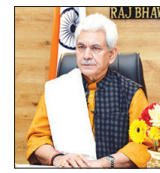


Good Morning Kashmir

17th Year Of Publication

Office of LG J&K
@OfficeOfLGJandK



I urged stronger collaboration between Govt & Social Orgs to empower younger generation. We must ensure that school children receive balanced, nourishing meals. Every child deserves access to healthy food & we need to make sure no child is left behind.

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Rare Snowfall In Upper Reaches, Rains Lash Kashmir Plains



SAJID RAINA

SRINAGAR: Upper reaches of North Kashmir's Bandipora district, Drass and Zojila areas witnessed fresh snowfall on Thursday.

According to details available, moderate to heavy rainfall lashed several parts of the Valley, disrupting normal life and causing damage to property.

A MeT official said that the snowfall in the remote Tulail Valley near the Line of Control followed a sharp overnight drop in temperatures, covering mountain slopes and residential areas. Similar conditions were reported in Drass and along the Zojila axis. Locals termed the snowfall unusual in the second half of May.

Meanwhile, heavy rains accompanied by thunderstorms affected districts including Srinagar, Bandipora, Ganderbal, Baramulla and Kupwara. While the showers brought relief from

rising temperatures, they also led to waterlogging and temporary disruptions.

In Bandipora, heavy rainfall created flood like situation near Darul Uloom Rahimiya along the Srinagar-Bandipora road, with water and mud entering residential areas and damaging houses.

Two houses belonging to Nazir Ahmad Dar and Reyaz Ahmad Dar of Nusoo village were partially damaged. Two persons, including a minor girl identified as Muskaan, sustained minor injuries. One was discharged after treatment, while the other was undergoing treatment at District Hospital Bandipora.

Residents claimed the flooding was caused by blocked drainage and leaking pipes. "Our repeated requests to authorities for clearance went unaddressed," they said, adding, "A drain under construction had been reduced in size, leading to overflow during heavy rain."

•P-06

Generation-Next Embodies Nation's Dreams, Aspirations: LG Sinha

Urges Stronger Collaboration Between Govt, Social Organisations To Empower Younger Generation

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday said that values, knowledge and faith instilled in children today will shape the future of India and Jammu and Kashmir.

"I urged stronger collaboration between Government and Social Organisations to empower younger generation. We must ensure that school children receive balanced, nourishing meals. Every child deserves access to healthy food and we need to make sure no child is left behind," the Lieutenant Governor said while laying foundation stone of Akshaya Patra's centralized kitchen facility in Katra.

Once operational, this facility will provide 5000 nutritious meals to school children every day. On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor also spoke about Akshaya Patra's future projects in Union Territory of Jammu Kashmir including upcoming kitchen facility in Jammu.

The Lieutenant Governor spoke on legacy in ordinary life emphasising that it rests on 3 questions - what are we creating, what are we preserving,



and what will we hand over to future generations? He said we must add another question to that list: what are we feeding our children? He further observed that nutrition of our young generation will shape our future.

The Lieutenant Governor stated that a hungry child cannot learn, and a school that cannot feed its children cannot honestly create equal opportunities for progress. He said that decades of global research and their outcomes have shown that nutrition

and education are not separate things; education rests on the foundation of good nutrition.

"Children who eat balanced, nutritious meals concentrate better, retain information more effectively, and participate more actively in class. Protein, vitamins, and a balanced diet supply the basic energy for thinking and understanding of a child. I want every school in Jammu Kashmir to remember, when we provide nutritious meals in schools, we are •P-06

LG Inaugurates State-Of-The-Art SMVD Helipad In Katra

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: The Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday inaugurated the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Helipad at Village Hutt, Katra.

The Lieutenant Governor said that the integrated aviation facility will streamline heli-operations, enhancing heli connectivity, safety and convenience for pilgrims visiting the holy shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji.

"This helipad has been developed in strict compliance with the safety and operational norms laid down by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). The facility places a paramount emphasis on passenger safety, security, and seamless travel experience, meeting the growing heli-services demand of the devotees. It will also provide a significant •P-06

Police Tighten Noose Around Drug Peddlers, Carry Multiple Operations



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday said it arrested seven drug peddlers, a terrorist aide and seized several vehicles involved in illegal mining in multiple operations carried out across Kashmir as part of the ongoing "Nasha Mukht Jammu Kashmir Abhiyaan".

A Police official said that huge quantities of contraband substances, including charas powder, heroin and poppy straw, were recovered during separate operations in Baramulla, Anantnag and Kulgam districts.

In Baramulla's Boniyar area, police arrested Sabbir Mumtaz of Trikanjan after recovering a charas-like substance wrapped in polythene during routine patrolling. A case under the NDPS Act has been registered and investigation has been initiated, the official said.

In Anantnag district, police arrested an alleged "most wanted" drug peddler, identified •P-06

Elected Govt Disappointing J&K People One Way Or Another: Ruhullah

WARIS FAYAZ

HANDWARA: Member Parliament (MP), Srinagar, Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi on Thursday said people of Jammu and Kashmir were getting disappointed with the elected government "one way or another".

Speaking to reporters here, Ruhullah, criticised the government over the demolition drive at Sidra and said the elected dispensation must take responsibility instead of remaining silent.

"The government is disappointing people one way or the other. If they cannot stop this, then at least they should tell the people who is behind it so that we will fight against them if they do not want to," he said. "Otherwise, it is the government which should do it. They are elected representatives and an elected government."

Mehdi, a National Conference (NC) leader, said an elected government was



expected to stand with the people and address their concerns.

Reacting to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's remarks on restoration of statehood, the MP said larger questions linked to the developments of 2019 still remained unanswered. "Time will speak on statehood restoration. But what about the atrocity beyond statehood in 2019? When will the sentiments of the people of Jammu and Kashmir be respected?" he asked.

Meanwhile, the Member Parliament appealed to his colleague, Engineer •P-06

Cold Storage Units Continue To Support Kashmir Apple Growers Despite Quality Concerns

Around 15 Pct Of Apple Produce Still Lying In CA Storage Units; Growers Cite Rise In B, C Grade Fruit This Season

JAHANGEER GANAIE

SRINAGAR: Controlled Atmosphere (CA) cold storage units continue to play a crucial role in sustaining Kashmir's horticulture economy, with nearly 15 per cent of apple produce still stored across various cold storage facilities in the Valley as growers wait for favourable market conditions.

Fruit growers said that despite fluctuations in rates over the past few months, the decision to store apples instead of selling them during the peak harvest season has largely proved beneficial. However, they expressed concern over the unusually high percentage of B and C grade apples this year, which affected their overall returns.

According to growers, nearly 30 per cent of this season's apple produce fell under B and C grade categories, reducing profit



margins for orchardists. While A-grade apples continue to fetch encouraging prices in outside markets, lower-grade fruit has not generated the returns growers had expected.

Many orchardists said that during the harvesting season, market demand remained weak and prices were low, forcing them to shift their produce to cold storage units in the hope of securing better returns later.

A grower from Shopian said that A-grade apples are still receiving good prices in wholesale markets, but growers holding lower-grade fruit are struggling to recover production and storage costs. "The quality issue this year has impacted many orchardists. Premium fruit is doing well, but B and C grade apples are not fetching satisfactory rates," he said. Another orchardist •P-06

CS Reviews Afforestation Progress; Calls For Accountability-Linked Plantation Works

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Thursday reviewed the physical achievements and implementation progress of afforestation and ecological restoration works being undertaken across Jammu and Kashmir under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), emphasizing sustainable restoration of degraded forests, scientific monitoring and enhanced protection of vulnerable forest landscapes across the UT.

The review was held during the 27th meeting of the Steering Committee of J&K CAMPA and was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Commissioner Secretary, Forests; PCCF (HoF); Chief Wildlife Warden; CEO, CAMPA and other senior officers of the Forest Department.



During the meeting, the Chief Secretary directed the Forest Department to ensure complete digitization of forest maps and boundary pillars for effective demarcation and protection of forest land. Stressing the need for improving the survival rate of plantations, he called for linking payments to contractors with the survival of planting material and directed the Finance Department to vet future tenders for incorporation of suitable clauses in this regard. He also instructed •P-06

'Trusted Nations Must Work Together' Rajnath Singh On India-S Korea Defence Cooperation

GMK NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday inaugurated the Indian War Memorial at Imjingak Park in Seoul alongside South Korea's Minister of Patriots and Veterans Affairs Kwon Oh-eul, commemorating the role Indian troops played during the Korean War and in its aftermath.

India and South Korea built the memorial as part of events marking the 75th anniversary of the Korean War. The memorial honours the Indian Army's 60 Para Field Ambulance and the Custodian Force of India (CFI), which provided medical assistance, humanitarian support and post-war peacekeeping services during and after the 1950-53 conflict.

The two ministers laid wreaths at the memorial and



paid tribute to Indian personnel whose contribution South Korea continues to remember with gratitude decades after the war.

Addressing the ceremony, Rajnath Singh said India's contribution during the Korean War reflected the country's longstanding commitment to peace, humanitarian assistance and international cooperation. He said the shared sacrifices and

wartime history of India and South Korea continued to strengthen the Special Strategic Partnership between the two countries.

"Commemorating the role of Indian troops helps strengthen people-to-people understanding and brings renewed attention to the historic bonds between the two countries," Singh said.

Singh also thanked the South Korean government,

particularly the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs, for supporting the construction of the memorial.

Kwon Oh-eul praised India's role during the war and said the service and sacrifices of Indian troops forged enduring bonds of friendship between Seoul and New Delhi.

The two ministers also signed an MoU aimed at cooperation in honouring Korean War veterans and strengthening exchanges between them. They later released a memoir dedicated to soldiers who served during the conflict.

Among India's most significant contributions during the war was the work of the 60 Para Field Ambulance, commanded by Lt Col A.G. Rangaraj, Maha Vir Chakra. The unit treated thousands of wounded soldiers and civilians while •P-06

J&K Govt Warns Against Fake Holiday Order

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Thursday termed as fake a purported order regarding the preponement of a holiday on account of Urs Hazrat Ameer Kabir that is being circulated on social media platforms.

In an official alert, authorities clarified that the order was fabricated and had not been issued by the General Administration Department (GAD).

The government advised citizens not to share unverified information and urged the public to rely only on official government platforms and handles for authentic updates.

Officials also warned that spreading fake news is a punishable offence and said strict legal action would be taken against those found circulating forged documents or misinformation online.

Pulwama Attack Mastermind Hamza Burhan Killed In Muzaffarabad



GMK NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI: Hamza Burhan, one of the alleged masterminds behind the 2019 Pulwama terror attack, has reportedly been shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Muzaffarabad, located in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

As per available information, no organization has claimed responsibility for the shooting, and the precise details of the incident remain unclear.

Burhan was reportedly involved in planning and logistical support for the Pulwama attack, which stands as one of the deadliest assaults

on security forces in recent memory. The February 2019 attack on a CRPF convoy along the Jammu-Srinagar highway claimed the lives of more than 40 personnel. The Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) claimed responsibility for the attack.

According to reports, the shooting occurred in Muzaffarabad, where unknown assailants opened fire before fleeing the scene. Pakistani authorities have not released detailed information immediately following the incident, and investigations are expected to continue.

The killing is part of a pattern of reported •P-06

Secretary RDD stresses 'quality jobs' for rural youth under DDU-GKY 2.0

Over 1,600 rural youth trained; placement process underway

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD), and Panchayati Raj, Mohamad Aijaz Asad, on Thursday chaired a review meeting of Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) under the HIMAYAT Scheme (DDU-GKY 2.0) to assess the implementation and progress of the programme across Jammu & Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Chief Operating Officer, Himayat, Rajneesh Gupta, State Project Manager, Sajad Choudhary, officers of the Himayat Mission Management Unit (HMMU), and representatives of various Project Implementing Agencies.

During the meeting, the performance of each PIA engaged under the first phase of DDU-GKY 2.0 (HIMAYAT 2.0) was reviewed in detail, with particular focus on training completion, placement performance, retention, and the quality of employment opportunities being offered to rural youth.

The Secretary observed



that while most PIAs had substantially achieved their training targets, the immediate priority now remains achieving the mandated placement targets under the scheme.

The meeting was informed that under DDU-GKY 2.0, a total target of 2,248 candidates has been sanctioned for the financial year 2025-26, against which 1,615 candidates have already been trained, while 650 candidates have been placed so far.

Emphasizing that HIMAYAT is fundamentally a placement-linked programme aimed at generating sustainable livelihoods, the Secretary directed all PIAs to make focused and result-oriented efforts toward ensuring quality placements for trained candidates.

While appreciating the efforts of agencies in commencing training programmes and generating placements, he stressed the need to further improve training quality and ensure sustainable employment outcomes.

