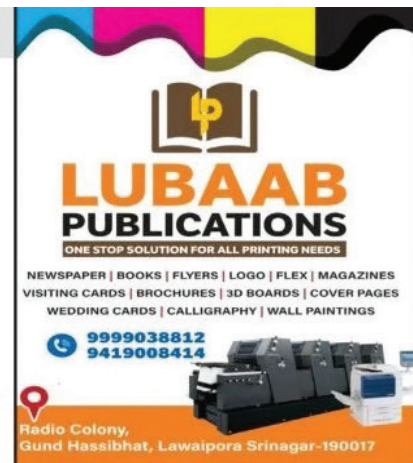


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Voice To The Voiceless



Future Belongs to Those Who Recognise Possibilities, Not Boundaries : LG Manoj Sinha

Sinha launches student-designed degree programme, semiconductor skilling initiative and multidisciplinary academic reforms



HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, JULY 31: Declaring that the future belongs to those who recognise possibilities rather than boundaries, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday unveiled a series of transformative academic initiatives at Cluster

University Jammu, describing them as the beginning of a new philosophy of higher education that combines academic flexibility, technological advancement and India's intellectual heritage.

Addressing a gathering after inaugurating the university's flagship "Design Your Degree" programme and several

new academic initiatives, the Lieutenant Governor said the changing global landscape demands graduates who can integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines instead of remaining confined to a single area of specialisation.

"The frontiers of knowledge are continuously expanding. Problems are multidimensional, and their solutions are possible only through multidisciplinary approaches. The 21st century will welcome young people who possess the ability to integrate knowledge from different fields and discover new solutions," he said.

Sinha described the "Design Your Degree" initiative as a revolutionary step towards student-centric education, allowing students to customise their academic programmes by choosing subjects that match their interests, abilities and career aspirations. He said the initiative would promote innovation, creativity and independent thinking while preparing students for emerging global challenges.

The Lieutenant Governor also inaugurated integrated academic programmes in Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Mathematics and

■ SEE ON P-2

Non-Local Labourer Killed in Kulgam Terror Attack as Terrorists Attempt to Disrupt Peace

Second Terror Strike in South Kashmir This Month; Security Forces Launch Massive Hunt for Attackers



HT NEWS DESK / UNI

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: In an apparent attempt to disrupt the improving security environment in Jammu and Kashmir, terrorists on Friday evening shot at two non-local labourers in the Kilam area of south Kashmir's Kulgam district, killing one and critically injuring the other.

Officials said unidentified terrorists opened fire on the labourers, leaving both with serious bullet injuries. They were rushed to a nearby

hospital, where one of them succumbed to his injuries. The other remains under treatment and is undergoing surgery.

Soon after the attack, security forces and Jammu and Kashmir Police launched a massive cordon-and-search operation in the area. Additional reinforcements were deployed, and efforts are underway to trace the attackers. The incident marks the second terrorist attack in south Kashmir this month. On July 22, a Jammu and

■ SEE ON P-2

E20 Petrol May Reduce Fuel Efficiency by Up to Six Per Cent : Gadkari

Government says ethanol-blended fuel remains safe, improves emissions and has shown no evidence of engine failures

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 31: The Centre has acknowledged that vehicles running on E20 petrol may witness a two to six per cent reduction in fuel efficiency depending on the vehicle type and age. However, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari informed Parliament that extensive testing has found no evidence of engine failures linked to the higher ethanol blend.

Petrol blended with 20 per cent ethanol (E20) can reduce fuel economy by 2 to 6 per cent depending on the vehicle category and vintage,



Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari informed Parliament on Thursday. The Union Minister, however, argued

■ SEE ON P-2

Cabinet Extends PM-KISAN Scheme Till 2030-31

Centre approves ₹3.15 lakh crore outlay to continue direct income support for farmers over the next five years

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 31: The Union Cabinet on Friday approved the extension of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme for another five years till 2030-31 with a financial outlay of ₹3.15 lakh crore. The decision will ensure continued direct income support of ₹6,000 annually to eligible farmer families across the country.

The government on Friday extended the PM-KISAN scheme for the next five years till 2030-31 with a total outlay of over ₹3.15 lakh crore, a decision

aimed at providing financial support to farmers.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme, launched in February 2019, eligible landholding farmer families get financial assistance of ₹6,000 per year. The amount is transferred directly into their bank accounts in three equal instalments. Nearly 4.5 lakh crore have been disbursed so far under this scheme. The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi,

■ SEE ON P-2

Policeman Injured in Accidental Firing During Patrol in Kokernag

Officer sustains foot injury after service weapon discharges accidentally; condition reported stable

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

ANANTNAG, JULY 31: A police constable sustained injuries after his service rifle accidentally discharged during a routine patrol in the Magam area of Kokernag on Friday. The injured officer was shifted to hospital for treatment, and officials said his condition remains stable while further proceedings are underway.

■ SEE ON P-2

Om Birla Warns MPs Against Protests Inside Parliament

Lok Sabha Speaker says banners, placards and symbolic costumes erode the dignity and traditions of the House

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 31: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Friday strongly cautioned Members of Parliament against bringing banners, placards and symbolic costumes into the House, saying such demonstrations undermine the dignity and established traditions of Parliament. His remarks came amid repeated disruptions during the Monsoon Session.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Friday strongly cautioned Members of Parliament against carrying banners and placards into the House and using costumes or altered attire to stage protests,



saying such actions undermine the dignity and established traditions of Parliament.

■ SEE ON P-2

Mian Altaf Urges Priority Passage for Apple-Laden Trucks

National Conference MP says uninterrupted highway movement is vital to protect Kashmir's horticulture economy

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: National Conference Member of Parliament Mian Altaf Ahmad on Friday appealed to the Jammu and Kashmir administration to provide priority passage to apple-laden trucks on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway. He said delays in transporting perishable produce were resulting in heavy financial losses for growers and traders.

National Conference Member of Parliament



Mian Altaf Ahmad on Friday urged the Jammu and Kashmir administration and the Traffic Police to ensure

■ SEE ON P-2

PM Modi to Launch ₹17,900-Crore Development Push in Andhra, Inaugurate Vivekananda Youth Centre

PM to unveil airport, semiconductor, renewable energy and highway projects before dedicating Mysuru's Viveka Smaraka to the nation

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 31: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka on Saturday to inaugurate, dedicate and lay the



PM Announces Ex-Gratia for Bhiwandi Building Collapse Victims

₹2 lakh relief for families of deceased, ₹50,000 for injured as death toll rises to nine

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JULY 31: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday expressed grief over the loss of lives in the Bhiwandi building collapse in

■ SEE ON P-2

نَبِّكَ اَللّٰهُمَّ نَبِّكَ
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J&K Govt notifies agriculture pause periods under VB-GRAM G to protect peak sowing, harvesting seasons

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has officially notified specific agricultural "pause periods" under the newly launched Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-GRAM-G), effectively halting public works during peak farming seasons to prevent labour shortages.

The move comes as the Union Territory transitions from the erstwhile MGNREGA to the VB-GRAM-G.

According to the order issued by the Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, the pause schedules have been tailored to the distinct agro-climatic calendars of the Kashmir and Jammu divisions. In the Kashmir Division, no new works will be commenced or executed during three key windows: April 26 to May 10 for Kharif sowing; May 25 to June 10 for Kharif transplanting and Rabi harvesting; and September 26 to October 23 for Kharif harvesting and Rabi sowing.

For the Jammu Division, the enforced pause will occur from April 15 to April 29 for Rabi harvesting; June 15 to June 29 for Kharif sowing and transplanting; and October 15 to November 13 for Kharif

harvesting and Rabi sowing.

The notification, issued under Sections 6(2) and 6(3) of the VB-GRAM-G Act, strictly bars the initiation or execution of scheme works during these windows. However, a carve-out allows the Government to undertake specific projects during the pause period if expressly permitted by the Government of India under Section 7 of the Act on grounds of public interest.

This enforcement of a mandatory 60-day agricultural pause is a core feature of the newly notified Jammu Kashmir Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika

Mission (Gramin) Scheme, 2026, which was formally rolled out on July 1st, 2026.

The Secretary said that the flagship programme enhances the guaranteed wage employment from the previous 100 days to 125 days annually for every eligible rural household willing to do unskilled manual work.

Aijaz Asad said that with the agricultural pause periods now legally defined, we are ensuring that our drive for rural infrastructure development does not come at the cost of farm productivity.

"The transition to 125 days of work under VB-GRAM-G, coupled with technology-driven planning, marks a significant shift towards the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047," he said.



Javed Rana reviews Jal Shakti works in Zadibal constituency; emphasizes quality work execution, timely resolution of issues

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana today chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of various Jal Shakti sector works in Zadibal constituency. He directed the concerned officers to ensure their timely completion and effective implementation.

The meeting, held at the Civil Secretariat Srinagar, was attended by MLA Zadibal, Tanvir Sadiq; Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti, Kashmir along with other senior officers.

During the meeting, the Minister reviewed the progress of ongoing drinking water supply and allied infrastructure works in the constituency. He also took stock of the issues and demands projected by the MLA.

Rana directed the concerned officers to accord top priority to the issues



raised by the MLA and ensure their resolution in a time-bound manner.

The Minister stressed that projects nearing completion should be expedited so that they are commissioned and made operational without delay, enabling the people to avail the intended benefits at the earliest. He further directed the officers to resolve all bottle necks affecting the progress of ongoing works to ensure that no development project suffers avoidable delays. The Minister under-

scored the importance of close coordination among all stakeholder departments for effective implementation of developmental projects. He also directed the officers to make judicious use of available resources, ensure optimum utilisation of funds under various schemes and maintain the highest standards of quality in execution of works.

Reiterating the government's commitment to ensure uninterrupted and equitable drinking water supply across the consti-

tution, the Minister directed the officers to expedite the pending water supply schemes, bridge distribution gaps in underserved areas and maintain regular water quality testing to safeguard public health.

"The present administration is firmly committed to strengthening drinking water infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir. Officers must ensure timely completion of all ongoing schemes, as every delay directly affects the public welfare," Rana asserted.

Film submission deadline for 1st IFFJK extended upto 1st August

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: The film submission deadline for 1st International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (IFFJK) 2026 has been extended until 1st August, 2026 11:59 PM, to provide filmmakers final opportunity to register their entries for participation in the inaugural edition of the festival.

The IFFJK, organised by the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), is scheduled to be held from September 7 to 10, 2026. The festival aims to establish Jammu & Kashmir as a vibrant destination for cinema, creativity and cultural exchange while providing a prestigious platform for filmmakers from across the world to showcase their work.

The Festival is receiving tremendous response with more than 900 entries received from around 50 countries. This encouraging response from both national and international filmmakers underscores the growing confidence in Jammu & Kashmir as an emerging hub for film production, cinematic excellence and creative collaboration.

The four-day festival will feature screenings of selected films, interactive sessions, masterclasses, panel discussions and cultural engagements, offering opportunities for filmmakers, industry experts, students and cinema lovers to exchange ideas and explore new avenues of collaboration.

The festival also aims to promote the culture of Jammu & Kashmir through Cinema, promote artistic excellence, cultural exchange, and cinematic innovation by exhibiting and recognising outstanding films from around the world.

The DIPR is planning a slew of activities to ensure participation from all stakeholders.

Pertinent to mention, the curtain raiser ceremony of the festival was held on July 17, 2026, inviting filmmakers, artists, producers and cinema enthusiasts from around the world to participate in the landmark event.

CUKashmir congratulates Prof. Anurag Misra on his appointment as Dir NIT Srinagar

■ HT News Network

Ganderbal, July 31: Central University of Kashmir (CUKashmir) has extended heartfelt congratulations to Prof. Anurag Misra (Chairman of the Ad-hoc Board of Studies) of the newly established Deptt of Civil Engineering, CUKashmir, on his appointment as the Director of the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Srinagar. On behalf of the University fraternity, Vice Chancellor, Prof. A. Ravinder Nath, conveyed his congratulations to Prof. Misra and wished him success in his new leadership role. He expressed confidence that Prof. Misra's vast academic experience, visionary leadership, and commitment to excellence would further strengthen NIT Srinagar as a premier institution of higher learning. Dean Academic Affairs, Prof. Shahid Rasool, Registrar, Dr. Nisar Ahmad Mir, and Head, Deptt of Civil Engineering, Dr. Asif H. Shah, also congratulated Prof. Misra on this achievement and wished him a distinguished tenure marked by academic innovation, institutional growth, and impactful leadership. Prof. Anurag Misra has been associated with the varsity's Deptt of Civil Engineering. Through his guidance, mentorship, and valuable academic inputs, he has played a significant role in strengthening the academic framework and curriculum of the Department. His continuous support has been instrumental in nurturing the growth of one of the University's youngest academic departments.

SKUAST-K signs MoA with Naqash Royal Arts to advance Handmade Pashmina Knitwear Innovation

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: In a significant step towards strengthening industry-academia collaboration and promoting value addition in Kashmir's iconic pashmina sector, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) on Friday signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with Naqash Royal Arts, a leading business firm with decades of experience in domestic and international pashmina markets.

The agreement, signed through the Division of Livestock Products Technology, Faculty of Veterinary Sciences & Animal Husbandry, Shuhama, will leverage the University's scientific expertise to develop high-value pashmina products with enhanced quality, durability and commercial appeal.

The agreement was signed in the presence of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Director Educa-



tion Prof. Mohammad Altaf Bhat, Director Extension Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, Registrar Prof. Azmat Alam, Dean, Faculty of Veterinary Sciences & Animal Husbandry Prof. Riaz Ahmad Shah, industry partners and faculty members. Addressing the gathering, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai said pashmina is one of Kashmir's most valuable heritage products and holds immense potential for diversification through research-driven innovation. He

emphasized that the collaboration will focus on extensive research and development to create premium handmade pashmina knitwear that is organic, durable and globally competitive. "Through this partnership, we aim to develop products that can carry Kashmir's craftsmanship to global markets while creating new economic opportunities for the sector," Prof. Ganai said. Welcoming the participants, Dr. Asif Sofi, Head, Division of Livestock Products Technol-

ogy, said the partnership reflects the Division's continued commitment to strengthening industry linkages through knowledge exchange, resource sharing and technology transfer. He noted that the Division has signed 10 collaborations in the past two years, taking its total number of MoUs to 12, with partners including ICMR, ICAR-CIRCOT, NIFT, artisans and other stakeholders.

Dr. Sofi said the collaboration seeks to combine traditional craftsmanship with scientific intervention to develop handmade pashmina knitwear that meets evolving market expectations while preserving the authenticity of Kashmir's centuries-old craft.

The collaboration is expected to strengthen the interface between research and industry by translating scientific expertise into market-ready pashmina products, contributing to the sustainable growth and global positioning of Kashmir's pashmina industry.

Mian Altaf Seeks Priority Passage for Fruit-Laden Trucks on NH-44

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, July 31, KNT: National Conference Member of Parliament Mian Altaf Ahmad on Friday urged the Jammu and Kashmir administration and the Traffic Police to ensure uninterrupted and priority movement of fruit-laden trucks on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway (NH-44), saying recurring traffic disruptions were inflicting heavy losses on the horticulture sector.

The MP expressed concern over repeated interruptions on the highway, saying the transportation of perishable horticultural produce should be accorded priority.

