

POONCH MIRROR

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Mission YUVA to become national benchmark for self-employment schemes: CM Omar Abdullah

CM disburses Rs 100 Cr in 3,003 cases, marks Rs 1,000 Cr milestone; launches Credit Guarantee Fund, inaugurates 20 SBDUs

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today expressed hope that Mission YUVA would emerge as a model for self-employment schemes across the country, asserting that Jammu and Kashmir aims to set a national benchmark in entrepreneurship-led development.

The Chief Minister made these remarks while addressing the Yuva Mahotsav—Mission YUVA programme held at the Convention Centre here, where he interacted with entrepreneurs and beneficiaries of the scheme.

“In the future, not only should I believe this, but we have taken it as a mission



that in the whole country, in all the states, if any self-employment or entrepreneurship scheme is used as an example, it should be the Jammu & Kashmir Mission Yuva Scheme. And from my side, and from the side of my colleagues, we will continue to help you as much as we can,” he said.

He urged beneficiaries

to stay connected with the scheme and continue to bring forward new ideas and expansion plans.

Highlighting the importance of the initiative, the Chief Minister said unemployment remains the biggest and most complex issue facing Jammu and Kashmir.

“I would like to say a few

words about the importance of this mission. We all know that there is a very big and complicated issue of unemployment in Jammu and Kashmir. You can see this issue everywhere in Jammu and Kashmir—whether in the plains, hilly or remote areas,” he said.

He reiterated that no

Cont. on page 7

Rs 3.80 Cr UT subsidy disbursed to 4288 beneficiaries under PM Surya Ghar Yojana: CM

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today informed the Legislative Assembly that Rs 3.80 crore has been disbursed as UT subsidy in favour of 4,288 consumers of Kashmir and Jammu Power Distribution Companies under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana.

The Chief Minister was replying to a question raised by legislator Shakti Raj Parihar regarding the scheme.

The Chief Minister, who also holds the Power portfolio, said that Rs 1.80 crore has been disbursed in favour of the first 2,053 consumers of KPDCCL, in line with the Central Financial Assistance (CFA). Similarly, Rs 2 crore has been disbursed in favour of 2,235 beneficiaries of JPDCL under the scheme.

He informed the House that under the PM Surya

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LG attended Mahavir Janma Kalyanak-celebration of birth of Lord Mahavira, at Jammu

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Tuesday attended the Mahavir Janma Kalyanak, a special event organized by S.S Jain Sabha, to celebrate Mahavir Jayanti, at Jammu.

The Lieutenant Governor extended his felicitations and best wishes to all on the auspicious occasion.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor spoke on



Lord Mahavira's teachings of Ahimsa and Anekantavada, emphasizing right faith, knowledge, and conduct in today's world, which urgently needs compassion, peace, and brotherhood.

“Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, India stands resolute today. He has laid foundation for

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Eid celebrated with religious fervor, gaiety across Jammu region

JAMMU: Amid tight security arrangements, Eid ul-Fitr was celebrated with religious fervour and traditional gaiety across the Jammu region today, with a large number of Muslims gathering at various Eidgahs and mosques to offer special Eid prayers and prayed for peace and betterment of mankind. City & Local Guides

Eid ul-Fitr marks the end of the fasting month of Ramzan is considered



a sacred and holy month in Islam. The month is observed through fasting, prayers and charity, and ushers in a festival of joy,

togetherness and thanksgiving. Eid-ul-Fitr falls on culmination of Ramzan and

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Assistant Professor killed, husband critically injured in Jammu-Poonch highway mishap

Poonch mourns the loss of a beloved academician as yet another accident exposes deadly road realities

POONCH: In a deeply distressing incident that once again underscores the perilous state of road safety in the Pir Panjal region, an Assistant Professor from the Zoology Department of Government Degree College Poonch lost her life in a catastrophic road accident on Thursday along the Jammu-Poonch highway. Her husband, who was driving the vehicle, remains in a critical condition, fighting for survival.



The deceased, Dr Tabasum Naz, was a respected academician known for her intellectual rigour and unwavering commitment to students. She was travelling with her husband, Muhammad Haamid, in

a Maruti Swift when the vehicle reportedly met with a severe accident at Kallar—an infamously accident-prone stretch of the highway.

Eyewitnesses described

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Birthday Turns Tragic in Rajouri

Missing youth found dead; family suspects murder, blocks highway NH144A

RAJOURI: Tension gripped the Chakli area of Rajouri district after the body of a 22-year-old youth who had gone out to celebrate his birthday with friends was found under suspicious circumstances on Monday morning.

The deceased has been identified as Aman Sharma, son of Rashpal Sharma. According to his younger brother, Tarun Sharma, Aman was working at a chemist's shop in Rajouri. On Sunday, his birthday,



he left home to celebrate with friends but did not return by evening. Repeated attempts by the family to contact him failed as his mobile phone was switched off. The family searched for him on their own but could not trace him.

Early Monday morning, some locals spotted a body lying beneath the Chakli bridge and informed the

villagers. Police were alerted, and upon inspection, the body was identified as Aman Sharma. The police immediately shifted the body to GMC Rajouri for a postmortem.

After the postmortem, when the body was handed over to the family, angry relatives, along with villagers, staged a strong protest

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Draw inspiration from PM Modi's resolve to build strong, prosperous India: LG Sinha tells citizens

JAMMU: "Vande Mataram is our identity, strength, and vow. It is not just verses but a profound experience woven into our civilization's fabric. Vande Mataram singing and related events revives memories of immortal martyrs, honors their sacrifices, and renews our commitment to India's glory," the Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha said this on Monday.

He called upon every section of society to share one dream: making India the world's greatest nation.

"We must unite to realize it. When every citizen of J&K UT dedicates themselves to building a developed India, I believe that collective spirit will become an unstoppable force," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor was speaking at the closing

ceremony of Special Phase marking the 150 years of Vande Mataram, at Abhinav Theatre, Jammu. The Special Phase organised from 23rd March to 30th March 2026 to commemorate Shaheedi Diwas and honor the great martyrs of the freedom struggle, whose immense sacrifices paved the way for India's independence.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised that the devotion and fervor in Jammu Kashmir towards Vande Mataram, reflects how this Union Territory has shed painful chapters, embracing the ideals we have toiled for over the last five-six years. "Under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, Jammu Kashmir has been integrated into the national mainstream,



setting new benchmarks in development and showcasing profound patriotism through pivotal events like Vande Mataram and Har Ghar Tiranga," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The nation witnessed Jammu Kashmir's stellar contribution during the previous phases of Vande Mataram @150 years commemorative event. In the

first phase (November 7-14, 2025), 9 of India's top 10 performing districts were from UT, with Kishtwar at Number 1. In the second (January 19-26, 2026), 6 were from Jammu Kashmir, led by Poonch.

The Lieutenant Governor said the overwhelming participation of people of Jammu Kashmir in the previous two phases of

Vande Mataram event and embrace of its values signal a transformative power for the future. "I firmly believe a region's greatest strength lies in its ability to envision its future. In Jammu Kashmir, I'm witnessing that potential flourish.

It's vital to spread the message that true patriotism is the bedrock of peace and progress. It's a sense

of responsibility, a spirit of contribution, assuring us that we can better the world together," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that Vande Mataram symbolized the dream, goal, and resolve generations fought for and the special week-long phase offered moments to reflect at the confluence of history and aspiration, paying tribute to countless sacrifices that grant us today's freedom, unity, and pride.

