

North in News

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Postal Regd. No. JK/504/19-21

VOL. NO. 14 | ISSUE NO. 122

JAMMU, THURSDAY, 14 MAY 2026

E-paper: <https://northinnews.com/epaper/> PAGE 12

RS. 3.00

Anti-Drug Campaign In J&K Turning Into Revolution Against Narcotics: LG

Srinagar, May 13: The Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, today joined 'Nasha-Mukt Jammu Kashmir Campaign' Padyatra in Kupwara. The Lieutenant Governor also addressed a public gathering. The Lieutenant Governor said that over the past 32 days, civil and police administration struck a devastating blow to the entire drug smuggling ecosystem and this people's movement is transforming into a revolution against narcotics. "Our consistent action is crippling narco-terrorist networks. Properties worth



crosses have been seized, assets confiscated, and passports of 15 smugglers recommended for cancellation. Over 730 smugglers and peddlers have been arrested," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor stated that at the start of this campaign in April, many doubted the possibility of a mass movement against drugs and underestimated the strength of an awakened public and the impact of determined governance with citizen support. "With

people's participation and massive support across the Union Territory, a truly organic movement has emerged across villages, urban neighborhoods, schools, colleges, and the streets of Jammu Kashmir. This fight against drugs is a long one. For decades, people in Jammu Kashmir saw drugs and terrorism as separate threats. But they are not two problems but they are the two heads of the same snake. One head makes money through drugs while the other uses that money to fuel terrorism. Our terrorist neighbor

(Contd on Pg 2)

PM Modi urges cabinet colleagues to spend wisely, cut down on fuel costs

NEW DELHI, MAY 13: After a public call to reduce fuel use, stop gold purchase and other measures to reduce the import bill, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday urged his cabinet colleagues to cut down unnecessary expenditure, including on petrol, sources said. During a meeting of the Union cabinet chaired by the prime minister, he is learnt to have told ministers that they must focus on cost-cutting and consciously reduce spending of resources in the wake of the West Asia crisis. Sources said the prime



minister also urged the ministers to cut down their conveyance size and foreign visits, after which several ministers announced steps in this regard. Prime Minister Modi himself significantly reduced his conveyance size, days after he appealed for cutting down fuel consumption and spending more wisely, prompting several BJP chief ministers and other leaders to adopt similar measures. Official sources said that the prime minister's appeal is not about spending less but spending

(Contd on Pg 2)

Shah reduces convoy size to less than half following PM appeal for fuel conservation amid West Asia crisis

New Delhi, May 13: Union Home Minister Amit Shah has reduced the size of his convoy to less than half following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "seven appeals" for responsible fuel consumption amid the West Asia crisis. The reduction in the number of vehicles in the Home Minister's convoy has been implemented as part of a broader effort within the government to promote efficient use of resources while maintaining all mandatory security arrangements. The development comes



shortly after Prime Minister Modi significantly reduced the size of his own conveyance during recent domestic visits to Gujarat and Assam while retaining all essential security components mandated under Special Protection Group (SPG) protocols.

Sources said the Prime Minister's decision was implemented immediately after his speech in Hyderabad, where he urged citizens to contribute towards economic resilience by reducing dependence on imported fuel and adopting environmentally sustainable alternatives. Following the Prime Minister's appeal, Amit Shah also decided to reduce the number of vehicles accompanying his conveyance without compromising security protocols.

(Contd on Pg 2)

Governor Kavinder Gupta takes lead on fuel conservation

- ▶ Declares Raj Bhavan a 'Fuel Conservation Zone' in response to PM Modi's National Call
- ▶ Directs reduction of Official Conveyance Size by Half
- ▶ Declares not to use State Helicopter until crisis ends



SHIMLA, May 13: In a significant and symbolic gesture of solidarity with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visionary call for fuel conservation and national self-reliance amid the ongoing West Asia crisis, the Governor of Himachal Pradesh Kavinder Gupta today announced a comprehensive set of measures at Raj Bhavan aimed at reducing fuel consumption, promoting austerity, and positioning Himachal Pradesh as a model state in India's collective response to global energy

Declares Lok Bhavan a Fuel Conservation Zone

Governor Kavinder Gupta announced that Raj Bhavan will henceforth function as a designated "Fuel Conservation Zone." He announced that Lok Bhavan will observe "Petrol-Free Sundays" - with no official vehicle using a single litre of imported fuel on Sundays. All Sunday official engagements will be conducted through video conferencing or consolidated level arrangements.

Directs reduction of Official Conveyance Size by Half
 The Governor has directed that the size of all his official convoys be

reduced with immediate effect - a decisive and visible step that signals that the constitutional head of the state is prepared to lead by personal example even in matters of operational comfort.

All non-essential official meetings will henceforth be conducted through video conferencing, eliminating unnecessary road travel. Official events and functions will be consolidated to further reduce vehicle movement. All government departments have been directed to adopt strict austerity measures and minimise fuel expenditure with immediate effect.

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BRIEF NEWS

NEET Paper Leak: Woman detained in Pune handed over to CBI

PUNE, May 13: A woman has been detained by Pune Police for her alleged connection to the NEET paper leak case and handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation, a senior official said on Wednesday. City police commissioner Amitesh Kumar said the woman was detained from Bibhewadi. "We questioned her and handed her over to the CBI for further probe," he said. Kumar, however, refused to elaborate on the woman's exact role in the alleged paper leak which led the National Testing Agency to cancel the examination for admissions to undergraduate medical courses, held on May 3.

(Contd on Pg 2)

NIA Arrests Wanted Narco-Terrorist After Extradition From Portugal

NEW DELHI, MAY 13: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday arrested wanted narco-terrorist Iqbal Singh alias Shera after successfully securing his extradition from Portugal. He was taken into custody by an NIA team at the Delhi airport immediately after he arrived from Portugal, to where he had absconded in 2020. His successful extradition and arrest come as a major shot in the arm for the NIA's fight against Pakistan-backed narco and cross-border terrorism, officials said. During the

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Jammu and Kashmir registers over 93% Revenue record digitisation

JAMMU, May 13: The Jammu and Kashmir government has achieved 93.39 per cent progress in the digitisation of revenue records, with more than 64 lakh such records approved across the Union Territory, official data said. The officials said digitisation of revenue records is one of the flagship reforms under the modernisation of land records programme aimed at ensuring transparency, accuracy and efficiency in land record management. As per the official data, out of a total of 68,59,915 khasras (revenue records),

approvals have been given for 64,06,641 khasras, while 3,04,549 cases are pending at the maker level, 1,10,587 with checkers, and 38,138 at the approver stage. The government, on December 26, 2025, laid down comprehensive guidelines for rectification of errors, entry of backlog mutations, public verification and final freezing of Jamabandis. The process is being updated daily through a monitoring mechanism supervised by divisional commissioners and the financial

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Govt Hikes Paddy MSP By Rs 72 To Rs 2,441/Qtl Sunflower Seed Sees Steepest Rise At Rs 622

NEW DELHI, MAY 13: The government on Wednesday announced a hike in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for paddy by Rs 72 to Rs 2,441 per quintal for the 2026-27 kharif marketing season, while steeper increases for pulses, oilseeds and cotton aimed at reducing import dependency and encouraging crop diversification. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved MSPs for 14 kharif crops ahead of sowing, which typically begins in June with the onset of the southwest monsoon. For paddy, the MSP for common and A-grade varieties stands at Rs 2,441 and Rs 2,461 per quintal, respectively for 2026-27 kharif marketing season (September-October). The MSP for cotton (medium staple) has been raised by



Rs 557 to Rs 8,267 per quintal, while the long staple variety will fetch Rs 8,667 per quintal - the second-highest absolute increase among all crops. The highest absolute increase, however, has been recommended for sunflower seed at Rs 622 per quintal, taking its MSP to

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Withdrawal Of Retirement Funds Soon To Be Automated: EPFO

NEW DELHI, May 13: Retirement fund body EPFO will soon automate the process for settling final provident fund withdrawal claims, fast-tracking the money transfer to the applicant's bank accounts, a top official said on Wednesday. The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has more than seven crore members. At present, partial or advance withdrawal claims of up to Rs 5 lakh are settled through auto mode, and the deadline for the auto-settlement mode is three days from filing the claim. Speaking at the

ASSOCHAM's National Seminar on New Labour Codes, Central Provident Fund Commissioner, EPFO, Ramesh Krishnamurthy, said, "We are also going to initiate, as far as feasible, auto-settlement for now... which was (available) only for advances. Now we are going in for auto-settlement of final withdrawals." He further added that the EPFO is going in for auto-settlement and auto-transfer of provident fund accounts in case a member shifts employers. "You don't have to file a

(Contd on Pg 2)

Teacher among 2 held for 'aiding' foreign terrorists in Kishtwar



Jammu, 13 May: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Wednesday arrested two individuals including a teacher for allegedly providing logistical support and shelter to foreign members of terrorist outfit Jaish-e-Muhammad's Saifullah group in Kishtwar district, officials said. The arrested persons were Mashkoor Ahmed, a resident of Beighpora Singhpora who worked as a government school teacher, and Maneer Ahmed, a resident of Bandeyan Naidgam. The arrests came as part of the authorities' ongoing efforts to dismantle the terror network in the region. On February 22, the Army gunned down three terrorists of

Jaish-e-Muhammad's Saifullah group in Chattroo. The terror group had been operating in the upper reaches of the Kishtwar-Doda belt. In a decisive operation against anti-national elements, police have arrested key accused providing aid to foreign terrorists at a hideout in the Singhpora-Chattroo area of Kishtwar," a police spokesperson said. He said the arrests were made during an operation in connection with a case registered at Chattroo police station in March. The case was filed under Sections 61(2) (criminal conspiracy), 109 (attempt to murder), 147 (robbing) and 148 (armed with deadly weapon) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Sections 13 (punishment for unlawful activities), 16 (punishment for terrorist act), 18 (conspiracy, preparation for terrorist act), 19 (punishment for harbouring terrorists) and 20 (punishment for being member of terrorist organisation) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, and the Arms Act. Kishtwar Senior Superintendent of Police Naresh

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Police repatriates 9 Inspectors Transfers 7 to ACB

JAMMU, MAY 13: Jammu and Kashmir Police has repatriated nine Inspectors from the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) to their respective zones, while seven other Inspectors have been transferred to ACB for further duties with immediate effect. According to an order issued by the Police Headquarters, the reshuffle has been carried out in the interest of administration and approved by the Director General of Police (DGP). The Inspectors repatriated from ACB include Showkat Ahmad Khan, Manzoor Ahmad Beigh, Mohammad Saleem, Imtiaz Ahmad, Muhammad Tufail, Manjeet Singh, Rajpal, Tanveer Hussain and Mohd Hafiz. They have

(Contd on Pg 2)

'Pure' Inter-Faith Love Fine, Plot To Lure Hindu Girls Problematic: RSS On 'Love Jihad'

NEW DELHI, MAY 13: No one can question "sheer pure love" even if it's between individuals of different religions, but any planned conspiracy to take away Hindu girls is definitely problematic, top RSS functionary Dattatreya Hosabale has said. He said there are an uncounted number of cases among Swayamsevaks who have married across castes, religions and even nationalities for "pure love" and the Sangh has always accepted it as natural. "We have welcomed, celebrated and attended those weddings," the RSS General Secretary said in a rare and free-wheeling interview. "If it is sheer pure love, no question. When it is jihad, there is a question," he said. Asked how he defines 'love jihad', a term often used by



the Hindu right wing for companionship between a Muslim man and a Hindu woman, Hosabale said, "The thing is nobody has (defined it). Love jihad, the term was first used by some high court judge. So it is not our contribution." "The thing is that if two individuals are in love, then there is no religion, nationality, et cetera. So that love is pure." But, he added, when this becomes an agenda and there is a planned conspiracy to take away Hindu girls, then it raises a question and causes friction. "Then this DNA thing doesn't work. Because even with that (same) DNA, if somebody is hijacking a girl from some village, leave alone Muslims, is not love," he said, referring to Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh

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FROM PAGE ONE

Anti-Drug...

is involved in financing terror through drug smuggling, turning both drugs and money against innocent Kashmiris," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor further observed that the drug smuggling is destroying families and communities and it is providing terror groups their oxygen. He said by dismantling drug smuggling networks, the administration is cutting the lifeline that feeds the fire of terror.

"In Kupwara and Handwara areas combined, 28 drug smugglers are now behind bars. I want to urge our police officers, the soldiers guarding Kupwara's borders, and the Anti-Narcotics Task Force warriors that not a single guilty should escape. As a border district, Kupwara must stay extra vigilant and take the harshest action against drug smugglers," the Lieutenant Governor said.

It is pertinent to mention that every police station in Kupwara has been directed to gather full details on active drug smugglers and peddlers in their areas and launch decisive action within the next 68 days.

The Lieutenant Governor also urged citizens of Kupwara to participate in awareness drive. He also emphasized on rehabilitation and asked the officers and stakeholders to treat drug addicts as a victim trapped in the dark web of narcotics.

"The drug addicts need our compassion. They are our responsibility. We have to support every young man and woman seeking counseling or treatment. We must ensure they return to society's mainstream. Senior officials must ensure swift action on every complaint and tip coming through the Manas portal and toll-free number. This has to be done with commitment. Every citizen of Kupwara must remember that we will reach every young person extending a hand for help. Together, we will dismantle the drug smuggling networks, free our youth from addiction's clutches, and reconnect them to the path of progress," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor challenged those criticizing "Nasha Mukti Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan" and said that they should name just one innocent person who was unfairly targeted and effective action will be taken. He said if anyone is trying to protect drug smugglers, we must ask ourselves should they face consequences or not? The Lieutenant Governor said that people of Jammu Kashmir are very clear and firm and they want stringent action against drug smugglers and when the people unite, no force can stop us.

"In the days ahead, our crackdown against drug smuggling network will grow tougher and more powerful. The women of Dardpora village had met and they shared how drug smuggling funded weapons that slaughtered their families. That's why I say it loud and clear that drug traffickers and terrorists are inseparable partners in crime," the Lieutenant Governor said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor unveiled the trophies of Kupwara Forest League by Forest Department and Youth Service and Sports' Volleyball Championship under Nasha Mukti J&K Abhiyan.

He also felicitated the winner of reel making competition on drug abuse.

PM Modi...

more wisely by reducing fuel consumption, avoidable dependence on imported goods and foreign-currency-intensive services.

They also stressed that the Modi government is not cutting capital expenditure, welfare spending or subsidies. A downsizing in the prime minister's convoy was implemented in his recent domestic visits. The reduction was done while maintaining essential security components as per the SPG protocol, the sources said. Modi's convoy size was cut in Gujarat and Assam, immediately after his speech in Hyderabad during which he suggested an array of measures for reducing expenditure on imports.

The sources said the prime minister also asked for electric vehicles to be included in his convoy, wherever possible, without making new purchases.

They emphasised that Modi's appeal to conserve fuel, adopt work-from-home wherever possible, and reduce avoidable foreign-exchange outflows were not "austerity measures", which have a negative economic connotation.

Shah reduces...

In another step aimed at promoting sustainability, PM Modi has also directed officials to include Electric Vehicles (EVs) in his convoy wherever feasible, without making any fresh purchases.

Addressing a gathering in Secunderabad earlier this week, Prime Minister Modi stressed that patriotism in present times extends beyond guarding the country's borders and also includes responsible conduct in daily life.

"Patriotism is not only about the willingness to sacrifice one's life on the border. In these times, it is about living responsibly and fulfilling our duties to the nation in our daily lives," the Prime Minister had said.

Highlighting the impact of global disruptions and rising fuel costs, PM Modi appealed to people to reduce petrol and diesel consumption by increasingly using public transport, car-pooling and electric vehicles.

The Prime Minister also urged citizens to reduce edible oil consumption to lower import dependence and called upon farmers to cut the use of chemical fertilisers and move towards natural farming practices.

"The same is true for edible oil. We have to spend foreign currency on its import. If every household reduces the use of edible oil, it is a huge contribution to patriotism," PM Modi had said.

Governor...

Declares not to use State Helicopter until crisis ends

Governor Kavinder Gupta declared that he will not use the state government helicopter for any official engagements until the West Asia crisis subsides and global fuel prices stabilise. "When the nation is being called upon to conserve every drop of fuel, it would be inappropriate for me to use the most fuel-intensive mode of official transport available," the Governor said.

Governor as Chancellor Urges Universities to Lead the Conservation Movement

As the Chancellor of all State Universities of Himachal Pradesh, Governor Gupta made a special appeal to Vice Chancellors across the state to institutionalise fuel and energy conservation within their respective campuses immediately. He asked the Vice Chancellors to issue formal advisories to faculty, staff, and students promoting carpooling, cycling, and use of public transport for daily commute. He called upon students - as the most energetic and influential section of society - to become ambassadors of the fuel conservation movement in their colleges, hostels, and home communities. "Our universities must not merely teach conservation as a subject - they must practise it as a culture," the Governor said.