"Recurring traffic disruptions on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway (NH-44), the administration and the Traffic Police must ensure uninterrupted and prioritised passage of fruit-laden



trucks. Delays along the NH-44 result in severe economic losses for local dealers due to the perishable nature of the produce," Mian Altaf said.

He urged the authorities to put in place effective traffic management measures to facilitate the smooth movement of fruit-loaded vehicles, particularly during the peak apple transportation season.

The appeal comes amid growing concern among political leaders and fruit growers over delays in the movement of apple-laden trucks on the national highway. [KNT]

Delegation of Imams from UP hail shrine-transformation in J&K during the meeting with Dr Darakhshan at Srinagar

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: A delegation of Imams and Ulema from Uttar Pradesh after visiting many prominent spiritual shrines in J&K today hailed the transformative development at these shrines. Maulana Farooq Naqashbandi from Rajouri accompanied the delegates during their spiritual tour. The delegation termed the development done by the Waqf Board here as the role model for whole of the country. The delegation later called on the Chairperson of the J&K Waqf Board Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi at Waqf Headquarters in Srinagar and expressed their appreciation for the Board under the leadership of Dr Andrabi for creating great infrastructure at all the spiritual shrines throughout Jammu and Kashmir. In the detailed interaction, Dr Syed Darakh-



shan Andrabi said that on the basis of her years long administrative experience in Central Waqf Council, she could undertake the transformation and accountability mission into her hands just after taking charge as the first Chairperson of J&K Waqf Board as per the Central Waqf Act. "Like J&K, Waqf Boards throughout the country were used for political interests by the earlier ruling dispensations. But under the Prime Minister Modi ji's rule, we see changes everywhere and the Waqf system

also saw many transformative changes throughout the country. I am thankful to the Prime Minister for providing me a chance to take the lead in J&K to enforce transparency and accountability in Waqf management system. I along with my team feel encouraged when our efforts are appreciated," said Waqf Board Chairperson. She assured the delegation that this mission of development with transparency will continue and our spiritual spaces will see more glory in the days to come.

ACB Summons Fire & Emergency Services Recruits for Height Verification

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, July 31, KNT: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), Jammu and Kashmir, has directed candidates selected in the Fire and Emergency Services Department under Order No. 823 of 2020 dated October 4, 2020, to appear for a height measurement test on August 3 as part of an ongoing investigation into the recruitment process.

According to an official communication issued by the Senior Superintendent of Police, Police Station ACB Central, Sidhra, Jammu, the verification exercise is being conducted in connection with FIR No. 01/2025 registered at Police Station ACB Central, Jammu.

The Director General, Fire and Emergency Services, has been asked to ensure that all selected candidates presently posted in different districts report to their designated venues at 10:00 am



on August 3.

As per the schedule, 82 candidates from Jammu, Kathua and Samba districts have been directed to report at District Police Lines (DPL) Jammu, while 38 candidates from Rajouri and Poonch will report at DPL Rajouri. Twenty-nine candidates from Udhampur and Reasi have been asked to report at DPL Udhampur.

Candidates from Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban have been directed to report at DPL Doda, while 130 candidates from Srinagar, Budgam and Ganderbal will undergo

verification at PCR/DPL Srinagar. A total of 124 candidates from Baramulla, Bandipora and Kupwara have been asked to report at DPL Baramulla, while 93 candidates from Anantnag, Shopian, Pulwama and Kulgam will report at DPL Anantnag.

The ACB said the height measurement exercise forms part of the investigation into the 2020 recruitment process in the Fire and Emergency Services Department. The district-wise list of candidates has also been circulated along with the official communication. [KNT]

Swachhta 50-50 launched in Bandipora to strengthen shared responsibility for Sustainable Waste Management

DC calls for collective Public Participation, announces time-bound measures for BWGs

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, JULY 31: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, today chaired the district-level convention marking the formal launch of the "Swachhta 50-50" initiative, a flagship campaign of the District Administration based on the principle of 50% Government and 50% Public participation for effective and sustainable solid waste management across the district, at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat Bandipora.

The convention witnessed participation of Additional District Development Commissioner Bandipora, Nazir Ahmad Mir; PO ICDS Bandipora, Yasar Ali Khan; ACP Bandipora, Aijaz Ahmad; Chief Education Officer Bandipora; District Information Officer; Block Development Officers, and other stakeholders.

The programme commenced with the National Anthem, followed by the Swachhta Pledge, which was administered by the students of Gov-

ernment Higher Secondary School Quilmuqam.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner said that Swachhta 50-50 is a people's movement based on shared responsibility and called upon every stakeholder to work wholeheartedly to make the initiative a success. She said that the District Administration had already taken three major steps towards scientific waste management and that Swachhta 50-50 marked the fourth step in this direction.

Highlighting the implementation strategy, the Deputy Commissioner announced that after a one-month handholding period, Bulk Waste Generators (BWGs) would be required to scientifically manage their own waste in accordance with the Solid Waste Management Rules, while the District Administration would continue to provide all necessary technical support and guidance. She said that 89 identified BWGs in the district account for a major share of waste generation and would be brought under this mechanism.



She further informed that exhibitions would be organised to demonstrate scientific waste management practices and clarified that any issues relating to implementation in rural areas would be addressed through the Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, while concerns in urban areas

would be handled by the concerned Municipal Committees.

The Deputy Commissioner also informed that the District Administration had successfully conducted an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) initiative in Gurez, where 11 companies participated. Of these,

three companies accepted the proposals, while the remaining companies were closely monitoring the district's waste management efforts and were expected to take a decision in the coming weeks. She reiterated that the responsibility for collection and disposal of single-use plastic (SUP) rests with the producers under the EPR framework.

She said that a dedicated coordination group had been constituted to ensure sustained implementation of the initiative and informed that the District Administration had also developed the dedicated portal Swachhta 50-50 in for monitoring and management of the programme.

Emphasising the role of institutions, the Deputy Commissioner said that every school and every Anganwadi Centre would adopt 50 households on a long-term basis. She said that students would sensitise their parents while teachers would certify installation of separate dustbins in their own households, setting an example for the community. She also stressed the need for greater participation of male members of society in household waste management.

The Deputy Commissioner identified four key household responsibilities under the initiative, including installation of separate dustbins for source segregation, home composting of wet waste, payment of user fee and adoption of cloth bags to eliminate the use of single-use plastic.

The Deputy Commissioner directed that work under the initiative should begin in schools from Monday and called upon stakeholders to actively sensitise shopkeepers regarding the use of cloth bags.

During the convention, Dr. Saptak Rarotra from SWAHA Resources Management Pvt.Ltd. demonstrated the functioning of the Swachhta 50-50 digital platform, explaining features including the dashboard, organisation mapping, household allocation, household adoption, baseline survey, QR code generation and monitoring system designed to track implementation across the district.

ADDC Budgam chairs MY Bharat District Advisory Committee meeting; reviews youth engagement initiatives

■ HT News Network

BUDGAM, JULY 31: Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Budgam, Vivek Agarwal, today chaired the meeting of the Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) District Advisory Committee at the Conference Hall, Budgam, to review youth engagement initiatives and strengthen coordination among stakeholder departments.

The meeting reviewed the implementation of various MY Bharat programmes aimed at promoting youth participation in nation-building, volunteerism, skill development, leadership, and community service. Discussions also focused on enhancing



outreach, increasing youth registrations, and ensuring active participation of educational institutions and line departments in MY Bharat activities.

The ADDC stressed the need for greater convergence among departments to create meaningful opportunities for young people and directed the concerned officers to orga-

nise regular awareness and engagement programmes across the district.

Later, the ADDC chaired a review meeting of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) to assess the progress of ongoing sanitation initiatives in the district.

The meeting reviewed the status of key SBM components, including solid and liquid waste manage-

ment, cleanliness drives, sanitation infrastructure, and awareness campaigns. He directed the concerned officers to ensure timely completion of all ongoing works and maintain sustained efforts towards achieving the objectives of the mission.

The ADDC emphasized close monitoring of field-level activities, effective public participation, and inter-departmental coordination to strengthen sanitation and hygiene across the district.

The meetings were attended by the CPO, ACP, District Officer, MY Bharat, District Panchayat Officer, Executive Officers of Urban Local Bodies, Block Development Officers, and other concerned officers.

VC JKLCMA reviews progress of Lake Conservation initiatives in J&K

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: The Vice Chairman (VC), Jammu & Kashmir Lake Conservation and Management Authority (JKLCMA), Khurshid Ahmad Shah, convened a review meeting today, to take stock of various ongoing activities and works being undertaken by the Authority for the conservation, protection and management of water bodies in Jammu & Kashmir.

All the officers of JKLCMA participated in the meeting. During the meeting, a detailed review of the progress of various ongoing works and field activities was undertaken. The Vice Chairman emphasized the need for time-bound execution, effective monitoring and regular field inspections to ensure that the objectives of

lake and waterbody conservation are achieved in a coordinated and sustainable manner. The meeting also reviewed measures being undertaken for the protection of water bodies from encroachments, illegal constructions, dumping of solid waste, and discharge of untreated sewage. The concerned officers were directed to maintain close coordination with the field agencies and take prompt action wherever violations affecting the water bodies are noticed. The progress of demarcation and clearance of encroachments, cleaning and maintenance of water channels, outlets and other associated works was also reviewed. The officers were directed to intensify field-level monitoring and ensure that cleared areas are protected from re-encroachment.

40 Trainee Civil Judges visit FSL Srinagar for exposure to Forensic Science



■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: A batch of 40 trainee Civil Judges, accompanied by the Secretary, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar, today visited the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), Srinagar as part of an exposure programme aimed at enhancing their understanding of the role of forensic science in the criminal justice system.

The programme commenced with an introductory presentation by Sheikh Suhail Ahmad, Scientific Officer, Fingerprints Division, who briefed the participants on the mandate, organizational structure, scientific capabilities, and pivotal role of FSL Srinagar in assisting investigating agencies and the judiciary through scientific examination of evidence.

The participants were subsequently taken on a guided tour of the laboratory, coordinated by Dr. Rais Ahmad, Scientific Officer, Narcotics & Chemical Division, and Sheikh Suhail Ahmad, Scientific Officer, Fingerprints Division. During the visit, the trainee judges interacted with experts across various forensic disciplines and were briefed by the respective

Scientific Officers on the functioning of their divisions, modern analytical techniques, sophisticated instrumentation, quality assurance practices, and the scientific procedures followed in the examination of forensic exhibits.

Later, Dr. Qazi Danish Mushtaq, Deputy Director JKFSL Srinagar interacted with the visiting judicial officers regarding functioning of the District Mobile Forensic Units (DMFUs). He highlighted the crucial role of the mobile forensic units in providing on-the-spot scientific assistance at crime scenes, ensuring proper collection, preservation, and documentation of physical evidence, and facilitating timely forensic support to investigating agencies across the Union Territory.

The exposure programme offered the trainee judicial officers valuable insights into the practical application of forensic science in criminal investigations and judicial proceedings. The participants actively interacted with the forensic experts, discussing the evidentiary value of scientific findings and the significance of forensic reports in ensuring fair and effective administration of justice.

Sale of unsafe 'New Fast Tea' Batch prohibited in Pulwama

■ HT News Network

PULWAMA, JULY 31: The Food Safety Department, Pulwama, has prohibited the sale of a batch of "Dust Tea (Premium Instant Mix Tea)" marketed under the brand name "New Fast Tea" (Batch No. 10) after it was declared unsafe for human consumption by the National Food Laboratory, Ghaziabad. According to the Designated Officer, Food Safety, Pulwama, the sample of the tea product was procured by the Food Safety Officer, Tral, from the market and subsequently sent for analysis. The laboratory report found the product to be unsafe due to the presence of water-soluble synthetic colour Tartrazine and Sunset Yellow, rendering it non-compliant with the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. The department stated that the consumption of the said product may be harmful to public health and is liable to prohibition under Regulation 2.3.7 of the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales)

FDA takes enforcement action against Unsafe Ghee and Misbranded Frozen Meat

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: The Food & Drugs Administration (FDA), J&K has initiated enforcement action following the declaration of four Ghee samples, namely Dairy Mohan, Apna Dairy Milk, Sahi Taj, and Milk Bite, as unsafe by the National Food Laboratory, Ghaziabad. Based on the laboratory reports, the Designated Officer, Food Safety, Anantnag, seized 1,250 litres of Ghee belonging to the affected batch numbers, valued at approximately 4.88 lakh, and

issued a Prohibition Order under the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. The sale and distribution of the affected batches have also been prohibited under Section 36(3)(b) read with Section 18(1)(f) of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. Further, Food Safety Teams in the Jammu Division conducted inspections, collected three additional samples of the affected Ghee brands, and forwarded them to NABL-accredited laboratories for analysis of quality and safety parameters. During the inspections, 1,277 litres of Ghee, valued at

approximately 4.97 lakh, were seized under the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, pending receipt of laboratory analysis reports. In a separate enforcement action, the Food Safety Team, Srinagar, conducted inspections of seven establishments dealing in meat and meat products. During the inspection, 2,600 kg of frozen meat, valued at approximately 5.98 lakh, was seized from an establishment at Bubghair, Kawardara, Srinagar, as the product was found to be misleading due to a mismatch between the contents of the package

ADC Sopore visits cloudburst-affected Taki Khan Mohammad Mundji

■ HT News Network

BARAMULLA, JULY 31: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Sopore, Dr. S.A. Raina, today conducted an extensive visit to Taki Khan Mohammad Mundji to assess the damage caused by a recent cloudburst that struck the area during a spell of heavy rainfall.

The ADC was accompanied by officers from the Revenue Department, Irrigation and Flood Control Department, and other



concerned departments.

During the visit, Dr. Raina undertook an on-the-spot inspection of the affected sites to assess the extent of damage caused due to the overflowing of the nallah following the

cloudburst.

Interacting with the local residents, the ADC listened to their concerns and assured them that the administration is committed to extending all possible assistance and taking

timely measures to mitigate the impact of such natural calamities.

Dr. Raina directed the officers of the Agriculture and Horticulture Department to undertake a detailed assessment of the losses incurred by the local population so that appropriate relief measures can be initiated without delay.

Taking serious note of the obstruction in the natural flow of the nallah, the ADC instructed the officers of the Irrigation & Flood Control Department and Revenue Department.

Labour Comm reviews progress of PM-SYM Scheme, Labour Codes implementation at Ganderbal

■ HT News Network

GANDERBAL, JULY 31: A comprehensive review meeting on the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) Scheme and the Labour Codes was held today at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat, Ganderbal, under the chairmanship of Charandeep Singh, Labour Commissioner, Jammu & Kashmir. The meeting was co-chaired by Fahim Bihagqi, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Ganderbal. The meeting witnessed



the participation of senior officers from various line departments, including the District Programme Officer, Poshan/ICDS; General Manager, District Industries Centre (DIC); Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD); Exec-

utive Engineers of R&B, JPDCL, Jal Shakti (PHE), PMGSY, Irrigation & Flood Control (I&FC) and Rural Engineering Wing (REW); Chief Education Officer; Officer Commanding, Beacon; Chief Agriculture Officer; Chief Horticulture

Officer; Assistant Director, Fisheries; Assistant Director, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA); Assistant Labour Commissioner, Ganderbal; Block Development Officers; Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Council Ganderbal; Assistant Director, Handlooms/Handicrafts; Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO); In-charge Estates, Central University of Kashmir; General Manager, APCO, Sonamarg Tunnel Project; General Manager, Megha Engineering & Infrastructure Limited (MEIL), Zojila Tunnel.

