POONCH MIRROR

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J&K Administration Declares Shopian Seminary Unlawful Under UAPA, Cites Alleged JeI Links

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration has designated Darul Uloom Jamia Siraj-ul-Uloom, located in Imam Sahib area of Shopian district, as an unlawful entity under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), citing alleged connections with the banned organisation Jamaat-e-Islami and concerns related to radicalisation, officials said.



The decision was formalised through an order issued by Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, under Section 8(1) of the Act.

According to the order, the move follows a dossier submitted by the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Shopian, on March 24, 2026. After reviewing available records and supporting material, authorities stated that the institution, while operating as a religious educational centre, exhibited several legal, administrative, and financial discrepancies.

These reportedly include irregularities in land acquisition, absence of mandatory registration with relevant authorities, and efforts to bypass statutory oversight mechanisms.

The order further refers to what it describes as "credible inputs" suggesting ongoing and covert links between the seminary and Jamaat-e-Islami, which was banned by the central government in 2019. It also alleges that individuals associated with the banned organisation continue to exert

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Anti-Drug Awareness Programme Held at Madrasa in Poonch



POONCH: As part of the ongoing Nasha Mukt Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, Police Station Loran on Saturday organised an anti-drug awareness programme at Madrasa Darul Aloom Zia-ul-Islam in Poonch district.

Students and staff members of the madrasa participated in the session, which focused on raising awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and the importance of prevention among youth.

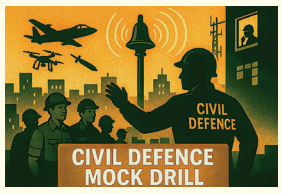
During the programme, officials highlighted the physical, psychological and social consequences of substance abuse. Participants were also informed about the need for early intervention and responsible decision-making to prevent addiction.

A police official, speaking on the occasion, said that community participation and awareness are key to tackling the growing menace of drugs. He stressed the role of educational institutions and families in guiding young people away from sub

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10-Minute Blackout Drill Conducted in Poonch to Test Civil Defence Readiness

POONCH: A 10-minute blackout mock drill was conducted across Poonch on Friday evening to assess emergency response mechanisms and strengthen civil defence preparedness, officials said.



The exercise, organised by the District Disaster Management Authority in coordination with Civil Defence, the State Disaster Response Force, and local police, began at 8:00 PM and concluded at 8:10 PM.

Residents across urban and rural areas participated by switching off lights and staying indoors, simulating conditions during a potential emergency. Authorities said the drill aimed to evaluate inter-departmental coordination and public responsiveness to civil defence protocols.

Departments including Health Services, Fire and Emergency Services, and the Power Development Department were involved in the exercise. A senior district official said the drill helped test communication systems and operational preparedness across agencies.

Officials reported a high level of public cooperation, noting that the voluntary blackout was observed widely. Cadets from the National Cadet Corps (NCC) and local volunteers assisted authorities in monitoring compliance and facilitating the exercise.

Prior to the drill, the administration had issued advisories clarifying that

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Poonch Police and Health Officials Coordinate Anti-Drug Strategy; 100-Day Campaign Targets Border District Vulnerabilities



POONCH: Police and public health administrators in this border district convened at Police Station Poonch on Tuesday to synchronize enforcement tactics with medical treatment protocols, according to statements provided by district administrative officials. The meeting forms part of a larger, government-initiated 100-Day Drug-Free Campaign currently underway in the region.

The session was conducted under the authority of Deputy Commissioner Ashok Kumar Sharma, Senior Superintendent of Police Shafqat Bhat, Additional Superintendent of Police (Operations) Ajay Sharma, and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Parvaiz Ahmed Khan, all of whom were present to coordinate the inter-departmental strategy.

Dr. Shafiq Chouhan,

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Poonch Panel Flags Incomplete JJM Schemes, Erratic Water Supply During Inspection

POONCH: A House Committee reviewing the implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday flagged incomplete infrastructure and irregular water supply after inspecting multiple schemes across Poonch district.

The committee, headed by legislator and former High Court judge Hasnain Masoodi, visited sites in Poonch Haveli to assess the progress of schemes meant to provide functional household tap connections. Residents from several villages, including

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19 Dead, Several Injured After Bus Skids Off Road in Udhampur

UDHAMPUR: At least 19 passengers were killed and several others injured after a bus skidded off the road in Kagort village of Ramnagar in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district on Monday morning.According to officials, police, rescue teams, and local residents rushed to the scene immediately after the incident and launched a rescue operation. The injured were shifted to



nearby hospitals for treatment.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Udhampur-Reasi Range, Shiv Kumar Sharma, said that the accident occurred at a sharp curve. "The driver may have lost control while

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District Magistrate Poonch Imposes 60-Day Curbs on Inflammatory Social Media Content

POONCH: The District Magistrate of Poonch has issued an order under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, imposing a 60-day restriction on the posting, sharing and circulation of inflammatory and misleading content on social media platforms to prevent communal tensions and maintain public order.



The move comes amid heightened concerns over the circulation of communal content online in the region.

According to the official order, the restrictions come into force with immediate effect and will remain in operation for 60 days unless modified or withdrawn earlier.

The order prohibits uploading, sharing, or forwarding any content including text, images, videos, audio, memes, graphics, or reels that promotes enmity, hatred, or ill-will between com

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Baisakhi Observed in Poonch; Gathering Held at Nangali Sahib Shrine

POONCH: Baisakhi was observed in Poonch district on Tuesday with a religious gathering held at the Gurdwara Nangali Sahib shrine, attended by devotees and several civil and police officials.



According to organisers, the event was held in the presence of Sant Mahant Manjit Singh Ji, head of Dera Santpura Nangali Sahib. Devotees from various parts of the district arrived at the shrine for the occasion.

MLA Haveli Aijaz Ahmed Jan, DIG Rajouri-Poonch Sandeep Wazir, Deputy Commissioner Ashok Kumar Sharma, and SSP Shafqat Hussain Bhat were among the officials present. Senior officers from the Army also attended the event and paid respects.

The programme featured recitations of Gurbani Kirtan by Ragi Jathas. S. Harcharan Singh, General Secretary of the District Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (DGPC), conducted the proceedings. Speakers addressed the gathering on the historical significance of Baisakhi and the creation of the Khalsa Panth by Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1699.

In his address, Sant Mahant Manjit Singh Ji spoke about the importance of following the Sikh Rehat Maryada.

He asked the community to adhere to the teachings of the Gurus.

The Health Department established a medical camp at the venue to provide free check-ups to visitors. Other government departments also set up informational stalls. Security arrangements were in place to manage the crowd, officials said.

The religious proceedings concluded with the recitation of Hukamnama from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The event ended with the serving of Guru Ka Langar to the attendees.

SSP Poonch visits border areas, hears grievances at public durbar

POONCH: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Poonch, Shafkat Hussain, on Friday visited forward areas along the Line of Control (LoC) and interacted with residents, officials said.

Accompanied by DySP Headquarters Neeraj Sharma and DySP Operations Azhar Amin, the SSP held a public durbar where locals raised concerns related to civic amenities, security, and cross-border issues.

Addressing the gathering, the SSP said the police would take up the grievances with the concerned departments for necessary action. "We are working in coordination with other agencies to address the issues highlighted by residents," he said.