Aijaz Asad emphasized that placement should not be limited to the issuance of appointment letters, but should ensure that candidates remain employed, perform effectively, and sustain their livelihoods over time.

Highlighting the importance of reducing attrition among placed candidates, he directed agencies to provide proper counseling, continued support, and conducive facilities to trainees.

Calling for greater

accountability, the Secretary stated that the credibility and reputation of implementing agencies would ultimately depend on the successful completion of training programmes and the long-term success of candidates in the workforce.

Aijaz Asad further urged agencies to maintain high standards in hostel facilities, training infrastructure, and overall trainee welfare.

The Secretary directed all agencies to work in close coordination with the Himayat Mission Management Unit (HMMU) and ensure timely achievement of targets with a sustained focus on quality skilling, placement retention, and youth empowerment across Jammu & Kashmir.

Startup India, DPIIT, JKEDI, B'la Admin collaborate to organize TEJAS Workshop

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA: In a significant initiative aimed at strengthening the startup and entrepreneurial ecosystem in the district, the TEJAS (Transforming Entrepreneurial Journeys Across States and Districts) Workshop was organised Thursday at Dak Bungalow Baramulla by Startup India, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Govt. of India in collaboration with JKEDI and District Administration Baramulla.

The event was inaugurated by the Director JKEDI, Mohd Younis Malik in the presence of Additional Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Syed Altaf Hussain Musvi, Chief Planning Officer Baramulla, Nisar Ahmad, General Manager DIC Baramulla and resource persons from Startup India and several other officers.

The workshop also brought together aspiring entrepreneurs, innovators, students, startup founders, industry experts and government representatives on a common platform to promote innovation-driven entrepreneurship and economic growth in the district.

Speaking on the occasion, Director JKEDI, Mohd Younis Malik, highlighted the immense entre-



preneurial potential of the youth of Baramulla and stressed the need to create a robust ecosystem that supports innovation, enterprise creation and sustainable livelihoods.

He further said that the government is committed to creating an enabling environment for startups and innovators and through Startup India and JKEDI initiatives so that the youth can become job creators rather than job seekers.

Later in the day, the DC Baramulla also visited the workshop and assured full support from the District Administration to aspiring entrepreneurs and innovators and said every possible assistance would be extended to help youth transform their ideas into

commercially viable ventures capable of generating employment and contributing to the local economy.

The DC further congratulated JKEDI for creating this culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, highlighting that such platforms help in nurturing ideas, refining innovations and ultimately commercialising them to bring them into the market.

Resource persons from Startup India, conducted detailed technical sessions during the workshop and provided comprehensive insights into the startup journey in India, the evolving entrepreneurial ecosystem and various government schemes designed to support innovation-driven enterprises.

The experts elaborated

on different initiatives and support mechanisms available for startups and innovators, including incubation support, funding opportunities, mentorship programmes, intellectual property facilitation, market linkages and policy incentives.

They also guided participants on the process of availing benefits under Startup India and related schemes, registration procedures, eligibility criteria and institutional support available for transforming innovative ideas into viable business ventures.

The workshop further featured sessions on innovation and design thinking, intellectual property awareness, entrepreneurship culture and promotion of district-specific products under the One District One Product (ODOP) initiative.

Interactive discussions on business model development, financial planning, investment readiness and founder interactions were held, enabling participants to engage directly with experts and gain practical insights into entrepreneurship and enterprise development.

Earlier, the guests of honour inspected various stalls set up by successful and budding entrepreneurs from across the district, where a wide range of innovative and market-ready products were showcased.

MD JPDCL, DC review progress of power Sector projects in Kishtwar



GMK NEWS NETWORK

KISHTWAR: Managing Director Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (JPDCL) Gurpal Singh along with Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma Thursday reviewed the status of the ongoing the Power Sector projects in Kishtwar district.

Executive Engineer (ExEn) JPDCL Abdul Hamid delivered a detailed presentation regarding the progress of the ongoing projects under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), Smart Metering Programme and Solar Rooftop installation under PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.

The MD JPDCL directed executing agency to speed up the pace of work under RDSS for timely completion of the projects. He also directed the concerned agency to expedite the progress of Smart Metering across the district and ensure completion in a time-bound manner.

The MD JPDCL fur-

ther instructed the ExEn JPDCL Kishtwar to coordinate with the line departments for facilitating Solar Rooftop installations of employees under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.

Emphasizing efficiency in power distribution, the MD JPDCL directed the department to reduce Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses below 15 percent in the district.

Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma also laid special emphasis on the speedy implementation of Smart Metering to strengthen power distribution and improve consumer services.

The meeting concluded with a detailed review of ongoing projects and discussions on ensuring their timely execution for strengthening the power infrastructure in Kishtwar district.

The meeting was attended by ADC Pawan Kotwal; CPO Akhil Thakur; CEO Sanjay Dogra; EEs, JEs, besides other officials of JPDCL.

NIT Srinagar students launch Startup to digitize India's labour chowks

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: In an attempt to bring India's unorganised construction labour sector online, two fourth-year students of National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar have launched a startup that connects labourers, contractors and customers through a digital platform modeled around traditional labour chowks.

The startup, "BigBrick," founded by Saurabh Kumar from the Civil Engineering Department and Aryan Kumar from the Mechanical Engineering Department, is being described as India's first digital platform focused exclusively on labour chowks and construction workforce management.

According to the founders, BigBrick has already onboarded more than 2,500 construction workers across Srinagar, Jammu, and Katra, creating direct connections between workers, contractors, and customers.

At a time when thousands of labourers across the country continue to depend on roadside labour markets for daily work, the startup aims to bring transparency, accessibility, and organized hiring into the sector through digital intervention.

So far, the startup has



generated revenue worth ₹11 lakh and recently received a funding offer at a valuation of ₹3 crore from Mumbai based company, second officer of ₹40 lakh by another venture, marking a rare success story emerging from a student-led venture in Kashmir.

BigBrick has also been incubated and funded by the NewGen IEDC, University of Kashmir, and was awarded the "Best Startup Idea" during the IDE Bootcamp for its innovation and market potential.

The core team behind the venture also includes Yashas Naidu, Vivek Kumar, Munmun Naresh, Raj Kumar & Vijay Kumar, who played a key role in scaling operations and expanding worker outreach.

In his message, Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia congratulated the students for their achievement and said Institute is committed to promoting innovation and entrepreneurship among

young minds. "This achievement reflects the innovative spirit and entrepreneurial potential of our students. Startups like BigBrick demonstrate how technology can be used to address real societal and economic challenges," he said.

Registrar, Prof. Atikur Rehman also appreciated the initiative and said such success stories inspire other students to think beyond conventional career paths.

"It is encouraging to see our students building impactful ventures with real-world applications. Such initiatives not only create employment opportunities but also strengthen the startup ecosystem of the region," he said.

Saurabh Kumar, Co-Founder of BigBrick said the aim of the startup is to organize the unorganized labour sector through technology and create a transparent system where workers can access employment opportunities with dignity.

Nasha Mukh Abhiyan DC G'bal chairs NCORD meeting, reviews Anti-Drug measures

GMK NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL: A meeting of the District Level NCORD Committee meeting was Thursday held under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore to review anti-drug enforcement, awareness activities, rehabilitation measures and inter-departmental coordination across the district.

A detailed review of actions taken by concerned departments was conducted, with focus on inspections of drug stores, IEC activities, rehabilitation services, tobacco control, monitoring of illicit cultivation of poppy and prosecution of offenders involved in narcotics-related cases.

The DC directed the Drug Control Officer to significantly enhance field inspections and sample collection across the district.

On preventive enforcement, officials informed the meeting that naka checking as well as random inspections of warehouses had been undertaken in order to prevent transportation of drugs through couriers. The Excise Department was instructed to continue surprise checks and improve monitoring mechanisms.

Emphasising a victim-centred approach, the DC



directed the Health Department to strengthen counseling, and ensure sustained rehabilitation support for affected individuals. The functioning of the Addiction Treatment Facility (ATF) in District Hospital, Ganderbal, availability of trained staff as well as availability of medicines was also reviewed, with directions issued to address operational gaps and improve service delivery.

The meeting also discussed enforcement under tobacco control regulations. Concerned departments were asked to intensify action against tobacco sale and consumption near educational institutions and public spaces.

Inter-departmental coordination on verification and monitoring of offenders was also reviewed. The progress on cancellation of driving licenses, vehicle registration, passport, Aadhaar and contractor card of individuals involved in narcotics-related cases was also reviewed.

Officials were directed to strengthen data sharing and clear pending cases in a time-bound manner as per the laid down SOP.

The committee further reviewed destruction of illicit cultivation and field surveillance. It was informed that illicit poppy crop had recently been destroyed on various parcels of land in the district. Concerned departments were directed to continue surveys, strengthen ground monitoring for identification of vulnerable locations.

Progress under community-based anti-drug initiatives, IEC activities and progress on drug-free panchayat programmes was also assessed.

Calling for a coordinated approach, the DC directed departments to intensify awareness campaigns, and try to provide victims of the drug menace with livelihood opportunities through government schemes like Mission Yuva as well as counseling support.

Awareness Programme on POSH Act 2013 held in Budgam

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM: SANKALP - Hub for Empowerment of Women, Mission Shakti Budgam, under the supervision of the District Social Welfare Office, Budgam and the aegis of the District Administration Budgam, organized an Awareness Programme on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act, 2013 to promote safe, dignified, and gender-sensitive workplaces.

The programme aimed to sensitize participants about the key provisions of the POSH Act, 2013 and strengthen awareness regarding the rights and pro-

tections available to employees against sexual harassment at the workplace.

The session emphasized the collective responsibility of institutions and individuals in fostering an environment of respect, equality, and professional integrity.

During the programme, Afroza Ahad, District Mission Coordinator, Mission Shakti Budgam, highlighted the objectives and significance of Mission Shakti in empowering women through awareness, support services, and institutional mechanisms that ensure their safety, security, and socio-economic development. She emphasized the

importance of creating gender-sensitive workplaces where women can work with dignity and confidence.

Latief Ahmad, Legal Aid Defence Counsel, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam, delivered an informative session on the POSH Act, 2013, elaborating on its legal framework, objectives, and provisions for prevention, prohibition, and redressal of sexual harassment at workplaces. He stressed the importance of awareness of legal rights and the need for effective implementation of the Act to ensure a safe working environment for all employees.

The resource persons

underscored that awareness, prevention, and timely redressal are crucial for fostering workplaces free from discrimination, harassment, and intimidation. Participants actively interacted during the session and expressed their commitment to upholding the principles enshrined in the POSH Act.

The organizers reiterated that creating safe and respectful workplaces is fundamental to women's empowerment and inclusive development, and called for continued efforts towards awareness, prevention, protection, and effective grievance redressal.

District Finale of Three-Tier Essay Competition held in B'pora

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: District Administration Bandipora Thursday hosted the District-Level Finale of the Essay Writing Competition under the Nasha Mukh Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, marking the culmination of a structured three-tier competition conducted as part of the ongoing 100-Day Campaign.

The competition followed a three-tier format, with Block-Level and Sub-Division-Level rounds held on May 15 and May 18 respectively. The top 10 participants from each of the district's 12 blocks



progressed to the Sub-Division stage, while 10 students each from Bandipora, Sumbal, and Gurez qualified for today's District-Level Finale, bringing

together 30 finalists.

The finalists presented their written perspectives on the menace of drug abuse, its impact on society, and the collective

responsibility of youth in building a drug-free future.

The examination was conducted under the supervision of Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Yaar Ali Khan, and District Information Officer, Aadil Manzoor Wani, who commended the participants for their thoughtful contributions and highlighted the importance of engaging young minds in preventive awareness initiatives. They reiterated the administration's commitment to youth-centric outreach and awareness programmes under the Nasha Mukh Jammu & Kashmir campaign.

LG dedicates new Vaishnavi Bhawan at SMVD Shrine to devotees

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Thursday dedicated the new Vaishnavi Bhawan at the holy shrine Shri Mata Vaishno Devi to the devotees.

The Lieutenant Governor said that the new facility will significantly enhance the pilgrim accommodation capacity at Bhawan, improve overall pilgrim amenities and create a modern, efficient and comfortable infrastructure designed to accommodate the growing influx of devotees.

The project was conceptualized under the comprehensive Master Plan for the Bhawan and its extended areas. Recognizing the need for enhanced infrastructure and creation of modern Yatri Accommodation facilities, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) approved the redevelopment of the Pannishalla area, which was previously used for



staff quarters, into Yatri-cum-Staff Accommodation complex.

The New Vaishnavi Bhawan has been constructed over a total area of approximately 45,784 Sq. ft. The facility will provide 78 well-furnished rooms for pilgrims.

