

North in News

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New helipad inaugurated by LG in Katra to boost Vaishno Devi, Shiv Khori connectivity

JAMMU, MAY 21: The Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday inaugurated the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Helipad at Village Hutt, Katra. The Lieutenant Governor said that the integrated aviation facility will streamline heli-operations, enhancing heli connectivity, safety and convenience for pilgrims visiting the holy shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji. "This helipad has been developed in strict compliance with the safety and operational norms laid down by the Directorate General of

Sinha lays foundation stone of Akshaya Patra's Centralised Mid-Day Meal Kitchen in Katra

Civil Aviation (DGCA). The facility places a paramount emphasis on passenger safety, security, and seamless travel experience, meeting the growing heli-services demand of the devotees. It will also provide a significant boost to religious tourism in the region," he said. It is pertinent to mention that the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, in collaboration with the Shri Shiv Khori Shrine Board, has undertaken development of a modern Helipad/Heliport at Village Hutt, Katra, as well as at Shiv Khori, to ensure convenience, safety and accessibility for pilgrims undertaking heli-crover to holy shrines. The infrastructure (Contd on Pg 2)

Heatwave scorches India, Jammu sizzles



New Delhi, May 21: Several states across India sweltered under blistering heat on Thursday, with Uttar Pradesh's Banda district again emerging as the hottest place in the country at 47.6 degrees Celsius. According to the IMD, heat wave to severe heat wave conditions prevailed in several places of Haryana, Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and adjoining Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh. The national capital, Delhi, continued to witness intense heat as temperatures hovered around 45

degrees Celsius. The Ridge weather station recorded 45.3 degrees Celsius, making it the hottest place in Delhi, the Met department said. The second hottest place was Ayanagar, where the maximum temperature touched 44.5 degrees Celsius, followed by Palam and Lodhi Road, each registering 44.3 degrees Celsius, while Sadarjung recorded 43.6 degrees Celsius. Delhi also reported its first heatstroke patient of the season -- a 24-year-old student from West Bengal who was admitted to the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital. Officials said he remains critical after being brought (Contd on Pg 2)

Two irrigation officials caught red-handed in Rs 1 Lakh bribery case

ANANTNAG, MAY 21: The Jammu and Kashmir Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Thursday arrested two officials of the Irrigation Division Anantnag for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 1 lakh from a complainant in connection with a land dispute case. According to officials, the accused have been identified as Nazir Ahmad Wani, serving as Zildar, and Bilal Ahmad Wazir, Parwati, both posted in Irrigation Division Anantnag. An official spokesperson said the ACB received a written complaint alleging that the

No Shortage Of Petrol, Diesel Or LPG all Indian Seafarers Safe: Government

New Delhi, May 21: The government on Thursday assured citizens that adequate stocks of petrol, diesel and LPG are available across the country amid the evolving situation in West Asia, while confirming that all Indian seafarers in the region remain safe. During an inter-ministerial media briefing held at the National Media Centre, officials from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways outlined measures being taken to maintain fuel availability, ensure maritime safety and



prevent disruption in essential supplies. The government advised citizens not to indulge in panic buying of petrol, diesel or LPG, stating that efforts are being made to ensure uninterrupted supply of essential fuels across the country. Citizens were also urged to avoid rumours, rely on official sources and use digital LPG booking platforms. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said supply to domestic LPG (Contd on Pg 2)

Pulwama attack mastermind Burhan shot dead by unknown men in PoK

NEW DELHI, MAY 21: Arjmand Gulzar, alias Burhan Hamza, a designated terrorist and the key mastermind behind the 2019 Pulwama terror attack on a CRPF convoy, has been shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), officials said here on Thursday.



Hamza, who was operating under heavy ISI-vested security, was ambushed in Muzaffarabad. He was critically injured and airlifted to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Rawalpindi, where he succumbed to his injuries, the

Pulwama district, Hamza was once associated with Al Badr, moved to Al Baraq, and maintaining a close alliance with Pakistan's espionage agency, the ISI, after an acrimonious exit from the outfit. He was declared a designated terrorist under UAPA for his involvement in orchestrating the February 14, 2019, suicide terror attack conducted by Pakistan-based terrorist organisation Jaish-e-Mohammad, on a CRPF convoy in Pulwama, which killed 40 personnel. In retaliation, the Indian (Contd on Pg 2)

BRIEF NEWS

DIG visits forward areas along LoC

JAMMU, MAY 21: Deputy Inspector General of Police, Rajouri-Poonch range, Sandeep Wazir on Thursday visited the forward areas along Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district to review the security situation and operational preparedness in the border area. The DIG interacted with police personnel deployed in the forward belt in Salotti sector and reviewed the existing security arrangements, deployment patterns and coordination mechanisms aimed at maintaining peace and vigilance along the border, officials said. During the visit, Wazir stressed the need for maintaining high alertness, seamless coordination among security agencies (Contd on Pg 2)

LPG consumers flag issues with e-KYC, lack of smartphones

SRINAGAR, MAY 21: LPG consumers in the Kashmir valley are facing difficulties in getting their cylinders refilled as distributors are witnessing a huge rush of customers for the mandatory eKYC of their connections. While the distributors deal with the rush, many customers are facing issues with the self-eKYC after the government made it mandatory to procure refills. From non-smartphone penetration to privacy concerns, customers have flagged several issues in the way of eKYC. "I have an LPG connection and have to do the mandatory eKYC, which means I have to download two (Contd on Pg 2)

Parliamentary panel members grill top NTA officials over NEET paper 'leak'

NEW DELHI, MAY 21: Several members of Parliament grilled top NTA officials on Thursday, with the agency's director general telling them that the NEET-UG paper was not leaked through their system and the CBI is probing the matter, sources said. During a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, several MPs questioned the National Testing Agency (NTA) officials on the steps taken by them to strengthen the



exam system in order to prevent paper leaks in the future. The panel had summoned top officials of the education ministry, including Education Secretary Vineet Joshi. The NTA officials, (Contd on Pg 2)

including Chairperson Pradeep Kumar Joshi and Director General Abhishek Singh, gave a detailed presentation on the recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Report on reforms in the agency. The sources said on queries from the MPs on how the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate) paper was leaked, Singh said it was not leaked through their system. At this, several MPs asked him then how did the paper get leaked and (Contd on Pg 2)

Delay in Representation Fatal: HC Quashes Doda Man's PSA Detention

JAMMU, MAY-21(JNF): In a significant ruling on preventive detention, the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has quashed the detention of a Doda resident under the Public Safety Act, holding that unexplained delay in deciding his representation and failure to communicate the outcome violated constitutional safeguards. A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Arun Palli and Justice Rajnesh Oswal allowed the Letters (Contd on Pg 2)

Patent Appeal filed by Rehmatullah, aged 28 years, son of Abdul Ghani Padder, resident of Dassa Bhatta, Doda, and set aside the judgment of the Writ Court dated July 22, 2025, which had earlier dismissed his habeas corpus petition. The detention order bearing No. PSA-02 of 2024 dated November 9, 2024, issued by the District Magistrate, Doda, was consequently quashed. Appearing for the (Contd on Pg 2)

Court Cannot Gamble With Victim's Life: HC Rejects MTP Beyond Statutory Limit

JAMMU, MAY-21(JNF): The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has refused to permit medical termination of pregnancy of a minor sexual assault survivor, holding that the Court cannot pass an order which may endanger the life and health of the victim, particularly when a duly constituted Medical Board has warned of grave medical complications. Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal dismissed the writ petition to the extent it sought permission for Medical Termination of Pregnancy, while directing the authorities to ensure complete medical care, protection, confidentiality and rehabilitation of the minor victim and the prospective child. The petition was filed on (Contd on Pg 2)

behalf of Minor Victim 'X' through her father, seeking urgent permission for termination of pregnancy arising out of alleged sexual assault and rape. The case relates to FIR No. 38/2026 registered at Police Station D.H. Pora, District Kulgam. The accused has already been taken into custody and the matter is under investigation. Appearing for the petitioner, Advocate Asifa Rashid argued that the victim was a minor and the pregnancy was the direct consequence of rape. It was submitted that forcing the victim to continue the pregnancy would violate her right to life, dignity and bodily integrity under Article 21 of the Constitution. The counsel (Contd on Pg 2)

Budha Amarnath Yatra boosted Hindu population in Poonch, claims VHP

NEW DELHI, MAY 21: The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) on Thursday claimed that the annual Budha Amarnath Yatra organised by the Bajrang Dal has contributed to a four per cent increase in the Hindu population in Poonch town of Jammu and Kashmir and helped check migration from the region. Addressing a press conference here, VHP international general secretary Milind Parande said the annual pilgrimage located in Poonch district has brought many positive changes to the region. "One visible outcome of this yatra is that the percentage of the Hindu population living in Poonch town has increased by around three to four per cent because of this yatra. (Contd on Pg 2)

Financial stability has also improved because the pilgrimage has generated large-scale economic activity in the region," he told reporters. Parande said the annual yatra is not only religious in nature but has also played an important role in promoting national integration and boosting the morale of soldiers guarding (Contd on Pg 2)

Dr. Jitendra Singh Dedicates UMMID Programme to the Nation

New Delhi, May 21: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, and Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh today dedicated the UMMID (Unique Methods of Management of Inherited Disorders) Programme for Rare Genetic Disorders/ Diseases to the Nation and said India is steadily entering an era where healthcare, diagnosis and treat- (Contd on Pg 2)

Police attaches drug peddler's properties worth Rs 7 crore

JAMMU, MAY 21: Police on Thursday attached properties worth approximately Rs 7 crore belonging to a detained drug peddler in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, officials said. The move comes amid police's intensified campaign against drug trafficking networks and their financial infrastructure. The attached properties comprises 6 kanal and 18 marlas of land and a single-storey residential house, having a plinth area of 2,107 square feet, situated at Chak Sheikhia area, they said. The properties belong to Harpal Singh, alias Balochi, a resident of Kathua, who is detained under the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1988, officials said. Investigators said the properties were prima facie, acquired through proceeds generated from illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The actions were carried out the directions of (Contd on Pg 2)

COMPASSION

New helipad...

is based on technical inputs from Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), and operational requirements assessed by the Board. It is capable of accommodating enhanced passenger handling and helicopter operational capacity, including future shifting of the existing Sheri Helipad operations to Village Hutt.

The project includes construction of the helipad and allied aviation infrastructure, development of a 110 km approach road, creation of an expanded terminal building with passenger amenities such as waiting halls, ticketing and refund counters, reception areas, offices and security cabins, as well as construction of a modern hangar facility and associated operational infrastructure.

The facility also includes provision of safety, security, sanitation, parking, utility services, emergency response systems and queue management facilities necessary for efficient helipad operations.

The project aims to create sufficient operational capacity for present and future helicopter traffic while addressing safety concerns related to helicopters flying over Katra town.

It also streamlines and professionalizes heli-services through centralized management and operation by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, leveraging its long-standing expertise in heli operations. It will also facilitate integrated pilgrimage connectivity between the two shrines from a common helipad and support development of pilgrim infrastructure in the Shri Shiv Khori Shrine area through collaborative institutional arrangements and financial assistance.

The occasion also marked the inauguration of the Helipad and other related works at the Shri Shiv Khori Shrine.

The enhanced infrastructure will increase footfall at the holy shrine and make travel more convenient for pilgrims visiting Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji who also wish to undertake pilgrimage to Shri Shiv Khori.

Members of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board - Mahamandeshwar Shri Swami Vishveshvaranand Giri (Mahant), Dr. Ashok Bhan, Shri Suresh Kumar Sharma, Shri Lalit Bhasin, Shri Kulboshan Ahuja, Dr. Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor, Shri Ranesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Shri Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB; Shri Kumar Abhishek, Deputy Commissioner, Reast; Shri Alak Maurya, Additional CEO SMVDSB; senior officials of the Shrine Board, police and District Administration and Border Roads Organization were present at the inaugural ceremony.

Heatwave...

unconscious to the facility on Thursday morning. In Uttar Pradesh, Banda again recorded the highest temperature in the country with 47.6 degrees Celsius.

The Meteorological Department issued a 'Red Colour Warning' for the next three days and an Orange Warning thereafter in view of the possibility of heatwave to severe heatwave conditions and warm night conditions at isolated places across the state over the next week.

In view of the severe heatwave and continuously rising temperatures in the state, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed officials to exercise complete vigilance regarding relief and rescue operations. A red warning is the highest level of weather alert, meaning 'take action'.

According to the Meteorological Centre in Lucknow, the absence of any active weather system, enhanced radiational heating due to clear skies and dry weather, and the subsidence of hot winds associated with an anticyclone over central India in the middle tropospheric levels have aggravated the heat conditions in the state.

Similar conditions prevailed in the neighbouring states of Haryana and Punjab.

Haryana's Sirsa, with 45.8 degrees Celsius, and Punjab's Ferozkot, with 45.9 degrees Celsius, turned out to be the hottest places in the two states.

Chandigarh braved yet another hot day at 44.2 degrees Celsius, over four notches above normal. Delhi recorded a high of 44.2 degrees Celsius, with a scorching hot sun and a hot breeze. In Rajasthan, Jaipur recorded a high of 44.2 degrees Celsius, five notches above normal. Ambala recorded a high of 44.2 degrees Celsius, five notches above normal, while Hissar recorded a high of 44.3 degrees Celsius, three notches above normal. Karnal recorded a high of 43.8 degrees Celsius, five degrees above normal while Bhavnagar braved a hot day at 44 degrees Celsius.

The maximum at Gurugram settled at 42 degrees Celsius. In Punjab, Bathinda registered the maximum temperature at 45.6 degrees Celsius, while Patiala recorded 44.9 degrees Celsius, five degrees more than normal. Ludhiana saw temperatures rising to 43 degrees Celsius, four degrees above normal and Amritsar at 41.5 degrees Celsius.

In Rajasthan, Sri Ganganagar was the hottest place with the maximum temperature of 45.1 degrees Celsius. Phalodi recorded a maximum of 44.8 degrees Celsius, while Pilani and Alwar registered 44 degrees Celsius each, according to the Meteorological Department.

The mercury settled at 43.8 degrees Celsius in Chittoorgarh, 43.6 degrees Celsius in Barmer, and 43.4 degrees Celsius in Churu. Heat wave conditions persisted at several places in Himachal Pradesh, with mercury levels staying three to five degrees above normal. Una sizzled at 44.3 degrees Celsius, followed by Neri at 41.0 degrees Celsius and Sundernagar at 39.9 degrees Celsius. The local Meteorological station issued an orange alert for thunderstorms, along with lightning, hail and gusty winds for five districts of Chamba, Kangra, Kullu, Mandi and Shimla for May 22.

In Uttarakhand, the administration advised children, senior citizens, and outdoor workers to exercise special caution. The weather office warned that temperatures in the plains may exceed 40 degrees Celsius, while hill districts will likely breach the 30 degree Celsius mark.

Two irrigation...

Corruption Bureau seeking legal action against the accused officials. Following a preliminary verification, the ACB found that the land under dispute was reportedly proprietary land belonging to the complainant and not state land. The verification also substantiated allegations of bribery against the officials.

Subsequently, the ACB registered FIR No. 05/2026 under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (amended in 2018) at Police Station ACB Anantnag and initiated an investigation.

A special trial team was constituted, which successfully apprehended both officials while allegedly receiving the bribe amount. The officials were arrested on the spot, and the cash was recovered in the presence of independent witnesses, the spokesperson said.

The ACB also carried out searches at the residences of the accused officials in the presence of Executive Magistrates and independent witnesses.

Further investigation into the case is underway.

No Shortage...

consumers, domestic PNG users and CNG transport networks is being maintained at 100 per cent despite the geopolitical situation. The ministry said online CNG order bookings rose to nearly 99 per cent on an industry basis, while Delivery Authorization Code-based deliveries increased to around 96 per cent to prevent diversion and black marketing of cylinders.

According to the ministry, around 1.34 crore LPG cylinders were delivered over the last three days against bookings of approximately 1.32 crore cylinders. On Wednesday alone, nearly 47.5 lakh LPG cylinders were delivered.

To strengthen enforcement against hoarding and illegal diversion, more than 5,000 raids were conducted across the country during the last three days. Surprise inspections were also carried out at over 3,100 retail outlets and LPG distributorships by PSU oil marketing

companies.

The ministry said penalties were imposed on 463 LPG distributorships, while 81 distributorships have been suspended so far.

The government also highlighted efforts to expand the use of piped natural gas (PNG) as an alternative fuel source. According to the ministry, over 58,500 PNG consumers have surrendered their LPG connections through the MYPNGD in partial bill May 20.

Since March 2025, around 7.64 lakh PNG connections have been activated, while infrastructure has been created for an additional 2.81 lakh connections.

The ministry said 22 States and Union Territories are receiving additional commercial LPG allocations linked to PNG expansion reforms.

On fuel pricing, the government said rising tensions in West Asia had led to higher crude oil prices globally. To shield consumers from the impact, excise duty on petrol and diesel was reduced by Rs 10 per litre.

The government also revised export levies on fuel products, reducing the export levy on diesel and aviation turbine fuel, while imposing an export duty on petrol.

"All retail outlets are operating normally across the country and there are adequate stocks of petrol and diesel available at all petrol pumps," the ministry said.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways said maritime operations remain stable and all Indian seafarers in the Gulf region are safe.

"No incident involving Indian-flagged vessels or foreign vessels with Indian crew has been reported in the past 72 hours," the ministry said.

The Directorate General of Shipping has so far facilitated the safe repatriation of more than 3,316 Indian seafarers, including 99 in the last 72 hours.

Pulwama...

security forces ran an intelligence-led operation led by IAF jets in the early hours of February 26, 2019, striking the biggest training camp of JEM in Balakot.