Governor Leads by Personal Example

In a gesture designed to set a powerful personal example, Governor Gupta announced that he will personally give up his official vehicle one day every week, opting instead for an electric vehicle or carpooling. "Leadership means leading from the front," the Governor said. "If I ask the people of Himachal to conserve fuel, I must be the first to demonstrate that commitment through my own conduct."

Formal Appeal to State Government

Governor Kavinder Gupta has also written a formal letter to the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh urging the state government to adopt a comprehensive fuel conservation policy across all departments. He has appealed to all constitutional heads, ministers, and Members of the Legislative Assembly to voluntarily refrain from using official and private vehicles for at least one day every week.

Message from the Governor

In his message to the people of Himachal Pradesh, Governor Gupta said:

"At a time when global uncertainties arising from the West Asia crisis are posing serious challenges to economic stability across nations, every conscious step towards conservation and self-discipline becomes a contribution to national strength. In response to the Hon'ble Prime Minister's visionary call for fuel conservation, self-reliance and strengthening the economy, I urge all government and non-government employees including members of the Council of Ministers to voluntarily refrain from using their official and private vehicles for one day every week. This is not merely a measure of saving fuel - it is a collective expression of responsibility towards the nation."

The Governor further appealed to citizens - particularly the youth - to adopt carpooling, use public transport, walk for short distances, and promote cycling as both a conservation and health measure. He urged educational institutions, religious leaders, and community organisations to spread the fuel conservation message at the grassroots level.

Governor Gupta also called upon the people of Himachal Pradesh to embrace the "Vocal for Local" spirit - prioritising local products, handicrafts, and indigenous goods over imported alternatives, and choosing domestic tourism destinations over foreign travel. He noted that Himachal Pradesh itself - with its unmatched natural beauty, spiritual heritage, and adventure tourism potential - is among India's finest tourism destinations, and choosing to holiday within the country strengthens both the national economy and local employment. The Governor made a special appeal to the youth of Himachal Pradesh to actively participate in nation-building and strengthen the spirit of social responsibility and discipline within their communities. He reminded them that in times of crisis and challenge, India's greatest strength has always been its unity, discipline, and collective resolve. Himachal Pradesh has always played a leading role in the national interest - and will continue to do so. "Every rupee saved on fuel import is a rupee invested in India's development," the Governor concluded. "In times of national challenge, Himachal Pradesh has always led from the front. We will do so again."

Jammu...

commissioner (Revenue), they said. Ramban, Shopian and Ganderbal districts have achieved 100 per cent completion with all khasras approved and no pendency reported, the data said. In Srinagar, out of 2,58,221 khasras, 2,58,135 have been approved with only 78 pending at the maker level and five with checkers, taking the completion rate to 99.97 per cent, it said.

Budgam recorded 99.96 per cent progress with 4,83,790 approvals out of 4,83,998 khasras, while Poonch achieved 99.95 per cent completion with 2,27,932 approvals and 117 cases pending at different stages, data said.

Udhampur registered 99.73 per cent progress with 3,48,812 approved khasras and 951 pending with makers, it said.

Kathua achieved 99.25 per cent completion with 4,50,289 approvals, while 3,337 cases are pending at the approver stage.

Kupwara recorded 99.13 per cent progress with 5,41,337 approved khasras, while 1,210 cases are pending with makers, 1,595 with checkers and 1,941 with approvers.

Samba registered 99.06 per cent completion with 2,70,203 approved khasras and 2,553 pending cases at

various stages.

Rajouri achieved 98.79 per cent progress with 3,20,466 approved khasras, while 3,915 cases remain pending. Baramulla, one of the largest districts in terms of khasras, recorded 98.70 per cent completion with 6,69,193 approvals and 8,846 cases pending at different stages.

Bandipora achieved 98.61 per cent progress with 1,90,592 approved khasras, while Kulgam registered 98.58 per cent completion with 2,17,353 approved cases.

Kishtwar recorded 94.11 per cent progress with 1,73,167 approved khasras and 10,839 cases pending. Jammu district, which has the highest number of khasras at 8,26,563, achieved 91.64 per cent completion with 7,57,434 approvals, while over 69,000 cases are pending at various stages.

Doda recorded 84.58 per cent progress with 2,29,832 approved khasras and 41,897 pending cases. Pulwama achieved 80.54 per cent completion with 3,71,156 approved khasras, while 89,683 cases are pending.

Anantnag registered 74.65 per cent progress with 3,61,685 approvals and more than 1.22 lakh cases pending at different levels.

Reasi recorded the lowest progress at 39.38 per cent with only 57,357 approvals out of 1,45,645 khasras, while over 88,000 cases are still pending.

The officials further said that 5,989 villages have been completely approved, accounting for 87.87 per cent of total villages, while grievance collection has been initiated in 3,311 villages across Jammu and Kashmir.

Govt Hikes...

Rs 8,343 per quintal. Nigarseed (up Rs 515 to Rs 10,052/ql) and sesamum (up Rs 500 to Rs 10,346/ql) also received significant increases.

Among other oilseeds, soyabean (yellow) was raised by Rs 380 to Rs 5,708 per quintal and groundnut by Rs 254 to Rs 7,517 per quintal.

In pulses, tur (arhar) MSP was raised by Rs 450 to Rs 8,450 per quintal, urad by Rs 400 to Rs 8,200 per quintal, while moong saw a marginal increase of Rs 12 to Rs 8,780 per quintal.

For other cereals, jowar (hybrid) MSP has been fixed at Rs 4,023 per quintal (up Rs 324), with the Maldandi variety at Rs 4,073 per quintal.

Bajra has been raised by Rs 125 to Rs 2,900 per quintal, ragi by Rs 319 to Rs 5,205 per quintal, and maize by Rs 10 to Rs 2,410 per quintal.

Briefing reporters, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the MSPs have been fixed to ensure remunerative prices for farmers and are at least 50 per cent above the cost of production across all 14 crops. The margins are estimated to be highest for moong (61 per cent), followed by bajra and maize (56 per cent each) and tur/arhar (54 per cent).

For the remaining crops, the margin is pegged at 50 per cent. The government estimates the total payout to farmers at Rs 2.60 lakh crore, with annual procurement projected at 824.41 lakh tonne.

Indian Vegetable Oil Producers' Association (IVPA) President Sudhakar Desai welcomed the MSP hike for oilseeds but reiterated the need for stable and dynamic import duty framework that can respond to changing global price cycles, domestic crop economics and inflationary trends.

Withdrawal...

form anymore. We try to auto-migrate your accounts to your latest member account," he stated.

Talking about fully operationalising four labour codes by publishing rules under those, he stated that there has been a huge attempt to simplify, codify, standardise definitions and other terms.

The four new labour codes have already been notified by the government on May 8.

Krishnamurthy said that the next set of notifications that pertain specifically to the EPFO would be published shortly.

Under the new legal framework, the three schemes - EPF Scheme 1952, Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme 1976 and Employees Pension Scheme 1995 - will also be renotified.

"We have not gone in for major changes. We have tried to integrate all the learnings from the past. We have included all the recent central board of trustees approved decisions, which include simplification of the withdrawals and other such reforms, including a major overhaul of the provisions relating to the exempt trust. Those have been included in the new schemes," he added.

On this occasion, Union Labour Secretary Vandana Gurnani said that labour is in the concurrent list of the Constitution, and states will frame their own rules. The philosophy of the government has been to balance the compliance reduction, ease of doing business, ease of expanding business, and ensuring that the workers are not shortchanged, she said.

The onus is now on the industry to ensure that reform is not just viewed as a compliance checklist, but it is a commitment to dignity, a commitment to a happy, healthy and productive workforce, she added.

Teacher...

Kumar said investigations led to the arrest of Mashoor Ahmed, who was employed as a teacher in the School Education Department. He said the accused was directly involved in facilitating a hideout for foreign terrorists in the Singhpora area of Chatroo, thereby providing logistical assistance to terror operatives active in the region. He said Maner Ahmed had been arrested earlier for similar offences. Police said further investigation is underway to detect and dismantle the wider network involved in supporting terrorist activities in the district. Reiterating its

"zero-tolerance policy" against terrorism and supporters of terrorism, police warned of strict action against individuals found aiding antinational activities. According to security forces, six Pakistan-backed terrorists were killed in Kishitwar-Udhampur in February this year.

Police...

been posted to Kashmir Zone, Jammu Zone and Armed Zone respectively.

Meanwhile, the officers transferred to ACB include Tariq Hassan, Jaspal Singh, Nisar Hussain, Sohail Ahmad, Abid Ashraf Bhat, Mukhtar Ali and Mohammad Iqbal from different units including PHQ, Kashmir Zone, Jammu Zone, Armed Zone and GRP.

In a separate order, Inspector Vimal Kumar Koul has been detached from Armed Zone and transferred to ACB for further duties with immediate effect.

The order stated that all the officers shall be relieved forthwith.

'Pure'..

(RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat's comments about Hindus and Muslims of India having the same DNA.

He stressed that he was not talking only about Hindu girls and it cannot be allowed even if a girl from any other community is kidnapped.

"You cannot say that 'as we belong to one DNA, it's okay'. It is not. That is why it should be a socially acceptable thing. Love is not barred in a society," he said.

Asked specifically whether he was saying that the Sangh was not against a love marriage between individuals of different faiths or communities, he said that there are many families of Swamyansvaks where they have married outside their caste, community or religion.

"We do not publicise it as we accept it as a natural thing," he said. At the same time, he said, what is being referred to as 'love jihad' cannot be ignored, as such cases are being reported in large numbers and heard in courts every month.

"Many girls have come back and they have told their sad stories... There are around 20,000 cases that have been documented. All these things cannot happen," he said.

He also wondered whether love happens only one way. "All cases of Hindu girls and Muslim boys? So that means this love has only one dimension. Then it is not love. There is a conspiracy," he said.

On another question about Bhagwat's comments about the need for Hindus to have more children, Hosabale said it is important for family security and several other reasons.

"If there is only one child, one child norm, then if something happens to the child at some age, what will happen to the parents in their old age?" Secondly,

if there is only one child who gets all the love and everything, there is a risk that the child develops an ego or loneliness.

"Siblings help us learn love, sharing and compassion. But if a child grows without a sibling, there can be psychological problems or ego or loneliness," he said.

He further said that having more children is also important for the community and the nation.

"We are creating economy, we are creating wealth, we are growing everything. But in the future, if the nation becomes a nation of old people, there would be a problem," he said while referring to Japan.

Hosabale said India is an ancient nation, but it is also a young nation even after thousands of years.

"We should remain young as a nation," he said while advocating for people to have more children.

NEET...

The cancellation of the exam left over 20 lakh medical courses aspirants and their families anxious about the fresh examination date, admit cards, examination centres and the counselling timeline.

NIA...

investigation, the NIA found Shera to be a key conspirator and handler of an India-based narco-terror module engaged in smuggling heroin from Pakistan.

A native of Punjab's Amritsar, Shera had allegedly masterminded a conspiracy to smuggle narcotics from Pakistan into the border state, the probe agency said.

According to the NIA, he coordinated and supervised the trafficking and distribution of the smuggled drugs, and channelled the proceeds through hawala networks to Pakistan- and Kashmir-based operatives of HizbulMujahideen (HM) terrorist outfit to facilitate terror activities.

The arrested fugitive had a non-bailable warrant of arrest (NBW) against him in the case since October 2020. An Interpol notice had also been in place for his arrest since June 2021.

To further the anti-India narco terror conspiracy, Shera had formed a terror gang and operated a Punjab-based network involved in trafficking large quantities of heroin, collecting sale proceeds, and transferring funds to handlers and terror operatives, the NIA said in a statement.

The agency said Shera maintained close links with Pakistan-based HM operatives.

The case was originally registered by the Punjab Police following the arrest of an HM overground worker, Hiral Ahmed Shergoiji. Police had also recovered Rs 29 lakh in alleged drug proceeds from Shergoiji - a close aide of deceased terrorist commander Riyaz Ahmed Naikoo.

Further investigation had led to the recovery of another Rs 32 lakh as narco terror proceeds from various Punjab-based members of the terror gang. The NIA, after taking over the case, had launched massive efforts to dismantle the module and secure Shera's extradition.

Shiv Mandir Sector-7 to mark Shani Amavasya with Hanuman Chalisa chanting on May 16

Devotional gathering in Trikuta Nagar aims to strengthen cultural values, youth participation and collective pursuit of peace, prosperity and national progress

Jammu, May 13, 2026: Shiv Mandir, Sector-7, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, is preparing to observe the sacred occasion of Shani Amavasya on May 16, 2026 (Saturday) with deep religious devotion and community participation. The temple will host a mass recitation of the Hanuman Chalisa from 6 PM onwards, accompanied by elaborate arrangements for prasad distribution to all devotees attending the gathering.



The programme was announced at a press conference addressed by Mandir Committee President Shiv Kumar Jolly, along with senior committee members Vijay Vaid, Umil Arora, Dr. R. L. Handoo, Nanaji Raina, Rajesh Gupta, Thakur Sameer Ji, Pandit Pankaj, and Pandit Mohinder. The committee informed that preparations are in full swing, including arrangements for seating, devotional music setup, sound system, lighting, crowd management, and prasad

distribution to ensure a smooth and spiritually enriching experience for devotees.

Speaking on the occasion, the organisers emphasized that observance of Shani Amavasya and collective chanting of Hanuman Chalisa go beyond ritual worship and represent a deeper reaffirmation of values enshrined in Sanatan Dharma. They stated that such spiritual congregations act as a

strong medium for preserving India's ancient cultural and philosophical traditions, which have historically guided society towards righteousness, discipline, and compassion.

The committee further observed that in today's rapidly changing social environment, religious and cultural programmes play a vital role in connecting younger generations with their roots. They noted

that participation of youth in such events helps instill moral values, self-discipline, and respect for heritage, while also strengthening a sense of unity and shared identity within the community. According to them, these cultural engagements act as a guiding force in steering youth away from distractions and towards constructive and value-based living. Highlighting the broader national perspective, the organisers stated that such community-driven spiritual initiatives also contribute indirectly to the larger vision of peace, prosperity, and inclusive national progress. They remarked that it is the collective moral responsibility of society to ensure that cultural strength and spiritual awareness continue to guide development efforts, particularly as India moves towards the goal of becoming a developed nation by 2047 (Viksit Bharat @2047).

MLA Bahu Ch. Vikram Randhawa Leads Massive Protest Against Land Encroachments in Jammu

Jammu, May 13: Senior BJP leader and MLA Bahu, Ch. Vikram Randhawa today led a massive protest along with members of civil society, social activists, local residents, and party workers including District President Naresh Singh Jasrotia, and his team against the increasing incidents of illegal land encroachments across Jammu, particularly in Bahu Constituency and the forest land surrounding the historic Mahamaya Mandir. Raising serious concern over the growing activities of land mafias and encroachers, the MLA said that illegal occupation of forest and government land has become a major threat to the ecological balance, public property, and the religious heritage of Jammu city. Speaking on the occasion, Ch. Vikram Randhawa strongly condemned the



attempts by land encroachers to illegally occupy forest land near Mahamaya Mandir and warned that such anti-public activities will not be tolerated at any cost. He said that the sacred surroundings of Mahamaya Mandir must be protected and preserved for future generations.

The MLA further stated that several areas of Jammu, especially Bahu Constituency, are witnessing continuous attempts of illegal encroachments by land mafias, and demanded immediate intervention by

the administration to identify and remove all such encroachments without delay.

During the protest, the police department and district administration held discussions with the protesters and assured that necessary action regarding the encroachments would be initiated and completed within seven days. Following the assurance from the administration, the protesters peacefully opened the highway and suspended the protest temporarily.

NC nominated Zonal Committee Pir Panjal Zone YNC

Jammu, May 13: As approved by the Provincial President Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Jammu, Mr Rattan Lal Gupta, Sardar Tejinder Pal Singh (Aman) Provincial President Youth National Conference Jammu has nominated Zonal Committee Youth National Conference, Pir Panjal Zone.

Mr Waqar Lone has been nominated as Zonal President Pir Panjal Zone Youth National Conference. Mohd Afsal Choudhary Advocate, Sardar Gurpreet Singh (Naveen), Mr Wasim Akram, Mr Mukhtiar Rathore as Vice Presidents Pir Panjal Zone YNC. Mr Lobish Verma as Secretary Pir Panjal Zone YNC. Gursharan Singh, Mr Sajad Owais, Mr Amjed Ali Khan, Mr Vishal Sharma and Mr Habib Ul Rehman as Joint Secretaries Pir Panjal Zone YNC. Mr Ghulam Isaq as Coordinator Pir Panjal Zone YNC. Mr

Naveed Mirza and Mr Imran Tabassum as Executive Members Pir Panjal Zone YNC. Mr Rattan Lal Gupta congratulated newly nominated YNC Zonal Committee Pir Panjal Zone and hoped that the team of Youth National Conference will ensure close coordination with their respective District Presidents (Parent Body) and work untidily to strengthen the party at gross root level in their respective areas. They will also ensure that new young blood is added in the party at Panchayat level. On this occasion Sardar Tejinder Pal Singh (Aman) assured the Provincial President that the team nominated would make awareness among the Youth about the policies and programmes of the party and smooth implementation of government schemes in their respective areas which have been launched by the Omar Abdullah led government.