The construction work of the building commenced in the month of February 2024 and the building was completed in a time period of two years.

The ground floor houses reception and waiting areas, Manager Office and Staff Mess with Kitchen, ensuring efficient operational management of the facility. A Bhojanalaya is

also available on the terrace for catering to pilgrims and staff.

To ensure accessibility and convenience, the building is equipped with five lifts, including three passenger lifts of 26 person capacity, one service lift and one connecting lift linking the facility with Parvati Bhawan.

The Lieutenant Governor also paid obeisance at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine. He prayed for peace and prosperity of J&K UT and well-being of one and all.

Members of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board - Mahamandeshwar Shri Swami Vishveshvaranand Giri Mahraj, Dr. Ashok

Bhan; Shri Suresh Kumar Sharma; Shri Lalit Bhasin, Shri Kulbushan Ahuja; Dr. Mandep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Shri Bhim Sen Tuti, IGP Jammu; Shri Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Shri Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB; Shri Shiv Kumar Sharma, DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range; Shri Kumar Abhishek, Deputy Commissioner, Reasi; Shri Alok Maurya, Additional CEO SMVDSB, senior officials of the Shrine Board, police and District Administration attended the inaugural ceremony.

Advisor Wani holds interaction with Industrial, Trade Associations of Jammu

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani Thursday held an interaction with representatives of Industrial and Trade Associations of Jammu province to discuss various issues concerning the industrial sector in Jammu & Kashmir.

During the interaction, representatives of the Industrial Associations raised several issues pertaining to growth and sustainability of industries in the Union Territory. The industrialists highlighted that, as on date, there is no fiscal package available for industries in J&K and stressed the need for continued policy support to strengthen the industrial ecosystem.

The representatives expressed hope that the proposed Logistics Policy and Public Procurement Policy, presently under formulation, would address many of the challenges being faced by industries in the region.

The issue of extension in EM-I registrations for units allotted land at Balole Industrial Estate was also raised during the meeting. The Associations further



requested introduction of auto-renewal mechanisms for Green Category Units to facilitate ease of doing business.

During the interaction, it was also suggested that dedicated routes for promotion of trekking tourism be identified and developed. The Associations further emphasized according priority to local industries and promotion of traditional sectors, particularly the woollen industry in Jammu & Kashmir.

Addressing the participants, the Advisor emphasized the Government's commitment towards improving Ease of Doing Business and making industries in J&K more vibrant and competitive. He stressed that industrial growth must translate into employment generation and called for promotion of localized industries,

particularly agro-based and wool-based sectors. The Advisor further emphasized the need to support existing industrial units and encouraged industrialists to actively contribute towards sustainable industrial development in Jammu & Kashmir.

The industrial representatives also sought continuation of turnover incentives and urged the Government to take up the matter of pending registrations under New Central Sector Scheme with the Central Government.

The representatives also advocated for extension of benefits under NCSS and highlighted the need for leveraging Artificial Intelligence, promotion of e-commerce, and according special focus to the service sector in the Union Territory.

The meeting was also

attended by Managing Director, J&K SDICO/SICOP, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar, Director, Industries and Commerce Jammu, Dr. Arun Manhas, President, Chamber of Commerce & Industry-Jammu, Arun Gupta, National Chairman, D2C Industry Association, M. A. Alim, Vice President, CII-Sidhant Choudhary, Chairman, ICC-Rahul Sahai, President-ASSOCHAM Sh. Manik Batra, Chairman, President, PHDCCI-Rakesh Wazir, Chairman, FICCI FLO- Ms. Varsha Bansal along with other officers from the Department of Industries and Commerce.

Later, several delegations and individuals also called on Advisor to Chief Minister at Civil Secretariat, Jammu and highlighted their issues before him seeking early intervention for redressal.

A delegation of the Non-Teaching Employees Union, University of Jammu, raised service matters of non-teaching staff. Chairman, All J&K Transport Welfare Association, Karan Singh called on the Advisor, put forth demands of the transport fraternity.

CS inaugurates CGG&PA at IUST, lauds University's academic, research initiatives

GMK NEWS NETWORK

AWANTIPORA: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Thursday visited Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) and inaugurated the Centre for Good Governance & Policy Analysis (CGG&PA) during a series of engagements aimed at strengthening policy research, governance innovation and institutional collaboration.

During the visit, the Chief Secretary toured Campus I and Campus III of the university and inspected various laboratories and academic facilities. He also interacted with officers and faculty members.

Atal Dulloo appreciated the efforts of the faculty and staff in the growth and academic advancement of the university, particularly its introduction of high-end and emerging programmes in frontier sciences and artificial intelligence in line with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. He also lauded the university's initiatives in strengthening industry linkages, promoting research, and fostering innovation-driven academic collaborations.

Congratulating Prof. Shakil A Romshoo Vice Chancellor IUST and his



team for the achievements made by IUST, he expressed confidence that the Centre for Good Governance & Policy Analysis would further strengthen the university's contribution towards policy research and institutional development. He remarked that IUST possesses immense potential to contribute towards improving ease of living for the people through meaningful collaborations with the government and national-level institutions.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Shakil A. Romshoo highlighted the university's achievements and outlined its vision for academic excellence, innovation, and public engagement. He stated that IUST has emerged as an active contributor to several flagship national missions through its work in sustainability, emerging technologies,

entrepreneurship, healthcare, and community development. He also thanked the Government for its continued support, which, he said, has enabled the university to strengthen its academic and research ecosystem and expand its engagement with society and industry.

Earlier, Director, CGG&PA, Dr. G. N. Itoo, while welcoming the dignitaries, said that the Centre would serve as an important platform for promoting evidence-based policy-making, interdisciplinary research, and meaningful collaboration between academia, government institutions, and society to address contemporary governance and developmental challenges. A documentary showcasing the university's academic, research, innovation, and outreach initiatives was also screened.

Div Com Kashmir reviews preparations for SANJY-2026

Stresses to expedite registration of Service Providers, Timely execution of Dev Works

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, Thursday chaired a high-level meeting to review the preparedness for the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY-2026).

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Commissioners of Anantnag, Srinagar, Ganderbal and Bandipora, Commissioner SMC, besides Heads of Departments from Rural Sanitation, ULB, Health, FCS&CA, BEACON, KPDC, PHE, R&B, Animal Husbandry and Labour Departments. Representatives from telecom service providers including BSNL, Jio, Airtel and G-Max were also present.

Reviewing the registration process of service providers, the Divisional Commissioner emphasized on expediting registrations to meet the target of 28,000 service providers besides ponies. He directed concerned authorities to ensure timely generation of RFID cards for all registered service providers by May 30.

The Divisional Commissioner also reviewed



the development of pony stands and was informed that essential infrastructure works including fencing and development of sheds has already been completed. He further instructed officials to conduct health check-ups of ponies and ensure adequate availability of fodder along the yatra routes.

Taking stock of telecom connectivity and bandwidth availability at base camps and along the yatra axes up to the Holy Cave, the Divisional Commissioner directed telecom companies to ensure uninterrupted and efficient network services during the pilgrimage period. Chief Engineer KPDC was asked to provide uninterrupted power supply to telecom installations.

The meeting also reviewed snow clearance operations, construction of gabion and breast walls, and ongoing repair works

along the yatra tracks. Deputy Commissioners were directed to personally inspect the repair and maintenance works being undertaken along the axes.

To facilitate smooth movement and convenience of pilgrims, the Divisional Commissioner called for augmentation of staff at yatri registration counters. He also instructed rationalization of registration counters across the three districts in view of the direct railway connectivity to Srinagar. Regarding the installation of tents at base camps, the Divisional Commissioner reviewed the allotment process and directed concerned committees to conduct mandatory fire safety audits.

Besides, he reviewed the progress of developmental works being executed by the PHE, KPDC, R&B, I&FC, SDA, PDA, Tourism Department, ULB and other allied agencies.

Sakeena Ito inaugurates PGRP Conclave-2026 at GDC Srinagar



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SRINAGAR: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Ito Thursday inaugurated the Post Graduate Research Programme (PGRP) Conclave-2026 at Government Dental College (GDC) Srinagar.

Addressing a large gathering of doctors, academicians, researchers and students on the occasion, the Minister underscored the importance of research and innovation in strengthening the healthcare sector and improving patient care. She said that platforms like the PGRP conclave provide an opportunity for young medical professionals and scholars to showcase their research work, exchange ideas and contribute towards advancements in medical science.

Sakeena Ito lauded the efforts of the faculty, students and organisers for conducting the conclave and encouraging a culture of scientific inquiry and academic excellence. She said that research-based learning is essential for addressing emerging health challenges

and ensuring quality healthcare services for the people.

"Doctors play a pivotal role in society and the profession of medicine is one of the noblest professions meant to serve humanity with dedication, compassion and commitment," the Minister said.

The Minister urged young doctors and researchers to remain committed to ethical medical practices and continue striving for excellence in patient care and scientific research. She also highlighted the government's commitment towards strengthening healthcare infrastructure, promoting medical education and encouraging research activities across the Union Territory.

Speaking on the occasion, Principal GDC Srinagar, presented the brief outline about the objectives of the conclave.

During the event, the Minister also interacted with students and faculty members and appreciated their contribution towards academic and healthcare excellence. She also released the Newsletter on Research Conclave-2026.

Pr Secy DMRRR reviews ration distribution, extension of welfare schemes for migrants

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Principal Secretary Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRRR) Chandraker Bharti Thursday reviewed the progress on implementation of the ration distribution in terms of the Special Relief Ration Scheme for Kashmiri/Jammu Migrants as well as extension of benefits of social sector/welfare schemes to eligible migrants, after integration of their ration cards on the national database.

The meeting was attended by Director Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) Jammu, R.K Shavan; Relief & Rehabilitation Commissioner(M), J&K, Dr Arvind Karwani and senior officers from DMRRR, FCS&CA, Social Welfare Departments and National Informatics Centre.

During the meeting, the Principal Secretary directed the concerned departments to take proac-

tive steps to reach out to all households and ensure ration supply to all migrant beneficiaries who have enrolled for integration on the NFSA database, even if e-KYC formalities are pending/ in process. He asked the FCS&CA Department to provide free ration of April and May as a one-time exception during the transition period into the NFSA database to all such beneficiaries from the FPS dealers indicated by them in the NFSA application, and issue necessary order on same.

The Principal Secretary also asked the officers of the Relief Organization to reach out to all such households that have still not lifted the ration despite the completion of e-KYC formalities and facilitate them. He asked the FCS&CA Department to explore the possibility of establishing a Ration ATM at Mini-Township Jagti, which houses more than 5,000 migrant families and Relief Organization shall identify and provide suitable space for the purpose.

The Principal Secretary also called for conducting an extensive IEC campaign through print, electronic, and social media to make migrants aware that the integration of migrant ration cards into the NFSA database is purely a welfare-oriented governance reform aimed at inclusion of migrants into the mainstream welfare architecture, extension of social security benefits, digitization and modernization of records, transparency, and accountability in beneficiary management. He highlighted that the continuation and protection of all the existing relief provisions/guidelines/ entitlements available to Kashmiri/ Jammu Migrants is ensured.

He also directed the officers of Social Welfare department to organise special camps in coordination with the Relief Organization in at migrant camps and prominent non-camp areas at Jammu to reach out to potential migrant beneficiaries of social sector/welfare schemes

and facilitate them in filling varied online applications for availing benefits of different social sector schemes like Old Age Pension, Widow Pension, Disability Pension, Marriage Assistance, Ayushman Bharat and various scholarships. He also asked them to organise a camp at Reasi for Jammu Migrants.

During the meeting, it was informed that about 21,000 migrant ration cards have already been punched into the NFSA database, and the process of integrating about 5,000 migrant ration cards is in progress and around 50% of families have lifted ration so far under the new scheme. It was apprised that those who could not lift ration in the month of April are being provided two months' free ration (April & May 2026) and those who received less ration due to any glitch in April or May will also be provided the remaining portion by the FCS&CA Department.

The Government, in terms of various Government Orders and

notifications, has repeatedly clarified that the earlier scale of ration distribution to the migrants registered under the relief category shall continue and that all relief ration card holders shall continue to receive 11 Kg free ration per person per month and 1 Kg sugar as per the extant scale of ration distribution. Besides, those registered with the Relief Organisation under the non-relief category (Pensioners, etc.) and categorized into the NPHH category will also receive 5 Kg ration on the Government-approved rates as per their entitlement under NFSA on cost basis.

Social Welfare Department apprised the meeting that 776 families have so far availed the benefit of various social sector schemes after the integration of migrant ration cards into the NFSA database. Pertinent to mention that migrants could not earlier avail the benefits of these schemes due to their ration cards being non-digitized and not integrated into the national database.

