

CM Omar reviews roadmap to strengthen senior secondary education in J&K

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, AUG 24

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today chaired a review meeting of the School Education Department at the Civil Secretariat here to review a comprehensive roadmap for strengthening access to senior secondary education and improving the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the higher secondary level in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting discussed a phased plan to upgrade 714 High Schools into K-12 composite schools, with focus on requirements of teaching and non-teaching staff, infrastructure, laboratories and other essential facilities.

The proposed upgradation is aimed at ensuring continuity in school education, expanding access to Classes XI and XII and reducing dropouts at the critical transition after Class



10, particularly in underserved and geographically remote areas.

The meeting also deliberated on better utilisation of existing human resources, strengthening academic facilities and improving the overall school network. The roadmap envisages a planned and requirement-based approach to expansion, besides coordination with the Government of India for necessary support under centrally sponsored

schemes.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah emphasised the need for a focused and need-based strategy to expand senior secondary education, with particular attention to accessibility and ensuring better educational opportunities for students across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Education Sakina Itoo, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir

Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, ACS PWD Anil Kumar Singh, ACS Finance Shailendra Kumar, Commissioner Secretary Planning, Development and Monitoring, R Alice Vaz, Commissioner Secretary Education Ram Niwas Sharma, Mission Director Samagra, Director Education Kashmir and other concerned officers.

District-Level Capacity Building Programme on PM Gati Shakti held at Reasi

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, AUG 24

A district-level Capacity Building Programme on the implementation of the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan (PMGS-NMP) was held today at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat, Reasi, with the participation of officers and representatives from various departments of the District.

The programme commenced with a welcome address by Chief Planning Officer (CPO), Narinder Gupta, who highlighted the importance of PM Gati Shakti in promoting integrated, coordinated and technology-driven planning at the district level.

The technical session was conducted by Santosh Kumar Rai, PM Gati Shakti Consultant, EY LLP, who provided an overview of the PM Gati Shakti framework, its objectives, GIS-based planning mechanism, geospatial datasets and the importance of inter-departmental convergence in the planning and execution of infrastructure and development projects.



During the session, participants were sensitised to the practical use of the PM Gati Shakti platform for data-driven decision-making, spatial planning, identification of infrastructure gaps, project prioritisation, optimisation of resources, synchronisation of departmental works and strengthening of first- and last-mile connectivity. The need to move from isolated departmental planning towards an integrated Area Development Approach was also emphasised.

Representatives from AYUSH, Social Welfare, NIC, PWD Katra, PWD Mahore, PWD Reasi, Fisheries, Sheep Husbandry, Animal Husbandry, Chief Education Office, JPDCL, Health, Mining, ACD, Fire & Emergency Services, ARTO, Poshan, Agriculture, Sericulture, Cooperatives and other departments and offices participated in the programme.

The programme provided a valuable platform for district and sectoral of

ficers to understand how GIS and integrated spatial data can improve project planning, avoid duplication, enhance inter-departmental coordination and ensure optimum utilisation of resources. The participating departments were encouraged to incorporate PM Gati Shakti principles into their respective planning and project implementation processes.

The programme concluded with remarks by GM, Department of Industries & Commerce (DIC), Reasi, Navdeep Wazir, who stressed the need for sustained inter-departmental convergence, regular updating of data and effective utilisation of the PM Gati Shakti platform for coordinated, inclusive and sustainable development of District Reasi.

The programme marked an important step towards strengthening district-level capacity, digital planning and institutional convergence, facilitating more efficient and integrated implementation of infrastructure and development initiatives under the PM Gati Shakti framework.

Natrang's 'Colours of Jammu Kashmir' Outshines at IIM Jammu

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, AUG 24

Balwant Thakur's internationally acclaimed cultural concept, Colours of Jammu Kashmir, presented by Natrang Jammu, emerged as the highlight of the celebrations marking 10 years of excellence at IIM Jammu. The spectacular presentation captivated the audience with its vibrant portrayal of the rich cultural heritage, artistic traditions and extraordinary diversity of Jammu and Kashmir.

The prestigious occasion was graced by Padma Shri Miland Prahlad, Chairman of the Board of Governors, along with distinguished members of the Board, including Prof. B. S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu. The presence of eminent dignitaries added further significance to an evening dedicated to celebrating excellence, cultural heritage and the spirit of Jammu and Kashmir.

Known for constantly reinventing its presentations, Natrang once again gave a fresh and innovative dimension to Colours of Jammu Kashmir. This edition introduced a specially designed supporting video component with each presentation, enhancing the visual impact of the performances while providing meaningful context to the



artistic narratives. The seamless integration of live performances and visual storytelling transformed the programme into an immersive cultural experience.