Director Agriculture Jammu Participates in Regional Meeting of Northern States on Rabi Price Policy 2027-28 at Chandigarh

Jammu, May 13: Director Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare Jammu, Sh. Anil Gupta today participated in the One Day Regional Meeting of Northern States regarding Rabi Price Policy for the 2027-28 marketing season held at Krishi Bhawan, Dakshin Marg, Chandigarh under the Chairmanship of Chairman, Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India. The meeting was organised by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi to deliberate upon the price policy for the upcoming Rabi marketing season 2027-28 with a focus on ensuring fair remuneration to farmers and strengthening agricultural marketing mechanisms across



Northern States. Representatives and senior officers from various states participated in the meeting and shared their views and recommendations. During the meeting, Director Agriculture, Jammu, Sh. Anil Gupta represented the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and actively participated in the dis-

ussions related to procurement mechanisms, crop pricing and farmers' welfare measures. He highlighted the importance of ensuring timely and effective procurement operations for safeguarding the interests of farmers. Shri Anil Gupta emphasized the need for direct procurement of wheat

through the Food Corporation of India (FCI) so that farmers receive the notified Minimum Support Price (MSP) without inconvenience. He also stressed the establishment of adequate procurement mandis equipped with essential infrastructure including storage facilities and availability of gunny bags to prevent distress sale of agricultural produce during the procurement season. During the deliberations, emphasis was also laid on implementation of the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mechanism for ensuring transparent and timely payments directly into the accounts of farmers during the Rabi Marketing Season 2027-28. Sh. Anil Gupta further informed the house that the Agriculture Department Jammu & Kashmir.

Bharat flags off 13th Annual Jyesth and Hari Chhadi Yatra with devotional fervour from Bari

Bari (Jammu), May 13: The 13th Annual Jyesth and Hari Yatra commenced today with great religious enthusiasm, devotion, and traditional rituals as JKPC Kissan Congress Chairman and Mahant Bharat Priye ceremoniously flagged off the sacred chhadi yatra from the historic premises of Shri Shakti Chandi Dham, Bari. The atmosphere at the shrine reverberated with devotional chants, shlokas, and bhajans as a large gathering of devotees assembled to witness the commencement of the annual pilgrimage. Priests performed customary rituals before the ceremonial flag-off, seeking blessings for the smooth, peaceful, and successful conduct of the



yatra. The Jyesth and Hari Chhadi Yatra is dedicated to the revered memory of late Dev Raj/Devesh Thakur Ji, who originally initiated this spiritual tradition with deep religious commitment. What began as a humble devotional initiative has today evolved into a significant annual pilgrimage, symbolising continuity of faith, cultural identity, and spiritual unity among devotees. Following his demise, the sacred tradition has been faithfully preserved and carried forward by Pandit Pankaj Ji and Sant Lal Singh Thakur Ji, who have ensured that the spiritual legacy remains uninterrupted and continues to inspire devotees across regions. This year marks the 13th edition of the yatra, which will be con-

ducted from May 13 to May 15, 2026. The three-day spiritual journey will see devotees walking alongside the ceremonial chhadi (holy staff), offering prayers, chanting hymns, and participating in religious rituals throughout the route. The procession began from Jammu and will pass through key traditional halts including Hari Nagar, Kathua, and Basohli, before reaching its final destination at the revered Bari Chandi Mata Temple in the Bari area. At each halt, local devotees are expected to welcome the yatra with traditional offerings, prasad distribution, and collective prayers, reinforcing the spirit of shared devotion. Speaking on the occasion,

Mahant Bharat underscored the profound spiritual significance of the yatra, describing it as a living tradition that connects generations through faith and devotion. He said that such pilgrimages are not merely religious journeys but also serve as a bridge between cultural heritage and contemporary spiritual practices. He further stated that the teachings embedded in such traditions encourage righteousness, compassion, discipline, and service to humanity. According to him, the continued observance of the yatra reflects the unwavering faith of devotees in divine blessings and the enduring strength of Sanatan spiritual values.

NEET irregularities pushing youth future into darkness: Naveen Choudhary

Jammu, May 13: Naveen Choudhary, District Youth President of All J&K Jat Sabha, on Wednesday strongly criticized the Central Government over the alleged irregularities and paper leak incidents linked to the NEET examination, stating that such failures are pushing the future of the country's youth into darkness. In a statement issued here, Choudhary said that repeated incidents of paper leaks and mismanagement in competitive examinations have badly shaken the confidence of students and parents across the nation. He termed the issue not merely an administrative lapse, but a serious attack on the aspirations of lakhs of hardworking students preparing for their



careers. "Over the past few years, several major examinations, including recruitment and entrance tests, have come under the shadow of corruption and paper leak scandals. Despite tall claims and new laws introduced by the government, the examination system continues to remain vulnerable," he said. Choudhary alleged that the

government has failed to ensure a transparent and secure examination process, allowing organized cheating networks and paper leak mafias to flourish unchecked.

"The youth of this country are losing hope. Students spend years preparing with dedication, but repeated controversies are destroying their morale and confidence," he added.

Highlighting the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, he said that thousands of students from the region study under difficult social and economic conditions with dreams of becoming doctors and professionals, but such incidents leave them mentally distressed and uncertain about their future.

Chowkidar failed to protect future of Youth: Tony slams Modi Govt on NEET Leak

From NEET to recruitment exams, nothing safe under BJP: Tony

JAMMU, May 13 : Senior Congress leader and former DDC Sushetgarh Taranjit Singh Tony launched a scathing attack on the BJP-led Central Government over the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak controversy, alleging that the country's examination system has completely collapsed under the so-called "Chowkidar regime." In a strongly worded statement, Tony said that from 2014 onwards, nearly 90-plus examination paper leaks have taken place across the country, with the majority of such scandals emerging from BJP-ruled states including Rajasthan,

Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Gujarat. He alleged that despite repeated promises of transparency and accountability, the BJP government has failed to dismantle the "paper leak mafia" operating openly across India. "More than 22 lakh NEET aspirants and nearly 6 crore youth of this country are living under uncertainty because the BJP government has turned competitive examinations into a business model for corruption. The future of India's youth is being auctioned while the government remains a silent spectator," Tony said.

Referring to the recent cancellation of NEET-UG 2026 by the National Testing Agency (NTA) following allegations of a large-scale paper leak, Tony alleged that the scandal exposed the deep-rooted nexus between coaching mafias, middlemen and influential political protection. Reports suggest that leaked "guess papers" matching a large portion of the actual exam were allegedly sold for lakhs of rupees, while agencies have now launched multi-state investigations into the racket. Tony claimed that if examination papers are leaking



year after year, then the involvement cannot be limited to small operators alone. "When such scams happen repeatedly, it clearly indicates that the entire machinery is compromised. The money generated through these scams reaches powerful people sitting at the top," he alleged.

He further attacked the BJP government over the functioning of central agencies and questioned the credibility of the CBI probe into the NEET leak case. "The BJP uses agencies like the CBI as political tools. How can students expect justice when the same government under whose rule the scam happened is now controlling the investigation?" Tony asked. Citing statements made by opposition leaders across the country, Tony said even national leaders have termed the NEET scandal as a "crime against the future of youth." Congress leaders have accused the

government of organized corruption in the education system, while several opposition parties have demanded accountability and resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Tony alleged that BJP leaders talk about "New India" and "Digital India," but in reality students are facing "Paper Leak India." He said poor and middle-class families spend years preparing for examinations, take loans, and make sacrifices for their children's education, only to see their dreams shattered due to corruption and administrative failure.

"The BJP government has failed to protect the integrity of India's education system. Instead of ensuring merit and fairness, they have allowed exam mafias to flourish. The youth of this country will never forgive those responsible for destroying their future," he added. Demanding strict punishment for all those involved in the NEET paper leak scandal, Tony called for a Supreme Court-monitored independent investigation and a complete overhaul of the National Testing Agency to restore public confidence in the examination system.

JAMMU

Mahant Baba Yashpal Ji Maharaj and Sanjeev Verma Flag Off Drug-Free Awareness March at Baba Ballo Ji Devsthan Mathwar

Grand Awareness March Organized Under "Drug-Free Jammu & Kashmir Campaign"
Program Organized by Shri Kailakh Jyotish and Vedic Sanshan Trust

Jammu, May 13: Under the guidance of the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, a grand, inspiring, and historic awareness march was organized today in the Nagrota Assembly Constituency as part of the 100-day public awareness campaign under the "Drug-Free Jammu & Kashmir Campaign." The event was organized by Shri Kailakh Jyotish avim Vedic Sanshan Trust.



The awareness march commenced from Jandiyal Chowk and concluded at RMG International School, Jandiyal, Jammu. A large number of youths, students, social organizations, administrative officials, teachers, and local residents enthusiastically participated in the march, sending a strong message of unity against drug abuse. The program was formally inaugurated by Mahant Baba Yashpal Ji Maharaj of Baba Ballo Ji Devsthan Mathwar and Shri Sanjeev Verma, IAS, Chief Electoral Officer, Jammu & Kashmir, who flagged

off the march. The entire area echoed with powerful slogans such as "Quit Drugs - Embrace Life" and "Save Youth - Save the Future." Carrying awareness placards and banners, the youth conveyed the message that drug addiction destroys not only individuals but also families, society, and the future of the nation. The program was presided over by Mahant Baba Yashpal Ji Maharaj, who, in his inspiring address, stated that youth power is the greatest strength of

any nation. He emphasized that if young people fall prey to drug addiction, the future of society becomes dark and uncertain. He urged the youth to adopt the path of values, education, spirituality, and national service in order to become agents of positive social change. The Chief Guest, Shri Sanjeev Verma, IAS, Chief Electoral Officer, Jammu & Kashmir, stated that drug abuse has become a serious social and moral challenge facing society

today. He emphasized that the government's anti-drug campaign must be transformed into a people's movement so that every family and every young person becomes a part of this mission. He appreciated the organizers and described such awareness initiatives as extremely important for society.

The successful event was led by Mahant Rohit Shastri (State Awardee) of Shri Kailakh Jyotish avim Vedic Sanshan Trust. Addressing the gathering, Mahant Rohit Shastri said, "This is not merely a campaign against drugs, but a great mission to save society and future generations. Until every citizen actively participates in this fight, the dream of a drug-free India will remain incomplete." He expressed gratitude to all the distinguished guests, administrative officers, media representatives, youth participants, and local residents for their support and presence.

NEET Cancellation a Coordinated Assault on Crores of Dreams: Shiv Sena (UBT)



Jammu, May 13: The Jammu & Kashmir unit of Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasahb Thackeray) on Wednesday launched a sharp attack on the Central Government over the cancellation of the NEET examination, calling it not merely an "administrative failure" but a "coordinated crime" against the future of crores of students across the country. Addressing a press conference here, party State President Manish Sahni said that over the past two years, a disturbing and dangerous pattern of paper leaks has emerged across the country. Citing figures, Sahni said, "In the last 24 months, more than 15 major examinations in the country, including prestigious exams like UGC-NET and UP Police recruitment examinations, have fallen prey to corruption. The government hurriedly passed the 'Public Examinations Act 2024', but on the ground its far is completely absent."

Questioning the government's capability, Sahni said that students and parents across the country are deeply angry and frustrated. "Is the government not even capable of conducting a secure and transparent examination? It is the government's weak and indecisive approach that has emboldened the paper leak mafia," he said. Referring to Jammu & Kashmir, Sahni stated that more than 50,000 students from the Union Territory, who are already struggling under difficult geographical and social conditions, have been completely shattered by the decision. He said that for students dreaming of becoming doctors despite limited resources and hardships, the cancellation has come as a devastating blow. Sahni demanded a fair investigation into the entire matter under the supervision of the Supreme Court of India and sought swift and strict legal action against all those involved in the paper leak racket to eliminate the "mafia raj" from the examination system.

JKNC Delegation Meets Cluster University VC Raises Key Academic and Administrative Issues

Seek preference to locals in appointments



Jammu, May 13, 2026: A delegation of the Jammu Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), led by Zonal Secretary & Coordinator Dr. Vikas Sharma, met the Vice Chancellor of Cluster University of Jammu, Prof. K. S. Chandrasekhar, to discuss several important issues concern-

ing the functioning and administration of the University. During the meeting, the delegation strongly emphasized the urgent need for permanent appointments to key administrative posts, including Registrar, Controller of Examinations, Dean Academic Affairs, Assistant Registrars, and Assistant Professors against all sanctioned vacancies. The delegation stated that prolonged in-charge and ad-hoc arrangements are adversely affecting accountability, timely decision-making, and the smooth functioning of the university.

The delegation also urged the university administration to prioritize local candidates in recruitment processes so that highly qualified youth from Jammu can receive better employment opportunities in higher educational institutions. It was highlighted that local youth prefer university employment and deserve fair representation in appointments.

NEET cancellation unfortunate, but instant re-exam move praiseworthy: Purnima Sharma

Purnima appreciates Govt's quick response in NEET Paper Leak Case

Jammu, May 13: BJP spokesperson and former Deputy Mayor of Jammu, Adv. Purnima Sharma, on Wednesday expressed concern over the cancellation of the NEET-UG 2026 examination following allegations of a paper leak, but appreciated the prompt response of the National Testing Agency (NTA) and the Government of India in ordering an immediate re-examination and initiating strict action against those responsible.



Adv. Purnima Sharma said that while the cancellation of such a major national-level examination has caused anxiety among lakhs of students and parents, the swift intervention by the NTA to protect the integrity of

The NTA has announced a fresh re-examination process within days and the matter has also been handed over to the CBI for a detailed probe.

She said the future of students cannot be compromised by the actions of a few anti-social elements involved in paper leak rackets and examination frauds. "The decision to cancel the examination may have been difficult, but it was necessary to ensure justice for honest and hardworking students across the country," she stated. Adv. Sharma further welcomed the assurance given by authorities that no fresh registration fee would be charged and that all existing candidates would be accommodated in the re-examination process.

Calling for exemplary punishment for those involved in the alleged leak, she urged investigative agencies to identify the entire network behind the malpractice and ensure stringent legal action so that such incidents do not recur in the future. She said the Modi Government has adopted a zero-tolerance policy against corruption and unfair practices in examinations.

She also appealed to students not to lose morale and remain focused on their preparation, expressing confidence that the re-examination will be conducted in a transparent and secure manner under strengthened monitoring mechanisms.

JKPCC Holds Protest, Burns Effigy of Education Minister over NEET paper leak

JKPCC seeks Resignation of Education Minister, SC monitored probe

Jammu, May 13: Jammu & Kashmir Pradesh Youth Congress today staged a massive protest at Shaheed Chowk Jammu against the NEET paper leak issue and burnt the effigy of Union Education Minister over the repeated controversies surrounding national level examinations.

Supported by senior Congress leaders including Working President Shri Raman Bhalla, Former Minister DCC President Jammu Yogesh Sawhney, Chief Spokesperson Ravinder Sharma, Former MLC Ved Mahajan and others, the Youth Congress workers raised slogans against the central government, burnt the effigy of the Education Minister, and demanded Supreme Court monitored probe into the paper leakage issue spoiling the career of lakhs of candidates.

The protest was organized as per the direction of Indian Youth Congress President Uday Bhanu Chib and on the instructions of Anirudh Sawhney, General



Secretary J&K Pradesh Youth Congress. A large number of Pradesh Youth Congress office bearers, activists, and youth workers participated in the demonstration and expressed anger over the uncertainty and stress being faced by lakhs of students and their families due to repeated examination related controversies.

JKPCC Vice President Adv. Ranjodh Singh; Dr. Suhaib

Manhas Secretary JKPPC, Amir Malik Joint Secretary, Harris Aly Joint Secretary PYC, Hussaini Mubarak Chowdhary Assembly General Secretary, Harris Assembly General Secretary, youth leaders Ahmed Sharif (Gibran), Danish Iqbal, Molsin, Tahir, Arsalan, Asyan, Bali, Zuhair, Wasim, Rehbar, Umar, and Sami, among others led the protest. Senior JKPCC Leaders also joined

the protest to support the resentment and anger of youth. They included Working President Raman Bhalla, Former Minister J&K Yogesh Sawhney, Chief spokesperson Ravinder Sharma and Ex MLC Ved Mahajan, Iqbal Dar, Virender Manhas, Rakesh Sharma, Sohni Sharma, Vijaynt Pathania, Jatin Vashisht, Raj Kumar Sodhi, Amit, Asha Chandan, Kamlesh Manhas, and others.

