediate assessments should be carried out wherever agricultural land or standing crops are affected, and that all necessary measures should be taken to minimize losses to the farming community.

SKUAST-K Researchers secure prestigious ANRF National Post-Doctoral Fellowships

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 22: Two researchers from Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) have secured the coveted Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) National Post-Doctoral Fellowships, among India's most competitive funding programmes for early-career scientists, for pioneering research on crop disease resistance and next-generation diabetic wound care.

The fellowships have been

awarded to Dr. Aasiya Nabi and Dr. Sofi Imtiyaz Ali for high-impact translational research in plant pathology and regenerative medicine, respectively, further strengthening SKUAST-K's growing research footprint across agricultural and biomedical sciences.

Dr. Aasiya Nabi, an alumna of the Division of Plant Pathology, Faculty of Horticulture, and a former Nehru-Fulbright Doctoral Fellow at Kansas State University, USA, received the fellowship for her project, "Dissection of Race-Specific Resis-

tance in the Phaseolus vulgaris-Colletotrichum lindemuthianum Pathosystem: Insights from Race 73 and Co-12 Interaction." She will investigate the molecular mechanisms of bean anthracnose resistance. The study aims to identify race-73-specific effector proteins and validate their interaction with the Co-12 resistance gene, generating insights that could accelerate the development of disease-resistant bean varieties.

In biomedical engineering, Dr. Sofi Imtiyaz Ali secured the two-year ANRF fellowship for

his project, "Smart Bioactive Wound Dressing Engineered from Earthworm Granulation Scaffold and Multifunctional Therapeutic Cocktail for Diabetic Ulcer Healing." The project seeks to develop an indigenous bioengineered wound dressing that combines an earthworm-derived tissue scaffold with multifunctional therapeutics to promote tissue regeneration, prevent infections and provide a cost-effective, clinically scalable solution for chronic diabetic wounds.

Congratulating the awardees

and their mentors, Vice Chancellor Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai described the twin achievement as a testament to SKUAST-K's vibrant research ecosystem and growing national standing in scientific innovation.

"Securing two prestigious ANRF National Post-Doctoral Fellowships across distinct scientific disciplines reflects SKUAST-K's growing national prominence and our commitment to nurturing talent capable of solving complex challenges in agriculture, veterinary science and human healthcare," he said.

DC Budgam visits Magam, Beerwah Hospitals; inspects restoration work on damaged diversion bridge at Beerwah

Says all departments fully mobilized; restoration of damaged infrastructure in full swing

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, JULY 22: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today visited the Sub-District Hospitals (SDHs) at Magam and Beerwah to review healthcare facilities and ensure uninterrupted medical services in the wake of the recent inclement weather.

During the visit, the DC inspected hospital wards, treatment facilities and other healthcare services being provided to patients. Stressing the need for seamless functioning of all health institutions across the district, he directed the Health Department to remain fully prepared to respond to any emergency. He also interacted with doctors, healthcare staff and patients to obtain first-hand feedback on the

quality of patient care and the availability of essential medical services.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner visited Beerwah to inspect the ongoing restoration work on the damaged diversion bridge over Nallah Sukhnag, where efforts are underway to restore vehicular movement at the earliest. He directed the concerned departments to expedite restoration of all damaged roads and bridges to ensure uninterrupted connectivity.

He further instructed the concerned departments to ensure prompt restoration of damaged water supply schemes and electricity lines so that scheduled drinking water and power supply to the affected areas remains uninterrupted.

During his visit to the damaged shopping complex at Beerwah, the Deputy Commissioner interacted with affected shopkeepers and assured them that their concerns would be taken up with the Government for appropriate rehabilitation measures.

He also inspected the under-construction bridge at Chewdara

and directed the executing agency to expedite the work for its early completion, ensuring improved connectivity for the local population.

Subsequently, the Deputy Commissioner chaired a review meeting at the Town Hall, Beerwah, to assess the flood-like situation and review the progress of restoration works in Beerwah, Khag, Magam and other affected areas of the district.