Officials said residents were also sensitised about the risks associated with illegal cross-border activities, including smuggling and drug trafficking, and were advised to report any suspicious movement to the police.

A local resident who attended the durbar said that issues concerning basic services and security were discussed during the interaction.

The border areas of Poonch, situated along the LoC, have remained sensitive due to cross-border tensions and related security challenges.

Poonch launches 'Nasha Mukt J&K' campaign, holds awareness march

POONCH: The District Administration in Poonch on Friday launched the 'Nasha Mukt Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan', marking the occasion with an awareness rally and a series of programmes aimed at addressing substance abuse in the district.

The inaugural function was held at the Government Degree College Poonch auditorium, where participants took a pledge to work towards a drug-free society. District Social Welfare Officer Khalil A. Banday administered the pledge.

Speaking at the event, Deputy Commissioner Ashok Kumar Sharma said the administration would pursue a zero-tolerance approach towards drug trafficking. "Strict action will be taken against offenders, while efforts to strengthen awareness and rehabilitation will continue simultaneously," he said.

Senior Superintendent of Police Shafqat Bhat underscored the importance of community participation in tackling the issue.

"A police-public partnership is essential to curb drug abuse at the grassroots level," he said.

Officials from the District Legal Services Authority and the Health Department briefed participants on the legal implications of drug peddling and the adverse health effects of substance abuse.

According to officials, substance abuse has emerged as a growing concern in parts of the district, prompting authorities to intensify awareness and preventive measures.

Cultural performances by local artists highlighted the social and personal consequences of drug addiction.

Later, an awareness march involving students and members of civil society was flagged off from the college grounds.

The march passed through the main market and concluded at the historic Poonch Fort. A signature campaign was also organised as part of the outreach initiative.

The programme was coordinated by the Social Welfare, Information, Education, and Youth Services & Sports departments in collaboration with the police.

Suspected Explosive Device Containing Grenades Recovered in J&K's Rajouri

RAJOURI: Police and security forces on Friday recovered a suspected improvised explosive device (IED) containing two grenades in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district, officials said.



A police spokesperson said that the suspicious object was spotted by local residents in the Thandapani area of the Sunderbani sector, following which security agencies were alerted. A joint team of the Jammu and Kashmir Police and security forces reached the spot and immediately cordoned off the area to ensure civilian safety.

Upon preliminary inspection, the device was found to be a box containing two grenades, believed to have been configured as an improvised explosive device. Officials said the exact nature and triggering mechanism of the device would be determined after a detailed examination.

A bomb disposal squad (BDS) was deployed to the site and the explosives were safely neutralised without causing any damage, the police spokesperson confirmed.

No casualties or injuries were reported in the incident.

Police have registered a case and initiated an investigation to ascertain the source of the explosives and any possible links to militant activity. Searches in the surrounding areas have also been intensified as a precautionary measure.

The Sunderbani sector in Rajouri district has witnessed intermittent security-related incidents in the past, prompting heightened vigilance by security forces in the region.

Police Hold 'Thana Diwas' Across Poonch to Boost Community Engagement

POONCH: Police in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Thursday organised "Thana Diwas" across all police stations, aiming to strengthen engagement with local communities and address public concerns directly.



According to officials, the initiative is part of ongoing efforts to promote community-oriented policing and improve coordination between law enforcement agencies and residents.

The programme witnessed participation from dozens of residents, including retired government employees, former Sarpanchs, Chowkidars, Lambardars, and other members of civil society.

During the sessions, Station House Officers (SHOs) interacted with attendees and discussed key issues affecting the region, with a particular focus on drug abuse. Officials highlighted the growing concern over narcotics use among youth and outlined measures for prevention and early identification of addiction.

"Community participation is essential in tackling challenges like drug abuse. We urge citizens to share information and work closely with the police," said Neeraj Sharma, who led the programme at Police Station Mandi.

Participants raised several concerns, including drug availability in certain areas, lack of youth engagement programmes, and delays in addressing minor civic issues.

"Such meetings give us a platform to speak directly with the authorities. However, timely follow-up on grievances remains crucial," said a local resident and former Sarpanch.

Officials assured that the issues highlighted during the sessions would be addressed on priority and necessary follow-up action would be taken.

Police said that "Thana Diwas" will continue to be organised regularly to enhance transparency, accountability, and public trust.

However, some residents noted that the long-term effectiveness of such initiatives depends on consistent implementation and visible outcomes.

Authorities have urged citizens to cooperate in efforts to curb crime and drug abuse in the district.

Poonch Police Trace Two Missing Women, Reunite Them with Families

POONCH: Two women who had been reported missing in Poonch district have been traced and safely reunited with their families, according to local police.

Officials said both cases were registered at Police Post Ajote, prompting search efforts that involved field inquiries and technical tracking.

One of the women, identified by police as Anjum Khatun from Degwar Mardyala, had been reported missing earlier. Authorities said she was later located and returned to her family.

In a separate case, another woman from the Ajote area, identified as Misra Bi, was also reported missing and subsequently traced.

Police said that, after completing legal formalities and verification procedures, both women were handed over to their families. The missing persons cases have now been closed.

Authorities did not disclose further details about the circumstances surrounding the disappearances.

Six Alleged Drug Peddlers Arrested in Jammu and Kashmir in Multiple Police Operations

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Police have arrested six suspected drug peddlers in a series of coordinated operations across multiple districts, officials said.

Four of the arrests were made in the Katra area of Reasi district after several videos circulated on social media allegedly showing the sale of narcotic substances in the old Daroor market. Acting on the footage, police launched a swift operation, leading to the detention of four individuals.

A police officer said banned tablets were recovered during the operation. The suspects have been identified as Rishpal Singh, Uttam Singh, Sehal Lal all residents of Katra and Joginder Singh, a resident of Kanjali. Legal proceedings have been initiated against them, police added.

In a separate operation in the Mandi area of Poonch district, police arrested another suspect, Iftikhar Hussain, during routine checking. Officials said 8.80 grams of heroin were recovered from his possession.

Meanwhile, in Jammu district, police apprehended a sixth suspect, Uttra Kumar Suryavanshi, a resident of Chhattisgarh, near Karlop bridge in the Gajansoo area. Approximately one kilogram of cannabis was seized during the operation.

Police said cases have been registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, and further investigations are ongoing.

The High Court Appoints Administrative Judges for Kulgam and Poonch

JAMMU: The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has appointed new administrative judges for the districts of Kulgam and Poonch following the retirement of Justice Javed Iqbal Wani.

According to an order issued by the Registrar General, Justice Rajesh Sekhri has been designated as the Administrative Judge for Kulgam, while Justice Mohammad Yousuf Wani has been assigned similar responsibilities for Poonch.

The appointments are aimed at ensuring continuity in judicial administration and maintaining effective oversight across the districts.

Rains Leave Poonch Labourers Exposed, Renew Calls for Shelter at Bus Stand

POONCH: Since the beginning of this week, continuous rainfall has forced scores of daily-wage labourers to seek cover under plastic sheets and along shop fronts at the main bus stand here, once again exposing the absence of basic infrastructure at the site.



Between 8 am and 10 am on most days, an estimated 70 to 100 labourers gather at the bus stand in search of work. With no designated shelter or seating, many were seen standing in the open during the downpour, some using plastic sheets for cover while others huddled against walls to escape the rain.

