

Sakeena Itoo reviews progress on implementation of various projects in Health, Education, Social Welfare Deptts.

Calls for time-bound completion of projects, optimal utilisation of funds

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 17: Minister for Health & Medical Education, School Education, Higher Education and Social Welfare, Sakeena Itoo today chaired a high-level meeting to review the action taken and progress achieved on decisions taken during earlier review meetings, with particular focus on major infrastructure and development projects being implemented by the Health, Education and Social Welfare departments across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary Education, Ram Niwas Sharma; Special Secretaries of Higher Education, Health and Education Departments; Directors of Health Services Jammu and Kashmir; Directors of School Education Jammu and Kashmir; Principals of Government Medical Colleges and other senior officers of the concerned departments.

The Minister undertook a comprehensive review of the physical and financial progress of various ongoing projects, including infrastructure works, Capex and SASCI projects, utilisation of funds, procurement of equipment and implementation of decisions taken in previous review meetings.

Emphasising the importance of translating sanctioned projects into tangible outcomes



for the people, Sakeena Itoo directed the officers to ensure strict adherence to timelines, close monitoring of execution and clear accountability at every stage. She stressed that financial expenditure must correspond with actual physical progress and called for immediate resolution of bottlenecks causing delays.

Reviewing healthcare infrastructure in Kashmir, the Minister was informed that the 125-bedded District Hospital at Reshipora,

Budgam has achieved 75 per cent physical progress and is targeted for completion by March 2027. The status of various SASCI projects was also reviewed.

The meeting was further informed that a proposal for establishment of a Critical Care Hospital Block at Uri has been initiated, with five kanals of land identified at Mohara.

In Jammu division, the Minister reviewed the proposed Trauma Centre at Surankote, new

UT Capex works and the 100-bedded Hospital at Sunderbani. She was informed that construction of the Sunderbani hospital is nearing completion, while equipment worth 66 lakh has been requisitioned and the facility is expected to be made operational shortly.

The Minister also reviewed infrastructure and other development works at GMC Handwara, GMC Srinagar, SKIMS Medical College Bemina, GMC Rajouri, Government Ayurvedic College Akhnoor, GMC Kathua, GMC Jammu and GMC Anantnag.

At GMC Rajouri and GMC Kathua, she took stock of Capex and CSS works, functioning of Dental Units and procurement of essential equipment. The meeting was informed that the upgradation of the GNM Nursing School to a Nursing College at GMC Rajouri has achieved 65 per cent progress, while construction of the Teaching Hospital at GMC Kathua is at an advanced stage.

At GMC Jammu, the Minister reviewed the status of Capex and CSS works and was apprised that several projects have either been completed or are nearing completion. The functioning of the Emergency Dental Unit and District Early Intervention Centre at SMGS Hospital was also assessed.

DIPR Shopian organises Photo Exhibition showcasing Life Stories, Struggle and Sacrifice of Freedom Fighters

■ HT News Network



SHOPIAN, AUGUST 17: The District Information & Public Relations (DIPR), Shopian, organised a photo exhibition showcasing the life stories, struggles, sacrifices and contributions of freedom fighters and martyrs as part of the ongoing Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign.

The exhibition featured photographs and accounts highlighting the lives and struggles of national heroes and their significant role in the nation's journey towards freedom. It provided visitors, particularly the younger generation, an opportunity to learn about their courage, patriotism, determination and selfless sacrifices.

The life stories of the freedom fighters and martyrs served as a source of inspiration, reminding visitors of the immense sacrifices made for the country and the values of courage, unity and national service.

The exhibition formed part of a series of patriotic activities being organised in Shopian under the Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign and celebrations marking 150 years of Vande Mataram, aimed at fostering patriotism and keeping alive the inspiring legacy of the nation's heroes.

DC Ganderbal reviews preparations for Annual Harmukh Gangbal Yatra-2026

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GANDERBAL, AUGUST 17: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, today chaired a meeting to review the preparations and arrangements for the smooth conduct of the Annual Harmukh Gangbal Yatra-2026.

The meeting held a detailed review of the arrangements being made by various departments, with particular focus on road connectivity, security, accommodation, drinking water, sanitation, healthcare, power supply, traffic management, food supplies, communication and emergency response mechanisms.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned departments to complete all necessary arrangements well in advance and ensure effective inter-departmental coordination. He stressed upon the need for proper deployment



of manpower and magistrates at identified locations to facilitate the smooth movement and management of the yatra.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned departments to ensure adequate arrangements for drinking water, sanitation, toilets and cleanliness along the route and at the camps. He stressed upon maintaining a clean and environmentally responsible yatra, with special emphasis on proper waste disposal and keeping the area free from plastic waste.

The Health Department was directed to deploy doctors, ambulances and medical teams

and ensure adequate availability of medicines, oxygen and other essential medical facilities for timely response.

The Power Development Department was asked to ensure adequate power arrangements, while the concerned agencies were directed to keep communication and telecommunication facilities functional and maintain necessary backup arrangements.

The DC also directed the Forest and Wildlife authorities to ensure that all arrangements are carried out while safeguarding the ecology and natural environment of the area.

Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi Reviews Arrangements at Naqshband Sahib Shrine Ahead of Khwaja Digar

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, August 17, 2026: Ahead of the religious observance of Khwaja Digar, Chairperson of the Jammu & Kashmir Waqf Board, Dr. Syed Darakhshan Andrabi, personally visited the historic Naqshband Sahib Shrine in Srinagar and reviewed the arrangements made there in detail. During her visit, Dr. Darakhshan Andrabi personally inspected the various arrangements at the shrine, including cleanliness and sanitation, mats and carpeting for devotees, prayer areas, lighting, movement and access arrangements, facilities for devotees, and overall preparations. She also interacted with the Waqf Board officers and staff present on the occasion and directed that all facilities for devotees be maintained in the best possible manner, so that they could offer their prayers and worship in a peaceful, clean and dignified environment. The Chairperson also inspected the interior and exterior areas of the shrine and personally reviewed the arrangements made for devotees. Her presence on the ground reflected the Waqf Board's emphasis on direct supervision, accountability and efficient arrangements during important religious occasions. Following the inspection, the arrangements for Khwaja Digar were carried out smoothly, and the Khwaja Digar prayers were offered peacefully, with a large number of devotees participating with religious devotion and reverence. Dr. Syed Darakhshan Andrabi's personal presence on the occasion once again.

District Admin Bandipora marks Har Ghar Tiranga culmination with giant Map of India at SK Stadium

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, AUGUST 17: District Administration Bandipora, in collaboration with the Department of School Education, Bandipora, organised the grand culmination of the Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign-2026 at SK Stadium, Bandipora, in connection with the 150 Years' Commemoration of "Vande Mataram." Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, presided over the programme as the Chief Guest. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation of around 10,000 students along with teaching and non-teaching staff from educational institutions across the district. Despite the hot weather, the students participated with great enthusiasm, carrying the Tricolour and joining in various activities that reflected patriotism, national unity and pride in the nation.



A major highlight of the programme was the creation of a giant Map of India by the students, who collectively formed and filled the map, presenting a striking visual expression of national unity and the spirit of Vande Mataram. The initiative showcased the creativity, discipline, coordination and patriotic enthusiasm of the students and emerged as a special attraction of the event.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner appreciated the enthusiasm and spirit displayed by the students. She lauded the students for their remarkable

presentation of the Map of India and said that such initiatives serve as a source of encouragement and inspire everyone to contribute more towards the nation. The DC also appreciated the efforts of teachers and educational institutions for facilitating the participation of students and nurturing in them the values of patriotism, unity and respect for the National Flag. The students participated with pride in the celebrations and joined in the singing of the National Anthem. The programme provided a meaningful platform for inculcating the values of patriotism, unity, integrity and responsible citizenship among the younger generation.

The overwhelming participation of students and staff made the culmination programme a memorable celebration of the national spirit and the 150-year legacy of Vande Mataram.

District Admin Kupwara organizes Training Session Under Census 2027 Phase II

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, AUGUST 17: District Administration Kupwara today organized a training session for District Officers, Charge Officers, and census related officials under Census 2027 Phase II at the Meeting Hall of the ACD Complex, Kupwara.

The training session was aimed at sensitizing and equipping the designated Charge Officers and officials with the necessary knowledge and skills for the effective implementation of the second phase of Census 2027.

During the session, participants were briefed on various aspects related to the census process, including their roles and responsibilities, field-level procedures, and adherence to the prescribed guidelines and protocols.

On the occasion, ADC Kupwara, Gulzar Ahmad Khan who is also the District Census Officer emphasized the importance of accuracy, coordination, and timely completion of census-related activities to ensure smooth and effective implementation at the district level.

He reiterated commitment from District



Administration to ensuring meticulous preparations and coordinated efforts for the successful conduct of Census 2027 in the district.

CPO Kupwara, Tehsildars, Master Trainers, Staff from DSEO Kupwara, and other concerned officials were present during the training session. On the occasion, ADC Kupwara, Gulzar Ahmad Khan who is also the District Census Officer emphasized the importance of accuracy, coordination, and timely completion of census-related activities to ensure smooth and effective implementation at the district level.

He reiterated commitment from District Administration to ensuring meticulous preparations and coordinated efforts for the successful conduct of Census 2027 in the district.

CEO, FSSAI reviews food testing facilities in J&K; assessed infrastructure, capacity enhancement measures

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 17: Chief Executive Officer, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Rajit Punhani, today visited Food Laboratory, Kashmir during his visit to Srinagar, to have on spot assessment about its functioning.

During the visit, the CEO FSSAI took round of various sections, including Microbiological Section, Chemical Section and HEE Sections and interacted with the technical staff of the Laboratory.

Subsequently, the CEO FSSAI chaired a meeting which among others was attended by State Drug Controller J&K, Joint Commissioner Food Safety, Deputy Commissioner Food Safety Kashmir, Accounts Officer FDA and Food Analyst Food Testing Laboratory Srinagar and Jammu.

E Commissioner, Food & Drugs Administration, J&K, made a detailed presentation outlining the laboratory's analytical capabilities, testing performance, NABL accreditation, infrastructure, manpower position and the roadmap for strengthening food testing facilities across the Union Territory. It was informed that the Food Laboratory, Kashmir is an FSSAI-notified and NABL-accredited facility equipped with advanced instruments, including GC-MS/MS, LC-MS/MS and ICP-MS. The laboratory presently has a NABL scope covering 354 parameters, comprising 77 quality and 277 safety parameters.

The presentation highlighted the testing workload handled during the last three financial years. The laboratory



analyzed 11,479 samples in 2023-24, 9,938 in 2024-25 and 6,722 in 2025-26, out of which, 440, 266 and 381 samples respectively, were found to be non-conforming.

The meeting was informed that the steps have been initiated to expand the scope of Laboratory to 3500 parameters by end of 31st March, 2027 covering key commodities including milk and milk products, fruits and vegetables, cereal and cereal products, oils and fats and Indian sweets and achieve wider coverage of 5,000 parameters in the long run.

The Commissioner brought to the notice of the CEO, FSSAI the key constraints affecting the laboratory's functioning, including inadequate infrastructure, shortage of technical manpower. He also sought his intervention in approval of the proposal for hiring of Technical Manpower, Chemicals, CRMs Consumables etc. He requested the CEO, FSSAI for providing financial and technical assistance for construction of new laboratory building at Srinagar and Jammu and upgrading the facility to improve quantity and volume of testing.

The Food Laboratory, Kashmir is presently housed in an old, shared Drug & Food Laboratory complex, with limited space for modern equipment and dedicated instrument sections.

As part of the long-term strategy, the Department proposed developing an integrated Food Testing Laboratory network across Jammu and Kashmir by leveraging the existing facilities in government institutions, including SKUAST and IUST, with suitable technical and manpower support. The initiative is intended to expand the overall testing capacity and facilitate timely analysis of samples received from different parts of the Union Territory.

The Commissioner, Food & Drugs Administration, J&K, expressed gratitude to Rajit Punhani, CEO, FSSAI, for visiting the Food Laboratory, Kashmir and for taking a keen interest in its functioning, analytical capabilities and capacity-building requirements.

