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Let Raksha Bandhan Strengthen the Bonds of Peace and Harmony : LG Sinha

DPS Baramulla students celebrate festival of brotherhood at Lok Bhavan Srinagar



HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 24: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday celebrated Raksha Bandhan with students of Delhi Public

School (DPS), Baramulla, at Lok Bhavan in Srinagar, in a special interaction that highlighted the values of love, unity and social harmony. As part of the

celebrations, the students tied sacred Rakhis on the wrist of the Lieutenant Governor and exchanged greetings, bringing a warm festive spirit to the occasion ahead of Raksha Bandhan, which will be celebrated on August 28.

Addressing the students, the Lieutenant Governor urged them to uphold and spread the true spirit of Raksha Bandhan by becoming ambassadors of peace, love, unity and harmony. He encouraged the young minds to imbibe these values

SEE ON P-2

If It Can Be Done in Jammu, We Should Replicate It in Srinagar : Omar Abdullah

CM calls for mission-mode action to tackle stray dog menace, faster sterilisation and better garbage management



HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, AUG 24: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday directed the Srinagar Municipal Corporation and concerned departments to adopt a focused, coordinated and humane mission-mode strategy to tackle the growing stray dog menace, stressing that Jammu's reported 80 per cent sterilisation success should be replicated in

SEE ON P-2

The Pilot Must Generate Learning for Wider Implementation : Atal Dulloo

Chief Secretary reviews preparedness for drug rehabilitation programme, directs early rollout and strengthened training

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, AUG 24: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo on Monday reviewed preparations for the Phase-I pilot of the Rehabilitation and Socio-Economic Reintegration Scheme for Drug Abuse Victims, 2026, directing the Social Welfare Department to ensure its early commencement while strengthening infrastructure, manpower, capacity-building and digital monitoring mechanisms to



create a model that can eventually be expanded across Jammu and Kashmir.

Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high-level

SEE ON P-2

"Verify Credentials Before Investing": EOW Warns Public After ₹2-Crore Fraud Arrest

Crime Branch arrests wanted accused in Bengaluru after year-long hunt over alleged high-return investment scheme

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, Aug 24: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) Kashmir of Crime Branch J&K has arrested Junaid-Ul-Islam of Budgam from Bengaluru in an alleged ₹2-crore investment fraud case, with investigators claiming that the accused collected money from several individuals by promising monthly returns of 10 per cent, prompting the agency to caution the public against schemes offering unusually high or guaranteed returns. The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) Kashmir of Crime Branch J&K has arrested an accused wanted in a

SEE ON P-2

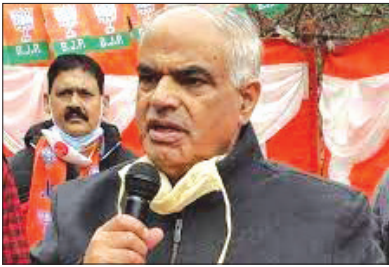
It Is Important to Create Brotherhood Across Communities : Ashok Koul

BJP leader describes return of Kashmiri Pandits as positive development, stresses social harmony in J&K

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SHOPIAN, Aug 24: Jammu and Kashmir BJP General Secretary (Organisation) Ashok Koul on Monday described the return of Kashmiri Pandits to the Valley as a positive development and called for greater brotherhood and social cohesion, saying

SEE ON P-2



"Clarify KUMSA's Status Through a Written Order": Employees

Kashmir University ministerial staff body seeks restoration, alleges it has remained non-functional since 2022

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, Aug 24: Employees associated with the Kashmir University Ministerial Staff Association (KUMSA) have sought restoration of the

association's functioning, alleging that it has remained unable to operate since 2022 despite submission of documents sought by the University authorities and without any formal written order communicating its suspension, dissolution or prohibition.

The Kashmir University Ministerial Staff Association (KUMSA), an employee body representing the University's non-teaching staff, has allegedly remained unable to function

SEE ON P-2

HT BOTTOM NEWS

Brief Intense Showers Could Trigger Flash Floods and Landslides : Met

Hot and humid conditions to continue across J&K; Srinagar records 30.5°C and Jammu 34.3°C

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, AUG 24: Jammu and Kashmir is likely to experience generally hot and humid weather over the coming days, with scattered rain and thundershowers expected at intervals, while the Meteorological Centre has warned that brief but intense localised showers could trigger flash floods, mudslides and landslides in vulnerable areas. Jammu and Kashmir is likely to



witness generally hot and humid weather over the coming days, with

brief spells of rain and thundershowers at scattered places, the Meteorological Centre here said on Monday.

According to the latest forecast accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) brief spells of rain or thundershowers are likely at scattered places during the early morning and afternoon

hours between

SEE ON P-2

HT Editor-in-Chief Jehangir Bukhari Conferred Honorary Doctorate in New Delhi for Contribution to Journalism and Socio-Cultural Service
Distinguished Personalities Honoured Include Noted Cinematographer Vindu Dara Singh, Tihar Jail Superintendent Ajay Bhatia, Shot Put Gold Medallist Dr Richa Sood, Yogesh Rana and Others
By Sheikh Mushtaq
HT Correspondent
NEW DELHI, Aug 23: In recognition of his longstanding contribution to journalism, media and social service, noted journalist and Editor-in-Chief of Daily Headlines Today, Jehangir Bukhari, was conferred an Honorary Doctorate at a prestigious ceremony in New Delhi.
The honour was bestowed by the World Cultural and Educational Organisation in appreciation of Bukhari's long association with journalism and his contribution to highlighting issues of public importance, social concerns and matters affecting communities.
Bukhari has had a diverse and eventful career in the media, during which he has remained closely associated with issues concerning public interest and social awareness. Through his journalistic work, he has consistently sought to contribute to public discourse by bringing issues of wider social relevance into focus.
As Editor-in-Chief of Daily Headlines Today, Bukhari has been guiding the newspaper's editorial affairs and strengthening its focus on issues that matter to the public. His association with the newspaper has also reflected his commitment to journalism as an instrument of information, awareness and constructive dialogue.
The conferment of the honorary doctorate marks another significant milestone in his professional journey and comes as recognition of his sustained engagement with the media and his contribution to social initiatives.
The New Delhi ceremony also witnessed the recognition of several accomplished personalities from different walks of life. Among those honoured with honorary doctorates were noted cinematographer Vindu Dara Singh, Tihar Jail Superintendent Ajay Bhatia, Shot Put Gold Medallist Dr Richa Sood and Yogesh Rana, besides other distinguished personalities.
The gathering was attended by dignitaries, professionals and representatives from diverse fields, making the ceremony an occasion to acknowledge achievements in journalism, public service, sports, cinema and other areas of social and professional endeavour.
The recognition bestowed on Bukhari was particularly significant for the media fraternity, as it acknowledged his years of association with journalism and his efforts to use the profession to draw attention to matters of public concern.
For Bukhari, the honour is a recognition of a professional journey shaped by a continued commitment to journalism, public awareness and social service. It also underlines the enduring importance of responsible journalism in informing society and contributing to a meaningful public discourse.



Continue from Front Page.....

Let Raksha

in their everyday lives and contribute towards building a more peaceful and harmonious society.

The interaction also provided the students with an opportunity to meet and engage with the Lieutenant Governor and share the festive spirit at Lok Bhavan.

Dr. Shashwata Shiva, Principal of DPS Baramulla, along with coordinators, teachers and other office-bearers of the school, accompanied the students during the visit.

If It Can Be

Srinagar through increased sterilisation, trained dog catchers, adequate veterinary manpower and swift disposal of garbage and food waste.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today called for a focused, coordinated and humane response to the growing stray dog menace in Srinagar, directing the concerned departments and Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) to accord the issue top priority and work towards tangible results.

Chairing a review meeting on the issue, the Chief Minister observed that the stray dog menace has emerged as one of the foremost practical concerns for residents of Srinagar, with the issue affecting the daily lives and sense of security of citizens across the city and beyond.

The Chief Minister noted that the progress in addressing the issue in Jammu through better handling of sterilisation coverage needs to be replicated in Kashmir division. He questioned why the relatively better implementation of Animal Birth Control being followed in Jammu has not been implemented efficiently in Kashmir.

“Within the same territory, we have success of having achieved around 80 percent sterilisation in Jammu, while Srinagar has not been able to make comparable progress. If we have demonstrated that it can be done in Jammu, we should be able to replicate that success in Srinagar,” the Chief Minister said.

Seeking a clear assessment of the requirements of the concerned departments in terms of veterinary surgeons, paravets and other support staff needed in Kashmir division, Omar Abdullah assured full government support for the resources needed to undertake the work in a sustained manner and directed to immediately engage the requisite staff and take immediate action on ground to address the issue of dog menace including measures for quick disposal of garbage dumps so that dogs do not thrive on road side piles of food waste. CM exhorted SMC and JMC to deal with garbage disposal within municipal areas in quick time, which is seen as major hazard by the public as giving rise to dog menace and giving an impression of polluted cities.

He directed that a dedicated team be constituted within SMC to address the issue in mission mode, with emphasis on substantially increasing the number of trained dog catchers, scaling up sterilisation operations and strengthening the availability of veterinary doctors and trained personnel.

The Chief Minister stressed that the response must be humane and in accordance with established procedures, while remaining focused on effectively controlling the stray dog population and addressing the concerns of citizens.

He called for greater coordination among the Housing & Urban Development Department, Health and Medical Education Department, SMC and other concerned agencies to ensure that the measures adopted translate into measurable improvement on the ground.

The Chief Minister said the objective should be to develop a sustainable and effective mechanism for addressing the stray dog issue not only in Srinagar but across Jammu and Kashmir.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Commissioner Secretary Housing & Urban Development Mandeep Kaur, Commissioner Secretary Health & Medical Education M Raju, Commissioner Secretary Education, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Inspector General of Police Jammu Zone, Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

Jammu based officers took part in the meeting through video conferencing.

The Pilot Must

meeting to review the preparedness for implementation of the Phase-I Pilot of the Rehabilitation & Socio-Economic Reintegration Scheme for Drug Abuse Victims, 2026, being coordinated by the Social Welfare Department.

The meeting was attended by the Principal Secretary, Home; Commissioner Secretary, H&ME; Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department; DC, Srinagar; Head, IMHANS, Srinagar; Director, Health, Jammu/Kashmir and other concerned officers.

Deputy Commissioners from outside districts along with the Institution heads connected with the meeting through video conferencing.

The meeting reviewed the readiness of the identified pilot institutions and districts, availability of human resources and infrastructure, capacity-building initiatives, inter-departmental coordination and the development of a dedicated digital mechanism for end-to-end monitoring of beneficiaries.

The Phase-I pilot is proposed to be implemented at IMHANS Srinagar, ATFs at Jammu, Kathua, and in Budgam district. The pilot is

aimed at testing the rehabilitation model on the ground, identifying operational gaps, refining the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and generating the necessary learning for its subsequent expansion across the Union Territory.

Taking stock of the preparedness in the pilot districts, the Chief Secretary reviewed the availability of infrastructure and manpower at each location and stressed the need for focused training and capacity-building of Medical Officers, Counsellors, Case Managers, ASHA workers and SHG members so that each stakeholder is adequately equipped to discharge the role assigned under the rehabilitation framework.

The Chief Secretary directed the Social Welfare Department to coordinate the implementation of the programme and ensure its commencement at the earliest. He further directed the Department to simultaneously identify the requisite human resources and infrastructure for extending the rehabilitation mechanism to other districts, so that the pilot exercise facilitates a smooth transition towards wider implementation.

He also sought a first-hand appraisal from the heads of the concerned institutions and the Deputy Commissioners of the districts where the pilot is being initiated. Emphasising the importance of ground-level coordination, he observed that the success of the programme would depend upon each stakeholder performing the designated role with commitment and ensuring seamless coordination throughout the rehabilitation process.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the capacity-building initiatives undertaken by IMHANS Srinagar for Medical Officers, Counsellors, Case Managers, SHG members and ASHA workers. He directed IMHANS to continue conducting such training programmes across all districts so as to create a sufficiently large and skilled pool of human resources capable of supporting the rehabilitation programme as it expands.

He further directed the National Informatics Centre (NIC) to complete the Rehabilitation Monitoring Portal without further delay, emphasising that an effective digital monitoring mechanism would be critical for tracking beneficiaries and ensuring coordinated implementation of the programme. The proposed portal envisages confidential, end-to-end digital case management, with each beneficiary assigned a Unique Digital ID (UDIN) and role-based access restricted to authorised officials.

The Chief Secretary stressed the importance of building a trained multidisciplinary human-resource pool capable of undertaking screening, assessment, referral, counselling, family engagement, case management and relapse-risk identification, while maintaining confidentiality and ethical standards in handling beneficiaries.

The Chief Secretary underscored that the Phase-I pilot should serve as a practical model for coordinated rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration, with effective convergence among the concerned departments, health institutions, district administrations and community-level stakeholders.

Giving a detailed presentation on the pilot, Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Sarmad Hafeez, apprised the meeting of the proposed implementation framework, site-readiness, manpower requirements, capacity-building initiatives and digital monitoring mechanism.

He informed that every pilot location would require suitable medical, counselling and social-work facilities, including doctors' rooms, patient and family counselling spaces, group therapy facilities and referral/emergency linkages. The facilities would also have identified Medical Officers/Psychiatrists, Counsellors and Social Welfare Officials/Case Managers, besides linkages with community networks including ASHA workers and Self Help Groups. Orientation and training of the concerned personnel would precede beneficiary intake under the pilot.

The meeting further deliberated upon strengthening addiction psychiatry capacity in J&K through proposed collaboration with the National Drug De-addiction & Treatment Centre (NDDTC), AIIMS New Delhi. The proposed collaboration includes structured training, mentoring, observerships and joint research in addiction psychiatry, opioid agonist treatment, dual-diagnosis management and evaluation of rehabilitation interventions.

On this occasion the Head, IMHANS Srinagar, Dr Arshad Hussain, briefed the meeting about the interventions undertaken so far by the Institute and the facilities covered under the pilot. He also highlighted certain areas requiring focused attention at the participating health facilities.

Dr Hussain informed that training modules for different categories of personnel have been developed and several batches have already been trained. He expressed confidence that the ongoing capacity-building exercise would create adequate trained manpower within the next two to three months to satisfactorily operationalise the rehabilitation centres in accordance with the approved policy framework.

It was further elucidated that the first phase of the Circle of Care training module has already been completed, with more than 300 frontline workers, including ASHA workers, NRLM/SHG representatives and teachers, trained across Kashmir Division. The proposed

next phase envisages expanding the programme to 1,020 participants through 34 cohorts across J&K, covering Counsellors, ASHA workers, Social Welfare officials, police personnel, teachers, SHGs and other stakeholders.

Additionally the meeting was apprised that the capacity-building component envisages training of Medical Officers/Psychiatrists, Counsellors, Social Welfare Officials, ASHA workers, SHGs and other frontline stakeholders in areas including screening, assessment and referral, counselling and family engagement, Individual Rehabilitation Plans and case management, relapse-risk identification, confidentiality and ethical handling, besides the portal and reporting workflow.