Addressing the gathering, Youth Congress leaders said that the repeated incidents of paper leaks, exam irregularities, and cancellation of examinations have completely exposed the failure of the BJP-led central government in ensuring a transparent and fair examination system. They said that students spend years preparing for competitive examinations with great dedication, but the government's negligence and inability to conduct examinations fairly have shattered the confidence of the youth.

ADC Nowshera Chairs Public Darbar at Panchayat Ghar Lam, Qila Darhal

Nowshera May 13: A Public Darbar/Public Grievance Redressal Camp was organized at Panchayat Ghar Lam of Block and Tehsil Qila Darhal, Sub Division Nowshera, under the chairmanship of Dr. Pritam Lal Thappa, Additional Deputy Commissioner Nowshera.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from local residents, Panchayati Raj Institution members, prominent citizens, and officers of various departments. During the interaction, the people projected several demands and grievances related to road connectivity, water supply, electricity, healthcare facilities, education, revenue matters, and other developmental issues of the area. Speaking on the occasion, the ADC emphasized the importance of direct public outreach programmes in strengthening coordination between the administration and the general public. He assured the participants that all genuine grievances and developmental demands projected during the Darbar would be examined on priority and taken up with the concerned departments for early redressal.

The ADC also stressed upon the officers to



remain accessible to the public and ensure prompt disposal of public issues in a transparent and time-bound manner. He directed the concerned departments to work in close coordination for effective implementation of various government welfare and developmental schemes at the grassroots level.

BJP J&K slams Pakistan's 'Double Standards' amid US-Iran conflict

Jammu, May 13: BJP J&K today criticized Pakistan, as the double standards of Pakistan were exposed once again during the US-Iran war.

In a press statement issued today, Adv Parimoksh Seth, Spokesperson, BJP J&K, criticized Pakistan for its double standards in every field be it terrorism or playing role of mediator. Seth said that Pakistan's stance during the US-Iran conflict is contradictory, as Pakistan, on one hand, acted as a mediator between the US and Iran during ceasefire efforts, while on the other hand, Iranian military aircraft were allowed to use



Pakistani airbases during the conflict, and Iranian aircraft were parked at Noor Khan base of Pakistan. Seth said that Pakistan has always been known for its double standard. Now, when Pakistan was supposed to act as a mediator between the US and Iran, it chose to go ahead with its hidden agenda, and was exposed once

again when news of use of Pakistan's air bases by Iran was exposed. Seth said that the conduct of Pakistan is always doubtful since its creation, as Pakistan is the father of terrorism in the world. The news of the use of Pakistan's air bases by Iran, when it should have acted with neutrality, has raised serious questions over Pakistan's credibility, and the same has come under global scrutiny due to Continued Double Standards. Seth further said that Pakistan's repeated contradictions in its statements and actions have once again raised serious questions about its credibility.

MLA Ramgarh Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal Receives 50+ Youth Club Registration Forms Under MY Bharat Initiative

SAMBA, May 13: In a significant initiative aimed at promoting youth empowerment and community participation, more than 50 Youth Club registration forms were submitted to MLA Ramgarh Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal by Former Parliamentarian, Block Samba, Devinder Kumar and Advocate Sanjeev K. Kohli for the establishment and registration of new Youth Clubs under MY Bharat, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India. The initiative aims to connect rural youth with various government-led programmes related to leadership development, sports promotion, volunteerism, social awareness campaigns, and nation-building activities. The newly proposed



Youth Clubs are expected to play an active role in encouraging youth engagement and strengthening the grassroots welfare.

The programme was organized under the guidance of Sushil Singh Charak, Chief Functionary of Nations Development Association (NDA), affiliated with MY Bharat.

He informed that active work is being undertaken for Youth Club registrations across Samba and Jammu districts and also highlighted the importance of the PM Internship Scheme for providing skill development and employment opportunities to the youth. Addressing the gathering, MLA Ramgarh appreciated the enthusiasm and participation of local youths and assured full support for initiatives related to youth welfare, sports, and social development under MY Bharat.

Advocate Nar Singh, Legal Advisor, Nations Development Association (NDA), along with youth volunteers and social workers, was also present on the occasion.

DC Kulgam chairs Mega Block Diwas at Devsar Listens to Public Grievances, Demands

KULGAM, MAY 13: Continuing the public outreach initiative aimed at taking governance to the doorsteps of the people, a Mega Block Diwas was today held at Devsar under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam. The programme was attended by ADDC Altaf Ahmad Khan, Joint Director Planning (JDP), ACR, CEO, CMO, Executive Engineers, Tehsildar Devsar, BDO Devsar, and other district and sectoral officers. Delegations from Kund, Maskhod, Chowgam, Bonigam, Check, Devsar, Berigam and several other villages participated in the programme. During the event, the DC interacted with a large gathering of residents from Devsar and adjoining areas, who apprised the administration of various issues and demands related to basic amenities and developmental needs. Key issues highlighted by the public included completion and operationalisation of filtration plants, strengthening of solid waste management systems, development of playfields, and establishment of children's parks. Residents of Chowgam village raised concerns regarding augmentation of staff at the local health centre, besides construction and upgrade of roads and development of playfields in the area. Several road connectivity issues were also projected by the public. The residents further demanded construction of a flood protection



bund at Nava. A delegation of farmers also demanded strict monitoring to ensure the availability of quality pesticides and fertilizers in the market. People from various other villages also projected their developmental requirements and public issues before the district administration. The DC gave a patient hearing to all grievances and assured the public that all genuine demands would be addressed in a time-bound manner. He directed the concerned officers to take immediate action on priority issues. All issues and demands raised during the programme were duly recorded for appropriate action and redressal. On the occasion, registration and awareness counters were also set up to disseminate information regarding various government schemes and facilitate on-the-spot registration of eligible beneficiaries.

PD&SJ Ganderbal chairs 2nd UTRC meeting 2026 in District

GANDERBAL, MAY 13: Principal District & Sessions Judge (PD&SJ)/Chairman District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal, Abdul Nasir, conducted the 2nd Under Trial Review Committee (UTRC) meeting today, with the objective of ensuring timely review and release of undertrial prisoners, thereby promoting their rights and access to justice. The meeting was held in the office chamber of the Principal District & Sessions Judge, and was attended by Jain Kishore, District Magistrate, Ganderbal; Sudhanshu Dhama, Senior Superintendent of Police, Ganderbal; Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary DLSA, Ganderbal; Shafiq Ahmad, Public Prosecutor. Sessions Court, Ganderbal; Shahbaz Hussain, DySp, Central Jail, Srinagar; Khurshid Ahmad (I/C) Public Prosecutor, Addl. Sessions Court, Ganderbal; Showkat Ali (Inspector), In charge Subsidary Jail Dignibul, Ganderbal, and Sajid Irfan, Deputy, LADC Ganderbal. The UTRC convened to



review the cases of nine prisoners shortlisted by the Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal for consideration, among them one UTRC has been previously recommended for release by UTRC. After thorough consideration, the committee decided to recommend six UTRCs for release.

Inspection Wing Kashmir Launches Training Drive on Electrical Safety for Power Sector Employees 150 Linemen Trained in First Instance

SRINAGAR, MAY 13: Reaffirming its commitment to place safety as the foremost priority in all power sector operations, the Electrical Inspection Wing, PDD Kashmir, organized a two-day training programme on theme "Electrical Safety and Accident Prevention" for the field employees of Electric Division-I and Electric Division-II on 11th and 12th May 2026 at Data Centre, PDD Complex, Bemina. It was stated that on the directions of ACS PDD, Ashwani Kumar, a structured training schedule has been devised by the Inspectorate and the present programme forms part of the said training drive under which large-scale training programmes shall be conducted across all districts of J&K to ensure wider participation of field employees at their respective places of posting. The programme witnessed active participation of around 150 field employees and was aimed at enhancing awareness regarding safe working practices, accident prevention measures and adherence to safety protocols during operation and maintenance

activities of the power system. During the sessions, the participants were sensitized about the potential hazards associated with electrical works and were trained in various preventive and protective measures aimed at safeguarding human life and minimizing workplace accidents. Informative presentations, practical demonstrations and audio-visual modules on electrical safety practices were also showcased to familiarize the employees with modern safety standards and procedures. Special emphasis was laid on the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and safety devices while carrying out field assignments. The employees were strongly advised not to undertake any work without observing mandatory safety precautions and standard operating procedures. The training sessions were organized and conducted by officers of Inspection Wing Kashmir, namely Er. Fayyaz Wani and Er. Adil Bashir Gurkha, who served as master trainers for the programme under the supervision of Er. Malik Habib Ahmad.

Awareness Programme under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan held at Mini Secretariat Kulgam

KULGAM, MAY 13: As part of the ongoing 100-day campaign under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan, an awareness programme was today organised at the Conference Hall of Mini Secretariat Kulgam under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students of various schools across the district along with officers from different departments. The event was organised with the aim of spreading awareness among youth about the harmful effects of drug abuse and encouraging them to adopt a healthy and responsible lifestyle.



During the programme, students presented a series of cultural performances, skits and awareness-based presentations highlighting the ill effects of substance abuse and the importance of building a drug-free society. The performances were widely appreciated by the audience for effectively conveying the message against drug addiction.

Addressing the gathering, the DC emphasised the importance of collective efforts in combating the menace of drug abuse. He urged students to act as ambassadors of change and spread awareness within their communities regarding the adverse impact of narcotics on individuals and society. He also highlighted the significance of sports, education and constructive activities in steering youth away from substance abuse and motivating them towards a positive future. The programme concluded with a pledge by participants to support the vision of a drug-free society and actively contribute towards the success of Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan.

Govt would provide additional food grains during Eid, Muharram festivities: Satish Sharma

SRINAGAR, MAY 13: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, Information Technology, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, today chaired a review meeting to assess the preparedness and ensure seamless availability of essential commodities and public services ahead of the forthcoming Eid and Muharram observance across Jammu and Kashmir. The meeting was attended by MLA Zaidal Tanvir Sadiq, Commissioner Secretary, FCS&CA, Saumbh Bagat, VC LCMA, MD RTC, RTO Kashmir, Senior officers of the administration, officers of the Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department, representatives of the Food Corporation of India (FCI), Oil Marketing Companies



(OMCs), Legal Metrology Organization (LMO), Food Safety Department, PDD, R&B, PHE, SMC, district administration and other concerned agencies. During the meeting, the Minister stressed the importance of maintaining uninterrupted supply of essential commodities. He directed the concerned departments to work in close coordination to ensure that the public does not face any inconvenience during the festive period. The Minister directed that adequate stock of food grains and other essential commodities under the Public Distribution System (PDS) and FCI be maintained at all depots and distribution points across Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized that timely distribution and proper monitoring mechanisms should be put in place to avoid any shortage or disruption in supply. Satish Sharma further stated

that an additional quota of food grains would be made available in view of the increased demand during Eid and Muharram festivities so that people across Jammu and Kashmir receive adequate supplies without any inconvenience. Reviewing the availability of LPG, the Minister instructed Oil Marketing Companies and allied agencies to ensure sufficient stock of both domestic and commercial LPG cylinders. He further directed the agencies to streamline the supply chain and distribution process to effectively meet the increased demand during the festive season. The Minister also instructed the concerned authorities to explore the possibility of reducing the waiting period for booking and refilling domestic LPG cylinders in order to facilitate consumers during Eid and Muharram.

SWD organizes Awareness Session on importance of Reproductive Health, Hygiene among women

SRINAGAR, MAY 13: Social Welfare Department (SWD) through the SANKALP Hub for Empowerment of Women Srinagar organized an awareness session on aspects of women's health. She emphasized the importance of reproductive health and hygiene for women at Mission Poshan Zone Khommo. The programme aimed to create awareness among women and adolescent girls regarding the importance of reproductive health, personal hygiene, proper nutrition, and preventive healthcare practices. The session saw enthusiastic participation from local women. Anganwadi workers, as well as pregnant and lactating mothers from the area.

During the programme, Dr. Sabiya Wani from the Department of Health served as the resource person and delivered an informative session on key aspects of women's health. She emphasized the importance of menstrual hygiene, maintaining a balanced diet, timely medical check-ups, and early identification of health concerns to ensure the overall well-being of women. She also informed participants about various government schemes and healthcare services available for women under different social welfare and health initiatives. Officials from SANKALP Hub for Empowerment of Women

Srinagar highlighted that awareness and education are essential tools for empowering women and strengthening community health. They encouraged participants to share the knowledge gained during the session with their families and communities, helping to promote healthy practices and remove the stigma often associated with reproductive health issues. The participants appreciated the initiative and expressed the need for organizing more such awareness programmes at the grassroots level to improve health awareness and ensure better outcomes for women and adolescent girls.

Dr Bhajan Kour takes charge as CMO Bandipora Assures strengthened Healthcare Services



BANDIPORA, MAY 13: Dr. Bhajan Kour today formally assumed charge as the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Bandipora amid a warm welcome by medical staff, officers and health employees at the CMO office Bandipora. On the occasion, the staff and officials extended their support and expressed

optimism for further strengthening of healthcare services in the district under her leadership. Addressing the gathering after assuming charge, Dr. Kour reaffirmed her commitment towards improving the overall healthcare system across Bandipora. She said her priority would be to strengthen health infrastructure and ensure quality and accessible medical services in every part of the district. She stressed the need for enhancing primary healthcare facilities, streamlining referral services and ensuring availability of essential medicines and adequate staff in peripheral health institutions.

Javed Rana reviews development works, annual action plan for Poonch

SRINAGAR, MAY 13: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today chaired a meeting with the senior officers of PHE, Irrigation & Flood Control and PWD departments of Poonch at Civil Secretariat here to review the development works and issues concerning the district. During the meeting, detailed discussion was held on sector-wise priorities, ongoing projects and proposed new works under the plan. The Minister stressed the need for realistic planning, timely execution and optimal utilisation of resources. He directed the officers to ensure that the Annual Action Plan reflects the actual needs of the people, with a focus on improving the basic infrastructure, drinking water supply, road connectivity, healthcare facilities and education



services. Emphasising transparency and accountability, Javed Rana asked the departments to maintain close coordination and adhere strictly to the set timelines for projects completion. He also underscored the importance of involving the elected representatives in the planning process to ensure inclusive and need-based development. The Minister called for prioritising the works that have maximum public impact, particularly in remote and under served areas of the district. He further directed the officers to closely monitor the progress on key projects and resolve the existing bottlenecks in a time-bound manner. He emphasised that focus should be laid on remote and border areas of the district that have historically remained underserved. He underlined that no segment of the population should be left behind in the development process, and that field-level execution must match the intent of policy. During the meeting, the departments presented their proposed outlays and highlighted the achievements and challenges. The Minister reviewed the proposals in detail and issued necessary directions for refining and consolidating the plan. Reiterating the government's commitment to balanced and equitable development, Javed Rana said that the annual action plan should serve as a road map for accelerating the development and improving the quality of life of the people of the district.

North in News

EDITORIAL

Ban on Liquor

The debate must shift from survival to transformation

If Jammu and Kashmir can survive without revenue from liquor is a question that touches fiscal policy, social health, tourism economics, and cultural identity, and the answer lies in examining whether the Union Territory's development model must remain tethered to excise income or whether alternative, more sustainable revenue streams can replace it without destabilizing public finances. Data from recent budgets shows that J&K collects roughly Rs.1,500-Rs.1,800 crore annually from liquor excise, which is 4-5 percent of its own tax revenue and less than 2 percent of total receipts once central grants are included. While that figure is not insignificant, it is also not irreplaceable if the government pursues a deliberate strategy of broadening the tax base, improving compliance, and monetizing the region's unique strengths, and the case for moving away from liquor dependence begins with public health because alcohol abuse correlates with domestic violence, road accidents, loss of workdays, and rising burden on the healthcare system, and the social cost of liquor consumption in J&K, where terrorism, unemployment, and youth alienation are already sensitive variables, often exceeds the excise gain when one accounts for policing, de-addiction centers, judicial time, and lost productivity. Therefore economic restraint applied to liquor consumption is also economic wisdom in the long run, and the second argument is that J&K's comparative advantage does not lie in alcohol sales but in horticulture, handicrafts, hydropower, tourism, and knowledge services, and each of these sectors has the potential to yield higher, cleaner, and more equitable revenue than excise. If cold chain infrastructure, GI tagging, and direct farmer-market linkages are scaled, the tax buoyancy from GST, mandi fees, and export cesses can offset liquor excise within a few years. And hydropower is the third pillar because J&K has an estimated 20,000 MW potential. With NHPC and CVPP projects in the pipeline the UT can become energy surplus and sell power to the northern grid. The debate must shift from survival to transformation because Jammu and Kashmir's future lies not in bottles but in blossoms, books, bandwidth, and bridges, and the sooner the fiscal policy aligns with that vision the faster the region moves from post-conflict recovery to pre-eminent prosperity.

