

Good Morning Kashmir

17th Year Of Publication

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Without women farmers, every plate would be empty, leaving humanity starved. They sustain the world, work harder than their male counterparts & their strength anchors food security, planting seeds of prosperity for families and society in every field.

Srinagar • Friday 17, April 2026 • Vol: 17 • Issue No: 93 • Pages: 08 • Price: ₹ 1/- (Air Surcharge for Delhi, Jammu & Ladakh 50/- Paisa) RNI No. JKENG/2010/36998

10 Accused Named SIA Files Chargesheet In 'Doctors Terror Module' Case

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The State Investigation Agency (SIA), Kashmir, Thursday filed its charge sheet in a significant terrorist conspiracy case involving a covert module commonly referred to as the "Doctors Terror Module". The charge sheet has been filed against ten (10) accused persons in connection with an FIR registered at Police Station Nowgam, Srinagar.



The case originates from an incident dated 19-10-2025, wherein provocative and threatening posters were pasted in the Nowgam area in the name of the proscribed terrorist outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM). The posters were aimed at spreading fear among the public, disturbing public order, and directly challenging the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India.

According to the statement issued by SIA, a meticulous and sustained investigation has revealed that the poster campaign was not an isolated act, but part of a larger, well-orchestrated terrorist conspiracy aimed at reviving the banned terrorist outfit Ansar Ghazwatul-Hind (AGuH). The accused persons had formed a highly clandestine module, actively engaged in radicalisation, recruitment, and operational preparations for carrying out terrorist attacks across the country.

The investigation further established that the

Women Farmers Conference Women Empowerment Across All Sectors Top Priority Of PM Led Regime: LG Sinha

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: "Without women farmers, every plate would be empty, leaving humanity starved. They sustain the world, work harder than their male counterparts and their strength anchors food security, planting seeds of prosperity for families and society in every field. Under Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, women's empowerment is the top priority across all sectors," the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said on Thursday.



government stakeholder to ask, what challenge or barrier in women farmers' lives can be eliminated immediately? By removing them one by one, we can honor their leadership and enrich society and the nation through direct market access, he said.

The Lieutenant Governor was speaking at the Women Farmers Conference, organised by Indian Farmers Fertilizer

Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) at Srinagar.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor highlighted the contributions of women farmers in agriculture and allied sectors, the efforts of women Agri-entrepreneurs, and emphasized developing Agriculture sector under their leadership.

The Lieutenant Governor said that the UN General Assembly has fittingly declared 2026 the International Year of Women Farmers, which was a long-awaited dream.

"I view International Women Farmers Year 2026 as a historic opportunity, proclaiming women as creators, not mere laborers, in agriculture's growth. Prioritize

- LG highlights contributions of women farmers in agriculture and allied sectors
- Without women farmers, every plate would be empty, leaving humanity starved
- UN General Assembly has fittingly declared 2026 International Year of Women Farmers
- I trust 2026 will sincerely recognize women's roles in agriculture and allied sectors
- LG called upon technology innovators to prioritize technical tools for women farmers

MeT Forecasts 2-Day Wet Spell Across J&K



SAJID RAINA

SRINAGAR: The Meteorological Centre Srinagar on Thursday forecast generally cloudy conditions with intermittent spells of light rain and thunder-showers across Jammu and Kashmir till April 19, with a possibility of gusty winds and

Rapid Conversion Of Paddy Fields Raises Food Security Concerns In Kashmir



JAHANGEER GANAIE

SRINAGAR: The rapid conversion of agricultural land into horticulture across Kashmir is emerging as a serious

Tulip Garden Records 3.9 Lakh Visitors, Closes For Season

1,222 Foreign Tourists Visit; Footfall Led By Domestic, Local & International Visitors

REHAN QAYOUM MIR

SRINAGAR: Asia's largest Tulip Garden in Srinagar closed for the season on Wednesday, capping a successful run with total footfall nearing 3.9 lakh and revenue surpassing Rs 3.66 crore, officials said.



3.89 lakh after inclusion of pending online ticketing data.

Assistant Floriculture Officer In-charge Tulip Garden Srinagar, Imran Ahmad, said that the garden recorded 3,82,297 visitors till the last day, with the final figure expected to reach around

"Footfall will be around 3.89 lakh as at least 7,000 more visitors will be added once the final online

CS Reviews Preparations For Amarnathji Yatra-2026

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Thursday chaired a high-level meeting of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB), attended by senior officers from the Civil Administration and Police department to review the comprehensive arrangements being made for the smooth, safe, and successful conduct of the Shri Amarnathji Yatra (SANJY)-2026, scheduled to commence on July 3, 2026.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary undertook a detailed review of the preparedness across all sectors, with a particular focus on ensuring the safe and seamless

India, Austria Condemn Pahalgam Attack, Call For Global Anti-Terror Push

SAJID RAINA

NEW DELHI: India and Austria on Thursday strongly condemned the Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 tourists last year in Kashmir and called for coordinated global efforts to counter terrorism, including cross-border networks and radicalisation.

The issue figured prominently during talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Austrian Chancellor Christian Stocker, marking the first visit by an Austrian leader to India in nearly four decades.

Briefing reporters, MEA Secretary (West) Sibi George said both sides "categorically and

Two Years Of Gandbal Tragedy 'Bridge Stands Now, But Those Who Died Will Not Return'



REHAN QAYOUM

SRINAGAR: Two years ago, on April 16, 2024, Kashmir woke to an ordinary morning. By noon, it was mourning. The Gandbal-Batwara boat tragedy lasted only minutes in the waters of the Jhelum, but its impact stretched across months and years. What happened that day became more than a disaster; it became a symbol of delay, loss, waiting and grief.

Residents of Gandbal, Batwara and nearby areas had for years

relied on small boats to cross the Jhelum. The two banks were close, but the nearest bridge was far, forcing people to choose between a long route or a risky shortcut. Locals have repeatedly said that an under-construction footbridge has remained delayed for years.

Children used the crossing to reach schools, workers used it for jobs, while women used it for daily errands. Over time, risk had become routine.

On the morning of April 16, a routine ferry boat

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Comm Secretary I&C visits Pulwama, attends mega event under NMBA

GMK NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA: Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce (I&C) Department, Vikramjit Singh, who is the District Mentor for overseeing the implementation of Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan in Pulwama, Thursday visited the district and presided over a mega event at Government Degree College (Boys), Pulwama.

The event was organised under the ongoing 100-day intensive campaign of the Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan and witnessed participation from a large number of stakeholders.

The programme featured cultural performances, awareness skits, speeches and interactive sessions aimed at highlighting the ill effects of drug abuse and promoting a drug-free society.

Addressing the gathering, Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Rajpora, Ghulam Mohi-ud-din Mir, highlighted the menace of drug abuse and

stressed the need for collective efforts to eliminate it from society. He appreciated the initiative of the 100-day intensive campaign and urged people from all walks of life to actively participate in the campaign for a better and healthier future.

Member of Legislative Assembly Pulwama, Waheed-ur-Rehman Para, emphasised the importance of engaging youth in constructive activities and linking them with government-sponsored schemes to safeguard them from drug abuse. He also emphasized the role of society and local communities in preventing substance abuse and supporting affected individuals.

Highlighting the role of youth, he said that the administration is taking sustained measures for the rehabilitation of victims of drug abuse and their reintegration into society by linking them with various government schemes. He added that youth clubs across wards and Panchayat halqas are being revitalised and strengthened



to act as platforms for positive engagement. Vikramjit Singh who attended the programme as Chief Guest, said that drug menace has

adversely impacted society and highlighted various factors that lead youth towards substance abuse. He advised young people to introspect and understand the devastating impact of drugs on individuals, families and the socio-economic fabric of society.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama said that the 100-day campaign has been launched with the objective of eliminating drug abuse through coordinated efforts of all stakeholders. He added that the campaign is being implemented through a three-pronged strategy focusing on Information, Education and Communication (IEC), treatment, rehabilitation and prevention, and enforcement across the district.

"A whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach remains central to the successful implementation of the campaign," said the DC, while appreciating the enthusiastic participation of various sections of society in the event and

the campaign at large.

He called for coordinated efforts among the administration, police, civil society and community stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of the Nasha Mukta Abhiyan and to make it a mass movement.

On the occasion, Commissioner Secretary led the participants in taking the Nasha Mukta pledge and also took part in a signature campaign along with attendees to mark their support towards the successful implementation of the campaign.

The event was attended by MLA Rajpora Ghulam Mohi-ud-din Mir; MLA Pulwama Waheed-ur-Rehman Para; former DDC member Dadsara Avtar Singh; political representatives; members of Trade Federation Pulwama; Auqaf Committee members; civil society members; social activists; religious leaders; students; and officers from paramilitary forces, district administration and police including Senior Superintendent of Police Pul-

wama, Tanushree, and Commandant CRPF 182/183 Battalion, among others.

Later in the day, the Commissioner Secretary held a review meeting with Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Senior Superintendent of Police Pulwama and other district and sectoral officers to assess the implementation of the ongoing 100-day intensive campaign under the Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan.

Meanwhile, as part of the campaign, a series of awareness programmes and activities were conducted across municipal wards and Panchayat halqas in areas including Gulistan Aripal, Amirabad Dadsara and Prichoo Pulwama, involving local communities and focusing on themes related to a drug-free society.

Besides, as part of the campaign, special poster-making competitions on the theme "Say No to Drugs and Yes to Life" were organised across educational institutions of the district.

Commissioner STD reviews strategy for new Financial Year

Stresses on proactive monitoring, analytical scrutiny to identify defaulters

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Commissioner State Taxes Department (STD), P.K. Bhat chaired a meeting here Thursday to review the department's strategy for the newly commenced financial year.

The meeting was attended by Additional Commissioner (Administration & Enforcement), Namrita Dogra and all tax officers of State Taxes Department.

During the meeting, detailed deliberations were held on strengthening compliance mechanisms and enhancing deterrence against tax evasion at the circle level. The meeting laid emphasis on outcome-based actions aimed at augmenting GST revenue across the Union Territory.

Addressing the participants in the meeting, the Commissioner stressed the need for initiating actionable measures from the



very first month of the financial year to effectively curb the menace of fake Input Tax Credit (ITC).

He underlined the importance of proactive monitoring and analytical scrutiny to identify defaulters at an early stage. He expressed confidence that with focused efforts, the new financial year will prove more productive for the UT of J&K.

Highlighting the role of technology, the Commissioner urged officers to

leverage digital tools and data analytics for efficient tracking of cases, timely interventions, and improved enforcement outcomes. He emphasized that technology-driven governance would be key to ensuring transparency, accountability, and higher revenue realization.

Additional Commissioner Namrita Dogra called upon State Tax Officers, Inspectors, and field functionaries to work in close coordination and as a cohesive team within

their respective circles. She stressed that collective effort, discipline, and accountability are essential for enhancing departmental productivity and achieving revenue targets.

The department also appealed to all taxpayers to adhere to GST norms, ensure timely filing of returns, and maintain transparency in their transactions, emphasizing that voluntary compliance is crucial for fostering a fair and robust tax ecosystem.

DC Shopian reviews progress under PM Surya Ghar, RDSS

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN: Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Shishir Gupta Thursday chaired a comprehensive review meeting at the Mini Secretariat to assess the progress of key power sector initiatives, including PM Surya Ghar (Rooftop Solar Scheme) and the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) in the district.

During the meeting, the DC conducted a detailed review of ongoing works and sought inputs from officers of KPDC, executing agencies, and other stakeholders.

