

Srinagar
Tuesday
September 01 | 2026
18 Rabi’ al-Awwal 1448 AH
Issue No: 209
Volume: 16
Pages: 12
Price :Rs: 2/-

www.dailyheadlinestoday.com
16TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION
HEADLINES
TODAY
Voice To The Voiceless



P:08

Kaverappa turns pitch frustration into four-wicket haul, says injury layoff helped add to arsenal

BRIEFLY

“Saving Lives Is My Biggest Reward”

‘Blood Man of Kashmir’ Shabbir Ahmad Khan completes 195 blood donations over 46 years

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 31: Sixty-year-old Shabbir Ahmad Khan of Srinagar’s downtown area has donated 195 pints of blood over 46 years and organised more than 1,500 blood donation camps across Kashmir, earning recognition as the ‘Blood Man of Kashmir’. Beginning his journey in 1980 after a friend needed an emergency transfusion, Khan discovered that he had O-negative blood and has since dedicated himself to voluntary blood donation

»»» MORE ON P 02

Beware of Porn Apps That Can Hijack Your Android Phone : Home Ministry

Cybercrime unit warns users against malicious APKs capable of compromising devices and enabling financial fraud

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 31: The Union Home Ministry’s cybercrime arm has warned Android users against a fresh wave of malicious applications disguised as pornography platforms that can potentially take control of smartphones and facilitate financial fraud. The National

»»» MORE ON P 02

Arms Cache Recovered During Search Operation in Shopian Orchard

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SHOPIAN, AUG 31: Security forces recovered a cache of arms and ammunition during a search operation in an orchard at Naikpora Meemander area of Shopian district, officials said.

The recovery was made during a cordon and search operation jointly conducted by 44 Rashtriya Rifles, SOG Shopian and 14 Battalion CRPF. According to officials, the search operation led to the discovery of a suspected hideout in an orchard associated with Rayees Ahmad Shah, a resident of Naik Mohalla, Meemander. The recovered items include one AK-47 rifle, two AK-47 magazines, 60 rounds of 7.62 mm ammunition, one pistol, six rounds of 9mm ammunition and one hand grenade.

»»» MORE ON P 02

Young Man’s Death at Anantnag Mid City Private Hospital Triggers Protest, OT Sealed

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

ANANTNAG, AUG 30: The death of a young man from Kulgam at Mid City private hospital in Anantnag has triggered a protest by his family members, who have alleged medical negligence and demanded a thorough probe into the circumstances surrounding his death.

The family members staged a protest at the hospital premises following the death, alleging lapses in treatment and seeking accountability. The case has also brought renewed scrutiny on

»»» MORE ON P 02

Ex-Serviceman Killed After Chinese Kite String Slits Throat in Jammu

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, AUG 31 A retired Army soldier was killed after his throat was slit by a banned Chinese kite string while he was travelling on a two-wheeler through the Bishnah area of Jammu Ring Road, officials said.

The deceased was identified as Naib Subedar (Retd) Lakhvinder Singh, who sustained critical injuries after coming into contact with the kite string late Sunday.

Singh was returning to his home in R S Pura after completing his work at an industrial unit in Bari Brahmana,

»»» MORE ON P 02

Red Cross Services Must Reach the Far-Flung and Border Areas : LG Manoj Sinha

Calls for stronger humanitarian outreach, district action plans, resource mobilisation and intensified efforts against TB and drug abuse

HT NEWS NETWORK

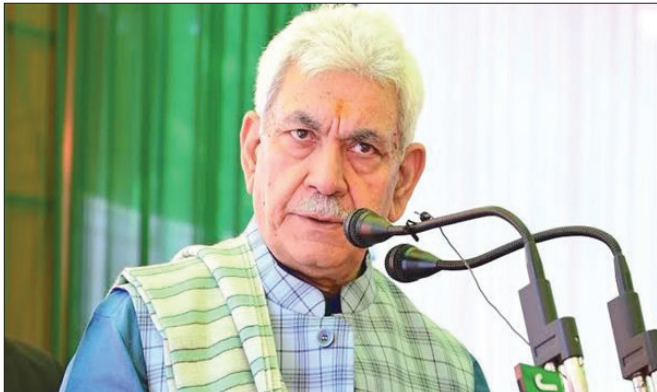
SRINAGAR, AUGUST 31: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who is President of the Indian Red Cross Society, J&K, today chaired its Annual General Meeting and reviewed the organisation’s functioning and future roadmap, directing Deputy Commissioners to intensify resource mobilisation, prepare comprehensive district-wise annual activity plans and expand humanitarian services to remote and border areas. He also called for exploring diagnostic centres in underserved areas, coordinated efforts for complete elimination of tuberculosis and an intensified anti-drug campaign.

Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha, today chaired the Annual General Meeting of the Indian Red Cross Society, J&K UT and reviewed its functioning, activities and future roadmap.

The meeting was attended by Dr Mandeep K Bhandari, Principal

Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Shri Shubhankar Pratyush Pathak, General Secretary, Indian Red Cross

strengthen humanitarian and welfare activities of the Red Cross Society.



Society, J&K; Deputy Commissioners (Presidents of District Red Cross Units), and officials of IRCS, J&K.

The Lieutenant Governor, who is the President of the Indian Red Cross Society, J&K UT, directed the Deputy Commissioners to intensify resource mobilisation and explore innovative avenues for fund generation to further

He further directed them to prepare comprehensive district-wise annual activity plans, identifying priority areas and interventions, and submit the same for effective implementation. Emphasising the need to take Red Cross services closer to the people, the Lieutenant

»»» MORE ON P 02

RHTC Najafgarh Must Emerge as a Comprehensive Centre for Patient Care and Training : J.P. Nadda

Reviews Healthcare, Manpower and Digital Health Expansion at Rural Health Training Centre

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 31: Union Health and Family Welfare Minister J.P. Nadda today reviewed the progress of the Rural Health Training Centre, Najafgarh, directing officials to ensure time-bound completion of ongoing works while strengthening patient care, manpower, medical education and digital health systems. The centre currently records around 47,000 OPD consultations and 9,000 emergency attendances every month and has expanded services including laboratory, ambulance, anti-rabies vaccination and anti-snake venom facilities.

Union Health and Family Welfare Minister J.P. Nadda on Monday reviewed the progress of the Rural Health Training Centre (RHTC), Najafgarh, and directed



concerned agencies to ensure time-bound completion of ongoing works and further strengthen patient care, manpower, academic activities and digital health systems.

»»» MORE ON P 02

“J&K Must Build a Sustainable Sports Ecosystem from Grassroots to Elite Level”

UT targets ₹1,000–1,200 crore under Khelo India 2026–31 as Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo directs districts to prepare comprehensive sports plans

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 31: Jammu and Kashmir has set an ambitious target of securing 1,000–1,200 crore in Central assistance under the Khelo India programme during 2026–31, with a focus on modern sports infrastructure, grassroots talent identification, professional coaching and development of elite athletes. Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, while chairing the first meeting of the UT Level Coordination Committee, directed Deputy Commissioners to prepare district-wise sports plans by September 15 and make optimal use of existing infrastructure and funding opportunities. Jammu and Kashmir has

drawn up an ambitious five-year roadmap to maximise Central assistance under the Khelo India

sports ecosystem across the UT. The roadmap was presented today before the UT Level



programme, with the Union Territory aspiring to secure around 1,000–1,200 Cr during 2026–31 for strengthening sports infrastructure, nurturing talent and building a comprehensive

Coordination Committee (UTLCC) in its first meeting chaired by Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, who called for a focused, district-driven approach to

»»» MORE ON P 02

J&K Loses Nearly ₹3,700 Crore of Horticulture Produce After Harvest Every Year

NITI Aayog flags massive post-harvest losses and calls for cold-chain, processing and marketing reforms

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 31: Jammu and Kashmir is losing horticulture produce worth nearly 3,700 crore annually after harvest, with apples and vegetables alone accounting for estimated losses of around 3,060 crore, according to a NITI Aayog roadmap for horticulture development up to 2047. The report identifies inadequate cold-chain infrastructure, limited

processing capacity, transportation constraints and weak handling and marketing systems as major challenges, and proposes stronger storage, processing, aggregation and value-addition infrastructure.

Jammu and Kashmir is losing horticulture produce worth nearly 3,700 crore after harvest, with apples and vegetables alone accounting for monetary losses of around 3,060 crore, according to a NITI Aayog roadmap for development of the

»»» MORE ON P 02

HT BOTTOM NEWS

Their Demand Is Genuine; Stipend Hike File Is Already Under Process : Sakina Itoo

Says proposal to raise MBBS interns’ monthly stipend from ₹12,000 to ₹30,000 is with Finance Department

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 31: Jammu and Kashmir Health and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo has acknowledged the demand of MBBS interns for a higher stipend as genuine, saying a proposal to increase the monthly payment from 12,000 to 30,000 has already been forwarded to the Finance Department for examination. Her statement came after MBBS and BDS interns staged peaceful demonstrations at government medical institutions



across J&K, citing long working hours and significant clinical responsibilities during compulsory internship.

: Apni Party president and former Finance Minister Syed Muhammad Altaf Bukhari on Monday questioned the functioning and direction of Jammu and Kashmir Bank, raising concerns

over its lending pattern in the region, recruitment policy, representation on its Board and reports of a possible relocation of its headquarters.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar, Bukhari said the bank’s credit growth in Kashmir was considerably lower than the growth recorded by the institution outside Jammu and Kashmir.

He put the credit growth in Kashmir at around nine per cent against nearly 20 per cent elsewhere, arguing that the figures raised questions over whether the bank was increasingly directing its lending activity away from its traditional market in Jammu and Kashmir. Bukhari said the issue was particularly significant because

»»» MORE ON P 02

J&K Bank Must Explain Its Lending, Recruitment and Board Policies : Altaf Bukhari

Questions lower credit growth in J&K, alleged recruitment changes and reports of headquarters shift

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 31: Apni Party president and former Finance Minister Syed Muhammad Altaf Bukhari has sought clarification from the Jammu and Kashmir Government and J&K Bank over its lending pattern, recruitment policy, Board composition and reports of a possible relocation of its headquarters from Srinagar. Bukhari claimed credit growth in Kashmir was around nine per cent against nearly 20 per cent outside J&K, and argued



that the bank, in which the J&K Government holds around 52 per cent stake, must continue to play a meaningful role in supporting the region’s economy

»»» MORE ON P 02

One-Day Seminar on Sufi Poet Lassa Khan Fida Organized by Cultural Academy

Event Pays Tribute to the Poetic and Sufi Contributions of Lassa Khan Fida

HT News Network

Anantnag, August 31, 2026: The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages organized a one-day seminar on the life, poetry, literary contributions and Sufi thought of renowned Kashmiri Sufi poet Lassa Khan Fida at his Ziyarat Sharief at Achabal Adda, Anantnag. The seminar was organized to pay tribute to the literary and spiritual contributions of the Sufi poet and to highlight his place and role in the rich tradition of Kashmiri Sufi poetry. A large number of devotees, writers, poets, intellectuals, researchers and people associated with cultural circles participated in the event.

The seminar was presided over by Prof. Gulshan Majeed. In his presidential address, he highlighted the poetic and Sufi contributions of Lassa Khan Fida and said that Sufi poetry holds a unique and fundamental place in the literary history of Kashmir. He stressed the need for further research on the lives and literary



contributions of Kashmiri Sufi poets and for passing their rich legacy on to the younger generation. At the outset, Academy Editor Sheeraza Javed Iqbal welcomed the guests, scholars, writers, poets, devotees and other participants. In his welcome address, he said that taking literary and cultural programmes to places associated with the origins of Kashmir's literary and spiritual traditions, or with important literary personalities, is a meaningful initiative.

He said such programmes help connect local literary and cultural communities with institutional activities while also strengthening the younger generation's bond with their cultural heritage. During the academic session of the seminar, paper presenters highlighted various aspects of Lassa Khan Fida's life, poetry, literary contributions and Sufi thought through their research papers. Gulshan Bhadarni, while presenting his paper, shed detailed

light on different dimensions of Lassa Khan Fida's poetry, his Sufi philosophy and his position in the Kashmiri poetic tradition. A special poetic session was also held during the seminar, in which poets presented their compositions inspired by the personality, poetry and Sufi philosophy of Lassa Khan Fida. The cultural segment of the programme featured Kashmiri folk music presented by folk singers. The traditional musical performance further enhanced the spiritual and cultural ambience of the event. Other speakers on the occasion said that Kashmir's Sufi poetry is an important part of its shared cultural and civilizational identity. They said that through their poetry, Sufi poets propagated messages of spiritual elevation, love, humanism, moral values, tolerance and mutual brotherhood. The speakers also emphasized the need for further research and documentation on poets like Lassa Khan Fida so that their scattered literary heritage could be preserved and the intellectual, linguistic, Sufi and cultural dimensions.

NFT Organises: Workshop-Cum-Seminar on Bhand Pather at GBMS Shuplian Khag

GULFAM BARJI

Budgam/August: 31 Nundresh Folk Theatre "NFT" Bamurada Khag Budgam organised a one-day workshop-cum-seminar on Bhand Pather at Govt, Boys Middle School Shuplian Zone Khag. The programme was organised with the support of the Ministry of Culture Govt, of India, under the Guru-Shishya Parampara Repertory Grant Scheme. Students, teachers and staff of the school participated enthusiastically in the programme which aimed at acquainting the younger generation with Kashmir's rich folk theatre and folk music traditions and creating awareness about the preservation and promotion of the region's traditional cultural heritage. Chairman All Kashmir Folk Artists Association Shah-i-Jahan Ahmad Bhagat, General Secretary Fayaz Ahmad Rather, Headmaster of the school and other teachers attended the programme. The speakers appreciated NFT for conducting cultural and artistic activities in educational institutions, saying that such initiatives are proving beneficial in connecting the younger generation with their cultural roots. During the workshop, artists of NFT introduced the students to the history, traditional techniques and practical aspects of Bhand Pather. Live demonstrations and performances



were also presented to familiarise the students with various aspects of Kashmir's traditional folk theatre. The students actively participated in the interactive activities. Speaking on the occasion, Ghulam Mohammad Butt, Director-cum-President, Nundresh Folk Theatre, thanked the school administration, teachers and students for their cooperation. He said that preservation of traditional arts and folk culture is the need of the hour and that cultural activities in educational institutions can play an important role in keeping the younger generation connected with its rich cultural heritage. The students and teachers appreciated the initiative and stressed the need for organising more such cultural programmes in schools.

