

# Kashmir Convener

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## Z-Morh tunnel inauguration: PM's 12th visit to J&K in 10-years

Umaisar Gull Ganaie  
/Raja Syed Rather

**SRINAGAR:** In over one decade of his tenure since 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is all set to make his 12th visit to Jammu and Kashmir on Monday (January 13) to inaugurate the much-awaited Z-Morh tunnel at Sonamarg in Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district.

Modi assumed the office of Prime Minister for the first time on May 26, 2014 and took the oath as PM for the third consecutive term on 9th June, 2024.

According to the details gathered by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his previous 11 visits to Jammu and Kashmir from 2014 inaugurated dozens of development projects and announced financial packages worth thousands of crores.

On July 4, 2014, the PM inaugurated the Udhampur-Katra railway line, improving access to the Vaishno Devi shrine while in September 2014 during devastating floods, the PM visited to assess the damage and announced a relief package of Rs 1,000 crore for rescue and rehabilitation.

In 2015, the PM, besides inaugurating the second phase of Baglihar Hydro Electric Project (450 MW) in Ramban, launched a comprehensive economic package of Rs 80,000 crore for Jammu and Kashmir.

On November 7, 2015, the PM inaugurated the second phase of the Baglihar Hydro Electric Project (450 MW) in Ramban and laid the foundation for national highway projects (Udhampur–Ramban and Ramban–



Banihal sections of NH 44). He also launched a comprehensive economic package of Rs 80,000 crore for Jammu and Kashmir.

Moreover, on April 19, 2016, he inaugurated the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Super Speciality Hospital, delivered a convocation address at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, and inaugurated a sports complex in Katra. On April 2, 2017, the PM inaugurated the

Chenani-Nashri Tunnel, India's longest road tunnel at the time, improving Jammu-Srinagar connectivity while on October 19, 2017, the PM celebrated Diwali with soldiers in Gurez, acknowledging their contributions.

Loved pictures,  
videos of Sonamarg  
shared by CM  
Omar: PM Modi  
'I am eagerly awaiting  
my J&K visit'

Raja Syed Rather

**SRINAGAR,** Jan 11 : Stating that he loved the pictures and videos of Sonamarg shared by J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said



that he is eagerly waiting to visit Sonamarg in Central Kashmir's Ganderbal District to inaugurate the Z-Morh tunnel.

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## Amit Shah lists eliminating narco- terrorism among major achievements



KC NEWS NETWORK

**NEW DELHI:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said that the law enforcing agencies in recent times have successfully eliminated many narco-terrorism networks across

the country.

Chairing a regional conference on 'Drug Trafficking and National Security' here, Shah said, "Many cases of narco-terrorism were busted in Jammu

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## J&K Will Dismantle Narco-Terror Nexus: LG

KC NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU:** Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah chaired a regional conference on 'Drug Trafficking and National Security' in New Delhi, organized by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB). Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha participated

>>SEE ON P-7

## J&K government unveils austerity measures to streamline financial management

KC NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR :** In a significant move, the Jammu & Kashmir government on Tuesday unveiled a slew of austerity measures to streamline financial



management and reduce miscellaneous expenses. The government also directed for observing utmost economy while imposing a 10% economy cut on budget allocation for other expenditures.

In an order, a copy of which lies with news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Finance department announced several measures for rationalisation of

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## Srinagar Launches First Shelter Home for Beggars

KC NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin, discussed the city's efforts to address social challenges, urbanization, and infrastructure development.

In an exclusive interview with KNS, he highlighted the administration's commitment to creating a welfare-driven city and shared key updates on initiatives such as the rehabilitation of beggars, traffic management, and preparations for national events.

Dr. Mohiuddin announced the launch of Srinagar's first shelter home for beggars in the Hawal area, established under the Smile Scheme by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Managed by the NGO "Prayas," the shelter accommodates 50 people and offers food, basic living facilities, and rehabilitation services. The initiative includes skill training in trades such as tailoring, batik work, and bulb making, with special childcare

homes and schools for children involved in begging.

He elaborated on the historical context of the 1960 J&K Provincial Beggary Act, which criminalized begging but was later struck



down by the High Court. The administration has since shifted focus from punitive measures to addressing the root causes of begging, aiming to empower marginalized individuals through education and livelihood opportunities.

The Deputy Commissioner acknowledged the dual nature of urbanization, which brings both opportunities and challenges. Addressing traffic congestion,

a major issue in Srinagar, he highlighted the implementation of Intelligent Traffic Management Systems (ITMS) and collaborations with the Regional Transport Authority. These measures are part

of the broader Smart City initiative to modernize infrastructure and improve urban living standards.

Dr. Mohiuddin also spoke about the city's homeless population, explaining that a census has been conducted to better understand the scope of the issue. He noted seasonal fluctuations in the numbers, with more people arriving in summer

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## Satish Sharma meets Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal

KC NEWS NETWORK

**ASSAM:** Minister for FCS &CA, Transport, Youth Services and Sports, Information Technology, Science and Technology, ARI & Training Satish Sharma, today met Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal and discussed various pivotal issues regarding development of inland waterways and urban water transportation in J&K.

The Minister expressed gratitude to the Centre government for announcing special projects pertaining to water transport infrastructure and inland waterways including jetties for river cruise tourism in River Jhelum, repair of Chhatabal weir for proper navigation and operationalisation of River Chenab, Jhelum and Ravi.

During the interaction, the Minister emphasised the immense potential of developing waterways/water bodies in Jammu & Kashmir

under Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), for important lakes viz. Dal, Wullar, Nigeen, Surinsar,



Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW), which could greatly contribute towards the socio-economic growth of the region. He drew attention of Union Minister towards development of key water bodies including world famous lakes like Dal, Nigeen, Manasbal, Anchar, Mansar, Surinsar, Ranjit Sagar and important rivers like Sindh, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Munawar Tawi.

He urged to provide vessels

Mansar and river Jhelum, Chenab and Ravi in addition to other facilities like construction of Jetties/View Points at the lakes, infrastructure for establishing Passenger transport, recreational activities in important rivers like Jhelum, Sindh, Chenab, Ravi, Munawar Tawi.

This will greatly help in promoting tourism and boosting socio-economic growth of rural and border areas including

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## 3-day orientation program for MLAs concludes

KC NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU:** "The MLAs should actively participate in the House proceedings with complete information of rules and procedures of the house, stated Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, while addressing the valedictory session of three day orientation program held for newly elected MLAs of J&K Assembly at Assembly Complex, Jammu.

The Speaker extended gratitude to all the participating members especially the newly elected members for ensuring their participation and listening patiently to the resource persons. He hoped that this orientation programme will help the

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## BOTTOM STORY

## Sonamarg Tunnel to Unlock New Opportunities for Connectivity, Economic Growth

KC NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** The Sonamarg Tunnel (earlier known as Z-Morh Tunnel), a progressive infrastructure project in Jammu and Kashmir with a total cost of ₹2,717 crore, is redefining regional connectivity and economic advancement. Stretching up to 12 km (Tunnel length: 6.4 km + Approach Road: 5.6 km), this two-lane bi-directional tunnel creates a vital connection between Gagangir and Sonamarg, ensuring all-weather and safe connectivity. The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, will formally dedicate



the tunnel to the nation on Monday, 13th January 2025, in a ceremony

attended by Union and state ministers, as well as senior government officials.

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## Key dev projects get Forest clearance



KC NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU:** Minister for Jal Shakti, Forests, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today approved forest clearance for a series of critical developmental projects aimed at driving progress across Jammu and

Kashmir.

The clearance marks a major step forward in government's commitment to infrastructure expansion and economic growth in the Union Territory while simultaneously addressing environmental issues.

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# Extensions In Service Set Back To Those Who Are In Line: Jagdeep Dhankhar

**BENGALURU:** Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar said on Saturday that extensions in service, extensions in any form for a particular post are set back to those who are in line.

Dhankhar was delivering the inaugural address at the 25th National Conference of Chairpersons of State Public Service Commission being held in Bengaluru.

According to him, extension of service indicates that some individuals are indispensable.

“Indispensability is a myth. Talent abounds in this country. No one is indispensable. And therefore, it lies in the domain of public service commissions at the state and the central level that when they have a role in such kinds of situations, they must be firm,” added the VP.

He also said public service commissions’ appointments cannot be driven by patronage, or by favouritism.

“We cannot have a public service commission Chairman or a member, wedded to a particular ideology or an individual. That will be undoing the essence and spirit of the framework of the constitution,” said Dhankhar.

The Vice-President also frowned upon post-retirement recruitment and said it is antithetical to



what was visualised by framers of the Constitution.

“In some states, it has been structured. Employees never retire, particularly those in the premium services. They get a number of ad-hoc nomenclatures. This is not good. Everyone in the country must have due and that due is defined by law,” said the VP.

The VP also said fairness of selection has no

meaning if paper leakages occur.

“Paper leakage has become an industry, a form of commerce. This is a menace that must be curbed,” he added.

He commended the initiative the government has taken in this regard, with the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024.

The Vice President is also of the view that although it is “India’s century”, without a “calm political atmosphere” India will not really gain. A vitiated political climate is far more dangerous than the climate change we are facing, he pointed out.

“Our polity at the moment is too divisive, too polarised. Interaction is not taking place at the premium level in political organisations.”

The solution, according to him, is harmony in polity. “Harmony is imperative. If there is no harmony in polity, if the polity is polarized, deeply divisive, with no communication channels functioning, imagine you are in an earthquake, you are lost and you have no connection with the outside world, things will be terrible for you,” he added. He also said for India to stand strong, we need strong institutions.

“Any institution, if it is weakened, the damage is to the entire nation. Weakening of an institution is like a prick on the body. The entire body will be in pain,” said Dhankhar. To build strong institutions, he added, states and Union governments must work in tandem. “They must be in synergetic mode. They must be in sync with one another when it comes to national interest,” said the VP.

Noting that discussion is deeply rooted in our civilizational ethos, the Vice President urged senior

leadership for all political parties, irrespective of their ideologies, to “enhance dialogue, believe in consensus and always be ready for deliberation”.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who was also present on the occasion, said Public Service Commissions are pillars of democracy, upholding meritocracy and fairness, and contributing immensely to governance.

“Karnataka has a rich history in public administration, starting with the Mysore Civil Services (MCS) examination initiated by Dewan Sir K Seshadri Iyer in 1892. This pioneering step set the foundation for a cadre of distinguished administrators, a legacy Karnataka continues to uphold with pride,” he added.

He said tackling challenges such as paper leaks remains a top priority for Karnataka today. He also said learning from the best practices of other states and leveraging advanced technologies like artificial intelligence will make recruitment more transparent and corruption-free.

Karnataka Governor Thawarchand Gehlot; Chairman of UPSC Preeti Sudan and Chairman of Karnataka Public Service Commission Shivashankarappa S Sahukar were among the dignitaries present on the occasion.

## Dark Web, Cryptocurrency, Drones Continue To Be Challenge: Amit Shah

**NEW DELHI:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday that dark web, cryptocurrency, online marketplace and drones continue to be a challenge for the country and these have to be checked by strict measures.

Chairing a regional conference on 'Drug Trafficking and National Security' here, Shah also asserted that the country will not allow even a single kg of drugs to be smuggled in or out of the country.

He said the government has not only



been successful in eliminating many networks

of drugs, but the terrorism linked with them too was also destroyed. He said many cases of narco-terrorism were busted in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh and these were major achievements.

