

## JKPS Kunjwani hosts insightful session on Goal Setting and Drug Awareness



Resource person, Mohd Shahid Saleem Dar, JKAS officer addressing students in a session on ‘Goal Setting and Drug Awareness’ at JK Public School Kunjwani.

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: JK Public School Kunjwani organized an interactive and thought-provoking session for students of Classes 9 and 11, featuring JKAS officer Mohd Shahid Saleem Dar as the distinguished resource person.

A committed civil servant, Mohd Shahid Saleem engaged students in a questionnaire-based discussion, offering invaluable insights on goal setting, time management, and the perils of drug addiction. The session commenced with a warm welcome by the Principal JKPS Kunjwani Rajesh Rathore,

who presented the resource person with a plant sapling as a token of appreciation.

The discussion revolved around the importance of hard work, perseverance, and using technology wisely. Mohd Shahid Saleem reflected on his own academic journey, emphasizing how the education system of the past, though rigid, instilled resilience in students.

He urged students to avoid procrastination, align their activities with their goals, and manage their time effectively while embracing competition as a tool for growth.

Shifting focus to the alarm-

ing rise in drug addiction, the honoured Guest shared staggering statistics, revealing that 13,500 drug-related arrests have been made, and 1.7 lakh individuals, including young girls, have fallen prey to substance abuse in the state.

He outlined key warning signs of addiction, including neglect of personal hygiene, withdrawal from social interactions, aggression, and prolonged isolation. Stress, trauma, and easy availability of drugs were identified as primary causes, with addiction leading to escapism and loss of humanity. He urged stu-

dents to choose their friendships wisely and prioritize their well-being. The session left a profound impact on the students, equipping them with valuable lessons on discipline, perseverance, and the importance of making informed life choices.

Expressed his gratitude to Shahid Saleem Dar, Principal JKPS Kunjwani presented him with a memento as a mark of appreciation and proposed the vote of thanks by saying, "Your session was not just informative but also thought-provoking, engaging, and impactful. We deeply appreciate the time and effort

you have dedicated to being here with us today. Your expertise and passion for guiding young minds will surely leave a lasting impression on our students. On behalf of the entire school community, I extend our sincerest thanks to you for your invaluable contribution. We hope to have more opportunities to learn from you in the future".

"JKPS Kunjwani remains committed to holistic student development, fostering awareness on crucial societal issues while inspiring students to work towards a brighter future", he summed up.

## Hands-on training on 'Synthesis of Key Intermediates and APIs' concludes at IIIM

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The three-Day Skill Development Training Programme on "Hands-on Training on Synthesis of Key Intermediates and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs)" concluded on Wednesday at CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, Jammu.

The training, which commenced on February 3, 2025, provided participants with in-depth knowledge and hands-on experience in advanced pharmaceutical synthesis techniques, contributing to skill enhancement and professional development in the pharmaceutical sector. In the workshop, 25 brilliant minds drawn from across the country have got the opportunity to learn various things. During the

The sessions were led by distinguished faculties, including Dr. Amol Gade, Scientist, NPMC Division; Dr. Prasoon Gupta; Dr. Ravindra S. Phatake, Scientist, and Dr. Showkat Rashid, Sr. Scientist, along with other experts from the Natural Products & Medicinal Chemistry (NPMC) Division. This carefully curated approach ensured participants gained both theoretical knowledge and practical expertise in pharmaceutical synthesis.

The programme commenced with an inaugural ceremony on 3rd February 2025, led by Director Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, CSIR-IIIM, Jammu, who emphasized the importance of capacity building in the pharmaceutical sector to bridge the skill gap

Goals (SDGs) and contribute to the nation's mission of achieving the 'Viksit Bharat.'

The day concluded with a valedictory ceremony, where Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, facilitated the participants with certificates for their successful completion of the workshop. The event was graced by Er. Abdul Rahim, Chief Scientist & Head, RMBD&IST, Dr. Naveed Qazi, Head, Natural Products Medicinal Chemistry, and Dr. Parvinder Pal Singh, Principal Scientist, who applauded and appreciated the participants for their enthusiasm and dedication. They emphasized the importance of such initiatives in equipping professionals with cutting-edge skills to meet industry demands. The proceedings of the event con-



Director Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, CSIR-IIIM, Jammu with faculty and participants.

three-day programme, 25 participants engaged in a comprehensive module that seamlessly combined expert lectures and hands-on lab sessions.

and support India's vision of becoming a global hub for high-quality APIs.

He also highlighted how such initiatives align with the Sustainable Development

ducted by Dr. Mohd. Asrar Khan and Dr. Love Sharma respectively, while a formal vote of thanks was presented by Dr. Nasir-Ul-Rashid, Senior Scientist.