Javid Dar visits Mawar to condole demise of MP Er Rashid's father

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar Thursday visited Mawar, Langate to offer condolences at the residence of Baramulla Member of Parliament Engineer Rashid on the demise of his father, Haji Khazir Mohammad Sheikh.

The Minister expressed deep sorrow over the passing away of the deceased

and conveyed his heartfelt sympathies with the bereaved family. He prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and strength to the family to endure the immense loss.

The Minister described Haji Khazir Mohammad Sheikh as a respected and dignified elder whose contributions and values earned him immense regard in the community. He said the demise has created a void not only for the family but also for the people who knew him closely.

Good Morning **Kashmir**

EDITORIAL

Feeding Futures, Not Just Stomachs

The foundation stone laid by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha for the Akshaya Patra Foundation's centralised mid-day meal kitchen in Katra is more than the inauguration of another welfare facility, it is a reminder that the future of a society is shaped in its classrooms and nourished in its kitchens.

At a time when discussions around education often revolve around infrastructure, examinations and technology, the basic reality still stares us in the face: a hungry child cannot learn. The importance of nutritious meals in schools is not merely a social welfare measure but a direct investment in human capital. Malnutrition silently affects concentration, attendance, learning ability and overall development of children, especially those from economically weaker backgrounds.

The upcoming kitchen, expected to provide 5,000 meals daily, may appear modest in scale when compared to the region's population, yet its symbolic value is immense. It reinforces the principle that education and nutrition are inseparable. A classroom loses its meaning if students attend it on empty stomachs.

The remarks made by the Lt Governor on legacy also deserve reflection. Societies often measure progress through roads, buildings and economic figures, but the true measure of development lies in the health and wellbeing of children. The question "What are we feeding our children?" is both moral and political. It forces governments and communities alike to introspect whether enough is being done to secure the physical and intellectual growth of the next generation.

Equally significant is the role of organisations like Akshaya Patra Foundation, whose work demonstrates how public welfare becomes stronger when governments and civil society work together. With millions of children already being served across the country, such initiatives show how collective responsibility can bridge gaps where state mechanisms alone may struggle.

However, ceremonies and speeches alone cannot solve the larger challenge. Jammu and Kashmir continues to face issues of poverty, unemployment and educational disparities in many rural and remote areas. The mid-day meal scheme must therefore expand not only in scale but also in quality, monitoring and outreach. Nutritious food should not remain confined to selective institutions or urban pockets. Every child, regardless of geography or economic background, deserves equal access to healthy meals and dignified education.

The real success of this initiative will not be measured by the size of the kitchen or the number of officials present at the inauguration. It will be measured years later, in healthier students, improved learning outcomes and children who grow into productive citizens capable of shaping a stronger society.

Feeding children is not charity. It is nation-building.

Grids As Lessons For World's Unplanned Cities



NAVEED QAZI

Modern cities are often born out of chaos, expanding through unplanned sprawl, informal settlements, and congested arteries that reflect urgency rather than foresight. Yet history demonstrates that order can be drawn from geometry, and that the deliberate act of shaping space can transform how societies live, move, and thrive. The Roman grid called castrum, conceived in military camps and perfected in colonial towns, was more than a feat of engineering. It was a philosophy of balance, accessibility, and civic discipline. Archaeologist Fikret Yegul and historian Diane Favro explained in Roman Architecture and Urbanism (Cambridge University Press, 2019) that this disciplined geometry embedded imperial authority into civic life, inspiring Roman colonial towns across Europe, North Africa, and the Near East. Its echoes can still be traced in the bones of European cities today.

The linguistic legacy of the castrum is visible in Britain, where several cities carry names derived from Roman camps. Manchester, Lancaster, Doncaster, and Winchester all preserve the suffix 'caster', 'chester', or 'cester', directly rooted in castrum. These names are reminders of how Roman military order seeded the foundations of urban Britain. Across Europe, major cities like Cologne, Vienna, and Belgrade grew from Roman camps, their layouts bearing traces of orthogonal clarity. Beyond Europe, colonial cities in the Americas, from Mexico City to Buenos Aires, too carried forward the castrum's influence through Spanish planning codes that mandated grids.

The Renaissance revived this orthogonal clarity. Leon Battista Alberti, in *De re aedificatoria*, equated geometric order with harmony, while Vincenzo Scamozzi envisioned cities where symmetry reflected humanist ideals. These visions were not direct imitations of Roman camps but carried the same conviction: rational geometry could embody civic virtue. The castrum's disciplined grid became a metaphor for balance, a way to reconcile the chaos of medieval urban growth with the Renaissance pursuit of order.

Baroque planners adapted this clarity with theatrical ambition. Karlsruhe, with its radial avenues converging on a central palace, and Versailles, with its monumental axes, blended Roman rationality with spectacle. The geometry was no longer about military defence but about projecting power and grandeur. Yet the underlying principle remained: cities could be shaped by lines and angles, their identity forged through spatial order. The Spanish Laws of the Indies carried this lan-



guage overseas, establishing colonial cities in the Americas with layouts that echoed Roman precedents. Historian Sofia Greaves noted in *Rome and the Colonial City: Rethinking the Grid* in October 2025 that the orthogonal plan became a civilisational marker, though modern scholarship critiques its colonialist framing and stresses its adaptability across contexts.

By the nineteenth century, the grid was reinterpreted for industrial modernity. Ildefonso Cerda's Eixample plan for Barcelona, drafted in 1859, exemplified this transformation. Cerda adopted the grid but innovated with octagonal blocks, chamfered corners, and wide boulevards to improve circulation, hygiene, and visibility. Unlike the castrum's military logic, his design was rooted in egalitarian ideals and public health. Naomi Fielding observed in *How Ancient Roman Architecture Shaped Urban Planning* in October 2025 that while Cerda did not directly imitate Roman camps, his rational geometry echoed the same pursuit of clarity and accessibility that had defined Roman urbanism. His plan was a modern reinvention of the grid, adapted to the challenges of industrial society.

Other modern planners also drew on this legacy. Baron Haussmann's Paris boulevards imposed axial clarity reminiscent of Roman order, though with imperial spectacle. The Commissioners' Plan of 1811 for Manhattan scaled the grid to unprecedented dimensions, prioritising commerce and expansion. Le Corbusier's twentieth-century 'Radiant City' reimagined geometric order through zoning and verticality, a rationalist descendant of the castrum tradition. In each case, the Roman model was less a blueprint than a symbolic ancestor, reinterpreted to meet the needs of different ages.

Roman castrum planning instilled the idea that cities could be rationally ordered through geometry. Renaissance humanists saw in it a metaphor for harmony, colonial administrators a tool of control, and modern hygienists

a framework for egalitarian circulation. Cerda's Barcelona grid, though not a direct imitation, stands as a modern reinvention of the castrum's orthogonal clarity, adapted to the challenges of industrial society. Haussmann's boulevards, Manhattan's grid, and Le Corbusier's utopian visions all testify to the enduring appeal of geometric order.

Modern scholars caution against romanticising the grid as a universal solution. The rigidity of orthogonal planning can suppress organic growth, erase cultural diversity, and impose uniformity where complexity thrives. The colonial use of grids, in particular, reveals how geometry can serve as a tool of domination. The Roman castrum was a military instrument, and its descendants have sometimes carried the same logic of control. The challenge for modern planners is to balance the clarity of geometry with the richness of lived experience.

For developing nations, where cities often grow organically and haphazardly, the lessons of the castrum are both cautionary and instructive. The grid demonstrates the power of rational planning to facilitate movement, improve sanitation, and create equitable access. In cities across South Asia, Africa, and Latin America, unplanned sprawl has produced congestion, inadequate infrastructure, and stark inequalities. The Roman model suggests that even modest interventions—introducing orthogonal clarity in transport corridors, aligning public spaces along central axes, or creating evenly distributed service hubs—can impose order without erasing organic vibrancy. As urbanist Ricky Burdett argued in *The Guardian* in September 2023, the challenge for rapidly growing cities is not to replicate European grids wholesale but to adapt principles of clarity and accessibility to local contexts.

The castrum also teaches that geometry carries values. A grid can embody discipline, equality, or domination depending on how it is applied. For poorer nations, the lesson is to

wield geometry as a tool of inclusion rather than control. Aligning streets to improve access to schools, hospitals, and markets can transform lives. Designing blocks to maximise airflow and sunlight can combat health crises. Creating central forums can foster civic identity. The Roman precedent shows that geometry is not neutral; it is a language of power. Developing nations must decide what values their geometry will express.

In contemporary urbanism, the grid continues to inspire but also to provoke debate. Modern cities such as Barcelona, New York, and Paris demonstrate the grid's capacity to organise space, facilitate movement, and embody civic ideals. Yet planners increasingly recognise the need for flexibility, sustainability, and inclusivity. The castrum's disciplined geometry remains a foundation, but it must be adapted to the complexities of modern life. The lesson of history is not that the grid is perfect, but that it is powerful—a tool that can shape cities for better or worse.

Hence, it must be postulated that the enduring influence of Roman castrum planning lies in its simplicity and adaptability. A military camp became a model for colonial towns, Renaissance visions, Baroque spectacles, industrial expansions, and modernist utopias. Each reinterpretation carried the same conviction: that geometry could embody order, identity, and power. From the disciplined lines of Roman camps to the chamfered corners of Cerda's Barcelona, the grid has remained a constant presence in the evolution of urban form. It is a testament to the enduring appeal of clarity in a world of complexity.

The story of the castrum is, ultimately, the story of how cities imagine themselves. Geometry is not neutral; it carries meanings, values, and ambitions. The Roman grid embodied imperial discipline, Renaissance symmetry, Baroque spectacle, colonial control, industrial hygiene, and modernist utopia. Each age reinterpreted the lines and angles to reflect its own priorities. The castrum's legacy is not a single model but a tradition of rational urbanism, a belief that cities can be shaped by geometry to embody the ideals of their time.

As world cities continue to evolve, the castrum remains a silent presence. Its disciplined geometry echoes in the vision of modernist planners. It is also a reminder that the lines we draw on maps are more than technical choices. They are expressions of how we imagine society. For developing nations, where unplanned sprawl threatens sustainability and equity, the castrum offers a lesson in clarity: geometry can be a tool of inclusion, a way to impose order without erasing diversity, and a means to build cities that embody not only discipline but dignity. The Roman castrum, born of military necessity, has become a symbol of urban order, a geometry that continues to inspire, challenge, and shape the cities of Europe and beyond. If wisely adapted, it can, in many ways, inspire cities of the Global South as well.

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Cancer Awareness: Why Early Detection And Timely Treatment Matter



DR. DODUL MONDAL

Cancer is no longer a rare disease. With rising cases across the world, almost every family today knows someone affected by cancer. According to global estimates, millions of new cancer cases are diagnosed every year, and the numbers continue to rise steadily. Despite advances in treatment, fear, myths, delayed diagnosis, and lack of awareness still remain major challenges in cancer care.

Cancer is not a single disease but a condition in which cells in the body grow uncontrollably. Normally, cells grow, divide, and die in a balanced manner. Cancer develops when this natural process is disturbed and abnormal cells continue to multiply without control. These cells can form a lump or tumor and may spread to other parts of the body if not treated on time.

One important thing people must understand is that not every tumor is cancerous.

Some tumors are benign, meaning they grow slowly and usually remain confined to one place without spreading. Cancerous or malignant tumors, however, can invade nearby tissues and spread to distant organs. This is why any swelling, lump, or unusual symptom should never be ignored. Early medical evaluation is essential.

Several factors can increase the risk of developing cancer. One of the biggest contributors is tobacco use, including smoking and chewing tobacco products such as gutka, khaini, and zarda. Tobacco is strongly linked to cancers of the mouth, throat, lungs, and food pipe. Excessive alcohol consumption, obesity, poor diet, lack of exercise, prolonged sun exposure, environmental pollution, and certain infections can also increase cancer risk.

Family history also plays an important role in some cancers such as breast cancer, ovarian cancer, colon cancer, and uterine cancer. Having a close family member with cancer does not mean a person will definitely develop the disease, but it may increase the risk. In such situations, timely counselling and regular screening become important.

Lifestyle choices significantly influence cancer risk. A diet rich in processed and junk



food, combined with physical inactivity, can contribute to obesity and increase the chances of developing certain cancers. On the other hand, regular exercise, maintaining a healthy weight, eating fresh fruits and vegetables, and avoiding tobacco can help lower the risk substantially.