JKAACL releases Ajit Singh Mastana's Punjabi Ghazal Collection "Reejhan De Jharney"

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 31: The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) organised a book release function at its Seminar Hall, Academy Complex, Lal Mandi, Srinagar, to release "Reejhan De Jharney", a collection of Punjabi ghazals authored by renowned Punjabi writer Ajit Singh Mastana.

The function was presided over by Prof. Gurcharan Singh Raina. Harvinder Kour, Secretary, JKAACL; S. Jaipal Singh, Dr. Sukhwinder Singh, and Popinder Singh Paras, Editor, Sheeraza Punjabi were present on the occasion. Congratulating Ajit Singh Mastana on the publication of his book, Secretary, JKAACL, appreciated his long-standing contribution to Punjabi literature and language. She said that Mastana has dedicated a significant part of his life to the promotion



and development of Punjabi literature and language. She added that the Academy is committed to recognising and encouraging writers who have made valuable contributions to the literary and cultural heritage of Jammu and Kashmir. S. Jaipal Singh, the Chief Guest, also congratulated Ajit Singh Mastana and appreciated his literary contribution. He said that writers of such calibre can bring positive change in society through their meaningful and thought-provoking writings. He praised Mastana's

Preparations reviewed for 1st International Film Festival J&K at Gulmarg

HT News Network

BARAMULLA, AUGUST 31: Chief Executive Officer, Gulmarg Development Authority (GDA), Tariq Hussain today

chaired meeting at the Convention Centre, Gulmarg to review the arrangements for the 1st International Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir, 2026. The meeting was attended by the District Information Officer (DIO) Baramulla, Iftakhar Naseem, Assistant Director Tourism Gulmarg, Sub-Divisional Police Officer Tangmarg, Station House Officer Gulmarg, Block Medical Officer (BMO), Executive Officer Municipal Committee Tangmarg/Gulmarg, Manager J&K Cable

Car Corporation, representatives of Hoteliers Association Gulmarg, Traders Association Gulmarg and ATV Operators Association Gulmarg, besides other concerned representatives. The meeting



held detailed deliberations on the overall preparations in Gulmarg and ensuring that Gulmarg presents itself as a world-class destination before filmmakers, creative professionals and visitors from India and abroad. A roadmap for a one-day itinerary for visiting delegates and guests was comprehensively discussed, with emphasis on showcasing Gulmarg's scenic beauty, adventure activities, hospitality, local culture and other tourism attractions.

Cluster University Srinagar organizes Three-Day Workshop on Research Methodology for Ph.D. Scholars

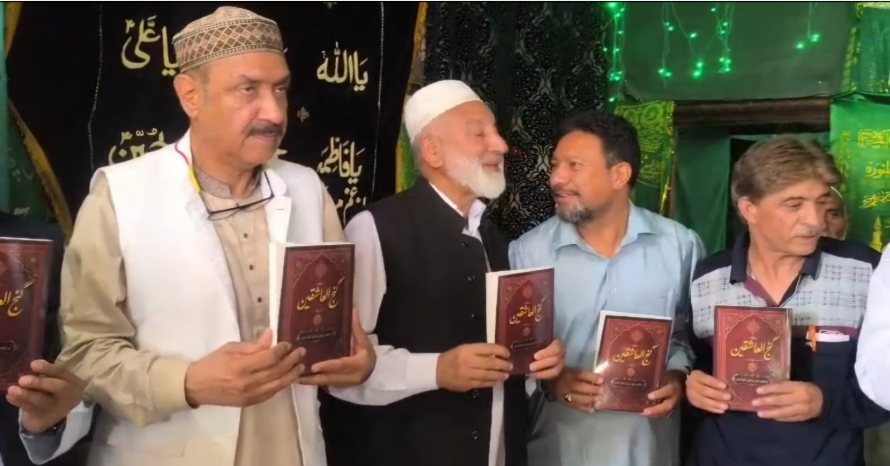
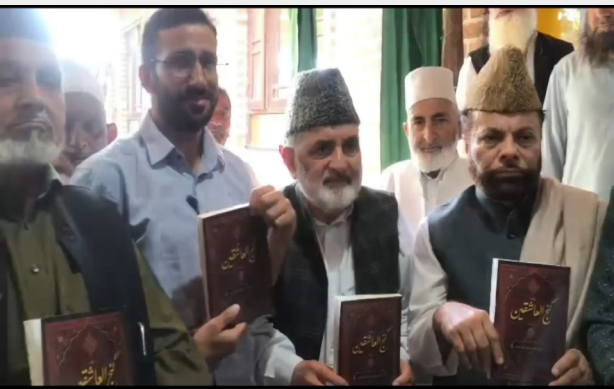
HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 31: The Dean, Academic Affairs, Cluster University of Srinagar, organized a three-day workshop on "Research Methodology" for Ph.D. scholars of the Maidan Batch 2025 at the Government College of Education (IASE), M.A. Road, Srinagar, a constituent college of Cluster University of Srinagar. Prof. (Dr.) Mohammad Mobin, Vice-Chancellor, Cluster University of Srinagar, in his

comprehensive address, elaborated on the fundamentals of research, the evolving landscape of academic scholarship, and the way forward for doctoral researchers. Prof. (Dr.) Mobin also provided valuable guidance to scholars and supervisors on research ethics, academic integrity, originality, and the challenges associated with doctoral research. He emphasized that a successful research journey demands more than methodological rigour, requiring critical thinking.

Scholarly Legacy Takes Literary Shape : Mufti Sharief-ul-Haq Bukhari's Books Unveiled at Kreeri Muradabad

Galaxy of religious scholars, political leaders, writers, poets, academics and media personalities gathers at Hazrat Mir Syed Haji Muhammad Muraad Al-Bukhari (R.A.)'s shrine for the memorable launch



HT CULTURAL DESK

Kreeri, August 31: In an occasion marked by spiritual solemnity, literary distinction and scholarly significance, the books authored by eminent religious scholar Mufti Mir Syed Sharief-ul-Haq Bukhari were formally launched today at the sacred mausoleum of the revered Sufi saint Hazrat Mir Syed Haji Muhammad Muraad Al-Bukhari (R.A.), bringing together a distinguished cross-section of religious, political, literary, academic, social and media personalities. The choice of the historic mausoleum

as the venue lent a special spiritual character to the ceremony, with the gathering reflecting the deep connection between Kashmir's religious heritage, scholarship and literary traditions. The occasion was attended by prominent personalities who came together to acknowledge and appreciate the scholarly contribution of Mufti Sharief-ul-Haq Bukhari and the importance of preserving works of knowledge for future generations. Among those present on the occasion were former Minister Mir Syed Basharat Hussain Bukhari, Hon'ble MLA Kreeri Irfan Hafeez Lone,

representative and Secretary of Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir Syed-ur-Rehman Shams, representative of the Chief Editor of Rising Kashmir Hafiz Ayaz, Syed Tamheed Bukhari, Chief Editor of Headlines Today Syed Jahangir Bukhari, Chief Editor of Kashmir Thunder and former bureaucrat Farooq Ahmed Renzushah, former BDO Ghulam Mohideen Sofi, Syed Saleem Geelani, Professor Al-Haj Syed Saad-ud-Din Sadi Bukhari, renowned poet Fayaz Tilgami, senior literary personality and noted poet Syed Sarwar Hashmi, Advocate Syed Shabir Bukhari, Media Secretary JKINC Syed Naseer

Bukhari, Professor Syed Yaseen Kirmani, Syed Basharat Haqqani, Syed Qamar Bukhari, Syed Basharat Qadari, former SSP Syed Mohideen Andrabi and Muneer Khan, besides a large number of scholars, intellectuals, writers and well-wishers. The gathering underlined the significance of literary and scholarly works in carrying forward the intellectual heritage of society. Speakers and participants appreciated the author's efforts in putting his thoughts and scholarship into the form of books and expressed hope that the works would reach

a wider readership and contribute to meaningful religious and intellectual discourse. The ceremony also provided an opportunity for scholars, literary figures and members of civil society to interact and reflect upon the enduring relevance of books and scholarship in an era increasingly dominated by rapidly changing digital platforms. The participants emphasised that serious literary and scholarly contributions remain essential for preserving collective wisdom, cultural memory and intellectual traditions. The presence of prominent poets

and literary personalities added a distinct cultural dimension to the event, while the participation of religious scholars and academics reinforced its scholarly character. The gathering also acknowledged the importance of encouraging authors and scholars who devote their efforts to research, writing and the dissemination of knowledge. Holding the book launch at the mausoleum of Hazrat Mir Syed Haji Muhammad Muraad Al-Bukhari (R.A.) was widely regarded as particularly meaningful, linking the literary occasion with the spiritual legacy of a revered figure

whose name remains deeply associated with the region's religious and cultural heritage. The participants extended their best wishes to Mufti Mir Syed Sharief-ul-Haq Bukhari and expressed hope that his books would prove a lasting source of knowledge, guidance, inspiration and intellectual enrichment, particularly for younger generations. The ceremony concluded on a solemn and positive note, with prayers for the author's continued success and for his scholarly works to benefit readers for years to come.

HT EDITORIAL

The Click That Can Cost You Everything

The latest warning from the Ministry of Home Affairs against malicious Android applications disguised as pornographic apps is far more than another routine cyber-security advisory. It is a stark reminder that in an increasingly digital society, financial fraud can begin with something as ordinary—and as dangerous—as a single careless click.

The National Cybercrime Threat Analytics Unit under the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre has flagged a disturbing pattern in which malicious applications are promoted through advertisements on social-media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram. Users are lured to websites carrying provocative content and then persuaded to download applications in the form of APK files from outside trusted app stores. What appears to be entertainment can quickly turn into a sophisticated mechanism for compromising a smartphone and, potentially, the finances of its owner.

The real danger lies not in the name of the application but in the permissions it seeks after installation. Particularly alarming is the misuse of Android's Accessibility facility. Designed to assist users with disabilities and enable specialised device functions, Accessibility access can provide an application with considerable control over a phone. In the hands of malicious software, that power can potentially be abused to manipulate the device and facilitate unauthorised financial activity.

This is precisely where public awareness must move beyond the traditional advice of simply "not clicking suspicious links". Cybercriminals have become smarter. Their advertisements can look convincing, their websites can appear genuine and their applications can be given harmless-sounding names. The modern internet scam is often designed not to frighten the victim, but to make the victim voluntarily open the door.

The reported use of secondary applications disguised as software updates makes the threat even more serious. Users have been trained to accept updates as a sign of security, yet the same instinct can be exploited by malware. The reported installation of unauthorised VPNs is another reminder that even technical functions unfamiliar to ordinary users can be manipulated to compromise their privacy and data.

The fundamental rule should therefore be simple: an application obtained from an advertisement or an unfamiliar website deserves no automatic trust.

There is little justification for downloading an APK from an unknown source when safer alternatives exist. Equally, no unfamiliar application should be granted powerful permissions merely because it claims those permissions are necessary for installation or functioning. Users should regularly examine the applications installed on their phones, remove those they do not recognise and keep Google Play Protect and device security updates enabled.

Banks and digital-payment systems have strengthened their safeguards, but no security architecture can entirely compensate for a compromised personal device. A smartphone today is not merely a communication instrument. It may contain banking applications, payment credentials, personal photographs, contacts, official documents and authentication information. Losing control of the phone can therefore mean exposing an entire digital identity.

The responsibility, however, does not rest with users alone. Social-media companies must also accept greater responsibility for advertisements that direct users towards malicious applications and websites. If criminals can purchase advertising space to reach millions of people, platforms must have equally strong mechanisms to identify and remove deceptive campaigns. Digital safety cannot be achieved by placing the entire burden on the individual user.

There is another uncomfortable dimension to this particular form of fraud. Because the initial lure involves adult content, victims may hesitate to report what happened. That hesitation benefits criminals. There should be no embarrassment in reporting a cybercrime. A compromised device is a security incident, not a moral failure.

Anyone who suspects that a malicious application has taken control of a device should act quickly—disable suspicious permissions, remove the application and monitor bank accounts and UPI transactions for unauthorised activity. Where necessary, the device may have to be restored to factory settings after important data is safely backed up. Financial fraud should be reported immediately through the national cybercrime helpline 1930 or the official cybercrime reporting system.

But the larger lesson is one of digital discipline.

India's transition to digital payments has been remarkably rapid. Yet digital convenience has sometimes advanced faster than digital awareness. Millions know how to make a UPI payment, but far fewer understand the significance of granting Accessibility access, installing an APK or allowing an unknown application to become a device administrator.

That knowledge gap must be closed.

The MHA warning should therefore be treated as a public wake-up call. The particular applications identified today may disappear tomorrow, only to be replaced by new names and new tricks. The technology will evolve, the bait will change and the platforms may be different. The vulnerability they seek to exploit, however, will remain the same: human trust and carelessness.

