

Srinagar

Friday

July 31 | 2026

15 Safar 1448 AH

Issue No: 180

Volume: 16

Pages: 08

Price: Rs 02/-

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PM Modi Calls for Unified National Response to West Asia Crisis

CCS reviews energy security, fertiliser supplies and seafarers' safety; PM directs coordinated monitoring

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 30: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday directed the government to adopt a unified national response to the escalating conflict in West Asia, stressing the need for coordinated action to protect India's citizens, strengthen energy security and safeguard the country's economic interests.

Chairing the fourth special meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), the Prime Minister reviewed the evolving geopolitical situation and instructed all ministries and agencies to establish a coordinated monitoring mechanism to ensure swift implementation of measures across critical sectors.

The Cabinet Secretary briefed the CCS on the government's preparedness, stating that adequate stocks of petroleum products, including liquefied natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas, are available and that procurement sources have already



been diversified to reduce supply risks.

The meeting was informed that sufficient crude oil supplies have enabled Central Public Sector Enterprise refineries to operate at utilisation levels exceed-

ing 100 per cent, ensuring uninterrupted production of petrol, diesel and other essential petroleum products.

The government is also expanding piped natural gas connections and strengthening the National Gas Grid, liquefied natural gas import and regasification infrastructure, City Gas Distribution networks and pipeline connectivity to enhance long-term energy resilience and reduce dependence on conventional fuels.

Food security was another key focus of the meeting, with the CCS reviewing the availability of fertilisers for the upcoming cropping season. The Prime Minister directed officials to ensure uninterrupted fertiliser supplies and explore alternative sourcing options wherever necessary.

The safety of Indian seafarers serving on domestic and foreign-flagged vessels in conflict-affected regions also came under review. The Prime Minister

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'Development Benefits Must Reach People Without Delay': CM Omar Abdullah



■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, JULY 30: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday directed officials to ensure that development benefits reach the people without unnecessary delay, while reviewing the progress of major infrastructure projects and addressing long-pending public issues during an extensive tour of Ganderbal district.

Beginning his visit, the Chief Minister inspected the ongoing construction of the New Bus Adda Road, a key infrastructure project expected to ease traffic congestion in the district. Stressing the importance of timely execution, he instructed the

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'We Can Only Hope Peace Is Maintained': Omar Abdullah Expresses Concern Over Force Against Protesters in PoJK

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JULY 30: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday voiced concern over reports of force being used against protesters in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK), expressing

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The Holy Shrine Called Me: Devotees' Extraordinary Journeys Inspire Millions

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, JULY 30: Two pilgrims from Uttar Pradesh have become inspiring symbols of unwavering faith, resilience and determination as they undertake extraordinary journeys to two of Jammu and Kashmir's most revered shrines despite immense physical challenges.

Among them is Jyoti, an amputee who lost both her legs in a train accident in 2015, yet continues to undertake the annual pilgrimage to the Machail Mata Temple in Kishtwar district on a hand-operated tricycle. This year marks her eighth consecutive pilgrimage since she began the journey in 2018.

Accompanied by her mother, a rescued pet monkey named Bajrangi and her dog Kalu, Jyoti has travelled through the difficult mountain terrain after setting out nearly two months ago from Udhampur district.

Speaking during the journey, she said she never seeks personal blessings.

"My only prayer is that people remain on the right path, care for their families

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Centre Fully Utilised Rs 10,528 Crore For J&K National Highways In 2023-24: Nitin Gadkari

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JULY 30: The Central Government on Thursday informed the Lok Sabha that Rs 10,528 crore allocated for the development and maintenance of National Highways in Jammu and Kashmir during the 2023-24 financial year was fully utilised,

underscoring continued investment in strengthening the region's road infrastructure.

Replying to an unstarred question in the Lok Sabha, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Jairam Gadkari said National Highway projects, including inter-State bridges and roads of economic importance, are sanctioned on the basis of



traffic density, connectivity requirements, road conditions and their alignment with the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan.

The Minister said Jammu and Kashmir received an allocation of Rs 10,331 crore for National Highway works in 2024-25, of which Rs 10,204 crore was spent. In 2025-26, the allocation stood at Rs 8,083 crore, with expen-

diture reaching Rs 7,999 crore.

For the current financial year 2026-27, the Union Territory has been allocated Rs 1,846 crore, while Rs 1,484 crore had already been utilised by June 30, 2026, reflecting the continued pace of infrastructure development.

The Minister also informed the House that Ladakh

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J&K Police Attach Properties of Five Pakistan-Based Terror Operatives

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JULY 30: In a significant step aimed at dismantling the financial and logistical networks of terrorism, Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday attached approximately 1.7 hectares of land belonging to five Reasi residents who are alleged to be operating from Pakistan as members of the banned terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

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CS takes stock of PMAY-U housing schemes for Urban Poor

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 30: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, took a comprehensive review meeting of the Housing & Urban Development Department (H&UDD) to evaluate the implementation of housing schemes for the urban poor under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Chief Secretary, Power Development Department; Commissioner

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Preserving Our Heritage Means Safeguarding the Collective Memory of Our People: LG Saxena

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

LEH, JULY 30: In a landmark move to preserve Ladakh's rich historical and cultural legacy, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has approved the declaration of 23 heritage sites across the Union Territory as Protected Monuments under the Jammu and Kashmir Ancient Monuments Preservation Act.

The notification marks a major milestone in the region's heritage

conservation efforts, extending statutory protection to several historically and archaeologically significant sites that have remained vulnerable to neglect, natural deterioration and encroachment.

The protected sites include ancient forts, monasteries, caves, archaeological remains, rock carvings and prehistoric rock art, all of which reflect Ladakh's unique civilisational heritage and cultural identity.

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Govt Committed to Teachers' Welfare: Sakeena Itoo

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 30: Minister for School Education, Higher Education and Social Welfare, Sakeena Masood Itoo, today reaffirmed the, assuring that all genuine issues and long-pending concerns of teachers would be examined sympathetically and addressed on priority.

The Minister made these

remarks while addressing a one-day Teachers' Convention organised by the Jammu & Kashmir Teachers Joint Action Committee (JKTJAC) at Teachers' Bhawan Bemina here today.

Addressing the gathering, Sakeena Itoo paid rich tributes to the invaluable contribution of teachers towards nation-building and societal progress. She said that teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the future of society by nurturing generations of students and instilling values, knowledge and character among them.

"The future of our nation

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

PM Modi.....

instructed authorities to establish a dedicated mechanism to provide timely information, emergency assistance and counselling to seafarers and their families.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to protecting Indian citizens and the diaspora, Mr Modi said every possible measure should be taken to shield them from the impact of the regional conflict.

The Prime Minister also emphasised the importance of accelerating India's transition towards renewable energy, particularly solar power and other non-fossil fuel sources, to strengthen the country's long-term energy independence.

Concluding the meeting, Mr Modi reiterated that a whole-of-government approach would remain central to India's response, with continuous monitoring and coordinated action aimed at safeguarding national interests and ensuring public welfare.

'Development.....

executing agencies to accelerate the pace of work so the project could be completed and opened to the public at the earliest.

Accompanied by Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal Jatin Kishore and senior Roads and Buildings Department officials, the Chief Minister reviewed the quality and progress of the work on site.

Later, Omar Abdullah chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the status of major development projects and deliberate on issues affecting the district. The meeting focused on road connectivity, irrigation infrastructure, flood protection works, sewerage facilities, solid waste management, land acquisition and other projects aimed at improving public services.

Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal presented a detailed report outlining priority projects requiring urgent government intervention, including land acquisition for road widening schemes, construction of the approach road to the Paribal-Takanwari bridge, strengthening irrigation canals and power canal embankments, improved connectivity to the Central University of Kashmir, tourism infrastructure development and the establishment of a sewage treatment plant at Manasbal.

The district administration also highlighted the need for rehabilitation of shopkeepers displaced by the Ring Road Phase-II widening project, construction of strategic link roads and establishment of an Integrated Solid Waste Management Plant, along with several other public welfare initiatives.

After reviewing the projects, the Chief Minister directed all departments to work in close coordination to remove administrative bottlenecks, expedite pending approvals and ensure the time-bound completion of ongoing and proposed works. He emphasized that delays in project execution must be minimised so that the benefits of development reach citizens promptly.

Reaffirming his government's commitment to balanced and inclusive development across Jammu and Kashmir, the Chief Minister said strengthening infrastructure, improving civic amenities and ensuring responsive governance remain key priorities.

During his visit, Omar Abdullah also met several public delegations and individuals at the Dak Bungalow in Ganderbal, where he heard grievances and development-related demands from residents representing different parts of the district.

The delegations raised issues related to drinking water supply, irrigation, desilting of canals, upgrading educational and healthcare institutions, filling staff vacancies in health centres, development of playgrounds and sports infrastructure, tourism facilities and other local development concerns.

Assuring the public that their genuine concerns would receive priority attention, the Chief Minister directed the concerned departments to examine each issue and take appropriate action within a fixed timeframe, reiterating his government's commitment to transparent, accountable and people-centric governance.

'We Can Only.....

hope that peace would prevail and innocent civilians would be protected.

Speaking to reporters during his visit to Ganderbal district, Abdullah said the situation across the Line of Control was a matter of concern and that the reports emerging from the region were deeply troubling.

"As far as the situation in that part of Kashmir is concerned, we are all worried. The reports coming from there, the way force is being used and innocent people are being targeted—we can only hope that peace is maintained there," the Chief Minister said.

Responding to a question on whether the National Conference's protest in New Delhi on July 20 demanding the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood had achieved any immediate results, Abdullah said political movements require persistence and cannot be expected to succeed through a single demonstration.

He said the party had organised the protest fully aware that one event alone would not bring about the restoration of statehood, but stressed that it was important to clearly communicate the party's position and keep the issue in the national spotlight.

Abdullah said the National Conference had taken the matter to the national capital to remind the country that the promise of restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir remains unfulfilled.

Referring to the opposition People's Democratic Party's announcement to stage protests across the Union Territory on August 5, the Chief Minister said his party had already acted by raising the issue in New Delhi and through constitutional means.

He noted that the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly had passed a resolution seeking the restoration of the region's constitutional guarantees and statehood, which had been forwarded to the Central Government for consideration.

Earlier in the day, Abdullah reviewed the progress of several development projects during an extensive tour of Ganderbal district, where he also interacted with public representatives and assessed ongoing infrastructure works.

(Agencies)

Centre Fully.....

received Rs 658 crore for National Highway development in 2023-24, with the entire allocation fully utilised. In 2024-25, the region was allocated Rs 794 crore, against expenditure of Rs 768 crore, while Rs 338 crore was allocated in 2025-26, of which Rs 333 crore was spent. During the current financial year, Rs 70 crore has been allocated, with Rs 20 crore spent up to the end of June.

Providing details of assistance under the Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF), Gadkari said the scheme supports the development and maintenance of State roads, including inter-State bridges and roads of economic significance.

According to the Minister, Jammu and Kashmir recorded an accrual of Rs 128.67 crore under the CRIF in 2023-24, while Rs 206.67 crore was released. In 2024-25, both accrual and release stood at Rs 128.67 crore. During 2025-26, the accrual and release were Rs 141.54 crore each. For 2026-27, the accrual is Rs 148.51 crore, with Rs 125.73 crore released up to June 30.

For Ladakh, the CRIF accrual stood at Rs 326.41 crore in 2023-24, against a release of Rs 68.10 crore. In 2025-26, the region recorded an accrual of Rs 359.05 crore, while Rs 210.84 crore had been released, the Minister added.

The latest figures presented in Parliament highlight the Centre's continued emphasis on expanding and maintaining road infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, with highway projects remaining a key component of regional connectivity and economic development.

The Holy Shrine.....

and continue to receive the blessings of the Goddess," she said.

Jyoti said Bajrangji became part of her family after being rescued following the death of its mother due to electrocution, while Kalu has accompanied her on the pilgrimage over the past four months.

The Machail Mata Temple, situated in the remote Paddar Valley of Kishtwar district, is dedicated to Goddess Chandi, a manifestation of Goddess Durga, and attracts thousands of devotees every year.

In another remarkable display of devotion, Sunil Kumar from Mahoba district in Uttar Pradesh has continued his unique pilgrimage to the Amarnath Cave Shrine by crawling instead of walking.

Travelling face-down on a thermocol sheet, Sunil reached Anantnag on the 414th day of his journey, drawing admiration from fellow pilgrims and security personnel alike.

"The holy shrine called me," Sunil said, describing the spiritual inspiration behind his pilgrimage.

He also expressed gratitude to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) for extending continuous assistance throughout his journey and ensuring his safety along the route.

The annual Machail Mata and Amarnath pilgrimages continue to witness remarkable stories of devotion, with thousands of pilgrims overcoming physical hardships in pursuit of their spiritual beliefs.

This year's 57-day Amarnath pilgrimage commenced on July 3 and will conclude on August 28. More than 436,000 pilgrims have so far offered prayers at the sacred cave shrine, reflecting the enduring significance of one of India's largest annual religious pilgrimages.

J&K Police.....

The action was ordered by Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat, who directed the attachment of the properties of the five accused terrorists as part of the police's continuing campaign to weaken the support structure of terrorism in the Union Territory.

According to an official spokesperson,

the attached properties belong to Altaf Din, Ghulam Mohammad, Mohammad Ashraf, Shabir Ahmad and Bahar Din, all of whom are alleged to have crossed into Pakistan several years ago for weapons training before joining the Pakistan-based militant organisation.

Senior police officials said the accused are currently involved in facilitating terrorist activities by supplying arms, ammunition and financial assistance to militants operating in Jammu and Kashmir. They are also alleged to be engaged in recruiting and influencing local youth to participate in terrorist activities, particularly in the Reasi district.

In a related development, police have also initiated proclamation proceedings against Mohammad Qasim, identified as a senior Lashkar-e-Taiba operative currently based in Pakistan. Officials noted that his property had already been attached in March this year as part of ongoing legal action against individuals accused of supporting terrorism.

The latest operation forms part of the Jammu and Kashmir Police's broader strategy to disrupt terror financing, dismantle support networks and deny terrorist organisations access to assets that could be used to sustain or facilitate militant activities.

Officials reiterated that stringent legal measures against individuals involved in terrorism and its support network will continue as part of sustained efforts to safeguard peace and security in the region.

(With inputs from agencies)

CS takes.....

Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department; Commissioners of Jammu and Srinagar Municipal Corporations; Managing Director, J&K Housing Board; Director General, Codes; Chief Town Planners of Jammu and Kashmir; representatives of J&K Bank and other senior officers.

