

GDCs of Bandipora, Gurez organize awareness programmes on drug abuse under NMBA

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BANDIPORA: NCORD Cell of HKM Degree College Bandipora organized two awareness programmes on drug abuse on Thursday under the banner of the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) to educate students and the general public about the harmful effects of substance abuse and the need for collective action to eradicate the menace from society. An awareness lecture was organized in the Department of Computer Science on the topic "Drugs and its Ill Effects on Society." The programme aimed to create awareness among students regarding the growing menace of drug abuse

and its adverse impact on individuals and society. During the session, NCORD Convener Prof. Irfan Ahmad Wagay delivered an informative and insightful lecture highlighting the causes of drug addiction, its physical, mental, social, and economic consequences, and the importance of collective efforts in eradicating the social evil. He urged students to stay away from drugs and to play an active role in spreading awareness within society. He emphasized that awareness, education, and moral responsibility are essential tools in building a drug-free society. The programme witnessed active participation from the students

of the Department of Computer Science, who appreciated the initiative taken by the college under the banner of the NCORD Cell. Meanwhile, another awareness programme was organized by the NCORD Cell at Mangnipora for local adults on the theme "Drug Abuse: Causes and Remedial Measures for its Control." The programme focused on creating awareness among the community regarding the harmful effects of drug addiction and the collective responsibility of society in combating the menace. On the occasion, Prof. Irfan Ahmad Wagay delivered an insightful lecture highlighting the major causes of drug

abuse, its adverse impact on individuals, families, and society, and various preventive and remedial measures to control the growing problem of substance abuse. He emphasized the importance of awareness, parental guidance, community participation, and moral education in protecting youth from the dangers of drugs. He also urged the participants to actively support the mission of building a drug-free society under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan. The programme witnessed active participation from the local residents of Mangnipora, who appreciated the initiative taken by the college NCORD Cell for

spreading awareness at the grassroots level. The event concluded with an appeal to work collectively for a healthy and drug-free community. Under the banner of the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA), GDC Gurez organized a Women-Led Awareness Drive and Plantation Drive with the aim of promoting awareness among college students regarding the harmful effects of drug abuse and the importance of environmental conservation. The programme highlighted the active role of women in spreading awareness about social issues and encouraging youth to adopt healthy and responsible lifestyles.

Dr. Farooq urges party's Women's Wing to strengthen grassroots, highlight Omar government's initiatives

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SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference President Dr Farooq Abdullah Thursday presided over a Provincial meeting of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Women's Wing at the Party Headquarters, Naw-e-Subha, Srinagar. The meeting was chaired by Party President Dr. Farooq Abdullah and organised under the leadership of Women's Wing President Shameema Firdous. The meeting was convened by Provincial President Women's Wing Er. Sabiya Qadri. The meeting was also attended by General Secretary Ali Muhammad Sagar, Treasurer Shammil Oberoi, Provincial President Showkat Mir, along with all district presidents and senior office-bearers of the Women's Wing from Kashmir province. During the four hour meeting, detailed discussions were held on strengthening organisational outreach at the grassroots level, enhancing women's political participation, and reinforcing the Women's Wing's institutional framework. The leadership stressed sustained mobilisation at booth and ward levels to further deepen democratic engagement. Reiterating the party's welfare-centric approach, Dr. Farooq highlighted that the Omar Abdullah-led government had consistently prioritised public welfare and



women's empowerment through targeted socio-economic interventions. Addressing the meeting, Dr. Farooq said, "The Omar Abdullah government is working so that welfare reaches the last mile, especially women who form the backbone of our society. Our focus has remained on empowerment through education, economic support, and dignity-oriented governance." He further said that the government's initiatives in strengthening livelihood opportunities, supporting vulnerable families and promoting self-employment schemes have laid the foundation for inclusive growth. In an indirect reference to ongoing organisational priorities, Dr. Farooq underscored that sustained empowerment measures ranging from mobility support for women to financial assistance for economically weaker families in marriage-related needs reflect