Emphasis was laid on achieving set targets within stipulated timelines and addressing gaps requiring immediate intervention.

Highlighting the importance of mass participation, the DC directed all concerned officers, particularly Assistant Engineers (AEs) and Junior Engineers (JEs) from various blocks, to sig-



nificantly increase registrations on the PM Surya Ghar portal. They were instructed to ensure submission of daily progress figures and work towards covering the entire eligible population of the district.

The DC stressed the need to accelerate rooftop solar installations and called for intensified field level efforts to enhance adoption.

He further directed that all inspections related to solar installations be completed within one week to avoid delays in execution. While reviewing RDSS

components, the DC underscored the importance of strengthening power distribution infrastructure for improved service delivery.

Issues related to smart metering were discussed in detail, and concerns were directed to resolve technical and operational bottlenecks promptly, ensuring smooth installation and functionality of smart meters.

The DC also emphasized addressing consumer-related concerns, including billing issues and service grievances, in a time bound manner.

Grievances raised by vendors and executing agencies were also discussed. The DC assured necessary support and directed departments to facilitate smooth coordination and remove procedural hurdles impacting progress.

To enhance awareness and public participation, the DC called for intensified publicity campaigns highlighting the benefits of PM Surya Ghar and RDSS.

He stressed the need to document and promote success stories to encourage wider adoption across the district and further instructed that periodic progress reports be submitted for continuous monitoring and review.

The meeting was attended by Sub Divisional Magistrate Zainapora, Bilal Ahmad, Executive Engineers of KPDC, R&B, LDM Shopian, senior officers, AEs, JEs, representatives of executing agencies, vendors etc.

DC B'pora reviews progress of Panchayat Electoral Roll Revision

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, on Thursday chaired a meeting at Mini Secretariat Bandipora to review the progress of the Summary Revision of Panchayat Electoral Rolls 2026.

During the meeting, it was informed that the revision process is being carried out across 1133 polling stations in the district. The DC took a detailed review of the progress achieved so far and emphasized the need for ensuring transparency and saturation in the electoral roll updation process.

The EROs/AEROs informed that the draft electoral rolls had already been published at Panchayats on 27-03-2026 for inspection by the general public and for inviting claims and objections.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the Assistant Commissioner Panchayat (ACP) to share a detailed calendar regarding public announcement

vehicles with the BDOs to strengthen awareness and outreach at the grassroots level. She also directed the ACP to chair meetings focusing on door-to-door data capturing to improve coverage.

Expressing concern over poor penetration in certain areas, the DC stressed the need for intensified field-level engagement. She directed Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) to ensure proper identification and inclusion of vulnerable sections, particularly persons with disabilities and voters aged 85 years and above.

The DC further called for organizing dedicated meetings with Booth Level Officers (BLOs) to streamline the process and enhance efficiency. She emphasized the importance of proactive public interaction, urging officers to listen to people's concerns and address grievances effectively to ensure maximum participation and accuracy in the electoral rolls.

DC Budgam reviews progress of 100-Day Nasha Mukta Abhiyan

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM: Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan Thursday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress of the ongoing 100-day intensive Nasha Mukta Abhiyan in the district.

During the meeting, the DC took a detailed review of activities being carried out by various departments under the Nasha Mukta Abhiyan, emphasizing the need for sustained and coordinated efforts to eliminate drug abuse from society. He stressed that all stakeholders must work in close synergy to ensure the success of the initiative.

Threadbare discussions were held on awareness campaigns, community outreach programmes, and the role of educational institutions in sensitizing youth against the menace of drug abuse. The DC underscored the importance of involving local communities, youth groups, and institutions in spreading awareness

and promoting a drug-free environment.

He directed all officers to intensify IEC activities, ensure wider public participation, and regularly monitor progress at the grassroots level. Departments were also instructed to share daily updates of their activities to maintain momentum and visibility of the campaign.

The DC called for a collective and proactive approach to make Budgam a drug-free district.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Budgam, Joint Director Planning, all Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs), Assistant Commissioner Police (ACP), Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Principals of all Degree Colleges, District Information Officer (DIO), District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO), Executive Officers (EOs) of all Municipal Committees and representatives from the School Education Department.

Training of staff for JKSSB Junior Assistant Exam held in Anantnag

GMK NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG: To ensure smooth, fair and transparent conduct of the upcoming OMR-based Written Test for the post of Junior Assistant scheduled on April 19, 2026, the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) in collaboration with District Administration Anantnag organized a comprehensive training session for superintendents and deputy superintendents, invigilating and other supervisory staff, Thursday at Dak Bunglaw, Khanabal.

Member JKSSB, Showkat Ahmad Rather, Additional District Magistrate, Tariq Ahmad Malik, superintendents, deputy



superintendents, invigilators and other officials attended the session.

The primary aim of the session was to sensitise the deployed staff about the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and examination guidelines.

Addressing the meeting,

Member JKSSB, Showkat Ahmad Rather said the purpose of the training programme is to familiarise the exam staff with prescribed procedures and SOPs. He stressed the need for maintaining utmost transparency and fairness and to ensure the examina-

tion is held in a smooth and hassle free manner.

During the training, key aspects of the examination process were discussed in detail to ensure that the staff is well-versed with the necessary procedures. Special emphasis was laid on proper checking of candidates at entry points before allowing them into the examination halls. The staff were strictly instructed to ensure that no candidate carries mobile phones or any other prohibited electronic gadgets inside the examination centres.

The session emphasized the importance of vigilance, transparency, integrity and fairness throughout the conduct of the examination.

Gandhi Memorial College Srinagar hosts Seminar on Social Justice

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Debates and Seminar Committee, Gandhi Memorial College, Srinagar, Thursday organized a seminar titled "Social Justice and the Indian Constitution" in the

college auditorium.

The event was attended by a significant gathering of students and faculty. The event featured an insightful keynote address by the Principal, Prof. (Dr.) Masood Ahmad Malik, who explored the

intricate nuances of social justice and paid tribute to the transformative role of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in shaping India's constitutional mandate for equality.

Complementing the academic discourse, an

elocution contest was held featuring twelve student speakers, where Ashiya Zahoor, Ashiya Javed, and Abid Awan secured the first, second, and third positions, respectively, for their exceptional performances.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

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LALMANDI SRINAGAR.

e-mail: mbcircularsrn.north@jk.gov.in

NO.SE/R&B/CSN/PS/512-517 | Dated. 13-04-2026

Subject: - Expression of Interest (EOI) for Empanelment of Consultants for various Building Works for PWD(R&B) Circle Srinagar North.

Reference:- This Office NIT No.01/SECSN/2026-27/176-80, DATED: 06-04-2026, issued under endorsement no. SECSN/EOI/2026-27/176-80 Dated: 06-04-2026.

CORRIGENDUM

The following condition is substituted in section IV pre-qualification criteria for Class I point no. VI, Class II point no. VI, Class III point no. VI, Heritage works point no. VIII;

"The annual turnover of the participating agency, derived from consultancy services for any of the last five completed financial years ending March 2025, shall not be less than 60 lacs/45 lacs/35 lacs/20 lacs for class I/Class II/Class III/heritage works. A turnover certificate of the said period shall be issued and duly signed by chartered accountant, explicating indicating the unique document identification no. (UDIN) shall be submitted and duly uploaded along with the bid documents".

The other terms and conditions of NIT shall remain unaltered.

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer,
PWD(R&B) Circle Srinagar North.

DIPK-446-26
Dt: 16/04/2026

CS assesses impact, implementation of PMIS in J&K

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Thursday convened a meeting to assess the implementation status of the Prime Minister's Internship Scheme (PMIS) in Jammu and Kashmir and outlined a comprehensive strategy to enhance its outreach and impact across the Union Territory.

Those who attended this meeting includes Commissioner Secretary, School Education Department; Secretary, Employment and Skill Development Departments; MD, Skill Development Mission along with other concerned officers.

Director, PMIS in Ministry of Corporate Affairs, GoI attended the meeting through video link.

The Chief Secretary underscored the importance of the scheme in improving youth employability by providing structured internship opportunities in reputed companies.

He noted that PMIS, launched under the Union Budget 2024-25, offers internships of 6 to 9 months with a monthly stipend of ₹9,000 and an additional one-time grant of ₹6,000, thereby enabling young individuals to gain valuable industry exposure.

Reviewing the progress, it was informed that Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed encouraging response in terms of registrations, with over 4,400 youth registered on the portal and more than 2,800 profiles completed so far. However, only 68 internship opportunities are currently available in the UT, despite J&K ranking among the top states in registrations.

The Chief Secretary took this occasion to impress upon the concerned to bridge the gap between registrations and available opportunities, he also emphasized the need for aggressive industry engagement with the active role of the Ministry



in doing the same for J&K. He observed that increasing participation of companies is crucial to ensuring that the registered youth are meaningfully absorbed under the scheme.

The Chief Secretary directed the department to significantly scale up registration efforts and set an ambitious target of achieving at least 2 lakh reg-

istrations from across the districts of Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized that this can be achieved through a mission-mode approach involving educational institutions, employment centres, and grassroots-level outreach mechanisms.

Highlighting the constraints posed by the limited presence of large corporate houses in the

UT, he stressed the need to scale up internship opportunities manifold for the youth across the States/UTs of the country. He called for proactive engagement with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to enhance the number of internship opportunities to at least 1,000 in the coming days, so as to bridge the existing gap between demand

and availability.

The Chief Secretary directed that PMIS registration be integrated with institutional mechanisms, including ITIs, polytechnics, and colleges, to ensure maximum coverage of eligible youth. He also called for active involvement of District Employment & Counseling Centres, Common Service Centres, and placement cells in facilitating registrations.

The Secretary, SDD, Kumar Rajeev Ranjan apprised the meeting of a 100-day roadmap aimed at significantly scaling up registrations and improving outcomes. The plan targets 20,000 registrations in the initial phase, with a structured approach involving campus drives, establishment of help desks, mass awareness campaigns, and deployment of mobile registration units in remote areas.

A key focus of the strategy, he revealed, pivots on the con-

vergence with Mission YUVA to leverage its extensive youth database and grassroots network. He further divulged that over 4.73 lakh "willing to work" youth have already been identified under Mission YUVA, and around 2,000 YUVA Doots will be mobilized to carry out door-to-door awareness and registration drives across all districts.

Stressing the need for effective monitoring, he instructed departments to conduct regular reviews and ensure real-time tracking of progress through digital platforms. He further directed that bottlenecks, if any, be promptly escalated for timely resolution.

Highlighting the transformative potential of the scheme, the Chief Secretary said that PMIS can play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between education and employment and in preparing the youth of Jammu and Kashmir for the demands of the modern job market.

Mega Shikara Rally held on Dal Lake to Promote Drug-Free Society

DIPR, Tourism Department join hands under Nasha Mukt J&K campaign

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: In a unique initiative, the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), in collaboration with the Tourism Department, organized a mega anti-drug Shikara rally on the iconic Dal Lake under the ongoing Nasha Mukt Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan.

The initiative was a part of the ongoing 100-Day 'Nasha Mukt Jammu and Kashmir' campaign launched by the Lieutenant Governor J&K, and in line with the calendar of activities of District Administration Srinagar.

The rally aimed to spread awareness about the ill effects of drug abuse among a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including tourists, shikara owners, and communities residing in and around water bodies.

The initiative sought to ensure that the message of a drug-free society reaches even the most remote and water-bound habitations.



Dozens of vibrantly decorated shikaras glided across the waters of Dal Lake, carrying banners, placards, and messages advocating a drug-free lifestyle.