"When it rains, we neither find shelter nor work. The entire day is lost," said a 45-year-old labourer who travels nearly 20 kilometres daily from a nearby village. "We come early hoping for work, but continuous rain leaves us with nothing.

"The situation has also created difficulties for nearby businesses. A local shopkeeper said the presence of large numbers of workers seeking cover during heavy rain often leads to practical constraints. "They are compelled to stand here, but during rains it becomes difficult for us as well. A proper shed is needed," he said, requesting anonymity.

Labourers have demanded that the administration provide a covered shed at the bus stand along with basic amenities such as seating and access to drinking water, saying the lack of such facilities exposes them to health risks and affects their ability to earn a livelihood.

The issue, workers say, is not new. Similar difficulties were reported during previous winters when labourers had to wait for work in extreme weather conditions without any protective infrastructure.

Officials indicated that the matter involves multiple departments.

A labour department functionary said the construction of a shelter at the bus stand falls under the jurisdiction of municipal authorities. "The matter can be taken up for discussion, and appropriate steps may be considered," the official said.

With the rain continuing through the week, the demand for a designated shelter has gained urgency, highlighting a long-standing gap in civic infrastructure for informal workers in the district.

Jammu Shia Groups Celebrate US–Iran Ceasefire, Call for Global Peace

JAMMU: Several Shia organisations in Jammu organised public celebrations following the announcement of a ceasefire between the United States and Iran, describing the development as a positive step towards regional stability.



The events were led by members of the Shia Federation Jammu Province and the Anjuman-e-Hussaini Bathindi Jammu Centre, alongside participation from other local groups.

Prominent attendees included Provincial President Ashiq Hussain Khan, Syed Fida Hussain Rizvi of Anjuman-e-Hussaini Bathindi, Maulana Zawar Hussain, Imam of Juma Masjid Imami Raza, and social activist Abid Safi.

Participants distributed sweets among the public and raised slogans during the gatherings. Photographs of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Mojtaba Khamenei were also displayed.

Speaking at the event, Ashiq Hussain Khan said the ceasefire was being seen by participants as a moment of relief and a hopeful sign for peace. He criticised the escalation of tensions in the region and expressed hope that the ceasefire would contribute to long-term stability.

Syed Fida Hussain Rizvi, General Secretary of the Shia Federation, emphasised the importance of peace and described the development as an opportunity to reduce conflict. He stated that Iran had acted in self-defence and reiterated calls for restraint and dialogue.

Organisers said the gatherings were intended to promote unity and solidarity, adding that the ceasefire had raised hopes for an end to further escalation in the region.

The events concluded peacefully.

Harvinder Singh Reviews Anti-Drug Campaign Progress in Poonch, Calls for Sustained Grassroots Efforts

POONCH: Director Employment & Managing Director Mission YUVA, Harvinder Singh, who is also serving as mentor for District Poonch, on Tuesday reviewed the progress of the Government's 100-day J&K Nasha Mukt Abhiyan during a meeting held at the Deputy Commissioner's office.

The review meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Ashok Kumar Sharma, Senior Superintendent of Police Shafqat Bhat, Additional Deputy Commissioner Tahir Mustafa Malik, and other district and sectoral officers.

According to officials, more than 550 activities have been conducted across the district under the campaign, reportedly engaging over two lakh people through awareness drives, sports events, and community outreach programmes. A detailed presentation in this regard was delivered by District Social Welfare Officer Khalil A. Banday.

While appreciating the inter-departmental coordination, Harvinder Singh emphasized the need to maintain momentum and strengthen engagement



at the grassroots level to ensure that awareness efforts translate into long-term behavioural change.

Deputy Commissioner Sharma reiterated that the district administration is focusing on involving educational institutions, youth groups, and local communities to widen the campaign's reach. SSP Shafqat Bhat highlighted the importance of strict enforcement measures alongside awareness initiatives to effectively curb drug abuse.

As part of the visit, Harvinder Singh also attended a painting competition at Government Girls Higher Secondary School aimed at promoting anti-drug awareness among students. He later inaugurated a cricket match at the Sports Stadium, underscoring the role of sports in encouraging a healthy and drug-free lifestyle.

However, despite official claims of wide outreach, independent assessment of the campaign's on-ground impact remains limited. Some local observers believe that sustained follow-up measures and community-level rehabilitation support will be crucial in determining the long-term success of the initiative.

Poonch, like several other border districts, has witnessed growing concern over substance abuse in recent years, making such campaigns a key focus area for both administration and civil society.

The review concluded with officials reiterating their commitment to intensify efforts under the ongoing campaign and expand its reach to vulnerable sections of society.

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH : "Education is not just learning facts, but shaping a better future."

The Unspoken Emergency: Breaking the Chain of Substance Abuse Before a Generation Is Lost

KH AJAZ MADNI

There is a fire burning through our streets, our schools, and our homes, and for far too long, our national conversation has chosen to whisper about it instead of raising a clarion call. We are speaking, of course, about the spiralling crisis of substance abuse. It is no longer an isolated problem of the urban rich or the borderland poor; it has become a sweeping, democratic catastrophe that devours ambition, fractures families, and silently rewrites the destiny of our younger generation. As an institution committed to the public good, we believe the time for euphemisms and moral panic is over. This page is dedicated to a single, unwavering proposition: drug addiction must be treated as a public health emergency, not a criminal failing, and our response must be as urgent, as compassionate, and as unyielding as the epidemic itself.

The scale of the crisis is far greater than what makes it to the evening headlines. Official estimates, which we have long suspected to be conservative, paint a deeply disturbing picture. According to data tabled in Parliament last year, over 30 million people in India are estimated to use cannabis, more than 20 million use opioids, and a rapidly growing number are falling prey to synthetic drugs like methamphetamine. The National Narcotics Control Bureau's own seizure data shows that heroin and opium consignments have not diminished despite record hauls; they have merely fragmented into smaller, more evasive supply chains. Yet numbers, staggering as they are, fail to capture the human wreckage. Behind every data point is a teenager in a rehabilitation centre wrestling with withdrawal, a mother who has sold her jewellery to fund a private de-addiction bed, a village that has lost a generation of its labour force to the numbness of a brown sugar dose.

We must confront an uncomfortable truth: the criminal justice-centric approach to this crisis has not merely failed; it has actively worsened the problem. For decades, our laws have prioritised punishment over healing. The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985, with its draconian provisions for mandatory minimum sentences and virtual denial of bail, was drafted with the intent to crush drug cartels. Instead, it has most often crushed the small-time consumer, the impoverished peddler driven to the trade by his own addiction, and the family that loses its breadwinner to a prison term that serves no rehabilitative purpose. A 2023 report by a leading legal research foundation found that over 60 per cent of those incarcerated under the NDPS Act are awaiting trial, many for the possession of quantities that are clearly for personal use. Meanwhile, the kingpins and international traffickers remain, by and large, phantoms with financial protection. We do not advocate for a softening of the law on traffickers; they are merchants of death and must feel the full weight of the state. What we demand is a judicial and legislative clarity that distinguishes between the victim of addiction and the perpetrator of the trade, a distinction currently buried under a one-size-fits-all legal regime.

