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PAGE 12

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India's aspirations 'No longer limited to its Borders': Modi to diaspora in the Netherlands



THE HAGUE, MAY 16: Terming India a "land of opportunities", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday that the country is undergoing an unprecedented transformation and its aspirations are "no longer limited to its borders". Addressing the Indian community in The Hague, the Prime Minister also said that India is dreaming big and its youth

aspires to reach the sky. "Today India is saying we don't just want transformation, we want the best, we want the fastest. That is why when there are unlimited aspirations in India, the efforts are also becoming limitless," he said in his over 40-minute speech, amid applause from the audience. "Today's India is going through a phase of" **(Contd on Pg 2)**

Lok Bhavan J&K Celebrates Sikkim Statehood Day In Srinagar



SRINAGAR, MAY 16: Jammu Kashmir Lok Bhavan celebrated the Statehood Day of Sikkim, at Srinagar. The event brought together students, security personnel and people of Sikkim living in the Union Territory. Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha extended his heartfelt greetings to the people of Sikkim on the occasion. "Sikkim, the sacred land of Guru Padmasambhava, shines

like a radiant star among Himalayan states and UTs. It is recognised globally as a model of organic farming, peace and spirituality. The incredible linguistic diversity and rich cultural heritage distinguish Sikkim on the world stage," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Sikkim is scaling new heights of" **(Contd on Pg 2)**

J&K Govt approves projects worth Rs 72 crores to strengthen sanitation infrastructure



SRINAGAR, MAY 16: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has approved Used Water Management Projects for Baramulla and Rajouri at an estimated cost of ₹37.96 crore and ₹34.43 crore respectively, aimed at strengthening sanitation infrastructure and addressing wastewater



management challenges in the two urban areas. The projects, cleared by Omar Abdullah led Government, are expected to ensure scientific treatment of sewage, prevent pollution of water bodies and significantly improve public health, hygiene and overall living conditions for the residents of Baramulla and Rajouri. The Housing & Urban Development Department has formulated Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for the Used Water Management Projects for" **(Contd on Pg 2)**

Satish Sharma ditches car, rides tanga to promote fuel conservation

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: A Jammu and Kashmir Minister on Saturday rode a 'tanga' (horse-cart) in Srinagar, and said it was the best way to support Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal for fuel conservation. Ditching his official vehicle, Satish Sharma -- the Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and



Consumer Affairs, Transport, and Youth Services and Sports -- trav-





OUR CENSUS, OUR DEVELOPMENT

(First Phase of Census 2027)

Houselisting and Housing Census by the Government of India is about to begin in your State/Union Territory
 Before this, a 15-day special facility is being provided where you can fill in your information online yourself


I am Pragati



SELF-ENUMERATION

Simple and Secure Digital facility

I am Vikas



How to do Self-Enumeration?

- 1 Visit the official portal (se.census.gov.in)
- 6 You will receive an SE ID after submission
- 2 Login via OTP using your mobile number
- 7 Keep the SE ID safe
- 3 Select your State, District and Local details
- 8 Provide the SE ID to the enumerator when they visit
- 4 Mark your house location on the Digital Map
- 9 The enumerator will confirm the information
- 5 Fill in information related to the house and family

It's Benefits

- Time-Saving
- Accurate Information
- Fast Data Processing

Remember: Self-enumeration is a special facility

If you are unable to self-enumerate, do not worry; an enumerator will definitely visit your home during the scheduled period to record the information

All your information will remain completely confidential and secure

Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh

Self-Enumeration


17th - 31st May

Houselisting

1st - 30th June

LET US FULFILL OUR RESPONSIBILITY AND PARTICIPATE IN THE CENSUS

TOLL FREE - 1855



CensusIndia2027

J&K High Court declares 15-Day summer vacation for District Courts in Jammu summer zone

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has announced summer vacations for district courts functioning in the Jammu summer zone of the Union Territory. As per an official notification issued by the Registrar General's office, the courts will observe a 15-day vacation from June 8 to June 22, 2026, includ-

ing both dates. The order applies to district courts situated in the summer zone of Jammu province. However, courts operating in Districts Kishtwar and Doda, along with courts located at Batote, Gool, Banihal and Ukhral in Ramban district, and Bani in Kathua district, have been exempted from the" **(Contd on Pg 2)**

NEET paper leak: Delhi court sends kingpin Kulkarni, accused Waghmare to 10-day CBI custody; biology lecturer arrested

NEW DELHI, MAY 16: A Delhi court on Saturday sent the alleged kingpin in the NEET paper leak case, Prahlad Vithalrao Kulkarni, and another accused, Manisha Sanjay Waghmare, to CBI custody for 10 days, agreeing with the agency that their interrogation was needed to unearth the entire conspira-

cy. The development came as biology lecturer Manisha Mandhare, who was part of the National Testing Agency's (NTA) paper-setting committee, was arrested here on Saturday after being questioned by the agency at its headquarters. Special CBI judge Ajay Gupta granted 10 days' custody to the CBI after Special Public Prosecutor Neetu Gupta sought a 14-day remand for the interrogation of Kulkarni and Waghmare, saying there was a larger conspiracy involved and both needed to be taken to various parts of the country for the probe, which was at an initial stage. According" **(Contd on Pg 2)**

FROM PAGE ONE

India's...

unprecedented transformation," the prime minister said. "You must have seen recently that India hosted the world's largest and most successful AI Summit. Before that, India also successfully hosted the G20 Summit. And this was not a one-time event. This has now become the character of today's India." Modi praised India's start-up ecosystem, saying India has the third-largest start-up network in the world. "India's aspirations today are no longer limited to its borders. India wants to host the Olympics, become a global manufacturing hub, emerge as a leader in green energy, and become the growth engine of the world," the prime minister said. Recalling that in 2014, India had only four unicorns, Modi said India has nearly 125 active unicorns now. "Today, our startups are doing remarkable work in AI, defence, and the space sector. This culture of research and innovation is becoming even more expansive," he added. He said that India's aspiration-driven journey is also strengthening its democracy, as he mentioned the recently held assembly elections in multiple states.

"This time, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry witnessed nearly 80-90 per cent voter turnout. Women's participation also increased significantly, and this trend is visible across every state. Today, voters in India are enthusiastic. We feel proud that voting records are being broken every year," he said. Modi also took a jibe at the opposition parties, asking the audience if the popular snack Jhal muri has reached 'The Hague as well. Underlining that the Netherlands is known for tulips, Modi added that India is known for the lotus. "Both the tulip and the lotus teach us that whether the roots are in water or in the earth, one gains both beauty and strength," he said.

Modi said India and the Netherlands can coordinate in the international arena and work on securing global projects. Modi also said that many cultures have vanished over time. But India's diverse culture still beats in the hearts of its people. "Generations have changed, countries have changed, environments have changed... but the family values have not changed," the PM said. Referring to the COVID pandemic and global conflicts, Modi said that this decade is becoming a decade of challenges for the world. "If these situations are not changed

rapidly, the achievements of the past many decades will be washed away," he warned. Modi arrived in the Netherlands on Friday on the second leg of his five-nation tour to further deepen bilateral cooperation in areas such as trade, technology, defence and renewable energy.

Lok Bhavan...

development and stands at the forefront of the nation's vision. The Lieutenant Governor stated that the emotional bond shared among all Indian states/UTs is deeply rooted in the core values of unity, compassion and brotherhood. The Lieutenant Governor also highlighted that the landmark July 2022 J&K-Sikkim horticulture agreement has yielded groundbreaking results in fostering interaction among youth, farmers and researchers from both regions. "I regard this thriving collaboration as a prime example of the 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'. This spirit of mutual partnership will prove instrumental in realizing our collective resolve for a 'Viksit Bharat'.

May Sikkim, known for its breathtaking natural beauty and remarkable achievements in sustainable development and organic farming, continue to scale new heights of growth and development. I pray for the well-being and prosperity of all its citizens," the Lieutenant Governor said.

J&K Govt...

Municipal Council Baramulla and Municipal Council Rajouri under the CAPEX component of Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0.

The DPRs have been technically vetted by National Institute of Technology Srinagar. The projects will be executed using Sequential Batch Reactor (SBR) Technology, which provides high treatment efficiency through a single-step biological treatment process. The projects have been conceived to improve sanitation facilities and create sustainable wastewater treatment systems in Baramulla and Rajouri. Both projects are scheduled to be completed within a period of 18 months.

Satish...

Road here: The ride was streamed live on the minister's Facebook account. Sharma said he was supporting the Prime Minister's campaign and appealed to people to con-

tribute towards fuel conservation. "Save Petrol! I believe this is the best way to implement austerity measures. Instead of travelling in a car, one should travel like this. Everyone should follow this campaign," he said. The minister said the ride also provided him an opportunity to travel in a horse-cart in Kashmir. "This is good. Today, I got the chance to sit in this tanga in Kashmir," he said, adding that tourists were welcome to visit Jammu and Kashmir during the ongoing tourism season. A security personnel and another guest were also travelling with the minister in the horse-cart. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has also reduced the size of his cavalcade following the Prime Minister's appeal for fuel conservation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on May 11, urged citizens to curb the use of fuel driven vehicles amid the global energy crisis triggered by tensions in West Asia. The prime minister suggested reducing petrol and diesel consumption, using metro rail services in cities, car pooling, increased use of electric vehicles, utilising railway services for parcel movement, and working from home to conserve foreign exchange.

J&K High...

The High Court has also instructed Principal District and Sessions Judges as well as Chief Judicial Magistrates of the concerned districts to ensure proper arrangements for hearing and disposal of urgent civil matters during the vacation period within their jurisdictions.

NEET paper...

to the case file, the court said, accused Waghmare conspired with a public servant associated with the NTA and others to receive the question paper and answers of the NEET exam, after which she provided it to several people, including some of the accused, such as Dhananjay Lokhande, for monetary benefit. The probe report, it noted, said that she also destroyed the leaked question paper after the exam was conducted on May 3. Regarding Kulkarni's role, the court noted that he, along with Waghmare and several others, provided the "confidential exam-related material" to the "selected students", for which the accused "subject expert" received a "substantial amount of money." He also later destroyed the material and caused the disappearance of evidence, and after being

arrested, both the accused did not disclose the names of "all people involved in the circulation of the leaked paper", the court noted. It allowed the CBI a 10-day custody of the accused, noting that the agency cited several grounds, including that there was a larger conspiracy involved, they needed to be taken to various parts of the country for the probe and that the investigation was at an initial stage. The court also noted other reasons for their custodial interrogation -- unearthing of the entire conspiracy, recovery of all relevant incriminating material, including digital evidence and the financial trail, and prevention of further destruction of evidence by other active members of the syndicate. It rejected the argument of Kulkarni's counsel, who opposed the custody plea, saying no one from the NTA had been arrested and that the NTA assigned the task of setting the question paper to different persons and later collected their respective sets of questions from them, but none of the assigned people knew whether the questions provided by them would form part of the original question paper. In its remand paper, the agency said its probe had revealed that Waghmare was in contact with co-accused Dhananjay Lokhande and was known to Kulkarni through Manisha Mandhare, and that "Kulkarni provided the questions to certain persons through Waghmare." The agency told the court that "Manisha Waghmare and Prahlad Kulkarni are in conspiracy with others in obtaining and circulating the leaked question paper." According to the CBI, Kulkarni, a resident of Pune, was a lecturer of Chemistry involved in the process of examination on behalf of NTA and had access to the question papers. It had earlier said that during the last week of April this year, Kulkarni had mobilised students, with the help of Waghmare, and conducted special coaching classes for these students at his residence in Pune. "He dictated the questions along with options and the correct answers during these special coaching classes, and the questions so dictated were handwritten by students in their notebooks and have exactly tallied with the actual question paper of NEET UG 2026 Examination held on May 3," the agency had alleged after his arrest on May 15. Waghmare, also a resident of Pune, had been arrested a day earlier. They were brought to the national capital on a transit remand.

Jasrotia meets Dr Jitendra Singh, seeks boost to irrigation, education and infrastructure in Jasrota

NEW DELHI, MAY 16

In a significant initiative aimed at accelerating developmental works in Jasrota constituency and adjoining areas of Kathua district, BJP MLA from Jasrota constituency Rajiv Jasrotia on Saturday met Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Jitendra Singh in New Delhi and projected several key demands related to irrigation infrastructure, education and public welfare for favourable consideration.

During the meeting, Jasrotia submitted detailed representations to the Union Minister and sought his intervention for early approval and execution of important projects of public significance in Jammu and Kashmir. A major issue highlighted by the MLA was the proposed "Improvement and Strengthening of Main Ravi Canal and its Distribution Network" project estimated at ₹271.83 crore. Jasrotia informed the Union Minister that the project is of immense strategic and agricultural importance for Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in view of the commissioning of the Shahpur-Kandi Dam



and the need for optimal utilization of Ravi river waters. He stated that the project envisages comprehensive strengthening and modernization of the Main Ravi Canal along with restoration and upgradation of the entire canal distribution network. The proposed project also includes construction of a canal siphon across River Ujh to ensure uninterrupted canal operations during flood situations and reduction of water conveyance losses. The MLA further informed that once completed, the project is expected to create an irrigation potential of around 54,072 hectares,

thereby significantly benefiting farmers and strengthening the irrigation sector across large parts of the region. Highlighting the long-term benefits of the project, Jasrotia said the scheme would not only improve irrigation facilities and agricultural productivity but also contribute substantially towards farmers' welfare, water management and rural economic development. Seeking intervention of the Union Minister, Jasrotia requested that the matter be taken up with the Central Water Commission and other concerned authorities for reconsideration and early

approval so that the project could be executed expeditiously in the larger public interest. He also informed Dr Jitendra Singh that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) of the project has already been submitted by the Union Minister (RTIC) Department, Jammu and Kashmir, to the Central Water Commission for reconsideration on merits. Apart from irrigation infrastructure, the BJP MLA strongly projected the long-pending demand for establishment of a Kendriya Vidyalaya (KV) and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) in Jasrota constituency.

Jasrotia informed the Union Minister that students belonging to rural and economically weaker sections are facing considerable difficulties due to the absence of quality central educational institutions in the constituency. He emphasized that there has been a consistent public demand for opening of both institutions to provide better educational opportunities to local students. The MLA stated that establishment of a Kendriya Vidyalaya and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya

would immensely benefit deserving students from remote and rural areas by providing access to quality education, competitive academic exposure and improved career opportunities.

He further apprised the Union Minister that the proposal has already received recommendation from the Chief Minister's Office vide letter No. PS/HCM/D.O./2026/67 dated April 10, 2026, for favourable consideration. Urging early action, Jasrotia appealed to Dr Jitendra Singh to sympathetically consider the genuine public demand and facilitate sanctioning of both educational institutions in the constituency.

The BJP legislator reiterated his commitment towards ensuring balanced development of Jammu constituency and expressed hope that the Union Government would extend necessary support for implementation of these vital projects aimed at improving irrigation infrastructure, educational facilities and socio-economic growth in the region.

Census 2027: 1,200 Enumerators to be deployed in Jammu city, Self-Enumeration window to open today

JAMMU, May 16

Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) Commissioner Dr Devansh Yadav on Friday termed Census 2027 a "historic" exercise being undertaken after a gap of fifteen years, and urged citizens to actively participate in the enumeration to enhance the coverage of government welfare schemes and strengthen service delivery.

With more than 1,200 enumerators deployed for the exercise in Jammu city, and the self-enumeration window to open May 17, the commissioner clarified various aspects related to Census 2027.

He said people must not perceive the exercise as a threat to citizenship, as the census was not linked to validating citizenship or legal residency.

"Jammu city, with a population of around eight lakh, comprises seventy-five wards and around fifteen outgrowth areas, along with some slums. In all these areas, Jammu Municipal Corporation teams consisting of more than 1,200 enumerators, will conduct the census," Yadav told reporters here. He said the self-enumeration window will remain open from May 17 to May 31, during which citizens can upload their household details on the official census portal using a one-time OTP-based registration system.

"The benefit of self enumeration is that when JMC teams visit houses in June, the already submitted information can be fetched automatically, reducing the time taken for data collection and minimising chances of errors," he said, appreciating the efforts of the organizing team and emphasized that such initiatives play a vital role in strengthening self-reliance and economic empowerment in the region. NRLM officials also encouraged participants to make full use of the training programme and develop sustainable income-generating skills. The inaugural session concluded with an interactive discussion with trainees, where participants expressed gratitude for providing skill-based training opportunities in Batote.



He said the month-long field exercise from June 1-30 would ensure complete coverage and appealed to people to contact JMC helpline numbers if census teams fail to reach any locality. He said intensive training sessions for enumerators are underway and another round of training will be conducted before the commencement of field operations to ensure smooth implementation of the exercise.