## Com Secy Culture reviews functioning of Kala Kendra

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Commissioner Secretary, Culture, K Ramesh Kumar, on Wednesday reviewed the functioning of Kala Kendra, emphasizing the need to enhance its operations in line with its aims and objectives.

"All possible resources should be utilised to make Kala Kendra a center of excel-

lence in promoting cultural heritage", maintained the Commissioning Secretary. Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL), Harvinder Kour; Special Secretaries in Culture Department, Trishla Kumari Kundal and Malikzada Sheeraz Ahmed; Secretary, Kala Kendra Society, Dr. Javaid Rahi;

Deputy Director, Archives, Archaeology and Museums, Dr. Sangeeta Sharma besides other senior officials were present in the meeting. While deliberating on the initiatives required for further development, K Ramesh Kumar directed the concerned officers to focus on landscaping, renovation and repair of various sections of the building to

enhance its aesthetic and functional value.

The Commissioner Secretary was briefed about various activities and programs being conducted by Kala Kendra for promotion and preservation of art and culture in the region. He also inspected different galleries of the institution and appreciated the dedication of the staff and artists in

showcasing the diverse cultural heritage of Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized the importance of preserving traditional art forms for future generations.

K Ramesh Kumar reaffirmed the government's commitment towards strengthening cultural institutions and ensuring that Kala Kendra and JKAACL continue to serve as plat-

forms for nurturing and promoting artistic excellence in the Union Territory.

Earlier, Dr. Javed Rahi provided an overview of the institution's functioning, highlighting its significant role in preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of Jammu region. He informed that Kala Kendra Society has organized 37 exhibitions and workshops

in 2024, including national and international-level events. Meanwhile, the Commissioner Secretary also reviewed the functioning of JKAACL at the Writers Club, Jammu.

During the meeting, he was apprised that the Academy has conducted 196 major events in 2024, with the participation of over 7000 writers and artists and an audi-

ence of lakhs of people. Additionally, the Academy has recently introduced 31 new schemes aimed at promoting art, culture, and languages.

Later, K Ramesh Kumar visited Abhinav Theatre, KL Saigal Hall, and other JKAACL buildings to assess their infrastructure and explore areas for further enhancement.

## PIL regarding shortage of Doctors/Para Medics in UT of J&K and Ladakh

### DB expresses anguish over health facilities in both UTs & concern over non-filling of posts in Health Department

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In the much publicized Public Interest Litigation filed by renowned RTI Activist Balwinder Singh highlighting the shortage of Medical Officers/Dental Surgeons/Consultants and Para Medics in the health institutions across the UTs of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh particularly in the peripheral areas, a Division Bench of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court at Jammu comprising Chief Justice Tashi Rabstan and Justice MA Chowdhary after expressing its deep anguish over health facilities in both the UTs and the failure of both the UTs to file response to the fourteen suggestion filed by Advocate Sheikh Shakeel Ahmed appearing for petitioner suggesting the ways and means for improving the health infrastructure in the rural health institutions in both the Union Territories.

After hearing Advocate Sheikh Shakeel Ahmed with Advocates Rahul Raina, Supriya Chouhan and M Zulkarnain Chowdhary appearing for the petitioner whereas Sr. AAG SS Nanda appearing for the UT of Jammu & Kashmir and DSGI Vishal Sharma appearing for UT of Ladakh, the Division Bench headed by Chief Justice Tashi Rabstan observed that, "It is very strange that the basic amenities of health is being dealt with casually particularly in the rural areas of the UTs of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Providing of health facilities, which is basic need of the public, must be the priority of the government in a welfare State, DB said."

The Division Bench further while expressing its deep anguish over the non-serious approach of both the UTs further observed, "In the backdrop of the aforesaid facts, this Court records its anguish over the health facilities in the UTs of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and the respondent-UT of Jammu and Kashmir is directed to take a holistic view of the matter; so as to ensure that the basic health facilities are made available to the people.

The respondent-Department of Health and Medical Education is expected to take a call on the creation of posts of Medical Officers/Dental Surgeons/Consultants and Para Medics in the health institutions across the UTs of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, particularly in the peripheral areas and also ensure that the posts already created are filled up on a fast track basis and the deployments/attachments made from the rural health institutions to the cities is stopped forthwith so that the people of rural areas get some solace, on their health issues".

Advocate Sheikh Shakeel Ahmed drew

the attention of the Division Bench towards fourteen suggestions filed by him on November 25, 2024 wherein after seeking the opinion of experts the petitioner Balwinder Singh has suggested various measures for improving the health care in both the UTs particularly the remote/far flung areas.

Advocate Ahmed further submitted that it was on December 17, 2024, the Division Bench had granted two weeks' time to Senior AAG SS Nanda and DSGI Vishal Sharma to file their response on behalf of both the UTs to the suggestions filed by him.