On the occasion, Joint Director Information Kashmir, Syed Shahnawaz Bukhari, and Joint Director Tourism Kashmir, Waseem Raja, actively participated in the rally along with students, shikara owners, and officials from both departments.

The officers interacted with tourists and local

stakeholders, sensitizing them about the physical, psychological, and social consequences of drug abuse. They highlighted that such innovative outreach programmes are essential to connect with diverse sections of society and ensure that no segment remains untouched by the awareness drive.

Shikara owners, who play a vital role in the tourism ecosystem of Kashmir, also expressed their support for the initiative and pledged to contribute towards spreading aware-

ness among visitors and local communities.

The rally not only reinforced the government's commitment to eradicating drug abuse but also showcased how traditional elements of Kashmir's heritage can be effectively leveraged to promote social causes.

During the rally, Shikaras carried a powerful message that the fight against drugs is a shared responsibility, and together, a healthier and drug-free Jammu and Kashmir can be achieved.

Rana advocates inculcating moral values among students

GMK NEWS NETWORK

MENDHAR: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, Thursday advocated the significance of inculcating high moral values and nurturing holistic growth among the students in shaping a brighter future for the nation.

The Minister, while participating in the annual day celebrations at IDPS Mendhar, underscored the vital role of education in developing not just the intellect but also the character of the young learners.

Addressing an enthusiastic gathering of students, teachers and parents, the Minister spoke about the evolving landscape of education in an era defined by rapid technological advancement. He said that while digital progress has opened new avenues of learning, it has also underscored the need to instil strong moral values, discipline and a deep sense of responsibility in students.

Emphasizing the shared responsibility of educators and families, Rana called for a collaborative approach to nurturing well-rounded individuals. He urged stakeholders to focus on building resilience, integrity and compassion among the young minds so they are better equipped to contribute meaningfully to society.

The Minister remarked that instilling respect for diversity and encouraging inclusivity from an early age are crucial steps towards building a progressive and unified society.

Commending the efforts



Rana lays foundation stone for Panchayat Ghar at Gholad Relhan

GMK NEWS NETWORK

MENDHAR: Aimed at strengthening the grassroots governance and enhancing the rural infrastructure, Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, Thursday laid the foundation for construction of a Panchayat Ghar at Gholad Relhan in Mendhar.

The Panchayat Ghar is being constructed by the Rural Development & Panchayat Raj Department under the Rural Infrastructure Development initiative, at an estimated cost of ₹30 lakh.

The project is expected to provide a modern and functional space to facilitate local governance and

community activities.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister emphasized the crucial role Panchayat Ghars play in empowering local self-governance. He said that such institutions act as the backbone of grassroots democracy by enabling effective planning and implementation of development programmes at the village level. He stated that the government remains committed towards strengthening the Panchayati Raj institutions to ensure inclusive growth and participatory development.

Highlighting the benefits of the project, Rana said the new Panchayat Ghar will serve as a dedicated hub for public meetings, grievance redressal

and community engagement. "It will also streamline the implementation of various welfare schemes, ensuring greater transparency, accountability and efficiency in governance," he maintained.

The Minister reiterated that the government is focused on bridging infrastructural gaps in rural and tribal areas. He informed the public that more such development initiatives are in the pipeline to uplift remote and underserved regions.

The local representatives and residents pledged their full cooperation in ensuring timely completion of the Panchayat Ghar while ensuring active participation in future developmental initiatives in their area.

of the school administration and staff, he appreciated their commitment towards providing qual-

ity education and creating opportunities for students to showcase their talents. The event also displayed

cultural performances by the students reflecting creativity, confidence and a spirit of celebration.

Tawi Mohatsav Baisakhi Mela to be elevated as Jammu's major festival: Dy CM



GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, Thursday said that the Baisakhi Mela on the banks of River Tawi will be promoted into one of the biggest festivals of Jammu and Kashmir, aimed at attracting the tourists from across the country and beyond.

Addressing a large gathering during the concluding day of Tawi Mohatsav celebrations, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the vibrant mela has fulfilled a long-cherished dream of the people of Jammu to celebrate such a grand cultural festival along the banks of River Tawi, also revered as Maa Surya Putri.

He said that the government is working earnestly towards promoting Jammu as a key cultural and religious destination, adding that sustained efforts will be made to further enhance the scale and outreach of the Baisakhi Mela in the coming years.

He also appreciated the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha and the Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, for their continued support and encouragement in organizing such a grand event. He also lauded the efforts of

the Jammu Municipal Corporation, Smart City officials, Tourism Department and other concerned agencies for their coordinated work in making the festival a grand success.

Highlighting the collective efforts behind the event, the Deputy Chief Minister said that while planning plays a crucial role, it is the dedication and hard work of officers and officials on the ground that ensure successful execution of such mega events. He further said that all efforts shall be taken to elevate the Baisakhi Mela into one of the biggest festivals of Jammu and Kashmir, drawing participation from artists, tourists and cultural enthusiasts from across the globe.

The Deputy Chief Minister also called for incorporating public feedback and suggestions to further improve the event in the coming years, ensuring that the festival continues to grow in scale, quality and appeal.

The three-day event witnessed a series of cultural programmes, musical performances, traditional activities and large public participation, reflecting the rich cultural heritage and festive spirit of Jammu region.

Sakeena Itoo expresses grief over death of student in Udhampur accident

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo Thursday expressed profound grief and sorrow over the tragic demise of Anjali Choudhary, a 4th semester student of Government College for Women, Gandhi Nagar Jammu, who lost her life in a road accident near Udhampur this morning.

The unfortunate incident occurred when the student was travelling along with fellow students on a picnic to Patnitop.

Expressing her heartfelt condolences, the Minister said she was deeply saddened by the untimely loss of the young student, describing the incident as heart-breaking and tragic. "I am deeply saddened to learn about the tragic demise of Anjali Choudhary, a bright young student of Government College for Women, Gandhi Nagar Jammu, who lost her life in an unfortunate road accident near Udhampur while travelling with fellow students to Patnitop," the Minister said.

Sakeena Itoo conveyed her sympathies to the bereaved family, friends and the entire college fraternity during this difficult time.

The Minister also directed the concerned authorities to extend all possible assistance and support to the grieving family. "My heartfelt condolences are with her family, friends and the entire college fraternity. I have directed the concerned authorities to provide all necessary assistance to the bereaved family. May the departed soul rest in eternal peace," she added.

Javid Dar reviews functioning of education department in Baramulla

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, Thursday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the functioning and key challenges facing the Education Department in district Baramulla and Rafiabud.

The meeting was attended by the Director School Education Kashmir, Chief Education Officer (CEO) Baramulla, District Education Planning Officer (DEPO) Baramulla and Zonal Education Officers (ZEOs). They presented a detailed overview of the current status of educational institutions, infrastructure, staffing and ongoing developmental initiatives in the district.



During the meeting, the Minister emphasized the need for strengthening the education system through effective planning, better coordination among the stakeholder departments and timely resolution of issues. He directed the concerned officers to ensure quality education, optimal utilization of resources and enhanced monitoring mechanisms to achieve the desired outcomes.

Javid Dar stressed the

importance of providing a conducive learning environment in schools, addressing infrastructure gaps, ensuring availability of teaching staff and promoting student enrolment and retention, particularly in rural and far-flung areas.

He also called for adopting innovative teaching methods and leveraging technology to improve the learning outcomes. He asked the officers to work with dedication and

accountability to ensure that the government schools deliver quality education comparable to the best standards.

The Minister apprised the Minister of various challenges facing the sector and sought necessary support for their resolution.

The Minister assured that all their genuine issues will be addressed on priority to further strengthen the education system in the district.

Good Morning **Kashmir**

EDITORIAL

Mutton Mafia Thrives As Authorities Look Away

Every spring, like clockwork, mutton prices in Srinagar shoot up—and every year, the same tired explanations follow. This is no longer a “seasonal issue.”

It is a predictable failure of governance, regulation, and market accountability. At Rs 800 per kilogram, mutton is fast becoming a luxury in a region where it is not just food, but part of culture, tradition, and daily life. Yet, what makes the situation truly indefensible is not the price itself, but the complete absence of control. There is a government-fixed rate on paper, and then there is the actual rate people are forced to pay. The two exist in entirely different realities.

The administration’s response has become ritualistic—statements, warnings, and the promise of “strict action.” But where is that action? If overpricing is illegal, why does it continue openly, year after year, in the same markets, in the same manner? Either the enforcement mechanism is ineffective, or worse, it is selectively blind.

Butchers, on the other hand, shift the blame upstream—to suppliers in outside markets. Even if that argument holds some truth, it exposes a deeper structural failure. Why is there no regulated supply chain? Why does a staple commodity depend so heavily on fluctuating external markets without any buffer, oversight, or intervention?

This is not just about mutton. It is about the larger pattern of how essential commodities are managed in Kashmir. When prices rise unchecked and accountability disappears, it erodes public trust and normalizes exploitation.

What is most alarming is the normalization of this cycle. People expect prices to rise every spring. Traders expect to get away with it. And the administration expects its warnings to be enough. They are not.

If authorities are serious, they must move beyond optics. Enforce the law visibly. Penalize violators publicly. Regulate the supply chain. Anything less is complicity. Until then, this so-called “seasonal hike” will remain what it truly is: an annual test the administration keeps failing—and the public keeps paying for.

The Strait Of Opportunity: India’s Time To Lead



ADITI BAJPAI

The Strait of Hormuz crisis — triggered by US-Israeli strikes on Iran and a subsequent naval blockade following the failure of the Islamabad Talks, has exposed a fundamental vacuum in global leadership. The UN Security Council has not acted against the aggressor. The Trump-led US has moved unilaterally, abandoning its role as a global mediator. Traditional architects of the global order have either chosen sides or retreated into silence. Into this vacuum steps an opportunity, and there is perhaps no nation better placed to seize it than India.

The deeper structural reason for this leadership vacuum is the simultaneous delegitimisation of three pillars that previously anchored global order. First, American multilateral credibility has eroded sharply, a nation that invaded Iraq on fabricated pretexts, withdrew from climate agreements and has now blockaded the Strait of Hormuz cannot simultaneously claim to be the defender of a rules-based order. The irony is telling: the US declared reopening the strait a major war aim, which had been open till the war began shows huge lack of clarity in its objective before disrupting west asia’s peace by self acclaimed Nobel peace laureate. Second, the UNSC’s paralysis is structural, not situational, a veto-wielding architecture designed in 1945 to manage post-war rivalries cannot resolve a crisis in which a permanent member is itself the aggressor. Third, emerging powers have not yet stepped into that vacuum with the full weight of their influence. That is precisely what makes this India’s moment.

The Hormuz crisis has made visible what strategic autonomy costs when it is practised as absence rather than agency. India is not merely a bystander with interests at stake, it is a civilisational power with the rare diplomatic capital to act where others cannot. It



maintains active channels with Washington, Tehran, Riyadh, and Moscow simultaneously. It carries no colonial guilt, no Cold War baggage, and no military footprint in West Asia. When Iran selectively allowed ships from only five nations, including India, to transit the Strait, it was not coincidence. It was a recognition of India’s standing. The Indian Navy’s Operation Sankalp, which successfully escorted Indian-flagged vessels safely through the Gulf of Oman, demonstrated both capability and composure under pressure. This is not the behaviour of a passive nation, this is the quiet competence of a rising power.