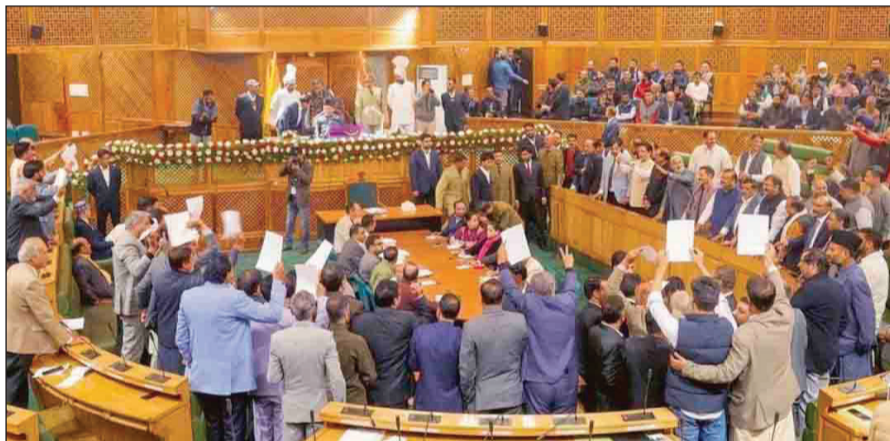
"Vande Mataram inspires us to honor our past, empower our present, and pledge a bright future. This was a UT-level introspection, reviving cultural roots through public participation and enlisting every citizen in nation-building," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Jammu & Kashmir Assembly: MLA Calls for Social Media Regulation, Action Against Fake Journalists

JAMMU: The issue of Social Media Regulation in Jammu Kashmir took centre stage in the Legislative Assembly on Friday, as a Congress legislator called for an urgent policy framework and strict action against individuals posing as journalists on digital platforms.

In a significant intervention during the ongoing Assembly session, Congress MLA Iftikhar Ahmed, representing Rajouri, urged the government to introduce comprehensive regulations governing social media content and to crack down on what he described as the growing menace of fake journalists.

"Addressing the House, Ahmed pointed out that in the absence of a clear regulatory framework, virtually anyone can create social media pages and present themselves as media professionals, operating without accountability or



oversight.

He warned that such unregulated activity has led to the widespread circulation of misleading and fabricated videos, often damaging the reputation of individuals and institutions, with little to no mechanism available for redressal.

The legislator stressed the need for the government to clearly define who qualifies as a media professional and to introduce

minimum standards or accreditation systems to ensure credibility within the sector.

Ahmed further called for the registration and regulation of media entities operating on social platforms, emphasizing that accountability must be enforced wherever misinformation results in harm to individuals or organisations.

Highlighting the challenges faced by established

media institutions, he noted that many continue to function responsibly despite difficult conditions and deserve institutional support, including insurance coverage and financial safeguards.

Concluding his remarks, the Congress MLA urged the government to enact clear and robust legislation to address the issue and to ensure the responsible dissemination of information across digital platforms.

J&K Government Ends Unauthorized Transfers in Youth Services, Questions Over Enforcement Persist

SRINAGAR/JAMMU: The Directorate of Youth Services and Sports, Jammu & Kashmir, has cancelled all unauthorized transfers, deployments, and attachments with immediate effect. The decision aims to restore discipline and improve administrative efficiency.

Officials stated that many employees, including teachers, lecturers, and REKs, were shifted without approval. As a result, staff placement became unbalanced. This situation affected the performance of the department.

According to the official order, several subordinate officers issued transfers without proper authority. In addition, some inter-district postings were also made in violation of rules. Therefore, the department decided to act firmly. The order clearly states that all such *незакон* arrangements stand cancelled immediately.

The government has also taken a strict financial step. It has directed Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs) not to release salaries for employees working under unauthorized postings.

Furthermore, only digitally signed and officially approved orders will be accepted. This move aims to ensure transparency and prevent misuse of authority.

However, past trends tell a different story. Earlier, similar orders were issued, but they failed to produce long-term results.

In many cases, employees reported to their original posting for just one day. Soon after, they returned to deputation or attachment through informal arrangements.

As a result, the system continued without real change.

Sources within the department reveal that recommendations often influence such decisions. Because of this, official orders lose their impact.

BJP Lawmakers Protest in J&K Assembly Over Demand for National Law University in Jammu

JAMMU: Proceedings in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly were disrupted on Friday after Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislators staged a protest inside the House, demanding the establishment of a National Law University (NLU) in Jammu.

The protest coincided with the commencement of the second phase of the budget session. BJP members raised slogans and

sought clarity from the government regarding the proposed location of the university. They argued that the Jammu region has long been deprived of premier higher educational institutions and called for an immediate decision on the matter.

Carrying placards, the lawmakers continued their protest as soon as the session began, briefly affecting the normal functioning of the Assembly.



The second phase of the budget session opened amid heightened political tensions, with opposition parties expected to press the government over a range of

issues, including unfulfilled electoral promises, regional concerns, and the restoration of statehood.

Meanwhile, in a post on X, legislator Sajad Lone

questioned the delay in issuing a formal notification for the proposed law university. He noted that Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had assured the Assembly in October last year that the National Law University would begin functioning from 2026 at Ompora in Budgam, Kashmir.

Referring to provisions under Section 3 of the Jammu and Kashmir NLU Act, Lone asked why the notification for establishing

the university at Ompora had not yet been issued.

He further stated that while the authority to establish the university rests with the Jammu and Kashmir government, opting for admissions through the Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) conducted by a consortium of more than 20 law universities across India would make it unlikely for classes to commence in 2026, as the examination has already been held.

LG interacts with group of students from Army Goodwill School, Saujiyan visiting Jammu under Army's J&K Integration Tour

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Friday interacted with the students from Army Goodwill School (AGS), Saujiyan, Poonch, visiting Jammu as a part of J&K Integration Tour under Operation Sadbhavana.

The tour, organised as part of the outreach programme of the White Knight Corps, is aimed at fostering national integration and holistic development of children from remote border areas.

The Lieutenant Governor lauded the Indian Army's continued commitment



towards the welfare and development of youth in border areas. He said, such initiatives are instrumental in nurturing young minds

and strengthening the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.

The contingent, comprising 33 students accompa-

nied by teachers and Army personnel, also shared their personal experiences from the tour. The primary objective of the tour is to

provide exposure to children from border villages and to broaden their understanding of the nation's cultural, social, and insti-

tutional framework, while fostering confidence and a sense of belonging.

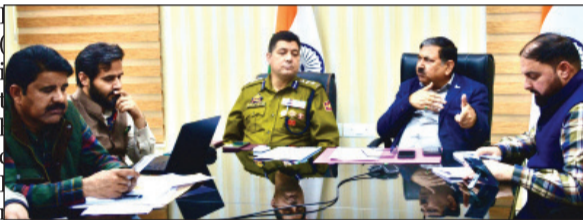
The itinerary included visit to Poonch, Rajouri, Jammu, and Srinagar, where the students were exposed to diverse environments and institutions.

The tour also marked several first-time experiences, including rail travel to Srinagar and exposure to urban settings such as shopping complexes, Air Force Station, Jammu and exposure to Army way of life significantly broadening their outlook and confidence.

DC Poonch reviews anti-drug measures at district-level NCORD meeting

POONCH: Deputy Commissioner Poonch Ashok Kumar Sharma today chaired a meeting of the district-level committee under the Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) to review the measures taken for the prevention of the drug menace in the district.

