

# Collective efforts can achieve drug-free J&K: Dr Darakhshan

Rayees Shah

**GANDERBAL:** Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board Chairperson Darakhshan Andrabi on Sunday said that collective and consistent efforts by society, administration and youth can help achieve the goal of a drug-free Jammu and Kashmir. She was addressing the "Asluk Aalav" (The Call for Truth) awareness programme organised at Government Degree College Ganderbal by Al-Rahim Trust in coordination with various NGOs working on social reform and awareness issues in Jammu and Kashmir. Addressing the gathering as the chief guest,



Andrabi said the people of Jammu and Kashmir, especially the youth, were strongly supporting the "Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyaan" launched under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

"We all supported the peace initiatives after 2019 and that is why Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing peace, progress and aspirations. Now, collective and consistent efforts can surely

achieve a drug-free J&K," she said. Andrabi said eliminating drug abuse was necessary to secure the future of the younger generation and ensure lasting peace and prosperity in the Union Territory. She appreciated the action taken by police and civil administration against drug peddlers and suppliers, but said stronger measures were needed to dismantle the drug network operating in Jammu and Kashmir. "We need strict social accountability against those involved in drug trafficking. Social boycott of people engaged in the drug trade can become an effective deterrent," she added.

# Marathon under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan witnesses huge participation

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**KULGAM:** A marathon organised under the banner of Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan witnessed enthusiastic participation from youth, students, sports lovers, and citizens across Kulgam today.

The event was flagged off by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam from the Sports Stadium Kulgam and culminated at the Mini-Secretariat Kulgam.

The marathon was organised with the objective of spreading awareness against drug abuse and encouraging youth to adopt a healthy and active lifestyle through sports and positive engagement. Participants from different areas of the district took part in the event with great zeal and enthusiasm, reflecting strong public support for the campaign against substance abuse. Speaking on the occasion, the DC appreciated the overwhelming par-



ticipation of the youth and reiterated the administration's commitment towards making Kulgam a drug-free district through sustained awareness and community participation.

A pledge against drug abuse was also administered during the event, with participants reaffirming their commitment towards building a healthy and drug-free society.

# NC slams Mehbooba for parroting BJP-RSS script

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference State Spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar launched a scathing attack on PDP President Mehbooba Mufti, accusing her of parroting the BJP-RSS script and manufacturing political noise to destabilize the democratically elected government in Jammu and Kashmir.



in the region. He said that the people of Jammu and Kashmir delivered a massive mandate to the National Conference to undo the political blunders and betrayals committed during the PDP regime. "PDP today stands politically exposed. From facil-

itating the BJP at crucial moments, including the recent Rajya Sabha elections; facts that even surfaced through RTI disclosures to now indulging in desperate political theatrics, the party continues to function as an extension of the BJP's larger agenda in J&K," he said.

He said her corruption allegations are completely baseless. The party's treasurer is Shammi Oberoi, who is a Rajya Sabha member, not a minister. Taking a sharp dig at Mehbooba Mufti, Imran advised the former Chief Minister to rise above headline-hunting politics and embrace constructive opposition instead of indulging in perpetual fearmongering and manufactured outrage. "Peddling hollow narratives and indulging in political grandstanding will not help Mehbooba Mufti reclaim the credibility and political space she squandered by bartering the identity, dignity, and interests of Jammu and Kashmir for the sake of power," he said.

# Addiction is medical, psychological condition; treat addicts as patients, not criminals: Mental health expert

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**SRINAGAR:** Amid growing concerns over drug abuse among youth in Jammu and Kashmir, mental health experts and social stakeholders have intensified calls for collective action, urging parents, teachers, doctors and society at large to play a proactive role in protecting the younger generation from falling prey to substance abuse. Mental health experts believe that awareness, emotional support and timely guidance are essential in preventing youth from drifting toward addiction.

Dr Nizam ud Din, Associate Professor in the Department

of Psychiatry at Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) Medical College Hospital, Bemina, said society must change the way it views people struggling with addiction.

He said individuals affected by substance abuse should be treated as patients in need of care, counselling and rehabilitation rather than being isolated or stigmatised.

"Addiction is a medical and psychological condition. Such individuals require support, treatment and social acceptance. Isolation and humiliation only worsen their condition," Dr Nizam ud Din said.

He called for stronger action against drug trafficking net-

works and urged authorities to focus on stopping the inflow of narcotics into the region at its source. "The lack of parental engagement, peer pressure, social isolation and easy availability of drugs are among the major factors contributing to rising addiction cases among youth," he said. The psychiatrist advised parents to maintain open communication with their children, monitor behavioural changes, encourage healthy activities and seek professional help whenever necessary.

He urged teachers and educational institutions to increase awareness programmes and counselling sessions to iden-

tify vulnerable students at an early stage.