Hamza, who also had an alias, Doctor, was currently living in Cheda Bandi, a densely populated neighbourhood on the outskirts of Muzaffarabad, with security details of eight commandos, a bullet-resistant (BR) vehicle, and an escort vehicle, indicating state-level protection and operational importance, sources said.

The security cover was given to him after he allegedly made a fabricated attack on himself somewhere between January and February 2025, they said.

He worked closely with Farooq Qureshi, a former Al Baraq commander whose name has repeatedly surfaced in dossiers linked to narcotics trafficking, counterfeit currency rackets, arms smuggling and cross-border militant operations in the Kashmir Valley.

The two operated from an industrial compound locally referred to as the 'Machis Factory' in Muzaffarabad, the sources said.

Hamza maintained close ties with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, particularly with an officer identified as Col Rizwan, suggesting deep intelligence ties and protection, they said.

The terrorist has recently married the daughter of Qadir Lala, a former Hizbul Mujahideen operative from Kupwara, currently employed as a security operator at the terror group's housing project in Chak Shehad, Pakistan.

He was also said to have maintained close ties with Murtaza, another former Hizbul Mujahideen operative from Pulwama, now based in Islamabad, making frequent visits to his residence, the sources said.

Parliamentary...

what was the need to cancel the exam and hold a retest. The NTA DG team answered to this and instead said the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is looking into the matter. Some opposition MPs demanded that the probe report be presented before the panel, but some of their counterparts from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) objected to this, saying the CBI is an independent body and it should be allowed to do its work.

The sources said Singh gave a detailed presentation on the implementation of the steps recommended in the Radhakrishnan Report on NTA reforms and informed that around 70 per cent of the short-term measures suggested have already been implemented. The NTA officials told the members of the panel that steps are being taken to evolve a foolproof examination system and a comprehensive review is being conducted. They also said credible people should be involved in the paper setting and distribution system.

The NTA officials said holding the NEET through a computer-based testing (CBT) platform is being considered and future exams could be conducted through this mode.

The MPs are keen to have raised the issue of staff shortage and filling vacancies in the NTA to ensure that the agency functions efficiently and leakages are prevented.

The sources said the NTA informed the members of the committee that there is a staff shortage of around 25 per cent in the agency currently and steps are being taken systematically to fill up all such vacancies to plug any loopholes.

After the meeting, the chairperson of the parliamentary panel, Congress MP Divyavijaya Singh, said, "Whatever discussions happen in the parliamentary committee, we are under oath and we cannot discuss it."

He later said, "The meeting went off very well. We got inputs from all the members. The members expressed their concerns over the NEET paper leak."

Earlier, listing out the steps taken by the NTA and the government to prevent breaches and malpractices, the officials of the agency said detailed standard operating procedures (SOPs) and checklists for breach management in both PPT and CBT modes have been sent to stakeholders and the collaboration established with the state or district administrations for conducting high-stake examinations and reporting malpractices are being actively monitored on social-media platforms.

The NTA informed the panel that the NEET (UG) 2026 was conducted by it on May 3 at 5422 centres in 565 cities (including 14 cities abroad). The examination was conducted in 13 languages and more than 22.7 lakh candidates had registered, with over 22.05 lakh appearing in the examination.

The Radhakrishnan Committee has made several recommendations, including harmonisation and unification of entrance tests for undergraduate admissions, a gradual migration towards computer-aided testing and the creation of an NTA public test platform and infrastructure.

Among the long-term measures suggested by the high-level committee of experts are a transition from pen and paper to computer-based testing, the introduction of multi-session and multi-stage testing, and the imposition of number of attempts and age limits. These will be implemented in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The NTA also aims at establishing cloud-based infrastructure, integrating artificial intelligence (AI) and blockchain for secure monitoring, phasing out reliance on test-delivery agencies by building an in-house examination software and institutionalising pilot testing. The agency also aims to adopt advanced cryptographic solutions and establish network-security measures, besides developing a state-of-the-art model by absorbing domestic and international best practices, including earnings from the NTA methodology.

The NTA informed the panel that on May 7, four days after the NEET (UG) was held, the agency received inputs concerning alleged malpractice around the examination. The inputs were escalated to central agencies on the morning of May 8 for independent verification and action.

On the basis of inputs subsequently examined by the NTA in coordination with central agencies and investigative findings shared by law-enforcement agencies, a decision was taken to cancel the NEET-UG 2026 and re-conduct the exam on June 21.

Delay in...

appellant, Advocate M. A. Bhat argued that the detention was based on five FIRs, but the appellant had already been discharged in FIR No. 173/2016 and discharged of major offences in FIR No. 177/2016. It was further submitted that the remaining FIRs related to ordinary law and order issues and had no nexus with the objects of the Public Safety Act.

The appellant also contended that his representation against the detention order was not considered in accordance with law and, in any case, the outcome was never communicated to him, thereby infringing the safeguards guaranteed under Article 22(5) of the Constitution.

On the other hand, Senior AAG Monika Kohli, appearing for the Union Territory, supported the order and submitted that all constitutional and statutory safeguards under the Public Safety Act had been duly complied with.

After assessing the detention record, the Division Bench observed that the core issue going to the root of the matter was the consideration and communication of the decision on the representation submitted on behalf of the detainee. The Court noted that the appellant's brother had submitted a representation on November 22, 2024 to the Advisory Board, Home Department and District Magistrate, Doda. Though the District Magistrate rejected the representation on December 5, 2024, the outcome was never communicated to the appellant. The Home Department rejected on January 21, 2025, but the date of communication was not specified.

The Bench held that even if communication was presumed to have been made on January 21, the Home Department had taken more than one and a half months to decide the representation, which amounted to impermissible delay.

Relying upon the Supreme Court judgment in Sanjiv Singh Mokha vs District Magistrate, Jabalpur, the High Court reiterated that the right to make a representation against preventive detention includes the valuable right to its expeditious consideration and prompt communication of the decision. The Court observed that delay in decision, the prosecution and failure to communicate the decision strike at the heart of procedural safeguards available to a detainee.

The Division Bench further held that the writ Court had not properly considered this crucial aspect and, therefore, its judgment could be set aside.

Allowing the appeal, the High Court quashed the PSA detention order and directed that the appellant be released from custody forthwith, provided he is not required in any other case. (JNF)

Delay in...

also relied on the provision under the MTP Act which recognizes that pregnancy caused by rape is presumed to constitute grave injury to the mental health of the victim.

The Court noted that the pregnancy had crossed the ordinary statute of limitation under the Termination of Pregnancy Act. At the time of filing of the petition, the gestational age was around 25 weeks and 5 days, and during consideration of the matter it had advanced to around 27 weeks.

Earlier, the High Court had directed constitution of a Medical Board to assess whether termination could be safely carried out. The proceedings were also held in-camera to protect the identity, privacy and dignity of the victim. After considering the medical assessment, the Court proceeded on the premise that the victim was a minor.

However, the Medical Board opined that termination at such an advanced stage carried serious medical and obstetric risks, including prolonged and failed induction, operative interventions like hysterectomy, postpartum hemorrhage, puerperal sepsis, need for intensive care, multiple blood transfusions and secondary infertility as a long-term consequence.

The petitioner relied upon the Supreme Court judgment in S vs Union of India, when termination was permitted at 28 weeks. The High Court, however, distinguished the ruling, observing that in that case the Medical Board had found the minor physically fit for termination, whereas in the present matter the expert body had clearly warned of serious risk to the victim's life and health.

Justice Nagal observed that the Court, while exercising writ jurisdiction, cannot disregard or sit in appeal over expert medical opinion, particularly when such opinion indicates a threat to life. The Court held that the paramount consideration must be preservation of life and minimization of risk to the health of the minor.

The Court further observed that sympathy alone cannot be a ground for issuing directions where such directions may expose the person concerned to life-threatening complications. Judicial discretion, the Court said, must operate within the framework of medical science, statutory safeguards and constitutional limitations.

While declining permission for MTP, the High Court directed that Government Law Dept Hospital, Srinagar, should provide free pre-delivery and post-delivery care, hospitalization, medicines, investigations, dietary requirements, counselling and all necessary medical support to the victim.

The Government Medical Superintendent, Lalla Ded Hospital, the Nodal Officer, Directorate of Mission Vatsalya, JKK, and the SPs of Gulgam and Srinagar to file monthly compliance reports before the Registry regarding the medical condition, care provided and overall welfare of the minor victim and the prospective child.

The writ petition was accordingly disposed of with directions for strict implementation of all assurances regarding care, protection, confidentiality and rehabilitation. (JNF)

Budha...

the borders. "As a result of this pilgrimage, all Hindu religious sites along the route have been preserved, and among minority Hindus living near the India-Pakistan border, the spirit of valour instead of migration has grown," he said.

According to the VHP leader, the pilgrimage has also contributed to infrastructure growth in the region. A highway from Jammu to Poonch has now largely been ready. There has also been a survey regarding the extension of a railway line to the area," he said.

Parande said this year's Budha Amamah Yatra will begin on August 16 and continue till August 27.

The inauguration will take place at Bhagwati Nagar Base Camp in Jammu, while pilgrims will leave for Poonch on August 17.

According to Parande, the Bajrang Dal has been organising the "Shri Baba Budha Amamah Sahasik Yatra" for the past 21 years to the shrine near the India-Pakistan border.

He said the century-old pilgrimage had become "almost defunct" during the 1990s due to terrorism in the Valley and continuous cross-border shelling.

Parande said the Bajrang Dal took responsibility for reviving the pilgrimage in 2005 and initially mobilised around 7,000-8,000 participants annually.

"The yatra had started with 7,000-8,000 people under Bajrang Dal's initiative has now become a pilgrimage of the larger society. Today, around 1.5 to 2 lakh people participate in it," he claimed.

During the initial years, the yatra faced firing incidents and grenade attacks. Despite all this, the pilgrimage continued," he said.

Bajrang Dal national coordinator Kishan Prajapat said a dedicated website and registration portal have been launched for the pilgrimage to help devotees across the country register online and access information about the temple, route and travel arrangements.

Prajapat said the initiative aims to encourage more people to visit the shrine located in Mandi Rajpura village of Poonch district near the border.

Dr. Jitendra...

expensive, making it essential to build a coordinated national mechanism to make diagnosis and management feasible, affordable and accessible for all families.

Describing UMMD as a major step towards the future of precision medicine in India, the Minister said the initiative would also prepare the country's healthcare ecosystem for the next generation of gene and genome-based medical care.

The Union Minister was addressing a special function organised by the Department of Biotechnology for dedication of the UMMD Network to the Nation at Pitthiv Bhawan, New Delhi. On the occasion, the Minister also released the UMMD Compendium and launched the UMMD Dashboard aimed at strengthening nationwide access to diagnostics, counselling, outreach and programme monitoring for inherited disorders.

The event was attended by Secretary, Department of Biotechnology and Director General, BRIC, Dr. Rajesh S. Gokhale, Senior Advisor, DBT, Dr. Sachita Ninawe; senior scientists, clinicians, healthcare professionals, representatives of UMMD implementing institutions and officials from scientific and healthcare organisations across the country.

Referring to the healthcare reforms introduced under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership over the last decade, Dr. Jitendra Singh said the Government has consistently focused on healthcare that is affordable, accessible, preventive and citizen-centric. He said India has expanded wellness centres, strengthened health insurance coverage and widened access to affordable medicines while simultaneously building systems for early detection and preventive healthcare.

The Minister said inherited and rare genetic disorders represent a silent but deeply challenging public health burden, where families often spend years moving from one hospital to another in search of diagnosis and treatment. He said despite affecting comparatively smaller populations, these disorders impose enormous emotional, social and financial hardship on affected families and therefore deserve the same level of national attention and healthcare sensitivity as any other major disorder burden.

Sharing his perspective as a medical professional, Dr. Jitendra Singh said rare genetic disorders historically received limited attention in mainstream medical education and healthcare practice because of their low prevalence and complex diagnosis process. He said this often resulted in delayed diagnosis, lack of awareness and inadequate treatment access for patients. He added that India's vast genetic diversity further makes the challenge more complex and requires a robust ecosystem of early screening, genetic diagnostics, prenatal counselling, clinician training and community outreach.

Appreciating the Department of Biotechnology for taking up a difficult but socially transformative mission, Dr. Jitendra Singh said UMMD demonstrates how science, compassion and public policy can come together to reduce suffering through timely intervention and preventive healthcare. He said the programme has successfully established a national framework integrating genetic diagnostics, prenatal and newborn screening, genetic counselling, clinician capacity-building and community outreach under a unified public health model.

The Minister said the programme has already benefited nearly three lakh individuals through screening and diagnostic services and expanded outreach across Aspirational Districts and underserved regions. He said the initiative has also helped establish nearly 80 NIDAN Kendras for advanced diagnostics and counselling, ensuring that advanced genomic healthcare reaches beyond metropolitan centres and becomes accessible to ordinary citizens.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said the experience gained through UMMD would serve as an important foundation for the future of precision medicine, where treatment protocols for diseases such as diabetes, cardiac ailments and cancers may increasingly be based on the individual genetic profile of patients. He said genetic medicine and nuclear medicine are emerging as two major frontiers that could redefine healthcare in the coming decades.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology and Director General, BRIC, Dr. Rajesh S. Gokhale said the UMMD initiative has brought hope to thousands of families through scientific intervention, collaborative biotechnology research and early diagnosis. He said India's genetic diversity provides enormous opportunities for scientific innovation and translates into significant solutions relevant not only for India but globally.

Earlier, welcoming the gathering, Dr. Sachita Ninawe said the UMMD programme has significantly strengthened India's response to inherited genetic disorders by improving access to genetic diagnostics, counselling and capacity building. She said the initiative has helped create an integrated nationwide network for management of rare and inherited diseases through coordinated institutional partnerships.

The programme also featured an overview of the UMMD initiative, presentations on achievements and success stories, and screening of a short film highlighting the initiative's journey, impact and future roadmap.

Police...

Kathua's Senior Superintendent of Police Mohita Sharma. The properties were formally attached under various sections of the Act, after it was identified as illegally acquired during the course of investigation, officials said.

They said that Singh has been involved in four NDRP-related cases registered in Kathua district over the years.

Local residents have welcomed the action, describing it as a strong step against narcotics-related activities in the district. Police reiterated its commitment to making the district drug-free by targeting both drug traffickers and assets allegedly created through proceeds of the narcotics trade.

DIG...

and proactive policing in sensitive areas. The visit was aimed at overseeing the preparedness of police to strengthen security measures and ensure effective policing in forward villages along the LoC.

The DIG also chaired a conference to review the prevailing security scenario and deliberated upon various operational, investigative and administrative aspects of policing, they said.

Addressing the officers, Wazir asked them to remain vigilant and proactive in tackling emerging security challenges, cyber-related offences and other criminal activities, while underscoring the need for better coordination among various police units and security agencies to strengthen the overall security grid in the district.

LPG consumers...

apps on my phone and then undertake the process. These apps need several phone permissions, which raises privacy concerns," Yawar Ahmad, a consumer in the city here, said.

Shazia, a home-maker, said many women like her do not have smartphones, so undertaking eKYC by installing applications does not make sense.

"I have a Ujjwala connection and I cannot afford a smartphone, so how will I do the self-eKYC?" she asked.

State consumers said such "service bottlenecks" were caused as the government's facing severe issues with the supply of LPG due to the crisis in the Middle East.

While OTP has been mandatory at the time of gas delivery, many consumers have received messages about gas being delivered without sharing the OTP.

"I received an OTP which I didn't share with the distributor, but then I still got the message about gas being delivered. However, the gas was not delivered," Mehraj Ahmad, another consumer, said.

DC Kathua convenes public outreach programme at Duggan

Assures time bound redressal of public grievances



KATHUA, MAY 21: Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma today chaired a Public Outreach Programme at Duggan, a remote block of Bani Sub-Division, to take first-hand appraisal of public grievances and developmental needs of the area. The programme witnessed active participation from local residents, public representatives and members of various delegations who projected issues requiring immediate attention of the district administration.

The locals and public representatives highlighted several demands, seeking augmentation of health and education infrastructure, marking the JK Bank branch at Duggan functional, meeting shortage of staff in the departments, opening of a Veterinary Hospital and an Allopathic Health Centre, release of pending land compensation, development of a playground, restoration of irrigation canals, adequate supply of agricultural

inputs such as seeds and urea, upgradation of educational institutions and strengthening of power infrastructure in the area. Responding to the demands, the Deputy Commissioner reiterated the administration's commitment towards addressing public concerns and ensuring equitable development of remote and far-flung areas. "Improvement of road connectivity and infrastructure development are key priorities," he assured

The DC directed the Agriculture and Horticulture Departments to ensure maximum outreach and benefits to the people of Bani and Duggan under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP). He appealed to farmers and youth to avail benefits of horticulture, beekeeping and other livelihood generation schemes being implemented by the government.

Regarding the functioning of JK Bank branch at Duggan, the DC assured that the matter would be taken up with the concerned authorities to ascertain the reasons for delay and facilitate its early functioning. On the demand for a playground, he informed that the issue would be taken up with the Sports Council, while directions were issued to the education department to prepare proposals for strengthening educational infrastructure in the area.

ADDC Jammu reviews implementation of PM-SYM Pension Yojana for unorganised workers



JAMMU, MAY 21: Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Jammu, Sher Singh today chaired a meeting to review the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan Dhan Pension Yojana (PM-SYM) in the district.

Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PM-SYM) is a voluntary, contributory pension scheme of the Government of India for workers in the unorganised sector. While discussing the benefits of this social security scheme, the ADCD asked stakeholder departments to maximize the coverage of construction workers, labourers, municipal workers, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, traders, domestic workers, members of Self Help Groups (SHGs),

and handcraft workers. He further directed the officers to make concerted efforts to enroll eligible workers falling under their respective departments. The ADCD instructed the officers to identify unorganised workers in the age group of 18 to 40 years and submit weekly progress reports on the coverage of the targeted group.