While speaking the Chief Secretary observed that access to affordable housing is one of the most fundamental aspirations and essential needs of every family, particularly those belonging to the urban poor. He noted that for economically weaker households, a significant share of their income is often consumed in meeting housing-related expenses, leaving limited resources for other basic necessities.

He said that the PMAY-Urban serves as a transformative social welfare initiative by providing secure and dignified housing to eligible beneficiaries, thereby substantially reducing their financial burden. This, he added, enables such families to redirect their hard-earned income towards other critical needs such as education, healthcare, nutrition and improving their overall quality of life, ultimately contributing to their long-term socio-economic empowerment.

The Chief Secretary directed all Deputy Commissioners, Commissioners of Municipal Corporations to further mobilise field functionaries to expedite verification of applications, preparation and submission of DPRs, and timely release of eligible instalments to beneficiaries strictly in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

He emphasized that every eligible urban poor household should be covered under the scheme, while ensuring complete transparency, accountability and adherence to the standards specified in the scheme. He instructed officers to strengthen field-level monitoring through regular inspections and effective use of digital platforms for real-time tracking of progress.

The Chief Secretary further impressed upon the officers to resolve all pending issues proactively, enhance public awareness regarding the benefits of the scheme and facilitate eligible beneficiaries in completing all procedural formalities so that no deserving household is left out.

During the meeting, the Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD, Mandeep Kaur presented an overview of the implementation of PMAY-U 1.0 and PMAY-U 2.0, highlighting the physical and financial progress achieved across all districts of the Union Territory.

Highlighting the progress under PMAY-U 1.0, the Commissioner Secretary revealed that against the revised sanctioned target of 36,412 dwelling units, 31,663 houses have already been completed, registering an impressive completion rate of nearly 87 per cent, while the remaining houses are at various stages of construction and nearing completion.

The meeting also reviewed the implementation of PMAY-U 2.0, particularly under the Beneficiary Led Construction (BLC) component. It was divulged that 92 Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) involving 2,120 houses have been approved so far, with 1,379 houses already grounded and construction progressing steadily across different stages.

Taking stock of beneficiary verification, the meeting was apprised by the MD, Housing Board, Smita Sethi that under the BLC vertical, 23,256 applications have been received, of which 20,154 applications have already been verified, while the process of

scrutiny of the remaining applications is underway.

The meeting further reviewed progress under the Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP) and Interest Subsidy Scheme (ISS) verticals of PMAY-U 2.0. It was informed that verification of applications under these components is being carried out on priority to ensure timely approval of eligible beneficiaries and seamless implementation of the scheme.

The meeting concluded with a detailed district-wise review of implementation, during which the Chief Secretary issued specific directions to the concerned officers for accelerating the pace of execution, improving coordination among stakeholders and ensuring timely completion of all sanctioned housing projects under PMAY-U across Jammu and Kashmir.

Preserving.....

Announcing the decision, LG Saxena said, "Preserving our heritage means safeguarding the collective memory of our people for future generations." He emphasised that the initiative goes beyond protecting physical structures and aims to create a strong institutional framework for the scientific conservation, documentation and sustainable management of Ladakh's invaluable historical assets.

He said the declaration demonstrates the administration's commitment to preserving the Union Territory's priceless heritage while promoting responsible cultural tourism, academic research and greater public awareness of its historical legacy.

With the notification now in effect, the protected monuments will receive legal safeguards under the Act, enabling the administration to undertake conservation and restoration work, prevent encroachments, regulate activities that may threaten their structural integrity and preserve their historical authenticity.

The 23 notified monuments comprise ancient rock art sites, archaeological remains, caves, monasteries, forts and other heritage structures spread across Leh and Kargil districts. These monuments had long remained in a deteriorated condition and faced increasing risks due to the absence of formal legal protection.

Officials said the notification will facilitate systematic preservation and ensure that these irreplaceable monuments are conserved in their original character and passed on to future generations as enduring symbols of Ladakh's rich cultural and historical heritage.

Govt Committed.....

rests in the hands of teachers, whose dedication and commitment have enabled countless students to excel in different fields and contribute meaningfully to society," the Minister said.

Sakeena Itoo further highlighted

that the School Education department has undertaken series of administrative reforms to strengthen human resource management, improve field administration and address long-pending service matters in a time-bound manner. She added that department has initiated the placement of eligible PG Masters/PG Teachers as In-charge Lecturers to address faculty shortages in Higher Secondary Schools.

The Minister also said that in a major administrative achievement, updated final seniority lists for 31 out of 36 disciplines, covering 20,281 PG Masters/PG Teachers, have been issued after several years and the final seniority list of 3,509 Headmasters has also been notified.

"Department has further strengthened educational administration by placing 136 Senior Lecturers as In-charge Principals, 22 Principals as In-charge Chief Education Officers and 1,083 Masters as In-charge Headmasters", she said.

"To fill vacant teaching positions, 594 Lecturer posts in 27 subjects were referred to the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission, which has recommended 537 candidates in 26 subjects".

Expressing concern over issues confronting the teaching fraternity, the Minister observed that teachers who have devoted decades of their lives to imparting quality education deserve due recognition and fair consideration of their genuine concerns. She said the Government is fully aware of the challenges being faced by teachers and is committed to resolving them in a transparent and time-bound manner.

Referring to concerns raised regarding various service-related matters, Sakeena Itoo said that all genuine demands placed before the Government would be examined with empathy and seriousness. She reiterated that the School Education Department remains committed to protecting the interests of teachers while further strengthening the education sector in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister gave a patient hearing to the issues projected during the convention and assured the participants that the Government would continue engaging with all stakeholders to ensure that genuine concerns of teachers are addressed in the larger interest of strengthening the education system across Jammu and Kashmir.

On the occasion, Sakeena Itoo also handed over appointment orders as well as promotion orders to various candidates and officials respectively.

The convention was attended by Special Secretary, School Education Department, Ghulam Rasool Mir; Director School Education Kashmir, Naseer Ahmad Wani; Chief Education Officer Srinagar, senior officers of the School Education department as well as representatives of the teaching fraternity from across Jammu and Kashmir.



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CMYK



Div Com Kashmir chairs High-Level Meeting to review alignment of Flyovers, Srinagar Ring Road

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 30: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, today chaired a high-level meeting of key stakeholder departments to deliberate on the alignment and implementation of major road infrastructure projects, including the Parimpora-Dalgate Flyover, Panthachowk Flyover, and the Srinagar Ring Road stretch from Panthachowk to Pandach.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Conservator Forests, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Vice Chairman Srinagar Development Authority, Director Airport Authority, Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Srinagar, Chief Engineers of KP-DCL and Irrigation & Flood Control, along with senior officers from the Roads & Buildings Department,



RTO, UEED, LCMA, Air Force, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), BSF, and other concerned departments.

A threadbare deliberation was conducted on the proposed Parimpora-Dalgate Flyover, with discussions focusing on its align-

ment, project cost, anticipated impact on traffic flow, and implications for existing city utilities. It was decided to constitute a committee comprising officers from the stakeholder departments to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the project's impact and submit recommendations.

The meeting also discussed construction of the two parts of the Panthachowk-Pandach Flyover and decided to move ahead with the execution of the project. With regard to the Panthachowk-Pandach section of the Srinagar Ring Road, the meeting decided to undertake a fresh study of the proposed alignments to minimise the impact on residential areas. NHAI officials were directed to carry out a comparative evaluation of the suggested alignments and submit recommendations for the most suitable option.

Earlier, the meeting also discussed the proposed road from Ring Road Part-I via Sheikhpora to Airport Road and its potential impact on adjacent BSF security establishments. On the occasion, the Divisional Commissioner directed officers of the Air Force and BSF to hold joint consultations with the executing agency to explore a feasible solution that addresses the concerns of all stakeholder departments while ensuring timely implementation of the project.

J&K Pharmacy Colleges Seek Urgent Policy Reforms

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 30: The Jammu & Kashmir PCI Colleges Association has raised serious concerns over regulatory lapses and policy shortcomings affecting pharmacy education in the Union Territory, urging the Government to take immediate steps to safeguard the interests of pharmacy institutions and students.

Addressing a press conference at the Press Club Jammu, Association President Sushil Sudan highlighted three major issues requiring urgent intervention.

Examining Authority for Pharmacy Courses
The Association demanded that the Jammu & Kashmir State Pharmacy Council be designated as the examining authority for pharmacy courses instead of the Jammu & Kashmir State Nursing Council. It argued that the existing arrangement violates Section 12 of the Pharmacy Act, 1948.

According to the Association, the State Pharmacy Council has already submitted representations to the Government on two occasions and possesses the required infrastructure and resources to conduct pharmacy examinations efficiently.

Concern Over Domicile Bar

The Association also expressed concern over the domicile requirement for admissions to pharmacy and nursing courses. It said the policy adversely affects children of Government employees, including personnel serving in the Armed Forces



and Central Armed Police Forces such as the CRPF and BSF, who are posted in or connected with Jammu and Kashmir but do not possess domicile certificates.

It maintained that the restriction creates unnecessary hardship and goes against the spirit of the abrogation of Article 370, which aimed to promote greater integration, equality and equal educational opportunities.

Demand to Exempt D.Pharmacy Admissions from JKBOPEE Counselling

Another key demand was the exemption of Diploma in Pharmacy (D.Pharmacy) admissions from the JKBOPEE counselling process.

The Association stated that, considering the limited intake capacity of PCI-approved institutions and the need for timely admissions, D.Pharmacy admissions should be conducted directly by Pharmacy Council of India (PCI)-approved institutions in accordance with PCI guidelines.

It said such a mechanism would ensure timely admissions, reduce administrative delays, maximize seat utilization, lessen the financial burden on students and institutions, and support the overall growth of pharmacy education while maintaining transparency and compliance with PCI regulations.

Call for Immediate Action

Concluding the press conference, Sushil Sudan urged the Government to address the Association's genuine demands at the earliest in the interest of pharmacy education in Jammu and Kashmir.

Among those present at the press conference were Dr. Davinder Chopra (General Secretary), Sajad Ahmad Bhat (Vice President), Dr. Hyat Mukhtar, Qayoom Yousuf, Nazir Ahmad, Adil Mushtaq, and Rajeshwar Verma.

District Admin applauds ZSWO Kupwara's role in Nasha Mukht JK Abhiyan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, JULY 30: In a proud moment for the Ex-Servicemen community of Kupwara district, the Zila Sainik Welfare Office (ZSWO) Kupwara has been formally appreciated by Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, for its commendable role in the recently concluded 100 Days Nasha Mukht JK Abhiyan.

The commendation acknowledges the active and dedicated involvement of the Ex-Servicemen fraternity, mobilised under the leadership of Col SS Raja, ZSWO, in driving the anti-drug campaign to a successful conclusion. Over the course of the campaign, veterans took part in a wide range of



activities like awareness drives, rallies, interactive sessions with students and youth, and outreach programmes across the district, all aimed at sensitising the public to the dangers of substance abuse and promoting a drug-free way of life.

Expressing gratitude, the ZSWO appreciated every Ex-Serviceman, Veer Nari and volunteer who lent their time and effort to the campaign's success, noting that their commitment once again reflects the discipline and social responsibility that define the ESM community.

Looking ahead, the Zila Sainik Welfare Office reiterated its resolve to remain an active partner with the district administration in future endeavours centred on youth empowerment, social awareness and community welfare.

Satish Sharma reviews Transport sector, pushes for tech-driven, citizen centric reforms in J&K

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 30: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, IT, Youth Services & Sports, Transport and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, today chaired a series of review meetings to assess the functioning of the Jammu and Kashmir Road Transport Corporation (JKRTC), Transport, Motor Vehicles and State Motor Garages departments.

The meetings focused on evaluating the current performance, service delivery and operational challenges across these departments.

Laying down a roadmap for the future, the Minister stressed on technology-driven reforms, modern infrastructure and sustainable transport development across Jammu and Kashmir. He called for improved service delivery through digital solutions and better facilities, while directing officials to work toward a more efficient and citizen-friendly transport system in the UT.

The Minister undertook an extensive review of the operational performance, financial position, manpower, infrastructure, digital initiatives, enforcement mechanisms, road safety measures, fleet management and future expansion plans of the departments and agencies functioning under the Transport sector.

Emphasising that an efficient, safe and reliable transport system is indispensable for economic growth and public welfare, Satish Sharma said that every institution under the Transport Department must evolve into a modern, technology-enabled and citizen-centric organisation capable of meeting the growing mobility requirements of the people.

"Our vision is to build a transport ecosystem that is efficient, transparent, digitally empowered and environmentally sustainable. Every reform must ultimately improve public service delivery and make transportation safer, more accessible and commuter-friendly," the Minister said.

Reviewing the functioning of JKRTC, the Minister assessed its operational efficiency, route coverage, fleet availability, manpower position, financial performance and passenger services.

Stressing the need to bridge the gap between the existing fleet and operational requirements, he directed the officers to prepare a time-bound roadmap for fleet augmentation, expansion of services in underserved areas and optimum utilisation of available buses and trucks.

He appreciated the Corporation's improving operational performance and called for sustained efforts towards route optimisation, prudent resource management and enhanced financial sustainability.

The Minister also reviewed the successful implementation of the free bus travel initiative for women. He emphasised that welfare measures should continue while ensuring operational viability of the Corporation.

Highlighting the importance of digital transformation, Satish Sharma directed the officials to expedite implementation of the Intelligent Transport Management System (ITMS), including GPS-enabled fleet tracking, electronic ticketing, real-time passenger information systems and advanced monitoring mechanisms to improve transparency, operational efficiency and commuter convenience.

The Minister also reviewed plans

for induction of electric buses, development of EV charging infrastructure and asset monetisation initiatives. He said that these would significantly strengthen the environmentally sustainable public transport in Jammu and Kashmir.

Reviewing the functioning of the Transport Department and Motor Vehicles Department, Satish Sharma assessed the enforcement mechanisms, revenue generation, vehicle registration, issuance of driving licences and permits, road safety initiatives and the implementation of key transport infrastructure projects.

Expressing serious concern over road accidents, Satish Sharma emphasised that safeguarding human lives must remain the foremost priority. He directed for strict enforcement of traffic regulations, scientific road safety interventions, extensive awareness campaigns and close inter-departmental coordination to minimise road fatalities.

The Minister reviewed enforcement measures against habitual traffic offenders, including suspension of driving licences, cancellation of registrations and intensified enforcement drives. He appreciated the department's focus on ensuring compliance with road safety regulations rather than merely imposing monetary penalties.

Satish Sharma also reviewed the progress of major initiatives including Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facilities (RVSFs), Automated Testing Stations (ATSs), the Institute of Driver Training and Research, the Inspection and Certification Centre at Samba, implementation of the e-DAR platform, PM-Rahat for road accident victims and identification and rectification of accident-prone blackspots.

