

# Five-day Skill Development Programme for farmers, SHGs under CSIR Aroma Mission commenced at CSIR-IIIM

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM), Jammu, organized a 'Five-Day Skill Development Training Programme' for farmers and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) under CSIR Aroma Mission Phase-III.

The event was jointly inaugurated by Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, Director of CSIR-IIIM, Jammu, Dr. Sanjeev Khosla, Director, CSIR-IMTECH, Chandigarh and Dr. Sudesh Kumar Yadav, Director, CSIR-IHBT, Palampur at its experimental Farm Chatha, Jammu.

The programme is a part of the national-level mission being implemented by 11 CSIR laboratories, with CSIR-IIIM as the key institute known for Lavender cultivation.

More than 100 farmers including SHG of 40 women from Phalian Mandal, and old Satwari participated in the inaugural day.

The five-day programme will focus on various aspects of aromatic crop cultivation, value addition, distillation, processing, marketing, and entrepreneurship development.

Participants will be trained in techniques for product development and post-harvest processing, with a special emphasis on women-led innovation and rural enterprise.

This initiative reflects CSIR-IIIM Jammu's commitment to fostering



Dr. Sanjeev Khosla, Director, CSIR-Institute of Microbial Technology (IMTECH) lighting ceremonial lamp.

inclusive growth and supporting grassroots entrepreneurship.

Dr. Sanjeev Khosla, Director, CSIR-Institute of Microbial Technology (IMTECH), Chandigarh, highlighted the importance of connecting scientific research with on-ground agricultural needs. He emphasized "CSIR's objective is to engage with farmers, understand their real-time challenges, and offer practical solutions. Sharing the work of our labs with stakeholders ensures societal benefit and enhances skill development."

Dr. Zabeer Ahmed welcomed the participants and emphasized the

institute's continuous efforts to support farmers under the guidance of the Government of India and the Ministry of Science and Technology, led by Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh.

Dr. Ahmed further, stated, "CSIR Aroma Mission has been instrumental in providing handholding to farmers. I am pleased to share that CSIR-IIIM is now planning to initiate a long-duration advanced programme specifically for women entrepreneurs in the aroma sector."

He further encouraged participants to reach out to the institute's team in case of any difficulties and applauded the active participation of

women's Self-Help Groups.

In his remark, Dr. Sudesh Kumar Yadav, Director, CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT), Palampur, stated that the success of any national-level mission depends on how effectively local farmers implement it for their livelihood and community well-being.

He cited the example of floriculture in Kashmir, where tulip seeds previously imported from the Netherlands are now being produced locally through efforts by CSIR-IIIM and CSIR-IHBT marking a significant achievement in self-reliance.

The forenoon session was marked by videos of the farmer community cultivating aromatic crops, technical discussion on soil analysis, product development and live demonstration of Lemongrass oil distillation.

The program is being coordinated by Dr. Suphla Gupta, Senior Principal Scientist & Nodal Scientist, CSIR Aroma Mission Phase-III, along with her team including Dr. Rajendra Bhanwaria, Senior Scientist, Dr. Sahajee, Senior Scientist, Dr. V.P. Rahul, Senior Scientist and Dr. Siya Ram Meena, Senior Technical Officer, Jyotsna Sharma, Vanshika Bhagat, Neelisha Ambardar, Shiksha Sharma and Amulya Mansotra (project staff) for the conduction of the program.

# New Bridges, Bypasses opened on NH-44 for smooth Yatra movement

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), through its Regional Office in Jammu & Kashmir, has completed several critical infrastructure works on NH-44 between Lakhampur and Srinagar over the past fifteen days.

These developments will significantly ease traffic movement, especially during the ongoing Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY) 2025.

A four-lane viaduct of approximately 500 meters length has been constructed at Dalwas to bypass the problematic sliding zone at the Dalwas siding location. This viaduct is now open to traffic and is expected to substantially reduce travel time while enhancing safety in this key section of the highway.

In Ramban district, a two-lane cut-and-cover structure of around 700 meters has been completed at the Cafeteria More location, one of the most renowned landslide-prone stretches of NH-44. This new facility will provide uninterrupted



passage even during adverse weather and will help maintain consistent vehicular flow during the Yatra period.

In Kathua district, as part of the Delhi-Anrithsar-Katra (DAK) Expressway project, a major two-lane bridge of 584 meters has been constructed over the river Ujh.