Cancer symptoms can vary depending on the organ involved, but there are certain warning signs people should pay attention to. Persistent lumps or swelling, unexplained weight loss, unusual bleeding, long-standing cough, difficulty swallowing, changes in bowel or bladder habits, non-healing ulcers, or changes in moles should always be medically evaluated. Early-stage cancers often produce mild symptoms, which is why people tend to

ignore them until the disease progresses.

Diagnosis of cancer involves several tests, but biopsy remains the most important and confirmatory investigation. In a biopsy, a small tissue sample is taken from the suspected area and examined under a microscope. Imaging tests such as CT scans, MRI, PET scans, and blood investigations may also be required to determine the extent of the disease and plan appropriate treatment.

Cancer treatment has advanced significantly over the years. Depending on the type and stage of cancer, treatment may include surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, targeted therapy, immunotherapy, or a combination of these approaches. Modern cancer

care is highly personalised, and treatment decisions are usually taken by a multidisciplinary team of specialists.

Many people panic when they hear terms like "Stage IV" or "advanced cancer." However, advanced cancer does not always mean there is no hope. With modern therapies, many patients continue to live longer and maintain a good quality of life. Early diagnosis, proper staging, and timely treatment play a major role in improving outcomes.

Awareness remains one of the strongest weapons against cancer. Ignoring symptoms, relying on unqualified practitioners, or delaying medical consultation can reduce treatment success. Any persistent symptom or unexplained lump should be assessed by a qualified medical professional or cancer specialist.

Cancer care today is far more advanced than before, and many cancers are treatable or even curable if detected early. The focus should not only be on treatment but also on prevention, healthy lifestyle choices, regular screening, and timely medical attention. Early action can save lives.

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■ Chai And The Researcher

The Unsung Fuel Of Academic Life

A Reflection On Ritual, Cognition, And The Soul Of Scholarship

MOHD IQBAL RATHER

“For a researcher, whose work offers so little external structure, self-created rituals like chai become the load-bearing walls of the daily routine.”

Ask any researcher what they cannot live without, and the answers will vary: a good supervisor, a working laptop, access to databases, and so on. However, probe a little deeper, especially in South Asian academic culture, and one answer surfaces with striking consistency: chai. Not coffee, not green tea, not sparkling water. Chai, that warm, spiced, milk-laden brew that fills corridors, laboratories, libraries, and balconies with its unmistakable fragrance.

This article explores why chai holds such a privileged position in academic life, examining it through the lenses of psychology, cognitive science, social anthropology, and the lived personal experience of scholars across disciplines. What emerges is not merely a story about a hot drink but about human ritual, meaning-making, and the invisible scaffolding that holds intellectual work together.

The Ritual Anchor in an Unstructured World

Research, by its nature, resists structure. Unlike a nine-to-five job with clearly defined tasks, a researcher's day involves negotiating uncertainty. When does one stop reading and start writing? How long should one sit with a problem before concluding it is intractable? Is this hour spent “thinking” productive or merely procrastination dressed in intellectual clothing?

Chai inserts a rhythm into this formlessness. The morning cup signals the beginning of the workday for many employees. The mid-morning brew marks a pause after the first stretch. The afternoon glass is an acknowledged boundary between pre-lunch rumination and post-lunch recovery. These are not arbitrary habits; they are temporal landmarks in an otherwise undifferentiated expanse of time that is the day.

Psychologists refer to this function as “routine anchoring,” the use of recurring behaviors to create a felt sense of order and predictability. For researchers who receive precious little external validation or structure, these self-imposed anchors are not merely comforting. They are psychologically important.

The Neuroscience of the Chai Break

There is a popular misconception that the most productive researchers are those who work the longest, sitting at their desks, without distraction. However, cognitive science tells a different story. The human brain operates in oscillating cycles of focused attention and diffuse processing. Sustained concentration without rest does not lead to more insights; instead, it leads to diminishing returns, cognitive fatigue, and creative stagnation.

The chai break, as mundane as it appears, activates what neuroscientists call the Default Mode Network (DMN), a set of brain regions that become active precisely when we stop consciously directing our attention. Far from being idle, the DMN is the brain's background processor, the place where disparate ideas are silently connected, problems are reframed, and creative breakthroughs quietly incubate.

This is why so many researchers report their best ideas arriving not at their desks, but mid-sip, mid-stir, or mid-conversation over a cup of chai. The act of stepping away was not an interruption to thinking. It was the thinking.

The Biochemistry of the Cup

Beyond the psychological break, chai contains compounds of genuine cognitive significance. Tea leaves in standard chai contain L-theanine, an amino acid that promotes calm alertness. Unlike caffeine alone, which can induce anxiety and jitteriness, the combination of caffeine and L-theanine found in tea promotes focused attention without causing overstimu-



lation. The spices commonly added to chai, such as ginger, cardamom, cinnamon, and cloves, have independently demonstrated anti-inflammatory properties and have been associated with improved circulation, including in the brain.

Chai as Social Infrastructure

Research is, at its core, a social enterprise. Ideas do not arise in isolation; they are refined through conversation, challenged through debate, and enriched by exposure to perspectives beyond one's own. However, the formal structures of academic seminars, conferences, and peer reviews are often too rigid and high-stakes to allow the kind of loose, exploratory conversation in which genuine intellectual exchange occurs.

prerequisite for sustained intellectual performance.

The Phenomenology of Incompleteness

Researchers who are chai drinkers often describe, with a mixture of amusement and sincerity, a particular feeling when their regular cup does not arrive: a vague but persistent sense that something is missing. The day feels off. The concentration is elusive. There is an undercurrent of mild dissatisfaction that colours the entire working session.

This experience, so common that it borders on a cliché among researchers, has a clear psychological explanation. Once established, habits create predictive pathways in the brain. When a habitual cue (time, setting,

The Mid-Career Researcher

As researchers advance, their chai habits often become more personal and protective. The cup is no longer primarily about social bonding; it is about maintaining focus across competing demands of teaching, administration, grant writing, and research. The mid-career researcher's chai break becomes a deliberate act of self-preservation, a ten-minute withdrawal from institutional demands into a private space of thought.

The Senior Scholar

For established researchers and academics, the chai ritual often becomes a space for mentoring. The informal chai meeting with a student is often where the most meaningful guidance occurs, not in the formal

explosion but through a gradual and careful process of infusion. It requires the right conditions: not too much heat, not too little, and not rushed. A cup of chai brewed too hastily is thin and unsatisfying, just as a research paper written without proper rumination suffers the same fate.

Chai also teaches tolerance for imprecision. Every chai maker will tell you that there is no single definitive recipe; each household, person, and tradition has its own proportions and variations. The best chai is the one that has been adapted through experience and iteration to suit the maker and the moment. This mirrors the research process: the rigid application of a single method to every problem rarely yields insight. Adaptation, iteration, and a willingness to depart from the formula are hallmarks of the finest research.

A Note on Dependency and Balance

It would be incomplete to celebrate the chai habit without acknowledging the questions surrounding it. An overreliance on any single ritual can become a form of avoidance, such as the endless chai break that substitutes for actual work, or the researcher who cannot begin any task without first completing an elaborate preparation ritual. The chai break is most valuable when it is earned, when it follows a period of genuine effort, and signals a genuine pause rather than a prolonged deferral.

Similarly, the physical dimensions of the chai consumption warrant consideration. The caffeine content, although moderate compared to coffee, is real, and for researchers who drink many cups across the day, the cumulative effects on sleep and anxiety can be significant. The most productive researchers tend to be

Research, by its nature, resists structure. Unlike a nine-to-five job with clearly defined tasks, a researcher's day involves negotiating uncertainty. When does one stop reading and start writing? How long should one sit with a problem before concluding it is intractable? Is this hour spent “thinking” productive or merely procrastination dressed in intellectual clothing?

The chai break fills this gap. Gathered around a kettle or departmental urn, researchers speak differently. Hierarchies flatten. A PhD student can question a professor's interpretation without the formality of a seminar room. A colleague from an adjacent field might offhandedly mention a methodology that turns out to be exactly the tool that another researcher has been searching for. Ideas travel sideways across disciplines and ranks in ways that institutional structures rarely facilitate.

In South Asian universities and research institutions, the departmental chai session is a recognized informal institution. It has its own unspoken protocols: who makes it, who brings the biscuits, and who gets the first cup. These rituals embed the researchers in the community. They signal belonging. As decades of organizational psychology research confirm, belonging is not a luxury but a



aroma of chai being brewed) is not followed by its expected behavior (the act of drinking), the brain registers a prediction error. This is not merely disappointment; it is a genuine disruption of the brain's model of how the day is supposed to unfold.

Therefore, the feeling of incompleteness that the chai-deprived researcher experiences is not irrational sentimentality. This is an entirely logical consequence of a deeply internalized routine being interrupted. Understanding this helps researchers recognise that protecting their chai time is not indulgence; it is self-management.

Chai Across the Research Journey

The role of chai shifts across the different stages of a researcher's career, but its presence remains constant.

The Early Researcher

For PhD students and junior researchers, chai is often the social currency of a lab or department. Brewing rounds for colleagues is an act of inclusion, a way of signalling that one belongs and wishes to contribute to the collective. In the solitary slog of early stage research, literature reviews, failed experiments, and supervisor meetings that leave one more confused than before, the chai break is frequently the only guaranteed positive experience of the day.

supervisor meeting with its agenda and anxieties, but in the relaxed, open-ended conversation that a shared cup of chai permits.

The Sensory Dimension: Smell, Memory, and Focus

The olfactory system, which is the brain's smell-processing architecture, has a uniquely direct connection to the limbic system, which governs emotion and memory. This is why certain smells bypass rational thought and connect directly with feelings and memories. The scent of brewing chai, the warm spice of cardamom, the sharpness of ginger, and the sweetness of milk and tea leaves are, for regular chai drinkers, profoundly laden with associations.

For researchers who have spent years beginning their work sessions with chai, the smell of it brewing is not merely pleasant. It is a powerful contextual cue, a signal that tells the brain: this is the time for focused, creative, intellectual work. Over time, the sensory experience of chai became so deeply associated with the mental state of productive thinking that the aroma alone could induce that state.

Chai as Philosophical Companion

There is something philosophically fitting about chai as a researcher's companion. Research, at its best, is a patient process. It steeps slowly, like tea leaves, releasing its value not in a sudden

those who have calibrated their chai consumption to complement rather than disrupt their natural rhythms.

Conclusion: Researchers who feel incomplete without their regular chai are not being melodramatic. They are, in fact, demonstrating a sophisticated self-awareness of what their mind and body require to function at their best. Chai is not separate from the research. This was part of the research. It is the pause that makes the thinking possible, the ritual that structures the formless day, the shared cup that makes the isolated labour of scholarship feel like a human endeavour undertaken in community. In an academic culture that increasingly fetishises productivity metrics, publication counts, and funding success, the humble chai break is a quiet act of resistance. It insists on the value of pause, of warmth, of the slow and the unhurried. It reminds the researcher that the goal is not merely to produce, but to think and that thinking, real thinking, requires rest as much as effort, warmth as much as rigour, and a good cup of chai as much as anything else.

“Protect your chai time. It is not a luxury. It is infrastructure.”

Author is a Research Scholar, Department of Physics, National Institute of Technology, Srinagar, Hazratbal

Rare Snowfall In

The affected families demanded compensation and urgent repairs, including restoration of the damaged road and strengthening of protection works.

Officials said restoration teams had been deployed, with Tehsildar Bandipora visiting the site to assess the situation.

Rainwater also accumulated in low-lying areas of Srinagar and other towns, briefly affecting vehicular movement. Authorities have advised residents in flood-prone and vulnerable areas to remain cautious.

The Meteorological Department has predicted light rain, thunderstorms and gusty winds across several parts over the next two days, while warning of possible lightning and hailstorm activity in both Kashmir and Jammu divisions.

According to the MeT department, the weather is expected to remain partly to generally cloudy on May 22, with one or two spells of light rain, thundershower and gusty winds at many places.

The department said there is a possibility of thunder, lightning, hailstorm and gusty winds with speeds of 40-50 kmph, gusting to more than 60 kmph, at a few places in the Kashmir and Jammu divisions during the period.

From May 23 to 25, the weather is likely to remain mainly dry during the forenoon, with brief showers expected at isolated to scattered places towards late afternoon hours, it said.

The MeT department has forecast generally hot and dry weather from May 26 to 28, while partly to generally cloudy conditions with light rain or thundershower at isolated places are expected between May 29 and 31.

Officials also warned of hot and humid conditions at a few places in the Jammu division on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, several places in Kashmir recorded rainfall during the past 24 hours. Pahalgam received 14.2 mm rainfall, Gulmarg 13.4 mm, Kupwara 11.4 mm, Qazigund 6.8 mm and Srinagar 5.4 mm, according to the MeT data.