The entire show was thoughtfully structured as an engaging narrative, unfolding the immense cultural wealth of Jammu and Kashmir through its diverse dance traditions. Each performance reflected a distinct facet of the region's identity, bringing alive its colourful customs, traditions and collective spirit. The vibrant costumes, energetic movements, evocative music and powerful stagecraft combined to create a breathtaking spectacle.

What made the presentation particularly striking was its ability to communicate the unity in diversity that defines Jammu and

Kashmir. Rather than merely presenting individual folk traditions, the production brought them together as parts of a larger cultural mosaic, celebrating the shared heritage and emotional bonds of the people.

The culmination of the programme turned out to be an unforgettable visual and cultural treat, generating immense enthusiasm among the audience. The final moments resonated with a powerful sense of national pride and collective identity, leaving the spectators enthralled.

Through Colours of Jammu Kashmir, Natrang once again demonstrated its commitment to taking the region's cultural heritage to wider audiences through innovative theatre and performance. The presentation at IIM Jammu not only added colour and

grandeur to the institution's 10th-anniversary celebrations but also reaffirmed the enduring power of art to celebrate heritage, inspire pride and unite people.

Choreographed by Sunny Mujoo, the presentation was enlivened by the creative light design of Shivam Singh. The talented artists of Natrang who featured in the event included Sunny Mujoo, Kananpreet Kaur, Janvi Bilorla, Radhika Khajuria, Muskan Thakur, Isha Sharma, Khushboo Pandita, Vani Thakur, Musarat Bano, Chinky Behal, Deepika Jangral, Vipashu Sharma, Arya Sharma, Muskaan Gupta, Pallvi Sharma, Vanishika Manhas, Sakshi Gupta, Sanket, Sahil Narwalia, Arun Dev Verma, Arun Sharma, Narinder Verma, Aryan Sharma, Amit Rana and Krishna.

Div Com reviews Development Proposals for heritage sites in Budgam, Pulwama

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, AUG 24

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, today chaired a meeting to review proposals for the development, renovation and upgradation of heritage sites including Asar-i-Sharief Peth Makhama Budgam and Khoo Sahb Yarwan Shadimarg, Pulwama.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Director Archives, Archaeology and Museums, Superintending Engineer PWD South Kashmir, Tehsildar Waqf Board, officers from Budgam district and representatives of the District Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, Pulwama.

During the meeting, members of the Prabandhak Committee submitted a detailed proposal for the development and renovation of the Holy Spring at Khoo Sahb Yarwan. They sought inclusion of several components in the Detailed Project Report (DPR), including construction of Nishan Sahib, development of the Holy Spring, a langar room, glass room, cottage rooms, footpath and fencing.



Taking note of the demands, the Divisional Commissioner directed the

Superintending Engineer, PWD South Kashmir, to incorporate the requirements in the proposal and conduct a site visit in coordination with the concerned district administration. He also stressed the need to involve community representatives during the process to ensure that their requirements are appropriately reflected in the development plan.

Regarding Asar-i-Sharief Peth Makhama, the Divisional Commissioner directed the Tehsildar, Waqf Board, to engage with local community members, assess the requirements of the proposed project and examine the feasibility of facade development and renovation of the shrine.

The Divisional Commissioner emphasized coordinated efforts among the concerned departments and stakeholders for the timely and effective development of both religious and heritage sites.

Justice reaches frontier as NALSA Jagriti programme held at GDC Tangdhar

KUPWARA, AUGUST 22: In a significant outreach initiative aimed at taking legal awareness and access to justice to the remotest and far-flung areas of Jammu and Kashmir, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Kupwara, under the aegis of the Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority (JKLSA) and in furtherance of the objectives of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), today organised an awareness programme on the NALSA JAGRITI (Justice Awareness for Grassroots Information and Transparency Initiative) Scheme, 2025, under the theme "Empowered Youth, Stronger India", at Government Degree College, Tangdhar.

Acting Chief Justice of High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Patron-in-Chief and Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority, Justice Sanjeev Kumar, was the chief guest on the occasion.

The programme was attended by M. K. Sharma, Registrar General, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh; Shazia Tabasum, Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority; Manjeet Singh Manhas, Principal District & Ses-

sions Judge, Kupwara; Shrikant Suse, Deputy Commissioner, Kupwara and Syed Tahir Geelani, SSP Kupwara, besides officers of the district administration, police and education department, judicial officers, members of the Bar Association Tangdhar, faculty members, representatives of civil society and students from Government Degree College Tangdhar, Government Higher Secondary Schools and other educational institutions.