RAJNI SHARMA, EDITOR

BY ASHOK K MEHTA

Nearly four decades after the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord first envisioned Trincomalee as a strategic pillar of regional cooperation, India and Sri Lanka now appear closer than ever to transforming the historic harbour into a major energy hub in the Indian Ocean.

Forty years after the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, which provided for the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to assist Sri Lanka in dealing with its twin insurgencies — JVP and LTTE — and gave first right to India to develop Trincomalee Port, the visit of Vice President CP Radhakrishnan last month appeared to have finally sanctified the inter-governmental treaty, making Trinco the energy hub for the region. This could not have come a day too soon, with oil and gas prices rocketing due to the on/off Gulf War. Radhakrishnan was accompanied by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, who has been chargé d'affaires in Colombo. Focus was on two issues: the Trinco energy project and the Tamil question, languishing due to lack of interest by successive governments in Colombo.

The political upheaval in Sri Lanka, like the Gen Z movement in Nepal, ushered in a brand-new Marxist political outfit, JVP, in its new avatar as the National People's Power alliance, had been involved in two insurrections in 1971 and 1988, and in both instances New Delhi was the first responder.

President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, in his discussions with Mr Radhakrishnan, highlighted India's Neighbourhood First policy and its three critical interventions: the economic crisis of 2022, the financial lifeline

during the debt crisis, and Cyclone Dlitwa. Radhakrishnan noted: "We stand with your successes and struggles like an affectionate elder brother". The term 'elder brother' (Daju in Nepali) did not please all Nepalese, as it is patronising. New Delhi's \$4 billion assistance package consisted of a USD 1 billion credit line for food and medicines, a currency swap of USD 400 million, USD 500 million for fuel, help in the IMF bailout, loan deferment, and foreign exchange support. India's help during the dire crisis has, to a large extent, transformed its image from that of an interventionist during the three-decade Eelam war to that of a friend, as noted by President Dissanayake. The anti-India sentiment has almost evaporated, though New Delhi has diluted its stand on the Tamil question.

Part of the blame for this lies with Sri Lanka Tamils for creating divisions within Tamil political parties. The Tamil question over the years has been relegated to 'Tamil aspirations', especially after the political mauling of the fractured Tamil parties in the Northern Province. NPP won three of nine seats in Jaffna district, topping for the first time the vote share of a Sinhalese-led national alliance, with NPP winning seats in Jaffna. The Tamil National Alliance, which at one time had 16 seats and, with other Tamil parties, 25 seats, is today reduced to 12 seats, including Muslim seats. In 1977, the Tamil United Front was the main opposition party in the Sri Lanka Parliament with 18 seats. Dissanayake has been telling Tamils that the new constitution, which has no timeline, will address the Tamil question. Radhakrishnan informed Tamil

leaders that he had discussed the issue with his Sri Lankan interlocutors. Provincial Council elections have not been held in seven years, and there is no indication they will be held anytime soon.

Tamils have genuine grievances. They say the spirit of the ISLA has not been realised and the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, which opened the door to a federal model of power sharing and devolution within a 'united, undivided and indivisible Sri Lanka', has not been implemented because of the unitary system. The late Tamil leader R Sambanthan had said: "India has a special duty in ensuring resolution of the Tamil question". India's facing interest was reflected in 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi merely mentioning 'cooperative federalism'. No longer do Indian leaders mention implementation of 13A or reconciliation following the military excesses during the Eelam war. But Colombo has done well to build a memorial recognising the sacrifices of 1,257 IPKF soldiers who facilitated the LTTE defeat in 2009.

The most critical contemporary issue is the Trinco energy hub project, which Misri described at length in his briefing to the Colombo media last month. Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath encapsulated the significance of the Trinco project, calling it a 'permanent solution to the energy crisis in India's neighbourhood'. As GoC IPKF South, which included the Trinco region during the de-induction of the IPKF, we studied in detail the strategic salience of Trinco in the Indian subcontinent and the Indian Ocean region. The history of the harbour was marked by contests for its possession among the Dutch, French, and British.

Adm Horatio Nelson called Trinco the world's deepest and finest harbour and the gateway to the Bay of Bengal, which Britain secured but had to abandon after 162 years. It built, in 1935 with impregnable Manchester steel, 100 oil tanks, of which Tank No. 91 was destroyed by Japanese bombers during World War II. There was no oil tank with the number 99, considered ominous. Instead, there were oil tanks numbered 101 and 102. These oil tanks had the capacity to store 1 million tonnes of petroleum.

The British abandoned Trincomalee Harbour only in 1956, even after Sri Lanka's independence in 1948, similar to their strategy of retaining the Chagos group of islands in Mauritius. A number of agreements and MOUs were signed with India over the renovation of the upper and lower oil tank farms, but due to the three-decade-long Eelam war.

None could futility until January 2022, when an MOU for a joint venture for the renovation of 61 upper oil tank farms was signed. However, it never took off, as Sri Lanka considers it a vital national asset and politically a very sensitive issue to hand over to a foreign power.

Earlier, in 2003, IOC had signed a 35-year lease to develop 15 oil tanks, paying an annual fee of USD 100,000. While IOC is operating 15 oil tanks, Sri Lanka Oil Corporation is utilising its 16 oil tanks for fuel storage and offshore bunkering, and Prime Flour Mill Singapore has three for water storage. Following Radhakrishnan's visit, conversation on the renovation of oil tanks has been revived, and a multipurpose oil transfer pipeline between Karaikal/Chennai and Trincomalee is on the cards.

The tasks ahead

BY GOVIND BHATTACHARJEE

The massive electoral mandate of the BJP stands in stark contrast to an almost broken and dysfunctional state that it inherits. Lawful governance structures stand dismantled, with bureaucratic behaviour conditioned by unquestioning allegiance to the governing party. Deep institutional decay, substitution of policy by patronage, a near collapse of administrative machinery, and social discourses manipulated to preserve a self-serving status-quo define a failing state decayed almost beyond repairs, at least in the short term. To revive it from the abyss of despair it has sunk into would be no easy task for any government, and people should not expect miracles.

The historic mandate has imposed a daunting responsibility to reverse this descent which will demand far more than mere resolve — it must revive a dysfunctional administration, restore the rule of law by neutralising entrenched criminalised political networks that have flourished under overt state protection, and rebuild institutional credibility from scratch. It must also revive investor confidence, fix a broken and intensely politicised educational eco-system and lay the foundations for economic renewal, modernise industry, agriculture, and infrastructure to generate employment.

It would be more than a Herculean task to achieve all

these and a pragmatic policy for the government would be to identify and carefully plan its tasks in the short, medium and the long term to ultimately transform the state into an engine of growth and rejuvenation. It is important that the government must resist the temptation to dissipate its energies in ideological triumphalism or by confrontationist paralysis. Of course, those who have abused power and plundered the state during the last 15 years must face the full force of law, but governance should not be consumed by vindictiveness — it came with the promise of Badlaa, not Badla. A feasible roadmap could be short-term stabilisation, medium-term institutional and economic restructuring, and long-term civilizational and developmental transformation. In the short term, the government must restore law and order, stabilise finances, reduce corruption, and reassure citizens that governance will be impartial and accountable. In the medium term, it must undertake structural reforms in industry, agriculture, education, healthcare, and urban governance. Long term goals should be to restore Bengal's civilisational and intellectual and economic vitality so that it can again earn the respect of India. Electoral legitimacy does not automatically confer moral legitimacy which comes only through fairness and transparency.

The immediate challenge

would be to restore administrative neutrality and supremacy of law. Public confidence and trust have been eroded completely through the culture of political patronage, limitless corruption, cadre influence, and partisan functioning of administration. When political allegiance defines administrative competence and determines career advancement, bureaucracy becomes a willing collaborator in the institutional decimation. It is doubtful whether the same bureaucracy can now reinvent itself to help the government deliver, and getting a few officers with experience and integrity on deputation from outside the state for some time at least may not be a bad idea. Depoliticising the police administration and strict non-interference in their transfers should be another top priority.

Building institutional safeguards to prevent one partisan ecosystem replacing another and to prevent the goons of TMC infiltrating the new apparatus would be another priority, as would be to end the obnoxious cut-money culture and the syndicate mafiosi that thrived so luxuriantly under the previous regime and stifled all economic activities — guardrails should be erected to see that it never again comes back. The political violence which has characterised West Bengal's electoral politics throughout also must see its end. Another important consideration from the perspective of national security is to strength-

en border security and prevent illegal infiltration by fulfilling the promise of land allocation for fencing within 45 days.

Equally important is to ensure the safety and security of women, not only at the workplace but everywhere, through effective policing and special women-only police battalions. The TMC government has not placed the CAG reports before the legislature since 2021, this would be an immediate task for the new government. Simultaneously, the government must fix the public finances of the state and ensure fiscal stabilisation by focusing on debt. Given the enormous electoral handouts that it has promised to women and others, this would be difficult, especially in view of the heavy debt burden carried by the state, which now amounts to 36 per cent of its GDP and carries an interest burden of around Rs 45,000 crore annually. The government must therefore rationalise expenditure, improve tax compliance through digitisation and undertake a complete overhaul of all its running schemes the way Uttarakhand and some other states have done. Schemes which are not delivering must be closed regardless of sunk costs, and others merged for better synergy; that way resource utilisation can be optimised. Welfare cannot be an open-ended tap that drains the treasury, continuity of welfare must be balanced with fiscal prudence. Technology.

SRH's batting collapse against Gujarat Titans only a blip, insists Vettori

New Delhi, May 13: Sunrisers Hyderabad head coach Daniel Vettori described his side's batting collapse against Gujarat Titans as a rare off day after SRH were bundled out for their lowest-ever IPL total in a crushing 82-run defeat in Ahmedabad on Tuesday.



Chasing 169 at the Narendra Modi Stadium, SRH were bowled out for just 86, their lowest-ever IPL total. Earlier, Sai Sudharsan scored 61 while Washington Sundar added 50 to help GT post 168/5.

"We knew we needed to get off to a good start, and that's what we weren't able to do. But I mean if they'd scored 200, then we would have known it would have been incredibly difficult. But I think the fact that it

was 169, we thought we had a chance. But as always, you have to start well and we didn't, and that's what happens. "And I don't put any blame on the batting unit. They've been exceptional this year. Every team throughout the IPL is going to have their small blips once in a while, and ours was tonight," Vettori said in a post-match press conference. Gujarat Titans dominated with the ball as Kagiso Rabada and Jason Holder picked up three wickets each. Prasidh Krishna claimed two wickets, while Mohammed Siraj and Rashid Khan chipped in with one apiece each.

The win helped GT climb to the top of the points table after successfully defending the second-lowest total of the season. "We knew coming up against their bowling line-up and the fact that they had five seamers (Arshad Khan was the fifth but didn't get to bowl) plus Rashid (Khan) was always going to be a challenge. We didn't get the start we wanted, and they were able to capitalise the whole way through, and their bowling was brilliant," Vettori said.

The heavy defeat dealt a major blow to Sunrisers Hyderabad's net run rate and exposed concerns around their batting after a strong run in the tournament. Despite the setback, SRH remain firmly in contention for a play-off spot and will need quick improvement in their remaining matches to stay in the race for a top-two finish. Cummins penalised for over-rate offence. Meanwhile, SRH captain Pat Cummins was fined Rs 12 lakh for maintaining a slow over rate during the match. In a statement, the IPL said, "As this was his team's first offence of the season under Article 2.22 of the IPL's Code of Conduct, which pertains to minimum over-rate offences, Cummins was fined INR 12 lakhs."

11th District Srinagar Pencak Silat Championship 2026-27 begins at Polo Ground

Srinagar, May 13: The 11th District Srinagar Pencak Silat Championship 2026-27 was formally inaugurated today at the historic Polo Ground, Srinagar, amid great enthusiasm from athletes, coaches, and sports lovers. The championship is being organised by the District Srinagar Pencak Silat Association under the aegis of Pencak Silat Association of J&K and J&K Sports Council. The event commenced with a colourful demonstration by national-level Pencak Silat athletes, which drew huge applause from the audience. Over 450 athletes from various schools, clubs, and academies across Srinagar district are participating in Sub-Junior, Junior, and Senior categories for both boys and girls. Polo ground manager attended the event as



Chief Guest. In his address, the chief guest lauded the role of Pencak Silat in promoting discipline, self-defence, and fitness among youth and assured full support from the administration for developing combat sports in J&K. The 3-day championship will feature Tandjung (Match), Tunggul (Single), Ganda (Double), and Regu (Team) events. Medal winners from the championship will represent Srinagar at the upcoming UT-level Championship.

Government Polytechnic College Reasi organized Inter-Department Badminton Competition

Reasi, May 13: As a part of 100 Days Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyan launched by District Administration Reasi, Government Polytechnic College Reasi organized a spirited Inter-Departmental Badminton Competition for girls. The event marks a significant milestone in the institution's dedicated campaign to foster a drug-free lifestyle among the youth. The competition was organized under the guidance of Principal Dr. Arun Bangotra, who emphasized the role of sports in building character and resilience against social evils. He encouraged all participants to take part in the sports



activities to keep themselves fit and healthy and play the games with the sportsmanship and lauded the students' enthusiasm and underlined the role of sports in nurturing teamwork, perseverance and the leadership's essential virtues for the future. The competition saw an enthusiastic turnout with a total of 34 girls students participating from various academic departments. The matches showcased intense skill and high sportsmanship. The winner was Arti Devi, 4th Semester, Computer Dept., while runner-up (2nd Place) was Shrutti, 2nd Semester, Computer Dept. and Third Place Vishali Devi, 4th Semester, Electrical Dept.

Sundar credits GT's clarity after fifth straight win in IPL 2026

New Delhi, May 13: Gujarat Titans all-rounder Washington Sundar credited the team's clarity and consistency after GT registered their fifth straight win in IPL 2026 with a dominant 82-run victory over Sunrisers Hyderabad in Ahmedabad on Tuesday. Despite posting a modest-looking 168/5 on a tricky Narendra Modi Stadium pitch, Gujarat Titans completely outplayed SRH by bowling them out for just 86 in 14.5 overs. The pacers made full use of the conditions before the spinners wrapped up the innings. "It means a lot. This season has been extremely competitive, with every team coming hard at us. To win five games on the trot speaks volumes about the consistency we've shown as a unit. At the same time, sticking to what has worked for us is



also a challenge. You can sometimes lose diving by partner to do too many things, but I think we've done well to avoid that. A lot of credit has to go to the team for maintaining that clarity and consistency," Sundar said. Batting first after losing the toss, Gujarat Titans were under pressure at 64/3 in the 10th over before Sundar and Sai Sudharsan steadied the innings with a crucial 60-run partnership. Their stand helped GT recover and eventually post a competitive total. Sundar said constant communication between him and Sudharsan was key during the partnership. "It's always enjoyable batting with Sai because we constantly communicate in the middle. It was important for me to understand both the situation and the nature of the wicket, especially since it was doing a bit more than usual. Early on, I wasn't finding boundaries, while Sai was able to get them without taking many risks. That balance really helped both of us and allowed the partnership to settle in nicely," Sundar said. The win took Gujarat Titans to the top of the points table with 16 points from 12 matches, but Sundar insisted the team is focused only on staying consistent and continuing to play good cricket. "It's extremely important for us to stay present and understand what has worked well for us so far. We've been playing some really good cricket, but there's still a long way to go in the tournament. Hopefully, we can continue this momentum and eventually go on to win the championship," he concluded.

Former boxer Manoj Kumar raises concerns over BFI selection process

New Delhi, May 13: Commonwealth Games gold medalist Manoj Kumar has raised concerns over the transparency of the Boxing Federation of India's (BFI) new athlete assessment system for selecting boxers for upcoming international events, including the 2026 Commonwealth Games and Asian Games. The national selection camp resumed on Wednesday after the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) reverted to a trial-based selection process following a directive from the Sports Authority of India to make the assessment system more transparent and fair. Reacting to the federation's latest notification, Manoj questioned why former



boxers and decorated athletes were not included in the monitoring or assessment process. "The entire selection process has been kept strictly limited to the head coach, judges, and the federation. Why were former Arjuna Awardees, Dronacharya awardees, Olympians, and senior players not included as

observers or selection monitors?" Manoj Kumar wrote on social media. The former boxer also said the involvement of experienced former players would have improved the confidence of athletes in the process. "When it comes to the fairness, transparency, and trust of players in the selection process, the presence of experienced players like Vijender Singh and Akhil Kumar should certainly have been ensured," he added. Earlier, the BFI announced a new selection process for elite national campers at the NS NIS Patiala from May 13 to 15. Under the new system, boxers will be evaluated through a five-judge scoring setup involving one head coach and four

judges during sparring bouts to improve transparency and fairness. "Scores shall be announced immediately after the completion of each sparring bout, in line with the procedure followed during boxing competitions," the notification read. The federation also clarified that the previous marking system would not be used for the current assessment. BFI had earlier conducted strength and conditioning tests for boxers on Sunday, but those results have now been scrapped. "The scores obtained earlier in the sports science tests, weight management, health management, and attendance shall stand withdrawn and shall be treated as null and void," it said.

