

## All parties should unite to compel the Centre to initiate a dialogue: Bukhari

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Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari today said, "We saw that in Ladakh, all parties joined hands for the interests of Ladakh, and the Centre was forced to initiate a dialogue with them to address their aspirations."

"Taking a cue from Ladakh, all political parties must unite to compel the Centre to initiate a dialogue with the people and political parties to address the issues of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

He said it is imperative that the Centre starts a dialogue with the people of Jammu and Kashmir to resolve their genuine issues and grievances. He said that the Apni Party will support any such attempt if it is made. He was addressing a workers' convention today in Samba, Jammu.

He demanded the immediate holding of ULB and Panchayat elections in Jammu and Kashmir. He said these elections are important for strengthening grassroots-level democracy and ensuring that people elect their own representatives to address their local issues at the grassroots level.

Speaking on public issues and the elected government's failure to address them, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari said that people failed to assess the merit and capability of candidates during the 2024 Assembly elections.

He said, "Unfortunately, many people in Jammu and Kashmir tend to vote either on the basis of political dynasties or religious affiliations. This is why one particular party won 29 seats in Jammu, while another secured 42 seats in the Valley. Both parties, in different ways, misled and allured voters in the name of religion."

He went on to say, "However, elections in J&K were not always like this. In the past, people did not vote along communal or religious lines. Even in 1947, when the entire subcontinent was engulfed in communal hatred and violence during Partition, Jammu and Kashmir stood out as a



place where such hatred was largely absent. Gandhi himself praised J&K at that time, saying that amid the darkness of Partition, he saw a "ray of hope" (Roshni ki Kiran) only in Jammu and Kashmir."

"However, the BJP extinguished this 'Roshni ki Kiran' in 2024 assembly elections here," Mr Bukhari added.

Taking a dig at the ruling NC, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari said that the party had misled people during the elections with false promises and lies.

He asked, "Where are the 200 units of free electricity that the NC had promised to the people during its election campaign? What happened to the one lakh jobs that the party had said it would provide soon after taking charge of the government? What happened to its commitment to regularise daily wagers? Nearly two years have already passed since the party came to power. Where are the free cooking gas cylinders and the additional ration quota that were promised to the people before the election?" "These were all lies meant to allure and mislead voters," He remarked.

Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari also launched a sharp criticism of the Central Government over its the Industrial Development Package for Jammu

and Kashmir unveiled in 2021.

"We were told that the Industrial Development Package for Jammu and Kashmir, worth Rs 28,400 crore, would usher in sustainable development and create large-scale employment opportunities. The scheme promised massive subsidies for new manufacturing and service-sector enterprises. However, the reality is that out of the Rs 28,400 crore package, nearly Rs 19,500 crore in subsidies has reportedly been granted to just 22 industrialists from outside Jammu and Kashmir."

"This has failed to generate meaningful employment opportunities for local youth, as many of these industrialists even brought labourers from outside the Union Territory," Apni Party chief said.

Speaking on the occasion, the party's Provincial President, Manjit Singh, took a dig at the government, accusing it of failing on every front. He said "The NC government is completely insensitive to the interests of the people. Had it genuinely cared about safeguarding public interests, it would have extended the residency requirement for domicile from the current 15 years to 50 years. The government has the authority and powers to do so, but it has chosen not to act."

"The reality is that the NC and the BJP are hand in glove with each other. Both parties are concerned only with their own political and personal dividends. There appears to be an understanding between them — the NC criticises the BJP in the Valley, while the BJP targets the NC in Jammu. In truth, both are merely pursuing their own interests," Singh said.

Besides the Party President and the Provincial President, other prominent leaders who were present on the occasion or addressed the gathering included Provincial Vice President Shah Mohamed Tantray; District President Samba Raman Thapa; Provincial Vice Presidents Saleem Alam and Arun Chhibber; Provincial Secretaries Ajaz Kazmi and Balbir Singh Baba; senior leader Bodh Raj Bhagat; Provincial Women Wing President Pavneet Kour; Party Spokesperson Advocate Sahil Bharti; Kishan Wing President Badri Sharma; Babu Ram; Makhani; Farooq Chouhan; Vaibhav Mattoo; Neelam Gupta; Mohammad Arif; Ritu Pandita; Vicky Sudan; Vishal Jyotshi; G.L. Pandita; Joginder; Yash Choudhary; Dalbir Singh; Inder Paul Singh; District President Rural Jammu and Samba District party workers.

