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Rapid transformation in Ladakh since 2019 UT remains PM Modi's focus: Amit Shah

LEH/JAMMU, MAY 1: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said Ladakh was a model of rapid transformation since the 2019 bifurcation of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, and listed sweeping political, social and economic changes in the Union territory. The region has remained at the centre of Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's development agenda, he said. Shah said Ladakh had long demanded Union territory status due to lack of devel-



opment and asserted that the decision had brought visible change across sectors. His remarks came amid renewed calls by the Leh Apex Body and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) for resumption of talks with the Centre on statehood and inclusion under the Sixth Schedule. "Ladakh had an old demand to be made a Union territory,

The basic reason for this demand was that development was not taking place here. Now I want to tell you what has been done after it was made a Union Territory in 2019," Shah said. He said that Ladakh has now seven districts and 193 panchayats, with five new districts — Sham, Nubra, Changthang, Zaskar and Drass — created and notifications already issued. Shah said that local languages had also been given administrative recognition. "Earlier only Hindi and English

Gujarat, Maharashtra foundation day Celebrated at Lok Bhavan Jammu; LG Sinha calls them growth engines of India



JAMMU, MAY 1: The Foundation Day of Gujarat and Maharashtra was celebrated with enthusiasm at J&K Lok Bhavan, with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha presiding over the event. Addressing

the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor described Gujarat and Maharashtra as the "growth engines" of the nation, highlighting their significant contribution to India's GDP and exports.

along with their rich social, cultural, and spiritual heritage. He said Gujarat is known for its entrepreneurial spirit, simplicity, and warmth, while Maharashtra commands global respect for its enterprise, valor, and spiritual legacy. "Both states are powerful drivers of India's development trajectory," he remarked. The Lieutenant Governor paid tribute to great leaders from Gujarat, including Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and Prime Minister Narendra

CM Omar inaugurates 368 residential units for government employees



PAMPORE, MAY 1: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today inaugurated 368 newly constructed residential quarters for government employees at Sempora, developed across 23 blocks

at an estimated cost of Rs. 90.65 crore. Constructed by the Estates Department, the project marks the completion of a major residential infrastructure initiative aimed at strengthening government housing facilities in the Kashmir Valley. It forms part of the government's push to enhance employee welfare by providing modern, well-equipped residential spaces. Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Pampore Justice (Retd.) Hasnain Masoodi, Additional Chief Secretary

Two sites in Ladakh to be developed as 'Valley Of Flowers': LG Saxena



LEH, MAY 1: Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Vinay Kumar Saxena on Friday said that a plan to develop two locations in the Union Territory as "Valley of Flowers" is in pipeline to boost tourism and enhance the region's natural appeal. The initiative

aims to plant a wide variety of flowers that can withstand Ladakh's harsh climatic conditions, including extreme cold and low oxygen levels. Experts have been consulted to identify resilient species suitable for high-altitude terrain. Choglamsar and Wari La in Leh will be developed as "Valley of Flowers", LG Saxena said. Choglamsar and Wari La in Leh will be developed as "Valley of Flowers", LG Saxena said. During

President Murmu exhorts Army training command to enhance Army's operational preparedness

SHIMLA, MAY 1: President Droupadi Murmu on Friday exhorted the Army Training Command (ARTRAC) to continue to work with fervour to enhance the operational preparedness of the Indian Army. President Murmu, who visited the ARTRAC headquarters here before winding up her five-day visit to Himachal Pradesh, said in a statement. The Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, who was briefed about the evolution of ARTRAC by Lieutenant



General Devendra Sharma, GOC-in-C, ARTRAC, complimented all ranks of ARTRAC and defence civilians for the stellar work being done, and urged them to continue working with enhanced

zeal and fervour, the ministry said. Murmu was received at ARTRAC headquarters by Himachal Pradesh Governor Kavinder Gupta and Lt Gen Devendra Sharma.

BRIEF NEWS

ED Says Terror Financing, Crypto Frauds New Focus Areas For Agency

NEW DELHI, MAY 1: Crypto currency frauds, terror financing, cyber-enabled crimes and narcotics trafficking are the new focus areas for the Enforcement Directorate, agency's Director Rahul Navin said on Friday. Speaking during the 70th 'ED Day' event held here, he noted that bank and real estate frauds had declined due to the implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code Act and Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA). During 2025-26, the ED filed 812 chargesheets and 155

Special Crime Wing Kashmir Files Chargesheet In Multi-Lakh Job Fraud Case

SRINAGAR, MAY 1: The Special Crime Wing Kashmir of the Crime Branch J&K has filed a chargesheet before the Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Srinagar in connection with a multi-lakh government job fraud case, officials said. The chargesheet has been filed in FIR No. 09/2019 under Sections 201, 419, 420, 468, 471, and 120B of the IPC against three accused — Fayaz Ahmad Khan of Malora Shalteng Srinagar, Showkat Ahmad Shah of Shanzipora Handwara, and Owais Ahmad Bather of Shalteng Khwaja Bagh. The case stems from a

Bridge portion collapses on Jammu outskirts; 3-4 labourers feared trapped, 1 rescued

JAMMU, MAY 1: A portion of a small bridge collapsed in the Bantialab area on the outskirts of Jammu city on Friday, trapping at least three to four labourers under the debris, while one injured worker was rescued, official sources said. Authorities have closed the road link following the collapse of the portion of the bridge. The incident occurred when labourers were carrying out repair work on a retaining wall near the bridge that was damaged in last year's flash floods, the sources

ACB traps head constable red-handed in Rs 15,000 bribery case



SRINAGAR, MAY 1: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Friday said it arrested a head constable after he was caught red-handed accepting a Rs 15,000 bribe in Srinagar. They said the accused had allegedly demanded money to remove a complainant's name from an FIR registered at Police Station Soura. In a statement, a spokesperson said

Lt Gen Balbir Singh takes over as GOC 15 Corps

SRINAGAR, MAY 1: Lieutenant General Balbir Singh on Friday assumed charge as the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the strategically crucial XV Corps (Chinar Corps), reinforcing leadership at a time when security dynamics in Jammu and Kashmir remain under close watch. Headquartered in Srinagar, the Chinar Corps is responsible for guarding the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir and overseeing internal security operations across the Valley. Lt Gen Singh's appointment comes amid sustained counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism efforts in the Union Territory. An experienced officer with deep operational roots in Jammu and Kashmir, Lt Gen Singh has served in several key roles linked to counter-insurgency (CI)



and counter-terrorism (CT) operations. Prior to his elevation, he was serving as Major General General Staff (MGGS) at the Northern Command. An alumnus of the Indian Military Academy, Lt Gen Singh began building his Kashmir experience early in his career. He held an important position at

8th Central Pay Commission to visit Srinagar; Stakeholders invited for interaction

JAMMU, MAY 1: The Eighth Central Pay Commission is scheduled to visit Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, from June 1 to June 4, 2026, to engage with various stakeholders regarding pay structures and allowances. According to an official notice issued today, Central and UT Government organizations, institutions, and unions wishing to meet with the Commission must first submit a mem-

orandum through the official website at 8pc.gov.in. Following this, representatives must request an appointment via the designated NIC forms link by May 16, 2026, using the unique memo ID provided during the initial submission. While specific venue details and meeting schedules for the four-day visit are expected to be released shortly, the Commission also clarified that similar

Above-Normal Heatwave Days Likely In Some Parts Of India In May: IMD

NEW DELHI, May 1: Above-normal heatwave days are likely in some parts of the foothills of the Himalayas, east coast states, Gujarat and Maharashtra in May, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Friday in its monthly forecast. In a statement, Director General of Meteorology, IMD, Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, said, "During May 2026, minimum temperatures are expected to be above normal across many parts of the country." However, many areas of northwest India, along with some parts of central India and southern parts of northeast India, are likely to experience normal to below-normal

Exit polls will prove wrong again: Farooq

SRINAGAR, MAY 1: National Conference (NC) chief Farooq Abdullah on Friday said he has never trusted exit polls and expressed hope they would prove wrong. "I have never trusted exit polls. Exit polls have proved wrong in the past, and I hope they prove wrong this time," Abdullah told reporters here when asked about the exit polls giving an edge to the BJP after the assembly polls in the key states. Assembly elections were held in West Bengal, Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. To a question about police filing an FIR against unidentified people for glorifying separatism on social media after PDP leader Iltija Mufti posted a video of late separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Abdullah said he



does not get involved in such matters. "I don't know why it was filed. I don't get involved in these matters. Iltija Mufti would know why an FIR was filed against her," he said. The NC president said the increase in airfare for the annual Hajj pilgrimage is due to rising fuel prices. "Because fuel prices have increased. You can't do anything about it. If this war doesn't stop,

then God knows how much more prices will increase for us," he said. Asked about the RTI reply stating that the PDP had not appointed a chief agent for last year's Rajya Sabha elections in J&K, Abdullah said the PDP had not voted for the NC candidates. "They did not vote for us. Ask them who they voted for," he said. When asked, the PDP said

Minor boy's body recovered six days after he slipped into stream

SRINAGAR, MAY 1: The body of a minor boy, who had gone missing after slipping into a stream earlier this week in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district, was recovered on Friday, officials said. Chief minister Omar Abdullah expressed shock and grief over the incident. Mohammad Hanzala (4), a resident of Tiken village, had accidentally slipped into the fast-flowing Rambiara stream and was swept away by strong currents near Dujan Bridge on Sunday, the officials said. A rescue operation was launched but the boy could not be traced. The body was recovered on the sixth day of the search operation in Shopian district, they said. "Deeply shocked and saddened by

FROM PAGE ONE

Rapid...

special status to the erstwhile state. Shah said that the number of bridges has risen from 19 to 72 increasing the number by three times. Spelling out development in other sectors, he said that mobile towers have increased from 344 to 653, while heli-pads have gone up from seven to 41. He said, "Snow-clearing machines, crucial for the region, have increased from 60 to 215." On power infrastructure, Shah said grid-related works have increased from 145 to 184, while distribution transformers have gone up from 1,182 to 3,153. "I am giving these figures on this scale because after becoming a Union Territory, it (Ladakh) has remained the focus of the Narendra Modi government, the focus of the prime minister of the country, and so many development works have taken place together," the minister said. He said the impact of better infrastructure was visible in road connectivity, with the Zojila Pass, which earlier remained shut for 127 days, remaining closed for only 19 days this year. "The Kargil-Leh road, which earlier remained closed for nearly 175 days, was shut for only 11 days." Shah said work on the Zojila tunnel is in progress, construction of the Shinkun La tunnel has started and a new civil airport is also coming up. He said that VSAT connectivity has been extended to all panchayats and major work has been undertaken to upgrade telecom towers. In the education sector, Shah said Sindh Central University has been established, 174 ICT labs set up, 130 smart classrooms created, 40 science laboratories built and 24 Atal Tinkering Labs established. He said Ladakh became a fully literate administrative unit in 2024 and claimed there was no illiterate person left in the region. "Nearly 98 per cent households have been provided tap water connections under the Har Ghar Jal scheme, while substantial work has also been carried out in agriculture and horticulture," he said. Shah said Ladakh's budget has risen from Rs 1,000 crore when it was part of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state to Rs 6,000 crore now. He also announced the formation of the Sindh Infrastructure Development Corporation, saying it would play an important role in promoting industrial growth in the coming years. "We want this border region to become self-reliant," Shah said. He asserted that development in the UT is because of the vision of the prime minister.

Gujarat...

Modi, noting their transformative role in shaping the nation. He said Mahatma Gandhi's ideals of truth, non-violence, and selfless service turned India's freedom struggle into a mass movement and continue to inspire generations. Highlighting Sardar Patel's contribution, the Lieutenant Governor said India's strength as the world's largest democracy is rooted in his vision of unity in diversity. "His commitment to 'Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat' remains a guiding force for the nation," he added. Referring to Maharashtra, the Lieutenant Governor described it as a land of industry, spirituality, and sacrifice. He paid homage to icons such as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Bajirao I, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar for their contributions to national unity. He also recalled the legacy of Ahilyabai Holkar, whose devotion enriched India's spiritual traditions. The Lieutenant Governor further stated that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has witnessed a renewed sense of confidence, dignity, and progress over the past 12 years. He said the Prime Minister's leadership has inspired citizens to translate resolve into action, marking a historic phase in the country's development. He added that India's global standing has strengthened, with the Indian diaspora expressing pride in the nation's achievements. Referring to the Abrogation of Article 370, the Lieutenant Governor said the move fulfilled Sardar Patel's vision and reinforced the foundation of a united and strong India.

IRP 16th Battalion organises Anti-Drug Rally at Banihal under Nasha Mukti Abhiyan

RAMBAN, MAY 1: As part of the ongoing Nasha Mukti Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, a rally under the theme "Nasha Mukti Abhiyan - Drug-Free Society Campaign" was successfully organized by the 16th IRP Battalion at Banihal under the supervision of Director General of Police, J&K, Nalin Prabhat and Additional Director General of Police (Armed), J&K, Anand Jain. The main function was held at Helipad Ground, Gnd Banihal, witnessing enthusiastic participation from school children, local residents and battalion personnel, reflecting a strong collective resolve against the menace of drug abuse. The programme commenced with an address by DySP Kirpal Singh, who highlighted the growing need for awareness against drug addiction and stressed that combating the menace requires a united effort from all sections of society. He particularly emphasized the responsibility of

safeguarding the younger generation by spreading awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse. A large number of students actively participated in the event, adding energy and enthusiasm to the campaign while spreading the message of adopting a healthy and drug-free lifestyle. Their participation underscored the importance of involving youth in social awareness initiatives aimed at building a stronger and safer society. The programme concluded with an oath-taking ceremony administered by SSP/Commandant Sukhdev Raj, wherein participants pledged their commitment to work collectively towards eradicating drug abuse and promoting a drug-free society. Following the formal proceedings, a massive anti-drug rally was flagged off through Banihal town, culminating at Chareel.

The event witnessed participation from officials, dignitaries, and citizens, celebrating the enduring legacy and contributions of both states to the nation's progress.

CM Omar...

Estates Shaleen Kabra, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama Dr Basharat Qayoom, Director Estates Ashwini Khajuria, along with senior officers, engineers and other concerned officials, were present on the occasion. The Chief Minister inaugurated the Estates Quarters and inspected the newly constructed residential flats, including 2BHK and 3BHK units. He also visited the canteen and mess facilities and was briefed by senior officers of the Estates Department on upcoming and proposed housing projects. With its completion, the quarters are expected to significantly enhance the availability of accommodation for government employees and help ease long-standing shortage. The project assumes added significance in view of the restoration of the annual Darbar Move by the present government, which has revived the need for adequate residential facilities for employees relocating between Jammu and Srinagar. The residential quarters will particularly benefit a large section of Darbar Move employees, many of whom have faced persistent challenges in securing suitable accommodation for their families over the years. The availability of these units is expected to reduce dependence on private housing and improve overall working conditions by ensuring stability and convenience. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister reiterated his government's commitment to providing suitable family accommodation to employees. He said that strengthening employee welfare remains a key governance priority, and that efforts are underway to further augment residential infrastructure in a phased manner across Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized that residential accommodation plays a crucial role in enhancing productivity and morale among government employees, adding that the government will continue to invest in infrastructure that directly impacts their well-being. Highlighting the importance of efficient project management, the Chief Minister stressed the need for timely execution of public infrastructure works. He directed the concerned departments to ensure optimal utilization and proper maintenance of the newly created facilities so that they continue to serve employees effectively in years to come.

By the end of June, or so, the two locations are expected to transform into vibrant floral zones, becoming major attractions for tourists visiting Leh and other parts of Ladakh," he said.

The move is also expected to generate local employment and promote ecotourism, while adding aesthetic value to the cold desert landscape. "The green cover in Ladakh is 0.4 per cent as of now and our target is to convert into 5 per cent," the LG said.

Two sites...

An interaction with media, Saxena said the administration is working on fast-tracking the project, with plantation activities already underway at selected sites.

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President...

"Elaborating on the novel initiatives of the ARTRAC, Lt Gen Sharma brought out the impetus provided towards drone training, steps taken to absorb niche technologies, introduction of the concept of "Red Teaming" and initiatives towards digitisation and automation in the Indian Army," the ministry said in a statement. The President acknowledged the fact that ARTRAC has an all-encompassing role of designing concepts of warfare, resource development for the Indian Army and widespread engagements with friendly foreign countries and sister Services, it added. It is a critical gear in the path to military glory, Atmanirbharta and Viksit Bharat. The ARTRAC, through its 32 premier training establishments, vitalises the domain of professionalism in the Indian Army, which

gives it a unique perspective into the art and science of warfighting, the statement said.

Later, President Murmu was accorded a warm sendoff at Annandale Helipad in Shimla, where Governor Kavinder Gupta, Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, Panchayati Raj and Rural Development Minister Anirudh Singh, Chief Secretary Sanjay Gupta, DGP Ashok Tiwari and other senior civil, police and army officers were also present on the occasion. President Murmu's itinerary had several programmes but due to inclement weather conditions, she remained confined to Shimla.

Bridge...

incident came under the debris when the structure collapsed. The family members said while two of the labourers managed to escape, four got trapped. The sources said those trapped included the husband of a woman labourer, a mason, an unmarried labourer and a relative of the contractor. There was no official confirmation on the exact number of persons trapped under the debris till the filing of this report. The rescue operations are ongoing.

Lt Gen...

the 8 Sector headquarters in Lolab, Kupwara, where he was actively involved in operational planning. He later commanded 1 Sector of the Rashtriya Rifles during 2018-2019, playing a key role in managing the counter-insurgency grid. In 2023, as a Major General, he took over as GOC of Counter Insurgency Force (CIF) Victor, based in Awantipora, succeeding Maj Gen Prashant Srivastava. The Victor Force is responsible for operations in south Kashmir, an area that has historically witnessed significant militant activity. During his tenure, Lt Gen Singh worked closely with formations under the Chinar Corps and Northern Command, contributing to coordinated security operations and strategic reviews.

