

Javed Rana continues extensive tour of flood-hit Pir Panjal

Says Omar Govt stands firmly with every affected family

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, JULY 25

Continuing his outreach to flood and landslide-affected communities, Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, on Saturday visited Dhara Sangla in Surankote and interacted with the families who suffered losses in the recent landslides and flash floods.

The visit formed part of the Minister's extensive tour of flood and landslide-affected Pir Panjal region over the past several days, aimed at assessing the ground situation, reviewing relief and restoration efforts and ensuring timely assistance to the affected population.

At Dhara Sangla, Rana offered condolences to the families who lost their loved ones and assured them that the Government shares their grief and stands firmly with them during this difficult time.

He was accompanied by MLA Surankote, Choudhary Mohammad Akram along with officers from various departments.

"The Government stands firmly with every



family affected by this tragedy. We will remain with you through this difficult time and ensure timely support, including immediate relief, rehabilitation assistance and compensation, to help you rebuild your lives," the Minister said.

He also told the residents that the Government is closely monitoring the situation and remains fully committed to restore normalcy at the earliest.

During the ongoing tour, the Minister has been visiting some of the worst-hit villages and remote habitations, interacting with the affected families and inspecting damage to

homes, roads, water supply schemes, irrigation facilities and agricultural land. He is also reviewing the pace of relief and rehabilitation works being carried out by the district administration and line departments.

While taking stock of the restoration of essential services, Rana emphasised that the relief process must remain people-centric and responsive. He directed the officers to ensure that genuine cases of loss are assessed promptly and that eligible families receive relief and compensation without unnecessary delay. Rana also stressed the need for long-

term disaster mitigation and preparedness in vulnerable areas. He directed the officers to identify landslide- and flash-flood-prone locations and prepare comprehensive plans for permanent protective works to safeguard lives, property and infrastructure. He reiterated that the Government will continue to monitor the situation closely until normalcy is fully restored. He directed the concerned to restore damaged roads, drinking water schemes, power infrastructure and other public utilities on war footing to ease hardships for the affected population.

SKUAST-K becomes Kashmir's first University to hold fully Paperless PG Semester Exam

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, JULY 25

Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) has become the first university in the Kashmir Valley to conduct a completely paperless postgraduate semester examination, marking a significant milestone in the digital transformation of higher education in the region.

On July 25, the University successfully conducted a tablet-based digital examination for 150 postgraduate students enrolled in the course "Statistical Methods for Applied Sciences", replacing the conventional pen-and-paper examination system with a secure digital platform.

The initiative was envisioned by the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, as part of the University's broader mission to modernize academic administration through technology-driven, sustainable and student-centric practices. The transition reflects SKUAST-K's commitment to creating a future-ready academic ecosystem that aligns with global standards in digital education.

The implementation was coordinated under the supervision of Prof. K. N. Qaisar, Controller of Examinations; Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, Dean, Faculty of Horticulture; and Prof. Imran Khan, Head, Division of Agricultural Statistics, who ensured that the examination was con-



ducted in accordance with prescribed academic standards and robust data security protocols.

The examination was monitored on-site by Dr. Aziz Mujtaba Aezum, Dr. M. Iqbal Jeelani and Dr. Immad A. Shah, who managed real-time classroom operations, technical support and student facilitation to ensure a seamless examination experience.

Prof. Ganai described the successful conduct of the examination as a landmark achievement in the University's digital transformation journey. He said the initiative demonstrates SKUAST-K's resolve to adopt innovative technologies that enhance academic quality while promoting sustainability and operational efficiency.

"This transition is not merely about replacing paper with digital devices. It is about preparing our students for a technology-driven future while making academic processes more transparent, efficient and environmentally responsible," he said.

The University had earlier introduced the paperless examination system for undergraduate end-term examinations. Its successful expansion to the postgraduate level marks another major step towards fully digitising the University's evaluation system.

The digital examination platform offers several advantages over conventional examinations. It significantly reduces paper consumption, printing requirements and physical storage, contributing to environmental sustainability. The system also streamlines examination logistics through secure digital distribution of question papers, encrypted submission of answer scripts and faster evaluation, enabling quicker declaration of results.

To uphold examination integrity, the platform operates in a secure locked environment that prevents access to external resources during the examination. Digital audit trails, including automated timestamps

and activity logs, further strengthen transparency and accountability throughout the assessment process.

The initiative also familiarises students with computer-based assessments, helping them build digital confidence and preparing them for national competitive examinations such as ICAR-NET, GATE, CSIR-UGC NET and Civil Services, which are conducted through computer-based testing. The platform additionally supports accessibility through features such as adjustable font sizes and enhanced screen visibility.

The successful conduct of the 150-candidate postgraduate examination establishes a scalable model for digital assessments in higher education. SKUAST-K plans to gradually extend the paperless examination system across all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, reinforcing its position as a leader in technology-enabled agricultural education and academic innovation.

DAJ convenes review meeting on Rainfed Area Development Programme under HADP

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, JULY 25

Director Agriculture Jammu and PGMC Chairman of HADP Project P-15 'Rainfed Area Development Programme' Anil Gupta today convened a review meeting at the Conference Hall, Directorate of Agriculture, Jammu, to assess implementation status and address bottlenecks affecting the execution of activities under the Five-Year Action Plan.

Reviewing the physical and financial progress under Project P-15, the Director Agriculture stressed close inter-departmental coordination, timely execution of approved interventions and effective monitoring to ensure the benefits reach the farming community, particularly in rainfed areas. He directed the departments concerned to address implementation challenges on priority and adhere to the prescribed timelines.