Javid Dar reviews wool sector, HADP interventions

Calls for comprehensive roadmap to make J&K wool industry globally competitive

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 30: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, today chaired a meeting to review the status of wool industry and progress achieved under 27 projects of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) aimed at strengthening the sheep husbandry and wool sector in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Depart-

ment, Dr Ashish Chandra Verma; Mission Director, HADP, Sagar Dattatray Doifode; Director Sheep Husbandry, Kashmir; Director Finance, APD; representatives of the wool industry and other senior officers and stakeholders.

The meeting held a detailed assessment of the existing wool production ecosystem, infrastructure, processing and shearing facilities, HADP interventions, market linkages and value addition. It also deliberated on measures required to enhance the returns to sheep breeders and create sustainable livelihood opportunities for

rural youth.

Addressing the meeting, Javid Dar called for a comprehensive strategy to transform the wool sector of Jammu and Kashmir from a largely raw-material-based activity into a modern, value-added and market-driven industry.

The Minister directed the concerned departments to identify the villages and clusters with a high concentration of livestock and substantial potential for wool production and develop them as specialised wool-production and processing clusters. He called for focused interventions in such

areas, including capacity building, modern shearing practices, wool grading, processing, value addition, packaging and marketing.

Emphasising the importance of improving the quality of locally produced wool, Javid Dar directed the department to organise specialised training programmes for the sheep breeders, rural entrepreneurs and youth in modern wool processing and allied activities. He stressed that improving quality at the production level, coupled with modern processing and effective marketing, would substantially en-

hance the economic value of J&K wool.

The Minister laid special emphasis on youth engagement in the wool and livestock sector. He directed the officers to ensure that young people are provided adequate training, technology, financial assistance, infrastructure and market support to take up wool processing, value addition and allied enterprises as viable livelihood and entrepreneurial activities.

He further directed for strict monitoring and regular performance assessment of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) receiving financial as-

sistance under different components of HADP. He called for ensuring that subsidies and government support are utilised effectively and translate into measurable improvements in production, productivity, value addition, employment and farmers' income.

Javid Dar stressed the need for stronger convergence among the Sheep Husbandry Department, HADP, industry stakeholders, FPOs and other concerned agencies to establish an integrated wool value chain in Jammu and Kashmir. He called for greater emphasis on breeding, sheep health, scien-

tific shearing, wool collection, grading, processing, value addition, branding and market linkages. He said that a well-developed value chain would not only increase the income of sheep breeders but also generate employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in rural areas. "The wool industry has the potential to become a game changer for sheep breeders, farmers and rural youth," the Minister said, stressing that the sector must be developed as a commercially viable industry rather than being confined to traditional production practices.

DDC Baramulla chairs 3rd District Level Review Meeting

Calls for timely completion of Development Projects and strengthened Public Service Delivery

HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, JULY 30: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Baramulla, Dr. S.F. Hamid, today chaired the 3rd District Level Review Meeting at Dak Bungalow, Baramulla to undertake a comprehensive review of the functioning of various departments, assess the progress of ongoing developmental works and evaluate the implementation of key government schemes and flagship programmes across the district.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Sopore, Additional Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Chief Planning Officer Baramulla, Principal Government Medical College Baramulla, Sub-Divisional Magistrates of Uri, Pattan and Gulmarg, Assistant Commissioner Development Baramulla, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Baramulla, Superintending Engineers of R&B, Power Development Department (PDD), Jal Shakti and Irrigation & Flood Control Departments, besides other district and sectoral officers.

At the outset, the DDC reviewed the Action Taken Report (ATR) on the decisions taken during the previous District Level Review Meeting. He directed all departments to ensure

prompt compliance with the directions already issued and instructed officers to closely monitor the progress of pending issues so that targets are achieved within the prescribed timelines.

A detailed sector-wise review of departmental performance was conducted during the meeting. The DDC reviewed the functioning of the Health, Education, Jal Shakti, Public Works (R&B), Power Development Department, Rural Development, Agriculture and Allied Sectors, Horticulture, Animal and Sheep Husbandry, Social Welfare, Revenue, Industries & Commerce, Employment, Skill Development and other line departments. Department-wise progress was assessed with regard to implementation of developmental projects, expenditure under various components, achievement of physical targets, service delivery mechanisms and public grievance redressal.

During the review, Dr. S.F. Hamid directed all departments to intensify field monitoring, conduct regular inspections of ongoing works and ensure that developmental projects are completed within the stipulated timelines without compromising quality. He stressed the



importance of maintaining transparency, improving inter-departmental coordination and resolving bottlenecks promptly to avoid delays in execution. He also instructed officers to ensure optimum utilisation of available resources and focus on achieving tangible outcomes for the benefit of the public.

The meeting also reviewed the implementation of District Capex, UT Capex and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) besides assessing the progress under RDSS, PM Surya Ghar, NABARD-funded projects, Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Catch the Rain, Financial Inclusion initiatives, Mission YUVA, Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), JKICP,

PMGSY, AMRUT, PMAY (Urban & Rural), Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban & Rural), MGNREGA, District Skill Development Programmes, District Mineral Fund and various Self Employment Schemes.

The DDC directed the concerned departments to expedite implementation, ensure effective utilisation of funds and extend the benefits of these schemes to all eligible beneficiaries in a transparent and time-bound manner.

Reviewing the progress under the AMRUT Scheme, the concerned engineers informed the meeting that suitable locations have been identified for the construction of Overhead Tanks (OHTs) at various places in

Sopore. The DDC directed the executing agencies to complete all statutory and procedural formalities on priority and ensure that construction works are taken up at the earliest to strengthen drinking water infrastructure and improve water supply in the town.

The DDC also stressed the importance of ensuring the quality and safety of drinking water supplied to the public. He directed the concerned departments to conduct periodic sampling and testing of all drinking water sources across the district. He further instructed the Chief Medical Officer, Baramulla, to examine the water quality test reports on a regular basis and, wherever contamination is detected, ensure immediate public health interventions in coordination with the concerned departments so that any potential health risks are addressed without delay.

The meeting further reviewed the progress under the Aspirational District Programme, PMDDKY, PM SHRI, Government Medical College Baramulla, Social Security Schemes, ICDS, Tribal UT Capex, DAJGUA, Vibrant Village Programme, National Highway works under SBU RKCTC Packages I, II, III and IV, and JK Samadhan. The DDC emphasized

that all departments should work in close coordination to achieve the prescribed targets and ensure effective implementation of all developmental and welfare initiatives.

Reviewing the functioning of JK Samadhan, Dr. S.F. Hamid directed all departments to ensure timely disposal of public grievances and maintain quality while addressing complaints. He stressed that grievances should be resolved within the stipulated timelines and that officers must remain accessible and responsive to the concerns of the public.

Concluding the meeting, the DDC reiterated that the primary objective of every department should be to ensure efficient governance, timely execution of developmental works and prompt delivery of public services. He called upon all officers to adopt a proactive and result-oriented approach, undertake regular field visits, closely monitor ongoing projects and work in close coordination to accelerate the pace of development across the district. He emphasized that accountability, transparency and public welfare must remain the guiding principles in the implementation of all government programmes and developmental initiatives.

SKUAST-K FLAGS OFF FIRST BATCH OF BTECH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE STUDENTS TO IIT MANDI

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 30: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) today marked a significant milestone in its academic journey as the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, flagged off the first batch of students of BTech Artificial Intelligence in Agriculture Programme proceeding to the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi for their third year (Semester V and VI) studies under the collaborative academic arrangement between the two institutions.

The BTech Artificial Intelligence programme was conceived through a strategic collaboration between SKUAST-K and IIT Mandi with the objective of creating a new generation of professionals equipped with expertise in Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Robotics, Data Science, IoT, Digital Agriculture, Climate Intelligence, and other emerging technologies. The programme represents one of the first such initiatives in the country aimed at integrating advanced computing technologies with agriculture and allied sectors.

The outgoing students have successfully completed their first two years at SKUAST-K, where they underwent rigorous training in foundational engineering sciences, computer programming, mathematics, artificial intelligence fundamentals, deep learning, data science, IoT systems, and agricultural sciences.

During their one-year stay at IIT Mandi, the students will be exposed to advanced courses in Artificial Intelligence, Computer Networks, Programming



Paradigms, Robotics and Automation, Vision and Learning-Based Control Systems, Design Practicum, Drones and Automation Technologies, along with specialized electives offered by IIT Mandi. The students will also gain access to the institute's world-class laboratories, innovation ecosystem, startup culture, research facilities, industry-linked projects, and multidisciplinary academic environment.

The collaboration further envisages joint mentorship of students by faculty members from SKUAST-K and IIT Mandi, industry-linked capstone projects, internships, innovation-driven research, and exposure to national and international technology ecosystems. Through this model, students will have opportunities to work on real-world challenges related to agriculture, climate resilience, environmental sustainability, robotics, precision farming, and digital transformation.

Addressing the gathering, the Vice

Chancellor congratulated the students on becoming the first cohort of the program and described the occasion as a historic milestone in the evolution of agricultural education in the country. He emphasized that the future of agriculture lies at the intersection of technology, data, automation, and artificial intelligence and urged the students to take full advantage of the opportunities available at IIT Mandi. He encouraged them to serve as ambassadors of SKUAST-K and contribute towards developing innovative solutions for sustainable agriculture, climate adaptation, food security, and rural transformation. He also welcomed the newly admitted batch of students and reaffirmed the University's commitment to providing globally relevant, industry-oriented education through collaborations with premier institutions.

Prof. Rohitashw Kumar, Associate Dean, College of Agricultural Engineering & Technology, highlighted the unique

features of the programme and the collaborative efforts undertaken by SKUAST-K and IIT Mandi in designing a future-ready curriculum aligned with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP-2020), India AI Mission, Digital Agriculture Mission, and Viksit Bharat 2047. He emphasized that the programme has been structured to prepare students for leadership roles in emerging technology sectors by combining strong foundations in engineering and artificial intelligence with domain expertise in agriculture, thereby creating professionals capable of addressing real-world challenges through innovation, research, entrepreneurship, and technology-driven solutions.

The event concluded with the formal flag-off of the student contingent proceeding to IIT Mandi, marking the beginning of an important academic phase for the pioneering batch.

The initiative reinforces SKUAST-K's vision of creating globally competent professionals capable of harnessing artificial intelligence and emerging technologies to address the challenges of agriculture, climate change, sustainability, and rural development while contributing to the nation's technological advancement.

The programme was attended by Director Education, Prof. Mohammad Altaf Bhat; Registrar, Prof. Azmat Alam Khan; Associate Dean, College of Agricultural Engineering & Technology, Prof. Rohitashw Kumar; In-charge, Centre for Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning (CAIML), Dr. Showkat Rasool; faculty members, staff, students, and parents.

Director F&ES felicitates Personnel with Gallantry and Meritorious Service Medals

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 30: Director, Fire & Emergency Services (F&ES), J&K, Alok Kumar, today felicitated seven serving and retired personnel of the Department by presenting them with Gallantry Medals (GM), Meritorious Service Medals (MMS) and appreciation certificates in recognition of their exceptional bravery, distinguished service and unwavering dedication to duty.

During the ceremony, the Director honoured Medal for Gallantry to Firdous Ahmad Khan (LFM-1449), Bashir Ahmad Ahanger (FM-1996) and Late S.K. Raina (Deceased), who was honoured posthumously.

The Medal for Meritorious Service was conferred upon Puran Singh (LFM), Satpal Khujuriya (LFM), Abdul Rashid Ganie, Sub Officer (Retired), and Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Dar (SGFM).

Speaking on the occasion, the Director congratulated the awardees and appreciated their outstanding contribution towards protecting lives and property under challenging circumstances. He urged all personnel of the department to continue serving with dedication, discipline and compassion, while upholding the highest standards of professionalism in safeguarding the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of medals and certificates to the awardees amidst applause from the officials of department.

The Director also reaffirmed the department's commitment to strengthening emergency response capabilities through continuous training, skill development and modernisation. He said the dedication and courage displayed by the awardees would inspire other personnel to perform their duties with greater commitment and professionalism.

Waqar Knowledge Centre Bandipora hosts HSS Quilmuqam students for Career and Awareness Session

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JULY 30: As part of the District Administration Bandipora's ongoing initiative, envisioned under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, students from Government Higher Secondary School Quilmuqam visited the Waqar Knowledge Centre at the Mini Secretariat, Bandipora, on Thursday.

The exposure visit aimed to enhance students' understanding of government schemes, career opportunities, and citizen-centric welfare initiatives. The programme was attended by ICDS Programme Officer, Yaar Ali Khan, Knowledge Centre officials, and escort teachers, who interacted with the students throughout the session. During the visit, resource persons introduced the students to the various desks functioning within the Knowledge Centre and explained the services, government programmes, career guidance facilities, and public welfare initiatives offered through each section. They also highlighted the vision of the Knowledge Centre as



a comprehensive platform that empowers youth through information, guidance, and access to opportunities across different government departments.

Students were acquainted with a wide range of services, with special emphasis on career counselling, youth empowerment, skill development, welfare programmes, and other government support systems. The interactive session helped them understand the role of the Knowledge Centre as a one-stop destination for learning, guidance, and public awareness. The students participated enthusiastically, engaged in meaningful discussions, and raised thoughtful questions to gain a deeper understanding of the

opportunities available to them.

Addressing the gathering, the ICDS Programme Officer encouraged the students to remain informed about government initiatives, make well-planned career decisions, and actively utilise platforms like the Waqar Knowledge Centre for continuous learning, skill enhancement, and personal development.

The exposure visit offered students valuable firsthand insight into various government services, welfare programmes, and career pathways, reaffirming the District Administration Bandipora's commitment to empowering young people through awareness, education, and meaningful engagement.

District-Level Sensitization Workshop on Tobacco Control held in Bandipora

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JULY 30: To strengthen tobacco control measures and promote a tobacco-free environment, a District-Level Sensitization Workshop for Heads of Institutions and key stakeholders under the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) and the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003 was held on Thursday at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat, Bandipora. The workshop was organised by the Tobacco Control Cell, Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir, in collaboration with the Health Department Bandipora. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Bandipora, Dr. Bhajan Kour, presided over the programme.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Bhajan Kour highlighted the harmful effects of tobacco consumption on public health and stressed the importance of effective implementation of the provisions of COTPA, 2003. She called upon all stakeholders to work in close coordination to create greater awareness, ensure compliance with tobacco control



laws, and protect the younger generation from the ill effects of tobacco use. The workshop was attended by officers from the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP), Directorate of Health Services Kashmir (DHSK), who delivered technical presentations on tobacco control.