He reiterated that all departments have been fully mobilized and that restoration of damaged infrastructure is progressing on a war footing to restore normalcy at the earliest.

Among others, Additional District Development Commissioner Budgam, Vivek Agarwal; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Taufeeq Ahmad Gazi; Chief Planning Officer; Assistant Commissioner Development; Superintending Engineers; Executive Engineers of various engineering departments; the concerned Tehsildar; and other district officers accompanied the Deputy Commissioner during the visit.

College of Temperate Sericulture at SKUAST-K Mirgund holds Drug Abuse Awareness Programme

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 22: As part of the nationwide Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyan, the NSS Unit of the College of Temperate Sericulture, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), Mirgund, organised an awareness programme to sensitise students about the harmful effects of drug abuse and promote a healthy, drug-free society.

The programme brought together faculty members, non-teaching staff and students, with speakers emphasising the need for collective action to curb substance abuse, particularly among young people.

Delivering the keynote lecture, Dr. Aabid Khaliq Tantray, NSS Programme Officer, highlighted the physical, psychological, social and economic consequences of drug addiction. Stressing the role of educational institutions, families, and society in prevention, he urged students to make informed life choices and to become ambassadors for the "Say No to Drugs" campaign.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Iqrah Akbar, Assistant Professor, underscored the importance of mental well-being, healthy lifestyle choices and positive peer influence in protecting youth from substance abuse. She encouraged students to remain focused on their academic and personal goals while contributing to a drug-free society.



Rubio warns Iran over Hormuz, says talks require Tehran to honour commitments

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MANILA JUL 22 : U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Wednesday accused Iran of failing to honour commitments made during diplomatic contacts over the escalating Middle East crisis, warning that Washington remained prepared for negotiations but would not hesitate to act if Tehran continued to undermine efforts to reach a settlement.

Rubio delivered a message to Iran as he addressed the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference in Manila, saying Iran had reached out to the United States through both direct and indirect channels in an attempt to discuss the conflict, but questioned Tehran's willingness to negotiate in good faith.

"The United States is always committed to diplomacy," Rubio said. "We are open-minded and always willing to engage in negotiated settlements of differences."

However, he said previous understandings had not been honoured.

"Unfortunately, so far, even though we have reached agreements, they have not kept their commitments," Rubio said, adding that Washington's willingness to negotiate depended

on whether Iran demonstrated genuine intent.

"If they're serious, we're serious. If they're not, then we will do what is necessary to protect our interests and also the interests of our allies."

Rubio said the immediate dispute centred on Iran's demand to control maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway through which roughly one-fifth of the world's oil supplies pass. He rejected any suggestion that Tehran had the legal authority to regulate passage through the strategic shipping lane.

"This is an international waterway," Rubio said. "Iran demands the right, which they do not have under any existing legal mechanism, to control the transit of traffic through the Straits of Hormuz."

He argued that allowing any country to impose unilateral control over an international sea lane would set a dangerous global precedent extending far beyond the Middle East.

"If we create a precedent where a nation state can decide that they are going to control an international waterway, charge a toll, and if you don't pay them, blow up your ships, we have created a very danger-



ous precedent which will repeat itself in other parts of the world."

Rubio said the issue went beyond the immediate confrontation with Iran and struck at one of the fundamental principles governing international commerce.

"What is at stake here is not simply the issue of what's happening in the Straits of Hormuz. It's a very fundamental principle about freedom of navigation."

He warned that any disruption to free navigation through the waterway would have

consequences for the global economy.

"If that is threatened, then I think the global economy is threatened and the rules which have underpinned 150 years of international trade and commerce are also threatened. And that cannot be allowed to happen."

While reiterating Washington's preference for diplomacy, Rubio said negotiations could succeed only if commitments were respected.

"The United States remains open and willing to engage in

positive, constructive negotiations and talks so long as the commitments that are made are kept."

He added that if diplomatic agreements continued to be ignored, Washington would respond.

"When those commitments are not kept, which is what's happened in this particular case, then there will be consequences."