As addiction devastates families and policy responses stumble between denial and half-measures, this newspaper demands a public-health-first paradigm rooted in empathy, evidence, and strict accountability.

A compassionate reorientation, however, requires more than legal amendment; it demands a complete overhaul of our rehabilitation infrastructure, which today is a picture of civic neglect. In most districts, government-run de-addiction centres are understaffed, under-resourced, and often reduced to a handful of generic counselling sessions. The absence of medically assisted treatment (MAT) using globally accepted protocols, such as opioid substitution therapy with buprenorphine, leaves countless addicts to endure a cold-turkey withdrawal that is not only excruciating but also medically dangerous. Our investigation across five district hospitals in the northern belt revealed that only two had a regular supply of the essential anti-craving medication. The private rehabilitation sector, conversely, is riddled with unregulated, profit-driven centres where patients are subjected to pseudo-scientific "cures," physical restraint, and a complete absence of psychiatric care. The result is a revolving door: a person leaves a centre, is offered no livelihood, no community reintegration, and predictably relapses within months. We are not breaking the cycle; we are administering a temporary bandage on a haemorrhaging wound.

It is in the realm of youth prevention that our collective failure is most galling. The average age of initiation into drug use has, according to a multicentric AIIMS study, dropped to a terrifying 15 years. Schools, which should be the first line of defence, continue to treat substance abuse as a disciplinary issue rather than a health and psychosocial one. Counsellors are few, trained mental health professionals are almost non-existent, and curriculums still shy away from open, non-judgemental conversations about peer pressure, mental health, and the physiological impact of drugs. At home, parents, often constrained by guilt, ignorance, or social shame, discover an addiction only when it has reached a stage that requires hospitalisation. The deafening silence between generations has become an enabler. To this, add the relentless rise of digital drug networks, where substances are advertised through coded emojis on social media platforms and delivered as discreetly as a food order. Enforcement agencies, by their own admission, are struggling to keep pace with this hydra-headed, technology-driven supply model.

There is a counter-argument, often advanced by pragmatic voices in law enforcement, that a shift towards a public health approach will act as a permissive signal that triggers a spike in drug use. They point to jurisdictions where decriminalisation has, in their view, increased public nuisance and normalised substance use. We approach this argument with the seriousness it deserves, because we share the deep concern for public order and the sanctity of especially vulnerable suburban and rural communities. However, this argument collapses under the weight of longitudinal global evidence. Portugal's two-decade-long experiment with decriminalisation, accompanied by massive investment in treatment, housing, and employment reintegration, did not produce social chaos; it produced a dramatic decline in overdose deaths, HIV infection rates, and drug-related incarceration. Sweden's strict prohibitionist model, conversely, has struggled with some of the highest overdose mortality rates in Europe. The lesson is crystal clear: harsh criminalisation without a robust treatment net does not deter addiction; it merely drives it underground, into dark alleys and infected syringes. We, therefore, stand on the evidence: a dual strategy of mercilessly hunting the trafficker while unconditionally rehabilitating the user is not a compromise; it is the only workable model.

Any editorial on this subject would be incomplete without confronting the profound crisis in Punjab and the broader northwest, a region that has served as the canary in the coal mine. Decades of socioeconomic stress, porous borders exploited by trans-national cartels, and a legacy of agrarian upheaval have combined to create an ecosystem where opioid and synthetic drug addiction has reached the level of a generational tragedy. The state government's "Drug Abuse Prevention Officer" program, while an earnest beginning, has been hobbled by a lack of psychiatric training and a nonexistent referral pathway. Politically convenient crackdowns produce momentary headlines but little sustained impact. We believe the solution lies in a legally mandated, interstate narcotics grid that tracks cross-border supply not merely through policing, but through financial intelligence, real-time customs intelligence, and a joint interrogation of the hawala networks that lubricate this trade. Without a surgical strike on the financial capillary structure of the drug mafia, we will only keep chopping off branches while the roots thicken.

We issue today a five-point charter that we intend to put before every elected representative and every candidate seeking public office:

1. **Immediate Amendment of Section 27 of the NDPS Act:** We demand a legislative distinction that treats the small-quantity user as a subject for treatment and penalises diversion for profit. The consumption of small quantities for personal use must attract a mandatory assessment order, not a mandatory prison term.
2. **A National De-addiction Infrastructure Mission:** Within 24 months, every district hospital must have a fully functional, medically equipped detoxification and MAT unit, staffed by a psychiatrist, a social worker, and a peer-recovery coach who has lived experience of addiction.
3. **School-Based Mental Health and Early Intervention:** We demand a confidential, non-stigmatising counselling module in every secondary and senior secondary school, integrated with regular curriculum time, and the mandatory reporting of availability—not usage—of help centres to all students and guardians.
4. **Regulation of Private Rehabilitation Centres:** A central accreditation authority with the power to shut down centres that practice physical restraint, deny medical treatment, or employ unqualified personnel. Publicly accessible ratings and audit reports must follow.
5. **A Livelihood Guarantee for Recovering Addicts:** Recovery has no meaning without dignity. We propose a government-backed, three-year employment track in partnership with the private sector, with tax incentives for firms that hire and mentor recovering individuals, ensuring that no one is discharged from a centre into jobless destitution.

Let us be unequivocal. This is not a problem of "those people" in another neighbourhood or another economic stratum. It is our sons and daughters, our colleagues and our neighbours. Every moment of delay in reframing our policy from punitive to therapeutic, from secrecy-laden to transparent, costs us not just money but irreplaceable human potential. We cannot legislate or police our way out of a crisis rooted in despair, pain, and the societal failure to offer belonging. What we can do, and what we demand, is to build a system that meets a struggling individual with a helping hand before a handcuff, with a counselling room before a courtroom, and with the unwavering belief that recovery is not a privilege of the resilient few but a right of every citizen.

This newspaper's resolve on this matter is not symbolic. Starting next month, we will publish a monthly accountability tracker, naming the districts that have failed to provide treatment facilities, listing the rehabilitation centres that have violated norms, and profiling the bureaucracies that have let budget allocations lapse. We will celebrate the successes, but we will not flinch from exposing the failures. The collective silence that has allowed this epidemic to metastasise ends here. It is time for the nation to confront its demons with both courage and compassion. The alternative is a future we cannot afford to imagine.

No Shortage of Essential Commodities in Poonch/ Deputy Commissioner

POONCH: The availability of Poonch essential commodities has been officially clarified by the district administration amid rising concerns triggered by global tensions, with authorities assuring that there is no shortage and warning against panic.

In a firm and reassuring address, the Deputy Commissioner of Poonch stated on Saturday that the district currently faces no shortage of essential commodities, urging the public to remain calm and avoid falling prey to rumours circulating on social media.

Speaking during a press conference attended by members of print, electronic, and digital media, the Deputy Commissioner emphasised that the administration has made adequate arrangements to ensure uninterrupted supply across the district.



"There is absolutely no scarcity of any essential commodity," the DC asserted. He further clarified that key supplies, including LPG cylinders, petrol, diesel, and fertilisers such as Urea and DAP, are sufficiently stocked and being monitored closely.