On the occasion, Dr. Nabeel, District Nodal Officer, NTCP Bandipora, delivered a comprehensive presentation on the health hazards of tobacco use, while officers from DHSK made presentations on the objectives of NTCP, the provisions of COTPA, 2003, and strategies for the effective implementation and enforcement of tobacco control measures.

The workshop sensitised participants about the objectives of the National Tobacco Control Programme, the legal provisions of COTPA, 2003, and the role of various departments in enforcing tobacco control measures.

Discussions also focused on strengthening inter-departmental coordination for the effective implementation of the Act across the district. Heads of Institutions and representatives from the Revenue, Police, Health, Drug and Food Safety, Education, Municipal Council, Municipal Committees, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and the Media participated in the workshop.

MAJEED MAJAZI : A Friend a Mentor



■ **SHAKIR SHAFI**

Life is a blend of sunshine and shadow. To live it gracefully, one has to endure countless trails and hardships. As the renowned Urdu poet Jigar Morad-abadhi beautifully said:

زندگی ہے یا کوئی طوفان ہے
ہم تو اس جینے کے ہاتھوں مر چلے

At times, life becomes our greatest challenge, and at other times, our greatest comfort. It teaches us the philosophy of profit and loss, joy and sorrow. It arrives, it departs, and throughout this endless journey it leaves us with new lessons every day.

In the course of life, we meet thousands of people. Some remain in our memories, while others gradually fade away. A few, however, become an inseparable part of our lives. We learn from some, while some teach us lessons. Every day brings new experiences—sometimes we laugh, sometimes we weep. That is the essence of life.

Among the many people we encounter, there are a few who become indispensable companions. Their absence leaves an emptiness in our lives. Nearly twenty years ago, I was fortunate enough to meet such a person. Since then, he has remained an integral part of my life. He has given me a lot without ever expecting anything in return. Over the years, I have witnessed many dimensions of his personality. At times, he has been my teacher; at others, my closest friend. Sometimes he has guided me like an elder brother, and sometimes corrected me like a caring father. He is one of the very few people whose advice has never seemed unpleasant to me. That remarkable individual is none other than the beloved teacher, writer, and literary figure Majid Majazi.

Majid Majazi and I have shared a close bond for the past twenty years. We have worked together, travelled



together, celebrated our joys, and stood by each other in times of sorrow. Although he is nearly a decade elder to me, we have never allowed that age difference to affect our friendship. He is a man blessed with countless admirable qualities.

Majazi belongs to Hajin, often regarded as the cultural capital of Kashmir. Born on 27 July 1966 in Mohalla Wahab of Hajin. He received his early education in this culturally rich town and began his professional career as a teacher in September 1997. He graduated from Government Degree College Sopore and later earned his Master's degree in Urdu as well as a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) from the University of Kashmir.

The companionship of the late playwright Latif Aashiq awakened in him a deep passion for literature, particularly theatre, while the guidance of Dr. Aziz Hajini further nurtured his artistic talent. Majid Majazi has distinguished

himself as an accomplished actor, director, and playwright. He has delivered memorable performances in numerous stage plays, written several dramas, and directed many successful theatrical productions. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to theatre, he has received several prestigious awards.

The affectionate mentorship of Mohammad Ahsan Ahsan introduced him to the literary world, and he became actively associated with Halqa-e-Adab Sonawari. Alongside drama, he developed a strong inclination towards poetry and short-story writing, producing beautiful verses as well as thought-provoking short stories.

Children's literature occupies a special place in Majazi's literary career. He has authored several books for young readers. In 2022, his Kashmiri book "Phale Gulam Hanz" received the Bal Sahitya Puraskar from the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. In addition, many

literary and cultural organisations have honoured him with awards, certificates, and commemorative mementoes.

Majid Majazi has remained the driving force behind several literary and cultural organisations, including Adabi Markaz Kamraz, Halqa-e-Adab Sonawari, Wahab Cultural Society, and the Kashmiri Advisory Board of the Sahitya Akademi. He has also played a significant role in organisations such as Feroz Cultural Forum Badipora, Bazm-e-Shaban Bandipora, and Lala Arigami Literary Forum. Indeed, Hajin and Majid Majazi have become almost synonymous. It would be difficult to find any social, literary or cultural institution in Hajin where his contribution has not been felt. He worked closely with respected personalities such as Mohammad Ahsan Ahsan, Dr. Aziz Hajini, Taskeen Sahib, Niaz Sahib, Khush-dil Sahib, Haji Ghulam Ahmad Parey, and many other distinguished elders. His long-standing association with the

Hajin Auqaf Committee is equally noteworthy.

For the past fifteen years, he has also been actively involved with the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education, contributing to the preparation of Urdu textbooks.

Majazi has never hesitated to take on responsibility. He believes in action rather than words. Whether a task is small or large, simple or difficult, he always steps forward with dedication and commitment.

Throughout his teaching career, wherever he served, he earned admiration for his professional competence. Hundreds of his students today occupy respectable positions in different fields. His teaching methodology is unique. By using theatre and other co-curricular activities, he has successfully discovered and nurtured the hidden talents of his students. Many of them have gone on to make their mark not only in professional careers but also in the field of art and literature. He has also adapted remarkably well to the technological demands of the twenty-first century.

Majid Majazi is a compassionate teacher, a sincere companion, a profound human being, and a gracious friend. After rendering thirty years of dedicated service to the Department of Education, he retires today, on 31st July 2026. His retirement marks the departure of a hardworking, capable, and devoted educator from the department. Yet I firmly believe that his retirement will open a new chapter, allowing him to contribute even more actively to literature, language, culture, and society.

I have had the privilege of working alongside him for nearly two decades. He has been both my teacher and my friend. Today, as I pay tribute to his remarkable services, I sincerely acknowledge that whatever little recognition I have earned in life owes much to his guidance, encouragement, and generosity. On the occasion of his retirement, I fondly remember the late Latif Aashiq, Mohammad Ahsan Ahsan, and Dr. Aziz Hajini. May Allah grant them the highest place in Jannah.

May Almighty Allah bless Majid Majazi with good health, happiness, honour, and a long life filled with continued service to literature and society. Ameen.

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One-Day Seminar on the Literary Contributions of Sufi Poet Rajab Hamid Held at Satoora, Tral

Mushaira Organised as Part of the Seminar

■ **JAMEEL ANSARI**

TRAL, JULY 30: A one-day literary seminar in recognition of the literary contributions of renowned Sufi poet Rajab Hamid was organised at Satoora, Tral, under the joint auspices of the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) and Maraz Adbi Sangam.

The seminar was presided over by Sahitya Akademi Awardee, poet and former President of Maraz Adbi Sangam, Ali Shaida. The presidium also included Javed Iqbal Khan, Editor of Sheeraza Kashmiri, and Altaf Nadeem, Secretary of the Rajab Hamid Memorial Adab.

The programme commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Gulzar Ahmad Rather, who warmly welcomed the guests and briefly highlighted the life, personality and literary contributions of Rajab Hamid.

On the occasion, Dr. Mohammad Shafi Ayaz, President of Maraz Adbi Sangam, and noted literary critic Ashraf Ravi presented scholarly papers on Rajab Hamid's poetry, personality and life. The speakers offered a detailed appraisal of his literary and spiritual legacy, observing that he dedicated his entire life to the pursuit of Sufism, spiritual enlightenment and the quest for truth. They described his poetry as an invaluable treasure of the Kashmiri Sufi literary tradition.

In his presidential address, Ali Shaida said that Sufi poets have played a pivotal role in strengthening and preserving the Kashmiri language and its

literary heritage. He noted that Rajab Hamid possessed profound knowledge of Sufism, mysticism and spiritual philosophy, which is vividly reflected in his poetic works.

Speaking on the occasion, Javed Iqbal Khan said that Kashmiri literature is immensely enriched by Sufi poetry. He added that the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages has consistently worked to preserve and promote the works of eminent Sufi poets and will continue these efforts in the future.

In his concluding remarks, Altaf Nadeem expressed gratitude to the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages and Maraz Adbi Sangam for organising the seminar. He said that such literary events play a significant role in carrying forward the mission of great literary figures and introducing their ideas and philosophy to the younger generation.

The seminar concluded with a Mushaira (poetic symposium) in which a number of poets from South Kashmir presented their poetry. Among those who participated were Ali Shaida, Izhar Mubashir, Qamar Hamidullah, Dr. Shaida Hussain Shaida, Yousuf Jahangir, Dr. Shaikat Shafa, Saqib Faheem, Rashid Siddiqui, Riyaz Anznu, Nazar-ul-Islam Nazar, Mushaq Salfi, Javed Jameel, Nasir Munawar, Rehman Badroo, Zargar Aziz, Akash Bashir, Ghulam Mohammad Sheikh, Ghulam Hassan Lone Puri, and several other poets.

The proceedings of the seminar were conducted by Maqbool Sajid, who efficiently moderated the event.

Kukroosa Teacher's Demise Mourned; Thousands Attend Last Rites

■ **JAVOID BHAT**

KUKROOSA KUPWARA, JULY 30: The demise of Mohammad Sultan Hajam, an in-service teacher and resident of Kukroosa in Zone Vilgam, has cast a pall of gloom across the educational fraternity and the local community.

Known for his dedication, humility, and exemplary



service, Mohammad Sultan Hajam was widely respected for his unwavering commitment to education and for inspiring countless students through his wisdom, kindness, and professionalism. His passing has sent shockwaves throughout the region, leaving colleagues, students, and well-wishers deeply saddened.

Zonal Education Officer Vilgam, Mushtaq Ahmad Mir, along with teachers and members of the public, expressed profound grief over the loss. They described the deceased as a sincere educator whose contributions to the field of education and society will be remembered for years to come.

Thousands of people from different areas participated in his last rites, reflecting the immense respect and affection he enjoyed among the masses. The mourners prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and expressed solidarity with the bereaved family during this difficult time.

CCT's Play "GAASH" Delivers Powerful Message of Respect for Parents at CBF in SKICC Sgr

■ **GULFAM BARJI**



SRINAGAR, JULY 30: Curtain Call Theatre "CCT" delivered a remarkable performance of its short social play "Gaash" during the third edition of the Chinara Book Festival, organised by the National Book Trust of India at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) Srinagar. The festival featured a number of theatre groups from across the Kashmir Valley presenting thought-provoking plays on various social issues. Among them, "Gaash" stood out for its powerful message on the importance of honouring, respecting and caring for parents while highlighting their invaluable role in so-

ciety. The play was written by Hilla Khan and directed by Shabeer Hakak. The cast, comprising Mahjabeen Inksari, Hilla Khan, Kaneez Fatima and Shabeer Hakak delivered compelling performances that won the appreciation of the audience.

The play's inspiring message was particularly well received by students from various schools attending the festival who applauded both the meaningful storyline and the impressive performances of the artists. At the conclusion of the programme the Programme In-charge of the National Book Trust of India presented certificates of appreciation to all the participating artists in recognition of their outstanding performance.

HT EDITORIAL

The Return of Confidence Must Lead to Sustainable Growth

The signs of economic recovery in Jammu and Kashmir are becoming increasingly visible. Bustling tourist destinations, improved business activity, and stronger financial indicators all suggest that the region is gradually overcoming the disruptions caused by years of uncertainty and more recent security challenges. While optimism is welcome, the real measure of progress will lie in ensuring that this recovery becomes broad-based, inclusive, and sustainable.

Economic confidence is often reflected not only in statistics but also in the everyday experiences of people. The return of tourists, increased commercial activity, and rising demand for credit indicate that confidence is slowly returning among businesses, entrepreneurs, and consumers. Financial institutions frequently serve as a barometer of economic health, and stronger lending, particularly in retail and agriculture, points towards renewed investment and productive economic activity.

Tourism continues to remain one of Jammu and Kashmir's strongest economic pillars. A vibrant tourism sector creates employment across multiple industries, including hospitality, transport, handicrafts, retail, and food services. When visitors return in large numbers, the benefits extend far beyond hotels and houseboats, reaching thousands of families whose livelihoods depend directly or indirectly on the tourism economy. Sustaining this momentum requires continued efforts to ensure peace, improve infrastructure, maintain cleanliness, and provide visitors with a safe and welcoming environment.

Equally encouraging is the reported increase in agricultural and horticultural financing. Agriculture remains the backbone of the rural economy in Jammu and Kashmir, while horticulture—particularly apple cultivation—plays a pivotal role in generating income and exports. Greater access to institutional credit enables farmers to invest in better technology, improve productivity, and withstand market fluctuations. However, the true success of the sector will ultimately depend on fair market prices, efficient transportation, cold storage facilities, and timely access to national and international markets.

At the same time, caution must accompany optimism. Economic recovery should not be judged solely on short-term improvements or quarterly performance indicators. Lasting prosperity demands structural reforms, diversified sources of income, stronger industrial development, greater private investment, improved connectivity, and expanded opportunities for the youth. Small businesses, startups, artisans, and rural enterprises must also become equal beneficiaries of the ongoing revival.

The resilience demonstrated by the people of Jammu and Kashmir over the years deserves recognition. Despite repeated setbacks, businesses have adapted, entrepreneurs have persevered, and communities have continued striving for economic stability. This resilience should now be matched by consistent policy support and long-term planning that encourages investment while protecting the interests of local industries and farmers.

The current indicators undoubtedly inspire hope, but hope alone cannot sustain growth. The challenge before policymakers, financial institutions, and the business community is to convert renewed confidence into lasting economic transformation. If peace continues to prevail, tourism flourishes, agriculture prospers, and investment expands, Jammu and Kashmir can build an economy that is not only recovering but also resilient, diversified, and prepared for sustained growth in the years ahead.

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The Light That Still Guides: Remembering Hazrat Mir Syed Ataullah Shah Bukhari (RA)

Remembering a saint-scholar whose enduring legacy of faith, knowledge, and moral leadership continues to illuminate the Valley's rich Sufi tradition.