"The information will only be used for implementation of government welfare schemes and will not be linked with income tax or any other law," he clarified. Yadav said the June exercise would involve only houselisting, while the actual population census would be conducted in February next year.

He further said around 50,000 awareness slips are being distributed door-to-door to educate people about the census process and encourage participation. Replying to a query, the commissioner said caste-related and socio-economic details would not be collected during the exercise.

"Information such as availability of electricity, 'pucca' house, refrigerator, television, two-wheelers and other amenities will be collected to assess socio-economic conditions of households," he said, reiterating that the data would remain strictly confidential.

The commissioner said all MLAs have been designated as "census ambassadors" to spread awareness in their constituencies. On concerns regarding awareness in remote areas and apprehensions among people about sharing personal information, Yadav said the media has an important role in countering misinformation and fake news. "This work is being done in national interest and people should not have any doubts regarding the exercise," he said, adding that senior political leaders, judges and top officials would themselves begin self enumeration to build public confidence. Clarifying doubts regarding citizenship, he said the census exercise was not linked to validating citizenship or legal residency. "This is only an assessment of the ground situation. It does not amount to approval of citizenship," Yadav said people should provide details based on 50,000 awareness slips, explaining that individuals staying in a place for the past six months and expected to continue their stay for the next six months would be counted accordingly. Issuing an advisory, Yadav urged people to use only the official census website for self enumeration and avoid opening suspicious links received through SMS or other platforms. "No payment of any kind will be required for self enumeration. Only an OTP will be used for registration," he said, asking people to share only verified and secure official links in the public domain.

Development, Rural Growth through Sport, Horticulture Initiatives

BANDIPORA, MAY 16

Member of Legislative Assembly for Bandipora Constituency, Nizamuddin Bhat, today participated in two significant programmes aimed at promoting youth empowerment and strengthening the economy. Earlier, the MLA opened the KCFI Football Trials at SK Stadium Bandipora, organised by the Jammu and Kashmir sports council. Interacting with aspiring footballers, he highlighted the values of discipline, consistency, teamwork and perseverance, stating that sports not only nurture talent but also shape character, confidence and responsible citizenship. The MLA appreciated the continued efforts of the Sports Council in providing a meaningful platform for young athletes to showcase their potential and pursue excellence, adding that sports play a vital role in steering youth towards positive and con-

structive engagement. Later, the MLA attended a District Level Horticulture Awareness Camp as chief guest, organised by the Department of Horticulture Bandipora at Public Park Watpora. Addressing orchardists, farmers and the general public, the MLA emphasized the importance of horticulture in strengthening the rural economy and generating employment opportunities for farmers and youth. He stressed the need for adopting modern techniques and scientific methods to enhance fruit production and improve the quality of horticultural produce in the district. The awareness camp witnessed participation of Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Chief Horticulture Officer Bandipora, LDM Bandipora, officers from Agriculture and allied departments, former PRI members, orchardists, farmers.

RESTI Ramban hosts Soft Toys Training Programme for women at Babte

RAMBAN, MAY 16

A Soft Toys Training Programme aimed at empowering women and promoting self-employment opportunities was formally inaugurated at Babte by Director RSETI S. Harvirinder Singh in presence of officials from National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM). The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from local trainees, especially women eager to acquire new skills in soft toy designing and manufacturing. Speaking on the occasion, the dignitaries highlighted the importance of vocational training in generating livelihood opportunities and encouraging entrepreneurship among rural youth and women. The Director RSETI appreciated the efforts of the organizing team and emphasized that such initiatives play a vital role in strengthening self-reliance and economic empowerment in the region. NRLM officials also encouraged participants to make full use of the training programme and develop sustainable income-generating skills. The inaugural session concluded with an interactive discussion with trainees, where participants expressed gratitude for providing skill-based training opportunities in Batote.



DC Kishtwar rolls out action plan for Census 2027

Appeals people for active participation in Self-Enumeration Process

KISHTWAR, MAY 16: Deputy Commissioner (Principal Census Officer) Kishitwar Pankaj Kumar Sharma today urged the people of the district to actively participate in the self-enumeration process, which is set to begin from May 17 (tomorrow).

He was addressing a press conference regarding the preparation of the district for Census 2027 operations. He emphasized that Census 2027 shall be India's first fully digital census, incorporating a self-enumeration facility to ensure faster, transparent and error-free data collection. "Citizens can complete the self-enumeration process using smartphones, laptops, or desktop computers by visiting the official census portal at sc.census.gov.in," he



informed. The DC further stated that detailed instructions regarding the self-enumeration process are available on the portal. "In addition, QR codes printed on banners, pamphlets and awareness material distributed across the district can be scanned for direct access to the portal and step-by-step guidance," he explained. After successful completion of

self-enumeration, citizens shall receive a Unique Identification Number along with a certificate. The Deputy Commissioner advised the public to preserve this ID carefully, as it must be shown to the census enumerator during field verification visits in villages and localities. Appealing to the public to cooperate fully, the Deputy Commissioner stated that census data plays a crucial role in planning and development activities, including power supply, water facilities, road infrastructure, employment generation, skill development and other welfare schemes. He urged people not to pay attention to rumors or misinformation circulating on social media regarding the census process.

Nukkad Natak on Dengue Awareness organised at GHSS Bakshi Nagar

JAMMU, MAY 16: To generate awareness about the prevention and control of dengue, a Nukkad Natak was presented today at Government Higher Secondary School Bakshi Nagar by the Cultural Unit of Department of Information & Public Relations (DIPR) Jammu in collaboration with the State Malariaologist Office NVBDCP J&K.

The programme was organised under the aegis of the State Malariaologist/SPO, National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP), J&K, Directorate of Health Services Jammu with the objective of educating stu-



dents and staff about the causes, symptoms and preventive measures related to dengue fever. The performance effectively conveyed the message of community participation in preventing dengue and other vector-borne diseases. The programme was organised under the aegis of the State Malariaologist/SPO, National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP), J&K, Directorate of Health Services Jammu with the objective of educating stu-

DC Samba reviews civic amenities at Lodgement Centres

SAMBA, MAY 16: Deputy Commissioner Ayushi Sudam on Saturday conducted an extensive inspection of Lodgement Centres established for the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2026 at Chichi Mata, Nonath Ashram and Diani Transit Camp in district Samba.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the arrangements being put in place for the convenience and smooth stay of the Yatri. She inspected facilities related to sanitation, drinking water supply, power, lighting, toilets, bathing units, accommodation halls and power backup at all the designated lodgement centres. Accompanied by Additional Deputy



Commissioner Jagdish Singh and other concerned officers, the DC directed the stakeholder departments to ensure timely completion of all ongoing works and maintain proper coordination for hassle-free management of the Yatra arrangements. She took stock of the civic amenities and inspected the progress of work

DC Doda reviews progress of Mission YUVA implementation

DODA, MAY 16: Deputy Commissioner Doda Krishan Lal today chaired a meeting in the Conference Hall of the DC Office Complex to take comprehensive review of the implementation and progress of Mission YUVA.

At the outset, implementing department gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation, highlighting the progress achieved under the Mission related to Udhayam Jagriti 4.0, Capacity Building, processing of project proposals (applications) and disbursement of approved cases at the bank level. While reviewing Udhayam Jagriti 4.0 progress in education and technical institutions, the DC directed the heads of Colleges to encourage student registra-



tion under Mission YUVA. He instructed the colleges to appoint dedicated Nodal Officers for monitoring and expediting the UDHAYAM JAGRITI and directed them to maximize participation of students. The DC also instructed the heads of Colleges to ITIs and Polytechnic Institution(s) to mobilize

registration of maximum students under the scheme. He stressed the importance of grassroots outreach, he directed officers to organize awareness camps and conduct youth survey at block levels to identify and motivate potential beneficiaries. The Deputy Commissioner

reviewed the total number of SHG applications received, progress of loan disbursement, pendency status of cases and functioning of SBDUs and BHDs. The SBDU processing of applications and portal functioning, besides progress of BHDs in processing of loan applications was also reviewed with key performance parameters. The DC directed ADCs and SDMs to expedite BHD processing of loan applications and improve the flow of applications in blocks showing low performance. He instructed officers to strengthen coordination with bank authorities for early disposal of cases, timely loan disbursement and removal of bottlenecks in sanctioning processes. The DC also emphasized continuous handholding support to beneficiaries even after sanction of cases to ensure sustainability of enterprises and successful implementation of Mission YUVA. The Deputy Commissioner further directed the NRLM authorities to ensure registration of maximum women Self Help Groups within the stipulated timeline. He stressed the importance of hybrid training courses, enterprise mentorship and skill development initiatives for aspiring entrepreneurs. He called upon all stakeholders to work in coordination and mission mode to achieve the objectives of employment generation and economic empowerment across District Doda.

DC Ramban urges citizens to utilize Self-Enumeration facility

RAMBAN, MAY 16: Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan today briefed media persons regarding the upcoming Census 2027 operations with special focus on the initial Phase-House Listing and Self-Enumeration scheduled to commence across the district from May 17, 2026. Addressing the media, the Deputy Commissioner informed that the self-enumeration portal will go live at 6:00 am on May 17 and remain open till May 31, 2026, enabling residents to conveniently submit their household details online through mobile phones, laptops or other digital devices. He said that the self-enumeration process involves answering around 33 simple questions related to household particulars. To facilitate smooth participation, the district administration would widely circulate a tutorial video, direct



portal link and user-friendly flow-charts through mainstream media and official social media handles for public guidance. Highlighting the advantages of self-enumeration, the Deputy Commissioner said that the facility would ensure greater convenience, improved data accuracy and enhanced privacy, as citizens can fill in details as per facts and figures. Upon suc-

cessful submission, a Unique Identification ID will be generated, which residents must preserve for verification. He further informed that official enumerators shall conduct door-to-door field verification from June 1 to June 30, 2026. Households that complete self-enumeration would only need to share their Unique Identification ID with the visiting enumerator, thereby simplifying the process. The Deputy Commissioner stated that the district has been divided into 610 House Listing Blocks to ensure comprehensive and efficient coverage. "One enumerator will be deputed for each House Listing Block to facilitate systematic, accurate and hassle-free enumeration," he added. To ensure effective implementation, all Tehsildars and Executive Officers of Municipal Areas have been designated as Incharge Officers, while dedicated Help Desks and trained teams of enumerators and supervisors have been deployed to assist the public. Appealing for active public participation, the Deputy Commissioner urged citizens to make full use of the self-enumeration facility and called upon media houses to widely publicize the initiative for the successful conduct of this important national exercise.

DC Rajouri inspects Border School in Doongi Zone

Pushes for Digital Education, Infrastructure Development

RAJOURI, MAY 16: Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma today inspected Government Middle School Bassali, located near the Line of Control in Doongi Zone and interacted with students and staff members during the visit. The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the overall functioning and infrastructure of the school and held a detailed interaction with the students, encouraging them to focus on education and make effective use of technology for learning and skill development. As part of the Government's Digital India



initiatives, the Deputy Commissioner facilitated the installation of an LED system to provide digital learning opportunities to the students studying in remote border areas. "The initiative aims to connect students living in far-flung regions with the rest of the world through technology-based education and modern teaching methods," the DC informed.

National Dengue awareness Day observed in district Doda



DODA, MAY 16: National Dengue prevention Day was observed today across the health and educational institutions of district Doda with the aim of spreading awareness regarding its prevention and control. The programmes were organized under the guidance of Chief Medical

Officer Dr. Tanveer Ahmed Rather and under the supervision of the respective Block Medical Officers of the district. At the District Hqr, the main awareness programme was organized at Government Boys Higher Secondary School. District Officer

Annual Shiv-Parvati Moungrri Mela draws huge crowds on Day-2

Cultural performances enthrall visitors

UDHAMPUR, MAY 16: The second day of the three-day Annual Shiv-Parvati Moungrri Mela witnessed an overwhelming gathering of devotees and visitors from within and outside the district, who thronged the mela site to pay obeisance to lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. Cultural Wing of the Information Department-J&K presented a scintillating theme-based cultural programme, promoting communal harmony, mutual love and brotherhood. Artists from the Information Department, renowned local performers and students from the educational institutions presented vibrant cultural performances, which



highly appreciated by the audience. DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range Shiv Kumar Sharma attended the event as the chief guest. Deputy Director Sher-i-Kashmir Police Academy Udhampur Benam Tosh,

Mela Officer (Tehsildar Moungrri) Arushi Sabbarwal, along with other officers and a large number of local residents, witnessed the colourful cultural programme. Meanwhile, the Department of Youth Services & Sports, in collaboration with the Education Department, organised rural sports activities, witnessing enthusiastic participation from local youth. The district administration has made elaborate arrangements for the smooth and successful conduct of the mela with adequate facilities related to drinking water, electricity, healthcare, security and transportation.

BLSKS celebrates 13TH Anniversary of Art of Giving

Jammu, May 16: As part of celebrations of 13th Birth Anniversary of AOG (Art of Giving) & to promote the Traditional Cultural of India, Bhartiya Lok Sangeet Kala Sanshan & Volleyball association of J&K organized captivating awareness cultural program on peace and harmony in its 502th Regular Series Musical Play "Chamakne Ke Liye Sanjha Karen" at Reharsal Hall - Durga Bhawan, Jampur Jammu today on the theme - International Day Art of Giving 2026 is "Share to Shine". When you share what you have - your food, your time, your knowledge, your love, your talent - you do not become less. You shine. The Program was inaugurated by Chief Guest J.K. Koul Bezaan, founder and Chief Patron of JK Bhoomi Human Welfare Society. Dr. Anju Dogra from Health



Department, J&K Government, J.K.Raina, Freelancer Producer Director were Guest of Honor. The concept of art of giving, aimed at promoting peace, happiness, harmony and friendship. All across the globe as conceived by its founder Prof Achyuta Samanta who is also founder of KIIT and KISS, KIMS University, Bhubaneswar was highlighted by artists of

BLSKS in colorful manner. Besides this importance of all festivals, which cement bonds of peace & harmony were also articulated by the artists through colorful presentation Art of Giving says the more you share, the brighter you shine. Not with money. Not with fame. But with the light that comes from inside when you give. In order to accelerate Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan in

J&K the all members were administered Nasha Mukta pledged & an awareness camp was organized to keep the society away from drug additions. Dr. M.L.Dogra - Chairman BLSKS, read the message of Prof. Achyuta Samanta, founder of AOG whose 13th anniversary is being celebrated all across the country. Prof. Samanta's multi-faceted personality in the field of education,

social services Community welfare and sports were cherished on the occasion. Not only this Prof. Samanta's contribution as Former President of Volleyball Federation of India was also highlighted. Dr.Dogra also said "Peace and love are often said in the same breath. Peace, you could say, is the natural aftermath of showing love toward others. It turns out that peace might not be the "absence of conflict" at all. Instead, it comes from the show of love (or compassion) toward others, including when challenges develop. The balance, order, rhythm and harmony. Observe good faith and justice toward all nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all. He who lives in harmony with himself lives in harmony with the universe without caring for day to day conflicts. Over the years, the message of Art of Giving.

BJP raking up communal divides to disturb peace of Jammu Region: Rattan

Jammu, May 16: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Provincial President Jammu, Rattan Lal Gupta, on Saturday lashed out at the BJP for what he termed as a "deliberate and dangerous campaign" to vitiate the peaceful atmosphere in Jammu region by raking up communal divisions to destabilise the elected government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. While interacting a deputation from Sidhra and Rangura headed by Ch. Rehmat Ali former BDC Chairman and Shama Akther former Corporator at party's provincial headquarter, Sher-e-Kashmir Bhawan Jammu, Gupta said the BJP having been politically rejected by the people and sensing its rapidly shrinking ground in Jammu and Kashmir, has resorted to "communal polarisation, misinformation and fear-mongering" to stay politically relevant.



The BJP cannot digest the growing popularity and people-centric governance of the Omar Abdullah-led government. Frustrated by its political isolation, the party is now attempting to divide society on communal lines and disrupt the peace and progress being witnessed across Jammu and Kashmir," Gupta said. He urged the Lieutenant Governor's administration to take serious note of the "systematic propaganda and mischief" being spread by BJP leaders and their affiliates. "Since law and order, police and home affairs directly fall under the LG administration, it becomes its constitutional responsibility to curb such divisive politics that undermine the secular and pluralistic ethos of the country, particularly Jammu and Kashmir," he added. Gupta said no amount of BJP's "communal theatrics and propaganda" can derail the developmental momentum and welfare initiatives being undertaken by the Omar Abdullah government, as people are firmly standing with the National Conference. "The National Conference will never allow the BJP to fulfil its malicious agenda of dividing people for electoral gains.