DDC Kupwara reviews progress under District CAPEX Budget 2026-27

Stresses timely completion of works and strengthened rural sanitation

HT News Network

KUPWARA, JULY 31: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting of the officers concerned to assess the progress of developmental works being executed under the District CAPEX Budget 2026-27 and review the implementation of sanitation initiatives across the district.

During the meeting, the DDC conducted a detailed block-wise review of the ongoing works and directed all executing agencies to accelerate the pace of execution to ensure timely completion of projects within the stipulated time-frame. He emphasized that all works must be executed in strict adherence to the prescribed quality standards and called for regular field monitoring to ensure transparency, accountability and effective implementation.

The meeting was informed that a total of 2,287 works have been approved under the Rural Development Department during the current financial year. These works span various sectors, including PRI Grants, BDC Grants, DDC Grants, Elementary



Education, Secondary Education, Health, APDS, ABDS, SSY, UT CAPEX (Tribal), UT CAPEX (Revenue), Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and MPLADS.

Reviewing the implementation of the District Sanitation Plan, the DDC directed the officers concerned to strengthen sustainable solid waste management systems across all Gram Panchayats with special emphasis on operationalising Door-to-Door (D2D) waste collection, identifying waste collection points, ensuring scientific transportation and disposal of waste, and promoting community participation to achieve sus-

tainable sanitation outcomes. He also stressed the need for proper operation and maintenance of sanitation assets and called for sustained awareness among the public regarding cleanliness and waste segregation.

The meeting was informed that, in the first phase, a dedicated amount has been allocated to each Gram Panchayat to facilitate the implementation of solid waste management activities.

The DDC also reviewed the progress achieved under Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) 2026-27. He directed the concerned officers to expedite the

execution of the sanitation infrastructure works and ensure their timely completion and operationalisation.

DFO Kehmil, Langate and Kamraj informed participants about initiative taken in terms of Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for solid waste management at tourist destinations within or adjoining Reserve Forests. The SOP mandates scientific carrying-capacity studies for major sites, destination-specific waste management plans, and a ban on single-use plastics in ecologically sensitive areas. Anti-polythene check posts and Eco-Task Forces will enforce restrictions, while separate bins and coordination with Urban Local Bodies and RDD to ensure scientific disposal under the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026.

Among others, the meeting was attended by the Chief Planning Officer, Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD), Assistant Commissioner Panchayats, Divisional Forest Officers, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Education Officer, Block Development Officers, Tehsildars, Executive Engineer REW, Assistant Executive Engineers, Assistant Engineers and other officers concerned.

ICAR-NRC Makhana Scientist reviews Aquatic Crop Demonstrations at KVK Bandipora

HT News Network

BANDIPORA, JULY 31: Indu Shekhar, Principal Scientist from the ICAR-National Research Centre (NRC) for Makhana, Darbhanga, Bihar, visited Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Bandipora-I, SKUAST-Kashmir, to monitor the progress of Makhana (Euryale ferox) and Water Chestnut (Trapa natans) cultivation being undertaken at the KVK farm.

The visit aimed to assess the performance of these promising aquatic crops under the agro-climatic conditions of Kashmir and to review the progress made since the initiation



of demonstrations under the collaborative efforts between ICAR-NRC Makhana and SKUAST-Kashmir.

Prof. Indu Shekhar inspected the Makhana and Water Chestnut demonstration plots, interacted with the scientific staff, and evaluated crop growth, establishment, and field management practices. During the visit,

Prof. Indu Shekhar expressed satisfaction with the encouraging growth and adaptation of both crops under the prevailing climatic conditions of the Kashmir Valley. He appreciated the efforts of KVK Bandipora in introducing and promoting these high-value aquatic crops, highlighting their immense potential for diversification of farming

systems, productive utilization of wetlands, and enhancement of farmers' income. He emphasized that Makhana and Water Chestnut could emerge as economically viable enterprises in suitable water bodies across the region.

The Principal Scientist also provided valuable technical guidance on crop management, nutrient application, weed management, pest surveillance, and harvesting practices to ensure better productivity and successful commercialization. He stressed the importance of scientific monitoring, farmer capacity building, and collaborative research for scaling up the cultivation.

DC Poonch addresses 'Nasha Mukta Yuva for Viksit Bharat' programme at GDC Poonch

HT News Network

POONCH, JULY 31: Deputy Commissioner Poonch Ashok Kumar Sharma today addressed the 'Nasha Mukta Yuva for Viksit Bharat' programme, organised by MY Bharat at Government Degree College (GDC) Poonch, as the Chief Guest. Held under the supervision of District Youth Officer Akhil Arya, it aimed to raise awareness among youth about the



harmful effects of drug abuse and channel their energy towards creativity,

healthy living and nation-building. The programme drew an overwhelming

response across eight categories: Debate, Painting, Slam Poetry, Music, Nukkad Natak, Dance, Reel Making and Slogan Writing. The first-position winners were Vanshika Sharma (Debate), Shahzaib Qayoom (Painting), Mohd Samir (Slam Poetry), Syed Ajaz Ali (Music), Sarswati Group (Nukkad Natak), Sameer and Atif (Dance), Danish Qureshi (Reel Making) and Aliya Khan (Slogan Writing).

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary reviews industrial development, restoration works in Kathua

HT News Network

KATHUA, JULY 31: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today visited Bhagthali Industrial Estate in Kathua district to inspect the progress of infrastructure development and flood protection works being executed in the area.

During the inspection, the Deputy Chief Minister took serious note of the delay in execution of development works worth around 60 crore being undertaken by IRCON, including creation of industrial infrastructure, civic amenities and flood protection measures.

Expressing concern over the delay, he directed the concerned authorities to issue notices to the executing agency for failing to adhere to the original completion timelines fixed for 2025. He also called for third-party scrutiny of the works executed so far and fixed October 2026 as the deadline for completion of all pending works.

The Deputy Chief Minister also visited M/s Kanadhari Beverages, M/s Chiripal Poly Films Limited at Bhagthali Industrial Estate. He reviewed their operations and interacted with the management of the industrial units to obtain feedback on infrastructure, industrial facilitation and other issues.

Reviewing the local employment scenario, the Deputy Chief Minister called upon the industrial units to provide greater employment opportunities to local youth through skill development and placement camps. He stressed the need to involve local elected representatives while identifying skilled and unskilled manpower requirements so that employment



opportunities reach deserving candidates in the area.

Later, Surinder Choudhary chaired a comprehensive review meeting on the functioning of industrial estates and progress of various development and restoration works in the district.

During the meeting, it was informed that 14 industrial estates are being established across Kathua district.

Reviewing the status of roads damaged due to recent rains and floods, the Deputy Chief Minister was informed that out of 48 affected PWD roads, temporary connectivity has been restored on 46 roads, including the Old Kathua-Samba Road. He directed the Executive Engineers to ensure restoration of connectivity on all remaining roads without delay and submit proposals for permanent restoration on priority. While reviewing the restoration works under the Irrigation and Flood Control Department, it was informed that 11 out of 15 restoration works have been completed while work on the remaining projects is in progress.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed the Deputy Commissioner Kathua to regularly review the func-

tioning of industrial estates and submit a comprehensive report to the Government highlighting issues requiring intervention for improving industrial infrastructure and investor facilitation. He emphasized close coordination among the industrial associations and other stakeholders for effective resolution of issues.

He further instructed the officers of the Pollution Control Committee, Mining and Forest Departments to ensure strict enforcement of all statutory regulations.

Regarding the issue of mining, Surinder Choudhary observed that the course of the River Ravi requires scientific correction by undertaking regulated lifting of material from identified pockets to streamline the natural flow of the river and minimise the risk of erosion during heavy rains and floods. He also directed the Joint Director, Labour Department, to ensure effective implementation of labour welfare measures and strict compliance with labour laws and labour codes by industrial units.

Reviewing the implementation of Mission YUVA, the Deputy Chief Minister called for extensive awareness.

JDU President G.M. Shaheen Visits Pattan, Listens to Public Concerns, Urges Cadres to Prepare for Local Body Polls

HT News Network

Pattan, 31 July (HT) Janata Dal (United) Jammu & Kashmir President G.M. Shaheen, along with senior party functionaries, visited Pattan on Friday where he met local residents and heard their concerns over various civic and developmental issues. During the interaction, residents highlighted several pressing problems, including inadequate public facilities, poor infrastructure, unemployment, and administrative shortcomings. Shaheen assured them that the party would strongly pursue these matters with the concerned departments and continue advocating for timely solutions.

While addressing party workers



and local representatives, Shaheen called upon all office bearers and grassroots activists to begin preparations for the upcoming Municipal and Panchayat elections. He stressed the importance of expanding the party's organiza-

tional strength and maintaining regular engagement with the public at the grassroots level. Taking a dig at the present administration, Shaheen said the expectations of the people had not been fulfilled, and many citizens across

Jammu and Kashmir were struggling due to ineffective governance, growing public dissatisfaction, and the government's inability to resolve everyday issues.

"People voted with hopes of progress, accountability, and efficient administration, but those expectations remain largely unmet. Janata Dal (United) will continue to stand beside the people and raise their concerns through democratic means," he said.

Shaheen also reaffirmed the party's commitment to empowering grassroots democracy and ensuring that the concerns and aspirations of ordinary citizens receive proper attention and representation.

DC Kishtwar reviews progress of LADP, CSR and R&R works of Hydroelectric Projects

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, JULY 31: Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Pankaj Kumar Sharma today chaired a review meeting on the progress of works under the Local Area Development Programme (LADP), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) Plans of various Hydroelectric Projects, including Pakal Dul, Kiru, Kwar and Ratle at the New DC Office Complex, Kishtwar. The DC reviewed the physical and financial progress of ongoing and completed works, including a Community Hall at Kishtwar; a 63 MVA, 33/11 KV Receiving Station with a 33 KV line at Hasti; a Veterinary Complex with residential accommodation at Kukurwas, Drabshalla; individual high-density orchards; additional water lifting schemes; and upgradation of HSKwar. Officers from RDD, Education, Health, Youth Services and Sports, Horticulture, Animal



Husbandry, Municipal Committee, PWD, Jal Shakti, REW RDD, Fire and Emergency Services, JPDC and other allied departments presented updates on the works allotted to them. The DC directed the Tehsildar Kishtwar to identify land for the Community Hall and for a Health and Wellness Centre at Kwar and the ExEn PWD R&B Paddar to complete the upgradation of HS Kwar within one month. He directed all executing agencies to accelerate pending works while maintaining quality and transparency, submit weekly Action Taken Reports and begin work.

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

Jameel Ansari

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

The seminar was presided over by Sahitya Akademi Awardee, poet and former President of Maraz Adbi Sangam, Ali Shaida. The presidium also included Javed Iqbal Khan, Editor of Sheeraza Kashmiri, and Altaf Nadeem, Secretary of the Rajab Hamid Memorial Adab. The programme commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Gulzar Ahmad Rather, who warmly welcomed the guests and briefly highlighted the life, personality and literary contributions of Rajab Hamid. On the occasion, Dr. Mohammad Shafi Ayaz,



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

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

Kashmiri language and its literary heritage. He noted that Rajab Hamid possessed profound knowledge of Sufism, mysticism and spiritual philosophy, which is vividly reflected in his poetic works. Speaking on the occasion, Javed Iqbal Khan said that Kashmiri literature is immensely enriched by Sufi poetry. He added that the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages has consistently worked to preserve and promote the works of eminent Sufi poets and will continue these efforts in the future.

HT EDITORIAL

Selling Dreams, Stealing Futures

Job Scams Continue to Prey on Unemployment, Demanding Stronger Enforcement, Greater Public Awareness

The filing of a charge-sheet by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW), Kashmir, in the alleged Airports Authority of India recruitment scam is more than just another criminal prosecution—it is a stark reminder of the growing menace of employment fraud that continues to exploit the aspirations of thousands of young people. At a time when unemployment remains one of the most pressing challenges facing Jammu and Kashmir, the false promise of a government job has become a lucrative business for fraudsters who prey on hope, desperation, and trust.

The allegations in the present case, where job seekers were reportedly induced to part with substantial sums of money in exchange for fictitious appointments, expose the cruel reality of these scams. For many victims, the financial loss is only one part of the tragedy. Families often borrow money, mortgage property, or exhaust life savings in the hope of securing a stable future for their children. When the deception comes to light, it leaves behind shattered dreams, crippling debt, and a profound loss of faith.

Unfortunately, this is far from an isolated episode. Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed a disturbing pattern of fraudulent recruitment rackets over the years. Individuals and fake organisations routinely claim to possess influence in government departments, public sector undertakings, or security agencies, promising guaranteed appointments in return for money. Such claims not only exploit vulnerable youth but also undermine public confidence in the integrity of genuine recruitment processes.

The action initiated by the EOW deserves appreciation, but it should also prompt a broader institutional response. Investigations must be swift, prosecutions must be effective, and convictions must send a strong deterrent message. More importantly, preventive mechanisms need to be strengthened. Authorities should intensify surveillance of fraudulent networks, closely monitor suspicious recruitment advertisements, and establish accessible channels for reporting employment-related fraud before innocent people become victims.

Equally important is the role of public awareness. Despite repeated advisories from government agencies and law enforcement, many job seekers continue to fall into the trap of believing that government jobs can be purchased through influence or intermediaries. This dangerous misconception must be decisively challenged. Recruitment to government services follows transparent and competitive procedures. Any individual demanding money in exchange for an appointment is not an agent of opportunity but a criminal exploiting desperation.

Educational institutions, employment exchanges, civil society organisations, and the media all have a responsibility to educate young people about recognising and reporting recruitment fraud. Awareness campaigns should become a sustained effort rather than an occasional response after a scam is uncovered.

The broader challenge, however, lies in addressing unemployment itself. Limited employment opportunities create fertile ground for deception. While governments continue working towards expanding job creation and improving recruitment systems, unemployed youth must remain vigilant. No degree of desperation should replace due diligence. Verifying recruitment notifications through official government channels can prevent financial ruin and emotional trauma.

The latest charge-sheet should therefore be viewed as more than a legal milestone. It is a warning to fraudsters that the law will pursue them, and a reminder to society that vigilance is the strongest defence against deception. The battle against job scams cannot be fought by law enforcement alone. It requires a collective commitment from government agencies, educational institutions, the media, and citizens alike.

Only when transparency prevails, awareness spreads, and fraudsters find neither willing victims nor safe havens will the business of selling false promises finally come to an end.

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Gujjar-Bakarwal Community

Guardians of the Forests, Yet Left Behind in the March of Development



By Noor Mohammad Trali

"Wherever they found a place to rest, they made it their home. Yet time and the system have too often overlooked their simplicity and resilience."

The Gujjar and Bakarwal communities are among the oldest nomadic communities of Jammu and Kashmir. For centuries, they have lived in the high mountains, lush meadows, and dense forests, maintaining a way of life deeply connected with nature. They are not merely pastoralists; they are the silent custodians of the region's forests. Whenever wildfires break out or natural disasters strike, these communities are often the first to respond, risking their own lives to protect forests and wildlife long before official agencies arrive. To them, the forest is not simply a source of livelihood—it is their home, heritage, and identity.