8th Central...

consultative meetings will be organized in other states and Union Territories across India in the coming months.

ACB traps...

etc. He said consequent upon the information and in order to verify the allegations levelled against the said public servant, the matter was discreetly verified through a designated officer of ACB Srinagar. "The said accused demanded Rs. 50,000/- which was settled at Rs. 15,000/- as bribe from complainant for removing the name of complainant from the list of accused in case FIR No. 09/2026 being investigated by the said Head Constable." The spokesperson said on the basis of contents of the complaint, findings and recommendations of verifying officer offense under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, is prima facie established against the accused public servant namely HC Parvaiz Ahmad Rather S/O Gh. Nabi Rather R/O Rather Mohallah Safapora Ganderbal. "Accordingly, a case FIR NO. 08/2026 under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, is registered in Police Station ACB Srinagar today on 01 May-2026 and investigation has been taken up," he said. He said, during the course of investigation, a trap team was constituted for laying a trap wherein said HC Parvaiz Ahmad was caught red-handed while demanding and accepting the bribe of Rs.15, 000/- in the form of Rs. 5000/- Cash and Rs. 10,000/- through cheque from the complainant near District Police Lines Srinagar and recovery was also effected on spot. Further investigation into the case is going on.

Above-Normal...

minimum temperatures," he said. The IMD also said that rainfall in May is most likely to be above normal over India, barring some parts of east, northeast and east central India, where below-normal rainfall is likely.

Exit polls...

the NC chief publicly thanked the party after the RS polls, Abdullah asserted that he did not know who voted for whom. "Now, it is showing that the situation was not what we had expected. God knows the rest, and those know who voted," he said. Abdullah, a three-time chief minister of J-K, also rubbished the PDP's charge about the status of Urdu, saying Urdu will never be removed in J-K. "Nothing has been removed. This is wrong. Opinion has been sought from the people, and they will decide. Urdu is our language... Even if you see Delhi's attitude towards Urdu and what they want, Urdu will not end in Jammu and Kashmir," he said. He said the PDP has nothing else to show and accused the party of being responsible for the "sufferings" in J-K. "They will say it. What do they have? They are the ones responsible for the sufferings here, aren't they? Article 370 and 35A were repealed because of them. People should not forget that. Those who are shedding tears today are responsible for it. We are going through this difficulty. May God forgive them for what they have done," he added. Abdullah also welcomed the one-week's interim bail to Lok Sabha MP Sheikh Abdul Rashid. "It is very good that he came to visit his ailing father, to check on his health," he said.

Minor boy's...

the tragic death of young Mohammed Hanzala from Tikken in Pulwama. As the search for the young boy stretched in to the sixth day hope was running out but it's still been a terrible shock when the unthinkable was confirmed. I join the tens of thousands of Kashmiris in grief at Hanzala's death. May Allah grant him highest place in Jannat and may his family find strength to bear this unimaginable loss," Abdullah said on X.

ED Says...

supplementary charge sheets which is nearly twice the last comparable fiscal, he said. He added that the conviction rate of the agency was 94 per cent. The director said 2,400 money laundering cases were pending trial in courts and expressed optimism that "most" of these will result in conviction. Navin said the agency has restituted assets worth Rs 63,142 crore to victims of financial fraud, including homebuyers, investors and banks. The federal probe agency was established on May 1, 1956. It implements two criminal laws—The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act (FEOA)—apart from the civil provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

Special Crime...

complaint lodged by residents of Pulwama, who alleged that the accused persons duped them of lakhs of rupees on the pretext of securing government jobs for their children and relatives. During the course of investigation, it was revealed that the accused, acting in criminal conspiracy, impersonated influential officials and issued fake appointment orders purportedly from the Forest Department. These documents were later verified and found to be forged. The accused had allegedly collected huge sums of money in cash from the victims under the guise of arranging "backdoor entry" into government service. Officials said the challan has now been presented before the competent court for judicial determination. Meanwhile, the Crime Branch has urged the general public to remain cautious and vigilant against such fraudulent schemes. People have been advised to report any such incidents to the SSP Special Crime Wing Kashmir or submit complaints through the official email ID of the department. Authorities reiterated their commitment to taking strict action against those involved in job frauds and protecting citizens from financial exploitation.

Labour Department J&K marks Labour Day with outreach, awareness, workers' felicitation in Jammu

JAMMU, MAY 1: On the occasion of Labour Day, the Labour Department J&K organized a series of impactful programmes in Jammu, reaffirming its commitment towards the welfare, dignity, and empowerment of workers. This year's observance was aligned with the theme "Ensuring a Healthy Psychosocial Working Environment," emphasizing the importance of mental well-being, safe and supportive workplaces, and the need to address emerging challenges affecting workers' overall health and productivity. Labour Commissioner



J&K Charandeep Singh joined workers at Labour Chowk, Gangyal, where he interacted with them and highlighted various labour welfare schemes aimed at improving their socio-economic conditions. Workers were sensitized about government initiatives, refreshments were distributed, and it was assured that a special outreach camp would soon be organized to enhance access to these schemes. As part of the celebrations, a webinar on the theme "Ensuring a Healthy Psychosocial Working

Environment" was organized, bringing together officers, experts, and stakeholders from across the Union Territory. The session commenced with a welcome address by Deputy Labour Commissioner, Jammu, Sukhpal Singh, followed by opening remarks by the Labour Commissioner. The webinar featured insightful deliberations by eminent speakers including Prof. Renu Nanda, Prof. Hema Gandotra, Ms. Nimisha Rajput, and Dr. Ritika, who discussed critical issues such as child labour prevention, gender pay disparities, and the

working conditions of women employees. The session concluded with remarks by the Labour Commissioner, while the vote of thanks was presented by ALC Central Roopali Gandotra. In another programme held at Shram Bhawan, Jammu, workers were felicitated for their invaluable contribution to society. The event was attended by FACAO Nimisha Anand, Inspector of Factories Ravinder Krundoo, AMO JKESIS Dr Jyoti Jolly, and Dr Neeru Khajuria, among others.

Omar led Govt Committed to Safeguarding labourers/Workers Rights: Dy CM

Workers are the backbone of our economy says Ajay Kumar Sadhotra

JAMMU, MAY 1: Senior leader of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference and Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Friday asserted that protecting labourers' workers' rights remains the cornerstone of the Omar led government. He made these remarks while addressing a massive gathering on the occasion of International Labour Day (May Day) at the party's provincial headquarters, Sher-e-Kashmir Bhawan, Jammu. The function was chaired by Thakur Nar Singh, President of the State Central labour union wing, while Additional General Secretary Ajay Sadhotra and Provincial President (Jammu) Rattan Lal Gupta attended as guests of hon-



our. In his address, Choudhary, the chief guest on the occasion, emphasized that the government is prioritizing the welfare of labourers and the working class through a combination of legislative measures and policy initiatives. He noted that special focus is being given to both organised and unorganized labourers/ workers. Highlighting key initia-

tives, he said the government has taken up the regularisation of over 60,000 daily wagers as a priority. He further stated that more than 30,000 vacant government posts are being filled through the Public Service Commission (PSC) and Services Selection Board (SSB) to ensure a transparent recruitment process. To boost employment, Choudhary added that the

government is actively promoting private sector job creation through skill development programmes and startup initiatives aimed at reducing unemployment. He also informed that a high-powered committee, headed by the Chief Secretary, has been constituted to devise a phased and transparent roadmap for the regularisation of daily wagers, casual labourers, and seasonal workers. Additionally, he noted that over 750 crore has been sanctioned for construction workers, covering assistance for education, chronic illnesses, and disability. The Cabinet has also approved a 3% increase in Dearness Allowance (DA) for government employees, effective from July 2025.

Mahant Rohit Shastri Appointed as Honorary Member of the Advisory Board of Dogri Bhasha Academy for 2026-2028

JAMMU, MAY 1: Taking a significant step towards the preservation and promotion of the region's language, culture, and traditions, the Dogri Bhasha Academy, Jammu has appointed Mahant Rohit Shastri as a member of its Honorary Advisory Board for the term 2026-2028. This appointment has been made by the founder of the Academy, Shri Yashpal Nimal, who is himself a well-known figure in the field of language and cultural awareness. Mahant Rohit Shastri, a State Awardee and President of the Shri Kalikah Jyotish avim Vedic Sansthan Trust, has long been actively contributing to the promotion of Devvanti Sanskrit, Dogra traditions, and the region's rich cultural heritage. Considering his scholarship, social commitment, and cultural vision, this appointment is regarded as not only appropriate but also inspiring. On this occasion, Shri Yashpal Nimal stated that Mahant Rohit Shastri's experience and dedication will provide new direction and energy to the Academy's initiatives. He expressed confidence that under his guidance, efforts for the preservation and promotion of the Dogri language and culture will become even more effective. Expressing his gratitude for the



honor, Mahant Rohit Shastri said that he will continue to work with full dedication towards the promotion of Dogri language, Dogra culture, and Sanskrit. He also urged the youth to stay connected with their language and cultural roots. Various social, cultural, and intellectual groups across the region have welcomed this appointment, describing it as a positive and forward-looking decision.

A Daughter's Wedding Becomes a Symbol of Social Unity: Movement Kalki Makes the Impossible Possible

Jammu, 01 May: In a heartwarming example of social responsibility and unity, members of Movement Kalki successfully organized the wedding of a young woman whose marriage had been delayed for a long time due to financial and social constraints. The girl, who lives in a rented accommodation in Rehari Colony, had reached a point where even her relatives had stepped back from supporting her. Recognizing this as a collective social responsibility, Movement Kalki stepped forward and, with the support of the public, turned this seemingly impossible situation into a beautiful reality. The wed-



ding was solemnized with full rituals and celebrations on the 30th at Shagan Palace. This commendable initiative was led by Rajesh Sharma, Rajinder Singh, Anil Arora, Subhash Sharma, and Vijay Suri, under whose guidance the entire team contributed selflessly to make the

event successful. Movement Kalki expressed heartfelt gratitude to all contributors and members of society who extended their support for this noble cause. The organization also reaffirmed its commitment to continue serving and supporting those in need in the future.

Director Agriculture Jammu Launches "KrishiSamvad FTC-Jammu", Inaugurates Recording Studio

JAMMU, MAY 1: In a significant step towards strengthening digital communication and outreach in the agriculture sector, Director Agriculture Jammu, Sh. Anil Gupta, today inaugurated a state-of-the-art recording studio and launched "KrishiSamvad FTC-Jammu", a dedicated YouTube-based digital platform for the farming community. The initiative was launched in the presence of Joint Director Agriculture (Farms/SLUB), Sh. Amanjyoti Sharma, Deputy Director Agriculture Trainings, Smt. KarunaNidhi, and other officers and staff



members. Addressing the gathering, Director Sh. Anil Gupta highlighted that the newly launched platform will act as a dynamic interface between the department and farmers by facilitating timely dissemination of expert knowledge, innova-

ceptualizing and establishing the facility within a short span of time and with minimal resources. Speaking on the occasion, Joint Director Agriculture (Farms/SLUB), Sh. Amanjyoti Sharma, remarked that in the present era, social media has emerged as a powerful and transformative tool for sharing ideas, innovations, and best practices in agriculture, thereby effectively bridging the gap between research and field-level implementation. Deputy Director Agriculture Trainings, Smt. KarunaNidhi, informed that the platform will feature a wide spectrum of content, including expert

interactions, documentary films, and success stories of progressive farmers. She added that these initiatives are aimed at inspiring the farming community to adopt improved, sustainable, and income-enhancing agricultural practices. The inaugural episode of KrishiSamvad was hosted by Sh. NeerajRajwal, FMS FTC Jammu. Among other members present on the occasion were Dr. Dolly John, Training Officer; Sh. Guldev Raj, Information Officer; Sh. Anurag Verma, Training Officer; Smt. UrvanKaul, SMS-SDL, along with other staff members of the department.

BJP to sweep on strength of public trust: Bali Bhagat on exit poll trends Opposition in panic mode as its now end of appeasement politics: Bali Bhagat

JAMMU, MAY 1: Senior BJP leader and former Health Minister Bali Bhagat on Friday expressed strong confidence in the Bharatiya Janata Party's performance in the ongoing Assembly elections, citing recent exit poll trends that indicate a favourable mandate for the party across several states. Reacting to the latest projections, Bhagat said the exit polls reflect the "growing trust of people in the leadership and policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi." He asserted that the BJP is poised for a decisive victory, particularly in key states where the party has focused on governance, development, and welfare delivery. "Exit poll trends clearly indicate that the people of India have once again reposed their faith in BJP's vision of development and good governance. The



party is heading towards a strong and convincing victory," Bhagat said. He pointed out that multiple exit polls have projected the BJP and its allies gaining ground in several regions, including a strong lead in Assam and a competitive edge in West Bengal.

Some projections have even indicated a potential surge for the BJP in West Bengal, suggesting a major political shift in the state. Bhagat said these trends are a result of the Centre's "pro-people policies, infrastructure push, and transparent governance," adding that voters have rejected "dynastic and divisive politics." "The BJP's consistent focus on development, national security, and welfare schemes has resonated with every section of society. The opposition, on the other hand, has failed to present a credible alternative," he said. "Taking a swipe at opposition parties, including the Indian National Congress, Bhagat alleged that they are already "questioning exit polls and preparing excuses" ahead of the final results. He further stated

that the BJP's organisational strength and grassroots connect have played a crucial role in shaping voter sentiment. "From booth-level workers to national leadership, the BJP has worked tirelessly. The results will validate this hard work," he added. Bhagat also urged party workers to remain confident but grounded, emphasizing that the final verdict rests with the people. "Exit polls are just indicators, but we are confident that the actual results will be even more favourable for the BJP," he said. Exit polls released after the conclusion of voting across multiple states suggest a mixed but largely positive outlook for the BJP, with projections of retaining power in Assam and making significant gains elsewhere, reinforcing the party's political momentum.

Advance Winter Stocking of POL Products for Ladakh Starts IOCL begins Advance Winters Stocking for Ladakh

JAMMU, MAY 1: In its commitment to uninterrupted fuel supply in remote and hilly regions, Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) has formally commenced its Advance Winter Stocking (AWS) program for the Ladakh region. This crucial logistical effort aims to ensure that both civilians and the armed forces stationed in Ladakh have reliable access to petroleum products during the harsh winter season. Advance winter stocking continues till October-November subject to weather conditions. The ceremonial flag-off of the convoy of fuel tankers took place at the IOCL depot in Jammu in



presence of senior officers of the IOCL, members of Transport Owners Union, members of the Oil Tanker Union and other prominent transport traders. Senior Depot In charge IOCL Jammu Shantanu Kumar flagged off the tankers. The prominent people and officers of the oil company

BADC Demands Transparency in Pahari Speaking Board Pahari Hostel's Management Must Be Accountable to Students and Public: Dr Shazad

JAMMU, MAY 1: The Jammu & Kashmir Border Area Development Conference (JK-BADC), a registered body working for the welfare of tribal population and border residents, through its Chairman and former Vice Chancellor Dr. Shazad Ahmed Malik, who himself belongs to the tribal community, has demanded full transparency and accountability in the working of the JK Pahari Speaking Board, particularly in its management of Pahari hostels for students across the UT. Dr. Shazad said the Board was set up to serve students from



Pahari-speaking community but has been working without any public accountability. The hostels under it are meant to provide shelter to poor and deserving students, most of them coming from far-flung border and tribal areas. Any mismanagement here hurts the future

of these students directly. The BADC Chairman said students in these hostels come from very humble backgrounds and many families have made great sacrifices to send them to study in the city. They deserve proper food, clean accommodation and basic facilities. Whether they are actually getting all this or not, nobody knows, because the Board has never made anything public. He demanded that full details of funds received and spent by the Board be made public, along with the present condition of all Pahari hostels, number of students.

Madhu Paramhans Ji Maharaj enlightening congregation on the auspicious occasion of Buddha Purnima

JAMMU, MAY 1: On the auspicious occasion of Buddha Purnima today, Sadguru Shri Madhu Paramhans Ji Maharaj of Sahib Bandgi, enlightening the congregation in Ranjodi, Jammu, with a shower of nectar-like discourses, stated that true happiness can never be found in this world. All saints, in unison, have described this world as a "home of sorrows." "When you sit for meditation, you realize that despite your earnest efforts, your attention has drifted elsewhere. The attention was yours, yet where did it wander off to? Who stole your focus? Whenever you sit for meditation, do so with complete concentration. Observe and realize that lust, anger, and similar impulses are not the Soul itself; remain vigilant



against them. When you become fully concentrated-when the body becomes focused, when the mind becomes focused, and when your inner consciousness ("Surati") and inner awareness ("Nirati") also

become focused-then the single moment that ensues will be of greater value than spiritual practice spanning across entire epochs. Therefore, achieving such complete concentration is indeed a difficult task. You reside within this body, which serves merely as a temporary night shelter. One holds no proprietary rights over a temporary shelter; one simply spends the night there and must depart as soon as morning breaks. Such is the nature of this body; one day, you will inevitably have to leave it behind. When lust and anger rear their heads, a human being turns ferocious. We often think, "We will engage in devotion later." No wake up as soon as possible! Time is slipping away, moment by moment. Without the remem-

brance of the Divine Name ("Naam Suman"), everything is futile. Just as clouds in the sky scatter and dissipate after the rain has fallen, so too will everything eventually scatter and vanish. Nothing will remain. The astonishing reality is that this living soul is fully aware that, one day, it must depart from this world; yet, despite this knowledge, it makes no effort to strive for its own ultimate salvation. Such is the nature of the human mind. Kabi Sahib has repeatedly emphasized and proclaimed: "O Soul, seek out a True Saint-Guru for the salvation of your soul; for it is only with the True Saint-Guru that the 'True Name'-resides-the very Name that will liberate your soul from the ocean of suffering and lead it to its own Immortal Realm."