According to Dr Nizam ud Din, the enforcement measures are important; long-term success against the drug menace depends largely on community participation, rehabilitation support and awareness at the grassroots level.

"If society fails to act collectively and urgently, the growing drug crisis could severely impact the social fabric and future of the region," he said. He said safeguarding the younger generation is a shared responsibility and called upon people from all walks of life to actively contribute towards building.

# FSTP made operational in Kulgam

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**KULGAM:** In order to strengthen sanitation infrastructure and sustainable waste management, the Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP) has been made operational and thrown open today after the first trial was successfully conducted at Liroo Kulgam.

It was informed by the Assistant Commissioner Development, Bilal Ahmad Kamgar that it is the first such facility in the rural sector of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The initiative marks a major milestone in improving sanitation services and environmental protection in rural areas.

The FSTP has been established to scientifically manage and treat faecal sludge collected from septic tanks and soak pits, ensuring safe disposal and reducing environmental pollution, he added.

The trial was conducted under directions of the Deputy Commissioner, Shahzad Aalam by ACP Kulgam, Bilal Ahmad Kamgar in the



presence of Tehsildar/EO Kulgam, Nisar Ahmad and other technical experts, who inspected the functioning and operational mechanisms of the plant. Officials stated that the facility will cater to both urban and rural areas of the district by providing an efficient and eco-friendly solution for faecal waste management. The project is expected to significantly improve public health standards, sanitation practices, and cleanliness

across the district. During the inspection, officers expressed satisfaction over the successful trial and said that whoever wants the facility of sucker can contact on phone number 7889708711 / 7780823608 and the sucker service will be provided by Municipal Council Kulgam. People can also contact the District Emergency Operations Centre (DEOC) at +91-91034 24365 for booking requests related to Municipal Council Kulgam services.

# Dr Farooq highlights sacrifices of Mothers, remembers Begum Akbar Jehan

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**SRINAGAR:** On the occasion of Mother's Day, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, described motherhood as the most sacred and selfless bond in the world and urged the younger generation to honour, respect, and care for their parents, especially mothers, whose sacrifices form the foundation of every family

and society. In a statement issued from the party headquarters, Nawa-e-Subha, Dr. Farooq paid glowing tributes to Begum Akbar Jehan Abdullah, recalling her immense sacrifices and resilience during some of the most difficult periods in Jammu and Kashmir's history. He said that while Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Abdullah remained incarcerated in different jails, Begum Akbar Jehan

courageously shouldered the responsibilities of both mother and guardian, raising her family with determination and dignity despite immense hardships.

Dr. Farooq also highlighted the vision of the historic Naya Kashmir Manifesto as well as the party's election manifesto, stating that the welfare of mothers and children has always remained a cornerstone of the National Conference's socio-political

agenda. He said the government led by Omar Abdullah continues to work towards strengthening healthcare, education, social security, and welfare measures aimed at empowering women and ensuring the well-being of mothers and children across Jammu and Kashmir.

Meanwhile, on the eve of Mother's Day, the State Women's Wing of the National Conference or-

ganised a function at Nawa-e-Subha. The event was addressed by State Women's Wing President Shameema Firdous, who highlighted the invaluable role of mothers in shaping society and preserving values of compassion, unity, and resilience. Among others present on the occasion were Provincial President Kashmir Women's Wing Er. Sabiya Qadri and Provincial Secretary Ayesha Jameel.

# Rules tightened for pony operators in Gulmarg

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**SRINAGAR:** The Gulmarg Development Authority (GDA) has introduced a strict "one person, one trade" policy in Gulmarg, banning multiple trade licences and stopping ponywallas from using hired labourers.

The move comes a day after the Pahalgam Development Authority (PDA) rolled out a similar "one licence, one horse" policy in Pahalgam to

regulate pony services and reduce overcrowding.

GDA Chief Executive Officer Tariq Hussain said that the new rules are aimed at reducing congestion and protecting Gulmarg's environment. "The policy of 'one person one trade' is imperative to provide ample opportunities to the unemployed and to every deserving service provider," he said.

Under the new rules, each registered person will be al-



lowed to keep only one pony and pony entry will be allowed only through designated points. The authority has also regulated traffic movement in the resort. Light motor vehicles will have to park in designated market parking areas, while heavy vehicles will remain parked at the children's park. The CEO said any person holding multiple trade licences will be barred from doing business immediately.

# KCCI submits 12-point memorandum on ease of doing business, industrial policy reforms to Govt

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**SRINAGAR:** The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) submitted a comprehensive 12-point memorandum to the Committee on Ease of Doing Business and Formulation of Draft Industrial Policy, constituted by the Government of Jammu & Kashmir, seeking major structural, financial and policy reforms for the business and industrial sector in the Union Territory.