In the digital world, security often begins with a very small decision—whether to click, download or grant permission.

Sometimes, saying "No" is the strongest cyber-security measure available.



Wani Arfat

Not every battle is fought in a courtroom. Not every revolution begins on a stage. Some begin on the banks of a river, in a forgotten village, inside a government office, or in the pages of a newspaper read over a morning cup of tea.

For years, whenever questions have been raised about environmental destruction, public accountability, transparency, or governance in Jammu and Kashmir, one name has repeatedly surfaced in public discussions: Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat.

For more than two decades, Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat has emerged as one of Jammu & Kashmir's most respected environmentalists, transparency advocates, researchers, intellectuals, and grassroots campaigners. Through research, hard work, integrity, and civic participation, Dr. Bhat has shown that social change is not based upon politics and power positions but on evidence, public service, and dedication to the common good.

The journey of Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat started in Wathora, a historical village located approximately twelve kilometres south of Srinagar. Known for its Bhand Pather folk theatre tradition and situated on the banks of the Doodhganga River, Wathora shaped his early understanding of the close relationship between society, culture, and nature. Growing up in this environment inspired his lifelong commitment to environmental conservation.

Way before environmental issues became a popular cause for concern, Dr. Bhat had warned about the imminent danger facing Himalayan ecology of Kashmir. He always emphasized that the degradation of rivers, wetlands, forests, biodiversity, and agriculture land was a matter not only an issue of environmental degradation but also an endangerment of public health, economy, cultural inheritance, economic stability, and future generations.



Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat

science-based policy-making, stressing that climate change is a present issue that affects the glaciers, forest cover, biodiversity, agriculture, water bodies, and economy of Kashmir.

Dr. Bhat's contributions transcend one profession. He has seamlessly combined the roles of environmental campaigner, Right to Information crusader, investigative journalist, academician, public policy analyst, grassroots organizer, and lawyer. His activism is driven not by sentiment but by science, not rhetoric but law, and not publicity but public good.

He was one of the first few people to sound the alarm on the issues of wetlands degradation, unauthorized mining of river beds, deforestation, pollution, reduction in biodiversity, encroachments, and environmental fallout of poorly conceived developmental projects. He had pointed out many years ago that the environmental crisis would inevitably lead to humanitarian disaster.

Dr. Bhat is very different from other environmental commentators, who confine themselves to writing in newspapers and attending various conferences. Having the conviction that knowledge of environmental affairs starts at the field level, he travels extensively all over the state of Jammu and Kashmir, covering villages, forests, rivers, wetlands, hill stations, mining sites, and other places affected by environmental degradation. He gathers solid facts about the violations through interaction with locals, investigation and documentation before meeting officials and going to the courts. Hence, field work is one of the major components of his credibility.

Before committing himself completely to activism, Dr. Bhat was practicing dentistry. Through his patients from the remote villages of Kashmir, he became acquainted with the unfamiliar territories of Kashmir. On his Yamaha motorcycle, he made several trips starting from central Kashmir to reach the areas adjoining Pir Panjal range of mountains. Such trips allowed him to make a wide grassroots network throughout most of the districts, tehsils and administrative blocks.

The ability of investigation of cases has won him appreciation from the people belonging to the field of journalism, administration, law and activism. He studies the tenders, contracts, environment impact assessment, mining lease permits, pollution permits and official documents in order to find out clauses that are not paid attention to, procedural problems, unattended clearances and legal loopholes.

This legal acumen has helped Dr. Bhat transform the environmental issues into legal battles that can be fought. By using constitutional remedies and through litigation, especially before the National Green Tribunal, he has become one of the most active environmental litigators in Jammu & Kashmir. The persistent battle against the illegal riverbed mining has led to many judicial interventions, where both the National Green Tribunal and the Supreme Court have intervened to restore environmental governance and the rule of law.

(Mohammad Arfat Wani is a writer, social activist, and medical student from Kuchmulla, Tral. He writes on social issues, culture, and public concerns with the aim of raising awareness and inspiring positive change. Email: wania6817@gmail.com)

Bhagwat's USA Message

Hindutva, Harmony, Diversity and One Human Family



Lalit Garg

View Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Sarsanghchalak Dr. Mohan Bhagwat's visit to the United States in August 2026 merely as an outreach programme for the Indian diaspora would be to underestimate its wider significance. His address at the "One World, One Humanity" programme in New York on August 29 came at a time when the RSS has been the subject of diverse perceptions, allegations and ideological debates, not only in India but also abroad. Against this backdrop, the manner in which Bhagwat placed diversity, dialogue, service, coexistence and human unity at the centre of his message offered an opportunity to present the Sangh's worldview to global audiences from a different perspective. The significance of the visit is further enhanced by the fact that the RSS is observing its centenary year. Its ideas and its role in Indian public life are increasingly being discussed beyond India's borders. Bhagwat's visit to America therefore became an opportunity to explain the Sangh's thought through direct engagement and dialogue.

For decades, two sharply contrasting perceptions of the RSS have existed in India. One section regards it as a powerful embodiment of Indian culture, national consciousness, social service and organisation, while another associates its ideology with narrow religious politics. The Congress and various opposition parties have, from time to time, raised serious political questions about the RSS and its worldview. In the United States too, before Bhagwat's programme, certain organisations and



through confrontation; instead, he sought to explain the Indian civilisational perspective. In doing so, he opened a new space for debate about the RSS—one in which its ideas could be examined through the words and interpretation of its own highest leadership.

One of the most widely discussed aspects of Bhagwat's New York address was his unequivocal statement on Hindu-Muslim relations. He said that if a Hindu believes that there should be no place for Muslims in India, then such a person cannot be regarded as a Hindu. This statement is significant not merely as a political observation but because it connects his interpretation of Hindutva with the principle of social inclusiveness. He also emphasised the idea that truth is one, while the paths through which people understand and express it may be different. This has been a distinctive feature of the

Indian intellectual tradition: differences in belief need not be treated as a threat to existence; they can instead be understood as diverse expressions of humanity's search for truth.

This raises an important question: if Hindutva is understood as the cultural consciousness of India, can it exclude any community from the Indian nation? Bhagwat's answer appears to be an emphatic

experience suggests that unity does not necessarily require the elimination of differences. Different identities can coexist when diversity is respected rather than suppressed. This is what lifts Bhagwat's message beyond the conventional framework of a political speech. His emphasis was not merely on accepting diversity but on respecting and protecting it. He sought to place before the world the Sanatan perspective that regards the entire creation as interconnected and aspires towards the welfare of all humanity.

The essence of this worldview can be found in the timeless Indian expressions—"Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti" (Truth is one, though the wise describe it in different ways), "Atmavat Sarvabhuteshu" (regard all beings as you would regard yourself), "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the world is one family), and "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah" (may all be happy). Hindutva, in this broader civilisational sense, is not a narrow or exclusionary doctrine. It represents a way of life that recognises unity amid diversity and seeks the welfare of the entire world. Bhagwat's formulation that "seeing the world as one is our vision" captures the essence of this approach. Diversity is natural, while unity is the deeper truth. Therefore, celebrating diversity, respecting it and preserving it are integral to Indian culture. At the same time, preserving a sense of inner unity remains a collective responsibility. Human beings may differ in physical appearance, language, dress, customs, traditions and ways of life, yet there is something fundamental within us that connects us all. It is this civilisational message that Bhagwat attempted to articulate before an international audience with remarkable simplicity and clarity.

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Read It, Plant It, Grow It: Japan's Seeded Newspapers



placed in soil and watered. As the paper gradually breaks down, the seeds may germinate and grow into plants.

Japan has also developed modern forms of seed paper, including plantable washi, a traditional style of Japanese paper. Such paper can be made from recycled materials and contain flower or herb seeds. After use, the paper can become part of a new cycle of life rather than simply becoming waste.

The message behind this innovation is larger than the newspaper itself. It encourages people to rethink the meaning of "waste." A piece of paper may have a second life. Something that once carried information, advertisements or messages

can potentially contribute to greenery.

Seeded paper also offers an interesting lesson for schools, businesses and environmental organisations. Greeting cards, invitations, posters and promotional materials could be designed in ways that encourage people not simply to throw them away but to interact with nature.

Of course, plantable paper is not a complete solution to the environmental challenges created by paper production and waste. Recycling, reducing unnecessary printing and protecting forests remain important. But innovations like seed paper demonstrate how creativity can change our relationship with everyday objects.

The story of Japan's plantable newspaper reminds us of a beautiful possibility: reading can be followed by planting, and planting can be followed by new life.

In a world struggling with pollution and waste, perhaps the most inspiring ideas are those that ask us to see an ordinary object in an extraordinary new way.

Read it. Plant it. Grow it. And let yesterday's paper become tomorrow's greenery.

Dr Vijay Garg Retired Principal
Educationist Eminent Scientist Academic Editor
of online Magazine Inbworld.com
Malout Punjab

What Adbi Markaz Kamraz Made of Me

A 47-year literary journey, a movement that transformed an ordinary lover of literature into a Kashmiri poet and writer



By Dr. Rafeeq Masoodi

I often say from every stage that Adbi Markaz Kamraz did not make me its Vice President, Executive Member or Patron; it made me a poet and a writer. It transformed an ordinary literature-loving boy from a village into someone who could find his voice in Kashmiri.

If today my name is counted among those who write in Kashmiri, the entire credit goes to this 54-year-old movement—Adbi Markaz Kamraz. It is not merely an organisation; it is a Tehreek, a movement rooted in an enduring love for language, literature and Kashmir.

For bringing me into this movement, I shall always remain indebted to one person from my college days—Shahnaz Rasheed. He held my hand and taught me the meaning of commitment. He taught me to love Kashmiri at a time when the world was increasingly running after English, Urdu and Hindi. If today I can write even a few lines in Kashmiri, it is because of Shahnaz Rasheed and Adbi Markaz Kamraz.

I still remember that day vividly—the Annual Conference of Adbi Markaz Kamraz at Nishat Park, Bandipora. A shy young radio enthusiast, already deeply in love with adab, was introduced as an ordinary member by my Ustad, the late Professor Mishal Sultanpuri. That ordinary membership became one of the most extraordinary honours of my life. That day, I was nobody—just a listener.

Later, I was empanelled and encouraged by two great personalities—late Mohammad Ahsan Ahsan Sahib and my brother and friend, late Abdul Aziz Parrey, whom the world knows as Aziz Hajini, one of the greatest lovers and champions of the Kashmiri

language in our lifetime. These two men told me, in essence: You belong here.

Since that day in Bandipora, I have attended every annual conference of AMK without missing a single one, except during those years when my professional postings took me outside Kashmir—to Vividh Bharati, AIR and Doordarshan in Delhi, and later as Additional Director General, Doordarshan, in Malaysia and China. My body may have been in Delhi, Malaysia or China, but my soul remained seated in the mehfil of AMK—in Sopore, Bandipora or Srinagar.

Served as its Vice President and Executive Member for many years. Yet, believe me, the chair that always gave me the greatest satisfaction was the last one—the chair of an ordinary member.

AMK is my university.

Whatever little I have written owes its existence to this institution. My Kashmiri poetry collection Panun Dod Panaen Dag (My Pain, My Affliction), which was subsequently translated into English, Punjabi, Assamese, Gujarati, Tamil and other languages; my second collection Be Pia Talash (In Search of Myself), released by AMK itself at Tagore Hall; my Sahitya Akademi Award-winning translation of Bhisham Sahni's Tamas into Kashmiri; my translation of Vishnu Prabhakar's Ardh Narishwar; and, more recently, Manohar Shyam Joshi's Kyap, translated as Avuch—all became possible because AMK gave me the language, confidence and audience to express myself.

But AMK gave me something far more valuable than books.

It gave me people. It gave me a family.

How can I forget Nishat Ansari Sahib, whose intellectual depth helped me understand the nuances of Kashmiri criticism and taught me how to listen and conduct oneself in a literary gathering? How can I forget Prof. Bacha, a teacher of philosophy who nevertheless taught us to learn, speak and pronounce Koshur with pride?

And my own Aunt, Ateega Behenji Masoodi, who opened her doors to AMK when we did not have a place of our own to assemble and celebrate. At her historic place at Kanispora in Baramulla, she offered us jaay te' chaay—a place and tea. She also reminded us that women are among the true



custodians of our folklore and folk culture.

G. M. Aajir, Manzur Hashmi Sahib and Gowhar Mohiuddin were among those pillars who could sit through an entire night discussing a single word of Rahman Rahi or Mehjoor.

M. A. Shakib and G. M. Ghamgeen were soft-spoken personalities, but their poetry carried the force of fire.

My dear friend, Dr. Shujaat Bukhari, always believed that Kashmiri journalism and Kashmiri literature must move together.

Faruq Rafiabadi and Amin Bhat, our present President, represent the continuity of this caravan, carrying it forward with sincerity and dedication.

And above all stand Prof. Hajini, Prof. Rasheed Nazki, Prof. Mishal Sultanpuri and Dr. Aziz Hajini—the great Patrons who led this Markaz with extraordinary vision. They were giants. They established records that remain difficult to match. Their grandeur, dedication and commitment cannot simply be replicated. We can only try to walk in the shadow of their footsteps.

And today, I find myself sitting in the chair they once occupied—as Patron.

Believe me, whenever I sit in this chair, I feel more responsible, more humbled and, perhaps, somewhat frightened. I wonder whether a small man like me can ever match their stature. They devoted their lives to

Kashmiri. I am merely trying to follow the path they illuminated.

47 Years—Not a Formality, But a Pledge

This 47th Annual Conference is not a formality. It is not a photo opportunity. It is our pledge renewed.

Forty-seven years of an uninterrupted literary journey—how many organisations in Jammu and Kashmir can claim such continuity? Governments changed. Militancy came. Turmoil shook our society. Yet AMK never stopped.