Questions raised over police action and conversion angle; Movement Kalki team reaches ground zero

Jammu, May 16: The Movement Kalki team visited the Santhal area of Udhampur district to assess the ground situation regarding the sensitive case involving alleged religious conversion pressure, harassment of minor girls, and threats. Amid continuous allegations surfacing on social media and at the local level, the team interacted with the affected family, local residents, and people of the area to gather detailed information about the incident. According to the victim's family and local residents, some individuals belonging to a particular community had allegedly been pressuring the family for



religious conversion for a long time. The family further alleged that minor girls of the family were subjected to obscene acts, mental harassment, and attempts were made to forcibly abduct them. The family stated that the atmosphere of fear and intimidation had become so severe that the girls

were afraid to even step outside their home. Movement Kalki alleged that the police are attempting to portray the matter as a land dispute rather than investigating the religious conversion angle seriously, despite statements from the victim's family and local residents indicating otherwise.

Article 370 abrogation opened new era of development in J&K: Sunil Sharma

Kishtwar, May 16: Leader of Opposition in the J&K Assembly and senior BJP leader Sunil Sharma addressed an important session of the BJP's training workshop organized under the Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Prashikshan Mahabhiyan by BJP District Kishtwar, where he highlighted the historic transformation witnessed in Jammu & Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019. Addressing party workers, office bearers, and activists during the workshop, Sunil Sharma said that the abrogation of Article 370 by the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi marked a turning point in the history of Jammu & Kashmir. He stated that the decision ended decades of separatism, political uncertainty, corruption, and discrimination, which had hampered the overall development and progress of the Union



territory for many years. He said that after the constitutional changes of August 5, 2019, Jammu & Kashmir has witnessed remarkable improvements in various sectors including road connectivity, healthcare, education, tourism, power infrastructure, and employment generation. Sharma emphasized that democratic institutions

have become stronger and transparent governance has ensured that the benefits of welfare schemes are reaching the common people without discrimination. The senior BJP leader said that under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the people of J&K are now experiencing peace, stability, and new

opportunities for growth and prosperity. He added that youth, women, farmers, and marginalized sections of society are being empowered through various centrally sponsored schemes and development initiatives. Sunil Sharma urged BJP workers to remain closely connected with the masses and actively communicate the achievements and policies of the government at the grassroots level. He stressed that party cadres should work with dedication, discipline, and commitment while following the ideology and principles of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay, whose philosophy of Antodaya focuses on the welfare of the last person in society. He further stated that such training workshops are being organized to ideologically strengthen party workers and equip them with organizational and leadership skills so that they can serve society.

Natrang launches its ambitious mission, 'Theatre for Schools'

Jammu, May 16: Marking the completion of its eventful 43-year journey, Natrang launched its ambitious mission, 'Theatre for Schools', with the powerful staging of its internationally acclaimed play Aap Hamaare Hain Kaun written and directed by Balwant Thakur at Abhinav Theatre. The initiative aims to introduce theatre in schools in a highly professional and transformative manner, enabling students to experience the immense educational and emotional potential of performing arts. As part of this pioneering initiative, leading educational institutions from across the region were invited to witness the performance so that teachers and young students could directly experience the power of theatre. Schools that participated in this landmark programme included DPS Jammu, Nagbani; KC Public School; Jammu Sanskriti School; KC International School; Scientia International School; Shri Ram Universal School; India Kids



Udhampur; IDPS Ghumanhasan; MIER; Lutra Public School; and Tiny Tots Higher Secondary School. At the outset, the visionary behind this initiative, Balwant Thakur, spoke in detail about the transformative power of theatre and its ability to shape personalities, build confidence, enhance communication skills, and nurture creativity among children. Having worked extensively in more than 100 international cities and spent over four decades engaging with children's theatre in India and abroad, Balwant Thakur shared that, together with his colleagues

Neeeraj Kant and Sumeet Sharma, he has evolved a completely new methodology of theatre training for children. He emphasized that theatre should not remain merely a word-centric classroom activity but should become a dynamic process of experiential learning capable of transforming young minds. To demonstrate this innovative training process, Natrang presented Aap Hamaare Hain Kaun, a production specially developed through this new methodology. The emotionally engaging and artistically rich performance left a deep impact on the

audience, especially the students and teachers who witnessed the show. The presentation proved that theatre is not merely entertainment but a powerful educational tool that inspires sensitivity, imagination, discipline, teamwork, and self-expression. The overwhelming response from participating schools reflected a growing realization that theatre can play a vital role in holistic education. With the launch of 'Theatre for Schools', Natrang has taken a historic step towards creating a culturally vibrant and creatively empowered generation, reaffirming its commitment to meaningful theatre and social transformation through the arts. The show was brilliantly anchored by Shri Thakur and those who thrilled everyone with their mind-blowing performance included Aaradhya Thakur, Rishabh Marhatha, Ruhaan Chandra, Dwijesh Dutta, Kavish Anand, Supria Gorka, Sameera Raina, Anmol Sharma, Mahira Gupta, Aadwika Gupta.

Grand Celebrations Mark Shani Jayanti at Shri Lakshmi Narayan Mandir

Jammu, May 16: Devotees in large numbers gathered at Shri Lakshmi Narayan Mandir to celebrate the auspicious occasion of Shani Jayanti with great religious fervour, devotion, and enthusiasm. The festival marks the birth anniversary of Lord Shani Dev, the Hindu deity of justice and karma, who is widely worshipped by devotees across the country for blessing mankind with righteousness, discipline, and protection from hardships. Lord Shani Dev is regarded as the divine embodiment of Planet Saturn, one of the Nav-Grahas or nine celestial bodies in Hindu astrology, and is believed to be the son of Surya Dev Ji. The occasion holds immense spiritual significance among devotees who observe prayers and rituals



to seek the blessings of Lord Shani for peace, prosperity, and relief from obstacles in life. The celebrations at the temple commenced early in the morning with the sacred Puncharit Abhishek of Lord Shani Dev amid the chanting of Vedic mantras by the temple priests. The spiritual atmosphere filled the temple premises with devotion and positivity as devotees participated wholeheartedly in the rituals and offered prayers. In the evening, a grand Maha Arti was organized in which hundreds of devotees participated with great enthusiasm and devotion. The temple reverberated with the recitation of Shani Dev's Aarti and bhajans, creating a spiritually uplifting environment. The beautifully illuminated and decorated Shani Mandir attracted devotees from different areas.

Ashok Koul calls for ideologically committed cadre at Prashikshan Mahabhiyan

Nowshera, May 16: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) General Secretary (Organization), Ashok Koul, addressed the District Level Training Camp organized under the "Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Prashikshan Mahabhiyan-2026" by BJP District Nowshera on the topic "Vichar Parivar." BJP National Executive Member Ravinder Raina, BJP District President



Nowshera Pritam Sharma, and Kalakote-Sundarbani MLA Thakur Randhir Singh, senior party leaders, office bearers, and executive members from the district participated in the sessions. Ashok Koul, addressing the training camp, emphasized that ideological clarity and organizational discipline are the strongest pillars of the BJP. He said that the objective of the Prashikshan

Mahabhiyan is not only to strengthen party structure but also to ideologically empower every activist so that they can effectively work for the nation and society with dedication and commitment. Explaining the concept of "Vichar Parivar," Ashok Koul said that it represents a collective family of nationalist and socially committed organizations working with a common vision of nation-building, cultural preservation, social harmony, and public welfare. He stated that various organizations associated with the Vichar Parivar work in different sectors of society, including education, social service.

Vridh Ashram's relief camp brings hope to needy families and opens doors for elderly living in isolation

Jammu, May 16: In a meaningful humanitarian initiative driven by compassion and social responsibility, the Home for the Aged & Infirm (Vridh Ashram) today organized a Relief Distribution Camp for economically weaker and underprivileged families residing in rural Panchayat areas. As part of the initiative, specially prepared ration kits containing 10 kg flour, 5 kg rice, 3 kg pulses, 2 kg sugar, and 2 kg salt were distributed among 70 deserving beneficiaries belonging to Upper Gharota-B, Lower Ranjan, Upper Ranjan, Lower Jandial, Upper Jandial, and Doomi Panchayats. The initiative aimed not only to provide relief material but also to spread hope, dignity, and emotion-



al support among struggling families. The identification of genuinely needy beneficiaries and coordination of the outreach programme was sincerely carried out by Kuldip Singh Langeh, whose dedicated social efforts and support

were highly appreciated by the Management Committee of Vridh Ashram. The programme was conducted in the presence of Dr. Dinesh Gupta, Secretary; Shri Vijay Kumar, Joint Secretary; Managing Committee Members S. Rajinder Singh, Satpal Sharma, and Vijay Dhawan; along with Raghav Gupta, Social Activist, who actively participated in the humanitarian initiative. During the programme, Dr. Dinesh Gupta made a heartfelt appeal to the public regarding elderly persons who are living alone, neglected, or without anyone to care for them. He stated that if there is any genuinely needy senior citizen above 60 years of age, physically and mentally sound, not addicted, without proper shelter or family support, or living in isolation, such persons may be referred to the Home for the Aged & Infirm (Vridh Ashram), Ambhatha, Jammu for care, shelter, dignity, and emotional support. He further informed that the Ashram team is continuously reaching.

NR declares e-auction results for key passenger and commercial services in Jammu Division

JAMMU, May 16:

In a major step towards promoting transparency and the Digital India initiative, Northern Railway's Jammu Division has declared the results of the e-auction process conducted for various commercial service packages across key railway stations. The initiative aims to enhance commercial earnings and generate additional non-fare revenue, which will be utilized for upgrading passenger amenities and railway infrastructure. The Railway Administration stated that the e-auction system ensures equal and fair opportunities for local traders and entrepreneurs to provide services at railway stations through a completely transparent digital platform. Among the major developments, the contract for the Rear SLR parcel service in Train No. 13152 has been successfully allocated. The initiative is expected to facilitate faster and safer transportation of goods and consignments for traders and businesses. Local shopkeepers and small traders will now find it easier and



more economical to send and receive goods from Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Punjab. To strengthen passenger safety and convenience, an "Emergency Medical Room" will be established at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Railway Station. The facility is aimed at providing immediate medical assistance and first aid to pilgrims and passengers who may suddenly fall ill during their journey. In another passenger-friendly initiative, the Railways have awarded a contract for modern Digital Locker Facilities at Katra Railway Station. The self-service kiosk system will allow passengers

to securely store and retrieve their luggage without human intervention. The facility is expected to particularly benefit pilgrims arriving late at night or early in the morning, enabling them to proceed directly for the Bhawan pilgrimage without carrying heavy luggage or checking into hotels. The contract for systematic vehicle parking management at Budgam Railway Station in Kashmir Valley has also been successfully allotted. The move is expected to streamline traffic movement and eliminate congestion caused by unorganized parking outside the station premises. Separate lanes for passenger

drop-off and pick-up vehicles, including taxis, autos and private cars, will help ensure smoother traffic flow at the station entrance. According to the Railway Administration, these e-auction initiatives will not only enhance railway revenue but also significantly improve passenger experience through the adoption of modern digital technology and better service management. Highlighting another example of passenger-centric service, ticket checking staff of Jammu Division recently returned a lost watch to a passenger travelling on the Jammu-Srinagar Vande Bharat Express. The incident occurred on May 15 when a passenger travelling in Coach E-1 accidentally left his watch in the train's washroom. Upon noticing the unattended watch, the on-duty staff immediately informed Train Superintendent Shri R.K. Meena, who made repeated announcements across all coaches through the Public Announcement System. After the passenger provided valid identification and proof.

CCI in association with Healing Hands organizes Free Disease Screening Camp

JAMMU, May 16:

The Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CCI), Jammu, in association with Healing Hands successfully organized a Free Disease Screening Camp for the welfare of the general public and the business community at Chamber House, Jammu. At the outset the Chief Guest Dr. Rakesh Minhas, IAS Dy. Commissioner was welcomed and felicitated by the Chamber team headed by Sh. Arun Gupta by presenting a flower bunch, Shyam and a Memento. The camp was formally inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Dr. Rakesh Minhas, IAS, Deputy Commissioner Jammu, who appreciated the efforts of CCI Jammu in organizing such a meaningful healthcare initiative for society. He also praised the team of Doctors for providing their selfless ser-



vices to the society and felicitated them by presenting Mata ki Chunri and Mementos. Senior members of the Chamber, prominent citizens, traders, industrialists, and medical professionals were also present on the occasion. A team of reputed doctors and specialists including Dr. Rajesh Gupta, Dr. Neeraj Mahajan, Dr. Puneeta Gupta, Dr. Ankit Mahajan, Dr. Shally Kandhari, Dr. Satyankar Gupta, and Dr. Deepak Pathania provided medical consultations and screen-

ing services during the camp. The screening camp offered a wide range of diagnostic and health check-up facilities including Fibro Scan, Spirometry, HbA1c, Neuropathy Test, Lipid Profile, BMD Test, ECG, Blood Pressure, Uric Acid & Hb, Thyroid, Vitamin-D, Hepatitis-B, Ophthalmology Consultation, Dietician Consultation, and KFT tests. Speaking on the occasion, President CCI Jammu, Sh. Arun Gupta expressed,

Bhojshala verdict ends historic injustice: Raman Suri

JAMMU, May 16:

Welcoming the Indore High Courts decision regarding the Bhojshala complex in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh, Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Raman Suri today termed it a historic correction of a long-standing injustice done to the Hindu community. He said the verdict has once again reaffirmed that truth cannot remain buried forever and that the cultural and spiritual identity of Bharat will always prevail despite centuries of suppression.



Raman Suri stated that Bhojshala was never merely a disputed structure but a sacred center of learning, devotion, and civilization established by the descendants of Raja Bhoj as a

temple dedicated to Goddess Vagdevi, Ma Saraswati. He said generations of Hindus carried the pain of seeing their ancient temples altered and their heritage denied, yet they continued to pursue justice through constitutional and peaceful means. "This reclaiming of Bhojshala is a sign that the injustice inflicted upon Hindus for

decades is now being resolved through the democratic and judicial framework of the country," he added. Drawing parallels with the Ayodhya verdict, Raman Suri said the nation is witnessing the gradual restoration of historical truth. He emphasized that archaeological evidence, inscriptions, temple architecture, and historical records clearly established the Hindu character of Bhojshala, just as facts eventually prevailed in the Ram Jannabhoomi matter. He said such decisions strengthen the faith of millions who believe that India's ancient temples and civilizational symbols deserve dignity and rightful recognition.

CSIR-IIIM launches 'Yuva Kaushal Karyashala 4.0' to train young scientists in advanced biotechnology

JAMMU, May 16:

The CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine through its Technology Business Incubator (TBI) and BioNEST Bioincubation Centre on Saturday inaugurated "Yuva Kaushal Karyashala 4.0", a 10-day hands-on training programme in Biological Sciences aimed at equipping students with practical scientific skills, exposure to industrial biotechnology infrastructure and orientation towards innovation-driven entrepreneurship. The programme, launched at the institute's Jammu campus, has brought together 31 participants, largely students from the School of Biotechnology, University of Jammu, for advanced practical training in areas including fermentation technology, microbial biotechnology, analytical instru-

mentation, startup incubation and pilot-scale scientific operations. The inaugural session also witnessed the formal release of the "Yuva Kaushal Karyashala 4.0" training manual, which outlines the structure and practical modules of the workshop. Addressing the participants, Dr Zabeer Ahmed, Director, CSIR-IIIM Jammu, described the students as "the future of the nation" and stressed that India's scientific progress would depend heavily on creating a skilled and innovation-oriented youth population. He said programme like Yuva Kaushal Karyashala are essential for bridging the long-standing gap between theoretical classroom learning and practical laboratory exposure. Linking the initiative with the national visions of Viksit Bharat

2047 and Atmanirbhar Bharat, Dr Ahmed said India's biotechnology and research ecosystem requires trained manpower capable of working in real industrial and scientific environments. He emphasised that exposure to high-end scientific infrastructure at an early stage can significantly shape the research mindset of students. Highlighting the institute's journey, Dr Ahmed said CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, established in 1941, has evolved into one of the country's leading multidisciplinary research institutions, contributing extensively in pharmaceuticals, natural products, fermentation technology, medicinal plants and biotechnology innovation. He encouraged the students to make full use of the institute's advanced facilities, including

large-scale fermentation systems with capacities extending up to 25,000 litres, and interact closely with scientists, technical experts and innovators working across various disciplines. He urged students to remain focused on research and assured them that CSIR-IIIM would continue supporting young innovators and startup aspirants. Speaking during the session, Prof Sheetal Ambardar, Professor at the School of Biotechnology, University of Jammu, appreciated the initiative and said such practical programmes play a crucial role in complementing classroom education. She noted that direct exposure to industrial and laboratory environments helps students understand how scientific concepts are translated into real-world applications.