The meeting was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police Shafket Hussain Bhat; Additional Deputy Commissioner Tahir Mustafa Malik; Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Muhammad Sayeed; Chief Medical Officer Dr Mohammad Parvaiz; Sub



other concerned officers.

The Deputy Commissioner conducted an in-depth review of anti-narcotic operations across all tehsils. SDMs and Tehsildars presented area-specific reports detailing the status of drug addiction cases and measures undertaken for strict monitoring of chemist shops.

The Deputy Commis-

sioner Bhat presented latest enforcement data and emphasised the need for continued inter-departmental coordination.

The Chief Medical Officer and Medical Superintendent highlighted ongoing counselling services, medical interventions and sensitisation drives being carried out through health centres across the district.

MEF Holds Protest at GMC Rajouri Over Salary Cut, Service Rule Delay

300 employees participate; OPD, elective surgeries affected

RAJOURI: The Medical Employees Federation (MEF) staged a two-day peaceful protest at Government Medical College (GMC) Rajouri against the deduction of 2.5 days' salary of Non-Gazetted staff and the prolonged delay in framing recruitment and service rules. Held on March 24 and 25, the protest saw participation from over 300 employees, including technical, paramedical, and nursing staff, along with storekeep-

ers, electricians, drivers, and MTS workers. The agitation was carried out under the direction of MEF Provincial President Jaswinder Singh and Chairman Sush-eel Sudan. As part of the protest, OPD services and elective surgeries remained suspended from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, while emergency services continued uninterrupted to ensure patient care was not affected.

The protest was led by MEF President GMC Rajouri Nasir Khan, District Vice President Masood Malik, and other members, including Ishtaq Bhat, Waseem Akram, and Nadeem Ahmed Mir. The employees

also received support from the Medical Faculty Forum (Regd), Resident Doctors Association, and JKNHM Employees Forum.

Protesters termed the salary deduction "unjustified and demoralizing" and expressed concern over the delay of more than seven years in finalizing service and recruitment rules for Non-Gazetted staff, stating that it has adversely affected career progression.

Officials from the district and hospital administration reached the site and assured the employees that the matter had been taken up with higher authorities and was under review.

Thousands Participate in Al-Quds Day Rally Organised by Anjuman-e-Jafria in Poonch

POONCH: Thousands of people participated in a rally organised by the Anjuman-e-Jafria in connection with the observance of International Quds Day in Poonch on Friday, expressing solidarity with oppressed communities and particularly with the people of Palestine.

The rally began from the Imam Bargah in the town and proceeded through the main streets before culminating at Milad Chowk Parade Ground, where a protest gathering was held.

Participants carried placards and banners highlighting the significance of Quds Day, raising slogans in support of Palestine and commemorating the martyrdom of Ayatollah Khamenei.

Speakers at the gathering emphasised that Muslims have a moral and religious responsibility to stand against oppression anywhere in the world.



They underlined that remaining silent in the face of injustice is unacceptable, and that the teachings of Islam and guidance from the Imams encourage believers to support the oppressed, regardless of their location.

Addressing the crowd, Jaleel Ghazi said that this year's Quds Day rally saw

particularly large participation, reflecting an increased sense of unity across communities. He noted that members from various sects joined the rally, underlining that the movement represents a collective commitment to truth, justice, and support for oppressed peoples worldwide.

DC Poonch Reviews Comprehensive Arrangements for Shab-e-Qadar, Jamat-ul-Vida, Navratras, Eid-ul-Fitr and Ramnavmi

POONCH: Deputy Commissioner Ashok Kumar Sharma today convened a meeting of officers from various departments, civil society members and representatives of religious organisations to review arrangements for the upcoming festivals of Shab-e-Qadar, Jamat-ul-Vida, Navratras, Eid-ul-Fitr and Ramnavmi.

The meeting was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police Shafket Hussain Bhat, Additional Deputy Commissioner Tahir Mustafa Malik, Assistant Commissioner Development Shakeel Ahmed Malik, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Parvaiz Ahmed Khan, DAHO, DSHO, Executive Engineers of different departments, CEO Municipality, Tehsildar Haveli, AD FCS&CA, ARTO, AC Food Safety, AC Legal Metrology, I/C Fire and Emergency Services, besides religious heads and other concerned officers.



During the meeting, religious leaders and prominent citizens raised various issues related to arrangements for the festivals.

They emphasized the need for proper sanitation, uninterrupted electricity, regular and safe drinking water supply, adequate security arrangements, smooth traffic management, proper parking facilities, sufficient stock of ration and essential commodities, monitoring of rates and quality of food items, and availability of medical facilities.

While addressing the officers, the Deputy Commissioner took stock of the preparedness of various departments and issued necessary directions to ensure

all arrangements are put in place well in advance. He directed the Tehsildar, AC Food Safety, AD FCS&CA and Legal Metrology to conduct weekly inspections to check the rates and quality of food items being sold during the festive period and take strict action against black marketing and overpricing.

The Deputy Commissioner also instructed the PDD and PHE departments to ensure uninterrupted electricity and adequate potable water supply.

The CA&FCS department was directed to maintain sufficient availability of essential commodities and closely monitor the public distribution system during the festivals.

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH: "No matter how hard the past is, you can always begin again."

When Narratives Capture Power: Reclaiming Administrative Integrity in Poonch

KHAWAJA AJAZ MADNI

In every society, there comes a moment when silence begins to cost more than speech, when the weight of unaddressed distortions becomes heavier than the risks associated with confronting them. District Poonch, a region steeped in history, resilience, and the quiet dignity of its people, appears to be approaching such a moment. What is unfolding is not a sudden crisis, but rather the culmination of a long-brewing pattern one that has subtly but steadily influenced public perception, administrative functioning, and the very idea of justice within the district. For decades, an informal yet deeply entrenched network of individuals has operated within the social and political ecosystem of Poonch.

Outwardly, these figures have aligned themselves with various political identities, shifting affiliations when convenient, and presenting themselves as representatives of ideological diversity. Yet, beneath this ever-changing exterior lies a remarkable consistency not of principle, but of method.

Their actions have rarely aligned with the professed ideals of the platforms they claim to represent. Instead, their primary allegiance appears to be to influence itself: the ability to shape narratives, define reputations, and control access to administrative attention.

This phenomenon is neither unique to one region nor entirely unfamiliar in democratic societies. However, what makes the situation in Poonch particularly concerning is the degree to which such influence has permeated local administrative processes. Over time, a pat-

tern has emerged in which certain voices are amplified not because of their credibility or public service, but because of their proximity to power. Through calculated persuasion, selective information-sharing, and, at times, deliberate misrepresentation, these actors have positioned themselves as informal gatekeepers between the public and the administration.

The consequences of this dynamic are profound. Individuals who demonstrate independence of thought, who question prevailing narratives, or who attempt to advocate for transparency and fairness often find themselves at a disadvantage. Instead of being engaged on the strength of their arguments, they are frequently subjected to character attacks, false allegations, and systematic marginalization. In many cases, the strategy is not to refute dissent, but to discredit it entirely transforming voices of accountability into targets of suspicion.

Such practices, when left unchecked, create an environment where truth becomes negotiable and integrity becomes a liability. Capable and sincere individuals those who could otherwise contribute meaningfully to the district's development are discouraged, silenced, or pushed to the periphery. The loss is not merely personal; it is institutional. A system that fails to distinguish between authenticity and manipulation risks eroding its own legitimacy.

Equally troubling is the dual strategy employed by these influential circles. Within the community, particularly among religious figures and socially respected individuals, there is often an undercurrent of pressure subtle yet effective

designed to discourage dissent and maintain conformity.