The CEO, FSSAI expressed satisfaction on the working of laboratory and called upon the J&K FDA officials to continue their efforts for strengthening it further.

Div Com Kashmir reviews arrangements for Ist International Film Festival of J&K

Directs departments to designate nodal officers for smooth conduct of festival

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 17: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg today chaired a meeting to review preparations for the 1st International Film Festival of J&K (IFFJK), scheduled to be held from September 7 to 10 and organised by the Department of Information and Public Relations Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting deliberated on the objectives of the festival, the proposed programme of events, and coordination among various government departments and stakeholders to ensure its successful conduct.

Director Information and Public Relations Shreya Singhal, at the outset, made a detailed presentation outlining the vision and objectives of the festival, including promotion of cinematic excellence, cultural exchange, creative collaboration, emerging filmmaking talent and international industry engagement.



She apprised the meeting of the planned activities, including the opening and closing ceremonies, curated film screenings, masterclasses, panel discussions, jury and filmmaker interactions, film tourism initiatives, networking and business meetings, and dedicated engagement with students and young filmmakers.

While reviewing the arrangements, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir directed all the concerned departments to designate nodal officers for effective inter-departmental coordination and seamless execution of the film festival-related activities. He also directed the Director Information and Public Relations to prepare a comprehensive work chart for the event manager and participating departments, clearly defining roles, responsibilities and timelines. Emphasising the promotion of Kashmir's tourism potential, particularly emerging destinations, Anshul Garg directed the Tourism Department to undertake

focused branding of new tourist locations to attract filmmakers and international visitors. He also called for appropriate branding of shikaras and boats being utilised during the festival.

The Divisional Commissioner further stressed the need to integrate cultural programmes with the festival and showcase Kashmir's rich handloom and handicraft products at identified venues.

He advised the preparation of food menu suited to national and international guests and directed that bilingual service providers be designated through the outsourced agencies to facilitate effective communication.

Anshul Garg also called for organising heritage tours to locations identified by JKTDC and the Handicrafts & Handloom Department. He reviewed plans for customised tour packages, sightseeing programmes and transportation arrangements for visiting guests.

SKUAST-K holds Graduation Day for 77 BVSc students



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GANDERBAL, AUGUST 17: The Faculty of Veterinary Sciences & Animal Husbandry (FVSc&AH), Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), today held its 3rd Graduation Day Ceremony for the BVSc & AH 2020 batch at Harmukh Auditorium, Shuhama, marking the graduation of 77 veterinary students.

The graduating students were presented Provisional Degree Certificates upon successful completion of the BVSc & AH programme, while their final degree certificates will be conferred at the forthcoming formal convocation of the University.

The ceremony featured an academic procession, Veterinarian Oath, felicitation of academic achievers and the best outgoing internee student. A newsletter on the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan programme series, the 4th edition of the Arts & Craft Faculty Club magazine and a documentary prepared

by the graduating students were also released.

Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, who was the Chief Guest, congratulated the graduates and their parents and appreciated the Faculty for its continued efforts towards academic excellence and professional training.

Prof. Ganai urged the young veterinarians to go beyond professional qualifications and emerge as responsible One Health professionals and conscientious citizens. He called upon them to pursue excellence with discipline, integrity and a strong sense of social responsibility, contributing to the development of the region and the nation.

Highlighting SKUAST-K's growing academic and institutional recognition, the Vice-Chancellor reiterated the University's commitment to strengthening its national standing and pursuing global aspirations through progressive academic and institutional initiatives.

Mission Shakti Shopian conducts Awareness Programme on welfare initiatives for women at kathollan

HT News Network

SHOPIAN, AUGUST 17: Sankalp Hub for Empowerment of Women, Mission Shakti, Shopian today organized an impactful awareness programme at Kathollan, Shopian, with the objective of sensitizing women, girls and the local community about their rights, safety, dignity and the various welfare initiatives available for their empowerment.

During the programme, participants were sensitized about the vision and objectives of Mission Shakti, with special emphasis on strengthening



women's access to government schemes, services and institutional support. The team highlighted the importance of women's education, economic independence, financial literacy, legal awareness and participation in decision-making

Detailed awareness was also provided regarding various women and child welfare schemes and support services, including Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, PMMVY, women-related social security schemes, marriage assistance, employment-generating schemes, financial literacy initiatives and Mission YUVA. Participants were encouraged to make full use of eligible government schemes and approach the concerned departments for assistance.

The programme also focused on creating awareness regarding women's safety.

2-week Student Induction Programme for B.Tech/B.Arch Batch-2026 commences at GCET Jammu

HT News Network

JAMMU, AUGUST 17: The Government College of Engineering & Technology (GCET), Jammu today started a two-week Student Induction Programme for the first-year students of B.Tech and B.Arch Batch-2026.

The programme is being organized under the patronage of the Principal Prof. (Dr.) Sameru Sharma.

The inaugural ceremony commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by Prof. (Dr.) Sameru Sharma, in the presence of the Coordinator, Heads of Departments and faculty members.

Addressing the newly admitted students, Prof. (Dr.) Sameru Sharma

urged them to make the most of every academic, technical, research and co-curricular opportunity. She emphasized that engineering education is not merely about earning a degree, but about developing competence, character and the confidence to innovate and solve real-world challenges. She encouraged students to dream big, stay curious and disciplined, and strive to become skilled professionals and responsible citizens who bring pride to the institution and contribute meaningfully to society.

Coordinator of the Student Induction Programme Prof. Simmi Dutta outlined the objectives of the programme, emphasizing holistic development, intellectual growth, communication.

JU Organises Five-Day Workshop on Artificial Intelligence and Software Tools

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Jammu, August 17: A five-day workshop on "Artificial Intelligence and Software Tools" was inaugurated today at the Department of Lifelong Learning (DLL), University of Jammu. The workshop is being organised by the Counselling Unit of DLL, Employment Information Cum Advisory Bureau (EIAB), with the objective of enhancing participants' knowledge and practical proficiency in Artificial Intelligence, emerging AI tools, software applications, online resources and digital learning technologies.

The workshop was inaugurated by Prof. Priyanka Sharma, Director, Department of Lifelong Learning. In her inaugural address, she emphasised the growing importance of Artificial Intelligence and remarked that "AI is the need of the hour." She highlighted the need for students and scholars to develop digital competencies and keep pace with rapidly emerging technological advancements. Mr. Abhigya Mahajan, Assistant Professor, School of Computer Science and Engineering, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, Katra, was the resource person for the first day of the workshop. He delivered an informative session on Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Deep Learning.

DLSA Ganderbal, organises legal awareness programme on the NALSA Child-Friendly Scheme 2024

HT News Network

GANDERBAL, AUGUST 17: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Ganderbal, under the chairmanship of Abdul Nasir, Chairman, DLSA Ganderbal, and under the guidance and supervision of Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary, DLSA Ganderbal, organised a legal awareness programme on the NALSA Child-Friendly Scheme, 2024 at Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Saloora, Ganderbal. The programme was conducted with the objective of sensitising students about their legal rights and creating awareness regarding child-friendly access to justice, protection and legal assistance available to children.

Adv. Bilal Ahmad Bhat and Adv. Burjeena Hameed, Members of the Legal Services Unit for Children (LSUC), sensitised the students about various legal rights of children, protection from abuse, exploitation and violence,



and the importance of ensuring a safe, secure and child-friendly legal environment.

During the programme, Adv. Bilal Ahmad Bhat elaborated upon the role of Legal Services Authorities in providing free legal aid and assistance to children, particularly those belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged sections of society. He also apprised the students about the avenues through which children can seek legal assistance and protection whenever required.

Adv. Burjeena Hameed highlighted the fundamental rights of every child to dignity, care, protection and access

to justice, while emphasising the collective responsibility of parents, teachers, institutions and authorities in safeguarding children from abuse, exploitation and violence.

The students were encouraged to speak up against any form of abuse or exploitation and to approach their parents, teachers, police authorities or Legal Services Institutions whenever they require help, protection or legal assistance. The programme concluded with an interactive session, wherein the students actively participated and raised queries concerning their legal rights, protection mechanisms and available legal remedies. Their queries were appropriately addressed by the resource persons. The programme was appreciated by the school authorities and students and served as a meaningful initiative towards strengthening child-friendly access to justice, legal empowerment and awareness among children.

Budgam's Kani Craft shines on National Stage: DC hails artisans for National Handloom Award

HT News Network

BUDGAM, AUGUST 17: Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Amir Khan, has extended warm congratulations to renowned Kani artisans of Kanihama village, Fayaz Ahmad Wani and his student Manzoor Ahmad Hajam, on being conferred the prestigious National Handloom Award 2025 by President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu. The award was presented to the duo in New Delhi on August 7 in the weaving category for their exceptional craftsmanship showcased through a Chanddar Kani Shawl, reflecting Kashmir's exquisite artistic heritage and centuries-old weaving tradition.

The DC felicitated both artisans during the award ceremony of Independence Day function at Sports Stadium Budgam and lauded them for bringing distinction to Budgam and Jammu & Kashmir at the national level, describing the honour as a proud moment for the district and a significant recognition of Kashmir's rich handloom legacy. He appreciated their dedication and perseverance in reviving a nearly 400-year-old Kani design and transforming it into a masterpiece through traditional techniques. The award-winning shawl reportedly took over 15 months of painstaking work to complete.

The Deputy Commissioner particularly commended Fayaz Ahmad Wani for keeping the traditional craft alive and passing the skill to successive generations. Having trained more than 50 people in Kani weaving, his



contribution has helped preserve the craft while creating avenues for sustainable livelihoods.

He also appreciated Manzoor Ahmad Hajam, who has been associated with his teacher's Kani weaving unit for the past 25 years, describing their achievement as a fine example of the traditional Guru-Shishya tradition through which Kashmir's indigenous crafts have been preserved across generations.

The DC stressed the importance of promoting traditional crafts among the youth, encouraging young artisans to take up Kani weaving and other indigenous crafts as avenues for livelihood, entrepreneurship and cultural preservation.

He said national recognition to local artisans provides renewed impetus to efforts aimed at safeguarding Kashmir's unique artistic traditions and ensuring that traditional knowledge and skills continue to flourish among future generations.

The District Administration Budgam reiterated its commitment to supporting artisans, weavers and craftsmen and creating an enabling environment for the promotion of local handlooms and handicrafts.

SKUAST-K emphasises handholding, strengthening of Rural Collectives during JKCIP Mobilisation Drive

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BARAMULLA, AUGUST 17: A mobilisation drive under the Upscaling Collectivisation Component of the IFAD-sponsored Jammu and Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project (JKCIP) was organised by The Harvesting Harmony Farmer Producer Organisation Cooperative Ltd., Pattan, in collaboration with the Directorate of Extension, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K).

Prof. (Dr.) Raihana Habib Kanth, Director Extension and Dean, Horticulture, SKUAST-Kashmir,

was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

More than 185 prospective members and farmers participated in the programme, which aimed at creating awareness about the importance of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), encouraging farmers to join the collective and strengthening farmer-led institutions for sustainable agricultural development.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth emphasised the need for sustained handholding, capacity building and institutional strengthening of rural collectives to enable FPOs to emerge as effective farmer-led enterprises. She said FPOs can play a transformative role

in agriculture by enabling farmers to access modern technologies, quality inputs, institutional credit, value addition and organised markets through collective action.

She urged farmers to actively participate in FPOs and make full use of the opportunities being created under the IFAD-supported JKCIP to enhance farm incomes and build resilient and sustainable farming enterprises. She also highlighted the crucial role of SKUAST-Kashmir in providing continuous technical guidance, capacity building and extension support to strengthen farmer institutions across the Union Territory.



Dr. Waseem Hassan Raja underscored the importance of scientific farming, capacity building and collective marketing in

improving the economic status of farmers. He encouraged the participants, particularly women and rural youth, to actively engage

with the FPO and adopt improved agricultural technologies for enhancing productivity and profitability.