The meeting also reviewed the proposed training programme for Higher Secondary and College teachers, aimed at ensuring that at least one teacher in every Higher Secondary School and College is trained as an institution-based counsellor for prevention, early identification and referral of substance-use disorders. The proposed initiative envisages coverage of approximately 2,200 Higher Secondary Schools and Colleges across J&K.

A significant component of the proposed programme is the Rehabilitation Monitoring Portal (RMP), designed to facilitate confidential and end-to-end digital case management. The system will cover assessment, treatment, counselling, stabilisation, risk classification, Individual Rehabilitation Plans, referral, vocational support and follow-up, besides enabling real-time inter-departmental coordination and programme performance monitoring.

The coordinated Phase-I pilot is envisaged to provide the operational learning required for strengthening the model and preparing it for UT-wide implementation.

“Verify Credentials

Rs. 2 crore investment fraud case from Bangalore.

In a statement, the CBK said that the accused has been identified as Junaid-Ul-Islam, son of Nazir Ahmad Baba, resident of Alamar Colony Phase 1, Charar-e-Sharief, Budgam. He was arrested from Mangammanapalya, Bangalore.

Officials said the arrest was made in compliance with orders of the Hon'ble Court of 4th Additional Munsiff Judicial Magistrate, Srinagar, which had issued a warrant against him. He was wanted in FIR No. 07/2025 under Section 420 RPC, Police Station EOW Kashmir, and had been evading arrest for the past one year.

As per EOW, a preliminary enquiry prima facie substantiated allegations of cheating and financial fraud against the accused. He allegedly collected approximately Rs. 2 crore from several individuals by projecting himself as an investor associated with an e-commerce company and promising monthly returns of 10 percent.

After receiving the money through multiple bank accounts, he failed to honour his commitments and became unresponsive. Investigation prima facie established that he dishonestly obtained substantial amounts on the promise of high returns, thereby disclosing commission of offence punishable under Section 420 IPC.

Further investigation in the case is underway.

Meanwhile, EOW Kashmir has advised general public to remain vigilant against fraudulent investment schemes promising unusually high or guaranteed returns, verify credentials of individuals and companies before investing money, and report any suspected financial fraud promptly to concerned authorities. (KNS).

It Is Important

that strengthening relations between communities was essential for creating a conducive environment for their return and rehabilitation.

Jammu and Kashmir BJP General Secretary (Organisation) Ashok Koul on Monday said the return of Kashmiri Pandits to the Valley was a positive development, while stressing the need for strengthening brotherhood and social cohesion in Jammu and Kashmir.

Talking to reporters at Tirth Raj Kapal Mochan Nagbal in Shopian, Koul said it was encouraging to see Kashmiri Pandits returning to the Valley and resuming their connection with their ancestral places.

He said targeted killings were not confined to any particular place and claimed that such incidents existed in different parts of the world, adding that there was no place where complete security could be guaranteed.

Koul said Kashmiri Pandits would have to face challenges and struggle in the process of returning and rebuilding their lives in the Valley.

“Targeted killings won't stop and it is important to create brotherhood,” he said, stressing the need for greater social harmony.

On the migration of Kashmiri Pandits, Koul said they had left the Valley before the arrival of the then Governor Jagmohan, while alleging that some people in Kashmir had supported external forces at the time, which, according to him, encouraged such forces.

Koul said efforts to strengthen brotherhood between different communities were important for creating conditions conducive to the return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits in the Valley. [KNT]

“Clarify KUMSA's

since 2022 despite its members claiming that all formalities sought by the authorities were completed, including submission of its Constitution, details of members and source of income.

Employees and members associated with KUMSA alleged that the association was effectively blocked from functioning after a dispute with the University administration in 2022, but no written order communicating its suspension, dissolution or prohibition has been made available to them.

They said they were asked to submit details concerning the association, including its Constitution, biodata of its members and information regarding its source of income, besides clarifying whether the association was political or apolitical. According to the members, all the required information and documents were subsequently submitted, yet the association was not allowed to resume its activities.

The employees alleged that the absence of a formal written order has left them without clarity about the legal or administrative basis on which KUMSA's functioning was stopped.

KUMSA has a long history at the University of Kashmir. Its office-bearers have represented non-teaching employees in discussions with the University administration for years, while University records also show the association's participation in institutional affairs.

In 2018, the University Council formally considered a request from KUMSA seeking representation in University statutory bodies. The Council did not approve representation up to the level of the Syndicate but resolved that the KUMSA president could be heard by competent bodies on a case-to-case basis.

In February 2021, KUMSA released its revised Constitution at a function attended by then Vice-Chancellor Prof Talat Ahmad. The University administration at the time publicly acknowledged the association and its role in representing non-teaching employees.

The association was also actively engaging with the University administration in February 2022, when the University issued a detailed public response to allegations raised by KUMSA. The University spokesperson described some of the association's demands as illegitimate and accused its office-bearers of using pressure tactics, while KUMSA had raised issues concerning employees and administrative functioning.

Employees now allege that following the developments of 2022, the association's functioning was effectively brought to a halt.

They said the impact has gone beyond representation of employees on service-related matters, claiming that KUMSA had also been functioning as a welfare mechanism for non-teaching staff, particularly retired employees and those facing serious health or other personal difficulties.

Some members told the news agency Kashmir News Trust that employees contributed around 300 each month towards the association's welfare

activities and the collected funds were used to provide assistance to employees in need.

They alleged that the association had extended support to retired employees and

staff members suffering from different ailments and had provided a platform through which employees could collectively raise their grievances before the administration.

Some members alleged that certain officers who were uncomfortable with an employee body seeking accountability were instrumental in ensuring that the association remained non-functional. The allegation, however, could not be independently established.

The employees said the absence of an active association has weakened their collective ability to raise issues concerning service conditions, welfare and administrative decisions.

They also pointed towards the Jammu University, saying its non-teaching employees continue to have an organized representative body and questioned why a similar arrangement should not be permitted at the University of Kashmir.

The members said KUMSA was established in 1978 and has continued to represent non-teaching employees through different administrations and generations of office-bearers.

They are now seeking the immediate restoration of the association's functioning and have urged the University authorities to clarify its status through a formal written communication rather than keeping the employees in uncertainty.

The employees said that if there is any legal or administrative impediment to KUMSA's functioning, the authorities should communicate it formally and provide the association an opportunity to address any deficiencies. If all required formalities have already been fulfilled, they demanded that the association be allowed to function normally. Gulshanpor

Brief Intense

August 25 and 28.

The weather activity is expected to increase slightly from August 29 to 31, when light to moderate rain and thundershowers may occur at scattered to many places, with brief intense showers possible during the early morning and afternoon hours.

The MeT said hot and humid conditions are likely to continue from September 1 to 2, with brief spells of rain or thundershowers at scattered places. Between September 3 and 5, similar weather is expected, though rainfall activity is likely to remain confined to isolated places.

The weather office cautioned that brief intense showers at localised places could trigger flash floods, mudslides and landslides, particularly in vulnerable areas.

TEMPERATURES REMAIN ABOVE NORMAL
Meanwhile, temperatures remained largely above normal at several places in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday.

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 30.5 degrees Celsius against a normal of 29.3 degrees, while the minimum temperature settled at 16.4 degrees.

Qazigund recorded a maximum of 29.8 degrees and a minimum of 14 degrees, while Pahalgam recorded 25 degrees and 11.7 degrees, respectively.

In North Kashmir, Kupwara recorded a maximum of 30.2 degrees and a minimum of 14.8 degrees. Kokernag recorded 28.4 degrees during the day, while its minimum temperature was 14.2 degrees.

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Education sector holds key to progress; Private Institutions making valuable contribution: Sakeena Itoo

Addresses Foundation Day celebrations of Maple Grove Education Institute Rawalpura Srinagar

■ **Farooq Rather**

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 24: Minister for Education, Health & Medical Education and Social Welfare, Sakeena Itoo today addressed the Foundation Day celebrations of Maple Grove Education Institute Rawalpura here.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister said that education remains the most important sector for the overall progress and development of society, adding that no amount of discussion on the subject can be considered enough given its far-reaching impact on individuals and communities.

She underscored the pivotal role of education in shaping the future of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister said that both government and private educational institutions are making sustained efforts to provide quality education to students, with several private institutions making a significant contribution to the education sector. "There are some private institutions whose contribution is so remarkable," she observed, while appreciating institutions that have consistently demonstrated commitment towards academic excellence.

Sakeena Itoo said that while a number of government schools, including middle, high



and secondary schools, are performing exceptionally well, there is always scope for further improvement. She emphasised that the government and private sectors must continue working together to strengthen the educational ecosystem and provide better opportunities to children.

The Minister further said that education must contribute to the holistic development of children by nurturing not only their academic abilities but also their values, character and sense of responsibility.

Emphasising the importance of equality and inclusiveness in education, Sakeena Itoo said that every child must be treated equally irrespective of social or economic background. "For us, children are one. We should never discriminate. Every child deserves equal opportunity to learn, grow and realise their potential," she said.

Referring to an interaction with students during the programme, the Minister said she was particularly encouraged by the aspirations expressed by the children about their future

careers. She noted that while some students expressed their desire to become doctors, others aspired to enter public life and become ministers.

"This is a very encouraging sign. Our new generation is not only dreaming of professional success but is also conscious of its role in public life and governance. Their aspiration to become political leaders and ministers reflects their confidence and belief that they too can contribute to society," Sakeena Itoo remarked.

The Minister said that such aspirations need to be nurtured through an education system that encourages children to think freely, dream ambitiously and develop a strong sense of social responsibility.

She called upon educational institutions to continue creating an environment where academic excellence, ethical values, inclusiveness and leadership qualities grow together, saying that the children of today will shape the social, economic and democratic future of Jammu and Kashmir.

Director School Education Kashmir, other senior officers of School Education department, management and teachers of Maple Grove Education Institute, large number of students and their families were also present on the occasion.

ADDC Shopian Reviews Rabies Control Measures

■ **HT News Network**

SHOPIAN, AUGUST 24: Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone, today chaired a meeting of the Joint Steering Committee and District Zoonosis Committee at the Mini-Secretariat, Shopian, to review the implementation of the National Rabies Control Programme (NRCP) and strengthen measures for the prevention and control of zoonotic diseases in the district.

The meeting held detailed deliberations on rabies prevention and control, timely reporting of dog-bite cases, availability of Anti-Rabies Vaccine (ARV) at health centres, and appropriate management and referral of animal-bite cases.

Emphasising the importance of a coordinated One Health approach, the ADC directed all concerned departments to work in close coordination for effective prevention and control of rabies and other zoonotic diseases. He stressed the need for timely implementation of decisions taken during the meeting and regular coordination at both district and block levels.

The members also stressed the need for nomination of Nodal Officers by all concerned departments to ensure effective implementation of the programme, besides maintaining and sharing monthly work-done reports for systematic monitoring and review.

The meeting further discussed measures to enhance community awareness regarding prevention of dog bites, promote responsible management of stray dog populations, strengthen surveillance and reporting of zoonotic diseases, and improve coordination among the Health, Veterinary, Wildlife, Forest, Education, Rural Development and Municipal departments.

DC Srinagar conducts on-site review of arrangements at Hazratbal Shrine ahead of Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (SAW)

■ **HT News Network**

SRINAGAR AUGUST 24: Ahead of the observance of auspicious occasion of Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (SAW) and the Friday following, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today conducted an on-site review of the arrangements at Hazratbal Shrine and took stock of the facilities being put in place for devotees.

Vice Chairman Lakes Conservation & Management Authority (LCMA), Khurshid Ahmad Shah, Additional Deputy Commissioner Aadil Fareed, Joint Commissioner SMC Nuzhat Qureshi, IAS Probationer Aakash Garg, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, SP Hazratbal, Hilal Khaliq, SDM East Zubair Ahmad, Tehsildar Wakaf Board, Ishitiyaq Ahmad, Tehsildar Khanyar/North, Syed Shahid,



BMO Hazratbal, Dr Abdul Majeed, Executive Engineers of KPDC, PHE, R&B, SMC, UEED, ARTO, Officers of fire & Emergency, besides members of the Shrine management.

During the visit, the DC reviewed the arrangements related to availability of drinking water, uninterrupted power supply, sanitation and cleanliness measures, traffic management, parking, transportation, healthcare, fire safety, security

and other essential services required for the smooth conduct of the auspicious occasion.

While chairing a meeting at the Shrine, the DC took a department wise comprehensive review of the arrangements from the Officers of the concerned departments and the DC directed the Officers to ensure that all necessary facilities are put in place well in advance to cater to the large number of devotees expected to visit Hazratbal for prayers.

Emphasizing the importance of meticulous coordination, the DC called upon all concerned departments to work in close synergy to ensure adequate facilities for devotees and seamless observance of auspicious occasion. He directed the concerned agencies to put in place a comprehensive traffic management plan to facilitate smooth movement of devotees.

VC JKLCMA reviews preparations for Eid Milad-un-Nabi (S.A.W) at Hazratbal

■ **HT News Network**

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 24: Vice Chairman (VC), JKLCMA, Khurshid Ahmad Shah, conducted a tour of the Hazratbal area to review the arrangements and preparedness ahead of the forthcoming Eid Milad-un-Nabi (S.A.W).

The Vice Chairman was accompanied by the Superintending Engineer, Executive Engineers, XEN LD-II and Mechanical Division, along with all concerned AEEs and JEs.

During the visit, the Vice Chairman reviewed the functioning of the Intermediate Pumping Stations (IPSs) at Nigeen and Saderbal and directed the concerned officers to ensure their smooth and uninterrupted operation.

He also inspected the areas affected by water blockage and choking of drains and directed the concerned staff to undertake



immediate clearance measures to ensure proper drainage and prevent water accumulation.

The issue of leakage in the parking area near the Hazratbal Shrine was also reviewed. The Vice Chairman directed the concerned officers to take necessary corrective measures at the earliest.

He further inspected the ablation pond and directed the concerned staff to ensure its thorough cleaning and proper maintenance before the Eid Milad-un-Nabi (S.A.W) celebrations.

The Vice Chairman also directed the field staff to maintain cleanliness and proper upkeep of the Hazratbal lakefront, particularly in view of the expected gathering of devotees and visitors during the occasion.

Khurshid Ahmad Shah emphasized that all identified issues should be addressed on priority and directed the concerned officers and field staff to ensure proper cleanliness, drainage, sanitation and maintenance in and around the Hazratbal area during the occasion.

DC Srinagar reviews arrangements for Raksha Bandhan Festival

■ **HT News Network**

SRINAGAR AUGUST 24: To review and finalize arrangements for the upcoming festival of Raksha Bandhan, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today chaired a meeting of senior Officers at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

The festival is scheduled to be celebrated on August 28, 2026, with great religious and cultural significance. The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Mir Imtiaz Ul Aziz, Additional Deputy Commissioner Aadil Fareed, Joint Commissioner SMC Nuzhat Qureshi, IAS Probationer Aakash Garg, SP Headquarters Umar Shah, SP Traffic Zaheer Abbas, Chief Planning Officer Fayaz Ahmad Dar, SDM East Zubair Ahmad, Executive Engineer KPDC Syed Abrar, Executive Engineer PHE Aijaz Rafiq, Tehsildar South Sajad Rasool Shah, District Health Officer Dr Rubeena and other officers of concerned departments, besides representatives of the Dharmarth Trust, Shankaracharya Temple. At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner conducted a detailed review of the arrangements being put in place by the line Departments for the seamless observance of the festival, including water & power supply, cleanliness & sanitation, traffic management, parking facility, medical facilities.