The old two-lane bridge was dismantled for widening the existing highway to four lanes. During the construction phase, two-way traffic was managed over a single deck. With the new bridge now operational, traffic has been successfully diverted across two separate bridges, significantly improving safety and vehicular speed.

Similarly, in Samba dis-

trict, a new two-lane major bridge of 250 meters has been completed over river Bein. This structure also forms part of the DAK Expressway.

The previous bridge was dismantled as part of the widening plan, and with the new deck now in service, traffic has been segregated across dual structures, facilitating smoother and safer travel.

These timely completions are part of NHAI's sustained efforts to strengthen critical infrastructure along the Jammu-Srinagar corridor. The upgraded assets will not only support the smooth conduct of SANJY 2025 but will also ensure safer and more reliable highway connectivity for all road users in the region.

# HC rejects pre-arrest bail in PMLA of mastermind in fake Cryptocurrency case

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Justice Mohd Yousaf Wani of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court rejected the pre-arrest bail of Naresh Kumar Gulia who is master-mind in fake Cryptocurrency case of Ladakh in which ED has registered a case.

The case originated from FIR 16/2020 registered at Police Station Leh under Section 420 IPC following a complaint by the Additional District Magistrate, Leh.

The FIR accused A.R. Mir, Ajay Kumar Choudhary, and others of running a fraudulent cryptocurrency scheme that cheated thousands by promising to double their investments.

Following the registration of the FIR, an ECIR (Enforcement Case Information Report) No. ECIR/SRZO/02/2022 was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. The case involves around 2,508 investors with initial investments worth Rs 7.34 crore, although the estimated proceeds of crime are now valued at Rs 16.81 crore, based on bank statements, ITRs, and statements under Section 50 of PMLA. Investigations revealed that "The Emollient Coin Limited" was incorporated in the UK in 2017, and represented in India by Naresh Gulia, who also promoted and managed the fake

cryptocurrency operation. After dissolving the initial company in March 2019, Gulia incorporated another UK-based entity, Tec Coin Limited, to continue the Ponzi scheme. The mobile app promoting the fake cryptocurrency stopped functioning by late 2019, resulting in heavy losses for investors.

Justice Wani, while denying bail, observed that the applicant is accused of serious economic offences and has absconded during the investigation.

Despite receiving formal notices, he failed to cooperate with the ED. The court emphasized that his custodial presence is essential for a logical and result-oriented investigation.

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: In celebration of Sanskrit Month, a grand community feast (Bhandara) was organized at the sacred Showa Mata Temple, Rajan Jandial, by Shri Kailash Jyotish Avim Vedic Sansthan Trust, Jammu. The event aimed to promote Devavani Sanskrit and witnessed enthusiastic participation from Sanskrit scholars, dignitaries, and hundreds of devotees. The program commenced with ceremonial lamp lighting and the worship of Maa Showa Devi, led by Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) North, Deepak Kumar. In his address, he emphasized the significance of Sanskrit, stating, "Sanskrit is not only our cultural identity but also the foundational language of India's Vedic tradition, spiritual consciousness, and scientific



SDM North, Deepak Kumar being honoured by SKJVS Trust members during a programme.

thought. Events like this inspire youth to reconnect with their roots and embrace their rich heritage."

Presiding over the event, Mahant Rohit Shastri, President of the Trust, affirmed their mission to make Sanskrit a household language.

"Sanskrit is not just the language of scriptures but the very soul of our civilization. Our aim

is to bring Sanskrit to every home, enriching lives with its timeless wisdom," he said.

He further announced that the Trust is conducting a series of awareness initiatives throughout Sanskrit Month, including workshops on cyber-crime awareness, drug de-addiction rallies, free medical camps, tree plantation drives and interactive Sanskrit dia-

logue sessions

Mahant Shastri also appealed for the inclusion of Showa Mata Temple in the official tourism map of Jammu and Kashmir, highlighting its religious and cultural significance. "This would not only boost pilgrimage tourism but also preserve and promote the region's heritage," he noted.

The event was graced by sev-

eral notable personalities, including Kuldeep Kumar, Pratap Singh, Sunil Sharma, Bhushan Singh, Dr. Vishva Gupta, M. L. Verma, Pramod Sharma, Sunil Singh Raipuria, Uttam Chand Sharma, Lucky Sharma, Rakesh Gandotra, Naresh Raina, among others.