“The use of dark web, cryptocurrency, online marketplace, drones continue to be a challenge for us even today,” he said.

Shah said a technical solution to these problems have to be found through joint efforts by the states

## Spadex docking : Satellites on hold mode at 1.5 km distance, further drift to reduce it to 500 m tomorrow

**CHENNAI:** A day after arresting the excessive drift between the two spacecrafts as part of Spadex docking experiment mission, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Friday evening said the spacecraft were now at a distance of 1.5 km and on hold mode. Further drift to reduce the distance to 500 m was planned to be achieved by Saturday morning.

The docking experiment was twice deferred due to technical glitch.

In a post on X on SpaDeX Docking update,

the Space Agency said “Spacecrafts are at a



distance of 1.5 km and on hold mode. Further drift to 500 m is planned to be achieved by tomorrow morning.”

Yesterday, ISRO said “The drift has been arrested and spacecrafts put in a slow drift courseto move closer to each other. By tomorrow, it is expected to reach initialisation conditions”.

The excessive drift has led to the postponement of docking of the two satellites—Chaser and Target—scheduled for today morning, but was postponed for the second time. The docking was earlier scheduled on January 7 and was deferred to yesterday as it required

## IMD looks to use data from Cube Sats, IoT devices for better forecasts

**NEW DELHI:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is looking to access data from CubeSats, crowdsourcing, and Internet of Things devices besides conventional weather satellites to improve its forecast accuracy, a former official said.

The IMD has also sent a dedicated meteorological satellite in orbit and installed a new high power computing system (HPCS) last year that would allow it to issue more accurate forecasts.

“IMD will soon move to an ensemble prediction system with a horizontal resolution of 6 km, which is an improvement over the current resolution of 12 km,” Madhavan Rajeevan, Ministry of Earth Sciences’ former secretary, said in an article penned on the occasion of the 150th Foundation Day of IMD.

“The improvement of observation networks incorporating state-of-the-art technologies such as crowdsourcing, CubeSats, IoT devices and unmanned platforms will significantly improve data quality and forecast efficiency,” he said.



Rajeevan said the IMD was also setting up separate research testbeds in Bhopal and Mumbai to deepen the understanding of monsoon dynamics and cloud physics.

“As user expectations continue to grow, the IMD must continuously innovate and proactively address these demands,” he said. The IMD has access to weather observations from over 6,000 surface observatories in addition to data from

weather balloons, satellites, a network of radars which feed information to prediction models. “By embracing cutting-edge technologies and continually improving forecasting systems, IMD can sustain its legacy as a global leader in weather and climate services and helping India navigate the challenges of climate Change,” Rajeevan said.

In a separate article, leading

meteorologist U C Mohanty said under the aegis of Ministry of Earth Sciences, significant scientific and technological advancements have been achieved across various domains of Earth system sciences, encompassing the atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, cryosphere, biosphere, and their intricate interactions.

The advances in computational resources allowed the use of advanced deterministic chemical transport models, leading to more accurate air quality forecast,

replacing the previous empirical and statistical approach which has some limitations and misses to adequately represent the physical and chemical processes of pollutants.

The scientists at IMD and Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, Ministry of Earth Science jointly developed the advanced Air Quality Early Warning System (AQEWS), Rajesh Verma, Chairman of the Commission for Air Quality Management said.

## Shiv Sena (UBT) To Go It Alone In Local Bodies Polls, Says Raut

**NAGPUR:** Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Saturday said his party will contest the upcoming elections to the various local bodies alone.

Talking to reporters, the Rajya Sabha MP said the INDIA bloc and Maha Vikas Aghadi alliances were for the Lok Sabha and assembly polls.

“In an alliance, workers of individual parties don’t get opportunities, and it hampers organisational growth. We will contest polls to the Mumbai, Thane, Nagpur and other municipal corporations, zilla parishads and panchayats on our strength,” he said.

He said party chief Uddhav Thackeray gave the party indications that it should go alone. Hitting out at Congress leader Vijay Wadettiwar for indulging in a blame game over the MVA’s defeat in the state assembly, Raut said those who don’t believe in consensus and compromise have no right to be in an alliance. He further claimed that the INDIA bloc did not hold a single meeting after the Lok Sabha elections.

“We were not able to appoint even a convenor for INDIA bloc. It isn’t good. As the largest party of the alliance, it was the Congress’s responsibility to convene a meeting,” the Sena (UBT) leader said. Reacting to Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar’s remark that he has never mentioned farm loan waivers in his speeches, Raut said, “Even if he hasn’t spoken about it. Farm loan waiver and Rs 2,100 for Laadki Bahin beneficiaries are mentioned in the BJP’s poll manifesto.



### Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER WATER WORKS DIVISION SRINAGAR

#### GIST OF NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

Short Term E-NIT. No: 75/WWD/Sgr/Civil of 2024-25 Dated 11.01.2025

Executive Engineer Water Works Division Srinagar on behalf of Commissioner SMC Srinagar, invites tenders by e-tendering mode on percentage basis in 2 Cover System as:-

S.N	Name of Work	Esttd. Cost (In lacs)	Cost of EMD (In Rs.)	Cost of Tender Document (In Rs.)	Head of Account	T.O.C	Class of Contractor
1	Electro-mechanical repairs and replacement/ maintenance work to machinery/Water Tanker bearing Nos. 8047, 5076, 5231 of Water Works Division Srinagar	1.47	2940/-	200	M&R	10 Days	Registered Automobile Workshop Holders/ Mechanical SSI Unit Holders/ Automobile Contractors/ Mechanical Contractors
2	Electro-mechanical repairs and replacement/ maintenance work to machinery/Water Tanker bearing nos. 8047 of Water Works Division Sgr	1.44	2880/-	200	M&R	10 Days	
3	Electro-mechanical repairs and replacement/ maintenance work to machinery/Water Tanker bearing Nos 8047, 5076 and 5816 of Water Works Division Sgr	1.00	2000/-	200	M&R	10 Days	

Position of AAA:-Accorded

Position of Funds:- Available

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings (if any), Book of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms, conditions of contract and other details can be seen / downloaded from the website: [www.jktendersgov.in](http://www.jktendersgov.in) As per schedule of dates given below

Table (II)		
01	Date of publishing of Tender Notice	11.01.2025
02	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 11.01.2025 10:00 A.M. To 20.01.2025 04:00 P.M.
03	Bid Submission Start Date	11.01.2025 10:00 A.M.
04	Bid submission End Date	20.01.2025 Upto 04:00 P.M.
06	Date and time of opening of Bids (Online)	21.01.2025 at 2:00 P.M. In the office of the Executive Engineer Water Works Division Srinagar

No. WWD/Sgr/CC/7409-21  
Dated: 11.01.2025

Sd/-Executive Engineer  
Water Works Division  
Srinagar

DIPK-10754/24

### Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION KUPWARA

NIT No.45-Kupwara/5529-37 of 2024-25 e-tendering DATED: - 10-01-2025

For & on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of J&K Union Territory, e-tenders [in single cover system](#) are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Union Territory J&K Govt. CPWD ,Railways and other state/Central Governments for the followings works:-

S. No.	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T.Doc. (In rupees)	Earnest Money (In rupees)	Time of Completion (In days)	Time & Date of Opening of Bid	Class of Contractor	Major Head of Account
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
01	Up gradation of Poyepora Road at Hyhama by Protection Wall.	4.74	200/-	9500	30 days	18-01-2025	"DEE"	3054--M&R
02	Construction of CC drain at Hiri	3.87	200/-	7500/-	30 days	18-01-2025	"DEE"	3054--M&R
03	Construction of CC Drain at TraitlabHayhama from General road near Masjid Sharif via Traitlab onwards(500m)	2.90	200/-	5800/-	30 days	18-01-2025	"DEE"	3054--M&R
04	Restoration/Up-gradation of Masoodi Link road from general Road to Dar MohallaBanparabumhamakupwara BWO WBM Grade II, Grade III and Edge Wall/RCC Spun Pipes in Patches/Stretches	2.82	200/-	5700/-	21 days	18-01-2025	"DEE"	3054--M&R
05	Construction of foot bridge on mallahDardnard near LO Ab Rasheed Zargar and others at Jugljal Ward No. 01	6.77	300/-	13600/-	30 days	18-01-2025	"C&D"	BDC Grants
06	Completion of left over work on account of Construction of Catefiera at Govt. Polytechnic College Kupwara (Balance Work)	2.14	200/-	4300/-	21 days	18-01-2025	"DEE"	Education

Position of AAA

:-Accorded

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, 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](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) as per schedule of dates given below:-

01.	Date of issue of Tender Notice	10-01-2025
02.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 10-01-2025 to 18-01-2025 (4.00P.M)
03.	Bid submission start date	10-01-2025 from (10.00A.M)
04.	Bid submission end date	18-01-2025 upto (04.00P.M)
05.	Date & time of opening Bids (on line)	18-01-2025 at (6:00P.M) in the Office of the Executive Engineer RnB Division Kupwara

#### TERMS AND CONDITIONS :-

The Bidders are advised to read all conditions laid down in the NIT carefully before uploading softcopy any short fall found in the soft copy the tender shall be rejected.

a. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape Treasury Challan (Under Account Head 0059) [\(Treasury Challan\)](#) must be written boldly the Name of Work, Name of Contractor alongwith NIT No. & Sr. No of NIT in favour of [Executive Engineer R&B Division Kupwara](#) (tender inviting authority ) and Earnest money /Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR pledged to [Executive Engineer R&B Division Kupwara](#) The Issuance date of the Treasury Challan and CDR/FDR Must be in between the date of Downloading to Bid Submission end Date

b. The Successful Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% additional performance security deposit of the allotted cost. The same shall be released after successful completion of the defect liability Period of the work. The EMD of 2% successful bidders shall be released after receipt of 5% Performance Security.

1. The bidders shall ensure that their bids shall be accepted only if their registrations cards are uploaded on <https://jkpwdoms.jk.gov.in> portal in active Tab. as per circular instructions issued by Development Commissioner works vide No.PW/DCW/DB/668-72 Dt.10-06-2022.

2. The GST-3B for last Quarter ( Quarterly return) or Previous month for (Monthly return) Should be uploaded, irrespective of date of Tender Contractors Strictly Not Eligible

a. The bidders who has participated in 2023-24 and has not completed the works within stipulated time frame/who had left the work midway/who had not started /taken up the works are strictly not eligible. Any such participation may lead to cancellation of their bid and no claim shall be entertained in this regard.

b. Contractors who failed to execute the allotted work/ work during the previous final Year (2023-24) are note eligible before tendering for the current financial Year 2024-25

72. All other terms and conditions shall be the same as per detailed and stock issue rates of 2024-25 circular instructions issued by the higher authorities from time to time.

73. The key construction material shall have to be arranged by the contractor of their own as per the quality/specifications.

1. Cement = JKOPC Brand

2. Steel of all sorts = SAIL certified (The sail certificate shall have be produced /deposited in the division by the AEE concerned at the time submission of the work done bills). No extension in quantities/Cost is allowed in any case.

