

Sheetal Nanda chairs technical expert panel discussion on ecological balance



HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, APR 18

A day long Technical Expert Panel Discussion focusing on ecological balance among the biological species in the Mansar-Surinsar lake, with special reference to the carrying capacity of fishes and turtles, was successfully held at Eco-Hut Mansar under the Chairpersonship of Commissioner Secretary Forest, Ecology & Environment, Sheetal Nanda.

Among others who participated were PCCF & HoFF, PCCF (Wildlife)/CWLW, Chief Conservator of Forests Jammu/RWLW, senior officers and officials, Scientists, Academicians and local stakeholders.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner Secretary emphasized the urgent need to develop a comprehensive action plan to preserve the ecological

integrity of the lakes. She highlighted that active involvement of local communities, youth and prominent citizens is essential for creating awareness and ensuring sustainable conservation efforts.

Sarvesh Rai, PCCF & HoFF, underlined that the government is making consistent efforts towards turtle conservation and breeding programs. He reassured that water level in Mansar and Surinsar lakes is stable and the department had installed water pumping for expelling excessive water to maintain the Littoral Zone in both the lakes. Due to efforts of Wildlife Department, about 4-5 feet level has lowered during the current year, he added.

He also replied during the discussion that no water bodies within the forest areas have shrunken, reflecting the effectiveness of the ongoing departmental initiatives.

Chaturbhujia Behera,

PCCF (Wildlife)/Chief Wildlife Warden J&K, proposed several practical measures including enhancing cleanliness, relocating the cremation shed as per local demand and implementing contour trenching. He further assured that the pollution related and other departmental issues would be systemically addressed. He also stressed the importance of community engagement programs to raise awareness about sustainable fishing practices/shifting of fishes from mansar lake to other safe sites with consultation of local people.

The panel also discussed afforestation drives and forest fire control measures to strengthen ecological resilience in the region.

Dr. V.S. Senthil Kumar, Chief Conservator of Forests & Regional Wildlife Warden, Jammu, presented brief description of Mansar-Surinsar lakes and highlighted the social,

religious and biological significance of Mansar lake, calling for a balanced approach that respect both the ecological and cultural values.

Adding further insights, Omparkesh Sharma, Former PCCF, recommended installation of informative hoardings, discouraging the use of junk food packaging around the lake and promoting indigenous species conservation. He also advocated for incorporating local art, craft and heritage elements, along with clear signage for fish conservation awareness.

The discussion witnessed active participation of Anurag Arya, Divisional Forest Officer Jammu, Scientists of SKUAST Jammu, Professors Central University of Jammu and University of Jammu, as well as officers and officials of Wildlife Department Jammu including the CEO, Mansar-Surinsar Development Authority and Joint Director Fisheries.

Master Trainers Programme for Census 2027 Concludes at IMPARD J&K

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, APR 18



In a significant step towards strengthening field-level preparedness for Census 2027, the Directorate of Census Operations, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh successfully concluded a comprehensive training programme for Master Trainers at Institute of Management Public Administration and Rural Development (IMPARD) J&K.

The four-day residential programme was aimed at building a robust training ecosystem for the upcoming Census, which is set to be India's first fully digital and paperless exercise. Addressing the participants, Amit Sharma, Chief Principal Census Officer and Director Census Operations, underscored the pivotal role of Master Trainers in ensuring accuracy, uniformity and quality in data collection.

He highlighted that Census 2027 would require a technologically proficient workforce at every level, given its digital framework. Sharma appreciated the training modules that focused on key digital tools such as the HLO Mobile Application, Supervisor

App and the Census Management and Monitoring System (CMMS) portal. Participants were trained in installation procedures, data entry protocols, validation mechanisms and troubleshooting for seamless field operations.

The programme covered a wide range of subjects including Census concepts, enumerators and supervisors, and detailed aspects of House Listing Operations.

Special emphasis was laid on practical components such as ground truthing of House Listing Block boundaries, preparation of layout maps and ef-

fective interaction with respondents. Sessions on data ethics, privacy and security were also conducted to sensitise trainees on safeguarding confidential information. The training further included modules on self-enumeration, highlighting the role of Master Trainers in encouraging citizen participation in the digital Census process. Role-play exercises and field visits provided hands-on experience in household enumeration and handling sensitive situations.

Describing the initiative as a key milestone in the preparatory phase of Census 2027, Sharma reiter-

ated the commitment to maintaining high standards of training, data accuracy and operational efficiency.

Arun Kumar and Manmeet Singh Loomba played an instrumental role in conducting the sessions and guiding participants through the structured modules.

The programme featured a blend of theoretical inputs, practical demonstrations and interactive exercises, including quizzes, group activities and real-time training delivery practice, aimed at enhancing the capacity of Master Trainers for the next level of field functionalities.

World Heritage Day celebrated at Shopian

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, APR 18

World Heritage Day was celebrated today at Historic Mughal Sarai, located on the Mughal Road by the District Administration Shopian.

On the occasion, the mock drill on disaster preparedness for safeguarding heritage sites was carried out with a focus on protecting and safeguarding heritage sites from potential disasters.