At the same time, when engaging with administrative authorities, these same actors present themselves in an entirely different light: as balanced, rational, and indispensable intermediaries who understand the "ground realities" better than anyone else.

This duality allows them to operate with a degree of impunity. By controlling the flow of information in both directions, they create a self-reinforcing loop in which their version of events becomes the default understanding.

Over time, this not only distorts individual cases but also shapes broader administrative perceptions affecting decisions that have long-term implications for justice and governance.

In the age of digital communication, one might expect such patterns to weaken under the scrutiny of public discourse. Indeed, social media has often been described as an "era of exposure," where hidden truths eventually surface and narratives can be challenged in real time. Yet, adaptability has been one of the defining strengths of entrenched influence. Recognizing the shifting landscape, many of these actors have successfully rebranded themselves in the digital sphere. They project images of benevolence, philanthropy, and social commitment carefully curated personas that obscure past actions and complicate efforts to hold them accountable.

Perhaps the most concerning development, however, is the extension of this influence into the younger generation. By engaging with youth sometimes through mentorship, sometimes through

patronage there is an attempt to replicate existing patterns and ensure their continuity. If successful, this would not only perpetuate current challenges but also embed them more deeply into the district's future.

At the heart of this issue lies a fundamental question about the role of administration in a democratic society. Institutions are designed to function as neutral arbiters guided by evidence, governed by procedure, and committed to fairness.

When administrative decisions begin to rely, even inadvertently, on unverified narratives or the assertions of a select few, the balance shifts. Merit, due process, and impartiality risk being overshadowed by influence, access, and perception.

It is important to recognize that this is not an indictment of the administration as a whole. On the contrary, the very structure of governance is built upon rigorous selection processes, professional training, and a commitment to public service.

Officers who serve in such capacities carry both the authority and the responsibility to rise above localized pressures and ensure that their decisions reflect the principles they represent.

What is required, therefore, is not merely awareness, but deliberate action. The credibility of those who claim to speak on behalf of society must be subject to scrutiny, just as any formal submission would be. Allegations, regardless of their source, should be examined through transparent and independent mechanisms. No individual or group should be allowed to monopolize the narrative of truth.

Equally important is the need to recognize and protect those who stand for integrity, often at significant personal cost. In many instances, the individuals who face the greatest opposition are not those who threaten social harmony, but those who challenge its distortion. Their consistent targeting is not incidental; it is indicative of a deeper pattern that deserves careful consideration.

Poonch stands at a crossroads not in terms of resources or potential, but in terms of narrative control. The future of the district will not be determined by the voices that speak the loudest, but by the institutions that listen the most carefully. Justice is not merely the absence of wrongdoing; it is the presence of fairness, transparency, and accountability.

This is, undeniably, a time of exposure. The convergence of awareness, communication, and public engagement has created an opportunity to reassess long-standing assumptions and correct systemic imbalances. Whether this opportunity is seized or overlooked will depend largely on the willingness of institutions to distinguish between perception and reality.

So, the strength of any administration lies not in its ability to maintain order, but in its capacity to uphold justice especially when doing so requires challenging entrenched narratives. For Poonch, the path forward demands precisely that: a reaffirmation of principles, a commitment to impartiality, and a resolve to ensure that truth is not merely heard, but recognized.

Only then can trust be restored, dignity reaffirmed, and the promise of justice realized not for a select few, but for all.

The Poonch Parable: Paying Twice for Administrative Failure

KHAWAJA AJAZ MADNI

For over two decades, the citizens of Poonch have watched their municipal council preside over a slow-motion environmental disaster. The unscientific dumping of nearly 19,000 metric tonnes of legacy waste along the banks of the Poonch River was not a secret; it was a visible, festering reality that contaminated a water source upon which countless communities depend. The dumping site, located close to the Sher-e-Kashmir bridge, has for the past five or six years seen waste directly enter the river a river that supplies drinking water to populations on both sides of the Line of Control. Now, with the National Green Tribunal (NGT) imposing an environmental compensation of Rs 2.71 crore for these flagrant violations of the Water Act, 1974, the administration has arrived at a solution that is as legally permissible as it is morally indefensible: the auction of public assets, including a community hall built by and for the taxpayers of the town.

This move encapsulates a profound crisis of governance. For roughly 15 to 20 years, successive administrations of the Poonch Municipal Council and the district bureaucracy failed in their most basic duty of scientific waste management. The warnings were

sounded early concerns were first raised with the district administration as far back as 2017. Meeting after meeting took place, and assurance after assurance was given, yet action never came. Each hearing before the green tribunal followed a familiar, cynical pattern: the district administration and municipal council would submit written affidavits promising improvement, while the ground reality near the river remained unchanged. Three years ago, the deputy commissioner explicitly assured the tribunal that a waste processing plant would soon become operational, yet those words remained empty on paper. The NGT, in its relentless pursuit of environmental justice, had even imposed a personal cost on the Deputy Commissioner in September 2024 for delays in recovering the penalty, signalling the tribunal's exasperation with the local administration's inertia. The result of this institutional sloth is a stark liability that the municipal council, having paid a paltry Rs 25 lakh, now finds itself unable to clear.

What makes this case particularly damning is the complete absence of remedial action even after judicial intervention. Since the matter was first taken to the tribunal in 2022, the amount of waste processed at the site stands at zero. Inspection reports submitted to the tribunal and the Pollution

Control Committee confirm that bio-remediation remains incomplete, pointing not to any shortage of technology or funding, but to serious and persistent gaps in planning and execution. This is not a failure of resources; it is a failure of will.

By moving to sell a community hall, the administration is not merely liquidating an asset; it is endorsing a doctrine of collective punishment for individual and systemic failure. It sends a deeply troubling signal: that the guardians of civic amenity can destroy a public good the river through negligence, and then destroy another public good community infrastructure to pay for it. The citizens of Poonch are thus being sentenced twice: first to live with the health and ecological hazards of an untreated, river-choking dump yard, and second to watch their own tangible assets, funded by their own taxes, be sold off to atone for the sins of their administrators.

The argument that the municipal corporation has no other resources is a confession of bankruptcy, not just financial, but of creative and accountable governance. The financial burden should rightly be recovered from the salaries and pensions of the Chief Executive Officers and Deputy Commissioners who presided over this long decade of dereliction. Dumping waste near

a river is a criminal act under the law, and the liability for criminal acts is personal to the wrongdoers. To shield the officials by selling off public property is to subvert the very principle of accountability. Notably, the tribunal itself had to impose costs on the deputy commissioner for excessive leniency in pursuing the case a clear judicial recognition that the fault lay with individuals, not with an abstract entity.

There is also a deeper structural question that demands attention. Why does a town like Poonch lack the kind of empowered, full-time municipal leadership that could have averted this crisis? At present, municipal affairs are managed by an officer who also serves as district panchayat officer, juggling responsibilities with limited powers and resources. The directorate responsible for urban local bodies has shown little seriousness in addressing this crisis, leaving Poonch in a perpetual state of administrative limbo. The contrast with cities that have transformed their waste management under determined, empowered leadership could not be starker. Clearing 19,000 metric tonnes of waste is not an impossible challenge cities across India have handled far larger quantities. What makes Poonch different is the absence of accountability and political will.