the party's broader commitment to social justice and equitable development. He added that women's participation in entrepreneurship and self-help initiatives is being encouraged to ensure long-term financial independence and socio-economic upliftment. The meeting also called upon the Women's Wing to intensify organisational consolidation and expand its outreach at the grassroots level while remaining fully prepared for the forthcoming Panchayat and Urban Local Body (ULB) elections. Special emphasis was laid on enhancing women's representation in democratic institutions and strengthening participatory governance. The session concluded with a renewed resolve to reinforce organisational unity, expand public outreach and carry forward the party's pro-people, pro-development and pro-women agenda across Jammu and Kashmir.

LPG consumers flag issues with e-KYC, lack of smartphones

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SRINAGAR: LPG consumers in the Kashmir valley are facing difficulties in getting their cylinders refilled as distributors are witnessing a huge rush of customers for the mandatory eKYC of their connections. While the distributors deal with the rush, many customers are facing issues with the self-eKYC after the government made it mandatory to procure refills. From non-smartphone penetration to privacy concerns, customers have flagged several issues in the way of eKYC. "I have an LPG connection and have to do the mandatory eKYC, which means I have to download two apps on my phone and then undertake



the process. These apps need several phone permissions, which raises privacy concerns," Yawar Ahmad, a consumer in the city here, said. Shazia, a home-maker, said many women like her do not have smart-

phones, so undertaking eKYC by installing applications does not make sense. "I have a Ujjwala connection and I cannot afford a smartphone, so how will I do the self-eKYC?" she asked.

Some customers said such "service bottlenecks" were caused as the government's facing severe issues with the supply of LPG due to the crisis in the Middle East. While OTP has been mandatory at the time of gas delivery, many consumers have received messages about gas being delivered without sharing the OTP. "I received an OTP, which I didn't share with the distributor, but then I still got the message about gas being delivered. However, the gas was not delivered," Mehraj Ahmad, another consumer, said. "These messages are computer-generated by an app. However, the booking is effective only after eKYC," a distributor here said.

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

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SRINAGAR: In an attempt to bring India's unorganised construction labour sector online, two fourth-year students of National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar have launched a startup that connects labourers, contractors and customers through a digital platform modeled around traditional labour chowks. The startup, "BigBrick," founded by Saurabh Kumar from the Civil Engineering Department and Aryan Kumar from the Mechanical Engineering Department, is being described as India's first digital platform focused exclusively on labour chowks and construction workforce management. According to the founders, BigBrick has already onboarded more than 2,500 construction workers across Srinagar, Jammu, and Katra, creating direct connections between workers, contractors, and customers. At a time when thousands of



labourers across the country continue to depend on roadside labour markets for daily work, the startup aims to bring transparency, accessibility, and organized hiring into the sector through digital intervention. So far, the startup has generated revenue worth Rs 11 lakh and recently received a funding offer at a valuation of Rs 3 crore from Mumbai based

company, second officer of Rs 40 lakh by another venture, marking a rare success story emerging from a student-led venture in Kashmir. BigBrick has also been incubated and funded by the NewGen IEDC, University of Kashmir, and was awarded the "Best Startup Idea" during the IDE Bootcamp for its innovation and market potential. The core team behind the

venture also includes Yashas Naidu, Vivek Kumar, Munmun Naresh, Raj Kumar & Vijay Kumar, who played a key role in scaling operations and expanding worker outreach. In his message, Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia congratulated the students for their achievement and said Institute is committed to promoting innovation and entrepreneurship among young minds. "This achievement reflects the innovative spirit and entrepreneurial potential of our students. Startups like BigBrick demonstrate how technology can be used to address real societal and economic challenges," he said. Registrar, Prof. Atikur Rehman also appreciated the initiative and said such success stories inspire other students to think beyond conventional career paths. "It is encouraging to see our students building impactful ventures with real-world applications.