Sat Sharma highlights BJP's Ideological journey at Pt. Deen Dayal Prashikshan Mahabhiyan

JAMMU, May 16:

J&K BJP President and MP (Rajya Sabha) Sat Sharma addressed a session of the training workshop organized under the Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Prashikshan Mahabhiyan of District Jammu at Bhagwati Nagar, Jammu, emphasizing the ideological foundation, organizational strength, and historic journey of the Bharatiya Janata Party.



J&K BJP Vice-President Priya Sethi, General Secretary Sanjita Dogra, District Prabhari Brijeshwar Singh Rana, District President Adv Rajesh Gupta, MLAs Yudhvir Sethi, and Arvind Gupta, Seh-Prabhari Arun Sharma, along with senior leaders, including District Office Bearers, and Executive Body were present in the workshop.

Sat Sharma, while addressing the participants, said that the Bharatiya Janata Party has emerged as the world's largest democratic political organization due to its unwavering commitment to nationalism, disciplined cadre-based structure, and dedication to public service. He elaborated on the evolution of the party from the

Bharatiya Jana Sangh to the BJP and highlighted the ideological contributions of great thinkers like Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee in shaping the party's vision and direction. Sharma stressed that the Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Prashikshan Mahabhiyan is aimed at strength-

ening organizational efficiency and equipping party workers with ideological clarity, leadership skills, and communication capabilities to effectively connect with the people at the grassroots level. Sat Sharma further said that BJP workers have always played a vital role in nation-building and public welfare, and urged the participants to work with dedication, discipline, and commitment to further strengthen the party at every booth and organizational level. Other senior leaders also addressed various sessions of the workshop, highlighting the importance of training programmes in enhancing the capabilities of party activists and ensuring effective implementation of the party's ideology and policies among the masses.

Army motivates youth to join armed forces

Rajouri, May 16:

A motivational talk on joining the Armed Forces was organised by the Indian Army at Eklavya Model Residential School, Hubbi, Rajouri, to inspire and encourage local youth to pursue a career in the Indian Armed Forces. The session aimed to motivate talented and aspiring students to serve the nation and explore various career opportunities available in the Armed Forces. Students were briefed on different entry schemes, eligibility criteria and career options based on their interests, aptitude and educational qualifications. The talk also highlighted the selection procedure for becoming an officer in the Armed Forces, with emphasis on essential qualities such as leadership,



discipline, dedication, courage and patriotism. The student participated enthusiastically and showed keen interest in understanding the recruitment process and life in the Armed Forces. The initiative reflects the Indian Army's continued commitment towards guiding and empowering youth,

especially from remote and underprivileged areas, while strengthening its bond with the local population. The students expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Indian Army for organising the informative and motivational session aimed at shaping their future and overall development.

Trikuta Nagar Shiv Temple witnesses unprecedented devotee rush during grand Shanivari Amavasya celebrations

Jammu, May 16:

In an inspiring display of faith, unity and spiritual devotion, Shanivari Amavasya was celebrated with immense religious fervour at the Shiv Temple in Sector-7, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, where thousands of devotees from different sections of society gathered to seek blessings and participate in a spiritually uplifting programme. The grand event was organised by the Mandir Committee under the leadership of President Shiv Kumar Jolly and senior member Vijay Vaid. The temple premises witnessed an overwhelming rush of

devotees throughout the day, reflecting the growing inclination of people towards spirituality and religious gatherings in the present era marked by stress, anxiety and fast-paced lifestyles. The repeated chanting of the Hanuman Chalisa emerged as the central attraction of the programme and created a deeply devotional atmosphere that resonated throughout the temple complex. Devotees participated with great enthusiasm and unwavering faith, turning the event into a powerful symbol of collective spiritual energy and

social harmony. In today's materialistic and technology-driven world, where people often struggle with mental stress, isolation and social disconnect, such religious and spiritual programmes play an important role in restoring inner peace, emotional balance and cultural values. The large participation of youth, women, elderly citizens and families highlighted the continued relevance of spiritual traditions in strengthening moral values and preserving India's rich cultural heritage. The programme also served as a reminder of the importance of community



bonding and collective prayer in promoting positivity and social unity. Devotees said that participating in the Hanuman Chalisa recitation gave them spiritual strength, mental peace and renewed confidence to face life's challenges.

A grand Bhandara was organised on the occasion where devotees were served traditional dishes associated with the blessings of God (Channi Maharaj). The community feast reflected the spirit of selfless service, equality and togetherness, with volunteers serving devotees with dedication and humility. Temple President Shiv Kumar Jolly said that it was perhaps the first time such a massive rush of devotees had been witnessed at the temple on Shanivari Amavasya. He expressed gratitude to the devotees for participating

with immense faith and appreciated the dedicated efforts of the temple management committee and volunteers for successfully organising the event in a disciplined and peaceful manner. He further stated that religious programmes of this nature are not merely rituals but important social platforms that inspire people towards humanity, discipline, compassion and collective responsibility. He emphasised that in the present era, where society is facing increasing social and psychological challenges, spiritual gatherings help in spreading hope,

positivity and moral consciousness among people. Devotees also lauded the temple management for organising such a grand and spiritually enriching programme and said the event had created an atmosphere of devotion and positivity across the area. Prominent among those present on the occasion were Ajay Gupta, Madam Girja, Pabba Ji, D.P. Arora, Devinder Choudhary, Nana Ji Raina, Anita, Urmil Arora, Rajesh Gupta, Head Priest Pankaj Pandit, Suresh Sethi, Pandit Vijay and Pandit Mohinder Ji.

North in News

EDITORIAL

India under the leadership of PM Modi can lead the world out of the West Asia crisis

India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi can lead the world out of the West Asia crisis because the region today is caught in a cycle of retaliatory strikes, maritime threats, energy shocks, and humanitarian collapse that no single bloc can de-escalate alone. India's unique position as the world's fifth-largest economy, the largest energy importer with deep ties to both Gulf producers and Iran, a historic friend of Palestine with growing strategic partnership with Israel, and a civilizational power with no colonial baggage in West Asia gives it credibility that the West, China, or Russia cannot replicate. Prime Minister Modi has spent the last decade building exactly the kind of multi-vector diplomacy that a multipolar crisis demands. He has hosted Netanyahu and Abbas within months, maintained \$35 billion trade with Iran despite US sanctions pressure, expanded the India-UAE CEPA to \$100 billion ambition, invested in Chabahar Port as a humanitarian and connectivity corridor to Afghanistan and Central Asia and deployed Indian naval ships for anti-piracy and evacuation in the Red Sea. India is neither a bystander nor a partisan but a stakeholder with assets on the ground, and that stakeholder status is critical because the current crisis is not only about Israel-Hamas or US-Iran but about the Strait of Hormuz, Bab el-Mandeb, and Suez, through which 40 percent of global traded goods pass. When Houthi drones target tankers and Israeli strikes target nuclear facilities, the world faces inflation, food insecurity, and energy scarcity, and India, which imports 85 percent of its crude and depends on Gulf remittances for 25 million workers, feels the shock directly. Modi's government has therefore moved from reactive fuel diplomacy to proactive peace diplomacy, using the G20 platform to insist that the Global South cannot afford another war-induced inflation. Using the I2U2 grouping with Israel, UAE, and the US to push economic cooperation even amid conflict, showing that de-escalation can be framed as development, not surrender. India under Modi can deliver because it has the relationships, the credibility, the capabilities and the conviction that a war in West Asia is not a distant chessboard but an immediate threat to Indian growth and global stability, and therefore leadership is not optional but obligatory, and Modi's India is positioned to provide it not by choosing sides but by making peace the most profitable option for all sides, and that is how India can lead the world out of the West Asia crisis.

RAJNI SHARMA, EDITOR

Rise of Vijay to Power in Tamil Nadu

Omkar Dattatray

Emergence of youth in political power in Tamil Nadu is really a welcome development and rise of C.J. Vijay to the top post of chief minister is the most recent instance of this trend. In a dramatic turn of politics, in a merely short period of time Vijay rose to power by sweeping the 2026 Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu and it is unprecedented in the political history of this state which hitherto was ruled either by DMK or by AIADMK. But this traditional power game has been broken by the actor turned politician and that too in a short period of time. It is so good that 51-year-old actor-turned-politician C. Joseph Vijay has become the chief minister of Tamil Nadu, marking a historic shift by breaking the 59-year DMK-AIADMK duopoly in his debut election. He officially launched his party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam [TVK] on February 2024, converting his massive fanbase into a structured political movement focused on youth development, anti-corruption, and a "Tamil-first" progressive agenda. Vijay [Thalapathy] took oath as Tamil Nadu's chief minister on May 10, 2026, after his party TVK secured 108 seats in 234-member Assembly, leading a coalition government. His party achieved this historic debut by leveraging immense fan support, prompting change, and focusing on welfare. In a stunning debut, Vijay the movie star secured a remarkable victory, besting two formidable Dravidian parties and making a generational shift in voter preference. Now all eyes are on Vijay the leader to see if he can stand tall and deliver. For nearly four decades, several political aspirants have stepped forward to project themselves as a credible alternative to the deeply entrenched Dravidian duopoly in Tamil Nadu. Yet, when a self-styled agent of change finally emerged—seeking a mandate on the amorphous promise of a maatram [change]-the verdict stopped ago-

nisingly short of a decisive majority. But Vijay made this shortfall good by aligning with other parties to form a coalition government. A whimsical electorate has been swayed more by mood than by the mechanics of how the promised change will be implemented. Riding a palpable groundswell of fan frenzy, the film star C. Joseph Vijay and his fledgling party, the TKV, scripted a stunning debut, securing 108 seats. Vijay, himself won both the seats he contested, but his party fell just 11 seats short of simple majority needed to form government. Vijay scripted a magical story, securing a staggering 1.72 crore votes, or 34.92 per cent of the votes, far ahead of the second-placed DMK's 1.19 crore votes. In doing so he eclipsed the once-iconic feat of M.G. Ramachandran [MRG], the matinee idol and founder of AIADMK then ADMK, who had similarly stormed to power in 1977, his alliance ousting the DMK by winning 144 seats and garnering 33.52 per cent vote share. The Vijay's remarkable victory was not an absolute one underscoring a lingering hesitation among a substantial segment of the electorate that remains unconvinced of his political depth and administrative readiness. But the large segment that did not vote him does not appear to have had such fears. "Just like that let us have change," said a voter can supplier in Chennai who water for Vijay, capturing the impulsive undercurrent behind the surge. This sentiment of asking for change "just like that" was a familiar strain, especially among the Instagram-influenced Generation Z and Gen X voters. That said, Vijay's appeal appears to have cut across conventional social boundaries, capturing a broad spectrum of voters across caste, class, religion, gender and regional loyalties. Vijay's style of "parachute politics" took the wind out of the sails of both

the DMK and AIADMK who have dominated the political canvas for nearly half a century. The DMK-alliance finished with 73 seats now find itself on the opposition benches while AIADMK reduced to 47 seats, has forfeited the opposition space. Key Factors in Vijay's Rise to power [2024-2026] 1]---Rapid Political Ascent---After announcing his political entry in early 2024, Vijay pledged to fight the 2026 election, securing a major victory in just two years. 2]---Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam [TVK] ---Vijay turned his decades-old fan network, Vijay Makkal Iyakkam, into a robust political organisation focused on grassroots welfare and engagement. 3]The "Clean Sweep"---In the 2026 Assembly Elections, TVK, securing 108 seats, single largest party, allowing Vijay to form the government while relegating the major Dravidian parties to the opposition. TVK emerged as the single largest party, though it required alliance negotiations to cross the 118-seat majority threshold in the 234-seat assembly which it did successfully and cobbled a coalition government. 4]Appeal to Youth & Women---According to pollsters, his appeal was highest among new voters and women, driven by his cinematic image as a "boy next door" and promises of fundamental change. 5-Anti-Establishment Sentiment---He positioned his party as a fresh alternative to the established DMK and AIADMK parties, capitalizing on a desire for change among voters. 6]Grassroots Organisation---his party's foundation was laid by the Vijay Makkal Iyakkam massive fan club network established in 2009 that focused on welfare activities like blood donations and education support. 7]---Political Debut---Launching the TVK in February 2024, Vijay, a promi-

nent star [popularly known as "Thalapathy"], aimed to transition from cinema to politics. 8]---Swearing-in---He took the oath of office at Chennai's Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium. 9]---Immediate Action---Upon taking office, Vijay signed orders regarding free electricity, a task force for women's safety, and a unit for drug addiction prevention. 10]---Strategic Positioning---His campaign focused on issues like corruption, inequality, and the need for a new political alternative, drawing significant support from youth and women as well as first-time voters. 11]---Sole Power Centre---In his initial address, Vijay stated, "There will be no power centre than me," asserting control over his government. 12]---Coalition Leadership---TVK formed a government with support from the congress, Left parties, and others. 13]---Popular Mandate---He secured a roughly 35% vote share in his debut election. Background and Transition 1]---Cinema to Politics---Often called "Thalapathy" [Commander] by fans, Vijay was one of Tamil cinema's biggest superstars for decades before entering politics, similar to predecessors MGR and NTR. 2]---Strategic shift---following the creation of his party in 2024, he announced his departure from cinema to focus exclusively on public service, with the final film Janaganagan in mind. His swift success is attributed to his immense popularity and the ability to turn emotional connections from film into tangible political capital. In brief, Vijay's political ascent is considered a historic shift in Tamil Nadu's political landscape. The author is a columnist, social, KP activist & Freelancer

The pit as a destination

BY ALOK SHARMA

There is a particular quality to the silence that settles over a coal mine when operations cease. The machinery stops. The conveyors go still. The blackened earth - scarred, compacted, chemically altered across decades of extraction - does not look, at first, like a place a tourist might choose to spend an afternoon. And yet across the world, from the galleries of the Zollverein complex in Germany's Ruhr Valley to the lamp-lit tunnels of Wales' Big Pit, exactly these landscapes have been transformed into some of heritage tourism's most visited and most moving destinations. Millions of people travel specifically to stand where coal was once cut, to understand the industry that shaped the modern world, and to honour the communities who powered it. India has 400 such sites. And until now, nobody had systematically asked which of them could follow the same path. A study commissioned jointly by the Ministry of Coal and the Ministry of Tourism - and conducted by researchers at the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management and the Madhya Pradesh Institute of Technology and Science - has produced the first empirical answer to that question. Using a ten-parameter Tourism Potential Index applied to 15 coal mine sites across six coal India Limited subsidiaries in Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and West Bengal, the study scores each site across accessibility, attractiveness, infrastructure, socio-economic conditions, community engagement, environmental sustainability, demand potential, investment



feasibility, safety, and site activity status. The composite scores range from 1.11 to 9.20 on a ten-point scale. The headline findings are straightforward enough. WCL Sooner in Maharashtra leads the rankings, already attracting approximately 10,000 visitors monthly to its eco-tourism park. ECL Jhanyra in West Bengal, CCL Barka Sayal in Jharkhand, MCL Hingula in Odisha and NCL Kakri in Madhya Pradesh complete the high-readiness tier. These five sites, the study argues, are candidates for immediate structured tourism development investment under Swadesh Darshan 2.0's industrial heritage circuit. But the more consequential finding is buried one layer deeper - in the statistical analysis of what actually determines whether a site is ready to receive tourists. The answer is not what the conventional tourism development playbook would predict. Physical attractiveness - the scenery, the surviving industrial architecture, the natural setting - ranks fourth among predictors of destination readiness. Environmental quality, the parameter that governments most visibly invest in through greening and remediation pro-

grammes, is statistically non-significant. It does not, on the evidence of this sample, meaningfully differentiate a ready site from an unready one. What does? Socio-economic profile - the strength of the surrounding community's economic base, the diversity of local livelihoods, the presence of women's Self-Help Groups, the density of artisanal and entrepreneurial activity - is the single most powerful predictor of whether a coal mine site can realistically transition to tourism. Investment feasibility is second. Community and cultural engagement is third. The implication is uncomfortable but important. India's current coal mine repurposing strategy - building eco-parks, greening overburden, revegetating surface land - is necessary but insufficient. It addresses the visual dimension of mine closure while leaving untouched the human dimension that our data identifies as the binding constraint. A site that looks healed but whose surrounding community has been economically hollowed out by three generations of mono-economy dependence on coal does not become a tourism destination by adding trees. It only becomes a park that people drive past.