The community feast (Langar) witnessed massive participation, with hundreds of devotees enjoying the meal in a spiritually uplifting and communal atmosphere. The efforts of the Trust members and local volunteers in organizing the event were widely appreciated.

The event concluded with a collective pledge by attendees to adopt Sanskrit in daily life, expressing unwavering support for the Trust's mission to safeguard and promote India's ancient language and cultural traditions.

# Day 2 of Holistic Orientation Programme at IIM Jammu inspires with motivation, creativity, leadership

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Day 2 of the five-day Holistic Orientation Programme at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu unfolded with an enriching mix of motivation, strategic insights, creative inspiration, and cultural celebration. The day was curated to nurture leadership potential, emotional well-being, and entrepreneurial thinking among the new batches.

The day began with a rejuvenating session titled "Maximize Happiness and Mindfulness" by renowned yoga expert Sahil Mehra, under the banner of Anandam - The Center of Happiness. Welcomed by Prof. Shyam Narayan Lal, Chairperson, Anandam, and Brig. Neeraj Soni (Retd.), Co-Chairperson, the session focused on cultivating inner peace, emotional balance, and mindfulness-essential for future leaders.

A special session on the 4-Tier Mentor-Mentee Program followed, led by Brig. Neeraj Soni,



Director IIM Jammu, Prof. B.S. Sahay and other dignitaries releasing books.

highlighting mentorship as a holistic journey of learning, growth, and mutual respect. Students were encouraged to embrace values such as humility, empathy, and resilience as cornerstones of leadership development.

A major highlight of the day was an electrifying interaction with Prahlad Kakar, legendary ad guru, educator, and author. Introduced by Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, the session began with a short film on Kakar's life, followed by his candid insights on creativity, storytelling, and risk-taking in advertising. His engaging style, coupled with real-life anecdotes

and iconic ad campaigns, left a deep impression. A symbolic moment was marked with Prof. Sahay posing with Kakar's book Adman Madman, joined by Prof. Jabir Ali and Dr. Baljeet Singh. The session ended with a standing ovation for Kakar's inspirational and thought-provoking narrative. Further enriching the day, Abhay K. Srivastava, Senior President - Operations, Mankind Pharma Ltd., delivered an insightful session on "Operational Excellence and Future Trends in Pharmaceutical Supply Chain".

Drawing parallels from the Bhagavad Gita, he stressed

value-driven leadership, innovation, and the role of AI and blockchain in transforming the pharma sector. His message emphasized strategic thinking, purpose, and selfless service.

Shivaraman Iyer, Global CFO, GeBBS Healthcare Solutions, addressed the students on "Life-Changing Skills that Matter for Future Leadership." Sharing global leadership experiences, he stressed the importance of trust, storytelling, and authenticity. He inspired students to shape their personal narratives and embrace diversity with confidence and conviction.

Adding further depth, Dr. Anurag Batra, Chairman & Editor-in-Chief of BW Businessworld, delivered a heartfelt keynote. Drawing from his journey as an entrepreneur and media leader, he urged students to pursue purpose, collaboration, and love for what they do, stressing that success stems from humility and resilience. The day also featured a dynamic panel discus-

sion on "Job Seeker to Job Creator: J&K

Entrepreneurship Ecosystem," moderated by Dr. Muqbil Burhan, featuring local entrepreneurs Rajesh Jain, Anil Suri, Anil Gupta, Aagam Jain, and Hasit Singh Sachdeva. The session showcased stories of resilience, innovation, and self-reliance, highlighting opportunities in tourism, agriculture, and education. Panelists emphasized the importance of mindset, risk-taking, and collaboration between academia and industry.

The day concluded on a celebratory note with "Rang Tarang - A Festival of Theatre and Dance," performed by the IPM 4th Batch under the direction of Padma Shri Balwant Thakur. Showcasing the rich culture of Jammu and Kashmir, the evening reflected student creativity, collaboration, and community spirit, followed by a community dinner.

The orientation programme continues until 18th July 2025, with more inspiring engagements lined up.

# LIC ties up with AU Small Finance Bank for Bancassurance



**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**

NEW DELHI: Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India, the Country's largest life insurer, on Tuesday tied up with AU Small Finance Bank, one of India's leading small finance bank, under Corporate Agency arrangement.

The partnership was officially launched through a joint webcast held on 14th July, 2025, attended by senior leadership teams from both organisations.

The event marked a significant step toward greater financial inclusion and the expansion of insurance penetration, especially in underserved and rural

segments where AU Small Finance Bank has a strong presence.