DC Shopian chairs District-Level NCORD meeting

■ **HT News Network**

SHOPIAN, AUGUST 24: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta, today chaired a District-Level Narcotics Coordination (NCORD) Committee meeting at the Mini-Secretariat, Shopian, to review and strengthen coordinated efforts to combat the drug menace in the district.

The meeting was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Shopian, Mushtaq Ahmed Choudhary; ADC, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz; ACR, Shakoor Ahmed Dar; SDM Zainapora, Bilal Ahmed; ACD, Muzaffar Ahmed; and senior officers from various departments, including Health, Education, Social Welfare, Agriculture, Horticulture, Transport, Excise & Taxation, besides representatives of concerned enforcement agencies. During the meeting, threadbare discussions were held on issues pertaining to narcotics control, prevention, enforcement and inter-departmental coordination. The participating officers shared updates and inputs from their respective departments and deliberated on measures to further strengthen the collective response against drug abuse.

The DC stressed the need for close coordination among all stakeholders,



effective enforcement and sustained awareness among youth and the general public to prevent drug abuse and safeguard the younger generation from the harmful consequences of substance abuse.

He directed all concerned departments and enforcement agencies to maintain close coordination and ensure timely follow-up and implementation of decisions taken during NCORD meetings.

The DC further directed SDM Zainapora to convene awareness meetings in the concerned areas to sensitise farmers and the general public against the cultivation of poppy and make them aware that such illegal cultivation invites strict legal action under law.

Acting Chief Justice inaugurates Lawyers' Chambers at DCC Anantnag; lays foundation stone for Munsiff Court Complex at Dooru

■ **HT News Network**

ANANTNAG, AUGUST 24: Acting Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Sanjeev Kumar, accompanied by Justice Sanjay Dhar, Judge High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (Administrative Judge for District Anantnag), inaugurated the newly constructed Lawyer's Chambers at the District Court Complex, Anantnag.

The inauguration marks an important step towards strengthening the judicial infrastructure and providing improved working facilities to the members of the legal fraternity. The newly constructed Lawyers' Chambers are expected to provide Advocates with a more conducive professional environment and facilitate their interaction with litigants and other stakeholders.

Addressing the gathering, the Acting Chief Justice highlighted the importance of providing adequate and modern infrastructure to members of the Bar and ensuring a conducive working environment for advocates and judicial officers. He underscored the role of a strong and well-equipped judicial infrastructure in facilitating efficient delivery of justice.



He stressed upon the young lawyers that legal profession is not merely a means of earning the livelihood, it is a noble profession which carries with it a great responsibility towards judiciary, society and the cause of justice. He also highlighted the importance of professional/legal ethics which must remain at the centre of legal practice and reminded the young lawyers that success in the legal profession is earned through hard work, perseverance and continued learning.

The Acting Justice also emphasized the vital role of the legal profession in upholding

the rule of law and ensuring meaningful access to justice. He underscored the collective responsibility of the legal fraternity to uphold the highest standards of professional ethics, integrity and discipline.

He expressed confidence that the newly inaugurated chambers would not only provide improved facilities and a better working environment for members of the Bar but would also strengthen the professional capacity of advocates and contribute towards the efficient, accessible and effective functioning of the justice delivery system. Justice Sanjay Dhar, while

speaking on the occasion, emphasised the importance of the continuous development and upgradation of court infrastructure for ensuring accessible, efficient and people-oriented justice. He underscored the need for all stakeholders in the justice delivery system to uphold the highest standards of professional ethics, integrity and responsibility.

Emphasising that the legal profession plays a vital role in the administration of justice, Justice Sanjay Dhar highlighted the importance of maintaining the dignity and decorum of the institution, while ensuring that the interests of litigants and the cause of justice remain paramount. The inauguration of the lawyers' chambers at District Court Anantnag is expected to provide improved facilities and a dedicated workspace for members of the Bar, thereby strengthening the overall functioning of the court complex, he added.

A welcome address was delivered by Advocate Peer Shafiq, Acting President, Bar Association, Anantnag. This was followed by a keynote address by Tahir Khurshid Raina, Principal District & Sessions Judge, Anantnag, highlighting the inauguration of the Lawyers' Chambers as a significant milestone for the legal fraternity of Anantnag.

DC Baramulla reviews arrangements at Major Shrines ahead of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW)

■ HT News Network

BARAMULLA, AUGUST 24: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Dr. S.F. Hamid, accompanied by the Additional Deputy Commissioner and officers of various line departments, today visited Hazrat Syed Janbaz Wali (RA) Shrine and Dargah-e-Aliya Shere Khaas, Baramulla, to review the arrangements being put in place ahead of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW), when a large number of devotees are expected to visit the shrines.

During the visit, the DC took a detailed assessment of the arrangements concerning sanitation, street lights, drinking water, uninterrupted power supply, road connectivity and other essential facilities required for the convenience of devotees.

The management committees apprised the DC of various requirements and highlighted the need for adequate fencing, streetlights and improved sanitation in and around the shrine premises, besides proper cleanliness along the approach roads.

Taking immediate note of the issues raised, the DC directed the Additional Deputy Commissioner Baramulla to ensure immediate installation of streetlights at the identified locations. He also directed the Executive Officer, Municipal Council Baramulla, to ensure



thorough sanitation and cleanliness in and around both shrines, including the roads and approach routes leading to the religious sites.

The DC further directed the concerned authorities to ensure uninterrupted power supply at the shrines and along the routes used by devotees. He stressed that all essential services should remain functional throughout the period of the religious observance, particularly during evening and night hours.

At Hazrat Syed Janbaz Wali (RA) Shrine, the Deputy Commissioner also inspected the ongoing works for

upgradation of facilities and took stock of the progress being made. He enquired about the facilities being developed for devotees and sought details regarding the arrangements to be made during the ongoing construction process.

The concerned Executive Engineer, R&B Department, apprised the DC about the status of the ongoing works and informed him that necessary arrangements would be ensured to facilitate devotees and minimise inconvenience during their visit to the shrine.

The Deputy Commissioner directed

all concerned departments to complete the required arrangements in a time-bound manner and maintain close coordination with the shrine management committees. He emphasized that special attention should be given to cleanliness, sanitation, drinking water, power supply, accessibility and the overall movement of devotees.

The DC also stressed the importance of ensuring that the approach roads and areas surrounding the shrines remain clean, well-lit and accessible, particularly in view of the expected footfall during the occasion.

The DC called for coordinated and proactive efforts by all concerned departments to ensure that devotees are provided with a safe, clean and comfortable environment and that the observance of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW) is facilitated smoothly and peacefully. The DC also stressed the importance of ensuring that the approach roads and areas surrounding the shrines remain clean, well-lit and accessible, particularly in view of the expected footfall during the occasion.

The DC called for coordinated and proactive efforts by all concerned departments to ensure that devotees are provided with a safe, clean and comfortable environment and that the observance of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW) is facilitated smoothly and peacefully.

DC Kulgam chairs meeting of SDRF to review hailstorm damages in district

■ Farooq Rather

KULGAM, AUGUST 24: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, today chaired a district level meeting of State Disaster Relief Force (SDRF) to review the damages caused due to hailstorms across the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner undertook a detailed review of the villages affected by the recent hail storms in the district and took stock of the relief measures extended to the affected farmers.

He directed the concerned officers to ensure that the final assessment of damages is carried out in a time-bound and transparent manner, and that admissible relief is disbursed to the affected beneficiaries without delay.

The meeting also deliberated upon the provision of Anti-Hail Nets as a preventive measure to safeguard horticulture produce from future hailstorm-related losses. The DC directed the Agriculture and Horticulture Departments to identify vulnerable orchard belts and explore convergence with available schemes for wider coverage of Anti-Hail Nets across the district.

The DC further asked all concerned officers



to remain proactive in disaster preparedness and to submit accurate and expeditious reports so that affected people get timely relief under SDRF norms.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kulgam, Viqar Ahmed Giri, Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Reyaz Ahmad Shah, Tehsildar, Kulgam Nisar Ahmad Wani, Tehsildar DH Pora, Zahid Gani, Chief Horticulture Officer, Mohd Ramzan War, and other officers and officials.

DM Kupwara chairs NCORD Committee Meeting, Reviews Anti-Drug Measures in the district

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, AUGUST 24: District Magistrate Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, today chaired a meeting of the District-Level NCORD (Narco Coordination Centre) Committee to review the anti-drug measures being implemented across the district. The meeting comprehensively assessed inter-departmental coordination in the areas of prevention, enforcement, awareness, and rehabilitation measures.

At the outset, a detailed discussion was held regarding enforcement achievements, including FIRs registered under the NDPS Act by the district police (Kupwara & Handwara), attachment of properties belonging to drug peddlers, preventive detention of offenders, removal of encroachments, and destruction of illicit cannabis and poppy cultivation across the district.

The DM also reviewed action initiated under the SOP of the Home Department, including cancellation of driving licences, contractor cards, gun licences, and passport-related actions against individuals involved in narcotics-related offences.

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



Reviewing the district's de-addiction and rehabilitation initiatives, the Medical Superintendent, Government Medical College (GMC) Handwara, and the District Health Officer (DHO) Kupwara briefed the meeting on the number of patients registered at de-addiction centres, those currently undergoing treatment, and individuals who have successfully recovered through rehabilitation programmes.

Appreciating the efforts of the Health Department, the Deputy Commissioner stressed the need to further strengthen counselling, treatment, and post-rehabilitation follow-up services. During the same meeting, review of panchayat wise playfield development was also undertaken. Rural Development Department was directed to expedite completion of playfield on priority.

ADDC Budgam Reviews Progress of Jal Jeevan Mission, Har Ghar Jal Certification, Sujalam Shakti Rollout

■ HT News Network

BUDGAM, AUGUST 24: Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Budgam, Vivek Agarwal, today chaired a meeting to review the physical and financial progress under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in the district, besides taking stock of the status of Har Ghar Jal

certification and the rollout of Sujalam Shakti. During the meeting, a detailed review was conducted of the Action Taken Report (ATR) on directions issued in previous meetings. The ADC reviewed the progress towards Har Ghar Jal certification at the Panchayat and village levels and directed

the concerned officers to expedite the certification process wherever it remains pending. The meeting was informed by the Project Manager, JJM Budgam, that the district has achieved 100 per cent coverage of functional tap-water connections in all Anganwadi Centres.

DC Kulgam Inaugurates Annual Athletic Meet 2026

■ Farooq Rather



KULGAM, AUGUST 24: The Youth Services & Sports (YSS) Department, District Kulgam, organised the Annual Athletic Meet 2026 under the Annual Activity Calendar of the Directorate of Youth Services & Sports, J&K, with enthusiastic participation from young athletes representing all six zones of the district.

The meet was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, who appreciated the efforts of the YSS Department in promoting sports and providing young athletes with opportunities to develop and showcase their talent at the grassroots level.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Kulgam and Tehsildar Kulgam, along with other officials and sports enthusiasts, were also present on the occasion.

The athletic meet featured competitions in the Under-14, Under-17 and Under-19 Boys categories, with participants competing across a wide range of track and field events. These included 100m, 200m, 400m, 600m, 800m, 1500m and 3000m races, besides field events such as Javelin Throw, Shot Put, High Jump, Long Jump and Discus Throw.

The event provided budding athletes with a vibrant platform to demonstrate their speed, strength, stamina and sporting ability in a disciplined and competitive environment. The enthusiastic participation of athletes from all six zones reflected the growing interest in athletics among the youth of the district.

The Annual Athletic Meet forms part of the YSS Department's continued efforts to promote a strong sporting culture, identify emerging talent and encourage greater youth participation in sports across Kulgam district.

MLA Bandipora reviews functioning of Jal Shakti Department, directs timely completion of ongoing Works

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, AUGUST 24: Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Bandipora, Nizam Ud Din Bhat, today convened a meeting here to review the functioning and progress of the Jal Shakti Department in the Bandipora Assembly Constituency, with particular focus on implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), water supply infrastructure, irrigation and flood management works, and the financial and physical progress of various schemes.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Superintending Engineer, Er. Ambreena Anjum; Executive Engineer PHE Bandipora, Er. Mudasir Malik; Executive Engineer I&FC Sumbal, Umar Jan Bhat; Executive Engineer PHE Sopore, Er. Mudasir Mushtaq and other concerned officers.

The department presented a detailed status of works and schemes being implemented under the PHE and I&FC sectors in the constituency.

Reviewing the progress under Jal Jeevan Mission, it was informed that a total of 57 schemes are being implemented in the Bandipora Assembly Constituency, of which 23 schemes have been completed.

Against a target of 24,736 Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs), 21,187 connections have been provided, achieving an overall



coverage of 85.65 percent. The Hydraulic Division Bandipora has achieved 80 percent coverage, while PHE Division Sopore, covering parts of Bandipora district, has achieved 95 percent coverage.

While reviewing the status of water quality monitoring, it was informed that 84 Field Test Kits (FTKs) are available across all 84 Gram Panchayats falling within the constituency, ensuring coverage for water quality testing at the grassroots level.

The meeting also reviewed the financial progress of Jal Shakti works. The department informed that the overall expenditure against releases under the PHE sector stood at 98.88 percent, reflecting substantial utilisation of available funds.

Under the I&FC sector, the meeting was apprised of the status of various works being executed under NABARD, UT CAPEX/SASCI, FMBAP Phase-II, PMKSY (AIBP), District CAPEX and other schemes. The review

also covered ongoing works related to flood protection, drainage, irrigation and strengthening of water infrastructure.

The department further briefed the MLA about works taken up under UT CAPEX 2026-27, including strengthening and re-sectioning of the Gadder Spill Channel, construction and strengthening of embankments along Tangwani Nallah, construction of flumes and lining works on Pir Khul and War Khul, besides several irrigation and protection works in the Sumbal area.

During the review, Nizam Ud Din Bhat directed the concerned officers to ensure timely completion of all ongoing works, particularly those having a direct bearing on drinking water supply, irrigation and flood protection. He stressed the need for close monitoring of works at the field level and directed officers to remove bottlenecks, wherever identified, so that projects do not face avoidable delays.

Phase-II Capacity Building under Classes of Joy TaRL Initiative concludes in Budgam DC emphasises child-centric, activity-based & level-appropriate teaching for improved learning outcomes

■ HT News Network

BUDGAM, AUGUST 24: Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today presided over the concluding workshop of Phase-II capacity building under the Classes of Joy - Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) Approach initiative at DIET Beerwah.

The capacity-building workshop witnessed the participation of teaching staff from Zone Beerwah and focused on addressing learning gaps in foundational literacy and numeracy among school children through innovative, child-centric and level-appropriate teaching methodologies.

During the workshop, the Deputy Commissioner interacted with the

teaching staff and took detailed feedback on the learning and teaching methods being adopted under the initiative. He discussed the experiences of teachers, the effectiveness of the TaRL approach and the response of students to play-way and activity-based teaching interventions.

The Classes of Joy initiative, being implemented in partnership with Pratham Education Foundation, aims to bridge learning gaps among children in primary and middle schools through a structured four-step process comprising baseline assessment, grouping of children according to their learning levels, targeted teaching interventions and end-line assessment.

