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Pilgrims' Safety Is Our Highest Priority: LG Sinha

Orders Swift Restoration of Amarnath Yatra Routes

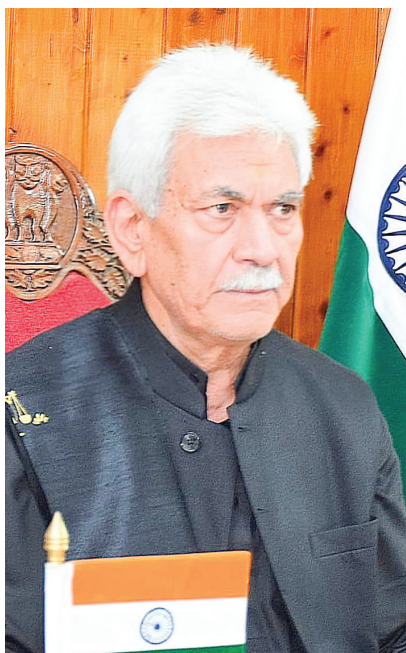
■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 25: Declaring that the safety of pilgrims remains the foremost priority, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday directed authorities to expedite repair and restoration work along the Amarnath pilgrimage routes following damage caused by recent heavy rainfall.

Chairing a high-level review meeting with Camp Directors and senior officials, the Lieutenant Governor assessed the condition of the pilgrimage tracks, safety barriers and other critical infrastructure. He instructed the executing agencies to focus on vulnerable stretches prone to mudslides and falling rocks to ensure the safe movement of pilgrims.

To strengthen emergency preparedness, Mr. Sinha ordered the

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Amarnath Yatra to Continue Only via Baltal Route as Pahalgam Track Undergoes Repairs

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 25: The Shri Amarnathji Yatra will continue exclusively through the Baltal axis while urgent repair and maintenance works are carried out on the rain-affected Pahalgam route, the administration announced on Friday.

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, said the recent spell of heavy rainfall had necessitated immediate restoration work along the Pahalgam axis

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Border Villages Are India's First Villages: PM Modi To Interact With Youth Participants Today

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 25: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will interact with more than 400 participants of the Viksit Vibrant Village Programme 2026 through video conferencing on Sunday, reaffirming the Centre's vision of recognising India's border villages as the nation's "first villages" and integrating them into the country's development journey.

The interaction, scheduled for 4:30 pm, will bring together youth representatives from every State and Union Territory who recently completed the month-long programme in border villages across Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

According to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the initiative was launched to strengthen the connection between young citizens and India's frontier communities while promoting inclusive development, national integration and greater awareness of the strategic importance of border regions.

The 2026 edition of the programme was conducted in two phases from June 4 to June 30 across 74 border villages. Participants were selected through a nationwide online quiz competition that attracted more than three lakh entries from across the country.

During the programme, the youth lived with local families and participated in com-



munity development activities, including cleanliness campaigns, awareness drives on government welfare programmes, cultural exchanges, tree plantation, youth conventions, local governance simulations, interactions with artisans and visits to strategically significant institutions.

The PMO said the initiative provided

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LG Flags Off Reading Marathon at Dal Lake, Srinagar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 25: Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha today flagged off the Reading Marathon at the banks of Dal Lake, marking a unique convergence of knowledge, fitness, and environmental responsibility. The event, organised by the National Book Trust as part of Education Week, celebrates six successful years of the National Education Policy.

Addressing thousands of students from colleges and universities across the UT of Jammu Kashmir, the Lieutenant Governor highlighted the significance of the reading marathon as a symbol of collective learning and social responsibility.

"Education should not remain confined to books and examination halls. It must reach playgrounds, social spaces, and become a way of life. Today's Reading Marathon is a powerful example of that vision," he said.

The reading marathon carried the message "Run for a Green Future". The Lieutenant Governor described this motto as a

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Heavy rain disrupts life across J&K, woman dies in house collapse, several roads shut

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JUL 25: Heavy rainfall lashed several parts of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, triggering landslides, flash flood concerns and a house collapse that claimed the life of a woman in Rajouri district, while disrupting road connectivity across the Union Territory.

A 45-year-old woman was killed and two of her family mem-

bers injured after a portion of their concrete house collapsed in Bhatian village of Thanamandi in Rajouri amid incessant rainfall, officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

The deceased was identified as Shahida Parveen, wife of Abdul Rehman. Her husband, Abdul Rehman (62), and son Toufeeq Rehman (25) sustained injuries and were shifted to the Government Medical College (GMC) As-



sociated Hospital, Rajouri, where they are undergoing treatment.

Officials said the family was trapped under the debris after the house caved in. Residents rushed to the spot and rescued the victims before they were taken to the hospital.

Continuous rain also triggered multiple landslides across the Jammu region, affecting road connectivity.

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Vaishno Devi Pilgrimage Resumes After Six-Day Suspension Despite Continuing Rain

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, JULY 25: The pilgrimage to the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district resumed on Saturday after remaining suspended for six days due to adverse weather conditions, providing much-needed relief to thousands of devotees who had been waiting to undertake the journey.

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"It Is Not a Matter of Individual Prestige": Pradhan Resigns as Education Minister

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JUL 25: Union Minister Prahlad Joshi was on Saturday appointed as the new Education Minister after Dharmendra Pradhan resigned from the post, saying the issue was "not a matter of individual prestige" and expressing concern over the developments surrounding the NEET paper leak controversy.

According to an official communiqué issued by the President's office, the resignation of Pradhan was accepted with immediate effect on the advice of Prime



Minister Narendra Modi. The President subsequently assigned Joshi, who currently serves as the Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, the additional responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

Pradhan stepped down amid widespread student protests across the country demanding accountability over the alleged irregularities in the NEET examination. In his statement, he said he was deeply disturbed by the events that had unfolded over the past ten days and stressed that the matter

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Machail Mata Yatra To Begin From July 28 Subject To Favourable Weather: Deputy Commissioner

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, JULY 25: The annual Machail Mata Yatra in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district will commence from July 28, subject to favourable weather conditions, after being postponed by three days due to persistent inclement weather, Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Pankaj Kumar Sharma announced on Saturday.

The Deputy Commissioner said

the shrine will be ceremonially reopened on July 25 in accordance with traditional religious practices, but the pilgrimage for devotees will begin only after a fresh assessment confirms that weather conditions are safe for travel.

Located at an altitude of 9,705 feet in the scenic Paddar Valley, the revered shrine had reopened for the season on April 14 after remaining closed during the winter

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Drug Traffickers Will Face Strict Legal And Financial Consequences: Srinagar Police

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JULY 25: Srinagar Police on Saturday intensified its campaign against drug trafficking by attaching immovable properties worth approximately Rs. 1.35 crore allegedly acquired through proceeds of the narcotics trade, reaffirming that those involved in drug-related crimes will face both legal and financial consequences.

The action, carried out under

the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, is part of the police's sustained efforts to dismantle the financial network supporting drug trafficking and curb the menace of narcotics across the city.

According to an official statement, the first attachment involves a double-storeyed residential house at Nadir Gund, Pir Bagh, Hyderpora, valued at around Rs. 70 lakh. The

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Amarnath Yatra Resumes After Six-Day Suspension; 6,269 Pilgrims Leave Jammu

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, JULY 25: The annual Shri Amarnath Yatra resumed on Saturday after a six-day suspension caused by adverse weather, with 6,269 pilgrims departing from the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu for the Baltal base camp in Kashmir under elaborate security arrangements.

The pilgrimage had been suspended

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Indian Armed Forces fully prepared to counter any challenge, says Defence Minister

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

DRASS, JUL 25: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said that India continues to face security challenges as adversities persist with tactics such as proxy warfare and infiltration, but assured that the armed forces are fully prepared to respond to any threat.

Addressing soldiers, Singh, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said the government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership has taken steps to ensure

that the morale of the armed forces remains high.

He highlighted the focus on military modernisation, providing soldiers with advanced weapons, equipment, and training to meet evolving security requirements.

"The effort is to ensure that our soldiers receive the best weapons, the best equipment, and the best training in the world," Singh said, praising the armed forces for staying ahead by adopting new technologies and innovations.

The Defence Minister lauded

the courage and dedication of Indian soldiers, saying their bravery is recognised both within the country and globally. He described the spirit and determination displayed by troops as "unparalleled" and "incomparable."

Singh assured the armed forces that the government remains equally committed to their welfare and well-being, just as soldiers remain committed to safeguarding the nation.

Highlighting India's push for self-reliance, Singh expressed

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Div Com Jammu reviews rain damage restoration works across Jammu Division

Directs officers to ensure uninterrupted essential services

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 25: Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar today chaired a meeting to review the damage caused by recent rains in all districts of Jammu division and to take stock of ongoing restoration and relief works. The Div Com directed the Managing Director of JPDCL to ensure that all restoration works pertaining to damaged power infrastructure are completed on a priority basis so that supply to affected areas is normalised at the earliest.

Reviewing the pace of relief operations, the Div Com took stock of the ex-gratia disbursement to affected families across all districts and directed Deputy Commissioners to expedite the process so that no eligible beneficiary is left out.

The meeting undertook a detailed review of the power and water supply position in the affected areas. With more rains forecast on July 29 and 30, the Div Com directed all Deputy Commissioners to arrange essential commodities, including foodgrains, LPG cylinders and other items of daily use, well in



advance so that there is no disruption in supply during the spell.

He also directed the Health Department to ensure sufficient stock of medicines at all health facilities in vulnerable areas and to position adequate medical staff so that any emergency can be met promptly.

The Power and Jal Shakti Department officers apprised the meeting of the status of water supply pumping and the functioning of tube wells and dug wells in the affected districts

and were directed to restore these on priority.

The Div Com underlined the need to strengthen flood protection measures and ensure public safety. He directed that school buildings found unsafe or damaged be locked and not used until repairs are carried out, keeping in view the safety of children.

He directed that roads closed due to landslides, shooting stones or damage be restored and opened for traffic on a war-footing basis,

and directed the departments concerned to take up immediate repair and desilting of drains and water channels to prevent water-logging in case of further rains.

All Chief Agriculture Officers were directed to assess the crop damage suffered by farmers in the affected areas and submit a report at the earliest for extending due assistance.

All Chief Education Officers (CEOs) were directed to take an immediate call on declaring a

holiday in schools in the event of heavy rains, to ensure the safety of students.

The Div Com also sought a comprehensive district-wise assessment of damage to roads and other public infrastructure, along with a status report on ex-gratia relief distribution, from all Deputy Commissioners.

Concluding the meeting, the Div Com directed that the water level of rivers, streams and nallahs across the division be kept under constant watch and that people be alerted well in time in case of any eventuality.

The Div Com assured that the administration is prepared to deal with any emergency arising out of the prevailing weather and appealed to the public to cooperate with the district administrations and follow advisories.

Among those present were Deputy Commissioners and Additional Deputy Commissioners of different districts, Chief Engineers of the Power Development Department (PDD), Jal Shakti (PHE) and PWD (R&B), Director Agriculture, Director School Education and other officers concerned of line departments of the division.

Anganwadi Workers' Union Pays Tribute to Senior Leader Tasleema Subhan, Vows to Continue Struggle for Workers' Rights

■ FAROOQ RATHER

SRINAGAR, JULY 25: A delegation of the Anganwadi Workers' and Helpers' Union, Jammu & Kashmir, a unit of the All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers' and Helpers affiliated with the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), visited the residence of senior union leader Tasleema Subhan, who passed away two days ago after a prolonged illness.

The delegation comprised Union President Hanifa Mir, General Secretary Suraya Jabeen, Vice President Shafiq Akhtar, and senior leader Lateefa Ganie.

Paying rich tributes to the deceased leader, the delegation described Tasleema Subhan as a dedicated and committed activist who remained at the forefront of the struggle for the rights and welfare of Anganwadi workers throughout her life.

The union leaders said that the late Tasleema Subhan was always available to support and protect the interests of hardworking ICDS workers, particularly in Srinagar district. They noted that she actively participated in numerous peaceful campaigns and protests aimed at securing the legitimate rights and welfare of Anganwadi workers until her last days.

Dr. Showkat Hussain Tali Appointed State Academic Coordinator for IAP Neonatal Resuscitation Programme in J&K

■ FAROOQ RATHER

ANANTNAG, JULY 25: In a significant recognition of his contributions to pediatric healthcare and medical education, Dr. Showkat Hussain Tali, Head of the Department of Pediatrics at Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag, has been appointed as the State Academic Coordinator for Jammu & Kashmir under the Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP) Neonatal Resuscitation Programme (NRP) – FGM Project. The appointment has come into effect immediately and will remain valid until December 31, 2026. The appointment letter was issued by the IAP NRP FGM Project Office and signed by Dr. Neelam Mohan Maheshwari, National President, IAP 2026; Dr. Ruchira Maheshwari, Secretary General, IAP (2026–2027); Dr. V. P. Goswami, National Chairman, IAP NRP FGM Programme; and Dr. Vishnu Mohan PT, National Coordinator, IAP NRP.

The Indian Academy of Pediatrics acknowledged Dr. Tali's outstanding dedication and significant contributions towards advancing neonatal resuscitation training and improving newborn healthcare services. In his new role, Dr. Tali will be responsible for strengthening the Neonatal Resuscitation Programme across Jammu & Kashmir by expanding the network of trained professionals, enhancing academic leadership, and promoting quality neonatal care in a mission mode.

SKUAST-K Top Brass Reviews Agricultural Roadmap at 20th SAC Meeting of KVK Kupwara

■ DR. AB QAYOOM

KUPWARA, JULY 25: Reaffirming its commitment to strengthening agricultural research, innovation and farmer-centric extension services, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) convened the 20th Annual Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting of Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Kupwara on Saturday.