Guru Ravi Dass Sabha Bahu Fort celebrates Buddha Jayanti, Labour Day with tributes to Dr Ambedkar

JAMMU, May 1: Shri Guru Ravi Dass Sabha Bahu Fort Jammu celebrated Buddha Purnima and International Labour Day with great devotion and respect at the premises of Gurudwara Shri Guru Ravi Dass Ji Maharaj, Bahu Fort. The programme was held under the presidency of Dr Vijay Shivgotra. On the occasion, floral tributes were paid to Gautama Buddha and B. R. Ambedkar, remembering their immense contributions to humanity, equality, and social justice. Speaking on the occasion, General Secretary Sham Lal Basson highlighted the life and teachings of Lord Buddha. He said that Gautama Buddha was born on Baisakh Purnima at Lumbini, attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Bodhi Gaya, and



achieved Mahaparinirvana at Kushinagar—all on the same auspicious day, making it a "Triple Blessed Day." He added that this year marks the 2588th anniversary of these significant events, symbolizing wisdom, compassion, and spiritual awakening. Basson further noted that India once flourished as a leading nation when Buddhist philosophy guided society, describing it as "Buddhaya Bharat." He emphasized that Buddha Purnima inspires people to adopt values of peace, compassion, and enlightenment in daily life. Highlighting the historical importance of the day, he stated that the declaration of Buddha Purnima as a public holiday in India was initiated by Dr B.R. Ambedkar during his tenure as Law Minister. He also elaborated on Ambedkar's major role in shaping labour rights in India. Marking International Labour Day, Basson recalled Dr Ambedkar's contributions

as Labour Member in the Viceroy's Executive Council from 1942 to 1946. He credited Ambedkar with reducing working hours from 12-14 hours to 8 hours per day, introducing employment exchanges, ensuring maternity benefits for women workers, and creating welfare funds for miners. He also highlighted Ambedkar's role in promoting health, safety, and compensation laws, as well as enforcing the principle of "equal pay for equal work." He further spoke about Ambedkar's decision to renounce Hinduism in 1935 and his eventual adoption of Buddhism on October 14, 1956, at Nagpur (Diksha Bhumi), along with over five lakh followers, marking a historic social transformation. Several dignitaries paid tributes on the occasion,

including Baldev Raj Nargotra, Chairman Bahu Fort Development Committee; Kulbir Singh (Bittu Baba), President Dogra Sabha Gorkh Nagar; Bahadur Lal, former President Saryara Sabha; Prof. Chaman Lal Shivgotra; Mahesh Shivgotra, President All J&K Bank Employees SC/ST/OBC Association; Sham Kalsi, Vikas Kalsi, Mangat Kalsi, Charan Dass Shivgotra, Moti Ram, Om Parkash, Bishan Lal (Retd. SP), Manohar Lal, Ramesh Lal, Kushal Chand, Amit Kumar, and many others. The event concluded with a message of unity, equality, and commitment to the ideals of social justice, encouraging people to follow the teachings of Buddha and Dr B.R. Ambedkar in building a harmonious society.

Samba Police nabbed 02 drug peddlers with 10 gm heroin like substance

Samba: May 1, 2026: Intensifying its drive against drug smugglers/peddlers in the ongoing Nasha Mukti Abhiyan, Samba Police under the supervision of SSP Samba, Sh. Anuj Kumar-IPS, has arrested two drug peddlers in the jurisdiction of Police Station Vijaypur and recovered approximately 10 grams heroin-like substance (Chitta) from their possession. A team of Police Station Vijaypur during routine patrolling duty near Shiv Nagar Road Vijaypur, intercepted an electric Auto bearing registration No. JK08P-6178 which was coming from the Rakh Barotian side and moving towards Vijaypur side. During checking, approximately 10 grams of heroin-like substance (chitta) was recovered from the possession of the driver and co-passenger.



The drug peddlers identified as Azar ul Din S/o Abdul Majid R/o W.No.4 Bar GMS Surjan tehsil Bani district Kathua and Noor Alam S/o Kamal Hussain R/o Myanmar (Berma) Mando A/P near Macca Masjid Bathindi district Jammu have been arrested. The contraband item along with Auto has also been seized. A case FIR No 74/2026 U/S 8/21/22/29 NDPS Act has been registered at Police Station Vijaypur and investigation started.

Indian Army organises medical camp for gujjar & Bakarwal communities

Poonch, May 1: Indian Army organised a medical camp for the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities at Loran on 01 May 2026 under the Nasha Mukti Abhiyan J&K. The initiative aimed to provide essential healthcare services to people residing in remote and inaccessible areas. During the camp, villagers were provided with basic health check-ups, treatment for common ailments and free medicines. The medical team also spread awareness regarding hygiene, nutrition, disease prevention and the harmful effects of substance abuse.



The initiative proved highly beneficial for the local population, especially those with limited access to healthcare facilities. The local residents appreciated the efforts of the Indian Army and expressed gratitude for the compassionate

Bharat flags key agrarian issues, seeks urgent Govt action to protect farmers

Reasi, May 1: Continuing his outreach to the farming community, JKPCSS Kissan Congress Chairman Bharat Priye today addressed an impressive gathering of farmers at village Mansu in Reasi district, highlighting pressing agrarian concerns and calling for immediate government attention to safeguard the interests of cultivators. The meeting witnessed active participation from several prominent Congress leaders, including District Congress President Ajay Salalia, District Kissan Congress President Kamal Singh, senior leader Bishan Magara, and Youth President Maninder Sharma, along with a large number of local farmers. During the interaction, farmers raised a range of burning issues



affecting their livelihoods, including inadequate irrigation facilities, rising input costs, lack of timely access to fertilizers and seeds, poor market linkages, and insufficient government support. Bharat Priye listened to the grievances in detail and assured the gathering that their

concerns would be strongly taken up with the concerned authorities. Addressing the gathering, Priye emphasised that agriculture remains the backbone of the rural economy in Jammu and Kashmir and stressed the need for comprehensive policies to strengthen the sector. He urged the government to adopt farmer-friendly measures, ensure fair pricing for produce, and enhance infrastructural support to improve productivity and sustainability. A significant highlight of the meeting was the strong resentment expressed by both leaders and locals against the proposed cable car project at the Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine. The speakers cautioned that the project, if implemented without adequate consideration of ground realities, could severely impact the livelihood of thousands of people dependent on traditional means of income associated with the pilgrimage. Bharat Priye echoed these concerns, stating that development initiatives must not come at the cost of displacing or marginalizing local communities.

SJAC Ramban Demands Answers on 88% Submergence, Unpaid Land Compensation, and Road Diversion – Massive Rally on May 3

Ramban, May 1: The Sawalkote Joint Action Committee (SJAC), under the leadership of its President, Advocate Fairuz Khan, along with members of the SJAC, namely: Legal Advisor Muzaffar Lone, Mohd Akhtar, Sadam Bali, Mudassar Azmat Mir, Manzoor Ahmed, Mohd Irshad Rather, Wakeel Singh, Surjeet Singh, Imtiyaz Ahmed, Mohd Rahim, Happy Singh, Ab Rahim Bali, Mohd Asif Tak, and Gulrayz, addressed a press conference today at Ramban, raising serious concerns over the continued uncertainty surrounding the Sawalkote Hydroelectric Project. The Committee highlighted the persistent lack of clarity regarding the proposed road diversion. It



noted that the matter has already been formally escalated through communication dated April 13, 2026, wherein Member of Parliament Dr. Jitendra Singh forwarded a proposal submitted by MLA Udhampur (West), Er. Pawan Kumar Gupta, to Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar. The proposal reportedly suggests routing road connectivity to the project through Udhampur

instead of Ramban. The SJAC stated that such developments have created confusion and anxiety among the residents of Ramban regarding their rightful stake in the project. The Committee also expressed concern over reports indicating a possible shift of the project site by 2-3 kilometers away from Ramban. It warned that such a move could reduce Ramban's role to that of a reservoir zone while the district continues to bear the environmental and social costs. The SJAC stated that if the project is shifted in this manner, Ramban will face a disproportionate burden of submergence, with an estimated 88% of the affected land falling within the district. Further, the Committee questioned the continued delay in the opening of tenders and the absence of a clearly defined and time-bound execution plan. It emphasized that prolonged ambiguity undermines public confidence and adversely impacts local development, planning, livelihoods, and economic expectations. The SJAC also raised the issue of land acquisition and compensation. It stated that several affected families have either received inadequate compensation or have had their land acquired but left unused for years. The Committee demanded that all compensation be ensured strictly in accordance with the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. It further demanded that where acquired land remains unused, it should either be returned to the rightful owners or compensation should be reassessed and paid in accordance with the Act. Reiterating its position, the SJAC placed the following key demands: Immediate and official clarification regarding the road diversion plan

Army launches "Operation Green Shield" in Poonch sector

Poonch, May 1: Under the initiative titled "Operation Green Shield," the Indian Army's Ace of Spades Division has launched a large-scale afforestation drive in the Poonch sector aimed at promoting environmental sustainability and ecological restoration in high-altitude operational areas. As part of the campaign, approximately 50,000 saplings are planned to be planted in a phased manner across key locations in the region. The initiative focuses on enhancing ecological balance, improving green cover, and mitigating the impact of deforestation caused by infrastructure development and changing environmental conditions. The plantation drive also contributes towards



strengthening operational survivability through improved camouflage and concealment in mountainous terrain, while simultaneously supporting long-term environmental conservation goals. The programme reflects the Indian Army's continued commitment towards nation-building, environmental protection and sustainable development in border areas. Local communities and youth are also being encouraged to participate in the initiative, fostering collective responsibility towards preserving the environment for future generations. "Operation Green Shield" stands as a significant step towards creating a greener and more sustainable future while reinforcing harmony between operational preparedness and environmental stewardship.

Indian Army intensifies "Nasha Mukti J&K Abhiyan" through sports, community outreach & awareness campaigns

Jammu, May 1: Indian Army organised a series of activities under the Nasha Mukti J&K Abhiyan at Ari Sarhotti, Barakh and Upper Murrah on 01 May 2026 to spread awareness against drug abuse and encourage community participation. At Ari Sarhotti, a volleyball match was conducted for



local youth to promote a healthy and drug-free lifestyle through sports. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation and drew over 150 civilians and students, fostering sportsmanship, unity and awareness against substance abuse. At Barakh, an interaction session with Sarpanchs, Panchs and Numberdars was organised to discuss the harmful effects of drugs on youth and society. Participants were encouraged to support awareness drives and guide youth towards positive activities. At Upper Murrah, Indian Army conducted a door-to-door awareness campaign with participation of 53 students and two teachers from Govt Middle School. Students visited households carrying placards and pamphlets to educate villagers about the dangers of narcotics and the importance of community vigilance. The local population appreciated the initiatives and reaffirmed support towards.

Dr Amir Hussain posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, PDD JK

Doda: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has ordered the transfer and posting of Dr Amir Hussain, JKAS yesterday. Dr Hussain, who was serving as Chief Executive Officer, Emergency Relief Organization Jammu and Kashmir has been transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Power Development Department. Hailing from village Masri Pranu and a product of Green Model Hr Sec. School Doda Dr Amir Hussain qualified the prestigious JKAS in 2010-2011 at a young age of 25 years. Earlier he had completed his graduation in Veterinary Sciences from SKUAST Kashmir. He has earned recognition for his integrity, admin-



istrative competence, and commitment to public service. During his tenure as Chief Executive Officer, Emergency Relief Organization, he played a crucial role during the recent floods in strengthening relief

and rehabilitation measures, streamlining distribution mechanisms, and ensuring timely assistance to displaced and affected people. Over the course of his career, Dr Hussain has held several important assignments across key departments. He has previously served as Under Secretary to the Government in the General Administration Department (GAD), where he was involved in important administrative and policy matters. At the field level, he has served as Tehsildar Bhaderwah, Assistant Commissioner Sales Taxes and Assistant Commissioner Revenue Kishtwar, where he handled critical revenue and land administration responsibilities.

In addition, he has served as Deputy Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC), contributing to the functioning of one of the premier recruitment institutions of the Union Territory. In his new role as Additional Secretary in the Power Development Department, Dr Hussain is expected to contribute significantly to policy formulation, administrative coordination, and implementation of key initiatives aimed at strengthening the power sector. His wide-ranging experience in both field and secretariat postings positions him well to enhance efficiency and governance in the department.

Director Sericulture calls for Youth Participation in Sericulture for Sustainable Livelihood



SRINAGAR, MAY 01: Deputy Commissioner, Azaj Ahmad Bhat, today facilitated the distribution of silkworm seed to various districts of the Kashmir Valley, marking the commencement of the silkworm rearing season. The event was organized

by the Sericulture Development Department, J&K at the Main Grainage, Srinagar. On the occasion, Bhat underscored the importance of ensuring the timely distribution of silkworm seed to each and every silkworm rearer. He exhorted all field func-

tionaries to extend necessary technical guidance and advisory support to rearers so that they do not face any difficulties during the rearing. The Director further stated that the department has embarked upon a mission to achieve self-sufficiency in silk-

worm seed production adding that significant progress has already been made in this direction though much remains to be accomplished. He emphasized that the Department of Sericulture is working relentlessly not only to achieve indigenous pro-

duction of silkworm seed at the local level but also to explore avenues for its export to other States and Union Territories across the country. Highlighting the socio-economic potential of the sector, the Director called upon the local youth to actively participate in sericulture activities to secure an honourable livelihood and support their families. He also stressed the need to attract more people towards the sericulture sector noting that it contributes to the preservation of nature, ecology and the environment while simultaneously helping steer youth away from the menace of drug abuse. The Director was accompanied by senior officers of the department, field functionaries and silk-worm rearers.

DC Kulgam presides over training programme for Krishi Udyamis

KULGAM, MAY 01: Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam presided over a day-long training programme for Krishi Udyamis of District Kulgam. The programme was organized with the objective of enhancing entrepreneurial skills, promoting modern agricultural practices, and strengthening value addition in the farm sector. Experts from the Agriculture and allied departments, banking sector, CSC Coordinator, and KVK Kulgam delivered comprehensive sessions on key topics including introduction of Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs), reporting, monitoring, accountability, farmer mobilization, CSC operations, service delivery, and various government schemes supporting agri-startups.



Addressing the gathering, the DC emphasized innovation, transparency in daily reporting, and collective efforts to make agriculture a profitable enterprise. He urged Krishi Udyamis to work independently while ensuring accountability in KKG operations so that the benefits of schemes reach the last farmer. In his address, District Agriculture Officer Kulgam, Mohammad

Amin Sheikh, highlighted the pivotal role of Krishi Udyamis in operationalizing Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs) as self-sustaining farmer service hubs. The programme witnessed active participation from budding agri-entrepreneurs and field functionaries. Interactive discussions and practical demonstrations were held on sustainable agriculture, efficient resource utilization, and income diversification.

Change of command of Chinar Corps

SRINAGAR, 01 May 2026: Lieutenant General Prashant Srivastava relinquished the Command and handed over reins of the Chinar Corps after 19 months of exemplary leadership and sage guidance. During this period the region witnessed consolidation of security architecture which became responsive and synergised and contributed to peace and stability of the Valley. His eventful and challenging tenure was characterised by meticulous execution of OP SINDOOR & OP MAHADEV, which brought the perpetrators of the dastardly 'Pahalgam Attack' to justice, incident-free conduct of the Amanath Yatra 2025 and multiple initiatives in Nation Building. Under his astute stewardship, the Corps also registered



notable operational successes in Counter-Infiltration along the Line of Control and in Counter-Terrorism operations in the hinterland, delivering a decisive and debilitating blow to inimical elements. Equally commendable

were his sustained outreach initiatives, which fostered trust and goodwill among the local populace, earning him admiration for his humane and affable approach. Lieutenant General Prashant Srivastava now

proceeds to assume the prestigious appointment of the Quarter Master General at HQ of MoD (Army), New Delhi. Lieutenant General Balbir Singh, a highly decorated and battle-hardened officer with over 34 years of illustrious service, has assumed command of the Chinar Corps on 01 May 2026. Upon taking over, he paid solemn obeisance at the Chinar War Memorial, Srinagar, honouring the supreme sacrifice of the Nation's bravehearts. Possessing extensive operational experience in Counter-Infiltration and Counter-Terrorism operations across Jammu & Kashmir and North East, he brings along a wealth of expertise and strategic acumen. He previously had commanded the Counter Insurgency Force (Victor) in South

Kashmir. In his inaugural address, Lieutenant General Balbir Singh reaffirmed his resolve to work in close synergy with the Civil Administration and the 'Awamof Kashmir' to further strengthen the foundation of peace, stability and prosperity in the region. He exhorted all sections of the society to join hands with security forces in overcoming the persistent challenges. As the mantle of leadership transitions, the Chinar Corps remains an enduring emblem of unity, resilience and unwavering commitment - steadfast in its mission to ensure lasting peace, stability, nurturing rich cultural heritage and meet the aspirations of the Kashmiri youth for a brighter future & 'Vikasit Kashmir'.

PSA Pushes Scouting Programs To Strengthen Students' Physical Fitness & Mental Well-Being

"Engage Younger Generation In Scouting, Keep Them Away From Drugs": Dr. Owais Mattoo

SRINAGAR, May 1: In a positive step to improve student growth and well-being, the Private Schools Association (PSA) has highlighted the need to introduce Bharat Scouts and Guides units in schools across the Kashmir Valley. The suggestion was made during a meeting between PSA Director Media & Communications Dr. Owais Mattoo and Secretary Bharat Scouts and Guides Nazir Ahmad Mir. During the interaction, Dr. Mattoo emphasized that structured platforms such as the provide a disciplined and purposeful channel for



students to engage in productive activities. He urged all educational institutions to establish dedicated scouting and guiding units, noting that such initiatives contribute significantly to shaping responsible, confident and socially aware students.