Take firm action against Private schools indulging in arbitrary fee hikes, imposing unjustified financial burdens on parents: Sakeena Itoo directs JKBOSE authorities

Reviews performance, functioning of JKBOSE; Calls for strict monitoring of Private schools across J&K

JAMMU: Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo today directed the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) authorities to take firm action against Private schools indulging in arbitrary fee hikes and found violating prescribed norms or imposing unjustified financial burdens on parents.

The Education Minister passed on these directions while chairing a comprehensive review meeting at Civil Secretariat here to assess the performance, administrative functioning and ongoing academic reforms of JKBOSE.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary Education, Ram Niwas Sharma; Chairman JKBOSE, Ghulam Hassan Sheikh; Director School Education Kashmir, Naseer Ahmad Wani; senior officers of school education department and JKBOSE

as well as other concerned officers.

During the review, the Minister evaluated the Board's preparedness for upcoming examinations, timely declaration of results, curriculum implementation and grievance redressal mechanisms. She emphasized the need for adopting technology-driven solutions to enhance operational transparency and improve coordination between schools and JKBOSE.

Highlighting the critical role of JKBOSE in shaping the academic future of students, the Minister directed officials to maintain strict quality standards and ensure accountability at all administrative levels. "JKBOSE must continue working towards a student-centric system that promotes fairness, accessibility and academic excellence", she maintained.

Expressing concern over complaints regarding arbitrary fee hikes by certain



private educational institutions, the Minister issued clear directions for constant monitoring and regular inspections of private schools. "Take firm action against Private schools indulging in arbitrary fee hikes and found violating prescribed norms or imposing unjustified financial burdens on parents", she stated.

The Minister asked the Commissioner Secretary to form committees, comprising of School Education department and JKBOSE officers, for regular inspection and monitoring of Pri-

private schools across Jammu and Kashmir, including CBSE affiliated schools.

"Schools must function with responsibility and transparency. Any attempt to exploit students or parents through unauthorized fee structures will not be tolerated," she asserted, adding that strict enforcement of existing regulations is essential to protect public trust.

The Minister called for strengthening coordination between district education authorities and regulatory bodies to ensure compliance with govern-

ment guidelines. She also emphasized on establishing a robust feedback and grievance redressal mechanism to identify gaps and improve service delivery within the education system.

The Minister further directed the JKBOSE authorities to declare 10th class results of Summer zone areas timely. She also appreciated the Chairman JKBOSE for streamlining the availability of textbooks in all educational institutions and commended him for bringing various initiatives in the Board which has contributed to its overall operational efficiency.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to equitable and quality education, the Minister urged all stakeholders to work collectively towards building a transparent, accountable and student-friendly educational ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir.

During the meeting, Chairman JKBOSE,

Ghulam Hassan Sheikh gave a detailed presentation on various functional domains of JKBOSE. He informed the Minister about various initiatives undertaken by the Board under NEP-2020 like curriculum and textbook development, Foundation Stage (ECCE), Vocationalisation of Education, Equitable & Inclusive Education, Examination Reforms, State Institute of Open Schooling, IT Interventions and Energised Textbooks.

He also informed the meeting about other initiatives like integration of Vocational Subjects at Secondary and Higher Secondary Levels in various trades like Agriculture, apparels, Made ups & Home Furnishing, Automotive, Beauty & Wellness, Electronics & Hardware, Healthcare, IT/ITeS, Retail, Physical Education & Sports, Plumbing Assistant, Telecom, Tourism and Hospitality, Media & Entertainment as well as Power sector.

Army Hosts Drone Awareness Program in Poonch

RAJOURI: The Indian Army's Durga Battalion organized a drone awareness program in villages located along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district, aiming to enhance technological awareness and strengthen grassroots security preparedness.

The event was organized for ex-servicemen, Village Defence Guards (VDGs), local dignitaries, and children. The primary objective was to educate participants about the growing role of drone technology in modern warfare and national security.

During the program, Army personnel provided detailed insights into the types of drones used by



the Indian Army, as well as those that adversaries could potentially employ. A live drone operations demonstration was a key highlight of the event, capturing attendees' keen interest.

Experts from the Army also guided participants on how to identify suspi-

cious or hostile drones, the precautions to be taken, and the proper reporting procedures. The initiative aimed to empower local communities to respond promptly and effectively, thereby contributing to the safeguarding of national security.

CS reviews implementation of key reforms to revamp healthcare in J&K



JAMMU: A high-level meeting was chaired by Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo to take assessment of the steps taken by the Department of Health & Medical Education (H&ME) as part of an ongoing and sustained process to chart a comprehensive and transformative roadmap for healthcare reforms as recommended from time to time by NITI Aayog. The meeting witnessed the participation of senior officers of the Health & Medical Education Department and other key stakeholders, focusing on accelerating systemic reforms, strengthening healthcare infrastructure, and enhancing service delivery across the Union Territory. A forward-looking and integrated strategy was deliberated upon to transform the healthcare landscape through technology infusion, institutional collaboration, capacity building, and robust public health systems.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo

underscored the importance of continued collaboration with NITI Aayog for extension of institutional support and guidance in many of the Department's endeavours. He expressed satisfaction over the collaborative efforts that have already translated several initiatives into reality and observed that such partnerships are proving increasingly beneficial for Jammu & Kashmir.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed in detail the progress achieved across each of the key initiatives being implemented by the Health & Medical Education Department. He took a comprehensive appraisal from the Principals of various Government Medical Colleges regarding efforts to secure additional MBBS and postgraduate seats, emphasizing the need to further strengthen medical education capacity in the Union Territory.

He also undertook a thorough assessment of the advancements made

in upgrading existing healthcare facilities and the introduction of new and specialized services across institutions. Stressing the importance of timely execution, he directed the concerned authorities to sustain the pace of progress, ensure optimal utilization of resources, and focus on expanding quality healthcare services to meet the growing needs of the population.

He stressed the need for strong inter-departmental coordination, continuous monitoring, and timely execution to ensure that these reforms result in tangible improvements in health outcomes for the people.

Highlighting the objectives of the meeting, Commissioner Secretary, Health & Medical Education, M. Raju outlined a series of major initiatives forming the core of the reform agenda. These initiatives, he terms, aims at ensuring accessible, affordable, and quality healthcare for all sections of society.

DC Poonch inaugurates training of Charge Officers for Census 2027

POONCH: A three day training programme for Charge Officers for Census 2027 commenced today in the Conference Hall, marking a significant step towards preparations for the upcoming Census.

The programme was inaugurated by the Deputy Commissioner Ashok Kumar Sharma who delivered the inaugural address and highlighted the importance of coordinated efforts, accuracy and timely execution for

the successful conduct of Census operations.

Tehsildars and CEO MC Poonch are participating as Charge Officers. The Executive Officer Surankote and the Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Council Poonch, have been designated as Charge Officers for Municipal committee Poonch Municipal Council Poonch respectively.

Officials from the Planning Department and other concerned departments, including the Dis-

trict Informatics Officer (DIO), NIC, are actively participating in the training programme.

During the session, a detailed PowerPoint presentation was delivered, training material was distributed among the participants, and the Census timeline was discussed in detail. The roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders were clearly outlined to ensure smooth and efficient implementation of the Census process.

Nearly Nine Years On, Poonch Waits for a School in Martyr Rajinder Kumar's Name

POONCH: Nearly nine years after he made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty, the family of Martyr Constable Rajinder Kumar of the Jammu and Kashmir Police continues to await the fulfilment of a promise that found official expression through a government communication the naming of a government school in his honour.