Dr. Mohammad Iqbal Bhat, Coordinator, Upscaling Collectivisation, JKCIP, SKUAST-Kashmir, elaborated on the objectives of the component and the institutional support mechanisms being extended to FPOs under the project. He stressed that increased farmer membership and active participation are essential for developing strong and self-sustaining producer organisations capable of addressing production, value addition and marketing challenges.

Dr. Bhat also highlighted the support being provided by SKUAST-Kashmir in handholding farmer collectives, including capacity building, value addition, branding of FPO products and market intelligence, aimed at enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of rural enterprises.

The programme concluded with an interactive session in which farmers raised queries regarding FPO membership, governance, business planning and the benefits of collectivisation. The experts responded to their queries and encouraged eligible farmers to join the FPO and actively contribute to its growth and sustainability.



HT EDITORIAL

Real Spirit of Independence Day Begins When The Celebration Ends.

Two days after the 80th Independence Day, the celebrations may have receded into memory, but the deeper meaning of freedom should remain alive in the conscience of every Indian. Independence is not a date on the calendar, nor is patriotism confined to a flag-hoisting ceremony, a national anthem or a few hours of celebration. Freedom is a living responsibility—one that must be renewed through our conduct every day.

India's independence was secured through extraordinary sacrifice. Generations endured imprisonment, hardship and uncertainty so that a future generation could live in a sovereign nation and determine its own destiny. The greatest tribute to that sacrifice is not merely to remember it once a year, but to ensure that the freedom so dearly won continues to produce a stronger, fairer and more united India.

Eighty years after independence, the country has travelled a remarkable distance. From the challenges of a newly independent nation, India has emerged as an increasingly confident economic, technological, scientific and strategic power. Its achievements in space, digital technology, infrastructure, defence production and innovation have demonstrated what national determination can accomplish.

Yet the journey is far from complete. The real test of independence lies in whether every citizen can participate in the nation's progress. A developed India cannot be measured only by highways, industries or economic figures. It must also be measured by the quality of its schools, the opportunities available to its youth, the dignity of labour, the strength of its institutions and the ability of ordinary citizens to live with security, justice and hope.

The country's young population represents perhaps its greatest national asset. Their aspirations must be matched by education, employment, entrepreneurship, innovation and opportunities to contribute. The frustration of a young person who cannot find a fair opportunity is not merely an individual problem; it is a challenge to the nation's future. India must create an environment in which talent is encouraged, enterprise is rewarded and hard work finds its rightful place.

The same determination must guide the pursuit of self-reliance. A nation that possesses the capacity to manufacture, innovate and defend itself commands greater confidence in the international arena. Indigenous capabilities in defence, space, artificial intelligence, cyber technology and advanced manufacturing are therefore not simply symbols of technological progress; they are expressions of national sovereignty.

But patriotism must never be reduced to loud declarations. Its finest expression is found in quiet acts of responsibility. Paying taxes honestly, respecting the law, protecting public property, helping the vulnerable, rejecting corruption, respecting differences and refusing to allow hatred to divide society are all acts of patriotism.

The strength of India lies precisely in its diversity. Its many languages, cultures, traditions and faiths are not weaknesses to be overcome but strands that together form the national fabric. The freedom struggle itself demonstrated that India could unite around a larger national purpose despite profound differences. That spirit of unity remains indispensable today.

The Tricolour symbolises a nation that belongs equally to all its citizens. Its honour is upheld not only by soldiers guarding the borders, but also by citizens safeguarding the values, institutions and social harmony of the Republic.

Two days after Independence Day, therefore, is perhaps the right time to ask what remains after the celebrations have ended. The answer should be a renewed sense of duty. The flags may be lowered, the speeches may be over and the patriotic songs may have fallen silent, but the responsibility of nation-building continues without pause.

India's freedom was won once, but its promise must be defended and fulfilled every single day. The most meaningful tribute to the freedom fighters is to build a nation that is stronger without becoming intolerant, prosperous without becoming indifferent, powerful without losing compassion, and united without losing its diversity.

The real spirit of Independence Day begins when the celebration ends.



Dr. Uzma Naqash

A university degree is often seen as a gateway to opportunity, independence, and a fulfilling future. Yet, for millions of young people today, graduation marks not the beginning of a career but the start of a long and uncertain search for employment. Behind every unanswered job application lies a story of resilience, disappointment, and growing psychological distress.

Youth unemployment is no longer just an economic concern—it is a significant mental health challenge. As qualified young people struggle to secure meaningful employment, many experience persistent stress, anxiety, low self-esteem, and feelings of hopelessness. The gap between aspirations and reality can gradually erode confidence, leaving talented individuals questioning their abilities despite years of hard work and education.

The emotional impact of unemployment extends far beyond financial insecurity. Young adults often face social pressure from family, peers, and society to achieve career success within a specific timeline. Watching friends

advance professionally while remaining unemployed can foster feelings of inadequacy, isolation, and self-doubt. Overtime, these emotions may contribute to depression, chronic stress, sleep disturbances, and burnout.

In today's highly competitive job market, academic qualifications alone are often insufficient. Employers increasingly seek experience, technical

expertise, digital skills, and adaptability. As opportunities become limited, many young people find themselves trapped in a cycle where they cannot gain experience without employment and cannot secure employment without prior experience.



The consequences extend beyond individuals. The gap between aspirations and reality can gradually erode confidence, leaving talented individuals questioning their abilities despite years of hard work and education.

Meaningful change requires coordinated

pathways for fresh graduates through entry-level positions, mentorship, and skill-development initiatives.

Equally important is protecting the mental well-being of unemployed youth. Accessible counselling services, peer-support groups, mental health awareness campaigns, and community-based interventions can help young people cope with stress while maintaining hope and resilience. Seeking psychological support should be viewed as a sign of strength rather than weakness.

Young people should also remember that unemployment does not define their worth. Investing time in learning new skills, volunteering, networking, and pursuing professional development can enhance both confidence and future opportunities. Success rarely follows a single timeline, and every setback can become a stepping stone toward growth.

A degree should symbolize potential, not uncertainty. By creating inclusive employment opportunities and prioritizing mental health, we can ensure that today's educated youth are empowered to transform their knowledge into meaningful careers and brighter futures. Investing in young people is ultimately an investment in the social, economic, and emotional well-being of our society.

The destination should never end with a degree—it should begin with opportunity, dignity, and hope.

A flagship programme for young creative minds



Sahil Manzoor

Nomination starts for the years 2026–2027. A great chance to visit Sakura, Japan. Science has utterly changed the lifestyle of humans. "Science begins where our thinking stops". The science field is so developed that anyone can think beyond their imaginations. Sometimes we could be bizarre and think for a while, "I wish I could be real that I saw a dream I was flying over the sky". Sometimes we see in our dreams such impossible and strange things. We witness events and occurrences that seem unfathomable and peculiar to the average individual. Science has the potential to make impossible things possible. Science is not based on theories. Science is all about practicals. It means you have to show the world about your inventions, modifications, and world acceptance when your inventions are proven beneficial to humanity.

Most of us are so curious to know how day and night cause. How seasons are caused and how rain falls in such a way that it comes on the earth's surface without causing destruction. How the stars twinkle, how the moon lights the earth during the night, and many more natural phenomena. Scientists took decades to learn about a single natural phenomenon. It also happens when they discover equipment for their research work. Before heading to any goal, we need a number of things to prove that, like research, equipment, and hypothetical theories of great minds who have worked on them.

This universe is so vast and is expanding without limits. We have discovered very few things in the universe. We have different disciplines, like science, which is curious to know more facts about this universe, facts about the stars, suns, and moon (the moon is the natural satellite of the earth and reflects the light of the sun), science, which is curious to know more facts about the layers of the earth,

and facts about aquatic life. We know very little about aquatic life. There is still a gallery of facts that we have not yet known. One thing that is very great about science is that it never stops working on any particular thing, like discoveries or natural phenomena. Every day we are getting more interesting facts about related astronomy fields, getting updated by modifying their functions, and every day we get modifications about all the fields of science. For me, the definition of science is "science is the field where our things stop and science begins from there. Sometimes it looks like science is utterly out of the human mind, but it is true that all the inventions are man-made and every advancement in science is only because of human minds.

Why is everyone among us a scientist?

One who solves his own problems and solves the problems of society by doing strange makeshifts is a scientist. We discover new things, and we modify machines, keeping in mind that this should give respite to all of humanity.

Today we are surrounded by machines, like mobile phones, laptops, photostat machines, and machines at home like rice cookers, washing machines, mixer grinders, televisions, radios, and a number of other things we are using and troubleshooting our problems with.

Today in this article, I am going to share my opinion about one of the great and dignified flagship programs that inspire awards, MANAK. This flagship program is a well-known program of the Department of Science and Technology, New Delhi. Any country first strengthens its science sector, then begins dreaming about development. Our country is one of them. India has a great record in the world when we talk about science and technology. Our nation has produced well-known scientists like the great scientist of India, such as

C.V. Raman (discovery of the Raman effect), Homi J. Bhabha (quantum theory and nuclear physics), A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (space launches and defense missiles), Vikram Sarabhai (space satellites and rockets), Jagdish Chandra Bose (Crescograph), Raj Reddy (AI and technology), Shrinivas Ramanujan (discovery of various methods and series in mathematics), Salim Ali (systematic bird surveys), Satyendra Nath Bose (contribution to quantum mechanics), and S.S.

Abhyankar (contribution to algebraic geometry).

Let us start by learning about the Inspire Awards MANAK and how educational institutes can apply and submit the ideas of their students. Nominations for the session 2024–2025 have started with the Department of Science and Technology, New Delhi.

What is Inspire Award?

Inspire award in well-known flagship programmes conceptualized and developed by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India. This flagship programme gives you a chance to become a scientist. If your idea or innovation has the potential to troubleshoot the problems of the world, like a needle is an idea or a chair is an idea, keep in mind that your idea must have economic, educational, and social importance.

Who is eligible for this prestigious flagship programme?

Middle schools can nominate five students for these inspiring awards. First, an idea competition was held in the school to select the best five students whose ideas are new and have the potential to make the problems of the world easier. How can one develop an idea? You have to think about existing problems in your surroundings and in the world and put forward your idea of how you can troubleshoot them. Every innovation and every idea is important.

How to apply.

1) Select 5 students from middle school and 2 students from secondary school and record their ideas with proper research. If either the idea is new or already existing, then it has no importance.

2) Collect the bank details of the students and mention the name on the bank pass on the portal.

3) Mention the synopsis, material required, social, economic, and educational importance in word format; also mention the workings of the model or idea you are going forward with.

In case you have any problems while forwarding the ideas of your students, you can mail me at sahilmanzoor0401@gmail.com. or sahilmanzoorhat786@gmail.com

Some heroes stand at the borders. Some heroes build the roads that take us there



By M S Nazki

Mera Karma Tooh, Mera Dharma Tooh.....Hum Jiye Yah Marengi Eh Watan Tere liye.....Perhaps on these lines the BRO works!

-A short story to start with!

-Captain Roy stared at his watch at 7:00 PM. His daughter's birthday party was starting back home, but a sudden flash flood warning required him to stay and secure the mountain village bridge.

-Choosing the safety of hundreds over his own family celebration, he stayed at his post, proving that true duty always comes first.

-The Warning: The rain fell hard on the northern hills. Roy looked at his phone buzzing with pictures of a birthday cake.

-His radio crackled with an emergency call about rising river waters.

-The Choice Roy wanted to go home to cut the cake with his little girl. He knew the old bridge upstream might break under the pressure.

-He turned his jeep around and drove straight toward the danger zone.

-The Action: Roy reached the bridge just as the wooden barriers began to snap.

-He blocked the road with his vehicle and flashed his warning lights. Minutes later, the heavy floodwaters roared through, crashing where cars would have crossed. The Lesson: Traffic stopped safely on both sides of the river. Roy wiped the rain from his face and smiled at a job done.