The initiative covers more than



850 schools, around 4,600 teachers and approximately 45,000 children

across Budgam district, supported by a comprehensive mechanism for

capacity building, monitoring, follow-up and academic support.

The Deputy Commissioner appreciated the efforts of the teaching fraternity and stressed the need for sustained implementation, effective monitoring and active participation of teachers to ensure that every child receives instruction according to his or her actual learning level and progressively attains age- and class-appropriate learning outcomes.

Among others, ADC Budgam, Mehraj-ud-Din Shah; SDM Beerwah, Taufeeq Ahmad Gazi; Chief Education Officer Budgam; Principal DIET, Tehsildar Beerwah and other concerned officers were present on the occasion. Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today presided over the concluding

workshop of Phase-II capacity building under the Classes of Joy - Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) Approach initiative at DIET Beerwah.

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Div Com reviews Development Proposals for heritage sites in Budgam, Pulwama

■ **HT News Network**

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 24: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, today chaired a meeting to review proposals for the development, renovation and upgradation of heritage sites including Asar-i-Sharief Peth Makhama Budgam and Khoo Sahb Yarwan Shadimarg, Pulwama.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Director Archives, Archaeology and Museums, Superintending Engineer PWD South Kashmir, Tehsildar Waqf Board, officers from Budgam district and representatives of the District Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, Pulwama.

During the meeting, members of the Prabandhak Committee submitted a detailed proposal for the development and renovation of the Holy Spring at Khoo Sahb Yarwan. They sought inclusion of several components in the Detailed Project Report (DPR), including construction of Nishan Sahib, development of the Holy Spring, a langar room, glass room, cottage rooms, footpath and fencing.

Taking note of the demands, the Divisional Commissioner directed the Superintending Engineer, PWD South Kashmir, to incorporate the requirements in the proposal and conduct a site visit in coordination with the concerned district administration. He also stressed the need to involve community representatives during the process to ensure that their requirements are appropriately reflected in the



development plan. Regarding Asar-i-Sharief Peth Makhama, the Divisional Commissioner directed the Tehsildar, Waqf Board, to engage with local community members, assess the requirements of the proposed project and examine the feasibility of facade development and renovation of

the shrine.

The Divisional Commissioner emphasized coordinated efforts among the concerned departments and stakeholders for the timely and effective development of both religious and heritage sites. During the meeting, members of the Prabandhak Committee submitted a detailed proposal for the development and renovation of the Holy Spring at Khoo Sahb Yarwan. They sought inclusion of several components in the Detailed Project Report (DPR), including construction of Nishan Sahib, development of the Holy Spring, a langar room, glass room, cottage rooms, footpath and fencing.

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2-Day Seminar on Dogri Drama begins at KL Saigal Hall Jammu



■ **HT News Network**

JAMMU, AUGUST 24: A two-day seminar on "Dogri Drama", jointly organised by the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi and Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, began today at K. L. Saigal Hall, Writers Club, Jammu. The seminar, being held on August 24 and 25, aims to deliberate upon the rich tradition, evolution and diverse dimensions of Dogri drama.

The inaugural session commenced with the welcome and introductory address by Mohan Singh (Padma Shri), Convener, Dogri Advisory Board, Sahitya Akademi Shiv Dev Sushil, eminent Dogri writer and playwright, delivered the keynote address, while Sonali Arun Gupta, Special Secretary, Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, delivered the remarks as Chief Guest. Dr. Om Goswami, noted Dogri writer and playwright, delivered the presidential address. The inaugural session concluded with the vote of thanks proposed by Reeta Khadyal, Dogri Editor, Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages.

The first academic session, chaired by T. R. Mangotra Sagar, noted Dogri writer and playwright, focused on the development of Dogri drama up to 1990. Radha Rani spoke on Dogri drama up to 1960, Mukesh Kumar presented his views on Dogri drama from 1961

to 1980, while Shalu Sharma discussed the period from 1981 to 1990.

The second academic session, chaired by Dr. Padam Dev Singh Nandan, Sr. Assistant professor Deptt. of Dogri, Jammu University, examined the subsequent development of Dogri drama.

Anu Sharma discussed Dogri drama from 1991 to 2000, Rakesh Verma covered the period from 2001 to 2010 and Shagufta Chaudhary spoke on Dogri drama from 2011 to 2020.

The discussions during the day provided a comprehensive overview of the historical journey of Dogri drama across different periods, highlighting its evolution, major trends and contribution to the literary and cultural heritage of the Dogri-speaking region.

The seminar brought together writers, playwrights, scholars and literary enthusiasts, providing an important platform for meaningful discussion on the past and present of Dogri theatre and dramatic literature.

Prominent writers of Dogri language and literature, prominent artists, young writers, playwrights and Students/Scholars of Deptt. of Dogri, Jammu University as well as Students of Deptt. of Performing Arts, Cluster University were present on the occasion.

One Day Orientation Session organised for students of Dogra Law College at JKEDI

■ **HT News Network**

JAMMU, AUGUST 24: Students from Dogra Degree College and Cambridge International School visited the Regional Office of the Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) at Bari Brahmna today as part of an immersive exposure and awareness programme focused on entrepreneurship, innovation and emerging opportunities for youth in Jammu & Kashmir. The programme was organised with the objective of nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset among students and familiarising them with the institutional support available to aspiring entrepreneurs across the Union Territory. A total of 85 participants spread over batches were briefed by Amit Sharma, Teaching Associate, JKEDI regarding the role of Entrepreneurship as a career choice. He gave a



detailed layout about the various opportunities in the field of innovation and self employment with respect to the current academic scenario. Later, Assistant Manager, F&A, JKEDI Sorab Mengi delivered an informative session on the J&K Startup Policy, highlighting the incentives, mentorship support, infrastructure and other facilities available to early-stage entrepreneurs.

UT-Level Mushaira Jashn-e-Azadi held at Government Degree (PG) College Baderwah

■ **HT News Network**

BHADERWAH, AUGUST 24: A UT-level Mushaira Jashn-e-Azadi was organised today at Government Degree (PG) College Baderwah as part of the celebrations marking the spirit of freedom, patriotism and cultural heritage.

The programme was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Sunil Kumar Bhutyal as the chief guest, The College Principal was the Guest of Honour. The literary event was attended by faculty members, including Dr. Akhtar Hussain (HOD) Urdu, senior citizens, students and other distinguished guests.

The Mushaira provided a vibrant platform to the poets and participants to showcase their literary talent and

express their sentiments on patriotism, national unity and love for the country through Urdu, Kashmiri and Hindi poetry. The participation of students and senior citizens added further charm and diversity to the event.

The Mushaira was attended by Mir-Maglis Ashok Kumar Sharma Paras, Suhail Sadaqi, Hamid Ullah Mayer, Sajid Sarmadi, Altaf Ayab, Adil Farhat, Touseef Tabish Majid Jami and others participated in the Mushaira.

The gathering appreciated the rich tradition of Urdu literature and poetry, while highlighting the important role of cultural and literary activities in nurturing patriotic values and strengthening social harmony among the younger generation.

GDC Ramgarh Organises Udyam Jagriti 5.0 College Hackathon and Awareness Campaign

■ **HT News Network**

Jammu, Aug 24, : Government Degree College (GDC) Ramgarh successfully organised Udyam Jagriti 5.0 - College Hackathon and Awareness Campaign under the Mission Yuva initiative. The programme aimed to sensitise and motivate students towards entrepreneurship, innovation, self-employment and skill-based career opportunities.

The programme was organised under the able guidance and leadership of Principal Prof. (Dr.) Meeru Abrol, whose support and encouragement contributed significantly to the successful conduct of the event. The programme was coordinated by Prof. Brham Dutt, IIC Coordinator and Dr. Shivali Panigotra, Nodal Officer, Mission Yuva. The coordinators briefed the students about the objectives and significance of the Udyam Jagriti 5.0 campaign and encouraged them to actively participate in entrepreneurial and innovation-oriented activities. The resource persons, Ms. Anuradha SBDU Financial expert, Mr. Anmol Sharma BHD coordinator and Ms. Anisha Devi SBDU Coordinator highlighted the objectives and opportunities under Mission Yuva and the Neo Enterprise initiative.

AIIMS Jammu Welcomes New Executive Director & CEO Prof. (Dr.) Sanjeev Sinha

■ **HT News Network**

Jammu, August 24, 2026: AIIMS Jammu is entering a new phase of leadership with the appointment of Prof. (Dr.) Sanjeev Sinha, Professor, Department of Medicine, AIIMS New Delhi, as the new Executive Director & CEO of AIIMS Jammu. Prof. (Dr.) Sanjeev Sinha joins AIIMS Jammu on deputation from AIIMS New Delhi, bringing a rich blend of clinical expertise, academic experience and research orientation to the institution. As Professor in the Department of Medicine at AIIMS New Delhi, Prof. (Dr.) Sanjeev Sinha has a distinguished academic and clinical background, with experience spanning patient care, teaching, medical training and research. His expertise is expected to bring valuable academic and scientific perspective to AIIMS Jammu.

Under his leadership, AIIMS Jammu shall be expanding and strengthening clinical services, enhancing the quality of medical education, promoting



high-quality research and innovation, encouraging interdisciplinary academic collaboration and creating greater opportunities for faculty and students to engage in impactful research. His leadership is also expected to contribute towards building a strong culture of evidence-based clinical practice, academic excellence and research-driven healthcare, while further strengthening AIIMS Jammu as a centre of excellence. The appointment of Prof. (Dr.) Sanjeev Sinha as Executive Director, AIIMS Jammu, has been approved by the

Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) for a period of three years from the date of assumption of charge, or until attaining the age of 70 years, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

The tenure of Prof. (Dr.) D. N. Sharma as Executive Director & CEO concludes with this leadership transition. He assumed charge of AIIMS Jammu on January 10, 2026, and served the institution during an important phase of its development.

AIIMS Jammu acknowledges his valuable contribution and leadership during his tenure and conveys its best wishes for his future endeavours.

Speaking on the leadership transition, the AIIMS Jammu fraternity expressed its appreciation for the contribution of Prof. (Dr.) D.N. Sharma and conveyed its warm welcome to Prof. (Dr.) Sanjeev Sinha, expressing confidence that his experience and vision will provide fresh impetus to the institution's journey towards greater excellence.

SWD Srinagar organizes Open-End Discussion on Ending Stigma on Menstruation under BBBP

■ **HT News Network**

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 24: Social Welfare Department, SANKALP-HEW Srinagar organised an Open-End Discussion on Ending stigma on Menstruation at Islamia College of Science and Technology, Hawal, Srinagar, with the objective of promoting awareness, understanding and open dialogue on menstrual health and hygiene.

The interactive programme provided a platform for students and participants to openly discuss various aspects related to menstruation, including menstrual hygiene, health concerns, common misconceptions and the importance of maintaining proper hygiene practices.

The discussion also focused on encouraging young people to approach menstruation as a natural biological process and to help create an environment where menstrual health can be discussed without stigma or

hesitation.

Officials from Department of Social Welfare SANKALP-HEW Srinagar interacted with the participants and addressed their queries, while emphasising the importance of awareness, access to reliable information and supportive social attitudes towards menstrual health.

On the occasion, certificates were distributed among the students who participated in the debate in recognition of their active participation and contribution to the programme.

The Department stated that such awareness programmes are an important step towards empowering young people with correct information and fostering a more informed and sensitive society.

The programme concluded with an interactive exchange of views and questions from the participants, reflecting the importance of continued dialogue and awareness on menstrual health and hygiene.

Shri Amarnath Vaishnavi Jayanti Celebrated in Jammu

■ **GULFAM BARJI**

JAMMU/AUGUST: 24 Amarnath Vaishnavi Foundation (ANVF) organised a commemorative function at Jagti Township Jammu to mark the Jayanti of Shri Amarnath Vaishnavi bringing together distinguished personalities, students, artists and youth.

Born on August 24, 1925, Shri Amarnath Vaishnavi was a teacher, social worker, community leader and dedicated champion of social service. He made significant contributions in the fields of education, social reform, national integration, issues concerning Kashmir and Ladakh and the welfare of the Kashmiri Pandit community. Following the migration of Kashmiri Pandits in 1990 he played an important role through the Jammu Kashmir Sahayata



Samiti in providing assistance, rehabilitation support and educational opportunities to affected families and children. As part of the Jayanti celebrations scholarships were distributed among 46 deserving students under the Shri Amarnath Vaishnavi Scholarship programme. Five students Diksha Mirza, Akshara Koul, Ishika Koul, Sanvi Tikoo and Veerangana Suri were specially felicitated for their outstanding academic performance. The programme also featured art, speech and quiz competitions for children and youth on the culture and heritage of Kashmir. Renowned artists Pankaj Raina, Shivani Koul Bhat and Sushma Sahni served as

judges for the art competition. The programme was compered by Bhavika Pandita a Class 8 student.

Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner J&K Arvind Karwani attended the function as the special guest. Shri Bal Krishan Sanyasi, Shri Rohit Bhat, Suman Bhat and other prominent personalities were also present. Speaking on the occasion ANVF President Rohini Vaishnavi said that the Jayanti provided an opportunity to remember the values that guided Shri Amarnath Vaishnavi's life, including courage, compassion, integrity, service and social responsibility. She said the Foundation remains committed to carrying forward his mission through education, youth empowerment, cultural awareness and social

Ministry of Culture
Government of India

राष्ट्रीय नाट्य विद्यालय
NATIONAL SCHOOL OF DRAMA

NATIONAL SCHOOL OF DRAMA
(An Autonomous Institution of Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India)
THEATRE IN EDUCATION CENTRE, SRINAGAR
In collaboration with
J&K ACADEMY OF ART, CULTURE & LANGUAGES
ORGANISES

15 DAY WRITING WORKSHOP
FROM 3RD Sep.2026

The National School of Drama, Theatre in Education Centre, Srinagar in collaboration with J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages is going to organize 15-day writing workshop in Srinagar. The workshop aims to develop the core writing skills, writing process, craft of creative writing and enhance the play writing techniques under the guidance of NSD experts.

Interested aspirants may collect the application forms from NSD, TIE Centre, Cultural Academy Campus, Lal Mandi, Srinagar from **18th August to 31st August 2026 between 11:00am to 4:00pm.**

Register your name before the workshop begins
➤ **Admissions is free on the first cum first serve basis.**
➤ **After the completion of workshop certificates will be awarded to all the participants.**

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED:
1. Copy of Aadhar Card,
2. Passport size photograph.
3. Credentials in support of writing experiences.
For further information contact 9419059895

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Director
National School of Drama



HT EDITORIAL

J&K's Power Tariff Debate Must Rise Above Politics

The recent 6.83 per cent increase in electricity tariffs in Jammu and Kashmir has opened yet another political debate between the government and the opposition, but the issue deserves a more mature and balanced examination than a simple exchange of accusations. While the ruling National Conference-led administration has defended the decision as an economic compulsion after four years without a tariff revision, the Congress, PDP, Apni Party and other opposition parties have strongly opposed the move, describing it as an additional burden on the people.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has argued that the increase is among the lowest in recent years and has sought to place the decision in the context of rising inflation, increasing power costs and persistent transmission and distribution losses. His contention that previous governments had imposed considerably higher tariff increases is politically relevant, but it cannot by itself answer the concerns of consumers who are now faced with higher electricity bills.