## Big push to rural entrepreneurship: Rs36 cr SVEP projects approved in J&K

**SRINAGAR, MAY 24:** Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, on Saturday chaired a meeting of the UT-Level Steering Committee (Non-Farm Livelihoods) under the Jammu & Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission's (JKRLM) Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP), which accorded in-principle approval to six Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) worth ₹36 crore aimed at promoting rural entrepreneurship and sustainable non-farm livelihood opportunities across Jammu and Kashmir.

The approved DPRs pertain to six new SVEP blocks—Sogam-Wavoora, Pulwama-Litter, Chadoora-Surasyar, Khour-Paragwal, Pouni-Reasi and Bhadarwah-Bhalla—where over 12,000 enterprises are projected to be established over the next four years.

The meeting was attended by Mission Director, JKRLM, Dr. Shubhra Sharma; Chief Operating Officer, HIMAYAT, Rajneesh Gupta; besides representatives from the Forest, Ecology & Environment Department, Tribal Affairs Department, Social Welfare Department, Handicrafts & Handloom Department, Industries & Commerce Department, MSME, KVIC, NABARD, RSETIs, Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) and other stakeholder institutions.

Officials informed the committee that Jammu & Kashmir has been implementing SVEP since 2015–16 with technical support from National Resource Organisation (NRO) partners, including EDII. The programme initially commenced in the pilot blocks



of Lar in Ganderbal district and Basohli in Kathua district, where nearly 2,500 entrepreneurs were established during the first phase. With the approval of the six new DPRs, SVEP coverage in Jammu & Kashmir will now expand from eight to 14 districts.

The Secretary stated that the newly approved DPRs focus on promoting innovative rural enterprises aligned with local resources and market demand. He highlighted sectors identified for intervention, including walnut oil and butter extraction, sheep wool processing, trout fish processing, village and border homestay ecotourism, vermi-compost production, saffron value addition, herbal tea processing, amla-based products, and honey processing with value addition and packaging. Emphasising the need for scientific identification of viable

enterprises, Aijaz Asad stressed that enterprise selection should be guided by local demand patterns, consumption trends and rural spending behaviour.

He directed officials to prioritise economically sustainable enterprises supported by robust market linkages and value-addition opportunities to ensure long-term livelihood generation for rural youth and women.

The Secretary also underscored the importance of strengthening entrepreneurship training, capacity building and monitoring mechanisms for effective implementation of the approved projects. He stated that entrepreneurship development should be decentralised to the village level through community-based training modules and Training of Trainers (ToT) programmes.

Calling for stronger inter-departmental convergence, he directed stakeholders to ensure timely execution and rigorous monitoring so that maximum benefits reach aspiring rural entrepreneurs across Jammu and Kashmir. Data presented during the meeting revealed that non-farm livelihood initiatives in Jammu & Kashmir have so far supported 26,551 enterprises, including 26,217 individual enterprises and 355 group enterprises under NRLM and SVEP.

SVEP is a sub-scheme under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana—National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, aimed at promoting non-farm entrepreneurship among Self-Help Group (SHG) members and their families in rural areas.

## ASTRO ZINDAGI

(Weekly Horoscope May 25 - 31, 2026)

### ARIES :

This week, Mars intensifies your emotional undercurrents, while Venus enhances your charm and magnetism especially in love. Expect passion to flare up. Singles may feel drawn to someone instantly, but make sure the spark aligns with your deeper emotional needs. Couples can deepen intimacy, especially if lingering issues are addressed with honesty and boldness. The North Node supports emotional transformation, urging you to evolve through vulnerability. On the financial front, Mercury's influence sharpens your thinking. A midweek opportunity may appear promising but take your time. It warns against hasty decisions. Real growth comes through smart, steady planning. In your career, Jupiter lights up your sector of innovation.