Providing detailed figures to support the claim, the DC revealed that the district maintains a strong LPG reserve. The total storage capacity stands at approximately 4,500 cylinders, with a daily consumption of 1,200 to 1,500 cylinders. Currently, around 3,400 to 3,500 cylinders are available daily, ensuring a continuous buffer stock of nearly two to two-and-a-half days. He added that further steps are being taken to enhance this reserve.

Regarding petroleum products, the administration has maintained a buffer stock capable of meeting demand for five to seven days. The daily petrol consumption in the district is estimated at 42,000 litres, with an available stock of 299,820 litres. Similarly, diesel consumption stands at approximately 58,000 litres per day, while current reserves are around 302,660 litres.

On the availability of fertilisers, the DC confirmed that no shortages have been reported from any part of the district. Adequate supplies of DAP and Urea are available to meet agricultural requirements during the ongoing and upcoming cropping cycles.

Highlighting strict enforcement measures, the Deputy Commissioner stated that the administration has acted proactively to curb any attempt at creating artificial scarcity or engaging in malpractice. Inspection teams constituted at district, sub-division, and tehsil levels have conducted a total of 197 inspections so far. Penalties have been imposed in several cases, and instances of misuse of domestic LPG cylinders for commercial purposes have been dealt with firmly, including seizures.

Issuing a strong advisory, the DC urged the public not to panic under any circumstances.

He warned that any attempt to spread misinformation or incite panic particularly through social media will attract strict legal action.

"There is absolutely no need for panic anywhere," he reiterated. "Social media platforms are under close surveillance, and those found spreading false information will face action without leniency."

The Deputy Commissioner also appealed to citizens and media professionals to verify information through official administrative channels before sharing it. He assured that teams at all levels tehsil, sub-division, and district are actively working to maintain transparency and respond promptly to public concerns.

Nasha Mukt J&K: 1670 Women Committees Join Anti-Drug Drive in Rajouri



RAJOURI: On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, meetings of Mahila Nigrani Committees were organised across various panchayats in Sub-Division Kotranka as part of the ongoing 100-day campaign under the Nasha Mukt J&K Abhiyan.

Across the district, 1,670 Mahila Samitis have been constituted, with training and activation sessions being conducted at the sub-division level. In Sub-Division Kotranka as well, such sessions are underway to ensure the effective functioning of these committees.

The initiative aims to strengthen grassroots vigilance and promote community participation in curbing the menace of drug abuse. Women from different panchayats actively participated in the meetings and pledged to play a proactive role in identifying and reporting drug-related activities in their areas.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Kotranka, Dilmir, while addressing the gatherings, emphasised the vital role of women in safeguarding society from the ill effects of substance abuse. He urged committee members to remain vigilant and work in close coordination with the administration and law enforcement agencies to ensure the success of the campaign.

He further highlighted that awareness, early intervention, and collective responsibility are key to achieving the goal of a drug-free society. Participants were also sensitised to the harmful impact of drug addiction on individuals, families, and society at large. Similar interactions were also held in Darhal and Nowshera, where Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma and SSP Rajouri Gaurav Sikarwar personally interacted with committee members.

DC Rajouri's Leadership Drives District to No.1 Spot in Budget Quest 2026

RAJOURI: District Rajouri earned national recognition at a three-day Chintan Shivir organized by the Department of Youth Affairs, Government of India, at Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre, for recording the highest participation in the country's Budget Quest 2026 initiative.

The achievement marks a major milestone in youth engagement and civic awareness.

The award was received by Deputy Director Youth Services and Sports, Nitin Hangloo, on behalf of the District Administration of



Rajouri, acknowledging the district's exceptional efforts in mobilizing youth at an unprecedented scale.

Rajouri secured the top position nationwide in the Viksit Bharat Budget Quest Quiz 2026, reflecting its strong grassroots outreach and effective coordination.

The recognition was conferred by Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, Raksha Nikhil Khadse, who commended the district administration for its innovative approach to engaging young minds and promoting financial literacy.

DDC Rajouri conducts surprise inspection at De-Addiction Centre; 10-bed Psychiatry Ward operational at GMC

RAJOURI: District Development Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma today conducted a surprise inspection of the Drug De-Addiction Centre to assess the functioning of the facility and the quality of services being provided to patients.

During the visit, the DDC inspected various sections of the centre, interacted with patients and staff. He reviewed the availability of medicines, counselling services and overall management of the facility. He stressed the need for a compassionate and professional approach in dealing with patients undergoing



treatment for substance abuse.

It was informed that on the directions of the DDC, the psychiatry and de-addiction ward at the Associated Hospital GMC has been made operational. A total of 10 beds have been designated for this purpose in the 180-bedded IPD block. The Head of the Department (HOD) Psychiatry has been directed to take over and manage the 10-bedded ward to ensure specialized care and effective treatment of patients.

CS reviews process for establishment of KVs/JNVs across districts of J&K

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a meeting to review the availability of land and infrastructure for Central Government educational institutions, including Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) and Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs), that are either non-functional or presently operating from temporary premises across various districts of Jammu and Kashmir.



The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, School Education Department; Secretary, Revenue; Deputy Commissioners representing Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (JNV) and Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS); Director School Education, Jammu/ Kashmir; Regional Officer, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Jammu, besides other senior officers.

Divisional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners from the districts participated through video conferencing. During the review, the Chief Secretary sought detailed district-wise and institution-wise inputs regarding the current infrastructural status of these schools. He specifically enquired about the identification and availability of suitable land for construction of permanent school buildings and the arrangements made for their temporary functioning till such infrastructure is developed. Emphasizing timely action, the Chief Secretary directed the Revenue Department to expedite the transfer of identified land parcels to the School Education Department for further leasing to the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan to facilitate early execution of works.

Lieutenant Governor visited Sariah in Rajouri, inaugurated several development projects

RAJOURI: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Friday emphasized that a nation is defined by its remotest village where our borders begin and our identity shines before the world.

"Under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, India advances with renewed resolve. Border areas are no longer the nation's edge but its first village and foremost opportunity. New commitment thrives and connection with mainstream has taken root," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor was speaking at a public gathering during his visit to vibrant village Sariah in Rajouri, where he inaugurated the Common Service Centre and initiated several development projects.

These projects include Water Conservation Works under JSJB 2.0 and development of playgrounds in vibrant villages Sariah, Pukharni, Bhawani, Chapardhara and Namban. He also paid tributes to



Brig. Mohammad Usman.

The Lieutenant Governor said that through the Border Area Development Programme under Vibrant Villages Programme, we are ensuring infrastructure and welfare schemes reach every border village.

"No map fully captures the true essence of our border villages, which reveal only lines. Within those lines, I see a vibrant society and steadfast families advancing the nation's progress," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that national security flows from soldiers at the borders and border village residents who dwell there.

"A road reaching a border village builds not just passage but unshakeable confidence in our defense. Electricity lighting a border village home offers not mere illumination but fresh hope. Employment for a border village youth transforms not only one life but the trajectory of an entire community.

My vision is clear that border village development is integral to national security, and every border village must rank among our nation's most prosperous," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that since assuming responsibility for Jammu Kashmir in August 2020, he had prioritized border villages' aspirations.

"In border villages where women rise each dawn dreaming of brighter futures for their children amid challenges, where farmers toiling in their soil through hardships, and where communities stand as sentinels without uniforms, we have ignited a new dawn of progress," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor also called upon officers to achieve 100% saturation of HADP, Mission Youth, Mudra Yojana, and all welfare schemes, leaving no eligible citizen behind.