WHS Sports Hub Golf Cup 2026 to be held at Royal Springs Golf Course, Srinagar

Srinagar, May 13, 2026: WHS Sports Hub will host the WHS Sports Hub Golf Cup 2026 on 23rd & 24th May 2026 at the prestigious Royal Springs Golf Course, a championship golf course designed by legendary architect Robert Trent Jones Jr. Rapidly emerging as one of Jammu & Kashmir's leading amateur golf events, the tournament is expected to witness participation from around 100 golfers from across the country, bringing together corporates, business leaders, and sports enthusiasts for a premium golfing and hospitality experience in Kashmir.



Organised by Farid Singh and Viraj Singh, co-founders of WHS Sports Hub, the event reflects their vision of promoting professionally managed sporting events and positioning Jammu & Kashmir as a destination for sports tourism and elite sporting experiences. The two-day event will feature league-based competition formats including Better Ball Pairs and Gentlemen Pairs, along with morning shotgun starting events and positioning Jammu & Kashmir as a destination for sports tourism and elite sporting experiences. Lush, curated goodie bags, and multiple prize categories.

Can't Indian coaches develop Indian hockey? Sreejesh slams Hockey India



Two-time Olympic goal-keeper PR Sreejesh has openly criticised Hockey India after his tenure as coach of the junior men's team was abruptly ended despite producing results, questioning why Indian hockey continues to rely heavily on foreign coaches. Sreejesh, who took charge of the junior side after retiring following the 2024 Paris Olympics, hinted that he was removed from the

role to accommodate a foreign coach despite achieving strong results during his time with the team. Under his guidance, the Indian junior men's team finished on the podium in all five tournaments they played, including winning the Junior Asia Cup and securing bronze medals at both the Sultan of Johor Cup and the FIH Junior Men's World Cup. Expressing his disappointment in a strongly-worded post on social media, Sreejesh said the decision had left him shocked given the team's performances. He also questioned the federation's approach towards Indian coaches. "It seems like my coaching career comes to an end after 1.5 years, during which we played 5 tournaments and secured 5 podium finishes, including a Junior World Cup bronze medal," Sreejesh wrote. Sreejesh said coaches are usually removed after poor results, making his situation difficult to understand. "I have heard about coaches getting fired after bad performances. But this is the first time I am experiencing being removed to make way for a foreign coach." Sreejesh also revealed what he claimed Hockey India.

PBKS battle slump while MI play for pride in Dharamsala

New Delhi, May 13: Already eliminated from the race to the play-offs, five-time title-holders Mumbai Indians could play the party spoilers and go all-out without any baggage of expectations when they take on last season's runners-up Punjab Kings, desperate to finally stop the bleeding after a stunning reversal in form, in the crucial IPL 2026 clash at Dharamsala's HPCA Stadium on Thursday. Punjab Kings have suddenly lost momentum with four straight defeats, while off-field chatter on social media has only added to their troubles. The Ricky Ponting-led side will not be eager to put those distractions behind them and focus on fixing their bowling and fielding issues. Mumbai Indians, mean-



while, are out of contention for the playoffs and will now play purely for pride. With no pressure of qualification, MI could use the remaining games to test their bench strength, especially with uncertainty around the availability of captain Hardik Pandya, and stand-in skipper Suryakumar Yadav. Punjab currently sit on 13 points from 12 matches and have endured a

dramatic dip in form. They failed to defend 222 against Rajasthan Royals, were bowled out for 163 against Gujarat Titans, and were bowled out for 136 against Sunrisers Hyderabad, and most recently lost despite posting 210 against Delhi Capitals. For PBKS, the power-play battle against Jasprit Bumrah could shape the contest. Openers Prabhshiran Singh and Priyansh Arya have looked dangerous at Dharamsala, but Bumrah's accuracy and bounce on the high-altitude pitch could pose a major challenge early on. Captain Shreyas Iyer remains Punjab's key batter through the middle overs, while Marcus Stoinis has been their biggest threat at the death with an exceptional strike rate in the final overs this season. Shashank Singh has also played the finisher's role but has struggled for consistency in recent matches. Punjab's biggest concern, however, remains their fielding. They have dropped 16 catches this season, with Shashank alone accounting for five missed chances. Their bowling has also lacked control at crucial moments. Arshdeep Singh has taken wickets regularly but has leaked runs, while the absence of Vijaykumar Vyshak in the previous game reduced their options at the death alongside Marco Jansen. Meanwhile, after a forgettable outing in IPL 2026, Mumbai Indians, placed in the penultimate ninth place in the points table, will look to end the season on a high. Ryan Rickelton has been their standout batter this season with 382 runs at an impressive strike rate, while Bumrah continues to remain their biggest weapon with the ball despite the team's struggles. With Hardik and Suryakumar likely unavailable, MI could hand Tilak Varma the captaincy, although the franchise may also turn to former skipper Rohit Sharma for leadership duties.

'Committed to implementing UCC in Assam,' reaffirms CM Himanta Sarma ahead of first Cabinet meeting

New Delhi, May 13: Days after returning to power with a historic mandate, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday firmly reiterated his government's commitment to implementing the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), declaring that the BJP-led administration would work to fulfil every promise made in its election manifesto. Speaking to reporters, Sarma said the UCC was an integral part of the BJP's electoral commitments and would be pursued along with other promises made to the people of the state. "UCC is a part of our election manifesto. Every point in our election manifesto, not only UCC, all that we have mentioned in our election manifesto, we'll try 100 per cent to implement," the Chief Minister said. The remarks came a day after Himanta Biswa Sarma took oath for a second consecutive term as Chief Minister in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra



Modi and senior BJP leaders. The BJP-led NDA registered a massive victory in the Assam Assembly elections, winning 102 out of 126 seats. First Cabinet meeting after massive electoral win strong assertion came ahead of the first Cabinet meeting of the new government, signalling that key ideological and governance priorities of the BJP will remain central

to Assam's political roadmap. The first Cabinet meeting of the new government, scheduled for Wednesday, is expected to focus on development priorities and administrative decisions for the next phase of governance in the state. UCC debate gains momentum in BJP-ruled states Sarma's statement comes amid

renewed political debate over the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code in BJP-ruled states. The proposed law seeks to replace religion-based personal laws governing marriage, divorce, inheritance and adoption with a common legal framework applicable to all citizens. The BJP has consistently projected the UCC as a measure aimed at ensuring gender justice, equality and national integration. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and senior party leaders have repeatedly argued that separate personal laws for different communities go against the principle of equal rights. Earlier this year, Uttarakhanda became the first state in independent India to pass a Uniform Civil Code legislation after the Pushkar Singh Dhami government cleared the bill in the Assembly. The law, however, is yet to be fully operationalised pending procedural implementation.

CBSE 12th Result 2026 out: 85.20% students pass, key details here

New Delhi, May 13: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Wednesday, May 13, announced the results for the Class 12 board examination. This year, the overall pass percentage has been recorded at 85.20 per cent. Students who appeared for the examination can check and download their marksheet from the official website at results.cbse.nic.in. Notably, the overall pass percentage in the CBSE Class 12 board examination has witnessed a decline this year compared to 88.39 per cent in 2025. As per the official details provided, a total of 17,80,365 students registered for the Class 12 exams. Out of these, 17,68,968 had appeared



and 15,07,109 students have passed it. This takes the overall pass percentage to 85.20 per cent. Last year, a total of 14,96,307 students had passed the examination. Compared to last time, this year the CBSE Class 12 board exams witnessed a drop of 3.19 percentage points in the overall pass percentage. CBSE Class 12 Board exams: Here's a list of official websites to check results.cbse.nic.in, digilocker.gov.in, umang.gov.in. Here's a step-by-step guide to check the results on the official website: Step 1: Visit the official CBSE website at results.cbse.nic.in. Step 2: On the homepage, click on the 'Senior Secondary School Examination (Class XII) 2026' option. Step 3: Provide your roll number, school number, admit card ID, date of birth, and security pin. Click on the 'Submit' button.

Tamil Nadu govt revokes astrologer Rickey Vettrivel's appointment as OSD after criticism



New Delhi, May 13: The Tamil Nadu government on Wednesday revoked the appointment of TVK spokesperson Rickey Radhan Pandit Vettrivel as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay, according to an official government order issued by the Public Department. The development comes barely a day after the appointment order was issued, triggering political chatter and criticism from opposition leaders over Vettrivel's selection for the politically significant post.

An official proceeding issued by the Public (Estt-IV) Department stated that the earlier order appointing Vettrivel as OSD to the Chief Minister (Political) had been withdrawn with immediate effect. "The orders issued regarding the appointment of Thiru. Rickey Radhan Pandit Vettrivel as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to Chief Minister (Political) vide in the reference 2nd cited is hereby revoked," the order signed by Principal Secretary to Government Reeta Harish Thakkar read. The government order was dated May 13, 2026, and referenced communication received from the Chief Minister's Office on May 12.

Leena resigns as West Bengal Commission for Women chairperson after change of govt

New Delhi, May 13: Leena Gangopadhyay, known to be close to the Trinamool Congress, has resigned as the Chairperson of the West Bengal Commission for Women (WBCW), officials informed on Wednesday, May 13. This comes days after Suvendu Adhikari took oath as the new Chief Minister of West Bengal after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) registered a landslide victory in the 2026 Assembly elections, marking an end to Mamata Banerjee-led TMC government's 15-year rule.



According to Gangopadhyay has stepped down before the end of her term. Being a key figure in women's advocacy, Gangopadhyay is a prominent writer, producer, and director famous for her work in the Bollywood film industry. She also

Gangopadhyay's production banner. After Rahul's death, Leena claimed that he himself went into the sea as there was no scene of shooting in the water. Later on, it came out that Rahul drowned while shooting. Rahul's wife, actress Priyanka Sarkar, even lodged a complaint against Gangopadhyay and a few other members of the production company. After Rahul's demise, a section of Bengali artists, technicians and directors openly spoke against Gangopadhyay and decided to sever ties with her production company. She then expressed her desire to resign from the post so that there would be no accusation of 'influence' in the investigation into the case. However, she did not resign later. nns a production company.

Haryana Municipal Election Results 2026: BJP tightens grip on urban belt with Ambala, Sonapat wins

New Delhi, May 13: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged as the dominant force in the Haryana local body elections as counting concluded on Wednesday, securing significant victories across municipal corporations and councils. The ruling party clinched the Mayor posts in the high-stakes Sonapat and Ambala Municipal Corporations, while also maintaining a strong lead in Panchkula. In Sonapat, BJP's Rajiv Jain was elected Mayor after securing a decisive 78,035 votes, defeating his nearest rival, Congress candidate Kamal Diwan, who garnered 54,788 votes. The victory was mirrored in Ambala, where BJP candidate Akshita Saini won the mayoral race with 52,794 votes, defeating Congress's Kulwinder Kaur Saini by a margin of 21,358 votes. The party's success extended to the ward level as well, with the BJP winning 16 wards in Ambala.



The saffron party also made inroads into traditional strongholds and other local bodies. In Sonapat, considered a bastion of former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, BJP's Praveen Koch won the Chairman's post. Similarly, BJP candidate Ajay Jangra secured the chairman's position in Dharuhera, while Vinita Peepal

won the chairperson's seat in the Rewari Municipal Council. However, the opposition managed to register a win in Uklana, where the Congress-backed candidate Reema Soni defeated the BJP's Nikita Goel in the Chairperson election. In Dharuhera, Ajay Jangra secured 9,292 votes, leaving independent candidate Babu

Lal Lamba and Congress's Kumari Raj in the second and third positions, respectively. The election process was not without controversy. In Panchkula, Congress mayoral candidate Sudha Bhardwaj alleged irregularities in the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), claiming that seals were broken and unauthorised access was provided to strong rooms. Her allegations sparked protests by supporters, though official responses to the claims were still awaited during the counting process. Celebrating the victory, Haryana BJP President Mahan Lal Badoli said the results reflected the public's "blessings for the triple-engine government". Scenes of celebration were witnessed across the state as supporters carried the winning candidates on their shoulders and distributed sweets to mark the party's electoral success.

Prateek Yadav's death was due to sudden deterioration in health, says friend

Lucknow, May 13: A close friend of Prateek Yadav has claimed that his death was caused by a sudden deterioration in health. Prateek Yadav, son of late Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav and husband of BJP leader Aparna Yadav, died in Lucknow on Wednesday morning at the age of 38. Urging people not to pay attention to any rumours, Sarvesh Pandey, Prateek Yadav's gym partner, told IANS, "Do not pay attention to these rumours suggesting that something happened at home. His health suddenly deteriorated, and it was a sudden death. Earlier, he used to go to the gym regularly, but not recently. He was under business pressure. He did not have any serious illness." Sarvesh has



described Prateek as a kind-hearted person and called the incident deeply tragic. "He had a very good nature. This is a very tragic incident, and may God grant peace to his soul. He was brought to the Civil Hospital late last night, around 11 P.M. to 12 A.M. He later went back home, but his condition worsened significantly," Pandey said. He added, "Treatment was ongoing, but his health deteriorated during the night. When I came here in the morning, I learnt about his death. I have also come to know that he had fallen in the bedroom and suffered a head injury." As of now, the exact cause of death is yet to be officially confirmed, while a post-mortem examination is being conducted. As per reports.

Fuel prices may go up if West Asia war continues, says RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra



New Delhi, May 13: India may be forced to raise prices for petrol and diesel if the West Asia conflict continues, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said. He added that this was due to soaring cost of crude oil in the global market. Malhotra said the rising energy prices due to the ongoing Iran war were testing India's flexible inflation targeting. This necessitates potential policy intervention by the central bank. Notably, the RBI's next monetary policy meeting is scheduled for

June 5, when it is expected to take a call regarding key interest rates that were left untouched to promote economic growth. The RBI Governor has indicated that raising retail fuel prices is "a matter of time" if the West Asia crisis persists. It will ultimately lead to an increase in transportation costs and inflation. Earlier, the Monetary Policy Committee of the RBI had in its April 2026 meeting decided to keep the repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent, maintaining a neutral stance. This reflects a "wait and watch" strategy to balance strong domestic growth, besides keeping an eye on inflation amid global uncertainties. "We are being more and more data dependent. The RBI is being flexible in its approach and is ready to look through the shock if it is transitory, but if it is entrenched, we need to take action," IANS quoted Malhotra as saying at a conference hosted by the Swiss National Bank and the International Monetary Fund in Switzerland on Tuesday. This comes after Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said that stocks for petrol, diesel and LPG are adequate in the country, but hinted that their prices might go up due to the heavy losses that public sector oil companies were piling up.

NEET UG 2026 paper leak case widens to Kerala; CBI probes 'model question paper' circulation network

New Delhi, May 13: The investigation into the alleged NEET question paper leak has now reached Kerala, with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probing whether students from the state received a "model question paper" believed to have been prepared using the leaked original exam paper. The Kerala link emerged after Rajasthan Police shared details of around 200 students suspected of accessing the leaked material. Investigators are now examining possible connections in two Kerala districts, while also probing the role of a Rajasthan-based medical student currently studying in the state. Officials suspect the student, originally from Churu district in Rajasthan, may have acted as a conduit in circulating the paper among NEET aspirants in Kerala. The development comes as the CBI broadens its probe into what investigators describe as a highly organised interstate examination



racket spanning multiple states. Kerala among states under scanner in NEET leak investigation The agency has expanded the investigation to 10 states and constituted a special investigation team with four dedicated squads to trace the network involved in the alleged leak. According to preliminary findings, investigators believe the paper may have been leaked directly from the printing press in Nashik, Maharashtra, where this year's NEET examination papers were printed. This marks a shift from earlier exam scans, where leaks were often suspected during transportation or distribution stages. The probe has centred around a medical student identified as Shubham Karniyar, who is accused of obtaining the original paper from the printing facility and passing it through intermediaries in Haryana. Officials suspect the paper eventually reached operators based in Rajasthan's Sikar district.

'Model question paper' matched actual NEET exam, say investigators To avoid raising suspicion, the leaked paper was allegedly converted into a "model question paper" before being circulated through networks operating in Kerala, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. Investigators claim the similarities between the model paper and the actual exam were substantial. According to the findings so far, 90 Biology questions and 35 out of 45 Chemistry questions in the circulated material matched the final NEET examination paper. The papers were allegedly sold through Telegram and WhatsApp groups for amounts ranging from Rs 25,000 to Rs 2 lakh. The CBI is continuing its investigation into the wider network and the possible involvement of students, intermediaries and coaching-linked operators across states.