Ironically, the very people who have safeguarded these forests for generations frequently face uncertainty, restrictions, and displacement during their seasonal migrations. Their traditional way of life often collides with administrative challenges, leaving them feeling like strangers in landscapes they have helped preserve for centuries.

The Gujjar-Bakarwal community is widely known for its simplicity, honesty, hard work, and hospitality. They have largely pursued their rights peacefully and have never resorted to violence to make their voices heard. Yet, despite decades of independence and development, many continue to struggle with limited access to quality healthcare, clean drinking water, roads, housing, and other essential public services.

Education: A Journey from Tents to Dreams

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing the community is education.

For thousands of nomadic children, education begins and often ends in makeshift

tent schools that move with their families. These temporary classrooms provide basic access to schooling, but they fall far short of the learning environment available to children in urban areas.

extracurricular opportunities, the other struggles for the most basic educational facilities. Such disparities inevitably widen the gap in educational outcomes and future opportunities.

Improve access to healthcare, safe drinking water, temporary shelters, and veterinary services along seasonal migratory routes.

Ensure that policies concerning forests and grazing are implemented in a manner that respects the community's traditional way of life while remaining consistent with applicable laws and conservation objectives.

Expand residential schools and hostel facilities so that children who wish to pursue uninterrupted education can do so without abandoning their cultural identity.

The simplicity of the Gujjar-Bakarwal community should never be mistaken for weakness. They are an integral part of Jammu and Kashmir's cultural heritage and have long played an important role in protecting its fragile mountain ecosystems. Their children deserve the same opportunities to dream, learn, and succeed as every other child in the country.

The true measure of development is not how far cities advance, but whether those living in the most remote mountains are able to move forward with equal dignity, opportunity, and hope.

A Reflection in Verse

Politicians see our valleys as places to visit,

But snow and rain have often left us homeless.

They call us the kings of the mountains,

Yet even a clay pot cannot survive the storm.

Summer drives us to Jammu, winter calls us to Kashmir,

The changing seasons test us every year.

We spend our days following our flocks across the hills,

While politics remembers us only during elections.

We carried dreams of education to the school tent,

But found that even opportunity had forgotten our path.

Election seasons bring leaders to our camps,

Victory often brings silence and forgotten promises.

Trali, this is not merely the story of one community;

It is the unfinished journey of justice, equality, and hope.



Many of these schools lack permanent buildings, electricity, laboratories, libraries, digital learning tools, and even basic furniture. During harsh weather, children often study while sitting on mats inside tents that offer little protection from rain, wind, or extreme temperatures.

This raises a fundamental question: How can a child studying in a temporary tent classroom be expected to compete on equal terms with students attending well-equipped institutions such as convent schools, Delhi Public School (DPS), and other modern schools? While one group benefits from smart classrooms, internet connectivity, advanced teaching methods, and

The Way Forward

If India truly aspires to build an inclusive and equitable society, the contributions and aspirations of the Gujjar-Bakarwal community deserve greater recognition and practical support. Several measures deserve serious consideration:

Establish well-equipped mobile schools with trained teachers, digital learning resources, and flexible academic calendars suited to the nomadic lifestyle.

Introduce special educational support programmes, scholarships, and coaching facilities to help nomadic students compete in higher education and competitive examinations.

Nature Never Forgets Its Path



By: YOUSUF MIR

(This short story highlights the truth that the laws of nature may be ignored for temporary gain, but they can never be changed.)

Sahil and Muneeb had been close friends since childhood. Although they belonged to two different districts, distance had never weakened their friendship. Their childhood was filled with visits to each other's homes, playing in fields, orchards, and along the banks of streams and seasonal channels.

As the years passed and they completed their education, their paths diverged. Sahil joined government service, while Muneeb decided to expand his family's traditional occupations of farming and trade. He owned a small shop and only ten marlas of agricultural land, where he raised vegetable seedlings, sold seeds and plants, and earned his livelihood through hard work.

Within a few years, his efforts began to bear fruit. As his income increased, he built a modern poly greenhouse. The quality of his vegetable seedlings became known far and wide, and his financial condition improved considerably.

One day, while standing on his land, he said to himself: "If only I had more land, my destiny would completely change."

A natural stream flowed beside his land. Slowly, he began filling the edges of the stream with soil. Every year, he added a little more filling and moved his fence forward. In this way, his land gradually increased. Within a few years, his ten marlas had expanded to nearly one kanal.

On this newly added land, he built a second poly greenhouse. People admired his success, and Muneeb became convinced that he had achieved something remarkable.

One day, Sahil came to visit his old friend. As always, they sat together for a long time, remembering their childhood, and then Muneeb took him to see his land.

With great pride, he said: "Look, Sahil! I started with only ten marlas, and today... it has become nearly one kanal. I have even built a second poly greenhouse. It is all by the grace of God."

Sahil silently examined the land. He looked at the stream, then turned towards Muneeb.

"Muneeb, you have not expanded your land; you have narrowed the stream's course."

Muneeb smiled. "This stream? It has not seen a flood for years. Now it is only a stream in name."

Sahil calmly replied: "My friend, water may come late, but when it comes, it never forgets its path. Nature never

away. The vegetable seedlings disappeared into the mud. The wooden chest was also swept away by the strong current.

Muneeb, his relatives, and his neighbours rushed to save what they could, but water waits for no one. In a few moments, years of hard work, savings, and countless hopes were carried away.

When the news reached Sahil, he immediately went to his friend. Muneeb was sitting on the ground. His eyes were



forgets its path."

Muneeb laughed softly. "You are a government employee. You do not understand the details of farming. You will see, this very land will secure my children's future."

Sahil did not think it was right to argue. He only said: "Alright... time itself will decide."

Months passed, and Muneeb's success continued to grow. His second poly greenhouse became fully productive. Different vegetable seedlings for the spring season were ready. He also stored the year's rice harvest in a strong wooden chest and kept it safely on the same land.

He was certain that his hard work would bring even greater rewards. But nature was silent, not unaware.

At the beginning of March, continuous heavy rain fell for several days. Water from the mountains began gathering in the stream. At first, it reached the banks, then suddenly its flow became powerful.

Where the stream's course had been narrowed over the years by filling with soil, the water broke through with full force. Within hours, both poly greenhouses were washed

red, and his face showed complete helplessness.

The moment he saw Sahil, he embraced him and burst into tears. "Sahil... I am ruined..."

After a few moments, he said in a broken voice: "I kept thinking that I was increasing my land, but in reality I was laying the foundation of my own destruction. You warned me in time, but I laughed at your advice."

He became silent, wiped his tears, and looked towards the sky. "I did not conquer the land. I challenged nature itself, and no human being has ever won a battle against nature."

Sahil placed his hand on his friend's shoulder. They remained silent for a few moments.

Then Sahil quietly said: "My friend... nature never forgets its path. It is we who sometimes forget it."

In the distance, the same stream flowed quietly once again, as if reminding humanity that we can live in harmony with nature, but we can never block its path without paying the price.

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Grand Farewell Ceremony Held in Honour of J&K Cultural Academy Head Assistant Abdul Ghani Shah on His Retirement

Speakers Pay Glowing Tribute to Abdul Ghani Shah's Dedicated, Honest and Exemplary Service



JAMEEL ANSARI

Srinagar, July 31: A grand and dignified farewell ceremony was organised today by the Tagore Hall Employees to honour the retirement of Abdul Ghani Shah, Head Assistant of the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL), in recognition of his long, sincere and dedicated service.

The function was presided over by Ideel Saleem, Additional Secretary (Kashmir), JKAACL. The dignitaries on the dais included Syed Shakeel-ur-Rehman, Deputy Secretary, Mufti Shafiq-ur-Rehman, Editor (Arabic), and the guest of honour, the retiring Head Assistant, Abdul Ghani Shah. The event was attended by officers and employees of the Academy, literary personalities, friends and well-wishers of the retiree.

In his presidential address, Ideel Saleem paid rich tributes to Abdul Ghani Shah for his long, honest and dedicated service. He said that throughout his career, Shah performed his duties with utmost sincerity, commitment, professionalism and humility. He described him as a valuable asset to the institution whose contributions would always be remembered. He also wished him good health, happiness and a peaceful post-retirement life.

Deputy Secretary Syed Shakeel-ur-Rehman, Editor (Arabic) Mufti Shafiq-ur-Rehman and other speakers also praised Abdul Ghani Shah's professional competence, simplicity, humility and unwavering commitment to the Academy. They observed that his exemplary work ethic, dedication and courteous nature had earned him the respect of colleagues and would continue to inspire future generations of employees.

Expressing his gratitude, Abdul Ghani Shah thanked the Tagore Hall Employees, the Academy

administration, his colleagues, friends and all those present for organising the memorable farewell. In an emotional address, he said he had always received affection, respect and wholehearted support during

Zahoor Ahmad War and Abdul Wahid Minhas, who appreciated Abdul Ghani Shah's valuable services and wished him a healthy and fulfilling retired life. During the programme, the Tagore Hall



his service in the institution, memories that he would cherish throughout his life. He remarked that while official service comes to an end, the bonds of friendship, affection and mutual respect remain forever. He also wished continued progress and success for the Academy.

Among those who also shared their views on the occasion were Dr. Najeeb Latief (JKAS), Under Secretary, Dr. Syed Iftikhar Ahmad, Dr. Shabnam Rafiq, Dr. Gulzar Ahmad Rather, Zahoor Ahmad War, Birgees Akhtar, Ajaz Ahmad Saboon, Saleem Salik

Management screened a short documentary highlighting Abdul Ghani Shah's long professional journey and his valuable contributions to the Academy.

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of a traditional shawl and mementos to the retiree by the Tagore Hall Employees, his friends and colleagues as a mark of respect and appreciation for his distinguished service. The function ended in a warm, cordial and emotional atmosphere with prayers and best wishes for his future.

The Role Of Diet In Cardiovascular Diseases



By SURINDERPAL SINGH

The Cardiovascular diseases have become one of the greatest public health challenges of the twenty-first century. Every year, millions of people lose their lives to heart attacks, strokes, hypertension and other cardiovascular disorders. While modern medicine has made remarkable progress in diagnosing and treating these conditions, an uncomfortable truth remains: many cardiovascular diseases are largely preventable. The most effective weapon against this growing epidemic is not always found in sophisticated hospitals or expensive medicines—it begins with the food we choose to eat every day.

Our dietary habits have changed dramatically over the past few decades. Traditional meals prepared from fresh grains, vegetables, fruits and legumes have increasingly been replaced by processed foods rich in saturated fats, trans fats, refined sugars and excessive salt. Fast food has become a symbol of convenience, but its long-term consequences are proving to be costly. Rising rates of obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol have followed this nutritional transition, placing an enormous burden on individuals, families and healthcare systems across the world.

The relationship between diet and cardiovascular health is no longer a matter of speculation. Decades of scientific research have demonstrated that unhealthy eating damages the blood vessels, increases harmful cholesterol, promotes chronic inflammation, raises blood pressure and accelerates the development of atherosclerosis—the gradual narrowing and hardening of arteries. These silent changes often progress unnoticed for years until they suddenly manifest as a heart attack or stroke. By then, the opportunity for prevention may have already passed. Equally encouraging, however, is the evidence showing that healthy dietary choices can dramatically reduce cardiovascular risk. A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds and healthy fats supplies the body with essential nutrients, dietary fibre, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals that protect the heart and blood vessels. These foods help lower cholesterol, regulate blood pressure, improve blood sugar control, reduce inflammation and maintain healthy body weight. In many cases, they complement medical treatment and more importantly,

help prevent disease before it develops.

Among the greatest nutritional concerns today is the excessive consumption of salt. Modern processed foods contain large quantities of hidden sodium, contributing significantly to hypertension, one of the strongest risk factors for heart disease and stroke. Similarly, sugar-sweetened beverages and highly processed snacks provide large amounts of empty calories while increasing the risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes. These dietary patterns are not merely unhealthy; they represent preventable threats to public health.

The quality of dietary fat also deserves careful attention. While saturated and trans fats increase harmful LDL cholesterol and encourage plaque formation inside arteries, healthier unsaturated fats found in nuts, seeds, olive oil, mustard oil, groundnuts and fatty fish help protect cardiovascular health. Likewise, replacing refined carbohydrates with whole grains improves blood sugar regulation and supports healthy cholesterol levels. Diet alone cannot eliminate cardiovascular disease, but it remains the foundation upon which all other preventive measures rest. Regular physical activity, avoidance of tobacco, moderation in alcohol consumption, stress management, adequate sleep and periodic health screening work together with healthy nutrition to safeguard the heart. Medicines undoubtedly save lives, but no medication can fully compensate for years of unhealthy eating habits.

Unfortunately, healthy eating is often misunderstood as expensive or difficult to maintain. This misconception discourages many families from adopting nutritious diets. In reality, some of the most heart-friendly foods—lentils, beans, seasonal fruits, locally grown vegetables, whole grains and traditional home-cooked meals—are both affordable and widely available. The challenge lies not only in affordability but also in awareness and informed food choices.

Governments, educational institutions, healthcare professionals and the food industry all share responsibility for addressing this crisis. Public health campaigns should promote nutritional literacy from an early age. Schools should encourage healthy eating habits among children, while food manufacturers must reduce excessive salt, sugar and unhealthy fats in processed products. Clear nutritional labelling can empower consumers to make informed decisions and foster a culture of healthier living.

Cardiovascular diseases should no longer be viewed solely as medical problems; they are also social and nutritional challenges. Every unhealthy meal consumed today may contribute to tomorrow's disease burden, while every healthy meal represents an investment in future well-being. Prevention must therefore become a shared national priority rather than an individual responsibility alone.