Chief Secretary inaugurates CGG&PA at IUST, lauds University's academic, research initiatives

AWANTIPORA, MAY 21: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today visited Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) and inaugurated the Centre for Good Governance & Policy Analysis (CGG&PA) during a series of engagements aimed at strengthening policy research, government innovation and institutional collaboration. Congratulating Prof. Shakil A. Romshoo Vice Chancellor IUST and his team for the achievements made by IUST, he expressed confidence that the Centre for Good Governance & Policy Analysis would further strengthen the university's contribution towards policy research and institutional development. He remarked that IUST possesses immense potential to contribute towards

and emerging programmes in frontier sciences and artificial intelligence in line with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. He also lauded the university's initiatives in strengthening industry linkages, promoting research, and fostering innovation-driven academic collaborations. During the visit, the Chief Secretary toured Campus I and Campus III of the university and inspected various laboratories and academic facilities. He also interacted with officers and faculty members. Atal Dulloo appreciated the efforts of the faculty and staff in the growth and academic advancement of the university, particularly its introduction of high-end

improving ease of living for the people through meaningful collaborations with the government and national-level institutions. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Shakil A. Romshoo highlighted the university's achievements and outlined its vision for academic excellence, innovation, and public engagement. He stated that IUST has emerged as an active contributor to several flagship national missions through its work in sustainability, emerging technologies, entrepreneurship, healthcare, and community development. He also thanked the Government for its continued support, which, he said, has enabled the university to strengthen its academic and research ecosystem and expand its engagement.

DC Doda reviews arrangements for Eid-ul-Azha 2026

DODA, MAY 21: Deputy Commissioner Doda Krishan Lal today chaired a meeting here in the Conference Hall-DC Office Complex to review the arrangements for the Eid-ul-Azha. The meeting was convened to ensure smooth celebration of the festival and to review the preparedness of the stakeholder departments for providing essential services to the public across the district. The Deputy Commissioner reviewed arrangements related to uninterrupted water and power supply, sanitation, traffic regulation, healthcare facilities, availability of essential commodities, transportation, market checking and fire and emergency services. Stressing coordinated efforts by all departments, the DC emphasized to facilitate peaceful, hygienic and hassle-free celebration of Eid-ul-Azha throughout the district. The Deputy Commissioner directed the Jal Shakti Department to ensure uninterrupted drinking water supply at Eidgahs, mosques, community centres and other major congrega-



tion places during the festive days. The Power Department was instructed to maintain uninterrupted electricity supply across the district to avoid inconvenience to the public. The Executive Officer Municipal Committee Doda was directed to intensify sanitation drives, fogging operations, drainage clearance and cleanliness measures around mosques, Eidgahs, market areas and other public places. The EO

was further instructed to impose heavy fines on owners of stray animals to maintain sanitation and public convenience in the town. Traffic Police, Police Department and Transport authorities were asked to ensure proper traffic regulation and smooth public movement, especially in busy market areas and near major prayer venues. The enforcement departments were asked to remove wrong parking and encroachments

from the town to avoid traffic congestion during the festival. The Police was directed to deploy adequate security personnel at sensitive locations to maintain law and order during Eid celebrations. The Health Department was instructed to keep medical teams, ambulances and emergency healthcare services on alert in every block of the district during the festive period. The Chief Medical Officer was directed to ensure availability of medicines and necessary healthcare facilities at all health institutions. The Deputy Commissioner also directed the Food Safety, Legal Metrology and FCS&CA Departments to intensify market inspections to check overpricing, hoarding, food quality and use of standard weighing measures. The department was instructed to ensure adequate availability of essential commodities and uninterrupted supply of LPG gas during the festive season. Tehsil Dar Doda was asked to monitor the availability and distribution of essential commodities across the district, while flying squads.

TB Mukht Bharat 100 day Campaign 2.0 State TB Cell Jammu solicits support from political leadership to generate public awareness

JAMMU, MAY 21: A team from the State TB Cell Jammu today met political Leadership to solicit their support to strengthen TB Mukht Bharat 100 day Campaign 2.0. The team from the Directorate of Health Services Jammu paid a courtesy visit to Rajya Sabha MP Sat Sharma CA, Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma and other senior leaders. During the meeting, a detailed discussion was held with the leadership regarding the 'TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan' and the 100-Day TB



Elimination Public Awareness Campaign. The leadership assured full support and active participation for the successful implementation of the campaign. The Leaders emphasized that the Prime Minister's vision of TB-Free India can be

achieved only through public awareness, collective efforts and active participation of society. MP Sat Pal Sharma expressed his willingness to become a Nikshay Mitra and extend nutritional support to TB patients during the upcoming event.

Trainees felicitated on completion of Mali course

JAMMU, MAY 21: The Department of Horticulture Jammu on Thursday felicitated the batch of trainees, who completed one year Mali training course here at Mega Fruit Plant Nursery Chakroli. Director Horticulture Jammu Gul Syed was the chief guest. He gave away certificates to the trainees who successfully completed the one year orientation programme. During the training, the trainees drawn from different districts of Jammu were imparted theoretical and technical knowledge about the horticulture practices. The trainees were also educated about protocol of raising nurseries in open and protected structures, the methods of propagation of fruit plants, training/pruning of plants, basin preparation and other nursery operations. The Director Horticulture Jammu briefed the trainees in detail about Central and J&K sponsored schemes of the department such as Holistic Agriculture Development Programme aimed at to double the farmers' income. He also advised the trainees to implement the knowledge gained during the training period in their respective horticulture zones. The Director Horticulture Jammu impressed upon trainees to work for the welfare of farmers and to promote horticulture practices in their respective Districts.

NORTHERN RAILWAY					
E-TENDER NOTICE					
Tender Notice No-27,26-2026-27-ADEN-LDH & 29, 30-2026-27-ADEN-JRC			Date: 20.05.2026		
By 5:00 PM (IST) for and on behalf of the President of India invite qualified bidders to tender for the work mentioned in the tender notice. Bidders will be able to submit their original/bid copy up to closing date and intently. Manual offers are not allowed against these tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. In place of Earnest money deposit, "Bid Security (Escrow)" to be submitted on prescribed format as available in document section on the portal.					
Tender Type	Tendering Section	Work	Single Packet System		
Open	Works		Yes		
Date of Uploading Tenders	Bid Starting Date	16.05.2026	27.05.2026	16.05.2026	15.00 Hrs
Sl. No	Tender Number	Details of Tender			
1	27-2026-27-ADEN-LDH	Replacement of old disassembled gns. with standard staff quarters in colony No. 12 at Luchkera and Samrala. (R 1 to R 2 & 7 to 9) in colony No. 12 at LDH & 1 to 1 & 2 to 1 & 3 at J&K, under ADEN/LDH.	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money	Validity of Offer
			4,22,95,914.11	8,45,900.00	90 Days
					08 Months
Special Technical Criteria: "Construction of Building/quarters"					
2	26-2026-27-ADEN-LDH	Replacement of old disassembled gns with standard staff quarters at Narambala, Phagosa & Gonja. (16 Nos ADEN-LDH & 1 Nos T&V staff quarters in the section 552/WP/01) under ADEN/LDH.	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money	Validity of Offer
			4,08,48,721.84	8,17,000.00	90 Days
					08 Months
Special Technical Criteria: "Construction of Building/quarters"					
3	26-2026-27-ADEN-JRC	Replacement of old disassembled quarters with standard staff quarters in colony No. 3 at Jalandhar City, (16 Lhs) under ADEN/JRC.	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money	Validity of Offer
			3,50,29,655.43	7,00,000.00	90 Days
					08 Months
Special Technical Criteria: "Construction of Building/quarters"					
4	30-2026-27-ADEN-JRC	Replacement of old disassembled gns. with standard Type-II staff quarters at Buzurgpur & Akhawal (16 Lhs) under ADEN/JRC.	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money	Validity of Offer
			3,99,62,907.54	7,99,200.00	90 Days
					08 Months
Special Technical Criteria: "Construction of Building/quarters"					
Note: 1. Bidders bidding, bidders to check for any compulsion issued against tender.					
					1711/26
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE					

Adjudicating Officer FSSA Jammu imposes over Rs. 14 lakh Fine on traders for food safety violations

JAMMU, MAY 21: 2006, including selling or distributing substandard and misbranded food products, expired food, rotten meat and operating without valid licence etc. Additionally, the licenses of 25 Food Business Operators (FBOs) have been recommended for suspension. These defaulters failed to deposit penalties previously imposed for serving unhygienic food, working without a valid license and dealing in substandard and misbranded products. Additional Deputy Commissioner Jammu Vidhu Shekhar, the des-

ignated Adjudicating Officer under FSSA, has been spearheading the crackdown to enforce District administration's zero-tolerance policy against adulteration and mislabelling. The Adjudicating Officer has appealed to all food business operators in the district to strictly adhere to the guidelines laid down under FSSA 2006 and ensure that only safe and properly labelled food items reach consumers. Those found flouting the norms will continue to face stringent action, officials warned.

Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir - 100 Day Campaign DIPR Jammu hosts Symposium-cum-Cultural programme at GHS Panjgrain

JAMMU, MAY 21: Continuing its outreach under the "Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir - 100 Day Campaign" the Cultural Unit Jammu of the Department of Information & Public Relations (DIPR) in collaboration with Dogri Sainiya Sabha Kuppad Pargalla, today organised a Symposium-cum-Theme Based Cultural Programme at Government High School Panjgrain Jammu. The programme was aimed at sensitising students about the harmful effects of drug abuse and motivating them to adopt a healthy and responsible lifestyle. Students actively participated in the symposium and shared insightful views on the issue, reflecting awareness



and concern towards building a drug-free society. The Chief Guest, Headmaster Manju Chaudhary appreciated the initiative and encouraged students to act as responsible citizens by spreading awareness against drug abuse.

Sonakshi secured the first position for an impressive presentation, whereas Reetika and Kritika were adjudged second and third, respectively. Symposium was judged by Rekha Sharma, Meena Sharma and Rajinder Singh. Adding further

impact to the programme, a Nukkud Natak on Nasha Mukht was presented by the students of the school, effectively conveying a strong social message. The artists of the Cultural Unit Jammu also presented theme-based songs in Hindi and Punjabi, which inspired the audience and reinforced the campaign's message. The programme witnessed active participation from students, staff members and faculty, making it a meaningful awareness initiative. The entire programme was conducted under the direction of Deepak Dubey, Joint Director Jammu and under the supervision of Mohit Sharma, Cultural Officer.

BJP's track record of scams, manipulations disqualifies it from giving moral lectures: Rattan Lal Gupta

JAMMU, MAY 21

The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Provincial President Rattan Lal Gupta today launched a scathing attack on BJP leaders Ashok Koul General Secretary and Ravinder Raina former State President, terming their allegations against the Omar Abdullah-led government as politically bankrupt, malicious and desperation-driven rhetoric aimed at diverting public attention from BJP's own tainted legacy of corruption, manipulation and administrative failures.

Addressing a joining function at the Provincial Headquarter, Sher-e-Kashmir Bhawan Jammu, Organized by Rakesh Singh Raka Vice President Central Zone, Gupta said the BJP leadership in Jammu and Kashmir has been left politically unruined by the growing public confidence, transparent governance and mass outreach initiatives undertaken by the National Conference government.

"The BJP is visibly rattled by the resur-



gence of people-centric governance under Omar Abdullah Sahib. Unable to digest the overwhelming public response and administrative accountability of the present dispensation, BJP leaders have resorted to their old playbook of propaganda, diversion and manufactured outrage," Gupta said.

He asserted that before levelling baseless accusations against the National Conference, BJP leaders must first answer to the people of the country for the long list of scams, controversies and institutional failures associated with their own party.

"It is politically ironic and morally laughable that a party engulged in

controversies like the Electoral Bonds scandal, Vyapam scam, the Adani controversy and repeated allegations of toppling democratically elected governments through 'Operation Lotus' is attempting to sermonize on ethics and accountability. Party Accused of Selling Democracy Cannot Lecture NC on Governance," he remarked.

"Who will answer for the irregularities in JKSSB recruitments? Who will take responsibility for the JKVIB scandal and the Sub-Inspector recruitment scam and the recent NEET examination controversy that shattered the aspirations of lakhs of students? Taking

direct aim at BJP leaders in Jammu and Kashmir, Gupta said those indulging in political mudslinging against the Omar Abdullah government must first come clean on controversies linked to their own ranks.

Gupta said the Omar Abdullah-led government has prioritized restoration of democratic institutions, responsible governance, administrative transparency and public trust, which has deeply frustrated the BJP's divisive political machinery. "The contrast is now visible to the common people. The National Conference believes in ability and inclusive

development, whereas the BJP thrives on polarisation, media optics and perpetual political 'distraction,' he said.

On this occasion scores of Youth activists from BJP into National Conference. The joining names are: Harjot Singh, Ankush Sethi, Lovely Kumar, Anirudh Kumar, Rohit, Bivsh Sharma, Manav, Gautam, Himanshu Kumar, Sarjeet, Manjot Singh, Shubham Kumar, Harish Thakur, Randeep Singh, Rahul Vaid, Mukesh Kumar, Gopal K. Choudhary, Vivek, Nitish Sharma, Vivek Kumar and Sanjeev. Among others who were present included: Sheikh Ashraf Ahmad former minister, Provincial Secretary Jammu, Bimla Luthra former MLA, Babu Rampal former minister and Central Zone, Bushan Lal Bhat former MLC, Vijay Lochan Chairman 'S' Cell, Abdul Gani Teli Chairman OBC Cell, Laxmi Data Senior leader, Harshvardhan President NCSU, Sardar Sandeep Singh Wazir Additional Spokesperson Jammu, Rajni Devi.

Encroach forest land, NC will protect you : Bali Bhagat slams Omar Govt

JAMMU, MAY 21



Senior BJP leader and former Forest Minister Bali Bhagat on Thursday launched a scathing attack on the NC-led government over alleged political patronage to forest encroachers, accusing the ruling alliance of weakening anti-encroachment drives and encouraging illegal occupation of protected land across Jammu and Kashmir.

"Under the NC regime, encroachers are flourishing openly because they know they enjoy political protection. Ministers and alliance leaders are openly standing with those illegally occupying forest land instead of supporting officials tasked with protecting public property," Bali Bhagat said while reacting to the recent controversy surrounding anti-encroachment action near the Mohmaya belt in Jammu.

Targeting Forest Minister Javed Ahmed Rana and Congress leader Raman Bhalla, Bali Bhagat alleged that their visit to the encroachment site has exposed the "dangerous vote-bank politics and communal agenda" being pursued by the

Today, under NC rule, the same encroachers are being emboldened and protected," he said.

He further accused the NC leadership of trying to give the issue a communal colour to polarise people and shield illegal occupants.

"NC is deliberately attempting to communalise the issue to divert attention from the core issue of illegal land grabbing. Forest land belongs to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, not to any political community or political constituency. Law cannot change on the basis of vote-bank calculations," Bali Bhagat asserted.

Calling the developments "extremely dangerous for environmental protection and rule of law," the senior BJP leader said continued political interference in anti-encroachment drives would severely damage fragile ecological zones and demoralise honest officers working on the ground.

"The administration must make it clear whether it stands with the law or with the encroachers. Forest land cannot be converted into a political rehabilitation centre for illegal occupants," he added.

MLA Kishwar Shagun Parihar starts Blacktopping Work on Hasti-Kurya Bridge Road



JAMMU, MAY 21

In a significant step towards strengthening road infrastructure and improving connectivity in the region, MLA Kishwar Shagun Parihar today formally inaugurated and commenced the blacktopping work of the road stretch from Hasti to Kurya Bridge in the presence of officials from the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) and promi-

nent local residents. During the visit, NHIDCL officials regarding the quality, execution and timely completion of the project. She emphasized that improving road connectivity in rural and far-flung areas will be my one of the foremost priorities, as better roads are directly linked with economic growth, public convenience and overall regional development. MLA Shagun Parihar stated that the blacktopping of the Hasti-

Kurya Bridge Road will provide major relief to commuters and significantly enhance transportation facilities for the local population. She further remarked that the project will benefit students, farmers, traders and daily commuters by ensuring smoother and safer travel connectivity.

NHIDCL officials apprised the MLA about the progress of the work and assured that the project would be completed within the stipulated time frame while maintaining prescribed quality standards. Local residents expressed gratitude to the MLA for her proactive efforts and continuous commitment towards addressing public issues and accelerating developmental works across Kishwar constituency. The MLA Shagun Parihar while reaffirming her dedication towards inclusive and sustainable development, ment assured the people that several more developmental

Modern Conference Hall inaugurated at Jammu Railway Administrative Complex

JAMMU, MAY 21



In a significant step towards strengthening, modernizing and technologically upgrading the railway administrative system, a newly constructed state-of-the-art Main Conference Hall was inaugurated today at the Jammu Railway Administrative Complex. The modern facility was formally inaugurated in a traditional manner by the Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), Jammu, Shri Vivek Kumar, in the presence of senior railway officials, technical engineers, and administrative staff. The occasion marked an important milestone in enhancing administrative efficiency and digital connectivity within the railway network.

The newly developed Conference Hall has been designed in line with the evolving digital needs of railway operations. More than just a conventional meeting room, the facility has been established as an advanced communication and coordination hub aimed at making administrative decision-making

integrated with high-speed internet connectivity and secure network systems to ensure uninterrupted communication and swift transfer of large volumes of data. The facility enables direct real-time communication with the Ministry of Railways, Railway Board, and major railway divisions across the country. Comfortable and ergonomic seating has been provided to ensure better priority and convenience during long-duration meetings and review sessions. The hall has been fully soundproofed to allow confidential

discussions and strategic deliberations without external disturbances.

Addressing the gathering after the inauguration ceremony, Divisional Railway Manager, Jammu, Shri Vivek Kumar congratulated the entire team involved in the project and emphasized the importance of modern communication infrastructure in railway administration. He said that the present era demands rapid communication and quick decision-making, and the establishment of this modern Conference Hall would significantly strengthen both internal and external communication capabilities of the Jammu Railway Administrative Complex.