### TAURUS :

This week, Venus brings calm, steady energy to your relationships. If you are in a partnership, focus on maintaining balance and peace. It's a good time to discuss future plans, but there is no need to rush decisions. In finances, Saturn encourages you to review your spending habits and focus on long-term goals. Look for opportunities to save or invest wisely, and avoid impulse purchases. At work, Mars helps you remain steady and reliable. Though progress may feel slow, stay patient. If you have been aiming for a raise or promotion, the work you are putting in now will pay off in the future. In education, Mercury helps you focus and gain clarity. Your understanding of complex subjects is improving, and it's a great week to ask questions or dive deeper into tough topics.

### GEMINI :

This week brings emotional growth in your relationships, with the Moon encouraging deep talks. If you are in a relationship, you may realize something important about your partner's needs or your own. A calm conversation will help resolve any doubts. If you are single, Venus boosts your natural charm, and a new connection could form over a shared interest. In finances, Mars helps you take charge and focus on your money matters. It's a great time to set clear financial goals, like saving or cutting back on unnecessary spending. A helpful opportunity may come through a friend or colleague, but make sure it aligns with your long-term plans.

### CANCER :

This week, your heart is open to deeper connections, thanks to the influence of Venus. Whether you are in a relationship or single, embrace the simple moments, and trust the natural flow of things. Take it slow, and allow love to unfold without rushing. Venus encourages you to prioritize trust and emotional connection. Midweek, you will feel more motivated to take charge of your finances, with the Saturn helping you focus on your long-term security. It's an excellent time to review your financial goals, adjust your spending habits, and plan for future stability. Later in the week, your career may require more assertiveness, driven by Mars.

### LEO :

At the start of the week, your love life calls for introspection and emotional growth. Venus encourages you to reflect on what truly works in relationships. If partnered, expect honest talks about future plans or healing past doubts. Singles may meet someone thoughtful but take your time to see their consistency. Midweek, Mercury asks you to review your finances carefully. Avoid quick spending and focus on saving. Helpful advice or practical opportunities could appear, stay open but cautious. In work, the Sun guides you to finish projects and clear the way for new goals. Leadership and clear communication help resolve conflicts, especially in business partnerships.

### VIRGO :

As the week begins, Mercury enhances your clarity, making it a good time to focus on organizing ideas and completing tasks. You are drawn to new tools or methods, evaluate them carefully before use. Career matters may present new challenges, but your grounded approach ensures steady progress. By midweek, Venus and the Moon bring emotional warmth to relationships. You will sense your partner's feelings deeply, and single might experience heartfelt connections. Acts of kindness create lasting closeness. At the same time, finances need careful review. Sudden bills may arise, so set aside funds and avoid impulsive spending. Around Thursday, Mars energizes your efforts, helping you push forward in studies or career goals.

### LIBRA :

The week opens with a light and cheerful energy from Venus brightening your love life. Couples will enjoy quality time, laughter, and shared joy, perfect for date nights or small adventures. Singles will shine socially, attracting others with their calm and friendly nature. Mercury brings opportunities to increase your income this week, especially from efforts already underway. Creative projects may show growth, and it's a good time to plan financial moves like asking for a raise or starting something new. Be cautious with social spending; saying no protects your financial stability.

### SCORPIO :

This week begins under the influence of Mercury encouraging emotional curiosity and deeper conversations. If you are in a relationship, Mercury's energy supports thoughtful communication, helping you understand your partner on a new level. Singles may feel drawn to someone with a unique perspective, but Venus advises patience, let trust grow naturally rather than rushing in. Financially, Saturn urges caution and discipline. Unexpected expenses may challenge your budget, so prioritize essentials and avoid impulsive spending. This week favors careful review of income streams, with Jupiter offering potential new opportunities but thorough analysis is essential. Clear communication in joint finances remains key to steady, long-term growth.