The meeting was chaired by the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of SKUAST-K, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganie, who also serves as Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Committee. It witnessed the participation of senior university officials, scientists, district officers, and progressive farmers from across Kupwara district. Among the prominent dignitaries present were Director Extension, SKUAST-K, Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, who attended as the Guest of Honour, and Director, ICAR-ATARI, Ludhiana, Dr. Parvender Sheoran, whose visit to KVK Kupwara marked his first official interaction with the institution. Heads of various KVKs, officers from line departments, scientists from the Directorate of Extension, KVK Kupwara staff, and progressive farmers also attended the meeting. The programme commenced with a welcome address by Prof. G.M. Bhat, Head of KVK Kupwara, followed by a comprehensive presentation on the Action Taken Report, highlighting the centre's achievements during the past year, implementation of previous SAC recommendations, priority areas for intervention, and future strategies aimed at addressing emerging challenges in the agriculture and allied sectors. An interactive session was held with representatives of various line departments and progressive farmers, who shared their experiences, challenges, and suggestions. The discussions focused on ensuring that field-level realities are effectively incorporated into future research, extension programmes, and policy planning for the district. Recognising excellence in agriculture, several progressive farmers were felicitated with appreciation certificates by Vice Chancellor Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganie for their outstanding contributions towards the adoption of scientific farming practices and innovation. The initiative was aimed at encouraging farmers to continue



serving as role models within the farming community.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth appreciated the efforts of KVK Kupwara in introducing improved crop varieties, expanding farmer outreach programmes, and promoting entrepreneurship among rural youth. She underlined the need for stronger collaboration between scientists, farmers, and government departments to ensure sustainable agricultural development. In his keynote address, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganie commended the dedication and performance of the KVK Kupwara team and urged the scientists to embrace innovation, strengthen technology transfer, and explore new opportunities to transform KVK Kupwara into one of the finest Krishi Vigyan Kendras not only in Jammu and Kashmir but across the country.

Dr. Parvender Sheoran, Director, ICAR-ATARI Ludhiana, appreciated the centre's extension activities and stressed the importance of accelerating technology dissemination, promoting location-specific agri-

cultural innovations, and strengthening farmer-centric interventions to enhance the effectiveness of the National Agricultural Research and Extension System. The meeting concluded with a formal vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Firdous Ahmad Raina, who expressed gratitude to the Vice Chancellor, Director Extension, Director ICAR-ATARI, scientists, officers of line departments, progressive farmers, and KVK staff for their valuable participation. He also acknowledged the support extended by the District Administration Kupwara and appreciated the media fraternity for consistently highlighting agricultural initiatives, promoting scientific awareness, and bridging the gap between researchers and the farming community. The successful conduct of the 20th Scientific Advisory Committee Meeting reaffirmed SKUAST-K's commitment to developing resilient, technology-driven and farmer-oriented agricultural systems, while strengthening collaboration among research institutions, extension agencies and farming communities for sustainable rural development.

Acknowledgement Issued by Advocate Mir Abdul Majeed Following Demise of His Wife

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 25: Advocate Mir Abdul Majeed, former Range Officer, Senior Member, Chief Spokesperson and State Advisor, Jammu & Kashmir, Senior Member of the Jammu & Kashmir-Ladakh Pensioners United Front, and the Forest Officers Welfare Association (Retd.), has expressed heartfelt gratitude to all friends, relatives, well-wishers, and members of various government and non-government organisations who extended their condolences on the demise of his beloved wife.

In a statement, Mir Abdul Majeed said the sympathy, prayers, and moral support extended by people during the family's time of grief had been a great source of strength and comfort.

He also conveyed special appreciation to those friends and colleagues who, due to adverse weather conditions, could not visit his residence personally but expressed their condolences over the phone and conveyed their apologies. Among them were Haji Sheikh Bashir Ahmed, State President of the Forest Officers Welfare Association, Jammu & Kashmir, and General Secretary of the Jammu & Kashmir-Ladakh Pensioners United Front; Wani Qayyum, Chairman of the Jammu & Kashmir-Ladakh Pensioners United Front and State President of the Jammu & Kashmir Civil Society Forum, along with its members; Abdul Razzaq, former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests; Sardar Kiran Singh; Abdul Hameed Butt; Gul Muhammad Naik; Khurshid Maqbool; Syed Jawadul Hassan, former Deputy Conservators of Forests; and Manzoor Ahmed Butt, Deputy Director, Forest Protection Force, Budgam.

Mir Abdul Majeed said the family humbly acknowledges and deeply appreciates the heartfelt condolences and kind sentiments expressed by everyone. He requested all friends, relatives, and well-wishers to continue praying for the eternal peace and forgiveness of the departed soul.

He concluded by expressing profound gratitude to all those who stood by the bereaved family with compassion, support, and prayers during this difficult time.

Hashmi Condemns Lal Chowk Attack

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUL 25: Terming the fatal shooting of a young policeman as an act of unforgivable savagery, Agha Syed Karar Hashmi declared on Tuesday that the true Jihad lies in eradicating unemployment and steering youth toward education, not in snatching away the sole providers of helpless families. His searing rebuke came as the valley reeled under the shock of Constable Aashiq Hussain Qureshi's martyrdom at Lal Chowk, with Hashmi asserting that the time has come to bury the gun culture and resurrect the path of dignity and livelihood for every Kashmiri household.

Condemning the attack that claimed the life of the 35-year-old IR 3rd Battalion soldier from Beeru Budgam, Hashmi called for the terror ecosystem to be dismantled root and branch without any further delay.

"This entire network of hatred has bled this region for far too long; it must be pulled out by its roots," he said, even as authorities confirmed that the martyred constable was declared dead upon arrival at the hospital, with medico-legal formalities strictly proceeding as per protocol. The grief-stricken family, now staring at an abyss, has become the latest symbol of a tragedy that has repeated itself too many times.

In a powerful intervention that sought to reclaim the narrative from the hands of militants, Hashmi delivered a blunt and profound message to the perpetrators and their sympathisers. "To provide employment to the unemployed is Jihad. To provide guidance to the wandering and misguided youth is Jihad. But to kill a man who was the sole bread-earner of his family, who returned home to the smiles of his children? That is not bravery—that is sheer barbarism.

Hell with terrorism and hell with those who preach this nonsense," he declared, his words resonating deeply with a weary populace that longs for peace over panic.

Moving from condemnation to constructive action, Hashmi made an urgent and heartfelt appeal to the Director General of Police Shri Nalin Prabhat, demanding that the nearest kin of the martyred constable be provided a government job without a single day's delay, so that the family does not descend from mourning into destitution.

He simultaneously pressed for the swiftest and sternest exemplary punishment for the culprits involved, insisting that justice must not only be done but must be seen to be done to restore public faith. "A punishment that is delayed is a punishment that is denied," he asserted, calling for a speedy trial to send a clear deterrent message.

Agha Syed Karar Hashmi concluded with a somber yet hopeful prayer for the eternal peace of the departed soul, while voicing the collective aspiration of thousands of silent Kashmiris. "May this menace of nonsense militancy finally meet its ends."

DC Ganderbal reviews ongoing SANJY-2026 arrangements at Baltal Base Camp amidst inclement weather

Interacts with Pilgrims, obtains first-hand feedback regarding facilities

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, JULY 25: In view of the prevailing inclement weather during the ongoing Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY)-2026, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, today visited Baltal Base Camp to review the preparedness of stakeholder departments and assess the facilities put in place for the safety and convenience of pilgrims.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner inspected the on spot Registration Centre, Yatri Niwas, accommodation facilities, medical aid centres, and other essential services available at the Base Camp. He reviewed the functioning of various departments and directed the concerned officers to ensure that all facilities remain fully operational despite the prevail-

ing weather conditions so that pilgrims do not face any inconvenience.

The DC also visited various locations within the Baltal Base Camp and interacted with pilgrims from different parts of the country to obtain first-hand feedback regarding the facilities being provided.

Interacting with local shopkeepers, vendors and service providers, the Deputy Commissioner stressed that every stakeholder associated with the Yatra has an important role in ensuring a safe and comfortable pilgrimage.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments to remain on alert, maintain close coordination and ensure prompt response. He further instructed field officers to undertake regular inspections and maintain continuous moni-



toring to facilitate smooth conduct of the Yatra.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner chaired a review meeting at Baltal to assess the preparedness of all stakeholder departments for the smooth conduct of the ongoing Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra.

At the outset, the con-

cerned officers briefed the meeting on weather forecast, condition of Yatra track, accommodation facilities, registration arrangements, deployment of manpower and telecommunication systems. Reviewing the arrangements department wise, the Deputy Commissioner directed all

concerned agencies to maintain round the clock vigilance, strengthen inter-departmental coordination and ensure uninterrupted essential services for the pilgrims.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized that all departments should remain fully prepared in view of the inclement weather and ensure prompt response to any issue flagged by Yatris.

The meeting was attended by Camp Director Baltal, Additional Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Camp Directors of Domail, Brarimarg and Lower Holy Cave, Executive Engineers of Jal Shakti (PHE), Power Development Department (PDD), officers from Beacon, Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board (SASB), Police, Health, Fire & Emergency Services, Rural Development Department and other line departments.

DC Kathua inaugurates District Badminton Tournament under Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan

HT NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA, JULY 25: Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma today inaugurated the District Badminton Tournament at the Indoor Sports Stadium, Kathua, organised by the District Administration under the Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan to promote a healthy and drug-free lifestyle among youth.

Over 200 players are participating across Under-14, Under-19, Men's, Women's and Veteran singles categories, while 58 teams are competing in various doubles events.

Interacting with the players, the Deputy Commissioner urged them to adopt sports as a way of life and stay away from substance abuse. He stressed optimum utilisation of the Indoor Sports Stadium and called for responsible use of sports infrastructure and public assets.

The Deputy Commissioner said the District Administration will organise badminton and other sporting events regularly to provide competitive exposure to local talent and encourage greater youth participation. He added that the existing sports infrastructure requires upgradation and informed that the matter has already been taken up with the higher authorities.

He reiterated that under the Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, the District Administration is continuously organising sports and youth engagement activities to channelise the energy of young people towards constructive pursuits and build a drug-free society.

Among those present were Chief Planning Officer Ranjeet Thakur, Chief Medical Officer Dr Vijay Raina, Assistant Director Fisheries Pawan Kumar and District Information Officer Gurpreet Singh.

Earlier, Assistant Director Fisheries Pawan Kumar, who is also Chairman of the Sub-Committee for Management of the Indoor Sports Stadium, informed that the championship has received an enthusiastic response from players across different age groups and categories.

On the opening day, matches in the Under-14, Under-19 and Senior categories for both boys/men and girls/women were conducted amid keen competition. The participants displayed impressive skill, discipline and sportsmanship.

DC Kathua reviews Village Development Plans under PMAGY

HT NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA, JULY 25: Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma today chaired a meeting to review the Village Development Plans (VDPs) prepared under the Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY) for the identified villages of the district.

Detailed deliberations were held on the works proposed by the respective Village Level Convergence Committees (VLCCs) constituted under PMAGY. The proposed works were reviewed with a focus on ensuring convergence of various Government schemes to address the infrastructure and developmental needs of the identified vil-



lages.

The Deputy Commissioner called for comprehensive, need-based Village Development Plans prepared through close coordination among all stakeholder departments. He directed the officers concerned to ensure that the proposed works conform to the scheme guidelines and reflect the genuine developmental requirements of the local population.

The DC directed the departments to finalise the Village Development Plans in a time-bound manner so that the objectives of the Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana are met.

Among those present were Chief Planning Officer Ranjeet Thakur, Assistant Commissioner (Development) Akhil Sadotra and the Block Development Officers of Kathua, Nagri and Keerian-Gandyal, besides other officers concerned. District Panchayat Officer Aamir Choudhary and some Block Development Officers participated through virtual mode.

BMO Bhaderwah spearheads awareness to promote JK Sehat app

HT NEWS NETWORK

BHADERWAH, JULY 25: Block Medical Officer Bhaderwah Dr Versha Sharma today highlighted the JK Sehat App, a flagship digital healthcare initiative of the Government aimed at making quality healthcare services more accessible and citizen-friendly, before officers of various departments at Bhaderwah.

In a meeting held today, she urged all officers and officials present to download, register and become familiar with the app's features and requested all departments to disseminate information about it in their offices and among the public to maximise its reach.

Dr Sharma informed participants that the JK Sehat App enables citizens to book OPD appointments in Gov-

ernment health institutions, avail teleconsultation services, access home healthcare services and use other digital healthcare facilities, reducing unnecessary travel and improving access to quality healthcare. The Block Medical Officer appealed to all stakeholders to work collectively so that every household in District Doda is made aware of the app.

DAJ convenes review meeting on Rainfed Area Development Programme under HADP

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 25: Director Agriculture Jammu and PGMC Chairman of HADP Project P-15 'Rainfed Area Development Programme' Anil Gupta today convened a review meeting at the Conference Hall, Directorate of Agriculture, Jammu, to assess implementation status and address bottlenecks affecting the execution of activities under the Five-Year Action Plan.

Reviewing the physical and financial progress under Project P-15, the Director Agriculture stressed close inter-departmental coordination, timely execution of approved interventions and effective monitoring to ensure the benefits reach the farming community, particularly in rainfed areas. He directed the departments concerned to address implementation challenges on priority and adhere to the prescribed timelines.

Anil Gupta described the Rainfed Area Development Programme under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) as a key initiative to enhance agricultural productivity, promote climate-resilient farming and improve the livelihoods of farmers in rainfed regions and called on all stakeholder departments to achieve the project milestones within the stipulated timeframe.

The PGMC Chairman directed the implementing agencies to expedite



disposal of all eligible applications received through the Kisan Sathi Portal and to complete verification and approval without delay so that benefits reach the eligible beneficiaries at the earliest.

Among those present were Director Horticulture Jammu Gul Sayed, senior and technical officers from the Agriculture and allied departments of Jammu, the Project Investigator (PI) of P-15, SKUAST-Jammu and Technical Officer Agriculture Production Department (APD) Dr Veer Abhimanyu Koul. Director Agriculture Kashmir, Director Animal Husbandry Jammu/Kashmir, Director Sheep Husbandry Jammu/Kashmir, Director Horticulture Kashmir and senior officers from the Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry and Horticulture departments of Kashmir participated through virtual mode.

Capacity building and training programme on Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana organised at Kisan Kendra

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 25: The Sub-Divisional Agriculture Office, Marh, today organised a one-day Capacity Building and Training Programme for field functionaries under the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) 2026-27 at the Farm Training Centre, Kisan Kendra, Talab Tillo, Jammu.

The programme aimed to enhance the technical knowledge and field-level capacities of agriculture functionaries for effective promotion of organic farming under PKVY.

Around 80 officers and field functionaries from across Jammu district took part and were sensitised on various aspects of organic farming, including PKVY implementation guidelines, organic input management, certification procedures, cluster development, documentation and sustainable agricultural practices.