He further stated that the facility would greatly assist in conducting strategic meetings, safety reviews, and coordination during emergency and disaster management situations. The new infrastructure, he added, would not only save valuable time but also improve inter-departmental coordination and operational efficiency within the railway system.

Memorandum Submitted to Advisor to CM regarding issues in University of Jammu

JAMMU, MAY 21

Provincial Secretary of Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), Ankush Abrol, submitted a memorandum to the Hon'ble Advisor to the Chief Minister Government of Jammu & Kashmir, highlighting several serious issues concerning the University of Jammu and seeking urgent intervention in the interest of transparency, accountability, and academic welfare.

The memorandum demanded that the building of the Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE) at the University of Jammu be named after Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah (Sher-e-Kashmir) in recognition of his historic contributions to the region and the education sector.

Serious concerns were also raised regarding the interviews conducted on



October 4 and 5, 2024, for key administrative posts, including Registrar, Director (DIOA), and other positions. The memorandum called for a high-level and impartial inquiry into the appointments amid allegations of favoritism and lack of transparency.

Referring to the tragic suicide of an Associate Professor at the University, the memorandum urged the government to make the report of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) public in

which, according to the memorandum, has adversely affected academic standards and student interests.

Highlighting another important issue, the memorandum stated that Vice Chancellors appointed in various institutions across the Jammu Division are predominantly from outside the Union Territory.

It urged the government to give due consideration to eligible candidates belonging to Jammu & Kashmir in future appointments. The memorandum also pointed out that no admissions have been conducted for the M.P.Ed. and B.P.Ed. courses in the Directorate of Physical Education during the past two years. It sought necessary action against the concerned officials responsible for the lapse, stating that it has negatively impacted students and aspiring candidates.

Natrang to organise its much awaited Children Theatre Camp from First Week of June

KATHUA, MAY 21

Renowned cultural institution Natrang is all set to organise its much-awaited Children Theatre Camp from the first week of June, 2026, offering young participants a vibrant platform to explore creativity, confidence, and communication through the medium of theatre.

Joined by senior artists, Neeraj Kant and Sumeet Sharma, Padma Shri awardee and Director of Natrang, Balwant Thakur, said the camp has been specially designed as a unique and comprehensive theatre training programme for children. Beyond acting and stagecraft, the initiative aims to nurture multiple life skills that are essential for the holistic

development of young minds.

He informed that the camp will focus extensively on enhancing public speaking abilities, communication skills, personality development, storytelling techniques, creative expression, confidence building, team spirit, and leadership qualities. Through carefully curated activities, games, theatre exercises, and interactive sessions, children will get an opportunity to discover their hidden talents and overcome hesitation and stage fear in a joyful and encouraging environment.

According to Balwant Thakur, theatre is one of the most powerful tools for shaping the personality of children as it stimulates imag-

ination, emotional intelligence, discipline, and social awareness.

He emphasized that in today's highly competitive and technology-driven world, children require creative spaces where they can express themselves freely and develop the confidence to communicate effectively.

The Children Theatre Camp by Natrang has earned immense popularity over the years for its innovative approach and transformative impact on participants. Hundreds of children who attended previous editions of the camp have greatly benefited in academics, communication, and overall personality development. Many participants have also gone on to excel in cultur-

al and creative fields.

The camp will be conducted by experienced theatre professionals and trained resource persons associated with Natrang, ensuring a highly engaging and professionally enriching experience for the participants. Parents have always appreciated the camp for creating a positive, disciplined, and inspiring atmosphere for children during the summer break.

Interested parents and guardians are encouraged to register their children at the earliest as seats for the camp are expected to fill quickly due to overwhelming response every year. Detailed information regarding registration and schedule will be announced shortly by Natrang.

E-Rickshaw, E-Auto Union meets BJP leadership over fare, zoning issues in Jammu

JAMMU, MAY 21

A deputation of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi E-Rickshaw and E-Auto Union called on senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders at the party headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, and submitted a memorandum highlighting the grievances and demands of e-rickshaw and e-auto operators.

The deputation, led by Union President Gourdev Kapoor, met J&K BJP President and Rajya Sabha MP Sat Sharma in the presence of J&K BJP General Secretary Baldev Singh Billawaria, MLA Ch Vikram Randhawa, senior leader Vibodh Gupta, Office Secretary Tilak Gupta, SC Morch President Dharminder Kumar, Sanjeev Sharma, Satish Shastri, and other party leaders.

During the interaction, the Union members expressed serious concerns regarding the fare structure and operational policies imposed on e-rickshaws and e-auto operators in Jammu. They stated that there is a significant disparity between the operational costs of e-rickshaws and e-autos and the fare rates fixed by the Transport Department, making it



increasingly difficult for operators to sustain their livelihood.

The deputation informed the BJP leadership that the proposed zoning system for Jammu city, under which routes are reportedly being restricted to short distances of 2 to 4 kilometers, would adversely affect their earnings and daily operations. They also raised objections to the mandatory installation of electronic meters, stating that the fare rates notified by the department are not practical or economically viable.

The Union demanded that the fare structure be fixed on a per-passenger basis rather than on a per-kilometer basis.

They further termed the proposed zoning system as unjustified and sought its immediate withdrawal. The members also pointed out that while Prime Minister Narendra Modi has consistently promoted green and sustainable energy initiatives, the restrictions being imposed on e-rickshaw operators are negatively impacting those who have adopted eco-friendly means of transport for their livelihood.

Listening patiently to the deputation, Sat Sharma assured the Union members that the BJP would take up their concerns with the appropriate authorities and make every possible effort for an

early and just resolution of their issues.

Sat Sharma, addressing the deputation, said that the BJP is fully committed to safeguarding the interests of every section of society. He said that the concerns raised by the e-rickshaw and e-auto operators are genuine and deserve serious consideration. He said that the BJP will ensure that their issues are taken up at the appropriate level so that a practical and people-friendly solution can be worked out.

Sat Sharma further announced that a committee comprising Baldev Singh Billawaria and Ch Vikram Randhawa would be constituted to hold detailed discussions with the Union representatives and prepare a comprehensive report on the matter before taking it up with the concerned authorities.

Sat Sharma added that the BJP works on the principle of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He stressed that the BJP will not allow injustice to be done to any hardworking citizen, particularly those who are contributing towards environmental-friendly transportation and sustainable development.

CJP reflects youth anger against system: Sahni

JAMMU, MAY 21

Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) Jammu & Kashmir unit chief Manish Sahni has termed the so-called 'Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) movement, which has recently gained traction on social media across the country, as a reflection of rising frustration, unemployment, and deep disillusionment among the youth towards the system.

Sahni said that treating this movement merely as a joke, meme, or social media trend would be a serious mistake. According to him, it represents the pain, anger, and broken trust of millions of educated, unemployed youth in the country.

He stated that when young people, despite sitting in positions of power, continue to face unemployment, corruption, paper leaks, recruitment scams, and administrative apathy, their frustration naturally emerges through satire and new forms of protest.

Launching a sharp attack on the insensi-



ble attitude of those in power, Sahni said it is unfortunate and shameful that the youth of the country are being labelled with derogatory terms such as 'parasites' and 'cockroaches'.

'Youth are the backbone of this nation, the driving force of India's future — not insects to be insulted by those sitting in positions of power,' he remarked.

Sahni further said that from Jammu & Kashmir to Delhi, the future of lakhs of young aspirants remains uncertain. Repeated controversies surrounding competitive examinations like NEET, incidents of paper leaks, delays in

recruitment processes, and lack of transparency have pushed many young people towards mental stress, anxiety, and depression.

He added that when governments and institutions stop listening to the voices of the youth, such sharp symbols of resistance and protest inevitably emerge.

Sahni also expressed support for one of the demands raised by the CJP movement regarding the practice of appointing retired judges to Rajya Sabha seats or government posts, stating that the neutrality and credibility of democratic institutions must be protected at all costs.

He asserted that maintaining public faith in institutions is essential for the health of democracy and warned that ignoring the concerns of the youth would have serious consequences for the country's future.

Concluding his statement, Sahni said that Shiv Sena stands firmly with the youth of the nation and will not tolerate any insult to their dignity, aspirations, and future.

BJP Mahila Morcha holds organizational monthly meetings in Jammu and Samba Districts

JAMMU, MAY 21

J&K BJP President Mahila Morcha Adv. Neha Mahajan, accompanied by Er. Urvashi Gupta State General Secretary, today chaired the organizational monthly meeting of BJP Mahila Morcha District Samba, while Purna Nandan Vice President Mahila Morcha and Prabhari conducted the organizational monthly meeting of District Jammu Mahila Morcha.

The meeting at District Samba was organized under the leadership of District



President Indu Wazir and was attended by Sonia Thakur State Secretary Mahila Morcha, District Samba

Secretary Amit Dubey, along with senior Mahila Morcha office bearers and karyakartas. The District Jammu

organizational meeting was organized by District Jammu Mahila Morcha President Anuradha Sharma in the presence of General Secretaries Manu Ball and Ranju Sharma along with district and mandal-level activists.

During both meetings, detailed discussions were held regarding upcoming organizational programmes and party activities. The office bearers and karyakartas were guided to actively participate in all forthcoming campaigns and ensure their effective implementation at the grassroots level.

'Mann Ki Baat' inspires citizens to actively contribute towards nation-building, social transformation: Sat Sharma

JAMMU, MAY 21

J&K BJP President and Rajya Sabha MP Sat Sharma chaired a meeting of the party's All Cells at the BJP headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, to review organizational activities and strategize for the effective implementation of the upcoming 'Mann Ki Baat' programme across Jammu & Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by J&K BJP General Secretaries Sanjita Dogra and Baldev Singh Billawaria, MLA Vikram Randhawa, 'Mann Ki Baat' Incharge Vibodh Gupta. All Cells Incharge Ved Sharma, and All Cells Co-Incharge Munish Khajuria, who conducted the proceedings of the meeting.

Sat Sharma, while addressing the meeting, emphasized the importance of ensuring the participation of every booth-level worker in the forthcoming 'Mann Ki Baat' programme. He instructed all Cells Convenors and Co-Convenors to organize the programme at the booth level in every district and mandal, ensuring maximum outreach and public engagement.

Sat Sharma said that 'Mann Ki Baat'



has emerged as a powerful platform connecting the leadership with the common masses by highlighting issues of public welfare, social awareness, grassroots innovations, youth empowerment, women-led initiatives, environmental protection, and national development. He stated that the programme not only strengthens the organizational structure of the BJP at the grassroots level but also inspires citizens to actively contribute towards nation-building and social transformation.

Sanjita Dogra said that the BJP's organizational strength lies in its disciplined cadre and consistent grassroots outreach. She emphasized that all party cells must work in coordination to ensure that the message of 'Mann Ki Baat' reaches every house-

hold and inspires greater public participation in social and developmental initiatives. Baldev Singh Billawaria stated that 'Mann Ki Baat' has played a significant role in creating awareness among citizens regarding various welfare schemes, social responsibilities, and national priorities. He said that BJP workers should use the programme to strengthen their connect with the people.

Vikram Randhawa stressed that BJP workers must take the message of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to every section of society and use the programme as a medium to strengthen public participation and awareness regarding developmental and welfare initiatives.

Vibodh Gupta elaborated on the minute organizational details related to the success-

ful conduct of the programme and asked the Cell representatives to ensure proper coordination at district, mandal, and booth levels for efficient and impactful execution of the event.

Ved Sharma reviewed the monthly organizational programmes undertaken by various cells and discussed the action plan and upcoming activities scheduled for the next month. He called upon all cells to work in coordination and maintain regular public outreach programmes to further strengthen the party at the grassroots.

Among the prominent participants in the meeting were Pawan Singh, Bharat Shushan, Deepak Kapahi, Amit Manhas, P.C. Sharma, Puneet Mahajan, L. Narinder Singh, L. Snarna, Ajay Gupta.

Strategic global partnerships under PM Modi securing India's future growth and global leadership: Dr. Pardeep

JAMMU, MAY 21

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent five-nation diplomatic tour marks a decisive step towards securing long-term economic strength, technological advancement, energy security, and strategic global influence, stated Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, Media Incharge, J&K BJP. Dr. Pardeep Mahotra said that in today's rapidly changing world order, global leadership is no longer determined only by military power or geography, but by control over technology, investments, innovation, energy partnerships, and strategic cooperation. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is posi-

tioning itself at the center of this transformation with confidence and clarity. Dr. Pardeep said that during the visits to the UAE, Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway and Italy, India entered into 57 important agreements and understandings covering sectors such as semiconductor, green energy, infrastructure, telecom resilience, defense cooperation, clean energy, investments, and energy security. Dr. Pardeep Mahotra said that these partnerships are not symbolic diplomatic engagements, but concrete steps aimed at strengthening India's economy, boosting employment opportunities, accelerating industrial growth, and securing the nation's future interests. Dr.

Pardeep elaborated that the UAE's commitment of nearly \$5 billion in infrastructure investments and strategic oil reserve cooperation will strengthen India's energy security and economic resilience. Sweden's collaboration in 6G technology, telecom resilience, and quantum innovation reflects India's growing technological leadership and future-readiness. Dr. Pardeep further said that the semiconductor partnership involving ASML and Tata Group in the Netherlands represents a transformational move towards making India a major semiconductor manufacturing hub, while Norway's proposed \$100 billion investment framework and Green Strategic

JKPCC Pays tributes to Shri Rajiv Gandhi on his death anniversary

JAMMU, MAY 21

To commemorate the 35th anniversary of the martyrdom of Former Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi, the Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee organized a "Shradhanjali Samaroh" at Rajiv Bhawan PCC HQ Shahidi Chowk Jammu today, which was Presided over by PCC Chief Shri Tariq Hameed Karra while AICC General Secretary and CLP Leader G.A. Mir, Working President Raman Bahalla, Former Ministers Mula Ram, Yogesh Sawhney, besides other senior leaders also attended.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Tariq Hameed Karra recalled the contributions of Rajiv Gandhi as

Prime Minister on various fronts especially in the field of science and technology and Panchayat Raj system to the country, which are his biggest gifts to the nation. He lowered voting age from 21 years to 18 years to politically empower the youth.

He introduced the Computer and IT in the country as a result India is the leader in the World in the field of IT & Computer because of the timely lead taken by Rajiv Gandhi and it provided the biggest source of employment to the youth in the country and abroad.

Karra said that Rajiv Gandhi gave the Panchayat Raj system to the Country whereby women got 33% reservation besides SCs & STs at each tier of



Panchayat Raj regime in the country. He said that it transformed and percolated down the democracy to the grass root level.

He said Rajiv Gandhi was a visionary leader who had vision for the youth of the Country and prepared them for the challenges and opportunities of 21st Century. He is known for

Rajiv Gandhi, P.V. Narsimha Rao and Dr. Manmohan Singh, who took the country to the newer heights of progress and all round development.

He asked the party cadres to work for the peace and harmony and strengthening of Congress party to fight the communal and divisive forces and defeat politics of hate. He said congress is only national alternative to BJP as regional parties face threat from the ruling party, as witnessed in different parts of the country, Congress can be defeated but can't be finished, he asserted.

AICC General Secretary & CLP Leader Shri G.A. Mir in his address paid rich tributes to the former Prime Minister Shri Rajiv

Gandhi and recalled his great contributions to the nation during his short time.

Mir said that Rajiv Ji gave the direction to the India of 21st Century and the youth of the country could face the challenges due to the orientation and opportunities offered by the visionary leadership of Rajiv Gandhi Ji. Revolution in the field of telephones, computer & IT are all the gifts of Rajiv's vision, he added.

He said that the democracy at grass root level and to the door step of people was introduced by Rajiv Gandhi by 73rd & 74th amendment of the Constitution. The PR system got constitutional status in the country with reg-

ular elections and 33% representation to women and SC/STs at each levels.

He recalled the contributions of Congress in the building of the nation and criticized those distorting facts and misleading the people being ignorant of Congress history.

Mir asked the party leaders that it is time to pay back to the party and strengthen it, which is need of the nation. He said that party leaders should rise above their self interests and work for the strengthening of the party.

Working President Raman Bahalla paid rich tributes to Rajiv Gandhi on the occasion. He recalled the visionary leadership of Shri Rajiv Gandhi who was the youngest Prime Minister.



North in News

EDITORIAL

A dedicated Jammu tourism board with professional approach is needed

Along with Kashmir's tourism the government should also prioritise Jammu's tourism. Because a balanced, integrated approach to the Union Territory's visitor economy will unlock the full potential of the region, reduce seasonal and geographic concentration of risk, create year-round employment for youth, and project the composite cultural identity of Jammu and Kashmir to the world. While the Valley's Dal Lake, Gulmarg, and Pahalgam have rightly been the face of tourism for decades, Jammu division with its wealth of pilgrimage circuits, heritage towns, adventure corridors, and biodiversity hotspots has remained under-leveraged despite receiving over 1.2 crore pilgrims to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi every year, and that footfall, if converted into extended stays and diversified itineraries, can generate as much revenue and employment as Kashmir's summer and winter peaks, and the logic for prioritising Jammu is both economic and strategic. Because the region's tourism is currently pilgrimage-dependent and single-day, with 70 percent of yatis returning to Katra or Jammu the same night, spending limited money on local handicrafts, homestays, or experiences, and if even 20 percent of these pilgrims can be motivated to stay two additional nights and explore Bhaderwah, Patnitop, Sanasar, Mansar, Surinsar, Mantalai or the border tourism circuit at Suchetgarh, the direct injection into hotels, transport, guides, and retail would exceed ₹3,000 crore annually. That is before counting the multiplier on food, fuel, and services, and the infrastructure to enable this shift is already being laid because the completion of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link, the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway, the Jammu Ring Road, and the expansion of Jammu Airport to handle night operations and wide-body aircraft have cut travel time from Delhi to Katra to 6 hours by road and 7 hours by Vande Bharat, making Jammu the most accessible part of the UT. The government's decision to run Bharat Gaurav trains and heritage circuits can be extended to a "Shakti Peeth Circuit" linking Vaishno Devi, Chandi Mata Machail, Sukrala Mata, and Bawe Wali Mata, and a "Heritage and Nature Circuit" connecting Mubarak Mandi, Amar Mahal, Bahu Fort, Raghunath Temple, Mansar Lake, and the Doda-Kishtwar high-altitude meadows, and these circuits also need targeted branding because Kashmir has been marketed as "Paradise on Earth" while Jammu is still pitched only as a transit point. A dedicated Jammu Tourism Board with professional marketing, digital campaigns, and influencer tie-ups can reposition the region as "The Land of Temples, Treks, and Tranquility" with distinct hashtags and seasonal festivals.