Highlighting concerns around rising substance abuse among youth, Dr. Owais Mattoo stressed that active participation in scouting programs can act as a preventive mechanism by promoting positive engagement. He stated that "All schools

across the valley must form a unit of Bharat Scouts and Guides and actively involve students in their programs to keep them engaged in positive and skill-building activities, thereby steering them away from the menace of drug abuse". The PSA further outlined the wide-ranging benefits of scouting and guiding for students' overall fitness and health. Regular outdoor activities, physical training and adventure-based learning inherent in scouting contribute to improved physical fitness, stamina and healthy lifestyle habits. At the

same time, these programs foster mental well-being by reducing stress, enhancing focus and building emotional resilience through teamwork and problem-solving experiences. Dr. Mattoo added that scouting instills essential life skills including leadership, discipline, self-reliance and community service. Participation in group tasks and social initiatives nurtures a sense of belonging and purpose among students, which is crucial for maintaining positive mental health in today's fast-changing environment.

ALC Srinagar Celebrates International Labour Day with Focus on Healthy Work Environment

SRINAGAR, MAY 01: On the occasion of International Labour Day, the Office of the Assistant Labour Commissioner, Srinagar, today organized a programme at JK Cements Saifco, highlighting the significance of a healthy and supportive workplace environment. The event was held in line with this year's theme, "Ensuring a Healthy Psychosocial Working Environment." Workers, employers, and representatives from various industrial units participated enthusiastically, reflecting a collective commitment towards improving workplace conditions. The programme underscored the importance of creating a safe, inclusive, and dignified work environment, with special emphasis on mental well-being and strengthening employer-employee relations.

During the event, awareness sessions were conducted on labour laws, new labour codes, workers' rights, and the importance of social security measures. Participants were also sensitized about maintaining a drug-free workplace under the Nasha Mukht Bharat initiative. A pledge was administered on the occasion, reaffirming commitment towards respecting workers' rights, and promoting their overall well-being. The programme reiterated that labour forms the backbone of dignity, progress, and prosperity.

Kind Attention Rail Passengers

IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is notified for the information of all concerned that Train No. 26401/26402 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Srinagar - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Vande Bharat Express and Train No. 26404/26403 Srinagar - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Srinagar Vande Bharat Express will be extended up to Jammu Tawi w.e.f. 02.05.2026 as per details given below:-

26401/26402 Jammu Tawi - Srinagar - Jammu Tawi Vande Bharat Express Train Daily (Except Tuesday)			
TRAIN NO. 26401	STATIONS		TRAIN NO. 26402
ARR. DEP.			ARR. DEP.
06:20	Jammu Tawi		18:50
07:37	Martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan		17:25
08:05	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra		16:55
08:28	Rasai		16:34
09:56	Banihal		14:58
11:10	Srinagar		14:00

Days of Run : 26401 Ex. Jammu Tawi and 26402 Ex. Srinagar from 02.05.2026
Accommodation : Executive Car & AC Chair Car

26404/26403 Srinagar - Jammu Tawi - Srinagar Vande Bharat Express Train Daily (Except Wednesday)

26404/26403 Srinagar - Jammu Tawi - Srinagar Vande Bharat Express Train Daily (Except Wednesday)			
TRAIN NO. 26404	STATIONS		TRAIN NO. 26403
ARR. DEP.			ARR. DEP.
08:00	Srinagar		18:05
09:00	Banihal		16:40
11:05	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra		14:50
11:35	Martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan		14:16
12:45	Jammu Tawi		13:20

Days of Run : 26404 Ex. Srinagar and 26403 Ex. Jammu Tawi from 02.05.2026
Accommodation : Executive Car & AC Chair Car

Note :- In re-percussion to above, timings of the following trains will be revised as per details mentioned below:-

Train No. 12549 Durg Jn. - Martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan Superfast Express: Effective From: 02.05.2026
Train No. 20847 Durg Jn. - Martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan Superfast Express: Effective From: 03.06.2026

Station	Existing Timings		Revised Timings	
	Arrival	Departure	Arrival	Departure
Jammu Tawi	17:43	17:50	17:43	17:50
Bajjala			16:10	16:35
Sangar	18:22	18:44	19:05	19:20
Martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan	19:40		20:05	

For any kind of information, passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTEAS App.



DC Shopian commends unified efforts in Minor's Rescue Operation

SHOPIAN, MAY 01: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta, extended heartfelt appreciation and deep gratitude to all agencies and individuals involved in the extensive rescue operation that led to the recovery of the body of minor, Mohammad Hanzala from the Rambhara Stream. He acknowledged the relentless and coordinated efforts of the J&K Police, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), and the Indian Army. He also expressed special gratitude to the general public and volunteers from various NGOs who stood shoulder to shoulder



with the administration in these efforts. Their dedication and support were instrumental throughout the operation. Further, the Deputy Commissioner, on behalf of the District Administration,

expressed his deepest condolences and stands in solidarity with the bereaved family of Mohammad Hanzala, praying for patience to endure this profound loss.

GMC Srinagar bids farewell to Retiring Employees

SRINAGAR, May 01: Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar today accorded a warm farewell to four of its employees on the occasion of their superannuation. On this occasion, Prof. (Dr.) Ifhat Hassan Bhat, Principal, Government Medical College Srinagar, felicitated the retiring officials viz. Farahat Qadir, Estate Officer; Nazir Ahmad Bhat, Senior Photographer; Syed Showkat Hussain, Lab Attendant and Mohammad Yusuf Thoker, Senior Lab Technician and conveyed her best wishes for their future endeavors. She acknowledged their longstanding and dedicated service, highlighting their significant contributions to institutional development, administrative efficiency, and the maintenance of professional standards. She



further remarked that their commitment, integrity, and exemplary work ethic have set a benchmark for others to follow. Mohammad

Ashraf Hakak, Administrator, Associated Hospitals, GMC Srinagar, also appreciated the invaluable services rendered by the retirees. He emphasized their role in strengthening institutional systems and supporting the delivery of quality healthcare services. The function was attended by Prof. (Dr.) Saleem Ito, Deputy Academic Registrar; Tahleela Asmat, Chief Accounts Officer; Dr. Nadia Khanday, Accounts Officer, Associated Hospitals; Bashir Ahmad Bhat, Personnel Officer; Shabir Ahmad, Assistant Director Planning, and other officers and officials of GMC Srinagar. The event concluded with the presentation of mementos as a token of appreciation and gratitude for the dedicated services of the retiring employees.

North in News

EDITORIAL

Train connectivity Binds Jammu and Kashmir into one economic, social and strategic corridor

Train connectivity to Kashmir is a historic engineering and emotional milestone for the entire Union Territory. The question of whether Jammu as a region should celebrate has a clear answer, yes, because the new rail link does not divide benefits between Jammu and Kashmir Valley but binds them into one economic, social, and strategic corridor. Jammu stands to gain immensely as the gateway, service hub, and cultural bridge, and the completion of the Udhampur Srinagar Baramulla Rail Link, especially the critical Katra Banihal section with the Chenab Bridge and Anji Khad Bridge, means that for the first time a person can board a train in Kanyakumari and reach Srinagar without changing mode. This all weather connectivity ends the decades of dependence on the Jammu Srinagar National Highway that gets blocked by landslides, snow, and security checks, and for Jammu city and division the immediate impact is a surge in passenger and freight traffic that will use Jammu as the interchange point. Rest stop, and logistics base, and hotels, restaurants, taxi services, and retail in Jammu will see higher footfall because tourists heading to Vaishno Devi, Patnitop, and Kashmir will plan halts, and traders in Jammu who supply goods to the Valley will now use faster, cheaper, and safer rail cargo instead of trucks that face delays and high costs. Kashmir directly benefits Jammu because the two economies are linked, and when tourism grows in Gulmarg and Pahalgam it also grows in Katra and Mansar. The traders and transporters in Jammu earn more, and culturally the rail line will increase people to people contact, allowing families divided by geography to visit more often. Overall the rail connectivity ends the old zero sum thinking that if Kashmir gains Jammu loses, because modern infrastructure creates positive sum outcomes where both regions rise together, and a connected Kashmir means a stronger Jammu, and a prosperous Jammu means a stable gateway to Kashmir, and therefore Jammu as a region should celebrate not just the engineering feat but the new era of opportunity, unity, and pride that the train brings, because it places Jammu at the center of the story of New India where geography is no longer a barrier and the Himalayas are no longer a wall but a link, and that is worth celebrating with vision and preparation.

RAJANI SHARMA, EDITOR

RAJU MANSUKHANI

When His Holiness The 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet endorsed a powerful appeal for peace by the Holy Father, Pope Leo, during Palm Sunday Mass on 31 March 2026, he drew global attention to the great spiritual traditions of all religions. "The Holy Father's call for laying down of arms and renunciation of violence resonated profoundly with me, as it speaks to the very essence of what all major religions teach. Indeed, whether we look to Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism the message is fundamentally the same: love, compassion, tolerance, and self-discipline.

Violence finds no true home in any of these teachings. History has shown us time and again that violence only begets more violence and is never a lasting foundation for peace," he said. To commemorate Vesakha or Buddha Purnima on 1 May 2026, teachings of compassion, love and peace of Buddha become more significant when brutalities of war, genocide are unleashing untold sufferings on millions of people. Global citizens invariably question: Why was Buddha - also referred to as Sakyamuni Buddha and Siddhartha Gautama - so concerned about peace and harmony? The Dalai Lama explained, "We all want happiness and do not want suffering. Even people who have no religious belief can benefit if they incorporate these human values of compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, contentment and self-discipline into

their lives." Human values are universal and eternal as is clearly evidenced in the Grand International Exposition "The Light and the Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One", inaugurated in New Delhi on 3 January 2026. The Awakened One refers to Buddha who spread the message of peace and kindness 2600 years ago from the heartland of the Indian sub-continent. Drawn by the resilience of these human values, Heads of State, leaders of India and overseas, thousands of Buddhists and lay people are thronging the Exposition to experience, and be blessed by, the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha in our age of violence. "Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time. Hatred ceases through non-hatred. This is an eternal law," it is stated in Dhammapada (Yamaka Vagga, Verse 5) and finds a prominent place in the Exposition catalogue. Such verses are integral to the core doctrine of Buddha's teachings - the Four Noble Truths. "This is the Noble Truth of Suffering.

This is the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering. This is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering. This is the Noble Truth of the Path Leading towards the Cessation of Suffering," explained Buddha when he delivered his first sermon, the Dhammacakkha ppa-vattana Sutra, at Vepitthana near Varanasi. For the next forty-five years he taught the Dharma, demonstrating to lay people the pathways to achieve the end of suffering by following the Eight-fold Path: with the

Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration - often called the Middle Path for it is neither highly indulgent, esoteric nor is it strictly ascetic. Dukkha or suffering is central to the doctrine of Buddha and he provided reasons for the suffering which was afflicting individuals, families and communities. The reasons are purely and solely human - they are desire, attachment, greed, pride, aversion, and ignorance. Among these reasons, it is desire which is the cause of suffering, and it is through the cessation or removal of desire that suffering can cease. This universal equation, simply stated by Buddha, continues to shape our lives and destinies when nations are at war and community-members are at each other's throats.

How then are conflicts to be resolved? How then can bombings, bullets and bloodshed cease? Modern Buddhist scholars point out the Buddha put conflict in the context of the first noble truth and traced the root cause of every conflict to some unwholesome state of the human mind. "Thus, in order to permanently solve conflicts, Buddhism would suggest that these unwholesome states be uprooted through mindfulness of our habitual behavioural patterns. According to recent literature, this would be the contribution of the Buddha's teaching to the problem of conflict resolution: inner peace must be achieved first if we want outer

peace," commented the Japanese scholar Juichiro Tanabe in 'Exploring a Buddhist Peace Theory'. Does this mean that the Buddha overlooked the external dimensions of peace? Buddhist scholars see a priority of the mind over social and institutional structures and would agree that conditions of the outer world are dependent on internal conditions of human beings both individually and collectively. At 'The Light and the Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One', visitors come face to face with the inner and outer life of Buddha, his disciples and the worlds they inhabited. Through a selection of rare artefacts - stone coffers, inscriptions, sculptures, manuscripts, metal objects and paintings, Buddha's life and spirituality come alive. From Indian Museum, Kolkata, is the stone sculpture 'Seated Buddha in bodyhanga mudra', dated to C. 2nd Century CE of the Kushana period and is an exquisite example of the Gandhara school of art, from the north-western part of undivided India. "We see the seated Buddha in meditation in the serene padmasana (lotus pose), embodying spiritual concentration. The heavy folds of the robe (Sa'gha?) that fall across the body and its realistic treatment is a hallmark of Gandharan art, influenced by Greco-Roman sculpture. The robe covering only one shoulder is an influence of Mathura School of Art on Gandharan art which flourished simultaneously," explained the curator Dr Savita Kumari.

Masterpiece, or just a News Items portrayal of poverty?

AMITABHA BHATTACHARYA

It is about three and a half decades since Satyajit Ray (1921-1992) has left us. The appeal of the large body of his films remains undimmed in his native Bengal and in countries as different as US, France, and Iran. New books are being published, rediscovering him and reinterpreting his works. Much has been written about his transformative role on Indian film-making, with Pather Panchali, his first, reckoned as a trailblazer.

Filmmakers from Martin Scorsese, Wes Anderson to Christopher Nolan, from Majid Majidi and Abbas Kiarostami have acknowledged their debt to Ray in unequivocal terms. Ray's sustained relevance continues to strengthen his stature, at home and abroad. Unfortunately, in large swathes of our country, his films have hardly been seen, and he is remembered only by name. Reasons are many, like an absence of cultural sensitivities, inability to appreciate cinema's full creative potential, and the general lack of public interest to come out of the cozy cocoon of easily available, under-nuanced entertainment. Ray never sought to discriminate between art films and the commercial ones. Hollywood classics moved him, and he appreciated good, commercially successful Bollywood films too. Majority of Indian cine-goers did not have the occasion or interest to watch Ray films, and his works are often posited against films made to pander to the common public taste. This provides a fertile space for

supercilious philistines to spread canard, seeking to gain instant publicity by denting Ray's image. The severe indictment by one author in a rambling piece titled 'The Dark Side of a "Classic": Why Pather Panchali is Overrated Poverty Porn' that gained traction in certain circles has to be seen in this context. In a country where freedom of expression is valued and where intellectual space allows even for the killers of Mahatma Gandhi and supporters of Hitler to air their views, this audacious piece should have best been ignored.

The author, like some in the past, is well within his rights to dislike and detest Ray's first film (1955). But the insinuations go far deeper and are often based on incorrect information. Peeved, understandably, at an unsavoury comparison between Pather Panchali and Dhurandhar, Sandeep Balakrishna writes that Ray transformed a literary work of considerable merit into what is today known as poverty porn', patronized by West Bengal Chief Minister (Dr. B.C. Roy) and 'Nawab Nehru', with a seal of approval by the West. It highlights how tax-payer's money was spent to complete the film, the CM having been influenced by a concubine 'whose grip over her lover was absolute'. What a baseless, defaming last sentence! However, let us stick to the facts.

It is a part of film folk-lore what risks Ray had taken and what hardships his family had to go through while making Pather Panchali - spending personal savings, taking loans,

and even pawning his wife's jewellery. After a substantial amount spent during the shooting phase, the unfinished film was shown, through the intervention of a gracious family friend, to Dr. Roy and his advisors. Impressed by the quality and novelty (except for the ending), the West Bengal government agreed to take charge and provide financial assistance to complete it. The amount actually paid was rather modest, in thousands. (Think of the huge returns the government received as producer).

Importantly, it required a Roy to spot Ray's talent, and a Nehru to watch and, overruling objections from certain officials, send it to Cannes where it won the Best Human Document Award. The rest is history. Much before the Film Finance Corporation and later the NFDC were set up to finance meaningful cinema, the foresight of statesmen like Roy and Nehru to encourage the emerging genius should be remembered by a grateful nation. Not publicly well-known is that very few of Ray's twenty-nine feature films deal with subjects and characters with poverty as a backdrop. The 'Apu Trilogy' is a human saga, of nobility and hope, and of indomitability of the human spirit. To describe Pather Panchali as peddling poverty may be appealing to a one-eyed cyclop, but by that yardstick where would Saratchandra and Premchand be placed?

It is also worth remembering that the film was received enthusiastically, and acclaimed critically, when it was released

in Calcutta. It won the President's Gold Medal for best feature film. The international appreciation, from Cannes and thereafter, came after its initial success in the home-turf. The author has alluded selectively to Truffaut and NYT's film-critic Bosley Crowther and a few others who were initially not impressed by Ray's first film Truffaut's comment 'I don't want to see a movie of peasants eating with their hands' was facile, and understandably, he was later embarrassed for this remark. Also, moved by the success of Pather Panchali, Bosley Crowther reviewed the film a second time, and revised his opinion for the same NYT.

The film's hold on human imagination, on a local and global scale, continues to expand, even seven decades after its release. Finally, insinuating a lady of noble traits, hailing from an aristocratic Brahmo family, who facilitated Dr. Roy watching the incomplete work and rendering a great public service, in a language that only exposes the class and political inclination of the author, has reduced the piece to a level so crass as to make it irredeemable. At a time when certain political formations in the country seem to be in a competitive mode about cultural aggressiveness and insensitivity, any sane advice is unlikely to yield results. But the governments in the state and the Centre cannot absolve them of responsibilities to preserve and project the legacy of the true icons of modern India among whom Ray remains a leading one.