No.5529-37  
DT: 11-01-2025

DIPK-10721/24

Sd/-Executive Engineer  
R&B Division Kupwara



# From Conflict to Calm: Gurez virgin beauty attracts over 1 Lakh visitors in 2024

**AADIL ABDULLAH**

**BANDIPORA:** Gurez Valley, once a quiet border region, has emerged as a rising star in Kashmir's tourism scene, with an impressive 1,11,000 visitors recorded in 2024, according to data collected by the District Administration of Bandipora.

Known for its breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural heritage, Gurez has become a sought-after destination for those in search of tranquility and adventure, despite the challenges it faces.

"Located near the Line of Control, the valley's natural beauty and serenity are drawing increasing numbers of tourists each year," the data shared by the district administration Bandipora, as accessed by the news agency JKNS.

It reads as however, the region's tourism potential remains constrained due to poor road connectivity, with the main access route being closed for nearly three months every winter due to heavy snowfall. This seasonal barrier limits the valley's ability to fully capitalize on its appeal.

Local residents also recognizing the untapped



potential, have strongly advocated for year-round connectivity. They believe that improving the infrastructure would not only boost tourism but

winter tourism, with its snow-covered landscapes being ideal for skiing, snowboarding, and trekking. Locals are calling on the government to invest in winter sports infrastructure and further develop the region's potential as a year-round destination.

"Gurez has all the ingredients to become a year-round tourism hub. The focus must be on improving connectivity and promoting winter sports to unlock its full potential," said Zaheer Ahmed, a local resident.

Khalid Lone, another resident, emphasized, "Winter tourism can create jobs, especially for educated youth. With the right facilities, it can provide sustainable livelihoods to those seeking employment in Gurez."

The surge in tourism has already begun to transform lives, with many young people previously unemployed now finding work in the tourism sector, signaling a hopeful future for the valley.

"We hope peace will continue between both countries, allowing us to live without fear," said Jameel Ahmed, a local, expressing optimism for long-term stability

## Butcher Shop Sealed In Khrew Over Rat Infestation; Food Safety Violations Found

**Bilal Habib**

**PAMPORE:** Authorities have taken swift action after a viral video surfaced showing a rat infestation at a butcher shop in the Khrew area of Pampore Tehsil, South Kashmir's Pulwama district.



Acting on the matter, the Assistant Commissioner Intelligence-cum-Legal Cell Kashmir, who also holds additional charge as Assistant Commissioner Food Safety Pulwama Hilal Ahmad Mir, along with the concerned Food Safety Officer Sadiya Javid, inspected the shop and discovered it in extremely unhygienic conditions. The shop was immediately sealed, and further investigations have been initiated.

They also conducted a special inspection drive against the food business operators, including butchers, bakers, and restaurants, were inspected in the Khrew town. Violations of sanitary and hygienic standards under the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act were found at six establishments. A fine of Rs 6,000 was imposed on the violators, officials told Kashmir Convivor. Authorities emphasized the importance of maintaining hygiene and warned of strict action against those flouting food safety norms.

Earlier, a video viral on social media shows rats eating meat at a butcher shop in the Khrew area of Pampore.

Assistant Commissioner Intelligence-cum-Legal Cell Kashmir, Hilal Ahmad Mir, while talking to Kashmir Convivor, stated that a complaint was received

regarding a butcher shop in Khrew, Pampore, where meat was being stored in unsanitary conditions, allowing the presence of rats (rodents). "As soon as we received the complaint, the department immediately swung into action and visited the site. We have sealed the meat shop as proper sanitation was not maintained, and there was evidence of rats in the premises," he said.

We also conducted a drive against other shops in the area, including chicken sellers, bakers, and restaurants. We found violations of the Food Safety Act and took action against those responsible. A fine of six thousand rupees was collected from the violators, and complaints against some will be presented in court for further legal action.

I appeal to the general public that just as we received this complaint, if similar complaints continue to come to us, we will take immediate action against the violators. This is a continuous process, but I urge the people to contact us whenever they notice any issues related to food items. Your cooperation is essential in ensuring food safety and hygiene.

He further told Kashmir Convener that all food items should be stored at the proper temperature, ensuring that the environment is free from rodents and flies. Food items must be kept in a safe and hygienic environment. Every business operator is required to have a license or registration. Licenses are issued to those with a turnover exceeding Rs 12 lakh, while those with a turnover below Rs 12 lakh are provided with registration.

He mentioned that during field inspections, it was observed that some operators lack the necessary food licenses or registrations. Such operators are being warned, and if they fail to comply, legal action will be taken against them. Additionally, if proper sanitation is not maintained, strict action will be taken against the shopkeepers involved.

He emphasized that the department does not merely impose fines but also provides awareness to business operators. Furthermore, appreciation certificates are awarded to those who comply with the Food Safety Act and maintain high standards of hygiene and safety.

## Srinagar District Takes Lead In Implementation Of SMILE Scheme Across J&K



**SRINAGAR:** With an aim to rehabilitate and facilitate beggars to join mainstream to live a dignified life under SMILE (Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise) scheme in District, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat Saturday visited newly established Rehabilitation Home for persons engaged in the act of Begging here at Hawal.

Notably, Srinagar has become the first District in Jammu and Kashmir to implement the SMILE scheme launched by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in 2022, to rehabilitate and reintegrate beggars into society.

During the visit, the DC was accompanied by Chief Planning Officer, District Social Welfare Officer, Tehsildar Eidgah, NGO members and other concerned.

On the occasion, the DC took a detailed round of the Rehabilitation Home and inspected the facilities and rehabilitation measures for the persons engaged in the act of Begging.

While interacting with the Officers and staff of

the Rehabilitation Centre, the DC said that the initiative has been taken to address the issue of begging in the District under SMILE (Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise) scheme. The DC added that the SMILE scheme will provide beggars with vocational training and livelihood opportunities, aiming to empower them to become self-sufficient. He emphasized a holistic approach, focusing on social reintegration and the well-being of marginalized individuals.

Dr Bilal further said that special provisions will be made for children found begging. He said they will be enrolled in schools to ensure their education and development. He said that the District Administration is committed not only to eliminate begging but also to ensure that those affected receive the support they need to earn livelihood with dignity and honour.

Meanwhile, the DC has stressed the staff of the Rehabilitation home to work in a compassionate manner towards the affected section of the society and enable them to lead a life of value and dignity.

## DC Bandipora reviews preparations for Republic Day celebrations

**BANDIPORA:** The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Zaffar Husson Shawl and a team of concerned officers, today visited S.K. Stadium Bandipora to review the ongoing preparations for the upcoming Republic Day celebrations.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner held a comprehensive review of the arrangements made by various departments.

Officials from the concerned departments briefed the Deputy Commissioner about the progress and the measures implemented so far to ensure the smooth conduct of the event.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need for prompt and efficient preparations, urging all concerned to complete their respective tasks well ahead of the event.

He stressed the importance of meticulous planning to ensure the success of the Republic Day celebrations and to ensure comfort and safety of all attendees.

The Deputy Commissioner also directed the concerned departments to ensure that all arrangements are in place, including security, seating, illumination, and other logistical aspects, well before the event.

Tehsildar Bandipora Firdous Ahmad Qadri, DySP HQ Lateef Ahmad Khan besides officers and officials from R&B, Jal Shakti, Municipality, Youth Services and Sports, and other concerned departments were present on the occasion.



## Baramulla's young Karate stars shine bright at National stage

**BARAMULLA:** Baramulla's young karate champions, aged 7-10 years, were honored by DC Baramulla, Minga Sherpa at his office here, following their stellar performance in the JKS South Asia Karate Championship 2025 held in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.

These budding athletes brought pride to the district by winning 3 gold medals and a bronze medal, showcasing their exceptional talent and dedication.

Their journey to success began in 2024 when they participated in the 1st North India Karate Championship in Jammu, securing 4 gold medals and the prestigious Best Discipline Award for their exemplary sportsmanship and commitment.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC expressed pride in their achievements, stating, "This is a proud moment for the district. I assure you that every possible facility will be made available to these young stars so they can compete not only at the national level but also at the international stage.

Balancing academics with their passion for karate, these young champions have set a benchmark for others, proving that determination and hard work can lead to exceptional success. The DC reiterated the administration's commitment to support local talent and fostering excellence in sports.

## GMC Srinagar rebuts news item suggesting increase in the Neonatal mortality rate at LD Hospital

**SRINAGAR:** The Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar has strongly refuted the news item circulated by some media outlets suggesting an increase in the mortality rate at Lal Ded Hospital (LD Hospital) for the year 2024.

In an official statement issued here, it has been clarified that the neonatal mortality rate (NMR) at Government Lal Ded Hospital (LD Hospital) for the year 2024 stands at 9.9 per 1000, which is significantly lower than the national average, though neonatal mortality rate at LD cannot be used as an index of neonatal mortality in the society.

The GMC authorities further explained that the neonatal mortality rate has not risen but, in fact, has been effectively contained through advanced treatment methods. These improvements have ensured that the rate remains well below the national average, demonstrating the hospital's success in providing high-quality care.

In 2024, LD Hospital attended to a total of 221,163 outpatients (OPD), with 37,908 inpatient (IPD) admissions with 29,939 live births. Further 3,107 neonatal IPD admissions were recorded. Out of these neonatal admissions, 297 deaths occurred, resulting in a neonatal mortality rate of 9.9 per 1000 which is below than the national neonatal mortality which at present is 17-21 per 1000 live births.

The millennium development goal is to reduce neonatal mortality rate to 12 per 1000 live births. This figure reflects a remarkable achievement in the face of challenges and is attributed to the advanced healthcare systems in place at the valley's only tertiary maternity care hospital. The state-of-the-art medical infrastructure and skilled medical professionals at the hospital have played a crucial role in maintaining these positive outcomes. It is pertinent to mention here that the patients who need termination of pregnancies earlier in maternal interest or for different fetal reasons like decreased blood flow to fetus are also referred to LD hospital which also increases the neonatal admissions and mortality. But given all the facts and advanced health care system the neonatal mortality rate is below the national average.

Different measures have been implemented to reduce the neonatal mortality rate in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). These include the round-the-clock availability of doctors and paramedics, the provision of high-end equipment such as ventilators, CPAP machines, and warmers, as well as the free availability of life-saving medications like surfactants. Additionally, the hospital ensures that there is consistent support for oxygen supply, including an oxygen plant that provides adequate pressure for ventilators and CPAP machines.

## ISRO Scientist Delivers a special talk on "From Space to Species" at Jammu University

**JAMMU:** The Department of Botany, University of Jammu, in collaboration with the J&K Biodiversity Council, organized a special talk titled "From Space to Species: Monitoring of Essential Biodiversity Variables Using Remote Sensing" by Dr. C. Sudhakar Reddy, Head of the Forest Biodiversity and Ecology Division, NRSC, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), Hyderabad.

Initiating his insightful and thought-provoking talk, Dr. Reddy outlined the underlying causes of biodiversity loss, its far-reaching implications, and the various measures being undertaken to address these challenges. Focusing on the concept of Essential Biodiversity Variables (EBVs), Dr. Reddy elaborated on Remote Sensing-based methodologies such as Spectral Reflectance Patterns, which are instrumental in measuring ecological biodiversity, forest types, land cover, long-term forest cover changes, global tree cover loss, leaf area index, and forest fragmentation citing some specific examples from

India and globe. He also detailed the application of remote sensing approaches for biomass estimation and discussed their utility in addressing critical biodiversity threats, including forest fires, invasive alien species, and the shrinkage or loss of water bodies. Additionally,



he emphasized the role of remote sensing in mapping the global spatial distribution of endemic and threatened species and predicting their suitable habitats. Conveying his gratitude to the University of Jammu, Dr. Reddy desired he seeks to have meaningful collaborations with the Universities and research organizations in Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh for gathering essential information for the monitoring of EBVs at scales relevant to research and decision-making for conserva-

tion. The lecture concluded with an engaging question-answer session, where Dr. Reddy addressed queries from researchers and scholars in the audience.