Jammu recorded a maximum temperature of 41.5 degrees Celsius, over three degrees above normal, while Srinagar settled at 23.9 degrees Celsius.

Meanwhile, more than 69 livestock animals were killed after lightning struck a pasture in the Pahalgam area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district during heavy rain and thundershower.

According to officials, a herd of sheep and goats was caught in the open when lightning hit the area amid intense weather activity.

At least 69 livestock animals perished in the incident, the officials said. The sudden loss has caused concern among local herders, as livestock rearing remains a major source of livelihood in the area—(KNO)

Generation-Next

not merely filling stomachs but we are shaping future thinking.

The next generation is not just our future but they are the living expression of the dream and aspiration we wish to build as a nation. Their education, health, and confidence are a shared pledge and a collective responsibility of society. The values, knowledge, and faith we instill in children today will shape Jammu Kashmir's and India's decades to come," the Lieutenant Governor said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor applauded self-less service of Akshay Patra, which is among the world's largest NGOs in the school meal sector, currently serving over 20 lakh children across 16 states and 3 UTs.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor also served the meal to the school students.

Shri Bharatarshabha Dasa, National President & Trustee, The Akshaya Patra Foundation; Shri Baldev Raj Sharma, Member of Legislative Assembly, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi; Shri Kuldeep Raj Dube, Member of Legislative Assembly from Reasi; Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Shri Ram Niwas Sharma, Commissioner/Secretary School Education Department; Shri Bhim Sen Tuti, IGP Jammu; Shri Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Shri Shiv Kumar Sharma, DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range; Shri Kumar Abhishek, Deputy Commissioner, Reasi; Shri Uday C. Rege from Savita Oil Technologies; senior officials, members of Akshaya Patra Foundation and students in large number attended the ceremony.

LG Inaugurates State-

boost to religious tourism in the region," he said.

It is pertinent to mention that the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, in collaboration with the Shri Shiv Khori Shrine Board, has undertaken development of a modern Helipad/Heliport at Village Hutt, Katra as well as at Shiv Khori, to ensure convenience, safety and accessibility for pilgrims undertaking helicopter travel to holy shrines.

The infrastructure is based on technical inputs from Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), and operational requirements assessed by the Board. It is capable of accommodating enhanced passenger handling and helicopter operational capacity, including future shifting of the existing Serli Helipad operations to Village Hutt.

The project includes construction of the helipad and allied aviation infrastructure, development of a 1.10 km approach road, creation of an expanded terminal building with passenger amenities such as waiting halls, ticketing and refund counters, reception areas, offices and security cabins, as well as construction of a

modern hangar facility and associated operational infrastructure.

The facility also includes provision of safety, security, sanitation, parking, utility services, emergency response systems and queue management facilities necessary for efficient helicopter operations.

The project aims to create sufficient operational capacity for present and future helicopter traffic while addressing safety concerns related to helicopters flying over Katra town.

It also streamlines and professionalizes heli-services through centralized management and operation by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, leveraging its long-standing expertise in heli operations. It will also facilitate integrated pilgrimage connectivity between the two shrines from a common heliport and support development of pilgrim infrastructure in the Shri Shiv Khori Shrine area through collaborative institutional arrangements and financial assistance.

The occasion also marked the inauguration of the Helipad and other related works at the Shri Shiv Khori Shrine.

The enhanced infrastructure will increase footfall at the holy shrine and make travel more convenient for pilgrims visiting Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji who also wish to undertake pilgrimage to Shri Shiv Khori.

Members of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board - Mahamandleshwar Shri Swami Vishveshvaranand Giriji Maharaj, Dr. Ashok Bhan, Shri Suresh Kumar Sharma, Shri Lalit Bhasin, Shri Kulbushan Ahuja; Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Shri Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Shri Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB; Shri Kumar Abhishek, Deputy Commissioner, Reasi; Shri Alok Maurya, Additional CEO SMVDSB; senior officials of the Shrine Board, police and District Administration and Border Roads Organization were present at the inaugural ceremony.

Police Tighten Noose

as Nasir Ahmad Dohbi of Sallar, during naka checking at Shakras in Srigufwara area. Around five kilograms of charas powder-like substance was recovered from his possession, he said.

In another operation in the Achabal area of Anantnag, police arrested Irshad Ahmad Bhat of Magraypora and recovered a heroin-like substance from him, the official added.

Meanwhile, Police in Kulgam also made multiple arrests during naka checking operations. Bilal Ahmad Hajam of Larkipora was arrested at Chowgam Bridge and around 4.5 kilograms of charas powder was recovered from a nylon bag in his possession, police said.

Another accused, Sameer Ahmad Sheikh of Bangedar, Anantnag, was arrested with 157 grams of charas-like substance concealed in a polythene bag, police said.

In a separate operation near Sopat in Kulgam, Nazir Ahmad Rather was arrested after he allegedly tried to flee on noticing a police party. Around 2.6 kilograms of poppy straw-like substance was recovered from him, police added.

Police said all the accused were arrested and cases under relevant sections of the NDPS Act were registered at respective police stations.

In a separate operation, police along with Army's 34 Rashtriya Rifles and CRPF arrested a terrorist associate in Mohammadpora area of Kulgam.

The accused, identified as Aadil Hussain Lone of Mohammadpora, was intercepted during a joint operation and two hand grenades along with incriminating posters were recovered from his possession, police said.

A case has been registered and further investigation is underway, officials said, adding that more arrests and recoveries were expected.

In Pulwama district, police registered a case under the Essential Commodities Act after a huge quantity of urea fertiliser was allegedly found stored illegally in a godown at Parigam area. The owner failed to produce valid documents or licence for storage of the fertiliser, officials said.

Meanwhile, police conducted anti-drug awareness rallies, road races, village-level meetings and checking drives across Budgam, Baramulla, Awantipora and Pulwama districts under the anti-drug campaign.

Police said poppy plants cultivated illegally in the Rajpora area of Pulwama were destroyed, medical shops were checked in Kakapora and raids were conducted at several locations linked to narcotics activities—(KNO)

Elected Govt Disappointing

Rashid not to withdraw from politics after the Baramulla MP recently hinted at stepping away from electoral politics during his father's funeral gathering.

"I heard his speech. It is his personal choice whether to remain away from politics or not," Ruhullah told reporters.

He said faith teaches people to remain determined and steadfast on the chosen path despite difficulties and pressure. "Allah asks us to stay steadfast and determined on the track," he said.

Without naming anyone, Ruhullah said, "People often leave only after greed or when they come under someone's power. But Er Rashid has seen challenges, family issues and difficult circumstances. Despite that, he continued his work with dignity."

The MP said he could relate to Er Rashid's struggles and understood what the Baramulla MP may be going through emotionally and

politically after years in jail.

"I want him not to quit and remain determined," he added—(KNO)

Cold Storage Units

from Pulwama said the availability of CA storage facilities has nevertheless protected growers from distress sales. "Had there been no cold storage units, many growers would have suffered huge losses during the peak season when markets were flooded," he said. "At least now we have the flexibility to release produce gradually."

President of the Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers and Dealers Union, Bashir Ahmad Basheer, said several factors contributed to the higher percentage of lower-grade apples this season.

"There are multiple reasons behind the increase in B and C grade apples this year," Basheer said. "During the peak season, rates were very low, and growers rushed to cold storage facilities without properly sorting or checking their produce."

He said that heavy pressure on storage infrastructure also created operational difficulties. "Vehicles carrying fruit had to wait for two to three days for unloading at several places. Besides that, many orchards were harvested earlier than the normal picking time, which affected fruit quality, and labourers were less in a few cold storage units," he added.

Basheer further said that negligence by some storage operators also played a role. "A few cold storage owners accepted produce beyond their actual capacity, which affected proper management inside the units. There were also electricity-related issues at some facilities that impacted storage conditions," he said.

Despite the challenges, growers believe CA storage facilities remain a lifeline for Kashmir's apple industry by helping regulate market supply and preventing panic selling during the harvest period.

Experts from the horticulture sector said cold storage units have transformed the way growers market their produce. Instead of selling immediately after harvest at low prices, orchardists can now wait for demand to improve and sell their apples in phases.

Growers have also demanded expansion and modernization of cold storage infrastructure in remote fruit-growing areas, saying better facilities would reduce post-harvest losses and improve quality management.

"With proper infrastructure, timely power supply and better handling practices, growers can avoid quality deterioration and secure better returns," growers said—(KNO)

CS Reviews Afforestation

the department to ensure greater field presence of staff up to the rank of Rangers for safeguarding forests and enhancing green cover across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed year-wise trends in forest diversion and compensatory afforestation. The presentation revealed that diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes has sharply declined after 2020, while the area treated under afforestation and ecological restoration programmes has nearly doubled in recent years, reflecting the administration's increasing emphasis on ecological conservation and restoration.

Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar stressed upon recreating missing forest records on the pattern of the Revenue Department and advocated staggered payments linked with survival of planting material in phases of growth for ensuring accountability and better outcomes.

Commissioner Secretary, Forests, Sheetal Nanda highlighted the sustained plantation efforts undertaken by the department over the years and informed the meeting that a robust mechanism of monitoring and multilayer evaluation has been institutionalized to ensure efficient execution of works on the ground.

The meeting was informed that since inception of CAMPA activities in 2010-11, more than 1,06,023 hectares of degraded forest area across Jammu and Kashmir has been treated through afforestation, assisted natural regeneration and ecological restoration measures. During the same period, nearly 746.65 lakh saplings have been planted across different forest divisions, reflecting sustained expansion in plantation activities over the years.

Meanwhile the PCCF (HoF), Sarvesh Rai, informed the meeting that during the financial year 2025-26, nearly 2,952 hectares of area was treated under different CAMPA components across the Union Territory. He stated that over 12.65 lakh running feet of fencing was completed along with 19.32 lakh patch sowing and dibbling interventions were carried out, while 68.70 lakh saplings were raised in nurseries and maintenance of more than 164 lakh nursery saplings was undertaken during the year.

He further apprised that the department executed 37,001 cubic metres of soil and moisture conservation works, constructed 108 water harvesting structures and ponds, completed 27 check dams and established more than 14,940 boundary pillars during the year for strengthening forest protection and ecological restoration efforts.

CEO, CAMPA, K. S. Jayachandran informed the meeting that plantation activities have witnessed a major surge after 2020, with annual plantation figures increasing substantially. Against an average annual plantation of nearly 46.60 lakh saplings during the last sixteen years, more than 67 lakh saplings were planted during 2020-21 and consistently high plantation targets have been maintained thereafter.

He further informed that during the financial year 2025-26 alone, over 40.35 lakh saplings and planting bags were utilized for afforestation and ecological restoration works. Elaborating on soil and moisture conservation interventions, he stated that since 2010-11, more than 5.13 lakh cubic metres of Dry Rubble Stone Masonry (DRSM) works and over 30,927 cubic metres of crate structures have been executed under CAMPA activities for slope stabilization and improving water retention capacity in fragile forest landscapes. Additionally, 1,732 water harvesting structures and ponds have been constructed for moisture conservation and groundwater recharge in vulnerable areas.

The presentation further highlighted that extensive fencing and protection measures have been undertaken for safeguarding newly established plantations and regeneration sites. Over 374.78 lakh running feet of fencing has been erected and 1,47,623 boundary pillars installed across Jammu and Kashmir for demarcation and protection of forest land.

The Chief Secretary was also informed that extensive catchment area treatment and biodiversity management works are being carried out in hydroelectric project areas including Pakal Dul Hydroelectric Project, Kiru Hydroelectric Project, Kwar Hydroelectric Project, Ratle Hydroelectric Project and Shahpur Kandi Project.

These interventions include afforestation, slope stabilization, pasture development, fire prevention measures, wildlife habitat improvement, eco-development activities and construction of inspection paths, bridges and biodiversity parks.

The meeting was further apprised that wildlife conservation infrastructure has also been significantly strengthened under CAMPA through expansion of rescue centres, development of biodiversity parks, construction of visitor interpretation centres, anti-poaching infrastructure and improvement of wildlife habitats in ecologically sensitive regions including Kishtwar High Altitude National Park.

The presentation also highlighted that substantial infrastructure has been created for strengthening field-level forest management and protection mechanisms. This includes construction of 42 Range Offices, 56 Block Offices, 22 Check Posts, 48 Guard Huts, 12 Chowkidar Huts and 17 Inspection Huts in remote forest areas for improving mobility, monitoring and protection capabilities of frontline staff.

The Chief Secretary was informed that monitoring of CAMPA works is being undertaken through geo-tagging of projects, public disclosure on e-Green Watch portals, regular inspections and third-party evaluations. The third-party evaluation conducted for works executed during FY 2022-23 recorded an overall survival rate of more than 51 percent across plantation sites in Jammu and Kashmir.