RAJNI SHARMA, EDITOR

IDY 2026: Nudging the World Towards Mindful Consumption



PRATAPRAO JADHAV

As the world observes the International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2026, humanity stands at a defining civilizational moment. We are living in an age of remarkable technological and material advancement, yet we are simultaneously confronted with rising lifestyle disorders, mounting mental stress, ecological degradation, and unsustainable patterns of living. At the heart of many of these crises lies a common challenge - unchecked and mindless consumption. From excessive exploitation of natural resources to over-dependence on digital stimulation and unsustainable lifestyles, modern societies are increasingly drifting away from balance. It is in this context that Yoga emerges not merely as an ancient wellness practice, but as a timeless framework for responsible living. Yoga offers humanity a powerful pathway towards self-regulation, moderation, and conscious choices. It teaches us how to restore harmony - within ourselves and with the world around us. The Call for Mindful Consumption In addressing the global challenge of overconsumption, the

visionary leadership of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has provided a compelling direction through Mission LIFE - Lifestyle for Environment. At COP26, the Prime Minister articulated a principle that resonates deeply with the philosophy of Yoga: "What is needed today is mindful and deliberate utilisation, instead of mindless and destructive consumption." More recently, amid global economic uncertainties and supply-chain disruptions, the Prime Minister expanded this appeal into an everyday civic responsibility. He encouraged citizens to consciously moderate avoidable consumption - from conserving fuel and reducing unnecessary energy use to reconsidering non-essential expenditures. This appeal is not rooted in scarcity; rather, it is a strategic and ethical call for collective resilience, sustainability, and national responsibility. As he reminded us, "Every small and big effort matters; just as every drop fills a pot." These ideas are deeply aligned with the foundational principles of Yoga. Yogic philosophy speaks of Aparigraha - restraint from unnecessary accumulation - and Santosha - contentment with what one truly needs. Together, these principles cultivate a mindset that moves individuals away from compulsive consumption and towards conscious living. Yoga transforms us from passive consumers into responsible custodians of the planet. Yoga as a Tool for Ecological Harmony The planet possesses enough resources to meet human needs, but not enough to satisfy limitless greed. Yoga helps restore this awareness by deepening our sense of interconnectedness with nature. The air we

breathe, the food we consume, and the stability we seek are all part of a shared ecological system. The practice of Yoga gradually reshapes behaviour from within. It calms mental restlessness, reduces impulsivity, and strengthens self-discipline. In a world driven by instant gratification and excessive consumerism, Yoga creates the inner clarity needed to distinguish between genuine need and endless desire. As the Minister associated with both Health & Family Welfare and Ayush, I witness every day how Yoga serves as a preventive public health tool against non-communicable diseases (NCDs). By encouraging physical activity, mental balance, and disciplined living, Yoga reduces dependence on unhealthy habits and excessive medical interventions. A yogic lifestyle naturally encourages simplicity, moderation, balanced nutrition, reduced waste, and mindful use of resources - precisely the behavioural changes required for environmental sustainability. Thus, Yoga is not only a pathway to individual wellness; it is also a practical framework for ecological responsibility. India's Global Wellness Leadership Today Yoga has evolved into one of India's most influential contributions to the world - a powerful expression of wellness, harmony, and collective well-being. What began as an ancient civilizational practice has today become a global movement that transcends geography, politics, language, and culture. Every year, millions across continents participate in Yoga celebrations, not merely performing asanas, but embracing a shared aspiration for healthi-

er, more balanced, and sustainable lives. Yoga has emerged as a universal language of preventive healthcare, mental well-being, and mindful living. Through Yoga, India has offered the world a non-coercive and inclusive framework for holistic health - one that addresses modern anxieties with timeless wisdom. This is the deeper significance of IDY 2026. Because Yoga touches millions of lives globally, it also provides an unparalleled platform to inspire behavioural transformation at scale. Messages of sustainability, moderation, and conscious living can travel farther and resonate deeper through the collective spirit of Yoga. A Collective Resolution for IDY 2026 True well-being cannot exist in isolation. Human health, community well-being, and planetary health are deeply interconnected. The challenges of climate change, lifestyle diseases, and environmental degradation demand not only policy interventions, but also behavioural transformation. On this International Day of Yoga, let our commitment extend beyond the yoga mat. Let us embrace Yoga not only as a daily practice, but as a way of life - one that encourages mindful consumption, inner discipline, and ecological responsibility. Let us answer the Prime Minister's call for conscious living and build a future where progress is measured not merely by what we consume, but by how responsibly we live. By transforming our inner climate, we can together heal the outer climate of our planet. (The author is Union Minister of State (IC, Ministry of Ayush, and Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare.)

Problems exacerbated

BY S S SAXENA

The recent Gulf War has unsettled global energy markets, disrupted shipping routes, and shaken investor confidence. For India, heavily dependent on Gulf energy imports and remittances from millions of Indian workers in the region, the shockwaves are immediate: rising fuel costs, a weakening rupee, volatile stock markets, and widening trade deficits. These pressures expose the fragility of our economy and magnify risks already looming from within - slowing growth, layoffs in industry, and an energy shortage that was long anticipated but insufficiently addressed. The Sensex has swung wildly in recent weeks, reflecting nervous capital markets. In the last week of April, it fell by over 750 points, part of a broader 7 per cent decline this fiscal year. The rupee, meanwhile, has slipped to little more than Rs 95 against the dollar, its weakest level in months. This decline is not merely a number on a currency chart; it reflects deeper vulnerabilities - dependence on imports, capital outflows, and the absence of strong export competitiveness. India's trade deficit has widened to \$119 billion, with a record \$12 billion imbalance with China alone. These figures underline how external shocks like the Gulf War quickly translate into domestic strain. Yet the most worrying consequence lies in the social sphere. India's demographic dividend - the promise of a young workforce powering growth - risks turning into a demographic disaster. Youth unemployment is rising sharply: nearly 40 per cent of graduates under 25 remain jobless, and urban female youth unemployment has touched 26 per cent. Uttar

Pradesh, India's most populous state, illustrates the crisis vividly. Young men and women spend their days drifting aimlessly, not for lack of ambition but for lack of opportunity. Degrees are plentiful, but employable skills are scarce. The education pipeline is riddled with flaws. Mushrooming coaching centres, fake institutions, and staggering capitation fees in medical and engineering colleges have eroded quality. Policies have not kept pace with global skill demands. Graduates emerge with certificates but not competencies, widening the gap between job seekers and available jobs. India adds five million graduates annually, but only 2.8 million graduate-level jobs are created. The mismatch is glaring, and the frustration it breeds is dangerous. The Gulf War shockwaves have made this mismatch more visible. Rising energy costs squeeze industries, leading to layoffs. Volatile markets deter investment, limiting job creation. A weak rupee makes imports costlier, straining households and businesses alike. In this environment, idle youth become not just an economic statistic but a social challenge. Civic indiscipline, migration pressures, and unrest are natural spillovers when aspirations collide with stagnation. The system itself reveals the deeper fault lines. Infrastructure has not kept pace with the demands of climate stress and economic volatility. Priorities in governance have often been misplaced, focusing on short term optics rather than long term resilience. An unresponsive bureaucracy, more eager to oblige than to innovate, has compounded the problem. Education policy remains fragmented, allowing mushrooming coaching centres, fake institutions, and staggering capitation

fees to flourish unchecked. These are not isolated lapses but structural weaknesses that have left India exposed. The Gulf War has not created the crisis; it has merely magnified vulnerabilities already embedded in our governance and institutions. Consider the contrast with China. Despite its dependence on imported oil, China has devised effective routes and tailored foreign policy to secure supplies. In most other sectors, it is nearly self-sufficient - from steel and electronics to chemicals and consumer goods. By empowering smaller industrial bases and investing in manufacturing quality and competitiveness, China has offset global shocks and built resilience. South Korea, too, turned its demographic dividend into a growth engine by aligning education with industry needs, creating vocational pipelines, and investing in technology. India has shown that self-sufficiency is possible - the Green Revolution made us food secure, and the White Revolution made us the world's largest milk producer. These successes prove that with foresight and policy alignment, India can achieve resilience. Yet in manufacturing and energy, we are yet to replicate this model. Smaller industrial bases were not empowered to produce quality, competitive goods. Instead, we remained dependent on imports, widening our trade deficit and weakening the rupee. The Gulf War has exposed this weakness brutally, reminding us that resilience cannot be built overnight. The cotton and textile industry offers another telling example of missed opportunities. India has long been one of the world's largest producers of cotton, yet countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam have captured greater access to global markets. Their advantage lies not in raw mate-

rial but in cost efficiency, quality control, and disciplined labour practices. Bangladesh's garment exports crossed \$45 billion in 2025, while India's stagnated despite having a larger cotton base. Vietnam, with far fewer resources, has built a reputation for consistent standards and competitive pricing. The Gulf War has made global markets more volatile, but this should have been the moment for India to showcase perfection in its products. Instead, failing standards, poor finish, and higher costs have eroded competitiveness. The lesson is clear: without seriousness in training and inculcating discipline - so woefully lacking among our youth - India cannot offset global shocks. Every weakness in quality and skill is magnified by the turbulence unleashed by the Gulf crisis. The consequences are already visible. In Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Rajasthan, youth unemployment fuels migration to metros, where overcrowding and informal work deepen fragility. In urban centres, graduates with degrees in engineering or medicine struggle to find jobs that match their training, while industries complain of skill shortages. This paradox - educated youth without jobs, and industries without skilled workers - is the hallmark of a system that has failed to connect education with employment. The wastage of India's women is another silent crisis. Female literacy has risen, yet female labour force participation remains stuck at around 23 per cent, among the lowest in Asia. Millions of educated women remain outside the workforce, constrained by social barriers, safety concerns, and inadequate childcare. This is not just a loss of individual potential but a weakening of national resilience.

Rajeev Charak and Arti Jasrotia listened to the grievances of people at BJP Headquarter

JAMMU, MAY 21 : At the Party headquarters of Bharatiya Janata Party in Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, BJP leaders continued their daily public grievance redressal programme. Today BJP State Vice President Rajeev Rajput Charak and State Secretary Arti Jasrotia were present to listen to the issues of the people. During the interaction, people from various areas projected their grievances before the BJP leaders, many of which were resolved on the spot through immediate communication with the concerned departments and officials. Rama and Aarti raised the issue related to the free e-bus service for women and informed that on Kathua Road and in several other parts of Jammu, bus drivers often do not stop the buses for



female passengers, causing great inconvenience to women commuters. Taking serious note of the matter, BJP State Vice President Rajeev Rajput Charak wrote to the Transport Commissioner of Transport Department Jammu and Kashmir seeking necessary directions and early resolution of the issue. Meanwhile, Ganesh Dutt Sharma, a resident of Vikram Chowk, Jammu,

lodged a complaint against the officials of Jammu Municipal Corporation alleging adoption of a "pick and choose" policy in anti-encroachment drives. He stated that despite similar encroachments by all shopkeepers in the market, action was being taken only against selected individuals. BJP leaders spoke to Joint Commissioner Kulbhushan Khajuria over the phone and urged a fair

inquiry into the matter along with appropriate action. Buddha Singh highlighted the persistent water scarcity problem in Jallochak area and sought immediate intervention from the concerned department. Similarly, Satpal Sharma brought to light that after his migration from Ramban due to terrorism, certain local persons had allegedly encroached upon his vacant land. BJP leaders assured that the matter would be taken up with the concerned authorities for proper investigation and necessary action. The BJP leaders stated that the party remains committed to public welfare and continues to act as a bridge between the administration and the common people for timely redressal of grievances.

CEO Doda felicitates meritorious students at GHSS Kilhotran, reviews academic activities

DODA, MAY 21: Chief Education Officer Doda Bhushan Kumar Pathak today visited Capt. Sanjay Arya Memorial Higher Secondary School Kilhotran, where he attended a felicitation programme organised to honour JKBOSE Exam toppers (Academic Session 2025). The CEO inspected the overall functioning of the institution, reviewing academic performance, infrastructure, classroom teaching



and other educational standards in a far-flung area. The programme began with a welcome address by the School Principal Dr. Bhushan Kumar Sharma. He high-

lighted the achievements of students and the dedication of the teaching staff. The CEO felicitated meritorious students with mementos and congratulated them on their success in JKBOSE examinations. He encouraged them to pursue their goals with dedication and discipline. Addressing the gathering, the CEO lauded the commitment of the staff and acknowledged the support of the local community in strengthening the education system.

Regional Ayurveda Research Institute, Jammu, Holds Free Medical Camp and Health Awareness Drive in Loran Valley

JAMMU, MAY 21 - The Regional Ayurveda Research Institute, Jammu, organized its first Free Medical Camp of the financial year under the Tribal Health Care Research Programme-Tribal Sub Plan (THCRP-TSP) at Sultan Pathri village, Block Mandi, Loran Valley, District Poonch.

Under the guidance of Dr. Harbans Singh, Research Officer In-charge and Principal Investigator of the THCRP project, the camp provided free medical consultations, medicines, and health education to a large number of local tribal residents. Dr. Mohd. Moein, Senior Research Fellow (THCRP), deliv-



ered an awareness lecture on the "TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyan - 100 Day Campaign," highlighting early recognition of tuberculosis symptoms, the importance of prompt diagnosis and treatment adherence, nutritional support, and community engagement in the effort to eliminate TB. Attendees were also sensitized to common lifestyle disorders, their prevention, and the benefits of healthy dietary and lifestyle practices. To reinforce public health messaging, the team distributed Information, and

Communication (IEC) materials covering preventive healthcare, sanitation, nutrition, and healthy living. The camp was carried out by the THCRP team of the Regional Ayurveda Research Institute, Jammu, with active participation from institute staff and local supporters. Residents welcomed the initiative, praising the outreach and awareness activities. The camp marks an important step towards improving healthcare access and health literacy among tribal communities in the remote areas of Poonch district.

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1 CLASS BILLAWAR

Kartor Singh s/o Hukam chand R/o malni pelli. A/p Dier Tehsil Billawar

BDO Billawar

IN THE MATTER OF: An application for registration of date of certificate/death certificate u/s 13 (3) Registration of Birth and Death Act, 1969.

NOTICE TO GENERAL PUBLIC

Whereas the above titled applicant has filed this application for seeking direction to non-applicant for registration of birth/death particulars of applicant's Brother namely shamsher Singh S/o sh. Hukom chand s.m. Murood. Dev. who died 6.08.2017 at Aher who was on. Whereas through the medium of this publication, the public at large is that in case anyone having any objection in issuance of direction with respect to registration of birth/death particulars of applicant's Brother mentioned above to the non-applicant, then he/she shall file the same before the court in person or through counsel or any recognized agent and contest the claim within 07 days from the date of this publication, failing which appropriate orders shall be passed in this publication. If the date fixed turns to be a holiday, then the matter shall be taken up on the next following working day.

Issued today on 20-5-26 under my signature and seal of this court.

Se TEHSU DAR
Ex-Class Billawar Billawar

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, SEHRISH BASHIR, W/O ASAF NAWAZ, R/o Gandhri, District Ramban, hereby inform the general public that due to a clerical error in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 4340 6980 5430, my name has been wrongly mentioned as "SARISH BANOO" instead of "SEHRISH BASHIR" and my date of birth has been wrongly recorded as 01-01-2007 instead of 01-01-2006. Hence, both names refer to one and the same person. For all official and legal purposes, my correct name and date of birth shall be read as SEHRISH BASHIR and 01-01-2006. If anybody has any objection regarding this notice, the same may be conveyed within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice.

NOTICE

I, Mudassar Hussain Bukhari, S/o Ashiq Hussain, R/o Village Dhalwax, Tehsil & District Ramban, UT of J&K, hereby notify for the information of the general public that my name and my father's name have wrongly been recorded in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 8488 3515 8582 as Mudassar Shah S/o Ashiq Hussain Shah instead of my correct name Mudassar Hussain Bukhari S/o Ashiq Hussain. Henceforth, I shall be known and identified by my correct name Mudassar Hussain Bukhari S/o Ashiq Hussain for all official and legal purposes. If anybody has any objection regarding the above correction/change, the same may be conveyed to the concerned authority within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice.

NOTICE

I Leena kotwal W/o D/o Harish kotwal R/o H.no 114/2 Shiv Nagar Talab Tillo Jammu have lost my original Number plates of my vehicle bearing No JK02AC 9672. Now I am applying for the duplicate of the same objection if any may be conveyed to the RTO Jammu within seven days from the date of publication of this notice

NOTICE

I, Arekh Kumari W/O Pintu Raja R/O Brehvi Solki Age: 30 Years Tehsil: Kalakote District: Rajouri (UT of J&K) That my Son correct name Shivang Rajput And wrongly been mentioned in his Aadhar Card No. 307843129410 I.e. Shivang. That my Son correct name Shivang Rajput mentioned in his Aadhar Card instead of only Shivang. That Shivang Rajput and Shivang is One and the same person. Objection if any may be conveyed to the concerned authority within seven days from the date of publication of this notice

NOTICE

I, Usha Devi W/O Daleep Singh, R/O Dharam, Post Office I Gulab Dei w/o Kalu Ram R/o Hiller Tehsil Rajgarh District Ramban have applied for correction of my name which has been wrongly written as Barfu Devi instead of correct name Gulab Dei in my Aadhar card objection if any may be conveyed to the concerned authority within seven days from the date of publication of this notice.