CM inspects last year's flood breach site at Shalina, inspects restoration works undertaken
Directs strengthening of embankments



SRINAGAR, MAY 01: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today visited Shalina near Lasjan to inspect the site that had developed a breach during the floods in September last year. The Chief Minister was accompanied by his Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Pampore Justice (Retd.) Hasnain Masoodi, Additional Chief

Secretary, Jal Shakti, Shaleen Kabra, and other concerned officers. During the visit, the Chief Minister reviewed the ongoing repair and flood mitigation works at the breach site. He directed the concerned departments to ensure strengthening of embankments to prevent recurrence of such incidents. Emphasizing the need

8th CPC to visit Srinagar from June 1-4

SRINAGAR, MAY 01: The 8th Central Pay Commission (CPC) is scheduled to visit Srinagar Jammu & Kashmir, from June 1 to June 4, 2026 (Monday to Thursday).

A notice issued by Director 8th CPC in this regard reads, "Concerned stakeholders including Organizations/Institutions of Central Government as well as Jammu & Kashmir (UT) and Unions/Associations desirous of interacting with the Commission at Srinagar may kindly submit memorandum at Commission's website (https://8cpc.gov.in) and thereafter, submit their request seeking an appointment vide https://nicforms.nic.in/enRyYmxNjMmZRIyZy1MjkyNTIwMjYwNDMwOD E=, on or before 16th May, 2026, along with 'unique memo Id' generated after submitting memorandum". The Notice adds that details regarding the venue and meeting schedule will be communicated to the applicants at a later stage. It is further read that the Commission will hold similar meetings in other cities across various States and Union Territories in due course.

Foundation Day of Maharashtra Gujarat celebrated at Lok Bhavan

Unity in Diversity is India's Greatest Strength, says Governor Kavinder Gupta

SHIMLA: A felicitation programme was organized at Lok Bhavan today to celebrate the Foundation Day of the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra. Governor Shri Kavinder Gupta invited people from both states residing in Himachal Pradesh to join the celebrations and mark the occasion in a spirit of unity and cultural exchange.

On the occasion, participants from Gujarat and Maharashtra interacted with the Governor and shared insights into their rich cultural heritage, traditions and customs. The programme provided a platform for meaningful dialogue and strengthened the bonds of mutual respect and understanding among people from different



regions of the country. The Governor honoured the guests by presenting them with traditional Himachali caps and mufflers as a gesture of warmth and hospitality. Addressing the gathering, Shri Gupta said that such programmes further strengthen the feeling of belongingness and national unity. He

remarked that despite having multiple languages and diverse cultures, the people of India are united as one nation, which is the country's greatest strength. He said that the spirit of "Vasudhaiva Kurumbakam" is deeply embedded in Indian culture, and celebrations like State Foundation Days

reflect this noble philosophy. He added that such events at Lok Bhavan provide an opportunity for people to understand each other better and be grateful for the diversity that enriches the nation. Secretary to the Governor Shri Sandeep Bhardwaj was also present on the occasion.

Deputy CM reaffirms govt's commitment to workers' welfare, social security

JAMMU, MAY 01: Commemorating the Labour Day observance, Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today described the working class as the backbone of the economy. He reiterated the government's firm commitment to ensure their economic welfare and social security across Jammu and Kashmir. In his message, the Deputy Chief Minister emphasized that workers are the driving force behind development and progress. The government remains steadfast in safeguarding their rights through strict implementation of labour laws and welfare schemes. "Our workers are the foundation of economic growth. The government is

committed towards ensuring safe working conditions, fair wages, social security and dignity of labour for every worker across the Union Territory," he said. Highlighting the key labour reforms, the Deputy Chief Minister referred to the introduction of reforms as comprehensive framework covering wages, industrial relations, occupational safety and social security. Describing these as landmark reforms, he said, "The new Labour Codes simplify the compliance while strengthening the protection and welfare of workers. They aim to ensure universal minimum wages, improved workplace safety, enhanced

social security and robust mechanisms for dispute resolution." "The Labour Department is actively working towards effective implementation of these reforms in Jammu and Kashmir to build a fair, transparent and worker-friendly labour ecosystem," he added.

KTMF General Secretary M Altaf Dar Rajbagh Visits Solina Bazar, Encourages Bashir Ahmed on Opening of "Water Point"

SRINAGAR, MAY 1: KTMF General Secretary (Org) and Publicity Chief, M Altaf Dar Rajbagh, today visited Solina Bazar to personally congratulate and encourage Mr. Bashir Ahmed on the opening of his new business establishment, "Water Point," a refreshing outlet offering all kinds of juices, cold drinks, and beverages. During his visit, M Altaf Dar Rajbagh praised Bashir Ahmed for his dedication, courage, and commitment towards entrepreneurship, stating that the establishment of such ven-

tures is vital for promoting local business, generating employment opportunities, and strengthening the economic fabric of the region. He said that small businesses are the backbone of



society and must be supported at every level. He further added that youth should come forward with innovative business ideas and contribute positively towards economic development and self-sufficiency.

M Altaf Dar Rajbagh extended his best wishes to Bashir Ahmed for the grand success of Water Point and assured continued support from Kashmir Traders and Manufacturers Federation (KTMF) for traders and entrepreneurs working tirelessly for the betterment of the local market. The visit reflects KTMF's continued commitment to promoting trade, supporting new businesses, and encouraging the spirit of entrepreneurship across

regions of the country. The Governor honoured the guests by presenting them with traditional Himachali caps and mufflers as a gesture of warmth and hospitality. Addressing the gathering, Shri Gupta said that such programmes further strengthen the feeling of belongingness and national unity. He

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KATRA,
DISTRICT REASI EXECUTIVE
MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS

Ph. No. 01991-295681 Email: Tehsilkatra@gmail.com
Block Development office Katra, Station House Officer, Katra, No.83-85/ROBAD/2026-27
Date 23/04/2026
Subject:- Application regarding Verification for Issuance of Death Certificate.

Sir,
With reference to subject captioned above, this office has received an application of Sh.Ravi Kumar S/O Late Sh.Madan Lal R/o Aghar Jitto, Tehsil Katra District Reasi regarding registration of death of his father namely Madan Lal.

In this connection, you are herewith requested to report on the subject matter either birth registered on the name of Sh. Madan Lal S/o Late Sh. Dina Nath R/o Village aghar jitto, Tehsil Katra District Reasi, Date of Death 16.04.2014(16th day of April, Two Thousand and fourteen) by your goodoffice or not. If registered then issue a certificate under rule.

Executive Magistrate
1st class Katra

NOTICE

I Tanveer Ahmed Wani S/o Bashir Ahmed Wani R/o 62 Bankot Banihal Ramban have applied for correction of my and my father's name which has been wrongly written as Tanvir Ahmed Wani S/o Bashir Ahmed D wani instead of correct name Tanveer Ahmed Wani S/o Bashir Ahmed Wani in my driving licence bearing No JK1920150006090. Objection if any may be conveyed to the ARTO Ramban within seven days from the date of publication of this notice.

NOTICE

I PARSHOTAM SHARMA S/O MADHAN LAL R/O NEERA BPO.CHANDERTOLE TEHSILDAR DISTRICT RAMBAN APPLIED FOR DEE CLASS CONTRACTOR CARD AT SEE OFFICE UDHAMPUR RAMBAN CIRCLE IF ANYBODY HAVING ANY OBJECTION CAN CONVEY TO THE CONCERNED AUTHORITY WITH IN THE SEVEN DAYS FROM THE APPLICATION OF THIS OFFICE NOTICE IN NEWSPAPER AFTER THAT NO OBJECTION SHALL BE ENTERTAINED.

Opposition MLA Devyani Rana's Protest Spurs PHE Deptt into action after 8 months of delay



DANSAL, MAY 1:- In a significant outcome of the strong protest led by MLA Nagrota, Devyani Rana, against the acute water crisis in the constituency, the Jal Shakti (PHE) Department has accorded administrative approval for the restoration of the long-defunct dug well at Hurlani (Kapothe) in Dansal. The dug well had remained non-functional since August 2025 following flood damage, causing severe hardship to local residents who have been grappling with an acute shortage of drinking water for months. Taking serious note of the situation, Ms. Rana had raised the issue during her protest and demanded immediate restoration of all defunct water supply systems, particularly highlighting the plight of people in the adjoining areas. Responding to the pressure created by the public outcry and the MLA's intervention, the department has now sanctioned the required funds and initiated steps for the restoration of the dug well. The repair work has been directed to be taken up as priority. Ms. Rana welcomed the move but stated that such urgent actions should not require public protests. She said that the Government has allocated nearly Rs 3500 Crores to the PHE department in the 2026-27 budget. The J&K Government has also received flood restoration

funding from the Centre upto nearly Rs 3000 Crores. However the funding is not reflecting on the ground in Jammu division which was adversely impacted during the floods. She reiterated that the ongoing water crisis is a result of prolonged negligence, lack of planning, and failure in timely maintenance by the PHE department. "This action clearly shows that when issues are raised strongly, the administration is compelled to respond. However, people should not be forced to come on roads for their basic rights like drinking water," she said. She further emphasized that while the approval for Hurlani dug well is a positive step; many other PHE stations and dug wells across Nagrota constituency are still lying defunct and require immediate attention. Ms. Rana urged the department to ensure quality repair works, proper technical supervision, and accountability to prevent recurrence of such failures. Reaffirming her commitment, she stated that she will continue to raise the voice of the people and ensure that essential services are restored in a time-bound manner. "The people of Nagrota deserve reliable access to drinking water, and I will not allow administrative lapses and lethargy that has crept into the system to deprive them of this basic necessity," she asserted.

Buddha Purnima Celebrated at University of Jammu as a Call for Peace Amid Global Conflict

JAMMU, MAY 1: The Department of Buddhist Studies at University of Jammu, in collaboration with the University of Life, celebrated Buddha Purnima with a thought-provoking event that highlighted the enduring relevance of Buddhist teachings in today's conflict-ridden world. Held in a serene atmosphere marked by a symbolic saffron glow, the programme brought together scholars, students, and spiritual seekers to reflect on the message of peace, compassion, and non-violence taught by Gautama Buddha.



Speaking on the occasion, former Head of the Department, Prof. Ram Nath Singh, underscored the urgency of adopting values such as loving-kindness, mutual goodwill, and compassion in the face of escalating global tensions, including the Russia-Ukraine conflict and unrest in West Asia. He emphasized that these principles are not merely spiritual ideals but

essential for sustaining peace and social harmony. Prof. Singh elaborated on the Buddha's core teachings, including the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, and the Brahmvivahans, describing them as a practical framework for addressing human suffering and fostering a more harmonious world. "Hatred cannot be overcome by hatred, but only through compassion and understanding," he remarked. Mrs. Shilpa Gupta, founder of the University of Life,

highlighted the egalitarian and transformative aspects of Buddhist philosophy. She noted that her organization has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Jammu to promote research and skill development rooted in Buddhist principles. Head of the Department, Prof. Reyaz Ahmed, spoke about the relevance of the Buddha's "Middle Path" in the current global scenario, advocating for a balanced approach that is neither passive nor aggressive but grounded in principled, non-violent engagement. Dr. Rajesh Sharma, Assistant Professor in the Department of Buddhist Studies, delivered the welcome address and — with characteristic efficiency — conducted the entirety of the function, ensuring that the event flowed seamlessly from invocation to reflection. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Vivek Sharma, faculty in the Department of Buddhist Studies, who expressed gratitude to all participants and called for translating prayers for peace into meaningful action. "Prayer without action is incomplete. Today we have prayed for peace; tomorrow we must work to build it — one compassionate act at a time," Dr. Vivek Sharma said in his concluding remarks. The event witnessed the participation of faculty members, including Dr. Ekta Kumari and Dr. Neeru Choudhary, along with a large number of students and research scholars.

NIT Srinagar showcases North Zone achievements at UBA review meeting

SRINAGAR, MAY 1: The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar, as the Regional Coordinating Institution (RCI) for the Kashmir Region under Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA), presented the consolidated North Zone progress report at the UBA Review Meeting held at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre (DAIC), New Delhi. The meeting was attended by Regional Coordinating Institutions (RCIs) from across the country to review the progress of rural development initiatives and deliberate on the

roadmap for the next phase of implementation under the Ministry of Education's flagship programme. Senior officials of the Ministry of Education, including Vineet Joshi, Secretary, Armstrong Pame, Joint Secretary, and others, addressed the meeting, while V K Vijay (IIT Delhi) presented a national overview of the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan. NIT Srinagar, representing the North Zone, presented a consolidated report covering key initiatives undertaken by premier institutions, including IIT Delhi, IIT Jammu, NIT Hamirpur, NITTTT

Chandigarh, and NIT Kurukshetra. The presentation was delivered by Dr Dinesh Kumar Rajendran, Technical Coordinator for RCI Kashmir Region. Dr Rajendran highlighted major interventions such as river rejuvenation projects, rural student outreach programmes, and technology-driven development initiatives implemented across the northern Indian region. He also informed that NIT Srinagar has established computer and science laboratories in 15 government schools, benefiting nearly 20,000 students.



Inconsistent CSK, Struggling MI Face Off In Battle For Survival

New Delhi, May 1: Their IPL 2026 campaigns hanging by a thread, Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians face a must-win showdown here on Saturday, with both sides desperate to reverse their inconsistent form and stay afloat in the playoff race. The two most successful franchises in IPL history have endured a forgettable campaign so far, with neither side able to build sustained momentum. While CSK have found conditions at the MA Chidambaram Stadium more familiar, their performances have lacked the clinical edge that has defined them over the years. Their batting has been inconsistent, particularly in the middle overs, while the bowling unit, traditionally their strength at home, has struggled to close out games under pressure. Mumbai Indians, too, have blown hot and cold this season. Despite flashes of brilliance from their top order, the five-time champions have been let down by a fragile middle order and an underwhelm-



ing bowling attack that has failed to defend totals or contain opposition batters at crucial junctures. With the league entering a decisive phase, this contest assumes added significance as both teams look to turn their fortunes. CSK will hope their spinners can exploit the slow Chapeau surface, while MI will bank on their power hitters to counter the spin threat. Given their current form, neither side starts as

a clear favourite, making this clash a battle of survival rather than dominance in what has traditionally been the IPL's marquee rivalry. Placed sixth in the points table with three wins from eight matches, the Ruturaj Gaikwad-led CSK are facing playoff uncertainty due to inconsistency, a negative net run rate, and the prolonged absence of MS Dhoni. Dhoni has been sidelined with a calf strain injury sus-

Mitchell Santner Sidelined For At Least A Month Due To Shoulder Injury



New Delhi, May 1: New Zealand white ball skipper Mitchell Santner will be out of action for at least a month due to a grade three ACL shoulder injury he sustained during the Indian Premier League. The 34-year-old injured his left shoulder while fielding during Mumbai Indians' match against the Chennai Super Kings on April 23. "Santner returned home to

New Zealand this week and saw a specialist this morning who confirmed a rest and rehabilitation period of at least one month," New Zealand Cricket said on Friday. The spin-bowling all-rounder, who took a fine diving catch to dismiss CSK's Kartik Sharma off Jasprit Bumrah but hit his shoulder and head on the ground, will thus be unavailable for the one-

off Test against Ireland and the first Test against England. "His availability for the second and third Tests to be evaluated at a later date," NZC said. The one-off four-day Test against Ireland begins at Stormont in Belfast on May 27, with the three Tests against England to be played at Lord's (June 4-8), The Oval (June 17-21) and Trent Bridge (June 25-29), respectively.

Iran To Participate In 2026 World Cup, Confirms FIFA Chief Infantino

Tehran, May 1: FIFA president Gianni Infantino has confirmed that Iran will participate in the upcoming 2026 World Cup, to be co-hosted by the United States, Mexico, and Canada, despite recent tensions involving Israel and the United States. Infantino made the announcement during his inaugural address at the 76th FIFA Congress in Vancouver, Canada. FIFA also shared a video on social media featuring excerpts from his speech. In his opening remarks, Infantino highlighted football's unique power to build bridges in a divided world, as all 48 participating member associations prepare for the expanded FIFA World Cup.



"I should say, confirming straight away for those who may want to say something else or write something else, that of course Iran will be participating in the FIFA World Cup 2026. And of course, Iran will play in the United States of America. The reason is very simple, dear friends — because we have

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi Gets Mitchell Starc First-Ball Six Challenge: "He Won't Be Jasprit Bumrah"

New Delhi, May 1: Rajasthan Royals teenager Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has set a tradition in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 by opening his account with boundaries against some of the best bowlers in the world. He even smashed Jasprit Bumrah, arguably the finest pacer in the world, for a six on the first ball he faced against him. However, former West Indies cricketer Ian Bishop doesn't think Sooryavanshi would be able to do the same against Mitchell Starc, the Australia superstar he is set to face when the Rajasthan Royals go head-to-head against the Delhi Capitals in the IPL on Friday. "No, I think you have to give Mitchell Starc credit. He'll come better prepared; he won't be Jasprit Bumrah," the former West Indies pacer, said on ESPNcricinfo.6



comment, however, is expected to charge Sooryavanshi, with the 15-year-old taking it more as a challenge than a verdict. Sooryavanshi has polished some top-of-the-draw bowlers like Jasprit Bumrah, Trent Boult, Josh Hazlewood etc in the ongoing edition of the IPL. "I think his psychological makeup is

efficient enough to take on the best bowlers in the world. He took on Jasprit Bumrah. Technically, he's kind of unique with his bat swing, more like a baseball sort of swing." Bishop, an ESPNcricinfo expert, told the media. Bishop said there is no tangible weakness in Sooryavanshi's batting, forcing

seasoned bowlers to frantically look for alternate plans against the 15-year-old. "It's very hard to see exactly what his weakness is because the back of a length delivery has worked against him, for example, in the under-19 World Cup and against Sunrisers Hyderabad. But then if you don't get that back-of-a-length delivery where he pulls and top edges early, those same deliveries disappear out of the park. "So, I think, technically, he's set up very well. He has a number of world-class bowlers in this tournament going through plan A, plan B, plan C, plan E, F, and G. And that's a good sign that he has all these veterans of the game, having to go through a whole host of plans as they try to go yorker, yorker, at him in the previous game. So I think he's set up well," he added.