Rubio also argued that firm U.S. action was necessary to prevent Iran from using the strategic waterway as leverage

over global energy markets.

Without consequences, he said, "a significant percentage of the energy supply of this region and 20 percent of the energy supply of the world" would effectively be held hostage by what he described as "a rogue regime."

Shifting his focus to Southeast Asia, Rubio sought to reassure ASEAN members that the region remained a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy despite multiple global crises.

Echoing President Donald Trump's commitment made at last year's U.S.-ASEAN Summit, Rubio said Washington was "with ASEAN 100 percent" and described the regional bloc as the primary platform for U.S. engagement in Southeast Asia.

Announcing a broad package of economic initiatives, Rubio said the United States would invest \$2.5 billion in strategic projects across Southeast Asia, aimed at strengthening regional development, economic resilience and security.

He stressed that the investments were driven by U.S. strategic interests rather than development aid.

"This is not charity. This is not something we're doing because we're nice people...

it's in our national interest."

"Our partnership with each of your countries and the region at large is in the national interest of the United States, and we will never abandon it," he said.

Rubio also announced \$1.5 billion in new financing through the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation to support aviation infrastructure, energy security and secure supply chains across the region.

In addition, Washington will provide nearly \$130 million in assistance for demining programmes across ASEAN countries and expand cooperation on liquefied natural gas, electricity grids, civil nuclear energy, critical minerals and regional energy infrastructure.

Describing Southeast Asia as the centre of future global growth, Rubio said developments in the region would shape international politics and economics for decades.

"I believe very much that the future and the story of the 21st century will be written in this region and by how events unfold here."

He reaffirmed that the United States intended to remain ASEAN's long-term strategic partner. UNI

\$37.5 bn war, No exit strategy: Pentagon faces tough Senate questions as Trump eyes fresh Iran Strike

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, JUL 22 : Testifying before the Senate Appropriations Committee for the first time since the US-Iran conflict re-escalated this month, US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said the war has already cost USD 37.5 billion, warning that the price tag is expected to rise as military operations continue while offering little clarity on how or when the conflict would end, even as President Donald Trump threatened fresh military action against Iran.

Appearing before the Senate Appropriations Committee alongside Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dan Caine, Hegseth sought congressional approval for a USD 87.6 billion supplemental funding package, including more than USD 67 billion for military operations, arguing that the United States must prepare for an increasingly dangerous global security environment.

The hearing, the first since the US-Iran conflict sharply escalated this month, quickly turned into a tense scrutiny of the administration's war strategy, with lawmakers from both parties questioning the soaring "financial cost, mounting casualties and the absence of a clearly defined endgame."

Hegseth disclosed that the conflict has already "cost USD 37.5 billion, a figure that includes operational expenses through the end of the current fiscal year."

"As you know, we live in a dangerous world that requires bold and swift action," Hegseth told lawmakers. "This request is an urgent, necessary injection of resources to address the immediate needs of our department." zHe described the supplemental package as part of a broader effort to strengthen military readiness, replace equipment consumed during combat operations and accelerate production of advanced weapons.

The Pentagon is seeking USD 20 billion to replenish equipment, sustain forward-deployed forces, strengthen troop numbers and maintain National Guard readiness, while another USD 40 billion would expand production of hypersonic weapons, Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs), counter-drone systems, solid rocket motors and resilient satellite networks.

"We're talking about solid rocket motors, Joint Direct Attack Munitions, hypersonics and counter-drone capabilities," Hegseth said. "Additionally, we will use this investment to secure digital and space dominance."

Despite the massive funding request, Hegseth stopped short of explaining what would constitute victory in the conflict. Rather than distancing themselves from the administration's handling of the conflict, Republican senators largely rallied behind the Pentagon's strategy despite growing public opposition to the war. Democrats, however, seized on what they described as a widening gap between the administration's early declarations of victory and the reality of a costly military stalemate. The hearing grew increasingly combative as Democratic lawmakers accused the administration of asking for billions more without explaining either the strategy or the likely duration of the war.