■ JAHANGIR BUKHARI

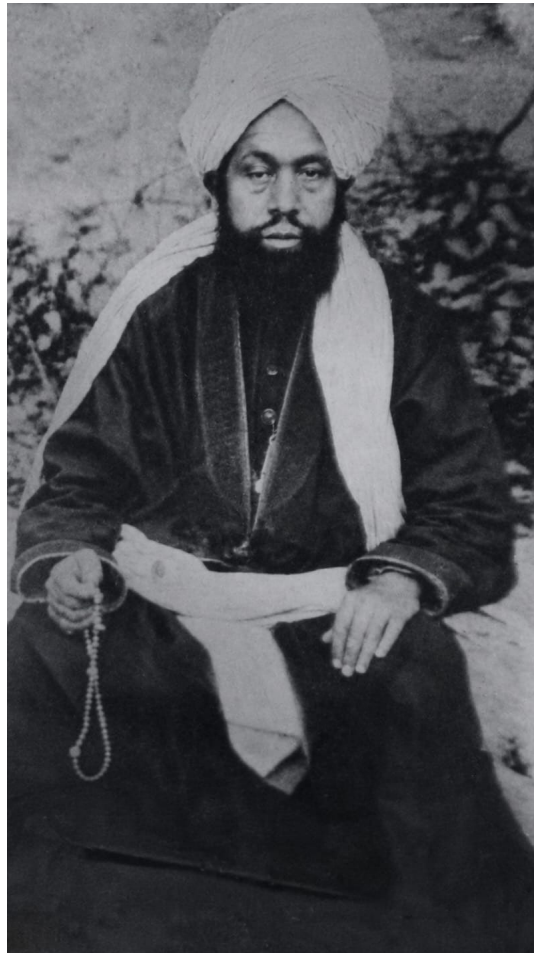
Kashmir's civilisational identity has long been shaped not only by its breathtaking landscapes but also by a remarkable tradition of saints, scholars, and spiritual reformers whose teachings transcended generations. Among these distinguished personalities stands Hazrat Mir Syed Ataullah Shah Bukhari (RA), a revered Sufi saint, Islamic scholar, and spiritual guide whose life embodied the harmonious blend of scholarship, devotion, humility, and public service.

His birth anniversary provides an opportunity not merely to remember a respected religious figure but also to reflect on the timeless values he represented—values that remain as relevant today as they were during his lifetime.

Born into the illustrious lineage of Hazrat Qazi Kashmir Haji Syed Murad Bukhari (RA), Hazrat Mir Syed Ataullah Shah Bukhari (RA) inherited a legacy deeply rooted in Islamic learning and spiritual excellence. For generations, the Bukhari family has occupied a distinguished place in Kashmir's religious and intellectual history, producing scholars who dedicated themselves to the dissemination of knowledge, the preservation of faith, and the moral upliftment of society.

Hazrat Ataullah Shah Bukhari (RA) carried this legacy forward with exceptional distinction. Renowned for his command over Islamic jurisprudence, Hadith, Qur'anic exegesis, and ethics, he became a source of guidance for scholars, students, and ordinary believers alike. Yet, it was not scholarship alone that earned him widespread reverence. His learning was inseparable from humility, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to serving humanity.

Like the great Sufi masters of Kashmir, he believed that religion was not confined to rituals alone. True spirituality, he taught, lay in cultivat-



ing sincerity, patience, gratitude, honesty, and compassion. His gatherings were remembered as places where knowledge nurtured character, and spiritual guidance inspired ethical living.

One of the defining chapters of his life was his close spiritual association with Hazrat Pir Syed Jamaat Ali Shah Mohaddis Alipuri (RA), one of the most eminent Islamic scholars and Sufi leaders of the Indian subcontinent. Under his guidance, Hazrat Ataullah Shah Bukhari (RA) became part of a wider spiritual and scholarly tradition that influenced religious life far beyond the borders of Kashmir.

His scholarly stature also found recognition

among leading religious authorities of his era. He is reported to have written a taqreez (scholarly endorsement) for the 1935 work Anwar-e-Aftab-e-Sadaqat by Hazrat Qazi Fazal Ahmad Hanafi Naqshbandi (RA), a publication carrying commendations from forty-one eminent scholars and Sufi leaders of the subcontinent, including Imam Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilvi. His inclusion among such distinguished names reflects the respect he commanded within wider scholarly circles.

More than eighty years after his passing, his influence continues to live on through the institutions, traditions, and generations shaped by his teachings. His life reminds us that genuine religious leadership is measured not by status or influence, but by integrity, wisdom, compassion, and selfless service.

At a time when societies everywhere are searching for ethical leadership and social harmony, the example set by Hazrat Mir Syed Ataullah Shah Bukhari (RA) offers enduring relevance. His emphasis on knowledge tempered with humility, faith strengthened by compassion, and spirituality expressed through service provides timeless guidance for individuals and communities alike.

Kashmir's celebrated Sufi heritage has always been a bridge between learning and humanity, between devotion and coexistence. The saints who nurtured this tradition shaped not only religious thought but also the social fabric of the Valley. Hazrat Mir Syed Ataullah Shah Bukhari (RA) remains one of those luminous personalities whose legacy continues to inspire hearts and minds.

Remembering him, therefore, is more than paying homage to a revered scholar. It is an affirmation of the values that have long defined Kashmir's spiritual ethos—knowledge over ignorance, compassion over division, humility over pride, and service over self-interest. In preserving the memory of such saint-scholars, society also preserves the moral compass that has guided generations and continues to offer hope for the future.

Author is Editor in Chief of this newspaper and this article has been written with reference/citation to the books written by Syed Abdul Jabbar Khamosh and Syed Ali Gowhar Bukhari

Sports and it's importance

Rising Sports Enthusiasm Among Valley Youth



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

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

Nowadays, the culture of sports has changed significantly. It has been observed that when educated, civilized, socially aware, and physically fit people take part in sports activities, more youth become attracted towards them. Today, IAS officers, senior officials, and politicians are inaugurating sports events, organizing tournaments, and encouraging Valley youth to participate and showcase their talent at different levels. Such opportunities help young players bring laurels to their families and society.

Every positive step in the sports sector is highly appreciable, and the administration has left no stone unturned in addressing youth-related issues. The youth of today need encouragement, sympathy, motivation, and hope. When we uplift and support them, they are less likely to move towards harmful activities. Valley youth are full of talent, en-



ergy, loyalty, and determination, but they still need a healthy environment where they can shine like the sun. It is our collective responsibility to recognize their potential and provide them with proper facilities such as playgrounds, quality equipment, trained coaches, and a motivating atmosphere. Such efforts are often more effective than counseling and legal action alone.

The environment plays a vital role in shaping the younger generation. Success is admired and respected by everyone, and when young people are provided with opportunities to succeed, they naturally move away from negative influences. A positive atmosphere can guide youth towards discipline, dedication, and excellence. Therefore, every governing body should work sincerely for the upliftment and welfare of society.

Public awareness is also essential in tackling serious issues like drug abuse. The government's campaign launched on 15 August 2020 by the Ministry of Social Justice and Em-

powerment aimed to make India drug-free and free from substance addiction. The campaign focuses on spreading awareness about the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol, motivating youth to stay away from addiction, promoting counseling, and organizing seminars and rallies in schools, colleges, and universities. Such initiatives educate people about the dangerous effects of drugs on health, education, families, and society. A healthy and successful life comes through dedication, consistency, perseverance, and a positive mindset. Strong minds never choose laziness or unlawful activities when they have opportunities for growth and success. Youth should use their talent and energy for the betterment of society and always strive to bring pride to the nation.

Why We Need Proper Academies
The Valley needs proper cricket academies, football academies, gyms, and modern sports facilities in both urban and far-flung areas. Every talented youth deserves encouragement and equal opportunities. Mod-

ern technology and advanced training methods should also be introduced in the sports sector.

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

Government-constructed stadiums should be maintained properly so that people can enjoy sports in a disciplined environment. These facilities are valuable assets for future generations, and it is our duty to protect and preserve them responsibly. Stay healthy, stay fit. Say no to drugs and yes to happiness, life, and success.

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Irshad Kamil: Redefining Love in Songs



■ DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

The history of Bollywood is not only the history of actors, directors, and composers; it is equally the history of its lyricists—the poets who transformed melodies into memories. A film song in India is rarely just a musical interlude. It is a narrative, an emotional confession, a philosophical reflection, and often a cultural document. Behind every unforgettable song stands a writer who understands the language of the human heart. From the classical elegance of the golden age to the experimental expressions of contemporary cinema, Bollywood songwriters have continuously redefined the relationship between poetry and popular culture. Their words have celebrated love, questioned society, expressed patriotism, explored spirituality, and captured the changing dreams of generations. The early decades of Hindi cinema witnessed the arrival of some of India's finest poets into the world of films. Many lyricists were already established figures in Urdu and Hindi literature, and they brought with them a rich tradition of metaphor, imagery, and emotional depth. One of the earliest masters was D. N. Madhok, who contributed significantly to the development of Hindi film songs in the 1930s and 1940s. His lyrics helped establish the importance of poetry in Indian cinema. The 1940s and 1950s produced a remarkable generation of lyricists who elevated film songs into a respected art form.

Shakeel Badayuni was one of the greatest romantic poets of Hindi cinema. His association with composer Naushad created unforgettable songs in films such as Mughal-e-Azam, Bajju Bawra, and Mother India. Shakeel's poetry combined classical Urdu elegance with deep emotional sensitivity. His expressions of love, devotion, and separation remain timeless. Shailendra, closely associated with Raj Kapoor and composers Shankar-Jaikishan, represented the voice of ordinary people. His songs combined simplicity with philosophical depth. Whether expressing optimism in Mera Joota Hai Japani or melancholy in Dost Dost Na Raha, Shailendra captured universal emotions through everyday language. Sahir Ludhianvi brought a different dimension to Bollywood songwriting. A progressive poet deeply concerned with social justice, Sahir used film lyrics to question inequality, hypocrisy, and human suffering. Songs like Jinhe Naaz Hai Hind Par and Yeh Duniya Agar Mil Bhi Jaye revealed that a film song could also become a voice of social conscience. Majrooh Sultanpuri was another giant of Hindi film lyrics. His career spanned several decades, and he adapted successfully to changing musical styles. From romantic melodies to youthful expressions, Majrooh displayed extraordinary versatility and poetic craftsmanship. Kaifi Azmi, a major figure of Urdu poetry, brought

literary sophistication and progressive thought to cinema. His songs reflected love, humanity, and social awareness. His writing proved that popular cinema could carry serious intellectual and emotional themes. Among modern lyricists, Gulzar occupies a unique position. He transformed the language of Hindi film songs by introducing unusual metaphors, delicate emotions, and philosophical reflections.

Among the lyricists who have transformed contemporary Hindi film music, Irshad Kamil occupies a unique and distinguished position. At a time when many popular songs rely on repetitive expressions and predictable emotions, Kamil has consistently demonstrated that film lyrics can still be poetic, philosophical, and emotionally profound. His songs have redefined the language of love in Indian cinema by moving beyond conventional romance and exploring love as longing, self-discovery, separation, spiritual awakening, and existential fulfilment. In his hands, the Hindi film song becomes a literary experience where words carry the fragrance of poetry while remaining accessible to millions of listeners.

Born in Malerkotla, Punjab, Irshad Kamil inherited the linguistic richness of Urdu, Punjabi, and Hindi. His academic interest in literature and his deep engagement with poetry shaped his creative sensibility long before he entered Bollywood. Unlike many lyricists who merely fit words into melodies, Kamil approaches songwriting as an act of storytelling. Every lyric becomes an emotional landscape where characters reveal their deepest fears, hopes, and desires. Love has always been the central theme of Indian cinema. Yet Irshad Kamil challenged the stereotypical representation of romantic love as mere attraction or emotional fulfilment. Instead, he presents love as a journey of transformation. His lovers are vulnerable, uncertain, reflective, and deeply human. They search for meaning rather than merely celebrating romance.

Perhaps no song illustrates this better than "Agar Tum Saath Ho" from Tamasha. The lyrics transcend the conventional language of heartbreak. Instead of dramatic declarations, Kamil presents a quiet emotional surrender. Love here is neither possessive nor triumphant; it becomes an intimate dialogue between hope and helplessness. Every line reveals emotional honesty rather than theatrical intensity. The song resonates because listeners recognise fragments of their own relationships within its restrained emotional vocabulary. Similarly, "Tum Ho" from Rockstar represents love as spiritual illumination. The beloved is not simply another person but the force that transforms existence itself. The lyrics move effortlessly between earthly affection and mystical devotion. This fusion of romantic and spiritual imagery recalls the traditions of Sufi poetry where human love becomes a metaphor for divine longing.

The influence of Sufi philosophy on Irshad Kamil's writing is unmistakable. Throughout his work, love is portrayed not as possession but as surrender. The lover willingly loses the ego to discover a higher truth. Such ideas have deep roots in the poetry of Rumi, Bulleh Shah, Amir Khusrau, and Kabir. Yet Kamil never imitates these traditions mechanically. Instead, he modernises them for contemporary audiences.

His celebrated song "Nadaan Parindey" from Rockstar is a remarkable example of metaphorical writing. The wandering bird becomes a symbol of the restless human soul searching for identity. Although the song belongs to a cinematic narrative, its philosophical resonance extends far beyond the film. Love here is inseparable from freedom, pain, memory, and self-realisation. One of Kamil's greatest strengths lies in his extraordinary command over imagery. Rain, rivers, winds, deserts, birds, moonlight, seasons, and journeys appear repeatedly in his lyrics. Yet these natural elements never function as decorative devices. Instead, they become psychological landscapes reflecting the emotional states of the characters. In "Phir Se Ud Chala," flight symbolises liberation from emotional imprisonment. The physical act of flying simultaneously represents intellectual awakening and spiritual freedom. Similarly, roads and destinations frequently symbolise life's uncertain journey rather than geographical movement.

Unlike many lyricists who rely on direct emotional statements, Kamil often chooses suggestive imagery. His metaphors invite listeners to participate actively in interpreting the song. Consequently, his lyrics continue revealing new meanings with repeated listening. Another remarkable feature of Irshad Kamil's songwriting is linguistic inclusiveness. He effortlessly combines Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, and colloquial expressions into a harmonious poetic language. His vocabulary remains literary without becoming obscure. Listeners from different regions recognise familiar words while simultaneously encountering refined poetic expressions. This multilingual richness reflects India's composite cultural heritage. Rather than privileging one language over another, Kamil creates a shared emotional vocabulary where linguistic boundaries disappear. His songs become cultural meeting points. His collaboration with composer A. R. Rahman produced some of the most memorable songs of modern Indian cinema. Rahman's experimental melodies complement Kamil's layered lyrics perfectly. In films such as Rockstar, Highway, and Tamasha, music and poetry merge seamlessly. Neither dominates the other; instead, both collaborate to create a unified artistic experience.