-He called his daughter to sing to her, knowing duty kept them all safe today. If you would like, I can write a longer version of this story or focus it on a different setting (like a space station or a hospital). Let me know how you want to proceed!.....

-Some heroes stand at the borders. Some heroes build the roads that take us there. As India celebrates 80 years of Independence, I wanted to share a moment of gratitude for some of the most unsung heroes of our nation — the Border Roads Organisation (BRO).

-In places like Adi Kailash, where the mountains are unforgiving and the roads can seem almost impossible, the BRO works 24x7, often in conditions most of us can barely imagine.

-Their work doesn't just create roads.

-It connects remote India to the rest of the country.

-It makes our yatra possible.

-It brings essential supplies and connectivity to some of the most inaccessible corners of our nation.

-And, in doing so, it also strengthens the operational reach and mobility of our Armed Forces.

he Border Roads Organisation (BRO) builds and maintains critical roads, bridges, and tunnels across high-altitude and border regions like Ladakh and the Himalayas.

-Working in extreme sub-zero temperatures and low oxygen levels, their engineers and workers are true unsung heroes who keep remote areas connected.

-What the BRO Does Road Construction: Cuts through harsh rock and ice to build strategic passes.

-Extreme Weather Work: Clears heavy snow and maintains connectivity when temperatures drop far below freezing.

-National Security: Supports the military by ensuring fast movement of troops and supplies to forward areas.

-Would you like to know more about specific projects like Project Himank, or famous high-altitude mountain passes they built near Jammu and Ladakh?

-To finish a hard job, do not look at the whole mountain. Break the huge task into tiny steps, take one small action each day, rest when you feel tired, and never give up until the work is done.

-The Stone Cutter and the Mountain: A young man named Leo had to move a giant pile of heavy stones blocking his village path.

-The pile looked too big. Leo felt sad and sat down to cry.

-An old wise woman walked by and smiled at him. She told him, "You cannot move the mountain today. But you can move one stone.

-Leo stood up. He picked up just one small stone and put it to the side.

-Then he picked up the next stone, and the next one after that.

-When he felt tired, he took a short break to drink water and rest his arms.

-Day after day, he repeated this simple routine without rushing.

-After many weeks, the heavy pile was gone, and the path was completely clear.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the author and do not reflect the editorial policy of Headlines Today at all and in any manner. We assume no responsibility or liability for the accuracy, completeness, or consequences of the views expressed therein....





Second-Order Thinking



Surinderpal Singh

The modern materialistic world is an age of instant communication, instant opinions and instant decisions, the ability to pause and think deeply has become increasingly valuable. We are often encouraged to act quickly, solve problems immediately and produce visible results in a matter of pre decided time. Yet many of the difficulties faced by individuals, institutions and societies arises not because decisions are made too slowly, but because they are made without considering what happens next.

This is where the need for second-order thinking becomes essential.

Second-order thinking is the habit of looking beyond the immediate consequences of a decision and considering its further effects. It asks not only, What will happen if we do this? but also, What will happen after that?

That simple shift in thinking can make the difference between a decision that merely addresses today's problem and one that creates a better tomorrow.

Human beings naturally tend to focus on immediate results. If attendance in a school is poor, the obvious response may be stricter punishment. If employees are not completing their work on time, working hours may be increased. If students are scoring poorly, more tests may be introduced. Such measures may produce immediate improvement. But improvement in statistics does not always mean improvement in reality.

If students are absent because of financial difficulties, transportation problems, family circumstances or lack of interest in learning, punishment may increase attendance without addressing the real cause. Students may come to school physically while becoming increasingly

disconnected from education emotionally. The attendance register may look better, but the underlying problem may remain. This is the difference between treating a symptom and solving a problem.

Every decision produces consequences, and some of those consequences may be unintended. A policy designed to increase accountability may create excessive paperwork. A reward system intended to improve productivity may encourage employees to focus on quantity rather than quality. A harsh disciplinary system may create obedience but also fear and resentment. A shortcut that saves time today may result in costly mistakes tomorrow.

The difficulty is that intended consequences are usually visible immediately, while unintended consequences often appear much later.

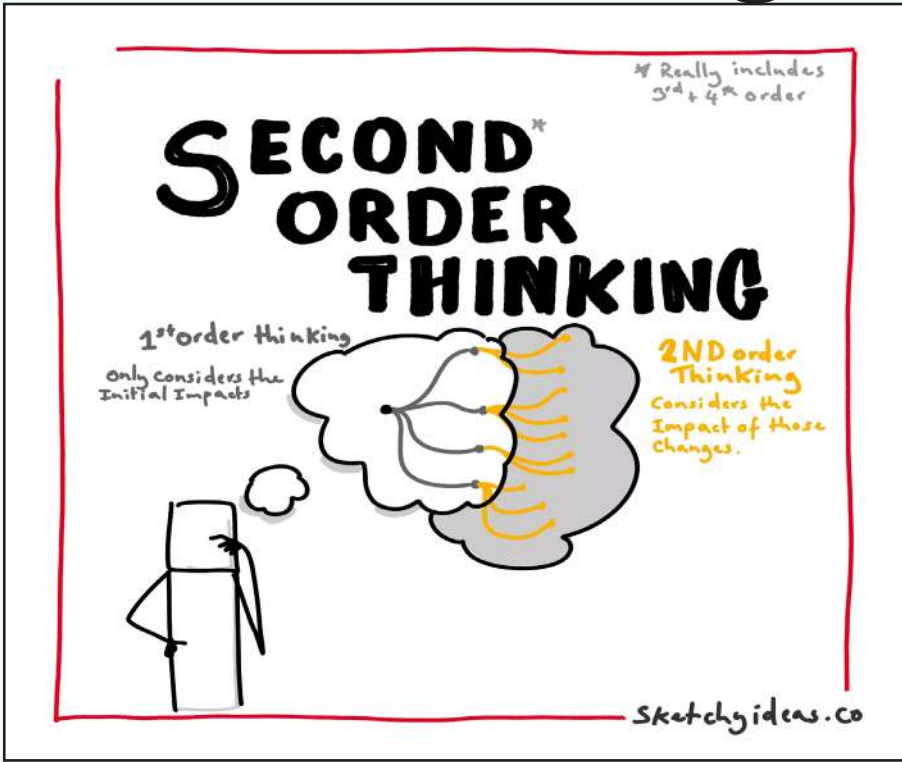
This is why responsible decision-making requires us to ask not only what we want to happen, but also what our decision might encourage others to do. Good intentions do not automatically produce good outcomes.

Second-order thinking is particularly important in administration. An administrator's responsibility does not end with issuing an order. Every order influences behaviour and repeated decisions gradually shape the culture of an institution. A rule may solve a particular problem today, but administrators must also consider whether it will create another problem tomorrow.

For example, an office may introduce an elaborate reporting system to improve accountability. Initially, this may appear successful. However, if employees spend most of their working hours preparing reports, less time may remain for actual productive work.

The system has achieved its stated purpose while weakening the larger purpose of the organization. A thoughtful administrator therefore asks:

- Will this decision solve the problem?
- A better administrator asks:
- How will people respond to it?
- A visionary administrator asks:



What kind of institutional culture will this decision create if it continues for years?

That is second-order thinking in practice.

Education also suffers when immediate outcomes become more important than long-term development. If students are taught primarily to obtain high examination marks, they may become skilled at memorization without developing curiosity, creativity and independent thinking.

Similarly, if teachers are judged mainly by paperwork or numerical targets, meaningful classroom interaction may suffer.

The central question in education should not simply be:

- How many marks did the student obtain?
- It should also be:

What kind of thinker is the student becoming?

A truly successful education system produces individuals who can question, reason, analyse evidence, solve unfamiliar problems and make responsible decisions. These are long-term outcomes and they cannot always be measured

through immediate statistics.

One of the greatest dangers in decision-making is confusing short-term success with long-term success. A company may reduce expenditure and immediately improve its financial figures, but excessive cost-cutting may weaken its workforce and future capacity. A leader may take an unpopular but necessary decision and face criticism today while strengthening the institution tomorrow.

A person may choose immediate comfort over discipline and enjoy the present while creating difficulties for the future.

The lesson is simple:
The easiest decision today is not necessarily the wisest decision for tomorrow.

Second-order thinking encourages us to consider the full life of a decision rather than celebrating its first result.

The need for second-order thinking has become even greater in the digital age.

Social media encourages immediate reactions. A headline is read, an opinion is

formed and a judgment is delivered—sometimes without checking the facts or understanding the complete context. We have gradually developed a culture in which speed is sometimes mistaken for intelligence.

But a quick reaction is not necessarily a wise reaction. Before sharing information, we should ask whether it is true. Before condemning someone, we should ask whether we know the whole story. Before supporting a policy, we should consider its long-term effects. A few moments of reflection can prevent considerable damage.

This form of thinking is not restricted to governments, administrators or business leaders. It is equally useful in ordinary life.

Before speaking in anger, we can ask what our words might do to a relationship. Before making an impulsive purchase, we can consider its impact on future financial needs. Before making a career decision, we can think beyond immediate salary and consider learning, stability and future opportunities. Before forwarding an unverified message, we can consider the consequences if it turns out to be false. In many situations, the difference between wisdom and regret is simply the willingness to pause before acting. One of the most valuable lessons of second-order thinking is that intentions and consequences are not the same thing. A person may intend to help but unintentionally create dependence. An administrator may intend to increase discipline but unintentionally create fear. A teacher may intend to improve examination performance but unintentionally discourage creativity. A government may introduce a beneficial policy but unintentionally create new administrative burdens. Therefore, good decision-makers must evaluate outcomes honestly. When consequences differ from intentions, the answer is not to defend the original decision blindly. It is to learn, adapt and improve.

Surinderpal Singh
Faculty In Science Department
Sri Amritsar Sahib Punjab.

Education teacher is the art of living



Sahil Manzoor

Education never means getting employment, handsome salaries, and all that comes with a job. Education simply means gaining control over everything within ourselves our anger, arrogance, dishonesty, jealousy, and other weaknesses. True education develops our character and teaches us how to deal with life.

How beautiful it is whenever I see educated people engaging in different livelihood activities. We know that in our country, almost everyone wants a government job. Yet, those who get into government service often start complaining: "What is so special about a government job?" I have a friend whose earnings are many times higher than mine. I also have a neighbour who earns in a few days what some people earn in an entire month.

My perspective regarding employment is quite clear. People who have zeal, enthusiasm, and a thirst to do something in any field rarely complain about what they have achieved or what they have lost. Different people have different stories when it comes to their choices of employment.

Some people may not be highly qualified, yet they have positive smiles on their faces and live their lives happily. On the other hand, some highly qualified people, such as engineers, teachers, doctors, and lecturers, complain that their earnings are insufficient, that they cannot afford a luxurious lifestyle, or that they cannot live like princes.

How Can We Be Happy?

For me, earnings are not everything. I believe in satisfaction. The person who is satisfied with his or her qualifications, profession, and earnings is a successful person. No one can defeat such a person's dreams or easily make them unhappy.

Actually, it is our own mindset that often creates problems. We keep looking at what others are doing without knowing their background. Different people have different strengths and different financial circumstances, so it is not possible for everyone to sail in the same boat.

Some people can make something great from very small things, while others have bigger opportunities because of their family background, financial status, education, or other advantages. Yet, they sometimes fail to make good use of those opportunities. This



raises an important question: why do some people have great opportunities but fail to use them to achieve their life goals?

Today, this thought came into my mind, and I decided to write about it.

Literally, I have been enjoying delicious masala (a mixture of gram) and lawasa tandoori chapatti for the last couple of decades, along with chutneys of different varieties, such as coriander, chilli powder, green chilli, curd, and pieces of salad.

One of the sellers from Parmeva, Khansahib, Budgam, has been selling these items for a long time. I like his behaviour and the way he presents his masala and lawasa with delicious chutney. He keeps the chutney in copper utensils, which adds to the traditional charm. What attracts me most is his behaviour. Even when members of the community call him "Sir," he remains humble and gentle.