This is not a novel insight in the global literature. The Zollverein complex in Essen, which now attracts 1.5 million visitors annually and carries UNESCO World Heritage status, required 15 years and approximately €150 million in public investment before achieving sustainable visitor flows. Crucially, the social infrastructure that made it work - the vocational retraining programmes, the community enterprise networks, the artisanal economy that gave former mining families a role in the heritage economy - was built through years of structural adjustment support before the tourism investment began. The sequencing mattered. Community capacity first, infrastructure second, marketing third. India's policy calendar may not allow for that patience. There is genuine political momentum behind coal mine tourism - the Ministry of Tourism has expressed interest in a dedicated Coal Tourism Development Authority, and Swadesh Darshan 2.0 creates a ready vehicle for circuit development. CIL's CSR mandate generates substantial funds annually across its subsidiary network. The institutional pieces exist. The question is whether they will be assembled in the right order. The governance challenge is also more complex than conventional DMO models are designed to handle. Coal mine tourism sites in India sit at the intersection of at least five regulatory and institutional actors: CIL subsidiaries, the Ministry of Coal, the Ministry of Tourism, state governments, and tribal self-government bodies operating under PESA provisions. No single tourism body currently has the mandate.



LG Manoj Sinha Attends 9th Maati Samman Samaroh in Mumbai

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha today attended 9th Maati Samman Samaroh, a Purvanchal festival of art, culture, food and tourism. On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor also felicitated distinguished personalities from Purvanchal. Addressing a gathering, the Lieutenant Governor said that historical, cultural and spiritual bonds between Purvanchal and Maharashtra run very deep. A glimpse of it seen in Lord Rama's Vanvas when he visited Panchvati and worship at Kashi Vishwanath and Trimbareshwar has strengthened spiritual traditions of both the regions. The Lieutenant Governor said that Purvanchal is not just a region on the map but Purvanchal is a consciousness. "It is a living energy that has offered humanity a fresh perspective. Purvanchal is an idea. To me Purvanchal is both a celebration of spirituality and an expression of devotion. Purvanchal brings the fragrance of art and the exuberance of culture. It is the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati, and the restraint of ascetic, selfless sages," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor observed that in modern times, the contributions of Lokmata Ahilyabai Holkar, Raghunath Rao and Malhar Rao Holkar were extraordinary.



He said when Purvanchal was wounded by invaders and it was struggling to reclaim its spiritual and cultural radiance, Lokmata Ahilyabai Holkar took up the mantle. Lieutenant Governor said that from Kashi Vishwanath Temple to Manikarnika, Dashashwamedh and Ahilyabai ghats, many temples and ghats came into being because of Lokmata Ahilyabai's patronage. The Lieutenant Governor said that saints from Maharashtra and Purvanchal, Sant Tukaram, Sant Gyaneshwar, Sant Namdev, Sant Eknath, Sant Ramdas, Growsami Tulidas, Sant Kabir and Sant Ravidas awakened social consciousness and showed society a new path. "I believe Purvanchal, which embodies a heritage from Lord Rama to the Buddha, created ways to reach truth. Several Tirthankaras of Jainism were born in regions of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Places from Ayodhya to Prayagraj, Chitrakoot, Samath, Varanasi and Kushinagar continue to guide humanity. In Purvanchal's soil many Upanishads were born, the Ramcharitmanas took shape, Kabir's anthologies and Sant Ravidas's immortal sayings emerged, and numerous Jain and Buddhist texts found their voice. The words of Munshi Premchand and Bharatendu Harishchandra shaped the new ideas. Pandit Ravi Shankar, Bismillah Khan, Girija Devi and Birju Maharaj breathed life into art. Heroes of independence struggle like Mangal Pandey, Chandrashekar Azad, Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqulla Khan, Rani Lakshmbai and Chittu Pandey changed the nation's destiny, and selfless leaders like Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Babu Shiv Prasad Gupta helped shape the new generation through education," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor said that in its deepest form Purvanchal is humanity's story. He said millions of indentured laborers from Purvanchal carried India's culture to Fiji, Mauritius, Trinidad, Suriname and Guyana, so Purvanchal belongs to every person who stands at the crossroads of global human exchange. He also observed that many districts of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have made significant contributions to Maharashtra's economy, and large numbers of migrant workers have powered their industries. He said today Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh function as two of India's principal

National Dengue Day observed across Kathua with awareness drive

KATHUA, MAY 16: National Dengue prevention Day was observed today across district Kathua. Awareness programmes were organized at the Office of the Chief Medical Officer and health institutions across the district to spread awareness about dengue prevention and control. District Health Officer Dr. Utam Chand delivered an awareness lecture at the CMO Office. Chief Medical Officer Dr. Vijay Raina, malaria staff and other officials besides the general public were present. Dr. Utam explained the signs and symptoms, prevention, control and treatment of dengue under the theme "Unite, Act, Eliminate." A Dengue Awareness Van carrying public awareness jingles was flagged off by the Chief Medical Officer and District Health Officer to



sensitize staff and the general public about preventive measures against the transmission of dengue. The health officials advised people to avoid self-medication. Medicines like aspirin and ibuprofen can lead to serious complications in dengue patients, they cautioned. It was also informed that there is no need to panic in case of a dengue-positive test as 95 percent of dengue cases recover without complications. The officials further informed that platelet component laboratory facilities for blood transfusion, dengue testing laboratories and separate beds for dengue patients are available at Government Medical College Kathua and Sub-District Hospitals. Similar awareness programmes were also conducted in other blocks of the district including Parole, Hiranagar, Billawar, Basohli and Bani under the supervision of the respective Block Medical Officers. RBSK teams and malaria staff also carried out awareness campaigns.

DC Ramban reviews formulation of Capex Budget - 2026-27

RAMBAN, MAY 16: Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan today chaired a meeting to take a comprehensive review of the functioning of the Rural Development Department and discuss the formulation of the developmental plan for the financial year 2026-27. The meeting focused on sustainable development in rural areas of the district. The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Development Sheraz Ahmed, Chief Planning Officer Dr. Shakeeb Ahmed RATHER, Block Development Officers of all eleven blocks of the district besides other concerned officers. The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the proposed developmental framework for the current financial year. He directed the Block Development Officers to prepare the plans in consultation with all stakeholders, giving due priority to basic infrastructure and area-specific developmen-



tal requirements. He instructed the officers to include all SOS works in the plans and stressed the importance of adopting a grass roots-oriented approach to ensure equitable and effective development in rural areas. Highlighting key priorities, the DC directed the officers to focus on the development of playfields, restoration and preservation of water bodies,

strengthening educational infrastructure and execution of other projects based on local requirements. He emphasized that developmental planning should be practical, inclusive and aligned with the aspirations of the people. Earlier, the Chief Planning Officer provided detailed guidance to the Block Development Officers regarding the preparation of developmental plans and urged them to ensure realistic projections, proper planning and effective utilization of available resources. The Assistant Commissioner Development briefed the chair on pending works under MGNREGA and PMAY-G, besides the status of implementation of ongoing rural development initiatives. Reviewing the closure of works by the District Level Committee under MGNREGA and PMAY-G, the Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned officers to ensure timely completion of all procedural formalities, data entry and work closure without further delay to maintain transparency and accountability. The Deputy Commissioner underscored the importance of inter-departmental coordination for effective implementation of government directives and called upon officers to work with added commitment towards achieving tangible developmental outcomes on the ground.

DC Poonch reviews Youth Engagement, Empowerment initiatives

Directs departments to submit action plans by Monday

POONCH, MAY 16: Deputy Commissioner Poonch Ashok Kumar Sharma today chaired a meeting at the Conference Hall of DC Office Complex Poonch to review the implementation of the youth engagement and empowerment initiatives being undertaken by different departments across the district. The meeting was attended by district heads of various departments including employment, education, youth services & sports, agriculture, floriculture, labour, health, DIC, ITI, colleges and other concerned officers. During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner conducted a department-wise review and stressed upon all stakeholders to enhance youth participation and ensure effective

implementation of schemes aimed at skill development, self-employment and constructive engagement of youth. Special emphasis was laid on generating self-employment opportunities for unemployed youth through different government schemes and entrepreneurship programmes. The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned departments to motivate and facilitate youth participation in initiatives such as Udyam Jagriti, poultry and egg farming under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), start-up and livelihood generation schemes, besides other employment-oriented activities. The Deputy Commissioner also emphasized increasing the

involvement of college students and youth in NCC, NSS, sports and cultural activities for their overall personality development and constructive engagement. All departments were instructed to work in close coordination and prepare comprehensive youth engagement and empowerment plans with measurable targets. The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned officers to submit their departmental action plans by Monday for further review and implementation. The meeting concluded with a resolve to adopt a coordinated approach for empowering the youth of the district and channelizing their potential towards positive and productive activities.

Department of Wildlife Protection
Office of the Wildlife Warden, Jammu Zoo
Nagrota, Jammu
SHORT TERM TENDER NOTICE
E-TENDERING

Tender Notice : e-NIT No.- 08/WLWJ of 2025-26 dated 14/05/2026
Supply of Green Fodder for Jammu Zoo and Manda Rescue Centre, Jammu.

For and on behalf of the Hon'ble Lt. Governor, UT of Jammu & Kashmir, e-tenders are invited from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K State Govt. / Central Govt. Organizations for the following works:

| Requirement of Items | Approx. Monthly requirement in Kgs | Place | Specification | Tender Fee | Earnest Money deposit |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|------------|-----------------------|
| Green Fodder | 30,000 kg/month | For Jammu Zoo & Manda Rescue Centre, Jammu | Fresh / clean seasonal/ Standard quality | Rs. 1000/- | Rs. 90,000/- |

The e-NIT consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities, (B.O.Q.), set of Terms & Conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental Website:- <http://jktenders.gov.in>

| | |
|---|--|
| Publishing Date | 14.05.2026 |
| Download Start Date | 14.05.2026 |
| Bid Submission start Date | 14.05.2026 |
| Bid Submission End Date (Online) | 21.05.2026 at 04.00 PM |
| Date of Opening of Technical Bid (Online) | 22.05.2026 at 12:00 PM (In the Office of Regional Wildlife Warden, Jammu, Manda Hills, Jammu) |
| Date of Opening of Financial Bid (Online) | 23.05.2026 at 12:00 PM (In the Office of Regional Wildlife Warden, Jammu, Manda Hills, Jammu) |

Bid documents can be seen at and download from the website:- <https://jktenders.gov.in>. Bid documents contain qualifying criteria for bidder, specifications, bill of quantities, conditions and other details.

Terms & Conditions:

- Bids uploaded must accompany scan copies of the following:
 - Govt. Treasury Receipt (cost of tender document) in shape of Treasury Challan for the amount shown against the work above to be deposited in Govt. Treasury under Account Head 0406.
 - Earnest money in shape of CDR pledged to Additional Wildlife Warden, Jammu Zoo, Jammu. (The EMD/CDR of previously participating bidders shall remain valid for the fresh tender process.)
 - PAN card with Latest Income Tax Return for the assessment year 2025-26.
 - GSTIN for the latest quarter (Jan-Mar 2025-26).
 - Form C/Registration Certificate (Same Nature of Business).
 - Affidavit of not-being blacklisted/any criminal case pending in any court of law and agree with the terms and conditions of the bid.
- The price bids uploaded on the website in time will be opened after the evaluation of the Technical Bids by the Tender opening Committee of the Department. The dates of opening price bids as per NIT. The price bids will also be opened in the office of Regional Wildlife Warden, Manda Hills, Jammu.
- The bids for the supply shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the date of opening of bids, if any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/tender before the said period or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid, the earnest money deposited shall be forfeited.
- The Department shall not be held responsible for selection criteria/policy matter being adopted by the Directorate of Information regarding publishing the e-NIT, in any of the newspaper under circulation.
- The Department will not be responsible for any delay in online submission of the bid due to any reason (Technical or otherwise).
- The accepting department however, reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons thereof.
- The daily supply should reach to Jammu Zoo/Manda Rescue Center Jammu before 8.00 AM daily. In case of any deviation in timing, the contract / agreement shall be terminated.

Wildlife Warden,
Jammu Zoo, Jammu.

Virat Kohli's ODI World Cup Ultimatum Leaves BCCI In A Tight Spot

New Delhi, May 16: When a sporting icon like Virat Kohli has to justify his worth, we know that everything isn't right when it comes to his relationship with the coaches, the management or the board. Kohli has never been one to speak in half-measures, but his remarks regarding his future in One Day Internationals are bound to force even the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to think about the road forward for the 2027 ODI World Cup. Speaking candidly on the Royal Challengers Bengaluru podcast, Kohli addressed the relentless speculation surrounding his participation in the 2027 ICC ODI World Cup. In doing so, he sent a clear message straight to the BCCI bosses, the management and selectors. "Either tell me on day one I am not good



enough I am not needed. But if I am made to feel like I need to constantly prove my worth and my value, then I am not in that space," were Kohli's comments in the podcast, as he made it clear that he is in no mood to prove himself again, especially at this stage of his career. If pushed, he hinted at moving on from "this space". For a player who has re-

defined modern cricket's fitness and run-scoring benchmarks, the statement is a fierce defence of his legacy. For the BCCI and the national selection committee, however, it complicates an already intricate relationship. The complexities of one-format cricket are not new. Following his T20 International retirement after India's 2024 World

Cup triumph and his subsequent departure from Test cricket, Kohli's international career is now exclusively reserved for the 50-over format. With ODIs increasingly squeezed out of the global calendar, the lack of consistent game time naturally demands a debate about Kohli's continuity in international cricket, especially at the age of 37. Yet, Kohli's counter-argument shifts the burden of proof entirely onto the management. By stressing that his year-round, elite lifestyle ensures he can "run boundary to boundary for 40 years without complaint," Kohli is making it clear that any attempt to drop or phase him out cannot be masked as a "fitness" or "workload" decision. Last year, Kohli scored 651 runs in the ODI format at an average of 65.1, while also recording three centuries.

BCCI Urged To Ban "Chit Business" After LSG Star's Celebration: "Bit Of Rubbish"

New Delhi, May 16:

Former India batter Ambati Rayudu has strongly criticised Akash Singh's 'chit celebration' during Lucknow Super Giants' (LSG) seven-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, saying such celebrations should be banned.



Akash, who starred with figures of 3-26, celebrated each wicket by pulling out a small chit from his pocket and showing it to the cameras. The note reportedly read: "#Akkionfire - Akash knows how to take wickets in a T20 game."

The chit celebration has become a new trend in IPL 2026, and several players, including Urvil Patel and Ragu Sharma, have celebrated milestones by bringing out chits with a message. Akash Singh's celebration quickly went viral on social media, but it also drew criticism from several former cricketers.

Speaking on ESPNcricinfo's TimeOut show, Rayudu said he did not like the trend of players bringing out notes and messages during matches. "I think they should ban this chit business, absolute nonsense. I don't think they're supposed to bring chits anyway," Rayudu said. The former CSK batter also questioned the idea behind the celebration and joked about how it must have been planned. "I just want to know at what point today he thought, 'Hey, this will be awesome, I'll pull this out on TV, and everybody will think I'm cool.' I also want to know which friends backed him and told him it was a great idea," he said. "I think that's his manifestation. It may not go down well with a lot of people, but it's kind of funny and a bit of rubbish," he added. Former New Zealand pacer Mitchell McClenaghan also criticised the trend and said young players should focus more on performance than dramatic celebrations.

Jasprit Bumrah Will Play Only 1 Format, 2 Star IPL Performers May Be Rewarded

New Delhi, May 16: Jasprit Bumrah will either play the one-off Test or the three-match ODI series against Afghanistan next month as the national selection committee is keeping an eye on the pace spearhead's workload while naming the squads for the series on May 19. The one-off Test, which isn't a part of the World Test Championship cycle, will be played at New Chandigarh from June 6-10, while the three ODIs will be held on June 14 (Dharamsala), 17 (Lucknow) and 20 (Chennai) respectively. The bilateral ODIs have gained traction because that is the only format that Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma play international.



ly. However, Delhi speedster Prince Yadav's name will certainly be discussed by the selection committee considering his stellar show in the last edition of the national one-day championship. Prince took 17 wickets from 8 Vijay Hazare Trophy games. Besides that, his effort in

"Zero Sense": Ruturaj Gaikwad Blasted For Big Tactical Blunder, Made Even Before LSG Match Started

New Delhi, May 16: Chennai Super Kings' 3-game winning run came to an end against bottom-table Lucknow Super Giants in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 campaign on Friday, putting their playoff qualification at risk. Punjab Kings' slip-up had opened the door for CSK to go fourth in the points table, but they couldn't capitalise on the opportunity. After the game, former Chennai batter Subramaniam Badrinath tore into skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad for his 'tactical blunder' that played a role in the team's defeat against Lucknow. Ruturaj himself blamed the bowling unit for the below-par show against LSG, after the batters took them to a challenging total of 187/5 on a tricky wicket. Lucknow chased down the total in just 16.4 overs.