There is, undoubtedly, a difficult financial reality confronting the power sector in J&K. Electricity has to be purchased, transmitted and distributed, while infrastructure requires continuous investment and maintenance. At the same time, high transmission and distribution losses, power theft, inefficient collection and the gap between the cost of supply and revenue recovery have remained longstanding challenges. These structural weaknesses cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely while the financial burden is repeatedly passed on to consumers.

Yet the opposition's concerns also deserve to be taken seriously. Electricity is an essential service, not a luxury, and for thousands of families, particularly those with limited incomes, even a modest increase in monthly expenditure can affect household budgets. The Congress has demanded an immediate rollback, while the PDP, Apni Party and other opposition voices have criticised the government's decision. Their objections reflect genuine public anxiety and should not simply be dismissed as political opportunism.

At the same time, criticism of the tariff increase should not obscure the larger financial crisis facing the power sector. If tariffs are kept artificially low without addressing the underlying deficit, the consequences could eventually be even more serious—poor maintenance, unreliable supply, mounting government liabilities and inadequate investment in the distribution network. A sustainable electricity system requires a realistic balance between affordability for consumers and financial viability for the utility.

The government's assurance of 200 units of free electricity for poor and needy households also needs to be clearly explained. If the administration is committed to providing such relief through solar power and the proposed Muft Bijli Yojana, it should place the complete framework before the public, including eligibility criteria, implementation timelines and the financial mechanism involved. Transparency will be essential to prevent confusion between the tariff revision and the promised relief.

The government should also demonstrate that increasing tariffs is not being treated as the easiest solution to the sector's financial problems. There must be a parallel and measurable campaign to reduce transmission and distribution losses, improve billing and collection, curb electricity theft, upgrade infrastructure and ensure accountability at every level. Consumers will be far more willing to accept difficult decisions when they can see that the government is equally serious about eliminating inefficiency.

The opposition, for its part, has an important role in holding the government accountable, but criticism should be accompanied by practical alternatives. A blanket demand for rollback may provide political dividends but does not resolve the fundamental problems confronting the power sector. The people of J&K need affordable electricity, but they also need reliable electricity—and both objectives require sound financial and administrative management.

The debate, therefore, should not be reduced to whether the tariff has risen by 6.83 per cent or whether previous governments imposed larger increases. The real question is why the people of Jammu and Kashmir continue to face the consequences of a power sector burdened by losses and inefficiencies, and what concrete steps are being taken to change this situation permanently.

The government must listen to the concerns of consumers, provide targeted protection to economically vulnerable families and make the tariff structure as transparent as possible. The opposition should continue to scrutinise the decision but also contribute constructive alternatives. Ultimately, neither political confrontation nor populist promises can provide a lasting solution.

Jammu and Kashmir needs a power policy that is financially sustainable, socially sensitive and administratively accountable. The tariff debate should become an opportunity to reform the entire power sector—not another political battle in which the consumer is left paying the price.



Sheikh Ghulam Muhammad

Nishat Ansari was a dynamic personality of an exceptional talent who worked through out his life for the promotion and propagation of Kashmiri Language, Literature and culture.

Nishat sahab has a tall stature among the scholars of Jammu and Kashmir and is rare among the rarest Kashmiri Language teachers who worked through out his life with vision and mission.

Nishat sahab has authored dozens of books besides authoring dozens of articles, talks and features that have been published, broadcasted and telecasted from time to time. Nishat sahab has its back five famous poetic collections and his famous poetic collection "Gulnaar" stands awarded by Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages.

Nishat sahab has authored famous monographs on "Prof. Mohi-ud-din Hajini, Dil-Soz Natipori and Jigar Murad Abadi"

Nishat sahab translated Shruks of Shaikh-ul-Aalam (RA) in poetic form in urdu language and this work was published by Sahitya Akademi New Delhi under the title "Salsabeel". Nishad Ansari translated Biographical profile of Dr. Zakir Hussain (Ex. President of India) in to Kashmiri Language and this great translation work was awarded by Sahitya Akademi New Delhi in 2007 after the death of Nishat Ansari Sahab.

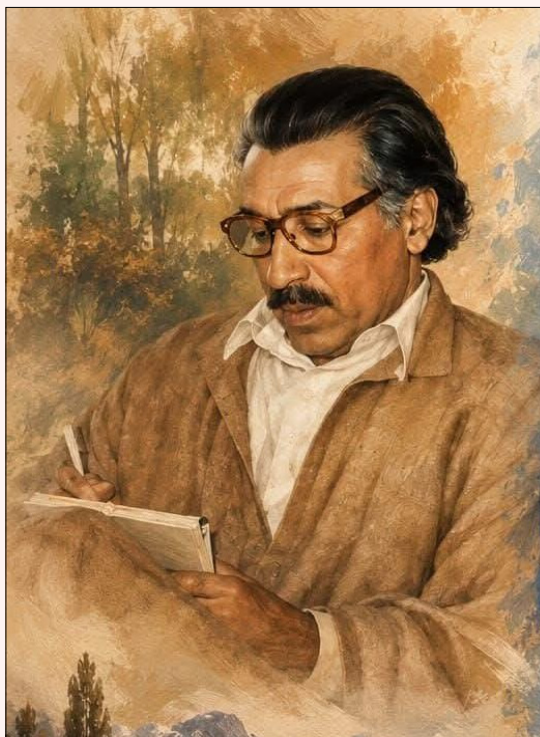
Research work:—"Kasher Marsi" Published by the University of Kashmir.

Nishat sahab remained affiliated through out his life with

Nishat Ansari

A Charismatic personality.

26 death anniversary--Tribute to Nishat Ansari.



National Institutions like All India Radio, Doordarshan Kander, Sahitya Akademi, JKAACL, JKBOSE and contributed a lot to these institutions out of his Adbi capabilities.

Nishat sahab contributed his best to Adbi organisations. He was founder member of Adbi organisations like "Daira-e-Adab-Delina and Adbi Markaz Kamraz. Adbi Markaz Kamraz is

a literary umbrella organisation having its deepest roots through out Jammu and Kashmir .Ansari sahab served as Vice President and General Secretary of "Adbi Markaz Kamraz" and is a known professional office record keeper of this great Adbi organisation.

"Adbi journey of Nishat sahab is an inspiration for all Adab lovers"

Nishat Ansari was born on 23th of December 1928 at Delina Baramulla.

Nishat Ansari was his pen name and his name as per school records is Ghulam Mustafa Ansari.

Nishat sahab passed Matric Examination in 1969 from JKBOSE.

Nishat sahab started his government service career in the department of Co-operatives Jammu and Kashmir but later on resigned from this department and joined School Education Department as per his inner choice as general line teacher. He served in School Education Department for long twenty three years with dedication, commitment, sincerity and honesty. On merit basis Nishat Ansari was awarded "The best Teacher award" by the School Education Department of Jammu and Kashmir

"Bottom Line"

Nishat sahab was a well rounded individual--multifaceted personality, a poet of repute, a writer, researcher, translator, critic, teacher, educationist, language and culture activist and above all a good human being.

"Nishat sahab passed away on 25 th of August 2000 at his Delina residence Baramulla"

May! his soul rest in Jana-tul-Firdous (Ameen).

Sheikh Ghulam Muhammad
Retired DIET Principal
Former Principal JK Sainik School
Mansbal.

21C Halqa-e-Adab Sonawari.
Senior member Wahab Cultural Society Hajin.

There is nothing more important than health.



Sahil Manzoor

This requires continuous efforts from the police, senior citizens, and family cooperation. This evil has no place in our pious society.

Kashmir's renowned doctor, Mr. Mohammad Sultan Khuroo, recently highlighted that during the last fifteen years, cases of fatty liver and Helicobacter pylori have increased due to people's lifestyle. This is very alarming. We must seriously reflect on our lifestyle and improve our diet.

Today, young people are becoming victims of obesity, which is very unfortunate. Youth should be physically fit because they are the future of the nation. We live in an era of awareness and cutting-edge technology, yet we lack a basic understanding of how important physical fitness is and how dangerous junk food and an unhealthy lifestyle can be. Fast food is not entirely bad, but we must take every health-related matter seriously and never be careless in this regard.

During the 1990s, the Kashmir Valley suffered for various reasons, and young people did not have enough opportunities to explore their interests and careers. Today, however, we have numerous opportunities to fulfill our dreams and live comfortably. Our parents, teachers, relatives, and well-wishers have great expectations of us. We must keep our promises and do our best for the nation and for humanity.

Routine Exercise Reflects Discipline

Routine exercise reflects discipline and keeps us fit and healthy. Therefore, regular exercise is vital for good health. Today's era is full of stress and anxiety, and people often complain about fatty liver, high cholesterol, obesity, and many other health issues. To overcome these problems, we need discipline in our lives. We must follow a balanced diet, exercise regularly, and go for routine medical check-ups.

Healthy People, Healthy Nation

Today, people face severe health problems such as obesity, gastrointestinal disorders, fatty liver, heart disease, orthopedic issues, and many other health risks. Our body performs countless functions such as digestion, blood circulation, and waste removal. When we observe these processes, we realize how perfectly they work. We are blessed

with intelligence to study and research what already exists in the universe. We should always be grateful and hopeful for the future.

Unfortunately, even in the age of advanced technology, we still lack complete treatments for certain diseases like cancer, AIDS, and several genetic disorders. This reminds us that every part of the universe has value and that we must remain humble.

Health Comes First

Today, people are motivated to achieve success and wealth but often forget to prioritize health. In reality, health comes before money, buildings, and fame.

Workers and labourers are fortunate because their jobs involve physical activity, which keeps them fit, although their income is often low. They deserve appreciation and better support. Sportspeople are also fortunate because regular physical activity keeps them healthy while bringing recognition and financial stability.

Many people complain that they do not have time for exercise. For them, a home gym is a great solution.

Importance of a Home Gym

A home gym means setting aside a room or a small space with basic equipment to exercise daily. You can gradually add equipment as your financial

condition improves. You may even request friends and relatives to gift fitness equipment on special occasions.

Benefits of Exercise

I started gym exercises in the 8th class. In Kashmir, it is often called the "iron game." During this journey, I met kind and supportive people who motivated me. I experienced great positivity, increased energy, and improved confidence. Exercise helps remove fatigue and brings freshness to daily life.

I encourage young people to join gyms, stay away from drugs, develop an interest in sports, and become confident and disciplined individuals. Before starting a home gym, consult a trainer for proper guidance. Involve your parents and siblings to make fitness a family habit.

Schools should establish mini gym centres to create awareness among students. Colleges should open gym facilities for students to reduce stress and promote healthy activities. In villages, many youngsters fall into harmful habits such as smoking and drug use. It is our collective responsibility to replace these habits with healthy activities.

Regular exercise keeps us happy, healthy, and energetic.

Sahil Manzoor Bhatti
sahilmanzoor411990@gmail.com

Mama Please Come Back.

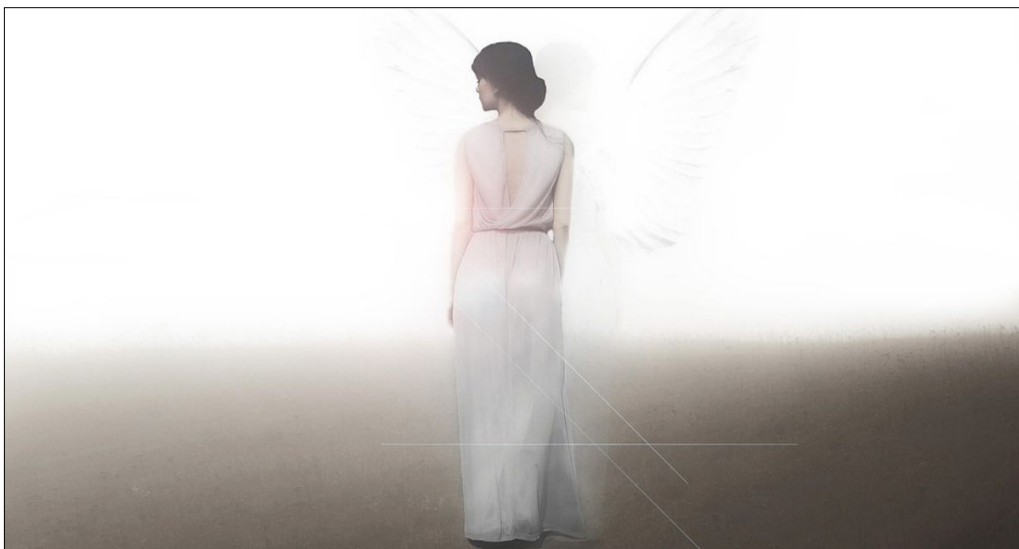
emotions and cry in silence without letting the other person know . When I visited him after a month after his mom passed away , he took a blanket over his head and started to cry . He tried really hard to make sure that I don't hear him crying . But he was unable to do so . As he was done crying , he removed

to recite things for the peace of his home I realized that he still misses her the same way he missed her while she was on the bed where her soul was taken away . While they were reciting verses for the peace of his mom I was able to feel that his body wanted a hug from his mother once more . He once



BY:- RAQIF MAKHDOOMI

It has been a year since my friend's mother passed away last year on 22nd of 2025 . And since then the only thing that has changed is the year nothing else . He misses her the same way he missed her the day she was buried . He still remembers her the same way he used to when he used to be away from home and his mom at home cooking his favourite dish . Things have changed and the things have changed him . He has now been able to hide his emotions unlikely the way he wasn't when she passed away . I still remember the second night after he buried her . The room was without lights the only thing that was lightened up was the screen of each one of us . While everyone was busy with scrolling through their phones my friend was buried with the thoughts of his mother . He was unable to accept the fact that his mother is no more . He was unable to accept that when he will come back he won't find his mom nor will he have the food ready . I often visit him after his mom passed away . What made me skip a breath was seeking him cooking in the kitchen . It wasn't seeing him cooking that made me skip a breath but the way he was breathing out sigh of sorrow while he was picking up every box to take out spices that were needed for cooking . We didn't speak but the silence in the room spoke more than the words could have spoken . To be very honest I couldn't find words to give him strength . What could I have said to him? He has lost his mom and there's nothing that can replace his mom . While we both were silent , I was speaking to me in my mind but I was unable to muster courage to open my mouth and ask him to have courage to deal with the situation . We often cheer people saying "Have courage things will get better". But how can you use these words to give courage to someone who has lost his loved one . While he finished cooking he smiled looking at me and said "Vothu ya . ye haagov tayaar". { WE are done cooking}. The smile spoke of his sorrows that he has mastered to hide . He developed a habit of hiding his



the blanket over his head and looked at me smiling and said "You want to have something". I acted as if I don't know anything and I replied "Yes, go get me a good cup of tea". He stood up without saying a word and left to make tea . While I was alone in the room I went into deep thinking . I started to think "How will this person come out of this mess?" While I was busy thinking about it the door opened and he came out with the tea . He placed the cup down and he was enough kind to get my favourite biscuits . We smiled at each other and that's how I thanked him . We sat in silence scrolled through Instagram and took sips of our tea . It's not that didn't want to speak about it but even before he could speak the tears came out and he refused to speak about what he's going through . He wanted and still wants to show himself that he's very strong but his eyes refuse to accept what he decides to do .