A Valley Under Shadow : Kashmir's Escalating Crisis of Sexual Violence



By Bisma Ashraf Lone

In Kashmir, a different kind of fear is spreading quieter than conflict, but no less devastating. It is the fear that a daughter, sister, neighbor, or friend may not come home safely, or may return carrying wounds that cannot be seen. Across Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla, and other parts of the Valley, reports of rape and sexual assault have risen in recent years, exposing a deepening social crisis that can no longer be ignored. The growing number of cases is not just a statistic. It reflects a society under strain, a justice system often too slow to respond, and a culture that still places shame on survivors instead of accountability on perpetrators. Behind every reported case is a life interrupted, a family shaken, and a community forced to confront painful questions about safety, silence, and power. The Rising Numbers Official crime records from Jammu and Kashmir show a troubling upward trend in crimes against women, with rape cases making up a significant and growing share. The increase may partly reflect better reporting and stronger awareness, but it may also point to a real rise in sexual violence. For years, underreporting has hidden the true scale of the problem, as many families chose silence out of fear, stigma, or mistrust of the system. What is now visible is only part of the picture. In both urban and semi-urban areas, changing social patterns, unemployment, substance abuse, and weakening community oversight appear to be making women and children more vulnerable. In remote areas, isolation and poor access to support services make it even harder to report abuse, meaning many cases remain buried. Voices From Everyday Life For many families, this is not a debate about numbers it is a daily reality. Parents no longer allow daughters to stay out late. Young women think twice before using public transport, walking alone, or trusting familiar faces. Fear has become



routine. Women's shelters, legal aid centers, and counselors report a steady flow of survivors, including teenagers, children, and older women. Some were assaulted by strangers, but many by people they knew neighbors, relatives, classmates, or colleagues. Too often, survivors are told to stay quiet, protect the family name, or accept a private settlement instead of seeking justice. By the time many cases reach police or lawyers, precious time has been lost. Evidence weakens, trauma deepens, and hope begins to fade. Survivors are left fighting not only the accused, but also the silence, shame, and delay that surround them. Why This Is Growing There is no single reason behind the rise in rape cases. It is the result of several forces coming together at once. Economic pressure, unemployment, and the emotional toll of long-standing uncertainty have frayed many households. In some cases, frustration turns into domestic violence or sexual abuse. Alcohol and drug use, increasingly reported in parts of the Valley, are also linked to many assaults. At the same time, the old informal safeguards that once existed in tightly knit communities have weakened. Urban growth, migration, and changing family structures have created more anonymity and less social oversight. Meanwhile, digital technology

has introduced new forms of danger, including harassment, stalking, blackmail, and the non-consensual sharing of private images. Another part of the rise is political and social: more survivors are speaking out. Awareness campaigns, legal advocacy, and social media have made it harder for abuse to remain hidden. But greater visibility does not mean the crisis is solved it means the scale is finally becoming harder to deny. The Cost of Silence For decades, sexual violence in Kashmir has often been handled through silence, compromise, or pressure to "settle" matters privately. Families, fearing gossip and stigma, have sometimes chosen concealment over justice. In some cases, survivors have been pushed toward forced reconciliation or even marriage to the accused, as if that could erase the violence. That culture is beginning to crack. Young activists, lawyers, journalists, and women's groups are challenging the idea that rape is a private issue. Survivors are slowly beginning to speak, not as symbols of shame, but as voices demanding change. Still, speaking out remains risky. Many face social backlash, online abuse, and threats to their safety. What Needs To Change The crisis demands urgent and serious action. Police must be trained to handle sexual violence cases with sensitivity, speed,

and discipline. FIRs should be registered immediately, evidence must be preserved properly, and survivors and witnesses need protection from intimidation.

Investigations cannot be delayed or treated casually. The justice system must also move faster. Fast-track courts need stronger support, and legal aid must be more accessible, especially for families with limited resources. Judges, prosecutors, and defense lawyers should be trained in trauma-informed practice so survivors are not re-traumatized by the process. Support services are equally important. Survivors need access to emergency medical care, counseling, legal assistance, and safe shelter. One-stop crisis centers should be available in every district, with confidentiality, transport, and language support built into the system. Prevention matters too. Schools, colleges, and community institutions must teach consent, gender respect, and personal safety in practical ways. Boys and men must be part of the solution, not treated as bystanders. Religious and community leaders also have a major role in rejecting victim-blaming and supporting justice. Long-term change will require economic and social reform. Employment opportunities, mental-health support, substance-abuse treatment, and women's empowerment are not separate issues they are part of the same struggle to build a safer society. A Moral Test This is not only a law-and-order issue. It is a moral test for Kashmir. A region that has already endured decades of pain cannot afford to normalize violence inside homes, neighborhoods, and institutions. The question is not whether the Valley has suffered enough; the question is whether it will continue to tolerate new forms of suffering in silence. The answer must be clear: no to silence, no to impunity, and no to compromises that protect perpetrators. Kashmir needs systems that believe survivors, punish offenders, and create conditions where women and girls can live without fear. The Valley stands at a crossroads. It can remain trapped in fear, or it can choose accountability, courage, and change.

Bisma Ashraf is a writer and researcher based in Baramulla, focusing on gender, justice, and social change in Kashmir. She can be reached at - bismaashraf1one@gmail.com.

CS launches 162 new online citizen services on eUNNAT Directs removal of obsolete compliances, integration of high-volume services with WhatsApp and SSO

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today held a meeting of all the concerned Administrative Secretaries to assess Jammu and Kashmir's performance on the National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) and reviewed the progress made by the Information Technology Department towards expanding the digital governance ecosystem across the Union Territory.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary launched 162 district-level online citizen services, developed by the Information Technology Department, which have now been integrated with the eUNNAT Portal, taking the total number of online Government-to-Citizen (G2C) services available on the platform from 1,548 to 1,710.

The newly added services, developed for 18 districts of the Union Territory, encompass a wide range of regulatory permissions and public services, including permissions for fairs and exhibitions, cultural programmes, political and religious gatherings, processions, drone operations and several other district-level services.

These services are now available through a completely digital, paperless and workflow-based platform, enabling citizens to apply online, monitor the status of their applications and receive digitally signed approvals without visiting



Government offices. Emphasising continuous improvement, the Chief Secretary directed all Administrative Departments to ensure timely compliance with all mandatory NeSDA parameters and work in close coordination with the Information Technology Department for digitisation of additional public services. The Chief Secretary also directed the Information Technology Department to work in close coordination with the Law Department to undertake a comprehensive review of all online citizen services with a view to identifying those that have become redundant or obsolete in view of subsequent policy and legislative reforms.

He observed that, under the Government's Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) and Reducing Compliance Burden (RCB) initiatives, several certificates, permissions and No Objection Certificates (NOCs) had

already been abolished. Such services, he said, should no longer remain active on digital platforms, as their continued availability may lead to avoidable inconvenience for citizens. Dulloo further maintained that the objective of digital governance is not merely to place services online but also to simplify governance by eliminating outdated and unnecessary compliances. He remarked that citizens, in no way, should be compelled to apply for certificates or permissions that are no longer required under the prevailing policy framework.

He advised that such services be appropriately categorised as 'No Longer Required' on the eUNNAT Portal after due legal validation. He expressed that our objective is not merely to improve rankings but to build an ecosystem where digital governance must translate into

better governance at the grassroots level.

Emphasising greater accessibility and inclusive service delivery, the Chief Secretary further instructed the IT Department to identify at least 100 high-volume citizen services for integration with WhatsApp and the Single Sign-On (SSO) platform. He said that priority should be accorded to services frequently availed by farmers, tribal communities, women, children and other vulnerable sections to make Government services more accessible through widely used digital channels.

He further called for the integration of emerging digital public assets, including AgriStack-enabled digital land records and SVAMITVA Property Cards, as and when these are operationalised by the concerned departments, observing that the eUNNAT platform should continuously evolve into a comprehensive, future-ready digital service delivery ecosystem.

Speaking during the meeting, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar, stressed that the success of digital governance should be measured by the tangible value it creates for citizens rather than by the number of services hosted on a portal.

The emphasis should be on meaningful, high-impact and frequently used services. Addition of services, by itself, does not constitute progress unless those services genuinely address citizens' needs and improve their experience of public service delivery, he observed.

NCC wing of PM SHRI Govt HSS Bhalra organises cyber awareness programme

■ HT News Network

DODA, JULY 31: The NCC Wing of PM SHRI Government Higher Secondary School, Bhalra, under 10 J&K Battalion NCC Baderwah, organised a Cyber Awareness Programme on Friday to promote digital safety among students. A large number of NCC cadets and students took part.

Associate NCC Officer Dr Sanjeev Kumar Koul delivered the welcome address, flagging the rising threats of cybercrime. He apprised participants of the Cyber Security Awareness Initiative of IT Jammu and stressed the importance of cyber hygiene.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr Nitin Singh Kotwal, PhD in Computer Science from the University of Jammu. He spoke on advancements in computer technology, emerging cyber threats and online safety and shared practical strategies to safeguard personal information, use social media responsibly and prevent cyber fraud.

The programme was held under the guidance of Principal Asha Bhalwal and coordinated by Dr Koul, with support from Nirbhik Singh, Master and other teaching staff. Students engaged with the resource person during an interactive session and the programme concluded with refreshments.

ADC Baderwah convenes review meeting on PWD development works

■ HT News Network

BHADERWAH, JULY 31: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Baderwah Sunil Kumar Bhutyal convened a review meeting at his office chamber to assess the progress of developmental works being executed by the Public Works Department (PWD) in Sub-Division Baderwah during 2026.

The review covered ongoing and newly sanctioned projects of the PWD (R&B) Division Baderwah, including the veterinary building, Higher Secondary School (Boys) Baderwah, Higher Secondary School Saringal, Government Degree College Baderwah, Sub-District Hospital Baderwah, Chandi Mata Temple Baderwah and Gupt Ganga Temple. The ADC reviewed the progress of works executed by the R&B and discussed the delivery of civic services in the sub-division.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner directed the officers concerned to furnish a comprehensive report detailing all developmental works undertaken by the R&B Department, along with the civic functions and services being provided to the public. Among those present were the Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE), R&B and the Junior Engineers of Baderwah and Bhalla of the PWD (R&B) Sub-Division Baderwah.

The AEE, R&B Baderwah also submitted work-wise details of all ongoing projects being executed by the PWD (R&B) Sub-Division Baderwah.

UDHAMPUR; Meeting on Supreme Court directions for child protection and anti-human trafficking

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, JULY 31: Under the chairpersonship of the Principal District and Sessions Judge Udhampur, a meeting was convened today in the office chamber to discuss implementation of the directions issued by the Supreme Court of India in G. Ganesh v. State of Tamil Nadu and Others (SLP (Criminal) No. 11263/2025).

The meeting focused on strengthening the institutional framework for addressing missing children, child trafficking, child rescue, restoration, rehabilitation and inter-agency coordination. The action points approved by the Supreme Court were deliberated in detail to ensure effective implementation at the district level. Among those present were representatives of the Anti Human Trafficking Unit, Special Juvenile Police Unit, District Child Protection Unit, Child Welfare Committee and the Department of Women and Child Development.

PDD Baderwah bids farewell to Technician-I Imtiaz Ahmed Kelu on his superannuation

■ HT News Network

BHADERWAH, JULY 31: The Power Development Department (PDD) Baderwah organised a farewell function for Technician-I Imtiaz Ahmed Kelu on his superannuation after 28 years of service in the department.

Officers and staff of the PDD appreciated Mr Kelu's dedication, sincerity and contribution throughout his career. They praised his professionalism, honesty and commitment to duty, describing him as a respected colleague whose services will be remembered.

As a mark of respect, the PDD staff presented a memento and farewell gifts to Mr Kelu in appreciation of his years of service.

The PDD Baderwah staff extended their congratulations and best wishes to Mr Kelu for a healthy, peaceful and prosperous retired life.

BJP condemns Human Rights violations in PoJK, urges global community to break silence

■ HT News Network

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday strongly condemned human rights violations in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK), accusing Pakistan of targeting civilians, including women and children, and calling upon the international community as well as regional political parties in Jammu and Kashmir to speak out against the alleged atrocities.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters, party spokesperson Dr Tahir Chowdhary and BJP leader and spokesperson Dr. Abhijeet Singh Jasrotia expressed concern over the reported situation in PoJK and asserted that the people of the region continue to look towards India with hope.

BJP spokesperson Dr Tahir Chowdhary alleged that the situation in PoJK has deteriorated significantly in recent weeks, claiming that Pakistan's army and security forces are directly firing upon civilians, killing innocent people, including women and children.

He alleged that videos emerging from the region show residents appealing to the world for help while facing what he termed as blatant human rights violations. "Unfortunately, the global leadership and international organisations have remained silent despite these incidents," he said.

Dr Chowdhary contrasted the present situation with earlier years in Jammu and Kashmir when, according to him, separatist leaders frequently



approached the United Nations over issues in Kashmir.

He questioned why those voices are now silent despite the alleged civilian suffering in PoJK.

Referring to political developments in the region, he claimed that the people of PoJK increasingly identify themselves with India after witnessing governance and development on the Indian side of Jammu and Kashmir.

"The people of PoJK openly raise slogans in favour of India and express their desire to reunite with India. This growing inclination towards India has created fear within Pakistan's establishment," he alleged.

He further accused Pakistan of attempting to suppress these sentiments by creating harsh living conditions for residents of PoJK, alleging restrictions on food, medicines and other essential supplies.

Dr Tahir questioned the silence of regional political parties, including the National Conference (NC), People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Congress.

"I ask the leaders of these parties why they are not speaking openly against the atrocities being committed on the people of PoJK," he said.

DC Reasi reviews road safety measures, directs expedited action on black spots

■ HT News Network

REASI, JULY 31: Deputy Commissioner Reasi Kumar Abhishek today chaired a meeting of the District Road Safety Committee to review road safety measures across the district and the progress made by stakeholder departments.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the status of the District Road Safety Action Plan 2026-27, the identification and rectification of accident-prone black spots, the installation of crash barriers, parapets, road signages, road safety audits and enforcement initiatives. He directed the departments concerned to expedite corrective measures at all identified black spots and the executing agencies to prioritise crash barriers, warning signages and other safety infrastructure, particularly on accident-prone and hilly stretches. The DC laid special emphasis on regular road safety audits, particularly of roads and bridges. He directed the agencies concerned to submit detailed reports on the audits completed so far and ensure compliance with prescribed safety standards and the Transport Department and Traffic Police to conduct enforcement drives in the Mahore area to check overloading, over-speeding and other violations.



He further emergency response mechanisms, including the constitution of Emergency Rescue Teams (ERTs), deployment of Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs), first-aid training, trauma care preparedness and compensation for accident victims. He directed the Health Department to prepare a detailed estimate for a trauma centre and identify suitable land for it at the earliest.

The meeting also reviewed road safety

awareness campaigns by the Traffic Police, ARTO, Education Department, Health Department and Civil Defence. The Deputy Commissioner directed the departments concerned to hold regular awareness programmes to educate citizens, especially the youth, on responsible road usage and traffic rules. He further emergency response mechanisms, including the constitution of Emergency Rescue Teams (ERTs), deployment of Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs), first-aid training, trauma care preparedness and compensation for accident victims. He directed the Health Department to prepare a detailed estimate for a trauma centre and identify suitable land for it at the earliest.

Welcomes Notification for Implementation of Forest Rights Act in J&K; Calls for Transparent and Time-Bound Execution: Rattan Lal Gupta

■ HT News Network

Jammu July 31st :Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President, Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), has welcomed the notification issued by the Government of Jammu & Kashmir on 30 July 2026 for the implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

Addressing a Press Conference at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhavan, Jammu today, Rattan Lal Gupta said that the implementation of the Forest Rights Act is a long-awaited step towards ensuring justice, dignity and constitutional rights to the Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers who have been residing in and depending upon forest areas for generations. Gupta stated that the Act is



intended to recognize both individual and community forest rights, safeguard traditional livelihoods, and empower Gram Sabhas in the protection and management of forest resources. He expressed hope that the notification would now pave the way for speedy recognition of genuine claims in a transparent, fair and accountable manner.

He urged the Government to ensure that all eligible beneficiaries, particularly Gujjars, Bakerwals, Gaddis, Sippis and other eligible

forest-dwelling communities, receive the benefits of the Act without delay. He also called for extensive awareness campaigns in remote and hilly areas so that no eligible claimant is deprived of his or her lawful rights due to lack of information.

The Provincial President emphasized that the entire implementation process must remain free from bureaucratic delays and unnecessary hurdles. He urged the concerned departments to complete verification and disposal of claims within a fixed timeframe while maintaining complete transparency.

Rattan Lal Gupta said that "no member of a forest dwelling Scheduled Tribe or other traditional forest dwellers shall be evicted or removed from forest land under his occupation till the recognition and verification procedure is complete."