As Hardik Pandya Struggles At MI, Gujarat Titans Praise His "World Class" Replacement

New Delhi, May 1: Following his side's win over Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), the Gujarat Titans (GT) Director of Cricket Vikram Solanki was all praise for the 'Player of the Match' Jason Holder, pointing out that his experience as a T20 cricketer and physical, technical attributes as an all-rounder have helped the side. There was no keeping the lanky Caribbean out of action against RCB, as he took three sensational catches to dismiss skipper Rajat Patidar, Tim David and Kunal Pandya, and also removed Jitesh Sharma and Romario Shepherd in a fine four-over spell of 2/29. Later, as the 156-run chase went off the track at 111/5, his 30-run stand with Rahul Tewatia solidified GT's hold over the match and eventually helped them earn their two points in full.



So far for the Titans, he has contributed 35 runs in two innings at a strike rate of 175.00 and taken three wickets at an average of 28.66, besides some important contributions as a fielder. Speaking during the post-match presser, Vikram called Jason a "world-class all-rounder" who is only getting better with time. "He has sort of proven across the years in international cricket and franchise cricket in the past how measured he is, and I think he is

only getting better. He spoke about understanding his game and that, of course, comes with experience. Any player that has played for as long as he has, around the world as he has, led teams as he has, international teams and been part of different teams, starts to get an understanding of what should be done in any given situation, and Jason is certainly doing that," he said. Vikram said that the team was excited to have him in the squad, even though he had to wait for a while before his turn came, but since then, he has played an important role with both bat and ball with his experience and situation-reading ability. "We were very excited when he was part of the squad. He has had to wait his time before he got an opportunity, but since he got an opportunity in all of the games he has played,

Zverev Joins Elite Federer-Nadal Club With Madrid Semis Run

New Delhi, May 1: Alexander Zverev maintained his impressive consistency at the ATP Masters 1000 level at the Madrid Open, easing past Flavio Cobolli 6-1, 6-4 at the Manolo Santana Stadium to book his place in the semi-finals. With his 90-minute victory, the German became just the fourth man to reach the semi-finals at each of the first four Masters 1000 events of the season since the series began in 1990, joining Roger Federer (2006), Rafael Nadal (2010, 2011) and Jannik Sinner (2026). Moreover, with his win over Cobolli, Zverev improved to 3-1 in their ATP head-to-head record and moved to 179 tour-level victories on



clay, surpassing Philipp Kohlschreiber for the most by a German man in the Open Era. The world No. 3 gave Cobolli no chance on the Caja Magica's centre court. With some impressive serving, Zverev was only truly tested once in the match — when it came to closing it out. At 5-4 and serving for the second set, the Hamburg native suddenly found himself facing two break points, both of which he saved with authority. Showing remarkable composure, he fired two huge serves to seal the win.

"You'll Be On Floor": Did Heinrich Klaasen Warn Fan For Recording His Family?



New Delhi, May 1: A video of Sunrisers Hyderabad overseas star Heinrich Klaasen allegedly warning a fan for recording him as well as his family without their permission has gone viral on social media. In the video that has been shared multiple times on social media, Klaasen was seen threatening someone and asking them

"Thank you very much, but don't take a photo. If I turn around and you take a photo of me and my family, I promise you will be on the floor, okay." Earlier, former South Africa fast bowler Dale Steyn heaped praise on Sunrisers Hyderabad's middle-order batter Heinrich Klaasen for his scintillating knock against Mumbai Indians and pointed out that the batter is "still right up there as an Orange Cap contender" despite coming out to bat in the middle order. After Sunrisers Hyderabad opener Travis Head added 129 runs for the first wicket, Klaasen thrashed an unbeaten 65 off 30, while Saiil Arora smoked 30 not out off ten balls to hand SRH the fourth-highest successful chase in the IPL, and their fifth straight win of the season.

RCB Break Silence On Catch Row That Left Kohli Fuming: "Ball Touched Ground"



New Delhi, May 1: The Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) vs Gujarat Titans (GT) match concluded in a defeat for the hosts, but not without controversy. Gujarat all-rounder Jason Holder's catch in the dismissal of Bengaluru skipper Rajat Patidar became a significant subject of debate, leaving the entire RCB camp livid regarding the third umpire's decision. RCB stalwart Virat Kohli even argued with an official outside the boundary rope over the dismissal. Speaking at the post-match press conference, veteran pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar shared his views on the catch controversy, suggesting he and his teammates felt that the ball did touch the ground. Bhuvneshwar,



who is the highest wicket-taker in the IPL 2026 season so far, said that based on the visuals displayed on the green screen, the RCB camp believed the ball had made contact with the turf. All they wanted was for the third umpire to examine more angles before finalising his decision. "I wasn't there, but from what I saw, the ball touched the

ground. I don't know what the umpire told them, or if it was within the laws of the game. I have no idea about that. However, we wanted the umpire to take a closer look at it," Bhuvneshwar told the media after the match. It has been rare for RCB to suffer a batting failure this IPL. Despite the start Virat Kohli provided, the Bengaluru side was bowled out for 155 runs. GT chased down the target with more than four overs to spare. When asked what went wrong for his team, Bhuvneshwar remarked that it was simply a bad day that saw the Titans play better than the Royal Challengers. "I wouldn't say anything went wrong, but rather that they batted well. It often comes down to whether it is a good day or a bad day. We lost the toss and were asked to bat first; we tried our best in both departments, but the result is that we lost. In a long tournament of 14 matches, you cannot be perfect in every department in every game. Our batting has been good throughout the tournament—we have scored 200 or more previously. This time, we were not up to the mark, but these things happen. It is about complementing each other; sometimes the bowler give away 200 runs and the batsmen chase it down without complaint. Today, it was our duty as bowlers to try our best to defend a low score," he said.

Noida on edge this Labour Day: Section 163 imposed till May 8, drones deployed after workers' unrest

New Delhi, May 1: Security arrangements were stepped up across Gautam Buddha Nagar on Friday as authorities moved to prevent any disruption on International Labour Day, weeks after protests by workers over pay and working hours. The precautionary measures come in the backdrop of last month's unrest in Noida's industrial areas, where demonstrations over wage revision and flexibility had led to arrests and heightened tensions. Officials said maintaining order during Labour Day events was a priority, even as normal work resumed across most units. Section 163 imposed, surveillance tightened. As per the police, Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita has been enforced in the district till May 8. The provision allows authorities to issue urgent preventive orders to avoid potential threats to public peace.



Security deployment has been increased in sensitive pockets, with drone monitoring introduced to keep a watch on gatherings and movement in key industrial zones. Police Commissioner Laxmi Singh said labour union events have passed without incident so far and that the overall situation remains stable.

The events traditionally organised by various labour unions have been held peacefully. At present, peace and order prevail every-

where. We are active on the ground. We are active on the ground. Police force has been deployed... Work is going on peacefully in all units," she said. 350 arrests after protests, social media under scanner. The tightened vigil follows action taken during the recent protests, where more than 350 people were arrested. Police alleged that misinformation circulating on digital platforms had contributed to the unrest. Assistant Commissioner of Police Rajeev Narain Mishra said

certain individuals were using new digital networks to spread misleading content. "We arrested over 350 people. Some were misusing social media, spreading rumours, and providing false information. Some were spreading misleading information through newly created WhatsApp bots and Twitter. Considering the sensitivity of this, a case has been filed against them," he said. He added that workers have started returning to their jobs in several companies, though in some areas, groups continued to press for their demands. Officials, he said, engaged with them through dialogue. Interim wage hike announced after protests.

Amid the unrest, a high-level committee set up by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has approved an interim increase of around 21 per cent in minimum wages for workers in Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ghaziabad.

Jabalpur cruise tragedy: Rescue operations continue, says Minister

New Delhi, May 1: The search and rescue operation following the Bargi Dam cruise accident in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur continued on Friday, even though nine people remained missing after the vessel capsized during a sudden storm a day earlier. Madhya Pradesh Minister Rakesh Singh said the difficult conditions had slowed down rescue efforts. He stated, "Yesterday, you must have seen that water was continuously flowing in; it was dark, and the depth of the water was also very high. Therefore, it was natural that the rescue operation could not proceed smoothly. NDRF teams are here. Five dead bodies have been recovered by the rescue teams, and we hope the rescue



operations will complete the process soon." Officials confirmed that at least six people have died so far in the incident. Four bodies were recovered on Friday morning alone, most of them women. Around 24 people have been rescued so far, while several others are still missing. The incident took place on Thursday, around 5.30 p.m. at the Bargi Dam area in Bhedaghat, when a cruise boat carrying more than 40 tourists suddenly capsized amid severe weather. Jabalpur Superintendent of Police Sampat Upadhyay said the vessel, operated under the state tourism department, overturned due to a sudden storm and strong winds that had been prevailing since the morning. Search operations involving NDRF and local teams continued through the night and resumed early Friday.

MHA updates OCI rules: Online applications mandatory, compliance norms tightened

New Delhi, May 1: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Thursday notified the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2026. The new rules update the 2009 framework work and change how Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) services and applications will now be handled. The idea is to make the process easier to follow, while also ensuring stricter adherence to rules. Under the revised rules, OCI applications will now have to be submitted online. At the same time, applicants will have the option of holding either a physical OCI card or an e-OCI document. According to the Ministry, minors will not be allowed to hold both



Indian and foreign passports at the same time under the revised provisions. OCI cards continue to offer multiple-entry, multi-purpose lifelong visas to persons of Indian origin and their spouses, along with certain economic and educational benefits in India. However, the government has reiterated that OCI status does not grant political rights such as voting or holding constitution-

al posts. The Ministry underlined that OCI status remains a privilege and not a right, and may be withdrawn if the holder is found violating Indian laws. Background of OCI scheme and tightened norms. The Overseas Citizen of India scheme was introduced in 2005 through an amendment to the Citizenship Act, 1955. It allows registration of persons of Indian origin.

National plot to shrink Maratha history says Shiv Sena(UBT) in 'Saamana'

New Delhi, May 1: The Shiv Sena Uddhav Balasahab Thackeray (UBT) on the 67th Foundation Day of Maharashtra on Friday claimed that the Marathi people were being cornered by "Maharashtra-haters" and "subservient" local rulers. It called upon the Marathis to once again raise the cry of Maharashtra Dharma to protect their identity and pride against this perceived "national conspiracy". The Thackeray camp in the party's mouthpiece, 'Saamana', said that even today, rickshaw drivers in Mumbai refuse to speak Marathi. Instead of enforcing the language, rulers are



bowing before them and withholding decisions that would make Marathi Maharashtra. "Progressive Maharashtra is currently trapped in the clutches of superstition and chauvinism. The self-respect of

Maharashtra and the Marathi identity (Asmita) are being suffocated by the confluence of Maharashtra-haters at the Centre and subservient rulers within the state. There is a 'national con-

spiracy' underway to extinguish the torch of Maharashtra and Marathi pride. The Marathi people must thwart this; for that, the clarion call of Maharashtra Dharma must be sounded once again," the editorial in Saamana said.

It said that while the government prepares for the usual 'artificial rain' of promises regarding the welfare of the Marathi people, there is a stark contrast between rhetoric and reality. "Marathi was won through the blood and sweat of mill workers, farmers, and labourers. Yet, today, the question remains: does Mumbai truly belong to those work-

ers anymore? In the very heart of the capital, rickshaw drivers reportedly refuse to speak Marathi. Rather than enforcing the language, the current administration is accused of "prostrating" before these elements by staying decisions that would make Marathi mandatory," said the editorial. The editorial further claimed that the recent changes in NCERT and CBSE curricula — such as removing maps of the Maratha Empire or reducing the glorious history of Shivaji Maharaj to a mere 68 words — point toward a systematic erasure of the state's heritage and Marathi identity.

Exit poll findings indicate decisive win for LDF, claims MV Govindan

New Delhi, May 1: The exit polls released on Wednesday dashed the CPM-led LDF's hopes of continuing in power, predicting that the UDF will come to power in Kerala. The projections have lifted the UDF camp. While across 10 different surveys, the UDF has emerged as the clear frontrunner, with projections suggesting a comfortable majority, CPM's Kerala secretary MV Govindan on Thursday said the underlying findings of the exit polls, specifically the absence of anti-incumbency and the popularity of the Chief Minister, indicate a definitive win for the LDF. Speaking to media persons here on Thursday, Govindan said that careful examination of the exit polls shows that the LDF is poised to return to power in Kerala. "The recent exit polls have made two things clear. One, there is no anti-government sentiment in Kerala,



and two, Pinarayi Vijayan is most likely to become the Chief Minister of Kerala," MV Govindan said. He reiterated that the LDF would win a third consecutive term, projecting a victory with over 90 seats and denying the existence of anti-incumbency. "The survey has said that the LDF will get 60 to 69 seats. If it is 69, then two more are needed for an

absolute majority. The surveyors themselves say that there may be a difference of five or eight. In fact, according to this survey, the LDF has a very good chance of coming to power. Therefore, the LDF has no worries," Govindan said. Govindan argued that exit polls do not accurately reflect ground reality and disagreed with predictions suggesting a UDF comeback.

Across 10 different surveys, the UDF has emerged as the clear frontrunner, with projections suggesting a comfortable majority. Seat forecasts for the front range from a low of 66-76 seats by People Insight to a high of 90-92 seats predicted by Political Laboratory. Axis My India estimates the UDF tally between 78 and 90 seats, reinforcing the possibility of a decisive comeback. In contrast, the CPM-led LDF is projected to fall short of retaining power. Its seat estimates vary widely — from 49-62 (Axis My India) to a maximum of 62-69 (PMARQ), suggesting a potential dip. The BJP-led NDA is expected to remain on the margins, with most exit polls predicting single-digit figures. Axis My India places the NDA between zero and three seats, while CNN-Vote Vibe and Jyoti Mirror estimate ranges of 0-4 and 0-5, respectively.

IRCTC announces '07 Jyotirlinga Yatra' tour on Bharat Gaurav Tourist Train in May

New Delhi, May 1: To promote heritage and pilgrimage tourism in India, the Bharat Gaurav Tourist train will be operated on exclusive circuits for the '07 Jyotirlinga Yatra' in May 2026. The tours will start from Delhi Safdarjung Railway Station. From heritage to pilgrimage shores, the '07 Jyotirlinga Yatra' tour has it all. Spanning over a period of 12 days, this tour will cover a host of places like Mahakaleswar Jyotirlinga (Ujjain), Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga (Omkareshwar), Nageshwar Jyotirlinga temple (Dwarka), Bet Dwarkadish Temple, Sonmath Jyotirlinga (Veraval), Trimbakeshwar Jyotirlinga (Nashik), Bhimashankar Jyotirlinga



(Pune), Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga (Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar), The Bharat Gaurav Tourist Train, a fully air-conditioned train, provides AC II, AC III, & Sleeper class and will accommodate a total of 750 tourists. The train has enhanced security features including CCTV cameras in common areas and unarmed security guards for each coach. The 07 Jyotirlinga Yatra has been launched at a spe-

cial price of Rs. 48,500/- per person for 2AC, Rs. 36,500/- for 3AC and Rs. 23,505/- for Sleeper class. The package price is inclusive of train journey in respective AC II, AC III & Sleeper class, accommodation in AC Budget Hotels & Non-AC Budget hotels, all meals (VEG ONLY), all transfers & sight-seeing in AC & Non-AC vehicles, accidental travel insurance and services of an IRCTC Tour Manager etc.

Today's Chanakya's exit poll indicates possibility of hung assembly in Kerala

Kochi, May 1: Today's Chanakya exit poll predicts a close fight between the CPM-led LDF and Congress-led UDF in Kerala indicating the possibility of a hung assembly in Kerala. The exit poll, while predicting a favorable outcome for the UDF, does not rule out the hopes of the LDF. It is noteworthy that this poll result does not say that the UDF will get a comfortable majority. It also shows the possibility of the BJP-led NDA winning double-digit seats. According to the fig-

ures released on Thursday, while the UDF is predicted to clinch 60 to 78 seats, the LDF is likely to win 53 to 73 seats. Along with this, the prediction also says that the NDA will also make big gains in the polls. Chanakya predicts that the alliance will become a decisive force by winning 3 to 11 seats. If that happens, it is expected that there will be a hung assembly in Kerala this time. Today's Chanakya exit poll highlights community-wise voting preferences for Kerala's election. The poll suggests strong backing for the UDF among Muslim and Christian groups. The survey says that 62 percent of the Muslim votes have gone into the UDF's box. The LDF got 33 percent and the BJP 4 percent. The UDF is predicted to get 53 percent of the Christian votes, the LDF 34 per cent and the BJP 11 per cent. The BJP is predicted to get 39 per cent of the Nair votes, the UDF will have to be satisfied with 32 per cent and the LDF with 28 per cent. The survey also says that the LDF will continue to have the upper hand in the case of the Ezhava community. The LDF is projected to get about 47 per cent of the Ezhava votes, the UDF about 20 per cent of the votes and the BJP about 32 per cent. In the Scheduled Caste category, the LDF is predicted to get 49 per cent, the UDF 31 per cent and the BJP 18 per cent. In

SC grants anticipatory bail to Pawan Khera in case over remarks against Assam CM's wife; sharp exchanges mark hearing

New Delhi, May 1: The Supreme Court on Friday granted anticipatory bail to Congress leader Pawan Khera in a case involving alleged forgery and defamation linked to remarks made against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife, Kiniki Bhuyan Sarma. The relief comes after a sharp legal battle that saw the apex court step in following the Gauhati High Court's refusal to grant Khera protection from arrest. The case has drawn attention not just for the allegations, but also for the political undercurrents and sharp exchanges inside the courtroom. The court, while granting relief, also flagged concerns that the proceedings appeared to be influenced by political rivalry, stressing that individual liberty cannot be compromised lightly. A bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and Atul Chaudhuri had reserved its verdict on Thursday after hearing detailed arguments from both sides. Senior Advocate Abhishek



Manu Singhvi appeared for Khera, while Solicitor General Tushar Mehta represented the Assam government. While allowing the plea, the court set aside the Gauhati High Court's order, observing that a balance must be maintained between the State's interest in investigation and an individual's right to personal liberty under Article 21. "While adjudicating an application for anticipatory bail, a careful balance must be struck between the State's

interest in ensuring a fair investigation and the individual's fundamental right to personal liberty under Article 21," the bench said. The court further said the criminal process must be applied with "objectivity and circumspection" and noted that the allegations and counter-allegations in the present "prima facie appear to be politically motivated and seemingly influenced by such rivalry, rather than disclosing a situation warranting custodial interroga-

tion." "Why custodial arrest?": Defence questions need for detention. Arguing for Khera, Singhvi questioned the need for custodial interrogation in what he described as a defamation case involving bailable offences. He told the court, "Interrogation is available; there is no flight risk. The question is the necessity of arrest. Why is it necessary to humiliate by custodial arrest?" He also took strong exception to remarks attributed to the Assam Chief Minister, saying, "Dr BR Ambedkar would turn over in his grave if he had imagined a constitutional functionary behaving like a 'constitutional cowboy' or a 'constitutional Rambo'." Singhvi further argued that the charges, including forgery under Section 339 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, were added later and did not form part of the original FIR. The Supreme Court also noted this aspect, observing that the Gauhati High Court had erred in relying on provisions that were not invoked in the FIR and had incorrectly shifted the burden onto the accused.