Days back when I was at his home on the first death anniversary of him mom . There were people who were invited

more wanted to hear her voice . But he has now become enough strong not to let anyone feel that he still misses his mom the way he did on the day when he buried her . While I mustered courage to speak up to ensure that the doesn't cry anymore he replied with silence . His silence was enough to tell me he still misses his mother . While I believe he misses his more than before . He might have mastered the art of "Not letting people know" but he calls me DADA [His elder brother] I even hear what he doesn't want to speak and feel what he doesn't want anyone to feel .

His silence says it loud every second "MAMA PLEASE COMEBACK. I NEED A HUG". I want him to give a reality check but whenever I look at this face I feel a lump in throat and my mind refuses to speak truth to him . But I hope he at some point of time accepts the reality .

Raqif makhdoomi is a law student .

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The Rainbow In My Eyes: When Heartbreak Learns To Pray

A First Impression of Dr. Nidhi Kansal's just launched poetry collection



Dr. Rafeeq Masoodi

There are collections of poems, and then there are chronicles of the soul. Dr. Nidhi Kansal's debut, *A Rainbow in My Eyes*., belongs emphatically to the latter. In an age where poetry is often reduced to Instagram & facebook captions, this collection dares to do something old-fashioned and radical – it tells a whole story. It is not a random gathering of verses; it is an emotional autobiography arranged in five distinct seasons: Invocation, Descent, Silence, Memory, and Healing, which has surprised me & am sure will force others too to say WoW... as Dr. Kansal is an open hearted, smiling, chatter patter girl whom I have known since 5 or 6 years now through my great creative man of Kashmiri poetry jib. Shshmsz Rasheed" so a huge surprise for me. Faces are deceptive Hearts are True... It charts a journey that millions live but few have the courage to articulate: the journey from loving wholly, to breaking quietly, to healing on one's own terms.

The title itself is not metaphorical decoration. It is a thesis. A rainbow does not appear despite the rain. It appears because of it. The book asks us to look at heartbreak not as an ending, but as a necessary weather system for the self to be reborn.

"I. The Invocation of Love" The collection begins in pure light. Poems like "My Dear Soulmate", "I Love You Madly" and "My Soulmate" establish love not as an emotion but as cosmology. The poet writes, "I'm your moon, you're my sun." It is celestial imagery that suggests this bond was written before birth, before time. "We Welcome The New Year Together" extends this celestial love into domestic hope – the ordinary, deeply Indian dream of growing old together, of sharing calendars,

festivals and mornings. The language here is devotional. Love is not passion alone; it is honour, care, and destiny. In "Letter From Heart To Soul" and "My Dear Poem", the beloved is not just a person but the very reason for poetry itself. This opening section is crucial. It sets the altitude from which the fall will later be measured. When the fall comes, we understand the distance.

"II. The Descent: Ashes and Unfinished Stories" With poem 7, "When You Read This, I

This is where Dr. Kansal finds her truly unique voice. In a literary world obsessed with loud declarations, she writes about the unsaid.

Poems like "Yours, Too Late", "Unsent" and "Unsaid" are about the words we never get to use. She brilliantly weaponizes the language of the digital age – "Last Seen", "Read", "Typing..." – and turns it into poetic tragedy in "Last Seen: The Graveyard Of Us". A whole generation will recognize that pain. "After You, Even Victory Felt Like Loss"

evidence of a love that no longer has a home. The frame still hangs, but the person who should speak from it does not. "The Love That Had No Name, Yet Breathed Like A Soul" is a brave acknowledgement that not all love fits into social categories like husband, wife, boyfriend, fiancée – but all real love breathes, and all real loss hurts. "V. The Rainbow: Healing and Release" The final movement is the rainbow itself. It does not arrive with drums. It arrives quietly.

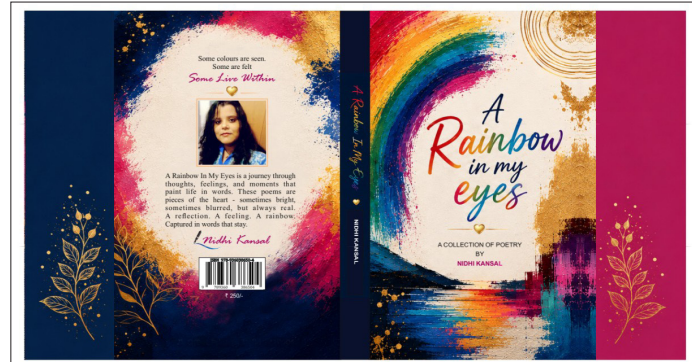
Poems like "When The Moon Forgets My Name" and "After You" are about learning to live without being called, without being someone's someone. "Between Silence And Forever" positions silence not as an absence to be feared, but as a new country to inhabit peacefully.

The book closes with two unforgettable poems: "When The World Offered Me Everything, I Whispered Your Name" and "No Receipts For A Heart Like Mine". The first admits the ultimate truth of deep love – that nothing external, no success, no praise, can replace a specific person. The last admits the ultimate truth of deep pain – that it leaves no proof. "No receipts" – no screenshots, no evidence, no wounds to show the world. Just a heart that learned to bless and walk away.

"A Critical Appreciation" On form, Dr. Kansal chooses short lines, free verse, and deliberate repetition. This creates the effect of someone thinking aloud, or praying. The lack of heavy ornamentation makes the emotion more direct, more Indian, more honest.

On imagery, the arc is deliberate and masterful. It moves from celestial (moon, sun, stars) to domestic (frames, receipts, last seen) to funeral (ashes, graveyards) to spiritual (wind, silence, rainbow). It is the journey of the soul itself.

Thematically, the book refuses two big lies of our times. First, that you must hate to heal. "I Still Can't Hate You" rejects that. Second, that healing must be loud and performative. "Between Silence And Forever" argues that the most profound healing can be quiet.



Have Already Become Ashes", the tone shifts irrevocably. This is the dark heart of the book. The poet introduces the central, haunting image of death-in-life. The 13th day is over. The rituals are done. The world has moved on. But the grief remains.

Poems like "When Love Became An Unfinished Story", "A Body That Still Breathes" and "The Day I Erased You" map the brutal stages of post-breakup survival in the digital age. The body continues to go to work. The name is deleted from the phone. But the erasing is more painful than the loss itself.

The most searing insight comes in this section: "What hurts the most? Not dying. But watching the heart die a little every day." This is modern grief. It is not dramatic. It is daily. It is waking up and remembering again. Poems like "Last Seen: The Graveyard Of Us" and "Even After The Last Wound" tell us that some relationships do not end with a fight. They end with silence. They become places we visit only in memory.

"III. The Architecture of Silence" and "Where Vows Never Reached, But Love Stayed" capture the absurd logic of grief – you can win every argument and still lose the person. The turning point of the entire book arrives with two quiet poems: "Eclipsed" and "I Still Can't Hate You". Hatred would be easier. Hatred would mean the person mattered less. To still love without bitterness, to still wish well without holding on – that is the hardest freedom of all.

"IV. Festivals, Frames and Nameless Love"

Few contemporary poets write so honestly about absence during celebration. "Eid Without You Still Knows Your Name" is culturally specific and yet universally resonant. It is a masterpiece of its kind. Festivals magnify loneliness because the world is laughing and you are only remembering.

In "The One Who Purchased What I Could Never Keep" and "Speak From The Frame", the poet moves into the realm of objects and photographs – the material

Belittling others: What Islam teaches us



Madeeha Farooq

Before you laugh at someone, remember—you don't know what they cried about last night. Before you point out their flaws, remember—they may already be fighting a war within themselves. Before you make someone feel worthless, remember—they are a creation of Allah, and perhaps they are more beloved to Him than you will ever know. Allah says: "Let not a people ridicule another people; perhaps they may be better than them."

You may call it a joke, but they may carry your words for years. You may forget what you said tomorrow, but they may remember it every time they look at themselves in the mirror. You may laugh at someone's appearance, their clothes, their body, their mistakes, or the things they cannot afford—without knowing how many times they have cried silently because of them. And perhaps the saddest part is this: Someone may smile in front of you while secretly wondering, "Why am I never good enough?" Allah says: "And do not insult one another, nor call each other by offensive nicknames."

So be careful with your tongue. A wound on the body can heal, but a wound created by words can remain hidden for years. The Prophet ﷺ warned us against arrogance: "No one who has an atom's weight of arrogance in his heart will enter Paradise."

You are not better because you are prettier. You are not better because you are richer. You are not better because you are more educated. You are not better because people admire you.

Everything you have is a blessing from Allah. And everything Allah gives can be taken away. Today, people sit behind screens and make fun of strangers, judge appearances, compare lives, spread gossip, and turn someone's pain into entertainment. But remember—there is a real heart behind every screen.

A person you made fun of today may go home and cry alone. A person you embarrassed in front of others may never forget that moment. And the person you thought was weak may be the one whose patience Allah loves most. Allah says: "And speak to people good words."

So if you cannot make someone's life better, at least don't make it harder. If you cannot heal their heart, at least don't become the reason it breaks. The Prophet ﷺ said: "The Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the Muslims are safe."

One day, the beauty you are proud of will fade. The money you have will remain behind. The attention you receive will disappear. But the way you treated people will remain part of your deeds. So choose kindness. Choose humility. Choose mercy. Choose words that heal. Because true strength is not making someone cry.

True strength is having the power to hurt someone and choosing, for the sake of Allah, not to. And if you have ever made someone feel small, go back and make it right. Apologize while you still can. Because some people leave this world before we get the chance to tell them, "I'm sorry." Never be the reason someone questions their worth.

Be the reason they remember that there is still kindness in this world. Raise people up. Protect their dignity. Speak gently.

The comfort of my lonely nights, the spark of my desire, These books are all I have left to keep my soul on fire.



By M S Nazki

These papers, these journals, these volumes of lore, Are meant just to make a lost love hurt no more."

(Original: "Ye ilm ka sauda ye risale ye kitaben / ik shakhs ki yaadon ko bhulane ke liye hain") -Duniya Mein jitni laantein hain, Bhook Unki Maan Hai. Ghussa jitna Kam Hoga, Uski jagah Udaasi Leti Jaegi.

-Har hasen cheez insaan ke dil mein apni waqt at paida kar deti hai. Khwaah insaan ghair-tarbiyat-yaafta hi kyun na ho?

-Shaa'iri ka aala-tareen farz insaan ko behtar banaana hai. Premchand

-Achchhe ustaad ke andar eik bachcha baitha hota hai jo haath utha-utha kar aur sar hila-hila kar bataata jaata ki baat samajh mein aayi ki Nahin. Mushtaq Ahmad Yusufi

-Qaumon ko jung mein tabaah nahi kartin. Qaumein us waqt tabaah hoti hain, jab jung ke maqaasid badal jaate hain. Intizar Hussain

-Humein husn ka me'yaar tabdeel karna hoga. Abhi tak uska me'yaar ameeraana aur aish-parwaraana tha. Premchand

-Kahte hain cigarette ke doosre sire par jo raakh hoti hai, dar-asl woh peene waale ki hoti hai. Mohammad Yunus Butt

-Aaj ka likhne waala Ghalib aur Meer nahi ban sakta. Woh shaa'iraana azmat aur maqbooliyat uska muqaddar nahi hai. Isliye ki woh eik bahre, goonge, andhe mu'aashre mein paida hua hai. Intizar Hussain

-People would say that I Have blown of my head as to why I started this story with Urdu couplets!

-The reason was that the subject matter said the same!

-Indian Army Organises 'Adab Aur Saqafat' Literary Festival 2026 in Kargil Kargil:

-The Indian Army organised the 'Adab Aur Saqafat – Literary Festival 2026' in Kargil, celebrating the rich literary heritage, cultural traditions and artistic spirit of Ladakh under the theme "Celebrating the Culture of Ladakh Highland."

-The event witnessed enthusiastic

participation from distinguished Army officers, college professors, students, poets, writers and literature enthusiasts from different parts of Kargil.

-The festival provided a vibrant platform for local poets and literary personalities to showcase their creative work and share their perspectives on the rich cultural identity of Ladakh. Brigadier Anil Joshi of 121 Brigade graced the occasion, while Retired IAS Officer Kacholpendy attended as the Guest of Honour. Their presence added significance to the literary gathering and encouraged the participating poets, students and young literary enthusiasts. A number of poets also took part

"I look for no mentor, nor guidance from men. I find my clear truth in the ink of the pen." (Original: "Mera tareeq-e-amiri nahi faqiri hai / Khudi na bech garibi mein naam paida kar") Iqbal!

-Major literary events organized in Ladakh include the ongoing Ladakh Book Festival 2026 (featuring the Ladakh Lit Fest) in Leh and the Indian Army's recent Adab Aur Saqafat – Literary Festival in Kargil.

-Ladakh Book Festival & Ladakh Lit Fest 2026 Dates: August 14–22, 2026 (Lit Fest sessions run August 18–22) Location: NDS Memorial Sports Complex, Leh Organizers: National Book Trust (NBT) India, Ladakh Administration, and the Indian Army Theme: "Valour and Wisdom" (for the Lit Fest component, focusing on military history, literature, and regional heritage)

-Highlights: Book exhibitions featuring 75 publishers in multiple languages, children's activities, storytelling, drama discoveries, and open literary discussions.

-Adab Aur Saqafat – Literary Festival Date: August 19, 2026

-Location: Government Degree College (GDC), Kargil

-Organizer: Indian Army Theme: "Celebrating the Culture of Ladakh Highland"

-Highlights: Showcased local poetry, regional artistic expressions, and creative panel discussions involving local writers, poets, and scholars.

-Ahmed Faraz wrote these lines: "The comfort of my lonely nights, the spark of my desire, These books are all I have left to keep my soul on fire." (Original: "Tanhaai ke jughn hain, yaadon ke diye hain / yeh log bhi kya hain jo kitaaben hamein de gaye")

-Dhuup mein niklo ghaTaon mein naha kar dekho, zindagi kya hai kitabon ko haTa kar dekho! Nida Fazli!

-Famous books about and from Ladakh include deep historical studies, cultural insights, and personal travelogues that capture life in

-Prominent Poets and Writers Akhone Asgar Ali Basharat: A celebrated self-taught poet from Kargil. He received the Padma Shri in



the high-altitude region.

-Key titles focus on local traditions, Buddhist heritage, and the changing landscape of the region.

-Notable Books on Ladakh Ancient Futures: -Learning from Ladakh by Helena Norberg-Hodge – A classic critique of rapid modernization and globalization showing its impact on traditional Ladakhi society

-A Journey in Ladakh by Andrew Harvey – A personal and spiritual travelogue recounting an Oxford scholar's journey into the heart of Ladakh's monasteries and culture.

-Ladakhi Histories edited by John Bray – A rich collection of essays and stories exploring the history, language, and transnational trade networks of the region.

-The Yogins of Ladakh by John Crook and James Low – An exploration of meditation masters and hermits living in the remote mountain caves of the Buddhist Himalayas.

-Ladakh: Changing, Yet Unchanged by Romesh Bhattacharji – A detailed look at the geography, remote corners, and shifting realities of Ladakh.