Today, I see similar food items being sold outside colleges, schools, sports stadiums, and other busy places. Such efforts by our educated youth to earn a livelihood should be appreciated. The government should support them by providing financial assistance and suitable permanent spaces so that they can earn with dignity and with proper governmental support.

There are great minds in the government, and I hope such initiatives for employment and self-reliance among our youth will be appreciated and supported.

How Can We Generate Employment with Little Financial Support?

We can start a business from a footpath and

gradually build it into a successful enterprise within a few years through honesty, hard work, and enthusiasm.

Anyone can become what he or she wants to become, but proper guidance and a great vision are necessary. Willingness plays a vital role and can uplift a person from any situation. There is no need to start a business with millions. When you start small, you remain calm because you have less fear of bankruptcy and fewer financial pressures.

Always try to learn from zero and then move higher. The higher you go, the calmer and wiser you should become.

Education
We should never claim that we are educated and then ask why we are unemployed.

For your kind consideration, an educated person should never give up simply because employment opportunities are limited. How is it possible that you spend 20 or 30 years learning how to tackle life's issues and deal with problems, but when it comes to employment, you give up?

Never blindly follow what others say. Come out of your comfort zone and try your best. Success does not come through discussions and lame excuses. It comes through hard work, patience, willingness, and perseverance.

Different people have different stories, different opportunities, and different journeys. What matters most is not how much we earn, but how meaningfully and honestly we live our lives.

Sahil Manzoor Bhatti
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Bashir Badr: A Poet Living In The The Hearts Of Million



BY-MOOL RAJ

Bashir Badr's poetry spoke to the heart, bypassing the heavy ornamentation that sometimes distances Urdu poetry from everyday readers.

The world of Urdu poetry feels a little dimmer as it bids farewell to one of the most beloved voices in modern Urdu literature — Dr Bashir Badr. He leaves behind not just a body of work that touched millions, but a way of seeing life through the simple yet profound lens of the heart. For those of us who grew up reciting his lines in mushairas, or whispering them to loved ones, or finding solace in them during quiet nights, his passing is not merely the end of a life, but the fading of a lamp that had guided so many.

Born Syed Muhammad Bashir in Ayodhya, he was just seven when he composed his first couplet, and recited his first full ghazal at 11 in a mushaira in Etawah in 1946. Even as a child, his words carried maturity that belied his years.

Having earned his doctorate from Aligarh Muslim University, he taught Urdu there and later at Meerut College for 17 years. His years in Meerut were one of his most prolific, where Badr published some of his best poetry, anthologies, ghazals, and other works in literary criticism.

Yet Meerut also tested his resilient spirit to the core. During the communal riots of 1987, his home as well as countless unpublished manuscripts were burnt. He moved to Bhopal, where he found new roots, and his pen found its voice again. His resilience was mirrored in his poetry — loss, memory, and the quiet hope that lingers even after everything seems gone.

His friend, the late Gopichand Narang, recalled that for Badr, the destruction of his library was the main casualty. The Urdu scholar and critic recounted how he was surprised to find that Badr harboured no anger toward those responsible. His words were that of a dervish:

Tumhare shahr ke saare diye to so gae kab ke
Hava se puchhna dahliz pe ye kaun jalta hai
Kabhi main apne hathon ki lakiron se nahin
uljha
Mujhe maalum hai qismat ka likh khahibadalta
hai

Another well-known couplet, born from his own experiences of loss in Meerut, carries both personal sorrow and a broader social commentary. Yet even here, there is no bitterness, only a clear-eyed sadness that calls for reflection.

Log toot jaate hain ek ghar banane mein
Tum taras nahin khaate bastiyen jalane mein
What set Badr apart was his ability to speak directly to the heart, bypassing the heavy classical ornamentation that sometimes distances Urdu poetry from everyday readers.

For his contemporary Wasim Barelvi, Badr was a path-breaking poet. Since 1940s, poets of the Progressive Writers' Association had revolutionised this traditional format, transforming it from a medium of unrequited romanticism into a revolutionary instrument for social justice, anti-colonial struggles, and human rights. According to him, Badr chose to go back to the old romantic style of Urdu ghazal, but with new parameters. He chose the language of the common man and the smiles of day-to-day life. His poetry was not political or revolutionary but could be satirical or even ironical regarding society's anomalies.

Charon pe naam the, naamon ke saath ohde the

Bahut talaash kiya koi aadmi na mila
(Houses had names, names had titles and positions)

I looked long but could not find a single human being)

Barelvi remembers him as a great nazim or compere as well, handling famous but sometimes temperamental poets and restless audiences with aplomb and patience.

Badr, renowned for his mastery of the Urdu language, was also well versed in Persian, Hindi and English. His collections, such as 'Aas', 'Aamad', 'Aahat', 'Image', and 'Ujale Apni Yaadon Ke', stand as testaments to his gift for capturing deep emotions into simple, everyday language. For 'Aas', he received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1999. That same year, he was honoured with the Padma Shri. These awards recognised what his readers had long known: here was a poet whose words captured the pulse of modern India.

One cannot speak of Bashir Badr without recalling his most famous couplet, the one that gave its name to a beloved All India Radio programme: Ujale apni yaadon ke hamare saath rahne do
Na jaane kis gali mein zindagi ki shaam ho jaaye

The Author Is A Regular
Columnist And Freelance Writer



First batch of Shri Budha Amarnath Ji Yatra accorded grand welcome at Poonch

HTHT NEWS DESK

POONCH, AUGUST 17: The first batch of Shri Budha Amarnath Ji Yatra pilgrims was warmly welcomed today by the District Administration and a large number of local people, here at the Yatra base camp, College Ground.

The district administration, led by Deputy Commissioner Poonch Ashok Kumar Sharma, DIG, Rajouri - Poonch, Sandeep Wazir, Senior Superintendent of Police, Shafket Hussain Bhat, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Tahir Mustafa Malik, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Muhammad Sayeed, Assistant Commissioner Development, Shakeel Ahmed Malik, besides other police and



civil administration officers along with the Yatra Management Committee, civil society members and large number of enthusiastic locals extended a grand welcome to the pilgrims.

Over two thousand yatris reached Poonch in the first batch, marking the formal commencement of the revered annual pilgrimage.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner

reaffirmed the district administration's commitment to ensuring the smooth conduct of the Yatra. He emphasized that comprehensive arrangements have been put in place to facilitate the yatris throughout their spiritual journey.

A large number of locals were also present, showcasing the district's rich tradition of hospitality.

The arrival of the first batch signals the beginning of a significant religious and cultural event in the district. The Yatra, spanning nearly 10 days will culminate with the Chari Mubarak Yatra from Poonch to Shri Budha Amarnath Ji Shrine in Mandi.

Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign Concludes in Ganderbal with Patriotic Fervour

HTHT NEWS DESK

GANDERBAL, AUGUST 17: The concluding event of the ongoing Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign-2026 was held today at Ganderbal, with Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Ganderbal chairing the programme. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation of students, civil society members and other stakeholders, who joined the celebrations and reaffirmed their commitment to the values of patriotism, unity and national pride.

As part of the concluding programme, students presented a series of cultural performances based on the theme of patriotism, showcasing the spirit of national unity and love for the country. The performances received appreciation from the gathering and added vibrancy to the concluding celebrations.

The ADCD appreciated the enthusiastic participation of



students, civil society and all stakeholders in the various activities organised across the district during the campaign. He emphasised the importance of continuing to uphold the spirit of patriotism, unity and national integration beyond the campaign period.

The participants and performers who contributed

to the successful conduct of the programme were felicitated on the occasion in appreciation of their participation and contribution to the celebrations.

The concluding event marked the culmination of a series of activities organised across District Ganderbal under the Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign-2026, including

Tiranga rallies, mass singing of the National Anthem, pledges, cultural programmes and other patriotic activities.

The event concluded with a renewed commitment to uphold the values of unity, patriotism and national pride and to carry forward the spirit of the Tricolour in the community.

Registrar of Companies (ROC J&K) leads Tiranga Yatra at Bahu Plaza Jammu

HTHT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, AUGUST 17: As part of the nationwide Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign 2026, the Office of the Registrar of Companies (ROC), Jammu & Kashmir, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India, in collaboration with the local chapters/branches of Professional Institutes (ICAI) and (ICSI) today organised and led a vibrant Tiranga Yatra at Bahu Plaza, Jammu. The Tiranga Yatra witnessed enthusiastic participation by officers and officials of the ROC J&K office, along with Jammu-based members of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) led by CA Amit Gupta and the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) led by CS Sahil. Carrying the National Flag with pride, the participants spread the message of patriotism, national unity and collective responsibility.

Speaking to the media on the occasion, Registrar of Companies, J&K, Haamid Bukhari said that the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign is a unique initiative that seeks to deepen the emotional connect of every citizen with the National Flag and the nation. He noted that the 2026 campaign marks the fifth edition, continuing the



initiative that began in 2022. This year, special feature of the initiative is the 150th Anniversary of Vande Mataram, the national song through which we cherish the cultural history of our nationalism and the values of patriotism of which, we all should be proud of.

He said that such initiatives inculcate a feeling of patriotism in the heart of every Indian and inspire citizens to cherish the ideals, sacrifices and values of the freedom fighters who laid down their lives for the country's independence. He further emphasised the message "Culture Unites Us All", observing that the values of unity and patriotism should remain above everything else for every citizen of the country.

Bukhari further highlighted the growing reach of the 2026 Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign, observing that the initiative has evolved into a people's movement extending beyond the territorial borders of India. He said that the National Flag

has been proudly displayed at various Indian embassies across the world, bringing together members of the Indian diaspora and citizens in a shared celebration of the Tricolour and the spirit of national pride.

CA Amit Gupta and CS Sahil, Chairpersons representing the Jammu-based CA and CS fraternities, respectively, also emphasised that the participation of professional bodies such as ICAI and ICSI reflects the important role that professional communities can play in strengthening the spirit of responsible citizenship and contributing to nation-building.

The Tiranga Yatra concluded with a renewed commitment by all participants to uphold the values embodied by the Tricolour and the cultural ethos of Vande Mataram and to carry forward the spirit of unity, integrity and patriotism in their professional and public lives.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Zareena Banoo, wife of Mushtaq Ahmad Khan, resident of gogoo, Humhama, Budgam, hereby inform the general public that my name was previously recorded as "Zarina Banoo", due to a spelling error. My correct and present name is "Zareena Banoo". Any person having any objection to the said change of name may contact me at the below mentioned contact details within the seven days from the date of publication of this notice.

"Zareena Banoo"
W/o Mushtaq Ahmad Khan
R/o gogoo Humhama, Budgam
*Contact No.: 6005908338



PUBLIC NOTICE

My Name wrongly mentioned in my School Records as Mehdi Reza Sheikh S/o Ajaz Hussain Sheikh R/o Astanpora chattergam D.O.B 16/01/2020 insted of Mehdi Reza Sheikh S/o Ajaz Hussain Sheikh R/o Astanpora chattergam BK Pora Budgam D.O.B 16/01/2020 as per D.O.B Certificate which needs to be corrected.

If anybody having any objection in this regard please file his/her objection in the concerned department within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Mehdi Reza Sheikh
S/o Ajaz Hussain Sheikh
R/o Astanpora chattergam
BK Pora Budgam

Office of The Executive Magistrate 1st Class Narbal District Budgam

Notice For The General public

is notified that the applicant namely Fatima Bagum D/o Gulam Mohi _ud _din Dar Russu Tehsil Narbal District Budgam applied for the Date of Birth of his Own namely Fatima Bagum daughter Gulam Mohi _ud _din _Dar. The applicant intends to register the Date of Birth of his Own as per school records / medical Board is 04/ 02/ 1960

If any one has objection in this regard, Convince Office of the Executive Magistrate 1st Class Narbal District Budgam within the period of seven days. After completion of said period no objection will be entertained.

