

Director Horticulture Inspects Mega Fruit Plant Nursery, Reviews Scientific Initiatives

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, JULY 14

Director Horticulture Jammu, Gul Sayed, conducted a comprehensive inspection of the Government Mega Fruit Plant Nursery (MFPN), Chakroi, R.S. Pura, to review scientific advancements, nursery operations and skill development initiatives being undertaken by the department.

Accompanied by District Horticulture Officer Jammu, Perminder Singh, the Director inspected the Tissue Culture Laboratory and Bio-Control Laboratory, where Technical Officers Amit Saraf and Zia-ur-Rashid briefed him on the scientific activities being carried out. He appreciated the efforts to adopt modern tissue culture techniques for raising quality fruit plants. During the visit, Gul Sayed also interacted with participants of the ongoing one-month training programme on Fruit Plant Orchard/Nursery Development and Management for unemployed youth. He highlighted the programme's role in enhancing technical skills, promoting self-employment and generating sustainable livelihoods. The training is being supervised by Divisional Training Officer



Virender Kumar.

The Director also reviewed various nursery operations, including budding, grafting and layering techniques, demonstrated by District Horticulture Officers Perminder Singh and Abhinav Gupta. He stressed the need to promote medicinal plant cultivation and introduce improved cultivars of mango, litchi, guava and citrus to develop the nursery into a

centre for diverse germplasm collection.

Commending the dedication of the officers and staff, Gul Sayed reiterated the department's commitment to strengthening tissue culture, bio-control and skill development initiatives to enhance horticultural productivity and create employment opportunities for youth across the Jammu division.

Later, the Director visited

the Government Fruit Plants Nursery at Miran Sahib, Maralian, where he, along with Horticulture Development Officer Dheeraj Sharma, inspected nursery activities and issued directions for effective implementation of departmental programmes, maintenance of quality planting material and further improvement of nursery infrastructure and management practices.

Speaker reviews HDF, RKS fund utilization for strengthening healthcare services in Charar-i-Sharief

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Speaker, Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, today chaired a meeting of the Hospital Development Fund (HDF) Committee of SDH Charar-i-Sharief and SDH Pakherpora falling in Medical Block Charar-i-Sharief and SDH Kremchore falling in Medical Block Khansahib to review the proposals for utilization of HDF for the financial year 2026-27.

The Speaker was apprised that the Hospital Development Fund is generated through various sources, including charges collected for pathological tests, X-ray services, hospital registration/prescription tickets and other user charges.

It was informed that the funds are utilized for payment of wages to HDF employees, procurement of essential medicines and medical equipment, minor repairs and renovation of hospital infrastructure, purchase of sanitary items and other patient-care requirements aimed at improving the quality of healthcare services.

The meeting was informed that all the three Sub-District Hospitals in Block Charar-i-Sharief have been accredited under the National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS), reflecting their commitment towards maintaining high standards of patient



care and healthcare delivery.

It was also highlighted that SDH Nagam had received the prestigious Kayakalp Award for cleanliness during the previous year while SDH Pakherpora has been conferred with the same award this year with rank one in J&K. Notably, SDH Charar-i-Sharief has consistently received the Kayakalp Commendation Award for the last three consecutive years in recognition of its sustained efforts towards cleanliness, hygiene and quality healthcare services.

The Speaker also reviewed the proposed utilization of the Rogi Kalyan Samiti (RKS) Fund for the financial year 2026-27. He examined the priorities identified for improving the healthcare facilities and patient amenities across the hospitals.

During the meeting, the Speaker stressed that every

rupee available under the HDF and RKS should be utilized judiciously, transparently and strictly in accordance with the prescribed guidelines, with the primary objective of improving patient care and strengthening healthcare infrastructure.

He directed the concerned authorities to accord priority to procurement of essential medicines and modern medical equipment, maintenance of hospital infrastructure, sanitation and other facilities that directly benefit the patients.

Emphasizing accountability and efficient financial management, the Speaker instructed the hospital authorities to ensure optimum utilization of available resources, avoid unnecessary expenditure and maintain complete transparency in execution of works undertaken through these funds. He

also called for periodic monitoring of expenditure and timely implementation of approved proposals so that the intended benefits reach the public without delay.