"CSK losing because of team selection errors is becoming a pattern this season. Leaving out Akeal Hosen in this track made zero sense. Another game, another missed opportunity," Badrinath said on X (formerly Twitter). Ruturaj refused to press the panic button after the defeat and urged his teammates to focus on the next two games, and get the two wins

that take the team to the next round. "I felt there was a bit of something for the fast bowlers. You know, when we batted, we found it difficult to hit off the hard lengths probably, their bowlers executed it really well. But I think we were looking at 160 or 170 and we ended up getting 180. So I thought, probably nothing

much better we could have done from a batting point of view, but I think credit to them. They batted really well and never know if the pitch got better or not, but I think they played some extraordinary shots," he said. "Just make sure we come back and improve what are the areas we need to improve and yes, try and adapt and assess the conditions as quickly as possible and it is a simple calculation for us. Win each and every game for however many games we play. So I think nothing simple. I mean, it is simple, nothing complicated. So quite easy here on for us. Nothing to worry about. Just make sure we have a good day. Make it count whoever has a good day and hope that we hope that we turn the things around," he said on the next two games.

"It's Wrong": R Ashwin blasts Punjab Kings owners' Call that could lead to team's elimination

New Delhi, May 16: Ravichandran Ashwin might see the Chennai Super Kings as the franchise closest to his heart, but he is also agonised by the troubled times the Punjab Kings have had to face recently. After going unbeaten in seven matches on the trot, PBKS went on to lose five matches in a row. Two of these matches took place in Dharamsala, their second home venue. While the likes of Mumbai Indians, Chennai Super Kings, Kolkata Knight Riders, and even Sunrisers Hyderabad – the most successful franchises in the league – continue to play all their home matches at a single venue, Ashwin didn't mince his words as he blasted the Punjab Kings owners to pick two different venues for the team. In a video shared on his YouTube channel, Ashwin questioned why



Punjab picked two different home venues while traditional top teams like CSK, KKR, MI, and SRH continue to play their home games at a single stadium. "Let me ask you a question. KKR, CSK, and MI, the three teams that have won the highest number of trophies-3, 5, and 5-out of the 19 seasons, they have won 13 trophies

in total. SRH has won two (Deccan Chargers and SRH). Take it as 15. Have these teams ever changed their home venue?" Ashwin said in the video. "Look, we can say from the outside that Punjab aren't doing well, but because I have personally been there, I know it is wrong. We won five matches in Mohali, then we changed venues and got

knocked out of the tournament," he added. Punjab find themselves in a situation where they need to win both of their remaining games to secure a top-four spot. However, one of these matches will be played in Dharamsala. Ashwin feels the venue change is to blame for the below-par performance from the Shreyas Iyer-led side, as they haven't been able to adapt to the conditions quickly enough. "So, I am saying that, sure, Punjab have suffered consecutive defeats, but they are not playing in Mohali; they are playing in Dharamsala, where the wicket is not that good to bat first on. The ball stays a little low in the first half, so it will take time for them to adapt. "Their batting order is scoring 30-40 runs fewer, or 20 runs fewer, because they have to adapt

Current IPL Media Rights Rs 48000 Crore, "Won't Be Surprised" If It Grows By 20-30 Per Cent: Team Owner

New Delhi, May 16: Punjab Kings co-owner Mohit Burman believes the recent winning bids for two IPL franchises worth billions of dollars will have a positive impact on the next media rights cycle and an increase of 20-30 per cent will not surprise him. The existing media rights cycle from 2023-2027 fetched an eye-popping Rs 48,000 crore (roughly USD 6.2 billion as per the exchange rate back then). While the number for television rights could go down, the digital rights value is expected to go up drastically. Rajasthan Royals and Royal Challengers Bengaluru recently attracted successful bids from new investors for close to USD 2 billion each (USD 1.65 billion and



streaming-first consumption," Burman told. Burman termed the engagement consistency of the IPL as a big confidence in the IPL's consistency. Very few sports properties globally deliver this level of engagement year after year. It continues to attract advertisers, massive audiences.

USD 1.78 billion respectively), and Burman said that is bound to drive up the media rights value. "It would be speculative to put an exact number on it right now because the media industry itself is evolving very quickly. The dynamics between television and digital are changing every year, and consumer behaviour is shifting rapidly toward mobile and

Thailand Open: Satwik-Chirag advance, Sindhu crashes out

New Delhi, May 16: India's top men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty stormed into the semifinals of the Thailand Open with a commanding straight-games win in Bangkok on Friday, while two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu bowed out after a hard-fought quarter-final defeat against old nemesis Akane Yamaguchi of Japan. Later in the day, Lakshya Sen is scheduled to face defending champion and home favourite Kunlavut Vitidsarn in the men's singles quarterfinals. Top seeds Satwik and Chirag delivered a dominant performance against



Japan's Takumi Nomura and Yutchi Shimogami, registering a comfortable 21-12, 21-13 victory in just 41 minutes. The win marked the Indian duo's first semifinal appearance at a BWF World Tour event in 2026. Facing the world

ICC Meeting In Ahmedabad During IPL 2026 Final, Suspense Over Mohsin Naqvi's Attendance

New Delhi, May 16: As Ahmedabad gears up for the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 final, an International Cricket Council (ICC) meeting has been called in the city on 30 and 31 May. While there could not have been a better occasion than the IPL final to invite the top bosses of all international cricket boards to the city, there is suspense over the attendance of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi. The ICC is due to hold a quarterly meeting in India, with the chief executives' committee holding a virtual session on 21 May, which is scheduled to be followed by an in-person meeting. Originally, the meeting was supposed to happen in March or April in Qatar, but had to be postponed



and shifted due to the West Asia conflict. However, with the meeting now taking place in Ahmedabad, Pakistan's in-person participation is doubtful, sources have told. The tensions between India and Pakistan are not new. In fact, the Asia Cup 2025 trophy had

India won still lies in Dubai, while Naqvi remains in his office. Hence, it looks unlikely that the PCB chief will cross the border to attend the meeting in Ahmedabad. The PCB has also received an invitation to attend the IPL 2026 final at the Narendra Modi

Stadium in Ahmedabad. However, there is no such confirmation from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) yet. Given the current relations between India and Pakistan, it would be a surprise to see Naqvi even seek clearances from the Pakistani government to travel to India. The BCCI and PCB have been at odds for a while. Recent friction between the two boards involved hosting arrangements and political blockades, including heavy speculation around India's participation in regional events due to security considerations and the ongoing refusal to engage in bilateral cricket. Tensions peaked during a highly publicised dispute over the handling of the Asia Cup trophy ceremony, where Indian players,



Intellectuals must make the present generation aware of the past and the changes brought about: CM Yogi

New Delhi, May 16: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has called upon the intellectual class to make the present generation aware of the past of both the country and the state, as well as the transformation visible today. He said that young people must be informed about the conditions in the state nine to ten years ago and the changes seen today. "This is extremely necessary to prevent youth from being misled by those who pushed the state into disorder, anarchy, riots, and curfews. Intellectuals must come forward to take responsibility for raising this awareness," he added. CM Yogi was addressing the 'Prabuddh Samvad' programme organised by the BJP's Rapti Nagar Mandal on Friday night. After paying floral tributes to Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya and Syama Prasad Mukherjee, following the collective singing of Vande



Mataram, the Chief Minister said that if today's youth are not informed about earlier conditions, they will not understand the consequences of appeasement. He said, "The state suffered the consequences of hooliganism, anarchy, disorder, curfews, and exploitation by regional parties 9-10 years ago. The youth need to be forewarned so that they do not have to face such a situation again."

Playing with the future of citizens for momentary selfish interests is an anti-national act, and no organisation or institution must be given such freedom." The Chief Minister further said that everyone has witnessed the rapid transformation in India, Uttar Pradesh, and Gorakhpur. Before 2017, when a child was born in UP, parents remained worried about protecting the child from

encephalitis. As the child grew up, anxiety shifted to their education and, eventually, employment. He said, "When people went outside UP for employment, they faced an identity crisis. Development was obstructed. There was no electricity, no roads, and no employment. There were no facilities for amadatta farmers. Traders were forced to pay 'goonda tax', doctors lived in fear, and daughters were not safe. Riots, curfews, anarchy, disorder, and corruption had become the identity of Uttar Pradesh," CM Yogi added. "Today, Uttar Pradesh guarantees development, security, and employment. Both daughters and traders are safe. Encephalitis has been completely eliminated. The once-closed fertiliser factory in Gorakhpur is functioning again. AIIMS Gorakhpur is fully operational, and the BRD Medical College.

After Maharashtra, now Delhi govt reduces VAT on Aviation Turbine Fuel amid West Asia crisis

New Delhi, May 16: After Maharashtra, the Delhi government has also reduced Value Added Tax (VAT) on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) from 25 per cent to 7 per cent, a move that will grant a huge sigh of relief to airlines. The aviation sector in the country is under immense stress due to rising operational costs amid the ongoing West Asia crisis. The cost of ATF has seen a sharp increase due to the global energy crisis, courtesy of the US-Iran war in West Asia, which has disrupted the supply through the key Strait of Hormuz route. Earlier on Friday, the Maharashtra government reduced the Value Added Tax (VAT) on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) from 18 per cent to 7 per cent. Union Civil Aviation



Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu said in a post on X. Naidu thanked Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis for the "timely intervention," noting that the decision would help keep airlines in check at a time when global challenges are pushing costs upwards. "Maharashtra State has 16 operational airports and the highest annual air traffic amongst the states, of around 75 million passengers, with daily passengers of around 2 lakhs. This reduction in VAT will help the flight operations in all these airports and benefit the large number of passengers," he said. ATF typically accounts for 30-40 per cent of an airline's operating costs, making it one of the largest expense heads for carriers. With crude oil prices volatile due to geopolitical risks, airlines have faced pressure on margins and fare structures.

Jairam Ramesh accuses Centre of politicising and weakening education system

New Delhi, May 16: Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Saturday launched a sharp attack on the Narendra Modi government, alleging that the country's education system had become "incompetent, politicised and corrupt" under the Centre's administration and accusing it of presiding over repeated institutional failures and controversies. In a post on social media platform X, Ramesh said the government's academic and educational ecosystem had steadily deteriorated over the past few years, claiming that academic standards and constitutional norms were being undermined while key concerns affecting students and universities



remained unaddressed. "The Modi Government's education ecosystem — populated by third-rate academic mediocrities — has proven itself to be supremely incompetent, politicised, and corrupted over the last few years," the senior Congress leader said. Ramesh cited a series of recent controversies to support his criticism, including the NCFER textbook revision dispute, the University Grants

Commission's draft regulations concerning the appointment of Vice Chancellors, repeated examination paper leaks, the alleged NAAC bribery scandal and what he described as the "ICHR scam." He also criticised the withholding of Samagra Shiksha funds and raised concerns over vacancies in teaching positions as well as the appointment of what he termed "absentee Vice Chancellors" in several Central universities. The Congress leader further targeted the Union Education Minister over his reported remarks on recommendations made by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education regarding.

Hypertension emerging rapidly among youth due to lifestyle changes: Jadhav

New Delhi, May 16: Calling hypertension a "silent killer", Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare and Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Ayush, Pratirao Jadhav, has said the condition progresses without visible symptoms and can lead to severe complications such as heart attacks and strokes. He highlighted that the Government of India, under the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NPCDCS), is actively promoting population-based screening, early detection and management



through Health and Wellness Centres across the country. In a special video message during the 'Illness to Wellness Conference on Transforming Hypertension Care: Prevention to Wellness' organised ahead of World Hypertension Day 2026, Jadhav said, "In today's time, it is essential that we make our communities more sensitive and aware, and strengthen awareness about hypertension. Due to changing lifestyles and reduced attention to physical and mental health, hypertension is rapidly increasing even among the

youth." The conference was organised by the Illness to Wellness Foundation and brought together leading policymakers, cardiologists, healthcare experts and public health leaders to deliberate on the growing burden of hypertension and the need to move from illness-centric treatment towards wellness-driven healthcare approaches. Addressing the gathering, Rajesh Bhushan, Former Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India and Chairperson, Governing Council, Illness to Wellness Foundation, said, "The problem of hypertension is as prevalent in rural India as it is in urban India, but because we live in metro cities, we often believe it is only an urban problem. Early detection is extremely important because without early detection, early treatment becomes difficult. At the same time, non-communicable diseases impact GDP significantly across countries, and therefore prevention and timely intervention are critical."

In his welcome address, Anil Rajput, Chairperson, Advisory Council, Illness to Wellness Foundation, said, "Modern lifestyles marked by long working hours, constant connectivity, poor sleep, sedentary habits and rising stress,

NEET aspirant dies by suicide in Rajasthan's Sikar; family stages dharna seeking compensation

New Delhi, May 16: Amid reports of suicides by some NEET 2026 aspirants following the cancellation of the entrance examination, a 23-year-old Dalit student from Rajasthan's Jhunjhunu district allegedly died by suicide in Sikar town on Friday afternoon. The deceased, identified as Pradeep Meghwal, a resident of Gada Gaurji village in Jhunjhunu district, had been living in a rented room in Sikar along with his two sisters for the past three years while preparing for the NEET examination. This year was reportedly his third consecutive attempt at the exam, in which he was said to have performed well and was expecting around 650 marks out of 720, according to his father and the police. Police said that Pradeep had spoken to his family over the phone on Friday morning. In the afternoon, while his elder sister



was taking a bath and the younger sister had gone to attend coaching classes, he allegedly hanged himself from the ceiling fan in their room. After coming out of the bathroom, his elder sister found him hanging from the fan with a noose around his neck, police said. She immediately informed the police and sought help from the landlord.

Pradeep was rushed to Sri Kalyan Hospital in Sikar, where doctors declared him brought dead. Since then, Pradeep's family members and residents of his native village have been staging a dharna outside the hospital mortuary and are refusing to allow the post-mortem examination. The protesters are demanding a compensation of Rs 2 crore for the family, a gov-

ernment job for one family member, and capital punishment for those responsible for the alleged paper leak in what they described as the country's most prestigious examination. Former Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot also expressed concern over reports of suicides by NEET aspirants across the country and condoled the deaths, expressing solidarity with the bereaved families. Referring to the death of Pradeep and similar incidents reported from Uttar Pradesh and Goa, the Congress leader and AICC general secretary said in a social media post on Friday night that the government had merely completed a formality by ordering a CBI probe. He further questioned the government's accountability, stating that no minister had accepted responsibility or resigned over the controversy.

'India is helping shape global thinking on inclusive digital finance': PK Mishra

New Delhi, May 16: Dr. P.K. Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, on Saturday addressed the 20th Annual Convocation of the National Institute of Bank Management (NIBM) in Pune, Maharashtra. Expressing his delight at joining the ceremony, he warmly congratulated the Batch of 2024-26 and the Gold Medal winners. He emphasised that the graduates are entering the professional world during a pivotal era where banking extends far beyond simple commerce. "Convocation ceremonies are milestones of achievement, but they are also moments of transition," remarked Dr. Mishra. Reflecting on NIBM's five-decade legacy as the apex banking think-tank,



Dr. Mishra highlighted the critical importance of institutional excellence. He noted that while traditional banking focused merely on mobilising savings, the contemporary landscape demands a broader focus on national opportunity. He urged the graduating class to internalize the evolving scope. "In the coming days, you need to see banking and finance in a much broader sense, as an architecture of inclusion, opportunity, trust and national development," he stated. Discussing traditional economics, Dr. Mishra explained that financial inclusion had been regarded as a quiet enabler in the background. He pointed out that linkages between the real economy and finance were poorly understood, often leaving the less privileged excluded from formal institutional support. He affirmed that this skewed credit availability adversely affected livelihoods.

Rahul Gandhi lauds Sikkim's cultural heritage on 50th Statehood Day



New Delhi, May 16: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday conveyed his greetings to the people of Sikkim on the occasion of the state's Statehood Day, describing the Himalayan state as a symbol of harmony, resilience and cultural richness. In a message posted on social media platform X, Gandhi said, "Best wishes to the people of Sikkim on their Statehood Day." Praising the state's natural beauty and traditions, he said, "Blessed

with abundant natural beauty, a rich cultural heritage, and vibrant traditions, Sikkim stands as a shining example of harmony and resilience." The Congress leader also wished continued prosperity for the state and its people, adding, "May the state continue to flourish and thrive." The message came as Sikkim marked the 50th anniversary of becoming a part of the Indian Union, with celebrations taking place across the state through official events,

cultural performances and public programmes commemorating its historical journey and development. "Sikkim became India's 22nd state on May 16, 1975, after a referendum ended the monarchy and paved the way for the former Himalayan kingdom's merger with India. Over the past five decades, the state has gained recognition for its environmental conservation efforts, organic farming initiatives and sustainable tourism practices. Bordering China, Nepal and Bhutan, Sikkim occupies a strategically important position in India's northeast and is widely known for its diverse cultural traditions and ecological wealth. Leaders from different political parties have extended greetings to the people of the state during the golden jubilee celebrations.