NOTICE

I, Usha Devi W/O Daleep Singh, R/O Dharam, Post Office I Gulab Dei w/o Kalu Ram R/o Hiller Tehsil Rajgarh District Ramban, UT of J&K, hereby notify for the information of the general public that due to clerical/typographical error, the name and Date of Birth of my son in his Aadhaar Card bearing No. 8080 6134 8794 have been wrongly recorded as "AKSHIT SINGH" and "06/05/2018" instead of his correct name and Date of Birth as "AKSHIT RAJPUT" and "06/04/2018" respectively. Further, my daughter bearing Aadhaar Card Number 9466 4292 4226 has also been wrongly recorded as "AKSHITA RAJPUT". Henceforth, my children shall be known and identified by their correct particulars as under: AKSHIT RAJPUT (Son) - DOB: 06/04/2018 AKSHITA RAJPUT (Daughter) - for all official and legal purposes. If anybody has any objection regarding the above correction/change, the same may be conveyed to the concerned authority within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice.

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) DIVISION KATRA
SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER
e-NIT No. 05 of 2026-27 Dated 20-05-2026
(Two Cover System)

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In two cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (In Lacs)	Cost of doc. (In Rs.)	Earnest Money (In Rs.)	Time of Compl.	Class of Contractor	Head of account
1	Minor repair works of NMDC Building for use during Amarnath Ji Yatra at Panthal.	3.50	600	7000	As per Yatra Schedule	D Class	SANJY-2026 under Revox

Position of AAAA:- Under process
Position of T.S:- Under process

Note: The Treasury Challans and CDRs are only accepted which can be made within date of publishing of tender and date of closing of tender. Treasury challans and CDRs which are not made within said period shall be treated as non responsive and the bid shall be rejected.

The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website <http://jktenders.gov.in> as per below schedule:-

1	Date of Publishing of Tender Notice	20-05-2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 20-05-2026 to 01-06-2026, 1700 Hrs
3	Bid submission Start Date	20-05-2026
4	Clarification start date	21-05-2026
5	Clarification end date	25-05-2026 up to 1600 Hrs
6	Pre-bid meeting date	26-05-2026 at 1200 Hrs
7	Bid Submission End Date	01-06-2026 up to 1700 Hrs
8	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids	02-06-2026 on or after 1200 Hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division, Katra
9	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed. (Online)

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of e-challan through Treasury indicating Treasury Voucher No. & date, e-NIT No. and name of work duly crediting to 0059 (Revenue) favouring Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division, Katra, uploading a copy of treasury challan and EM/ Bid Security in the shape of CDR/DR (The date of Treasury Challan/ Bid Security/ Affidavit between date of start of bid submission and bid submission end date) duly pledged to Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division, Katra, as mentioned in the bid documents.
- The date and time of opening of bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address.
- The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division, Katra.
- The earnest money of the unsuccessful bidder shall be released only after submission of Treasury Challan.
- The electronic bidding system would not allow any late submission of bids after the date and time as per server time. Bidders may modify their bids by uploading their request for modification before the deadline for submission of bids. For this, the bidder need not make any additional payment towards the cost of tender document. For bid modification and consequential re-submission, the bidder is not required to withdraw his bid submitted earlier. The last modified bid submitted by the bidder within the bid submission time shall be considered as the bid. For this purpose, modification/withdrawal by other means will not be accepted. In online system of bid submission, the modification and consequential-submission of bids is allowed any number of times. The bidders may withdraw his bid by uploading their request before the deadline for submission of bids; however, if the bid is withdrawn, the re-submission of the bid is not allowed. No bid shall be modified or withdrawn after the deadline of submission of bids.
- The date and time of opening of Financial-Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Financial-bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division, Katra. The date for same shall be intimated separately.
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids.
- The bidder shall be disqualified from bidding for any contract with this office for a period of 03 Years from the date of notification, if:-
 - Any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
 - Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within specified time period after issue of letter of acceptance.
 - In case contractor fails to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.
- Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.**
- Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.
- To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get "Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)" as per Information Technology Act-2008. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.
- The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned above.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents mentioned in NIT and SID with technical bid online.

No:- 952-57
Dated:- 20-05-2026

sd/
(Er. Neera Gupta)
Executive Engineer
PWD (R&B) Division
Katra

DIP/J-2420/26

Concerns grow over Varun's injury management during IPL season

New Delhi, May 21: A couple of days after BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia does not interfere much in injury management during the IPL, Kolkata Knight Riders assistant coach Shane Watson on Wednesday revealed that Varun Chakravarthy, a centrally-contracted India player, has been playing with a hair-line fracture in his left foot while helping KKR stay alive in the IPL 2026 play-off race. Speaking after KKR's win over Mumbai Indians at the Eden Gardens, Watson said Varun has been managing pain while continuing to bowl crucial overs for the team. Earlier this week, Saikia had said that while the BCCI and Centre of Excellence physio continue monitoring centrally contracted players during the IPL, franchises are pri-



marily responsible for handling player injuries and workload during the tournament. "So far as IPL is concerned, franchises take care of the injuries and fitness of the players. Of course physios from COE (Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru) are also monitoring them, workload as well as plan on how to keep them fit," Saikia said. "The monitoring is there but when IPL is going on, we cannot interfere too

much, had it been Indian team situation, our control would have been more," he added. "Now we are giving freedom to franchises to take call on the players. We will definitely look at their fitness level when it comes to selecting the national team," Saikia further said. On Wednesday, a desperate KKR once again fielded Varun despite carrying the injury. The spinner returned figures of 0/28 in four economical overs.

Watson admitted that the player was "playing through a bit of pain" while praising his performance in the match. "Well, I'm not exactly sure of where he is on his rehab journey at the moment. All I do know is he's obviously playing through a bit of pain at the moment, which just shows how brave he is, how much he wants to be here to be able to contribute for KKR, and he's still bowling beautifully," Watson said after the match. The mystery spinner has been one of KKR's most consistent performers this season alongside Sunil Narine, especially after a difficult start to the campaign. "It's been brilliant to be able to see [Varun's] turnaround from the first few games of the season, to then the impact he's been

able to consistently have every single game," Watson said. "And we are so lucky to be able to have someone of Varun's skill and also his desperation to be able to be here, and to play for KKR, because with the pain that he's managing, he could have easily just said, 'look, I don't want to be a part of this, I'm just going to go and rest it.'" "So we're very fortunate that he's all in, and he's done a brilliant job again tonight." The match also saw an unfortunate collision between Varun and young batter Angkrish Raghuvanshi while attempting a catch during Mumbai's innings. Raghuvanshi collided with Varun while running in from behind the stumps and later walked off the field after feeling discom-

Veteran Pandey Adding Value To Kolkata's IPL Campaign, Says Watson

New Delhi, May 21: Manish Pandey helped Kolkata Knight Riders to a four-wicket win over Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League on Wednesday, with assistant coach Shane Watson saying the performance underlined the 36-year-old's value to the side. Chasing 147, Kolkata found themselves in a difficult spot at 54-3 before Pandey's knock of 45 from 33 balls brought some much-needed stability and set up a victory which kept his side's playoff hopes alive. "This is the best I've seen him bat over the last few years," Watson told reporters. "He adds so much value. He's obviously a super experienced guy. He's an amazing fielder. He adds so much energy to our group, whether it's off the field, on the field, around the group. Those types of people, you give anything to be able to have



them in your squad, let alone then out in the middle when we're chasing a challenging total on that pitch." Pandey is one of just three players, along with Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, to have played in every season of the IPL since it began in 2008. "I'm not sure how he's doing it," the former Australia all-rounder added. "I know when I was at his age, I certainly was moving nothing like he's moving in the field. He's still incredibly fit. It

seems the way he's looking after himself, his preparation coming into this tournament as well, shows that he's still got a number of years of really good cricket in front of him." Kolkata, who are sixth in the standings, play Delhi Capitals in their final league-stage game on Sunday. The three-times IPL champions have an outside shot of qualifying for the play-offs, but need to beat Delhi and have other results go in their favour.

India Proposes Tough Anti-Doping Law Amendments To Crack Down On Traffickers, Syndicates And Illegal Suppliers



New Delhi, May 21: The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has placed proposed amendments to anti-doping laws in the public domain for stakeholder consultation, seeking to criminalise organised doping-related activities while protecting athletes from criminal prosecution for routine anti-doping rule violations. The proposed framework is aimed at tackling the

growing network involved in trafficking, illegal supply, administration and commercial distribution of prohibited performance-enhancing substances and methods in sports. The Ministry said the proposed amendments seek to criminalise activities such as trafficking and unauthorised sale of banned substances, administration of prohibited substances to athletes for doping purposes,

supply of such substances to minors, organised crime linked to doping, commercial distribution networks, misleading advertisements and paid promotions encouraging doping practices. The proposed provisions are primarily targeted at traffickers, illegal suppliers, organised syndicates and support personnel allegedly involved in facilitating doping networks in sports. The Ministry clarified that athletes themselves would not face criminal prosecution merely for anti-doping rule violations or positive dope tests, unless they are found directly involved in criminal offences such as trafficking or organised illegal activities.

Top spot on the line as RCB face dangerous SRH

New Delhi, May 21: Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Sunrisers Hyderabad will head into Friday's clash at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad with plenty still at stake despite both teams already securing their IPL 2026 playoff spots. With the race for a top-two finish going down to the final round of league matches, both sides know a win here could significantly improve their path to the final. Defending champions RCB currently sit at the top of the table with 18 points and the best net run rate in the competition at 1.065. A victory against SRH would guarantee them a first-place finish and secure two chances to reach the IPL final through Qualifier 1. Gujarat Titans and Sunrisers are still mathematically in the race for the top two, but RCB remain in the strongest position heading into the final weekend. Sunrisers Hyderabad, meanwhile, are third



on the table with 16 points from 13 games. They are level on points with Gujarat Titans but trail slightly on net run rate. For SRH, the equation is simple — beat RCB convincingly and hope Chennai Super Kings defeat Gujarat Titans. If those results go their way, Pat Cummins' side could still sneak into the top two. RCB have once again looked like

one of the most balanced teams in the tournament. Under Rajat Patidar's leadership, they have combined aggressive batting with disciplined bowling and have found consistency in the right time of the season. Virat Kohli has once again been the backbone of their batting line-up. The former India captain has scored 542 runs in 13 matches and continues to anchor

the innings while maintaining a healthy strike rate. Devdutt Padikkal has also played several important knocks at the top, giving RCB solid starts throughout the campaign. Their bowling attack has been equally impressive. Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Josh Hazlewood have formed one of the most reliable pace combinations this season, regularly striking with the new ball and controlling games at the death. Krunal Pandya's all-round contributions have added balance to the side, while Suyash Sharma and Romania Shepherd have chipped in with important performances. Heading into Friday's contest, RCB will start as slight favourites, especially considering the form they have shown over the past few weeks. But Sunrisers Hyderabad remain one of the most dangerous bowling sides in the tournament when their top order clicks.

Who Are Among The Women's Contenders To Look Out For At The French Open?

New Delhi, May 21: The following are some of the contenders for the women's singles title at the French Open, which begins on Sunday: Two-time French Open quarter-finalist Rybakina started 2026 on a high note as she won her second Grand Slam at the Australian Open, her first since Wimbledon 2022. Rybakina, who could not go past the fourth round of any major last year, turned things around at the WTA Finals in November where she beat world number one Aryna Sabalenka in the final. The 26-year-old started her clay season successfully defending her Stuttgart Open title last month, and has an opportunity to dethrone Sabalenka as the world number one at the French Open. Svitolina stormed to victory over defending French Open champion



Coco Gauff at last week's Italian Open final, establishing herself as one of the leading contenders at Roland Garros this year. The Ukrainian, who has reached the French Open quarter-finals five times, had also beaten Rybakina and Iga Swiatek earlier in the Italian Open, sending a warning

shot to the favourites ahead of the year's second Grand Slam. The 31-year-old reached the Australian Open semi-finals in January and has picked up seven wins over top-10 ranked opponents in 2026, as she looks to win her first Grand Slam at the French Open. Still chasing her maiden Grand Slam

triumph, Pegula faced heartbreak close to the summit in the last two majors, as she crashed out in the semi-finals at the U.S. and Australian Open. The 32-year-old credited her evolved serve for her improved form, telling the Tennis Channel in March that she had shifted her focus from pure speed to adding different spins and improving placement. The former U.S. Open finalist will hope her new technique will make her more effective on clay at Roland Garros, where she reached the quarter-finals in 2022. Kostyuk has not gone beyond the French Open's second round since 2021 but the 23-year-old emerged as a surprise dark horse ahead of the French Open when she won the Madrid Open, claiming her first WTA 1000 title, beating Mirra Andreeva in the final.

Clinical Aston Villa Outclass Freiburg To Win Europa League

New Delhi, May 21: Youri Tielemans and Emiliano Buendia scored stunning goals as Aston Villa outclassed Freiburg 3-0 in the Europa League final on Wednesday to end a 30-year wait for silverware and earn their coach Unai Emery a record-extending fifth win in the competition. Morgan Rogers added a third as Villa secured a first major trophy since they lifted the English League Cup in 1996, and their first victory in continental competition since they were European Cup champions in 1982 after defeating Bayern Munich in the final. Back-to-back wins in the Europa League for Premier League clubs after Tottenham Hotspur were



victors last season kept alive a rare continental hat-trick with Arsenal in the final of the Champions League and Crystal Palace to play in the Conference League decider. "I feel amazing," Tielemans told TNT. "We put in a shift, top performance, we had a great season, and to top it off with this, it's amazing. We only had one day to

practise, we did it on Monday, and it worked brilliantly tonight. "It's been a season with a lot of ups and downs. We started so bad, our standards were very very poor but the way we turned things around was great, credit to the players, credit to the staff, we just kept working, kept believing, and we got the win."

Bowlers Beware, Sooryavanshi's Best Yet To Come – Langer

New Delhi, May 21: Lucknow Super Giants head coach Justin Langer is the latest to join the Vaibhav Sooryavanshi fan club, saying bowlers need to worry because the 15-year-old batting sensation is only going to improve. Hailed as a generational talent even before his international debut, Rajasthan Royals opener Sooryavanshi has pulverised attacks in his second Indian Premier League season. The left-hander is currently the league's highest scorer, piling up runs at a staggering strike rate of 236.32. He has also clubbed 53 sixes, including



10 against Langer's Lucknow on Tuesday, and could still surpass Chris Gayle's 2012 record of 59, with Rajasthan having one match left. Sooryavanshi's 93 off 38 balls helped Rajasthan overwhelm Lucknow's 220-5 with five

balls to spare, prompting lavish praise from former Australia batter Langer. "In all my time I've seen some amazing players in 35 years of cricket," Langer told reporters after their seven-wicket defeat in Jaipur.

Swiatek Seeks Clay Redemption As She Targets Fifth Roland Garros Crown

New Delhi, May 21: Iga Swiatek heads into the French Open with a claycourt title since her Roland Garros triumph in 2024, but the Pole will still be among the leading contenders as she targets a seventh Grand Slam crown at her most successful major. The 24-year-old has dominated in Paris in recent seasons. In 2024 she was the third woman to win three straight French Open titles, following Justine Henin and Monica Seles, cementing her reputation as the standout claycourt player of her generation. However, Swiatek's trajectory has dipped slightly since then. Now ranked world number three, she endured a rollercoaster 2025 campaign that began under the shadow of a doping ban but



was ultimately transformed by a stunning Wimbledon triumph. Swiatek's one-month ban ended on Dec. 4, 2024 after the International Tennis Integrity Agency accepted that her positive test was caused by contamination of her medication melatonin. Despite her

Wimbledon breakthrough, when she thrashed American Amanda Anisimova 6-0 6-0 in the final, Swiatek's on court struggles have carried into this year. She suffered quarter-final exits at the Australian Open, Qatar and Indian Wells, before a shock second-round

defeat by compatriot Magda Linette at the Miami Open. That loss prompted a reset as Swiatek parted with coach Wim Fissette and brought in Francisco Roig, who worked with her idol Rafael Nadal during the Spaniard's run of 14 French Open titles. The change has yet to yield a trophy, but there have been gradual signs of progress on clay. Swiatek opened her campaign with a single win in Stuttgart before illness disrupted her run in Madrid, where a gastrointestinal problem forced her to retire in the round of 32 and she left the court in tears. In Rome, however, Swiatek showed encouraging improvement, losing to eventual champion Elena Svitolina in the semi-finals.

3rd convocation of Nalanda University: PK Mishra says 21st century should be a period of 'intellectual decolonisation'

New Delhi, May 21: Dr PK Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, recently addressed the third convocation of Nalanda University at Bihar's Rajgir and called for the 21st century to be a period of "intellectual decolonisation."

During the event on May 19, Mishra congratulated the 221 graduates representing 14 nations, marking their academic accomplishment as a milestone built on hard work and perseverance. He even recognised the ancient Nalanda Mahavihara as one of the greatest learning centres in history and said, "There are universities that are institutions. And then there are universities that are civilisation symbols. Nalanda belongs to the latter category."

While highlighting the historical and geographical significance of the region, Dr Mishra underscored Nalanda's core philosophy that knowledge must remain open to



dialogue, connected across disciplines, and directed towards humanity's greater well-being, read a statement.

Further, he lauded the university's new Net Zero campus, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while recalling Both Gaya, where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment.