In a statement issued, KCCI President Javid Ahmad Tenga, Farooq Amin, Ashiq Hussain Shangloo, Gowhar Maqbool presented the memorandum before Shaileendra Kumar, IAS, Financial Commissioner (Additional Chief Secretary), Finance Department, J&K, during a high-level stakeholder consultation organised jointly by the Finance Department and Industries & Commerce Department in Srinagar. Vikramjit Singh, IPS, Commissioner Secre-

tary, Industries & Commerce Department, and Amitava Chatterjee, Managing Director & CEO, Jammu and Kashmir Bank Limited, also attended the meeting. In its detailed submission, KCCI stated that despite repeated claims of reforms, the actual business environment in Jammu & Kashmir continues to suffer from procedural delays, weak infrastructure, policy uncertainty and excessive compliance burdens. The Chamber urged the government to incorporate practical and enforceable provisions in the upcoming Industrial Policy.

The Chamber's memorandum covered twelve major concerns: Ease of Doing Business: KCCI said that online systems and the single-window mechanism have failed to deliver on the ground, with entrepreneurs still compelled to physically visit departments and submit documents manually. It demanded complete digitisation, integrated depart-

mental clearances and time-bound deemed approvals. Industrial Estate Infrastructure: The Chamber highlighted that several industrial estates continue to lack roads, electricity, water supply and internet connectivity. It specifically raised the issue of entrepreneurs at Tulbal Sopore and Sempora Pampore who, despite executing lease deeds nearly three years ago, are yet to receive physical possession of allotted land.

NCSS 2021 Reforms: KCCI stated that nearly 70 percent of the Rs 28,400 crore incentive outlay under the New Central Sector Scheme (NCSS) has been marred by regional imbalance. The Chamber demanded extension of the scheme till 2035, enhancement of the outlay by Rs 75,000 crore, reservation of 25 percent benefits for local entrepreneurs and inclusion of existing units undertaking substantial expansion. Compliance Burden and Regulatory Reforms: Refer-



ring to industrial models in Maharashtra, Telangana, Gujarat, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, KCCI argued that J&K's current framework remains far behind national best practices. It demanded reduction in transfer fees, 30-day deemed approvals, removal of FAR utilisation fee, adoption of a "same beneficial owner" principle and introduction of a Sick Unit Revival Policy. Marketing and Branding Support: KCCI proposed creation of a dedicated J&K MSME Marketing and Branding Mission, legal protection for a "Made in Kashmir" brand, support for participation in national and international trade fairs, e-commerce onboarding assistance and freight subsidies for exporters facing geo-

graphical disadvantages. The Chamber noted that J&K handicraft exports exceed Rs 733 crore annually.

Public Procurement Policy: The Chamber said the mandatory 25 percent procurement policy for MSMEs under the MSMED Act is not being implemented effectively in J&K. It demanded that the reserved procurement quota be sourced from locally registered MSMEs and that procurement data be disclosed quarterly.

Modernisation and Technology Upgradation: KCCI sought dedicated incentives and subsidies for automation, energy efficiency, green technology and expansion of existing industrial units to improve competitiveness and productivity.

Relief for Interim Units: The Chamber demanded that industrial units established or registered before formal notification of the new Industrial Policy should remain eligible for incentives and benefits under the forthcoming framework through a clearly

defined cut-off mechanism. Transparent Land Allocation System: KCCI criticised the present land allotment ranking mechanism for excessive emphasis on projected employment generation without verification. It demanded transparent scoring criteria and post-allotment employment verification through EPFO and ESIC records.

Stamp Duty Exemption: KCCI pointed out that the proposed 100 percent stamp duty exemption applies only to units operating within government industrial estates, excluding nearly 60 percent of industrial units functioning on private land. The Chamber sought extension of the exemption to all genuine industrial transactions.

Insurance and Solar Subsidies: Highlighting that insurance premiums for industries in J&K are 40 to 60 percent higher than the national average, the Chamber demanded full premium subvention for general and workmen compensation insurance. It also sought 75 percent capi-

tal subsidy for rooftop solar installations to reduce dependence on costly grid and diesel power.

Loan Restructuring Window: KCCI demanded a one-time loan restructuring package for businesses affected by civil disturbances, natural disasters and policy disruptions, and urged J&K Bank and other financial institutions to extend immediate relief to stressed units.

Speaking during the consultation, KCCI President Javid Ahmad Tenga said the Chamber's recommendations were based on the ground realities faced by businesses in Kashmir and stressed that the new Industrial Policy must move beyond symbolic reforms. The Chamber said the Committee assured that the memorandum and recommendations would be given due consideration during finalisation of the revised Industrial Policy. KCCI also offered to make a detailed presentation and provide additional data to support its recommendations.