Divisional Seed Certification Officer Jammu Nirmal Parkash Sharma was the chief resource person. He highlighted the importance of soil health conservation and adoption of organic farming for sustainable agri-

cultural growth and urged the field functionaries to work closely with farmers to promote eco-friendly cultivation and ensure successful implementation of PKVY at the grassroots level.

Sub-Divisional Agriculture Officer Marh Khalid Hassan emphasised the pivotal role of field staff in creating awareness among farmers about organic farming and motivating them to adopt sustainable cultivation practices.

He called upon the participants to disseminate the knowledge gained so that the benefits of the scheme reach a larger number of farming households.

The technical sessions were delivered by Nirmal Parkash Sharma, DSCO, Jammu; Munshi Ram Rakwal, SMS-DL; Vishali Bagal, SMS-SDL; Bhumika Bandral, JAEQ; Anshu Banotra, AEA and Anjana Mahajan, AEO, Bhalwal, who conducted detailed sessions on the technical and operational aspects of the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana and organic farming.

The resource persons also conducted the proceedings through interactive discussions and question-answer sessions.

SKUAST-K becomes Kashmir's first University to hold fully Paperless PG Semester Exam

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 25: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) has become the first university in the Kashmir Valley to conduct a completely paperless postgraduate semester examination, marking a significant milestone in the digital transformation of higher education in the region.

On July 25, the University successfully conducted a tablet-based digital examination for 150 postgraduate students enrolled in the course "Statistical Methods for Applied Sciences", replacing the conventional pen-

and-paper examination system with a secure digital platform.

The initiative was envisioned by the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, as part of the University's broader mission to modernize academic administration through technology-driven, sustainable and student-centric practices. The transition reflects SKUAST-K's commitment to creating a future-ready academic ecosystem that aligns with global standards in digital education.

The implementation was coordinated under the supervision of Prof. K. N. Qa-

isar, Controller of Examinations; Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, Dean, Faculty of Horticulture; and Prof. Imran Khan, Head, Division of Agricultural Statistics, who ensured that the examination was conducted in accordance with prescribed academic standards and robust data security protocols.

The examination was monitored on-site by Dr. Aziz Mujtaba Aezum, Dr. M. Iqbal Jeelani and Dr. Immad A. Shah, who managed real-time classroom operations, technical support and student facilitation to ensure a seamless examination experience.

Prof. Ganai described the successful conduct of the ex-

amination as a landmark achievement in the University's digital transformation journey. He said the initiative demonstrates SKUAST-K's resolve to adopt innovative technologies that enhance academic quality while promoting sustainability and operational efficiency.

"This transition is not merely about replacing paper with digital devices. It is about preparing our students for a technology-driven future while making academic processes more transparent, efficient and environmentally responsible," he said.

The University had earlier introduced the paperless ex-

amination system for undergraduate end-term examinations. Its successful expansion to the postgraduate level marks another major step towards fully digitising the University's evaluation system.

The digital examination platform offers several advantages over conventional examinations. It significantly reduces paper consumption, printing requirements and physical storage, contributing to environmental sustainability. The system also streamlines examination logistics through secure digital distribution of question papers, encrypted submission of answer scripts and faster evaluation, enabling quicker declaration of results.

To uphold examination integrity, the platform operates in a secure locked environment that prevents access to external resources during the examination.

Digital audit trails, including automated timestamps and activity logs, further strengthen transparency and accountability throughout the assessment process.

The initiative also familiarises students with computer-based assessments, helping them build digital confidence and preparing them for national competitive examinations such as ICAR-NET, GATE, CSIR-UGC

NET and Civil Services, which are conducted through computer-based testing. The platform additionally supports accessibility through features such as adjustable font sizes and enhanced screen visibility.

The successful conduct of the 150-candidate postgraduate examination establishes a scalable model for digital assessments in higher education. SKUAST-K plans to gradually extend the paperless examination system across all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, reinforcing its position as a leader in technology-enabled agricultural education and academic innovation.

SKY Trust Felicitates Badhte Kadam Fellows, Women Skill Trainees at Palhalan

■ MUSTAFA BOTOO

PATTAN, JULY 25: Stand for Kashmiri Youth (SKY) Trust on Saturday organized a felicitation event at Parsa, Palhalan to recognize the dedication and achievements of Badhte Kadam Fellows, women skill trainees and partner organizations working towards building an inclusive and resilient Kashmir.

During the event, 16 Badhte Kadam Fellows were felicitated for successfully completing their fellowship with SKY Trust Kashmir, while 17 young women trainees were honored for completing their Tilla Embroidery skill training, highlighting the role of youth in preserving traditional heritage crafts and promoting financial independence.

On the occasion, two Badhte Kadam Fellows, Umaira from Sopore and Sabreena from Arampora, Sumbal, shared their fellowship experiences and explained how the programme helped them develop communication, youth leadership and facilitation skills. They also emphasized the importance of Darbaar – a community space in creating safe spaces for young women where they can learn, express themselves and access peer as well as psychosocial support.

Addressing the gathering,



Zahida Akhter, Chief Executive Officer, SKY Trust Kashmir, highlighted the mission, vision and

journey of the organization. She stressed the need for creating safe and supportive environments

for youth, particularly young women, enabling them to grow both personally and profession-

ally.

The programme was attended by several distinguished guests and partner organizations, including Dr. Rumania (Block Medical Officer, Pattan), Mansoor Ahmad (SI, SHO Office Pattan), Bashir Ahmad Mir (Human Aid Society Baramulla), Masrat Akhter (One Stop Centre Baramulla), Aisha Subhan (Sankalap Hub Baramulla), Aaisha Ji (Sankalap Hub Bandipora), Mudasir Shafi (Handicrafts Office Pattan), Ruksana Murtaza (Counsellor, BMO Office Pattan), Sadaf Nazir (Institute for Social Democracy), Altaf Ahmad (Kashmir Lifeline Baramulla Hub), and Ghulam Hassan (CRISIL Foundation).

A total of 53 participants attended the event. Special felicitations were also presented to Sankalap Hub Baramulla, Sankalap Hub Bandipora, SHO Office Pattan, and the Institute for Social Democracy for their continued support in promoting youth empowerment and strengthening community outreach initiatives.

The event concluded with SKY Trust reaffirming its commitment to nurturing youth leadership through skills development, mentorship and the creation of safe, gender-sensitive community spaces that prioritize opportunity, inclusion and mental well-being.

NIA Court Rejects Interim Bail To Ex-DSP; Grants 5-Day Custody Parole For Father's Last Rites

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 25: A special NIA court has rejected the interim bail application of dismissed police officer Devinder Singh but allowed him a five-day custody parole on humanitarian grounds to attend the post-death rituals of his father in Srinagar next week. Singh, who was posted with the anti-hijacking cell of police attached to the Srinagar airport, was arrested in January 2020 while ferrying Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists, including its self-styled commander Syed Naveed Mushtaq, at a checkpoint in south Kashmir's Anantnag.

He was subsequently chargesheeted in the case by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and dismissed from service in 2021.

According to the bail application, Singh's father Deedar Singh passed away in Srinagar on July 17.

The accused, who is lodged in the Kot Bhalwal central jail in Jammu since his arrest on January 11, 2020, sought 20 days' interim bail to attend the cremation and the post-death rituals.

The court was informed that his appeal against the rejection of regular bail is presently pending before the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Passing the order on July 21, Special Judge Prem Sagar dismissed Singh's plea for interim bail but granted him five days' custody parole on humanitarian grounds, permitting him to attend the 'Akhand Paath' and other post-cremation rituals at the family residence in Srinagar between July 27 and 30, under police escort.

"Keeping in view the facts and circumstances of the case, the prayer to grant interim bail is not considered as the applicant has already filed an appeal against the rejection of regular. However, this court partly allows the application of the applicant purely on humanitarian grounds and allows him to participate in the religious rituals...", the judge said in his four-page order.

The court said the accused will remain on custody parole from July 27 to 30 and return to jail on July 31. During the parole period, Singh will remain in police custody and be taken to the venue of the religious ceremonies between 10 am and 4 pm each day, the court said, directing that adequate police personnel will remain with him throughout the visit to ensure security.

The NIA had opposed the plea, arguing that the accused is facing trial for serious offences affecting national security under various sections of the IPC, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), the Arms Act and the Explosive Substances Act.

"The allegations against the applicant are of a serious nature, and there exists a statutory embargo under Section 43D(5) of the UAPA concerning the grant of bail. "The applicant's prayer for regular bail is also pending before the high court, which is listed for hearing on August 4. In these circumstances, the present application for interim bail deserves to be considered with due regard to the gravity of the offences and the statutory strictions governing the grant of bail," the NIA said.

EOW Kashmir chargesheets man for duping youth with fake overseas job promise

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, JUL 25: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) Kashmir on Saturday said it has filed a chargesheet against a Pattan resident for allegedly duping a youth of lakhs of rupees by promising him a rupees 90,000-per-month job in Cambodia, where the victim was instead forced into online scam operations.

In a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a spokesperson said the Economic Offences Wing (EOW), Kashmir, of Crime Branch J&K has filed a chargesheet in FIR No. 19/2026 under Section 318(4) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) against Mohd Yaseen Rather, son of Nisar Ahmad Rather, a resident of Kripalpora Payeen, Pattan, before the Court of Judicial Magistrate 1st Class.

ACB Files Chargesheet Against Then Patwari, Ex-Lumberdar In Baramulla Bribery Trap Case

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JUL 25: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), Jammu and Kashmir, has filed a chargesheet before the Special Judge, Anti-Corruption, Baramulla, against the then Patwari of Halqa Khawaja Bagh and a former Lumberdar in connection with a bribery trap case registered in 2024.

According to an official statement, the chargesheet has been filed against Fida Hussain Shah, the then Patwari of Halqa Khawaja Bagh, Baramulla, and Manzoor Ahmad Mir, former Lumberdar of Gutiyar, Baramulla, in connection with FIR No. 04/2024 reg-

istered at Police Station ACB Baramulla.

The ACB said the case was registered on April 16, 2024, following a complaint alleging that the accused had demanded illegal gratification from the complainant for issuing revenue records and No Objection Certificate (NOC) reports required for processing building permission applications submitted by the complainant and his father.

During the course of investigation, the ACB collected oral, documentary, electronic and scientific evidence, including the recovery of tainted currency notes and forensic examination of relevant exhibits. The investigating

agency said that witness statements and other corroborative material prima facie established the involvement of the accused in demanding and accepting bribe.

The Bureau further stated that the competent authority in the Government of Jammu and Kashmir granted prosecution sanction against the then Patwari before the filing of the chargesheet.

Both accused have been booked under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (as amended in 2018), read with Section 120-B of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and other relevant provisions of law.

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HT EDITORIAL

Keeping the Lights On Means Keeping Public Trust Alive

Electricity is no longer a luxury that people can afford to do without for a few hours. It has become the backbone of modern life, powering everything from homes and hospitals to businesses, schools and digital services. In an age where almost every aspect of daily living depends on uninterrupted electricity, a reliable power supply is not merely an expectation—it is a basic public necessity.

Jammu and Kashmir has made considerable progress in upgrading its power infrastructure over the past few years. New distribution systems, improved transmission networks and widespread installation of smart meters reflect a determined effort to modernise the sector. Consumers have also responded positively by embracing metering, paying their bills more regularly and cooperating with reforms aimed at improving efficiency and reducing losses.

However, the true success of these initiatives cannot be measured by the number of projects completed or kilometres of transmission lines laid. Their real test lies in whether the average consumer experiences a stable and dependable electricity supply. Unfortunately, frequent and unscheduled power cuts continue to cast a shadow over these achievements.

While occasional disruptions due to adverse weather or technical faults are inevitable, recurring outages without prior information leave people frustrated and inconvenienced. Families are forced to alter their daily routines, students struggle to continue their studies, businesses lose valuable working hours and healthcare institutions face avoidable operational challenges. In today's digital era, even a brief interruption can disrupt online education, banking services, government transactions and professional work.

Reliable electricity is also an economic necessity. Entrepreneurs, traders and small businesses depend on uninterrupted power to remain productive and competitive. Every unexpected outage translates into lost revenue, delayed services and increased dependence on costly backup systems. Such uncertainty discourages investment and weakens confidence in the overall business environment. Equally important is the need for better communication. Consumers deserve to know when planned maintenance or unavoidable shutdowns are scheduled. Timely updates through official channels, local media and digital platforms can help people prepare in advance and minimise inconvenience. Transparency builds confidence, while silence often breeds dissatisfaction.

The power department has undoubtedly undertaken significant reforms, but infrastructure alone cannot satisfy public expectations. Efficient service delivery, prompt fault restoration and responsive consumer engagement must become the defining features of a modern electricity system. Investments made with public resources should translate into visible improvements in the lives of those they are intended to serve.

A dependable power supply is ultimately a reflection of good governance. It strengthens economic activity, improves public welfare and enhances confidence in institutions. As Jammu and Kashmir moves towards greater development and digital transformation, ensuring uninterrupted electricity should remain a central priority rather than an ongoing challenge.

Citizens have shown their willingness to support reforms and fulfil their responsibilities as consumers. They now look to the authorities to honour their part of the social contract by delivering a power supply that is reliable, predictable and worthy of a modern and progressive society. After all, every light that stays on is more than a sign of electricity—it is a symbol of public trust.

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World Drug Problem: Persisting Issues, New Challenges, Innovative Responses



■ MOHAMMAD HANIEF

The world today stands at a critical juncture in its efforts to combat the growing menace of substance abuse and illicit drug trafficking. Despite decades of policy interventions, international cooperation, and law enforcement measures, the drug problem continues to evolve in scale, complexity, and impact. What was once viewed primarily as a criminal justice issue has now emerged as a multifaceted challenge affecting public health, social cohesion, economic development, and human security across nations.

The observance of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on June 26 serves as an important reminder that the global community must remain vigilant and responsive to emerging trends. This year's theme, "World Drug Problem: Persisting Issues, New Challenges, Innovative Responses," reflects both the enduring nature of the problem and the urgent need for fresh approaches in addressing it.

Over the years, illicit drug markets have demonstrated a remarkable capacity to adapt to changing circumstances. Advances in technology, globalization, and evolving consumer behavior have transformed the way illicit substances are produced, marketed, transported, and consumed. Criminal networks have become increasingly sophisticated, exploiting loopholes in regulatory systems and utilizing modern communication tools to expand their reach. The result is a dynamic and resilient underground economy that continues to challenge governments and institutions worldwide.