Earlier, Prof Yash Pal Sharma Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Jammu and Member, J&K Biodiversity Council extended a formal welcome to the learned scientist from ISRO, Hyderabad and introduced him to the audience highlighting his remarkable achievements and extensive research contributions. Prof Sharma informed that since species abundances and distributions are changing quickly, globally, it is imperative to gather trustworthy, comprehensive information for directing and evaluating activities and policies meant to manage and maintain the various benefits and functions of species and how the AI-driven tools and remote sensing can be employed to resolve some of the present challenges of biodiversity monitoring and conservation.

While Dr. Skarma Nonzom conducted the proceedings of the event, a formal vote of thanks was proposed by Dr. Harish Dutt. The event was attended by the officials of the J&K Biodiversity Council, Forest Research Institute, Jammu, Faculty of Life Sciences including Prof. Veenu Kaul, Dr. Neeraj Sharma (Bhaderwah Campus), Ms. Harpreet Kour, Mr. Rakesh Abrol, Dinesh Singh, Dr. Amit Gupta, Dr. Ripu Daman, Dr. Shash Pal (Department of Zoology, University of Jammu), Dr. Abhishek Dutta, Dr. Komal Verma, research scholars and students of the Department of Botany, University of Jammu.



# Defeating The Human Metapneumovirus?

By: Dr. Satyawan Saurabh

Human metapneumovirus has emerged as a global health concern, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, and immunocompromised individuals.

First identified in 2001, human metapneumovirus causes significant respiratory infections worldwide, leading to hospitalization and mortality, particularly in low-income countries.

As viral outbreaks such as human metapneumovirus pose increasing challenges, it is important to strengthen regulatory frameworks for effective management. Human metapneumovirus has become a significant global health concern due to its widespread spread, particularly during seasonal outbreaks.

The virus is gaining attention as its impact increases across regions. In China, increased surveillance has revealed a rise in human metapneumovirus cases, particularly in children and the elderly, indicating an increase in detection rates.

The World Health Organization reports that human metapneumovirus accounts for 3%–10% of hospitalizations globally, with a significant increase in children under five years of age.

The virus often spreads rapidly during flu season, leading to a surge in respiratory infections, making it a seasonal health threat. In China, the flu season coincides with a surge in human metapneumovirus cases, leading to increased hospitalizations and media coverage.

Despite being in circulation for years, many countries, including India, lack a comprehensive and affordable testing infrastructure for human metapneumovirus. While global agencies monitor human metapneumovirus, many regions still face challenges in detecting and reporting it, affecting early interventions. The virus disproportionately affects certain vulnerable groups, such as children under five years of age.

Human metapneumovirus disproportionately affects young children, particularly those under the age of five, who are at higher risk of severe illness and hospitalization. The elderly, particularly those with existing health problems, are more vulnerable to severe outcomes from human metapneumovirus infection.

In China, a rise in human metapneumovirus cases in the elderly has led to a rise in hospitalizations, highlighting the vulnerability of the older population. People with weakened immune systems are at higher risk of severe infection with human metapneumovirus, requiring intensive medical care.

Deaths due to hMPV are significantly higher in vulnerable groups, including infants and immunocompromised people. The case fatality rate for children under five years of age is 1%, raising concerns about the impact of the virus on high-risk populations in both developed and developing countries.

In low- and middle-income countries, limited healthcare access increases the risk of severe outcomes for vulnerable popu-

lations. Measures to strengthen the regulatory framework and capabilities to manage such viral outbreaks include strengthening

tem can be developed to monitor respiratory infections in real time, tracking trends and emerging threats such as human

its global collaboration to share information and resources for managing viral outbreaks, thereby ensuring timely response



the diagnostic infrastructure. India can enhance its diagnostic capabilities by expanding testing facilities for viruses such as hMPV in both the government and private sectors.

The Indian Council of Medical Research can collaborate with private laboratories to ensure widespread, affordable hMPV testing, leading to early detection and prevention. India can expedite the approval process for diagnostic tests by establishing a streamlined regulatory pathway that allows rapid approval of tests during public health emergencies.

The Drugs Controller General of India can implement an emergency approval mechanism for diagnostic kits that meet international standards. A robust national surveillance sys-

metapneumovirus.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare can expand the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme to include real-time human metapneumovirus tracking across all states. India can launch public health campaigns to raise awareness about human metapneumovirus, focusing on prevention methods and recognizing symptoms, especially among vulnerable populations.

The Ministry of Health can partner with the media and NGOs to conduct information campaigns, especially in rural areas, to recognize symptoms of respiratory infections such as human metapneumovirus.

Strengthen international collaboration: India can enhance

to emerging pathogens. India should enhance its regulatory framework to tackle emerging viral threats such as human metapneumovirus by strengthening surveillance, diagnosis, and rapid response mechanisms through National Health Mission initiatives.

Investments in vaccine and antiviral research, along with global best practices, will help mitigate such outbreaks. Strengthening healthcare infrastructure is essential to protect vulnerable populations and control hMPV spread.

(The author is a freelance journalist and columnist)

# How Carbon dioxide Has Been Regulating Earth’s Climate

BY: HANA JURIKOVA

Around 370 million years ago, Earth gradually descended into the longest lived and probably the most intense ice age witnessed by complex life: the Late Palaeozoic ice age. At its peak, huge continental ice sheets spread across much of the globe and the sea level fell by more than 100 metres. In all, this ice age lasted around 100 million years.

The transition in and out of the Late Palaeozoic ice age was one of the biggest climate transitions in Earth’s history, a turning point in the evolution of life and environment. It significantly shaped the two periods of time that made up the end of the Palaeozoic era.

First, it led to the creation of iconic “coal forests” full of giant insects in the Carboniferous period during the ice age. It also paved the way for the rise of reptiles in the Permian period that followed.

I lead an international team of scientists who have just published research demonstrating, for the first time, that carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) played a central role in this huge climatic transition.

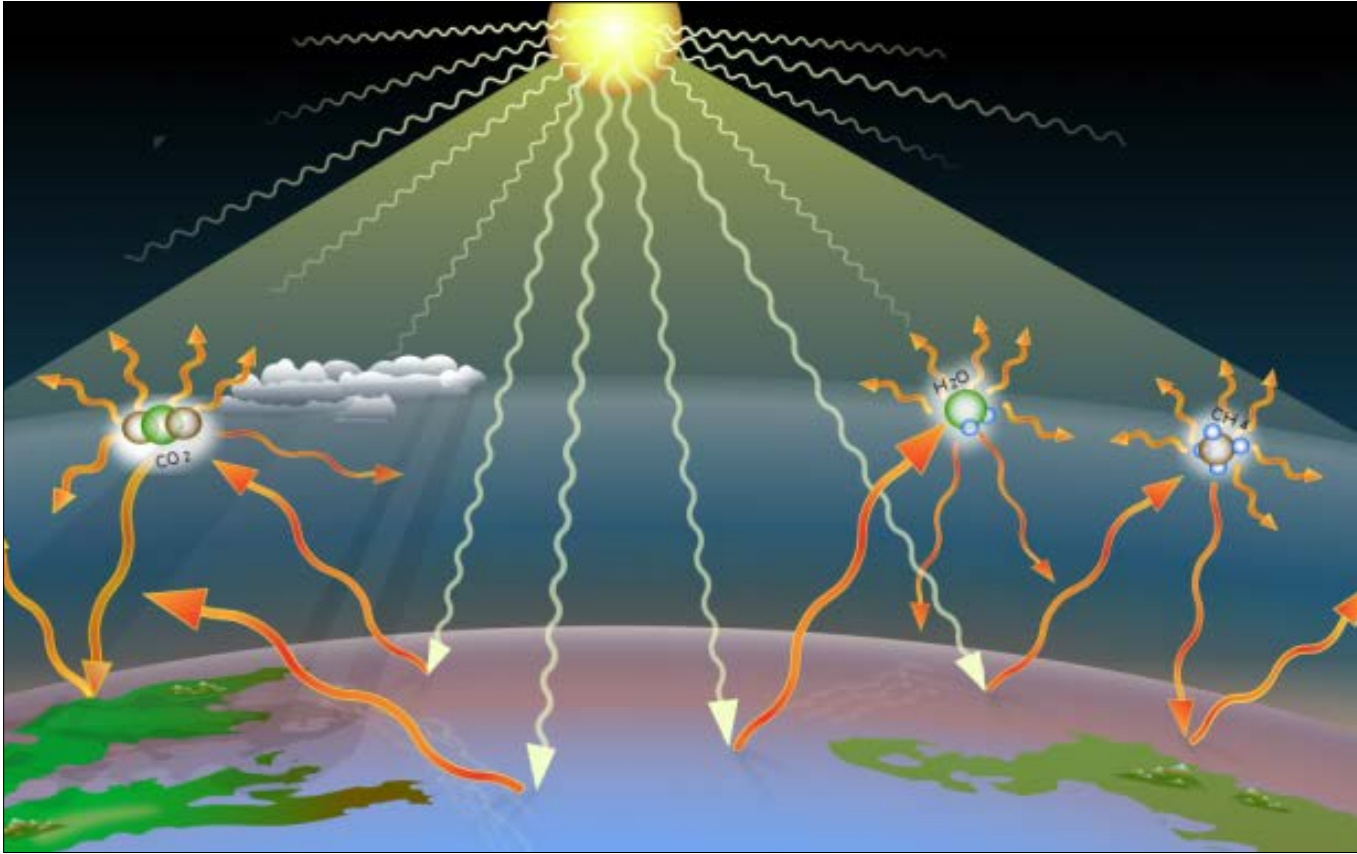
The Late Palaeozoic ice age has long been a climate enigma. Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> estimates for this period vary widely, and different reconstructions of the likely temperature vary by as much as 20°C.

The occurrence of glacial deposits throughout time has often been used to track the ice age. However, this approach is biased by the incompleteness of the geological record and has only loose time constraints. When attempting to reconcile the individual pieces of the puzzle, paradoxes have emerged, such as peak ice conditions coinciding with high CO<sub>2</sub> levels.

Closely regulated by carbon

Our new study provides an original 80-million-year CO<sub>2</sub> record that tracks the climate during the descent into and emergence from the Late Palaeozoic ice age. We did this by looking at the fossilised shells of ancient clam-like creatures known as brachiopods. These shells store chemical fingerprints such as boron isotopes, which enable us to calculate how much CO<sub>2</sub> was in the atmosphere when the brachiopods were alive.

This type of CO<sub>2</sub> reconstruction from Earth’s deep geologic past is entirely novel. Crucially, the reconstruction has a consistent timeline which enables us to bring



together all pieces of the puzzle to demonstrate that the climate of the Late Palaeozoic era was closely regulated by CO<sub>2</sub>.