He further submitted that despite the lapse of more than six weeks no such response has been filed which shows non-serious approach of both the UTs towards the health care of the public.

The Division Bench at this stage further observed that the Health and Medical Education Department in its status report pursuant to order dated March 16, 2023 had given district wise staff strength of Medical Officers/Para Medics, both for Jammu Division as well as Kashmir Division, which indicate that as against the sanctioned strength of 1390 of Medical Officers, only 726 are in position leaving 664 vacancies of Medical Officers in Jammu Division whereas, as against the sanctioned strength of 1467, 1395 Medical Officers are in position in Kashmir Division leaving 72 vacancies.

It has been further submitted that as against the sanctioned strength of 6868 of Para Medics, only 4379 are in place leaving 2489 vacancies in Jammu Division, whereas against the sanctioned strength of 8628 vacancies of para medical staff, only 5976 are in position, leaving 2651 vacancies of para medical staff in Kashmir Division.

The Division Bench while expressing its displeasure further observed that the figures indicate the dismal performance of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir in filling up of the vacancies of doctors as well as para medical staff particularly in the districts and peripheral areas where people have been suffering for want of health facilities.

The Division Bench while taking note of Badhal (Rajouri) Deaths. Observed that recently 18 deaths have taken place in Badhal area of Rajouri district, due to some mysterious disease and it has been a trend with the District Hospitals and the Public Health Centers (PHCs) across the UTs of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh that even manageable cases of ailments in absence of doctors are referred to the medical colleges of Jammu and Srinagar or some super-specialty hospitals, which

adds further workload to those institutions.

The Division Bench also expressed its deep concern over the deputations/attachments managed in Urban areas by the influential doctors and in this regard the Court observed that it is also stated that many Medical Officers, who are posted in the health institutions of the rural areas, manage their deputations/attachments in the urban areas, leaving the rural population without medical facilities at their respective places. Such a casual approach of not providing health facilities in the rural areas sometimes contribute to avoidable untimely deaths.

Advocate SS Ahmed at this stage submitted that since the year 2012, no recruitment has been made for filling up the posts of Dental Surgeons in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir and he also drew the attention of the Court for insufficient posts of Dental Surgeons, which requires to be augmented in the rural areas so that the people of rural areas particularly those in their advanced age, are not forced to travel up to the cities of Jammu and Srinagar to seek dental services.

The DSGI Vishal Sharma appearing for the UT of Ladakh submitted that the vacancies of the Dental Surgeons have been recently filled up in the UT of Ladakh, Upon this the Division Bench directed DSGI to file a compliance report indicating the availability of the Consultants of various fields particularly of critical units like Cardiology/Oncology in the hospitals of Leh and Kargil as the people of UT of Ladakh in absence of such facilities can hardly reach timely to the cities of Delhi, Chandigarh, Jammu or Srinagar to avail the medical facilities.

With these serious observations and directions, the Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Tashi Rabstan and Justice MA Chowdhary directed Health and Medical Education Department of both the UTs to file response affidavit to the fourteen suggestions within four weeks. The same shall also indicate the steps taken for the creation of posts of the Medical Officers/Dental Surgeons/Consultants and Para Medics in the health institutions particularly in the peripheral areas, filling up of the vacancies and with regard to other steps suggested by Advocate Sheikh Shakeel Ahmed appearing for the petitioner.

The Division Bench further directed the Registrar Judicial Jammu to supply copy of this order to Chief Secretaries of both the UTs. Looking into the importance of this matter, the Court directed the Registry to re-notify the instant PIL on March 5, 2025.



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**Textile Industry:**

- Two more types of shuttle less looms added to the list of fully exempted textile machinery to promote the domestic production of technical textiles thus facilitating modernisation and capacity building in the weaving sector. A boost in Make in India in technical textiles sector such as agro textiles, medical textiles and geo-textiles.
- The Customs Duty on knitted fabrics has been increased to improve the competitiveness of Indian knitted fabric manufacturers.



**Handicraft Exports:**

Nine new groups of materials can now be imported duty-free for use in the manufacture of handicraft goods for export. Additionally, the time limit for export of the handicraft goods extended from 6 months to 1 year, extendable to a further period of 3 months.



**Leather Industry:**

- Customs Duty on Wet Blue Leather is reduced from 10% to zero to support domestic value addition.
- Export duty on Crust leather also reduced from 20% to zero to facilitate exports by small tanners.



**Marine Products:**

- Customs Duty on Frozen Fish Paste (Surimi) reduced from 30% to 5%, making it cheaper to manufacture Surimi analogue products for export.
- Customs Duty on fish hydrolysate reduced from 15% to 5%, for manufacture of aquatic feed.



**Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) of Railway Goods:**

The time limit for exporting goods of foreign origin imported for repairs has been extended from six months to one year, and further extendable by one year in case of railway goods.

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