India’s stakes in this crisis are substantial, and managing them deftly is itself a demonstration of statecraft. Approximately 50% of its crude oil and 90% of its LPG pass through Hormuz. The Chabahar Port, India’s strategic gateway to Afghanistan and Central

Asia, built over two decades of patient investment, sits in the balance. Gulf remittances from nearly 10 million Indian workers form a vital pillar of the economy. Simultaneously, a predicted 8% rainfall deficit and disrupted fertilizer imports, DAP from West Asia and urea from Iran, place compounding pressure on agriculture. That India has navigated all of this without economic collapse or diplomatic rupture is a testament to its institutional resilience and foreign policy maturity.

Now, India must convert that resilience into initiative. Its unique position, not allied with the US, not hostile to Iran, trusted by the Global South, equips it to propose a multilateral maritime safety mechanism under UNCLOS, bringing together affected Asian nations like China, Japan, and South Korea to collectively assert transit passage rights. This is neither pro-US nor pro-Iran. It is pro-principle. It is exactly

the kind of solution that only a nation of India’s stature and neutrality can credibly table. During the G20 Presidency, India declared itself the voice of the Global South. The Hormuz crisis is the moment to make that declaration mean something, to demonstrate that India’s strategic autonomy is not merely the absence of alignment, but the presence of vision.

The world is not short of nations that pick sides. It is desperately short of nations that can rise above them. India is one of the very few that can. Our innovation of non aligned principle has always proven it. The Strait of Hormuz is not just a crisis to be weathered — it is a stage, and India has every reason to walk onto it.

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Counting Wealth Beyond Coins

ABID HUSSAIN RATHER



In common global usage, the terms “wealth” and “poverty” are often understood as being closely linked to money and material resources. But in reality, the matter is far more complex and multifaceted. Is wealth only defined by bank balances, property and assets? Or do knowledge, character, health, abilities and social respect also count? If someone has a lot of money but no peace of mind, and another has limited means but has utmost inner satisfaction and self-respect, who is truly rich and who is genuinely poor? This is a thought-provoking question that deserves our attention, and we need to ponder it.

In Islam, true wealth is not counted as a lot of money and other assets, but true wealth is described as the richness of the heart. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “True richness is the richness of the heart.” The Qur’an presents wealth as a test rather than an ultimate measure of superiority and pomposity. Religious obligations like zakat, charity and spending in the way of God remind us that wealth is a social trust and responsibility and we are not its absolute owners. In Christianity, a saying attributed to Jesus suggests that wealth-born arrogance and economic haughtiness distance a person from spirituality and righteousness. In Buddhism, desires are considered the root cause of sufferings, so true wealth lies in controlling



desires. In Hinduism, wealth (Artha) is accepted but kept subordinate to righteousness (Dharma). Thus, religions do not deny the importance of wealth, but they do not place it above morality and spirituality. All religions teach us that wealth should be treated as a source to fulfil our needs rather than being a source to satisfy all our desires blindly.

It is pertinent to mention here that standards of wealth vary across societies. In Western capitalist societies, money, power and luxurious lifestyle are often seen as signs of success, whereas in Eastern societies, family systems, social respect and education are also highly valued. According to the United Nations Development Programme, poverty is not just lack of income but deprivation of education, health, and quality of life. This is why the concept of “multidimensional poverty” has emerged, including factors like education, nutrition, clean water and

neat housing. In this context, a person may be financially average yet rich in several human development indicators.

An important question is whether true wealth is money or capability. History is full of individuals who rose from poverty through their abilities. Names like Bill Gates and Elon Musk are often cited, but behind their success were education, opportunities and supportive environments. If a society lacks quality education and equal opportunities, talent remains suppressed. Therefore, wealth is not just individual effort but also a result of collective systems.

Government policies play a crucial role in reducing or increasing the gap between rich and poor. A fair tax system, equal access to education, healthcare facilities and employment opportunities can balance economic inequality. Whereas corruption, nepotism and unfair distribution of resources lead to

the accumulation of wealth in a few hands. Global reports show that a large portion of the world’s wealth is concentrated among a limited group, indicating that inequality is not merely the result of individual effort or laziness but also because of structural disparities.

The distinction between lawful and unlawful wealth is also important. From an Islamic and moral perspective, lawful earnings bring blessings, whereas wealth gained through bribery, corruption and exploitation may shine temporarily but does not bring lasting respect. Rather, wealth earned through illicit and illegal means destroys peace of mind. Ignoring the difference between legal and illegal wealth leads to moral decline in society. True wealth benefits not only the individual but society as well.

Another ongoing debate is whether wealth and poverty are a result of destiny or efforts. Religion acknowl-

edges destiny but also emphasises striving and hard work. Humans are encouraged to work hard and persevere. Psychological studies show that a positive mindset and continuous efforts expand life opportunities. However, it is also true that someone raised in poverty, malnutrition and poor educational conditions faces greater challenges. Thus, destiny and effort are interconnected.

In conclusion, wealth and poverty are not determined solely by money, but their measurement has some other parameters. They are a combination of abilities, opportunities, state policies, social justice, moral values and individual efforts. Money is important but not the only criterion for determining being wealthy or poor. True wealth includes peace of heart, strength of character, light of knowledge and usefulness to society. If money exists alongside these qualities, it is a true blessing; otherwise, it is merely a number with temporary shine which fades with the passage of time. Finally, it can be said that wealth is not what we possess but what we become through what we possess. As Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA) beautifully said, “Wealth is not in having many possessions, but in having few wants.” Likewise, Socrates wisely observed, “Contentment is natural wealth, luxury is artificial poverty.” And in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, “The world has enough for everyone’s need, but not for everyone’s greed.” Thus, a heart at peace, a mind enlightened and a life of purpose remain the greatest treasures one can ever attain.

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Good Morning **Kashmir**

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R.N.I No: JKENG/2010/36998

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Office Address:

B-11, Budshah Flats, Jehangir

Chowk, Srinagar-190001

Printed at:

Khidmat Offset Printing Press, The Bund, Srinagar

Published From:

Main Bus Stand, Near Masjid Rehmat,

Lal Bazar, Srinagar - 190023

Layout Designer

Aijaz Ahmad Dar

Lonely Elders: The Silence Within The Grandeur



DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

The image of elderly parents living in grand houses but facing the reality of empty homes is one of the most poignant reflections of modern society. It speaks to the paradox of material abundance and emotional scarcity, of architectural magnificence and human loneliness. These houses, often built with the sweat and dreams of a lifetime, stand tall and proud, adorned with marble floors, sprawling gardens, and ornate furniture. Yet within their walls, silence echoes louder than any laughter once did. The grandeur becomes a shell, a reminder of what was once vibrant but is now subdued.

Parents who inhabit these homes often find themselves surrounded by memories rather than people, by photographs rather than conversations, by the weight of absence rather than the warmth of presence. The story of elderly parents in Kashmir and India is not just about aging, it is about belonging. It is about the human need to be seen, heard, and valued. The grand houses of Kashmir and the bustling cities of India may differ in architecture, but the silence within them is the same. It is the silence of waiting, for a knock on the door, a familiar voice, a shared meal. As families and societies, we must learn to fill that silence not with words but with presence. For in caring for our elders, we reaffirm the essence of humanity itself.

This phenomenon is not confined to one culture or geography; it is a universal reality shaped by the forces of modernization, migration, and shifting family structures. In earlier generations, homes were not just physical spaces but living organisms, pulsating with the energy of multiple generations under one roof. Grandparents, parents, children, and sometimes even extended relatives coexisted, creating a tapestry of shared lives. Meals were communal, festivals were collective, and the house was a sanctuary of togetherness. Today, however, the pursuit of education, careers, and personal independence has scattered families across cities, countries, and continents. The once-bustling homes are left with elderly parents who, despite their wealth and comfort, grapple with solitude.

The irony is stark: these parents often built such houses with the vision of accommodating their children and grandchildren, imagining family gatherings in spacious living rooms and celebrations in expansive courtyards. They invested not just money but emotion into creating spaces that could hold generations. Yet the very children for whom these homes were designed are now absent, caught in the whirlwind of modern life. The houses remain, but the purpose behind them seems to have dissolved. The elderly parents, while proud of their children's achievements, cannot help but feel the void of their absence. The grandeur of the house becomes a constant reminder of the emptiness within. Children must recognize that their parents' emotional needs are as real as their own ambitions. Occasional visits or phone calls, though appreciated, cannot substitute for sustained engagement. The elderly crave not pity but presence, not charity but companionship.

Loneliness in old age is not merely an emotional state; it has tangible effects on health and well-being. Studies have shown that isolation can lead to depression, cognitive decline, and even physical ailments. The silence of an empty home weighs heavily on the mind, often amplifying feelings of abandonment and insignificance. For parents who once played central roles in their families, the transition to solitude can be jarring. They may find themselves reminiscing about the days when the house was alive with chatter, when grandchildren ran through hallways, when festivals brought relatives together. Now, the same spaces feel cavernous, the laughter replaced by the hum of appliances or the ticking of clocks. The cultural dimension of this issue is particularly striking in societies where filial piety and family bonds have traditionally been emphasized.

In many Asian cultures, for instance, it was once unthinkable for parents to live alone in their old age. Children were expected to care for them, and homes were designed to



accommodate extended families. Yet globalization and urbanization have altered these norms. Young adults move to metropolitan areas or abroad for better opportunities, leaving behind parents in ancestral homes. The parents, often reluctant to leave the houses they built and the communities they know, choose to stay, even if it means enduring solitude. The grand house becomes both a source of pride and a prison of isolation.

Technology has attempted to bridge this gap, offering video calls, instant messaging, and social media as tools for connection. While these provide some comfort, they cannot replace physical presence. A hug, a shared meal, or a simple walk together carries a depth of intimacy that no digital interaction can replicate. Elderly parents may appreciate the effort of their children to stay in touch virtually, but they still yearn for the tangible closeness of family. The empty rooms of their houses remind them daily of the absence of such moments. The grandeur of the house, in this context, becomes almost mocking, beautiful but hollow, luxurious but lifeless. There is also a psychological aspect tied to identity and purpose.

For many parents, their sense of self was deeply intertwined with their role in the family. They were caregivers, providers, and anchors. They transform their solitude into service, using their homes as spaces to nurture others. In doing so, they reclaim a sense of purpose and breathe life back into their surroundings. Others



may choose to downsize, moving into smaller homes or retirement communities where companionship is more accessible. These decisions, though difficult, reflect an adaptive spirit, a refusal to let loneliness define their twilight years.

The broader societal question that emerges is how we, as communities, address the growing phenomenon of elderly parents in empty homes. It is not enough to admire their houses or respect their independence; there must be conscious efforts to ensure they do not feel abandoned. This could involve creating stronger community networks, encouraging intergenerational interactions, or reimagining housing designs that foster connection rather than isolation. It also requires a cultural shift, where suc-

cess is not measured solely by individual achievements but by the strength of family bonds and the care extended to elders. For the children, the challenge lies in balancing personal aspirations with familial responsibilities.

It is understandable that modern life demands mobility and independence, but it is equally important to recognize the emotional needs of parents. Regular visits, meaningful conversations, and gestures of care can make a significant difference. The grandeur of the house may not matter to them as much as the presence of loved ones within it. For elderly parents, the greatest wealth is not the property they own but the relationships they cherish. An empty home, no matter how luxurious, cannot substitute for the warmth of family.

Ultimately, the image of elderly parents in grand but empty houses is a mirror held up to society. It reflects the costs of progress, the trade-offs of modernity, and the fragility of human connection. It challenges us to rethink what truly matters in life. Is it the size of the house or the love within it? Is it the accumulation of wealth or the cultivation of relationships? These questions are not abstract; they are lived realities for countless families across the world. The answer, perhaps, lies in finding a balance, honoring the dreams of parents who built grand houses while ensuring those houses are not left empty of love.