One of the defining features of the contemporary drug problem is the diversification of illicit substances available in the market. The emergence of laboratory-produced substances, coupled with the increasing accessibility of various psychoactive compounds, has complicated efforts aimed at prevention, detection, and regulation. These developments have created new risks for users while presenting significant challenges for public health systems and law enforcement agencies.

The digital revolution has added another dimension to this evolving crisis. The rapid growth of online platforms, encrypted communication channels, and anonymous financial transactions has enabled traffickers to operate with greater speed and discretion. Illicit substances can now be marketed and distributed through digital networks that transcend geographical boundaries, making traditional enforcement strategies less effective. The internet has not only altered the mechanics of trafficking but has also expanded the reach of criminal organizations into previously inaccessible spaces.

This changing landscape has heightened concerns regarding the vulnerability of young people. Adolescents and young adults increasingly navigate a digital environment where exposure to harmful influences can occur with unprecedented ease. Curiosity, peer pressure, misinformation, and emotional vulnerability often intersect in ways that increase the risk of substance use. The consequences can be profound, affecting educational attainment, mental well-being, personal relationships, and future opportunities.

Beyond the challenges posed by trafficking and distribution networks lies the human dimension of the drug problem. Substance dependence continues to exact a heavy toll on individuals, families, and communities. It disrupts lives, weakens social bonds, and contributes to a range of health, psychological, and socioeconomic difficulties. Families often



bear the burden of emotional distress and financial hardship, while communities face increased pressures on healthcare, welfare, and social support systems.

The relationship between substance abuse and mental health has become increasingly evident in recent years. Psychological stress, anxiety, depression, loneliness, and other emotional challenges often contribute to substance use, while addiction itself can further aggravate mental health conditions. This complex interaction underscores the importance of adopting integrated approaches that address both prevention and treatment within a broader framework of psychological well-being.

The social consequences of substance abuse are equally significant. Educational disruptions, declining productivity, family conflicts, social isolation, and increased vulnerability to crime are among the many challenges associated with addiction. The cumulative impact extends beyond individuals, affecting communities and hindering broader development goals. Consequently, the drug problem must be viewed not only through the lens of public health or law enforcement but also as a developmental and societal concern.

India, like many other countries, continues to grapple with the far-reaching implications of substance abuse. Rapid social transformation, demographic shifts, unemployment, and increasing exposure to digital influences have contributed to growing concerns regarding the vulnerability of youth. The issue demands sustained attention and coordinated responses that prioritize prevention, awareness, and rehabilitation alongside enforcement measures.

In Jammu and Kashmir, concerns surrounding substance abuse have become increasingly prominent in recent years. The challenge has emerged as a matter of serious social concern, affecting individuals from diverse backgrounds and communities. The growing involvement of young people has heightened public anxiety and underscored the need for timely intervention. Beyond its immediate health implications, substance abuse threatens the social fabric of society by undermining the aspirations, productivity, and potential of an entire generation.

Recognizing the seriousness of the challenge, the government of Jammu and Kashmir has initiated a comprehensive "100-Day Anti-Drug Campaign" aimed at strengthening awareness, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and enforcement efforts across the Union Territory. The campaign represents a proactive and coordinated response that seeks to involve multiple stakeholders in addressing the issue.

A notable aspect of the initiative is its emphasis on collective par-

The social consequences of substance abuse are equally significant. Educational disruptions, declining productivity, family conflicts, social isolation, and increased vulnerability to crime are among the many challenges associated with addiction. The cumulative impact extends beyond individuals, affecting communities and hindering broader development goals. Consequently, the drug problem must be viewed not only through the lens....

ticipation. Government departments, educational institutions, healthcare professionals, law enforcement agencies, civil society organizations, and community groups have been encouraged to work together in creating awareness and promoting preventive measures. Such collaboration reflects the understanding that lasting solutions require the active involvement of society as a whole.

Educational institutions have emerged as important partners in these efforts. Schools, colleges, and universities play a vital role in shaping attitudes and behaviors during formative years. By fostering awareness, encouraging informed decision-making, and promoting healthy lifestyles, these institutions can serve as powerful agents of prevention. Equally important is the role of parents and guardians, whose guidance and support remain fundamental in protecting young people from harmful influences.

The campaign has also highlighted the importance of rehabilitation and recovery. Addressing addiction requires compassion, professional support, and opportunities for reintegration into society. Individuals affected by substance dependence often face stigma and social exclusion, which can become barriers to recovery. Strengthening treatment facilities, counselling services, and rehabilitation programmes is therefore essential in ensuring that those seeking help receive the support they need.

Community engagement remains one of the most effective tools in preventing substance abuse. Local leaders, educators, healthcare workers, social organizations, and youth groups possess the ability to influence attitudes and encourage positive behavioral choices. Strong communities create environments where awareness, support, and early intervention can flourish, reducing the likelihood of individuals falling into patterns of substance dependence.

Long-term success also requires addressing the social and economic factors that contribute to vulnerability. Access to quality education, employment opportunities, mental health services, recreational facilities, and skill development programmes can significantly strengthen resilience among young people. Investments in these areas represent investments in prevention and social well-being.

Across the world, innovative responses are increasingly shaping the future of drug control. Advances in technology, improved data analysis, enhanced international cooperation, and evidence-based public health interventions are providing new opportunities to address emerging challenges. At the same time, there is growing recognition that effective responses must be people-centered, emphasizing prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and social inclusion.

The evolving nature of the world drug problem demands an equally adaptive response. Governments, institutions, communities, and families must work together to create environments that promote awareness, resilience, and healthy choices. The challenge is significant, but it is not insurmountable.

The ongoing 100-Day Anti-Drug Campaign in Jammu and Kashmir demonstrates that meaningful progress is possible when awareness is combined with action and policy is complemented by community participation. It reflects a broader commitment to safeguarding the well-being of individuals, strengthening communities, and protecting future generations from the harmful consequences of substance abuse.

Ultimately, the fight against drugs is a fight for healthier societies, stronger families, and brighter futures. It is a shared responsibility that requires sustained commitment, informed action, and collective resolve. Only through cooperation, innovation, and compassion can societies effectively confront this evolving challenge and move towards a safer, healthier, and more resilient future.

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

Michael Madhusudan with Rebecca and Henrietta: A Tragic Saga of Love



■ DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

The life of Michael Madhusudan Dutt remains one of the most fascinating narratives in the history of Indian literature. Revered as the pioneer of modern Bengali poetry and the creator of Meghnad Badh Kavya, Madhusudan was not merely a literary genius; he was also a restless soul whose personal life was marked by passion, rebellion, ambition, loneliness, and tragedy. Among the many chapters of his remarkable life, none is more poignant than his relationship with Rebecca McTavish. Overshadowed by his literary achievements and later association with Henrietta Sophia White, Rebecca's story has often remained at the margins of literary history. Yet her life and her love represent one of the most moving episodes in nineteenth-century Bengal, deserving greater recognition and compassionate understanding. Love, in its truest sense, is not always crowned with success. Sometimes it survives only in memory, sacrifice, and silence. The relationship between Michael Madhusudan and Rebecca belongs to that category of immortal love stories where happiness proved fleeting, but emotional intensity remained unforgettable. Their union reflected not merely a romance between two individuals but also the cultural tensions, religious conflicts, and social transformations of colonial India.

Michael Madhusudan Dutt was born in 1824 in Sagardari, Jessore. Exceptionally brilliant from childhood, he was deeply attracted to English literature and Western civilization. His admiration for Milton, Shakespeare, Byron, and Homer shaped his literary aspirations. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Madhusudan dreamt of becoming an English poet rather than a Bengali one. His conversion to Christianity in 1843 shocked conservative Bengali society and led to estrangement from his family. The decision was not merely religious but represented his passionate quest for freedom from orthodox social conventions. After leaving Calcutta, Madhusudan eventually travelled to Madras, where he worked as a teacher, journal-

ist, and writer. It was there that destiny brought Rebecca McTavish into his life. Rebecca belonged to an Anglo-Indian family. She was educated, affectionate, gentle, and possessed a remarkable emotional strength. Their acquaintance gradually developed into deep affection, culminating in marriage. At a time when racial, religious, and social barriers divided communities, their marriage symbolized courage and mutual commitment.

Rebecca offered Madhusudan not only companionship but also emotional stability during one of the most uncertain periods of his life. She stood beside a struggling young intellectual who had little financial security but enormous literary ambition. Their home became a refuge where dreams were nurtured despite economic hardship. They were blessed with children, and Rebecca devoted herself wholeheartedly to family life. Those who examine Madhusudan's life often focus exclusively on his literary achievements. However, behind every creative mind lies an emotional world. Rebecca became an indispensable part of that emotional landscape. She believed in her husband even when recognition remained distant. Like many devoted spouses of great artists, she silently endured hardship without demanding public acknowledgment.

Yet the very qualities that made Madhusudan extraordinary also made him unpredictable. His restless temperament constantly sought new horizons. His ambitions exceeded the limitations imposed by provincial life in Madras. Financial insecurity, personal dissatisfaction, and emotional instability gradually affected the marriage. The passionate idealist who had once sought liberation from social conventions found himself increasingly dissatisfied with domestic responsibilities. During this period Madhusudan became closely associated with Henrietta Sophia White. Their growing intimacy ultimately led him away from Rebecca and their children. The separation was neither sudden nor simple. For Rebecca it meant the collapse of a life built upon love, trust, and sacrifice. She had crossed social boundaries to marry Madhusudan, only to experience abandonment under circumstances beyond her control.

History often celebrates genius while overlooking those who suffer because of it. Rebecca became one such forgotten figure. She neither sought public sympathy nor attempted to tarnish Madhusudan's reputation. Her dignity amid personal sorrow commands profound respect. She bore the emotional

burden of separation with remarkable courage while raising her children under difficult circumstances. For Madhusudan, however, the decision did not bring lasting peace. His later years were marked by relentless financial troubles, unfulfilled ambitions, exile in Europe, and recurring personal crises. Though he attained immortal fame through masterpieces such as Meghnad Badh Kavya, Tilottama Sambhab, Birangana, and his Bengali sonnets, happiness remained elusive. Success in literature could not entirely compensate for failures in personal relationships.

Henrietta, originally Emilia Henrietta Sophie White, was the daughter of a colleague Madhusudan met during his tenure at the Madras Male Orphan Asylum. When she joined him in Calcutta in 1858, after he had separated from his first wife Rebecca, their companionship became central to his life's final phase. Their relationship was shaped by Madhusudan's restless ambition and his desire to carve out a place for himself in the Western intellectual world. Henrietta accompanied him first to Calcutta, then to London, where he pursued legal studies, and later to Versailles, where the couple endured severe financial distress. In these years of exile, Henrietta's presence offered emotional stability amid Madhusudan's spiraling debts and declining health. Their life in Europe was marked by poverty so acute that they often relied on the generosity of friends, including Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, who repeatedly sent money to rescue the poet from destitution. Yet Henrietta remained steadfast, sharing both the burden of hardship and the fragile hope of recovery.

The couple had several children—Henrietta Elizabeth Sermista, Frederick Michael Milton, Albert Napoleon Dutt, and one stillborn child—whose lives were also touched by the instability of their parents' circumstances. Despite the turbulence, their household bore the imprint of affection and resilience. Henrietta's role extended beyond that of a spouse; she was a companion in exile, a caretaker during illness, and a witness to the poet's creative and emotional struggles. Their story reached its tragic culmination in June 1873, when Henrietta died just three days before Madhusudan himself passed away. The proximity of their deaths underscores the depth of their intertwined lives, suggesting a bond that endured until the very end. In the broader narrative of Madhusudan's life, Henrietta stands as a symbol of loyalty and quiet endurance, her presence illuminating the

human vulnerabilities behind the poet's heroic literary persona.

Modern scholarship increasingly recognises the importance of recovering forgotten voices from history. Rebecca's story invites historians and literary critics to move beyond conventional narratives centred exclusively on famous men. It reminds us that every celebrated life intersects with the lives of others whose sacrifices often remain invisible. Historical justice requires that such lives also receive thoughtful attention. The relationship between Michael and Rebecca further illustrates the complexities of colonial identity. Nineteenth-century India witnessed unprecedented interactions between European and Indian cultures. Mixed marriages challenged rigid racial boundaries while simultaneously exposing couples to social prejudice from multiple directions. Their marriage reflected the possibilities as well as the vulnerabilities inherent in such relationships.

Religion too played a significant role in their story. Madhusudan's conversion had already distanced him from traditional Hindu society. Marriage to Rebecca further symbolised his embrace of a cosmopolitan identity. Yet identity shaped by rebellion alone often encounters unforeseen emotional consequences. Freedom from one set of conventions does not automatically ensure inner fulfilment. Literature frequently transforms personal experience into artistic expression. Although direct autobiographical connections should not be exaggerated, Madhusudan's recurring concern with exile, loss, separation, heroism, and tragic destiny inevitably reflects the emotional currents that flowed through his own life. His heroes often struggle against overwhelming circumstances, just as he himself wrestled with ambition, alienation, and regret. Rebecca, in contrast, represents another form of heroism—the quiet courage of ordinary humanity. She did not compose epics or revolutionise literature. Her greatness lay in fidelity, compassion, and perseverance. Such virtues rarely attract dramatic attention, yet they constitute the moral foundation of civilisation. In recognising Rebecca, we also recognise countless forgotten women whose lives have sustained families while history celebrated others.

The tragedy of their separation also raises enduring questions about the relationship between artistic genius and personal responsibility. Can exceptional creativity excuse emotional neglect? Should society judge great artists solely through their works? Or must

biography and morality remain integral to literary evaluation? These questions continue to engage scholars across generations. Madhusudan's life offers no easy answers but encourages thoughtful reflection. In recent decades biographers have approached Madhusudan with greater psychological sensitivity. Rather than presenting him either as a flawless hero or a moral failure, they acknowledge the profound contradictions that shaped his existence. Such balanced understanding also creates space for appreciating Rebecca's humanity without diminishing Madhusudan's literary greatness. Compassion need not be exclusive; history can honour both genius and suffering. Today visitors to Sagardari remember Madhusudan as Bengal's immortal poet. Students memorise passages from Meghnad Badh Kavya and celebrate his pioneering contributions to Bengali literature. Yet alongside the image of the celebrated poet there should also remain the memory of Rebecca McTavish, whose love illuminated one of the most difficult phases of his life. Her story adds emotional depth to the public image of the poet and reminds us that every great life contains hidden chapters of joy and sorrow.