18 /08/2026

Office of The Executive Magistrate 1st Class Narbal District Budgam

Notice For The General public

is notified that the applicant namely Mohammed Akbar Dar S/o Abdul Rahim Dar Russu Tehsil Narbal District Budgam applied for the Date of Birth of his Own namely Mohammed Akbar Dar Son of Abdul Rahim Dar. The applicant intends to register the Date of Birth of his Own as per school records / medical Board is 04/ 02/ 1961

If any one has objection in this regard, Convince Office of the Executive Magistrate 1st Class Narbal District Budgam within the period of seven days. After completion of said period no objection will be entertained.

18/08/2026

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

Office of the Executive Magistrate 1st Class Narbal District Budgam

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified that the applicant namely Nazir Ahmad pathan S/o Gulam Rasool Pathan R/o Kawoosa Khalisa Tehsil Narbal District Budgam applied for the Death certificate of his father Gulam Rasool pathan (Iassa) S/o Gulam Qadir Pathan

They intend to register the Death of his father according to Masjid Committee / vaccination card 09/07/1994

If anybody has any objection in this regard. They may contact tehsil office Narbal within the period of seven days. After said days, no objection will be entertained.

Dated 15 /08/2026

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI

(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Application of MOHD YOUSUF SHEIKH S/O AB GANI SHEIKH R/O SHEIKHPORA Tehsil KREERI for the issuance of RBA in his/her their favor

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of RBA in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of SHEIKHPORA of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the SHEIKH community having annual income 155000/- details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1...MOHD YOUSUF SHEIKH Father 59 years Labour
 - 2...MUGLI BEGUM Mother 70 years H/W
 - 3...AJAZ AH SHEIKH brother 34 years Labour
 - 4...MOHD RAFIQ Brother 31 years Labour
 - 5...BILAL AHMAD TELI Applicant 26 years student
 - 6...AAYAT YOUSUF self /applicant 25 years student
- if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of said certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate 1st Class KREERI

Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir

Office of the District Development Commissioner, Kupwara

Phone: 01955-253335; Fax: 01955-252130; Email: kupwara@nic.in

Subject: Re - Advertisement Notice for Engagement of Krishi Udyami (KU)/Agricultural Entrepreneur in District Kupwara (Phase 1' & 2'd) 17 vacant positions.

Reference:- No:- CAO/Kup/Plg/2026-27/2257-60 Dated:- 03-08-2026 from Chief Agriculture Officer Kupwara.

Advertisement Notification No39/DCK of 2026

Dated:- 17-08-2026

applications in the prescribed format are hereby invited from eligible candidates, preferably from the concerned Panchayats, for engagement as Krishi Udyamis (KUs) - Agricultural Entrepreneurs on a contractual basis for operation and management of designated Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs) under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) in District Kupwara. The engagement shall initially be for a period of two (02) years, extendable annually subject to satisfactory performance and continuation of the scheme, strictly as per the terms and conditions prescribed by the Agriculture Production Department (APD), J&K.

1. KEY DETAILS

Particulars	Details
Name of Position	Krishi Udyami (KU) - Agricultural Entrepreneur
Number of Positions	17
Place of Engagement	Vacant Panchayat-level Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs) of District Kupwara, as listed in Annexure-I
Engagement Period	Initially 02 years, extendable annually subject to satisfactory performance
Age Limit	21-45 years as on the last date of submission
Remuneration	Self-earning/entrepreneurship-based engagement as per approved norms under HADP
Last Date for Submission	31st August, 2026

2. EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

The candidate must possess any of the following qualifications from a Government recognized institution:

Diploma in Agriculture and Allied Fields; OR

B.Sc./Graduation in Science; OR

Graduation in Agriculture and Allied Fields, including B.Sc. Agriculture/Horticulture/Forestry/Fisheries/Sericulture, B.Tech. in Agricultural Engineering, or B.V.Sc. & A.H.

Preference shall be given to candidates possessing:

Post-Graduation in Science/Agriculture & Allied subjects; and

Diploma/Certification in Computer Applications of 03 months or more from a Government recognized institution.

3. SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection shall be made strictly on the basis of the prescribed 100-point system, as under:

Criteria	Maximum Points
Domicile of Local Panchayat	25
Female Candidate	05
Educational Qualification	45
Post-Graduation in Science/Agriculture & Allied	10
Diploma/Certification in Computers	15
Total	100

The detailed selection criteria and educational qualifications are given in Annexure-II.

4. JOB PROFILE

The selected Krishi Udyamis shall establish, operate and manage the designated Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs) and shall, inter alia:

1. Facilitate availability and sale of recommended agricultural inputs.

2. Assist farmers in accessing schemes and services under HADP and other Government programmes.

3. Provide agricultural advisory and information services.

4. Facilitate applications, digital services and farmer registrations through designated portals.

5. Facilitate marketing of farmers' produce through B2B and B2C channels.

6. Maintain KKG infrastructure, records and inventories.

7. Submit prescribed reports and perform such other duties as assigned under the programme.

5. NATURE OF ENGAGEMENT & EARNING MODEL

The engagement shall be based on a franchise-franchisee/self-entrepreneurship model.

The KU shall not be entitled to any regular appointment or claim against Government service by virtue of this engagement. The earning potential shall primarily comprise:

> Service charges as per approved rate card;

> Commission on sale of recommended agricultural inputs;

Commission on B2B/B2C marketing of farmers' produce; and > Contingency fee for eligible training programmes,

6. SECURITY DEPOSIT

The selected KU shall be required to enter into an agreement with the Agriculture Production Department and deposit a refundable security amount of ₹10,000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand and only) in the form of an FDR from a Scheduled Commercial Bank, subject to the prescribed terms and conditions.

7. DOCUMENTS TO BE UPLOADED

Candidates shall upload self-attested copies of the following documents along with the application:

1. Matriculation/Date of Birth Certificate;

2. Marks certificates of all qualifying examinations;

3. Domicile Certificate;

4. Character Certificate issued by the competent authority; and

5. Other documents/certificates required as per the prescribed application form.

Original documents shall be produced at the time of document verification.

8. MODE OF APPLICATION

Eligible candidates shall submit their applications online through the official website of District Administration Kupwara: <https://kupwara.nic.in>

Google Link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSEhcmB2kgT9hCeszVvR14JsFsjp7qf48sJWD3KGBQDBM-Q/viewform?usp=header>

The prescribed application form and detailed terms and conditions may also be obtained from the official websites of:

District Administration Kupwara: <https://kupwara.nic.in> Agriculture Production Department: <https://jkapd.nic.in>

HADP: <https://hadp.jk.gov.in>

For further information/clarification, candidates may contact the Office of the Chief Agriculture Officer, Kupwara or communicate through e-mail at:

plgcaokupwara@gmail.com

GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. The candidate must fulfill all prescribed eligibility conditions as on the last date of submission of application.

2. Incomplete applications or applications not supported by the requisite documents shall be liable to rejection.

3. The selection shall be made strictly in accordance with the prescribed point-based criteria.

4. Shortlisted candidates shall be called for document verification and shall produce original certificates/documents.

5. The selected candidates shall be required to execute the prescribed agreement with the Agriculture Production Department.

6. The engagement shall not confer any right upon the selected candidate for regular appointment in Government service.

7. The selected KU shall be responsible for proper upkeep and maintenance of Department-owned assets at the concerned KKG.

8. Either party may terminate the agreement by giving three months' prior notice, subject to the prescribed conditions.

9. The candidate shall undertake to serve for at least two years; premature exit shall attract forfeiture of the security deposit as per the prescribed terms.

10. The Department reserves the right to modify/add any condition at the time of execution of the agreement.

11. Candidates are advised to carefully read the Annexures and detailed terms and conditions before submitting their applications.

12. LIST OF VACANT KISAN KHIIDMAT GHARS (KKGs)

The 17 vacant KKGs identified for engagement are detailed in Annexure-I appended to this Advertisement Notice, covering KKGs in Tangdar, Machil, Hyhama, Kalaroose, Drugmulla, Reddi Chowkibal, Handwara, Rajwar, Rajwar and Keran areas.

Last Date for Online Submission of Application: 31st August, 2026

Note: Candidates are advised to carefully go through all annexures before applying

DIPK-4650/26

Send Date: Aug 17 2026

District Development Commissioner, Kupwara



Sakeena Itoo chairs 46th BoDs meet of JKSCSTBC Development Corporation

■ **HT News Network**

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 17: Minister for Social Welfare, Education, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo chaired the 46th meeting of Board of Directors (BoDs) of the Jammu & Kashmir Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe & Backward Classes (JKSCSTBC) Development Corporation Limited at Civil Secretariat here today.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary Planning Development & Monitoring, R. Alice Vaz; Commissioner Secretary, Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs, Achal Sethi, Director General, Budget; Sultan Malik, MD JKSCSTBC Development Corporation; Ranjeet Singh; Director Finance SWD, Seema Bhasin and other members of the Board, besides senior officers of Social Welfare department and JKSCSTBC Development Corporation.

During the meeting, the Board deliberated upon various important administrative,



financial and policy matters concerning the functioning of the Corporation and took several key decisions.

Speaking during the meeting, the Minister emphasised on the need for the Corporation to function with greater efficiency, transparency

and responsiveness, with a focused approach towards ensuring that the intended benefits of welfare and development schemes reach eligible beneficiaries in a timely manner.

She called for strengthening institutional mechanisms, streamlining procedures and

improving coordination among the concerned stakeholders to facilitate easier access to financial assistance, self-employment opportunities and other support measures for the targeted communities.

"Welfare interventions should translate into tangible improvements in the socio-economic conditions of beneficiaries, particularly through initiatives that encourage entrepreneurship, sustainable livelihoods and economic self-reliance", she observed.

The Minister directed the Corporation to maintain close engagement with beneficiaries and community representatives, identify emerging requirements and take necessary measures to address genuine concerns within the prescribed framework. She also appreciated the efforts of the Corporation and stressed upon all concerned officers to ensure transparency, accountability, efficiency and timely implementation of the decisions taken by the Board in the larger public interest.

Directorate of Horticulture urges fruit growers to utilize dedicated Rail Parcel Services

■ **HT News Network**

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 17: In a major initiative aimed at facilitating efficient, reliable and cost-effective transportation of Kashmir's horticultural produce, the Directorate of Horticulture Kashmir has urged fruit growers, traders and other agricultural stakeholders across the Valley to actively utilize the dedicated Rail Parcel Services operated by Northern Railway. The dedicated service, JPP-RCS, has been operating successfully since September 2025 and connects Badgam (BDGM) with Adarsh Nagar Delhi (ANDI) via Jammu, with an intermediate stoppage at Bari Brahmana.

The availability of this cost-effective, time-efficient and all-weather rail transportation facility assumes considerable importance for the horticulture sector, particularly during the fruit harvesting and marketing season. The service provides reliable and timely connectivity to major markets across the country, thereby facilitating smoother movement and marketing of Kashmir's horticultural produce.

It is pertinent to mention that Train No. 00462, Ex-Badgam to Adarsh Nagar Delhi, has so far successfully transported 332 VPs carrying approximately 7,400 tonnes of produce,



including apples, e-commerce and mixed goods. On the return journey, 786 VPs carrying approximately 17,450 tonnes, mainly comprising e-commerce and mixed goods, have also been transported, reflecting the growing utility and operational efficiency of the rail parcel service. The Directorate has accordingly called upon fruit growers, traders and other stakeholders to make optimum use of the dedicated rail facility for transportation of horticultural produce, particularly during the peak harvesting season.

For commercial inquiries and booking details, stakeholders may contact the Office of the Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Northern Railway, Jammu Tawi, at Mobile/ CUG: 9596732950 or through email at srdcmjat@gmail.com.

Stock markets end in red, Nifty continues losses for fifth consecutive session

■ **UNITED NEWS OF INDIA**

New Delhi, Aug 17 (UNI) Indian stock markets on Monday ended in the red amid persisting geopolitical risks, and stronger-than-expected Q1FY27 earnings.

At close, Sensex was down by 281 points, or 0.36pc at 77,728.16, while the Nifty 50 settled at 24,287.65, down 78 points, or 0.32pc. The mid and small-cap segments outperformed. The Nifty Midcap 100 index climbed by 0.05pc, while the Nifty Smallcap 100 index rose by 0.36pc.

