

All J&K Gujjar-Bakerwal Conference raises voice for tribal rights, welfare

Calls for constitution of Tribal Advisory Group

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JAMMU: Significant Gujjar-Bakerwal Conference was held in Anantnag under the chairmanship of Choudhary Ajaz Ahmed Khan, former Minister in the Jammu and Kashmir Government. The event witnessed participation from delegates representing Anantnag, Srinagar, Pulwama, and other adjoining areas. The gathering collectively raised several urgent and long-standing issues concerning the Gujjar and Bakerwal tribal communities and demanded action from the government on a priority basis. One of the foremost demands put forth was the immediate constitution of a Tribal Advisory Group within the Tribal Affairs Department, to be headed by the Minister of Tribal Affairs. The speakers emphasized that tribal welfare and development cannot be left solely to the discretion of MLAs, many of whom are not adequately familiar with the problems faced by nomadic and forest-dwelling communities. They argued that the tribal population needs dedicated representation through an institutional body to ensure effective policy planning and execution. Another major concern raised was the recent order by the Finance De-

partment placing tribal funds at the disposal of MLAs. Ch Ajaz Ahmed Khan strongly criticized this move, stating that such a mechanism sidelines the actual needs and priorities of the tribal population. He insisted that tribal-specific works must only be taken up after proper identification and recommendation by the concerned Tribal Advisory Group. The conference also focused on compensation and disaster relief. Delegates demanded immediate financial assistance to those families whose cattle perished during recent unexpected snowfalls and hailstorms on high mountain peaks. They called upon the administration to release relief funds under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) without delay. Special mention was made of families affected by a recent fire incident in Makbara Shangus, where homes belonging to Yasin Chouhan and Imtiaz Khan of Pahalgam were destroyed. The participants appealed to the Deputy Commissioner Anantnag to provide immediate relief through the Red Cross and other emergency measures. The need for restoration of tribal grazing rights was another prominent issue discussed. The speakers noted that the Grazing Committee has not

held a meeting in many years, which has adversely affected the seasonal migratory routes and access to traditional pastures. The conference demanded the urgent revival of these meetings to protect the livelihood of nomadic shepherds. Furthermore, the participants emphasized the need for the development of six tribal routes which have already been identified by the Tribal Department. Implementation of this plan was urged without further delay. A deep sense of frustration was expressed over the lack of recruitment since 2019, which has hit educated tribal youth the hardest. Ch. Rashid Azam Inqlabi, a senior community leader, highlighted the importance of technical and professional education for the younger generation. He demanded that the government provide unemployment allowance to the educated tribal youth — ₹10,000 per month for graduates, ₹7,000 for undergraduates, and ₹5,000 for matriculates and below — until regular employment avenues are created. The issue of Forest Rights also found strong mention. The speakers criticized the government for failing to implement the Forest Rights Act (FRA) in letter and spirit. They urged



the government to rehabilitate tribal families displaced due to tourism development in areas like Pahalgam, Surinsar, Gulmarg, Sonamarg, and other tourist circuits. The conference was also addressed by key office bearers of the All Jammu and Kashmir Gujjar-Bakerwal Conference, including President Mohd Yousaf Majnu, Secretary Yasin Poswal, and Provincial Secretary

Maulana Abul Wahid Sahib. Several grassroots leaders and intellectuals including Qari Abdul Rehman Sahib, Farooq Khattana, Master Tahir, Mohd Younis Chichi, Amjad Khattana, Yar Mohammad (Pulwama), Qari Shafi Sahib, Mohd Akram (Udhampur), Altaf Nizami, Habib Ur Rehman, Javed Ahmed (Mahore), Master Naseem (Gulabgarh), and Riaz Ahmed Poswal also spoke on the occasion.

At the end of the session, an Adhoc District Committee for Anantnag was announced to coordinate local tribal affairs and mobilize further community initiatives. The conference concluded with a unanimous resolve to continue advocating for the socio-economic upliftment, rights, and dignity of the Gujjar-Bakerwal community across Jammu and Kashmir.