### SAGITTARIUS :

This week begins with Venus lighting up your love sector, bringing emotional lightness and a fresh curiosity. In relationships, you will feel drawn toward playful, explorative connection—whether through travel, new adventures, or meaningful conversations. Singles will attract attention effortlessly with humor and charm, but be sure to look beyond surface attraction to assess emotional depth. Financially, the influence of Saturn encourages a reset—this is an ideal time to correct imbalances like overspending or debt. Helpful advice or tools may come your way to simplify managing money, and a delayed payment or reimbursement could ease pressure. Mercury urges strategic thinking this week. Avoid rushing decisions; instead, recalibrate goals and review resources carefully. If leading a team or business, expect to pivot marketing or operations for greater stability.

### CAPRICORN :

This week begins under the steady, grounding influence of Saturn, encouraging emotional stability in relationships. If committed, shared routines and practical goals bring comfort, and patient, calm communication can heal lingering tensions. Singles may meet someone dependable through work or daily life—a connection based on reliability and kindness, not fleeting passion. Financially, Mercury guides a slow but steady flow. Payments come in gradually, so careful budgeting is key. Self-employed can refine pricing or invoicing strategies. Avoid financial burdens born of guilt; set clear boundaries.

### AQUARIUS :

At the start of the week, Mars brings passion with clear direction for Aquarius. Singles feel drawn to people who share their values, creating quick, meaningful attraction. Couples enjoy renewed emotional and physical closeness, especially after resolving past conflicts. Venus encourages you to let love flow naturally—avoid rushing or controlling the connection. Midweek, Mercury sharpens your mind for financial reviews and negotiations. A promising opportunity may appear, but read all details carefully. Unexpected expenses might come, yet you have the mental clarity to handle them calmly.

### PISCES :

This week, love flows with newfound clarity as Venus and the Moon foster emotional balance. If committed, it's a perfect time to deepen your connection through shared goals or travel. Singles may attract someone who values emotional depth beyond sensitivity, guided by gentle Venus energy. Financially, Mercury's influence brings clear thinking and organization. Past decisions begin to ripple positively, helping you manage resources better. Minor money issues may arise but resolve smoothly with clear communication under Mercury's watch. It's an ideal time to plan your finances toward mid-year goals. Mentally, the Sun and Mercury sharpen your focus, making it great for pitching ideas, refining plans, or professional meetings.

## DC Poonch conducts extensive inspection of NH-144A, RTS road

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JAMMU, MAY 24

Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Ashok Kumar Sharma today conducted an extensive tour of NH-144A and the RTS Road to inspect the progress of ongoing developmental works, assess road connectivity issues and review the functioning of various public institutions and essential services along the route.

During the comprehensive inspection, the Deputy Commissioner visited several vulnerable and bottleneck locations on both NH-144A and RTS Road. He issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned de-

partments and executing agencies for immediate clearance and improvement of traffic movement. Several bottlenecks causing inconvenience to commuters and affecting smooth vehicular movement were successfully removed during the tour, thereby improving road accessibility and ensuring safer transportation for the general public.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed upon the concerned officers to maintain close coordination and ensure timely redressal of road-related issues, particularly in view of public convenience and uninterrupted movement of essential services.

En-route, the Deputy

Commissioner also inspected various Government schools and reviewed the academic environment, attendance of staff, infrastructure facilities and overall functioning of the institutions. Necessary instructions were issued to the education authorities for maintaining proper discipline, improving educational standards, ensuring cleanliness and providing a seamless learning atmosphere to students.

During the tour, several issues related to the Jal Shakti Department were also brought to the notice of the Deputy Commissioner by local residents. Taking immediate cognizance, the Deputy Commissioner directed the con-

cerned officers to resolve water supply-related grievances on priority. Spot directions were issued for restoration and improvement of drinking water facilities in the affected areas.

The Deputy Commissioner reiterated the commitment of the district administration towards ensuring better road connectivity, strengthening public service delivery and addressing the genuine grievances of the people in a prompt and efficient manner. He emphasized that field visits and ground-level inspections will continue to ensure accountability, transparency and timely execution of developmental works across the district.