"Our commitment has transformed lives, and I affirm with confidence that change is tangible in Jammu Kashmir's border villages where roads now weave networks, healthcare is thriving, digital connectivity is transforming the education sector and residents now feel integrated to India's rapid growth," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said true development means equal opportunity, dignity, and instilled confidence and the Vibrant Villages Programme embodies this, advancing employment, education, infrastructure, and digital empowerment holistically.

"It is our moral duty to secure every citizen's brighter future. Sariah's border village residents have guarded our borders alongside soldiers; we owe them comprehensive progress, leaving none behind.

Border village residents have endured much for this nation; now, they must stand at prosperity's core. A developed India demands a strong rural heartland, incomplete without its first villages. I call upon Sariah's residents to unite in realizing the Vibrant Village resolve. All officials will ensure 100% saturation of every central scheme and welfare program," the Lieutenant Governor said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor visited the exhibition on Gyan Bharatam and inspected the stalls installed by various departments and stakeholders.

He launched the Vibrant Village Anthem and handed over sanction letters and appointment letters to various beneficiaries under Mission Yuva, HADP, PM Mudra, PMAY-G and other different schemes. The Lieutenant Governor also distributed TV Sets with DTH, and felicitated TB Cured Warrior, Nasha Mukt Abhiyaan volunteers, and citizens from diverse backgrounds for their valuable contribution to society.

Poonch Book Mafia Allegations: Congress Leader Naeem Ajaz Mir Demands Action Against Private Schools

POONCH: Senior Congress leader Naeem Ajaz Mir has expressed serious concern over the growing allegations of a "book mafia" operating within private schools in Poonch, accusing institutions of exploiting parents through unfair and monopolistic practices.

In a statement issued on Thursday, Mir said that several private schools in the district are frequently forcing parents to purchase textbooks, notebooks, and stationery only from specific shops or vendors designated by the schools. He termed the practice as a violation of government norms, which prohibit schools from compelling parents to buy study material from particular outlets. He further stated that such practices are becoming increasingly common in Poonch, placing a significant financial burden on families, particularly those from economically weaker backgrounds.

"Education should not be commercialised in a way that leaves parents with no choice but to bear unnecessary expenses," Mir said, adding that the issue requires urgent attention from the authorities.

The Congress leader also pointed out that many schools introduce new editions of books every academic session, making previous materials obsolete and forcing parents to spend more each year. He described this as a deliberate attempt to increase costs under the guise of academic requirements.

Calling for immediate intervention, Mir urged the Jammu and Kashmir Education Department to take strict action against schools found violating rules. He also demanded the establishment of a transparent mechanism for the selection and distribution of books to ensure affordability and fairness.

He emphasized that accountability measures, including inspections and penalties, are essential to curb such practices and protect the interests of students and parents.

Mir warned that unchecked exploitation in the education sector could undermine the principle of equal access to education and erode public trust in private institutions. He appealed to the government to act swiftly to regulate private schools and ensure that education remains accessible, transparent, and free from commercial exploitation.

Major Police Reshuffle in J&K: 80+ Officers Transferred

SRINAGAR: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has ordered a major reshuffle in the police department, transferring and posting over 80 officers across the Union Territory with immediate effect.

According to Government Order No. 200-Home of 2026 issued by the Home Department, the transfers have been made in the interest of administration.

The reshuffle includes several senior IPS officers. Tejinder Singh has been appointed as IGP CID, while Sarah Rizvi has been posted as IGP Crime. Shahid Mehraj Rather has been transferred as Director, Police Telecommunication. Multiple changes have also been made at the DIG and SSP levels across key districts and units including CID, Traffic, Security, and SDRF.

Officials said the move aims to strengthen administrative efficiency and improve policing across Jammu and Kashmir.

The latest development is being seen as one of the more extensive police reshuffles in recent times in Jammu and Kashmir, reflecting the administration's focus on optimizing institutional performance and ensuring better public service delivery.

Chief Justice flags off Multi Utility Vehicles for strengthening legal aid outreach across J&K

JAMMU: In a significant step towards strengthening access to justice and expanding outreach of legal services to the grassroots level, Justice Arun Palli, Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and Patron-in-Chief, J&K Legal Services Authority in the august presence of Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority and other Companion Judges of the High Court at Jammu today flagged off a fleet of Multi Utility Vehicles for District Legal Services Authorities of the Jammu Province, at High Court Complex, Janipur, Jammu.



These vehicles have been procured under the guidance of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) with the objective of strengthening the delivery of legal aid and welfare services, particularly in far-flung, rural, remote and underserved areas of the Union Territory.

Chief Justice appreciated the initiative and observed that access to justice must not remain confined to courtrooms alone, but should meaningfully reach every citizen, especially those belonging to vulnerable and marginalized sections of society. He emphasized that such initiatives are essential for taking justice to the doorsteps of the people.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority, also appreciated the launch of the vehicles and stated that the same would greatly enhance the outreach and efficiency of District Legal Services Authorities. His Lordship further observed that this initiative marks another important step in making legal services more accessible to the common people.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar also expressed that similar Multi Utility Vehicles are planned to be launched shortly for districts of Kashmir Province as well, so that the benefits of this initiative reach every region of the Union Territory in an equitable manner.

While interacting with media persons, Shazia Tabasum, Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority, highlighted that the vehicles shall be utilized for conducting legal awareness programmes, facilitating outreach camps, extending assistance to beneficiaries under various legal aid schemes, supporting Para Legal Volunteers, and ensuring better coordination of legal services activities at the district level. She further stated that the initiative would significantly strengthen the institutional capacity of District Legal Services Authorities in serving the people more efficiently.

The vehicles shall also be used for carrying out awareness campaigns relating to legal aid, women and child rights, senior citizens' welfare, victim compensation, mediation, Lok Adalats, drug de-addiction awareness, child protection, and other welfare-oriented initiatives undertaken by Legal Services Institutions from time to time.

J&K Administration Declares...

influence over the seminary's administration and academic functioning.

Officials also pointed to financial concerns, including a lack of transparency in fund management and alterations in financial control structures, raising the possibility of fund diversion or misuse.

Additionally, the order mentions reports indicating that some former students of the institution were allegedly involved in militant activities, and that the premises were being used in a way considered detrimental to national security.

The administration stated that due process was followed prior to the declaration. A show-cause notice was issued to the chairman of the institution on March 31, seeking an explanation. The response was reviewed, and further input was obtained from the SSP Shopian, who reportedly found the objections to be "untenable."

The order describes the action as preventive, aimed at stopping the alleged misuse of the institution's premises for unlawful purposes.

By invoking provisions of the UAPA, the administration has formally notified the seminary as an unlawful entity, paving the way for further measures such as sealing the premises and freezing associated financial assets.

Officials indicated that additional action, including possible seizure of the property, may follow in the coming days.

Anti-Drug Awareness...

stance abuse.

Participants were encouraged to spread awareness within their communities and support efforts aimed at building a drug-free society.

The programme concluded with an interactive session, where students shared their views and pledged to stay away from drugs.

Police said similar awareness initiatives are being conducted across the district as part of a broader outreach strategy under the anti-drug campaign.