Alyas Khan reviews functioning of Cooperative, Social Welfare Deptts

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RAMBAN: Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Mohammad Alyas Khan on Monday reviewed the functioning and progress of the Cooperative and Social Welfare Departments in a detailed meeting. The Meeting was attended by the CPO, Dr. Shakeeb Ahmed Rather, Deputy Registrar Cooperatives Priyanka Sharma and District Social Welfare Officer Tariq Parvez Kazi, Functional Manager DIC and other concerned. During the review of the Cooperative Department, it was informed that 69



Cooperative Societies are functional in the district, while 16 societies are currently non-functional. The DC emphasized the need to revive non-functional

societies and focus on promoting result-oriented cooperatives for sustainable growth. Taking stock of the functioning of the newly inaugurated Mini Super Bazaar, the DC directed the department to strengthen publicity and promotional activities to attract more consumers. He also reviewed the performance of Common Service Centres (CSCs) operating under Cooperatives, PM Jan Aushadhi Kendras (PMJAK) and PM Kisan Samridhi Kendras, besides assessing the functioning of Food Processing Units established under the Cooperative sector. While reviewing the Social Welfare Department, it was revealed that a total of 21,879 beneficiaries are availing benefits under various schemes like National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) and Integrated Social Security Scheme (ISSS). This includes 15,309 old-age pensioners, 2,369 women in distress and 4,201 specially-abled persons. Additionally, three children have been provided scholarships under the National Foundation for Communal Harmony (NFCH). DC directed the District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) to ensure the

availability of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials in Hindi, Urdu and English to enhance public awareness about welfare schemes. Further, the DC instructed the Social Welfare Department to expedite pending cases under the Marriage Assistance Scheme, ensuring timely benefits to eligible beneficiaries. DC also distributed tablets to three meritorious students under the Beti Padhao Beti Bachao (BPBB) scheme encouraging them to pursue academic excellence.

Gram Sabha fastens tribal progress of DAJGUA in Paddar

Gram Sabha fastens tribal progress of DAJGUA in Paddar

KISHTWAR: On the 15th and 16th days of the transformative Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gramin Ut-karsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA), awareness and benefit saturation camps were successfully organized in Block Paddar at two Scheduled Tribe population-dominated villages—Village Lossain, Panchayat Machail, Block Paddar on Day 15 and Village Kabban, Panchayat Sole, Block Paddar on Day 16. This flagship outreach initiative witnessed vibrant participation from tribal communities and local stakeholders with a special emphasis on Information, Education and Communication (IEC). The camps served as a single-window platform, streamlining access to a spectrum of welfare schemes and public services. Key departments including Health, Jal Shakti, Agriculture, Education, ICDS, Employment, Rural Development, JPDCL Kishtwar and FCS&CA set up interactive stalls. Tribal community members availed themselves of on-the-spot assistance for registration, application processing and service delivery—many of which were communicated in local dialects to ensure full accessibility. Specialized health check-ups were conducted, extending essential healthcare services to tribal populations often underserved due to geographic remoteness. Gram Sabhas held at both locations during the event emerged as a highlight—providing a democratic platform for open dialogue on community development. Resolutions were passed, concerns were addressed and the importance of participatory governance was reinforced. Voices from the Ground Tribal elders and residents expressed heartfelt gratitude to the district administration for bringing governance to their doorstep. They lauded the initiative as a meaningful step toward transparent, accountable and inclusive governance. The DAJGUA Day 15 and 16 events in ST-dominated villages of Block Paddar stand as a model of integrated service delivery and community empowerment—strengthening trust between citizens and the administration, and paving the way for sustainable tribal development.

Proud Moment: Two innovative projects selected for Inspire Award MANAK Scheme

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DODA: District Doda is brimming with pride as two of its talented young minds have been selected for the State Level Exhibition and Project Competition under Inspire Award MANAK Scheme 2023–24. The selections were made following the successful conduct of the District-Level Exhibition and Project Competition (DLEPC) held on Monday at Krishna Palace, Udhewhala, Jammu, organized by the SCERT Divisional Office, Jammu. The two student projects stood out for their ingenuity, creativity and real-world relevance, exemplifying the district's growing focus on nurturing scientific temperament and innovation in the school education system.

One of the selected entries, titled “Sliding Luggage Carrier Behind Buses,” was developed by Sujal Kumar, an ex-student of Government High School Pranoo, who is currently pursuing Class 12th at Government Higher Secondary School Berarru. Sujal's project offers an engineering-based solution to common transportation challenges, and it won acclaim for its practicality and innovative design. Joining him at the state-level platform is Avish Parihar, a student of Ex-Servicemen Public Higher Secondary School, Thathri. His project, titled “Waste Decomposing Machine,” received significant appreciation for addressing environmental sustainability

and offering a viable model for efficient waste management—an issue of growing global concern. The selection of both projects not only highlights the creative potential of District Doda's students but also reflects the relentless efforts of dedicated educators, mentors, and the academic ecosystem fostered by DIET Doda. In his congratulatory message, the Chief Education Officer Doda, Mohammad Hafiz extended warm wishes to both Sujal and Avish. He also acknowledged the crucial contributions of their guiding teachers and respective schools, emphasizing the importance of cultivating innovation and scientific thinking from an early age.