While acknowledging the physical achievements registered by the Forest Department under CAMPA, the Chief Secretary emphasized the need for further improving survival rates of plantations, strengthening scientific monitoring mechanisms and enhancing community participation in afforestation programmes.

He directed the department to focus on sustainable ecological restoration, protection of degraded and vulnerable forest landscapes and creation of durable ecological assets for ensuring long-term environmental resilience in Jammu and Kashmir.

Rajnath Singh On India

operating under heavy crossfire and extremely difficult battlefield conditions.

South Korean civilians and soldiers later gave the unit the title "Maroon Angels" in recognition of its humanitarian and medical work.

India also played a major role after the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement in 1953. Lt Gen K.S. Thimayya chaired the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC), while the Custodian Force of India supervised the custody and repatriation of prisoners of war.

Indian personnel handled the operation with professionalism, impartiality and compassion, earning international recognition for contributing to reconciliation and peace efforts on the Korean Peninsula.

Thimayya's leadership and diplomatic role during the process continue to symbolise India's constructive and peace-oriented approach during the Korean War.

The memorial stands at the same site where the Custodian Force of India established "Hind Nagar" in September 1954 to house nearly 22,000 prisoners of war before their peaceful repatriation.

India's Ministry of Defence funded the memorial project, which officials described as an effort to preserve and honour a relatively lesser-known chapter of shared India-South Korea history.

Senior officials, diplomats, military representatives, veterans and distinguished guests from both countries attended the ceremony. Kalpana Prasad, niece of Lt Col Rangaraj, also attended the event. South Korea's Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs dedicated the month in honour of Rangaraj.

Rajnath Singh concluded his four-day visit to Vietnam and South Korea with the inauguration of the memorial.

Pulwama Attack

attacks in recent years targeting terrorists and individuals linked to terror activities in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. However, no official confirmation has tied this incident to any broader operation or trend.

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Dy CM tours Handwara, inaugurates long-awaited Drugmulla-Hatmulla Bridge project

GMK NEWS NETWORK

HANDWARA: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary Thursday conducted an extensive tour of Handwara in Kupwara district to review developmental works, assess public facilities and hold public outreach programmes at multiple locations.

The Deputy Chief Minister was accompanied by Member of Parliament Chowdhury Mohammad Ramzan and MLA Uri Dr. Sajjad Shafi.

During an extensive tour, the Deputy Chief Minister also inaugurated the 110-meter-long Drugmulla-Hatmulla Bridge over Nallah Apurpur.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy CM said that the long-awaited bridge project will significantly improve connectivity, mobility and ease of transportation for the people of Drugmulla and adjoining areas.

"This bridge which was pending for a long time will enhance access to essential services and create better opportunities for local residents," he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister also visited the Bus Stand and Main Market in Handwara and addressed large gatherings of local transport and trader associations.

The Deputy Chief Minister assured that the Government is committed to welfare of transporters



and traders and assured all genuine issues shall be addressed on priority.

He underscored that the present Government has undertaken several long-pending developmental works in Handwara to complete on a fast-track basis.

He informed that work on various vital road and bridge projects, five roads under PMGSY have also been approved for Handwara and work on these projects will commence soon.

Referring to the Drugmulla Bridge, he said the project had remained pending for a long time but was completed within two years by the present Government.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed the concerned authorities to identify suitable land for construction of a Labour Sarai facility at Handwara for the convenience of workers and commuters.

He also reviewed macadamization works and other ongoing developmental projects and instructed

being provided to the public.

During inspection the Deputy Chief Minister held detailed discussion with the Principal, doctors and other staff members and reviewed the availability of infrastructure, medical equipment and other essential facilities.

He emphasized the need for strengthening healthcare services and ensuring quality patient care for the people.

MP Chowdhury Mohammad Ramzan and MLA Dr Sajjad Shafi also addressed the gatherings during public outreach programmes.

Earlier, the Deputy Chief Minister also visited the residence of MP Er. Sheikh Abdul Rashid and MLA Sheikh Khurshid at Mawar, Langate, to offer condolences on the demise of their father and expressed sympathies with them.

Later, the Deputy Chief Minister also inspected the ongoing construction work of the Rs 12.5 Cr, 3x18m span Bakhiaiker Bridge project in Handwara and directed officials to ensure its completion within the next three months to improve connectivity and mobility for the local population.

Senior officers from PMGSY, R&B, Mining, DICQ, Labour and Employment and officers from the district administration also accompanied the Deputy Chief Minister.

DC Sgr highlights role of youth in environmental conservation, anti-drug awareness

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The District Administration Srinagar Thursday organized an Inter-College Painting Competition-2026 under the Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme on the theme "Youth for Life and Nature" at the Government College of Education M.A Road.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, was the Chief Guest on the occasion and presided over the event.

The competition witnessed enthusiastic participation from students representing various Colleges across the District, who showcased their artistic talent and creativity through paintings focused on environmental conservation, sustainable living, and the role of youth in protecting nature and promoting life-affirming values.

The event was also attended by Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Nodal Principal Kashmir Division College, Seema Naaz, IAS Probationer Alfred Thomas, besides Principals of various City Colleges, faculty members and students.



Addressing the participants, the Deputy Commissioner underscored the objectives of the Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme launched by the District Administration Srinagar. He underlined the significance of environmental protection and judicious use of natural resources, urging students to adopt sustainable practices and contribute towards preserving the environment for future generations.

Appreciating the efforts of the participating students, the DC highlighted the importance of youth engagement in social and environmental issues. He said such programmes provide a meaningful platform for young minds to express

their ideas, creativity, and commitment towards building a better and greener society. He encouraged students to continue contributing positively towards society by utilizing their talent and energy for constructive and socially responsible causes.

The DC also emphasized the need for collective and coordinated efforts from all sections of society, including students to effectively tackle the challenge of drug abuse. He stated that drug addiction destroys lives and devastates families, urging students to carry forward the message of a drug-free society. Reiterating the importance of unified action, he called for sustained community participation to achieve the goal of a "Nasha Mukta Jammu and

Kashmir."

He also highlighted the counselling, treatment, and rehabilitation facilities available in Srinagar District for individuals affected by drug addiction and substance abuse, particularly at IMHAANS and through the Tele-MANAS platform. The DC said these facilities are playing a vital role in providing psychological support, medical assistance, counselling services, and rehabilitation to victims of drug abuse, while also helping families cope with the social and emotional impact of addiction.

During the valedictory ceremony, participants were felicitated for their outstanding performances and meaningful artistic contributions.

A documentary was also screened as part of the ongoing Drug-Free Jammu and Kashmir initiative to sensitize participants about the growing menace of drug abuse and to raise awareness regarding anti-drug campaigns, counselling services, and rehabilitation measures being undertaken by the Administration for affected individuals.

SDM Sumbal chairs meeting with Religious Leaders under Nasha Mukta Abhiyan

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: A meeting was convened by Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Sumbal, Murtaza Ahmad Sheikh, with Imams and Khateebes of Sub Division Sumbal under the Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan to discuss measures for curbing the growing menace of drug

abuse in society. During the meeting, the SDM highlighted the alarming impact of drug addiction on youth and society at large and emphasized the need for collective and sustained efforts to eradicate the menace. Stressing the vital role of religious leaders, he stated that Molvis and Khateebes hold significant influence

among the public and can play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and guiding youth towards a healthy and responsible path. The religious leaders were urged to spread awareness regarding the harmful effects of drug abuse during religious gatherings, Friday sermons, and other public

interactions and to encourage families and communities to remain vigilant against the menace.

The participants assured full cooperation in strengthening the Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan and pledged to contribute actively towards building a drug-free and aware society in Sub Division Sumbal.

DC Srinagar hands over newly procured rescue, relief equipments to SDRF



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR:- In order to assess and strengthen the district's emergency response mechanism, the District Administration Srinagar on Wednesday organized a Table-Top Exercise on disaster-related equipment to review fire and flood disaster preparedness at the DC Office premises here. The exercise was followed by a comprehensive practical demonstration of emergency response equipment and rescue operations.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, who is also the Chairman of the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), presided over the event.

The programme was attended by Director, Disaster Management J&K Aashish Kumar Additional District Development Commissioner Srinagar Rifat Aftab Qureshi, Additional Deputy Commissioner Mir Intiyaz Ul Aziz, Additional District Magistrate and Chief Executive Officer DDMA Srinagar Aadil Faraed, Commandant SDRF Masroor Ahmad, Additional CEO Srinagar Smart City Suhail ul Islam, SDM West Irfan Bahadur, SDM East Zubair Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Umar Gulzar, Deputy Director Fire & Emergency, Dr Aaqib, Executive Engineer of R&B, Abdul Qayoom, all Tehsildars and other concerned officers.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC/Chairman DDMA stressed the importance of conducting Table top preparedness exercises to strengthen disaster response capabilities and ensure prompt action during emergencies. He emphasized that coordinated planning and efficient deployment of resources are essential to minimizing risks and safeguarding lives and property during disasters.

The DC said that disasters often occur without any prior warning and that preparedness in terms of manpower, machinery, and emergency response capacity is the only effective way to minimize losses and respond efficiently during crisis situations. He emphasized that conducting Table-Top Exercises and practical demonstrations is of immense significance in enhancing coordination, strengthening preparedness mechanisms, and building the capacity of departments and field functionaries to deal effectively with disasters and other emergencies.

During the event, the DC/Chairman DDMA handed over disaster-related equipment kits to all Tehsildars of the district to strengthen preparedness at the Tehsil level.

In addition, four high-end rescue boats were also placed at the disposal of the District Administration Srinagar and Srinagar Smart City, with two boats allotted to each for emergency rescue operations.

Two-Day National Conclave on Swachh Bharat Mission concludes in New Delhi

GMK NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI: A two-day National Review Meeting and Conclave on Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0 concluded in New Delhi, bringing together Ministers, senior officers and representatives from various States and Union Territories to deliberate on the progress and future roadmap of urban sanitation and waste management initiatives across the country.

Jammu & Kashmir participated in the conclave with a delegation led by Minister for Rural Development, Agriculture Production, Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmed Dar.

The delegation also included Commissioner Secretary HUDD, Mandeep Kaur and Director Swachh Bharat Mission Urban, Dr. Devansh Yadav.

During the two-day deliberations, extensive discussions were held on key aspects of Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0, including bioremediation of legacy waste, operationalisation of waste processing plants, ensuring visible cleanliness in

urban areas and transforming the mission into a mass movement through the concept of "Jan Abhiyaan".

Ministers from different States, Secretaries from various Ministries and senior officials presented best practices and shared successful models being implemented in their respective regions. The conclave also focused on addressing challenges being faced in implementation and evolving practical solutions for strengthening urban sanitation systems across the country.

The proposed Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026 were also discussed in detail during the sessions. Deliberations were held on strategies for effective implementation of the rules in compliance with the directions of the Supreme Court, and a comprehensive action plan was framed up for their execution at the national and state levels.

The conclave reaffirmed the collective commitment of all States and Union Territories towards achieving the vision of clean, sustainable, and garbage-free urban India under Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information to the general public that I, SHOWKAT AHMED BHAT, S/o Ghulam Mohamad Bhat R/o Tajdar Colony, Zakura, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, Pin - 190006 am the father of MUHAMMAD IBRAHEEM BHAT who is studying in GD Goenka School in Class 3 having Admission No. 1980 in his school records his credentials are wrongly mentioned as MUHAMMAD IBRAHIM BHAT S/o SHOWKAT AHMED BHAT Mother's Name MASARAT SABAH while as his correct details as per DOB Certificate are MUHAMMAD IBRAHEEM BHAT S/o SHOWKAT AHMED BHAT and Mother's Name MASARAT JAN. This needs to be rectified in his school records. In this regard if anybody have nay kind of objection he/she may file the same with Principal GD Goenka School within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained afterwards.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD(R&B) DIVISION DOORU
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
NIT NO 07 OF R&B/Dooru/2026-27 / E-TENDERING/ EED/HD/ 646-51 DATED: 21-05-2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Union Territory of J&K, Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Dooru invited e-tenders on % age basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs in Lacs)	Cost of T./Doc. (in Rs)	Earnest Money (In Rs)	Time of Completion	Major Head of Account	Class of Contractor
1	Upgradation of Boon Inner link	12.77 lacs (10.84 + 1.93)	600	25540	9 months	District Sector	Dee and CEE and BEE class Only

Position of AAA: Accorded. Position of TS: Accorded.

The date of completion is subject to the availability of funds.

