

Chief Minister Omar inaugurates Lavender Festival at Nunar

Calls Lavender Cultivation addition of new chapter in journey of development and prosperity of J&K

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coming times.

Drawing parallels with internationally renowned lavender destinations, the Chief Minister said the scenic lavender fields of Ganderbal have the potential to attract visitors and nature enthusiasts, particularly those travelling to Sonamarg. He emphasized that such initiatives can create new sources of income for local communities while promoting rural tourism.

The Chief Minister also underlined the importance of reducing excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in agriculture. He said the government, in collaboration with agricultural institutions and experts, is working to promote sustainable farming practices and create awareness about the long-term benefits of preserving soil health.

Highlighting the government's efforts under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Omar Abdullah said substantial investments are being made to modernize the agriculture sector through advanced infrastructure, mechanization, value-addition facilities and promotion of high-value crops.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for a Post-Harvest Infrastructure Project for Medicinal and Aromatic Plants at the Model Floriculture Centre, Nunar, being established under HADP/NABARD at

a cost of ₹538.23 lakh.

The project includes development of an FPO Park with office and storage facilities, machinery for processing and e-marketing of medicinal and aromatic plant products, post-harvest management infrastructure, transportation facilities, establishment of a distillation unit, quality control laboratory, shade-net structures and other support facilities aimed at creating a comprehensive ecosystem for medicinal and aromatic plant cultivation and marketing.

The Chief Minister also reviewed infrastructure created at the centre under NABARD-funded projects, including development of a germplasm centre, strengthening of farm infrastructure, irrigation facilities, farm mechanization and establishment of essential oil distillation units.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also distributed sanction letters among beneficiaries under various agriculture and allied sector initiatives. The beneficiaries received assistance for establishment of Hi-Tech Poly Houses, Common Facilitation Centres, dairy units and breed-based farms, besides keys of tractors provided under government-supported mechanization programmes aimed at enhancing farm productivity and improving rural livelihoods.

Addressing the farmers, the Chief Minister reiter-

ated the government's commitment towards strengthening agriculture as a viable and profitable sector. He said efforts are being made to ensure that every region benefits from development initiatives and modern agricultural interventions.

Referring to ongoing road widening works in Ganderbal, Omar Abdullah acknowledged concerns raised by affected shopkeepers and assured them that their issues would be addressed in a fair and humane manner. He said the government would work towards a suitable rehabilitation mechanism in consultation with all stakeholders.

Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Javed Ahmad Dar while addressing the event underlined the importance of HADP for the promotion of cultivation of crops like lavender. He said the department of Agriculture is working to explore Medicinal and aromatic crops (including lavender) cultivation for the socio-economic transformation of farming community of the region.

Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, also addressed the gathering and highlighted the government's continued focus on strengthening the agriculture sector through infrastructure development, technological interventions and farmer-centric initiatives.

Public engagement an essential pillar of effective Governance: Sakeena Ito

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Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Ito today held series of interactions with public delegations and citizens at Civil Secretariat, Jammu, listening to their concerns and assuring them of timely and effective redressal.

During the public outreach, delegations representing different areas and sectors apprised the Minister of issues related to healthcare infrastructure, educational facilities, social welfare initiatives, public utilities and other developmental needs. Several individuals also met the Minister to present grievances and seek intervention on



matters concerning their localities.

Giving a patient hearing to all representations, the Minister reiterated the Government's commitment to responsive, transparent and people-centric governance. She emphasized that public engagement remains an essential pillar of effective administration and helps ensure

that developmental policies are aligned with the needs and aspirations of the people.

Highlighting the Government's focused approach towards improving grassroots governance, the Minister said that regular interactions with citizens provide valuable insights into local challenges and enable the administration

to formulate practical and inclusive solutions. She added that strengthening last-mile service delivery and enhancing accountability at every level remain key priorities of the Government.

She assured all public delegations and individuals that their genuine issues and concerns will be addressed on priority.

Dy CM chairs meeting on revival of customary mining activities in Kashmir

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Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today emphasized the need for prompt decisions regarding the sand and stone quarrying and lifting of loose material across Kashmir to ensure the uninterrupted availability of construction material for the public.

The Deputy Chief Minister made these remarks while chairing a meeting held to review the revival of customary mining activities and stone quarrying at identified locations across Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Members of the Legislative Assembly, including Justice (Retd) Hasnain Masoodi, Ahsan Ahmad Pardesi, Hilal Akbar Lone, Nizam-ud-Din Bhat, Javed Hassan Baig, and Mushtaq Ahmad Guroo besides Additional Chief Secretary, Mining Department, Director Geology & Mining, Director



Finance Mining, Joint Directors and District Mineral Officers.

While reiterating the government's commitment to completely curb the illegal mining activities, the Deputy Chief Minister stated that people should not face any shortage of construction material due to restrictions on unlawful operations.