The Speaker appreciated the healthcare staff for securing quality certifications and national recognition under the NQAS and Kayakalp initiatives. He urged them to sustain these achievements by maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness, patient care and hospital management, while continuing to provide accessible, affordable and quality healthcare services to the people of the area.

The meeting was attended by CMO Budgam Dr. Gulzar Ahmad, BMO, Charar-i-Sharief, Dr. Tasavur Khan, BMO Khansahib Dr. Arshid Ahmad along with other members of the Hospital Development Fund Committees.

Speaker expresses grief over demise of legendary leader Dr. Mustafa Kamal

SRINAGAR, JULY 14: Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, has expressed profound grief and heartfelt sorrow over the demise of Dr. Mustafa Kamal, former Cabinet Minister, brother of former Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah and uncle of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

In his condolence message, the Speaker described Dr. Mustafa Kamal as a towering political figure, a distinguished parliamentarian, an accomplished administrator and a compassionate leader who devoted his entire public life to the service of the people

of Jammu and Kashmir.

He said that Dr. Kamal rendered exemplary services while heading several key departments in the erstwhile State and earned widespread respect and admiration for his integrity, humility, visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to public welfare.

The Speaker said that throughout his illustrious political career, Dr. Kamal remained steadfastly committed to the upliftment of the downtrodden, the poor, the underprivileged and other weaker sections of society. He worked tirelessly for inclusive development,

social justice and the overall progress and prosperity of Jammu and Kashmir, leaving behind a lasting legacy of selfless public service and dedicated leadership.

Describing his demise as an irreparable loss, the Speaker said that Jammu and Kashmir has lost one of its most experienced, respected and farsighted leaders whose invaluable contribution to governance, development and public service will be remembered for generations.

Recalling his long association with the late leader, the Speaker said that Dr. Mustafa Kamal was not only

a valued colleague in the Cabinet but also a close associate with whom he had the privilege of working for many years in public life. He said that they shared a warm personal rapport, mutual respect and a deep bond forged through their collective commitment to serving the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Speaker remarked that Dr. Kamal's wisdom, affable nature, sincerity and unwavering dedication to public service earned him the admiration of colleagues across the political spectrum and that his passing has left behind a profound personal and professional void.

Rang Tarang Commences at IIM Jammu with Grand Celebration of Music, Dance

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Rang Tarang-2026, a spectacular three-day mega festival celebrating music, dance and theatre, commenced today with great enthusiasm at the Mandapam Auditorium of IIM Jammu. The festival was inaugurated with the traditional lighting of the ceremonial lamp by the Director of IIM Jammu, Prof. B. S. Sahay, in the august presence of Padma Shri Balwant Thakur, Director of Natrang.

Organised as a vibrant confluence of the performing arts, Rang Tarang-2026 will continue till July 16, 2026, featuring 18 captivating presentations, including 12 theatre productions, three dance performances and three musical concerts. Conceived and curated by Padma Shri Balwant Thakur, the festival is being executed with the support of Natrang's creative team led by Neeraj Kant (Theatre), Suraj Singh (Music) Pawan Verma/Mohd Yasin (Allied creative departments) and Sunny Mujju (Dance).

Addressing the gathering, Padma Shri Balwant Thakur elaborated on the vision behind introducing performing arts as an integral part of the learning experience for IIM students. He emphasised that management education must go beyond academics to nurture



confidence, creativity and emotional intelligence. Highlighting the transformative potential of theatre, music and dance, he explained that the specially designed programme seeks to empower students with self-confidence, effective public speaking, communication skills, critical thinking and collaborative leadership—qualities essential for future managers and entrepreneurs.

Balwant Thakur expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Prof. B. S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, for providing Natrang with the opportunity to conceptualise and conduct this unique performing arts initiative. He appreciated the Director's visionary leadership and unwavering support in integrating theatre, music and dance into the academic environment, stating that such initiatives

not only enrich campus life but also play a vital role in nurturing well rounded, confident and socially conscious future leaders.

In his address, Prof. B. S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, appreciated the initiative and underlined the importance of integrating performing arts with management education. He observed that such creative engagements enrich students' personalities, foster innovation, enhance leadership qualities and contribute significantly to their holistic development.