Nifty continued the losses for the fifth consecutive session. In these five sessions, the index has lost 1.20pc. On the other hand, the Sensex extended losses for the second consecutive session, shedding 0.45pc.

On the BSE, nearly 175 stocks, hit their 52-week lows in intraday trade. These included Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL), Bosch, and LG Electronics India, hit their 52-week high, while 120 stocks, including ITC, Procter & Gamble Hygiene and Health Care, KEC International, and Aditya Birla Lifestyle Brands.

Among the sectors, Nifty IT was down 1.75pc and FMCG down by 1.05pc ending with significant losses. Further, Nifty Realty was up by 1.46pc and Metal up by 1.26pc, clocked strong gains. Nifty Bank and Financial Services ended flat.

Crude oil prices remained elevated in trade,



with Brent crude futures edging closer to USD 90 per barrel.

BSE shares fell over 4pc to hit four-month low after Jefferies downgraded the stock to 'underperform'.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited said, "Energy-led input cost pressures continue to influence near-term market sentiment. However, stronger-than-expected Q1FY27 earnings, driven by a combination of pricing actions and volume growth, are likely to support earnings upgrades in the coming quarters. While the benefit of low-cost inventory aided profitability during the quarter, its sustainability remains a key monitorable, as higher-cost replenishment could constrain margin expansion in Q2FY27."

"Against this backdrop, investors are increasingly gravitating towards sectors and companies with strong earnings visibility, particularly within the mid- and small-cap segments. On the domestic front, bond yields,

55 aspirants set to complete Entrepreneurship training at Samba

■ **HT News Network**

SAMBA, AUGUST 17: Two batches, comprising 55 local aspirants, are set to complete 20-day training under Entrepreneurship Skill Development Programmes (ESDP-3&4) at District Administrative Complex Samba. Joint Director Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), Chand Kishore Sharma reviewed the ongoing training on the 19th day, today.

The Joint Director interacted with the 55 trainees from twin batches, reviewed the progress of the 20-day, 104-hour training programme and assessed the effectiveness of the training modules and learning outcomes. He encouraged the participants to apply the skills gained towards building sustainable entrepreneurial ventures and contributing to economic growth in Jammu & Kashmir.

Govt to set up high-powered banking committee for Viksit Bharat soon: Nirmala Sitharaman

■ **UNITED NEWS OF INDIA**

New Delhi, Aug 17 (UNI) The government is likely to constitute a high-powered committee on banking reforms later this month to examine the sector's requirements as India moves towards its Viksit Bharat goal, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday.

Speaking at the two-day PSB Confluence in New Delhi, Sitharaman said the discussions among public sector banks (PSBs) and public financial institutions (PFIs) would provide key inputs for the proposed panel.

The Finance Minister said the government was expected to announce the committee shortly and that the



recommendations and deliberations emerging from the conclave would serve as substantive reference material for the panel.

The high-level banking committee was first announced by Sitharaman in the union Budget for 2026-27. It is expected to undertake a comprehensive review of the banking sector and suggest reforms aimed at

supporting India's next phase of economic expansion while maintaining financial stability, financial inclusion and consumer protection.

Government sources indicated that the committee could be constituted as early as this month.

The Department of Financial Services (DFS) is organising the two-day conclave to bring together PSBs and PFIs for discussions on seven key areas. These include mobilisation of deposits, banking services for young customers, financing the investment cycle, supporting global capability centres (GCCs), strengthening agriculture and horticulture value-chain infrastructure.

Unemployment rate drops to 5.1pc in July, labour force participation rises: Govt Data

■ **UNITED NEWS OF INDIA**

New Delhi, Aug 17 (UNI) India's unemployment rate for people aged 15 years and above declined to 5.1 per cent in July 2026 from 5.5 per cent in June, even as labour force participation was broadly stable on a monthly basis but dropped to 5.9 per cent in July from 6.6 per cent a year earlier, among women, the overall and rural unemployment rates declined from June levels but remained higher than their corresponding readings in July 2025. Urban female unemployment increased to 8.8 per cent in July from 8.4 per cent in June and was broadly unchanged from 8.7 per cent a year earlier.



On a year-on-year basis, overall unemployment and rural unemployment were broadly unchanged in July. The urban unemployment rate, however, improved from 7.2 per cent in July 2025 to 6.7 per cent this year. The unemployment rate among men aged 15 years and above fell to 5 per cent in July from 5.3 per cent in June. It was also 0.3 percentage point lower

than the 5.3 per cent recorded in July 2025.

Rural male unemployment declined to 4.6 per cent from 4.9 per cent in June and was unchanged from the year-ago level. Urban male unemployment was broadly stable on a monthly basis but dropped to 5.9 per cent in July from 6.6 per cent a year earlier. Among women, the overall and rural unemployment rates declined from June levels but remained higher than their corresponding readings in July 2025. Urban female unemployment increased to 8.8 per cent in July from 8.4 per cent in June and was broadly unchanged from 8.7 per cent a year earlier.

Secretary RDD&PR calls for mission-mode push on VB-G RAM G implementation

Directs accelerated works, Person Days generation, wage payments and e-KYC

■ **HT News Network**

Srinagar, August 17: Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (RDD&PR), Mohammad Aijaz Asad, today chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the progress of the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramein) [VB-G RAM G], calling for a renewed and focused push to strengthen Person Days (PD) generation, activate worksites, ensure timely wage payments and tighten field-level supervision across the Union Territory. The meeting was attended by Director, Rural Development, Kashmir, Riyaz

Ahmad Wani; Director, Rural Development, Jammu, Shahnaz Akhtar; Director, Social Audit, Rajneesh Gupta; Additional Secretary, Waseem Raja; Superintending Engineers (REW), Jammu and Kashmir; Assistant Commissioners Development (ACDs); and Executive Engineers (REW).

Asad directed all Executive Engineers to process wage-component bills without delay, stressing that once the wage component is released, bills should be prepared simultaneously so that payments are not held up. He further directed that material payments be processed

alongside wage payments. The Secretary directed immediate and focused intervention to ensure timely initiation of works at all worksites.

He emphasised that all eligible Panchayats must be enabled to undertake works at the earliest, with a clear focus on strengthening employment generation and ensuring effective implementation of VB-G RAM G at the grassroots level. Holding Assistant Commissioners Development (ACDs) responsible for effective leadership at the block level, Asad observed that districts with proactive ACDs were delivering better



results, while few others were visibly lagging. He directed ACDs to take ownership of field-level implementation and warned that continued underperformance on certain parameters could invite accountability measures. Supervisory gaps, he stressed, must be promptly identified and corrected rather than allowed to persist. The Secretary also reviewed the e-KYC status of semi-skilled and skilled workers, whose payments will now be routed through the wage component. He directed Executive Engineers to complete the process within the stipulated timeline. He informed the meeting that MoRD

is expected to issue a detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) within the next few days regarding the proposed shift under which semi-skilled and skilled workers, currently often booked under the material component, will be reclassified under the wage component. He directed field officials to ensure that the transition is properly captured and implemented at the ground level. Acknowledging that certain villages in hilly, remote and snow-bound areas may naturally record comparatively lower figures during winters months, Asad directed officers to accord special attention to such

areas so that the benefits of the scheme reach all sections of the rural population. Reviewing wage-payment performance, the Secretary directed district authorities to expedite generation of Fund Transfer Orders (FTOs) against wage claims under VB-G RAM G, stressing that timely FTO processing is essential for ensuring prompt payment of wages to workers. Asad also emphasised the importance of Panch Sammelans as a platform for strengthening grassroots participation, direct engagement and coordination among elected representatives and field functionaries.

Entrepreneurship awareness programme held at Apna Van Mandal Jammu

HT News Network



JAMMU, AUGUST 17: MSME-Development & Facilitation Office (MSME-DFO), Jammu, Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Government of India, organised an Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme today at Community Centre, Apna Van Mandal.

The programme, held under the guidance of the Joint Director, MSME-DFO Jammu AK Tamaria, was attended by around 150 individuals, with women constituting the majority, reflecting the growing interest among women in entrepreneurship, self-employment and enterprise development. The event aimed to sensitise participants to various Government schemes, financial assistance, credit facilities and institutional support available for promoting entrepreneurship and the development of MSMEs.

Aabid Hussain, the programme coordinator delivered the welcome address and briefed the participants about the objectives of the programme and the importance of availing the government initiatives for enterprise development.

Functional Manager DIC Jammu Poonam Rani delivered a presentation on different schemes of the UT Government and apprised the participants about the support mechanisms available for entrepreneurs.

District Nodal Officer JKEDI Rajesh Kumar made a presentation on JKEDI schemes and highlighted initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment.

Branch Head Chattha Sandeep Singh Dutta and Branch Head Phallian, J&K Grameen Bank Rajan Khajuria sensitised the participants to various banking schemes, credit facilities and financial assistance available for setting up and expanding enterprises.

Assistant Director IEDS MSME-DFO Jammu D.K. Tyagi made a detailed presentation on the schemes of the Ministry of MSME, Government of India and apprised participants about the support available for the growth, development and sustainability of MSMEs.

Block Programme Manager JKRLM Neha Dubey shared information regarding relevant livelihood and entrepreneurship initiatives and opportunities available to the participants.

A key highlight of the programme was the facilitation of 10 Udyam Registrations on the spot, enabling prospective entrepreneurs to formally register their enterprises and access various benefits and support available under the MSME framework. The programme provided participants with an opportunity to interact with officials and resource persons and gain first-hand information regarding government schemes, institutional support, financial assistance and formal credit facilities.



Think You Need a Bone Density Scan Before 65? Read This First.

Routine osteoporosis generally begins at age 65 for women.¹ But some women get screened earlier—including the Kardashians.

On a recent episode of the Good Hang podcast, Kim Kardashian said she and her sisters, who range from their late twenties to late forties, receive bone density scans, called DEXA scans, every year. Not only that—a provider brings the device to them.

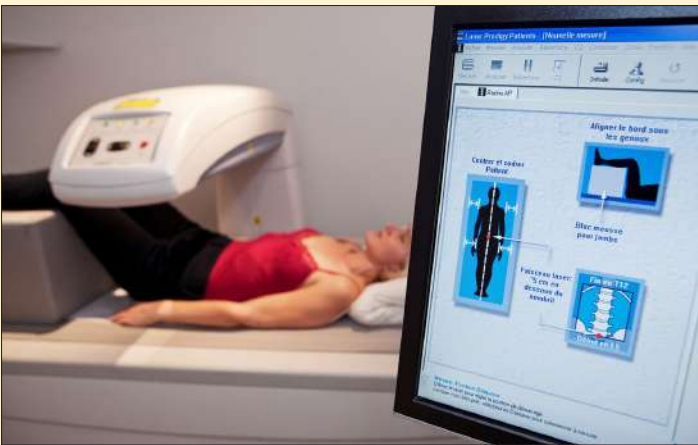
Most women don't actually benefit from DEXA scans prior to their 60s. But experts say there are a few exceptions.

First, When Do Women Start Losing Bone Density?

According to Rachel Pessah-Pollack, MD, an endocrinologist at NYU Langone, women reach peak bone mass by their late 20s. Some people with osteoporosis risk factors, such as a family history of the disease or low body mass index, may begin losing density around that time. But for most women, bone density remains stable until late perimenopause, the transitional period before menopause that typically hits in the mid-40s.

At that time, bone density begins to drop rapidly, largely because of falling estrogen levels, Pessah-Pollack explained. Bone loss accelerates most sharply one to two years after the final menstrual period, typically between the ages of 45 and 55, and then continues at a slower rate.²

Other factors can contribute to bone loss throughout life, according to Deborah Sellmeyer, MD, a clinical professor of medicine at Stanford University who specializes in metabolic bone disease. These factors include medications such as steroids, poor nutrition, malabsorption, and age-related changes like altered calcium and vitamin D metabolism, muscle loss, and



declining kidney function.

How Do DEXA Scans Work?