Nalwa holds monthly state review meeting

JAMMU, Jul 31: The BJP Minority Morcha, Jammu & Kashmir, on Friday held its monthly State Review Meeting in Jammu under the leadership of its President, S. Ranjodh Singh Nalwa, to assess the organisational activities of the Morcha and chalk out strategies for further strengthening the party's presence across the Union Territory. The meeting was attended by H.S. Pummy, Prabhari of the Morcha, Adv. Jasmeet Kour Pandey and Dhamanjeet Singh, General Secretaries of BJP Minority Morcha J&K, Gurdeep Singh, District President, Jammu South, besides district presidents, district prabhari, state executive members and other senior office-bearers from across Jammu and Kashmir. Addressing the gathering, S. Ranjodh Singh Nalwa reviewed the organisational performance of various districts and stressed the need to strengthen the Morcha at the grassroots level.

He called upon office-bearers to maintain close contact with people, intensify public outreach programmes and ensure the effective implementation of the party's policies and welfare initiatives among minority communities.

Nalwa urged party workers to remain united, disciplined and committed to public service while working to expand the organisational base of the Morcha throughout the Union Territory. He emphasized that regular interaction with the people and active participation in social and developmental programmes would further strengthen the party's connect with minority communities.

Chief Electoral Officer of Jammu & Kashmir, Sanjeev Verma, IAS, Unveils Achievers of North India

HT News Network

Jammu, 31 July 2026 The book Achievers of North India, dedicated to recognizing the remarkable achievements of distinguished personalities from various fields across North India, was formally unveiled by Shri Sanjeev Verma, IAS, Chief Electoral Officer of Jammu & Kashmir. The event was attended by Mahant Rohit Shastri, State Awardee and President of the Shri Kailash Jyotish Avim Vedic Sansthan Trust, Ashwani Ji, Editor of the book, along with several eminent dignitaries.

Addressing the gathering, Shri Sanjeev Verma, IAS, said that Achievers of North India is not merely a book but an inspiring document that reflects the struggles, dedication, and accomplishments of individuals who have made outstanding contributions to society and the nation in their respective fields. He stated that such publications inspire the younger generation and encourage a spirit of excellence, positivity, and commitment towards meaningful work. He congratulated the editor and everyone associated with the publication and expressed confidence that the book would serve as a valuable source of inspiration for years to



come. On the occasion, Mahant Rohit Shastri, State Awardee and President of the Shri Kailash Jyotish and Vedic Sansthan Trust, appreciated the initiative of bringing together distinguished achievers from across North India on a single platform. He said that many individuals are selflessly serving society in the fields of education, culture, spirituality, social service, administration, healthcare, literature, arts, industry, and several other sectors. Documenting their life journeys, dedication, and achievements is the need of the hour. He added that such publications not only recognize talent and service but also motivate the younger generation to contribute positively to society.

Ashwani sharma ji, MD Gold events and Editor of the book, informed that Achievers of North India features the biographies, achievements, and sig-

nificant contributions of several eminent and inspiring personalities from North India. He said that the primary objective of the publication is to bring the inspiring journeys of these achievers to the wider public and to encourage others through their stories of determination, perseverance, and success despite challenges.

The dignitaries present at the event described the publication as a commendable initiative, emphasizing that such efforts not only honour deserving individuals but also contribute to building a positive and progressive social environment.

environment.

Among those present on the occasion were Shri Saurabh Raina, Secretary, Jammu Development Authority (JDA), Kulbhushan Jamwal, and other distinguished guests. All the attendees extended their best wishes for the success of the book and expressed hope that Achievers of North India would serve as a powerful source of inspiration, guidance, and positive motivation for society while encouraging future generations to play an active role in nation-building.

The dignitaries present at the event described the publication as a commendable initiative, emphasizing that such efforts not only honour deserving individuals but also contribute to building a positive and progressive social environment. Among those present on the occasion were Shri Saurabh Raina, Secretary, Jammu Development Authority (JDA), Kulbhushan Jamwal, and other distinguished guests.

Policeman Injured in Accidental Firing During Patrol in Kokernag

HT News Network

Anantnag, July 31, KNT: A police personnel sustained injuries after his service weapon accidentally discharged during a patrolling duty in the Magam area of Kokernag in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Friday, officials said. The injured policeman was identified as Mohammad Altaf Khan, son of Habibi Ullah Khan.

Officials said the bullet struck his foot during the accidental discharge of the service weapon.

He was immediately shifted to Sub-District Hospital Kokernag for first aid and was later referred to Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag for specialised treatment.

J&K govt notifies uniform building permission fee across urban areas

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: In a significant reform aimed at streamlining the building permission process across Jammu and Kashmir, the Housing & Urban Development Department (HUDD) has notified a Uniform Building Permission Fee Schedule under the provisions of the Jammu & Kashmir Unified Building Bye-Laws, 2021, vide government order number 157-JK(HUD) of 2026.

The new fee schedule has come into force with immediate effect and will be applicable across all Urban Local Bodies and Development Authorities in the Union Territory.

The notification introduces a single, standardized fee structure for building permissions, replacing the varying rates that were previously followed by different Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, Municipal Committees and Development Authorities. The reform aims to bring uniformity, transparency, predictability and ease of doing business while ensuring a more consistent and citizen-friendly regulatory framework for urban development.

As per the new rates, the fee has been fixed at 80 per sq. metre for residential buildings including housing colonies, 150 for mixed-use buildings and 270 for commercial, public/semi-public, industrial and other special category buildings. The religious buildings have been exempted. The additional charges include Malba Security of 3,000 for residential and 10,000 for all other categories. A compounding fee of 40% of the applicable permission fee will also be levied over and above the normal fee.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Death of HANIFA BEGUM W/O AB HAMID WANI R/O. FREESTAR Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Death as 10/09/2024 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Death certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate 1st Class
KREERI.

HT - ADVT.

Tribal Affairs Department asks DCs to expedite settlement of Forest Rights Act claims across J&K

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: In a significant step towards ensuring timely implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA), the Department of Tribal Affairs has directed all the Deputy Commissioners across the Union Territory to expedite the process of receiving, verifying and settling claims under the Act through the statutory three-tier mechanism.

The directions have been issued through a government circular aimed at ensuring early completion of the statutory process for recognition and settlement of forest rights while safeguarding the legal rights of eligible forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers.

The Department, under the charge of Minister Javed Ahmed Rana, has also instructed all the districts to complete the claim verification and settlement process under the Forest

Rights Act and furnish the requisite certification upon completion.

Reiterating the legal safeguards provided under the Forest Rights Act, the Department has drawn the attention of all Deputy Commissioners and other stakeholders to Section 4(5) of the Act. The Act categorically provides that no member of a forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribe or other traditional forest dweller shall be evicted or removed from forest land under his or her occupation until the recognition and verification process prescribed under the Act is fully completed. The circular also reiterates the provisions of Section 6 of the Act, under which the Gram Sabha is the statutory authority responsible for initiating the process of determining the nature and extent of individual and community forest rights.

The Gram Sabha is mandated to receive, scrutinize and verify claims, prepare maps of the recommended claims and forward its recommendations to the Sub-Divisional Level Committee (SDLC) for further exam-

ination and decision.

Highlighting the statutory appellate framework under the Act, the Department noted that any person aggrieved by the resolution of the Gram Sabha may file an appeal before the SDLC. Similarly, appeals against the decisions of the SDLC may be preferred before the District Level Committee (DLC), whose decision on the record of forest rights is final and binding under the provisions of the Act.

As the nodal department responsible for implementing the Forest Rights Act in Jammu and Kashmir, the Tribal Affairs Department has also clarified that the provisions of the Act extend to municipal and urban areas. In such locations, the functions ordinarily performed by the Gram Sabha shall be carried out by the Ward Committee, wherever constituted, or by an assembly of adult residents of the concerned settlement, Mohalla Sabha, Pada or Tola, in accordance with the guidelines issued under the Act.

DISTRICT POLICE ANANTNAG.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Police Anantnag is investigating a Case FIR No.246/2026 U/S 103 BNS, 7/27 A.Act, 16,18,38, UA(P) Act, relating to a terrorist attack at Kotwal Gali, Anantnag in which one policeman attained Martyrdom. During investigation analysis of CCTV footage has featured above cited person who is involved in the said terrorist act.

If any person is having any knowledge /information or can identify the above mentioned accused, he/she may inform/ communicate through email/Whatsapp/SMS/Phone call to authorize in Anantnag Police, on below mentioned email/contact numbers:

Investigating Officer: 9596777660 Or 9596777661.

Email: spopsanantnag-14@jkpolice.gov.in

Any person giving such information shall be suitably rewarded and his/her identity will be kept confidential.



INVESTIGATING dt. AGENCY

DIPK-3939/26

Send Date: Jul 31 2026

Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER DEMARCATON FOREST DIVISION KASHMIR SRINAGAR TENDER NOTICE

e-NIT NO: 01 of 2026-27 DATED: 30-07-2026

For and on behalf of the Hon'ble President of India, e-tenders (Two cover system) are invited from registered, reputed and successful Contractors/Firms registered with Jammu & Kashmir Govt./Central Govt. Organizations for the following works: -

S.No.	Name of Work	Adv. cost (Rs. in Lakh)	Bid Security (EMD) INR (Rs.)	Class of Contractor	Cost of Tender Document/ IT FEE (Rs)	Time of Completion
1.	Construction of 52 No. Demarcation Boundary Pillars as per approved design along the forest Demarcation line (Main Line /Chak Line BP.s) as per the map/Tafseel-i-burjiyaat (Description of boundary Pillars) in Forest "Ladi Nambal" (Part) Uri Range Forest of J.V Forest Division Baramulla	3.53	7064	D	700	35 Days
2.	Construction of 13 No. Demarcation Boundary Pillars as per approved design along the forest Demarcation line (Main Line /Chak Line BP.s) as per the map/Tafseel-i-burjiyaat (Description of boundary Pillars) in Forest "Gujernad-Paranpela" Uri Range Forest of J.V Forest Division Baramulla.	0.838	1674	D	700	20 Days
3.	Construction of 54 No. of Demarcation Boundary Pillars as per approved design along the forest Demarcation line (main line) as per the map/Tafseel-i-burjiyaat (Description of Boundary Pillars) in "Reshnagri" Forest of Shopain Forest Division Shopain.	3.43	6868	D	700	40 Days

The position of codal formalities in respect of above work(s) is as under:

Sno	Particulars	Remarks
a.	Scheme	CAMPA
b.	Position of Funds	Budgeted
c.	Position of AA/TS	

Accorded by CCF S&D, J&K Vide:
I. PCCF/CCF/S&D/F-108/426-428 dated:09-07-2024
II.PCCF/CCF/S&D/F-108/458-62

The e-NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, scope of work, Bills of Quantities, (B.O.Q), Terms & Conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the website: - www.jktenders.gov.in.

Publishing Date:	30-07-2026
Download Start Date:	31-07-2026 from 12:00 Noon
Bid submission Start Date:	31-07-2026 from 12:00 Noon
Bid submission End Date:	12-08-2026 upto 06:00 PM
Date of Opening of Technical Bid through online:	13-08-2026 at 03:00 PM (In the office of Divisional Forest Officer, Demarcation Division Kashmir at Sheikhbagh Srinagar).
Date of Opening of Financial Bid through online:	To be opened (Online) after technical evaluation is completed.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the website: <https://jktenders.gov.in>.
 - The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the date of opening of bids.
 - The bidders have to submit their Technical & Financial bids online in electronic format with digital signature. No Technical or financial bid shall be accepted in physical/hard form. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned above.
 - Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copies of all necessary documents i.e., Valid Registration Card issued by PWD/CPWD/ duly renewed for the current year 2026-27, PAN, Valid GST Registration, Affidavit cum undertaking.
 - In pursuance to Finance Department Circular instructions vide No. FD-Code/290/2026 dated:22-05-2026 to implement online system for depositing Bid security (EMD) and Tender Fee across all works Departments. The Bidders shall deposit the EMD, IT Service Charges & Tender Fee in the Centralized Pooling Bank Account of this Department. The details of the Accounts are as. Account: Principal Chief Conservator Forests
- Name of the Bank: Jammu and Kashmir Bank.
Branch : Civil Secretariat
IFSC Code : JAKA0MOVING
Account No : 0110010200001102
- The above deposits should be made in separate Transactions and upload the transaction Receipts/ Fee deposit Receipt with the necessary documents to be uploaded above.
 - As per rule Guideline No. 4.12 of Manual for procurement of works from Govt of India, Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure, performance Security shall have to be deposited by successful bidder to the order of 5% of the value of contract
 - The Department will not be responsible for any delay in online submission of the bid due to any reason (technical or otherwise).
 - The Department shall not be held responsible for selection criteria/policy matter being adopted by the Directorate of Information regarding publishing the NIT, in any of the newspaper under circulation.
 - The Tender Accepting Authority reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
 - All other terms and conditions shall remain same as per PWD form 25 (double leaf) and as per the Detailed Tender document.

Send Date: Jul 31 2026
DIPK-3957/26

Sd/-
SHOWKAT AHMAD KUTHOO
Divisional Forest Officer,
Demarcation Forest Division,
Kashmir Srinagar

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my Father's name SONAULLAH GANIE Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040005042 wants to be registered on my name GH MOHD GANIE S/O GH RASOOL GANIE If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name...GH RASOOL GANIE
S/O...GH MOHD GANIE
R/O...BANDIPAYEEN
BLOCK...WAGOORA

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Nissar Ahmad Bukhari father of Syed Ayaan Nissar Bukhari resident of Kreeri District Baramulla want to inform the general public through this notice that my name and my wards name has been mistakenly mentioned in the school records Syed Ayaan Nissar son of Syed Nissar Ahmad Bukhsri instead of Syed Ayaan Nissar Bukhari son of Nissar Ahmad Bukhari. Now I want to correct it. In this regard if anybody has any objection they may contact the Principal SRM Welkin Educational Trust Sopore with in seven days after that no objection will be entertained

Nissar Ahmad Bukhari
Father of Syed Ayaan Nissar Bukhari
R/O:- Kreeri District Baramulla

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my No Plate of vehicle CREATA bearing Registration No J K01AK-4270 from LAWAIPORA TO NORBAL. Now I have applied for its Duplicate.

If any body have any objection regarding this He/She can contact RTO Srinagar within a period of seven days after that no objection will be entertained.

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

DEMISE

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the demise of

Mrs Sonmal

W/o Late: Habibullah Shah

R/o Shah Namat ullah Colony Srinagar

who passed away on
29th July 2026
(Wednesday).

THE CHAHARUM
will be held on

01 August 2026 (Saturday) 10:00 AM

Graveyard Anjum Masjid Qammarwari Srinagar

BEREAVED

SHAH FAMILY

7006993482 | 7780919429 | 7006708572

May Almighty Allah grant her the highest place in Jannat-ul-Firdous and give strength to the bereaved family. Ameen.

CCS reviews global security situation, supply chain constraints

■ HT News Network/UNI

NEW DELHI, July 31: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday discussed with a group of senior ministers the prevailing global security situation and how to maintain supply chain uninterrupted despite conflicts in different zones, including the Strait of Hormuz, the Black Sea, the Red Sea, and the Gulf of Aden.

The extended Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) meeting, chaired by the prime minister, was attended by permanent members - Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and special invitees - Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister J P Nadda, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri, official sources said.

It is understood that a comprehensive discussion was held regarding ongoing global conflicts, their security implications, and the resulting disruptions to India's imports and supply chains - most of which transit through these conflict zones.