Elderly parents in Kashmir and India face a complex web of challenges shaped by social transforma-

tion. In Kashmir, the challenges of aging are compounded by the region's unique socio-political context. Decades of unrest have not only strained the economy but also fractured social bonds. Many young people migrate to other parts of India or abroad for education and employment, leaving behind parents who remain deeply attached to their ancestral homes. The elderly in Kashmir often live in large, traditional houses surrounded by memories but devoid of company. Winters are harsh, and mobility becomes difficult, isolating them further. The sense of abandonment is not merely physical but emotional; they feel forgotten in a world that once revolved around family gatherings and communal harmony. The absence of their children is felt most acutely during festivals or family milestones, when silence replaces laughter and nostalgia replaces presence.

Across India, similar patterns emerge, though the scale and context differ. The country's demographic profile is shifting rapidly. India is aging faster than ever before. According to national projections, by 2050, nearly one in five Indians will be over sixty. This demographic transition poses immense social and economic challenges. The traditional expectation that children will care for their parents is increasingly difficult to sustain in a society driven by mobility and individual aspirations. Young professionals move to cities or abroad, leaving elderly parents in rural or

semi-urban areas. The emotional cost of this migration is profound. Parents who once took pride in their children's success now grapple with loneliness, their days marked by routine and silence. The grandeur of their homes, built with dreams of family togetherness, becomes a reminder of absence rather than achievement.

Health care is another pressing concern. In both Kashmir and India, access to geriatric care remains limited. Rural areas often lack specialized medical facilities, and even in urban centers, elderly care is not prioritized. Chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, and arthritis are common, yet regular medical supervision is rare. In Kashmir, political instability and harsh weather conditions further restrict access to health care. Many elderly parents depend on local clinics or traditional remedies, which may not be sufficient for complex health needs. The lack of trained caregivers and affordable nursing services adds to their vulnerability. For those living alone, even minor ailments can become major crises.

The fear of falling ill without help is a constant shadow over their daily lives. Economic insecurity also looms large. While some elderly parents receive pensions, many, especially those who worked in informal sectors—have no financial safety net. Inflation and rising living costs make it difficult to maintain their standard of living. In Kashmir, where tourism and agriculture are major sources of income, disruptions due to political tensions or environmental changes can severely affect household finances. Across India, the absence of comprehensive social security systems leaves many older adults dependent on their children or community support. Yet, as family ties weaken, this dependence becomes precarious.

Despite these challenges, there are glimmers of hope. In Kashmir, community organizations and NGOs have begun to address elderly care through social engagement programs and health camps. Some families are rediscovering the value of intergenerational living, recognizing that emotional support is as vital as financial stability. Across India, government initiatives such as the National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly and the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act aim to provide legal and medical support. However, implementation remains uneven, and awareness is limited. Technology has also emerged as a partial bridge, video calls and social media allow families to stay connected across distances. Yet, digital literacy among the elderly is low, and virtual communication cannot replace physical presence.

In Kashmir, rebuilding social trust and community cohesion is essential. The elderly, who have witnessed decades of turmoil, carry deep emotional scars. Their resilience deserves recognition, and their wisdom can guide younger generations toward empathy and peace. Across India, the challenge is broader but equally urgent: to ensure that modernization does not come at the cost of compassion. The measure of progress should not be limited to economic growth but should include how society treats its most vulnerable members. Elderly parents are living repositories of history, culture, and love. To neglect them is to lose a part of ourselves. The grandeur of a house is meaningless without the presence of people who make it a home.

Elderly parents living in empty houses remind us that material success cannot compensate for emotional neglect. Their stories are not just tales of loneliness but lessons in values, urging us to prioritize connection over consumption, presence over possessions. As society continues to evolve, it is imperative that we do not lose sight of these lessons. For in the end, a house is built of bricks and mortar, but a home is built of love and togetherness. Without the latter, even the grandest house remains empty.

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SIA Files Chargesheet

accused deliberately used the name of JeM to exploit its notoriety and create psychological impact, while covertly advancing the re-establishment and operational build-up of AGuH, reflecting a calculated attempt to mislead security agencies and conceal their true objectives.

Significantly, the module included highly educated individuals, including medical professionals, who misused their knowledge, access, and institutional spaces for unlawful activities. The accused were actively disseminating extremist propaganda through digital platforms and had undertaken procurement of materials and experimental activities related to explosive fabrication, including within residential premises and facilities linked to Al-Falah Medical College/University.

The investigation has revealed that the group had identified Triacetone Triperoxide (TATP)—a highly sensitive and volatile explosive used in several global terror incidents; as a preferred material due to the relative ease of sourcing its precursor components. The scale of accumulation of explosive substances and precursor materials by the module has sent shockwaves across security and investigative agencies nationwide, underscoring the seriousness of intent, level of preparedness, and the potentially catastrophic consequences had the conspiracy not been timely detected and neutralised.

Through a comprehensive, evidence-driven investigation, SIA has successfully dismantled the entire terrorist network and its support structure. The investigation has unearthed clinching and irrefutable evidence; comprising recoveries, digital forensics, scientific analysis, and corroborative witness accounts, which firmly establishes the complicity, active participation, and coordinated roles of each accused in the conspiracy. The material brought on record not only exposes the depth and spread of the module. A substantial body of evidence has thus been collected, clearly establishing a strong prima facie case against the accused.

Those chargesheeted include (1) Arif Nisar Dar @ Sahil, R/o Bunpora Nowgam, Srinagar; (2) Yasir Ul Ashraf Bhat, R/o Bunpora Nowgam, Srinagar; (3) Maqsood Ahmad Dar @ Shahid, R/o Bunpora Nowgam, Srinagar; (4) Irfan Ahmad Wagay @ Owais, R/o Nadigam, Shopian; (5) Zameer Ahmad Ahanger @ Mutlashi, R/o Wakoora, Ganderbal; (6) Dr. Muzamil Shakeel Ganaei @ Musaib, R/o Koil, Pulwama; (7) Dr. Adeel Ahmad Rather @ Javaid, R/o Wanpora Qazigund, Kulgam; (8) Dr. Shaheen Saeed, R/o Lalbagh, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh; (9) Tufail Ahmad Bhat, R/o Diarwani, Batmaloo; and (10) Dr. Umar Un Nabi S/o Gh. Nabi Bhat, R/o Koil, Pulwama (killed in Red Fort suicide attack)

The charge sheet has been filed before the competent court of law.

The SIA reiterated its unwavering commitment to dismantling terrorist ecosystems, neutralising radical networks, and safeguarding national security. This case highlights the evolving and sophisticated nature of terror conspiracies, including the misuse of professional institutions and digital platforms, and reinforces the need for sustained vigilance and coordinated counter-terror efforts.

Further investigation is in progress.

Women Empowerment

women farmers in every scheme. I trust 2026 will sincerely recognize women's roles in agriculture and allied sectors, fulfilling their aspirations," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor called upon technology innovators to prioritize technical tools for women farmers.

He stressed that the agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, and dairy departments must allocate resources to women farmers, while financial institutions design loan products enabling landless women farmers to access credit in their names.

"We must reinvigorate society with the resolve for women-led development in Jammu Kashmir, enabling women's power to transform it. Significant strides in women empowerment since 2020 has set a national example and our women farmers empowerment project exemplifies the success," the Lieutenant Governor.

The Lieutenant Governor exhorted the stakeholders to grant women farmers and entrepreneurs recognition, resources, and agency to work on their terms.

"Empowered women farmers are bearers of climate resilience, building robust agri-ecosystems with quality seeds, digital tools, and market linkages from cooperatives," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that through Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP), Jammu Kashmir advances holistic, tech-driven, farmer-centric transformation for higher production, incomes, and sustainable agriculture. It has registered 14,782 women farmers. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched JKCLIP on June 20, 2024, targeting climate-smart, market-oriented production; agri-economy ecosystems; sectoral development; and aid for vulnerable groups, women, and youth—registering 5,248 women farmers. PM Kisan Samman Nidhi has over 90,000 women beneficiaries. Over 8,000 women farmers are registered in natural farming and central schemes; 4,472 in horticulture; 128 in sericulture; over 144,000 in SKUAST schemes; 27,500 in dairy; and more than 16,000 in sheep farming and fisheries. Across agriculture and allied sectors, nearly 3,11,000 women are registered, he further said.

"I recognize millions more unregistered women farmers; I urge them to join central schemes. I take pride in Jammu Kashmir's self-help groups, women-led FPOs, and skill programs in mushroom, horticulture, beekeeping, food processing, and dairy, empowering rural women as farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, and decision-makers. When women control production resources, inputs, and services in agriculture and allied sectors, they ensure food security," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor urged the IFFCO to establish farmers' training centre, multi-facility farmers service centre, sheep production unit in J&K and provision of mobile soil testing machine to support local farmers.

The Lieutenant Governor also announced that the Mass Movement for 'Drug Free Jammu Kashmir' for the Kashmir Division will be launched from Srinagar on May 3, 2026. He called upon the women, youth and all sections of society to actively participate in this movement to eradicate

the drug menace from the Union Territory.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor felicitated the women agri-entrepreneurs. He also visited the stalls put up by IFFCO and various agri-entrepreneurs.

Shri Javid Ahmad Dar, Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj and Cooperative; Shri Dileep Singhani, Chairman IFFCO; Shri K. J. Patel, Managing Director IFFCO; Shri Yogender Kumar, Marketing Director IFFCO; Shri Sartaj Ahmad Shah, Director Agriculture, Kashmir; women farmers & Agri-entrepreneurs, members of women self-help groups and women delegates participated in the conference.

Shri Balwant Singh Mankotia, Member of Legislative Assembly from Chenani; Shri Akshay Labroo, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar; Dr GV Sundeeep Chakravathy, SSP Srinagar; senior officials and Agriculture experts were also present.

MeT Forecasts 2-Day

hailstorms at isolated places.

An official of the MeT department said that from April 17 to 19, the weather is likely to remain generally cloudy, with intermittent spells of light rain and thundershowers at many places, particularly during morning and late evening hours.

He also warned of gusty winds with speeds reaching 40–50 kmph and the possibility of hailstorms at a few locations during this period.

The weather is expected to improve from April 20 to 24, with generally dry conditions likely to prevail across the Union Territory.

Similar conditions are forecast for April 25 and 26, although brief spells of light rain or thundershower with gusty winds may occur at isolated places towards the afternoon.

Meanwhile, gusty winds reported in several parts of Kashmir on Thursday evening caused damage to rooftops, electricity poles and other infrastructure, officials said.

There were also reports of minor disruptions to power supply in some areas following the strong winds.

The MeT department has issued an advisory asking farmers to suspend farm operations from April 17 to 19 in view of the expected weather activity, including rain, gusty winds and possible hailstorms.

Officials said the advisory has been issued as a precautionary measure to minimise potential damage to crops and ensure safety during adverse weather conditions.

The department has urged people to remain cautious, especially during periods of strong winds and thunderstorms, and to follow official advisories—(KNO)

Rapid Conversion

concern, with experts warning that the trend could leave the Valley heavily, if not entirely, dependent on other states for its staple food, particularly rice.

A directorate-level retired officer of the Agriculture Department, said that Kashmir is already facing a food deficit of nearly 40-50 per cent. He said the steady shift from paddy cultivation to high-density apple orchards over the past five to six years has only deepened this dependence.