He called for timely formulation of a comprehensive Mining Policy for Jammu and Kashmir to ensure the optimal utilization of mineral resources while safeguarding the environmental interests.

He stressed trans-

parency in mining operations and directed the concerned authorities to ensure that no illegal mining practices are allowed in any district.

The Deputy Chief Minister also emphasized the need for effective royalty collection from all the companies engaged in mining activities across Kashmir and called for the speedy disposal of pending penalties and court cases related to mining operations.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held regarding the revival of customary stone quarrying activities at identified locations including at Pan-

thachowk in Srinagar, Sadrekoat Bala in Bandipora, and other related locations.

The Deputy Chief Minister underscored the importance of balancing developmental needs with environmental sustainability and directed the concerned departments to expedite the process of finalizing modalities for regulated mining operations.

The meeting explored mechanisms for the structured revival of quarrying activities and outlined a comprehensive way forward in the interest of public convenience.

Satish inaugurates Food Processing Laboratory, launches International AI Conference at CUK

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entrepreneurship. He examined advanced equipment including food pulpers and crushers for converting the fallen fruits into pulp, autoclave units for sterilization, dough sheeters, proofers, laminar air flow chambers and incubators.

Emphasising the need to bridge the gap between the scientific research and grassroots implementation, Satish Sharma called for taking innovations "from laboratory to land" so that farmers can directly benefit from scientific advancements. He stressed the importance of preserving the agricultural land and harnessing modern technology to enhance the productivity, reduce wastage and generate sus-

tainable livelihoods. The Minister also visited the Design Innovation Centre where the students displayed a wide range of innovative products, prototypes and traditional artworks.

Appreciating the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of the students, he directed the university authorities to explore mechanisms for commercialising the products developed by the young innovators. He also enquired about the process of assessing their market value and encouraged the university to facilitate market linkages for student innovations.

Lauding the efforts of students in preserving traditional crafts such as Namda, embroidery and

Papier-Mâché, the Minister said Jammu and Kashmir possesses a rich cultural and artisanal heritage which must be protected and promoted. He underscored the importance of imparting practical skills to youth while encouraging the future generations to value traditional knowledge systems alongside modern technological advancements.

Later, at the Tulmulla Campus of the Central University of Kashmir, the Minister inaugurated the maiden International Conference on Applied Artificial Intelligence.

Dean, School of Engineering, Professor Farooq Ahmad Mir, highlighted the significance of the conference in promoting research and innovation in emerging technologies.

Vice Chancellor Professor A. Ravindranath released the conference proceedings and souvenir in presence of distinguished academicians, scientists, researchers and delegates from within and outside the country.

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Additional District Magistrate Jammu Ansuya Jamwal today chaired a meeting to review the preparedness of the district administration for the fair conduct of the Re-Examination of NEET (UG)-2026, scheduled for June 21.

The ADM conducted a detailed review of the arrangements and issued instructions to officers concerned, covering the role of banks in examination-related processes, the duties and responsibilities of Centre Superintendents, deployment of security and traffic police and overall logistics for the examination. The ADM accorded special attention to candidate welfare, directing that candidates face no difficulty or hassle during secu-



rity checks and frisking at the examination centres and that all processes be conducted efficiently and without inconvenience to examinees.

The re-examination will be held from 02:00 PM to 05:15 PM, with an extension until 06:20 PM for Persons with Disabilities (PwD) and Persons with Benchmark Disabilities

(PwBD) candidates. Twenty-seven examination centres have been designated across Jammu district, with 13,684 candidates expected to appear.

The designated centres comprise one each at the Indian Institute of Management Jammu, the Indian Institute of Technology Jammu, the University

of Jammu and the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology Jammu, along with five Kendriya Vidyalaya Schools, two Army Public Schools, one Border Security Force centre, eight UT Government Colleges, six UT Government Schools and one centre at Police Public School, Miran Sahib.

DC chairs DLIC meeting under Mission YUVA

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Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Minga Sherpa today chaired a meeting of the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) under the Mission YUVA scheme to review and expedite implementation of youth entrepre-

neurship initiatives. The meeting evaluated and screened applications received under various categories of Mission YUVA, including Nano Enterprises, MSMEs and other eligible sectors, to identify and recommend suitable candidates for financial assistance. The

committee also reviewed overall progress of the scheme's implementation. Among those present were Additional District Development Commissioner Jugal Kishore, General Manager DIC Kishore Singh Katoch, Assistant Director Employment Priyanka Gupta, represen-

tatives of the banking sector and other officers concerned. After detailed scrutiny, the committee approved 329 cases for financial assistance under the Mission YUVA scheme, paving the way for aspiring entrepreneurs to establish and expand their ventures.