The safety of Indian citizens in conflict



zones and the protection of seafarers were also reviewed in detail during the two-hour-long meeting at the Parliament House complex, according to sources. The ministers gave presentations on their respective ministries and steps taken by them to ensure uninterrupted import of all goods, including petroleum, natural gas and fertilisers, they said.

Global political situation is believed to have been discussed at the meeting, which was called in short notice, the sources said.

The prime minister is learnt to have given certain directions to the ministers to ensure the safety of Indians, India's economic interests and find ways to the supply chain hinderance. Supply Chain Management

Before the US-Israel's war with Iran, India's 40 per cent energy import came through the Strait of Hormuz. With the conflict not ending permanently, India's energy import from West Asia was badly hit.

The energy import through the Strait

of Hormuz continues to be minimum due to the intermittent attacks on the oil and cargo ships.

Last week, the Yemen-based Houthis militia announced that it will target Saudi Arabian tankers attempting to cross the Bab al-Mandab. The group also targeted a few ships following the announcement.

The Bab al-Mandab connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea and a critical chokepoint for global trade, and energy supplies -- similar to the Strait of Hormuz.

According to the data available, the impact is already visible as ships crossings through the Bab al-Mandab decreased to an average 31 per day over the past three days in comparison to 43 per day in the first half of July.

Besides, Russian oil import through the Black Sea is also under pressure as Russia-Ukraine war intensified.

There have been several attacks on ships passing through the Black Sea in last few days.

India depends on imports to meet its over 88 per cent energy requirements. India also imports a large amount of fertilisers from various sources.

Besides about one crore Indians live and work in West Asia.

7.25 cr screenings for sickle cell anaemia conducted in tribal areas till July 26: Nadda

■ HT News Network/UNI

NEW DELHI, Jul 31 More than 7.25 crore screenings for sickle cell anaemia have been conducted in the tribal dominated areas of the country till July 26, Union Health Minister J P Nadda told the Lok Sabha on Friday.

Responding to a question, Nadda said public health and hospitals are state subjects and that the Union health ministry provides technical and financial support to the states and UTs for conducting screenings for sickle cell anaemia, procurement of drugs and strengthening the existing blood banks/establishing new blood banks, based on proposals received as programme implementation plans (PIPs) under the National Health Mission (NHM).

Under the National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission (NSCAEM), screenings in the targeted age group of 0-40 years are conducted at all the health



facilities, from district hospitals up to the Ayushman Arogya Mandir (AAM) level, in 17 states with tribal population, including Maharashtra, for the diagnosis of sickle cell disease (SCD). Responding to a question, Nadda said public health and hospitals are state subjects and that the Union health ministry provides technical and financial support to the states and UTs for conducting screenings for sickle cell anaemia, procurement of drugs and strengthening the existing blood banks/establishing new blood banks, based on proposals received as programme implementation plans.

India Calls For Global Scrutiny Over Pak's 'Ruthless' Crackdown In PoJK

■ HT News Network/UNI

New Delhi, Jul 31 India on Friday called upon the international community to scrutinise Islamabad's "ruthless" use of force against peaceful protesters in Pakistan-Occupied-Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) and hold it accountable for the "atrocities". Kashmir Tourism Information

Around 40 people were reportedly killed in the crackdown by the security forces in PoJK since July 27 amid local-body elections in the region.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir

Jaiswal said the Pakistani establishment continued to "unleash ruthless force" against peaceful civilians in PoJK.

The PoJK has been witnessing massive protests since last month over inflated living costs, alleged administrative apathy and political discrimination and atrocities against minorities.

The Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) has been leading the protests.

"This crackdown has resulted in the tragic death of over 40 civilians and serious injuries to many," Jaiswal said at a regular media briefing. Its absolute disdain



for the innocent people of PoJK was laid bare when the defence minister branded the protesting civilians as enemies.

"Adding to this, the Special Assistant to the prime minister on political affairs, openly admitted that the very 'mujahideen' that

Pakistani establishment trained, armed and sent to bleed India have now turned their guns inward, weaponising themselves against the state," he added.

Jaiswal said the "so-called" elections stand as a "humiliating rejection" of the Pakistani establishment.

"Facing a violent regime, the people have requested international organisations for an independent investigation into the unlawful killings," he said.

"We urge that the international community should scrutinise Pakistan's actions and hold it accountable for its atrocities," he added.

Rahul, Priyanka Making 'Fabricated' Allegations In Lok Sabha: Anurag Thakur

■ HT News Network/UNI

NEW DELHI, Jul 31 BJP MP Anurag Thakur on Friday accused Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for making "fabricated" allegations in the Lok Sabha in violation of the House rules.

He said he has submitted a notice to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla seeking action against Gandhi.

The former Union minister also accused the opposition parties of insulting the armed forces and the police, alleging that their leaders question military operations, level false allegations against Union Home Minister Amit Shah and use objectionable language in Parliament.

Thakur on Thursday submitted a notice of breach of privilege and



contempt of the House against Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi for "use of unparliamentary and derogatory language and levelling grave and unsubstantiated allegations" against Union Minister Amit Shah.

In the three-page notice, Thakur requested Birla to refer the matter to the Privilege Committee for a

detailed enquiry and appropriate action, including a direction to Gandhi to tender an unconditional apology to the House as well as to Shah.

"We have repeatedly seen that the Congress and some opposition parties never miss an opportunity to insult the Indian Army and the police. They questioned the airstrikes, surgical strikes and Operation Sindoor, and echoed the language of India's enemies," Thakur told reporters in the Parliament House complex. History. "It is unfortunate that the Congress leaders use objectionable language inside the House and level fabricated allegations in violation of the rules. I have submitted a notice under the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha and urged the Speaker to take action," he said.

Delhi sees light rain, thunderstorms; IMD forecasts wet spell till Aug 6

■ HT News Network /UNI

New Delhi, Jul 31 Delhi witnessed very light to light rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning at many places on Friday, while temperatures remained slightly above normal during the day.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast generally cloudy skies and intermittent rain across the national capital over the next week, with light to moderate showers expected to continue till August 6.

According to the IMD, there was no significant change in minimum temperatures, while maximum temperatures rose by 1-2 degrees Celsius over the past 24 hours.

Across Delhi, minimum temperatures ranged between 23°C and 27°C, while maximum temperatures were between 35°C and 36°C.

At Safdarjung, the city's base observatory, the maximum temperature settled

at 35.8°C, 1.4 degrees above normal, while the minimum temperature was 27.2°C, close to normal.

The station recorded 3.3 mm of rainfall during the 24-hour period ending at 8:30 a.m., with an equal amount recorded during the daytime observation period.

Relative humidity fluctuated between 62 per cent and 91 per cent, while north-easterly winds of around 15 kmph prevailed.

Among other stations, Delhi Ridge recorded the highest rainfall at 7.6 mm, followed by Najafgarh AWS (5 mm), Safdarjung (3.3 mm) and Palam (3 mm). Lodhi Road received 1.1 mm, while several stations, including Ayanagar and Pusa, recorded no rainfall.

The IMD has forecast generally cloudy skies with spells of very light to light rain for the rest of Friday, particularly during the afternoon and evening.

On August 1 and 2, Delhi is likely to witness one spell of light rain during the morning followed by another at many places in the afternoon and evening.

PM Modi says Cabinet's landmark decisions will empower farmers, athletes and drive India's energy future

■ HT News Network/UNI

New Delhi, Jul 31 Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday hailed a series of landmark decisions taken by the union Cabinet, saying they underscore the government's commitment to strengthening farmer welfare, promoting a sporting culture, enhancing energy security and expanding clean energy capacity as India advances towards the goal of becoming a developed nation.

In separate posts on social media platform X, the Prime Minister welcomed the Cabinet's approval to extend the Pradhan Mantri Kisan



Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme, revamp the Khelo India Scheme and enhance assistance to National Sports Federations, launch the National Offshore Exploration Scheme 'Samudra Manthan', and roll out the Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana.

Welcoming the extension of the PM-KISAN Scheme till 2030-31, Modi said the government remained dedicated to ensuring the prosperity of farmers across the country. "We are committed to the empowerment and prosperity of our farmer brothers and sisters across the country. In this direction, approval has been given today to extend the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme till 2030-31. This assistance not only helps our food producers meet expenses related to seeds, fertilisers and other farming needs but is also improving their economic condition," the Prime Minister said.

SC stays arrest of former TN Minister Senthil Balaji in TASMAL corruption case

■ HT News Network/UNI

New Delhi, Jul 31 The Supreme Court on Friday stayed the arrest of former Tamil Nadu Minister and present DMK MLA V Senthil Balaji in an alleged corruption case registered by the Tamil Nadu Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) in connection with irregularities reportedly in the functioning of the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (TASMAL).

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi passed the interim order while hearing Balaji's plea challenging the Madras High Court's dismissal of his anticipatory bail application.

The court made the protection from arrest conditional on Balaji cooperating with the investigation.

It also directed him to surrender his passport and restrained him from influencing witnesses or tampering with evidence. The Madras High Court had earlier dismissed his anticipatory bail plea in the fresh case registered by the DVAC in connection with the alleged TASMAL scam. The DVAC registered the case against Balaji and six others on Wednesday, alleging irregularities in liquor procurement, transportation contracts, grant of licences and other administrative decisions within TASMAL during the period from 2021 to 2025.

2020 Delhi Riots: Life Term For Ex-AAP Leader Tahir Hussain, Court Says Case Doesn'T Warrant Death Penalty

■ HT News Network /UNI

NEW DELHI, Jul 31 A Delhi court on Friday sentenced former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain and four co-convicts to life imprisonment for the murder of Intelligence Bureau officer Ankit Sharma during the 2020 Delhi riots, saying the case did not fall within the "rarest of rare" category warranting the death penalty.

The judgement was pro-

nounced by Additional Sessions Judge Praveen Singh in the presence of Hussain and others amid tight security.

The judge awarded the sentence after hearing arguments on the quantum of sentence and denied the state contention to award death penalty to the convicts, saying the prosecution was not able to prove that they were beyond reformation.

The courtroom was

packed with lawyers and senior Delhi Police officials including Crime Branch's Joint Commissioner and DCP.

The family of Hussain was so present in the court.

In its order, the court said, "I find myself unable to agree based on the SPP that the convicts are beyond reformation or have such a fiendish character that their continued existence, even in prison, will be a menace to society. For the other



offenses the convicts have been found guilty of, they must face the full force of the law." Geographic Refer-

ence It said that the state has not bought anything on record to establish that any of the convicts has any vio-

lent disposition or propensity to crime.

"The final test that law requires me to undertake before I conclude that this case invites capital punishment is whether the convicts are beyond redemption and there being no chance of reformation, it is now firmly established in our criminal jurisprudence that death penalty is of the last absorption," the judge said.

On being asked about his

sentence, Hussain said the high court will serve him justice.

Earlier, Delhi Police had sought death penalty for all the five accused, saying they fell to the "level of being animals" while relentlessly assaulting Sharma.

Special public prosecutor Madhukar Pandey had submitted that Sharma was brutally killed and was not shown any mercy by the convicts, so they should not be given any leniency.

Those who are asking for mercy today should have shown mercy themselves. No mercy was shown from anyone's side. No one even took Ankit to the hospital. They are asking for mercy after committing such a brutal murder, Pandey had said. On July 13, the court convicted Hussain and four others for the murder of Sharma, who was attacked by a mob during the riots. His body was later found in a drain.

Sleep disorders leave you tired? They may also alter your brain, US study finds

NEW DELHI: Structural changes in the brain responsible for attention, decision-making and emotional control could be associated with sleep disorders, a study by researchers at Florida International University (FIU) in the US has found.

Published in the peer-reviewed journal Scientific Reports on 26 February, the study examined the results of 57 brain imaging studies which may help improve diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders.

"The findings could help in developing better diagnostic tools, therapies and personalised therapies," lead author Katharine Crooks said in a statement.

The study estimated that 50 million to 70 million Americans have sleep disorders. But researchers warned that the findings do not show whether brain changes cause sleep disorders or result from them.

What the study found



For the study, researchers found structural changes in the thalamus, a part of the brain that

filters information, supports attention and helps with thinking in people with different sleep

disorders. They also found differences in the pulvinar, a part of the thalamus that helps to direct attention and control behaviour. These changes could help to explain why people with sleep disorders often have poor concentration, slower reactions, difficulty making decisions and an increased risk of errors and accidents.

The study compared two broad categories of sleep disorders. The first, dyssomnias, encompasses conditions such as insomnia and sleep apnoea, where it is hard to fall asleep, stay asleep or get restorative sleep. The second, parasomnias, includes conditions such as sleepwalking, nightmare disorder and sleep terrors, where unusual behaviours or experiences interrupt sleep.

Both groups showed changes in the thalamus but only parasomnias consistently showed structural changes in the posterior cingulate cortex, a brain region involved in motivation, decision making and emotional regulation. The

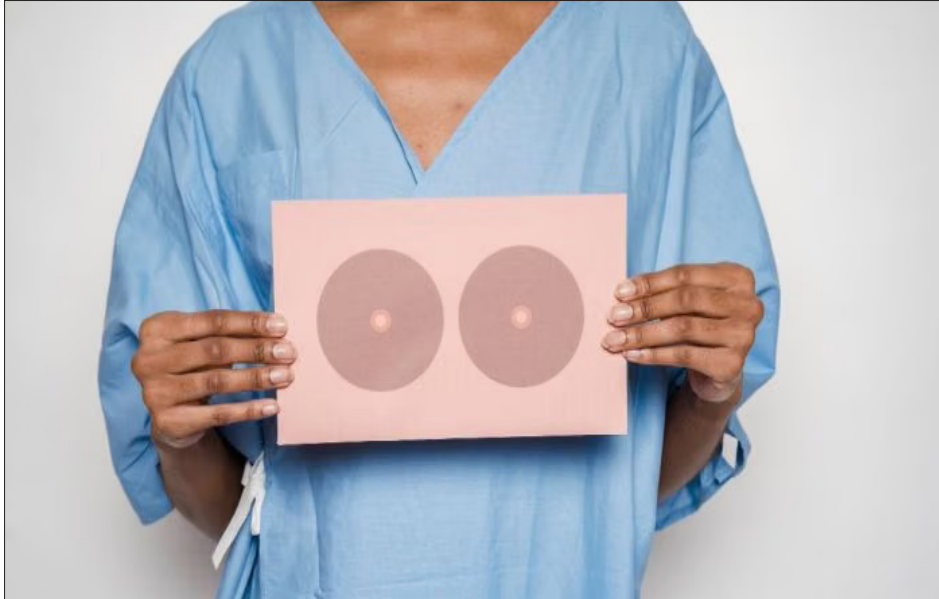
researchers say these changes may help explain the mood and behavioural problems sometimes seen in people with these disorders.

No specific structural changes were found that were consistent in dyssomnias. The study will help understand how sleep disorders affect the brain differently depending on how they disrupt sleep, researchers said.

"By bringing together the results of many studies, this research gives a clearer picture of how sleep disorders affect the structure and function of the brain, and where we should focus next," senior author Matthew Sutherland, a cognitive neuroscientist at FIU, said in a statement.

Future research will examine individual parasomnias, such as sleepwalking and rapid eye movement (REM) sleep behaviour disorder, to see if the brain changes are a cause, a consequence or a combination of the two.