"Thousands of hectares of fertile paddy land have been converted into orchards, primarily for apple cultivation. While this transition has improved the income of some farmers, it has significantly reduced local rice production," the officer said.

He cautioned that the Valley, once known for its self-sufficiency in rice, is now at a critical juncture. "If this trend continues unchecked, Kashmir could become 100 per cent reliant on other states for rice in the coming years," he warned.

The shift toward horticulture, especially high-density apple farming, has been largely driven by better financial returns compared to traditional paddy cultivation. Farmers are increasingly opting for orchards as they promise higher profits and relatively stable market demand.

However, experts believe this economic gain comes at a long-term cost.

"Horticulture undoubtedly boosts farmers' incomes, but it also exposes the region to external risks. Any disruption in supply chains—whether due to natural disasters, transport issues, or political instability—can trigger food shortages," said an official of the Agriculture department, wishing anonymity.

Historically, districts like Kulgam and Pulwama have been regarded as the rice bowls of Kashmir. But over the past two decades, these areas have witnessed a sharp decline in paddy cultivation.

"In Kulgam alone, more than 50 per cent of paddy fields have been lost to horticulture and urban expansion," the official said.

Pulwama presents an even starker picture. "There were areas where orchards were almost non-existent a few years ago. Today, after the introduction of high-density apple varieties, nearly 70 per cent of paddy land has been converted. If this demand continues, we may not see any paddy fields left in certain belts," he added.

Official figures underline the alarming trend. The area under paddy cultivation in Jammu and Kashmir has declined from 1,62,309 hectares in 2012–13 to 1,34,067 hectares in 2021–22—a drop of around 17 per cent.

Experts believe that the current decline could be even steeper, given the pace of land conversion in recent years.

Over the past decade alone, nearly 35,000 hectares of paddy land have reportedly been converted to non-agricultural uses, including horticulture and construction.

At present, nearly 60–70 per cent of the rice consumed in Kashmir is sourced from outside, mainly from Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh. Supplies are routed through the Food Corporation of India (FCI) as well as private traders.

Officials warned that such heavy reliance on external sources makes the region vulnerable. "In case of any disruption, the Valley could face serious food security challenges," they said.

Despite the alarming trend, officials pointed out that there is currently no strict legal framework to prevent the conversion of paddy land into other uses. "There is an urgent need for policy intervention. If corrective measures are not taken now, the situation may soon reach a point of no return," they cautioned.

Experts have called for a balanced approach that

safeguards food security while also supporting farmers' incomes—(KNO)

Tulip Garden Records 3.9

figures are received," Ahmad said.

He said the garden witnessed a steady stream of visitors throughout the season, with a notable surge on the closing day despite the bloom declining significantly. "Even in the last phase, the response remained strong. The closing day saw a heavy rush of visitors," he added.

In revenue terms, the garden generated Rs 3,66,43,504 from ticket sales, reflecting one of the strongest seasons in recent years. Of this, Rs 7,64,104 has been earned through online ticketing, while the final e-ticketing figures are awaited from J&K Bank.

He said offline ticketing continued to dominate, though digital bookings are gradually gaining traction.

The visitor profile this season reflected a strong turnout across categories. Around 2,24,233 tourists from outside Jammu and Kashmir visited the garden, while 1,56,842 were local visitors. Additionally, 1,222 foreign tourists also explored the garden, underscoring its growing global appeal.

Notably, the garden, which opened 10–12 days earlier than usual, maintained an average daily footfall of nearly 10,000 visitors. Peak days witnessed even higher numbers, with domestic tourist arrivals alone touching between 9,000 and 11,000 daily with significantly higher than previous years.

Visitors expressed delight over the experience, calling it a highlight of their Kashmir trip. "The Tulip Garden is absolutely breathtaking. Even though we came towards the end of the season, the beauty and scale are unmatched. It's a must-visit," said a tourist from Delhi.

Another visitor from Maharashtra said the garden exceeded expectations. "We had seen pictures online, but witnessing it in person is something else. The arrangements and the view with the mountains in the backdrop make it unforgettable," he said.

Officials said the Tulip Garden once again lived up to its reputation as the curtain-raiser for Kashmir's tourism season, drawing large crowds and setting a positive tone for the months ahead.

It is pertinent to mention that earlier, officials had announced that the garden would close on April 16 as the bloom had declined to around 20 per cent and was expected to fall further below the operational threshold—(KNO)

CS Reviews

movement of pilgrims along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, as well as the two primary routes to the holy cave via Baltal and Chandanwari. Emphasizing the anticipated increase in pilgrim footfall this year, he directed all concerned departments to augment infrastructure and services accordingly.

Dr. Mandep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor and Chief Executive Officer, SASB, delivered a comprehensive presentation outlining key aspects of SANJY-2026. These included registration processes, service provider arrangements, establishment of Yatra camps, langar services, and provisioning of essential facilities.

It was informed that registration for the Yatra commenced on April 15, 2026, through both offline (bank branches) and online modes, with 19,402 pilgrims registering on the very first day. The Pratham Puja is scheduled to take place on June 29, 2026.

The Chief Secretary directed the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) to ensure timely snow clearance on all Yatra tracks by May 15, 2026. He also emphasized the need for proper road maintenance, installation of signages and crash barriers, slope stabilization, bridge maintenance, and restoration of shelter sheds along the Yatra routes.

The Public Works Department (PWD) was instructed to complete macadamization of roads around base camps and undertake necessary repairs of helipads at Neelgrath, Baltal, and Pahalgam.

The Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRR&R) was tasked with identifying and demarcating flood- and disaster-prone areas to prevent the installation of facilities in vulnerable zones. Additionally, it was directed to ensure early debris clearance of nallahs near the holy cave and operationalize the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) in Srinagar by June 10, 2026.

The Department of Rural Sanitation was asked to ensure high standards of sanitation before, during, and after the Yatra, particularly along both routes during the 57-day pilgrimage period. Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and Development Authorities at Pahalgam and Sonamarg were directed to implement scientific waste disposal systems.

The Labour Department and Animal and Sheep Husbandry Department, in coordination with the concerned district administrations were instructed to ensure registration of all service providers and ponies in collaboration with district administrations of Anantnag and Ganderbal. Deputy Commissioners were directed to implement a digital prepaid system and notify standardized service rates for the convenience of pilgrims and service providers.

The Jal Shakti Department and Power Development Department were tasked with ensuring adequate water supply and uninterrupted power through necessary pipeline and cable networks, along with installation of RO filters and backup generators and illumination of tracks and base camps too.

The Health Department was directed to operationalize 100-bedded hospitals at Chandanwari and Baltal by June 20, 2026, and ensure deployment of sufficient medical and paramedical staff, along with critical care ambulances at all base camps and along both routes.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) will provide Doppler-based weather forecasting services and install LED display screens at base camps for real-time updates. Telecom service providers have been directed to ensure robust mobile and internet connectivity along the Yatra routes by May 15, 2026.

The Food & Civil Supplies Department will enhance the quota of essential commodities such as ration, LPG, and kerosene and ensure their uninterrupted availability throughout the Yatra.

The Chief Secretary also directed the Information Department to install an adequate number of public address systems, hoardings, and banners at Yatra camps, lodgement centres, and key locations along the route to facilitate dissemination of information to pilgrims.

The Fire & Emergency Services Department was instructed to deploy sufficient firefighting equipment at all camps, lodgement centres, langar sites, tents, and commercial establishments, and to con-

duct fire safety audits well in advance. Training and capacity building of service providers and langar operators were also emphasized to enable them to act as first responders during emergencies.

The Chief Secretary reiterated the importance of coordinated efforts among all departments and directed officials to ensure that all arrangements are put in place well ahead of time. He stressed that the overarching objective is to provide pilgrims with a safe, comfortable, and spiritually fulfilling journey, ensuring the successful and smooth conduct of SANJY-2026.

India, Austria Condemn

unequivocally" denounced terrorism in all its forms and stressed the need for sustained international cooperation to tackle the threat.

The two countries also referred to the Pahalgam attack and a terror incident near Delhi's Red Fort, condemning them in strong terms and calling for a comprehensive response to such acts.

According to officials, India and Austria agreed to enhance cooperation on counter-terrorism, including efforts to curb terror financing, prevent misuse of emerging technologies, and check recruitment by extremist groups.

A Letter of Intent was signed to establish a joint working group on counter-terrorism, aimed at facilitating information sharing, capacity building and coordination in multilateral forums, particularly in the context of India's engagement with the European Union.

Both sides reiterated their commitment to disrupting financial channels linked to terrorism and strengthening mechanisms under global frameworks such as the United Nations and the Financial Action Task Force.

The visit also saw the conclusion of 15 agreements and outcomes across sectors including defence, trade, innovation and skills development.

Among the key initiatives, the two countries agreed to set up a fast-track mechanism to address concerns of businesses and boost investment flows. An agreement on audiovisual co-production was also signed to promote collaboration between the film industries of India and Austria.

Officials said the discussions also touched upon broader economic cooperation, with both sides noting the potential of the India-European Union free trade agreement to expand trade and investment opportunities.

The engagements, they added, are expected to strengthen bilateral ties and deepen cooperation across strategic and economic sectors—(KNO)

'Bridge Stands Now,

carrying locals and schoolchildren entered the Jhelum near Gandbal-Batwara.

After making a few regular trips, the boat reportedly struck a pillar of the under-construction bridge and overturned. The boat, carrying men, women and children, lost balance in the current and capsized within moments. School bags, books, slippers and shawls were later seen floating in the river.

Locals immediately rushed into the water. Some swam toward children, some used ropes, while others shouted names into the river.

Rescue teams from SDRF, NDRF, police and MARCOS were mobilised. Parents who had sent their children to school arrived at the riverbank to scenes no family could imagine.

s rescue operations continued, reports of deaths and missing persons started emerging.

As bodies were retrieved throughout the day, the scale of the tragedy became clearer. Children were among those killed, and the incident sent shockwaves across Kashmir, triggering mourning and anger.

Soon after the tragedy, questions began to arise. Why were people still crossing like this in 2024? Why had the bridge remained incomplete? Why does action come only after loss? Locals openly linked the tragedy to years of delay in infrastructure.

Search operations continued in the Jhelum in the following days. Several bodies were recovered, but Showkat Ahmad Sheikh, a 40-year-old mason from Gandbal, remained missing.

For most families, burial marked the beginning of grief. For his family, grief could not begin properly.

"We had been demanding the bridge for years. It came only after lives were lost," Zubair Ahmad, a local resident said.

As public attention faded, one family remained trapped in the events of April 16.

No body meant no burial. No grave meant no place to sit and pray. His ailing mother kept asking for updates and waiting for news from the river.

Following public uproar, the under-construction footbridge near the accident site was completed in the following months. For many locals, the completion brought mixed emotions, as what could have prevented deaths came only after the tragedy.

When the first anniversary arrived, most families marked the day with prayers at the graves.

But Showkat Ahmad's family still had no grave to visit. His mother's health had weakened, while uncertainty continued inside the home. Though one year had passed, for the family, April 16 had never ended.

During sand extraction in the river stretch, partial human remains were found, including a foot later identified by the family through footwear. This led authorities to intensify searches. MARCOS and SDRF resumed underwater scanning and dredging operations in the river.

On January 19, 2026, the mortal remains of Showkat Ahmad Sheikh were recovered from the Jhelum. With this, the longest unfinished chapter of the tragedy came to an end. His remains were later buried, and final rites were performed. For the family, the waiting ended that day.

Family sources said that the ailing mother later travelled for Umrah after the son's burial.

