

Kulgam's whole-of-society movement against drug abuse gains massive momentum

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

KULGAM: What began as a determined call for collective action against drug abuse has today evolved into a district-wide people's movement in Kulgam.

Under the ongoing 100-Day Intensive Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan launched from April 11, District Kulgam has witnessed unprecedented public participation, strong grassroots mobilization, youth engagement, institutional convergence, and firm enforcement action against drug trafficking networks.

Driven by the vision of building a "Nasha Mukht Kulgam," the campaign has transformed from a conventional awareness initiative into a community-led social movement involving youth, parents, schools, Panchayats, religious institutions, women groups, sports organizations, health institutions, and law enforcement agencies.

One of the most remarkable achievements of the campaign has been the scale of

public outreach achieved in a very short span of time. More than 35,535 awareness programmes have been conducted across tehsils, villages, panchayats, schools, colleges, public spaces, and institutions throughout the district. These programmes have collectively reached and engaged people from 100% Panchayats and Wards reflecting the extraordinary level of Jan Bhagidari achieved under the campaign.

At the grassroots level, all 178 Panchayats of the district have been actively integrated into the movement. To institutionalize community participation, 178 Panchayat Mahila Samities and 178 Youth Clubs have been activated to serve as local anti-drug ambassadors and community support structures.

Recognizing that positive engagement is one of the strongest tools against substance abuse, Kulgam has strongly focused on youth empowerment through sports and recreation. As part of the campaign, 125

Panchayat-level playfields have been made functional, while work on 35 new playgrounds and stadiums has been initiated under MGN-REGA for development. Simultaneously, the district organized 423 sports events and leagues across variety of sports like Cricket, Football, Basketball, Volleyball and Badminton, witnessing participation of more than 37,586 youth and students, thereby channelizing youth energy towards healthy and constructive activities.

Religious institutions have also emerged as strong partners in the campaign. Anti-drug sermons and awareness activities were conducted in 1,472 mosques and religious institutions, while 706 religious leaders actively participated in spreading the message of social responsibility, moral guidance, and collective resistance against drug abuse. The administration has simultaneously strengthened counselling and rehabilitation support systems. A total of 91 counselling and assistance calls were re-

ceived under the campaign, reflecting growing public trust and willingness to seek help. Additionally, 25 IPD beds have been earmarked in the district for treatment and rehabilitation of drug victims, ensuring that the campaign remains not only enforcement-oriented but also compassionate and rehabilitative in approach.

While awareness and rehabilitation form one pillar of the campaign, the district has adopted an equally uncompromising stance against drug peddling and illicit trafficking. Authorities identified 11 major drug hotspots across the district and developed 184 rogue galleries at police stations and police posts for close monitoring of habitual offenders and peddlers.

Strong enforcement action has led to the registration of 67 FIRs and arrest of 76 drug peddlers during the campaign period. In addition, the administration has initiated stringent administrative and financial actions against individuals involved in narcotics-related activi-

ties. As part of the crackdown, 36 driving licenses and 18 vehicle registration certificates were suspended, 557 Aadhaar cards were recommended for suspension, 11 red entries were recorded in revenue records against individuals linked with narcotics activities. Besides, 6 immovable properties were seized and 3 properties attached under legal provisions. Attached and seized properties are estimated to be worth nearly Rs 2 crore. 8 illegal or drug-linked structures/properties have been demolished, valued at approximately Rs 1.90 crore.

Authorities also seized/attached 9 vehicles and 387 bank accounts, with movable assets valued at around Rs 50 lakh.

The district administration has also intensified regulation and monitoring of pharmaceutical establishments to curb misuse of prescription drugs. Out of 695 drug stores in the district, 145 stores have been inspected. All medical shops

have now been equipped with CCTV cameras and computerized billing systems to strengthen transparency and accountability.

The campaign has demonstrated that combating drug abuse requires not only strict enforcement, but also sustained awareness, youth engagement, community ownership, and rehabilitation support. The coordinated efforts of civil administration, police, health institutions, educational institutions, Panchayati Raj Institutions, religious leaders, and the general public have together created a strong social resistance against drug abuse in the district.

District Administration Kulgam reiterated its commitment to continue the movement with greater intensity and appealed to citizens, especially youth and parents, to actively participate in safeguarding society from the menace of drugs and contribute collectively towards building a healthier, safer, and empowered Kulgam.

Dr. Farooq pays obeisance at Khanqa Maul

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah paid obeisance at the revered Khanqah-e-Moula in Srinagar on the occasion of the annual Urs of Hazrat Sayadat Panah Ameer-e-Kabeer Mir Syed Ali Hamadani (RA).