Anil Gupta described the



Rainfed Area Development Programme under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) as a key initiative to enhance agricultural productivity, promote climate-resilient farming and improve the livelihoods of farmers in rainfed regions and called on all stakeholder departments to achieve the project milestones within the stipulated timeframe.

The PGMC Chairman directed the implementing

agencies to expedite disposal of all eligible applications received through the Kisan Sathi Portal and to complete verification and approval without delay so that benefits reach the eligible beneficiaries at the earliest.

Among those present were Director Horticulture Jammu Gul Sayed, senior and technical officers from the Agriculture and allied departments of Jammu, the Project Investigator (PI) of P-15, SKUAST-

Jammu and Technical Officer Agriculture Production Department (APD) Dr Veer Abhimanyu Koul. Director Agriculture Kashmir, Director Animal Husbandry Jammu/Kashmir, Director Sheep Husbandry Jammu/Kashmir, Director Horticulture Kashmir and senior officers from the Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry and Horticulture departments of Kashmir participated through virtual mode.

DC visits GMC Kathua, reviews flood damage

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, JULY 25

Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma today visited Government Medical College (GMC) Kathua to assess the damage caused by the recent floods and reviewed measures to safeguard the vital infrastructure.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner made an on-the-spot inspection of the affected areas and took stock of the damage to the campus and infrastructure from the recent heavy rains and flash floods.

He interacted with Principal GMC Kathua Dr Surinder Attri and the departments concerned to obtain a firsthand assessment and reviewed the restoration measures underway.

The DC directed the Flood Control Department to take all necessary measures to protect the assets and infrastructure of the Government Medical College from further damage. He instructed the officers



concerned to formulate and implement flood protection measures on priority to ensure the safety of the institution and uninterrupted healthcare services.

The Deputy Commis-

sioner also impressed upon the officers concerned to execute restoration work on time and maintain continuous monitoring of vulnerable locations to mitigate the impact of any future flooding.

Among those present were Additional Deputy Commissioner Kathua Mahima Madan, Chief Planning Officer Ranjeet Thakur and Administrative Officer GMC Pankaj Kumar.

Capacity building, training programme on Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana organised at Kisan Kendra

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, JULY 25

The Sub-Divisional Agriculture Office, Marh, today organised a one-day Capacity Building and Training Programme for field functionaries under the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) 2026-27 at the Farm Training Centre, Kisan Kendra, Talab Tillo, Jammu. The programme aimed to enhance the technical knowledge and field-level capacities of agriculture functionaries for effective promotion of organic farming under PKVY.

Around 80 officers and field functionaries from across Jammu district took part and were sensitised on various aspects of organic farming, including PKVY implementation guidelines, organic input management, certification procedures, cluster development, documentation and sustainable agricultural practices.

Divisional Seed Certification Officer Jammu Nirmal Parkash Sharma was the chief resource person. He highlighted the importance of soil health conservation and adoption of organic farming for sustainable

agricultural growth and urged the field functionaries to work closely with farmers to promote eco-friendly cultivation and ensure successful implementation of PKVY at the grassroots level.

Sub-Divisional Agriculture Officer Marh Khalid Hassan emphasised the pivotal role of field staff in creating awareness among farmers about organic farming and motivating them to adopt sustainable cultivation practices. He called upon the participants to disseminate the knowledge gained so that the benefits of the scheme

reach a larger number of farming households.

The technical sessions were delivered by Nirmal Parkash Sharma, DSCO, Jammu; Munshi Ram Rakwal, SMS-DL; Vishali Bagal, SMS-SDL; Bhumiya Bhandral, JAEQ; Anshu Banotra, AEA and Anjana Mahajan, AEO, Bhalwal, who conducted detailed sessions on the technical and operational aspects of the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana and organic farming. The resource persons also conducted the proceedings through interactive discussions and question-answer sessions.

DDAC Bandipora holds special Psychiatric Consultation, reinforces holistic approach to addiction recovery

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, JULY 25

As part of its sustained commitment to strengthening mental health and addiction recovery services, District Drug De-Addiction Centre (DDAC), Bandipora under the auspices of District Social Welfare Office, Bandipora Saturday organised another Special Psychiatric Consultation featuring renowned psychiatrist Dr. Aijaz Ahmad.

The initiative witnessed an encouraging response, with around 20 people

availing free psychiatric consultation and assessment. The beneficiaries comprised individuals undergoing treatment for Substance Use Disorders (SUDs), many of whom were also experiencing co-existing mental health conditions requiring specialised psychiatric intervention.

Before the consultation, the DDAC team conducted a comprehensive Group Counselling Session, focusing on the importance of adopting healthy lifestyle practices as an integral component of long-term recovery. Participants were sensitised about the significance of quality



sleep, balanced nutrition, maintaining strong family and social relationships, regular physical activity and self-discipline in achieving sustained mental well-being.

During the awareness session, the beneficiaries were introduced to the ABCD Model for Mental Well-being, comprising A—Adopt Healthy Sleep Habits, B—Balanced Diet, C—Connectivity with Family, Friends and Positive Support Systems, and D—Daily Physical Activity and Self-Discipline. The model was presented as a practical framework to promote healthy behavioural changes and

strengthen recovery outcomes.

Addressing the participants, Dr. Aijaz Ahmad highlighted the close association between addiction and mental health, stressing that timely psychiatric care plays a vital role in preventing relapse and improving overall quality of life. He also demonstrated simple yet effective coping strategies, including deep breathing exercises, stress management techniques, positive thinking, emotional regulation and self-care practices to help affected effectively deal with anxiety, stress and emotional challenges during recovery.