Those close to the family said she carried prayers for her son and for all those who lost their lives in the tragedy.

Today marks exactly two years since the Gandbal tragedy, not three. The bridge now stands. The missing man was found. The final burial was completed. Yet for the affected families, mornings remain divided into two parts—before the boat and after the boat.

"The bridge stands now, but those who died will not return," said Tawkeer Ahmad, a neighbour—(KNO)

CS reviews development of key tourism circuits to boost Tourism in Jammu

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo Thursday chaired a high-level meeting to review the progress of works and strategic initiatives undertaken by the Tourism Department for the promotion and holistic development of tourism across the Jammu region.

The meeting focused on assessing the implementation of various tourism development strategies aimed at strengthening diverse tourism circuits across districts and positioning Jammu as a vibrant, all-season tourism destination.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretaries of Finance, Tourism, and Public Works Department (PWD), Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Managing Director JKTDC, Director Tourism Jammu, and other senior officers.

Emphasising the immense untapped tourism potential of the region, the Chief Secretary directed the department to identify and prioritise high-impact works under the Capex budget. He specifically called for

immediate interventions at key religious and heritage destinations such as Shivkhori, Katra, Uttarbehni, and Purmandal. He observed that even diverting a small percentage of pilgrims visiting Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine to these circuits could significantly boost tourist footfall and transform them into major attractions.

Highlighting the importance of border tourism, the Chief Secretary stressed large-scale development at Suchetgarh, noting its growing popularity among visitors in recent years. He also underscored the need to explore and expand adventure tourism avenues at locations such as Aithem and the iconic Chenab Rail Bridge, suggesting that many such projects could be developed through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models.

Further, he instructed the department to identify suitable land parcels around Patnitop for development under the "One State: One Global Destination" programme.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed ongoing promo-



tional strategies and stressed the importance of timely completion of all infrastructure projects. He called for a comprehensive approach to convert the large influx of pilgrims into multi-day tourists by encouraging them to explore leisure, heritage, adventure, and spiritual tourism offerings beyond traditional routes.

Detailed reviews were conducted for major pilgrimage cir-

cuits, including Katra-Shivkhori and Uttarbehni-Purmandal, as well as adventure circuits covering Aithem, Chenab Rail Bridge, Baradari (Reasi), and Ranjit Sagar Lake (Kathua). Progress on leisure tourism circuits such as Patnitop-Sanasar, Surinsar-Mansar, and Rajouri-Poonch was also assessed.

Additional Chief Secretary Finance, Shailendra Kumar, suggested measures to improve accessibility to

tourist destinations, including upgradation of road infrastructure, development of essential amenities such as eateries and refreshment points, and strengthening public transport connectivity. He also proposed the development of entertainment and amusement facilities within Jammu city to encourage longer tourist stays.

Additional Chief Secretary Tourism, Ashish Chandra

Verma, presented a comprehensive overview of departmental initiatives, outlining a multi-pronged strategy focused on thematic tourism circuits, heritage experiences, adventure tourism, infrastructure augmentation, and promotion of offbeat destinations. These initiatives aim to enhance tourist footfall while encouraging extended stays through diversified and customised experiences.

Director Tourism Jammu, Dr. Vikas Gupta, provided detailed insights into the works executed and promotional efforts across various circuits. He highlighted the integration of major religious and heritage sites within the Katra-Shivkhori circuit, including Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, Shivkhori, Krimchi Temples, Raghunath Temple, and Ranbireswar Temple. He also briefed the meeting on ongoing projects and long-term development proposals for each destination.

The meeting was further apprised of key initiatives such as the development of an

Adventure Hub and Food Village at Aithem, establishment of a rafting centre at Baradari, and proposed adventure activities including bungee jumping, ziplining, and paragliding at the Chenab Rail Bridge with support from professional agencies. Plans for water sports at Ranjit Sagar Lake and promotion of border tourism at Suchetgarh and Gharana were also discussed.

The Tourism Department highlighted its extensive promotional efforts over the past year, including Familiarisation (FAM) tours, enhanced digital and social media outreach, and the successful organisation of thematic events such as the Jammu Marathon, Winter Carnivals at Patnitop, Bhaderwah, and Sarchal, National Rafting Championship at Shibnote (Doda), and Lohri Festival at Mubarak Mandi, among others.

The meeting also took appraisal of wide-ranging publicity campaigns conducted in major cities across the country to promote Jammu as a premier tourism destination.

Secy RDD reviews SASCI Projects, UT Capex Plan for FY 2026-27

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, Thursday chaired a review meeting to assess progress under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investments (SASCI) scheme and to finalise the Annual Action Plan for FY 2026-27 under UT Capex (Community Development).

The meeting was attended by Director Rural Development Kashmir, Shabir Hussain Bhat; Director Rural Development Jammu, Shahnaz Akhter; Director Finance, Umar Khan; Joint Director Planning, Kamal Kumar Sharma; besides senior officers of the R&B and RD&PR departments.

Reviewing the status of SASCI projects, the Secretary was informed that construction of residential accommodation for PRI members and protected persons at Bijbehara (Anantnag) is under-



way in Kashmir division. In Jammu division, key projects under execution include two-BHK residential complexes for DDC/PRI members at Udhampur, Reasi, Kathua and Samba; a District Development Council building at Reasi; drainage upgradation works in Mendhar; and construction of BDO office complexes, community halls, guest houses and drainage nallahs in Jammu district.

The Secretary directed both Directors to ensure that UT Capex and District Capex plans are uploaded on the designated portal

by April 21, as per timelines fixed by the Chief Secretary. He stressed that proposals must prioritise high-impact, durable infrastructure assets aimed at improving the quality of life in rural areas.

He further instructed that construction of Block Development Officer (BDO) offices be proposed in all blocks where such facilities are not available, to enhance access to administrative and developmental services.

The meeting also reviewed progress under the Viksit Village Scheme, which provides for an

allocation of ₹2 crore per Assembly constituency. Under the scheme, one village in each constituency will be developed as a Model Village with creation of key infrastructural, social and economic assets including DEWATS, Plastic Waste Management Units, village museums, entrance arches, selfie points, chaupals, digital labs, public libraries and multipurpose facility centres.

The Secretary directed officers to expedite preparation of DPRs and estimates to ensure timely implementation of the scheme.

DLSA Budgam conducts Awareness Programme on Rights of Prisoners

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM: As part of its calendar of activities, the District Legal Services Authority, Budgam (DLSA Budgam), under the aegis of the J&K Legal Services Authority and under the chairmanship of O. P. Bhagat, Chairman DLSA (Principal District & Sessions Judge), Budgam, successfully conducted an awareness programme at Central Jail Srinagar on Rights of Prisoners and Legal Aid to Prisoners.

The programme was organized with the objective of sensitizing inmates about their legal rights and the availability of free legal aid services, ensuring



that they are aware of their entitlements under law and are able to access justice effectively.

During the programme, resource person, Lateef Ahmad Khan, Chief LADC spoke on the importance of legal aid to prisoners. He explained the procedures for availing free legal services and highlighted the role of Legal Services Authorities in ensuring that no individual is

denied justice due to lack of financial resources. He encouraged the inmates to approach legal aid counsel for assistance in their cases and assured them of timely and effective legal support.

Nazeer Ahmad Wagay, Deputy LADC, elaborated on key rights such as the right to life and dignity, right to free legal aid, right to fair and speedy trial, and right to humane treatment while in custody. He also

underscored the importance of access to medical care, communication with family members and legal counsel, and protection against any form of torture or inhuman treatment.

The programme witnessed active participation from the inmates, who raised queries regarding their cases and legal remedies. These queries were addressed comprehensively by the panel of legal experts.

The initiative reflects the continued commitment of DLSA Budgam towards promoting legal awareness and ensuring access to justice for all, particularly the marginalized and underprivileged sections of society, including prisoners.

Arrangements for JKSSB Junior Assistant Examination finalised in Budgam

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM: District Administration Budgam Thursday convened a meeting at the Conference Hall Budgam to finalise arrangements for the OMR-based written examination for the post of Junior Assistant, scheduled to be conducted on 19th of April by the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB).

The meeting was chaired by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Budgam, Mehraj-din Shah, and attended by the Additional Secretary JKSSB along with senior officers and officials from various departments. Among those present were District Transport Officer Budgam, District Informatics Officer Budgam, ARTO Budgam, representatives from Police, Education Department, Traffic Police, besides Centre Superintendents, Deputy Superintendents, Magistrates/Observers, and Heads of Institutions of the designated examination centres.

During the meeting, the ADC reviewed in detail the arrangements being put in place for the smooth conduct of the examination. He stressed the importance



of effective coordination among all departments to ensure that the examination is conducted in a fair, transparent, and orderly manner.

Thredbare discussions were held on crucial aspects including deployment of magistrates and observers, security arrangements, transportation facilities, confidentiality and safe handling of examination material, availability of basic amenities at examination centres, and strict adherence to Standard Operating Procedures prescribed for the examination.

The Additional Secretary JKSSB briefed the participants about examination guidelines, protocols to be followed at centres, and the responsibilities assigned to supervi-

sory staff. He emphasized strict compliance with the Board's instructions to uphold transparency and integrity throughout the examination process.

ADC Budgam directed all concerned officers to ensure advance arrangements related to security deployment, traffic regulation, and logistical support. He instructed Centre Superintendents and supervisory staff to remain vigilant and facilitate a hassle-free examination experience for candidates.

All departments were asked to maintain close coordination and ensure timely deployment of manpower and resources for the successful conduct of the JKSSB Junior Assistant examination across all designated centres in the district.

DIPR Cultural Unit organizes Anti-Drug Awareness Programme at Balhama

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: As part of the ongoing 100-Day 'Nasha Mukt Jammu and Kashmir' campaign launched by the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor J&K, and in line with the calendar of activities of District Administration Srinagar, the Cultural Unit Kashmir of the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Thursday organized an awareness programme titled "Say No to Drugs and Yes to Life" under the ongoing Nasha Mukt J&K Abhiyan at Girls Secondary School (GSS), Balhama.

The programme witnessed active participation of students and staff, aiming to sensitize young minds about the harmful effects of drug abuse and the importance of leading a healthy and responsible life.

Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Srinagar, Tariq Reshi; BDO Khonmoh, Muqsit Wani; and AECO Cultural Unit, Syed Shakeel Shan, addressed the gathering.

The speakers highlighted the serious physical, psychological, and social consequences of drug addiction and emphasized the need for collective efforts to eradicate this menace from society. They urged students to stay away from drugs and become ambassadors of a drug-free society.

GOVT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE ZONAL EDUCATION OFFICER GANDERBAL

Tel. No. /Fax - 0194-2416128, Block -1, 2 nd Floor Qadri Complex Beehama

Subject: - Publication of Tender notice (Re-Tendering) of dietary item KGBV Gutliabagh.
Reference: - KGBV/G/1058, Dated: - 09/3/2026.

RE- TENDERING NOTICE

Tender Notice Published on 25/3/2026 in Brighter Kashmir, Veyth, Dargi Chinar, Shaharbeen times and Extension in Tender Notice published on 02/04/2026 in Good Morning Kashmir, Fish Eye, Uqaab, Nida-e- Kashmir. Only one vendor/bitter participated and rates of some items were far different from market rates and committee recommended cancellation of tender notice and re-tendering of tender notice may be an option for wide publicity.