For the martyr's family, particularly his elderly mother, the proposed renaming carries deep emotional significance. It represents not merely a symbolic gesture, but a lasting tribute to a son who laid down his life for the nation, and whose memory, they believe, deserves to inspire generations of students in his hometown of Poonch.

On September 11, 2016, Poonch town witnessed a fidayeen attack near the under-construction Mini Secretariat complex. Security forces responded swiftly to the assault, but the intense exchange of fire left several personnel critically injured.

Among them was Constable Rajinder Kumar, part of the police contingent deployed at the site.

He sustained grievous injuries during the operation and attained martyrdom while performing his duty. He was 36

The attack also claimed the lives of two soldiers of the Indian Army, underscoring the grave security challenges that personnel face in the region. For the people of Poonch, the incident remains etched in collective memory as a day of both tragedy and heroism.

In recognition of the sacrifices made by security personnel, the Office of the Chief Education Officer (CEO), Poonch, issued an official communication on June 18, 2022. The order, numbered CEO/P&S/11218-20, referred to earlier correspondence from August 2021 and directed all Zonal Education Officers to obtain resolutions from concerned Panchayats and municipal bodies regarding the naming of government schools after martyrs.

The communication was unambiguous. It instructed the concerned officials to submit the required resolutions within one week to enable the process to move forward. Copies



were marked to the District Development Commissioner, Poonch, and the Director of School Education, Jammu, for information.

Yet, despite the passage of nearly three years since the issuance of that order and almost nine years since Rajinder Kumar's martyrdom the proposal remains unimplemented.

The prolonged delay has prompted members of the local community to bring the matter to the attention of the authorities once more.

Mr Parupkar Singh Isher, a youth activist from Poonch, submitted a formal reminder to the Chief Education Officer on March 22, 2025, urging immediate action on the long-pending proposal.

In his communication, Mr Isher drew attention to

the earlier order and the lack of follow-through. He wrote:

"I am writing to bring to your attention a matter of utmost importance regarding the renaming of a government school after Martyr Rajinder Kumar. As you may recall, your office had issued an order vide number CEO/P&S/11218-20 dated 18-06-2022, under the subject 'Naming of Government Schools after Martyrs', with reference to letter number CEO/P&S/13516-19 dated 04/08/2021."

He further noted:

"However, it has been observed that despite the lapse of a considerable amount of time, no action has been taken to implement the said order. It is imperative that the school be renamed after Martyr Rajinder Kumar, who made the ultimate sacrifice for the nation."

The reminder also highlighted a deeply personal dimension the expressed wish of the martyr's mother to see her son's name commemorated through a public institution.

"This gesture would not only be a fitting tribute to

the martyr but also serve as a source of inspiration for the students and the community at large," the representation stated.

Across India, several state governments and local administrations have named educational institutions, roads, and public facilities after fallen soldiers and police personnel as a mark of respect and remembrance. Administrators often note that such initiatives serve a dual purpose paying tribute to national heroes while instilling values of courage, service, and patriotism among younger generations.

In neighbouring districts of Jammu and Kashmir, similar renaming exercises have been carried out over the years. Against this backdrop, residents of Poonch say the continued delay in this case raises uncomfortable questions about the execution of official directives.

Speaking to Poonch Mirror, Mr Isher said:

"It is not merely about installing a nameplate on a school building. This is about acknowledging sacrifice and preserving

memory. The martyr's mother wishes to see her son honoured in this way during her lifetime. That is a sentiment the administration must understand and respect."

Repeated attempts to obtain comments from the Office of the Chief Education Officer, Poonch, regarding the status of the proposal did not yield an official response at the time of filing this report. Officials in the district administration also declined to comment on whether the matter was currently under consideration.

For the family of Martyr Rajinder Kumar, the issue transcends administrative files and procedural formalities.

Nearly nine years after the tragedy that claimed her son's life, his elderly mother continues to hold on to a simple hope that somewhere in Poonch, a government school will one day bear his name, reminding future generations of the courage and sacrifice that defined his final moments.

Until that day arrives, the promise remains unfulfilled and the wait continues.

Policing with Presence: SSP Shafqat Hussain Connecting with the People of Poonch

POONCH: In the rugged and sensitive terrain of Poonch, where every day brings a mix of security challenges and civilian concerns, SSP Shafqat Hussain, a seasoned officer of the JKPS 2001 batch, has emerged as more than just a law enforcement official he has become a visible, approachable, and decisive presence on the ground. His style of policing is not confined to offices; it is defined by field presence, direct engagement, and swift action.

From leading Operation Sindoor to ensuring heightened vigilance along the Line of Control, his leadership reflects a deep understanding of the district's strategic sensitivity. Operation Sindoor, under his command, has not only targeted anti-social elements but also reinforced a sense of security among the public. His on-ground supervision during such operations has strengthened accountability and boosted the morale of his force. Beyond security



operations, SSP Shafqat Hussain has consistently stood among the people during times of distress. Whether it is heavy rains, landslides, or other natural calamities, his presence at ground zero reviewing rescue efforts and interacting with affected families has made a significant difference. In moments of crisis, his leadership transforms into reassurance for the common citizen.

His aggressive and

uncompromising stance in the war against drugs has added a strong dimension to policing in the district. With intensified crackdowns on drug networks and sustained awareness campaigns, he has addressed the issue both from an enforcement and social perspective, aiming to safeguard the future of the youth.

Maintaining law and order in a border district demands constant alert-

ness and balanced decision-making. SSP Shafqat Hussain has handled sensitive situations with calm authority, ensuring peace while upholding the rule of law. His leadership reflects discipline within the force and confidence among the public.

A defining feature of his tenure has been his emphasis on youth engagement. By promoting sports tournaments, anti-drug initiatives, and community outreach programmes, he has worked towards channeling the energy of young people into constructive paths. His vision goes beyond policing—it focuses on building a stable and progressive society.

What truly distinguishes SSP Shafqat Hussain (JKPS 2001 batch) is his unwavering presence whether during Operation Sindoor, along the Line of Control, or in the midst of natural calamities. He leads from the front, stands with the people, and ensures that policing remains connected to the ground realities.

Chief Secretary assesses fuel stock position across J&K

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the availability and distribution of petroleum products across the districts of the Union of J&K.

The meeting was attended by the Commissioner Secretary, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir; Deputy Commissioners; senior officers of the Legal Metrology and Food Supply Departments along with the representatives of Oil Marketing Companies.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary was apprised about the present stock position of all major petroleum products including Motor Spirit (MS), High Speed Diesel (HSD), aviation turbine fuel, and LPG available across the Union Territory.

Reiterating a zero-tolerance policy, the Chief Secretary directed strict legal action against any instances of hoarding, black marketing, overcharging, or diversion of petroleum products. He emphasized the need for

strict vigilance at all levels to safeguard consumer interests. While reviewing district-wise supply, he asked the Deputy Commissioners to furnish detailed reports on availability and distribution. He noted that no doubt overall situation remains satisfactory but stressed that all eligible domestic and commercial consumers must receive LPG supplies without delay, with priority accorded to genuine beneficiaries.

The Chief Secretary further underscored the importance of doorstep delivery of LPG and directed Oil Marketing Companies to maintain adequate stock levels at retail outlets, dealer points, and buffer depots to ensure uninterrupted supply.

He also instructed the Commissioner Secretary, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, to conduct regular reviews with district administrations, maintain close coordination, and keep the higher authorities informed. He emphasized the need for officers to remain accessible to the public and ensure prompt redressal of grievances.

Mission YUVA to...

country has solved unemployment solely through government jobs.