He was accompanied by party legislators Tanvir Sadiq and Hasnain Masoodi. MLA Habba Kadal Shameema Firdous along with party functionaries and local unit members particularly YNC District President Srinagar Irshad Anchari and his team, felicitated and welcomed him at the shrine complex gate.

People from all walks of life and different parts of the Kashmir Valley greeted Dr. Farooq on the occasion. He along with other party leaders, offered Namaz-e-Asr at the revered shrine and prayed for lasting peace and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir. Party Publicity Secretary Mir G.M. Saqi was also present on the occasion.

Nasir, Shammi visit Langate, offer condolences with Er Rashid

Srinagar: Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Sogami, along with MP & Treasurer Rajya Sabha Shammi Oberoi and Provincial President Showkat Mir Saturday visited the Langate residence of Member of Parliament Baramulla Er Rashid, and MLA Langate Sheikh Khursheed to offer condolences on the demise of their beloved father. The leaders expressed solidarity with the bereaved family. The visiting delegation conveyed heartfelt sympathies and prayed for strength and patience for the family during this difficult time. They also offered prayers for eternal peace to the departed soul.

Eid festival: Food safety inspections intensified in Anantnag

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ANANTNAG: Intensifying the food safety drive ahead of Eid-ul-Adha 2026, a joint team comprising of officials of Food Safety Department Anantnag, Veterinary Officer and others conducted extensive market checking and inspections of various food business establishments in the district.

The aim of the sustained drive is to ensure availability of safe and hygienic food items to consumers especially during the festive days.

The inspection drive covered bakeries, restaurants, sweet shops, meat and poultry outlets, milk establishments, provisional stores, and street food vendors. The team checked hygiene standards, food quality, storage conditions, and compliance



with food safety regulations. Food Business Operators were directed to maintain cleanliness, avoid sale of expired food products, and strictly adhere to the provisions of the Food Safety

and Standards Act, 2006. Authorities warned that strict action would be taken against violators and stated that such drives will continue across the district to safeguard public health.

KCCI urges strict collateral-free MSME lending in J&K, seeks bigger industrial package

Srinagar: The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) urged strict implementation of the Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs in Jammu & Kashmir, alleging that banks continue to demand collateral despite government-backed guarantees.

During a meeting with the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Industry, KCCI also called for enhanced financial support and a larger industrial package to boost entrepreneurship and employment in the region.

In a statement a spokesperson said the Chamber stressed the need for effective implementation of the scheme so that entrepreneurs can access collateral-free, guarantee-backed loans to start and grow businesses. He said KCCI President Javid Ahmad Tenga, accompanied by Executive Committee Member Ashiq Hussain Shangloo, submitted a detailed memorandum to Mr Tiruchi Siva, Chairperson of the Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Industry, during its review of MSME credit guarantee schemes in J&K. "Banks are still demanding collateral even for loans fully covered under the Credit Guarantee Scheme. This defeats the purpose of the scheme. Young entrepreneurs must be able to access credit without pledging their homes and properties," Tenga said, urging the



Standing Committee to direct RBI to enforce strict compliance and hold non-compliant banks accountable. He said KCCI also presented bank-wise data on performance under the scheme for FY 2023-24, FY 2024-25, and FY 2025-26, revealing that overall coverage has increased from Rs 6,110 crore to Rs 9,830 crore over three years, though distribution among banks remains highly skewed. The Chamber lauded the role of J&K Bank, which accounts for over 66 percent of total credit disbursed under the scheme, while

expressing concern over the limited participation of several major national banks. The memorandum also called for annual audits of banks in J&K, time-bound loan disposal of 21 days for loans up to Rs 25 lakh and 30 days for loans up to Rs 2 crore and mandatory written reasons for all loan rejections. KCCI further sought an enhanced guarantee cover of 90 percent for MSME loans up to Rs 5 crore for 10 years, a 50 percent reduction in guarantee fees for five years, and 100 percent coverage for women entrepreneurs and registered artisans. It also raised concerns over the New Central Sector Scheme (NCSS) for Industrial Development of J&K, launched by DPIIT in February 2021 with an outlay of Rs 28,400 crore up to 2036-37.

The Chamber demanded an additional Rs 75,000 crore allocation under the scheme with a 25 percent reservation for local entrepreneurs, citing a large backlog of eligible but credit-starved businesses in the region. KCCI President Javid Ahmad Tenga said Kashmir has a young and skilled workforce that needs better access to credit and institutional support to build sustainable enterprises and generate employment. He expressed hope that the Parliamentary Committee's intervention would lead to time-bound policy reforms for the MSME sector in J&K.

Sagar seeks effective arrangements on Eid Ul Azha

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SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference General Secretary and MLA Khanyar Ali Muhammad Sagar Saturday urged the administration to ensure comprehensive arrangements for the smooth observance of the forthcoming Eid-ul-Azha across Jammu and Kashmir.