Because AMK is a movement of people, not a movement dependent on government funds.

Today, when we see children struggling to read and write Kashmiri in Nastaleeq, and when Kashmiri has increasingly been treated as optional in educational spaces, the importance of this conference becomes even greater.

My appeal as Patron is simple:

Let us take Koshur from books to laptops, from seminars to primary schools, and from Sopore to Silicon Valley, where our children now live.

Let us make Kashmiri relevant to the next generation—not merely as a language of nostalgia, but as a language of knowledge, creativity, technology and identity.

I welcome all of you—poets, writers, teachers, students and lovers of Koshur—to the 47th Annual Conference of Adbi Markaz Kamraz at Hajin, the picturesque cultural capital of Kashmir.

Let us talk. Let us argue. Let us disagree. But let us do it in Koshur.

Because if Koshur dies, Kashmir dies. And if Koshur lives, Kashmir lives.

Tuhi chu Koshir, Be chus Koshur, Asi Chu Sari Koshir.

Kaashir T'CHI saen pehchhan te' Deke-Tike.

Dr. Rafeeq Masoodi, is a prolific writer, former DDG prasar bharthi broadcasting Corporation and is Patron of Adbi Markaz Kamraz. Also a regular contributor to daily HEADLINES TODAY as well. It is a matter of pride for us to carry his write ups in the newspaper

When Trust Turns Into Trauma The Hidden Cost of Betrayal

A partner's infidelity, deception or emotional abandonment can leave deep psychological scars, but compassion, accountability and support can help women rebuild their lives



BY BISMA ASHRAF

Betrayal rarely ends with the moment the truth comes to light. The discovery may happen in an instant—a message seen by chance, a secret relationship uncovered, unexplained financial transactions revealed, or the painful realization that the person once trusted completely has been living a parallel life. But the emotional consequences can continue long after that moment, quietly reshaping a woman's thoughts, behaviour, relationships and understanding of herself.

For many women, betrayal is not simply the collapse of trust between two people. It can shake the very foundations on which emotional security is built. The person expected to provide comfort becomes the source of anxiety. A relationship that once represented safety can suddenly become a place of uncertainty, suspicion and fear.

This is why betrayal should not be dismissed as merely a private relationship problem. Its psychological consequences can be profound, particularly when deception is prolonged, repeated or accompanied by emotional manipulation, financial control or social humiliation.

Infidelity is perhaps the most commonly recognized form of betrayal, but it is not the only one. Emotional withdrawal, secret relationships, concealed finances, hidden debts, deliberate economic deprivation and persistent dishonesty can all inflict serious emotional damage. Whatever its form, betrayal fundamentally violates an expectation of honesty, loyalty and security.

The mind often struggles to reconcile the person a woman believed she knew with the person whose actions have now been exposed. Memories that once brought comfort can suddenly become painful. Ordinary conversations are replayed repeatedly. Past incidents are examined for clues. A woman may wonder how long the deception lasted, what else she does not know and whether anything in the relationship was ever genuine.

Such constant questioning can produce emotional hypervigilance. Messages may be checked repeatedly, changes in tone may be interpreted as warning signs and innocent situations may trigger suspicion. Sleep can become disturbed, concentration can deteriorate and routine responsibilities can feel overwhelming.

Others may respond in the opposite way. Rather than becoming constantly alert, they may become emotionally numb. Activities that once brought happiness may lose

their meaning. Social interaction may feel exhausting. Ambition can fade and the future may appear uncertain or empty.

These reactions are not necessarily signs of weakness. They can be understandable responses to profound emotional injury. However, when distress continues for a long period, it can contribute to anxiety, depression and other psychological difficulties. Some women may also experience trauma-related symptoms, particularly when betrayal has been accompanied by manipulation, intimidation or prolonged emotional abuse.

Perhaps the most damaging consequence is the erosion of self-worth.

A woman who has been betrayed may begin asking questions that place responsibility on herself: Was I not good enough? Was I too demanding? Did I neglect him? Could I have prevented this? Such questions can become a destructive cycle in which the injured person attempts to find a personal explanation for someone else's decision to deceive.

But another person's betrayal is not evidence of the betrayed woman's inadequacy.

No woman should be made to believe that another person's dishonesty is a measure of her beauty, intelligence, affection, character or worth. Relationships can encounter difficulties for many reasons, but deception remains a choice made by the person who deceives.

Unfortunately, the burden can become heavier in societies where women are often expected to protect the image of the family regardless of circumstances. A woman may hesitate to speak about betrayal because she fears gossip, social embarrassment or criticism. Instead of being asked how she is coping, she may be asked what she did wrong or why she could not preserve the relationship.

This double standard is deeply damaging.

A man's infidelity may sometimes be dismissed as a temporary weakness or personal failing, while a woman's decision to confront betrayal, seek separation or express anger can attract disproportionate criticism. Such attitudes do not necessarily preserve families; often, they simply preserve silence.

And silence can become another form of suffering.

When a woman has no safe space in which to speak honestly about what she has experienced, emotional pain can become increasingly isolating. Friends and relatives may unintentionally worsen the situation by offering simplistic advice such as "forget it," "think about the children" or "adjust for the sake of the family." While such advice may be well-intentioned, it can leave the woman feeling that her emotional suffering is insignificant.

The presence of children makes these decisions even more complicated. Children are often sensitive to tension within a household even when adults attempt to hide the details. They may sense emotional distance, arguments and changes in their

mother's behaviour. At the same time, a woman may feel compelled to suppress her own pain in an attempt to maintain stability for her children.

There is no universal answer to whether a woman should stay or leave after betrayal. Every relationship has its own circumstances, and decisions must take into account emotional well-being, financial security, children, safety and the possibility—or impossibility—of genuine repair.

Reconciliation, when chosen, should not be confused with simply forgetting what happened. Trust cannot be

restored through apologies alone. It requires accountability, honesty, transparency and sustained behavioural change from the person who caused the injury. Without these elements, a woman may remain trapped in a cycle of suspicion, disappointment and repeated emotional harm.

For others, separation may become necessary. But leaving does not automatically end the emotional consequences of betrayal. A woman may still have to deal with grief, loneliness, financial uncertainty, social pressure and the loss of a future she once imagined.

This is where professional and community support become essential.

Counselling can provide a safe environment in which a woman can process grief, challenge self-blame, manage anxiety and rebuild emotional boundaries. Evidence-based psychological approaches can help individuals cope with intrusive thoughts, depressive symptoms, emotional distress and trauma-related difficulties.

Yet professional therapy is only one part of recovery. A compassionate friend, supportive family member or trusted community network can provide the validation that many women desperately need. Practical assistance can be equally important. Legal advice, financial planning, employment support and information about housing and child-related arrangements can reduce the uncertainty that often intensifies psychological distress.

Safety must also remain central. When betrayal is accompanied by threats, coercive control, stalking or violence, confronting a partner or announcing plans to leave may create additional risks. In such circumstances, emotional decisions must be accompanied by careful safety planning and appropriate professional assistance.

Healing is ultimately about reclaiming agency.

That process may begin with something as simple as rebuilding a daily routine, returning to work, reconnecting with friends, pursuing education, developing financial independence or rediscovering an interest that had been neglected. Small decisions can gradually restore a sense of control.

A woman does not have to remain defined by what was done to her.

Betrayal may become an important chapter in her life story, but it does not have to become the entire story. With time, support and self-compassion, the narrative can change—from one of humiliation and loss to one of survival, dignity and renewal.

Society, meanwhile, must reconsider how it responds to women who experience betrayal. We cannot continue to place the responsibility for maintaining a relationship entirely on the person who has been wronged. Compassion should replace gossip, support should replace blame and accountability should replace excuses.

Families, community institutions and religious leaders can play an important role in creating environments where women can seek help without fear of humiliation. Mental health support should not be viewed as a sign of weakness. Seeking professional assistance after emotional trauma is an act of self-preservation and strength.

There is also a larger lesson here for men. Trust within a relationship is not a privilege that can be taken for granted. Infidelity, emotional manipulation and financial deception do not merely hurt feelings; they can destabilize another person's psychological and social well-being. Accountability must therefore be understood as an essential part of responsible relationships.

The first Haryanvi short story collection 'Mhari Matti, Mhare Akhar' was released.



Dr. Satyawan Saurabh,

IAS Dr. Manoj Kumar Garg, Vice President of Haryana Art Council Mahesh Joshi, Padmashree Dr. Santram Deswal and litterateur Dr. Ramniwas Manav inaugurated the book.

'Haryanvi Literature-Art Confluence' organized in the memory of Manumukt 'Manav'

Narnaul. Under the joint aegis of Manumukt 'Manav' Memorial Trust, Narnaul and Haryana Kala Parishad, Kurukshetra, 'Haryanvi Sahitya-Kala Sangam' was organized at the International Cultural Center 'Manumukt Bhawan' located in the local HUDA Sector. After the prayer song presented by Industry Extension Officer Dr. Sunil Bhardwaj, the function concluded under the inspiring presence of Chief Trustee Dr. Ramniwas 'Manav' and the efficient conduct of Dr. Pankaj Gaur.

The ceremony was presided over by Dr. Manoj Kumar Garg, Vice Chancellor of Singhania University, Pachori Badi (Rajasthan) and a former Indian Administrative Service officer. Mahesh Joshi, Vice President of the Haryana Arts Council, was the chief guest, and Padmashree Dr. Santram Deswal, a senior litterateur and educationist from Sonapat, was the special guest.

All the distinguished guests paid tribute to the late Manumukt 'Manav' and praised the literary, cultural, and social work being undertaken by the Trust in his memory.

Trustee Dr. Kanta Bharti said that more than two dozen litterateurs of the country participated in this function organized on the 13th death anniversary of late Indian Police Service officer Dr. Manumukt 'Manav'.

Release of 'My soil, my letters'

In the function, the book 'Mhari Matti, Mhare Akhar', edited by Bhiwani's litterateur and columnist Dr. Satyawan Saurabh and Dr. Priyanka Saurabh and dedicated to Dr. Manumukt 'Manav', was released by the guests on the stage.

This is said to be the first short story collection

in the Haryanvi dialect. It contains a total of 99 short stories, including three each from 33 short story writers. These include one from Auckland (New Zealand), 27 from Haryana, three from Rajasthan, and one each from Chandigarh and Punjab.

Sushil Kumar 'Naveen' (Tosham) and Satyaveer Nahadia (Rewari) presented critical remarks on the released book.

Poets recited poetry

In the second phase of the event, poets such as Sanjay Pathak (Jaitpur), Praveen Pandit (Alwar), Prof. Jyoti Raj (Sonapat), Rajpal Yadav 'Raj' (Gurugram), Dr. Mukut Agarwal and Dalbir Singh 'Phool' (Rewari), Dr. Jitendra Bhardwaj and Oshin Shukla 'Sakshi' (Narnaul) recited poetry. The audience applauded the performances.

At the end of the programme, the President, Chief Guest, Special Guest and all the participating litterateurs were honoured with 'Dr. Manumukt 'Manav' 'Smriti Samman' by presenting them robes, mementos and certificates of honour on behalf of the Trust.

Their notable presence

Present at this special function, which lasted for about two and a half hours, were writers like Krishna Kumar 'Nirman' (Karnal), Dr. Rajkala Deswal (Sonapat), Dr. Suresh Vashisht and Krishna Jaimini (Gurugram), Rajpal Singh Gulia (Jhajjar), Bhoop Singh Bharti, Dr. Dharamveer Yadav and Samta 'Aruna' (Rewari), Amar Chand Bainiwal (Fatehabad), Dr. Satyapal Sharma and Ashok Vashisht (Hisar), Bhupendra Godara and Suman Godara (Siwani Mandi).

Apart from this, the presence of Harmahendra Yadav of Toronto (Canada), Vice Chancellor of Singhania University, Pachori Bari (Rajasthan) Dr. Pawan Tripathi, Chief Finance Officer Sunil Kumar Sobti and Sanjeev Grover, Ground Water Officer Rakesh Kumar of Dadri, CMGGA Prakhar Sachan of Narnaul, former AGM Amarjeet Yadav,

former Block Education Officer Mukesh Kumar, Dr. Jitendra Bhardwaj, Suresh Chand Sharma, Banwari Lal Sharma, Advocate Baldev Singh Chahal, Mohammad Shafi, Satyaveer Chaudhary, Dr. Pushpalata Bhardwaj, Dr. Sharmila Yadav, Dr. Vandana Kumari and many other dignitaries was notable.

(Dr. Satyawan Saurabh, PhD (Political Science), is a poet and social thinker,)

District NCORD Committee reviews drug control measures in Kishtwar

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, AUGUST 31: Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Pankaj Kumar Sharma today chaired a meeting of the District-Level Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) to review the preventive, rehabilitative and enforcement measures being undertaken by the stakeholder departments to curb drug abuse and illicit trafficking in the district.

At the outset, District Social Welfare Officer Tariq Parveez Qazi presented the Action Taken Report (ATR) on the decisions taken in the previous NCORD meeting.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the district heads of line departments to ensure the active participation of designated resource persons and officials in the IEC



campaign under the ongoing Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyan every Monday. He cautioned that any negligence or non-compliance in this regard would be viewed seriously.

It was informed in the meeting that wild cannabis has been destroyed spread over 8 kanal and 15 marla to

date. The Excise and Taxation Department was asked to continue and intensify enforcement measures against the illicit cultivation and destruction of all banned crops in accordance with the prescribed legal provisions and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

The Deputy Commissioner instructed the ADC to convene regular meetings with courier service operators and postal service providers operating to ensure reporting of bogus parcels and suspicious packages, proper maintenance of records and prevention of the transportation of unauthorised Schedule H drug consignments.