DEXA, short for dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry, is a quick, painless scan that uses low-dose X-rays to measure bone density. It works by assessing the amount of calcium and other minerals in bones—typically in the spine and hip, and sometimes in the forearm if either of those sites is not usable—and translating that information into a score, Sellmeyer explained.

Results include a T-score, which compares your bone density with that of a healthy young adult, and a Z-score, which compares bone density among people of the same age and sex, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³ The T-score is used to diagnose osteoporosis and osteopenia (an early sign of osteoporosis) in postmenopausal women and men over 50, while the Z-score is more commonly used for premenopausal women and men younger than 50, Sellmeyer said.⁴

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends



that all women at average risk for osteoporosis receive a DEXA scan beginning at age 65, with earlier screening for those at higher risk.¹

Are There Benefits to Getting a DEXA Scan Before Age 65?

According to Stellmeyer, it's not usually helpful for women to receive a bone density scan before menopause, technically defined as 12 consecutive months without a period. Younger women have a very low fracture risk, she said, so measuring bone density typically isn't useful unless there are indications of skeletal fragility, such as using medications like prednisone or estrogen suppressors or having a history of low-impact fractures, an eating disorder, irregular periods, or celiac disease.

However, Stellmeyer said that routine DEXA scans during late perimenopause or shortly after menopause could be helpful as a way to catch low bone density earlier and potentially prevent fractures. That said, there's a lack of large-scale studies with long-term follow-up demonstrating that this approach improves outcomes, she added.

Cost is also a consideration. Insurance typically won't cover bone scans before age 65 unless a health care provider determines that a patient is a candidate for one, Pessah-Pollack noted. In those cases, a letter of medical necessity may be needed. Without insurance coverage, DEXA scans can cost up to a few hundred dollars. But even if younger, low-risk women are willing to pay for a scan, that doesn't mean it will be helpful for them, Stellmeyer said. "Knowing the result may offer no benefit, only create stress, and potentially lead to inappropriate treatment that would not be able to further reduce the young woman's already low fracture risk," she said.

How to Keep Your Bones Strong

Instead of getting a scan that you may not need, experts said a better focus earlier in life is preventing bone loss through healthy lifestyle habits. Stellmeyer noted that these steps can reduce much of a person's

fracture risk.

"Adequate nutrition and physical activity to maximize bone growth are critical" at every stage of life, from childhood through adulthood, she explained.

On the nutrition front, getting enough vitamin D, protein, and especially calcium can make a real difference for bone health. Pessah-Pollack recommends 1,000 mg of calcium per day for women ages 19 to 50 and 1,200



mg per day for women over 50, ideally from food, though supplements can help fill nutritional gaps.

It's also important to avoid smoking and limit alcohol consumption. Keep in mind that some medications, such as steroids, can accelerate bone loss.

For postmenopausal women, research suggests that exercise, particularly a combination of aerobic and resistance training, can significantly slow bone density loss.⁵ Stellmeyer also recommends balance training to help reduce falls and prevent fractures.

As Stellmeyer said, having healthy bones "is a life-long endeavor, and we all should be implementing age-appropriate measures to maximize our skeletal health."

(Health.com)

How 20 minutes of nature can boost your health

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

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

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

1. You unconsciously relax

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

This can happen on a visit to the local park.

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

A UK study, involving nearly 20,000 people, found that those who spent at least a total of 120 minutes every week in greenery were significantly more likely to report good health and higher psychological well-being.

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

2. Your hormones reboot

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

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

"A study found that people in a hotel room for three days who were breathing in Hinoki (Japanese cypress) oil saw a big drop in the adrenaline hormone



and a large increase in natural killer cells in their blood."

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

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

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

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

3. Smell is a powerful sense

Smelling nature is just as powerful as seeing and hearing it.

The scent of trees and soil is full of organic compounds released by plants and "when you breathe them in, some molecules pass into the bloodstream."

Willis says pine is a good example of this as the smell of a pine forest can make you calmer within just 90 seconds and that effect lasts for about 10 minutes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bring nature to you

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Every bit seems to help," says Prof Ming Kuo.

(BBC News)

Jadeja, Suthar spin India to 178-run lead as Sri Lanka bowled out for 284

United News Of India

GALLE, AUG 17 : Ravindra Jadeja and Manav Suthar combined to crush Sri Lanka's late resistance as India bowled out the hosts for 284 on the third day of the opening Test, taking a commanding 178-run first-innings lead.

Sri Lanka looked down and out at 99/5 before Sonal Dinusha and Niroshan Dickwella staged a remarkable recovery, adding 146 for the sixth wicket. But India's spinners kept creating chances before Jadeja finally broke the partnership and then removed centurion Dinusha in a decisive burst that triggered Sri Lanka's collapse.

Dinusha played a superb counter-attacking innings of 100 off 168 balls, hitting four fours and two sixes for his maiden Test century. Dickwella, who was involved in a series of close calls, made 80 off 115 balls with seven boundaries.

The partnership frustrated India for more than 30 overs, but it was also marked by missed opportunities.



Manav Suthar came close to removing Dickwella when a thick edge flew rapidly towards KL Rahul at slip. Rahul reacted quickly but could not hold the difficult chance.

Jadeja subsequently induced an outside edge from Keshara Nuwantha that just carried towards Rahul, but the Indian fielder again failed to complete the catch.

India also had to survive a series

of tense DRS moments. Suthar's LBW appeal against Dickwella was reviewed, but ball-tracking returned umpire's call on impact. Jadeja then had another appeal against

Dickwella overturned after tracking showed the delivery would have bounced over leg stump.

The pressure, however, eventually became unbearable. Prasidh Krishna ended the 146-run stand at 236, getting

Dickwella to chase a good-length delivery outside off. The resulting edge carried safely to Rishabh Pant, ending the wicketkeeper-batter's determined 80.

Jadeja then dismissed Nuwantha for two to claim his 350th Test wicket, putting him among an elite group of Indian bowlers to reach the landmark. The biggest blow came three overs later. Dinusha had just reached his century and Sri Lanka were hoping he could take them towards India's total. Instead, Jadeja produced a delivery that summed up India's dominance. Bowling from round the wicket, Jadeja fired a flighted ball around off. It turned sharply into Dinusha, who went back looking for a routine flick but missed completely. The ball struck him in front of middle stump.

The decision was reviewed. UltraEdge showed no bat and ball-tracking returned three reds, confirming the dismissal.

Dinusha walked off shaking his head after a magnificent century, leaving Sri Lanka eight down for 274.

Black Hawks U21 crowned inaugural Guardians Trophy 2026 champions

United News Of India

PANJIM (GOA), AUG 17 : Black Hawks U21 (Hyderabad) were crowned champions of the inaugural Guardians Trophy 2026 after defeating hosts Goa Guardians U21 3-1 in the final at the Don Bosco Oratory here.

The victory brought the curtain down on three days of U21 volleyball in Goa, with the youth squads of all 10 Prime Volleyball League franchises competing on one platform for the inaugural Guardians

Trophy title on Sunday.

After 20 group-stage matches and two semifinals, Goa Guardians U21 and Black Hawks U21 (Hyderabad) emerged as the final two,

setting up a fitting conclusion to the tournament.

Hosts Goa Guardians U21 had to dig deep in their semifinal, overcoming Mumbai Meteors Youth 3-2 in a five-set battle.

Mumbai took the opening set 16-14 before Goa responded to win the next two 15-12 and 15-10. Mumbai forced the contest into a deciding fifth set with a 15-12 victory in the fourth, but Goa

held their nerve when it mattered most, taking the decider 15-10 to book their place in the final.

In the second semifinal, Hyderabad Black Hawks U21 produced a commanding performance against Ahmedabad Defenders U21, winning in straight sets.

East Bengal beat Rajshahi Stars in AFC Women's Champions League opener



United News Of India

KOTA KINABALU (MALAYSIA), AUG 17 : East Bengal FC hardly put a foot wrong as they began their AFC Women's Champions League 2026-27 Preliminary Stage campaign in style with a 4-0 win against Rajshahi Stars FC (Bangladesh) at the Likas Stadium here on Monday, August.

Ghanaian Olivia Anokye scored twice, while India internationals Astam Oraon and Soumya Guguloth netted once each to wrap up a dominant victory. Anthony Andrews' side will look to build on their momentum against Guam's Rovers FC on Thursday and hosts Sabah FA on

unday. Only the group winners will qualify for the group stage. East Bengal started strongly and were 1-0 up after nine minutes, with Olivia stroking home a penalty despite the best efforts of goalkeeper Rupna Chakma.

The IWL champions extended their lead through Astam Oraon in the 26th minute, with worse to follow for the Bangladeshi side before half-time.

Rimpa Haldar floated a cross in the 38th minute beyond Rupna, with Sulanjana Raul reacting quickest at the back post to cut back the ball for Olivia to grab her second of the evening.

Rajshahi regrouped after the break, but even though they offered more resistance, they had only one long-range strike from

Monika Chakma, which Panthoi Chanu Elangbam saved.

The Moshal Girls played the patient game with the advantage in their hands, capitalising on a defensive mistake in the 71st minute to add to the score, with Sulanjana playing Soumya through to slot it home and seal a sparkling performance for the Indian side.

Odisha to host World Athletics Continental Tour Silver Meet at Kalinga Stadium on August 22

United News Of India

BHUBANESWAR, AUG 17 : Odisha is set to strengthen its position on the global athletics map with the iconic Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar hosting the prestigious World Athletics Continental Tour Silver Meet on August 22.

Organised by the Sports and Youth Services Department of the Odisha Government in collaboration with the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) and under the aegis of World Athletics, the one-day event marks a significant upgrade from the successful Bronze-level meet hosted by the state last year.

The event is also being seen as an important precursor to the World Athletics Indoor Championships and the Asian Indoor Athletics Championships, scheduled to be hosted at Kalinga Stadium in 2028.

The meet will bring together 187 elite track and field athletes from 27 countries, including 143 athletes from 12 Asian nations. As many as 88 Indian athletes will compete against 99 international competitors on home soil. Among the major international contingents, Sri Lanka will field 24 athletes, followed by South Africa with 17 and Brazil with 11. The star-studded field includes 36 athletes ranked among the world's top 50 by World Athletics. Leading the field is Zambia's Muzala Samukonga, ranked sixth in the world and a bronze medallist in the men's 400m at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. He enters the competition with a season-best time of 44.02 seconds.

Saint Lucia Kings put up strong fight before Barbados Tridents secure rain-affected win

United News Of India

SAINT LUCIA, AUG 17 : Saint Lucia Kings produced a spirited effort in front of their home crowd but were unable to complete a challenging chase against Barbados Tridents, going down in a rain-affected contest in Gros Islet early on Monday.

After the match was reduced to 18 overs



per side, the Kings restricted the Tridents to 177 before Ackeem Auguste's attacking half-century kept the chase alive.

However, a cluster of wickets in the latter stages saw the Kings finish short of the target. The Tridents made a brisk start, with Quinton de Kock and Brandon King taking the attack to the Kings from the third over onwards.

De Kock and Brandon King were scoring quickly before Roston Chase provided the

Kings with an important breakthrough, dismissing de Kock for a rapid 38 off 15 balls.

He soon added the wicket of King as the Tridents' scoring rate began to dip. While Rivaldo Clarke contributed 15 from 22 balls, Sherfane Rutherford struck four sixes during the final four overs to bring up a second consecutive half-century, reaching the milestone from 27 balls and helping the Tridents post 177.

In reply, Ackeem Auguste provided the Kings with the impetus they needed. He took responsibility for keeping the chase on track. The Kings lost both openers inside the first six

overs, while Trident bowlers also kept things tight with the ball.

Auguste then shifted gears as his aggressive approach brought up a well-made 50 from 28 balls and reduced the equation to 61 runs from 36 deliveries, giving the Kings a strong chance.

The Tridents, however, bounced back, with Mujeeb dismissing Charith Asalanka in the 13th and Motie removing Auguste in the following over, ending the Kings' most promising partnership and leaving them needing 50 from 24 balls.

The Kings continued to fight until the

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