Admn bids farewell to Khurwani

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DODA: District Administration Doda today accorded a warm farewell to Irshad Ahmed Khurwani, Head Assistant (Nazir) at DC Office Doda on his superannuation after the rendering service of 40 years. A farewell function was organised at DC Office Doda to mark the occasion, which was graced by the Deputy Commissioner Doda, Harvinder Singh as the Chief Guest. DC appreciated the dedication, discipline and valuable contributions of the retiree throughout his service and extended best wishes for a healthy and happy post retirement life. The farewell ceremony



was attended by the Chief Planning Officer, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Accounts Officer, Tehsildar, AD Planning and other officials and staff of the DC Office. The staff expressed admiration and heartfelt gratitude for Irshad Ahmed Khurwani. As a token of appreciation and affection, a traditional shawl and gift was presented to Irshad Ahmed Khurwani by the Deputy Commissioner Doda and colleagues.

Anti-drug campaign organised at Gool

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RAMBAN: In line with the anti-drugs campaign launched by the District Administration Ramban, the Sub-Divisional Administration Gool on Monday organised a comprehensive anti-drugs awareness campaign at Panchayat Gool-A. The campaign was jointly led by the BDO Office and Police Department aiming to spread awareness among the locals,

especially the youth about the harmful effects of drug abuse and the importance of building a drug-free society. During the drive, officers sensitized the participants about the ill effects of drugs and encouraged community participation in eradicating the menace. The campaign is part of the ongoing efforts under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan to make Ramban a drug-free district.

4 drug peddlers held with contraband worth Rs 7 lakh

JAMMU: Four alleged drug peddlers were arrested along with narcotic substances including heroin in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, police said. Jeevan Kumar and Sunil Kumar, both residents of Jaganoo village, were arrested after 9.40 gm of heroin worth about Rs 6 lakh was recovered from their possession at Tikri on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway, a police spokesman said. He said they were moving on a motorcycle when they were intercepted and subjected to checking by police. Two more peddlers, driver Sanjay Kumar and Rohit Kumar of Kah-Phalata village, were arrested after 9.60 kg around Rs 1 lakh of poppy straw was recovered from their vehicle at Flata checkpoint in the Rehambal area, the spokesman said. He said all four arrested peddlers were booked under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. The spokesman said police have so far registered 61 cases under NDPS since January this year in the district and arrested 87 accused, including seven under the stringent Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PIT-NDPS) Act. The spokesman said 22 vehicles used for the transportation of narcotics were seized while six pharmacy shops were also attached for violating drug norms. As part of financial disruption, he said 43 bank accounts linked to drug peddlers were frozen, involving an amount of Rs 16,72,948. The seized contraband including heroin, charas, poppy straw and ganja during this period was valued at Rs 2.42 crore in the black market, the spokesman said, adding police also attached properties worth Rs 4.69 crore, including multiple vehicles, residential houses and commercial assets related to both NDPS and bovine smuggling cases.

Warm farewell accorded to retirees



JAMMU: The staff and officers of the Directorate of Agriculture, Jammu, bid a warm and affectionate farewell to Agriculture Economist Jammu Pardeep Sharma and Assistant Agriculture Engineer, Seed Processing Unit, Jammu, Arshad Hussain Rashid who superannuated today after rendering over 35 years of dedicated service to the department. A heartfelt farewell function was organized at the Directorate to honour the retirees for their remarkable contribution to the department and the farming community. Director Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare, Jammu, S. Arvinder Singh Reen graced the occasion and extended best wishes to the retiring officers.

In his address, the Director lauded their exemplary service, professionalism and unwavering commitment towards agricultural development and farmer welfare. He further added that the department will always value the dedication and sincerity with which the officers discharged their duties over the years. The retirees leave behind a legacy of service and integrity that will inspire future generations of the department. Warm wishes for a healthy, peaceful, and prosperous post-retirement life were also extended to the retirees by officers and staff from various districts of Jammu division. As a token of appreciation and respect, mementoes were presented to the retirees on behalf of the department.

Meanwhile, Head Pharmacist, Directorate of Health Services Jammu S. Dhar-minder Singh Bhargav, who superannuated today was accorded a warm send off by officers and officials of the Directorate of Health Services Jammu. S. Dhar-minder Singh Bhargav joined as Pharmacist and rendered 39 years of service in the Department. To bid him farewell, an impressive function was organized in the premises of the Directorate of Health Services Jammu. Director Health Services Jammu Dr. Abdul Hamid Zargar appreciated the sincerity, dedication and helping nature towards all the employees and wished him a healthy and prosperous post retirement life.