The Drugs Control Officer informed that 92 percent computer billing and 95.69 percent CCTV installation have been completed in medical shops across the district.

The School Education Department was asked to ensure that all remaining educational institutions are declared Tobacco-Free Educational Institutions in strict compliance with the TOFEI guidelines.

The Sub-Divisional Magistrates

and Tehsildars were exhorted to expedite the declaration of pending Panchayats as "Nasha Mukti" in accordance with the prescribed Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs), ensuring due verification and active community participation.

The CMO informed the meeting that drug test kits have been distributed among all departments to conduct tests of employees. The DC directed the departments to effectively use the test kits on suspects and submit results and outcomes of the tests to his office on a timely basis.

All the Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs) were directed to furnish Drug-Free Office Certificates after obtaining duly certified self-declaration forms from all government employees.

DC reviews implementation of National AYUSH Mission in Udhampur

■ HT News Network



UDHAMPUR, AUGUST 31: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Minga Sherpa, who is also the Chairman of the District AYUSH Society, today chaired a review meeting to assess the functioning of the AYUSH Department and the implementation of the National AYUSH Mission in the district. The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner Jugal Kishore; Chief Planning Officer Uttam Singh and other officers from various departments. At the outset, District AYUSH Officer Dr. Surekha Pandita delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation on the implementation of the National AYUSH Mission and the functioning of the AYUSH Department in the district. The DC directed the AYUSH Department to scale up its progress and achieve the prescribed targets within the stipulated timelines. He stressed the need to intensify outreach programmes and directed the department.

Director AYUSH reviews AYUSH healthcare facilities, Services in Jammu, Samba

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, AUGUST 31: Director AYUSH J&K Dr. Ajay Kumar Tikoo today undertook a comprehensive review of AYUSH healthcare services and infrastructure in Jammu and Samba districts, with a focus on strengthening service delivery, expediting the operationalization of newly established healthcare facilities and ensuring effective implementation of AYUSH programmes at the grassroots level.

As part of the visit, the Director AYUSH inspected the 10-bedded Integrated AYUSH Hospital at Gari Garh-Jammu, where he interacted with the hospital staff and obtained detailed feedback regarding the functioning of the facility and issues affecting service delivery. He assured the staff that the issues brought to his notice would be addressed on priority and directed them to adopt a systematic and result-oriented approach to ensure that IPD services are made functional at the earliest, thereby enhancing the availability and scope of AYUSH healthcare services in the area.

Later, Dr. Tikoo visited the under-construction 50-bedded Integrated AYUSH Hospital at Nonath, Ghagwal-Samba, where he reviewed the pace and quality of the ongoing construction work. He emphasised strict adherence to prescribed standards and directed the concerned officers to ensure the early completion of the project and timely operationalization of hospital services.

Later, the Director held a meeting to review the functioning of the AYUSH sector in District Samba, with emphasis on programme implementation, service delivery, institutional performance and operational challenges.

District level NCORD Meeting held at Kathua DC reviews measures to combat drug abuse, illicit trafficking

■ HT News Network

KATHUA, AUGUST 31: Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma today chaired a meeting of the District-Level Narco Coordination Committee (NCORD) to review the drug control measures and assess the progress achieved by the concerned departments in combating the menace of narcotics in the district.

At the outset, the meeting undertook a detailed review of the action taken on the decisions of previous NCORD meetings, besides assessing the status of enforcement activities, identification of vulnerable areas and measures adopted to prevent drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

It was given out in the meeting that suspension/cancellation of Vehicle Registration Certificates has been ensured by the Motor Vehicle Department of persons involved in illicit drug trafficking.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned officers to further intensify coordinated efforts against the cultivation,



trafficking and peddling of narcotic substances. He stressed upon the enforcement agencies to maintain close surveillance over vulnerable areas and ensure strict action against persons found involved in narcotics-related activities as per law.

Emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach to tackle drug abuse, the DC directed the Health, Education, Social Welfare and other concerned departments to intensify awareness and sensitization programmes, particularly among youth and students, about the harmful effects of drug abuse. He directed the stakeholders to

ensure regular sharing of information and prompt follow-up action on inputs related to narcotics activities. He stressed that concerted efforts by all concerned departments are essential to effectively curb the drug menace and create a safer and healthier environment for the people of the district.

The meeting was attended by GMDIC Mushtaq Choudhary; ADC Mahima Madan; ASP Sunil Kesar; CMO Dr. Vijay Raina; ACD Akhil Sadotra; CAO, DSWO, other concerned officers and representatives of the concerned departments attended the meeting.

DC Samba reviews anti-drug measures at NCORD meeting



■ HT News Network

SAMBA, AUGUST 31: Deputy Commissioner Samba Ayushi Sudan today chaired a meeting of the District-Level Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) Committee to take stock of drug and narcotic control measures in the district.

The meeting focused on reviewing the Action Taken Report on the decisions of the previous NCORD meeting and assessing the progress made by the stakeholder departments in implementing anti-drug measures.

Stressing de-addiction and rehabilitation measures,

the DC stressed the need to strengthen the functioning of the Addiction Treatment Facility (ATF) at District Hospital. She directed the concerned authorities to ensure that counselling, treatment and rehabilitation services remain accessible to individuals affected by substance abuse.

The DC also emphasized strengthening preventive measures in educational institutions. She called for capacity-building initiatives for teachers to enable them to identify early signs of vulnerability among students, provide appropriate guidance and impart awareness about the adverse

impact of drug abuse.

Underscoring the importance of community involvement, the Deputy Commissioner directed the departments to expand IEC activities, awareness drives and outreach programmes across the district. She further called for greater youth engagement through sports, orientation programmes and other constructive activities aimed at promoting healthy and positive lifestyles.

Senior officers and representatives from the health, education, enforcement and other concerned departments attended the meeting.

Omar-led Govt. Giving Priority to Youth Empowerment, Says Rattan Lal Gupta

■ HT News Network

Jammu August 31st: Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Provincial President Jammu, Adv. Rattan Lal Gupta, said that the Omar Abdullah-led Government is giving top priority to the empowerment and welfare of the youth of Jammu and Kashmir and is making sincere efforts to address their burning issues, particularly unemployment. Addressing the gathering on the occasion of opening the YNC Office in Gandhi Nagar, Jammu organized by S. Tejinder Pal Singh Provincial President Jammu YNC his provincial team and other YNC



functionaries in presence of Sheikh Bashir Ahmad Provincial Secretary Jammu, Bimla Luthra former MLA, Bushan Lal Bhat former MLC, Vijay Lochan Chairman SC Cell, Pardeep Bali Provincial Secretary Jammu, Ankush Abrol Joint Secretary Jammu Province, Rakesh Singh Raka, Dilshad Malik Vice Presidents Central Zone and

Laxmi Datta Senior leader. Gupta said that the youth are the backbone of the nation and their aspirations, concerns and future cannot be ignored. He stressed that creating adequate employment opportunities, strengthening skill development, promoting entrepreneurship and providing a conducive environment for young people

should remain among the foremost priorities of the Government. He said that the Omar-led Government is committed to creating new avenues for employment and self-employment and ensuring that the youth of J&K get opportunities to build a secure and dignified future. The Government has already started the Mission YUVA for the development and welfare of the Youth. The NC leader further said that the Government must continue to work with a focused approach to tackle unemployment and harness the energy, talent and potential of the younger generation.

SMVDU Organises Internal Hackathon for Smart India Hackathon 2026

■ HT HT NEWS DESK

Jammu, 31st Aug — Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU), Katra, successfully organised a two-day Internal Hackathon for Smart India Hackathon (SIH) 2026 at LT-3 under the aegis of the Board of Professional Activities (BPA), with the School of Computer Science & Engineering (SoCSE) as the key coordinating School.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from more than 150 students and attendees from different Schools, departments, programmes and academic years. Students from the 1st to



4th years worked on official SIH 2026 problem statements and presented innovative, technology-driven solutions addressing real-world challenges. The event was also supported by the student organising team comprising Shubham Saini, Naresh Kumar, Maneesh Kumar and Mukti Porwal, along with dedicated student volunteers who assisted in venue management,

participant coordination, technical support, anchoring and other logistical activities. The Internal Hackathon highlighted SMVDU's commitment to innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, entrepreneurship and practical problem-solving, providing students with a valuable platform to transform ideas into technology-driven solutions and participate in SIH 2026. The participating teams were evaluated by an expert jury comprising Dr. Swastik Gupta (SoCSE), Dr. Vipal Sharma (SoCSE), Dr. Rohit Tanwar (SoCSE), Dr. Yati Agarwal (SoCSE), Dr. Naveen Gondhi (SoCSE), Dr.

Kamaldeep (SoEE), Dr. Yathesh Anand (SoME) and Dr. Pooja Sharma (SoCSE). The evaluation focused on problem understanding, innovation, technical approach, feasibility, presentation and the overall potential of the proposed solutions. The jury also interacted with the teams and provided valuable feedback for further improvement. Dr. Ankush Raina, President, BPA, and Dr. Sunanda, Head, SoCSE, provided valuable guidance and support for the successful conduct of the event. Dr. Sonika Gupta (SoCSE) led the Internal Hackathon and played a central role in its planning, coordination.

Div Com Jammu hails KPs for thriving in diverse fields Community felicitates distinguished personalities

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, AUGUST 31: Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar today attended the '1st Community Cash Award Function' organized by the Saraswathi Educational, Cultural Charitable Trust in association with Helpline Humanity, here at Abhinav Theatre. The Divisional Commissioner was the Chief

Guest, while the former Director General of Police Dr. Ashok Bhan attended the function as the Special Guest and Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (M), Arvind Karwani as the Guest of Honour.

Among others present on the occasion included former Secretary to the Governor of Tamil Nadu and Managing Trustee, Saraswathi Educational, Cultural Charitable

Trust, Dr. C.K. Garyali; Board Member Helpline Humanity, Prof. Indu Kilam; Deputy Commissioner, Excise J&K, Sanjay Bhat and Founder, Helpline Humanity, M.K. Bhat, besides other prominent members of the community who were also present on the occasion in big numbers.

The programme was organized to recognize and honour individuals who have



made significant contributions to society and brought distinction to the Kashmiri Pandit community in their respective fields.

Addressing the gathering, the Divisional Commissioner highlighted the rich historical and cultural legacy of Kashmir, describing it as a land of knowledge, intellectual excellence, art and culture. He said that members of the

Kashmiri community have made their mark in diverse fields across the country and the world. He appreciated the initiative of the Saraswathi Educational, Cultural Charitable Trust in recognizing achievers from within the community, terming such recognition an important step towards encouraging excellence, preserving cultural identity and bringing the community

together. The Divisional Commissioner also acknowledged the difficult circumstances faced by the Kashmiri community following the events of the 1990s, stating that despite being displaced from their homeland, members of the community continued to excel in different fields and made significant contributions in India and abroad.



Kishtwar gears up for Digital Crop Survey-Kharif 2026

DC chairs final training session

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, AUGUST 31: The final training session of Surveyors, Verifiers and Supervisors on the Digital Crop Survey (DCS)-Kharif 2026 was held today at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat, New DC Office Complex Kishtwar under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma.

The training session was aimed at sensitising field functionaries and equipping them with the requisite knowledge and skills for the smooth, accurate and timely conduct of the Digital Crop Survey in the district.

Addressing the participants, the Deputy Commissioner emphasised the importance of proactive participation, accurate field-level reporting and effective utilisation of the digital



application for successful implementation of the Digital Crop Survey. "All officials and field functionaries have been provided access to the requisite software application. They need to ensure its proper utilisation during field visits," he emphasized. He explained that the digital system has been designed to capture the actual ground position, thereby enhancing accuracy and transparency in crop inspection and land records.

Highlighting the need to

address shortcomings associated with the conventional physical Girdawari process, the DC observed that records may, in some instances, be carried forward from previous years without adequately reflecting the actual status of crops on the ground. Such practices, he noted, can lead to ambiguity regarding the crop actually being cultivated, land ownership and other related particulars.

He further explained that under the digital system, the geographical coordinates of the

field are matched through the application, enabling the field functionary to capture and record the actual crop and field status on the spot. This, he said, would significantly enhance the reliability and authenticity of crop and land-related data.

The Deputy Commissioner informed that the maps pertaining to 50 villages have already been authenticated and uploaded. He directed the field functionaries to carefully verify the mapped plots and immediately identify and report any discrepancy relating to the number of plots, allocation of plots to individuals or assignment of plots to the concerned officials.

Emphasising the need for a proactive and result-oriented approach, the DC urged all participants and field functionaries to work with dedication, consistency and a sense of responsibility.

Sp'l Secretary APD reviews progress of major Horticulture Schemes in Jammu Division

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, AUGUST 31: A comprehensive review meeting was held today in the conference Hall of the Directorate of Horticulture Jammu to review the physical and financial progress of the horticulture schemes being implemented in the region.

Special Secretary Agriculture Production Department (APD) Dr. Ravi Shankar Sharma chaired the meeting attended by Additional Secretary Agriculture Production Department Safeeq Ahmed; Director Horticulture Jammu Gul Syed; Joint Director Horticulture Jammu Salil Gupta; Deputy Director Horticulture Jammu (Central) Mukesh



Sharma; all Chief Horticulture Officer of Jammu Province, Chief Canning & Processing Instructor Sanjeev Kumar Karlupia; Nursery Registration Officer Satish Kumar; Accounts Officer Rajesh Kumar; I/c District Horticulture Officer Mega Fruit Plant Nursery, Chakroi, S. Parminder Singh, Soil Analyst Ashwani Sharma, Horticulture Development Officer, Information, Dr. Vijay Kumar;

along with senior officers and officials from the Technical and Planning Sections of the Horticulture Department.