What did the Late Palaeozoic climate and CO<sub>2</sub> look like? Our reconstruction showed that for part of this era the Earth’s atmosphere sustained relatively low CO<sub>2</sub> (about 330 parts per million or ppm), reaching minimum values of about 200 ppm about 298 million years ago around the boundary between the Carboniferous and Permian periods.

The low atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> combined with less heat coming from the younger sun would have caused the intense “icehouse” conditions, with ice sheets extending as far as the planet’s mid latitudes.

Our reconstruction also revealed an unexpected end to the icehouse period. Scientists previously thought that the Late Palaeozoic ice age gradually waned away, but our findings showed it ended much earlier. Around 294 million years ago, large-scale volcanic activity triggered a rapid rise – at least on geological timescales – in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, and Earth became warmer and drier.

While the past couple of decades have brought much progress in reconstruction of CO<sub>2</sub> from Earth’s more recent past (in particular the past 60 million years where we have seafloor sediments), CO<sub>2</sub> reconstruction from the rock record has been long considered challenging. As such, our study pushes the boundaries in geological reconstruction of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> and

provides a key to unlocking its history to the beginning of Earth’s fossil record.

While CO<sub>2</sub> is expected to play an important role, as demonstrated during the Late Palaeozoic, precise knowledge of past levels and changes is fundamental to understanding of every aspect of the Earth system. Addressing the remaining gaps and continuously refining records is crucial to fully grasping CO<sub>2</sub>’s influence on Earth’s climate and habitability—past, present and future.

(The author is a Senior Research Fellow, School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of St Andrews)



...Himayat Alumni Meet

# Himayat scheme proving game changer for youth upliftment in JK: Javed Dar

Stresses on upskilling youth in tune with new job market trends

**JAMMU:** Minister for Agriculture Production and Rural Development Department & Panchayati Raj, Javed Ahmad Dar, today lauded the transformative impact of ambitious Himayat scheme, emphasising its pivotal role in empowering youth for job market.

Speaking at the Alumni Meet 2025 of Himayat where several beneficiaries shared their success stories, the Minister highlighted the often-overlooked struggles behind every achievement. "Every success story has a struggle behind it.

While people notice the glamorous outcomes, the hard work and challenges faced to reach there remain untold. Today, the children sharing their success stories have shown us that struggles shape identity and teaches valuable life lessons," maintained the Minister.

Javed Dar, who is also Minister for Election and Cooperative departments, remarked that successful implementation of

Himayat scheme is proving a game changer for social and economic upliftment of youth particularly in rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

He stressed on upskilling of youth in tune with the latest job market trends for better employment prospects.

The Minister outlined that the Himayat scheme must be promoted extensively, particularly in rural areas. "Those seeking jobs will benefit immensely if they are skilled and trained, enabling them to earn their livelihood," he added.

Javed Dar urged for greater accountability and a widened scope to strengthen capacity-building initiatives. He also emphasised the importance of skill development in a rapidly growing nation. "India, with its population of 1.5 billion, is among the fastest-growing developed nations. The coming years will bring numerous job opportunities, and it is essential to prepare individuals through

training and skill development," the Minister stated.

The Minister called on district-level officers to ensure widespread promotion of the scheme, especially in rural areas. "Extensive promotion is critical

to ensure that more youth benefit from the scheme. The Himayat initiative has the potential to produce countless success stories in the future, he said.

Reflecting on the government's efforts in the past two and a half months,

the Minister reaffirmed the commitment to public welfare. "We have worked tirelessly to ensure that every welfare scheme reaches the people with full dedication. Himayat is an extremely important project, and

to transform their lives.

Secretary in RDD & PR Department, Rachna Sharma, emphasized the transformative role of education, particularly vocational training in empowering youth and shaping their future.

Referring to the Himayat program, she said, "Himayat is precisely about empowerment through skill-based education. She cited examples of beneficiaries who have received opportunities abroad, stating, "As one of our colleagues rightly pointed out, beneficiaries of Himayat are now getting chances to work overseas and receiving international offers. This is a testament to the program's success."

Chief Operating Officer, Himayat, Rajneesh Gupta, shared key insights into the program's impact during the Alumni Meet, underscoring its role in empowering youth across Jammu and Kashmir.

Gupta highlighted the program's achievements, noting,

"As of now, Himayat has trained more than 32,500 candidates and approximately 14,000 of them have been successfully employed. He remarked, "Currently, many young individuals from across the Union Territory are undergoing training at our centers, located both within and outside J&K.

These centers are more than just training facilities; they are hubs of transformation, equipping young minds with the skills they need to seize opportunities and contribute meaningfully to society."

During the event, the Minister also inaugurated a counseling-cum-call center in collaboration with IIT Jammu.

The event was attended by DG Rural Sanitation, Anoo Malhotra, Director RDD Jammu Mumtaz Ali, Mission Director JKRLM, Shubhra Sharma, Director Panchayati Raj, J&K Sham Lal, Chief Executive Officer, IWMP, Rajnish Kumar and Additional Secretary, Waseem Raja.



to ensure that more youth benefit from the scheme. The Himayat initiative has the potential to produce countless success stories in the future, he said.

Reflecting on the government's efforts in the past two and a half months,

as it progresses, we will address any shortcomings and challenges to make it a success," he assured.

The Minister said that this initiative will not only help individuals think positively about their future but also enable financially weak families

## Forest Deptt organizes training session for employees on Social Media Management

**SRINAGAR:** In order to equip employees with the necessary SOPs to effectively manage social media platforms while adhering to government guidelines, a training session on social media handling was organized for the employees of the Forest Department at Sheikhbagh Forest Complex, Srinagar today.

The training session focused on enhancing the online presence of the Forest Department, promoting awareness about environmental conservation, and fostering engagement with the public. Employees learned about best practices for creating engaging content, responding to online queries, and addressing grievances.

During the session, employees were briefed on the Government's Social Media Policy and guidelines for handling official communications. Tips and techniques for creating informative and engaging content were shared, including visual storytelling through short documentaries and addressing public grievances were discussed.

Speaking on the occasion Irfan Rasool Wani, Chief Conservator of Forests, Kashmir said the Social media is a powerful tool that can bridge the gap between government agencies and the community. The platform improves communication with the public and increases awareness about environmental conservation. By leveraging social media platforms effectively, employees can promote the department's initiatives and share success stories.

DFO Planning and Publicity Division said the Forest Department plans to continue hosting training sessions to further develop the employees' skills in handling social media platforms. By investing in these training opportunities, the department aims to strengthen its online presence effectively.



## 3 Beekeeping Clusters worth Rs 3.80 cr under SFURTI being established in Jammu division: KVIB Chairperson

**JAMMU:** Chairperson J&K KVIB, Dr. Hina Shafi Bhat, presided over SFURTI Purchase Committee meeting at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Jagdish Chander, Secretary/CEO J&K KVIB, senior officers of the Board and SKUAST Kashmir (Technical Agency).

During the meeting, it was informed that three Beekeeping Clusters being established with an assistance of Rs. 3.80 crore are at various stages of implementation at Samba, Doda and Ramban, which shall directly benefit more than one thousand Beekeepers from the

cluster areas. It was further informed that with implementation of these clusters, there shall be improvement



in earnings of Bee-Keepers by better marketing, production and management practices besides facilities like Processing, Bottling, Packing & Testing of Honey shall be provided in the CFCs of these clusters.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Hina Shafi Bhat enjoined upon all the concerned agencies to work in



a mission-mode and ensure that all the spade work for undertaking various interventions under hard, soft and thematic interventions is expedited. She directed the officers to expedite and ensure that SPV formation in respect of

Kashur Maunch Beekeeping Cluster HMT Srinagar is completed saying that cluster must be ready for inauguration by March 2025.

It was informed that the Board is exploring the possibility to position its honey as ultra-premium honey in the market and ensure that it is exported to outside India also.

Dr Hina assured that all necessary measures would be undertaken to ensure time-bound implementation of SFURTI clusters across Jammu and Kashmir. She also stressed the importance of close coordination among the concerned agencies for the early establishment of the clusters.

## GMC Srinagar rebuts news item suggesting increase in the Neonatal mortality rate at LD Hospital

Neonatal mortality rate at LD Hospital significantly lower than the national average

**SRINAGAR:** The Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar has strongly refuted the news item circulated by some media outlets suggesting an increase in the mortality rate at Lal Ded Hospital (LD Hospital) for the year 2024.

In an official statement issued here, it has been clarified that the neonatal mortality rate (NMR) at Government Lal Ded Hospital (LD Hospital) for the year 2024 stands at 9.9 per 1000, which is significantly lower than the national average, though neonatal mortality rate at LD cannot be used as an index of neonatal mortality in the society.

The GMC authorities further explained that the neonatal mortality rate has not risen but, in fact, has been effectively contained through advanced treatment methods. These improvements have ensured that the rate remains well below the national average, demonstrating the hospital's success in providing high-quality care.

In 2024, LD Hospital attended to a total of 221,163 outpatients (OPD), with 37,908 inpatient (IPD) admissions with 29,939 live births. Further 3,107 neonatal IPD admissions were recorded. Out of these neonatal admissions, 297 deaths occurred, resulting in a neonatal mortality rate of 9.9 per 1000 which is below than the national neonatal mortality which at present is 17-21 per 1000 live births.

The millennium development goal is to reduce neonatal mortality rate to 12 per 1000 live births. This figure reflects a remarkable achievement



in the face of challenges and is attributed to the advanced healthcare systems in place at the valley's only tertiary maternity care hospital. The state-of-the-art medical infrastructure and skilled medical professionals at the hospital have played a crucial role in maintaining these positive outcomes.

## Dubjan winter carnival attracts huge attention of visitors

Festive extravaganza held amid breathtaking views of snow clad slopes of Pir Panjal, adorable banks of Rambaira

Visitors in thousands joined to witness the aura of first ever Winter Fest in Shopian **SHOPIAN:** In a bid to showcase the breathtaking beauty of Shopian district, a first ever Winter Carnival organized by the District Administration Shopian commenced today at Dubjan Meadows, along the banks of Giant Rambaira.

The two-day event, named after the folk tale of Heemal and Naegrat, witnessed much fanfare and excitement among people along the snow clad slopes of Dubjan, under the lap of mighty Pir Panjal mountains.

An aura of celebrations and festivities filled the air, which saw participation of thousands of people, coming from across the UT.

The festival was inaugurated with ribbon cutting and Pigeon Releasing Function by Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Shopian, Shabir Ahmad Kullay; Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar and DIG, South Kashmir, Javid Ahmad Matoo in presence of SSP, Shopian, Anayat Ali, ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone and other district officers.

The festival hosted a litany of adventurous snow activities including demonstration of Skiing & ATVs, snow games viz. snow cricket, snow sculpting competitions at the venue among other enjoyable activities.

Dubjan Meadows, located along the expansive Rambaira River is surrounded by snow-decked peaks and towering alpine type vegetation.

This picturesque area hosts mesmerising potential tourist hotspots of Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary (known for Markhor), historic Sarai of Mughal, Aliabad, Heerpora Sarai's, Hot & Cold water Sulphur Springs having therapeutic features, and the High Altitude Pir Ki Gali and famous shrine.

The area is a Tourist Circuit, ready to be promoted as an offbeat destination with road connectivity even in the harshest period of winter, mobile connectivity and other amenities coming up soon along the Road.

Additionally, an exhibition showcasing local cuisine and crafts was also an attraction along with Photographic exhibitions depicting different shades of Shopian. Agri allied and employment generation departments had also set up stalls at the venue.