-Ilm mein bhi surur hai lekin, ye vo jannat hai jis mein huur nahin Allama Iqbal -Ladakh has a rich literary tradition rooted in oral folk songs, spiritual verse, and regional languages like Bhoti and Balti.

-Notable poets and literary figures from the region include the Padma Shri awardee Akhone Asgar Ali Basharat and historian-poet Tashi Rabgias.

2022 for his work preserving and popularizing the Balti language through poetry, elegies, and marsias.

-Tashi Rabgias (1927–2020): A renowned scholar, historian, and author. He wrote extensive original poetry and compiled hundreds of traditional Ladakhi folk songs in the Bhoti language.

-Khayal Ladakhi: An active modern Urdu and Hindi poet. He is recognized for bridging literary traditions and launching works through major cultural academies.

-Kacholpendy (1917–2007): A prominent public servant and writer from Kargil known for chronicling the history, folklore, and traditional verses of Ladakh.

-Some of the most famous and widely read books on the 1999 Kargil War cover strategic overviews, journalistic accounts, and personal tales of bravery. Key titles include general military histories and intimate frontline narratives.

-Strategic and Official Accounts Kargil: From Surprise to Victory by General V.P. Malik: Written by the then-Chief of the Army Staff, this offers the definitive top-level strategic and operational view of the conflict.

-Kargil: Turning the Tide by Lieutenant General Mohinder Puri: A direct account focusing on the ground command and the tactical maneuvers required to reclaim vital heights.

-From Kargil to the Coup: Events that Shook Pakistan by Nasim Zehra: A detailed security analysis exploring the political, military, and

diplomatic fallout of the war across the border.

-Heroism and Personal Stories Kargil: Untold Stories from the War by Rachna Bisht Rawat: A collection of poignant, deeply human stories compiled through interviews with war veterans and the families of fallen soldiers.

-Vijyant at Kargil: The Biography of a War Hero by Colonel V.N. Thapar and Neha Dwivedi: The moving life story of Param Vir Chakra nominee Captain Vijyant Thapar, told by his father and family.

-Letters from Kargil by Diksha Dwivedi: A compilation showcasing the actual letters and diary entries written by soldiers right from the heart of the battle zones.

-Prominent Poets and Writers from Kargil -Akhone Asgar Ali Basharat: A self-taught Balti poet from Karkitchoo, Kargil. He received the prestigious Padma Shri in 2022 and an honorary doctorate from the University of Ladakh for keeping the Balti language alive through his poetry collections like Guldastae Basharat and Bazme Basharat.

-Mohammad Ali Ashoor: A noted Balti poet and leader in the literary community, he authored rGya-lon, a widely recognized collection of 100 poems written in the Nasta'liq script.

-Imdad Hussain Imdad: A senior Balti poet and former publication assistant at the Ladakh Academy of Art, Culture and Languages. He dedicated his life to promoting and preserving vernacular literature in Kargil.

-Sibte Hassan Kaleem: A famous modern Balti poet, broadcaster, and literary critic who regularly reviews and promotes regional poetic works on local networks and radio.

-Kargil has a rich, multi-layered literary history rooted in its diverse linguistic traditions, including Balti, Purgi, Shina, and Ladakhi. For centuries, oral folklore, Sufi poetry, and regional scripts preserved the heritage of this Silk Route frontier. Modern literary dialogues continue to thrive through academic platforms like those at Government Degree College Kargil, celebrating local poetic and cultural evolution

-Well, this was what we had but will end up with the following lines: two couplets in Urdu will sum it all up:

-Had se baD he jo ilm to hai jahl dosto, sab kuchh jo jD nte haiñ vo kuchh jD nte nahD ñ Khumar Barabankavi

-Qabrom mein nahin ham ko kitD bon mem uturo, ham log mohabbat ki kahani mein maren hain. It was tough but we Love challenges!





Ministry of MSME Conducts Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme in Remote Khumriyal, Kupwara

■ HT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 24: Branch MMSE DFO Srinagar under Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) conducted an Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme (EAP) in the remote area of Khumriyal, Kupwara, with a special focus on the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) and PM Vishwakarma Scheme.

The programme was organised in collaboration with the District Administration, Kupwara, with the objective of taking awareness about government schemes and entrepreneurship opportunities to people in remote and underserved areas.

The programme was attended by senior officials from the District Administration, including the Chief



Agriculture Officer, Kupwara; Lead District Manager (LDM), Kupwara; BDO concerned; Industrial Promotional officer (IPO) DIC Kupwara.

A.K. Tamaria, Head of Office, MSME-DFO Jammu, attended the programme as the Chief Guest.

In his inaugural address, A.K. Tamaria emphasised the importance

of taking the schemes and programmes of the Ministry of MSME to remote areas so that people at the grassroots level are aware of the opportunities available to them and are able to avail the benefits.

He stated that MSMEs are the backbone of the Indian economy and that greater awareness and participation are essential for strengthening entrepreneurship and employment generation at the local level. In his keynote address, Saheel Alaqband, Assistant Director, Branch MSME-DFO Srinagar, highlighted the need to promote entrepreneurship activities in the region and encouraged local youth and aspiring entrepreneurs to come forward and explore the opportunities available under various government schemes. Highlighting the achievements of the PM Vishwakarma Scheme in Jammu & Kashmir, he

stated that the scheme has made significant progress in the Union Territory, facilitating the reach of toolkits and other benefits to traditional artisans and craftspeople. He also highlighted the initiative of onboarding Vishwakarma products on Meesho free of cost, providing artisans with an opportunity to access wider markets and strengthen their livelihoods. Alaqband further emphasised that several schemes and programmes are being implemented by different government departments, but their success depends significantly on people coming forward, acquiring information and availing the benefits available to them. He urged the participants to actively explore these opportunities and consider entrepreneurship as a viable avenue for sustainable livelihood and employment generation.

JKEDI Srinagar conducts Junior Level Idea Challenge at GHSS Amira Kadal under JK Startup Policy

■ HT NEWS DESK



SRINAGAR, AUGUST 24: The Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), District Centre Srinagar, today organised the Junior Level Idea Challenge at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS), Amira Kadal, Srinagar, with an aim to foster innovation, entrepreneurial thinking and startup culture among students.

The programme was formally inaugurated by Gh. Mohiuddin Bhat, Chief Education Officer (CEO), Srinagar, along with Dr. Nusrat Manzoor, Principal, GHSS Amira Kadal, who appreciated the initiative and underscored the importance of creating an enabling ecosystem for young students innovators.

Shabir Hussain Shah, District Nodal Officer, JKEDI Srinagar, gave a detailed presentation on the J&K Startup Policy, highlighting the various opportunities, incentives and institutional support available to aspiring entrepreneurs under the policy.

A key highlight of the camp was the Startup Idea Challenge, wherein more than 70 students participated and 24 candidates from various Higher Secondary and High Schools presented their innovative ideas before the jury. The ideas covered diverse sectors including sustainable waste management, agricultural solutions and other emerging fields, reflecting the creativity and problem-solving potential of the participants.

The bootcamp provided participants with an opportunity to present their ideas, receive expert feedback and gain valuable insights into developing their concepts into viable and scalable startup ventures.

The initiative is part of JKEDI's continued efforts to promote a culture of innovation, entrepreneurship and self-employment among the youth of Jammu & Kashmir and to provide aspiring entrepreneurs with platforms for mentorship, idea validation and startup development.

The programme concluded with an interactive session, wherein participants expressed keen interest in taking their ideas forward and exploring opportunities under the J&K Startup ecosystem.

Among others, the programme was attended by Neelofar Jan, Lead District Manager (LDM), Srinagar, senior faculty members of JKEDI and GHSS Amira Kadal, startup founders, aspiring entrepreneurs and students.

Vidyalaya Management Committee Meeting Held at Kendriya Vidyalaya Aminoo, Kulgam

■ Farooq Rather

KULGAM, AUGUST 24: A meeting of the Vidyalaya Management Committee (VMC) of Kendriya Vidyalaya Aminoo, Kulgam, was held today under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam.

The meeting deliberated on various matters concerning the academic development of the Vidyalaya, students' achievements, sports activities, overall institutional development, and financial and administrative affairs.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner appreciated the commendable performance of Kendriya Vidyalaya Aminoo in the academic sphere and congratulated the students and teachers for their achievements. He lauded the efforts of the Vidyalaya in



providing quality education while nurturing discipline, creativity, leadership skills and self-confidence among students.

The Deputy Commissioner also commended the outstanding achievements of the students in sports and congratulated the students, coaches and teachers for their impressive performances. He observed that participation

in sports is vital for the physical and mental well-being of students and contributes significantly to developing teamwork, discipline, leadership and a competitive spirit.

The members of the committee put forth valuable suggestions aimed at further strengthening the functioning and overall development of the Vidyalaya.

JKEDI Shopian Conducts Startup Idea Challenge for Junior Students at NIPS Zainapora

■ HT NEWS DESK

SHOPIAN, AUGUST 24: The Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), District Centre Shopian, organised a Startup Idea Challenge - Junior Level at National Innovation Public School (NIPS), Zainapora, with the objective of fostering innovation, entrepreneurial thinking and a startup culture among school students.

Students from NIPS Zainapora, Allama Iqbal School Zainapora and Government Higher Secondary School Zainapora participated enthusiastically in the bootcamp and showcased a range of innovative ideas. Faculty members from the participating institutions were also present and encouraged the students to explore creativity, problem-solving and entrepreneurship.

The programme was moderated by Mudasir Mohiuddin, Assistant Faculty, JKEDI Shopian, who also delivered the welcome address. Mudasir Ahmad Khan assisted in the conduct of the programme.

A detailed presentation on the J&K Startup Policy was delivered by Sajad Ahmad, who sensitised the participants about the opportunities, incentives and institutional



support available under the policy for aspiring entrepreneurs.

Prof. Sheeraz Gull, GDC Zainapora, and Farooq Ahmad, LDM, J&K Bank, also addressed the gathering and shared valuable insights into innovation, entrepreneurship and the startup ecosystem. They encouraged the students to develop innovative solutions and consider entrepreneurship as a promising career pathway.

An inspirational interaction with Shaikat Majeed Shah, entrepreneur and founder of M/s Bachpan Playway School, Batpora, was another highlight of.

CBI books ex-DGCA flying training Director, aviation firms for 'corruption', 'favouritism'

■ HT NEWS DESK

Nagrot, August 22, 2026: With the objective of creating awareness among farmers regarding vegetable development, modern agricultural practices and the importance of vegetable cultivation. An Exhibition-cum-Kissan Mela under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) was organised in Zone Nagrot by the Sub Division Agriculture Office, Dansal.

The programme was graced by Chief Agriculture Officer Jammu, Sh. Manohar Lal Sharma, as the Chief Guest. District Agriculture Officer (Extension), Sh. Vinod Khajuria, along with district-level SMSs Sh. Rajeev Katoch, Sh. Munshi Ram and Sh. Kesar Durani, also participated in the programme and interacted with the farming community. The

DC visit Fruit & Vegetable Market Kulgam

Takes stock of facilities, interacts with growers and traders

■ HT NEWS DESK

KULGAM, AUGUST 24: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, today visited Fruit and Vegetable Market Kulgam with a view to take stock of its overall functioning and facilities available for growers and traders.

During his extensive tour of the Mandi, The DC interacted with the President and members of Fruit Growers and Traders Association Kulgam, transporters, and concerned stakeholders. The growers and traders highlighted various issues including connectivity from Fruit Market Kulgam to NH-444 and further need for extension of truss to the auction



platforms, macadamization of the left out work in mandi, adequate transport facility during peak season, regulation of freight charges, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, parking and security arrangements in the mandi. The DC gave a patient hearing to their demands and assured action on all flagged off demands and apprised that every step will be taken to resolve their

genuine issues on priority. He directed the Horticulture Planning & Marketing, for ensuring smooth functioning of the mandi. The DC also reviewed the status of allottees and functioning of allottees in the mandi and directed the concerned department to maintain proper sanitation inside the premises of Mandi.

Later, the DC also visited Brazool for establishing the Truck Terminal on the land under the control of the Horticulture (P&M) and also visited the land measuring about 300 kanals proposed/demarcated site at Adapora, Kulgam for establishment of Mega Fruit Market Kulgam. He directed the Tehsildar Kulgam.

Mission YUVA

DLIC discusses modalities to boost youth entrepreneurship in Udhampur

■ HT NEWS DESK

UDHAMPUR, AUGUST 24: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Minga Sherpa today chaired a meeting of the District Level Implementation Committee under the Mission YUVA scheme to review and expedite the implementation of youth entrepreneurship initiatives in the district.

The meeting focused on the evaluation and screening of applications received under various categories of Mission YUVA, including Nano Enterprises, MSMEs and other

eligible sectors, with the objective of identifying and recommending suitable candidates for financial assistance.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner Jugal Kishore, Assistant Director Employment Priyanka Gupta, representatives of the banking sector and other concerned officers.

After detailed scrutiny and deliberations, the committee approved 1,047 cases for financial assistance under the Mission YUVA scheme, paving

the way for aspiring entrepreneurs to establish and expand their ventures.

The DC emphasized the need to accelerate the pace of implementation through enhanced coordination among all concerned departments.

He directed the concerned officers to expedite the registration and processing of cases and stressed the importance of maintaining transparency, ensuring prompt disposal of applications and providing all necessary support to deserving youth with viable business proposals.

District-Level Capacity Building Programme on PM Gati Shakti held at Reasi

■ HT NEWS DESK

REASI, AUGUST 24: A district-level Capacity Building Programme on the implementation of the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan (PMGS-NMP) was held today at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat, Reasi, with the participation of officers and representatives from various departments of the District.

The programme commenced with a welcome address by Chief Planning Officer (CPO), Narinder Gupta, who highlighted the importance of PM Gati Shakti in promoting integrated,

coordinated and technology-driven planning at the district level.

The technical session was conducted by Santosh Kumar Rai, PM Gati Shakti Consultant, EY LLP, who provided an overview of the PM Gati Shakti framework, its objectives, GIS-based planning mechanism, geospatial datasets and the importance of inter-departmental convergence in the planning and execution of infrastructure and development projects.

During the session, participants were sensitised to the practical use of the PM Gati

Shakti platform for data-driven decision-making, spatial planning, identification of infrastructure gaps, project prioritisation, optimisation of resources, synchronisation of departmental works and strengthening of first-and-last-mile connectivity. The need to move from isolated departmental planning towards an integrated Area Development Approach was also emphasised.

Representatives from AYUSH, Social Welfare, NIC, PWD Katra, PWD Mahore, PWD Reasi, Fisheries, Sheep Husbandry, Animal Husbandry, Chief Education Office, JPDCL,



Health, Mining, ACD, Fire & Emergency Services, ARTO, Poshan, Agriculture, Sericulture, Cooperatives and other departments and offices participated in the programme.

The programme provided a valuable platform for district and sectoral officers to understand how GIS and integrated spatial data can improve project planning, avoid duplication, enhance inter-departmental coordination and ensure optimum utilisation of resources. The participating departments were encouraged to incorporate PM Gati Shakti principles into their respective

planning and project implementation processes.