Sagar emphasized the need for uninterrupted supply of essential services including electricity, potable water, sanitation, healthcare facilities, and availability of essential commodities during the auspicious days of Eid. He also called for proper traffic management, cleanliness drives around mosques and shrines, and adequate public transport facilities to facilitate devotees and the general public. He stressed that special attention must be given to sanitation measures in and around Eidgahs, marketplaces and residential areas to ensure convenience for people during the festival. Sagar further appealed to the concerned departments to work in close coordination so that the people do not face any inconvenience during Eid-ul-Azha celebrations.

Pampore Irrigation Dept reclaims encroached canal in Nowgam

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SRINAGAR: The Irrigation Construction Division Pampore on Friday said it has retrieved an encroached portion of a canal in Nowgam area during a swift anti-encroachment drive, restoring it for public use.

In a statement a spokesperson said the Irrigation Construction Division Pampore on today carried out a demolition drive in Nowgam area and successfully retrieved an irrigation canal that had been illegally encroached upon recently.

He said the action was taken under the directions of the Additional Chief Secretary, Jal Shakti Department, and under the supervision of the Chief Engineer, Irrigation & Flood Control Kashmir, along with the Superintending Engineer and Executive Engineer of the concerned division. "The division had received a written complaint regarding illegal encroachment on the canal.

Acting promptly, the department mobilized its field staff and removed the unauthorized structure raised by the encroacher," he said.

The spokesperson added that the demolition drive was conducted smoothly with the assistance of a Magistrate deputed by the Revenue Department and adequate police deployment to prevent any law-and-order issue during the operation.

"Following the drive, the encroached portion of the canal was fully restored for public use. Local residents appreciated the prompt intervention of the department in safeguarding vital irrigation infrastructure," he said. He added that the department reiterated its commitment to protecting irrigation canals and water bodies from encroachments to ensure uninterrupted water supply to agricultural lands, and appealed to the public to report such violations for timely action.

Schizophrenia treatable but stigma delays treatment: Psychiatrist

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SRINAGAR: Schizophrenia is a serious but treatable mental illness, yet thousands of patients continue to suffer silently due to stigma, fear and delayed medical intervention, psychiatrist Dr Abrar Guroo said.

Stressing the urgent need for awareness and compassionate care, he said misconceptions surrounding mental illness often prevent families from seeking timely psychiatric treatment, leading to worsening symptoms, disrupted lives and avoidable long-term consequences. Dr Guroo said that schizophrenia, though a serious mental illness, is treatable and manageable with timely psychiatric care, family support, and social understanding. However, he said, stigma surrounding mental

illness in society continues to delay treatment and worsen outcomes for many patients.

The psychiatrist explained, "Schizophrenia affects a person's thoughts, emotions, behaviour, and perception of reality. Patients commonly experience symptoms such as hearing voices, suspiciousness, false beliefs, disturbed sleep, social withdrawal, poor self-care, and reduced emotional expression."

Highlighting the social challenges associated with the illness, Dr Guroo said stigma remains one of the biggest barriers to recovery in India. According to him, many families choose to hide symptoms due to fear of judgment, social shame, and discrimination.

"Instead of seeking psychiatric care early, many patients

are taken to faith healers or kept isolated at home. By the time professional medical help is sought, valuable years may already have been lost," he said.

He warned that delayed treatment can have long-term consequences, including interrupted education, unemployment, strained family relationships, worsening psychiatric symptoms, and emotional stress within families.

"Research across the world consistently shows that early treatment leads to better recovery, improved functioning, and a better quality of life for patients," Dr Guroo added.

The psychiatrist stressed that schizophrenia continues to be widely misunderstood in society, with many patients being unfairly labelled as dangerous or incapable of

living independently.

"In reality, many people living with schizophrenia can study, work, maintain relationships, and lead independent lives when they receive proper treatment, medication, rehabilitation, and strong family support," he said.

The initiatives, such as Tele-MANAS, help bridge gaps in mental healthcare access by providing confidential counselling and psychiatric support services to people in need, he said.

Calling for greater awareness and compassion, Dr Guroo said mental illness should never be hidden in silence. "Schizophrenia is not a character flaw, personal weakness, or social disgrace. It is a medical condition that deserves timely care, understanding, dignity, and compassion," he said.

JK Hoteliers Club reconstitutes body, Mushtaq Chaya elected president

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SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Hoteliers Club (JKHC) has reconstituted its office bearers and executive committee for the 2026-2028 term, with prominent hotelier Mushtaq A. Chaya being elected as president.