The winter fest provided a platform to local businesses to set up stalls providing different sorts of services to the public who enjoyed their fullest.

Cultural and Artistic performances were also displayed. "This festival is aimed to highlight the beauty of the area besides the vast scope of tourism potential," the Deputy Commissioner said.



## Srinagar district takes lead in implementation of SMILE scheme across J&K

DC Srinagar visits Rehabilitation Home for persons involved in the act of Begging; takes stock of the available facilities

Says initiative aimed to rehabilitate and reintegrate beggars into Society to ensure their dignified life under SMILE scheme

**SRINAGAR:** With an aim to rehabilitate and facilitate beggars to join mainstream to live a dignified life under SMILE (Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise) scheme in District, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat Saturday visited newly established Rehabilitation Home for persons engaged in the act of Begging here at Hawal.

Notably, Srinagar has become the first District in Jammu and Kashmir to implement the SMILE scheme launched by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in 2022, to rehabilitate and reintegrate beggars into society.

During the visit, the DC was accompanied by Chief Planning Officer, District Social Welfare Officer, Tehsilidar Eidgah, NGO members and other concerned.

On the occasion, the DC took a detailed

round of the Rehabilitation Home and inspected the facilities and rehabilitation measures for the persons engaged in the



act of Begging. While interacting with the Officers and staff of the Rehabilitation Centre, the DC said that the initiative has been taken to address the issue of begging in the District under SMILE (Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise) scheme. The DC added that the SMILE scheme will provide beggars with vocational training and livelihood opportunities, aiming to

empower them to become self-sufficient. He emphasized a holistic approach, focusing on social reintegration and the well-being of marginalized individuals.

Dr Bilal further said that special provisions will be made for children found begging. He said they will be enrolled in schools to ensure their education and development. He said that the

District Administration is committed not only to eliminate begging but also to ensure that those affected receive the support they need to earn livelihood with dignity and honour. Meanwhile, the DC has stressed the staff of the Rehabilitation home to work in a compassionate manner towards the affected section of the society and enable them to lead a life of value and dignity.

## Dedicated to alleviating human sufferings, ensuring well being of vulnerable: J&K Red Cross Society

Conducts impactful activities in 2024 benefiting over 20,000 people

**Jahangeer Ganaie**

**Srinagar:** The Indian Red Cross Society, J&K-UT on Saturday said it is dedicated to alleviating human suffering, ensuring the well-being of vulnerable populations and promoting health and humanitarian values throughout India.

Red Cross Society J&K, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) conducted a series of activities in 2024 to improve the quality of life for individuals facing severe physical challenges.

Under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha (President, IRCS J&K) and the supervision of Rohit Khajuria (General Secretary), the organisation conducted numerous impactful activities in 2024.

Free Sanitary Napkin Distribution and Menstrual Hygiene Education: The J&K Red Cross Society distributed free sanitary napkins to female students at various government schools and conducted educational lectures on menstrual hygiene. This initiative aims to ensure that girls have the resources they need to manage their menstrual health with dignity and to disband the stigma surrounding

menstruation. A total of 1,220 sanitary napkins were distributed.

Free Tea Services: The Society provided complimentary tea outside government



hospitals in Jammu & Kashmir for patients and their attendants, which has been well-received by the community. Approximately 17,000 individuals benefited from this service.

Youth and Volunteer Programs: The organisation launched Red Cross Youth Units in every college in J&K, engaging young people in social and health awareness initiatives. A total of 12 camps were held, registering

1,375 students as Annual Associates of the Red Cross.

First-Aid Training and Awareness Programs: In collaboration with St. John Ambulance, the Society conducted first-aid training for corporate employees, students and community members. Over the year, 19 training sessions were held, with 416 participants trained. Additionally, 18 first-aid awareness programs reached approximately 2,000 people.

Healthcare Camps: Comprehensive medical camps offering immunizations, eye check-ups, and dengue testing were organized in schools and local organisations, examining a total of 646 individuals across 8 camps. Drug De-addiction Programs: The IRCS conducted educational programs in schools and colleges to raise awareness about the dangers of drug abuse, partially funded by the office of the Excise Commissioner, Jammu, under a CSR initiative aimed at combating drug addiction among youth.

Blood Donation Camps: Thirteen blood donation camps were organized in collaboration with various institutions, resulting in 1,177 voluntary donations.



# Inorganic Food Additives

## To Increase Allergy Vulnerability For Babies

A study suggests inorganic nanoparticles in our food, which get transferred into the mother's breast milk through the placenta, can interfere with intestinal regulation, leading to an increase in babies' chance of food allergies

Our society today is heavily focused on clean eating, or healthy eating with the advancement of organic restaurants, various types of diets, and more. We still, however, find excessive amounts of food additives and processors in our food. From jar foods to sauces, to even fast food menus, food additives are everywhere in our lives.

and nanoparticles, we have to be considerate about food allergy and the effect it has on fetuses. Such immunotoxic biocidal particles can impede the host-intestinal microbiota's favorable transfer, leading to a hindered immune system development.

### Growth of food allergy

Food allergy, or FA, refers to an unfavorable response resulting from an immoderate response to dietary proteins which results from a damaged introduction of oral tolerance.

FA can severely affect one's life, resulting in multiple mechanisms from nausea, hives, swelling, and even asthma. FA can also lead to a serious allergic reaction called anaphylactic shock, which can be fatal. FA affects around 6 to 8 percent of children,

exposed breast milk can get immune-related disorders.

"Due to the immunotoxic and biocidal properties of nanoparticles, exposure may disrupt the host-intestinal microbiota's beneficial exchanges and may interfere with intestinal barrier and gut-associated immune system development in fetus and neonate," continued Dr. Karine Adel-Patient.

Nanoparticles are not engrossed but rather processed in the gut, impacting the epithelium



### Understanding nanotechnology

Nanotechnology is a popular concept in food science that positively influenced our food culture, from food processing, packaging, and most importantly, the safety of our food. In-depth, nanotechnology can help with a myriad of elements from detecting bacteria, increasing food life, and discharging preservatives to helping with food packaging. With such accelerated advancement, however, inorganic nanoparticles have come into the picture.

"Nanotechnology introduces new chances for innovation in the food industry at immense speed, but uncertainty and health concerns are also emerging. EU/WE/global legislation for the regulation of nanotechnology in food is meager. Moreover, current legislation appears unsuitable to nanotechnology specificity," said Dr. Bhupinder Singh Sekhon in his research.

A recent study by the University of Paris-Saclay shared that these inorganic nanoparticles found in our everyday food could have much more serious health benefits than we think. The Université Paris-Saclay colleagues said nanoparticles not only affect ourselves but also the placenta, eventually reaching fetuses.

With such common exposure to food additives

Research showed that FA has dramatically escalated over the past two decades, exhibiting the importance of environmental factors in the particular disease. Studies showed that about 32 million people in America are suffering from at least one food allergy, and approximately 6 million children possess at least one as well.

and the most common allergies include peanuts and cow's milk.

Research showed that FA has dramatically escalated over the past two decades, exhibiting the importance of environmental factors in the particular disease. Studies showed that about 32 million people in America are suffering from at least one food allergy, and approximately 6 million children possess at least one as well.

"The impact of such exposure on the development of food allergy has not been assessed to date," stated corresponding study author Dr. Karine Adel-Patient.

"Due to the immunotoxic and biocidal properties of nanoparticles, exposure may disrupt the host-intestinal microbiota's beneficial exchanges and may interfere with intestinal barrier and gut-associated immune system development in fetus and neonate."

"This may be linked to the epidemic of immune-related disorders in children, such as food allergies - a major public health concern," continued Dr. Adel-Patient.

### How does it get transferred to babies?

When the mother gets exposed to foodborne nanoparticles, they transfer through the placenta, directly affecting the fetus. It also paves its way through breast milk, which is then fed to babies. Even healthy babies who get exposed to their mother's

intestinal barrier that is crucial to building a healthy reaction to dietary proteins.

"This may be linked to the epidemic of immune-related disorders in children, such as food allergies - a major public health concern."

The perinatal term is crucial for babies to receive sufficient nutrients and pave the way to create a healthy susceptible metabolism.

Dr. Adel-Patient also shared that the "review highlights the urgent need for researchers to assess the risk related to exposure to foodborne inorganic nanoparticles during a critical window of susceptibility and its impact on children's health."

Aside from other environmental components, certain inorganic nanoparticles can severely impact a baby's dietary health, including intestinal homeostasis, which can lead to FA. More study is needed to thoroughly examine the impact of fetal and neonatal subjectivity on nanoparticles.



# Covid variants still transmissible between species: Study

The SARS-CoV-2 virus is still highly transmissible between mammals, according to a study based on computer simulations.

Researchers at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), US, found that coronaviruses use their spike proteins -- which help them to infect cells -- to attach themselves to the host cells in both bats and humans in much the same way.

The findings, published in the journal Royal Society Open Science, show how the viral spike proteins in several SARS-CoV-2 variants interact with the host cell receptors known as ACE2 in both humans and various bats of genus Rhinolophus.

"We were hoping to see really cool

adaptive evolution happening as the virus got more used to humans and less used to bats, but we actually saw that there wasn't a whole lot of change," said Associate Professor Gregory Babbitt from RIT.

"Because this binding site has not evolved very much, there's really not much stopping it from transmitting from humans to bats," Babbitt said in a statement.

Scientists believe bats first transmitted SARS-CoV-2 to humans in December 2019, and the virus has since evolved into several variants such as Delta and Omicron.

The study suggests that there would be pretty widespread cross-species



infectivity, and the literature has shown there has been a lot of evidence of that.

The researchers used a computer simulation method called molecular dynamics to put proteins in a solvated simulation and then watch them move.

The approach uses high performance computing on graphics processors to show what every atom does over time.

Babbitt said this approach allows scientists to study questions that cannot be answered in a traditional laboratory.

"It would be dangerous to do experiments where we reinfected bats with human viral strains, so our computer-based simulations offered a much safer alternative," Babbitt added.



Continued From P1...

Z-Morh tunnel

of Ladakh, laid the foundation for AIIMS Jammu, and launched the Srinagar Ring Road Project and also launched rural BPOs in Bandipora and Ganderbal.

However, there were no direct visits due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021 also, there were no public visits by PM Modi in the year, but he chaired an all-party meeting with leaders from Jammu and Kashmir in June and continued emphasizing political engagement.

On June 20, 2023, PM Modi visited Jammu and Kashmir for a two-day trip, inaugurating and laying the foundation for several development projects.

On September 19, 2023, he visited Srinagar for an election rally in the region, his first visit post the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status in 2019.

On February 20, 2024, projects worth over Rs 32,000 crore were launched.

PM Modi launched multiple development projects in education, railway, aviation, and road sectors in Jammu and Kashmir.

Railway Initiatives: He inaugurated the 48 km railway line between Banihal-Khari-Sumber-Sangaldan and the newly electrified 185.66 km Baramulla-Srinagar-Banihal-Sangaldan section. The Prime Minister also flagged off the first electric train in the Valley, enhancing connectivity and promoting environmental sustainability.

Educational Institutions: The Prime Minister inaugurated permanent campuses for IIT Jammu and IIM Jammu, aiming to boost higher education infrastructure in the region.