10-Minute Blackout...

the exercise was routine and urged residents not to be influenced by misinformation circulating on social media. Power supply was restored immediately after the drill concluded.

Authorities said the exercise was successful and that performance data collected during the drill would be analysed to further strengthen the district's disaster management planning and response framework.

Poonch Police and...

Medical Superintendent of the District Hospital, attended the briefing alongside specialists from the Addiction Treatment Facility (ATF), identified in official attendance records as Dr. Femida Banday and counselor Saima Bhat. These health officials provided clinical guidance to law enforcement on the physiological signs of acute withdrawal and the standard operating procedures for emergency medical referrals.

According to a district police spokesperson, the primary focus of the closed-door deliberations was to address specific gaps in the current enforcement network. The discussions included directives to Station House Officers and NDPS enforcement officers regarding the streamlining of custody-to-care transitions. Officials said the goal is to ensure individuals detained for personal use are not merely processed through the legal system but are also directed toward rehabilitation services accessible at the District Hospital's ATF center.

The meeting was also attended by a contingent of uniformed police personnel and several local residents, whose participation was described by organizers as voluntary. A district administrator, speaking on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to address press directly, noted that the high visibility of the event was intended to signal a community-based response to the narcotics trade, which has historically exploited the district's unique geographic proximity to the Line of Control.

"The purpose of this 100-day push is not simply to increase arrest figures," the official stated. "We are attempting to map out how law enforcement and healthcare can function as a single, continuous intervention. You cannot separate the crime of trafficking from the public health crisis of addiction."

Speakers at the event emphasized that dismantling the drug ecosystem in Poonch requires a synchronized approach that links law enforcement's monitoring function with the medical community's responsibility to offer care to the voiceless and vulnerable.

Poonch Panel Flags...

Qasba Bandichechian, Khanetar, and Kokra Bandichechian, told the panel that erratic supply and non-functional lift schemes have left households struggling for clean drinking water.

"We get water once in four or five days, and sometimes not at all. The tank near our mohalla was supposed to be completed last year but work has stopped," said a resident of Khanetar.

The committee inspected Water Supply Schemes at Qasba Bandichechian, Khanetar, Bakerwalan Sokerkote, and Kokra Bandichechian. Members interacted with affected households and noted complaints regarding unfinished water tanks, stalled borewells, and inconsistent supply. Residents alleged that changes to Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) and project locations were made without adequate public consultation, contributing to delays and incomplete works.

Speaking after the site visits, committee chairman Hasnain Masoodi said, "We have recorded the grievances and observed the ground situation firsthand. The committee will submit its findings with clear recommendations, including fixing responsibility where lapses are found.

"A senior official accompanying the panel said the department would review the complaints and submit a compliance report to the committee. "Any deviation from approved plans will be examined and addressed," the official added.

The panel includes legislators Altaf Ahmad Wani, Ajaz Ahmad Jan, Ranbir Singh Pathania, Tanvir Sadiq, Javaid Riyaz Bedar, Rafiq Ahmad Naik, and Arjun Singh Raju. Jal Jeevan Mission Managing Director Anjali Seharawat was also present during the visit.

The committee is expected to examine deviations in DPRs and project execution as part of its final report to the Legislative Assembly.

The Jal Jeevan Mission aims to provide every rural household with a functional tap connection under the "Har Ghar Jal" initiative, even as several villages in Poonch continue to face significant gaps in implementation.

19 Dead, Several...

negotiating the sharp turn. The vehicle hit a parapet and rolled down into a gorge," he said. He added that whether the bus was overloaded remains under investigation.

Meanwhile, Narendra Modi expressed grief over the loss of lives. In a post on X, he said, "Pained to hear about the loss of lives due to a bus accident in Udhampur, Jammu and Kashmir. I extend my heartfelt condolences to those who have lost their near and dear ones. I pray for the speedy recovery of the injured.

"The Prime Minister also announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh for the next of kin of each deceased and Rs 50,000 for the injured.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh said that 16 persons died on the spot, while several others sustained serious injuries, indicating that the casualty figures are still being updated as rescue operations continue.

"Rescue and evacuation operations are underway with teams from Police, SDRF and district administration on site. The injured are being shifted to GMC Udhampur for urgent medical treatment. I and my office are in constant touch," he added.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha expressed deep sorrow over the incident, offering condolences to the bereaved families and directing authorities to ensure all possible assistance to the affected.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also expressed grief, stating that the government stands firmly with the victims and their families in this hour of tragedy and that all necessary support is being extended.

District Magistrate Poonch...

munities on grounds of religion, race, caste, community, language, or region.

The administration stated that social media platforms have been increasingly misused to spread communally provocative and false content, which has the potential to disturb public order, create communal tensions, and endanger lives and property.

Under the prohibitory directive, the following activities have been explicitly banned:

Communal Content: Material promoting hatred or ill-will between communities on religious, caste, linguistic, or regional grounds.

Fake News and Rumours: Creation or dissemination of false, fabricated, or misleading information designed to incite communal tensions, riots, or violence.

Morphed and Doctored Visuals: Circulating morphed, doctored, or out-of-context images or videos to misrepresent incidents and inflame communal sentiments.

Boycott Calls and Threats: Using social media platforms to call for boycotts, issue threats, or incite violence against any specific community, religion, or caste.

Organising Mobs: Coordinating unlawful assemblies or processions through social media with the intent to target, intimidate, or harm any particular community.

Hate Speech: Content that deliberately provokes sectarian or communal tensions.

The order covers all major digital platforms, including WhatsApp, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, and Telegram, officials said.

The administration has warned that violations will attract stringent action under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, and the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000. Penalties range from fines to imprisonment, including terms of up to seven years, and in certain serious offences, life imprisonment under applicable laws.

Specifically, promoting enmity between groups under Section 196(1) of the BNS carries a penalty of up to three years' imprisonment or a fine, or both. Acts endangering sovereignty, unity, and integrity of India under Section 152 of the BNS can lead to imprisonment of up to seven years or a life term, along with a fine.

Citizens have been directed to exercise caution and refrain from forwarding inflammatory content. The order urges people to report such material to the nearest police station or the cybercrime unit.

The directive also places responsibility on administrators of WhatsApp groups, Telegram channels, Facebook pages, and YouTube channels to prevent the circulation of prohibited content. Failure to do so will attract legal liability. Social media intermediaries have been instructed to comply with takedown requests issued by authorities under Section 69A of the IT Act and the IT Rules, 2021. Non-compliance may result in loss of safe harbour protection and other legal consequences.

For enforcement, the Senior Superintendent of Police, Poonch, has been directed to ensure prompt registration of FIRs against violators. The Cyber Crime Unit will undertake round-the-clock surveillance of social media platforms to proactively identify prohibited content. Additionally, special Social Media Monitoring Cells will be constituted at the sub-divisional level, under the supervision of respective Sub-Divisional Magistrates. The order will remain in force for 60 days from the date of issuance unless extended, modified, or revoked earlier.

District Administration, Civil Society Rajouri pay rich tributes to Martyr Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa

RAJOURI: The District Administration Rajouri and Civil Society today commemorated the birth anniversary of Martyr Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa with great reverence and solemnity here at the Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa Memorial, Museum & Library.