The partnership between lyricist and composer demonstrates that great film songs emerge through artistic dialogue rather than commercial formulae. Rahman's musical innovation provides expansive emotional spaces, while Kamil fills those spaces with words that breathe naturally. Equally significant has been Kamil's collaboration with composers like Pritam, Amit Trivedi, and others. Regardless of musical style, his lyrics retain their literary individuality. Whether composing a romantic ballad, a folk-inspired melody, or a contemporary urban anthem, he preserves emotional authenticity. The psychological complexity of Irshad Kamil's characters distinguishes him from many contemporary lyricists. His lovers often experience contradiction. They desire intimacy yet fear vulnerability. They celebrate togetherness while anticipating separation. This emotional ambiguity reflects real human relationships more accurately than idealised cinematic romance.

Songs like "Tum Tak" reveal desire not as physical attraction alone but as emotional incompleteness seeking fulfilment. The beloved becomes the missing element required for existential wholeness. Similarly, "Kun Faya Kun" transcends religious boundaries by portraying spiritual love through deeply inclusive imagery. Although rooted in Islamic mystical tradition, the song speaks universally about surrender, grace, and inner transformation. It demonstrates Kamil's remarkable ability to translate profound philosophical ideas into language understood by ordinary listeners. An important contribution of Irshad Kamil lies in restoring dignity to film lyrics as literature. During certain periods of commercial cinema, songs increasingly relied upon catchy phrases and simplistic emotions. Kamil reversed this trend by proving that literary sophistication and popular appeal can coexist.

His lyrics invite literary analysis because they employ metaphor, symbolism, paradox, irony, repetition, and allusion with remarkable subtlety. Many university students studying contemporary literature now include film lyrics within broader discussions of modern Indian poetry. Kamil's work contributes significantly to this evolving academic recognition. Another notable aspect of his writing is emotional restraint. He rarely exaggerates feelings. Instead of excessive sentimentality, he chooses understatement. This artistic discipline enhances emotional impact because listeners intuitively complete the unsaid meanings. Silence occupies an equally important place in his songs. The pauses between phrases often carry emotional significance comparable to the words themselves. This sensitivity reflects mature poetic craftsmanship. His female characters also deserve special attention. Unlike stereotypical portrayals, women in Kamil's songs frequently possess emotional agency. They articulate longing, uncertainty, resilience, and self-awareness with remarkable authenticity. Love becomes a dialogue between equals rather than a one-sided declaration.

Furthermore, Kamil understands the cinematic context exceptionally well. His lyrics never exist independently of character development. Each song advances the narrative while simultaneously functioning as an independent poem. This balance between storytelling and lyricism represents one of his greatest artistic achievements. The philosophical dimension of Kamil's work distinguishes him even further. Questions of identity, destiny, loneliness, freedom, memory, and transcendence repeatedly surface beneath romantic narratives. Love becomes the medium through which individuals understand themselves and the universe. This existential quality explains why audiences continue returning to his songs years after their release. They do not merely entertain; they accompany listeners through changing stages of life. A teenager hears romance, an adult hears longing, while an older listener discovers wisdom. Irshad Kamil also demonstrates remarkable sensitivity to contemporary emotional realities. Modern relationships are often shaped by mobility, career pressures, digital communication, uncertainty, and

emotional fragmentation. His lyrics acknowledge these realities without becoming cynical. Hope survives despite disappointment. Faith persists despite separation. His songs frequently suggest that love cannot eliminate suffering but can transform its meaning. Pain itself becomes evidence of emotional authenticity. Separation becomes another form of presence because memory continues nurturing affection. Critics have occasionally observed that Kamil's lyrics demand attentive listening. Unlike instantly consumable songs, his compositions reveal their richness gradually. Yet this very characteristic ensures their longevity. Great poetry rewards patience, and Kamil's songs continue unfolding new interpretations over time.

From a literary perspective, his work represents an important bridge between classical poetic traditions and contemporary popular culture. He inherits the emotional depth of Urdu ghazal, the spiritual intensity of Sufi poetry, the simplicity of Bhakti literature, and the narrative energy of modern cinema. These diverse influences converge naturally within his distinctive voice. Young lyricists increasingly recognise that commercial success need not require abandoning literary ambition. Kamil has demonstrated that audiences appreciate intelligent writing when presented sincerely. His influence therefore extends beyond individual songs toward reshaping expectations about film lyrics themselves. The future of Indian film music will undoubtedly continue evolving through technological innovation and changing audience preferences. Nevertheless, Irshad Kamil's contribution remains enduring because he reaffirmed the timeless truth that authentic emotions require authentic language. Melodies may change with generations, but genuine poetry retains its universal appeal.

In redefining love, Irshad Kamil has also redefined the role of the lyricist. He is not merely a provider of rhyming words but an interpreter of human emotions. His songs remind us that love is simultaneously fragile and powerful, earthly and spiritual, joyful and painful. They teach that true love is less about possession than about transformation, less about certainty than about discovery. In an age increasingly dominated by speed and superficiality, Irshad Kamil invites listeners to slow down, to listen carefully, and to inhabit language once again. His lyrics whisper rather than shout, suggest rather than explain, and illuminate rather than impress. That is why his songs remain unforgettable. They are not merely sung; they are lived. Through his poetic imagination, Irshad Kamil has restored depth, dignity, and literary beauty to the modern Hindi film song, ensuring that love continues to be expressed not only through melody but also through the enduring power of words.

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THE HEALING POWER OF FORGIVENESS



■ SURINDERPAL SINGH

Forgiveness is one of the greatest virtues a human being can possess. It is the ability to let go of anger, resentment and the desire for revenge after being hurt by someone. While forgiving may seem difficult, it is one of the most powerful ways to achieve peace of mind, emotional healing and healthier relationships. Forgiveness is not a sign of weakness; rather, it reflects strength, wisdom and maturity.

In today's fast-paced and stressful world, misunderstandings, conflicts and disappointments are common. Family disputes, workplace disagreements, broken friendships and social tensions often arise because

people find it difficult to forgive. Many continue to carry emotional wounds for years, allowing bitterness and hatred to occupy their hearts. However, holding onto resentment harms the person who carries it far more than the person who caused the hurt. Forgiveness begins with understanding that every human being is imperfect. Everyone makes mistakes, speaks harsh words in moments of anger or takes decisions that later prove to be wrong. Recognising our own imperfections helps us become more compassionate towards others. Just as we seek forgiveness for our own mistakes, we should also be willing to forgive those who genuinely regret their actions. One of the greatest benefits of forgiveness is improved mental health. Anger, hatred and resentment increase stress, anxiety and depression. They disturb our peace of mind and prevent us from enjoying life. Forgiveness, on the other hand, reduces emotional stress, promotes happiness and allows people to move forward without carrying the burden of past pain. Many psychologists believe that forgiving

others is an essential step towards emotional recovery and long-term mental well-being. Forgiveness also contributes significantly to physical health. Scientific studies have suggested that people who forgive experience lower blood pressure, improved heart health, better sleep and a stronger immune system. Chronic anger and bitterness keep the body under constant stress, while forgiveness allows both the mind and body to relax and heal naturally.

Healthy relationships are built on forgiveness. No friendship, marriage or family relationship can survive without it. Every relationship experiences misunderstandings and mistakes. If people refuse to forgive, even small disagreements can grow into permanent divisions. Forgiveness restores trust, strengthens emotional bonds and encourages open communication. It teaches people to value relationships more than their egos.

At workplaces, forgiveness creates a positive and cooperative environment. Employees and employers may sometimes make mistakes or misunderstand each

other. Instead of blaming and seeking revenge, a forgiving attitude promotes teamwork, mutual respect and better productivity. Organisations that encourage empathy and understanding often enjoy stronger employee satisfaction and long-term success. Forgiveness is equally important in education. Students may hurt one another through arguments or bullying, while teachers and parents may sometimes become overly strict. Teaching children the value of forgiveness from an early age helps them develop emotional intelligence, kindness and resilience. They learn to resolve conflicts peacefully instead of responding with anger or violence.

History offers many inspiring examples of the power of forgiveness. Great leaders have believed that forgiveness is stronger than hatred. Nelson Mandela spent 27 years in prison, yet after his release he chose reconciliation instead of revenge. His decision helped unite South Africa and prevented further violence, proving that forgiveness can transform entire societies. Every major religion places great im-

portance on forgiveness. Hinduism teaches compassion and letting go of hatred. Buddhism encourages forgiveness as a path to inner peace. Christianity emphasises forgiving others just as God forgives humanity. Islam teaches mercy and pardon as noble qualities. Sikhism promotes compassion, humility and forgiveness while encouraging people to rise above anger and ego. These teachings remind us that forgiveness is not merely a personal virtue but also a spiritual practice that uplifts individuals and communities.

It is important to understand that forgiveness does not mean accepting injustice or forgetting wrongdoing. It does not require trusting someone immediately or allowing repeated harmful behaviour. Instead, forgiveness means releasing the emotional burden of hatred while taking wise steps to protect oneself. Justice and forgiveness can exist together.

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM



■ SURINDERPAL SINGH

Justice has always been regarded as the foundation of a civilized society. A strong legal system protects the rights of citizens, resolves disputes fairly, punishes offenders and upholds the rule of law. However, modern legal systems across the world is facing numerous challenges that includes a growing number of pending cases, lengthy trials, high legal costs, shortage of judicial staff and increasing complexity of laws. These challenges often delay justice and reduce public confidence in legal institutions. In this context, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a revolutionary technology capable of transforming the legal system by improving efficiency, accuracy, transparency and accessibility.

Artificial Intelligence refers to computer systems that can perform tasks requiring human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, language understanding, pattern recognition and decision support. AI does not replace human intelligence; rather, it enhances human capabilities by processing vast amounts of information within seconds. In the legal profession, AI is increasingly becoming a valuable assistant for judges, lawyers, investigators, law enforcement agencies, legal researchers and ordinary citizens seeking legal guidance.

One of the most significant contributions of AI is legal research. Lawyers often spend countless hours searching through laws, judicial precedents, constitutional provisions and previous court judgments. AI-powered legal research platforms can analyze millions of legal documents in a matter of seconds and identify the most relevant cases. This saves valuable time, reduces human error and enables lawyers to prepare stron-



ger legal arguments.

AI also plays an important role in case management. Courts around the world struggle with millions of pending cases. Intelligent software can organize files, schedule hearings, classify cases according to urgency, monitor deadlines and automatically generate reminders for judges and court staff. Such automation reduces administrative burdens and allows judges to focus more on the legal merits of each case.

Another major application of AI is document review and contract analysis. Legal professionals frequently examine lengthy contracts, agreements, affidavits and evidence files. AI can rapidly identify important clauses, detect inconsistencies, highlight legal risks and compare documents with existing laws. Businesses, government departments and legal firms benefit enormously from this capability, as it minimizes mistakes and accelerates decision-making.

Artificial Intelligence has also improved predictive legal analytics. By studying previous judgments and judicial trends, AI systems can estimate the possible outcomes of certain legal disputes. Although these predictions are never ab-

solute, they help lawyers advise clients realistically and encourage settlements before lengthy litigation begins. Predictive analytics may reduce unnecessary court cases and lower litigation costs.

The legal system also benefits from AI in the area of criminal investigations. Advanced algorithms assist investigators in analyzing surveillance videos, digital records, financial transactions, mobile data, and forensic evidence. AI can identify hidden patterns that human investigators may overlook, helping solve crimes more efficiently. Facial recognition technology, voice analysis and digital evidence processing have become powerful investigative tools when used responsibly and within legal safeguards.

AI-powered chatbots and virtual legal assistants are making legal information more accessible to the public. Many citizens cannot afford expensive legal consultation or are unaware of their legal rights. Intelligent legal assistants can answer basic legal questions, explain legal procedures, assist in preparing standard legal documents and guide individuals toward appropriate legal remedies. This increases access to justice, especially for economically weaker sections

of society.

Artificial Intelligence also strengthens fraud detection and financial crime investigations. Banks, taxation departments and financial regulatory authorities increasingly rely on AI to detect suspicious financial transactions, money laundering, cybercrime, identity theft and fraudulent activities. By recognizing unusual patterns in massive datasets, AI helps law enforcement agencies prevent crimes before they cause extensive damage.

Another promising application lies in cyber law and digital security. As cybercrime continues to grow rapidly, AI helps monitor online threats, detect hacking attempts, identify malicious software and secure sensitive legal databases. Since modern legal systems increasingly rely on digital records and electronic evidence, AI contributes significantly to protecting judicial infrastructure from cyberattacks.

Despite its numerous advantages, Artificial Intelligence is not free from limitations. AI systems depend entirely on the quality of the data used to train them. If historical legal data contains social, racial, gender, or economic bias, AI may unintentionally reproduce those biases in its recommendations. Therefore, fairness, transparency and accountability must remain central principles in the design and deployment of AI-based legal tools.

Another serious concern is privacy and confidentiality. Legal proceedings involve highly sensitive personal information. AI systems handling such data must comply with strict privacy laws and cybersecurity standards. Unauthorized access, data breaches, or misuse of confidential information could seriously undermine public trust in the justice system.

Furthermore, AI should never replace judges. Delivering justice involves far more than interpreting written laws. Judges consider human emotions, ethical principles, compassion, social circumstances, constitutional values and the unique facts of every case. While AI can provide useful recommendations, organize evidence and assist legal analysis, the final decision must remain with

qualified human judges who can exercise wisdom, fairness and moral judgment.

Another challenge is the digital divide. Many developing countries still lack adequate digital infrastructure, trained personnel and technological resources. Without proper investment in education, cybersecurity, and digital governance, the benefits of AI may remain limited to urban areas and large institutions. Governments must therefore ensure that technological progress does not widen existing inequalities in access to justice.

To maximize the benefits of Artificial Intelligence in the legal system, governments should establish comprehensive legal frameworks regulating AI use in courts and legal institutions. Continuous training should be provided to judges, lawyers, police officers and court staff so that they can effectively use AI while understanding its limitations. Independent oversight mechanisms should regularly evaluate AI systems to ensure fairness, transparency, accountability and protection of fundamental rights.

Artificial Intelligence should be viewed as a powerful legal assistant rather than a substitute for human justice. Properly implemented, AI can reduce delays, lower legal costs, improve research quality, strengthen investigations and make justice more accessible to ordinary citizens. However, technology must always remain under human supervision, guided by constitutional values, ethical principles and respect for human dignity.

The future of justice will likely be shaped by a partnership between human intelligence and artificial intelligence. When innovation is balanced with responsibility, AI has the potential to make legal systems faster, smarter, more transparent, and more equitable. Ultimately, the true purpose of Artificial Intelligence in law is not merely to automate legal processes but to help societies deliver justice more efficiently while preserving fairness, equality and the rule of law.

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‘Heavy smoker’ died after reaction to quitting



A smoker died after a fatal reaction caused by quitting cigarettes, an inquest heard.

Jack Burton, 29, was on anti-psychotic medication to treat schizophrenia, but he needed a higher dose because he was a “heavy smoker”.