Div Com Kashmir reviews preparations for SANJY-2026

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SRINAGAR: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, today chaired a high-level meeting to review the preparedness for the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY-2026). The meeting was attended by the Deputy Commissioners of Anantnag, Srinagar, Ganderbal and Bandipora, Commissioner SMC, besides Heads of Departments from Rural Sanitation, ULB, Health, FCS&CA, BEACON, KPDCCL, PHE, R&B, Animal Husbandry and Labour Departments. Representatives from telecom service providers including BSNL, Jio, Airtel and G-Max were also present. Reviewing the registration process of service providers, the Divisional Commissioner emphasized on expediting registrations to meet the target of 28,000 service providers besides ponies. He directed concerned authorities to ensure timely generation of RFID cards for all registered service providers by May 30. The Divisional Commissioner also reviewed the development of pony



stands and was informed that essential infrastructure works including fencing and development of sheds has already been completed. He further instructed officials to conduct health check-ups of ponies and ensure adequate availability of fodder along the yatra routes. Taking stock of telecom connectivity and bandwidth availability at base camps and along the yatra axes up to the Holy Cave, the Divisional Commissioner directed telecom companies to ensure uninterrupted and efficient network ser-

vices during the pilgrimage period. Chief Engineer KPDCCL was asked to provide uninterrupted power supply to telecom installations. The meeting also reviewed snow clearance operations, construction of gabion and breast walls, and ongoing repair works along the yatra tracks. Deputy Commissioners were directed to personally inspect the repair and maintenance works being undertaken along the axes. To facilitate smooth movement and convenience of pilgrims, the Divisional Commissioner called for augmentation of staff at yatri registration counters. He also instructed rationalization of registration counters across the three districts in view of the direct railway connectivity to Srinagar. Regarding the installation of tents at base camps, the Divisional Commissioner reviewed the allotment process and directed concerned committees to conduct mandatory fire safety audits. Besides, he reviewed the progress of developmental works being executed by the PHE, KPDCCL, R&B, I&FC, SDA, PDA, Tourism Department, ULB and other allied agencies.

Chairperson TSEED visits KVK Bandipora

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BANDIPORA: Krishi Vigyan Kendra Bandipora-1 today hosted Swami Suryanil, Chairperson, Total Start Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Developers (TSEED), during his visit to the Kendra where he interacted with Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), tribal farmers, Agri entrepreneurs and rural youth regarding entrepreneurship development, sustainable agriculture and livelihood generation. The visit was organised to promote entrepreneurship ecosystems in rural areas and create awareness among farmers regarding value addition, Agri based enterprises, market linkages and innovative farming models for sustainable income generation. During the interaction programme, Swami Suryanil held discussions with FPO members, tribal farmer entrepreneurs and young Agri innovators on opportunities related to entrepreneurship, branding, collective marketing and rural enterprise development. He emphasized the need for promoting community driven entrepreneurial models for strengthening rural

economies and enhancing farmers' income. The visiting expert appreciated the innovative initiatives and demonstration units established at KVK Bandipora-1, particularly in the areas of Natural Farming, protected cultivation, integrated farming systems and vegetable cultivation. He also visited various demonstration units, lotus cultivation areas and Natural Farming based crop models established at the KVK. Swami Suryanil highlighted the importance of integrating innovation and entrepreneurship with agriculture for developing resilient and self-sustainable farming systems. He encouraged farmers and rural youth to explore opportunities in value addition, food processing and Agri based enterprises. Dr. Tariq Sultan, Head KVK Bandipora-1, briefed regarding various extension, training and farmer welfare initiatives being undertaken by the KVK. He highlighted the role of Krishi Vigyan Kendras in promoting scientific agriculture, entrepreneurship development and sustainable livelihood opportunities among farming communities.