It is pertinent to mention that the conversion of the residential quarter of Martyr ADDC Dr. R.K. Thapa into a Memorial Museum & Library, construction of a new entrance gate at the ADDC office, renaming of Dak Bungalow Rajouri in his honour, establishment of additional library at Government Boys Higher Secondary School Rajouri and installation of the martyr's statue at the entrance of ALG are initiatives undertaken by the Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma as a tribute to the martyr.

On the occasion, a documentary highlighting the inspiring life and dedicated public service of the martyr was screened, offering a glimpse into his remarkable contributions and enduring legacy. The family members of the martyr also visited the memorial, museum and library, reflecting on his life and achievements.

Floral tributes were paid to the martyr as a mark of respect, followed by a plantation drive wherein a tree was planted in his memory, symbolizing his lasting impact and commitment to society.

Languages not only means of expression but guardians of our history, identity and culture: Sakeena Itoo

JAMMU: Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo today remarked that languages are not merely a means of expressing thoughts but they are the guardians of our history, identity and culture.



The Minister stated this while delivering the Keynote address during One-day Seminar on 'Relation of Urdu with Regional Languages' at University of Jammu here.

The seminar was organised by Department of Urdu, University of Jammu in collaboration with National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL).

In her address the Minister said that this seminar is not just a formal event, but a reflection of our identity, as languages are not merely a means of expressing thoughts, they are the guardians of our history, identity, and culture.

"Urdu is a language that has evolved through centuries and has absorbed the influences of various civilizations and cultures. Lukhnow and Delhi are considered the birthplaces of Urdu but Jammu and Kashmir has equally nurtured this unique language", she stated.

The Minister highlighted that the Urdu's bond with local languages like Kashmiri, Dogri, Gujri, Pahari, Bhadarwahi, Kishtwari, isn't just neighbourly, but a deep linguistic relationship.

"Urdu adopted words, idioms and tone from local languages and in return gave them a wider platform. J&K is a land where Urdu not only got official patronage, but Sufis, Rishis, Sanskrit and Persian scholars played a key role in taking it to the masses", she said.

Sakeena Itoo further said that Urdu acts as a bridge connecting different communities here and helps reach each other's hearts. "Urdu language is the silken thread that unites our colorful culture", she said.

Reaffirming the government's commitment, Sakeena Itoo stated that sustained efforts are being made to promote and preserve regional languages, including Kashmiri, Dogri, Gojri, Pahari, and others. She stressed the importance of inclusive policies that encourage multilingual education and safeguard linguistic identities.

She also assured the NCPUL and Urdu Department of Jammu University that Government is firm in its resolve for promotion of Urdu language as well as regional languages.

The Minister also underscored the need for academic research and community participation in documenting and revitalizing indigenous languages. She called upon scholars, educators, and students to actively engage in initiatives that celebrate linguistic diversity.

On the occasion, the Minister also released a Urdu magazine.

Addressing the gathering, Vice Chancellor Jammu University, Prof. Umesh Rai said that Urdu is a diverse language and is spoken in several parts of the country. He added that languages are a powerful tool to bind communities.

Prof. Rai highlighted that languages are connecting different cultures and traditions, and we need to promote languages for National integration.

Speaking on the occasion, Director NCPUL, Dr. Shams Equbal said that J&K is not only famous for its beautiful landscapes and valleys, but also for its culture and traditions. He highlighted that the strong bond of different languages is evident in Jammu and Kashmir with varied number of languages spoken in its different parts.

Indian Army hosts Choudhary Abdul Ghani Volleyball tournament in Mendhar

MENDHAR: The Indian Army organised the inaugural Choudhary Abdul Ghani Volleyball Tournament at Operation Hill Ground, Mendhar, in memory of the late Choudhary Abdul Ghani, a respected community figure known for his contributions to youth development and social harmony.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from six local teams, primarily comprising members of the Gujjar community and drew players and spectators from surrounding villages. The tournament aimed to promote sportsmanship, encourage youth engagement in positive activities and strengthen community bonds in the region. The opening ceremony was attended by Indian Army personnel, local representatives and prominent citizens, who paid tribute to the legacy of Choudhary Abdul Ghani.

The officer highlighted the importance of sports in fostering discipline, teamwork and unity among the youth. Matches were played in a spirited yet friendly environment, with teams displaying commendable skill, coordination and determination throughout the competition. A large turnout of spectators added to the vibrant atmosphere, reflecting the community's strong support for such initiatives.

YS&S Department Poonch organises sports activities, yoga sessions under Anti-Drug Campaign

POONCH: In a significant step towards promoting a drug-free society and fostering a culture of health, discipline, and positivity among youth, the Department of Youth Services & Sports Poonch organized a series of sports and fitness activities, including yoga sessions, across various zones of the district under the banner of Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan.



The initiative witnessed enthusiastic participation from over 2,021 youth, reflecting growing awareness and a strong commitment among young individuals towards a healthy and drug-free lifestyle.

As part of the programme, intramural competitions were conducted across multiple zones, with a total participation of 3,826 students (boys and girls) in games such as kho-kho, kabaddi, chess, volleyball, and badminton. These competitions provided a vibrant platform for students to showcase their skills, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

Additionally, around 1,612 participants took part in the activities conducted across all zones of the District under the "Back to Bachpan" initiative, adding to the vibrancy and inclusivity to the campaign. The activities were carried out successfully with active involvement from students and staff, reflecting strong coordination and enthusiasm. The programme was conducted under the guidance of Director General Youth Services & Sports Anuradha Gupta.

A dedicated yoga session, along with multiple sports activities, was also organized, helping participants enhance both physical fitness and mental well-being. These activities not only promoted a healthy lifestyle but also instilled values of discipline, unity, and confidence. An Anti-Doping Awareness Programme was also conducted to educate participants about the harmful effects of performance-enhancing drugs and to promote the spirit of fair play in sports.

Tawi Mohatsav Baisakhi Mela to be elevated as Jammu's major festival: Deputy Chief Minister

JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today said that the Baisakhi Mela on the banks of River Tawi will be promoted into one of the biggest festivals of Jammu and Kashmir, aimed at attracting the tourists from across the country and beyond.



Addressing a large gathering during the concluding day of Tawi Mohatsav celebrations, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the vibrant mela has fulfilled a long-cherished dream of the people of Jammu to celebrate such a grand cultural festival along the banks of River Tawi, also revered as Maa Surya Putri.

He said that the government is working earnestly towards promoting Jammu as a key cultural and religious destination, adding that sustained efforts will be made to further enhance the scale and outreach of the Baisakhi Mela in the coming years. He also appreciated the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha and the Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, for their continued support and encouragement in organizing such a grand event. He also lauded the efforts of the Jammu Municipal Corporation, Smart City officials, Tourism Department and other concerned agencies for their coordinated work in making the festival a grand success.

LAST WORD

A Newspaper's True Duty

A newspaper's true duty is not merely to inform, but to illuminate. Beyond headlines and breaking news lies a deeper responsibility—to provide context, encourage reflection and give voice to those often unheard.

In times of uncertainty, journalism must resist noise and haste. It must choose accuracy over speed, depth over sensation and public interest over convenience. Only then can it earn trust—not for a day, but over time.

This publication aspires to be a record of events and a forum for thought, grounded in facts and guided by conscience.

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