However, his dosage, which would have been dangerous for a non-smoker, became “toxic” for him after three days without cigarettes.

Patients who smoke often require higher doses of some medication as cigarette smoke causes the liver to process medicine more quickly.

Burton, who took 525mg of clozapine every night, decided to give up smoking while on holiday in North Yorkshire in October 2025.

However, when he did not reduce his medication dosage when he stopped smoking, his usual dosage became too high, leading to a “fatal increase” in his clozapine levels.

A coroner has now warned of the effects of quitting smoking while on medication after it was found that there is “no guidance available to doctors on this issue”.

Burton, who lived in Worcester, was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia and had been prescribed the anti-psychotic clozapine by his community psychiatrist.

The inquest heard that if he had planned to quit smoking, he “should have informed his psychiatrist to reduce the amount of clozapine he

was taking” because too high a dose “could cause seizures”.

The young man’s sudden death and the lack of guidance on the issue has led Deborah Lakin, the assistant coroner for Worcestershire, to write a prevention of future deaths report.

She was concerned that there was a risk of further deaths without better guidance surrounding medicine dosage and smoking.

Throughout the inquest, it remained unclear whether Burton had asked questions about his medication and whether the correct information had been provided.

Referring to Burton’s inquest, Ms Lakin said: “There were inconsistent accounts provided to me by two consultant psychiatrists, about the relevance of reduction in smoking, rather than cessation of smoking, attributable to there being no guidance available to doctors on this issue.”

She continued: “The evidence revealed that there is no guidance on any standardised practice available to practitioners relating to asking questions and recording answers given when discussing possible symptoms of side effects of the medication.”

“Practitioners can therefore make no record if no information is provided, which does not indicate whether questions were asked.”

Courtesy Telegraph

DR TASADUK HUSSAIN ITOO

PHYSICIAN

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

FELLOW, INTERNATIONAL DIABETES FEDERATION
(IDF FELLOW, BELGIUM)

MEMBER, AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
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DC Kulgam reviews ULBs functioning, performance outcomes and ongoing developmental projects

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, JULY 30: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam today reviewed the functioning of the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) of the district, including Municipal Council Kulgam, Municipal Committees of Devsar, Yaripora and Frisal.

Detailed discussions were held on sanitation, solid waste management, revenue generation, civic amenities, and the progress of various ongoing developmental works of ULBs of the district.

The meeting assessed the status of major developmental projects under MC Kulgam, including the establishment of the vending zone at Kulgam, development civic works at Ziyarat Sharief at Kulgam, creation of on-street parking near District Hospital, and other infrastructure works.

The Deputy Commissioner di-

rected the concerned officers to strengthen monitoring mechanisms, improve service delivery, address operational issues on priority, and ensure timely completion of all developmental projects while maintaining quality standards.

A detailed review of the Solid Waste Management system was also undertaken, including the operationalization of trommel machines and corresponding substantial increases in user charges.

The DC directed the concerned officers to ensure optimum utilization of available infrastructure and uninterrupted operation of facilities for scientific processing, segregation and disposal of municipal solid waste.

He emphasized achieving 100 percent door-to-door waste collection, strengthening source segregation, ensuring timely transportation of waste and proper waste disposal, and maintaining regular monitoring for improved sanitation and envi-



ronmental sustainability.

The progress of the Solid Waste Management (SWM) project at Yaripora, which is nearing completion, was also reviewed. The Depu-

ty Commissioner discussed the proposal for installation of a trommel machine at the Yaripora SWM facility and directed the concerned officers to expedite the necessary

formalities for its establishment at the earliest to further strengthen the district's solid waste management infrastructure.

Ongoing works in MC Frisal and Devsar also came under review and performance outcomes of all municipalities assessed and instructions issued for enhancing the outcomes.

The meeting was also attended by ADC, Vikar Ahmad Giri; CPO, Malik Suheel; EO, MC Kulgam, Mohd. Irfan; EO MC, Frisal, Mohd. Rafiq and other concerned officers and officials.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for effective coordination among all Urban Local Bodies to ensure efficient implementation of developmental initiatives and timely resolution of civic issues. He directed officers to adopt a proactive approach in addressing public grievances and improving municipal services.

He also underscored the importance of maintaining cleanliness in

public spaces, markets and residential areas, asking the municipalities to intensify sanitation drives and create greater public awareness about waste segregation and responsible disposal practices.

Reviewing revenue generation, the DC instructed the Executive Officers to strengthen the collection of municipal taxes and user charges while ensuring transparency and accountability in financial management. He said enhanced revenue would enable the ULBs to improve civic infrastructure and service delivery.

The Deputy Commissioner reiterated the district administration's commitment to strengthening urban infrastructure and directed all concerned departments to work in close coordination for the timely execution of projects, ensuring that residents benefit from improved civic amenities and sustainable urban development.

DLSA Ganderbal concludes Two-Day Training-cum-Orientation Programme for Legal Aid Functionaries

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, JULY 30: Under the guidance of Abdul Nasir, Chairman, District Legal Services Authority (Principal District & Sessions Judge), Ganderbal, and under the supervision of Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal, the second and concluding day of the Two-Day Training-cum-Orientation Programme for Mediators, Panel Lawyers, Legal Aid Defence Counsels (LADCs), Supporting Staff, and Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) was successfully conducted today at the Conference Hall, District Court Complex, Ganderbal.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman, District Legal Services Authority (Principal District & Sessions Judge), Ganderbal, appreciated the active participation of all stakeholders and emphasized that such capacity-building initiatives are essential for strengthening the legal services delivery system and ensuring effective, accessible and quality legal aid to every deserving citizen.

Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal, gave a brief recap of the deliberations of the previous day and reiterated the



significance of continuous capacity building and coordinated efforts in strengthening the legal aid delivery system.

The first technical session on "NALSA Schemes, Role of Para Legal Volunteers in Legal Awareness and Community Outreach, and Grassroots Access to Justice for all" was delivered by Adv. Burjeena, Assistant Legal Aid Defence Counsel. The session highlighted the pivotal role of Para Legal Volunteers in disseminating legal awareness by conducting outreach activities, facilitating access to legal aid and bridging the gap between legal services institutions and the community, especially the marginalized and vulnerable sec-

tions of society including women and children.

The second technical session on "Professional Ethics, Courtroom Conduct, Effective Communication Skills and Best Practices for Legal Services Functionaries" was conducted by Adv. Ghulam Rasool Rather, who emphasized the importance of professional integrity, ethical standards, effective communication and courtroom etiquettes in ensuring efficient and quality legal services.

An interactive Group Discussion and Experience Sharing Session was also held, wherein Mediators, Panel Lawyers, Legal Aid Defence Counsels, Supporting Staff, and Para Legal Volunteers shared their experiences, deliberated on practical challenges encountered in the discharge of their duties especially in far flung and inaccessible areas and exchanged best practices for enhancing coordination and effective implementation of legal aid programmes to every nook & corner of district.

Adv. Tanveer Ashraf, Assistant Legal Aid Defence Counsel, expressed gratitude to all participants for their valuable contributions towards the successful conduct of the two-day training programme.

SWD Bandipora holds Awareness Programme on Digital and Financial Literacy under AVAY at Hajin

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, JULY 30: Social Welfare Department (SWD), Bandipora, today organized an awareness programme on Digital and Financial Literacy under the Atal Vayo Abhyudaya Yojana (AVAY) for senior citizens at Hajin.

The programme, held under the guidance of District Social Welfare Officer, Bandipora, aimed to equip senior citizens with essential knowledge and skills to safely use digital financial services, promote financial inclusion, and create awareness about cyber fraud prevention, online banking, digital payment systems, and responsible financial management.

Resource persons from the Centre for Financial Literacy, Hajin delivered detailed presentations on various aspects of digital and financial literacy. They educated the participants about secure digital transactions, banking services, government-backed financial schemes, and precautionary measures to protect themselves from online financial fraud. The experts also held an interactive session and addressed the queries raised by the participants.



Speaking on the occasion, Tehsil Social Welfare Officer, Sumbal, highlighted the growing importance of digital and financial literacy in today's technology-driven world. He urged senior citizens to adopt safe digital banking practices, remain vigilant against cyber scams, and make informed financial decisions. He also emphasized that awareness is the key to financial security and empowerment.

The participants actively participated in the programme and appreciated the efforts of the Social

Welfare Department in organizing such a timely and informative awareness initiative. They expressed that the programme had enhanced their understanding of digital financial services and would help them confidently and safely access various banking facilities.

The Social Welfare Department reiterated its commitment to organizing more such awareness programmes under AVAY to promote the welfare, dignity, financial inclusion, and digital empowerment of senior citizens across the district.

DC Budgam chairs DLSCC meeting; clears SRO-43 cases

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, JULY 30: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today chaired a meeting of the District Level Screening-cum-Coordination Committee (DLSCC) to review and clear cases under SRO-43 for compassionate appointment in favour of the next of kin of terror victims in the district.

During the meeting, the committee recommended cases for compassionate appointment after a thorough scrutiny of the applicants' credentials and verification reports. The cases have been referred to the General Administration Department (GAD) for further necessary action.

The cases were cleared after detailed deliberations and discussion by the committee members.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for the speedy disposal and clearance of such cases to ensure timely relief to the affected families. He observed that affected families have high expectations from the government and deserve prompt assistance and support.



The Deputy Commissioner further directed all concerned departments to ensure that all required formalities and verifications are completed within the stipulated timeframe for timely disposal of cases at the District level.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Budgam, Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR), senior officers from CRPF, District Information Officer (DIO), Deputy Superintendent of Police (Headquarters), Deputy Superintendent of Police, CID (CIK), Tehsildar Beerwah, and Tehsildar Budgam.

ADDC Shopian reviews JJM progress, directs expedited completion of pending works

HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPAIN, JULY, 30: Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress of works under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) across the district.

During the meeting, the ADDC reviewed the physical and financial progress of all ongoing JJM schemes, including overhead tanks, borewells, Rapid Sand Filtration (RSF) plants, pipe network laying, ground service reservoirs, mechanical works, electrical installations and the certification status of villages.

It was informed that out of 62 JJM schemes, 23 have been completed, while the remaining schemes are at various stages of execution. The meeting also reviewed the progress of 121 overhead tanks, borewells, filtration



plants, pipe network works, mechanical and electrical installations, besides the status of village certification and Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs).

The district has achieved 42,234 Functional Household Tap Connections out of a target of 45,598,

registering 92.62% coverage.

The ADDC stressed the need for timely completion of all pending works and directed the concerned officers to remove bottlenecks, improve inter-departmental coordination and ensure adherence to project timelines. He

emphasized that every effort should be made to provide safe and reliable drinking water to all households at the earliest.

He also directed the Assistant Executive Engineers (Civil) to furnish estimates for constructing functional tube wells in the district to augment water supply, and instructed the Assistant Executive Engineer (Mechanical) to expedite mechanical works to ensure early commissioning of water supply schemes.

The meeting concluded with directions to all executing agencies to intensify field-level monitoring and submit regular progress reports to achieve the targets within the stipulated timeframe.

The meeting was attended by SE, Hydraulic, Shopian, Nazia Nazir; Executive Engineer, PHE, Abdul Rashid, AEEs, JEEs and other concerned who briefed the chair on the progress and achievements under the mission.

KVK Srinagar Trains Youth in Honey Processing to promote Agri-Entrepreneurship

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JULY 30: More than 50 youth received hands-on entrepreneurial training in honey processing, fruit preservation, and value addition during a two-day Skill Development Programme jointly organised by Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Srinagar, under the Director-

ate of Extension, SKUAST-K, in collaboration with JK Agro Industries Development Corporation Ltd.

The programme focused on creating self-employment opportunities by equipping participants with practical skills across the honey and fruit value chain. Trainees received hands-on exposure to honey collection, purification techniques, quality

testing, bottling, labelling and marketing, alongside fruit and vegetable canning and value addition.

Head, KVK Srinagar, Dr. Shamim A. Simmani, said the initiative reflects the Kendra's commitment to nurturing agri-entrepreneurs by inspiring educated youth to establish sustainable agri-based enterprises capable of generating employment and

strengthening livelihoods.

Technical sessions were conducted by Dr. Haseeb Ur Rehman and experts from the Honey Processing Facility, Khonmoh, who highlighted the growing business potential in honey processing, fruit preservation, quality control, branding and market linkages. The experts encouraged participants to leverage

value addition as a pathway to higher farm incomes and enterprise development.

The participants appreciated the practical orientation of the programme and called for more such entrepreneurship-focused trainings to enable youth to become self-reliant and reduce dependence on government employment.

The organisers said such capacity-building programmes will continue to promote entrepreneurship and value addition in the agriculture sector, enabling rural youth to explore sustainable livelihood opportunities. They also emphasised the importance of skill-based training in strengthening the agri-economy and fostering self-employment.

India's housing market may see fresh supply as NRIs plan property exits: Report

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JUL 30: India's residential real estate market could witness a surge in resale inventory as a large number of non-resident Indians (NRIs) prepare to offload their property holdings, reflecting a shift in investment priorities rather than weakness in the housing sector.

According to the Remittor Annual NRI Wealth Report 2026, nearly half of NRI property owners surveyed intend to sell their Indian real estate immediately, while another one-fourth expect to do so within the next six months.

The report suggests that homes purchased during the peak NRI investment cycle between 2010 and 2019 are now entering a monetisation phase, with owners increasingly treating them as financial assets instead of long-term family holdings.

The Vancouver-based wealth technology startup said the trend

represents a broader transformation in the way overseas Indians manage their wealth.

Historically, owning a home in India served multiple purposes—from providing a retirement base and housing for family members to acting as a safety net for a possible return to the country. However, investment objectives are now taking precedence over emotional attachment.

The report estimates that more than 60pc of the properties expected to enter the resale market were acquired between 2010 and 2019, while nearly nine out of every 10 assets being sold are residential properties.

Apartments account for the largest share of listings, reflecting the popularity of urban housing investments made during India's rapid infrastructure and real estate expansion over the past decade.

Maharashtra is expected to contribute the largest share of resale properties at 26.8pc, followed by



Delhi-NCR with 23.4pc. Kerala accounts for 15pc of the expected supply, while Gujarat and Karnataka contribute 12.9 and 8.2pc, respectively.

These regions have historically attracted significant NRI investments due to strong economic growth, infrastructure development and

expectations of capital appreciation.

The report indicates that the planned sales are largely driven by profit booking after years of price appreciation rather than concerns over the health of India's housing market.

Many owners are choosing to rebalance their investment portfolio

as overseas borrowing costs remain elevated and cross-border tax compliance becomes more stringent.