Healthcare Facilities: He inaugurated the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Vijaypur (Samba), Jammu, established at a cost of over 1,660 crore, equipped with 720 beds, and associated medical colleges.

Aviation Infrastructure: PM Modi laid the foundation stone for a new terminal building at Jammu Airport, designed to handle about 2,000 passengers during peak hours, enhancing the region's connectivity.

Road Projects: He initiated important road projects, including two stretches (44.22 km) of the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra expressway connecting Jammu to Katra and phase two of the four-laning of the Srinagar Ring Road, aimed at improving intra-region connectivity.

**Loved pictures, videos**

The Prime Minister, according to the officials, would arrive in Sonamarg at around 11:45 am where he will inaugurate the 6.5 kilometre strategic Z-Morh tunnel. He will also address the gathering on the occasion.

The Prime Minister, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), will also meet the construction workers who worked meticulously in the harshest conditions. PM Modi will acknowledge their contribution to this engineering feat.

‘LOVED AERIAL PICTURES AND VIDEOS’

Meanwhile, reacting to the pictures and videos of Z-Morh tunnel and Sonamarg posted by the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, on social media, today, PM Modi wrote on X: "I am eagerly awaiting my visit to Sonmarg, Jammu and Kashmir for the tunnel inauguration. You rightly point out the benefits for tourism and the local economy. Also, loved the aerial pictures and videos!,"

Earlier in the day, the Chief Minister visited Sonamarg to review the preparations for PM Modi's visit. "Visited Sonmarg today to review preparations for PM @narendramodi ji's visit on Monday. The inauguration of the Z-morh tunnel will open Sonmarg to tourism all year round, Sonmarg will now be developed as a great ski resort. The local population will not have to leave in winter & the travel time to Kargil/Leh from Srinagar will also reduce," Omar wrote on X.

Z-MORH TUNNEL IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF ZOJILA PROJECT

Pertinently, the Z-Morh tunnel project constructed at the cost of over Rs 2,700 crore comprises the main tunnel, an egress tunnel and approach roads. Situated at an altitude of over 8,650 feet above sea level, it will enhance all-weather connectivity between Srinagar and Sonamarg enroute to Leh, bypassing landslide and avalanche routes and ensuring safer and uninterrupted access to the strategically critical Ladakh region.

It will also promote tourism by transforming Sonamarg into a year-round destination, boosting winter tourism, adventure sports, and local livelihoods

**Amit Shah**

and Kashmir, Punjab, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh and these were major achievements."

He said that the local police of Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh, along with central agencies, uncovered several cases of narco-terrorism. "Instead of being satisfied with these successes, we need to work with even more speed and enthusiasm," the Union Home Minister said.

Shah emphasized that regional conferences have played a pivotal role in strengthening the nation's fight against drugs. He highlighted that in 2024, the NCB and police forces across India seized drugs valued at Rs 16,914 crore—the highest figure since independence—indicating significant progress in the campaign against this menace.

He stressed the importance of timely policies, enhanced intensity, meticulous micro-planning, and consistent monitoring to address the challenges ahead.

He underscored that achieving a drug-free India is crucial to realizing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a fully developed India by 2047. He called for unified efforts, urging both the union and state governments, along with all relevant departments, to work collaboratively with dedication and commitment to eradicate this evil. He said that we are determined to destroy the entire ecosystem of narco terror.

‘DRUG DISPOSAL FORTNIGHT’

The Union Home Minister announced the launch of 'Drug Disposal Fortnight' dedicated to the destruction of confiscated narcotics. As part of this campaign, one lakh kilograms of narcotics valued at approximately Rs 8,600 crore will be destroyed over the next ten days, sending a powerful message to the public about the

government's commitment to eradicating drugs. He emphasized the need for a comprehensive, 360-degree "Whole of Government" approach to achieve total victory in the fight against drugs.

He said that under the leadership of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, the fight against drugs has strengthened a lot in the past 10 years and it has yielded very good results. He mentioned that we are very close to success in this battle, and are moving in the right direction.

Shah said that between 2004 and 2014, 3.63 lakh kilograms of drugs were seized, which increased sevenfold to 24 lakh kilograms in 10 years from 2014 to 2024, which is a huge achievement. "It is an example that the public, the courts, and the entire ecosystem, down to the grassroots level, are responding positively to our efforts," he added.

Shah said the value of drugs destroyed in the 10 years between 2004 and 2014 was Rs 8,150 crore, which has increased seven-fold to Rs 56,861 crore in the last 10 years. The Home Minister said that this should not be interpreted as an increase in drug usage, but rather that action is now being taken and results are being achieved.

He stated that the government led by PM Modi has worked at a rapid pace to destroy drugs, uncover the networks, and bring the entire ecosystem under the grip of the law.

Inaugurates regional unit in Bhopal

He also inaugurated the regional unit in Bhopal and dedicated the extension of the MANAS-2 helpline across 36 states and union territories. He urged all states to actively promote the MANAS app and toll-free number, emphasizing the importance of prompt, result-oriented action on every call to enhance the helpline's credibility. He noted that over 25,000 people have already engaged with the helpline and stressed the need for swift action on every call to ensure its effectiveness. Shah reiterated that only through collective responsibility and dedicated efforts, the goal of a drug-free India can be realized.

The Union Home Minister said that we have made several changes in investigations, not only exposing drugs but also uncovering the terrorism networks associated with them.

DARK WEB, CRYPTO-CURRENCY, ONLINE MARKETPLACES, DRONES CONTINUES TO POSE CHALLENGE

Shah stated that the use of the dark web, cryptocurrency, online marketplaces, and drones continues to pose a challenge for us. He said that all agencies should strengthen the resolve for a drug-free India by stopping drug smuggling through the dark web, crypto-currency, and drones.

Shah said that for the success of the 'Nasha Mukht Bharat' campaign, technical solutions to these challenges must be found by our agencies, state governments, and the youth involved in this field; only then this fight could be result-oriented. He mentioned that India is one of the largest producers of precursor chemicals, which is a concern in the fight against drugs. When strict measures are taken against traditional drugs, a natural diversion towards chemical drugs occurs. He added that at least 50 illegal labs have been caught across the country, which shows that due to our strict actions, the demand for drugs has increased, and they are being diverted through different channels. He emphasized that we need to stop this diversion immediately. The Home Minister urged all states to destroy illegal clandestine labs with rigor and take legal action against them with a ruthless approach.

PM MODI LED GOVT MOVING FORWARD WITH RUTHLESS APPROACH

The Union Home Minister said that the PM Modi led government has changed its approach against drugs since 2019. He mentioned that the Modi government is moving forward with a ruthless approach against the drug supply chain, a strategic approach for demand reduction, and a human approach for the victims.

He also stated that we need to increase the use of PIT-NDPS (Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act). He emphasized the need to strategically and cautiously expand the use of legal provisions for asset confiscation. Amit Shah also urged states to take proactive steps to enhance the capacity of Forensic Labs (FSL) instead of relying solely on the Centre for support.

Shah stressed upon the importance of investigating drug cases using both 'top-to-bottom' and 'bottom-to-top' approaches. He highlighted that no narcotics case should be treated as an isolated incident, and investigations must continue until the entire network behind it is uncovered. He urged that each case should be seen as an opportunity to dismantle a broader network, ensuring the fight against drugs reaches its logical conclusion. Shah emphasized the critical role of financial investigations in tackling the drug trade, including seizing properties linked to illicit activities. He stated that no major case should be concluded without a thorough financial investigation.

**J&K Will**

virtually from Jammu, emphasizing J&K UT's commitment to neutralise the narco-terror nexus and combat the drug menace.

While addressing the conference, the Lieutenant Governor said that concerted efforts were made in the year 2024 to target the illicit proceeds of narcotics trafficking and 188 properties of traffickers have been identified for attachment under Smugglers and Foreign Exchange Manipulators Act (SAFEMA). 274 repeat offenders were detained under PIT-NDPS Act.

The Lieutenant Governor said in 2024 significant improvements were recorded over previous years and 210 convictions were secured which is the highest ever. In 2024, around 1,514 cases under NDPS Act were registered and 2,260 arrests were made. He said the government is determined to completely dismantle the entire drug syndicate which is posing a serious and direct threat to the nation's sovereignty and security. Five special NDPS Courts have been established for speedy trial of cases.

"Financial investigations are now being carried out in all cases to work out forward and backward linkages so that the entire network is neutralised in every NDPS case," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He said, under the guidance of Prime Minister

Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, J&K Union Territory has adopted a whole of government approach to deal with drug trafficking and drug abuse. The Lieutenant Governor said that Inter-departmental coordination on various aspects and challenges is ensured and regular NCORD meetings have been held in the last two years.

The Lieutenant Governor said that the forensic labs have been strengthened and modern equipments as well as manpower has been ensured. This has resulted in effective functioning of labs and strengthening of the entire legal justice framework through filing early charge-sheet and effective trial of cases.

**J&K government**

expenditure, including holding of seminars, conferences, and workshops with utmost economy, while it also directed that holding exhibitions, fairs and conference outside J&K be strongly discouraged.

The Finance department has directed respective departments that during the last quarter of the current financial year the revenue expenditure should be limited to 30% of budget allocation and in the month of March, it should be limited to 15% of such allocation. "In the last month of the current financial year, payments may be made only for the works duly executed, and the goods and services already procured," the order states. The order further directs departments that no amount should be released in advance in the last month with the exception of the loans or advances to government servants as per service conditions or on compassionate grounds or to disaster victims as a measure of relief and rehabilitation.

The government has also ordered that rush of expenditure on procurement of goods and services should be avoided during the last month of the current financial year to ensure that codal procedures are complied with and there is no infructuous expenditure. "Director(s) Finance / Financial Advisor(s) are advised to specially monitor this aspect in their respective departments," it said. The government also imposed a 10 percent economy cut on the budget allocation for OE, LTC, telephone / POL, advertisements, publicity, hospitality & sumptuary.

"Utmost economy shall be observed in organising conferences/ seminars/workshops. Holding of exhibitions/fairs/seminars/conferences outside J&K is strongly discouraged," the order said, adding that there shall be complete ban on holding of meetings and conferences at private hotels," the order states. According to the order, government buildings/ halls should be utilised for holding meetings and conferences instead. It also imposed a 10 percent economy cut on the budget allocation for conduct of camps, conferences and seminars.

It also said that purchase of new vehicles is strictly discouraged. "Exceptional cases for meeting critical operational requirement shall be permitted with 20% reduction against condemnation as a replacement measure and with the concurrence of Finance Department. The already condemned vehicles must be auctioned and auction proceeds deposited as miscellaneous Revenue before submitting such proposal," the order said. It also directed administrative secretaries that travel expenditure should be regulated so as to ensure that each department remains within the allocated budget. "Re-appropriation/augmentation proposals on this account will not be entertained," it said, adding that international travel shall not be allowed until specific permission is granted by the Finance Department.

**Srinagar Launches**

and fewer in winter. The administration is focused on identifying and rehabilitating individuals throughout the year.

On preparations for upcoming national events, the Deputy Commissioner assured that all necessary measures have been taken. He praised the coordination between departments and expressed confidence in the city's readiness to host these events successfully.

Dr. Mohiuddin concluded by emphasizing the administration's dedication to transforming Srinagar into a progressive, inclusive, and well-managed urban center.

**Satish Sharma**

Akhnoor, Rajouri, Poonch, Reasi, Kathua, Chenab Valley, Gurez, Ganderbal and Kupwara.