The exercise highlighted the importance of timely response, coordination, and the use of modern rescue techniques in disaster situations.

The programme was conducted in the presence of Assistant Commissioner Development Shopian, Muzaffar Ahmad, Nodal Officer for the district, who appreciated the professionalism and preparedness of the SDRF team.

Block Development Officer Shopian, Shakeel Ahmad, along with officials from the RDD were also present on the occasion.

The event marked a joint



effort between the SDRF, RDD and District Administration Shopian, reinforcing inter departmental coordination in disaster risk management and public safety.

On the sidelines of the

programme, participants also took a pledge under the Nasha Mukta Abhiyaan, reaffirming their commitment towards building a drug free society.

The exercise served as a practical demonstration

aimed at enhancing awareness regarding disaster response mechanisms, particularly in heritage and high risk areas, while also engaging the local community in preparedness initiatives.

Awareness activities organised across Samba under Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyaan



HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, APR 18

District Administration Samba continued its intensive outreach and awareness efforts under the Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan, with multiple activities conducted across the district to sensitise different sections of society on the harmful effects of drug abuse.

An awareness camp was organised by the Department of Horticulture at Panchayat Dagore, Nud,

where locals were sensitised about the dangers of substance abuse and encouraged to adopt a healthy, drug-free lifestyle. Officials also provided information regarding various departmental schemes for the benefit of the public.

An awareness programme among youth was conducted at Gho Brahmana, Block Ramgarh, under the ongoing 100-Day campaign promoting awareness and encouraging young individuals to stay away from drugs.

At District Hospital Samba, an interactive session with recovered substance abusers was held, focusing on counselling, awareness and community participation. Participants shared their experiences, while anti-drug pledges were also administered at District Hospital Samba and CMO Office to reinforce collective commitment.

In the industrial sector, an awareness campaign and anti-drug pledge were organised at Cadilla Phar-

maceuticals, IGC Phase-I Samba, sensitising the workforce about the adverse effects of drug abuse and promoting a drug-free workplace.

Further, an AYUSH Awareness Camp was organised at Bari Brahmana Industrial Complex, which included awareness lectures, yoga sessions, rally, health check-ups, distribution of IEC material and medicines along with administration of an anti-drug pledge among industrial workers.

Commissioner SMC visits Maisuma Market; Orders immediate measures for Drainage, Street Lighting

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, APR 18

Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Faz Lul Haseeb, today visited the busy commercial hub of Maisuma and interacted with members of the Traders' Association to assess civic issues and ensure prompt redressal of public concerns.

During the visit, the traders apprised the Commissioner of issues related to drainage and inadequate street lighting in the area. Taking serious note of the concerns, the Commissioner issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned SMC officials to undertake development and proper maintenance of a deep drainage system to prevent waterlogging and ensure smooth flow of storm water, particularly during adverse weather conditions.

He further directed the concerned wing to install high-voltage street lighting in the area to improve visibility, enhance public safety, and facilitate smoother movement for pedestrians and commuters, especially during evening hours.



The Commissioner was accompanied by the Superintending Engineer (Drainage), Executive Engineer (Electric), and other senior officials of the Srinagar Municipal Corpora-

tion during the visit. Faz Lul Haseeb emphasized that issues affecting public convenience and business activity will be addressed on priority through coordinated and

Ration distribution under Special Relief Scheme for Migrants begins across Jammu Province

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, APR 18

The Government today commenced distribution of ration under the Special Relief Ration Scheme for Kashmiri and Jammu migrants as notified vide Government Order No. 15-JK(FCS&CA) of 2026 dated March 5, 2026.

The distribution was launched simultaneously at 32 ration depots earmarked for migrants in District Jammu, besides designated depots in other districts of Jammu province.

As per the existing scale, all relief ration card holders—irrespective of categorization into PHH, NPHH or Special categories—will continue to receive 11 kg of free ration per person per month along with 1 kg of sugar. Beneficiaries registered with the Relief Organization under the non-relief category (including pensioners) and falling under the NPHH category will receive ration at government-approved rates as per



their entitlement under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

Director, Food and Civil Supplies, Jammu, R.K. Shavan, and Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner, Dr. Arvind Karwani, along with senior officers, visited various ration depots at Jagti, Nagrota, Muthi-Buta Nagar and Purkhoo migrant camps to oversee the distribution process. The step taken by the Government was highly appreciated by the migrant community.

During the visits, Director Food and Civil Supplies, Jammu issued instructions to the concerned officials to ensure smooth and hassle-free distribution of ration to all the eligible beneficiaries. He further directed to expedite completion of e-KYC formalities for all pending Relief Ration Card holders, with necessary facilities to remain available at all depots.

Pertinent to mention that the Government has amended the Jammu & Kashmir Food Security

Rules, 2021 and the Targeted Public Distribution (Control) Order, 2023 vide S.O. 392 and S.O. 393 dated August 13, 2024, enabling integration of Migrant Ration Cards with the NFSA database. This step allows migrants to avail benefits under various government schemes.

Zonal Officers and Camp Commandants have been asked to reach out to all eligible beneficiaries and assist them in applying online for various welfare schemes.