According to the new structure announced on Thursday, Riyaz A. Shahdad has been appointed senior vice president, Tariq Ghani as junior vice president, Abdul Wahid Malik as secretary general, Mukhtar A. Shah as joint secretary general, Naseera A. Khan as finance secretary, and Murad Kapra as joint finance secretary.

Veteran hotelier Sardar Nander Singh has been named founder chairman, while Zahoor A. Trumboo and Mohd

Afzal Parray will serve as patron and mentor, respectively, a statement from the club said.

The newly constituted executive committee includes Jyotsana Suri and Omer Trumboo as advisors, besides Latif A. Bhat, Farooq A. Hafiz, Akib Chaya, M. Shafi Trumboo, Manzoor A. Burza, Amir Gunna, Sadam Zaroo, Aatif Yaqeen, Manzoor A. Shah, Mubi Shaw, Tariq Hafiz, Javed Anim, Khawar Jeelani, Sajad Makaya, Hayat Bhat, Hussain Khan, A.B. Majeed Sofi, Khalid Sheikh, Usman Shahdad, Manzoor Wagnoo, Naseem Chaya, Shabir Bazaz, Manzoor Khan, Zahoor A. Khan, Aazad Malik, Aadil Shah, Asma and Nayeem Putoo as members.

Speaking on the occasion, Chaya said the tourism sec-

tor in Jammu and Kashmir has started witnessing signs of recovery after suffering a major setback following last year's tragic attack in Pahalgam.

"Last year we faced a tragic incident in Pahalgam which temporarily derailed the tourism sector and affected confidence among visitors. However, tourism has now started reviving and we are seeing encouraging signs of recovery," Chaya said.

He stressed the need to collectively sustain the momentum and continue promoting the region as a safe and welcoming destination, adding that tourism is the backbone of Jammu and Kashmir's economy, providing livelihoods to thousands of families. "The revival of tourism will not only help the hospi-

talities sector but also transporters, artisans, traders and several allied sectors dependent on visitors," he said. Chaya emphasised that tourism growth must go hand in hand with environmental protection, as preserving the region's fragile ecology is crucial for long-term sustainability.

"Jammu and Kashmir's natural beauty is our greatest asset. We have to protect our environment, maintain cleanliness and encourage responsible tourism practices," he added.

The newly elected president also urged all stakeholders, including the government, tourism players and local communities, to work collectively to strengthen the tourism sector and reinforce confidence among visitors.

Advisory issued for hail affected orchards in Bandipora

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BANDIPORA: In view of the recent hailstorm that affected several areas of district Bandipora, the Department of Horticulture Bandipora has issued an advisory for orchardists regarding preventive and management measures for fruit crops to minimize post-hailstorm losses.

According to the advisory, orchardists cultivating apple and pear crops have been advised to spray any of the recommended fungicides including Trifloxystrobin + Tebuconazole 75 WG @ 40g per 100 litres of water, Zineb (68%) + Hexaconazole (4%) 72 WP @ 125g per 100 litres of water, Carbendazim 12% + Mancozeb 63% (75% WP) @ 250g per 100 litres of water, Propineb 70% WP @ 300g per 100 litres of water, Mancozeb 75% WP @ 300g per 100 litres of water, or Zineb

75% WP @ 300g per 100 litres of water.

The advisory further stated that after a gap of three days, orchardists may spray Urea @ 0.2% (200g per 100 litres of water) or spray NPK @ 2g per litre of water after 3-5 days to support recovery and improve plant health.

Similarly, growers of cherry, apricot, plum and peach crops have been advised to spray Carbendazim 50 WP @ 50g per 100 litres of water, Carbendazim 12% + Mancozeb 63% (75% WP) @ 250g per 100 litres of water, or Thiophanate Methyl 70 WP @ 50g per 100 litres of water. The Department also urged orchardists to remove fallen leaves and ensure proper drainage in orchards to avoid water stagnation and secondary infections.

The advisory has been issued in the public interest for the welfare of fruit growers across the district.

One lakh jobs promise was nothing but a lie: Sajad Lone

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Conference President and MLA Handwara Sajad Lone on Saturday denounced the NC-led government over the Finance Department's latest austerity order, accusing the administration of betraying the youth it had promised employment during elections.

Reacting to the order barring creation of new posts and directing surrender of positions vacant for over two years, Lone said the move exposed the "dishonesty" of the elected dispensation. "The government promised one lakh jobs in their manifesto. Now, rubbing salt into the wounds of those who voted for them, it has banned the creation of new posts," he said.

Lone further warned that surrendering long-vacant posts would deepen the unemployment crisis across Jammu and Kashmir. "Even posts vacant for two years will be surrendered. This government will go down in history as one of the most dishonest ever elected," he added.