Dr. Tahir Saleem, SMS Vegetable Science, KVK Bandipora-1, provided an overview of the vegetable based demonstration units and protected cultivation technologies established at the KVK. He highlighted the importance of scientific crop management and climate resilient vegetable production practices for improving productivity and farmers' income. Dr. Mohammad Iqbal Bhat, Coordinator Upscaling Collectivization, JKCIIP, also interacted with FPO members, tribal farmers and rural entrepreneurs regarding collective farming approaches, farmer institutional development and sustainable livelihood opportunities. He emphasized the importance of strengthening farmer collectives, market linkages and community based agricultural enterprises for improving rural economy and farmers' income. The programme concluded with an interactive discussion and field visit aimed at strengthening collaboration for promotion of entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable agricultural development in the district.

TEJAS workshop held in Baramulla

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BARAMULLA: In a significant initiative aimed at strengthening the startup and entrepreneurial ecosystem in the district, the TEJAS (Transforming Entrepreneurial Journeys Across States and Districts) Workshop was organised today at Dak Bungalow Baramulla by Startup India, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Govt. of India in collaboration with JKEDI and District Administration Baramulla. The event was inaugurated by the Director JKEDI, Mohd Younis Malik in the presence of Additional Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Syed Altaf Hussain Musvi, Chief Planning Officer Baramulla, Nisar Ahmad, General Manager DIC Baramulla and resource persons from Startup

India and several other officers. The workshop also brought together aspiring entrepreneurs, innovators, students, startup founders, industry experts and government representatives on a common platform to promote innovation-driven entrepreneurship and economic growth in the district. Speaking on the occasion, Director JKEDI, Mohd Younis Malik, highlighted the immense entrepreneurial potential of the youth of Baramulla and stressed the need to create a robust ecosystem that supports innovation, enterprise creation and sustainable livelihoods. He further said that the government is committed to creating an enabling environment for startups and innovators and through Startup India and JKE-DI initiatives so that the youth can

become job creators rather than job seekers. Later in the day, the DC Baramulla also visited the workshop and assured full support from the District Administration to aspiring entrepreneurs and innovators and said every possible assistance would be extended to help youth transform their ideas into commercially viable ventures capable of generating employment and contributing to the local economy. The DC further congratulated JKE-DI for creating this culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, highlighting that such platforms help in nurturing ideas, refining innovations and ultimately commercialising them to bring them into the market. Resource persons from Startup India, conducted detailed technical

sessions during the workshop and provided comprehensive insights into the startup journey in India, the evolving entrepreneurial ecosystem and various government schemes designed to support innovation-driven enterprises. The experts elaborated on different initiatives and support mechanisms available for startups and innovators, including incubation support, funding opportunities, mentorship programmes, intellectual property facilitation, market linkages and policy incentives. They also guided participants on the process of availing benefits under Startup India and related schemes, registration procedures, eligibility criteria and institutional support available for transforming innovative ideas into viable business ventures.

Arrangements reviewed for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026 in Bandipora

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BANDIPORA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam today reviewed the preparedness and arrangements being put in place for the smooth and successful conduct of the upcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY)-2026. During the review meeting, the DC took stock of arrangements related to security, sanitation, healthcare

facilities, traffic management, drinking water supply, power supply, accommodation and emergency response mechanisms to ensure a safe, smooth and hassle-free pilgrimage for devotees. The concerned officers briefed the chair regarding the measures being undertaken by their respective departments for facilitating the yatris during the pilgrimage period.



Emphasizing coordinated efforts among all departments, the DC directed the officers to ensure timely completion of all necessary

arrangements and maintain close inter-departmental coordination for effective service delivery. He stressed upon ensuring adequate

sanitation facilities, uninterrupted essential services, proper traffic regulation, availability of healthcare and emergency response teams at designated locations for the convenience and safety of pilgrims. The DC further instructed officers to remain vigilant and proactive in addressing any issues so that all required arrangements are put in place well before the commencement of the Yatra.