The saga of Michael Madhusudan and Rebecca is therefore much more than a romantic episode. It is a story of aspiration, cultural encounter, sacrifice, disappointment, and enduring affection. It reveals the fragile nature of human relationships amid the pressures of ambition and changing identity. Their lives demonstrate that love is not measured solely by permanence but also by the sincerity with which it is given. Ultimately, Rebecca's legacy survives not through monuments or celebrated literary works but through the quiet dignity with which she faced heartbreak. Madhusudan's legacy survives through poetry that transformed the course of Bengali literature forever. Together they represent two complementary truths of human existence: the immortality of artistic achievement and the immortality of selfless love. One conquered time through literature; the other conquered oblivion through sacrifice.

International Dickens Medal Winner multilingual writer and Columnist for national dailies Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee is a former Affiliate Faculty of Virginia Commonwealth University Richmond . He may be reached at prof.ratanbhattacharjee@gmail.com

Time to Empower Tribal Women



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHAT

In this important and evolving era, our nation is fully capable of producing great resources in every sector. Our nation is praised worldwide because, with each passing day, we are moving toward our goals of success. Our nation has immense potential and eminent goals, which we are achieving in different sectors. Our country has great diversity in cultures, religious perspectives, and people who think about the upliftment of our proud nation.

In India, one thing is always praised across the world: people from different cultures live under one colorful umbrella. This beautiful umbrella represents our unity in diversity.

However, one thing is unfortunate: in this developing era, some sections of society are still deprived of basic rights, such as access to higher education, skill development, proper shelter, clean water, and government welfare schemes.

Science and technology play an important and transformative role in today's nation. We now have electricity, internet,

water, and road networks in most parts of the country. However, we still lack in some areas. Health centers should be available everywhere so people can receive better medical facilities. Above all, education remains the most powerful tool. Today, we understand the true essence of education and how it shapes the future of generations and transforms the fate of communities and nations. There is no alternative to education. Education is as essential as oxygen, food, and shelter for survival on this mesmerizing blue planet.

In this article, I share my views on the upliftment of tribal women. The government should never hesitate to provide well-equipped educational institutions and skill development centers and should remain deeply concerned about their upliftment. The upliftment of any community directly leads to the upliftment of the nation.

Education for the downtrodden classes should be free and compulsory at every stage, without scholarship barriers.

In a world increasingly connected by cutting-edge technology, true education rises above barriers of caste, color, creed, and gender. Educated individuals promote humanity, equality, and progress. Technology has unveiled the mysteries of the world and offers unprecedented opportunities for growth and empowerment. For tribal girls in India, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, education and tech-

nology hold the key to breaking the cycle of marginalization and building a brighter future.

The Role of Technology in Uplifting the Marginalized

The internet has revolutionized access to knowledge and opportunities. It serves as a powerful tool for the underprivileged by offering resources on entrepreneurship, higher education, and skill development. Platforms like YouTube and Google have become virtual classrooms, enabling students to gain knowledge that was once out of reach. Today's learners can access vast information from the comfort of their homes. This accessibility empowers individuals to improve their social and economic status.

Education is universally recognized as a cornerstone of success. It fosters peace, reduces violence, dispels ignorance, and opens doors to financial independence and social respect.

Educational Institutions as Catalysts for Change

India's educational landscape has expanded significantly, reaching even remote areas through schools, colleges, universities, and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs). These institutions have transformed mindsets and enabled social mobility. Among tribal communities, particularly the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities of Jammu and Kashmir, educational awareness is gradually increasing. Education not only helps in securing jobs but also

broadens horizons and promotes independence.

Focusing on Tribal Girls A National Priority

This article highlights the challenges faced by tribal girls, especially from the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities, and the urgent need to uplift them. Although India has made progress in promoting gender equality, tribal communities remain economically and educationally disadvantaged.

According to the 2011 Census, around 12% of Jammu and Kashmir's population belongs to tribal groups, with Gujjars and Bakarwals being predominant. These communities migrate seasonally with livestock between Jammu's plains and the forests of Pir Panjal. Despite their deep connection with nature, they face significant barriers to education and economic opportunities.

Why Are Tribal Communities Lagging?

Geographical isolation, lack of awareness about government schemes, and poor infrastructure hinder access to education. As a result, tribal girls struggle to realize their full potential and contribute to the nation.

Solutions for Upliftment Compulsory Education and Scholarships:

Education up to the graduate level should be compulsory for girls, with full scholarships for professional courses. A 100% tuition fee rebate up to the post-

graduate level would remove financial barriers.

Local Skill Development Centers: ITIs should be established in villages to help tribal girls gain technical skills and employment opportunities.

Awareness and Support Campaigns: Awareness drives should inform communities about scholarships, healthcare, and livelihood schemes. Free transport for women in remote areas will improve access to education.

Economic Empowerment: Granting forest rights will support livestock rearing and dairy production, strengthening traditional livelihoods.

Local Employment Opportunities: District-level recruitment drives will motivate tribal youth to pursue education. Women's Safety and Rights Education: Awareness programs should educate girls about their rights and safety.

A Vision of Inclusive Progress The Gujjar and Bakarwal communities are an integral part of India's cultural diversity. By prioritizing the education and empowerment of tribal girls, India can uplift entire communities and strengthen the nation.

It is time to eliminate discrimination and embrace humanity. By investing in the education of tribal girls today, we can build a more inclusive and prosperous India tomorrow.

sahilmanzoor411990@gmail.com

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Healthy Habits, Healthier Lives:

Why Personal Hygiene Matters at Every Stage of Life



Good hygiene is more than looking clean—it's about staying healthy, preventing illness, and boosting confidence throughout life.



PERSONAL HYGIENE AT EVERY STAGE



CHILDHOOD

Builds strong habits, prevents infections, and supports healthy growth.



TEEN YEARS

Promotes confidence, prevents acne and infections, and supports well-being.



ADULTHOOD

Reduces stress, prevents illness, and enhances personal & professional life.



SENIOR YEARS

Maintains dignity, prevents infections, and ensures a better quality of life.



ALL STAGES

Good hygiene protects you and those around you—always.

Good hygiene, balanced nutrition, adequate sleep and regular exercise form the foundation of life-long physical, mental and social well-being

BISMA ASHRAF

Personal hygiene is far more than a daily routine of washing and grooming—it is a lifelong practice that safeguards health, prevents disease and enhances overall quality of life. From infancy to old age, maintaining good hygiene habits helps individuals remain physically fit, mentally resilient and socially confident.

Healthy living begins with simple yet essential practices such as regular bathing, proper oral care, clean clothing, handwashing, nail care, balanced nutrition, adequate rest and regular physical activity. These habits not only reduce the risk of infections but also contribute to emotional well-being and a positive personality.

Childhood is the most crucial stage for developing lifelong hygiene habits. Parents and schools play a vital role in teaching children the importance of cleanliness, healthy eating, exercise and personal discipline. A clean school environment, safe drinking water, proper sanitation and regular health check-ups further support children's growth and learning.

Healthy living begins with simple yet essential practices such as regular bathing, proper oral care, clean clothing, handwashing, nail care, balanced nutrition, adequate rest and regular physical activity. These habits not only reduce the risk of infections but also contribute to emotional well-being and a positive personality

Adolescence brings rapid physical and emotional changes, making personal hygiene, mental well-being and health education even more important. In later years, maintaining hygiene, nutritious diets and an active lifestyle helps older adults preserve their health, dignity and independence.

Equally important are adequate sleep and regular exercise. Sound sleep allows the body and mind to recover, while physical activity strengthens muscles, improves circulation, enhances immunity and promotes emotional well-being. Team sports and outdoor games also help develop confidence, discipline and social skills.

Experts emphasise that good health is built on everyday choices rather than occasional efforts. Clean surroundings, healthy homes, proper sanitation and awareness of preventive healthcare together create healthier families and stronger communities.

Personal hygiene is, therefore, not merely a habit but a way of life. Practised consistently from an early age, it lays the foundation for a healthier, happier and more productive society.

Body Growth Hormone and the Bodybuilding Craze



SURINDERPAL SINGH

The desire to look physically fit has become stronger than ever. Social media platforms are filled with images of muscular bodies, dramatic fitness transformations and promises of rapid muscle gain. While regular exercise and balanced nutrition remain the foundation of good health, an increasing number of young people are being tempted by shortcuts such as Human Growth Hormone (HGH). This growing trend deserves serious attention because what appears to be a quick path to success may actually lead to lifelong health problems.

Human Growth Hormone, commonly known as HGH or somatotropin, is a naturally occurring protein hormone produced by the pituitary gland at the base of the brain. It consists of 191 amino acids and plays an essential role in the growth of bones, muscles and other body tissues. It also helps regulate metabolism and stimulates the production of Insulin-like Growth Factor-1 (IGF-1), which promotes normal growth and tissue repair. In medicine, HGH is a valuable treatment for children and adults suffering from genuine growth hormone deficiency and certain other medical conditions. Under the supervision of qualified doctors, it has improved the quality of life for many patients.

Unfortunately, the same hormone is increasingly being promoted in the bodybuilding and gym industry as a miracle solution for building muscle and burning fat. Some trainers, online influencers and illegal suppliers claim that HGH can produce extraordinary physiques within a short period. Such claims are often exaggerated and rarely supported by complete scientific evidence. While growth hormone may increase lean body mass in certain circumstances, it cannot replace disciplined training, proper nutrition, sufficient rest and consistent effort. There is no injection that can substitute for hard work.

The misuse of HGH has become a matter of concern, especially among teenagers and young adults who may not fully understand its risks. Because HGH is a protein hormone, it cannot be taken orally and is administered through injections. Many products sold outside



legitimate medical channels are counterfeit, contaminated, or improperly manufactured, exposing users to additional dangers beyond the hormone itself.

Health experts warn that unnecessary HGH use can lead to swelling, joint pain, muscle aches, high blood sugar, diabetes, enlargement of internal organs, abnormal bone growth and cardiovascular complications. Long-term misuse may cause permanent changes that cannot be reversed. Moreover, combining HGH with anabolic steroids—a common practice in some bodybuilding circles—can significantly increase health risks.

There is also an ethical dimension to this issue. Competitive sports organizations ban the use of HGH as a performance-enhancing drug because it provides an unfair advantage and violates the principles of fair competition. Success achieved through artificial enhancement undermines the values of honesty, perseverance and sportsmanship that every athlete should uphold.

The fitness industry has a responsibility to promote evidence-based health practices rather than unrealistic expectations. Gym owners, fitness trainers, teachers, parents and healthcare professionals must educate young

people about the difference between medically necessary treatment and dangerous misuse. Fitness should never be measured only by muscle size or appearance but by strength, endurance, overall health and self-confidence.

Young people should remember that the human body grows stronger through patience and consistency. Balanced nutrition, scientific training methods, adequate sleep and regular physical activity remain the safest and most effective ways to achieve lifelong fitness. Shortcuts may seem attractive, but they often come with hidden costs that are far greater than the temporary benefits they promise.

The real message is simple: Human Growth Hormone is a remarkable medical discovery when used appropriately under medical supervision. However, its misuse in the pursuit of an ideal physique is neither wise nor safe. Instead of chasing artificial perfection, society should encourage healthy lifestyles, informed choices and realistic expectations. True strength is not built in a syringe—it is built through knowledge, discipline, and determination.

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

'Early Bird Dinner': Does the TikTok Sleep Hack Actually Work?

Influencers on TikTok and other social media platforms claim that eating dinner earlier can improve sleep quality and metabolic health.

The trend claims that "early bird dinners," which involve eating around 5:00 p.m. or 4 to 5 hours before bed, can help maximize deep sleep.

Some proponents say that eating earlier may help reduce midnight cortisol spikes and eliminate morning acid reflux.

But early bird dinners are not a new concept. The "early bird special" for those dining out before traditional hours has been around for decades.

Does eating earlier have any real benefits for sleep or well-being? Healthline spoke with experts to learn more.

Can early bird dinners improve sleep quality?

The early-bird-dinner trend suggests that eating the last meal of the day around 4 to 5 hours before going to sleep may improve sleep quality for some people.

Alex Dimitriu, MD, a double board-certified psychiatrist and sleep medicine specialist and founder of Menlo Park Psychiatry & Sleep Medicine, said that eating dinner earlier may offer some tangible benefits.

"This is a rare case where a TikTok trend actually aligns with basic human biology," Dimitriu said. "Eating earlier improves sleep by reducing digestion while asleep, and minimizing acid reflux, both of which can be disruptive to a good night's sleep."

Sarathi Bhattacharyya, MD, a pulmonologist and sleep medicine specialist and the medical director of MemorialCare Sleep Disorders Center at Long Beach Medical Center in Long Beach, CA, noted that eating or drinking later can disrupt sleep.

"Caffeinated beverages can also lead to nighttime awakenings, often for trips to the restroom," he said.

Bhattacharyya recommended avoiding eating and drinking, especially caffeine or alcohol, at least 3 hours before bed.

If you have trouble falling asleep, the 4-7-8 method is a simple technique you can try to relax and get better rest. Join our Sleep Well newsletter for your free guide and expert guidance once a week.

Eating dinner early is widely regarded as safe and beneficial for digestion. Studies have explored other potential benefits of early-bird dinners.

A 2021 study found that eating dinner at 6 p.m. rather than 9 p.m. improved blood glucose levels and substrate oxidation. Substrate oxidation is the burning of substrates such as carbohydrates and fats to produce energy for the body.

A 2023 review supports this by suggesting that going to bed soon after eating can lead to a prolonged rise in blood sugar levels, potentially due to disruption during the transition from daytime feeding to nocturnal fasting. Eating dinner earlier may help to avoid

this.

Another study from 2023 Trusted Source examined the potential benefits of an earlier dinner time for heart health. It found that there was a 28% higher risk of cerebrovascular disease in people who ate their last meal of the day after 9 p.m., compared with those who ate their last meal before 8 p.m.

The study also found that delaying the first meal of the day was associated with a higher risk of cardiovascular disease. Some people who eat dinner late at night may be more likely to skip breakfast the following morning, which could therefore increase the risk of heart problems.