"Indeed, the entire Asian continent has greatly benefited from the teachings of Lord Buddha. I am sure, the learning from this great University will spread far and wide across the continents," he said.

Addressing the broader context of the current era, Dr Mishra pointed out the paradox of the 21st century, wherein humanity possesses unprecedented technological capabilities in AI, biotechnology, and

quantum computing. However, this period even coincides with profound uncertainties, such as climate change, geopolitical conflicts, and growing social polarisation.

"The central question before humanity is not merely whether we can generate more information or technology, but whether knowledge will remain connected to wisdom, ethics, compassion, and human responsibility," he said.

He also reflected on Nalanda's foundational intellectual traditions and mentioned its interdisciplinary approach. He stressed the importance of cultivating vada, rigorous dialogue and inquiry, as an antidote to modern intellectual passivity, cautioning that while technology provides instant answers, it cannot replace ethical reasoning and moral responsibility, or fully comprehend human yearning, suffering, dignity, or aspiration, the statement added.

Census 2027: Self-enumeration ends today in UP, door-to-door from tomorrow

New Delhi, May 21: The online self-enumeration phase for Census 2027 in Uttar Pradesh concludes today, making Thursday the final deadline for residents to submit their details digitally.

According to census officials, more than 4.4 million people across the state have successfully completed the online forms since the initiative launched on May 7. The digital drive kicked off earlier this month with Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath filling out the initial self-enumeration forms. Under this digital system, heads of households were required to log in to the official portal (ce.census.gov.in) to complete the data entry. State's Chief Census Officer



Sheetal Verma said that residents who missed the online deadline need not worry. Starting tomorrow, May 22, the census will move to its next phase, featuring door-to-door visits by official enumerators. During these field visits, enumerators will personally interview the heads of households, a process expected to take 10 to 15 minutes, and fill out the physical or digital forms based on the responses provided. According to the district-wise data, Azamgarh leads the state in digital participation, with 264,000 residents completing the self-enumeration process. Shahjahanpur follows closely with 261,000 submissions, while Bareilly rounds out the top three at 251,000. Other notable high-performing areas include Moradabad.

'Mafia kingdom': Jagan Reddy accuses Andhra CM of 'misleading' people over Amaravati project



New Delhi, May 21: YSRCP chief and former CM Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday, May 21, slammed Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and accused him of "misleading" people in the name of the Amaravati capital project for his "scams," despite being aware that the project was unviable as

basic infrastructure alone would cost ₹2 lakh crore. While addressing a press conference at the YSRCP central office in Tadepalli, Reddy claimed that Naidu was creating "false impressions" about the capital city project. He further alleged that the Chief Minister was undermining the possibility of building a permanent capital, PTI reported.

"Despite knowing that the ₹2 lakh crore project cannot be implemented, Naidu is creating false impressions about the capital city for his scams and cheating people," Reddy said.

Reddy further alleged that the claims of a self-financing capital had collapsed. He said that the TDP-led coalition government in Andhra Pradesh had so far borrowed ₹47,387 crore for the greenfield capital city, besides earmarking ₹9,200 crore in the budget. Moreover, Reddy had claimed that the state government was neglecting public welfare and indulging into "rampant corruption and loot".

Govt to revive rainwater harvesting systems in 75 schools, aiming to save 50 crore liters of water

New Delhi, May 21: The Delhi government has decided to revive the existing rainwater harvesting systems across the 75 CM Shri Schools in the national capital. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said on Thursday that the initiative is expected to create an annual rainwater harvesting capacity of nearly 50 crore litres. A detailed presentation on the project was recently made before the CM, outlining the current condition of rainwater harvesting structures in the schools, the shortcomings identified during inspections, and the roadmap for restoring these structures.

Gupta said the government's objective is to



strengthen rainwater conservation, improve ground water recharge, and foster greater awareness about water conservation, especially among students and also the wider community. A comprehensive audit of rainwater harvesting infrastructure in 75 CM Shri Schools has already been conducted as part of the exercise. Highlighting the importance of rainwater harvesting, Gupta said Delhi receives an average annual rainfall of about 775 mm, and a rooftop area

of roughly 2,500 square feet can conserve nearly 2,00,000 litres of rainwater every year. She noted that this quantity can meet the annual water needs of a family of five, adding that the harvested water can be used for drinking, gardening, cleaning, flushing and several other purposes. According to the CM, the government will adopt the 'Ehsaas' model for rainwater harvesting in schools. This model was approved by the Delhi Jal Board in the year 2021, and is known for its low cost, minimal space requirement and near-zero maintenance. Under the system, rainwater collected from rooftops will be filtered and connected to storage units and bore-wells, helping recharge groundwater and even revive dry bore-wells. Informed that technical teams have completed inspections of all 75 schools and submitted their reports, and the audit found that most schools had rainwater harvesting systems in place, but many remained non-functional for years.

In some cases, school authorities were unaware that such structures even existed on their premises, while the inspection also revealed that rainwater was flowing directly into drains at many locations, defeating the purpose of water conservation.

India-Africa Forum Summit postponed due to the Ebola outbreak

New Delhi, May 21: The Fourth India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS IV), initially scheduled to take place in New Delhi on May 28-31, has been postponed due to the evolving health situation in parts of Africa while new dates for the Summit and its associated meetings will be finalised through mutual consultations and communication in due course, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday.

The decision was taken after extensive consultations between the Indian government, the Chairperson of the African Union (AU), and the African Union Commission regarding the holding of the summit and



associated activities. The move follows the World Health Organization (WHO) declaring Ebola virus outbreaks in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) due to the risk of further transmission. According to the MEA, India and the African Union, who had been working closely on convening IAFS IV, exchanged views on the evolving health situation in

parts of Africa. They reaffirmed the importance of continued cooperation in strengthening public health preparedness and response capacities across the continent, including support to the Africa CDC and relevant national institutions. "India reaffirmed its solidarity with the peoples and Governments of Africa and expressed its readiness to contribute to Africa CDC-led efforts aimed at addressing the evolving health situation, in line with the shared commitment to Africa's response," the MEA said in a statement. "Recognizing the importance of ensuring the full participation and engagement of African leaders and stakeholders,

Railways urges passengers to stay alert, vigilant while travelling

New Delhi, May 21: Urging passengers to remain alert and vigilant while travelling, Railways on Thursday said any suspicious activity or suspicious person noticed on railway premises should be immediately reported on the Railway helpline number 139.

Amid recent incidents targeting Railways, a crucial high-level security review meeting was held at Rail Bhawan in New Delhi. Railways are intensively using the latest technology tools like AI, drones, and CCTV to enhance the safety of trains, passengers, station premises and the vast rail network. This is being undertaken in a mission mode by strengthening the intelligence gather-



ing mechanism at the beat level of the Railway Protection Force (RPF). In the crucial high-level security review meeting, the Railway Ministry carried out extensive consultations with field officers from across the country in the presence of senior officials in the national capital. The meeting was chaired by Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw at Rail Bhawan. Ministers of State for Railways V. Somanna and Ramesh Singh Bittu were also present, besides the Chairman, Railway Board. It was noted during the meeting that in the last few days, the involvement of anti-social elements has emerged during the initial probe into multiple incidents, including some recent fire incidents. Indian Railways has taken these incidents seriously and the RPF is actively probing them.

Twisha Sharma's absconding husband moves HC for anticipatory bail



Bhopal, May 21: Following the rejection of his application by a Bhopal Court four days ago, Samarth Singh moved the Madhya Pradesh High Court at Jabalpur to secure an anticipatory bail. Samarth Singh, a Bhopal-based criminal lawyer, is the absconding husband of former Miss Pune Twisha Sharma (33), who was found dead under suspicious circumstances, allegedly by hanging, on the terrace of the couple's

retired district and sessions judge who is presently working as the Chairperson of the District Consumer Grievances Redressal Commission at Bhopal. Twisha's parents have been accusing her in-laws of harassing her for dowry and "murdering" her. On the other hand, Giribala Singh has been claiming that she was addicted to drugs, had psychological problems, and committed suicide. The Katara Hills Police have registered an FIR against Samarth Singh and Giribala Singh under Sections 80(C), 85 and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita along with relevant provisions of the Dowry Prohibition Act. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) of Bhopal Police is investigating the case, and at least six police teams are in search of Samarth. The Police.

Newly-elected MLAs sworn in; 16th Kerala Legislative Assembly assumes office

New Delhi, May 21: Newly-elected legislators officially took the oath as Members of the Legislative Assembly at the first session of the 16th Kerala Assembly in Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday. Pro-tem Speaker G Sudhakaran administered the oath of office to them.



Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar had sworn in G Sudhakaran on Wednesday. The remaining 139 members took the oath on Thursday. The swearing-in, which commenced at 9 am, was carried out in alphabetical order. V E Abdul Gafoor of Indian Muslim League (IUML), who represents Kalanassery, was the first to take the oath. He was followed by IUML's Parakkal Abdulla, who represents Kuttady. CPI's A Jayappa Prasad, who represents Punjara, was the first opposition member to swear in. Newly-appointed Chief Minister V. D. Satheshan took his oath at the 105th position. Former Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan

was sworn in at the 133rd position. The last person to be sworn-in was Xavier Chitilappilly, the CPM MLA elected from the Wadakkanchery assembly constituency. Forty-two MLAs chose to "solemnly affirm" instead of taking the oath in the name of God. Those who chose to solemnly affirm included all the CPM and CPI MLAs, Congress legislators V T Balram and Sumesh Achuthan, Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) leaders Shibu Baby John and Vishnu Mohan and Revolutionary Marxist Party of India (RMP) MLA K K Rema. Besides them, T K Govindan and V Kunhikrishnan — both former CPM leaders who left the party and contested as LDF backed independent candidates — and Communist Marxist Party Kerala State Committee (CMP KSC) legislator C P John also chose to solemnly affirm. IUML's Fyzal Babu, KDP's Mani C Kappan, Congress' Mathew Kuzhalnadan, K Muralaachandran, Ramesh Chennithala, S. Deeban



SpaceX files for what could be world's biggest IPO, may make Elon Musk world's first trillionaire

London, May 21:

Elon Musk's SpaceX has formally moved toward launching what could become the biggest initial public offering (IPO) in Wall Street history, a development that may propel the billionaire businessman into becoming the world's first trillionaire. The filing marks a defining moment not only for Musk's expanding business empire but also for the global space, artificial intelligence and technology sectors, where SpaceX has rapidly emerged as one of the most influential private companies. The proposed listing in the United States is expected to open public trading of SpaceX shares under the ticker symbol "SPXC" as early as next month, according to details emerging from the filing. Elon Musk is already the world's richest person through his control of Tesla, X, xAI and several other ventures. With SpaceX now valuing itself at nearly USD 1.25 trillion, Musk's majority ownership stake alone could be worth well above USD 600 billion after the listing. SpaceX reveals financial



details ahead of massive IPO. The filing has also offered one of the clearest pictures yet of SpaceX's financial position and operational scale. Space Exploration Technologies, while carrying debt estimated at USD 60.5 billion. The company acknowledged that it is also facing mounting legal liabilities, including more than half a billion dollars in anticipated legal costs linked to multiple ongoing disputes and lawsuits.

Financial disclosures further showed that SpaceX currently holds assets worth around USD 102 billion, including rockets, launch systems and infrastructure. The company acknowledged that it is also facing mounting legal liabilities, including more than half a billion dollars in anticipated legal costs linked to multiple ongoing disputes and lawsuits.

Starlink, rockets & AI expansion fuel SpaceX growth

SpaceX has evolved far beyond a traditional rocket company and now controls several major technology businesses tied to Elon Musk's wider ambitions. Apart from its globally dominant rocket-launch business, the company operates Starlink, the rapidly expanding satellite internet network that has gained strategic importance across several countries and conflict zones. SpaceX also owns xAI, Musk's artificial intelligence venture behind the chatbot Grok. The filing stated that Musk plans to further expand his AI ambitions under SpaceX as competition intensifies in the global artificial intelligence race. According to disclosures, xAI recently entered a major agreement with AI company Anthropic, developer of Claude. Under the arrangement, Anthropic is expected to pay USD 15 billion annually for access to data centre infrastructure linked to Musk's AI operations in the United States.

From gas to groceries, rising prices weigh on US consumers

Washington, May 21:

Americans are paying more for groceries, gasoline and other everyday necessities as inflation accelerates again, with economists increasingly pointing to geopolitical conflict and energy disruptions as key drivers of rising living costs. The latest data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) show the Consumer Price Index, a broad measure of inflation, rose 3.8 per cent over the 12 months ending in April, the fastest annual rate since 2023.



Monthly inflation increased 0.6 per cent in April, while energy prices climbed sharply and grocery costs continued to rise, leading to consumer dissatisfaction, reports Xinhua news agency. "Everything costs more now," Maxi Baker, a Glendale resident and mother of two, told

Xinhua, echoing growing consumer concerns over rising prices for almost everything. "Food, gas, clothes, rent, you name it, it's going up." Economists say one of the biggest contributors to inflation has been surging energy costs linked to conflict in the Middle East and disruptions to oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important energy corridors. The energy index increased 17.9 per cent for the 12 months ending

US-Iran talks enter critical phase as Tehran reviews fresh proposal; Trump warns of 'nasty' options

Washington, May 21:

The United States and Iran appear to be inching towards another crucial diplomatic moment, with President Donald Trump claiming negotiations are in their "final stages" even as Tehran confirmed that fresh messages from Washington are under review. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmael Baghaei said Tehran was examining the latest American position conveyed through mediation channels, while stressing that Iran remained deeply distrustful of Washington because of its recent record. The renewed diplomatic push comes weeks after a fragile cease-fire halted 40 days of direct conflict involving Iran, the US and Israel, raising hopes that both sides might still avoid another military escalation. Speaking to state-run IRIB

TV, Baghaei said communication between Tehran and Washington had continued through Pakistan's mediation efforts. According to him, Iran entered the talks "with goodwill and seriousness" but remained cautious due to what he described as hostile US actions over the past 18 months. He said Iran's demands included the release of frozen Iranian assets, an end to what Tehran called "maritime piracy", and the lifting of restrictions affecting Iranian shipping routes. Baghaei also said Iran, in coordination with Oman, was exploring a mechanism to ensure "lasting security" in the Strait of Hormuz. He added that Tehran was prepared to work with regional coastal states to create protocols for safe maritime movement in the strategically vital waterway. According

to Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency, Washington recently sent a revised draft proposal after Tehran submitted its own 14-point framework earlier this week. A source close to Iran's negotiating team said the mediator was currently in Tehran attempting to narrow differences between the two sides, though no agreement had yet been reached. Why the Strait of Hormuz remains central to US-Iran talks The Strait of Hormuz has emerged as one of the biggest flashpoints in the ongoing tensions. Following the outbreak of the conflict earlier this year, Iran tightened control over the route and blocked vessels linked to the US and Israel. After peace talks in Islamabad failed in April, the US imposed a naval blockade affecting ships travelling to and from Iranian ports.

Asim Munir likely to visit Tehran today as Iran-US mediation gathers pace

Washington, May 21:

Pakistan Army Chief General Asim Munir is expected to arrive in Tehran on Thursday as diplomatic activity surrounding indirect talks between Iran and the United States gathers momentum amid rising tensions in West Asia. The reported visit comes at a sensitive moment for the region, with Tehran and Washington continuing to exchange messages through intermediaries even as US President Donald Trump sharpens his warnings to Iran over a possible deal. Pakistan has increasingly emerged as a key communication channel between the two sides, according to Iranian media reports. Iran's ISNA news agency reported that Munir's visit is linked to ongoing consultations with Iranian officials and mediation efforts involving Tehran and Washington. The development follows Pakistani Interior Minister Syed Mohsen Naqvi's second visit to Tehran this week. During his trip, Naqvi met Iranian Interior



Minister Eskandar Momeni and also held discussions with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. According to ISNA, Pezeshkian and Naqvi discussed recent developments in the region, indirect negotiations between Iran and the US, and diplomatic efforts aimed at moving discussions forward. Iran says US proposal under review Iranian state-run Nour

Foreign Ministry stated that several rounds of message exchanges have already taken place and that discussions are continuing based on Iran's original 14-point framework.

The latest diplomatic push comes as Washington continues to publicly pressure Iran to move towards a deal. Trump administration sharpens warning to Tehran Speaking to reporters at Joint Base Andrews on Wednesday, Trump suggested a situation could escalate rapidly if negotiations fail. "It's right on the borderline, believe me. If we don't get the right answers, it goes very quickly. We're all ready to go. We have to get the right answers — it would have to be a complete 100% good answers," Trump said. The rhetoric was further intensified by Stephen Miller, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy and Homeland Security Advisor, who warned Iran of possible military consequences if talks collapse.

From Qeshm to Fujairah: Iran maps its grip on the Strait of Hormuz

Tehran, May 21:

Iran has formally defined the operational boundaries of its newly-created Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA), a move that comes at a time of heightened tensions with the United States and growing uncertainty over maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz.



The development is significant because the Strait of Hormuz remains one of the world's most strategically sensitive oil transit corridors. Any new regulatory structure introduced by Tehran is likely to be closely watched by global energy markets and

shipping operators, especially as negotiations between Washington and Tehran remain stalled. In a statement posted on X, the PGSA said the new supervision zone stretches from the line connecting Kuh Mobarak in Iran to southern Fujairah in the

United Arab Emirates on the eastern side of the Strait, and extends westward to the line linking Qeshm Island in Iran with Umm al-Qaiwain in the UAE. The authority added that vessels operating within the designated range would now require coordination

with the Persian Gulf Waterway Management system and must obtain permits before transiting through the Strait.

"Frequencies in this range for passing through the Strait of Hormuz require coordination with the Persian Gulf Waterway Management and a permit from this entity," the body said in its post. What is Iran's new Strait of Hormuz authority? Iran had earlier this week announced the creation of the Persian Gulf Strait Authority, a dedicated body tasked with supervising and regulating activities linked to the Strait of Hormuz.