ED remand of Punjab Minister Sanjeev Arora extended by two days

New Delhi, May 16: The Enforcement Directorate's custody of Punjab Cabinet Minister Sanjeev Arora has been extended by two more days by a special PMLA court in Gurgaon in connection with an alleged money laundering and fake GST invoicing case involving transactions worth over Rs 100 crore. Arora, who served as one of the influential ministers in the AAP-led Punjab government, is being held for interrogation in the case. After the expiry of the initial remand, the central agency sought additional custody, claiming that further questioning was required to examine financial transactions, alleged fake invoices, and the suspected network of shell companies linked to the probe. The ED also informed the court that fresh evi-



dence had surfaced during the investigation, following which the court allowed a two-day extension of the remand. Meanwhile, Arora has challenged his arrest and remand before the Punjab and Haryana High Court, alleging serious procedural violations by the Enforcement Directorate under Section 19 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Appearing for the minister, senior advocate Puneet Bali argued before the High Court that the mandatory safeguards under the

questions over the independence of the arrest process mandated under Section 19 of the Act. Bali argued that the arresting officer was required to independently assess the material available and record "reasons to believe" before making the arrest. According to the petitioner, the same officer who initiated the proceedings could not validly act as the arresting authority. Questioning the timeline of events, the counsel submitted that while the ED recorded the arrest time as 4 pm, Arora had allegedly been under detention since around 7 am. He argued that had the arrest genuinely taken place at 4 pm, the minister could have been produced before the court during regular working hours. The petitioner also alleged that the grounds of arrest were prepared later merely to demonstrate procedural compliance. Citing Supreme Court judgments, Bali argued that the grounds of arrest are required to be applied immediately at the time of arrest and not hours later.

As Ukraine reshapes US war doctrine, Army warns drone swarms are changing combat forever

Moscow, May 16: The US Army has warned that drones and artificial intelligence are transforming warfare at a speed never seen before, with senior military leaders telling lawmakers that future conflicts will increasingly depend on low-cost unmanned systems and rapid battlefield automation.

The remarks came during a hearing before the House Armed Services Committee, where top Army officials repeatedly pointed to the Ukraine war as evidence of how small drones, AI-assisted targeting and scalable autonomous systems are reshaping combat operations. US Army Secretary Daniel Driscoll said militaries that fail to modernise quickly risk falling behind in future wars, especially as Washington shifts its strategic focus towards the



Indo-Pacific region. "Drones are reshaping how humans will inflict violence on each other at a pace never witnessed in human history," Driscoll told lawmakers. "They are cheap, modular, precise, multi-role, and scalable." He said the Army was aggressively integrating battlefield AI, autonomous systems and open command networks into future military planning. "We're taking a lot of lessons learned from both Ukraine and OEF," LaNeve said, referring to

Operation Enduring Freedom. "It's moving at a much faster rate into our schoolhouse and into our doctrine." Lawmakers from both political parties raised concerns over whether the Army's budget priorities were fully aligned with its public emphasis on drone warfare. Representative Eugene Vinson questioned why funding for small unmanned aircraft systems had fallen compared to earlier years despite repeated warnings about the growing importance of drones in combat. Driscoll defended the strategy, saying the Army was prioritising the creation of a manufacturing ecosystem that could rapidly scale up drone production during wartime instead of maintaining massive stockpiles in peacetime. "What Ukraine is producing, I

Brazil's supreme court opens probe into funding for ex-president's film

Washington, May 16: Brazil's Supreme Federal Court has ordered an investigation into the possible diversion of parliamentary funds to cultural projects, including a film about former President Jair Bolsonaro.

The order was issued by Justice Flavio Dino on Friday (local time) after a complaint filed earlier this year by lawmaker Tabata Amaral of the Brazilian Socialist Party. Amaral alleged that public funds allocated through parliamentary amendments may have been used for electoral marketing and audiovisual content linked to Bolsonaro, who is serving a sentence for an attempted coup, reports Xinhua news agency.

According to the complaint, several lawmakers from Bolsonaro's Liberal Party allegedly transferred a total of 2.6 million reais



whether public budget funds were illegally linked to the financing of the production. The case remains under seal while evidence is being gathered.

Last week, on May 9, Brazil's Supreme Federal Court temporarily suspended a law that could shorten prison terms for individuals convicted over the January 8, 2023, attacks on government buildings, including former President Jair Bolsonaro. Justice Alexandre de Moraes.

Who are Kulwinder Johal and Preet Kaur Gill? Jalandhar natives earning big name in UK politics



London, May 16: Two Sikhs of Jalandhar origin have earned a name for themselves in the political circles of the UK. Hailing from Tehang village of Phillaur, Kulwinder Singh Johal (56) has become the first turbaned Sikh Mayor of Leicester. In another significant development in the UK, Preet Kaur Gill (53), who also hails from Jansher village of Jalandhar, has been



appointed as the Junior Health Minister in the cabinet reshuffle in the Kier Starmer government. Both developments are being celebrated across the Punjabi communities here and across the globe. Johal has been proudly telling everyone about his roots in Jalandhar. "My parents and grandparents first settled in Talwan village of Jalandhar after coming from Pakistan dur-

US says Israel and Lebanon agree to extend ceasefire by 45 days, talks to continue in Washington

Washington, May 16: Israel and Lebanon have agreed to extend their ceasefire for another 45 days following US-mediated talks in Washington, even as deadly exchanges between Israeli forces and Hezbollah continued along the southern Lebanese border. The announcement was made by US State Department spokesperson Tommy Pigott, who said the cessation of hostilities that began on April 16 would remain in force to allow further diplomatic progress between the two sides.

The extension comes at a time when the border remains volatile despite ongoing negotiations. While Washington is attempting to push both sides towards a broader political understanding, fresh Israeli strikes and Hezbollah attacks have continued to raise concerns over a wider regional escalation. "The April 16 cessation of hostilities will be extended by 45 days to enable further progress," Pigott said on Friday. He added that Israel and Lebanon would resume political



negotiations at the US State Department on June 2 and 3, while military representatives from both countries are scheduled to begin parallel security discussions at the Pentagon on May 29. According to the US State Department, the latest round of direct talks held on Thursday and Friday in Washington was "highly productive." "We hope these discussions will advance lasting peace between the two countries, full recognition of each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and establishing genuine security along their

shared border," Pigott said, according to Al Jazeera. Fresh violence continues despite ceasefire as negotiations progressed in Washington, violence continued in southern Lebanon. Lebanese media reported that Israeli strikes killed at least seven people on Friday, while Lebanon's Public Health Emergency Operations Center said nearly 2,951 people have been killed and 8,988 injured in Israeli attacks since March 2. Hezbollah, meanwhile, claimed it carried out multiple attacks targeting Israeli military positions, drones and armoured vehicles in southern Lebanon. According to Iranian state media Press TV, the group launched 17 operations that included drone strikes, missile attacks and artillery shelling. Hezbollah said it targeted Israeli military bulldozers, Merkava tanks and troop positions near the town of Haddatha. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) also confirmed that an interceptor had been launched against a "suspicious aerial target" in southern Lebanon. The military further said Hezbollah had fired anti-tank missiles and mortar shells near areas where Israeli troops were operating. Talks focus on Hezbollah disarmament and border security sraeli and Lebanese delegations were both represented by senior diplomats and security officials during the Washington talks. Israel's delegation included Ambassador to Washington Yechiel Leiter, while Lebanon was represented by Ambassador Nadeh Hamadeh Mouawad and former envoy Simon Karam.

Cyberattack hits America's fuel monitoring systems, US suspects involvement of Iran-linked hackers: Reports

Washington, May 16: A fresh cyber alarm has rattled the United States after multiple fuel monitoring systems used at gas stations across several states were reportedly breached, with American officials suspecting the involvement of Iran-linked hackers. The intrusions, which targeted systems responsible for tracking fuel storage levels, have intensified concerns over the vulnerability of critical infrastructure amid rising tensions in West Asia.

According to reports citing officials familiar with the matter, the attacks involved automatic tank gauge (ATG) systems, digital platforms widely used by fuel stations to monitor gasoline and diesel volumes in underground stor-



age tanks. Investigators believe several of these systems had been left exposed online without password protection, making them vulnerable to unauthorised access. Hackers allegedly manipulated fuel readings. Officials said attackers were able to alter fuel level displays in some compromised systems. However, authorities clarified that the actual amount of fuel inside the tanks was not physically changed, and there was no disruption to fuel supply operations. Despite the absence of physical damage or

injuries, cybersecurity experts have warned that access to such systems could create dangerous operational risks. Manipulated readings, they say, could potentially hide fuel leaks, trigger false alarms, or interfere with safety monitoring mechanisms at fuel stations. The incidents have reignited fears over the growing exposure of industrial control systems connected to the internet without adequate cybersecurity safeguards. Cybersecurity experts suspect Iran's cyber footprint is reportedly examining Iran-linked cyber activity as a key line of inquiry due to Tehran's previous record of targeting fuel and utility infrastructure. Sources

Israel, Lebanon Extend Ceasefire By 45 Days As Washington Talks Conclude

Washington, May 16: Israel and Lebanon agreed to a 45-day extension of a ceasefire that has temped down the conflict between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, as two days of talks facilitated by Washington concluded on Friday with an agreement to hold further meetings in the coming weeks.

"The April 16 cessation of hostilities will be extended by 45 days to enable further progress," State Department spokesperson Tommy Pigott said on Friday, adding that the talks aimed at settling decades of conflict between the two countries were "highly productive." The ceasefire was set to expire on Sunday. The Lebanese and Israeli delegations issued positive statements about the talks, their third meeting since



Iran intensified air attacks on Lebanon after Hezbollah fired missiles at Israel on March 2, three days into the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran. Israel's bombing campaign and ground invasion into Lebanon's south displaced some 1.2 million people, before U.S. President Donald Trump announced a ceasefire last month following initial talks between the two countries' ambassadors in Washington. Hezbollah and Israel have continued to trade blows, with hostilities focused in southern Lebanon, where Israeli forces are occupying a self-declared security zone.

After Trump trip, Putin to visit China on May 19



Moscow, May 16: Russian President Vladimir Putin would visit

China from May 19-20 for talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping, just days after US President Donald Trump concluded his high-profile Beijing trip, the Kremlin said on Saturday. Putin and China's President Xi Jinping would discuss bilateral relations and exchange views on key international and regional issues, the Kremlin said in a statement. The two leaders are also likely to sign a joint declaration marking the 25th anniversary of the Russia-China Treaty of Good-Neighbourliness and Cooperation. The visit comes.

Hours after meeting with Xi, Trump changes tone on Taiwan; says US won't travel 9,500 miles to fight their war

Washington, May 16: Hours after his two-day summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping, US President Donald Trump on Friday (local time) cautioned Taiwan against formally declaring independence from mainland China. Speaking to Fox News after his highly-anticipated meeting with Xi Jinping, Trump said, "I'm not looking to have somebody go independent." Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te has already stated that the self-governing island nation, which China considers as its own territory, is an independent nation and doesn't need to declare formal independence. While the US has long been supporting Taiwan, it has not established for-



mal diplomatic relations with the country even though Washington is bound by law to provide it with means of self-defence. However, after his meeting with Xi, Trump seems to have moved away from that position as he said that the USD 11 billion weapons

deal with Taiwan will be reviewed. Trump said that he and Xi Jinping discussed the weapons sale in "great detail" and reportedly told the Chinese leader that he will speak to Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te. "I'm going to say I have to speak to the person that right now is, you know, you know who he is, that's running Taiwan," he told Fox News. Trump said that the Chinese President "feels very strongly" about the Taiwan issue and "doesn't want to see a movement for independence". According to Chinese state media, Xi told Trump that the Taiwan question is "the most important issue in US-China relations" and the two countries.



J&K Judicial Academy conducts Training Programme on "Code of Civil Procedure" for Judicial Officers

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: Under the patronage of Justice Arun Palli, Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and Patron-in-Chief, J&K Judicial Academy, a one-day training programme on the Code of Civil Procedure was conducted today at the J&K Judicial Academy, Moominabad, Srinagar, for Judicial Officers of Kashmir Province under the guidance of the Chairman and Members of the Governing Committee of the Academy. Justice Rajnesh Oswal, Judge, High Court of J&K and Ladakh and Chairman, J&K Judicial Academy, in his keynote address observed that the Code of



Civil Procedure, though procedural in nature, is rooted in the principles of natural justice and serves as an effective instrument for implementation of substantive law. He emphasized that civil adjudication is foundation-

Dispute Resolution mechanisms in facilitating amicable settlement of disputes and ensuring accessible and efficient justice delivery. A Naseer Ahmad Dar, Director, J&K Judicial Academy, in his welcome address, stated that the Code of Civil Procedure forms the backbone of civil adjudication and its effective application is essential for fair, efficient and timely administration of justice. He informed that the programme was designed to deliberate upon practical application of procedural provisions, strengthen judicial efficiency, improve case management and reduce delays in civil trials. He further stated that the

sessions would focus on pre-trial proceedings, framing of issues, pleadings, admissions and procedural tools available under the CPC for effective adjudication. The first and second technical sessions were delivered by Justice Mohammad Yaqoob Mir, Former Chief Justice, High Court of Meghalaya, on "Role of Court in Pre-Trial Proceedings and Effective Case Facilitation" and "Case Management, Framing of Issues and Discovery Procedures." He emphasized the importance of judicial intervention in effective pre-trial management for narrowing controversies and ensuring expeditious disposal of civil cases.

NCDRC Member visits Baramulla, Reviews functioning of DCDRC Baramulla

BARAMULLA, MAY 16: Members of the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), New Delhi, Dr. Inder Jeet Singh and Shashi Nandan Keolyar, today visited the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (DCDRC) Baramulla to review its functioning and assess the consumer grievance redressal mechanism in the district. DCDRC Baramulla, Peerzada Qousar Hussain; Member, Nyla Yaseen; and Registrar National Commission, Iqbal Ahmad accompanied the delegation during the visit. During the visit, the members reviewed the overall functioning of the Commission and held dis-



Discussions on the timely disposal of consumer cases, strengthening institutional mechanisms, and ensuring the effective implementation of consumer protection laws. Later, the delegation visited Dak Bungalow Baramulla, where they interacted with members of the Bar Associations of Baramulla-Kupwara and exchanged views on consumer rights, legal awareness, and access to justice. President Bar Association Baramulla, Neelofar Masood and members of the Bar Associations of Baramulla and Kupwara appreciated the visit of the delegation and the continued efforts towards strengthening the consumer dispute redressal system.

Vibrant, participative anti-drug awareness programmes held across Shopian

SHOPIAN, MAY 16: Under the ongoing Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan campaign, a series of awareness and outreach programmes were organised across District Shopian today to educate the people about the ongoing 100 Day Nasha Mukta Abhiyan. Yoga sessions, awareness lectures and interactive programmes were conducted in educational institutions of the district where students and staff actively participated and pledged to promote a healthy & drug-free lifestyle. An inter-school debate competition was also organised at HSS Vaidi under the banner of NMJKA, where students highlighted the growing menace of substance abuse and stressed the collective responsibility of society in eradicating it. Similarly, awareness activities were held at HS Pinjora and HS Mantribhug, Shopian, sensitizing participants about the social, psychological and health-related consequences of drug addiction. Other departments also organised scheduled activities. GDC Shopian, KPDC, ICDS, Ayush and Revenue department conducted various awareness events where officials, stu-



dents, youth and local residents participated enthusiastically. Speakers highlighted the hazards effects of drug abuse and urged people especially youth to stay away from narcotics and stressed the need for coordinated and committed efforts towards the goal of drug free society. Participants were also encouraged to proactively spread awareness at the grassroots level and contribute actively towards building a healthy, safe and drug-free Shopian.