Residential properties dominate the sale pipeline, accounting for 88.8pc of the assets identified in the survey. Apartments alone make up 63.2pc of the total, while commercial properties account for just 4.6pc and agricultural land represents 3.4pc.

The report attributes the dominance of apartments to their comparatively transparent documentation, regulatory oversight under RERA and easier resale process.

While the number of potential sellers is rising, converting listings into transactions may take time. More than 81pc of respondents said they have not yet identified a buyer, highlighting the practical challenges NRIs face in completing property transactions from overseas, including documentation, negotiations and legal formalities.

The study also points to pricing

expectations as another hurdle. It found that many NRI owners, particularly in Tier-I and Tier-II cities, value their properties based on anticipated infrastructure-led appreciation rather than recent market transactions, creating a gap between seller expectations and professional valuations.

Another notable finding is that the proceeds from these sales may not immediately flow back into India's property market. More than half of the respondents said they plan to repatriate the funds abroad instead of reinvesting in Indian real estate, signalling a change in capital allocation strategies among overseas investors.

The report concludes that India's housing market is entering a new phase in which the next wave of property supply could increasingly come from existing NRI owners looking to unlock gains, rather than solely from fresh launches by developers.

Cybersecurity platform eyes subscription revenue, insurance tieups via Kavach app

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

BENGALURU, JULY 30: Bengaluru-based cybersecurity startup DigiKavach is betting on a subscription-led consumer cybersecurity platform and insurance partnerships as it seeks to tap India's fast-growing digital safety market, where cyber fraud losses are running into tens of thousands of crores annually.

The company on Wednesday launched Kavach One, a mobile application that helps users identify phishing links, malicious QR codes, scam calls, fake investment schemes and fraudulent applications before they become victims of online fraud.

Unlike conventional cybersecurity products that largely target enterprises, DigiKavach is positioning itself as a business-to-consumer (B2C) platform aimed at protecting individuals and families using India's rapidly expanding digital payments ecosystem.

Mentor K Sreedhar said the company has adopted a freemium strategy, offering the application free initially to drive user adoption and awareness before introducing a premium subscription later this year.

The paid version, expected to launch around September-October, will automatically screen incoming calls, phishing links, fraudulent URLs and malicious



content in real time instead of requiring users to manually verify suspicious messages. The annual subscription is expected to be priced below Rs 1,000, targeting mass-market adoption.

"Our immediate objective is user acquisition and awareness. Once users understand the risks and begin using the platform regularly, we will transition to an automated protection model through subscriptions," Shridhar said.

Besides subscription revenue, the startup is building a second monetisation channel by partnering with insurance companies to bundle cyber insurance with its platform.

The company is in discussions with insurers to offer integrated cyber protection packages combining fraud prevention, incident response and financial loss coverage, potentially creating a recurring revenue stream through

insurance distribution.

Go Digit General Insurance Chief Business Officer Ankur Sharma said the partnership reflects a shift in how cyber risk is likely to be managed in the retail market.

"Cyber protection cannot rely only on insurance after a fraud has happened. Prevention, awareness, technology and insurance together create a much stronger consumer proposition," Sharma said.

The company is also targeting banks, fintech firms, telecom operators and small businesses as potential enterprise partners that could distribute the application to customers as a value-added digital safety service.

India's cybercrime landscape presents a significant addressable market. Data shared during the launch showed the country recorded over 28 lakh cybercrime complaints in 2025, with report-

ed losses of Rs 22,400 crore. The growing volume of digital payments, online investing and smartphone adoption has expanded opportunities for fraudsters, creating demand for preventive cybersecurity tools.

Launching the application, Karnataka Director General of Police (CID and Cyber Command) Dr Pronab Mohanty endorsed preventive technologies as a critical component of cyber resilience, saying public awareness remains the first line of defence against digital fraud.

Shridhar said DigiKavach aims to reach 3-5 per cent of India's population within five years, arguing that such penetration could help prevent 60-70 per cent of common cyber fraud attempts.

For investors, the significance lies beyond the application itself. DigiKavach is attempting to build a recurring consumer cybersecurity business by combining software subscriptions, AI-driven fraud detection, insurance partnerships and potentially enterprise distribution—an approach that mirrors the evolution of antivirus companies into broader digital protection platforms.

If executed successfully, it could carve out a niche in India's still nascent consumer cyber-protection market, where awareness is rising but dedicated retail cybersecurity products remain limited.

Artha Bharat targets \$1.5 Billion AUM in three years, unveils global expansion plans

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, JULY 30 : GIFT City-based Artha Bharat Investment Managers IFSC LLP on Wednesday announced plans to double its assets under management (AUM) from \$750 million to \$1.5 billion over the next three years, backed by product expansion, international growth and a wider domestic investor base.

Marking two years of operations in GIFT City, the fund management firm outlined a three-pronged growth strategy that includes launching new investment products, expanding its presence in international financial centres and increasing access to its global investment offerings for Indian investors.

As part of its expansion plans, the company will launch two dollar-denominated debt-oriented funds, a commodity and precious metals arbitrage fund, and a global equity fund over the next two years.

It is also developing a proprietary quantitative investment strategy for future investment products.

To support its growth, Artha Bharat is expanding its office space in GIFT City by adding 3,300 square feet, increasing capacity to accommodate up to 100 employees.

The company has also signed an agreement to acquire 12,000 square feet of office space in the upcoming Shilp Twin Tower in GIFT City as part of its long-term commitment to the financial hub.

Managing Partner Sachin Sawrikar said the company has grown from a

single-fund platform to six funds within two years and plans to accelerate growth through expanded infrastructure, new products and a stronger international presence.

He noted that the firm's first fund has delivered six-fold returns to investors within its first three years.

The company also plans to strengthen its overseas footprint by expanding operations in the Middle East and exploring opportunities in Mauritius and Singapore to access wider pools of international capital.

In addition, Artha Bharat intends to broaden its domestic investor base by working with fund distributors and banks to market its investment products in India.

It plans to establish investor relations and distribution offices in Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru and Kolkata to strengthen its presence in key financial centres.

The company said its expansion strategy is aimed at leveraging growing demand for differentiated global investment opportunities while positioning itself as a leading fund management platform operating from GIFT City.

The expansion comes as GIFT City continues to attract global financial institutions and alternative investment managers with its international regulatory framework and tax incentives. Industry experts believe the growing ecosystem is positioning the financial hub as a key gateway for cross-border investments and global capital flows into and out of India.

Abyro Capital, T-Hub launch 'Beacon' to back India's next generation of SpaceTech startups

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, JULY 30: Abyro Capital, a venture capital firm focused on deep technology investments, has announced the launch of Beacon, a flagship platform aimed at discovering, funding and accelerating early-stage SpaceTech startups in partnership with T-Hub.

The programme will be officially launched on August 3. Under the initiative, five selected startups will receive an initial investment commitment of USD 500,000 each, along with access to follow-on funding, mentorship from leading SpaceTech founders and industry experts, and global market opportunities.

The startups will also undergo an eight-week acceleration programme focused on technology readiness, market validation and fundraising support.

Speaking on the initiative, Abyro Capital Founder and Managing Partner Vamsi Kora said Beacon is designed to bridge the gap between breakthrough space technologies and early-stage institutional capital, enabling Indian founders to build globally competitive SpaceTech companies.

Applications for the inaugural cohort will open on August 3 and close on August 21, with the final selection to be announced on September 30. The programme is open to startups developing technologies at Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) 2-4, according to a company statement on Wednesday. The initiative aims to strengthen India's rapidly growing SpaceTech ecosystem by supporting innovative startups with capital, mentorship and global market access.

Invest Qatar Expands India Outreach Opens Dedicated Office to Boost Bilateral Investment and Business Partnerships

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI, JULY 30: Invest Qatar, the national investment promotion agency of the State of Qatar, has strengthened its engagement with Indian businesses by launching a dedicated office in India.

It has held a series of high-level meetings aimed at expanding bilateral investment cooperation and encouraging Indian companies to use Qatar as a gateway to the GCC and Middle East and North Africa region, a release stated.

A week-long visit by a delegation was led by Abdulla Al-Emadi, Acting Head of Lead Generation for Asia Markets at Invest Qatar, who travelled to New Delhi and Mumbai to engage with Indian corporates, entrepreneurs, investors and technology companies. The discussions focused on strengthening long-term business partnerships, exploring fresh investment opportunities and supporting the growing network of more than 25,000 Indian businesses already operating in Qatar.

During the visit, Al-Emadi held meetings with representa-



tatives of Tata Consultancy Services, Fractal Analytics Limited, Rossari Biotech, Vilin Bio Med, TiE Mumbai, technology startups, scale-up companies and investors to explore new avenues for enhancing investment collaboration between India and Qatar.

A major announcement during the visit was the opening of Invest Qatar's first dedicated office in India. The agency said the move reflects its long-term commitment to the Indian market and underlines India's importance as one of its key strategic

markets in Asia.

The India office will be headed by Tanaz Buhariwalla as Director for India. According to Invest Qatar, the office will provide direct support to Indian companies planning to establish or expand operations in Qatar by assisting with market entry, regulatory procedures, investment facilitation and post-investment support services.

Commenting on the visit, Abdulla Al-Emadi said India remains one of Invest Qatar's most significant strategic markets and the opening of a permanent of-

fice demonstrates the organisation's commitment to building deeper and more enduring business relationships with Indian companies, investors and institutions.

He said the objective of establishing a local presence is to work more closely with businesses shaping India's economic growth and make it easier for them to evaluate investment opportunities available in Qatar.

Al-Emadi said discussions with Tata Consultancy Services, Fractal Analytics, Vilin Bio Med, Rossari Biotech and members of India's technology and innovation ecosystem indicated strong interest among Indian enterprises in using Qatar as a regional base for expanding into the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and the wider Middle East and North Africa region.

He added that Invest Qatar intends to build on the momentum generated during the visit by strengthening engagement with Indian businesses in the coming months.

The investment mission comes at a time when Qatar continues to attract strong in-

vestor interest because of its strategic location, modern infrastructure and international connectivity. The country is increasingly positioning itself as a preferred destination for Indian companies seeking regional expansion into Gulf and MENA markets.

Invest Qatar highlighted that the country was ranked first globally for general infrastructure in the Global Innovation Index 2025 and second worldwide for mobile internet speed in the Internet Speed Index 2025. It also noted that Qatar Airways and Hamad International Airport provide connectivity to more than 160 international destinations, supporting global trade and business operations.

The agency further stated that Qatar's Special Economic Zones offer a range of incentives for international investors, including 100 per cent foreign ownership, zero income tax, zero customs duties and unrestricted repatriation of profits within a legal framework based on English common law, making the country an attractive destination for companies seeking to establish regional operations.



Shubman Gill returns to No. 1 in ODI batters' rankings



UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

LORD'S: Shubman Gill's 188 runs in the three ODIs against England in mid-July, coupled with Daryl Mitchell's injury-enforced absence from the last two ODIs in the West Indies, have lifted the India captain to the top of the ICC rankings for batters in the format. This is Gill's third stint at the top of that table.

Staying with ODIs, while Will Young (up three spots to joint-38th), Sherfane Rutherford (up 13 spots to 45th) and Tom Latham (up five spots to 46th) have gained at the end of the five-match series, the big mover was Namibia's Bernard Scholtz. Scholtz returned remarkable figures of 10-2-21-1 against Netherlands and 10-2-14-0 against Nepal in CWC League 2 games in Utrecht, and that took him up five places to seventh in the bowling rankings.

The major Test-match action over the past week was in Tarouba, where West Indies beat Pakistan by 90 runs in the first Test of their WTC series.

The match belonged to the fast bowlers - all 40 wickets fell to them - and Player of the Match Justin Greaves' seven wickets (including a first-innings five-for) took him up 21 places to No. 48, while Jayden Seales, the star of the second Pakistan innings with a five-for, moved up five places to 24th. Mohammad Abbas, the third bowler in the Test to pick up a five for on his way to match returns of 8 for 85, has returned to the top 20 for the first time since 2021, getting to No. 17 after a nine-spot rise.

Among the batters, Babar Azam moved up four positions to 15th after an unbeaten 58 in the second innings, while Shan Masood's 109 in the first innings took him up eight places to 36th. Shai Hope, meanwhile, went from No. 51 to No. 39 after his 92 in the first innings.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, meanwhile, continued his rise with a Player-of-the-Series performance in the three-T20I series in Zimbabwe, scoring 151 runs in three innings at a strike rate of 196.10. Just six matches old in the format (and in international cricket), the batter jumped 230 places on the table to No. 48.

Ten Doeschate appointed Knight Riders' head of cricket strategy

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

LEEDS: Ryan ten Doeschate has been appointed head of cricket strategy at the Knight Riders Group, which owns Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in the IPL, Trinbago Knight Riders (TKR) in the CPL, Abu Dhabi Knight Riders (ADKR) in the ILT20 and Los Angeles Knight Riders (LAKR) in MLC. The arrangement is a "long-term" one, Cricinfo has learned.

His new appointment was made official a day after Cricinfo had reported his exit from the role as assistant coach of the India men's team, a position he held for two years. At the time, it was understood that he would be returning to the Knight Riders set-up, though the exact role wasn't clear. His first assignment will be with TKR at CPL 2026, starting August 7. "I'm excited to be back with the Knight Riders in this role," ten Doeschate said in a statement. "This is a unique opportunity to work with the coaching and analytics teams across our global franchises to strengthen our scouting/player development systems, and to build a long-term cricket strategy."



Pratika Rawal signs with Warwickshire Bears

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI: India women's international Pratika Rawal has signed with Warwickshire Bears until the end of the 2026 season. The 25-year-old batter will be available from their next round of Metro Bank One-Day Cup fixtures, which begins on August 19.

Rawal is set to return to action after missing the Lord's Test against England earlier this month with injury. She had sustained the injury during India A's second one-dayer against England A in Taunton on July 1.

"I'm really pleased to be joining Warwickshire," Rawal said in a statement. "I've heard so many good things about the club, and I'm excited to get started and to try and help the team as much as I can."

"It's going to be a great experience for me to test myself playing in England. Walking out at Edgbaston, which is such an iconic ground in world cricket, is also something I'm looking forward to."

Warwickshire are fifth in the One-Day Cup points table, just two points off Durham in third. The team that finishes third will face off in an eliminator against the second-placed side, ahead of a final with the league winners.

"This is a fantastic signing for the team, and we're very pleased to be able to welcome Pratika to Edgbaston," Ali Maiden, Warwickshire Bears Women head coach, said. "We're in a good position in the One Day Cup table as it stands, so bringing in a player of the calibre of Pratika can only strengthen our line-up as we look to finish the season on a positive note."

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