One of the hearing's sharpest exchanges came when Democratic Senator Jon Ossoff confronted Hegseth over the administration's earlier claims that Iran's military had been effectively defeated.

"You will not answer whether your statement made on the 14th day of the war that Iran's military had been 'destroyed' and made 'combat ineffective' was a truthful statement to the American people, as you sit here and ask for tens of billions of dollars more," Ossoff asked.

Trump puts Iran's 'Pickaxe Mountain' in crosshairs as fears grow over hidden Uranium stockpile

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

WASHINGTON/TEHRAN, JUL 22 : President Donald Trump has signalled that the next U.S. target in its military campaign against Iran could be Pickaxe Mountain, a heavily fortified underground nuclear complex.

Western and Israeli intelligence suspect that Pickaxe Mountain may be sheltering Tehran's surviving uranium stockpile and advanced enrichment centrifuges beyond the reach of previous airstrikes.

Responding to Trump, Iran warned that any U.S. strike on its nuclear facilities would be viewed as an expansion of the regional conflict.

The mountain has emerged as the focal point of U.S. concerns after intelligence assessments suggested Iran may have shifted key nuclear assets there following earlier American and Israeli attacks on Natanz, Fordow and Isfahan. Buried more than 100 metres beneath rock, the site is believed to be one of Iran's most secure nuclear fa-

cilities and a potential hub for rebuilding its enrichment programme.

"We'll be hitting that area very probably pretty soon. And there's not a thing they can do about it," Trump told reporters at the White House on Tuesday.

"We'll be hitting that area pretty soon, and very heavily," he added.

Trump's warning came amid reports that Israeli intelligence believes Iran transferred part of its stockpile of highly enriched uranium and advanced centrifuges to the underground complex after last year's strikes.

While the U.S. president stopped short of confirming the assessment, he acknowledged the possibility.

"They may have," Trump said. "We don't have it on record." "Maybe this one they have right. But it's okay. It doesn't mean anything unless they have the material."

"We follow the material," Trump said, indicating Washington's priority is preventing Iran from retaining or relocating

weapons-usable nuclear material.

The United States estimates Iran still possesses nearly 1,000 pounds of highly enriched uranium, close to weapons-grade purity, despite repeated military operations against its nuclear infrastructure.

Trump also accused Tehran of attempting to rebuild parts of its damaged nuclear programme.

"They're trying to possibly reconstitute a site," he said. "We'll hit that site. Any site where they're even thinking about nuclear, we'll be hitting it very, very powerfully."

Pickaxe Mountain is known in Iran as Kuh-e Kolang Gaz La, it lies about one mile south of the Natanz uranium enrichment complex. Construction began in 2020 after Iran informed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that it would build a new centrifuge assembly plant there following sabotage of an earlier facility.

Satellite imagery analysed by the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS)

shows the complex consists of multiple tunnel networks, heavily reinforced entrances and a vast security perimeter. The site is buried at least 100 metres underground, making it one of the hardest nuclear facilities in the world to destroy.

Although construction is believed to be continuing, analysts say activity increased significantly after U.S. and Israeli strikes damaged Iran's other nuclear sites in 2025, fuelling speculation that Tehran may be expanding the site's role beyond centrifuge production.

Israeli intelligence believes the complex could now house advanced centrifuges and part of Iran's enriched uranium reserve. Tehran denies the allegation, insisting its nuclear programme is for peaceful civilian purposes.

Experts say Pickaxe Mountain presents one of the biggest military challenges for the United States.

CNN reported that the depth of the Mountain could limit the effectiveness of even America's most powerful bunker-busting

bomb, the Massive Ordnance Penetrator (MOP). While airstrikes could collapse tunnel entrances, disrupt power supplies and halt construction, analysts caution they may not destroy the underground chambers themselves.

The Institute for Science and International Security says the facility's ventilation systems, electricity network, transport routes and personnel access remain potential vulnerabilities that could be targeted.

Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, however, expressed confidence in U.S. capabilities, saying, "If anybody in the world can reach anything on ... God's green earth, it's the United States military, the most powerful military in the world," he told lawmakers.

With International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors still barred from Iran, uncertainty over the status of Tehran's uranium stockpile and centrifuges has intensified, making Pickaxe Mountain the latest flashpoint in the confrontation over Iran's nuclear ambitions. UNI

Iran accuses Gulf neighbours of 'hosting its enemies', invokes 1991 Kuwait oil well rescue

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

TEHRAN, JUL 22 : Iran on Wednesday accused some of its regional neighbours of siding with its adversaries, saying that "hosting Iran's enemies and colluding with them to stoke conflict against Iranians" reflected "ingratitude toward the past and a lack of foresight."

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei, in a post on X, recalled Iran's role in helping Kuwait extinguish hundreds of burning oil wells after Iraqi forces withdrew from the country in 1991, suggesting that Tehran's goodwill had not been reciprocated.

Sharing a photograph of Iranian specialists working in Kuwait after the Gulf War, Baqaei described it as "a historic photo of noble and dedicated Iranian specialists" who helped extinguish the country's burning oil wells.

He said that although only three years had passed since the end of the Iran-Iraq war and despite what he called Kuwait's support, along with other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, for Saddam Hussein during the conflict, Iran responded to Kuwait's re-

quest for assistance.

According to Baqaei, Tehran dispatched a 47-member team of oil industry specialists that helped cap 28 burning wells in Kuwait's giant Burgan oil field, an operation he said became part of "the largest oil well firefighting operation in history."

Using the episode to criticise some of Iran's neighbours, Baqaei wrote: "The noble people of Iran extinguished the fire that was consuming you, yet you have become part of the malevolent forces' fire turned against our people."

He added, "Iran has always remained committed to good neighbourliness," but warned that "the smoke of ingratitude and shortsightedness will blow back into the eyes of the ungrateful," concluding with the proverb: "He who sows thorns shall not reap grapes."

The remarks come amid heightened regional tensions as the conflict involving Iran and the United States continues to escalate, with Tehran increasingly accusing some Gulf states of facilitating the presence and operations of its adversaries in the region. UNI

Strike on nuclear site will widen war: Iran warns Trump

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

TEHRAN, JUL 22 : Iran on Wednesday warned the United States that any attack on its underground nuclear or sensitive facilities would trigger a wider regional war, after President Donald Trump said Washington would "soon" target the heavily fortified Pickaxe Mountain nuclear site.

In one of Tehran's strongest warnings since the conflict with the United States escalated, the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, the operational command of the Iranian Armed Forces, said an attack on Iran's nuclear or other strategic facilities would be treated as "an expansion of the war in the region."

In a statement issued early Wednesday, the military headquarters accused Washington of threatening Iran's nuclear infrastructure and warned of sweeping retaliation.

"If the aggressor and terrorist US military takes such action, Iran will consider it an expansion of the war in the region," the statement said, adding that "all interests of the United States, its allies and supporters" would come under "powerful attacks" by the Iranian Armed Forces.

The warning came hours after Trump, during a White House meeting with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, said the United States would strike Iran's Kuh-e Kolang (Pickaxe Mountain) facility "pretty soon."

The mountain complex, located near the Natanz nuclear site, is believed to house advanced uranium-enrichment centrifuges and part of Iran's enriched uranium stockpile deep underground, as per Western and Israeli intelligence.

Military experts have already cautioned that targeting the heavily fortified facility would be among the most difficult nuclear sites to destroy through conventional air strikes.

The threat marked another escalation in the nearly two-week-old conflict, as the United States carried out an 11th consecutive night of strikes on Iranian military targets.

Iranian state media reported fresh attacks on several cities, including Tabriz, Behbahan, Bushehr, Mahshahr, Sirik, Chabahar and Konarak, while air defences were activated over Tehran. Video verified by international media showed flames and thick smoke rising near an airport in Behbahan following overnight strikes.