WMDA Organises Sanitation, Anti-Drug Awareness Rallies

GANDERBAL, MAY 16: The Wullar Mansabal Development Authority on Saturday organised a series of sanitation drives and anti-drug awareness rallies in the catchment areas of the famous Mansabal Lake to spread awareness about environmental conservation and the harmful effects of substance abuse. The programmes were conducted in collaboration with Sainik School Mansabal, local volunteer group QRT and a local educational institution. The initiatives witnessed active participation of students, volunteers, teachers and officials of the Authority. The rallies and cleanliness drives were organised as part of the ongoing "100 Day Nasha Mukta Abhiyan" launched across Jammu and Kashmir on April 11, 2026, with an aim to eradicate the growing drug menace from society and encourage public participation in awareness campaigns. During the programme, partici-



pants carried placards and raised slogans highlighting the importance of preserving the ecological balance of Mansabal Lake, which is considered one of the most scenic freshwater lakes of Kashmir. They also stressed the need for maintaining sanitation in

and around the lake to protect its natural beauty and biodiversity. Speakers on the occasion underlined that environmental degradation and drug addiction are serious concerns requiring collective efforts from all sections of society. The students and volunteers appealed to people, especially the youth, to stay away from drugs and contribute towards building a clean and healthy society. Chief Executive Officer of Wullar Mansabal Development Authority, Ahsanul Haq Chishti, while addressing the participants, said that the Authority has placed cleanliness within and around the lake among its top priorities. He said such awareness programmes with active citizen involvement would continue in the coming days as well. He also sought cooperation from the public in preserving the fragile ecosystem of Mansabal Lake and supporting the campaign against drug abuse for the betterment of society.

District Admin Srinagar's Rolling Trophy for Inter-College Cricket Tournament inaugurated at S.P. College

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar, Dr. G.V. Sandeep, on Saturday inaugurated the District Administration Srinagar's Rolling Trophy for the Inter-College Cricket Tournament (Men & Women)-2026 at S.P. College Srinagar under the Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme. The inaugural ceremony was attended by several dignitaries, including Dr. Seem Naz, Nodal Principal, Kashmir Division Colleges; Elford Thomas, IAS Probationer; Dr. Haris Izharrantray, Principal, S.P. College Srinagar; Dr. Hudda Gazali, Principal, Government College for Women Nawa Kadal Srinagar; Dr. Tehmeena Yousuf, Principal, Islamia College of Science and

Commerce Srinagar, and Dr. Deeba Sarmad, Principal, GDC Eidgah Srinagar, besides SSP Traffic Srinagar, SP East Srinagar, and SHO Kotli Bagh. Officials from the Youth Services and Sports Department Srinagar, the Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Srinagar, Physical Training Instructors (PTIs), Assistant Physical Training Instructors (APTIs), and other officers were also present on the occasion. The inaugural match of the tournament was played between Amar Singh College and Government Degree College Hyderpora. Amar Singh College won the toss and elected to field first. A total of 18 teams from various Government Degree Colleges have

registered for the tournament, including nine men's teams and nine women's teams. The participating men's teams include Government College of Education (IASE) Srinagar, GDC Hyderpora, Amar Singh College, GDC Bemina Srinagar, GDC Women M.A. Road Srinagar, S.P. College Srinagar, GDC Eidgah, Islamia College of Science and Commerce Srinagar, and Gandhi Memorial College Srinagar. The women's category included teams from GDC Zakura, Vishwa Bhaurati College, Amar Singh College, GC Women M.A. Road Srinagar, S.P. College Srinagar, Gandhi Memorial College Srinagar, Islamia College of Science and Commerce Srinagar, and GC Women Nawa Kadal Srinagar. Speaking on the occa-

sion, SSP Srinagar highlighted the importance of sports in character building and youth development. He said that tournaments and sporting events not only nurture talent but also channel the energy of young people toward productive and meaningful activities. He emphasized that the discipline learned through sports plays a vital role in shaping responsible citizens. He further urged students to stay away from drugs and adopt healthy lifestyles, stating that drug abuse poses a serious threat to society and the future of youth. "Youngsters must utilise their potential in positive avenues such as sports, education, and community service. Collective efforts from parents, teachers, police, and society are essential to eradicate the menace of drugs," he said.

PACS CP DLIMC Meeting: 17 Additional M-PACS recommended for computerization in Anantnag

ANANTNAG, MAY 16: To assess and monitor the implementation of the centrally sponsored scheme Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS) Computerization Project in the district, the 3rd meeting of the District Level Implementation and Monitoring Committee (DLIMC) of the project was convened today under the chairmanship of the District Development Commissioner Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat at the DC Office. At the outset, the committee confirmed the minutes of the 2nd DLIMC meeting held earlier, as no objections or observations had been received from any quarter. Addressing the meeting, the DDC stressed the need to implement the project of computerization and digital transformation of Cooperative Societies in a swift and time bound manner. He said the digital transformation will allow the PACS to unleash their true potential, making them profitable and sustainable in the long run. During the meeting, the committee delib-

erated upon the inclusion of additional Multipurpose PACS under Phase-II of the PACS Computerization Project launched by the Government of India. It was informed that the concerned Ministry has approved inclusion of additional PACS under the second phase of the project and accordingly the Registrar Cooperative Societies, J&K has identified eligible PACS for consideration. The committee was apprised that 22 PACS of the district falling under seven blocks and affiliated with eight branches of the Anantnag Central Cooperative Bank have already been computerized and made operational. Further, 17 additional audited and non-computerized M-PACS of the district were placed before the committee for inclusion under Phase-II. After detailed deliberations, the committee recommended the inclusion of 17 eligible PACS of the district for computerization under the scheme and authorized the Member Secretary, Managing Director, ACCB

DLTFC approves 31 applications under JKREGP in Anantnag

DDC stresses swift disbursement of loans

ANANTNAG, MAY 16: District Development Commissioner (DDC), Anantnag Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat today chaired the meeting of the District Level Task Force Committee (DLTFC) under J&K Rural Employment Generation Programme (JKREGP) at the DC Office. DDC, District Officer, KVIB, LBM, FM DDC, officials from Bank and KVIB and others attended the meeting. During the meeting, 37 applicants appeared before the committee for sanction of loans and establishment of different types of units under the JKREGP. After detailed interaction and assessment, the committee recommended 31 candidates for establishing their units under the scheme. The approved cases involve a total project cost of Rs. 312.05 lakh, with a proposed margin money assistance of Rs 109.375 lakh under the JKREGP scheme. Speaking on the occasion, the DDC stressed that the sanctioned loan amount be swiftly disbursed in favor of the approved cases for establishing their units in a time bound manner adding that proper guidance be provided to the beneficia-



ries so their units become profitable and sustainable. He said that proper implementation of the self employment and sponsorship schemes is vital to ensure meaningful employment for youth of the district.

DDC Anantnag reviews progress of PM SGMB Yojana, RRP & MHA Scheme

ANANTNAG, MAY 16: District Development Commissioner (DDC), Anantnag Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat today chaired a meeting at DC Office to review the implementation and progress achieved under the Scheme for Revival, Restoration, Preservation and Maintenance of Heritage and Architecture, PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli (SGMB) Yojana and Solarization in the district. The meeting was attended by ADC, SES PWD and KPDC, CPO, Exens PWD and PDD, representative of J&KEDA, AEEs and other concerned officials. During the meeting, officers from con-

cerned departments briefed the chair about the physical and financial progress achieved under these schemes in the district so far. Regarding the Scheme for Revival, Restoration, Preservation and Maintenance of Heritage and Architecture, the DDC issued directions to the executing agencies to expedite the pace of work on all pending projects while ensuring the durability and quality of the buildings and structures. He said the completion of these projects will be instrumen-

tal to revive heritage and preserve old architecture in the district. Reviewing the progress of PM SGMB Yojana, the DDC directed the concerned officers to expedite disposal of pending inspections and ensure timely completion of installations in favor of the feasible cases. He emphasized maintaining quality standards and ensuring maximum public outreach and beneficiary facilitation. He said the scheme is highly beneficial to harness clean and green energy while reducing the electricity bills of the consumers. The meeting was informed that a total of 5143 applications have been received in the dis-

trict, out of which feasibility for 4928 cases has been approved. It was given out that 2332 rooftop solar installations have been completed with an installed capacity of 8.63 MW against the applied capacity of 16.95 MW. It was further apprised that subsidy amounting to Rs 17.65 crore has been disbursed among 2393 beneficiaries under the scheme so far. Regarding the Solarization, details were given that 541 buildings have been allocated under the programme in the district. Out of these, material has been supplied for 472 buildings with a capacity of 5833 kW, while installation has been completed in 242 buildings with a capacity of 3532 kW. Additionally, material installation is under process for 230 buildings with a capacity of 2301 kW besides smart meter installation has been completed in 172 buildings with a capacity of 1969 kW. Dr. Bilal impressed upon the concerned executing agencies and officers to work in close coordination for achieving the targets within stipulated timelines. He said the complete solarization of government buildings will lower the burden on power stations besides ensuring sustainable and clean energy to the public institutions.

Deputy Chief Minister conducts extensive tour of Akhnoor; inspects colleges, development projects

JAMMU, MAY 16: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary today conducted an extensive tour of Akhnoor and adjoining areas to review the progress of ongoing developmental works besides assessing the institutional infrastructure across several educational establishments.

During the visit, the Deputy Chief Minister inspected various projects and interacted with the students, faculty members and staff to take first-hand appraisal of the academic facilities, infrastructure development and overall functioning of the institutions.

At the Government College of Engineering and Technology, Chak Bhalwal, Jammu, the Deputy Chief Minister reviewed the ongoing developmental works and inspected the institutional facilities.

He stressed the need for creating quality infrastructure, ensuring timely com-



pletion of projects and strengthening the academic environment for the benefit of students. He directed the concerned authorities to maintain high standards in execution of works and ensure that modern educational facilities are made available to the student community.

Later, the Deputy Chief Minister visited the

Government Ayurvedic Medical College, Sangam, Akhnoor, where he reviewed the ongoing hostel construction works along with MLA Akhnoor, Mohan Lal Bhagat.

During the visit, he interacted with the students and staff members and sought feedback regarding institutional facilities and accommodation needs.

He emphasized timely completion of the hostel project with quality construction standards so that better facilities are provided to the students.

The Deputy Chief Minister also inspected the ongoing works at Government Nursing College, Akhnoor along with MLA Akhnoor, Mohan Lal Bhagat. During detailed interaction

with the faculty members and students regarding the academic activities, the Deputy Chief Minister called for speedy infrastructure development.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed the concerned officers to ensure speedy execution of all ongoing works while strictly adhering to quality standards and timelines.

"The government is committed towards creating better educational infrastructure, providing a conducive learning environment for the students across Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Later, the Deputy Chief Minister also visited Indriapattan Bridge project near Pragwal, Akhnoor and reviewed the progress of ongoing works.

Termining the project as vital, he stressed upon timely execution and completion of the bridge to improve the connectivity and public convenience in the area.

Govt approves major cadre review, restructuring of J&K Engineering (Gazetted) Service in Jal Shakti Department

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: In a significant step aimed at enhancing the water supply, quality monitoring and engineering administration across Jammu and Kashmir, the government has approved a comprehensive cadre review and restructuring of the J&K Engineering (Gazetted) Service of the Jal Shakti Department.

The reforms have been sanctioned vide Government Order No. 91-JK(JSD) of 2026 dated 15.05.2026, following concurrence from the Finance Department and approval by the Council of Ministers. The restructuring exercise was undertaken to enhance the administrative efficiency, improve technical supervision, streamline field operations and address the emerging challenges in the water sector, particularly in remote and underserved regions.

As part of the approved reforms, the government has

sanctioned creation of the post of Secretary Technical in the Jal Shakti Department to strengthen the technical coordination and policy implementation at the departmental level. To improve water quality surveillance and monitoring mechanisms, the government has also approved the setting up of a separate Drinking Water Inspection and Quality Control (DIQC) wing within the department.

Further strengthening the field engineering setup, new offices of Superintending Engineer have been created for Hydraulic Circle Jammu-I and Hydraulic Circle Bandipora to ensure better operational management and supervision of water supply infrastructure.

The government has also approved creation of six new divisions, including Hydraulic Divisions at Gandoh, Gurez and Tangdar, PHE Division Mendhar and two Water Quality and Monitoring

Divisions for the Jammu and Kashmir provinces. These divisions are expected to significantly improve the service delivery in geographically challenging and border areas.

In another major reform, Mechanical Sub-Divisions of the department have been restructured to optimize manpower utilization and improve efficiency in mechanical operations and maintenance. The order also provides for creation of 43 posts through rationalization and corresponding reduction of 62 existing posts besides encadrement of 10 posts and reassignment of 137 posts within the cadre structure. Additionally, the government has revised deputation and leave reserve provisions across various engineering levels to ensure better human resource management and career progression opportunities within the department. The cadre review is expected to substantially strengthen the

institutional capacity within the Jal Shakti Department and enhance delivery of safe drinking water and allied public utility services across Jammu and Kashmir.

Notably, under the leadership of Jal Shakti Minister Javed Ahmed Rana, the department has witnessed major human resource reforms aimed at revitalizing the engineering and technical workforce while expediting the long-pending promotions and direct recruitment processes.

In a major breakthrough for the sector, nearly 300 engineers were appointed recently, significantly strengthening the human resource capacity of the department. The latest cadre restructuring and recruitment initiatives are being viewed as transformative measures for improving the governance, efficiency and public service delivery in the Jal Shakti sector across the Union Territory.



Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Kavinder Gupta is attending Club Leadership Learning Seminar as the Chief Guest being organised by the Rotary Club of Jammu at Royal Park Jammu at 10 AM tomorrow morning.

Avian conservation key to ecological balance, climate resilience: Javid Dar

Calls for strengthened research, conservation action at national symposium on Avian Biology

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: Emphasizing the critical role of birds in maintaining ecological balance and addressing the emerging climate challenges, Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, today said that avian conservation is indispensable for sustaining biodiversity, ensuring ecosystem stability and strengthening the climate resilience in fragile regions like Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister was addressing the valedictory function of the National Symposium on Avian Biology organized at Sher-



e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST)-Kashmir, where he attended as the chief guest. Addressing a distinguished gathering of scientists, conservationists, researchers and students from across the country, the Minister highlighted Jammu and Kashmir's

extraordinary avian wealth, noting that the Union Territory hosts nearly 600 recorded bird species across its wetlands, forests, alpine habitats and riverine ecosystems. He said several of these species are rare, migratory and habitat-sensitive, making the region one of India's most significant biodiversity hotspots.

Javed Rana inspects Eco Hut project

Reiterates govt's commitment towards environmental conservation, sustainable tourism development

POONCH, MAY 16: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today inspected the ongoing construction work of the Eco Hut near Chhatta Pani, Poonch being developed at an estimated cost of ₹1.27 crore.

The Eco Hut project is being developed with the objective of promoting eco-tourism in the region and providing modern, eco-friendly resting and recreational facilities for the tourists, trekkers, and nature lovers.

The project, being executed by the Forest Department under the Eco-Tourism Development Plan, is expected to significantly enhance the tourism potential of the region while ensuring conservation of its rich natural and ecological heritage.

The Minister interacted with the concerned officers and executing agency. He directed them to ensure that the project is completed within the stipulated timeframe without compromising on quality stan-



dards or environmental safeguards. He said that such initiatives not only promote tourism activities but also create livelihood and employment opportunities for the local youth, particularly those associated with tourism, hospitality, transport and allied sectors.

Equitable, inclusive development across J&K priority of Government: Sakeena Itoo

KULGAM, MAY 16: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today visited Nihama area of district Kulgam, and held a mega public darbar to listen the grievances, issues and demands of the local residents and other adjoining areas. During the Darbar, the locals highlighted several issues related to healthcare infrastructure, road connectivity, drinking water supply, electricity, educational facilities, social welfare schemes, irrigation, employment opportunities and other developmental concerns affecting the area. They also demanded upgradation of PHC Nihama, upgradation



of schools, establishment of a Tehsil, macadamization of various roads, augmentation of safe drinking water supply, installation of street lights in the market and other public welfare issues. While addressing the gathering, Sakeena Itoo reiterated the Omar Abdullah led Government's commitment towards equitable and inclusive development of all regions, particularly rural and far-flung areas. "Present Government is focused on strengthening public service delivery as well as ensuring that all genuine issues and demands raised during the darbar would be addressed on priority. She also gave onspot directions to concerned officers for resolution of various grievances and public issues. Sakeena Itoo also assured the locals

that such Public Darbars will be held on routine basis as they provide an important platform for understanding grassroots concerns and formulating responsive governance mechanisms. The Minister also urged the officers to maintain close coordination with the public and work with dedication, accountability and transparency for overall public welfare. Senior officers from various departments accompanied the Minister during the visit and responded to several grievances on the spot, while many issues were resolved immediately through on-site directions issued by the Minister.

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