UAE walks out of OPEC; report signals looser supply discipline, softer long-term prices

Dubai, May 1: The United Arab Emirates' decision to walk out of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is being seen as a pivotal shift in the global oil order, with potential ripple effects on supply strategies and price trends, according to an ICICI Securities report. The move comes at a time when global energy markets are already dealing with supply disruptions, particularly around key transit routes like the Strait of Hormuz. While immediate changes may be muted, the development signals a deeper churning in how oil producers may approach production and pricing in the years ahead. What ICICI Securities report says on UAE exit: Calling it a "major shift", the ICICI Securities report said the UAE's formal exit brings an end to a 65-year-old production alignment within the OPEC framework. "The UAE's announcement of its formal exit from OPEC... breaks a 65-year-old system of the OPEC cartel," the report noted, adding that this could dilute the group's



ability to coordinate supply decisions effectively. The brokerage highlighted that the UAE has already built substantial spare production capacity. Once logistical challenges ease, especially those linked to shipping constraints, this capacity could be released into global markets, potentially altering supply balances. Oil prices: Near-term pressure, long-term easing? According to the report, crude oil prices are likely to remain firm in the near term, supported by supply bottlenecks. "Crude prices likely persisting at USD 85/bbl levels over the next 9-12 months," it said. However, the longer-term outlook appears more balanced. "We believe this move may help soften prices in the longer term, although volatility in the markets may spike owing to lower cohesive supply management from OPEC," the report added. Could other OPEC members follow? The exit could also trigger introspection within the cartel. ICICI Securities pointed out that other member countries may begin reassessing the value of staying within OPEC, especially in the face of falling revenues and ongoing geopolitical uncertainties. A

looser grip within the group could mean countries start taking their own calls on production, making oil markets more unpredictable than before. What it means for India For India, the picture isn't straightforward. In the near term, firm crude prices could keep import costs under pressure. At the same time, any moderation in price over the longer horizon would offer relief to downstream oil marketing companies. The report noted that softer prices in the future would be a positive for downstream players, particularly the three oil marketing companies, even as near-term volatility remains a concern. The report concludes that the UAE's exit may mark a broader shift in how global oil supply is managed. With the cartel no longer as tightly held together, the tug-of-war between controlled production and open market forces could shift, potentially rewriting how prices behave and how stable the market feels in the coming years.

Nifty, Sensex dip nearly 0.75 pc this week amid geopolitical tensions

New Delhi, May 1: The Indian equity benchmarks closed in the red this week, as persistent selling from the foreign institutional investors (FIIs) and higher crude prices weighed on market sentiment. Nifty lost 0.73 per cent during the week and dipped 0.74 per cent on the last trading day to reach 23,997. At close, the Sensex was down 582 points or 0.75 per cent at 76,913. It dropped 0.97 per cent during the week. "Investor sentiment remained cautious as the double blockade in the Strait of Hormuz continued to weigh on global markets, without meaningful progress in negotiations," an analyst said. Oil prices peaked at \$126 per barrel for the first time in four years, intensifying inflationary concerns and raising the risk of fuel price hikes. The sharp rise in crude prices weighed on



the Indian rupee and revived worries about capital outflows and widening deficits, due to the country's heavy reliance on oil imports. On the sectoral front, most indices traded in red. Major laggards included Nifty Metal, PSU Banks, Realty, and FMCG. Nifty IT and Pharma remained resilient. Broader indices showed divergence with the benchmark indices during the week, as the Nifty Midcap100 only dipped 0.28 per cent, while Nifty Smallcap100 gained 1.62 per cent. Despite market volatility, early Q4FY26 corporate earnings prompted investors to adopt a constructive stance. While the sell-off was broad-based, defensive and demand-led sectors such as pharmaceuticals, healthcare, telecom, and energy outperformed. Geopolitical risks and inflationary pressures are expected to keep the Fed hawkish through 2026, adding uncertainty to the interest rate outlook, analysts noted.

Commercial LPG price hike: Cylinder rates spike in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai

New Delhi, May 1: A steep jump in commercial LPG prices from Friday has set off fresh concerns for restaurants and small businesses, even as the government held the line on domestic cooking gas rates. The decision comes at a time when global fuel markets remain volatile due to the ongoing Iran war and wider geopolitical tensions in West Asia. While there has been pressure to revise household LPG prices, the Centre has chosen to keep domestic rates unchanged, offering some relief to middle-class households already battling inflation. Mentioned sources say that the price of a 19 kg commercial LPG cylinder has been increased by Rs.993 on average. In Delhi, the price has surged



to Rs.3,071.50 from Rs.2,078.50 earlier. In Mumbai, the rate has jumped from Rs.2,031 to Rs.3,024. The 5 kg Free Trade LPG cylinder, used by small establishments and for limited commercial purposes, has also been hiked by Rs.261 per cylinder with immediate effect. Third hike since February hits businesses hard This is the third increase in commercial LPG prices

since February 28, when the Iran conflict began impacting global supply chains. Prices were first raised by Rs.144 in March, followed by another increase of nearly ₹200 on April 1. The cumulative effect is now being felt across sectors that rely heavily on commercial cooking fuel. Restaurants, hotels and small eateries are expected to face a sharp rise in operating costs.

UPI sees 25 pc growth at 22.35 billion transactions in April, starts FY27 on strong note

New Delhi, May 1: India's digital payments ecosystem up 25 per cent year-on-year growth in the month of April at 22.35 billion transactions at Rs.29.03 lakh crore in terms of value, which is a 21 per cent annual growth, according to data released by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) on Friday. On a daily basis, the average number of transactions saw a notable increase to 745 million in April (from 730 million in March). The average daily transaction value also rose to Rs.96,766 crore last month, from Rs.95,243 crore in the previous month. The MPMS monthly volumes stood at 362 million with Rs.701



lakh crore in transaction amount (13 per cent YoY growth). Average daily transactions at 12.08 million saw a notable increase too. In March, the UPI had registered its highest-ever monthly transaction volume at 22.64 billion, since its launch in 2016. UPI is now live in more than eight countries, including the UAE, Singapore, Bhutan,

and Nepal, Sri Lanka, France, Mauritius and Qatar, positioning India as a global leader in digital payments. UPI's growing international adoption is boosting remittances, promoting financial inclusion, and strengthening India's position in the global fintech landscape. India's flagship digital payments platform has recorded an extraordinary surge in transaction volume over the past decade, according to the Ministry of Finance. Launched on April 11, 2016, by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) under the regulatory supervision of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), UPI has evolved into the backbone of India's digital payments ecosystem. From a modest base of just 2 crore transactions in FY2016-17, the platform processed over 24,162 crore transactions in FY 2025-26, the ministry said. In value terms as well, UPI's rise has been equally remarkable. Transaction value surged from Rs.0.07 lakh crore in its first year of operations to around Rs.314 lakh crore in FY 2025-26, marking an increase of more than 4,000 times. This dual expansion in both volume and value highlights the platform's increasing relevance not just for small retail payments but also for higher-value transactions. According to government assessments, UPI's scale, interoperability, and reliability have positioned India as a global leader in digital public infrastructure. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has recognised UPI as the world's largest real-time payment system by transaction volume, further reinforcing India's standing in the global fintech landscape.

Centre revises diesel, ATF duties; no change in petrol, diesel prices

New Delhi, May 1: The Centre has revised export duties on diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) for the next fortnight starting May 1, even as retail prices of petrol, diesel and LPG will remain unchanged for consumers, according to official notifications and a statement by Indian Oil Corporation (IOC). The move comes at a time when global crude prices have surged, with Brent touching \$126 per barrel amid geopolitical tensions in West Asia. Despite this, the government and oil marketing companies have sought to shield domestic consumers from the impact. The Finance Ministry said export duty on diesel has been fixed at Rs.23 per litre, comprising Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED) of Rs.23, while ATF exports will attract a duty of Rs.33 per litre. Export duty on petrol continues to



remain nil. At the same time, central excise duty on petrol has been set at Rs.23 per litre and on diesel at Rs.33 per litre, effective May 1. The government has also reduced the additional excise duty on petrol to zero. These changes were notified under the Central Excise Act, 1944. Retail prices remain insulated Despite the adjustments in duties, IOC clarified that there will be no change in retail prices of petrol, diesel and domestic LPG.

"The retail prices of Petrol, Diesel and domestic LPG (14.2 kg cylinders) have remained unchanged, fully insulating domestic consumers from the recent increase in international fuel prices," IOC said in a press release. The company noted that nearly 90 per cent of petrol and diesel consumption in India is by the general public, which will not be affected. Prices of domestic LPG used by around 23 crore households, ATF for domestic airlines, and PDS kerosene will also remain unchanged. Overall, about 80 per cent of petroleum products have seen no price change, while 4 per cent have recorded a decrease and 16 per cent have witnessed an increase, largely in industrial segments. Bulk and commercial LPG cylinders, which account for less than 1 per cent of consumption, have seen a price hike.

India-UAE CEPA Driving Strong Trade Growth, Opening New Opportunities: Piyush Goyal

New Delhi, May 1: The India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) is driving robust trade growth and creating new opportunities for Indian businesses, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday. Four years after the implementation of CEPA, the economic relationship between India and the United Arab Emirates has witnessed significant growth across multiple sectors. Highlighting the progress in a post on social media platform X, Goyal said the agreement has created transformational opportunities for Indian farmers, MSMEs, and businesses. "Four years ago, when the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) came into force, it created transformational opportunities for Indian farmers, MSMEs, and other businesses," he said. He noted that bilateral merchandise trade between the two nations has crossed the \$100 billion mark, reflecting strong momentum since the agreement came into effect. Services trade has also shown steady growth, helping Indian companies access new markets while enhancing value creation. "Bilateral merchandise trade has



grown strongly, crossing \$100 billion, with services trade also rising steadily and opening new markets while creating greater value," Goyal said. He added that expansion across key sectors such as gems and jewellery, engineering goods, electronics, and agriculture is delivering tangible gains. He also noted that rising foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows from the UAE, along with increased overseas investments by Indian firms, reflect deepening economic ties.

Jet fuel price for international airlines up by 5 per cent in 2nd straight monthly hike

New Delhi, May 1: The price of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF), or jet fuel, for international airlines was increased by 5 per cent on Friday, marking the second straight monthly rise as oil companies pass on the global surge in energy prices in a calibrated manner. There is no change in the ATF price for domestic airlines. ATF prices have been increased by USD 76.55 per kilolitre or 5.33 per cent, to USD 1511.86 per kl in Delhi, home to India's busiest airport, according to state-owned oil firms. This follows the doubling of rates on April 1. On that day, rates for domestic airlines were hiked by 25 per cent



to Rs.104,927.18 per kl. Jet fuel prices were deregulated more than two decades ago, and since then, the rates have been aligned with benchmark international prices, as per a written understanding with the airlines. But since the West Asia crisis-induced surge

GST collections rise to record high of Rs 2.43 lakh crore in April

New Delhi, May 1: The Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection increased by 8.7 per cent year-on-year (YoY) in April to an all-time high of Rs.2.43 lakh crore, majorly due to rise in import revenue, according to the data released by Finance Ministry. The import-related taxes exceeded the domestic collections at the beginning of the new fiscal year, the data showed. The latest collection exceeded the previous record of more than Rs.2.23 lakh crore achieved in April last year. Net GST mop-up increased 7.3 per cent to approximately Rs.2.11 lakh crore after adjusting for refunds. The latest collection exceeded the previous record of more than Rs.2.23 lakh crore achieved in April



last year. Net GST mop-up increased 7.3 per cent to approximately Rs.2.11 lakh crore after adjusting for refunds. GST collections increased by double digits in the majority of major states, with Punjab and Chandigarh showing

the fastest growth rates of at least 65 per cent. However, for the majority of the states, the annual GST collection for FY 26 has drastically decreased. After Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, Sikkim saw the worst decline in the yearly

IIM Jammu Concludes Transformative Leadership Development Programme for Young Managers (Batch-I) of SAIL

Jammu, May 1: The Indian Institute of Management Jammu concluded the five-day Leadership Development Programme for Young Managers (Batch-I), organized for Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), a Maharatna CPSE, from April 27 to May 1, 2026, at the Vedanta MDP Centre, IIM Jammu. The programme was meticulously designed to equip emerging leaders with strategic acumen, managerial excellence, and future-ready leadership capabilities. The valedictory ceremony was presided over by Shri Sanjay Dhar, Executive Director HR-L&D, MTI SAIL, on the online mode. The occasion was also graced by Prof. Prashant Mishra, Chairperson, Executive Education and



Consultancy; Dr. Sarbjit Singh, Programme Director; and Dr. Chinmaya Kumar Swain, Programme Director, IIM Jammu. In his virtual address, Sanjay Dhar, Executive Director HR-L&D, MTI SAIL thanked IIM Jammu for nurturing SAIL's emerging leaders. He emphasized that growth comes through continuous learning, expanding one's thinking, and stepping beyond comfort zones. Highlighting SAIL's ambitious future, he urged participants to continuously apply their learning and expressed his eagerness to welcome them again. Dr. Sarbjit Singh, Programme Director, IIM

Jammu, presented the programme would be reflected in the positive changes they bring to their teams and organizational culture. Prof. Prashant Mishra, Chairperson, Executive Education and Consultancy, IIM Jammu, highlighted the importance of continuous learning, adaptability, and innovation. He noted that the programme enabled participants from diverse teams to gain broader perspectives and better understand cross-functional challenges. Emphasizing IIM Jammu's role as a bridge between industry and academia, he encouraged participants to continuously apply their learning and expressed his eagerness to welcome them again. Dr. Sarbjit Singh, Programme Director, IIM

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GGM Science College Organises Drug Free India Awareness Lecture for IGNOU Students

Jammu, May 1: The Department of Zoology, GGM Science College organized an awareness lecture on Drug Free India for IGNOU students under the ongoing Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan. Around 100 IGNOU students from different areas of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir participated in the programme. The Principal of the college appreciated the initiative and stressed the importance of spreading awareness among youth regarding the harmful effects of drug abuse. He encouraged students to become responsible citizens and contribute towards building a healthy and drug-free society. The programme featured expert talks by Dr. Rahul Kait, Convener NCORD



and Coordinator CWASC, Dr. Brinder Kumar, Convener Science Club, and Prof. Bal Krishan, Convener Manodarpan Psychological Counseling Cell. The speakers highlighted the physical, psychological, social, and economic impacts of substance abuse and motivated students to stay away from drugs. The resource persons also emphasized the need for awareness, counseling, and community participation in combating drug addiction. Students actively interacted during the session and shared their views on the issue. On the occasion, a pledge was administered to all participants to support the mission of a Drug Free India and spread awareness against drug abuse in society.

After 40 Years of Empowering Lives, Veteran Craft Teacher Bids Adieu in Bhadarwah

Bhadarwah, May 01: After serving for over four decades and empowering countless individuals through grassroots skill development, veteran craft teacher Gulnaz Begum was given a warm send-off by the Tehsil Social Welfare Office here on Thursday. The department organised a farewell ceremony attended by senior officers, staff members and retiree's family members to honour her 40-year-long career. Colleagues paid rich tributes to the retiring teacher, recalling her supportive

nature and her role as a guiding force within the department. Many highlighted her tireless efforts in bringing welfare initiatives directly to the beneficiaries at the community level. Addressing the gathering, Tehsil Social Welfare Officer (TSWO) Bhadarwah, Shah Nawaz Ahmad, lauded Begum's discipline and long-standing commitment to public service. Her professional integrity and compassionate approach have left a lasting impact on both her colleagues and the community," Ahmad said. He further said that her sheer dedication to the job would continue to serve as a benchmark and inspire future generations of workers in the social welfare sector. As a mark of respect and gratitude for her exceptional tenure, the department presented Begum with a formal token of appreciation. The programme concluded on an emotional note, with officials and family members extending their wishes for a healthy, peaceful and fulfilling post-retirement life.