The programme concluded with remarks by GM, Department of Industries & Commerce (DIC), Reasi, Navdeep Wazir, who stressed the need for sustained inter-departmental convergence, regular updating of data and effective utilisation of the PM Gati Shakti platform for coordinated, inclusive and sustainable development of District Reasi. The programme marked an important step towards strengthening district-level capacity, digital planning and institutional convergence, facilitating more efficient.



'My skin makes me unique and I'm learning to embrace it'

A woman born with a rare genetic skin condition that covers 98% of her body in birthmarks has spoken of how she is learning to embrace her appearance after years of trying to hide it. Laura Kelly, 28, was born with congenital melanocytic naevus (CMN) and underwent 14 operations as a baby, with doctors fearing she may not live beyond the age of eight.

Laura said CMN made her self conscious about how strangers might react and that, growing up as a teenager, she often wore heavy makeup and planned outfits to cover her skin.

She said embracing how she looks and raising awareness of CMN has given her more confidence and hopes sharing her story will help others with a visible difference.

What is congenital melanocytic naevus?

Congenital melanocytic naevus (CMN) is a type of birthmark or mole that is usually present at birth. It is caused by an increased number of pigment-producing cells in the skin, although some CMN may appear during the first year or two of life.

CMN is caused by a genetic change in a single cell while a baby is developing during pregnancy. It is not inherited from parents and can happen to anyone.

Small CMN are relatively common, affecting about one in 100 new-born babies. Larger or more widespread CMN are much rarer, occurring in about one in 10,000 to 20,000 births. In the UK, about 7,000 babies are estimated to be born with some form of CMN each year.

People with larger or multiple CMN may develop more birthmarks after birth, particularly during their first few years. The number that appear varies from person to person, and their pattern of development can help doctors understand how the condition may progress.

'Everybody knew me as the wee girl with the marks'



First reported by Derry Now, Laura said doctors were astonished when she was born with the condition in 1998. "I always think of how scary it had to be for my parents. I suppose back then, there wasn't much, if any actual awareness of CMN," Laura told BBC News NI.

Growing up in the small, close-knit community of Draperstown, County Londonderry, Laura said she she was very fortunate to be treated like any other child by her peers and teachers.

"Everybody knew me as the wee girl with the marks," Laura explained.

"Even the children I went to playschool with right up until upper sixth, nobody in my whole school years ever went up and told me that I had birthmarks on my face or body."

It was only during her teenage years that Laura said her relationship with her appearance began to change.

"I grew up not thinking that I was different to anyone until I did reach my teenage years, when it did affect me immensely."

Laura said she became increasingly self-conscious and started using makeup to hide her birthmarks, eventually covering herself from head to toe.



“

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In the UK, about 7,000 babies are estimated to be born with some form of CMN each year.

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"I wouldn't have left the house without makeup," she said. Laura said she found herself also carefully choosing clothes

so that as little of her skin as possible was visible.

"Every time I meet someone... I always feel like I have to tell them about me. It'll be the first thing I tell them: 'Oh, I was born with birthmarks'. And I know I don't have to do that, but I just feel like I have to."

'Wearing shorts in public was proud moment'

Despite sometimes appearing confident to others, Laura says she could feel very differently behind closed doors and sometimes needs to push herself to go out in public.

But meeting other people with CMN through the charity Caring Matters Now has helped change that.

"I never actually met someone who looked like me until recently. So, in my head, I felt like all these years I was the only person that looked like this."

Laura says her family and friends have noticed a big change in her confidence over the last few months.

She says she is now starting to show more of her birthmarks in public, including wearing shorts outside for the very first time during a recent spell of hot weather.

Laura says something as simple as wearing shorts is a huge milestone for someone who previously went to great lengths to hide her appearance, and she is now slowly learning to embrace how she looks.

"I have started to show myself off a bit more and embrace myself.

"Being different is unique, and being unique is better than being perfect."

Laura says she is taking it day by day and has set herself the goal of one day leaving the house without wearing any makeup at all.

After years of hiding her skin, she says she is proud of how far she has come and hopes others with a visible difference will learn to embrace their appearance.

"Gaining confidence doesn't happen overnight, by no means. It takes time and it's okay to feel self-conscious, it's okay to feel different.

"I never thought in a million years that I would walk out of the house with a pair of shorts on from I was like 13 or so, but now it does happen. And I'm proud of myself, I have to say."

(BBC News)

How 20 minutes of nature can boost your health

If you've ever felt calmer after a walk in the park or a stroll through the woods, it's not your imagination - it's biology.

Being outdoors can trigger measurable changes inside your body from lowering stress hormones, easing blood pressure and even improving your gut health.

You don't have to hike for hours to feel these benefits as maximum impact happens after just 20 minutes, so even a lunchtime walk to the park and a sandwich on a bench a few times a week can benefit your body and mind.

Here are four ways that being among nature can help improve your health.

1. You unconsciously relax

When you see green trees, smell pine and hear gentle rustling leaves or the sound of birdsong, your autonomic nervous system - a network of nerves controlling unconscious processes - responds instantly.

This can happen on a visit to the local park.

"We see changes in the body such as a lowering of blood pressure, a change in your heart rate variability and your heart beats slower - all associated with physiological calming," Baroness Kathy Willis, a biodiversity professor at Oxford University, told BBC Radio 4's What's Up Docs? podcast.

A UK study, involving nearly 20,000 people, found that those who spent at least a total of 120 minutes every week in

greenery were significantly more likely to report good health and higher psychological well-being.

The evidence for the benefits of spending time in nature is compelling enough that some areas have trialled so called green social prescribing connecting people with nature to improve their physical and mental health, with a positive impact on happiness and well-being.

2. Your hormones reboot

Your body's hormonal system also joins in the relaxation act.

Willis says that spending time outdoors triggers our endocrine system and lowers levels of cortisol and adrenaline - the hormones that surge when you're stressed or anxious.

"A study found that people in a hotel room for three days who were breathing in Hinoki (Japanese cypress) oil saw a big drop in the adrenaline hormone and a large increase in natural killer cells in their blood."

Natural killer cells are cells that tackle viruses in the body. The participants in the study still had elevated natural killer cells in their body two weeks after inhaling the smell.

Essentially nature "calms what needs calming and strengthens what needs strengthening," is how Prof Ming Kuo from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, summed it up to the BBC.

"A three-day weekend in nature has a huge impact on our virus fighting apparatus and even a month later it can be 24% above baseline."

Studies also show smaller but still persistent effects from shorter periods spent in nature, she says.

3. Smell is a powerful sense

melling nature is just as powerful as seeing and hearing it. The scent of trees and soil is full of organic compounds released by plants and "when you breathe them in, some molecules pass into the bloodstream."

Willis says pine is a good example of this as the smell of a pine forest can make you calmer within just 90 seconds and

that effect lasts for about 10 minutes.

You may think that the relaxing effect of nature is all in your mind, but another study found that even very young babies with no memory associated with particular smells, still calmed down when another scent associated with calming, limonene was puffed into the room they were in.

4. Gets good bacteria into your gut

As well as soothing your mind, nature can also help boost your microbiome as soil and plants are full of good bacteria.

"They're the same kinds of good bacteria we pay for in probiotics or drinks," Willis explains.

Prof Ming Kuo has studied the effect on factors such as infection susceptibility as well as mental health and says breathing in certain ones have the potential to boost your mood; and the antimicrobial chemicals released by plants - called phytoncides - could help fight disease.

Dr Chris van Tulleken says as an infection scientist he sees nature as a positively challenging environment that "tickles your immune system".

He gets his children to play with dirt in the forest which then enters their system through the nose or mouth.

Bring nature to you

Of course, not everyone can head into the woods on a whim but the good news is, you don't have to.

Even small touches of nature at home can make a difference, according to Willis.

Visually, flowers such as white or yellow roses have been shown to create the greatest calming effect on brain activity.

When it comes to smell, use a diffuser with essential oils like pinene which can help you feel calm.

And if all else fails, even a photo of a forest can help.

Research shows that looking at pictures of nature on your laptop or simply gazing out at something green can trigger the same calming brainwave changes and reduce stress.

(BBC News)

PM Modi to interact with youth, sporting icons ahead of National Sports Day

United News Of India

NEW DELHI, AUG 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address young people, including sports persons, from more than 1,500 locations on August 27, as part of the celebrations leading up to National Sports Day on August 29.

The virtual interaction will be part of the nationwide programme 'Khelo India Samvaad - Khel Ki Baat, PM Ke Saath', organised by the Sports Ministry two days before National Sports Day.

National Sports Day is observed every year on August 29 to mark the birth anniversary of hockey great Dhyan Chand. The programme will begin with Modi's virtual address, followed by events held simultaneously at participating locations across the country.



The initiative is aimed at giving young athletes and sports enthusiasts an opportunity to share their ideas, suggestions and views on the future of India's sports and youth ecosystem. The discussions will focus on four

broad areas: improving grassroots sports facilities, coaching and opportunities; identifying and developing talent with an eye on the 2036 Olympics; encouraging greater youth participation

and leadership in sports governance; and providing young people with future-ready skills, volunteering opportunities and avenues to contribute to nation-building.

The programme will also bring young participants face-to-face with some of India's leading athletes and medal winners.

Olympians and sporting icons including Deepa Karmakar, Saina Nehwal, Gagan Narang, Sreejesh, Mary Kom, Baichung Bhutia, Pulella Gopichand, Anju Bobby George, Karnam Malleswari, Mirabai Chanu and P.T. Usha, along with prominent cricketers, will interact with participants. The athletes will speak about their journeys, experiences and challenges, offering young participants an opportunity to learn from some of the country's most accomplished sports persons.

Sindhu, Ayush withdraw from China Masters

United News Of India

NEW DELHI, AUG 24: Star shuttlers PV Sindhu and Ayush Shetty have withdrawn from the upcoming China Masters Super 750, which gets underway on September 1. The tournament will be the only major BWF World Tour event before the Asian Games.

Ayush had a memorable run at the World Championships in New Delhi, where he stunned world No. 1 Shi Yuqi in the opening round. The Indian then reached the round of 16 before losing to Indonesia's Alwi Farhan.

With Ayush pulling out, Lakshya Sen and Kidambi Srikanth will be India's representatives in men's singles. Lakshya, however, suffered an early exit at the World Championships after being beaten by world No. 92 Garrett Tan of the USA in the second round. Sindhu also featured in the round of 16 at the World Championships,

where she went down to world No. 3 Wang Zhi Yi of China in a closely fought contest. The Indian appeared to be feeling the effects of the demanding match, which could have contributed to her decision to withdraw from the China Masters. Malvika Bansod and Aakarshi Kashyap have also pulled out, leaving Unnati Hooda, Devika Sihag and Tanvi Sharma to carry India's challenge in women's singles. In men's doubles, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will headline the Indian contingent alongside

Hariharan Amasukaran and Arjun MR. Satwik and Chirag returned from an injury lay-off at the World Championships but were eliminated in the round of 16 by eventual champions Liang Weikeng and Wang Chang of China. India will not have a pair in the women's doubles draw, with Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand opting out after their historic bronze-medal run at the World Championships.

Sinner withdrawal opens US Open race



United News Of India

NEW YORK, AUG 24: The withdrawal of world No. 1 Jannik Sinner with a right knee injury has dramatically opened up the men's draw at the US Open, with defending champion Carlos Alcaraz emerging as the leading contender despite returning from a four-month injury layoff.

Alcaraz, who has not played competitive tennis since April because of a right wrist injury, confirmed his return to New York last week. Sinner, meanwhile, pulled out of the season's final Grand Slam less than 24 hours later, removing the Spaniard's biggest rival from the tournament.

Alcaraz, who won his second US Open title last year, has captured two of the last four editions of the

tournament and shared the previous nine Grand Slam titles with Sinner before Alexander Zverev won the French Open earlier this year. The 23-year-old Spaniard's lack of match practice remains a major concern, particularly given the demands of winning seven best-of-five matches. However, the absence of Sinner has

significantly eased his path to a third US Open crown.

Alcaraz also has a strong record at Flushing Meadows. During his 2025 title run, he held serve in 98 of 101 service games, highlighting the strength of his game on the New York hard courts.

Germany's Zverev, the reigning French Open champion, is widely regarded as the strongest alternative to Alcaraz.

The German has been a consistent performer at the Grand Slams this year, pushing Alcaraz in the Australian Open semi-finals and Sinner in the Wimbledon final.

His preparation for the US Open has been uneven, however, with early exits at the Canadian Open and Cincinnati Open. Still, his improved aggression, powerful serve and outstanding backhand make him a serious contender in an unusually open field. American Ben Shelton is another player attracting attention. Shelton won the Canadian Open in Montreal after an early Wimbledon exit and will now have an opportunity to make a deep run on home soil without having to face Sinner.

Zadran begins full-time captaincy stint against India as Afghanistan announce squad

United News Of India

NEW DELHI, AUG 24: Afghanistan have announced a 15-member squad for their upcoming three-match T20I series against India, with Ibrahim Zadran set to begin his first assignment as the team's full-time T20I captain.

The series will also mark the return of fast bowler Naveen-ul-Haq, who missed the T20 World Cup and the subsequent T20I series against the West Indies because of injury.

The Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) said the team will travel to India ahead of the series to train and complete its preparations.

"It is also worth mentioning that the Afghanistan team will travel to India soon for training and final preparations before the event officially kicks off in AJCS,

New Delhi," the ACB said in a release.

The series will begin on September 13, with all three matches scheduled to be played at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi. The second T20I will be held on September 15, followed by the series finale on September 17.

Afghanistan squad: Ibrahim Zadran (c), Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Noor Rahman (wk), Sediqullah Atal, Darwish Rasooli, Azmatullah Omarzai, Gulbadin Naib,

Mohammad Nabi, Rashid Khan, Nangyal Kharoti, Noor Ahmad, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Fazal Haq Farooqi, Abdullah Ahmadzai and Naveen-ul-Haq. Reserves: Ijaz Ahmadzai, Shahidullah Kamal, Fareed Ahmad Malik.

Jurel century powers India to 503/9 declared, SL 8/2



United News Of India

COLOMBO, AUG 24: Dhruv Jurel struck a magnificent unbeaten 115, Rishabh Pant overcame a painful injury to make an attacking 63 and India's bowlers then reduced Sri Lanka to two wickets down before bad light brought a rain-affected second day of the second Test to a close at the Sinhalese Sports Club here on Monday.

India, resuming at 300/5, eventually declared at 503/9 in 138 overs, with Jurel producing a superb lower-order masterclass before Sri Lanka slipped to 8/2 in just three overs. The day began with Pant, who had retired hurt at three on Sunday after being struck on

the forearm, returning to the crease alongside Jurel. The pair immediately put Sri Lanka's bowlers under pressure, adding 100 runs for the seventh wicket in 145 balls. Pant completed his 21st Test half-century off 81 balls and continued his aggressive approach. He struck six fours and two sixes in his 89-ball 63 before falling to Keshara Nuwantha immediately after lunch, caught by Lahiru Udara at deep mid-off. India reached 419/6 at lunch, with Pant on 63 and Jurel on 59. Jurel, however, refused to retreat. He combined with Manav Suthar for a valuable partnership, moved through his third Test fifty and helped India cross 450. Suthar made a patient 18 before edging Prabath.

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