The meeting reviewed the progress of UT CAPEX (Regular), NABARD, Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), Jammu & Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement Project (JKCIP), Mission for Integrated

Development of Horticulture (MIDH) and other departmental Schemes.

The concerned functionaries gave detailed briefing on scheme-wise and district-wise physical achievements, financial expenditure, fund utilisation, approved targets, ongoing works and implementation status.

The officers briefed the chair about progress under different components, including High-Density Plantation, normal-spacing plantation, orchard rejuvenation, development and strengthening of departmental nurseries, quality planting material, horticulture mechanisation, protected cultivation, irrigation facilities, post-harvest management, processing and value addition, grading and packaging.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

Office of the Child Development Project officer, POSHAN Project Rafiabab.

Subject: Final Provisional Selection list of Sanginis (Anganwadi Workers) of POSHAN Project Rafiabab. and inviting of objections thereof.

Public Notice

Whereas, this office had advertised two posts of Sanginis (Anganwadi Workers) vide Advertisement Notice No. 02 of 2026 dated 01.01.2026, after obtaining approval from the Mission Director, POSHAN, J&K, vide Communication No. MD/POSHAN/47135-46 dated 24.12.2025.

Whereas, in response to the aforesaid Advertisement Notice, applications were received within the prescribed cut-off date, and a tentative selection list of eligible candidates was prepared by the District Level Selection Committee (DLSC) in accordance with the criteria prescribed under Government Order No. 222-JK (SWD) of 2022 dated 30.11.2022 and Government Order No. 103-JK (SWD) of 2023 dated 28.04.2023.

Whereas, a Public Notice vide No. CDPO/Rfd/HR/25-26/921-933 dated 21.02.2026, regarding the tentative selection list along with the overall merit list, was published in the newspaper Kashmir Images on 24.02.2026 and was also given local publicity for inviting objections, if any, from the general public/applicants.

Whereas, no objection was received in this office against the tentative selection-cum-merit list up-to the prescribed cut-off date, i.e., 02.03.2026.

Whereas, consequent upon the expiry of the prescribed period for filing objections and in the absence of any objection, the Final Provisional Selection List prepared by the DLSC is hereby annexed as Annexure-A, while the Overall Merit List is enclosed as Annexure-B.

Now, therefore, the matter is submitted to the Chairperson DLSC for further necessary action, the aforesaid Provisional Selection List is hereby published once again for the information of the general public and, in particular, for the information of the applicants, so as to provide an opportunity to file any appeal/objection, if any, against the said Provisional Selection List.

Any appeal/objection against the Provisional Selection List shall be submitted in the office of the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), Rafiabab, 1st Floor, Old Hospital Building, Dangiwach, against proper receipt, on or before 07-09-2026 up to 04:00 PM.

No appeal/objection shall be entertained after the expiry of the prescribed date and time. The Provisional Selection List shall be subject to the outcome of any appeal/objection received within the stipulated time and to the final approval/decision of the competent authority/DLSC.

DIPK-5126/26

Send Date: Aug 31 2026

(Member Secretary)
Child Dev. Project Office
POSHAN Project Rafiabab

No. CDPO/Rfd/HR/26-27/792-806 Dated:-29/08/2026

Annexure A. Provisional Selection of Anganwadi Workers (Sanginis)

S. N	AWC Details	Name of the applicant	Parentage D/O, W/O	Residence	Ward No	Qual.	Min. Marks	Max. Marks	%age	Belong to family of retiree AWW	Total	Remarks
1.	Mir Moh. Dolligund Ward No. 07 PH-Yarbugh	Falaq Manzoor	D/O Manzoor Ahmad Wani	Dolligund	7	12th	372	500	74.40	0	74.40	Selected
2.	Pump shed Mohala Dangerpora Ward No. 08 PH-Hib-Dangerpora	Nargis Nabi	D/O Ghulam Nabi Khan	Hib-Dangerpora	8	12 th	447	500	89.40	0	89.40	Selected

Annexure -B Overall merit list of all applicants AWC-wise.

S.NO	AWC	Name of the applicant	Parentage D/O, W/O	Residence	Ward No	Qualification	Min. Marks	Max. Marks	%age	Belong to family of retiree AWW	Total	Remarks
1	Mir Moh. Dolligund	Aarifa Akhter	W/O Shabir Ahmad Dar	Dolligund	7	12th	290	500	58.00	0	58.00	
2	Mir Moh. Dolligund	Ruqaya Akbar	D/O Mohammad Akbar Dar	Dolligund	7	12th	344	500	68.80	0	68.80	
3	Ward No. 07 PH-Yarbugh	Falaq Manzoor	D/O Manzoor Ahmad Wani	Dolligund	7	12th	372	500	74.40	0	74.40	Selected
4		Tawfeeqa Banoo	W/O Lt. Hilal Ahmad Mir	Dolligund	7	12th	363	750	48.40	0	48.40	
5		Seerat Shaukat	D/O Shaukat Ahmad Dar	Dolligund	7	12th	336	500	67.20	0	67.20	
6		Neelofar Wani	D/O Gh. Mohammad Wani	Dolligund	7	12th	261	500	52.20	0	52.20	
1	Pump shed Mohala Dangerpora.	Irum Rashid	D/O Abdul Rashid Dar	Hib-Dangerpora	8	12th	321	500	64.20	0	64.20	
2		Aaliya Mushtaq	D/O Mushtaq Ahmad Khaja	Hib-Dangerpora	8	12th	440	500	88.00	0	88.00	
3	Ward No. 08 PH-Dangerpora	Roheena Maqbool	W/O Aaqib Fayaz Lone	Hib-Dangerpora	8	12th	329	500	65.80	0	65.80	
4		Nargis Nabi	D/O Ghulam Nabi Khan	Hib-Dangerpora	8	12th	447	500	89.40	0	89.40	Selected
5		Aasima Ahad	W/O Hashim Farooq	Hib-Dangerpora	8	12th	238	500	47.60	0	47.60	
6		Mysooma Ashiq	D/O Ashiq Hussain Dar	Hib-Dangerpora	8	12 th	418	500	83.60	0	83.60	
7		Rayees Rehman	D/O Abdul Rehman Dar	Hib-Dangerpora	8	12th	292	500	58.40	0	58.40	
8		Saima Yousuf	D/O Mohammad Yousuf Dar	Hib-Dangerpora	8	12 th	301	500	60.20	0	60.20	
9		Nasira Bano	D/O Gh. Rasool Dar	Hib-Dangerpora	8	12 th	306	500	61.20	0	61.20	
10		Nazima Akhter	D/O Ghulam Rasool Dar	Hib-Dangerpora	8	12 th	305	500	61.00	0	61.00	
11		Rehana Akhter	W/O Mohammad Aaqib Dar	Hib-Dangerpora	8	12 th	291	500	58.20	0	58.20	

NCORD meeting: DM Reasi calls for intensive surveillance, awareness against drugs

HT News Network

REASI, AUGUST 31: District Magistrate Reasi Kumar Abhishek today chaired a meeting of the District Level Committee under the National Coordination Committee for Control of Drugs (NCORD) to review the measures being taken to prevent drug abuse and trafficking in the district.

The meeting was attended by SSP Mukund Tibrewal, ADDC Krishal Lal, ADC Rakesh Kumar, GMDIC Navdeep Wazir, ACD, DFO Reasi and other concerned officers. The meeting discussed monitoring of medical shops, drug trafficking, identified hotspots, de-addiction and rehabilitation efforts, besides awareness activities.

The DM directed the Drug Inspector to continue inspection of medical shops on regular intervals and ensure compliance with the prescribed norms. He also directed the ACD to ensure installation of CCTV cameras at identified hotspot locations to strengthen surveillance. He said that counselling of students in educational institutions should continue and awareness activities should be intensified.

He further directed SDMs and Tehsiladars to hold regular meetings with members of Mahila Nigrani Samitis and continue awareness programmes under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan. BDOs were also asked to organise awareness programmes in Panchayats every month with active participation of the local community.

JKBOSE notifies dates for re-evaluation, photocopies of answer scripts

HT News Network

JAMMU, AUGUST 31: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) has announced opening / closing dates of the online links for submission of forms for re-evaluation and obtaining the photocopies of answer scripts of classes 10, 11 & 12 of Session Annual Private/Bi-annual 2026 Summer/Winter Zone, Jammu Division.

According to a notification issued by Joint Secretary, Secrecy, Jammu Division, the desirous candidates can apply online for re-evaluation and collection of photocopies of answer scripts with effect from September 01 on the official website of JKBOSE (jkbose.jk.gov.in).

The last date for filling forms for obtaining photocopy of answer scripts is on September 06 and for filling Re-evaluation forms is on September 09.

The notification is available on the official website of JKBOSE. The candidates are advised to go through contents before availing the service and also adhere to the timelines.

Director FCS&CA reviews ration distribution for Kashmiri Migrants

HT News Network

JAMMU, AUGUST 31: Director, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, J&K Rajesh Kumar Shavan today chaired a meeting to review the status of ration distribution to Kashmiri Migrants under the Special Relief Ration Scheme.

The meeting was attended by Relief & Rehabilitation Commissioner (M), J&K, Dr. Arvind Karwani, Deputy Director F&R, Sham Abrol, Assistant Directors, FCS&CA, senior officers of the Relief & Rehabilitation Organization, representatives of NIC through virtual mode besides concerned Area Inspectors and other field functionaries.

The meeting held a detailed review of E-KYC of migrant beneficiaries, ration distribution, three-month advance distribution, lifting and availability of foodgrains, and other issues related to the smooth and timely delivery of ration to eligible migrant beneficiaries.

The Director asked the concerned officers to ensure timely and hassle-free distribution of ration as per entitlement and to closely monitor the process at the field level. The NIC authorities were specifically directed to ensure that all issues/technical problems flagged by migrant beneficiaries are attended to and redressed timely, so that beneficiaries do not face any inconvenience in availing their entitled ration.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Asaf Ali Shah Syed Geelani, S/o Ali Haider Shah, R/o Teetwal, Tehsil Karnah, District Kupwara, Jammu Kashmir, hereby solemnly declare that the caste entry recorded in my Service Books "Syed-Geelani" was corrected using a correction pen at the time of my initial appointment. I now seek proper authentication and regularization of the said correction by the competent departmental authority.

Any person having any objection regarding the aforesaid entry/correction may submit his/her objection, along with supporting documentary evidence, to the District Police Office, Kupwara, within 07(seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, it shall be presumed that no person has any objection to the said entry/correction. Accordingly, the competent authority may authenticate and regularize the correction in the Service Book, and no objection in this regard shall be entertained thereafter.

Sd/-

Asaf Ali Shah Syed Geelani
S/o Ali Haider Shah
R/o Teetwal, Tehsil Karnah

PUBLIC NOTICE

In my Passport Number Z1939810, I have changed my (Old Name) SHAMSU DIN S/O QAZI GH MUSTAFA to (New Name) QAZI SHAMS UD DIN S/O QAZI GH MUSTAFA, according to Aadhaar. In future I will be known as (New Name) QAZI SHAMS UD DIN S/O QAZI GH MUSTAFA.

If anybody is having any objection can contact Passport office Srinagar within seven days. After Seven days no objection will be accepted.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Abdul Hameed Chaku, S/o Late Ghulam Rasool Chaku, R/o Ishber, Nishat, Srinagar, hereby inform the general public that the General Power of Attorney executed in favour of Khaja Ghulam Ahmed Chaku, S/o Late Abdul Rehman Chaku, R/o Panditpora, Rainawari, Srinagar, on 5th September, 1979, has been cancelled/revoked by the undersigned.

Accordingly, the general public, banks, financial institutions, Government/Semi-Government institutions, registration authorities and all other concerned are hereby cautioned and informed not to undertake or entertain any transaction whatsoever in respect of the person, property or affairs of the undersigned on the basis of the said Power of Attorney, as the same stands expressly cancelled/revoked by the undersigned.

Any transaction, document, representation or action undertaken on the basis of the aforesaid Power of Attorney after its cancellation/revocation shall be at the sole risk and responsibility of the person(s) relying upon the same, and the undersigned shall not be responsible or liable for any such transaction or action.

Abdul Hameed Chaku
S/o Late Ghulam Rasool Chaku
R/o Ishber, Nishat, Srinagar

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my Father's name GH MOHI UD DIN RATHERS/O...AB KAHLIK RATHER. Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040003446 wants to be registered on my name IRSHAD AHMAD RATHER S/O GH MOHI UD DIN RATHER. If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name...IRSHAD AHMAD RATHER
S/O...GH MOHI UD DIN RATHER
R/O...WARIPURA BALLA
BLOCK...IWAGOORA

PUBLIC NOTICE

My son's name has been wrongly written as INAAM IQBAL S/O PEER MOHD IQBAL on his Adhaar card bearing Adhaar No. 8541 0158 8399 while his correct name is PEERZADA INNAM S/O PEERZADA MOHAMMAD IQBAL R/O THINDIMA which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of concerned Adhaar authority of India within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name...PEERZADA MOHAMMAD IQBAL
F/O...PEERZADA INNAM R/O...THINDIMA

بجلی کنکشن کی تبدیلی
02020100011151 کنزیومر آئی ڈی نمبر 78262 جو کہ محمد اسماعیل ناٹھ کے نام پر درج ہے، اب یہ بجلی کنکشن حاجی عبدالحمید ناٹھ کے نام پر درج کرنا مطلوب ہے۔ اس بارے میں اگر کسی اعتراض ہو تو دو سو سات دن کے اندر اندر اسسٹنٹ ایگزیکٹو انجینئر، الیکٹرک سب ڈویژن راجہ جی سرینگر کے دفتر میں پیش کرے۔

بعد از معیاد کوئی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
حاجی عبدالحمید ناٹھ ولد محمد اسماعیل ناٹھ ساکن الائنڈ میڈیو ریج سرینگر



CMYK



Div Com Kashmir urges fruit growers to leverage railway freight services for economical transportation

Advises fruit truck drivers to strictly adhere to prescribed load limits on National Highway

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 31: In a significant move aimed at facilitating the economical and hassle-free transportation of horticulture produce, particularly apples, to various domestic mandis and international destinations, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg today urged fruit growers, traders and other stakeholders to make greater use of railway goods and freight services.