'SAMVAD' Police Awareness Programme on Substance Abuse Prevention at JU's UIET, Kathua Campus

Kathua, May 01: Kathua Campus (JU), University Institute of Engineering and Technology (UIET), organized a Police Awareness Programme titled 'SAMVAD: Interactive Dialogue on Substance Abuse Prevention', under the 100-day intensive Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (Drug-Free India Campaign). The programme aimed at sensitizing students about the harmful effects of substance abuse and promoting a drug-free society. In his message, Prof. Arvind Jasrotia, Rector, Kathua Campus,



University of Jammu, highlighted the importance

of such initiatives in the present context, where substance abuse has emerged as a serious social concern, particularly among the youth. Dr. Rocky Gupta, IC Principal, UIET, Kathua Campus, University of Jammu, emphasized the significance of awareness, early intervention, and community cooperation in effectively combating the growing menace. The resource person, Sh. Ravinder Singh, DySP, Headquarters Kathua, cited real-life examples to sensitize students about the adverse effects of drug consumption. He also motivated them to channelize their energy in a positive direction for building a healthy and joyful society. PSI Anu Radha, SHO, Women Police Station Kathua, highlighted the legal consequences associated with drug peddling and consumption. This was followed by an interactive session wherein students shared their views and raised queries. The session witnessed enthusiastic participation, with both police officials addressing concerns effectively and offering practical guidance on resisting negative influences and making informed life choices.

J&K BJP Nanaji Deshmukh Library Department celebrates its Foundation Day "One India - Supreme India (Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat)" dedicated to PM Modi book released by BJP

Jammu, 01 May 2026: BJP celebrated the Foundation Day of the Nanaji Deshmukh Library and Documentation Department at the party headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, marked by cultural presentations, felicitation of prominent personalities, and release of a special book dedicated to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. J&K BJP President and Rajya Sabha MP Sat Sharma, accompanied by BJP J&K General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul, Rajya Sabha MP Ghulam Ali Khatana, Mahant Shri Shri Shri 1008 Rameshwar Das Maharaj, BJP J&K General Secretary Sanjita Dogra,



and Convener of the Nanaji Deshmukh Library and Documentation Department Kulbhushan Mahotra, were present on the occasion. Jagannath Kunj Bihari, National Organizing Secretary of Bharat Bharti, Randeher Raipuria, Sameer Khajuria, Salathia brothers, Ravi

touching poem depicting the inspiring life and contribution of Nanaji Deshmukh. On the occasion, the dignitaries also released a book titled 'One India - Supreme India (Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat)' dedicated to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The book highlights the Prime Minister's efforts to connect every region of the country through culture, heritage, and national identity. Sat Sharma, while addressing the gathering, said that the Nanaji Deshmukh Library established in the BJP headquarters premises has emerged as one of the finest and best-maintained libraries among all BJP libraries

across the country. He said that the library is not meant only for BJP activists, but is open for every citizen, especially students, scholars, and aspirants preparing for competitive examinations. He appreciated the efforts of Kulbhushan Mohtra in establishing and developing the library, stating that setting up such a well-equipped facility was a challenging task. He added that a large number of people regularly visit the library to access books and study material of their choice. Ashok Koul said that the library has become a valuable centre for intellectual and academic activities during the last years.

GCW Udampur Bids a Heartfelt Farewell to Section Officer Sh. Jagdish Kumar Badyal

UDHAMPUR, MAY 01, 2026: A warm and memorable farewell ceremony was organized at Government College for Women (GCW), Udampur, to mark the superannuation of Sh. Jagdish Kumar Badyal, Section Officer here on yesterday. The event was gracefully arranged by the College Principal and staff members to honour his long and dedicated service in the Department of Higher Education and witnessed the participation of teaching and non-teaching staff, along with the family members of the retiree. On the occasion, Dr. Mool Raj, Staff Secretary, presented a detailed and insightful



account of the professional journey of Sh. Jagdish Kumar Badyal. He highlighted that Sh. Badyal began his career in December 1998 as a Junior Assistant at Government Degree College (Boys), Udampur. Over the years, through his sincerity, hard work, and administrative excellence, he served at various prestigious institutions including General Zorawar Singh Government Degree College, Reasi, GGM Science College, Jammu, and Government Degree College, Ramban. Dr. Mool Raj further elaborated that Sh. Badyal was promoted to Senior Assistant, later to Head Assistant.

Vande Bharat train between Jammu and Srinagar a big gift to people of J&K: Balbir

Jammu, May 1: BJP spokesperson and former Vice Chairman Balbir Ram Rattan described the launch of the Vande Bharat train between Jammu and Srinagar as a historic milestone and a transformative gift for the people of Jammu & Kashmir. He said that this long-awaited rail link marks a new chapter in the region's journey towards development, integration, and prosperity. In a statement issued here, Balbir Ram Rattan said that the introduction of the Vande Bharat train on the Jammu-Srinagar route reflects the resolve of the Union government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi to strengthen connectivity in Jammu & Kashmir. He emphasized that this modern, high-speed, all-weather train ser-



vice will significantly reduce travel time between the two regions, making travel safer, faster, and more comfortable for passengers. Balbir said that for decades, the dream of seamless rail connectivity between Jammu and Srinagar remained unfulfilled due to geographical and logistical challenges. Today, that dream has turned into reality. The Vande Bharat train is not merely a mode of transport, but a powerful sym-

Farooq Abdullah's Attack on Security Forces Exposes Political Hypocrisy: GL Raina

Jammu, May 1: The recent remarks by Farooq Abdullah casting aspersions on the integrity and professionalism of India's security forces are deeply unfortunate, irresponsible, and politically motivated. At a time when the people of West Bengal have witnessed one of the most peaceful and participative elections in their recent history, such statements amount to nothing less than an attempt to undermine public confidence in the very institutions that safeguard our democracy. It reflects a deeply flawed understanding of electoral integrity and exposes the political discomfort of leaders long accustomed to selective interpretations of democracy. Reacting strongly, BJP J&K-UT spokesperson and

former MLC G. L. Raina stated that the record voter turnout-crossing 90 percent, speaks for itself. This unprecedented participation reflects the trust of citizens in a system where they were able to exercise their democratic rights without fear, intimidation, or violence. It naturally disturbs leaders who have been beneficiaries of lower voter turnout. Raina emphasized that this transformation in West Bengal like Kashmir was made possible by the firm and impartial conduct of the Election Commission of India, supported by the disciplined deployment of central security forces. "To question this framework is to question the very foundation that enabled free and fair elections," he said. The objection raised by the National Conference presi-



dent to the deployment of central forces in West Bengal exposes a deeper discomfort-not with the process, but with its outcome. For the first time in years, the state witnessed an election largely free from the shadow of violence that had long plagued its electoral history. No killings, no bomb blasts, no

systemic intimidation-just voters exercising their democratic rights in peace. "This transformation did not happen in a vacuum," Raina added. "It was made possible by the combined efforts of the Election Commission and the unwavering commitment of India's security forces. Record voter participation is not a coincidence-it is a consequence of restored faith in the system." He further pointed out the irony that leaders like Dr. Farooq Abdullah, who themselves remain under constant protection of these very forces, choose to malign their credibility for political convenience. Such selective criticism exposes a clear pattern: institutions are respected only when they serve narrow political interests. India's security forces have earned their reputation through decades of sacrifice, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to national duty. Baseless allegations against them are not only unjustified but also detrimental to the morale of those who stand as the first line of defence for the nation and its democratic processes. "We strongly condemn this deliberate attempt to spread mistrust against constitutional bodies and security institutions," Raina asserted. "India's democracy is strengthened when institutions are respected, not when they are targeted for short-term political gains. The people of India have repeatedly demonstrated their faith in free elections, and no amount of motivated rhetoric can diminish that truth."



"No decision to drop Urdu, don't spread lies": CM Omar Abdullah hits out at PDP

SRINAGAR, MAY 1: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday clarified that no decision has been taken to drop Urdu, asserting that the government has merely sought public feedback and accused opponents of spreading misinformation. Speaking to reporters on sidelines of the integration of two new blocks of estate department in Pampore, Chief Minister Omar said, "There is no dropping of Urdu. God save us from such people who cannot differentiate between truth and falsehood. Unfortunately, this group and its leadership see nothing beyond lies."

He said the government had asked critics to show any official order where Urdu had been removed. "They only showed the order where we invited public comments. If one cannot understand the dif-



ference between seeking feedback and dropping a subject, then it is unfortunate," he added.

Referring to PDP leader Itija Mufti's protest, Omar Abdullah said, "She is educated, but perhaps she still needs to understand the difference between asking for public comments and actually dropping a subject. The file regarding any such proposal is still on my table. I have not approved it, nor do I intend to."

He further stated that while a proposal may have come from the department, it has not been cleared. "As

an elected government, it is our responsibility to seek public feedback. The order issued was only for that purpose.

Those who have nothing constructive to offer are trying to push their based on falsehood," he said. Responding to a question on RTI-related claims, the Chief Minister alleged that the PDP was attempting to divert attention. "They supported the BJP earlier, and now they are trying to mislead people by raising such issues and focusing only on Urdu," he added.

Satish Sharma calls for Youth-Led Transformation, Reiterates Commitment to Nasha Mukh J&K, IT-Driven Growth and World-Class Sports Ecosystem

JAMMU, MAY 1: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, IT, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, today emphasized the pivotal role of youth in shaping a progressive and prosperous Jammu & Kashmir, calling for collective action to build a drug-free society, accelerate digital growth, and position the region as one of India's premier sports destinations. The event was attended by International badminton star Sania Nehwal, sports enthusiasts, Academicians as well people from different walks of life.

Addressing a gathering of students at the India's International Movement to Unite Nations (IIMUN) Jammu Conference, the Minister underscored that the future of Jammu & Kashmir lies in the energy, discipline, and vision of its



young population. He highlighted that youth engagement remains central to the government's policy framework, with focused investments in skill development, digital empowerment, and entrepreneurship. Reiterating the government's firm resolve to make Jammu & Kashmir Nasha Mukh, Satish Sharma said that drug abuse poses a serious threat to the social fabric and aspirations of the younger generation. He

noted that while enforcement and policy measures are being strengthened, the real change must come from within society. "Every young individual who chooses to stay away from drugs and guides others towards a healthier path is contributing to nation-building," he said, urging students to act as ambassadors of a drug-free movement. The Minister further outlined a comprehensive strategy involving awareness campaigns,

improved access to counselling, strengthening rehabilitation infrastructure, and coordinated action with law enforcement agencies to curb drug supply chains across Jammu and Kashmir. Highlighting the role of technology in shaping a modern Jammu & Kashmir, the Minister said the government is actively driving to build a robust digital ecosystem across the region. He noted that investments are being made in IT infrastructure,

innovation hubs, and start-up incubation centres to empower youth with future-ready skills. Emphasizing digital inclusion, he said efforts are underway to expand internet connectivity, promote e-governance, and create employment opportunities in emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and data analytics. "Our aim is to make Jammu & Kashmir not just a consumer of technology, but a creator of innovation," he added. Highlighting Jammu & Kashmir's immense sporting potential, Satish Sharma reiterated the government's vision to transform the region into a premier sports destination of the country. He said that with its unique geography and climate, J&K is ideally positioned to emerge as a hub for both winter and adventure sports, alongside nurturing excellence.

Sakeena Itoo felicitates top performers of ALOHA GAT-2025 at Srinagar

SRINAGAR, MAY 1: Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo today felicitated the top performers and achievers of ALOHA GAT-2025 at SCERT Bema. Here, organized to recognize and celebrate academic excellence and competitive spirit among students. Director School Education Kashmir, Naseer Ahmad Wani; Director, Centre for Governance, IUST, Dr. GN Itoo; Joint Director Education (Central), CEO Srinagar, senior management of ALOHA Srinagar, large number of students and



parents were also present on the occasion. Addressing the gathering, the Minister said that this unique test is not only about intelligence but it also depicts various instincts of a student's life.

"This exam does not only show your capabilities, but it sheds light on various extents of a child or student. It strengthens mental arithmetic, analytical thinking, concentration and overall cognitive develop-

ment among students," the Minister stated. The Minister further said that there is a lot of talent in Jammu and Kashmir among children. "For one and a half years, I am looking after education department

and I would not hesitate to say that the level of talent in our children is unprecedented. They need to be given a chance and way to move forward, they will create opportunities", she said. Congratulating the achievers, the Minister emphasized on the importance of such competitive platforms in nurturing talent at an early stage and preparing students for future academic challenges.

"Activities like ALOHA GAT not only enhance numerical ability but also instil confidence, speed and accuracy, which are prime qualities essential for success in modern education systems," she said.

Sr Vice president Chamber Gupta thanked Railway Minister for flagging off Vande Bharat Jammu-Srinagar train

JAMMU, MAY 1: Jammu 01 may Senior vice president Jammu chamber of commerce and industry Anil Gupta congratulated Railway minister Ashwani Vaishnav for flagging off Vande Bharat train from Jammu to Srinagar. Gupta said a dream of Akhand Bharat by running train from Kanyakumari to Kashmir of every countryman has been fulfilled. This has become reality only because of our Prime Minister Narinder Bhai Modi. Gupta requested central government to start a toy train in Jammu also on the pattern of Kalka-Shimla which started in 1903 and has 102 tunnels, 864 bridges & 919 curves in 96 kilometres passage to attract tourists. He said this will attract tourists to Jammu. Gupta also said there is a need of train like palace on wheels (Rajasthan) to cover the religious & environmental places of Jammu. He said that Railways should take



of need of people of Jammu and Kashmir and should start a daily train from Jammu to Haridwar and in this train priority should be given to the people who have to go to Haridwar to perform Ashvi Visarjan.

JKAACL pays musical tribute to Sarvanand Koul Premi

JAMMU, MAY 1: The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) organized a literary-cum-musical programme today here at KL Saigal Hall to commemorate the thirty-sixth death anniversary of noted scholar and poet Sarvanand Koul Premi. Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants) J&K Dr. Arvind Karwani was the Chief Guest, while eminent historian Dr. Ratan Lal Hangloo presided over the function. The distinguished gathering also included Padma Shri awardee B. L. Bhat and Rajinder Premi, who shared the date. In his address, Dr. Karwani lauded the sustained efforts of Rajinder Premi in preserv-



ing and promoting the rich literary and cultural legacy of Sarvanand Koul Premi. He highlighted Premi's invaluable contribution to Kashmiri literature and his role in fostering cultural harmony, describing him as a beacon of intellectual prowess and artistic excellence. Presiding over the function, Dr. Hangloo underscored the enduring legacy of Sarvanand Koul

Premi's works, stating that his writings continue to inspire generations and reflect the composite cultural ethos of Jammu and Kashmir. Scholarly papers on the life and legacy of the late litterateur were presented by Dr. Sohan Lal Koul and Dr. Vinod Kumar. They offered deep insights into his literary contributions and philosophical outlook.

DM Reasi chairs NCORD meeting; Calls for intensifying anti-drug campaign

REASI, MAY 1: District Magistrate Reasi Kumar Abhishek today chaired a meeting of the District Level Narco Coordination Centre to review enforcement measures and ongoing initiatives aimed at curbing drug abuse in the district. During the meeting, the District Magistrate reviewed cases registered under the NDPS Act and directed the Police Department to furnish detailed inputs on identified hotspots in the district for the installation of CCTV cameras to strengthen surveillance and deterrence. The District Magistrate also called for strict vigilance against illegal cultivation of poppy or



cannabis in the district. The concerned departments were directed to take stringent action against offenders. He further emphasized conducting regular tests of vulnerable sections by using drug detection kits. The Motor Vehicles Department, Police and Health Departments were asked to carry out such

tests and conduct enforcement drives. A comprehensive review of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities being conducted under the Nasha Mukh Jammu Kashmir campaign was also undertaken. The District Magistrate directed the ACD to provide detailed reports on pan-

chayats where awareness programmes have already been conducted and to ensure coverage of the remaining villages under the campaign. He further instructed the BDOs to actively sensitize the public about the ill effects of drug abuse during Gram Sabha meetings and to mobilize community participation in the campaign. Emphasizing the role of educational institutions, the District Magistrate directed the School Education Department to organize Parent-Teacher Meetings in all schools to raise awareness about the dangers of substance abuse among students and parents. The educational insti-

LDK marks International Labour Day with awareness drives, anti-drug pledge and workers' felicitation

KATHUA, MAY 1: The Labour Department Kathua today observed International Labour Day with a series of awareness-cum-outreach programmes across the district, including a major event at a local factory, aimed at honouring the invaluable contribution of workers and promoting awareness about labour rights, welfare measures and social well-being. The programme witnessed

active participation of workers from both organized and unorganized sectors and focused on sensitizing and focused on sensitizing workers about recent labour law reforms and various welfare provisions available for their benefit. Workers were provided detailed awareness regarding the newly introduced labour codes, including the Code on Wages, Industrial Relations Code, Occupational Safety,

Health and Working Conditions Code and the Code on Social Security. The participants were apprised of the key provisions, benefits and legal safeguards aimed at ensuring better wages, improved workplace safety, social security coverage and protection of workers' rights. Assistant Labour Commissioner Kumaon, Piyusha Khajuria, while addressing the gathering,



highlighted the historical significance of International Labour Day and reiterated the department's unwavering commitment towards safeguarding the rights, dignity and welfare of the labour force. She stressed the importance of awareness and active participation of workers for effective implementation of labour laws and welfare schemes. As part of the observance,

an awareness session under the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan was also conducted, during which workers were sensitized about the harmful effects of substance abuse and its adverse impact on individuals, families and society. A collective pledge was administered to all participants to work together for building a drug-free and healthy society. Recognizing the dedication and contribution of the

workforce, workers from different sectors were felicitated with Certificates of Appreciation for their commendable services. A legal literacy session was also organized by the officials of the Labour Department, wherein workers were informed about important labour laws, their rights and responsibilities and the legal remedies and safeguards available to them, thereby empowering them.

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All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Jammu City