Addressing the gathering, Acting Justice Sanjeev Kumar emphasised that legal awareness is an important instrument of empowerment and that the justice delivery system must remain accessible to every section of society. He stressed that geographical distance and difficult terrain should never become a barrier to justice, particularly for people living in remote and frontier areas.

He appreciated NALSA for bringing out the JAGRITI Scheme, 2025, observing that the initiative provides an important framework for taking legal awareness and the benefits of legal services to the grassroots. He particularly appreciated the efforts of the Jammu & Kashmir Le-

gal Services Authority and DLSA Kupwara for taking the scheme to a remote and frontier area like Tangdhar, thereby giving practical expression to its grassroots philosophy.

The Acting Chief Justice emphasised that rights and duties go hand in hand. While every citizen must be aware of and exercise his or her rights, equal importance must be attached to understanding one's duties and respecting the rights of others. Such awareness, he observed, creates an environment in which everyone can exercise his or her rights freely, with dignity and responsibility.

He also spoke about youth empowerment and legal literacy, saying that the young people constitute an important force in shaping the future of society. Knowledge of law, constitutional values, rights and responsibilities, he said, enables young persons to make informed decisions and become responsible citizens.

Addressing the issues concerning children and juvenile justice, the Acting Chief Justice emphasised the need for a sensitive, child-friendly and rehabilitative approach towards children in conflict with



law. He stressed that children should not be permanently labelled for mistakes committed at a young age and highlighted the importance of counselling, education, parental care, guidance and rehabilitation in helping them return to a constructive path.

He also drew attention to the growing challenge of substance abuse and drug trafficking, particularly among youth, emphasising that the menace cannot be addressed through punitive measures alone. He called for equal focus on prevention, early identification, counselling, treatment and rehabilitation

and urged the young people facing difficulties to seek help without fear or stigma.

On mental health, the Acting Chief Justice observed that mental and emotional well-being deserves the same attention as physical health. He called upon the parents, teachers and society to create an environment in which children and young people can speak about their concerns without fear or judgment. He also encouraged them to remain closely engaged with their children and understand their emotional well-being, friendships and online activities.

He highlighted the challenges associated with the digital environment, including cyber fraud, online harassment, identity misuse and misinformation. He emphasised the importance of digital awareness and responsible use of technology.

The Acting Chief Justice encouraged the girls and young women to pursue education, acquire skills, seek opportunities and participate fully in decision-making and public life. He said that their empowerment and equal participation are essential for the progress of society.

Calling for a proactive approach by the legal services institutions, he emphasised that District Legal Services Authorities, Taluk Legal Services Committees, Panel Lawyers and Para-Legal Volunteers must reach out to people who need assistance rather than waiting for them to approach legal services institutions. He stressed that legal awareness generated through JAGRITI should not remain confined to a single programme but should be carried forward continuously through schools, colleges, villages and communities.

Earlier, the programme

commenced with a welcome address by the Principal District & Sessions Judge, Kupwara, highlighted the importance of taking legal services and awareness initiatives to remote and frontier areas.

Thereafter, various speakers, including the Secretary, DLSA Kupwara, sensitised the gathering about the NALSA JAGRITI Scheme, 2025, its objectives, grassroots philosophy and the mechanism envisaged for its implementation. They highlighted the need for sustained legal awareness through schools, colleges, Legal Literacy Clubs, Para-Legal Volunteers, Legal Services Authorities, Taluk Legal Services Committees and other local institutions.

The speakers explained that the JAGRITI Scheme, Justice Awareness for Grassroots Information and Transparency Initiative, seeks to take legal knowledge and the benefits of legal services closer to the people. Its underlying philosophy is that awareness of rights and duties should not remain confined to courts or legal institutions but should reach citizens in their communities, educational institutions and other places of

everyday interaction. The initiative seeks to move from mere legal awareness towards legal empowerment, enabling people to understand their rights and duties, identify available remedies and know where and how to seek legal assistance.

Dr. Adil, representing IMHANS-K, thereafter addressed the gathering on mental health and emotional well-being. He sensitised the students and participants about the importance of recognising mental health concerns at an early stage, seeking timely professional assistance and creating a supportive and stigma-free environment for persons experiencing emotional or psychological difficulties.

The programme also witnessed a cultural programme presented by the artists and students. The students performed a skit based on the theme of drug trafficking, highlighting its harmful impact on individuals, families and society.

As part of the outreach initiative, a medical camp was also organised for the local population, where free medical consultation, treatment and medicines were provided to a large number of people.