Chemotherapy or hormone therapy? New test can tell what breast cancer patients need



NEW DELHI: A new cancer diagnostic test developed by researchers from the University of North Carolina School of Medicine accurately predicts whether breast cancer patients need chemotherapy, or if hormone therapy alone would be a safe and effective treatment plan.

"Support from a new clinical trial has found that more than two-thirds of high-risk patients could be spared chemotherapy without compromising outcomes," said Charles Perou, distinguished professor at the UNC School of Medicine and one of the researchers who developed the diagnostic test.

According to the statement posted on the university's website, Perou's work was critical in the development of the diagnostic test, called Prosigna. In 2005, researchers started working on a genomic test that can identify the patient's breast

cancer subtype and estimate the probability of the cancer coming back. This test can be used in the clinic and does not require an elaborate arrangement.

How does the test work?

According to the UNC School of Medicine, Prosigna analyses tumour samples and uses a machine learning algorithm to assess an ROR—risk of recurrence—score for the patient, which provides oncologists an insight into the patient's disease progression. These details include the probability of a patient's risk of cancer relapse.

In 2007, a clinical trial was set up to see if the Prosigna test could safely guide chemotherapy decisions for patients with early-stage, ER-positive HER2-negative breast cancer.

In this type of breast cancer, the tumour cells have ER or estrogen receptors, that use the hormone estrogen

to grow. However, they do not have high levels of the HER2 or the human epidermal growth factor receptor-2, a protein which controls how healthy cells grow, divide, and repair. The ER-positive HER2-negative breast cancer is also the most common subtype of breast cancer, representing about 70% of all cases.

The university's statement said that the trial—Optimal Personalised Treatment of early breast cancer using Multi-parameter Analysis (OPTIMA)—was followed with more than 4,400 patients across the UK, Norway, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand and Thailand for over 20 years.

"Participants were put on a treatment path according to their Prosigna results. Those who received high ROR scores (>60) received chemotherapy followed by hormone therapy, while those with low ROR scores (≤60) received hormone therapy alone," the statement read.

The results

The most promising outcome of the study was that over 68% of patients with clinically high-risk breast cancer could safely forgo chemotherapy entirely.

"These patients achieved five-year cancer-free survival rates of 93.7% without chemotherapy, demonstrating that omitting treatment did not compromise overall health outcomes or increase cancer recurrence risk," according to researchers.

The findings also showed that the Prosigna test was "equally effective for previously under-studied populations (premenopausal women and those with multiple breast cancer containing lymph nodes) demonstrating that assessing tumor biology, versus clinical factors alone, can guide chemotherapy decisions for more complex cases."

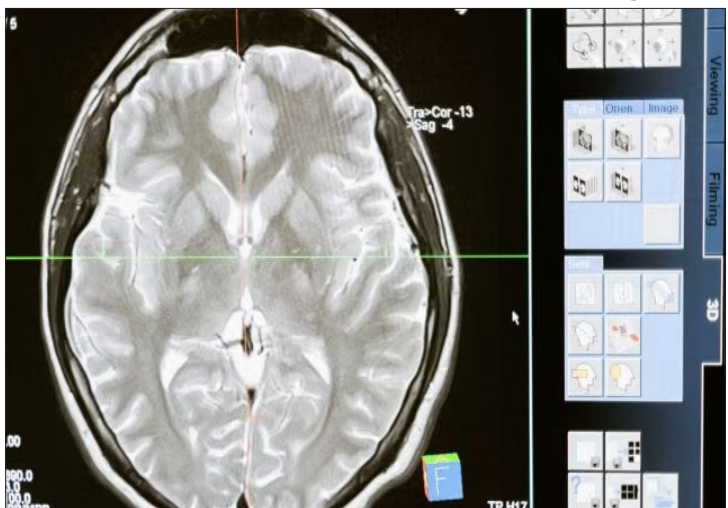
An early warning system protects the brain from viral attacks, say scientists

NEW DELHI: A viral infection may take days or weeks to infiltrate the body and reach the brain, but scientists found that the brain begins to prepare for battle within hours of sensing the infection. This is triggered by an early immune signalling system that communicates between the blood-brain barrier and any infected tissue across the body.

The discovery was published on 14 July in the journal Immunity by researchers at the Rockefeller University's Laboratory of Virology and Infectious Disease. This finding debunks the theory that the brain is passive and unaware of infections until the virus reaches its doors.

"We discovered that the blood-brain barrier acts as a sort of central immune signaling hub between the body and the brain. The presence of virus-associated molecules in the foot is enough to trigger the network," said first author Tyler Lewy, a former graduate student at Rockefeller University, and now a postdoctoral fellow with the NIH, in a University statement.

These findings are important



because some viruses, such as the West Nile virus, the Powassan virus, or the herpes simplex virus can invade the brain and cause encephalitis, a type of inflammation that leads to extensive neurological damage or even death. Now that researchers know the brain has an existing early-warning system they could create treatments to strengthen this immune response and prevent viral brain infections.

Tests on mice

Researchers made the discovery after infecting mice with the West Nile virus. Even though the virus had not affected the brain yet, the organ had already begun producing interferon-stimulated antiviral genes.

This proves that the blood-brain barrier is not just a wall between the brain and the rest of the body—instead, it acts like an immune organ which can communicate with the rest of the

body and alert the central nervous system of incoming dangers.

Researchers found that this warning is triggered not by the virus itself but by its genetic material, or viral RNA. The immune system detects this RNA in its tissues and sends a signal to the blood-brain barrier which then activates the relevant antiviral response in the brain.

In cases where scientists artificially triggered this warning system in mice, using synthetic molecules that resemble viral RNA, infected mice were far more likely to survive viruses that attack the brain. "This early warning system appears to be a common mechanism of protection that gives the brain time to gird itself against severe encephalitis caused by viruses. The findings deepen our understanding of the immune system's intricate surveillance apparatus and how the signaling pathways involved influence whether someone develops encephalitis or not," said professor of virology and Nobel laureate Charles M Rice in a University statement online.

Teenagers who eat protein-rich breakfast end up eating healthier during the day, says study

NEW DELHI: A recent US-based study has found that teenagers, who tend to skip breakfast, may improve the quality of their diet just by eating a high-protein morning meal. The study was conducted by the Dell Medical School at the University of Texas at Austin, and was presented at

added sugar intake

The trial included 128 adolescents, aged 14 to 21, who skipped breakfast at least six days a week. Participants were randomly assigned to either continue skipping breakfast, eat a typical breakfast (approx. 15 g protein), or eat a high-protein



NUTRITION 2026, the annual meeting of the American Society for Nutrition.

The study, held over six months, found that adolescents who ate breakfast had more of the

breakfast (approx. 30 g protein).

Researchers served more than 18,000 breakfast meals that included burritos, quesadillas, egg scrambles and smoothies. More than 90 per cent of the meals

served during the study were consumed by people.

Those who ate breakfast consumed higher levels of fibre, iron, zinc and choline, but the overall daily calorie intake was similar across all groups.

The study also found that groups that had breakfast consumed less desserts, sweets and candies than those who skipped breakfast, and the high-protein group had the lowest intake of added sugar.

"Although most Americans think that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, there isn't a lot of evidence to support this idea," Brown said. "We wanted to see

“This is one of the largest and longest tightly controlled breakfast trials in adolescents,” said Emma Rose Brown, a doctoral student at the University of Texas at Austin. “Our findings suggest that adding breakfast, particularly rich in protein, may be an effective way to improve nutrient intake and diet quality among older adolescents.”

key nutrients: iron, zinc and choline, as well as fibre as compared to those who kept skipping the meal. They also ate fewer desserts, sweets and other high-sugar foods. The most significant improvements were seen in participants who ate high-protein breakfast.

"This is one of the largest and longest tightly controlled breakfast trials in adolescents," said Emma Rose Brown, a doctoral student at the University of Texas at Austin. "Our findings suggest that adding breakfast, particularly rich in protein, may be an effective way to improve nutrient intake and diet quality among older adolescents."

More protein in brekky = less

whether consuming a high-protein breakfast would increase nutrient intake and promote healthier eating throughout the day."

Researchers say they now plan to explore whether protein-rich breakfast foods can help reduce food cravings and aid in long-term weight management, particularly among young adults and those who discontinue taking GLP-1 medications, used to treat type 2 diabetes and manage chronic weight conditions.

The researchers, however, said that the study is in preliminary stages and has not yet been through the peer-review process for publication in a scientific journal.

Asian Games gold medallist Swapna Barman retires

United News Of India

NEW DELHI, JULY 31 :Swapna Barman, the first Indian heptathlete to win a gold medal at the Asian Games in the combined discipline, announced her retirement from athletics on Friday.

The 29-year-old Swapna, who won her historic gold at the Jakarta 2018 Asian Games and is also a former continental champion, said a run of injuries had finally forced her hand. "Over the years, I have faced many injuries, including a slipped disc and knee injuries. I tried to fight through the pain and keep going, but now my body is no longer supporting me the way it once did," Barman noted in her retirement message.

"This is one of the most difficult decisions of my life. Athletics has been more than just a sport for me - it has been my identity, my passion, my dream," she said.

Born on October 29, 1996, in



Ghospara village near Jalpaiguri in northern West Bengal, Swapna grew up battling financial hardships. Her father, Panchanan Barman, worked as a rickshaw puller before suffering a stroke, while her mother worked at a tea estate. Swapna has three siblings, according to olympics.com.

Swapna got into athletics to try and help her family financially.

Trained at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) centre in Kolkata, she competed for years with a rare physical challenge, having been born with six toes on each foot - a condition that often

caused her acute pain during events. Swapna first announced herself as a force in Indian athletics in 2017 when she claimed the heptathlon gold

at the Asian Athletics Championships in Bhubaneswar.

Despite collapsing after the closing 800m race, she secured top podium having already banked enough points across the earlier disciplines to seal the title.

The Indian athlete's career-defining moment, though, came a year later in Jakarta.

Competing with a jaw injury, Swapna Barman became the first Indian to win an Asian Games heptathlon gold, making it one of the country's most celebrated athletics performances at the continental meet.

Her tally of 6026 points at Jakarta 2018 is her personal best and fell narrowly short of Olympian JJ Shobha's national record of 6211 points in the combined discipline, which has been standing since 2004.

The feat earned her the Arjuna Award, one of India's highest sporting honours, in 2019.

Test captain Najmul Shanto wants respect as Bangladesh eye Australia scalp

United News Of India

DHAKA, JULY 31: Bangladesh Test captain Najmul Hossain Shanto believes his team can overcome their injury woes and cause a surprise during their upcoming two-match ICC World Test Championship series against Australia.

Bangladesh travel Down Under for a Test series for the first time in 23 years and the Asian side arrive full of confidence having beaten Pakistan at home earlier in the year to rise to fourth on

the World Test Championship standings.

Their task of overcoming the Aussies will be difficult given the absence of key fast bowler Nahid Rana for the entire tour and the loss of experienced batter Litton Das and tall pacer Shoriful Islam for the opening match of the series in Darwin, but Shanto is expecting his side to perform well.

"Injuries can happen. Nahid Rana, Shoriful and Litton Das are obviously important players. Injuries are honestly beyond anyone's control. Any player can get injured at any time,"

Shanto said prior to Bangladesh's departure for Australia.

"But those who are in the squad have also been playing for many years. This is a great opportunity for those who have got their chance to perform well. As captain, I can't expect to always have my best players available. I have complete faith in whoever gets the opportunity."

"I have complete faith in the team that is going to Australia and believe we can play good cricket."

There's no point now thinking about which player would have made us better or who we're missing. I think what matters is how well this team can play and how much belief we have in it. I certainly have that belief."

J&K Women Clinch Bronze at All India Tennis Ball Cricket Championship



Farooq Rather

JAMMU, JULY 31: The Jammu & Kashmir Women's Tennis Ball Cricket Team made the Union Territory proud by securing the bronze medal (2nd Runners-up) at the All India Tennis Ball Cricket Championship, held in Jaipur, Rajasthan, from July 28 to 30, 2026.

The team delivered an outstanding performance throughout the tournament, displaying exceptional skill, determination, and team spirit while

competing against some of the strongest sides from across the country. Their consistent performances earned them a well-deserved place on the podium.

The squad was captained by Heena Bhat and coached by Faizan Qayoom, while Mehbooba Gul served as the team manager. Their leadership, meticulous planning,

and dedication played a key role in the team's successful campaign.

Congratulating the players on their achievement, B.K. Tickoo, President of the Jammu & Kashmir Tennis Ball Cricket Association, described the bronze medal as a proud moment for the Union Territory.

"The bronze medal won by our women's team is a matter of immense pride for the entire Union Territory."

The players have displayed outstanding commitment, discipline, and sportsmanship throughout the

championship. I congratulate Captain Heena Bhat, Coach Faizan Qayoom, Manager Mehbooba Gul,

and every member of the team for bringing glory to Jammu & Kashmir. This achievement will inspire many young girls to take up Tennis Ball Cricket and strive for excellence," he said.

Netherlands Men's Squad Named for FIH Hockey World Cup 2026

United News Of India

AMSTERDAM, JULY 31: Netherlands National coach Jeroen Delmee has announced his World Cup squad for the 2026 Hockey World Cup.

Twenty players, including two goalkeepers, are part of the selection.

The Dutch men's hockey team, TeamNL, will be in action from August 15 to 30 during the 2026 Hockey World Cup, which will be played in Amsterdam and partly in Waver (Belgium).

August 16, 2026, is marked with a large red circle in the calendar. On that day, the Dutch Men's Hockey team plays their first match of the 2026 Hockey World Cup in Amsterdam. New Zealand is the first opponent for head coach Jeroen Delmee's team.

"Making a selection involves disappointing some players," said national coach Delmee.

"That is actually the most frustrating aspect of the job. These guys have put their heart and soul into the team, had a clear goal in mind, and ultimately I decide otherwise. The difficult thing about the selection this time is that some players still need to take the final steps towards top fitness, because they have been sidelined due to injuries. We are counting on their progress and have a lot of confidence in that, but normally you have fewer uncertainties regarding fitness."

In addition to the group of 20 players, three players are on standby so they can step in if necessary.

Unnati Hooda, Tanvi Sharma enter semifinals of Taipei Open



United News Of India

TAIPEI, JUL 31 :India's Unnati Hooda and Tanvi Sharma won their respective women's singles matches to enter the semifinals of the Taipei Open badminton tournament here on Friday.

Kiran George, however, lost his men's singles quarterfinal match against Japan's fourth seeded Yudai Okimoto 21-12 21-10 in 33 minutes.

Hooda clinched a straight-game 23-21 21-16 victory over compatriot Devika Sihag to reach the last four stage, while Tanvi got the better of Thailand's Supanida Katethong 21-15 18-21 21-

14 in a gruelling 54-minute quarterfinal clash.

Earlier in the day, the all-Indian quarterfinal contest between Hooda and Sihag started with a fiercely contested first game, where the former held her nerve to win it 23-21.

Hooda was off to a great start, racing to an 11-3 lead before Sihag staged a spirited comeback to level the scores at 21-21. However, Hooda held her composure in the closing stages, winning the next two points to clinch the opening game.

In the second game, the third seeded Hooda maintained her momentum and capitalised on her leads to wrap up the match 21-16 against eighth seed Sihag in 42 minutes.

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