Through this tie-up, AU Small Finance Bank will distribute LIC's wide range of life insurance products including Annuity, ULIP, Term Insurance and Savings category across its branches and digi-

tal channels.

This will empower AU Bank's customers to access trusted, comprehensive protection and long-term savings solutions under one roof.

Through combined strength of a vast network of more than 3600 Branches and Satellite Offices of LIC and nearly 2500 touch point of AU Small Finance Bank, the penetration of life insurance across the country would be made easier and this will go a long way towards the vision of "Insurance for all by 2047".

With this collaboration both institutions reaffirm their commitment to promoting financial inclusion and delivering best insurance solutions across India.

# Congress to intensify statehood movement with protests in Jammu, Srinagar, Delhi

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: In a major escalation of its ongoing statehood campaign, the Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) has decided to hold a series of protest demonstrations in Jammu, Srinagar, and Delhi in the coming days.

The decision was taken during an emergency meeting of senior party leaders held on Tuesday at PCC Headquarters Jammu, chaired by PCC President Tariq Hameed Karra. The protest schedule will be formally announced tomorrow. Addressing the meeting, the PCC Chief reiterated that the Congress party has consistently opposed the "arbitrary, unconstitutional and undemocratic" downgrading and disbanding of the historical state of Jammu and Kashmir.

He highlighted that since the abrogation of Article 370, Congress has been leading the movement titled "Hamari Riyasat, Hamara Haq" demanding full statehood.

The party has organized numerous protests, public meetings, and Dharnas across the Union Territory.

He criticized the BJP-led Central Government for its silence on the commitment to restore statehood-a promise made on the floor of the Parliament, in the Supreme Court, and in public addresses.

The PCC Chief asserted that the Centre's inaction reveals its reluctance to restore statehood despite the Supreme Court's directive to hold Assembly elections. The party resolved to hold strong demonstrations in Jammu and Srinagar, followed by a peaceful Dharna in Delhi during the upcoming Parliament session beginning July 21, to press the Centre to introduce a bill restoring full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

Prominent leaders present included Raman Bhalla, Mula Ram, Th. Balwan Singh, Ravinder Sharma, Yogesh Sawhney, Ved Mahajan, Th. Balbir Singh, Raman Mattoo, Indu Pawar, Rajnish Sharma, Hari Singh Chib, Manmohan Singh, Vijay Sharma.

# Health, education pillars of J&K's progress, prosperity: Omar

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday inaugurated a 120-bedded state-of-the-art additional block at the Bone & Joint Hospital, Srinagar, underscoring his government's unwavering commitment to strengthening the two fundamental pillars of development-health and education.

Following the inauguration, the Chief Minister toured the new facility, including the operation theatres, wards, staircase, and ramp, and interacted with hospital staff and faculty members. Addressing a large gathering, he emphasized that no amount of infrastructure—whether roads, power projects, or commercial spaces—can substitute for quality healthcare and education. "Without robust schools and hospitals, our



Chief Minister Omar Abdullah inaugurating 120-bedded additional block at B&J Hospital.

progress remains incomplete," he stated.

Reflecting on the legacy of the Bone & Joint Hospital, CM Omar highlighted the resilience the institution has shown through decades of challenges. He recalled the 2014 floods, stating, "I remember standing under this bridge trying to pro-

tect the hospital. Despite the devastation, this hospital never stopped treating patients." He also recounted the 2022 fire, which gutted key sections including four operation theatres and teaching areas. "Even without a roof, surgeries resumed within days—a testament to the dedication of our

healthcare workers," he said.

The CM proudly invoked the vision of Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who inaugurated the hospital in May 1982, and called the new block a continuation of that legacy. "This facility will not only serve Srinagar but also cater to patients from Chenab,

Pir Panjal, and Kargil," he added.

Sharing a personal note, Omar Abdullah revealed that he had once been treated at the hospital after a cycling accident. "Thanks to the surgeons here, I still run 10-12 kilometers at 55," he said, lauding the hospital's quality care.

Emphasizing the need to staff the new block, he directed departments to expedite the creation of posts, stating, "This ribbon-cutting is not symbolic—it must translate into real service, with occupied beds, functioning OTs, and active teaching." As Minister for Housing & Urban Development, he also announced a special survey to identify water-logging hotspots in Srinagar and committed to launching 2-3 major infrastructure projects soon to ease traffic