Eating your last meal 4 to 5 hours before bed is generally safe for most people, Dimitriu said.

However, those with certain health conditions should consult with their doctor before making changes to their mealtimes.

"People with diabetes or low blood sugar should consult a doctor first," he said.

"Heavy proteins disrupt sleep quality the most because they force the body to work when it should be resting. Alcohol markedly impacts sleep architecture, reducing deep sleep in the first half of the night and REM sleep in the morning, both essential to a good night's rest," Dimitriu explained.

Many factors can affect sleep quality and duration.

"Beyond timing, the most effective ways to improve sleep are maintaining a consistent schedule and keeping your bedroom cool, dark, and quiet," said Dimitriu.

"Darkness is especially hard to get in the summer months, so either get blackout shades or an eye mask," he added.

Bhattacharyya said that late-night eating and inappropriate light exposure in the period leading up to bedtime are among the most common factors that can affect sleep.

"Light exposure can suppress the body's natural sleep drive and make it harder to fall or stay asleep," said Bhattacharyya. "This light can come from cell phones, televisions, and computers or tablet screens."

Exercise may also help or hinder a good night's sleep.

"While light to moderate exercise may help promote sleep, mainly due to the body's response to cool down after exercise, which can promote sleep through melatonin release, very intense or vigorous exercise may prevent sleep onset," Bhattacharyya said.

If you're concerned about the amount of sleep you're getting, you might wish to reach out to a healthcare professional to determine a possible underlying cause. Keeping a sleep journal can also be beneficial.

Speaking with a registered dietitian can also help create suitable eating plans — including meal times — based on individual circumstances.

Courtesy Healthline



Public Notice

I, Gulzar Ahmad Wani, S/o Gh. Mohammad Wani, R/o Taper, Waripora, hereby have no objection to the transfer of the electricity connection having consumer ID 0213040022712, installed at my commercial shops, presently rented by Mr. Irfan Ahmad Khan, S/o Bashir Ahmad Khan, R/o Waripora Bala, Kreeri, from my name to his name.

Public Notice

I have lost my Numbers plate of my vehicle bearing No JK09 - 1566 at Gulmarg .Now I am applying for its duplicate if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his /her objection in the office of ARTO BARAMULLA/POLICE STATION GULMARG within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name..ASIF AHMAD SHEIKH, S/O..GH MOHI UD DIN SHEIKH , R/O ...DANDMOHA , contact... 9682659227

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar hassubmitted case file pertainingto Birth of KHATIJA BEGUM W/O FATAH GANIE R/O. KAREWA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 17/08/1987 event has been shown to be occurred at this Home for issuance of delay order .In this connection . If anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Sd/- Executive Magistrate 1st Class Kreeri

Public Notice

It is hearby informed that my Parrantage in school records is wrongly mentioned as Naseer Ahmad Allie Mothers Name Saleema instead of Nasir Ahmad Allie Mothers Name Saleema Bano .Now I want to correct it . If anyone having having any objection in this regard should contact the Contact Principal Alamdar Mission Secoundary School Manchow Budgam within 7 seven days following which no objection shall be entertained.

Name: Ronak Jam, D/O: Nasir Ahmad Allie Mothers Name Saleema Bano

Public Notice

Subject: Public Notice for Correction of Name and Date of Birth in Aadhaar Record

I, Muskan Nazir, Daughter of Nazir Ahmad Mir, Resident of Kreeri, Baramulla, hereby declare that my name and date of birth have been incorrectly recorded in my Aadhaar card.

The corrections required are as follows:

- Incorrect Name: Simran Nazir
- Correct Name: Muskan Nazir
- Incorrect Date of Birth: 14/04/2005
- Correct Date of Birth: 20/10/2005

This public notice is being issued for the purpose of correction of my Aadhaar details and for submission before the UDID Authority.

If any person has any objection regarding the above-mentioned corrections, they may submit the same, along with supporting documentary evidence, to the UDID Office within the prescribed time. If no objection is received, the concerned authority may proceed with the correction of my Aadhaar records accordingly.

I hereby declare that the information furnished above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Place: Kreeri, Baramulla, Name: Muskan Nazir D/o Nazir Ahmad Mir, R/o kreeri

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KALANTRA / KREERI

Subject: Application of NISAR AHMAD BOKRA S/O GH MOHD BOKRA for the issuance of ST (SCHEDULE TRIBE Gujjar and Bakerwal)in favour of NADEEM NISAR , GAZALA NISAR & NAYEEM NISAR R/O BANDI BALA

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above, the applicant has submitted the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of ST . in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in village BANDI BALLA and belongs to the ST caste and BOKRA community, having annual income is 1067,224/PA the details of the family of the applicant are as follows

- 1...NISAR AHMAD BOKRA self 45 years Govt employee
- 2.... FARIDA BEGUM wife ,38 years House wife
- 3...NADEEM NISAR son 12 years student
- 4.GAZALA NISAR daughter 09 years student
- 5...NAYEEM NISAR son 08 Years student

The applicant has applied for Issuance of ST (SCHEDULE TRIBE Gujar & Bakerwal) certificate in favour of Self

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

NAIB TEHSILDAR KALANTRA

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public and all concerned authorities that the name of the undersigned has been incorrectly recorded in the Aadhaar records.

Incorrect Name: Sobiya Ahad, Correct Name: Subia Ahad

The correct particulars are as follows:

Name: Subia Ahad

Father's Name: Abdul Ahad Rashie, Address: Kakothal

Aadhaar Number: XXXX XXXX 3736

The incorrect name "Sobiya Ahad" appearing in the Aadhaar record is due to an inadvertent error. The correct name is "Subia Ahad," and the same may kindly be treated as the valid and correct name for all official purposes.

This public notice is being issued in support of the application for correction of the name in the Aadhaar records. If any person has any objection regarding this correction, they may raise it before the concerned authority within the prescribed period.

Subia Ahad, D/o Abdul Ahad Rashie, R/o Kakothal

Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my Father'sname GH NABI KHAN Nowthis Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040002242 wants to be registered on my name MANZOOR AHMAD KHAN S/O GH NABI KHAN If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication ofthis notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name....MANZOOR AHMAD KHAN S/O...GH NABI KHAN R/O ... TANGWARI BALA BLOCKWAGOORA

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar hassubmitted case file pertainingto Death of HANIFA BEGUM W/O AB HAMID WANI R/O. FRESTARH Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Death as 10/09/2024 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection .

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

Sd/- Executive Magistrate 1st Class Kreeri

Public Notice

It is here by notified that my name has been incorrectly mentioned in my Bank Account as SHAOIB AHMAD BHAT bearing Account no 0139040100011913 while my correct name is SHOIB MOHMAD BHAT S/O GH MOHAMMAD BHAT which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may file his /her objection in the office of J& K BANK KREERI authority of India within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name..SHOIB MOHMAD BHAT S/O ... GH MOHAMMAD BHAT , R/O ...TILAGAM PATTAN , Account No....0139040100011913 Dist....BARAMULLA

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

Public Works (R&B) Department

Office of the Executive Engineer PW(R&B) Division Kralpora

Email: eernbkralpora@gmail.com | Address: Kralpora, Kupwara-193224

FINAL NOTICE

Gh Ahmad Sheikh,
S/o Mohammad Yaqoob Sheikh,
R/o Zirhama Kupwara

No: DIV-KRLP/1724-27 | Dt: 25-07-2026

Subject: Upgradation of Meelyal Farkin road by way of protection works.

Reference: 01.Executive Engineer R&B Division Kupwara's Allotment No. 6130-33 Dated 12-09-2023.

Allotment No. Div-KRLP/3634-36 dated 11-02-2025.

02.Assistant Executive Engineer R&B Sub-Division Kralpora's Final Notice No. SDKRLP/1119-20 Dated:- 04-06-2026.

03.This Office Final Notice No. Div-KRLP/839-40 Dated 08-06-2026.

04.Assistant Executive Engineer R&B Sub-Division Kralpora's Final Notice No. SDKRLP/GC/25/121-22 Dated 12-06-2025.

05. This Office Final Notice No. Div-KRLP/1347-48 Dated:- 07-07-2026.

06. Assistant Executive Engineer R&B Sub-Division Kralpora's Final Notice No. SDKRLP/1216-17 Dated 23-07-2026.

The subjected work stands allotted to you vide the above referred allotment. In this connection you were supposed to start the work despite issuance of several notices from the subdivisional and divisional office from time and again.

Whereas, you were called so many times by the field engineers to start the work but you have not paid any heed to the issue. Despite of many assurances given by you regarding the start of the work, you have failed in your commitment so far.

It is imperative that you understand the seriousness of the issue and allocate the necessary resources and manpower to ensure that the project is completed well in time and as per the agreed-upon schedule.

Therefore, you are finally directed to start the work on the project in full swing within 02 days positively from the issuance of this final notice. Any failure to comply with this directive will leave us with no choice but to initiate the process for the termination of the contract and further action against your firm will be followed as per the relevant SBD guidelines.

**Sd/- Executive Engineer
R&B Division Kralpora**

DIPK: 3742/26 | Dated: 25-07-2026

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR (UT)

Office Of The Executive Engineer R&B Division Pulwama

TENDER NOTICE

E-NIT No: 80 /EEP/RNB/of 2026-2027/4090-4100 Dated: 25/07/2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT term e-tenders (In Single Cover system) are invited on %age Basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Government for the following work : -

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. Lacs.)	T.D Cost (Rs.)	Class	Call No:
1	Construction of boundary wall for Treasury Pulwama.	9.21	600/-	DEE, CEE	Ist call

Earnest Money (In %age.): 2% of ADV. Cost

Time of Completion in working Days: 45 working days

Major Head of Accounts: MH : NFB

Administrative Accord Approval No: AAA: 130 DATK of 2026 dt.22.07.2026

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, 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 .inas per schedule of date given below:-

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	25-07-2026
2.	Bid downloading Start Date	25-07-2026 from 10:00 A.M
3.	Bid submission Start Date	25- 07-2026 from 10:00 A.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	05 - 08-2026 upto 0 4:00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	06 - 08-2026 at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Div. Pulwama
6.	Submission of Performance Security(PS)	Upload a Copy of Performance Security(PS)/ Tender Fee to be deposited in Account No:0470010200000099 IFSC: JAKA0LALANG) Account Name: Centralized Designated Pooling JK Bank PW(R&B) Zone South

In light of Circular issued by Finance department Vide No:FD-code/290/2026 Dated 22.05.2026 and circular issued by worthy Chief Engineer PW(R&B)Department South Kashmir Vide order No:CE/R&B/SK/WS/2095-2111 Dated: 05.06.2026 ,the following conditions are mentioned below:-

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document/Tender Fee to be deposited in Cash in Centralized Designated Pooling JK Bank Account Bearing No: 0470010200000099, IFSC: JAKA0LALANG) .

2. All the bidders must deposit Earnest money /Bid security equal to 2% of advertised cost in Cash in Centralized Designated Pooling JK Bank Account Bearing No: 0470010200000099, IFSC: JAKA0LALANG)

3. The Successful bidder will have to provide performance security @ 5% of contract value to be deposited in Cash in Pulwama MC Holding Account Executive Engineer R&B Pulwama Bearing Account no. 0054010200003470 ,IFSC: JAKA0GOLDEN), which shall be released after successful completion of DLP /maintenance period..

The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Div. Pulwama

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

Sd/- Executive Engineer R&B Division Pulwama

DIPK: 3731/26 | Dated: 25-07-2026

JKSHC JAMMU & KASHMIR STATE HAJ COMMITTEE



HAJ 2027 (1448 H) IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

1

PASSPORT VALIDITY

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

2

COVER / GROUP

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

3

COVER HEAD

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

4

MOBILE NUMBER & WHATSAPP

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

5

FORM SUBMISSION

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

6

NOMINEE

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

7

BANK DETAILS (ACCOUNT HOLDER MUST BE COVER HEAD)

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VC SKUAST-K harvests Sweet Corn, felicitates winners of Sports Week at Wadura

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, JULY 25: Vice Chancellor, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganaie on Saturday visited the Faculty of Agriculture, Wadura, where he reviewed farm development initiatives, harvested sweet corn at the Integrated Farming System (IFS) Unit, and presided over the valedictory ceremony of the Vice Chancellor's Sports Week 2026, reaffirming the University's commitment to experiential learning, student well-being and holistic development.

During his visit to the IFS Unit, the Vice Chancellor harvested sweet corn and appreciated the farm development initiatives undertaken by the Faculty. He complimented Prof. Shakeel Ahmad Mir, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, Wadura, for his leadership in



strengthening farm infrastructure, promoting innovative agricultural practices and creating a learning environment that integrates classroom teaching with practical field exposure. He observed that such initiatives play a vital role in enhancing students' hands-on skills while fostering innovation and sustainable agriculture.

The Vice Chancellor also commended the Faculty for successfully organising the Vice Chancellor's Sports Week

2026, describing sports as an integral component of quality education that nurtures discipline, leadership, teamwork and resilience among students.

The valedictory ceremony, held on the Wadura campus, marked the successful conclusion of the week-long sporting extravaganza that witnessed enthusiastic participation from students across the University. The event celebrated sporting excellence while reinforcing SKUAST-K's focus

on promoting physical fitness, teamwork and overall personality development alongside academic achievement.

The ceremony was attended by Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, Director Extension, SKUAST-K; Prof. Sajad Ahmad Gangoo, Dean Students' Welfare, SKUAST-K; Mohd. Iqbal Choudhary, Chief Executive Officer, SKUAST-K Seed Company; Dr. Parvender Sheoran, Director, ATARI, Ludhiana; besides faculty members, officers, staff and students.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Ganaie congratulated the winners and participants for their outstanding performances and sportsmanship. He urged students to actively pursue sports along with academics, stating that participation in extracurricular activities builds confidence, improves decision-making abilities and contributes significantly to overall personality development.

He appreciated the dedicated efforts of Prof. Shakeel Ahmad Mir and Dr. Sajjad Ahmad Bhat, Students' Welfare Officer, Faculty of Agriculture, Wadura, along with the organising committee, for conducting the Sports Week in a professional and vibrant manner. He said such events strengthen the University's sporting culture while encouraging healthy competition and camaraderie among students.