"I have always said that no country has solved the issue of unemployment through government employment. I am not saying that we will not provide government jobs, it is our duty. But we also know that we cannot provide government jobs to everyone. If we cannot provide them, then what? Should the government raise its hands? We cannot do this," he said.

Calling it a failure to do nothing beyond government hiring, the Chief Minister stressed the need to create opportunities for self-employment.

"It is our duty to create a situation where people can create their own units. Instead of asking for jobs, you should be the ones who provide the jobs," he added.

He said the government aims to empower youth so that they transition from job seekers to job providers.

"We want to strengthen your hands so much that instead of asking for jobs, you yourselves start providing jobs to people," he said.

The Chief Minister highlighted that the scheme's success lies in its mission-mode implementation.

"Within a year, if this scheme distributes ₹1,000 crore. We could have called it a youth scheme or programme, but we used the word 'mission' because we have taken it in a mission mode," he said.

He added that working in mission mode brings seriousness, energy and renewed focus.

"Schemes will continue, but taking something in a mission mode is different. A new life and seriousness come into it," he noted.

The Chief Minister expressed gratitude to J&K Bank for its crucial role in implementing the scheme.

"I am very thankful to J&K Bank because this is not possible without their support," he said.

He acknowledged the challenges faced by entrepreneurs in securing loans, including collateral requirements, guarantees and associated risks.

"Those who have opened units know how difficult it is to take a loan—where to get collateral, who will guarantee it. There is always fear that if the business fails, families may lose their assets," he said.

He pointed out that even large industrialists face uncertainties, making risk a universal factor.

"Even big industrialists in this country have seen their businesses shut down. So, the fear is real," he said.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah emphasised that the government's role goes beyond financial support.

"Our work is not just to give you a cheque. Even after that, we must support you, whether in marketing or expansion," he said.

Referring humorously to his own efforts to promote businesses, he said even small gestures can help.

"If from my one tweet, their OTT platform gains two viewers, it is still something. If I go and eat ice cream somewhere and more people follow, that is also our work," he remarked.

He acknowledged that entrepreneurship is challenging and not everyone may succeed.

"Opening and running a business is not easy. Not everyone can become an entrepreneur. But those who can should not face obstacles due to funding or DPR issues," he said.

The Chief Minister cited examples of young entrepreneurs, including a PhD from Srinagar who started a mobile car spa service.

"He had the idea and education, but without funding, such ideas remain on paper," he said.

He also referred to the challenges of launching platforms like OTT services, noting their complexity and importance in promoting J&K's culture globally.

Encouraging beneficiaries, the Chief Minister expressed hope that businesses would grow and generate employment.

"Those who have employed five people should employ 10–15 next year so that this process continues," he said.

He assured periodic review of the scheme to improve its effectiveness.

The Chief Minister stressed the importance of constructive feedback.

Rs 3.80 Cr UT...

Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, the subsidy component is primarily borne by the Government of India through the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, with an additional subsidy component provided by the UT.

The Central Financial Assistance (CFA) is provided to residential consumers installing rooftop solar systems at Rs 33,000 per kW for the first 2 kW of installed capacity and Rs 19,800 per kW for the next 1 kW, taking the total maximum subsidy to Rs 85,800 for systems up to 3 kW.

In addition, the UT provides a subsidy of Rs 3,000 per kW—Rs 6,000 for 2 kW and up to Rs 9,000 for 3 kW (capped at 3 kW)—taking the total subsidy up to Rs 94,800 for a 3 kW system, he added.

The Chief Minister further stated that delays, wherever applicable, in the release of the UT's share are primarily due to the verification of beneficiary installations, scrutiny of supporting documents, and integration of subsidy disbursement through the national portal.

He said that the J&K Administration is taking necessary steps to streamline the process and assured that the pending UT subsidy share will be released to eligible beneficiaries upon completion of verification formalities.

LG attended Mahavir...

a powerful nation which is inspiring the world with its message that true peace is not weakness but unwavering courage and this is a time to build bridges, not battlefields," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that amid global conflicts and strife, humanity must draw lessons from Lord Mahavira's teachings which fosters enduring peace and unbreakable brotherhood.

"True progress stems from responsibility and accountability to one's actions. To envision a better future, we must bridge divides among people, fostering trust through understanding diverse cultures, ideas, and experiences," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that Lord Mahavira focus on introspection, individual transformation and his teachings of discipline, faith, and awareness can elevate society.

"By internalizing Ahimsa, restraint, austerity, Anekan-tavada, non-possession, and truth, we can contribute meaningfully to nation-building. Our impact depends on the character we cultivate," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor called upon the young generation to infuse non-violence into its mindset and reform attitudes toward nature, long exploited as mere utility. "True Ahimsa transcends ethics, becoming the sharpest environmental strategy," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that Lord Mahavira's legacy is a refined guidebook for navigating complexity.

Eid celebrated with...

Muslims on this day throng the mosques and Eidgahs from early in the morning to offer special Eid Prayers.

There was festivity in various markets in Jammu especially Katikan Talab, Gujar Nagar, Residency road etc with people seen busy in making purchasing. There was also huge rush in confectionary shops and Sweet shops with people purchasing Eid gift packs. The members of other communities were seen offering Eid greetings to their Muslim brethren in a traditional way.

The merry making children attired in colorful costumes were also seen busy in purchasing toys, sweets, ice cream etc and hugging each other on the occasion by offering Eid greetings.

At Residency Road NC Office the party men were seen busy in distributing sweets among the people and offering Eid greetings.

Meanwhile, hundreds of devotees offered prayers at different mosques and Eidgahs across the region, with the main congregation held at the Eidgah on Residency Road in Jammu, followed by gatherings at the Mecca Masjid in Bathindi, the Jamia Masjid in Talab Katikan, Jamia Masjid in Ustad Mohalla and Jamia Masjid in Sidhra.

In Jammu biggest congregation was held Eidgah Residency road where a large number of Muslim devotees performed Eid prayers and prayed for world peace, brotherhood and immediate end to war in Middle East. Religious scholars highlighted the significance of the day, emphasizing compassion, sacrifice and gratitude, and prayed for peace across the world, particularly in the conflict-hit regions of West Asia.

The Shahi Imam of Jammu, Mufti Inayatullah Qasmi, said Eid is a day of joy and gratitude after a month of fasting and worship. "We pray that Allah keeps everyone happy, prosperous and in good health, and that humanity lives in peace and harmony," Qasmi told reporters here.

Referring to global conflicts, the Shahi Imam said war is not a solution and urged nations to resolve differences through dialogue.

"We appeal to all countries to sit together and end this loss of human lives," he said.

National Conference provincial president Rattan Lal Gupta, who visited the Eidgah on Residency Road with party leaders to greet people, said Jammu has a long tradition of communal harmony.

"Irrespective of religion, people in Jammu celebrate each other's festivals together. Today also, people of all communities have gathered to share the joy of Eid," Gupta said.

Expressing hope that prayers offered on Eid would bring peace, prosperity and employment opportunities to the region, he said, "We also pray for an end to conflicts around the world."

Extending Eid greetings, National Conference (NC), MLA Bashir Ahmad Veeri said global conflicts have led to rising prices and hardships for the people.

"We pray that wisdom prevails, the war ends, and people get relief from suffering. We also pray for peace and brotherhood in our country," Veeri said.

After offering prayers, people were seen exchanging greetings and sweets to embrace the festival in a spirit of unity and celebration. Eid was also celebrated with traditional fervour across Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban, Poonch, Rajouri and Udhampur.