The inaugural session began on a spiritually uplifting note with a soulful rendition of Saraswati Vandana presented by a chorus of forty singers. The audience was then enthralled by a vibrant presentation of Raas Leela, depicting the enchanting and playful episodes from the

divine love of Radha and Krishna through graceful choreography and expressive performances.

The opening day also witnessed the staging of four engaging plays 'The Monkey's Paw,' 'Mughal Darbar Ka Raaz,' 'Dukhi Ram Ki Katha,' and 'Yeh Laash Kiski Hai.' The performances received an overwhelming response from students, faculty members and invited guests, reflecting the festival's success in creating a lively and intellectually stimulating cultural environment.

With an exciting lineup of theatre, music and dance over the next two days, Rang Tarang-2026 promises to be a unique celebration of artistic excellence while reinforcing the role of performing arts in shaping confident, creative and socially aware future leaders.

Vishwas-2026': EPFO's Special Initiative for Settlement of Pending Damages Cases

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The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has introduced the 'Vishwas-2026' Scheme, a special initiative aimed at facilitating the amicable and time-bound resolution of pending damages cases under Section 14B of the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 or 128 of the Code of Social Security, 2020.

The scheme has been introduced effective from 29 June 2026 and will remain operational for a period of six months.

Appealing to employers to take maximum advantage of the scheme, Sh.

Sumeet Singh, Regional Provident Fund Commissioner-I, EPFO Regional Office Jammu, stated that the initiative provides an opportunity to settle pending damages cases in a transparent, fair, and efficient manner. He emphasized that the scheme would reduce litigation, promote voluntary compliance, and strengthen employer-EPFO relations.

Under the scheme, eligible employers can seek settlement of pending damages. Cases pending are classified in 4 categories: (a) Ongoing Litigation Cases, (b) Finalised 14B orders including RRC Cases (Unpaid/Partially Paid), (c) Pre-Adjudication Cases (Notice Issued) (d) Pre-Ad-

judication Cases (Notice Not yet Issued) will be considered under the scheme, subject to the prescribed conditions. Employers are required to deposit the full interest amount under Section 7Q before applying and undertake not to pursue further appeal before any judicial or quasi-judicial forum once a settlement and abatement of the dispute is reached. Cases involving fraud, misappropriation, deliberate falsification of records, and matters where interest under dispute is not remitted and establishments where damages have been fully recovered are excluded from the scheme.

To facilitate employers and ensure seamless im-

plementation, EPFO Regional Office Jammu has established a dedicated Help Desk to provide guidance and assistance regarding the scheme.

Employers are also encouraged to submit their queries and seek clarification through email, social media platforms, and the WhatsApp helpline for prompt assistance.

Applications under the scheme are to be submitted online through the EPFO Employer Portal using a valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) or e-sign facility. Upon verification and approval by the competent authority, the approval certificate will be made available in the employer's login.

JKEDI Pulwama concludes MDP under RAMP at Shadimarg

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The Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), Pulwama, in collaboration with NRLM successfully concluded two Management Development Programmes (MDP-9 and MDP-10) under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) initiative at Shadimarg, Pulwama.

The programmes trained 44 women entrepreneurs, providing them with structured, high-quality training aimed at enhancing their entrepreneurial skills and strengthening their business capabilities.

The valedictory ceremony was attended by Communication Officer, Arif Khan; District Nodal Officer, JKEDI Pulwama, Raiyees Manzoor; ZEO Shadimarg, Khadim Husain; and DPM NRLM Pulwama, Dr. Imran Ahmad among others.

While interacting with the participants, the dignitaries and faculty members highly appreciated JKEDI's efforts in organizing such impactful capacity-build-



ing programmes in the far-flung areas of Pulwama district.

They commended the enthusiasm and active participation of the women entrepreneurs and encouraged them to utilize the acquired knowledge and skills to establish sustain-

able and growth-oriented enterprises.

On the occasion, DNO Pulwama, emphasized the importance of such initiatives in promoting entrepreneurship and empowering women at the grassroots level, especially

in rural and semi-urban areas.

Participants expressed heartfelt gratitude to the course team and JKEDI for their dedicated guidance and support in successfully organizing these programmes.