In his welcome address, Prof. Shakeel Ahmad Mir highlighted the Faculty's continued commitment to providing students with opportunities for academic, professional and personal growth. He applauded the enthusiasm, discipline and sporting spirit displayed by the participants throughout the week and expressed gratitude to the Vice Chancellor for his continued encouragement towards student-centric initiatives.

DDC Doda reviews HADP implementation

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

DODA, JULY 25: District Development Commissioner Doda, Krishan Lal today chaired a review meeting at the DC Office Doda to assess the progress of works under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP).

The DDC reviewed the physical and financial progress of various projects and took stock of ongoing activities, calling for timely implementation so that the benefits of the programme reach farmers and other stakeholders without



delay.

The DDC directed all officers concerned to expedite execution of HADP projects and achieve all targets within the stipulated timelines and instructed the departments to maintain close coordination, regularly monitor progress and promptly resolve any bottlenecks affecting implementation.

Officers briefed the Chair on the progress achieved in their respective departments, highlighted key achievements under the scheme and discussed the bottlenecks and challenges affecting implementation.

The DDC directed the departments concerned to take timely corrective measures for effective execution of all HADP projects.

Among those present were the Additional Deputy Commissioner Doda, Chief Agriculture Officer Doda, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer Doda, District Sheep Husbandry Officer Doda, Chief Horticulture Officer Doda and other officers and officials concerned.

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that Shaheena Akhter D/O Mohd Yousuf Bhat, W/O Latif Ahmad Lone, located at Nawa Malawari Pulwama, intends to establish a retail outlet for the sale of fertilizers and pesticides under Name & Style "M/S AF-TEE PESTICIDES" at the aforementioned location. In compliance with regulations, we hereby invite any objections from individuals or organizations who may have concerns regarding the proposed establishment.

Any objections must be submitted in writing to plant protection officer Lal Mandi srinagar for pesticides licence For Fertilizer licence To Chief agriculture officer Pulwama within seven days from the date of this notice.

Public Notice

It is here by notified that my name has been incorrectly mentioned in my Bank Fixed Deposit Certificate as Shabnum Begum bearing Account no:- 0806050300000140 . While my correct name is Shanu W/O Bilal Ahmad Beigh R/O :-Gangipora Bk pora Budgam . which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may file his /her objection in the office of Bank Manager J&K B/O Kanihama Budgam within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name..Shanu
W/O Bilal Ahmad Beigh
R/O :-Gangipora Bk pora Budgam

Public Notice

It is informed to the general public through this notice that I, Mohd Afzal Rather, S/o Gh. Hussain Rather, R/o Matipora, have a daughter namely Nadiya Zehra, whose date of birth is 15-06-2013. Now I want to obtain a Date of Birth Certificate. If anybody has any objection regarding the issuance of the Date of Birth Certificate, he/she may file the objection before the BDO Singhpora within a period of seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice.

Yours faithfully,
Mohd Afzal Rather
S/o Gh Hussain Rather
R/o Matipora

Public Notice

I want to change the name of my electricity bill having consumer id No :- 0206020002064 registried in the name of Gh Mohi-ud-din sofi to Fayaz Ahmad Sofi S/O Late Gh Mohi-ud-din sofi R/O Jamia Masjid Dangaerpora Chadoora .

If anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may file his /her objection in the office of Electricity Sub Division Chadoora within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name:- Fayaz Ahmad Sofi
S/O Late Gh Mohi-ud-din sofi
R/O Jamia Masjid Dangaerpora Chadoora .

Proactive planning and early warnings mitigate flood impact in Rajouri

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI, JULY 25: District Administration Rajouri's emphasis on advance preparedness and a robust early warning system played a crucial role in mitigating the impact of the severe weather event that struck the district in the early hours of 19 July 2026.

In anticipation of the adverse forecast, the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Rajouri convened a review meeting on 18 July 2026 to assess pre-

paredness across all departments and issued detailed instructions to field officers and line departments on identification of vulnerable locations, activation of control rooms, pre-positioning of machinery and manpower, inter-departmental coordination, dissemination of early warnings and advance evacuation of vulnerable populations.

Following the weather warnings, the district and sub-divisional administrations, Police, SDRF, Fire & Emergency Services and

other line departments activated the established response mechanism. They disseminated early warnings, closely monitored vulnerable areas and carried out precautionary evacuations in several locations before floodwaters reached critical levels.

These measures mobilised emergency response teams without delay and contributed significantly to the protection of human life. The coordinated functioning of the administration, emergency services, local volunteers.

DM Kupwara reviews Anti-Drug Measures at District NCORD Committee Meeting

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, JULY 25: District Magistrate (DM) Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, today chaired a meeting of the District-Level NCORD (Narco Coordination Centre) Committee to review the anti-drug measures being implemented across the district. The meeting comprehensively assessed inter-departmental coordination in the areas of prevention, enforcement, awareness, and rehabilitation, with particular focus on the progress achieved under the ongoing 100-Day Nasha Mukti Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan. At the outset detailed discussion held regarding achievements of 100 days campaign consisting enforcement measures undertaken by the district police Kupwara and Handwara in terms of the registration of FIRs under the NDPS Act, attachment of properties belonging to drug peddlers, preventive detention of offenders, removal of encroach-

ments and the destruction of illicit cannabis and poppy cultivation across the district.

He also reviewed action initiated under SOP of the Home Department, including the cancellation of driving licences, contractor cards, gun licenses and action related to passports of individuals involved in narcotics-related offences.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments to promptly conclude pending Regular Departmental Action (RDA) and other applicable legal proceedings against government employees found involved in drug-related offences, emphasizing that strict action is essential to ensure accountability and uphold the integrity of public institutions.

Reviewing the district's de-addiction and rehabilitation initiatives, the Medical Superintendent, Government Medical College (GMC) Handwara, and the District Health



Officer (DHO) Kupwara briefed the meeting on the number of patients registered at de-addiction centres, those currently undergoing treatment, and individuals who have successfully recovered through rehabilitation programmes. Appreciating the efforts of the Health Department, the Deputy Commissioner stressed the need to further strength-

en counselling, treatment, and post-rehabilitation follow-up services. While reviewing awareness and capacity-building initiatives, the Deputy Commissioner directed completion of trainings of nominated counsellors from Education Department, Government Degree Colleges (GDCs), SHGs, police officials and other concerned institutions to ensure

structured and effective awareness campaigns on the harmful effects of drug abuse across the district.

The Deputy Commissioner further directed that the momentum generated during the past 100 days be sustained through continued and coordinated efforts to achieve the objective of a Drug-Free Kupwara. Reaffirming the administration's commitment to combating drug abuse, he called upon all stakeholder departments to work in close coordination and adopt a proactive approach towards prevention, enforcement, awareness generation, and rehabilitation.

The meeting was attended by SSP Kupwara/Handwara, Medical Superintendent GMC Handwara, District Health Officer Kupwara, Principals of Government Degree Colleges, Chief Education Officer (CEO), District Information Officer (DIO), Officers from Prosecution, Tehsildars.

Nun Chai Talks: Renowned Physician Dr. Parvaiz Sajad Shah inspires students with life lessons in Bandipora

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JULY 25: Continuing its efforts to provide meaningful mentorship and career guidance to the youth, the District Administration Bandipora today organised another edition of Nun Chai Talks at Waqar Knowledge Centre, featuring renowned physician, Dr. Parvaiz Sajad Shah, Senior Physician, as the guest speaker.

The programme witnessed participation of Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib; BDO Aloosa, resource persons, students and youth, who interacted with the guest speaker during an inspiring and thought-provoking session focused

on perseverance, education, values and purposeful living. Sharing the story of his early life, Dr. Parvaiz Sajad Shah spoke about his humble beginnings and the challenges he overcame in his journey to becoming a doctor. He reflected on how perseverance, hard work and determination helped him realise his dream despite the obstacles he encountered along the way. He recalled joining Government Medical College, Srinagar, in 1989 and described his journey as the one shaped by determination, discipline and hard work.

During the interaction, Dr. Shah emphasised the pivotal role of parents and teachers in shaping an individual's future. He re-

called a memorable incident from his school days when his teacher, Shamsu-Din, inspired him to work harder and strive for excellence. He also fondly remembered Mohd Yousuf Sofi of Onagam, whose encouragement ignited his determination to work towards a brighter future.

Urging students to remain focused on their aspirations, Dr. Shah advised them to listen to the guidance of parents, teachers and elders, whom he described as the torchbearers for the younger generation. He encouraged them to stay committed to their goals instead of getting influenced by the crowd and reminded them that success comes through consistent effort,

patience and self-belief.

Highlighting the importance of social responsibility, Dr. Shah urged the younger generation to extend help to the downtrodden, protect the environment and actively contribute towards waste management for building a healthier and more sustainable society. Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner shared valuable insights on maintaining a healthy work-life balance while pursuing professional excellence. She encouraged students to remain focused on their goals instead of following the crowd and advised them to choose careers that genuinely bring them happiness and satisfaction.

The Deputy Commissioner said that true fulfilment comes when one finds joy in one's work and creates opportunities to seek happiness through dedication and purpose. Quoting a famous thought, she remarked that one's dream should be so inspiring that it does not allow one to sleep, motivating the students to pursue their ambitions with unwavering commitment.

An interactive question-and-answer session was also held during which students sought guidance on career choices, motivation, success and personal development. Dr. Shah and the Deputy Commissioner responded to the queries with practical advice drawn from their

personal and professional experiences.

The participants appreciated the session and described it as highly inspiring and enriching. They said the interaction motivated them to work hard, value the guidance of parents and teachers and remain committed to achieving their goals.

The District Administration Bandipora emphasized that the Nun Chai Talks initiative will continue to serve as a vibrant platform where distinguished achievers from different walks of life engage with young people, share their journeys and experiences, and encourage them to pursue their aspirations with confidence, purpose and determination.

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Global trade growth expanded 4pc QoQ in Q1FY26, momentum to remain intact in 2nd half of the year: UNCTAD

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUL 25 : Global trade growth was strong in the first quarter of 2026, expanding by 4 per cent quarter-on-quarter (QoQ), and goods trade and services increased by 4.8 and 1.6 per cent, respectively, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in its report on Friday.

The report suggested positive momentum into the second quarter of the current year, with estimates showing QoQ growth of 6.4pc for goods and 2.1pc for services.

UNCTAD noted that overall global trade is expected to increase by USD 2 trillion in the first half of 2026, and it will reach the record annual value.

Global trade inflation rose sharply to 3.6pc in QoQ in the first quarter, and UNCTAD predicted that it will further hit the mark of 5.1 pc in the second quarter.

"East Asia was the main engine of growth, with China and the Republic of Korea recording particularly strong goods trade, with the rest of Asia experiencing slower growth," the report said.

Coming to the regions like Africa and America, the report said that these places recorded import growth above the global average but weak export performance.

The demand for semiconductors, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) products, electrical machinery, batteries, critical minerals and electric vehicles supported expansion.

On the other hand, chemicals, iron and steel, and some renewable energy products contracted.

UNCTAD noted that demand for AI-related products, semiconductors, batteries and EV components will drive trade growth in the second half of the current year.

The report said that the ongoing trade negotiations with the US will keep the policy uncertainty elevated, and the renewed trade tensions of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz will increase the trade costs.

The UN organization identified some key short-term factors that are pointing towards a negative trade outlook, such as :- (i) Geopolitical tensions in the Middle East (ii) Debt burdens, fiscal constraints and uncertain

monetary easing (iii) Geoeconomic competition and fragmentation.

On the other hand, the report also noted some positive factors like growth in digital technologies, investment in supply chain resilience and emergence of connector economies and new trade corridors.

Presenting the growth data of different regions, the report noted that east asian economies outperformed their peers in goods trade during the first half of the current year.

Republic of Korea recorded the strongest growth, with exports increasing by 20pc.

India experienced a sharp decline of 8 per cent on the export side. Coming to imports, UNCTAD noted that China recorded the strongest increase with 13pc.

On the import side, the report noted that services imports declined in India, the Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation. On the other hand, Brazil and the European union (EU) recorded increases.

UNCTAD said that global trade growth in the first quarter of the year was driven by developing economies in East Asia. The report noted that developing

economies recorded a contraction of trade in Q1 2026 due to reduced imports and exports from the Middle East and South Asia regions.

"Global imbalances in goods trade remained relatively stable in Q1 2026, although the composition of these imbalances continued to shift across major economies. China's goods trade surplus expanded further during the quarter, while the United States' goods trade deficit continued to narrow, reinforcing the ongoing reconfiguration of global trade balances," the report said on current trade dynamics.

UNCTAD noted that the United Kingdom's (UK) goods trade deficit widened further and the European union (EU) goods trade balance shifted from surplus to deficit.

The organization said that the United States's trade deficit with Canada, China, India and the European union (EU) continued to narrow. US deficits with Vietnam increased.

Shedding light on categorical product trade in the first quarter of 2026, the report said, AI and electric vehicle-related goods all had a particularly strong growth performance, namely

batteries (15 per cent), critical minerals (38 per cent), ICT (14 per cent), semiconductors (25 per cent) and electric cars (11 per cent).

UNCTAD noted that renewable energy products, including solar and wind-related products, contracted during the quarter, while fossil fuel trade growth remained positive, driven by upward price pressures.

The motor vehicle sector growth was below average; hybrid vehicles recorded strong growth and a particularly strong one over the last 12 months.

"Geoeconomic factors continue to play a significant role in shaping bilateral trade patterns, with notable shifts in trade relationships observed over the past 12 months," UNCTAD said.

Trade interdependence between the United States and Canada declined markedly, even as Canada's dependence on the European union and China for trade increased.

Similarly, trade interdependence between the United States and China weakened, accompanied by growing trade dependence on these two economies among several East Asian economies, including Thailand and Vietnam. UNI

HCLTech to set up first AI Data Center at Odisha sovereign AI park; plans Rs 14,257 Cr investment

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUL 25: HCLTech announced plans to establish its first AI Data Center at the upcoming Odisha Sovereign AI Park in partnership with Sarvam and the Government of Odisha, marking the company's proposed entry into the full-stack artificial intelligence market.

In a regulatory filing, the IT services major said the proposed project involves a planned capital outlay of Rs 14,257 crore, including financial assistance from the Government of Odisha.