Assistant Professor killed...

scenes of chaos and panic as the vehicle lost control, leading to a devastating crash that left onlookers shaken. Within minutes, local residents, along with police personnel, rushed to the site and initiated a rescue operation. However, despite their swift response, Dr Naz succumbed to her injuries, leaving the academic community in profound grief.

Officials confirmed that Muhammad Haamid sustained grievous injuries and was immediately evacuated to Government Medical College Rajouri for specialised treatment. "His condition is critical," an official stated, adding that every possible effort is being made to stabilise him.

The tragic incident has once again cast a harsh spotlight on the Jammu–Poonch highway, a crucial yet increasingly hazardous arterial road connecting border districts with the Jammu region. Characterised by treacherous curves, constricted stretches, and mounting vehicular pressure, the highway has become synonymous with frequent mishaps many of them fatal.

Preliminary investigations suggest that the vehicle may have lost control, possibly due to challenging topography. However, officials have initiated a formal probe to ascertain the precise cause of the accident.

Dr Tabassum Naz's untimely demise has sent shockwaves across Poonch, particularly within academic circles where she was held in high esteem. Colleagues and students remember her as an erudite scholar and a compassionate mentor whose absence will leave an irreplaceable void.

Meanwhile, anguished residents have once again raised urgent demands for systemic intervention. "How many more lives must be lost before concrete measures are taken?" questioned a local, echoing a sentiment widely shared across the region.

The recurring tragedies on this highway are no longer isolated incidents but symptomatic of a deeper infrastructural and regulatory neglect. Experts argue that without immediate measures ranging from road widening and improved signage to stringent enforcement of traffic norms the highway will continue to claim innocent lives.

As grief envelops Poonch, this latest tragedy stands as a grim reminder of the human cost of inaction where every delay in reform translates into another life lost, another family shattered.

Birthday Turns Tragic...

by placing the body on the Jammu–Rajouri highway, blocking traffic. The protesters demanded the Deputy Commissioner's presence at the spot. When the DC did not arrive, the crowd raised slogans against the administration.

Family members alleged foul play, stating that a police naka is located just a few meters away from where the body was found, raising questions about how the body was dumped there without the police noticing. They termed it a brutal murder and demanded the immediate arrest of the culprits.

They further claimed that the police had assured them of significant progress during the postmortem, but even after more than 10 hours, no concrete leads had emerged.

After nearly three hours of protest, Assistant Commissioner Jahangir Khan reached the spot and assured the family of a fair and transparent investigation. He stated that if it is a case of murder, no one involved will be spared. Following this assurance, the protest was called off.

Meanwhile, the police have registered a case of death under suspicious circumstances and have initiated an investigation.



CM Omar flags off first-ever Jammu Marathon, urges people to maintain a healthy lifestyle

CM runs Half Marathon and completes in under two hours

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today flagged off the Jammu Marathon from Maulana Azad Stadium here and also completed the 21.1 km Half Marathon, leading from the front in promoting fitness and a healthy lifestyle.

Braving rain, hundreds of participants, including Minister for Youth Services & Sports Satish Sharma, legislators, the Chief Secretary, fitness icon Milind Soman and actress Gul Panag, joined the run, turning the event into a

vibrant celebration of resilience, unity and a strong message against drug abuse in the region.

Setting the tone for the day, the Chief Minister not only flagged off the marathon but also ran alongside participants, completing the Half Marathon and inspiring youth and citizens alike. He urged people from all walks of life to adopt a healthy and active lifestyle, underscoring that physical fitness is integral to overall well-being and societal progress.

Highlighting the theme “Temples to Trails,” the Chief Minister said the marathon is a step towards positioning Jammu as a hub for fitness tourism and cultural exploration. He noted that the route, which passed through prominent markets, heritage sites and iconic landmarks of the city, showcased Jammu’s unique blend of spirituality, history and scenic beauty.

The marathon commenced 22 minutes before sunrise from Maulana Azad Stadium and was organised by the Department of Tourism, with J&K Bank as the title sponsor. The event featured three race categories: Half Mar-

athon (21 km), 10 km Fitness Run and 5 km Fun Run, and carries a total prize pool of Rs 1.33 crore. The inaugural edition witnessed participation of more than 4,000 runners, including over 1,000 from outside Jammu and Kashmir and over 90 international athletes.

Despite inclement weather, the turnout remained enthusiastic, reflecting a growing culture of fitness and community participation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Participants from diverse backgrounds ran through rain-soaked streets, embodying determination and collective spirit.

Actress Gul Panag praised the enthusiasm of both runners

and organisers, highlighting the impressive turnout for the inaugural edition.

She described the overwhelming support as a significant achievement, noting that large numbers participated despite the inclement weather, and extended her congratulations to all participants and supporters.

Fitness icon Milind Soman, expressing his delight at being part of the event, described it as a significant milestone for the region. He said the large-scale marathon marks a positive beginning and hoped that such initiatives would continue to encourage people to embrace running and active living.

Police Martyrs Cricket Tournament inaugurated in Surankote, poignant tribute to martyred SOG jawan Amjad Ali Khan

POONCH: In a solemn yet spirited ceremony marked by reverence, unity, and public participation, District Police Poonch on Saturday inaugurated the Police Martyrs Cricket Tournament at the Sports Stadium Surankote. The event transcended the conventional boundaries of a sporting fixture, emerging as a meaningful homage to the courage and supreme sacrifice of police personnel who laid down their lives in the line of duty. This year’s tournament was particularly dedicated to the memory of martyred SOG jawan Amjad Ali Khan, whose valour continues to inspire the region.

The inaugural ceremony was graced by Senior Superintendent of Police Poonch, Sh. Shafqat Bhat (JKPS), as the Chief Guest. Among other distinguished dignitaries present were Addl.



SP Poonch Sh. Mohan Lal Sharma (JKPS), DySP DAR Poonch Sh. Shashikant Raina, SDPO Surankote Sh. Surinder Singh (JKPS), and Principal Government Degree College Surankote, Dr. Rani Mughal, who attended as the Guest of Honour. The event witnessed the presence of senior police officers, civil society representatives, prominent citizens, and a large gathering of youth and sports enthusiasts, reflecting strong community participation.

A deeply emotional

moment unfolded during the ceremony with the presence of the family of martyred Amjad Ali Khan, including his father, wife, and children. The gathering paid rich tributes and expressed profound respect for their sacrifice, acknowledging the courage and resilience of the family. Their presence added a human dimension to the ceremony, reminding everyone of the personal sacrifices behind the uniform.

Amjad Ali Khan had laid down his life during an encounter in the Sohan

area of Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir. His bravery, dedication, and unwavering commitment to duty were remembered with pride, as speakers highlighted the importance of keeping alive the legacy of such heroes.

Addressing the gathering, SSP Poonch Shafqat Bhat paid glowing tributes to all police martyrs and emphasised that their sacrifices would never be forgotten. He also used the occasion to strongly urge the youth to stay away from the menace of drugs, describing substance abuse as a serious threat to society and the future of young generations. He highlighted that sports and constructive activities are powerful tools to channelise energy in a positive direction and build a disciplined and responsible soci-

Jammu dominates 20th J&K UT Fencing C’ship, emerges overall winner

JAMMU: The 20th J&K UT Fencing Championship 2025–26 concluded successfully at the Indoor Fencing stadium M.A. Stadium, Jammu, with District Jammu emerging as the overall champion in both Men’s and Women’s categories.

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.