The Divisional Commissioner was chairing a meeting convened to review the utilization of railway freight services for the transportation of horticulture produce from Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by IGP Traffic, Kashmir, M. Soleman Choudhary; Deputy Commissioners, Director Horticulture Planning & Marketing, Ghulam Jeelani Zargar; officers of Northern Railway, Industries & Commerce and Information Departments, besides representatives of various fruit associations.



During the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner directed all Deputy Commissioners and the Director Horticulture Planning & Marketing to hold consultations with fruit growers, traders, associations and aggregators to encourage wider and more economical utilization of railway freight services.

He stressed that railway transportation



should be increasingly utilized for long-distance destinations, as it can provide a cost-effective and efficient alternative for transporting large quantities of horticulture produce. He also directed the Director Horticulture Planning & Marketing to ensure effective coordination among fruit growers, traders, associations and railway authorities for the smooth movement of produce. The Div Com laid special

emphasis on maximizing transportation of horticulture produce from Jablipora Mandi Anantnag. He further directed all Deputy Commissioners to explore and facilitate the transportation of a certain percentage of fruit consignments through railway services from their respective districts.

Discussing the Roll-on/Roll-off (Ro-Ro) service, the Divisional Commissioner directed Northern Railway officials to share an informational video with fruit associations highlighting the prescribed technical parameters for trucks, including permissible load height and other requirements, to facilitate its effective utilization.

With regard to transportation of fruit by road, both Divisional Commissioner Kashmir and IGP Traffic Kashmir directed fruit associations to undertake extensive sensitization of truck drivers regarding adherence to the permissible load limits on the National Highway.

DDC Anantnag chairs Bankers' DLRC meeting for quarter ended June -2026

Stresses fast disbursement, proper follow up as prime motive of banks

■ HT News Network



ANANTNAG, AUGUST 31: A District Level Review Committee (DLRC) meeting to review the performance of the banking sector in Anantnag district for the quarter ending June-2026 (Q1 FY 2026-27) was held today under the chairmanship of District Development Commissioner (DDC), Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat at the DC Office. The meeting was attended by GM DIC, CPO, CAO, CAHO, DD Fisheries, DSWO, AD Handicrafts, District Officers KVIB, KVIC and NRLM, LDO RBI, DDM NABARD, Cluster Heads of J&K Bank, Chief Manager SBI, Director RSETI, District Coordinators of various Banks and officers from KVIB, KVIC, EO MC Anantnag and NRLM. At the outset, the minutes of last DLRC meeting held in June-2026 were unanimously confirmed by the committee.

Presenting a comprehensive review, Lead District Manager (LDM), informed the chair that the total deposits in the district as of June 30, 2026 stood at Rs 9698.49 crore, while advances amounted to Rs 7612.18 crore, resulting in a Credit-Deposit (CD) ratio of 78.49%.

Under the District Credit Plan (DCP) of FY 2026-27, the banking sector disbursed Rs 1287 crore under the priority sector against a target of 6804.46 crore, thereby achieving about 19% of the allotted target. Non-priority sector lending stood at Rs 628.55 crore against the target of Rs 2567.21 crore, thereby achieving 24.5% of the target.

During the meeting, the DDC reviewed the performance of banks for the quarter 1st in detail. He laid special emphasis on improving the Credit-Deposit (CD) Ratio and enhancing credit flow to priority areas, particularly agriculture and allied sectors besides formation of FPOs and hassle free disbursement of loans. Reviewing the status of crop loans, the DDC advised the banks to ensure adequate and timely credit to farmers. He appreciated the progress shown in crop loan disbursement and urged the banks to intensify the efforts and achieve targets in coordination with the Agriculture Department. Observing the decline in some loan segments viz Vishwakarma Scheme, the DDC directed the banks to take immediate corrective measures and improve lending performance. He further reviewed the progress of other priority sector advances and instructed the banks.

DLSA Ganderbal establishes Two Village Legal Aid Clinics at Anderwan under NALSA

■ HT News Network

GANDERBAL, AUGUST 31: As part of the Mega Drive for implementation of NALSA Schemes at the Grassroot Level (Phase-I), District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Ganderbal has fully established two Village Legal Aid Clinics at Panchayat Ghar Anderwan-A and Panchayat Ghar Anderwan-B, with an objective of taking legal services, awareness and welfare benefits closer to the people of the identified village at the grassroots level.

The initiative is being undertaken in pursuance of the directions of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and the Jammu and Kashmir Legal Services Authority under the ongoing 60-day Mega Drive. The two Village Legal Aid Clinics have been properly arranged and equipped with display banners carrying the contact details of the Deputy Legal Aid Defence Counsel (LADC), panel

lawyers and Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs), enabling the local residents to easily approach the legal services functionaries for timely and effective assistance as per NALSA's schemes.

Today, a team of DLSA Ganderbal headed by the Deputy LADC, visited the identified clinics and held detailed discussions with the villagers. During the interaction, the team apprised the residents about various NALSA schemes and entitlements, the availability of free legal services and the manner in which eligible persons can seek legal advice, assistance and support through the Village Legal Aid Clinics.

The villagers were specifically requested to visit the Legal Aid Clinics with their grievances, legal issues and difficulties so that the same can be appropriately addressed and, wherever required, assistance can be provided through the legal services

machinery. The team also sensitized the residents regarding the availability of free legal aid to eligible persons as per section 12 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.

DLSA Ganderbal is also undertaking door-to-door legal awareness and outreach activities in the area to ensure that persons who are unable to visit the Legal Aid Clinics themselves are not left out. Through such direct outreach activities, the Authority aims to identify eligible beneficiaries and facilitate access to benefits under the identified NALSA schemes, particularly among downtrodden, vulnerable and disadvantaged sections of society of the said village.

The outreach is focused on creating awareness regarding schemes and legal entitlements concerning children, education and schooling, senior citizens, persons with mental illness and intellectual disabilities, victims of human-wildlife conflict and acid attacks.

Director Agriculture Kashmir kick-starts Rabi seed sowing at Kitchen Garden Lalmandi

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 31: Director Agriculture Kashmir, Sartaj Ahmad Shah today kick-started the sowing of Rabi season seeds at the Kitchen Garden, Lalmandi Srinagar, marking the commencement of the department's Rabi cultivation activities for the season.

Deputy Director, Central Kashmir, Qazi Showkat, Seed Production Officer Showkat Mughal and Deputy Director Planning, Javaid Ahmad Shah accompanied the Director Agriculture Kashmir during the programme.

During the programme, the Director participated in the sowing of Rabi crops and took stock of the preparations being undertaken at the Kitchen Garden for the upcoming season. He emphasized the importance of timely sowing, use of quality seed and adoption of recommended agronomic practices to ensure healthy crop growth and better productivity.

The Director stressed that Kitchen Gardens play an important role in demonstrating improved cultivation practices and encouraging farmers and the general public to adopt vegetable cultivation for nutritional security as well as additional income generation.

He directed the concerned officers and field functionaries to ensure that all necessary arrangements for Rabi cultivation are put in place well in advance and that farmers are adequately sensitized about suitable varieties, sowing schedules and scientific crop



management practices.

Seed Production Officer Srinagar briefed the Director regarding various initiatives taken by the Department for the effective utilization of the different resources at Seed Multiplication Farms across Kashmir, for optimum production of seed and seedlings.

The Director appreciated the efforts of the concerned staff and called for continued focus on demonstration-based extension activities so that the latest agricultural technologies and best practices reach farmers effectively.

DLSA Ganderbal concludes Week-Long series of Legal Awareness Programmes under NALSA (JAGRITI) Scheme

■ HT News Network

GANDERBAL, AUGUST 31: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Ganderbal, today concluded a week-long series of legal awareness programmes organised under the NALSA (JAGRITI) Scheme, 2025, with the final programmes held at Islamia Hanfia Model High School, Harran, Ganderbal.

The series of programmes were conducted under the chairmanship of Abdul Nasir, Principal District & Sessions Judge (Chairman, DLSA) Ganderbal, and under the overall supervision of Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal.

The series of programme commenced on 24th August 2026 and continued till 31st August 2026, covering a range of important legal and social issues concerning students and youth.

JKEDI organises Startup Idea Challenge 2.0 at Government Degree College Pulwama

■ HT News Network

PULWAMA, AUGUST 31: The Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) under the overall supervision of Mohammad Younis Malik, Director, JKEDI, organised the Startup Idea Challenge 2.0 in collaboration with Government Degree College for Boys, Pulwama.

The programme forms part of JKEDI's ongoing initiatives under the J&K Startup Policy 2024-27 to foster innovation, entrepreneurship and youth-led startups across the Union Territory.

Professor Bashir Ahmad



Sheikh, Principal of Government Degree College for Boys, Pulwama, graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Distinguished guests and faculty members present included Raiyees Manzoor, District Nodal Officer, JKEDI Pulwama; Dr. Tariq H. Ganai, Associate Professor and former Head, Department of Food Technology, Islamic

University of Science and Technology (IUST); Engineer G. N. Shah, Superintendent, ITI Pulwama, Zahoor Ah Basu, successful entrepreneur and proprietor of Gulab Enterprises; and Senior Faculty members from the college. Students participated with enthusiasm and presented a diverse range of innovative ideas before the selection committee. The shortlisted concepts will represent District Pulwama at the forthcoming state-level competition. The Startup Idea Challenge 2.0 offers selected innovators mentorship, incubation support, access to seed funding and co-working facilities at JKEDI hubs.

Farmers sensitized on Safe, Scientific and Eco-Friendly Pest Management at Harwan

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 31: The Central Integrated Pest Management Centre (CIPMC), Srinagar, in collaboration with the State Agriculture Department, Block Harwan, organized a Farm School-cum-Awareness Campaign for farmers at Village Wanihama Payeen, Harwan, Srinagar, today.

On the occasion, the State Agriculture Department, Srinagar, also conducted a Farmers' Field School in the village, during which several farmers were provided with Integrated Pest Management (IPM) kits to promote the adoption of safe, scientific, and eco-friendly pest management



practices.

Dr. Haroon Rashid Hakla, APPO (PP), sensitized the farmers about various pest-management issues and the serious consequences of using spurious and counterfeit pesticides, which can adversely affect both crops and human health. He also

briefed the farmers about the National Pest Surveillance System, emphasizing the importance of correctly identifying the specific pest or disease affecting their crops and using only those pesticides recommended under the CIB&RC-approved list.

Dr. Mehnaz Kaith, AEO Harwan, delivered an informative lecture highlighting the importance and relevance of such awareness campaigns for farmers in the present-day agricultural scenario. She elaborated on various methods, principles, and practical aspects of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and encouraged farmers to adopt sustainable pest-control measures.

SKUAST-K showcases Eight Decades of Rice Research at MRCFC Khudwani

■ Farooq Rather

KULGAM, AUGUST 31: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) showcased its rich legacy of rice research, biodiversity conservation and climate-resilient crop technologies through a live exhibition of Temperate Rice Biodiversity at the Mountain Research Centre for Field Crops (MRCFC), Khudwani.

Established in 1942, MRCFC has over eight decades of experience in developing rice, rapeseed and wheat varieties

suited to Kashmir's diverse agro-climatic conditions, ranging from temperate valley floors to cold high-altitude areas exceeding 2,000 metres. The exhibition showcased high-yielding rice varieties alongside the latest production and crop-protection technologies.

A key highlight of the centre's work is its germplasm conservation programme, which maintains a rich collection of indigenous landraces and exotic introductions, preserving an important living repository of Kashmir's rice biodiversity. MRCFC also holds national significance as the Nodal Centre

for Rice Blast Screening in India, making its crop-protection research relevant beyond the Kashmir Valley.

Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganie, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-Kashmir, attended the exhibition as Chief Guest. He was accompanied by Director Extension, Chief Agriculture Officers of Kulgam and Anantnag, and scientists of SKUAST-Kashmir and other dignitaries.

During the field visit, Prof. Ganie reviewed the ongoing research trials and appreciated the centre's comprehensive research programme, particularly its efforts in



germplasm conservation. Describing MRCFC as a role model for the University, he said

its work had earned recognition at national and international platforms. He also highlighted its role as India's Nodal Centre for Rice Blast Screening, underscoring its national importance in crop-protection research.

Prof. Ganie appreciated the scientists for their contributions, encouraged them to continue their research efforts and reaffirmed the University's commitment to supporting the farming community. He also emphasised the importance of Climate-Smart Agriculture and Resource Use Efficiency as key priorities for the region's future

agricultural development.

The Vice Chancellor further announced that the South Campus, Faculty of Agriculture, SKUAST-Kashmir, will be operationalised from the current season, marking an important step towards strengthening agricultural education, research and extension in the region.

The Director Extension highlighted the contribution of MRCFC-bred varieties to rice cultivation across the Kashmir Valley, noting their role in improving productivity and supporting its expansion over the years.



There’s something unique about eating together that’s good for us

Commensality – the act of sharing meals – can reduce your risk of depression and dementia.

It sounds almost too good to be true, but one simple change to your eating habits could do wonders for your body and brain. It can reduce your risk of depression and protect you from dementia. It can increase the pleasure you take in your food, and perhaps even cause you to live longer.