The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms- and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:

S.No.	Particulars	Dated
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	21-/05/2026
2	Period of Downloading of bidder documents	From 22 /05/2026 (09:00 Am) To 01-06-2026 (06:00 PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	From 22 /05/2026 (09:00 Am)
4	Bid Submission End Date	To 01/06/2026 (06:00 PM)
5	Date and time of opening of bid (online)	02/06/2026 (11:00AM)

In the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division DOORU.

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of Treasury Challan / Receipt (Under MH- 0059 PWD) in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division DOORU [Tender Inviting Authority] (Name of Work to be mentioned on the Treasury Challan / Receipt)(Refer Govt. order No. O.M No. A/24 (2017)-651 Dt 07-06-2018 (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date (NIT No and Name of work/ Item No. should be mentioned on Treasury Challan) and EMD (2% of advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division DOORU (Tender receiving Authority).
- All the Bidders have to submit Earnest Money/Bid Security (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG. Non submission of Earnest Money/Bid Security shall render the bidder as Non-responsive.
- The 1st lowest responsive (Successful) Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division DOORU (Tender receiving authority) within 03 Days before fixation of Contract and shall be released after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work. Failure to produce Performance Security shall render the L1 as non-responsive and case for debaring of the Contractor for a period of 03 Year be forwarded to Higher Authorities.
- The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG of the successful Bidder shall be released after receiving Performance security@5% of the allotted cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG and same shall be released after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work.
- Note: a. MSME's are required to pay only 50% of Tender Document Cost or Rs 500/- whichever is lower. MSME's are required to pay only 50% of the amount of EMD/ Bid Security or Rs 5000/- whichever is lower.
- The bidders are requested to quote their rates excluding 18%GST.
- The date and time of opening of Bid shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division DOORU.
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of Opening of Technical bids.
- The Earnest Money/Performance Security shall be forfeited If:
 - Any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modification in the terms and conditions of the bid.
 - Failure of successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within specified time period before issue of letter of intent.
 - Successful Bidder fails to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.
 - If at any stage of work, the Bidder back up from the contract, again the Performance security/EMD as well as work done claim will be forfeited.
- The tenders shall be opened and allotted to 1st lowest responsive bidder only when the funds are released/ available on Beams.
- The tender/ bid is liable to rejection if it does not fulfill the requirement as laid down in NIT
- Performance Security shall be released after DLP is over successfully.
- All other terms and conditions are as same as laid in PWD Form 25.

No:EED/HD/646-51
Dt: 21/05/2026
DIPK-1523-26
Dt: 21/05/2026

Er Mohd Ashraf Khan
Executive Engineer,
PWD (R&B) Division
DOORU

The Brazen Theft of a Lalbazar Graveyard

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: There is a quiet dignity we owe to those who have passed away. A graveyard is supposed to be a sanctuary of peace, a sacred space where families can grieve and remember. But in the Molvi Stop area of Lalbazar, that peace has been shattered by concrete mixer trucks, rising walls, and the deafening silence of the authorities.

On Tuesday, the raw pain of the local community boiled over into the public eye. Local residents came forward to expose a heartless reality: land grabbers have systematically invaded the public graveyard allotted by the Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board, carving up sacred burial land for private real estate.

The Indignity of a Sacred Land Grab

This isn't just a dispute over property lines; it is a profound violation of



REPRESENTATIONAL PIC

community trust. A desperate delegation of locals described a slow, agonizing process where influential neighbors have steadily pushed their fences forward. Today, permanent concrete structures stand directly on land that was meant to hold the community's loved ones.

Irshad Ahmad, a senior citizen who has watched his neighborhood change over decades, couldn't hide his disgust. He pointed directly at a specific family, describing them as "habitual violators"

who believe they are completely above the law.

"This graveyard belongs to the people," Ahmad said, his voice heavy with frustration. "The Waqf Board gave it to us so we could bury our dead in peace. But these land mafia elements have looked at a place of mourning and seen a financial opportunity. They are putting up buildings in broad daylight, and nobody is stopping them."

A Community Abandoned by the State
What cuts the residents

the deepest isn't just the greed of the land grabbers—it's the absolute betrayal by the people paid to protect them.

The community didn't immediately turn to protests. They did what good citizens are supposed to do: they wrote letters, filed complaints, and begged the J&K Waqf Board and municipal authorities to step in.

The response? Deafening silence.

By standing by as silent spectators, the authorities have effectively taken the side of the encroachers. They have signaled to the community that if you have enough money and influence, even a graveyard is up for grabs.

An Ultimatum Born of Despair

When you give people no legal recourse, you force them onto the streets. The residents of Lalbazar have made it clear that their patience has officially run out.

They have issued a stark warning to the administration: fix this now, or prepare for widespread public outrage and protests.

The community is demanding three immediate actions:

Stop the Hammers: Send enforcement teams to halt all illegal construction today.

Tear It Down: Demolish the concrete structures and reclaim every single inch of the stolen graveyard.

Enforce the Law: Prosecute the influential grabbers to show that sacred land cannot be bought or bullied away.

This is a defining moment for the Waqf Board and the local administration. They need to decide what matters more: the greed of a few powerful violators, or the dignity of an entire community and their right to bury their dead in peace.

Human Cost of J&K's Overburdened Drug Courts

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The files are stacking up so fast that the wood of the benches seems to groan under their weight. In the quiet corridors of Jammu and Kashmir's judiciary, a crisis is unfolding—not of violence, but of volume.

The launch of the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Drug-Free Campaign), spearheaded by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, has triggered an unprecedented wave of anti-narcotics enforcement. But while the dragnet is successfully catching suspects, the machinery built to process them is running on empty.

Speaking at a recent event at the Amar Singh Club, Senior Advocate Bashir Sidiq pulled back the curtain on a legal system under immense structural strain. Behind the numbers he shared are real lives—families stuck in limbo, overworked judges, and standard police officers trying to do the job of scientific experts.

The Reality in Numbers
The sheer scale of the legal bottleneck reveals



how deeply the drug menace has penetrated the region, and how heavily it weighs on the daily operations of local courts.

"Every single day, three to four new narcotics cases are registered," Sidiq warned. "This is no longer just a law enforcement issue; it is a societal crisis staring us directly in the face."

Currently, nearly 800 drug-related cases are languishing in courts across the Union Territory, alongside roughly 300 bail applications awaiting a final decision. For families waiting to see if their children will be rehabilitated or imprisoned, each day of delay is an agonizing lifetime.

Courtroom: Why Dealers Walk Free

There is a bizarre, frustrating trend happening inside the courtrooms. While nearly 40 new cases are registered every single month, the courts are simultaneously witnessing an average of 60 acquittals in the same timeframe.

How can a campaign be so aggressive at arresting people, yet see so many walk free?

Sidiq points the finger directly at how these crimes are handled the moment a suspect is handcuffed. Right now, everyday beat cops are expected to build airtight, scientifically complex drug cases. They are losing the battle in the details.

SM Krishna Memorial Open: Mukund loses as Indian challenge ends in singles

IAN S

BENGALURU: The Indian challenge in the men's singles section of the SM Krishna Memorial Open Tennis Championship came to an end, with Mukund Sasikumar going down to second seed Alastair Gray of Great Britain in a quarterfinal battle that stretched two hours and 40 minutes at the SM Krishna Stadium in Bengaluru on Thursday.

Mukund Sasikumar, the 29-year-old from Chennai who is ranked 536 in the world, produced a stirring fight and pushed the higher-ranked Gray (World No. 287) to the brink before eventually falling 2-6, 7-5, 7-6(3) in the most gripping match of the tournament.

In another quarterfinal, former World No. 40 Ilya Ivashka continued his dominant run, brushing aside Alex Hernandez of Mexico 6-1, 6-2 in just 72 minutes to storm into the semifinals, while third seed Hamish Stewart of Great Britain was equally clinical, requiring only 57 minutes to dismantle sixth seed Ognjen Milic of Serbia 6-2, 6-1. Fourth seed Petr Bar Biryukov overcame Malaysia's Mitsuki Wei Kang Leong 6-2, 5-7, 6-3 to complete the semifinal lineup.

Heavy rains disrupted the doubles quarterfinals,



with only one match being completed while two others were in progress.

Mukund Sasikumar's performance was marked by resilience and fearless shot-making, as he fired 14 aces—five more than Gray—and committed fewer double faults despite facing sustained pressure. The Indian repeatedly clawed his way back into the contest and was within touching distance of a semifinal berth.

Gray raced ahead early, capitalising on three breaks of serve in the opening set to pocket it 6-2 despite Mukund breaking in the second game. The Briton appeared in control, using his superior ranking and consistency to dictate proceedings.

However, Mukund raised his level dramatically in the second set.

After earning a break in the fourth game, the Indian looked poised to force a decider before Gray broke back in the ninth. With the set hanging in balance at 5-5, Mukund held firm and then struck decisively in the 12th game, breaking Gray to claim the set 7-5 and ignite hopes among the home crowd.

The deciding set turned into a rollercoaster. Gray secured a crucial break in the ninth game and appeared set to close out the contest. But Mukund showcased a remarkable fighting spirit, saving a match point before breaking back in the 10th game. Riding the momentum, the Indian then held serve at love in the 11th to push the pressure back on Gray. With neither player giving an inch, the contest headed into a tiebreak.

La Liga heads for tense final day with Europe, survival at stake

IAN S

MADRID: The top-flight La Liga heads into a dramatic final weekend, with two European places and two relegation spots to be decided in a tense two-hour spell in Spain on Saturday night.

Barcelona have already been crowned champions, Real Madrid are guaranteed to finish second, and Atletico Madrid, Villarreal, and Real Betis have secured places in next season's Champions League.

Real Sociedad have qualified for the Europa League after winning the Copa del Rey against Atletico Madrid in March, leaving Celta Vigo in pole position to claim the second Europa League spot.

Sixth-placed Celta is



three points ahead of Getafe and will secure sixth place with a draw at home to Sevilla, which sealed their top-flight survival last weekend. However, a Sevilla win at Balaidos, combined with a Getafe victory at home to Osasuna, would see Getafe leapfrog Celta into sixth and qualify for the Europa

League.

If Getafe fail to beat an Osasuna side that needs a point to confirm survival after a poor end to the season, Rayo Vallecano could move into seventh and take a Conference League place.

Rayo must win away to Alaves, which also secured

survival last weekend. However, if Rayo beat Crystal Palace in next week's Conference League final, it would qualify for the Europa League, opening up an extra European place for the team finishing eighth.

Valencia can also climb to seventh, but need to beat Barcelona at home and hope both Rayo and Getafe slip up. Barcelona are expected to rotate their starting lineup, although it showed in last weekend's draw against Betis that it remains competitive.

Espanyol have an outside chance of qualifying for Europe if they beat Real Sociedad at home, Rayo and Getafe both lose, and Valencia fail to win.

The relegation battle is even tighter, with Mallorca, Girona, Elche, Osa-

una, and Levante all still in danger. The outlook is bleak for second-bottom Mallorca, which must beat already-relegated Oviedo and hope Girona fail to beat Elche, Getafe beat Osasuna, and Levante avoid defeat against Betis.

Girona start the final day in the relegation zone but will survive with a home win against Elche, while Elche need only a draw at Montilivi.

Osasuna need a point at Getafe, as Spain's head-to-head rule would count against them if they finish level on points with Mallorca and Elche. Levante, after a strong late-season run, only need to avoid defeat against Betis, although it could still go down to the wire if they lose and finish level on points with Elche.

Afghanistan refugee women's cricket team set to embark on landmark England tour

IAN S

LONDON: The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) on Thursday announced it will host the Afghanistan refugee women's team for a ground-breaking tour of England starting on June 22, with the players also set to attend the ICC Women's T20 World Cup final at Lord's on July 5.

The itinerary includes high-quality training sessions and T20 matches for the side, as per a partnership between the MCC and the MCC Foundation. The tour carries significant cultural and sporting importance, given the exclusion of women from sport in Afghanistan since the Taliban's return to power in 2021.

More than 20 members of the Afghanistan women's cricket team have resettled in Australia since 2021, and played their first competitive match in Melbourne in January 2025. The Afghanistan



women's squad members were also present in India during last year's ODI World Cup.

"Since being displaced from Afghanistan in 2021, these players have shown extraordinary resilience in continuing their cricket journeys, in incredibly challenging circumstances. We have worked with It's Game On to build an itinerary and a set of experiences that we hope will be enjoyable and memorable.

"We are also delighted that the squad will attend the final of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026. Cricket has a responsibility to stand for inclusion and opportunity,

and we are proud to be hosting this tour and supporting the players in deepening their connection to the game," said Clare Connor, ECB Deputy CEO and Managing Director of England Women.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) last year announced a dedicated task force to support displaced Afghan female cricketers, assisted by the ECB, Cricket Australia, and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). A fund was set up to provide direct monetary assistance, though its long-term future remains uncertain.

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