'We'll finish the job': Trump escalates Iran warning amid Hormuz blockade fears

Washington, May 13: US President Donald Trump on Tuesday claimed that Iran's military capabilities had been severely damaged and warned Tehran that it must either return to negotiations or face further action, as tensions in West Asia continued to rattle global energy markets. Speaking to reporters at the White House before departing aboard Marine One, Trump repeatedly asserted that "Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon" and derided the ongoing blockade around Iran as "100 per cent ineffective". He also claimed that Iran's naval and air capabilities had effectively collapsed during the conflict. The remarks come at a time when the Strait of Hormuz has emerged as the centre of a widening geopolitical standoff involving the US, Iran and Israel. Shipping disruptions near the key maritime route have kept global oil markets on edge, while diplomatic conversations among major powers have intensified amid fears of a broader regional escalation. "We'll win it peacefully or otherwise," Trump said during the interaction. "Their Navy's gone, their Air Force is gone, every single element of their war machine is gone." The US President maintained that Iran had already suffered decisive military



losses and warned that Washington was prepared to continue pressure on Tehran if necessary. "They're defeated militarily, and they'll either do the right thing, or we'll finish the job," he said. Trump also argued that oil prices and inflationary pressures would eventually ease once the conflict comes to an end. Predicting a sharp increase in crude supply, he said global markets would witness "a gusher of oil" after

hostilities stop. "As soon as this war is over, you're going to see oil prices drop," Trump said. "You're going to see a stock market which is already at the highest point in history go through the roof." He dismissed criticism linking the conflict to rising inflation in the United States, calling current price pressures temporary. "The most important thing by far is Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon," Trump said later in the exchange. "If Iran has a nuclear weapon, the whole world will be in trouble." Iran accuses US of blocking peace efforts. Meanwhile, Iran sharply criticised Washington's role in the conflict, accusing the US of acting in bad faith and fuelling instability in the region. According to Iran's state broadcaster Press TV, Iranian Foreign

Minister Abbas Araghchi told Norway's deputy foreign minister in Tehran that the "lack of good faith and dishonesty of the United States" remained the biggest obstacle to ending the war. Araghchi also blamed the US and Israel for escalating tensions in the Strait of Hormuz, saying repeated violations of the ceasefire and the continued blockade of Iranian maritime ports had worsened the situation. He said Iran, as a coastal state bordering the strategic waterway, was considering new regulations related to the Strait of Hormuz in accordance with international law. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei also launched a strong attack on Washington and Tel Aviv in a post on X, describing the conflict as a battle between "good" and "evil".

Ex-Pakistani PM Imran Khan's Sister Again Not Allowed To Meet Him

Lahore, May 13: Former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's sisters and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi were again not allowed to meet the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder at Adiala Jail, local media reported on Wednesday. Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Imran Khan's sister Aleema Khan said that being denied a meeting with Imran Khan was a contempt of court, as they were not allowed to meet her brother despite Islamabad High Court's clear orders about family meetings every Tuesday and Thursday. Pakistan's Supreme Court reported, Aleema Khan said, "Imran Khan is not only our brother, but also the leader of PTI, so we said that we need all of you. Come here and increase the pressure so that Imran Khan can



receive treatment in a proper hospital...Imran Khan had carried out a sit-in for 128 days. He spent day and night on the streets. Everyone will have to show a little courage. This is a difficult time, and we are doing whatever we can." Earlier this month, the PTI condemned the detention of Imran Khan, which has completed 1,000 days, terming it a blatant act of political victimisation. PTI Central Information Secretary Waqas Akram said PTI founder Imran Khan is being subjected to political victimisation as the current government, afraid of his popularity and independent stance, is trying to sideline him. The UAE's Gulf Today reported, Akram stated that Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, were being subjected to inhumane treatment. He alleged that the PTI founder is being held in solitary confinement, while his family, lawyers, and party leadership were not allowed to meet him, which amounts to a clear violation of fundamental human and legal rights.

Ukraine Hits Russia's Energy Targets After US-Brokered Ceasefire Ends



Moscow, May 13: Russia resumed drone attacks on Ukraine's oil refineries and ports on Wednesday, two days after a three-day ceasefire proposed by U.S. President Donald Trump expired. Ukraine has been targeting Russian oil infrastructure to undercut Moscow's revenues from the energy sector and dent its military

Taman port's oil products and other terminals are located, regional authorities said. Debris from a separate Ukrainian drone attack caused a fire at a gas processing plant, in Russia's southern Astrakhan region, the region's authorities said. "All enemy aircraft were either shot down or neutralised by electronic warfare systems," Igor Babushkin, the local governor, wrote on Telegram. "The debris caused a fire." Babushkin said there were no casualties or injuries and that the fire was expected to be extinguished within a few hours. The plant is located near the Caspian Sea, some 1,675 km (1,040 miles) from the Ukrainian border.

USD 29bn spent, bases damaged, Tehran's arsenal still largely intact: The US-Iran war's ugly arithmetic

Tehran, May 13: The financial burden of the United States' military campaign against Iran has climbed beyond the Pentagon's own projections, triggering fresh scrutiny in Congress after officials admitted the war has already cost nearly USD 29 billion. The revised figure, disclosed during hearings on President Donald Trump's proposed defence budget, comes barely weeks after the Pentagon estimated the conflict would cost around USD 25 billion. Even that number, experts argue, may only reflect a fraction of the actual economic fallout that could unfold over the coming years.

According to Pentagon Comptroller Jay Hurst, the updated estimate includes mounting operational expenses, repair costs and replacement of military equipment damaged or exhausted during the conflict. "So, at the time of testimony from [the House Armed Services Committee], it was USD 25 billion, but the joint staff team and the comptroller team are constantly looking at that estimate,



and so now we think it's closer to 29." Hurst told lawmakers during a House Appropriations Committee hearing. "That's because of updated repair and replacement of equipment costs and also just general operational costs to keep people in theatre," he added. However, the Pentagon acknowledged that the estimate still excludes damage sustained by US military bases across the region. "We just don't have a good estimate at this time," Hurst later told a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee hearing. Congress presses Pentagon over Iran war costs and

weeks of US strikes. "With deep respect for the question, I'm not going to comment in this forum on what may or may not have been opined on by the IC," Caine said, referring to the intelligence community. Murphy questioned how Congress could continue approving war funding without transparent military assessments. "How do we assess whether we should continue funding this if you can't state to us what the assessments are?" he asked. Hegseth also refused to publicly discuss battlefield evaluations. This is not a classified setting. "We don't talk about those things," the defence secretary said. At another point during the hearing, Hegseth criticised lawmakers for referring to leaked intelligence reports. "Why would I validate what people may leak or not leak?" he asked. Senator Brian Schatz also questioned whether the Pentagon had underestimated Iran's retaliatory capabilities, particularly its drone operations and asymmetric naval tactics in the Strait of Hormuz.

Scientists Discover Hidden Molecular Switch That Could Strengthen Bones

McGill, May 13: Scientists at McGill University have discovered a hidden molecular "switch" that activates a powerful calorie-burning system in brown fat, a breakthrough that could pave the way for new treatments for bone diseases and metabolic disorders. The findings, published in the journal Nature, reveal how glycerol — a molecule released when fat is broken down during cold exposure — activates an enzyme called TNAP, triggering an alternative heat-producing mechanism in brown fat that scientists had struggled to explain for years. Brown fat, unlike white fat that stores energy, burns calories to generate heat and plays an important role



in metabolism and weight regulation. Scientists had long believed that heat production in brown fat relied on a single biological pathway. However, recent studies identified a second mechanism operating alongside the original system, though its activation process remained unclear. A research team led by Lawrence Kazak at McGill University's Rosalind and Morris Goodman Cancer Institute identified the molecular trigger behind this alternative system, known as the "riddle creature cycling." The researchers found that when the body is exposed

to cold temperatures, stored fat breaks down and releases glycerol. Working alongside structural biologist Alba Guarne, the team discovered that glycerol binds to the TNAP enzyme in a specific region called the "glycerol pocket," activating the alternative heat-producing pathway. "This is the first time we've identified how an alternative heat-producing pathway is activated, independent of the classic system," said Kazak, Associate Professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Canada Research Chair in Adipocyte Biology. "That opens the door to understanding how multiple energy-burning systems work together to keep the body warm at the just-right temperature," he added. Researchers said the discovery may have significant implications for bone health because TNAP is already known to play a crucial role in bone formation and mineralization. The TNAP enzyme is essential for calcification, the process responsible for building and maintaining strong bones. Mutations that reduce TNAP activity can lead to hypophosphataemia, a rare genetic disorder often referred to as "soft bones," which can cause fractures, chronic pain and skeletal abnormalities. The condition is more common in certain parts of Canada, including Quebec and Manitoba, due to inherited genetic mutations.

Ahead Of Trump-Xi Summit, China Warns On US Arms Sales To Taiwan

Beijing, May 13: China reiterated its strong opposition to U.S. arms sales to Taiwan on Wednesday, calling on Washington to honour its commitments ahead of U.S. President Donald Trump's arrival at a summit in Beijing. The issue of democratically governed Taiwan, which China views as its own territory, and weapons sales to Taipei is certain to be discussed during two days of meetings this week between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping. The U.S. is bound by law to provide Taiwan with the means to defend itself, despite a lack of formal diplomatic ties. In December, the Trump administration announced an \$11 billion weapons package for Taiwan, the largest ever. Zhang Han, a spokesperson for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, said Taiwan is an internal issue and a matter for the Chinese people. "We firmly oppose the United States engaging in any form of military ties with China's Taiwan region, and firmly oppose the United States selling weapons to China's Taiwan region," she said in Beijing. Taiwan is the "core of China's core interests" and honouring the commitments made by successive U.S. administrations

are "international obligations that the U.S. side is duty-bound to fulfil", Zhang added. The U.S. officially takes no position on Taiwan's sovereignty under Washington's "One China" policy, but has long supported, without accepting, Beijing's position that the island is China's. TAIWAN DEFENCE SPENDING Trump will be in China less than a week after Taiwan's opposition-controlled parliament approved only two-thirds of a \$40 billion special defence budget that President Lai Ching-te had requested, funding U.S. arms purchases but cutting domestic programmes like drones. A senior U.S. official told Reuters that Beijing would use that reduced budget as leverage with Trump. China could "argue that Taiwan's legislature opposes buying weapons and that the U.S. should respect the will of the Taiwanese people — in order to persuade President Trump to halt or reduce defence support for Taiwan", the official added.

Anthropic's Mythos Sends US Banks Rushing To Plug Cyber Holes



Washington, May 13: U.S. banks are rushing to fix scores of IT system weaknesses flagged by Anthropic's powerful but costly Mythos AI tool, prompting urgent repairs, software upgrades and raising the possibility of disruption for customers. As per a Reuters report, a handful of the country's largest lenders currently have access to Mythos and are uncovering

issues revealed by the AI tool. As they comb through the vulnerabilities, the larger banks are also helping smaller banks that do not have direct access to the tool prepare their systems, the report said, citing sources. Mythos is viewed by cybersecurity experts as posing significant challenges to the banking industry and its legacy technology systems, prompting a series of warnings from regulators and policymakers. "This is a wake-up call because cyber risk is moving to machine speed, while much of bank defense still operates at human speed," said Nitin Seth, co-founder & CEO of Incedo, a data, digital, and AI services firm. "It also breaks a long-standing assumption in banking security — that vulnerabilities can remain hidden for extended periods before they are discovered and weaponized." As Wall Street Banks test Mythos.

North Korea extends retirement age for office workers by 3 years amid population aging

Seoul, May 13: North Korea has raised the mandatory retirement age for office workers by three years to reflect the country's population aging and demographic changes, according to a North Korean academic paper on Wednesday. A revised labor law in 2024 stipulates that the retirement age for office workers eligible for state pension benefits is now 63 for men and 58 for women, according to the paper published in the 2026 first issue of the Journal of the Kim Il Sung University, seen by Yonhap News Agency. Under the country's labor law adopted in 1978, the retirement age had been set at 60 for men and 55 for women, but the revision



extended the criteria only for office workers, while leaving that for manual laborers and farmers unchanged. The amendment was adopted by the standing committee of the North's assembly in September

"The revisions reflect the evolving pension system and growing importance of intellectual labor," the paper said. "Under conditions where the population is aging and life expectancy is increasing, raising the pension age is a natural move." North Korea is experiencing a low birth rate and population aging. Yonhap news agency reported, according to the data from South Korea's Ministry of Data and Statistics released in December, people aged 65 or older accounted for 11.4 per cent of the North's population of 25.87 million as of 2024, classifying it as an "aging society" under international standards, North Korea's.



Yasha Mudgal reviews Capex Budget 2026-27 for Cooperative Department

Sets June 2026 deadline for completion of projects with over 70% physical progress

JAMMU, MAY 13: Commissioner Secretary Cooperative Department, Yasha Mudgal, today chaired a meeting at the Civil Secretariat to review and finalize the Capex Budget proposals for the financial year 2026-27 pertaining to the Cooperative Department. The meeting was attended by Director Finance, Cooperative Department, Rashim Deepika and other senior officers of the Department. During the meeting, the Director Finance briefed regarding the proposed Capex Budget allocations for 2026-27 under various sectors and schemes of the department. The proposals



covered ongoing works, proposed new projects, infrastructural upgradation, modernization initiatives and other development projects aimed at strengthening the cooperative sector across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. A comprehensive review of the ongoing schemes, infrastructural projects, financial performance and administrative functioning of various cooperative institutions was also undertaken during the meeting. Stressing the need for optimum and judicious utilization of Capex funds in a transparent and time-bound manner, Yasha Mudgal observed that the Capex Budget should focus on creation of durable assets, strengthening institutional infrastructure and enhancing service delivery mechanisms within the cooperative sector.

Expressing concern over the department's expenditure performance during the previous financial year, which stood at only 58 percent, Yasha Mudgal directed the officers to adopt a result-oriented approach and work tirelessly to achieve at least 80 percent expenditure during the next six months. The Commissioner Secretary emphasized that special focus must be laid on improving the service delivery, enhancing transparency and ensuring effective implementation of government programmes for the benefit of farmers, artisans, women self-help groups and other stakeholders.

DC Poonch inspects poultry farm established with support under HADP

POONCH, MAY 13: Deputy Commissioner Poonch Ashok Kumar Sharma today visited Middle Panchayat Sanai to inspect a modern poultry unit established under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP-P25) 2025-26.



The unit, with a capacity of 10,000 Layer birds, has been sponsored by the Animal Husbandry Department, reflecting the efficacy of the HADP support system in promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment across farming sectors. During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner inspected the infrastructure and functioning of the farm. He interacted with the beneficiary and inquired about the implementation of the project. He appreciated the initiative and termed it a significant step towards strengthening the rural economy and generating sustainable livelihood opportunities for local youth. The Deputy Commissioner emphasized that HADP schemes are proving instrumental in transforming the agriculture and allied sectors by encouraging modern and income-generating ventures. He directed the concerned officers to continue providing technical guidance and support to aspiring entrepreneurs so that more youth can benefit from such schemes.

DC Kathua inspects up-gradation works in Lakhampur along NHW undertaken for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026

KATHUA, MAY 13: Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma today conducted an extensive inspection of ongoing improvement, beautification and sanitation works in Lakhampur and various points along the National Highway being undertaken in view of the upcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026. During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner inspected key locations and assessed the status of road maintenance, cleanliness, repair of dividers and other civic amenities being put in place for the convenience of pilgrims and commuters. He stressed the importance of maintaining Lakhampur, the gateway to Jammu and Kashmir, in a clean, organized and aesthetically appealing manner, especially during a large



number of pilgrims and visitors pass through the district. The Deputy Commissioner directed the NHAI authorities to ensure timely completion of all works with special focus on sanitation, traffic regulation, road safety and public convenience. He emphasized that coordinated efforts among all departments are essential to provide a smooth, safe and comfortable passage for the Yatis. He also instructed the officials to maintain regular monitoring of the arrangements and ensure that all basic facilities including public conveniences, proper lighting and waste management systems remain functional and well-maintained. CPO Kathua Ranjesh Thakur, besides representatives of the National Highway Authority and other concerned officers, accompanied the Deputy Commissioner during the inspection.