Satish Sharma also requested for developing infrastructure for waterway transportation in certain areas in order to promote religious tourism, establishment of a Centre of Excellence in J&K for Research, Capacity Building & Training and creation of Regional/Sub-office of IWA in J&K, declaration of other rivers in J&K as National Waterways.

During the detailed discussion, the Union Minister assured full support from the Ministry saying that there are much more projects in pipeline which will develop and enhance inland water transport infrastructure in J&K.

**Key dev projects**

The approved projects included Water Supply Schemes (WSS) Bhattan, Kewa, Amrothi, Darsoo Guddar and others which aim to improve essential infrastructure in both rural and urban areas. The 4G Saturation Project in Babeti has also been cleared, reinforcing the government's focus on enhancing digital connectivity in remote and underserved regions. Additionally, re-routing of the 400 KV S/C Dulhasti to Kishenpur transmission line has been given the go-ahead, ensuring smoother power transmission and improved energy efficiency in critical areas.

The Minister directed the authorities to undertake aggressive compensatory afforestation to arrest any ecological imbalance, ensuring sustainable growth and infrastructure development.

Javed Rana, while announcing the approvals, emphasized the importance of these projects in addressing the developmental needs of the region. He remarked, "The forest clearance for these projects demonstrate our commitment towards fast-tracking development in Jammu and Kashmir while ensuring environmental sustainability. We are dedicated to fostering growth in a way that benefits every section of society."

The Minister highlighted that these projects had been carefully reviewed to ensure compliance with environmental norms, reflecting the government's balanced approach to development and conservation.

He also commended the Forest Department and other concerned authorities for their proactive efforts in expediting the clearance process without compromising on environmental safeguards.

The clearance reflects the government's broader vision of equitable development, prioritising projects that address long-standing infrastructural gaps and improve the standard of living for residents.

Rana further stressed the need for timely implementation of these projects and assured that the administration would monitor their progress closely to avoid delays.

The Minister also reiterated the government's commitment towards expanding opportunities for growth and modernising infrastructure across the Union Territory. He expressed confidence that these initiatives would pave the way for a more connected and resource-efficient Jammu and Kashmir.

**Sonamarg Tunnel**

historically prone to avalanches and heavy snowfall. The Sonamarg Tunnel is not just an engineering marvel; it marks a transformative leap in Jammu and Kashmir's development narrative. By strengthening trade, tourism, and local livelihoods while ensuring uninterrupted access and strategic security, the tunnel stands as a testament to India's infrastructural excellence under NHIDCL's conceptualized development. This milestone project sets a new standard for future infrastructure endeavors in the region and across the country.

Furthermore, the route between Srinagar and Leh is challenging due to unforeseen weather conditions, often causing road closures that disrupt connectivity. The infrastructure development of the Sonamarg Tunnel (6.4 km) and the upcoming Zojila Tunnel ( 13.1 Km ) aim to provide all-weather connectivity to Ladakh bypassing snow and avalanche-prone areas, enhancing safety, and reducing travel disruptions. The tunnel will significantly influence the region's economic landscape by improving the transportation of goods and essential services. By eliminating logistical barriers, it will enable faster movement of perishable goods while supporting local producers and traders through better market access. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways projects a 30% increase in trade volumes after the tunnel's opening. Once operational, it is expected to create direct and indirect employment opportunities across tourism, hospitality, and infrastructure maintenance sectors.

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that i have lost my Driving licence bearing Registration No:Jk02 20210008129, Adhar no Card bearing Registration No:9468 0773 8686, and Pan Card bearing Registration No: HJGPK 3693K, While traveling at Garoora . Now i want to submit missing report in police station Aragam and also want apply for its duplicate in this regard any person having any objection he/she may file the Objections in office of the Concern Authorities with in a period of seven days from the date of the publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be accepted.

**Manoj Kumar.**  
**S/O Jagdish Kumar.**  
**R/O Jammu R S Pora, Chakrohi .**

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that Electricity Agreement Bearing Consumer ID No:0216010005724, Which is Registered in the name of Raja Begum W/O Ab Ahad Lone, R/O Guroora Bandipora. Now i want to apply for Change this Electricity Agreement in the name of Ghulam Rasool Lone, S/O Abdul Ahad Lone, R/O Garoora Bandipora, in this regard any person having any objection he/she may file the Objections in office of the Assistant Executive Engineer Electricity Sub Division Bandipora with in a period of seven days from the date of the publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be accepted.

**Ghulam Rasool Lone.**  
**S/O Abdul Ahad Lone.**  
**R/O Garoora Bandipora.**

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that the Mother's name and Residence of my Son has been Mistakenly written in his school records as Shahnaz Begum, and Residence as Badwan Gurez, while as his Actual and correct Mother's name is Shahnaz Banoo, and Residence is Ward NO: 02 plan Bandipora. Now i want to apply for its correction in this regard any person having any objection he/she may file the Objections in office of the principal Blooming Buds Computer School Bandipora, with in a period of seven days from the date of the publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be accepted.

**Abdul Mateen Samoon.**  
**F/O Rayan Iqbal Samoon.**  
**R/O Ward NO: 02 plan Bandipora.**

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that the DOB of my Son has been Mistakenly written in his school records as 16-08-2012, while as his Actual and correct DOB is 01-05-2011. Now i want to apply for its correction in this regard any person having any objection he/she may file the Objections in office of the Principal Muslim Model School Qazipora Bandipora with in a period of seven days from the date of the publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be accepted.

**Zahoor Ahmad Khan.**  
**F/O Mohammad Muneeb khan.**  
**R/O Qazipora Bandipora.**

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that the DOB of my Son has been Mistakenly written in his school records as 06-01-2015. while as his Actual and correct DOB is 06-01-2016. Now i want to apply for its correction in this regard any person having any objection he/she may file the Objections in office of the principal Space Age Model School kaloosa Bandipora with in a period of seven days from the date of the publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be accepted.

**Salamat Ali Shameem.**  
**F/O Faheem Salamat.**  
**R/O Ashtangoo Tehsil Aloosa District Bandipora.**

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that in my Driving licence bearing Registration No JK1520190000494, my name and parantege has been Mistakenly written as Aijaz Ahmad Shah Peerzada S/O Mohammad Sideeq Shah Peerzada. While as my Actual and correct name and parantege is Aijaz Ahmad Shah S/O Mohammad Sideeq Shah. Now i want to apply for its correction in this regard any person having any objection he/she may file the Objections in office of the Assistant Regional Transport Office Bandipora with in a period of seven days from the date of the publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be accepted.

**Aijaz Ahmad Shah.**  
**S/O Mohammad Sideeq Shah.**  
**R/O Lawaypora Bandipora.**



# Mohammed Shami returns for India's T20I series against England

Fast bowler Mohammed Shami has finally made a comeback to the India squad with his selection for the five T20Is against England starting on January 22 in Kolkata. He returns after last playing for India in the ODI World Cup final in November 2023, after which he had ankle surgery and also suffered from knee-related niggles.

The T20I squad, led by Suryakumar Yadav, was picked by the selectors on Saturday but they are yet to announce India's ODI squad for the three matches against England in February as well as the provisional 15 for the Champions Trophy, the deadline for which is January 12.

Jasprit Bumrah was not among the 15 for the T20Is against England, with uncertainty still prevailing over the nature of the injury that prevented him from bowling in Australia's second innings of the fifth Test in Sydney.

Rishabh Pant, who was India's preferred wicketkeeper at the 2024 T20 World Cup and in two of the three T20Is in Sri Lanka in July last year, was not part of the squad; he was likely rested along with Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill after playing the Test series in Australia. Sanju Samson and Dhruv Jurel are the two wicketkeepers for the T20Is against England. Batting allrounder Riyan Parag was not available because he is recovering from a shoulder injury.

From the 15 that won a T20I series 3-1 in South Africa last November, the selectors have left out Ramandeep Singh, Jitesh Sharma, Avesh Khan, Yash Dayal and Vijaykumar Vyshak. They have been replaced by Nitish

Kumar Reddy, Harshit Rana, Dhruv Jurel, and Washington Sundar - all of whom missed that

would be passed fit to join the India Test squad in Australia but that did not happen due to a

ODIs in Nagpur (February 6), Cuttack (February 9) and Ahmedabad (February 12). Those are the



series because they were part of India's Test tour of Australia - as well as Shami.

Since returning to domestic cricket in November 2024, Shami played all nine of Bengal's T20 matches in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, taking 11 wickets with an economy rate of 7.85. He played only three of Bengal's seven 50-over games in the following Vijay Hazare Trophy though, with five wickets at an average of 25.80. During this period, there was constant speculation over whether Shami

recurring swelling in his knee.

Axar Patel was named vice-captain of the T20I squad in the BCCI media release. The two previous T20I squad announcements, for the series at home against Bangladesh and in South Africa, did not specify a vice-captain. Gill was the previous deputy when India played the T20I series in Sri Lanka in July.

India host England for five T20Is in Kolkata, Chennai, Rajkot, Pune and Mumbai between January 22 and February 2, followed by three

only ODIs India will play before the Champions Trophy begins on February 19; they only played three ODIs in 2024, in Sri Lanka last August.

India's T20I squad for England series  
Suryakumar Yadav (capt), Sanju Samson (wk), Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Mohammed Shami, Arshdeep Singh, Harshit Rana, Dhruv Jurel (wk), Rinku Singh, Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel (vice-capt), Ravi Bishnoi, Varun Chakravarty, Washington Sundar

## James Anderson in talks to play for Lancashire in 2025 season

James Anderson looks set to make a professional comeback in Division Two of the County Championship next season, after it was revealed he is in talks with Lancashire about an all-format return that will take his career past his 43rd birthday.

Anderson played his 188th and final Test against West Indies at Lord's in July 2024. He bowled out after 21 years as an England cricketer with 704 Test wickets at 26.45, and has not featured competitively since.

However, he showed he had unfinished business when he put himself forward for the IPL auction in December - where he went unsold - and has stayed fit during his role as England's Test bowling coach, with regular stints in the nets plus work with the team's strength and conditioning coaches.

Now, according to The Telegraph, he is ready to commit to at least one final season with Lancashire - the club that first signed him as a teenager almost a quarter of a century ago, and for whom he made his first-class debut in 2002.

Lancashire were relegated from the top flight of the County Championship last season, although Anderson demonstrated his enduring prowess in first-class cricket with figures of 7 for 35 in his solitary appearance against Nottinghamshire at Southport in June.

He is expected to be available from the start of the 2025 season, including a return to Lord's to face Middlesex in Lancashire's opening match from April 4 to 7, and - assuming he continues his coaching role with England - he could feature in five matches before the Test summer begins with a one-off match against Zimbabwe in May.

Anderson's comeback would also have to be combined with his burgeoning media duties, while Lancashire would also have to pay his wages for the first time in more than a decade, now that he is no longer an ECB centrally contracted player.



**Rishabh Pant, who was India's preferred wicketkeeper at the 2024 T20 World Cup and in two of the three T20Is in Sri Lanka** in July last year, was not part of the squad; he was likely rested along with Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill after playing the Test series in Australia. Sanju Samson and Dhruv Jurel are the two wicketkeepers for the T20Is against England.



## Khyber Cement Ka Zarra Zarra Dil Se Bana Hai