The company said the AI data center will strengthen India's sovereign AI capabilities while fostering a robust domestic AI ecosystem. The facility will leverage HCLTech's full-stack AI capabilities alongside Sarvam's foundation models to develop sector-specific AI applications for both public and private sector enterprises.

According to the filing, the investment is aimed at supporting India's sovereign AI ambitions and expanding the local developer ecosystem. The company said the AI infrastructure will address the government's data sovereignty requirements while enabling enterprises to build and deploy AI solutions across industries.

Commenting on the development, HCLTech Chairperson Roshni Nadar Malhotra said, "HCLTech has been a flagbearer of India's technology industry. In line with the Digital India and Atmanirbhar Bharat vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi, we strive to be an enabler of India's sovereign AI ecosystem with differentiated offerings across the value chain through focused investments and partnerships. We are pleased to start this endeavor in partnership with Odisha government and Sarvam."

CEO & Managing Director C Vijayakumar said, "This is an important milestone in our full-stack AI play and will enable us to serve the large demand for sovereign AI solutions and unlock the scale of our strategic partnership with Sarvam. Odisha offers a progressive policy environment backed by excellent infrastructure and we look forward to working with them in collaboration with Sarvam."

HCLTech further said the proposed AI data center will contribute to the delivery of multi-lingual AI-based services to citizens at the grassroots level, aligning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of making artificial intelligence accessible for everyone.

The announcement comes as India accelerates efforts to build indigenous AI infrastructure and computing capacity, with governments and technology companies increasingly investing in sovereign AI capabilities to reduce dependence on overseas infrastructure while supporting the country's growing AI ecosystem. UNI

Adani denies plans to set up Airline

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI, JUL 25: Adani Enterprises issued an official statement here on Friday, denying reports which appeared in the media that the Adani Group plans to launch an airline.

The company informed the stock exchange in a regulatory filing that recent reports in the media which claimed that the Adani Group is evaluating an entry to the airline business "were entirely baseless and factually incorrect", adding that it is not evaluating any proposal to enter the airline business.

Earlier, it was reported in a section of the media that the Adani Group had approached the government to seek changes to a rule which has barred operators of airports in Delhi and Mumbai from owning more than a 10% stake in a scheduled airline.

Media reports had claimed that a proposed change in the rule would remove the regulatory hurdle if the Adani Group chose to launch an airline.

According to such media reports, the Adani Group made a proposal to the union Civil Aviation Ministry in June seeking relaxation of rules which bar airport operators from owning a stake in airlines.

Such a proposal was linked to the Adani Group's expanding aviation interest in airport operations, ground handling, pilot training, aircraft maintenance and repair, and a planned aircraft manufacturing venture with Brazil's Embraer.

The Adani Group is India's largest private airport operator, managing eight airports, including Mumbai International Airport, besides the Navi Mumbai International Airport, which began operations recently.

However, IndiGo co-founder and Managing Director Rahul Bhatia said on Thursday that there will be a "massive conflict of interest" if airport operators are also allowed to own airlines, reacting to media reports which suggested that the Adani Group plans to launch an airline.

"All I can say is that if the news has any merit, one, it has no global precedent, and typically (there will be) a massive conflict of interest," Bhatia said during a recent analysts' call to discuss the airline's first quarter financial results. UNI

Stock markets settles low, Sensex losses nearly 2,100 points

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUL 25: The Indian Stock Markets settled lower on Friday extending the losing streak for the fifth consecutive.

At close, Sensex declined 331.62 points, or 0.43 percent to settle at 76,059.77 while Nifty dipped 102.15 points, or 0.43 percent to end at 23,767.45.

For the entire week, the Sensex lost nearly 2,100 points, or 2.7pc, while the Nifty shed 2.3pc.

Among the sectors, Nifty Auto lost 1.10pc, while Metal, Realty, and Oil and Gas declined by 0.50pc. Nifty Media jumped almost 2pc.

IT was up 0.82pc and PSU Bank up by 0.58pc while Nifty Bank rose 0.18pc.

Crude oil prices extended gains for the sixth consecutive session with Brent crude September Contract touching the USD 101 per barrel mark. So far this week, Brent crude has gained 15pc.

India VIX, the market's fear gauge, surged 9 percent to 14.68.

On Nifty, around 36 stocks ended in the red with Eternal, Bajaj Finance, and Mahindra and Mahindra losing the most. HCL Tech, Cipla, and Wipro ended as the top gainers in the index.

Shares of Eternal and Swiggy

declined by up to 4 percent after Walmart-owned Flipkart. HFCL extended its losing streak to a third straight session, falling another 5pc.

Some of the other significant losers were Hero MotoCorp, Hitachi Energy India, Gallantt Ispat, Jindal Stainless, Dalmia Bharat, Elecon Engineering, Jubilant Ingrevia, Siemens Energy India, Bajaj Finance, Abbott India and Granules India.

IT stocks also bucked the weak broader market trend, with Persistent Systems, Zensar Technologies and Coforge gaining up to 4pc. UNI

GCCS TO DRIVE 50PC OF INDIA'S OFFICE LEASING BY 2027; ANNUAL DEMAND MAY TOUCH 40 MN SQFT: COLLIERS REPORT

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUL 25 : Global Capability Centres (GCCs) are set to become the biggest driver of India's commercial real estate market, with annual office space leasing expected to reach 35-40 million square feet over the next two years and account for nearly half of the country's Grade A office demand, according to a report by Colliers India.

The report, titled "GCCs in India: Global leadership through scale, competitiveness, talent & innovation", said GCCs have leased around 118 million square feet of Grade A office space across the country's top seven cities since 2021, representing 37 per cent of India's total office leasing during the period.

In the first half of 2026 alone, GCCs accounted for 16.6 million square feet, or 46 per cent of overall Grade A office space absorption.

Colliers expects multinational companies to continue expanding their India operations, with GCCs projected to contribute 45-50 per cent of the country's office demand in 2026 and 2027. The report estimates annual GCC leasing at 35-40 million square feet, reinforcing India's position as a global innovation and technology hub.

The report noted that India's GCC ecosystem has evolved beyond traditional back-office operations into strategic centres focused on artificial intelligence, engineering, analytics, research and development, and digital



transformation. This growth has been supported by the country's large STEM talent pool, competitive operating costs, and availability of high-quality office infrastructure.

While the technology sector remains the largest occupier, accounting for 39 per cent of cumulative GCC leasing since 2021, demand is increasingly diversifying. The

BFSI sector now contributes 22 per cent of total GCC leasing, with leasing volumes nearly tripling between 2021 and 2025. Engineering and manufacturing companies account for 16 per cent of leasing activity, with office space absorption rising more than 2.5 times during the same period.

Geographically, Bengaluru and Hyderabad continue to dominate the GCC landscape, together accounting for more than 60 per cent of leasing since 2021. However, other markets are gaining traction, with Chennai recording more than four-fold growth in GCC leasing between 2021 and 2025, driven largely by engineering and manufacturing companies. Mumbai and Pune are emerging as preferred destinations for BFSI-focused

GCCs.

The report also highlighted that India's GCC activity remains concentrated in established business districts. The top 10 micro-markets have accounted for more than 70 per cent of GCC leasing since 2021, with Bengaluru's Outer Ring Road and Hyderabad's Secondary Business District together contributing 37 per cent of total leasing volumes.

Looking ahead, Colliers said emerging trends such as AI-native GCCs, smaller "nano" and mid-sized capability centres, and the expansion of operations into Tier II and Tier III cities through the "Hub-plus-one" strategy are expected to shape the next phase of growth in India's GCC sector. UNI

Private sector activity expands at slowest pace in over three years in July

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUL 25 : The private sector activity in India expanded at its slowest pace in more than three years in July. This is due to the growth in output and new orders moderated, while inflationary pressures intensified, according to the HSBC Flash India PMI released by S&P Global.

The HSBC Flash India Composite PMI Output Index fell to 54.3 in July from 57.1 in June, marking the weakest expansion in private sector activity since March 2022.

It said the slowdown is due to increasingly challenging market conditions, competitive pressures,

order cancellations, reduced client enquiries and shortages of key raw materials. New orders continued to grow but at their weakest pace in nearly four-and-a-half years.

The moderation was driven by the services sector, with the Services PMI Business Activity Index declining to 53.1 from 57.4, its weakest reading in 53 months. Manufacturing showed relatively better resilience, with the Manufacturing PMI Output Index rising to 57.0 from 56.3, although the headline Manufacturing PMI eased to 53.9 from 54.2.

"Renewed tensions in the Middle East have once again resulted in firms building buffers to manage

the uncertainties around the longevity of the supply-side shock. Finished goods and input inventories increased alongside a pick-up in purchasing volumes. Both output and new export orders rose, even as the overall manufacturing growth eased slightly. Price pressures firmed, with output charge inflation gathering pace and signalling a renewed push to protect margins," said Pranjal Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC.

Export orders strengthened across both sectors, with manufacturers recording the stronger improvement. At the composite level, international sales rose at the fastest pace since March. UNI

AP: PNB to establish Quantum Finance Innovation Hub in Amaravati

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

VIJAYAWADA, JULY 25: A Quantum Finance Innovation Hub will be set up at Amaravati Quantum Computing Centre in the Andhra Pradesh capital under an MoU signed on Thursday by the AP Quantum Mission and Punjab National Bank.

The agreement was signed in the presence of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and PNB Managing Director & CEO Ashok Chandra. With this agreement, Punjab National Bank has become the first bank in India to partner with a state government to establish a dedicated Quantum Finance Innovation Hub for the banking sector.

The hub will focus on strengthening cyber security in banking services, developing advanced systems to detect financial fraud proactively and enabling secure digital financial ecosystems through quantum technologies. It will also serve as a collaborative platform bringing together industries, academic institutions, startups, research organizations and government agencies.

In addition to quantum computing, the hub will promote research and innovation in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies while developing the skilled workforce required for these advanced domains.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief

Minister Chandrababu Naidu reiterated the government's vision of transforming Amaravati into a global hub for quantum and other deep technologies. He described the establishment of PNB's Quantum AI Finance Innovation Hub at Amaravati Quantum Valley as another significant milestone in that journey.

The Chief Minister urged PNB officials to take up special initiatives to improve digital literacy among banking customers and the general public. He emphasized that governments and banks must work together to enhance awareness and build public confidence in digital financial services.



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India eye series lead; Zimbabwe look to bounce back



UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HARARE: India will aim to build on their confidence-boosting victory when they take on Zimbabwe in the second T20I at the Harare Sports Club on Saturday. Despite India's convincing seven-wicket win in the series opener, Zimbabwe remain a competitive side capable of challenging the visitors.

India, led by Shreyas Iyer, ended a seven-match winless streak with an impressive performance in the first T20I, restricting Zimbabwe to 125/7 before chasing the target in just 13.2 overs. The victory came after disappointing series defeats against Ireland and England, giving the reigning T20 World Cup champions a timely morale boost.

Zimbabwe, however, found positives despite the loss. Recovering from 32/4, they posted a respectable total thanks to Wessly Madhevere's 39 and an unbeaten 27 off 20 balls from wicketkeeper Tadiwanashe Marumani, who impressed in an unfamiliar finisher's role.

The contest is expected to once again feature an exciting battle between Zimbabwe pace spearhead Blessing Muzarabani and India's teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. After being troubled initially by Muzarabani's pace and bounce, the 15-year-old smashed two fours and a six in one over before racing to an 18-ball half-century, becoming the youngest player to score a T20I fifty in men's international cricket.

India are likely to retain their winning combination, with Shivam Dube continuing as the fifth bowling option. Zimbabwe may also stick with the same XI, although left-arm spinner Wellington Masakadza remains an option if they seek greater bowling variety.

The Harare pitch is expected to once again favour fast bowlers, offering bounce and movement early in the innings. Weather conditions are forecast to remain clear with temperatures around 20°C.

Among the milestones, Zimbabwe opener Brian Bennett needs 10 more runs to reach 2,000 T20 runs, while Iyer could become the first captain to win the toss in each of his first nine international matches as skipper. India's Abhishek Sharma also enters the match with the highest strike rate (188.69) among batters with at least 1,000 T20I runs.

Sammy sees 'some light coming through' for West Indies in Tests

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI: West Indies have won just one game out of ten in the ongoing World Test Championship cycle and are eighth on the nine-team table. But with ninth-placed Pakistan with a new/old captain in Babar Azam at the helm in front of them, West Indies coach Daren Sammy is hopeful of moving up the table even if his stated target when he took over as head coach in December 2024 (he started in April 2025) was to try and win the next WTC (2027-29).

"Look, everything is a process. When I took on this job, when I look at the first three Test series we had: Australia here in difficult conditions, West Indies in India, West Indies in New Zealand. Phew! That was three really challenging ones.

Alzarri Joseph 'declined selection,' confirms Sammy

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

DUBAI: Alzarri Joseph "was unavailable for selection due to personal reasons", Cricket West Indies said when announcing the 15-member squad for the upcoming Test series against Pakistan, but West Indies head coach Daren Sammy has confirmed that the fast bowler had "declined selection". "Yeah, it is a big loss. Mr Joseph has declined selection. That's the reality of the situation," Sammy said at a press interaction two days out from the first Test, at the Brian Lara Stadium in Tarouba. "He was selected. I mean, he's now coming from injury. And for reasons since,

he has declined the selection."

Joseph played both Tests against Sri Lanka in June-July, picking up six wickets across the two games, and then played the five-ODI series against New Zealand, starring in the win in the opening game with 4 for 41.

"That is a decision that is way over my head," Sammy said. "I leave that with the directors to come up with whatever solutions where contracted players get to decline selection." For the Pakistan Tests, the fast-bowling line-up is made up of Shamar Joseph, Kemar Roach, Jayden Seales and allrounders Justin Greaves and Keemo Paul, with spin options in Jomel Warrican, newbie Joshua



Bishop and captain Roston Chase. "What I could tell you [is that] we have a bowling line-up that

we've seen that could take 20 wickets. That's the first start to winning Test matches," Sammy

said when asked if West Indies had the firepower to take on Pakistan. "We saw it in New Zealand. We saw it in the Australia series. We matched Australia with the ball as well. And the confidence and the work that the batters have put in, you could see it bearing fruit in the Test series against Sri Lanka. You know, much more consistency coming through." "So once we match these two, batsmen scoring runs, we know we have the bowling line-up to take 20 wickets and help us win Test matches." The first Test starts on Saturday and the second from August 2 in Port of Spain.

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