DC Ramban presides over Weekly Block Diwas at Gundi-Dharam

Resolved majority of public grievances on spot

RAMBAN, MAY 13: Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan today presided over the weekly Block Diwas meeting at Gundi-Dharam, providing a direct platform for interaction between the district administration and local residents and resolving the public issues on the spot. The Block Diwas was attended by SDM Gool Intiaz Ahmed/ACD Sheraz Ahmed; Executive Engineers, District and sectoral officers of line departments, besides a large number of local residents. The programme witnessed enthusiastic public participation, with residents projecting several demands and grievances related to road connectivity, drinking water supply, electricity, healthcare, education,



directed the Executive Engineer PMGSY to immediately conduct a comprehensive survey and initiate necessary repair and restoration works to ensure visible improvement in road connectivity and drainage. The Deputy Commissioner directed the Executive Engineer JPDCL to provide additional electric poles for the area and complete installation within ten days. Regarding water supply, he instructed the Jal Shakti Department to make arrangements to meet irrigation and drinking water needs till permanent solutions under the Jal Jeevan Mission are completed. The Deputy Commissioner directed the Chief Medical Officer to ensure that a medical team equipped with essential medicines conducts weekly visits to the area. He further assured the public that an ambulance for Gundi-Dharam would be provided at the earliest. The DC also directed the Assistant Director, Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs to organise a special camp in the area for resolution of ration card-related issues and other grievances pertaining to the department. He also

directed the ACD to take necessary steps for construction of a Community Sanitary Complex at Tata Pani. The Deputy Commissioner assured the public that all genuine demands raised would be addressed in a time-bound manner. He also appealed to the public to extend full cooperation in House Listing and other Census operations, emphasizing that accurate and timely data collection is crucial for effective planning, equitable resource allocation and implementation of welfare schemes. He assured the publicizing that the administration would continue holding such outreach programmes to ensure prompt resolution of public issues at their doorstep.

University of Jammu Organizes One-Day Research Methodology Workshop on "Netnography in Practice: A Contemporary Research Method"

JAMMU, MAY 13: The Business School (TBS), University of Jammu successfully organized a one-day Research Methodology Workshop on the theme "Netnography in Practice: A Contemporary Research Method" for its research scholars. The workshop was organized with the objective of equipping PhD scholars with contemporary research methodologies and strengthening the research ecosystem of the institution. The workshop introduced participants to Netnography, a modern qualitative research methodology adapted from ethnography and specifically designed to study online communities, digital cultures, and virtual consumer behaviour. The session provided valuable insights into the application of netnographic techniques in con-



temporary academic and industry-oriented research. The resource person for the workshop was Dr. Gurpreet Kour, Instructor of Record at Purdue University, USA, an accomplished academician and researcher with extensive international teaching and research experience in tourism, destination branding, and services marketing. Dr. Kour shared practical insights, global perspectives, and methodological approaches that enriched the understanding of the participants regarding emerging qualitative research practices. Nearly fifty research scholars of TBS participated enthusiastically in the workshop. During the inter-

active sessions, scholars also presented their ongoing research work, shared their academic journeys and experiences during their PhD programmes, and engaged in meaningful and fruitful discussions with the resource person. The workshop provided an excellent platform for academic interaction, peer learning, and scholarly engagement. Earlier, speaking on the occasion, Professor Anisha Gupta, Director, The Business School, University of Jammu, emphasized the importance of creating a vibrant and progressive research culture within the institution. She reiterated her commitment to strengthening the research ecosystem of TBS through such academic initiatives and encouraging scholars to adopt contemporary and globally relevant research methodologies.

Mission Shakti Jammu organises Sports Event at GHSS Dansal

JAMMU, MAY 13: Mission Shakti Jammu District Hub for Empowerment of Women Jammu, Department of Social Welfare J&K, organised a vibrant Sports Event under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao at Government Higher Secondary School Dansal. The aim was to encourage discipline, confidence, healthy and drug-free lifestyle among youth through sports and positive engagement. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from girl students, who displayed remarkable energy, sportspersonship and team spirit throughout the competitions. Addressing the gathering,



District Mission Coordinator Mission Shakti Shagun Manchanda highlighted the significant role of sports in shaping resilient, disciplined and responsible youth. "Active participation in sports and extracurricular activities serve as a powerful means to steer young minds away from substance abuse while promoting confidence, determination, leadership, and social responsibility," she maintained. She further reaffirmed Mission Shakti's commitment towards organising impactful awareness programmes focused on empowerment, gender sensitisation and building a healthier and addition-free society.

GDC Thanamandi Celebrates National Technology Day

Thanamandi, May 13, 2026: Department of Computer Applications and the Department of Physics in collaboration with the Institution's Innovation Council and the R&D Cell of Govt. Degree College Thanamandi celebrated National Technology Day with great enthusiasm here on Monday. On this occasion an impressive programme organized under the guid-

ance and support of the Dr. Nazakat Hussain, Officiating Principal of College who encouraged students to continuously update themselves with new technological tools and research trends to enhance their knowledge and skills. The event commenced with a welcome address by Prof. Supriya Gupta, HoD Department of Computer Applications who highlighted the significance of technological advancement and innovation in the present era. She encouraged students to cultivate scientific temper and remain actively engaged with emerging technologies for academic and professional growth. Dr. Mohd Ashaq, Vice President IIC, delivered an insightful lecture on the history and importance of National Technology Day and explained the relevance of celebrating the day in India. He elaborated on the contributions of Indian scientists and technological achievements that have strengthened the nation over the years. He also acquainted students with recent advancements in Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Cyber security, Robotics, Quantum Computing, and modern communication technologies.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner administered the Nasha Mukta pledge to participants as part of the ongoing 100 Day Nasha Mukta JK Abhiyan, launched by the

DC Kishtwar chairs weekly Block Diwas at Block Nagensi

Sets one month deadline to achieve Drug-Free status for the Block

KISHTWAR, MAY 13: Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Pankaj Kumar Sharma today chaired the weekly Public Outreach Programme (Block Diwas) at Panchayat Bhagna C, Block Nagensi to directly engage with people and effectively redress public grievances through grassroots governance. The Block Diwas programme, organized under the directions of the Lieutenant Governor of UT of J&K, aimed to bring governance to the doorstep of citizens, ensuring transparent, accountable and efficient delivery of public services. At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner administered the Nasha Mukta pledge to participants as part of the ongoing 100 Day Nasha Mukta JK Abhiyan, launched by the



abuse. ADDC Vinod Kumar Behnal also shared insights on the ongoing Nasha Mukta JK Abhiyan campaign in the district. The programme witnessed active participation from former PRI members including Ex. DDC members, Ex-BDCs and resi-

dents from all 12 panchayats of the Block. The residents raised several demands, seeking commencement of classes I local KV, adequate staff in schools, streamlining of Mid-Day Meal scheme, functioning of PHC Kiru, separate R&B office in the block, besides augmentation of education, healthcare, water-supply, electricity, telecommunication and road connectivity. Responding to the demands, the DC resolved most issues on the spot and noted other matters requiring intervention at the higher level. Referring to the Dharti Abha Janjatiya Gramin Utkarsh Abhiyan, the DC acknowledged the underdeveloped Gujarat and Bakarwal habitats in the 12 panchayats of the Block. He noted that the Abhiyan, initiated by the Prime Minister, aims to provide 100 percent electricity, water and road connectivity to every hamlet in a phased manner. He added that all left-out households and areas in Block Nagensi would be covered under this scheme. Regarding electrification, he assured that the work is set to begin immediately. The DC directed the Chief Education Officer to identify schools requiring minor repairs, such as in Cheri and submit proposals accordingly. He informed the local residents that KV classes shall commence soon at a makeshift building provided by the Power Project Authorities, while the land transfer for the main KV school building is at its final stage.



CS reviews progress under PM-SYM scheme in J&K

Over 99,000 unorganised workers enrolled under pension scheme across UT

SRINAGAR, MAY 13: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today chaired a meeting to review the progress achieved under the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) scheme across the districts of Jammu and Kashmir, with emphasis on expanding social security coverage for unorganised workers through sustained awareness and registration drives. The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shaileendra Kumar; Commissioner Secretary, Forests; Labour Commissioner, Charandeep Singh and other concerned officers, while Deputy Commissioners participated through video conferencing. During the meeting, the Chief Secretary directed the Labour Department to make dedi-



cated efforts for reaching out to all eligible unorganised workers for their registration under the scheme so that they are able to avail the benefits envisaged under it. He asked the Labour Commissioner to furnish weekly progress reports indicating district-wise registrations and the incremental achievements made from today onwards. Highlighting the significance of the scheme, the Chief Secretary observed that the benefits enshrined under PM-SYM are highly attractive for workers engaged in the unorganised sector. He said that the

scheme, along with other social security initiatives such as PM Kisan Maandhan and the National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self-Employed Persons, guarantees old-age financial security to vulnerable sections of society. He also called upon the Finance Department to closely monitor the implementation of these schemes and directed the Deputy Commissioners to assist in increasing registrations in their respective districts to ensure saturation of benefits. Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shaileendra Kumar, on the occasion, stated that Jammu and Kashmir possesses immense scope for the successful implementation of such schemes as a large section of the population is associated with the unorganised sector. He stressed the need for widespread awareness regarding the benefits of these schemes so that more eligible workers are encouraged to enrol themselves. Labour Commissioner, Charandeep Singh, while apprising the meeting about the scheme, informed that PM-SYM is a flagship pension scheme

of the Government of India launched in 2019 to provide old-age social security to workers in the unorganised sector, including street vendors, construction workers, domestic workers, agricultural labourers, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, hotel industry workers and other vulnerable categories amounting up to Rs 15,000 per month. He further informed that a total of 99,722 unorganised workers have so far been registered under the scheme across all the 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir, reflecting significant expansion in pension coverage among vulnerable sections of society. Srinagar district recorded the highest number of registrations with 10,312 beneficiaries, followed by Poonch with 9,251 and Pulwama.

DIPR organises Symposium-cum-Cultural Programme for students under "Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir - 100 Days Campaign"

JAMMU, MAY 13: Continuing its outreach under the "Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir - 100 Days Campaign", the Cultural Unit Jammu of the Department of Information & Public Relations (DIPR) today organised a Symposium-cum-Theme Based Cultural Programme at National Public School Bari, Samba. The programme was aimed at sensitising students about the harmful effects of drug abuse and motivating them to adopt a healthy and responsible lifestyle. Students actively participated in the symposium and shared insightful views on the issue, reflecting awareness and concern towards building a drug-free society. The Chief Guest, Principal Farman Ali, appreciated the initiative and encouraged students to act as responsible citizens by



spreading awareness against drug abuse. In the competition, Sanchit Singh secured the first position for an impressive presentation, whereas Kaleef and Indrani were adjudged second and third, respectively. Symposium was judged by Nasreen Bibi, Shashi Shekhar and Tilak Raj. The programme witnessed active participation from students, staff members and faculty, making it a meaningful awareness initiative.

Advisor to CM calls on Javed Rana discusses development priorities

SRINAGAR, MAY 13: Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, today called on Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, at the Civil Secretariat, Srinagar and held discussions on a range of development issues concerning the Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory. The two exchanged views on accelerating development across various sectors and deliberated upon measures to further strengthen public service delivery and administrative responsiveness in the UT. They reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment to the welfare of the people and stressed that developmental initiatives must reach every section of society, particularly those in remote and underserved areas. Both emphasised that the administration



remains firmly focused on translating policy intent into ground-level outcomes. They said that sustained coordination among the departments and leadership would be key to achieve the development aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

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DC holds Mega Public Outreach Camp at Kotedhera Assures time-bound redressal of public issues

RAJOURI, MAY 13: To strengthen public outreach and ensure responsive governance at the grassroots level, Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma today conducted a public outreach camp at Kotedhera area of Block Rajouri, where he listened to public grievances and reviewed the developmental requirements of the area. The outreach programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from local residents, who apprised the Deputy Commissioner of various issues concerning road connectivity, power supply, drinking water,



education and rural infrastructure. Among the major issues projected by the public were shortage of staff in educational institutions, scarcity of electricity poles, poor condition of roads - particularly Khormang to Sokargali road and Kotedhera to

internal roads including Thudi to Kotedhera road and highlighted other civic concerns requiring immediate attention. The concerned officers present on the occasion responded to the grievances on the spot and assured the public that all genuine issues would be addressed in a phased and time-bound manner. While interacting with the public, the Deputy Commissioner reiterated the administration's commitment towards transparent, accountable and people-centric governance. He directed all officers to proactively resolve public

issues and ensure efficient delivery of services at the grassroots level. Emphasizing the need for safeguarding public assets and improving monitoring mechanisms, the Deputy Commissioner instructed the concerned departments to install CCTV cameras at all pumping stations within two months to curb theft and ensure better supervision. He also directed the Executive Engineer PDD to replace all wooden electricity poles with new poles under the PHDSM scheme in a phased manner to strengthen the power infrastructure in the area.

Governor Kavinder Gupta Releases Book on Sharda Peeth

Calls it a Significant Contribution to J&K's Civilizational Heritage

NEW DELHI, MAY 13: Governor of Himachal Pradesh Kavinder Gupta today released the book "Sharda Peeth - Sati Desh Kashmir" authored by Acharya Madan, President of Vishwa Hindu Peeth, New Delhi. Describing the book as an important scholarly work documenting the ancient spiritual, cultural and educational legacy of Jammu and Kashmir, the Governor said that Sharda Peeth has been one of the greatest symbols of Bharat's civilizational glory and an eternal centre of knowledge, wisdom and Sanatan tradition. The Governor appreciated the efforts of Acharya Madan for bringing forth a research-oriented publication that highlights the historical, religious and cultural importance of Sharda Peeth and its deep connection with Kashmir's identity. He said that such literature plays a vital role in



reconnecting the younger generation with the rich heritage of the nation. Kavinder Gupta observed that Kashmir has historically been a reformed seat of learning and spirituality, and Sharda Peeth occupied a place of immense respect among scholars, saints and seekers from

across the Indian subcontinent. He said the book presents valuable insights into the glorious past of Kashmir, the Sharda civilization, Sanskrit scholarship and the ancient traditions associated with Maa Sharda. The Governor further said that preserving and promoting

the civilizational heritage of Bharat is the collective responsibility of society. He expressed hope that the book would inspire meaningful academic discourse and encourage deeper study of Kashmir's ancient heritage and spiritual traditions. Speaking on the occasion, Acharya Madan said that the book is an attempt to bring before society the historical and cultural significance of Sharda Peeth and revive awareness about one of the most revered centres of knowledge in ancient India. He also emphasized the need for preserving the cultural identity and historical legacy associated with Sharda civilization. Prominent scholars, intellectuals and devotees associated with Sharda Hindu Peeth, Jasbir Singh Khurana and Sanjay Kumar Maini were present on the occasion.

ICC Jammu Raises Key MSME Concerns During RBI's 70th Empowered Committee Meeting

JAMMU, May 13: The Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Jammu Chapter, under the leadership of its Chairman Mr. Rahul Sahai, submitted a detailed representation to the Reserve Bank of India during the 70th Empowered Committee Meeting held at Jammu, highlighting important concerns and recommendations for strengthening the MSME sector in Jammu & Kashmir. Addressing the representation to Sh. Chandar Shekhar Azad, Regional Director, Reserve Bank of India, Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh, Mr. Rahul Sahai appreciated RBI's continued engagement with industry stakeholders and its proactive approach towards addressing MSME concerns. The meeting was attended by Madam Vibha,



General Manager, RBI J&K and Ladakh, senior RBI officials, representatives of various industry associations, officials from the Directorate of Industries Jammu, MSME Department Jammu, SICOP, and heads of leading banks operating in the region. Mr. Sahai stated that the suggestions submitted by ICC Jammu are aligned with the seven appeals made by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Sh.

Narendra Modi Ji on 12th May 2026, including promoting work-from-home wherever feasible, encouraging Swadeshi, reducing fuel consumption, and promoting natural farming. The representation highlighted key issues including strengthening implementation of the Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS), promotion of solar energy adoption through concessional financing.

DC Samba chairs Outreach Programme-cum-Block Diwas at Border Village Chachwal under Vibrant Village Programme-II

SAMBA, MAY 13: Deputy Commissioner Samba Ayushi Sudan today chaired an Outreach Programme-cum-Block Diwas at border village Chachwal, Block Rajpura under the Vibrant Village Programme-II (VVP-II) of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. During

the programme, the Deputy Commissioner held a detailed review meeting with the line departments to assess the existing infrastructure and identify the infrastructural gaps in the border village. The local residents projected wide range of demands and issues pertaining to basic amenities and develop-



mental requirements of the area. The Deputy Commissioner gave patient hearing to the grievances and aspirations of the locals. He directed the concerned departments to take immediate necessary action for prompt redressal of the issues raised during the programme. Emphasizing the

significance of Vibrant Village Programme-II, the DC stressed upon the need for active participation of locals, youth, Self Help Groups (SHGs) and former PRI members in suggesting impactful projects for the socio-economic development of the area. She encouraged the public to work in close coordi-

nation with the administration for transforming village Chachwal into a vibrant and self-reliant border village. The Deputy Commissioner also sensitized the locals to various beneficiary-oriented government schemes and advised them to register for the same to avail benefits.

Editor, Publisher, Printer & Owner: Rajni Sharma, Published at: Sec-2, Channi Himmat, Jammu
Early Times Printing Press Samadhnian Road, Jammu
E-Mail: editor.northinnews@gmail.com
All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Jammu City