We're not talking about a new fad diet, but one of humanity's most ancient practices: commensality, or the act of eating with others. "The sharing of meals is an essential mechanism for bonding and building trust and connecting with others," says Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, a professor of economics and behavioural science at the University of Oxford. And that has serious repercussions for our wellbeing.

Sadly, the increased isolation of the modern world is making this increasingly unusual. But it might be easier than you'd think to reach out to others and harness the ancient connection between food and friendship.

Building mental resilience

uch of the research on commensality has focused on its consequences for our mental health. One study, by Xinyi Wang and colleagues at the Zhejiang Provincial Centre for Disease Control and Prevention in China, involved surveying 9,361 women aged 60 and over. It found that the number of people sitting around the table at mealtimes was a clear predictor of someone's risk of depression. This remained the case even after the team had controlled for a host of other factors that are known



to influence people's wellbeing, such as their general health and wealth, and whether or not that person lived alone.

This, the team concluded, suggests that there was something unique about commensality that affects our mental health.

Many other studies point to the same conclusions. Researchers from Tokyo, for instance, found that people aged 65-74 who lived with their families, yet ate alone, had five times the odds of developing depressive symptoms than those who regularly ate in company.

Arguably the strongest evidence comes from the World Happiness Report – a yearly analysis of wellbeing based on a global survey from the opinion polling company Gallup. In 2024, the company was sponsored by the Japanese food manufacturer Ajinomoto to add a section on people's eating habits, which included the following questions:

Thinking about the last 7 days ...

(1) On how many days did you eat lunch with someone you know?

(2) On how many days did you eat dinner with someone you know?"

"My eyes lit up when I saw," De Neve says, who co-authored a chapter on the importance of commensality in the latest World Happiness Report. "We're looking at about 150,000 individuals around the world who responded to that question."



De Neve's team found that the more meals that people shared with others, the higher they scored on standard measures of emotional wellbeing, with quite astonishing consistency. "It was as predictive of someone's life satisfaction as their employment status and your relative income," he says – two factors that are known to be enormously important for wellbeing.

Feel-good chemicals

e Neve emphasises that the questions about meal sharing may simply serve as a "proxy" of someone's general social life – but he suspects there is something special about eating together. He points out that the English word companion comes from the Latin roots cum and pā nis – "with bread" – while Chinese term ā ā (huā bàn) for the same concept derives from characters describing a military unit sharing the same kitchen stove. "It has deep cultural roots," he says.

In his book Friends, Robin Dunbar – a biological anthropologist at the University of Oxford – suggests that eating naturally triggers the endorphin system, those feel-good chemicals behind our natural highs. This could strengthen the bond forged over a meal, leading us to feel a heightened sense of connection.

In 2025, Japanese researchers found that people who regularly eat alone have reduced brain volume in key regions associated with cognitive function

ntriguingly, the presence of other people may amplify the pleasure of the food itself. One series of studies by Erica Boothby at the University of Pennsylvania found that people eating chocolate in another person's company found it considerably tastier.

Reduced dementia risk

Eating together may even slow the brain's ageing.

In 2025, Japanese researchers found that people who regularly eat alone have reduced brain volume in key regions associated with cognitive function, including the medial temporal lobe and the hippocampus. Although some of these differences appeared to be linked to the diet itself – in general, people who eat by themselves tend to consume less nutritious foods – it could not account for everything, suggesting that the reduced social connection was also playing a role in their long-term brain health.

The authors speculated the enjoyment and enhanced social support of the shared meals could soothe the stress, which is a known risk factor for neural decline. Alternatively, the conversations over the meals could provide extra mental stimulation that keeps our brains active into old age.

The participants were considered to have normal cognitive function during the study, but the researchers warned that this neural decline could eventually predispose them to dementia.

Buon appetito!

The World Happiness Report noted that eating practices vary widely between countries, and we may learn a lot from one nation's efforts to preserve its culture of conviviality.

On average, the Japanese share fewer than four meals together each week. In the UK and US, that figure is around seven to eight, while in Italy, it approaches nine.

Italy is, of course, well known for its sociable food culture. When Unesco awarded Italian cuisine the status of an Intangible Cultural Heritage, the organisation highlighted the crucial role that meals play in "connecting with family and the community, whether at

home, in schools, or through festivals, ceremonies and social gatherings".

It may be no surprise, therefore, that the country is also leading the way in finding ways to protect its culture of commensality against the pressures of the modern world. The Slow Food Movement, which originated in Italy, was launched 50 years ago as a direct reaction to the growing popularity of fast food. It is perhaps best known for its aims to protect local traditions and encourage sustainable consumption, but the movement has long emphasised the importance of centring our days around shared meals.

"In Italy, sharing food is a philosophy in its own right: to cook together and share the preparation of what we put on the table," explains Barbara Nappini, the president of Slow Food Italia. "This requires care and patience."

Platonic dates

Even so, the pressures of the 21st Century have led many Italians to feel increasingly isolated. But if you don't want to eat alone, the solution might be easier than you think.

You may already be surrounded by people who would jump at the chance of sharing a meal with you. A whole body of literature shows that people are far more receptive to these kinds of invitations than we expect.

In general, we underestimate how much people like us enjoy our company and want to spend time with us. So if you know someone who might also be feeling lonely and could appreciate the chance for a conversation over some good food, the best solution is just to ask them.

More like this:

- Why you eat more when you're in company
- How chewing more boosts your brain
- The key to losing weight may be enjoying your food

And if you're really struggling to think of someone, there are technological solutions. In 2019, the Italian tech entrepreneur Paolo Bavaro founded the app Tablo to connect lonely diners. It has so far been used more than 300,000 times.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the average user is young – around 30 years old. "At that age, it's harder to make friends," says Bavaro. "You work a lot, many of your friends have families – you want to socialise but you don't know who to go out with."

Bavaro's app, he emphasises, isn't aimed at a particular "type" of person, and it shouldn't be considered a dating app – the aim is to enlarge people's social circle at a time of life when they most need it.

When we mentioned the app to De Neve, he pointed us to an experiment by psychologist Jamil Zaki at Stanford University, who helped set-up "platonic dates" for shy students to meet up at the campus coffee shop – an initiative that helped enhance their social confidence. Such interventions, he suggests, can "have quite long-lasting benefits".

By breaking bread, you may just build a lasting friendship, and enhance your health and happiness in the process.

* David Robson is an award-winning science writer and author. His latest book is The Laws of Connection: 13 Social Strategies That Will Transform Your Life. He is @d_a_robson on Twitter and @davidarobson on Instagram and Threads.

** Alessia Franco is an author and a journalist focusing on history, culture, society, storytelling and its effects on people. She is La Raccontatrice on Facebook and @la_raccontatrice on Instagram

The US Open is getting longer as players already worry tennis tournaments are becoming too long

Press Trust Of India

NEW YORK, AUG 31 :The U.S. Open was a week old by the time Aryna Sabalenka and Carlos Alcaraz opened their title defenses.

What once was a two-week quest for a Grand Slam championship now extends into a third week, and U.S. Tennis Association CEO Craig Tiley was asked how he hoped to continue that growth.

"Four weeks," he said with a smile. Some players might fear he is serious.

They were already becoming wary of an overcrowded schedule that makes it hard to find many breaks, even before the U.S. Open moved up the beginning of the singles main draw last year to make it a Sunday start.

"I just hope they will not start on Saturday at some point, you know? And then on Friday and on Thursday, Tuesday, Wednesday," said Marta Kostyuk, the No. 11 seed from Ukraine. "So I hope this is it."

Kostyuk was one of the winners Sunday, and those players get the benefit



of two days off before their next matches.

Sabalenka and Alcaraz started Monday, the former opening day, and top-seeded Alexander Zverev and 2023 champion Coco Gauff are scheduled Tuesday on the final day of a first round that until last year was completed over two days.

"So they're finding ways to extend the tournaments, which I think is tough for the players," said Canadian Denis Shapovalov.

Leylah Fernandez, the 2021 runner-up in Flushing Meadows, said she would enjoy the extra day off after her victory

Sunday to spend time with her sister, who is in New York with her.

But Shapovalov, a 2021 Wimbledon semifinalist, argued that an extra day between matches doesn't mean more time off.

"Being off is when you're at home, able to sleep in your bed and not focus on tennis, right?" he said. "We're still going to have to come back tomorrow, practice the next two days. You're still in that match environment, tournament environment where I'm locked in and I'm not doing things that I would be doing when I'm off. You know, having

a brownie."

The expansion to a three-week event set in last year, when along with starting singles play on Sunday, the USTA shifted the mixed doubles tournament to a two-day event on the Tuesday and Wednesday preceding it. That was in hopes that top singles players would compete, which most of them wouldn't when it was contested once their priority event began.

Another day was added to that this year with a qualifying tournament that was held Monday for the final two spots in the 16-team field. With more real matches beyond the singles qualifying tournaments that take place the week before, and admission to the grounds free, there were huge crowds for what the USTA calls "fan week," and organizers clearly want more.

"This will become the tennis Disneyland," Tiley said.

He stressed that doesn't necessarily mean extending the length of the tournament, but by finding more types of events to do during it.

But extending events is exactly what tennis seems to be doing these days.

Six teams, international players in action at IAF squash meet in Chandigarh

Press Trust Of India

CHANDIGARH, AUG 31 :Some of the finest squash talent from India and abroad are in action at the four-day Indian Air Force International Squash Championship that began here on Monday.

Six teams, including international sides from the United Kingdom and Sri Lanka, besides veterans, are vying for top honours in this competition.

Being held at the Air Force Station here, the championship features both team events and an open singles category, bringing together elite national and international squash players on a common platform.

The championship will culminate on Friday

with the competition providing a high-level sporting platform for players while also promoting international sporting ties, camaraderie and friendship among the participating nations, stated a release.

The opening ceremony was graced by Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), as the chief guest.

Welcoming the participants, the CAS highlighted the importance of international sporting events in promoting camaraderie, mutual respect and friendship among nations.

Adding a sporting touch to the inaugural ceremony, Air Chief Marshal Singh also played a friendly squash match with Air Marshal M Baladitya (Retd) and Captain Dan Peskett of the United Kingdom.

Bhavani Devi headlines India's 20-member fencing squad for Asian Games



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI, AUG 31 :Olympian C A Bhavani Devi will headline India's 20-member fencing squad for the upcoming Asian Games in Japan after returning to competitive action following a two-month layoff.

Bhavani will return to action in the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games after competing at the Asian Senior Fencing Championships earlier this year.

All selected athletes will assemble at the NIS Patiala for a national preparatory camp starting Tuesday till September 15 before departing directly for Aichi-Nagoya on September 16 for the final pre-competition acclimatisation.

The contingent was finalised by the Fencing Association of India (FAI) selection committee based on national rankings and performances across major international competitions this year such as the Asian Senior Fencing Championships, the World Fencing Championships, and the

Commonwealth Fencing Championships.

The squad features strong players across all sections.

In Epee, Taniksha Khatri and Prachi will anchor the women's contingent after their standout gold and bronze medal performances at the Commonwealth Fencing Championships.

Karan Singh Gurjar's gold-medal-winning run in men's Sabre at the Commonwealth Fencing Championships strengthens India's podium prospects in the discipline, while Tejas Patil earns his place in men's Foil.

Following a historic bronze medal at the Commonwealth Fencing Championships -- marking the first time an Indian fencer clinched a senior medal in the Foil category at the competition.

FAI secretary general Rajeev Mehta expressed confidence in the contingent's preparation and potential. "Our fencers have demonstrated exceptional growth and resilience on the international stage over the past few years."

Barcola joins Liverpool from PSG in \$166M deal for biggest signing of the summer transfer window

Press Trust Of India

Liverpool, Aug 31 :Liverpool finalized the most expensive transfer of the summer window by signing Bradley Barcola from Paris Saint-Germain on Monday in a deal worth 123 million pounds (\$166 million).

Liverpool secured its main target of the summer after a monthslong pursuit of a speedy 23-year-old France international who is coming off winning back-to-back Champions League titles with PSG but mainly as an impact substitute, backing up Désiré Doué.

Now Barcola will expect to be a key part of an expensively assembled Liverpool attack that also includes striker Alexander Isak and Florian Wirtz, who were signed last summer for 125 million pounds (\$170 million) and 116 million pounds (\$156 million), respectively.

"It took a long time," Barcola said



in a Liverpool statement after signing what the club described as a long-term contract, "but I'm really happy today to be able to play for Liverpool and all I want is to be on the pitch and be able to play."

Barcola is primarily a left winger so isn't a like-for-like replacement for Liverpool great Mohamed Salah, who

played on the right for nine years before leaving for Trabzonspor to end a trophy-laden spell at Anfield.

The deal will see Liverpool paying 106 million pounds (\$143 million) for Barcola, who was part of the France team which lost in the semifinals to Spain at the World Cup this summer, and up to an additional 17 million pounds

(\$23 million) in potential add-ons. Barcola joined PSG for 45 million euros (\$38.5 million) from Lyon in 2023.

The fee sets a record for a player leaving the French league.

PSG said Barcola helped to "write one of the most beautiful pages in the history of Paris Saint-Germain."

"Through his talent and the emotions he offered to the fans, Bradley will remain in the hearts of Parisians," PSG said. Barcola will look to spark Liverpool, a fast and direct winger, joins a team that has gotten off to a sluggish start to the Premier League, with Liverpool needing late goals to salvage draws against Newcastle and Nottingham Forest in the opening two rounds. Cody Gakpo and summer signing Victor Muñoz have played on the left wing so far this season. Gakpo reportedly has been a target of Manchester City in the final days of the transfer window.

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