Requisition already received from Warden KGBV Gutliabagh regarding Dietary Items for KGBV Gutliabagh for financial year 2026-2027 and list is provided below for ready reference vide above reference. The bidder shall provide the reasonable rates item wise and submit the CDR of Rs 5000 (Rupees Five thousand only) favouring Zonal Education Officer Ganderbal. The tender documents should be submitted in the office of the Warden KGBV Gutliabagh with proper receipt by or before 22/04/2026 till 2.00 PM. No Tender document will be received after stipulated time period.

Bidder qualified will provide the dietary items as and when KGBV will be made residential.

| S.No | Name of the Item | Quality |
|------|---|------------------|
| 01 | Onion, Potato, Tomato, Saag, Beans, Radish, Bottle Guards, Cabbage, Capsicum Cauliflower, Brinjal, Spinach, Kadan | Fresh |
| 02 | Rice | A Grade Brand |
| 03 | Pluses (Green Moong, Masoor, Chola Yellow, White Chana and Rajma) | Standard Quality |
| 04 | Eggs, Cheese, Chicken/Meat | Fresh |
| 05 | Nutri | Standard |
| 6 | Spices (Red Chilly Powder, Turmeric Powder, Garlic, Meat, Masla, Methi packs, Salt Packs and snafu Powder) | Rehmant Spices |
| 7 | Mustard Oil | Peer |
| 8 | Soap for utensils | Bartan Bar |
| 9 | Brush for utensils | Chum Chum |
| 10 | Commerical Gas | BP |
| 11 | Biscuit/ Bread on daily basis | Krack Jack |
| 12 | Milk for tea as per need | Verka |
| 13 | Tea pati as per need | Taj Mahal |
| 14 | Sugar as per need | Standard quality |
| 15 | Butter as per need | Amul |
| 16 | Suji for fermi and halwa as per need | P Mark |
| 17 | Coconut for fermi and halwa as per need | Standard quality |
| 18 | Chana White (Chick Peas) as per need | Kabul Chana |
| 19 | Eggs for breakfast | Mithal |
| 20 | Broom | Standard quality |
| 21 | Detergent | Fena |

DIPK-457-26
DT: 16/04/2026

Zonal Education Officer
Ganderbal

Rampant Punjab Kings crush Mumbai Indians by 7 wickets in IPL

AGENCIES

MUMBAI: Prabhsimran Singh and Shreyas Iyer struck fluent fifties as Punjab Kings' winning run continued with a seven-wicket hammering of Mumbai Indians, who suffered a fourth consecutive defeat in the Indian Premier League here on Thursday.

Even as Quinton de Kock, with a brilliant 112 not out, and Naman Dhir (50) bailed Mumbai Indians out in the first half with a robust 132-run third-wicket stand, the hosts' 195/6 was never challenging enough on a docile track against the rampant Punjab batters.

Prabhsimran made a wicketless Jasprit Bumrah (0/41) and MI pay for a regulation drop early, smashing a strokeful 80 not out off 31 balls (11x4s, 2x6s), while skipper Iyer was in his elements, notching up his third fifty in as many outings with a 66 off 35 balls (5x4s, 4x6s), as the duo stitched a sturdy 139-run stand for the third wicket.

Chasing 196, PBKS went over the line with 21 balls to spare, scoring 198/3 as MI bowlers continued to disappoint collectively, with AM Ghazanfar's 2/31 being the only performance of note.

Punjab were quick off the blocks as the first over from Deepak Chahar yielded 21 runs, putting MI on the backfoot.

A pivotal moment arrived in the third over when Bumrah, placed at short third, spilled a regu-



lation chance off Hardik Pandya when Prabhsimran was only on 11.

Ghazanfar dismissed Priyansh Arya (15) and Cooper Connolly (17) to give Mumbai two elusive wickets in the powerplay, but the hosts could never capitalise on those breakthroughs.

Prabhsimran unleashed his rich repertoire of strokes, hitting a flurry of fours, while Iyer relished batting on his home track of the Wankhede Stadium, dispatching the bad balls with ease.

Their 139-run stand came from only 67 balls as Prabhsimran and Iyer eclipsed the first-innings heroics of de Kock and

Dhir. In the 16th over, a powerful pull from Iyer went through Dhir's hands for a six and the Punjab skipper sent the next from Shardul Thakur flying into the stands. However, a flick off the pads in the air gave Dhir another chance, which he converted with a fine diving catch in the front.

Earlier, a belligerent century from Quinton de Kock (112 not out) and a gritty 50 from Naman Dhir pulled MI out of doldrums and lifted them to an under-par 195/6.

Confined to warming the bench so far, de Kock replaced Rohit Sharma and smacked his third IPL

hundred to lead an inspirational fightback for the troubled Mumbai Indians, who had slipped to 15/2 in three overs.

The veteran Protea batter was in his elements during his unbeaten ton -- a 60-ball 112 not out (8x4s, 7x6s) and his first in IPL since 2022 -- clobbering the ball powerfully on the leg-side and picking boundaries with precision and terrific timing on the off.

Arsheep Singh (3/22) swung the ball precariously and bowled immaculate lengths to snaffle two key wickets early on, while a third came late in the innings.

After beating Ryan Rickelton (2) persistently

with deliveries that swung away, Arsheep had the South African caught at deep square leg on a shortish ball. He was then all over India T20I skipper Suryakumar Yadav (0), luring him outside off on the first ball and beating him with the swing to have a thick edge flying to short third.

With Suryakumar back in the hut and Tilak Varma (8) out of sorts, MI took a punt in promoting Dhir at No. 4 and the right-handed batter repaid the faith with a gutsy knock.

Dhir was also lucky when on 10, as Yuzvendra Chahal spilled a sitter at short fine-leg off Marco Jansen in the fifth over. He was lucky again when a misjudgement in calling for a single in the next over did not result in de Kock being run-out at the non-striker's end, as Shreyas Iyer missed the direct hit.

De Kock and Dhir put on 132 off 68 balls in a robust third-wicket stand which not only revived MI but built a strong platform to push on for a big total, but the hosts could not manage one.

With a strong bottom-hand stroke play, Dhir struck three sixes and as many fours and played a perfect second fiddle to de Kock.

In the 18th over, Iyer had his arms spread wide in celebration after he caught the ball off Hardik Pandya (14) while being airborne over ropes at long-on and hurling it to Xavier Bartlett for a superbly-executed catch.

IPL 2026: Prabhsimran has raised the bar; is maturing with each game, says Iyer after PBKS win

IAN S

MUMBAI: As Punjab Kings romped to a seven-wicket victory over Mumbai Indians in Match 24 of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 and surged to the top of the points table, skipper Shreyas Iyer singled out opener Prabhsimran Singh for his mature knock that made the win possible.

Chasing a challenging target of 196 built on a scintillating unbeaten century by Mumbai Indians opener Quinton de Kock (112*), PBKS were in trouble at 45/2 with Priyansh Arya (15) and Cooper Connolly (17) back in the dugout.

But Prabhsimran held the innings together, scored a well-controlled unbeaten 80 (39 b, 11x4, 2x6), his second successive half-century in IPL 2026, and shared a match-winning 139-run partnership with Iyer (66 off 35, 5x4, 4x6) to help the team romp to victory.

Iyer said Prabhsimran has matured a lot since last season and has raised the bar for his teammates.

"Prabhsimran has raised his bar, considering the last season, where he swung wildly, got runs and gave excellent starts. Now he's got maturity and finishing off games. He's maturing with each game," said Iyer in the post-match presentation.

He said the win was a result of team effort, and they will give the players confidence going forward. "Confident and optimistic going forward. We've



been playing phenomenally. We know each game is important; it's a collective effort, glad to have a comprehensive win," he said.

He jokingly pointed to the sensational catch, for which he laid the groundwork, to dismiss his opposite number, Hardik Pandya, as the turning point of the match. Iyer leapt high over the boundary rope, caught the ball by the tip of his left hand fingers, switched it to his right arm, and lobbed it over the boundary rope, all the while in the air. Xavier Bartlett completed the catch, even as Iyer celebrated in front of the crowd and near the MI dugout.

"My catch was the key to pulling things back

(laughs), but we have the tendency to do that. Did that even against SRH! We have to be present and enjoy the moment. We haven't decided on how to set totals, lucky to have won tosses so far," said Iyer. "The PBKS skipper said, 'We have many positive players ready to go out there and express themselves. You need to keep getting better each game, focus on yourselves, and that's the recipe we've been following.'

He also praised the huge crowd that had filled the stadium to watch the match. "I've seen crowds coming in numbers; the fan following is going high. Great to see fans showering their love," he said.

ISL 2025-26: 10-man East Bengal snatch thrilling draw against Bengaluru FC in six-goal classic

IAN S

KOLKATA: East Bengal FC put up a strong fight with 10 players to hold Bengaluru FC to an exciting 3-3 draw in one of the most thrilling matches of the Indian Super League (ISL) 2025-26 season at the Salt Lake Stadium on Thursday.

Bengaluru FC scored first in the 12th minute. Ashique Kuruniyan completed a fantastic solo run with a powerful shot into the top corner. East Bengal quickly responded, with Anwar Ali leveling the score in the 21st minute with an impressive back volley after a well-executed corner.

The match took a dramatic turn just minutes later. East Bengal was down to 10 men after Miguel Ferreira received a straight red card in the 24th minute following a clash with Ashique. The situation intensified as Ferreira kicked the ball toward the Bengaluru bench while leaving the field.

Even with fewer players, East Bengal kept pushing. However, Bengaluru regained the lead in the 39th minute when Suresh Wangjam took advantage of a mistake by goalkeeper Prabhsukhan Gill after a cross from Ryan Williams.

East Bengal wouldn't give up and found another equalizer in the 56th minute. Saul Crespo was quick to react and scored after his initial shot was blocked. Bengaluru took the lead again in the 71st minute, as Williams finished beautifully from a tight angle, seemingly setting his team on the path to victory.

But the excitement wasn't over. Deep into stoppage time, substitute Anton Sojberg became the hero, scoring in the 90+7th minute to earn a crucial point for East Bengal.

With this result, East Bengal rises to third place with 15 points from eight matches. Bengaluru FC is just behind them, also with 15 points, but from nine games, in a closely fought league table.

Lionel Messi acquires Spanish club UE Cornellà

IAN S

NEW DELHI: Lionel Messi has made a significant move into football ownership by fully acquiring UE Cornellà, a Catalan team currently playing in Spain's fourth tier, the Tercera RFEF.

Messi's investment highlights a deeper connection to Catalonia and a long-term plan to develop local talent. In the official statement, the purpose of the acquisition was clear: "With this operation, Messi strengthens his close relationship with Barcelona and his commitment to developing sports and local talent in Catalonia. This connection dates back to his time as an FC Barcelona player and has remained strong over the years."

Founded in 1951, Cornellà is currently having a successful

season, sitting third in their group and just five points behind leaders Manresa. They have already secured a spot in the promotion play-offs. Messi is expected to support the club with a solid investment plan, focusing on enhancing the youth academy and helping the team reach higher levels in Spanish football.

A major reason for Messi's choice is Cornellà's reputation as a talent hub. The club has consistently developed players who go on to succeed at the top level. The announcement emphasized this legacy: "Throughout its history, the club has stood out for its strong work with the youth academy and its ability to compete at the highest level within Spanish semi-professional football, establishing itself as a leader in training young players."

Show Timings

Friday, 17th April



LEE CRONIN'S THE MUMMY (A)
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
07:20 PM



BHOOTH BANGLA (U/A16+)
HINDI ATMOS - 03:15 PM, 06:30 PM



DHURANDHAR THE REVENGE (A)
HINDI ATMOS - 02:55 PM, 05:00 PM

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