The announcement was amplified by Iran's Supreme National Security Council, which reposted information confirming that the authority's official X account had become operational. Iranian state media outlet Press TV had earlier reported that Tehran was introducing a new maritime governance mechanism for ships entering the Strait.

According to the report, vessels intending to pass through the route would receive official instructions and regulatory communication from the email address info@PGSA.ir under the new framework.

Raul Castro indicted in US over killing of 4 Americans; Trump says, 'We're freeing up Cuba'

Washington, May 21:

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday said America was "freeing up Cuba" and promised support for the Cuban people after former Cuban President Raul Castro was indicted in the United States over the 1996 downing of two civilian aircraft linked to the Miami-based exile group Brothers to the Rescue. The indictment has sharply escalated tensions between Washington and Havana, reviving one of the most sensitive fault lines in US-Cuba relations. While Trump signalled that a broader policy announcement on Cuba could be coming soon, the Cuban government dismissed the charges against Castro as politically motivated and accused the US of attempting to justify aggression against the island nation. Speaking to reporters during an extended media interaction, Trump described Cuba as "a failing nation" and claimed Cuban Americans had waited "65 years" for such action. "We're going to help the Cuban people out. We're freeing up Cuba," Trump said, according to a statement later shared by the US Department of State on X. The US President also suggested that

Washington could soon unveil a new approach towards Cuba, though he insisted there would be no military escalation. "There won't be escalation. I don't think there needs to be. The place is falling apart. It's a mess," Trump said.

What are the charges against Raul Castro? According to Fox News and statements released by US officials, a Florida grand jury returned the indictment in April, though it was unsealed publicly on Wednesday.

The charges relate to the February 1996 shooting down of two aircraft operated by Brothers to the Rescue, a Miami-based Cuban exile organisation. Four men were killed in the incident: Carlos Costa, Armando Alejandro Jr., Mario de la Pena and Pablo Morales. US prosecutors have charged Castro with conspiracy to kill US nationals, destruction of aircraft and four counts of murder. Acting US Attorney General Todd Blanche, speaking during a ceremony in Miami honouring the victims, said the men were flying "humanitarian missions for the rescue and protection of people fleeing oppression across the Florida Straits".

'No faith, no law, no morality': India tears into Pakistan at UNSC, invokes 1971 mass rape and Kabul hospital strike



Kabul, May 21: India launched a strong attack on Pakistan at the United Nations Security Council on Wednesday, accusing Islamabad of carrying out cross-border violence against Afghan civilians and using terrorism as

a tool to destabilise the region. Speaking at the UNSC Open Debate on "Protection of civilians in armed conflict", India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Harish Parvathani, cited Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to allege that Pakistani military operations had led to large-scale civilian casualties in Afghanistan. The remarks came during a broader UN discussion on civilian safety in conflict zones, humanitarian access and attacks on medical facilities. India used the platform to reiterate its concerns over cross-border terrorism, the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, and the growing threat posed by emerging military technologies such as drones.

'Hair was on fire': Netanyahu fumes as Trump-Iran deal push strains ties with Israel

Jerusalem, May 21:

Aphone conversation between US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly turned tense as diplomatic efforts to revive negotiations with Iran gathered momentum, according to a report by Axios. The reported disagreement comes at a delicate stage in backchannel diplomacy involving several regional players, with mediators attempting to narrow differences between Washington and Tehran over Iran's nuclear programme and regional security concerns. The talks have also reopened visible fault lines between the United States and



Israel over how aggressively Iran should be handled. Citing multiple sources, Axios reported that Trump

and Netanyahu discussed a revised proposal linked to ongoing negotiations with Iran. One source familiar with the exchange reportedly described Netanyahu as being deeply "frustrated" after the call, saying his "hair was on fire".

The proposal currently under discussion is said to include commitments related to Iran's nuclear programme while also outlining possible terms for the release of frozen Iranian assets. According to the report, Qatar, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt are all involved in mediation efforts aimed at bridging the gap between Tehran and Washington. Trump signals diplomacy but keeps military option open Even as negotiations continue, Trump has maintained that military

Div Com Kashmir reviews preparations for SANJY-2026

Stresses to expedite registration of Service Providers, Timely execution of Developmental Works

SRINAGAR, MAY 21: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, today chaired a high-level meeting to review the preparedness for the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY-2026). The meeting was attended by the Deputy Commissioners of Anantnag, Srinagar, Ganderbal and Baramulla, Commissioner SMC, besides Heads of Departments from Rural Sanitation, ULB, Health, FCS&CA, BEACON, KPDC, PHE, R&B, Animal Husbandry and Labour Departments. Representatives from telecom service providers including BSNL, Jio, Airtel



and G-Max were also present. Reviewing the registration process of service providers, the Divisional Commissioner emphasized on expediting registrations

to meet the target of 28,000 service providers besides timely generation of RFID cards for all registered service providers by May 30. The Divisional Commissioner also reviewed the development of pony stands and was informed that essential infrastructure works including fencing and development of sheds has already been completed. He further instructed officials to conduct health check-ups of ponies and ensure adequate availability of fodder along the yatra routes. Taking stock of telecom connectivity and

bandwidth availability at base camps and along the yatra axes up to the Holy Cave, the Divisional Commissioner directed telecom companies to ensure uninterrupted and efficient network services during the pilgrimage period. Chief Engineer KPDC was asked to provide uninterrupted power supply to telecom installations. The meeting also reviewed snow clearance operations, construction of gabion and breast walls, and ongoing repair works along the yatra tracks. Deputy Commissioners were directed to personally inspect the repair and maintenance works.

GDCs of Bandipora, Gurez organize Awareness Programmes on Drug Abuse under NMBA

BANDIPORA, MAY 21: NCORD Cell of HKM Degree College Bandipora organized two awareness programmes on drug abuse on Thursday under the banner of the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) to educate students and the general public about the harmful effects of substance abuse and the need for collective action to eradicate the menace from society. An awareness lecture was organized in the Department of Computer Science on the topic "Drugs and its ill Effects on Society." The programme aimed to create awareness among students



regarding the growing menace of drug abuse and its adverse impact on individuals and society. During the session, NCORD Convener Prof. Irfan Ahmad Wagay delivered an informative and insightful lecture highlighting the causes of drug addiction, its physical, mental, social, and economic consequences, and the importance of collective efforts in eradicating the social evil.

Stress Management Sessions, Pledge Ceremonies held across Bandipora under Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan

BANDIPORA, MAY 21: Awareness and outreach activities under the ongoing Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan continued across district Bandipora on Thursday with stress management sessions, coping skills programmes, pledge ceremonies, awareness lectures, and motivational activities organised at various educational institutions.



Educational institutions including Govt High School Garoora, PM SHRI GHS Odina, HSS Quilnuqam, HSS Budoab, HSS Gadakhud, H/S Ketson, HS Panar, HSS Koranghal, PM SHRI Girls High School Sumbhal, GHS Naidikhai, HS Jumiyal, and HSS Sumbhal organised different awareness activities

under the Nasha Mukht Abhiyan action plan focusing on stress management, emotional well-being, coping skills, and prevention of substance abuse. At Govt High School Garoora, students and staff collectively took the Nasha Mukht pledge, reaffirming their commitment towards keeping society free from the menace of drug abuse. Similar pledge ceremonies and awareness activities

Startup India, DPIIT, JKEDI, Distt Admin B'la collaborate to organize TEJAS Workshop in Baramulla

Brings together aspiring Entrepreneurs, Innovators to showcase Ideas, Discuss Schemes, encourage innovation-led growth

BARAMULLA, MAY 21: In a significant initiative aimed at strengthening the startup and entrepreneurial ecosystem in the district, the TEJAS (Transforming Entrepreneurial Journeys Across States and Districts) Workshop was organised today at Dak Bangaloo Baramulla by Startup India, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Govt. of India in collaboration with JKEDI and District Administration Baramulla. The event was inaugurated by the Director JKEDI, Mohd Younis Malik in the presence of Additional Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Syed Altaf Hussain Musvi, Chief Planning Officer



Baramulla, Nisar Ahmad, General Manager DIC Baramulla and resource persons from Startup India and several other officers. The workshop also brought together aspiring entrepreneurs, innovators, students, startup founders, industry experts and government

representatives on a common platform to promote innovation-driven entrepreneurship and economic growth in the district. Speaking on the occasion, Director JKEDI, Mohd Younis Malik, highlighted the immense entrepreneurial potential of the youth of Baramulla and stressed the need to create a robust ecosystem that supports innovation, enterprise creation and sustainable livelihoods. He further said that the government is committed to creating an enabling environment for startups and innovators and through Startup India and JKEDI initiatives so that the youth can become job creators rather than job seekers. Later in the day, the DC Baramulla also visited the workshop and assured full support from the District Administration to aspiring entrepreneurs and innovators and said every possible assistance would be extended to help youth transform their ideas into commercially viable ven-

tures capable of generating employment and contributing to the local economy. The DC further congratulated JKEDI for creating this culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, highlighting that such platforms help in nurturing ideas, refining innovations and ultimately commercialising them to bring them into the market. Resource persons from Startup India, conducted detailed technical sessions during the workshop and provided comprehensive insights into the startup journey in India, the evolving entrepreneurial ecosystem and various government schemes designed to support innovation-driven enterprises.

Chairperson TSEED visits KVK Bandipora

Interacts with FPOs, Tribal Farmers, Rural Entrepreneurs

BANDIPORA, MAY 21: Krishi Vigyan Kendra Bandipora-1 today hosted Swami Suryani, Chairperson, Total Start Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Developers (TSEED), during his visit to the Kendra where he interacted with Farmer Producer Organisation (FPOs), tribal farmers, Agri entrepreneurs and rural youth regarding entrepreneurship development, sustainable agriculture and livelihood generation.



The visit was organised to promote entrepreneurship ecosystems in rural areas and create awareness

among farmers regarding value addition. Agri based enterprises, market linkages and innovative farming models for sustainable income generation. During the interaction programme, Swami Suryani held discussions with FPO members, tribal farmer

entrepreneurs and young Agri innovators on opportunities related to entrepreneurship, branding, collective marketing and rural enterprise development. He emphasized the need for promoting community driven entrepreneurial models for strengthening rural economies and enhancing farmers' income. The visiting expert appreciated the innovative initiatives and demonstration units established at KVK Bandipora-1, particularly in the areas of Natural Farming, protected cultivation, integrated farming systems and vegetable cul-

tivation. He also visited various demonstration units, lotus cultivation areas and Natural Farming based crop models established at the KVK. Swami Suryani highlighted the importance of integrating innovation and entrepreneurship with agriculture for developing resilient and self-sustainable farming systems. He encouraged farmers and rural youth to explore opportunities in value addition, food processing and Agri based enterprises. Dr. Tariq Sultan, Head KVK Bandipora-1, briefed regarding various extension

Awareness Programme on POSH Act 2013 held at Budgam

BUDGAM, MAY 2026: SANKALP - Hub for Empowerment of Women, Mission Shakti Budgam, under the supervision of the District Social Welfare Officer, Budgam and the aegis of the District Administration Budgam, organized an Awareness Programme on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act, 2013 to promote safe, dignified, and gender-sensitive workplaces. The programme aimed to sensitize participants about the key provisions of the POSH Act, 2013 and strengthen awareness regarding the rights and protections available to employees against sexual harassment at the workplace. The session emphasized the collective responsibility of institutions and individuals in fostering an environment of respect, equality, and professional integrity. During the programme, Afroza Ahad, District Mission Coordinator, Mission Shakti Budgam, highlighted the objectives and significance of Mission Shakti in

empowering women through awareness, support services, and institutional mechanisms that ensure their safety, security, and socio-economic development. She emphasized the importance of creating gender-sensitive workplaces where women can work with dignity and confidence. Latif Ahmad, Legal Aid Defence Counsel, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam, delivered an informative session on the POSH Act, 2013, elaborating on its legal framework, objectives, and provisions for prevention, prohibition, and redressal of sexual harassment at workplaces. He stressed the importance of awareness of legal rights and the need for effective implementation of the Act to ensure a safe working environment for all employees. The resource persons underscored that awareness, prevention, and timely redressal are crucial for fostering workplaces free from discrimination, harassment, and intimidation.

DC Kulgam reviews arrangements for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026

KULGAM, MAY 21: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam today reviewed the preparedness and arrangements being put in place for the smooth and successful conduct of the upcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY)-2026. During the review meeting, the DC took stock of arrangements related to security, sanitation, healthcare facilities, traffic management, drinking water supply, power supply, accommodation and emergency response mechanisms to ensure a safe, smooth and hassle-free pilgrimage for devotees. The concerned officers briefed the chair regarding the measures being undertaken by their respective departments for facilitating the yatis during the pilgrimage period.



Emphasizing coordinated efforts among all departments, the DC directed the officers to ensure timely completion of all necessary arrangements and maintain close inter-departmental coordination for effective service delivery. He stressed upon ensuring adequate sanitation facilities, uninterrupted electric services, proper traffic

Nasha Mukht Abhiyan: DC Ganderbal chairs NCORD meeting, reviews Anti-Drug measures

GANDERBAL, MAY 21: A meeting of the District Level NCORD Committee meeting was today held under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore to review anti-drug enforcement, awareness activities, rehabilitation measures and inter-departmental coordination across the district. A detailed review of actions taken by concerned departments was conducted, with focus on inspections of drug stores, IEC activities, rehabilitation services, tobacco control, monitoring of illicit cultivation of poppy and prosecution of offenders involved in narcotics-related cases. The DC directed the Drug Control Officer to significantly enhance field



inspections and sample collection across the district. On preventive enforcement, officials informed the meeting that naka checking as well as random inspections of warehouses had been undertaken in order to prevent transportation of drugs through couriers. The Excise Department was instructed to continue surprise checks and improve monitoring mechanisms. Emphasizing a victim-centred approach, the DC directed the Health Department to strengthen counselling, and ensure sustained rehabilitation support for affected individuals. The functioning of the Addiction Treatment Facility (ATF) in District Hospital, Ganderbal, availability of trained staff as well as availability of medicines was also reviewed,

with directions issued to address operational gaps and improve service delivery. The meeting also discussed enforcement under tobacco control regulations. Concerned departments were asked to intensify action against tobacco sale and consumption near educational institutions and public spaces. Inter-departmental coordination on verification and monitoring of offenders was also reviewed. The progress on cancellation of driving licenses, passport, Aadhaar and contractor card of individuals involved in narcotics-related cases was also reviewed. Officials were directed to strengthen data sharing and clear pending cases in a time-bound manner as per the laid down SoP. The committees further reviewed destruction of illicit cultivation and field surveillance. It was informed that illicit poppy crop had recently been destroyed on various parcels of land in the district. Concerned departments were directed to continue surveys, strength ground monitoring for identification of vulnerable locations.

Deputy Chief Minister tours Handwara, inaugurates long-awaited Drugmulla- Hatmulla Bridge project

Holds series of public outreach programmes

HANDWARA, MAY 21: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary today conducted an extensive tour of Handwara in Kupwara district to review developmental works, assess public facilities and hold public outreach programmes at multiple locations. The Deputy Chief Minister was accompanied by Member of Parliament Chowdhury Mohammad Ramzan and MLA Uri Dr. Sajjad Shafi. During an extensive tour, the Deputy Chief Minister also inaugurated the 110-meter-long Drugmulla-Hatmulla Bridge over Nallah Appurpur. Speaking on the



occasion, the Deputy CM said that the long-awaited bridge project will significantly improve connectivity, mobility and ease of transportation for the people of Drugmulla and adjoining areas. "This bridge which was pending for a long time will enhance access to essential services and create better opportunities for local residents," he said. The Deputy Chief Minister also visited the Bus Stand and Main Market in Handwara and addressed large gatherings of local transport and trader associations. The Deputy Chief Minister assured that the

Government is committed to welfare of transporters and traders and assured all genuine issues shall be addressed on priority. He underscored that the Government has undertaken several long-pending developmental works in Handwara to complete on a fast-track basis. He informed that work on arduous vital road and bridge projects, five roads under PMGSY have also been approved for Handwara and work on these projects will commence soon. Referring to the Drugmulla Bridge, he said the project had remained pending for a long time but was completed within two years by the present Government. The Deputy Chief Minister directed the concerned authorities to identify suitable land for construction of a Labour Sarai facility at Handwara for the convenience of workers and commuters. He also reviewed macadamization works and other ongoing developmental projects and instructed officers to ensure strict adherence to quality standards and timely completion of all works. During the daylong tour, the Deputy Chief Minister also conducted public outreach programmes at Rajwar in Bungus.

Jan Bhagidaari -Sabse Door-Sabse Pehle

Welfare Camps held at Tribal villages across Kishtwar District

KISHTWAR, MAY 21: In continuation to the 7-day "Jan Bhagidaari Sabse Door-Sabse Pehle" IEC Campaign, the District Administration Kishtwar today organised series of awareness and beneficiary Outreach Camps in different parts of the District.



The Camps were held at Panchayat Kabban in Block Paddar, Panchayat Udil Gojran in Block Inderwal and Panchayat Chamoti in Block Drabshalla to facilitate inclusive service outreach to tribal communities.

The initiative aimed to reinforce last-mile implementation of government schemes and enhance public awareness in remote tribal belts. The camps witnessed

enthusiastic participation from officers, officials, local inhabitants, public representatives and other stakeholders, enabling direct engagement between the tribal population and the government departments.

The camps provided multiple services, including on the spot registration under financial inclusion schemes. The departmental stalls set up by Animal Husbandry, Horticulture, FCS&CA, Education, J&K Bank, Lead Bank Office, Fisheries, Forest, PDD, ICDS, Health, Agriculture, Youth Services & Sports and Revenue Departments disseminated information regarding respective schemes and citizen-centric services among the tribal population.

Two-Day National Conclave on Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0 concludes in New Delhi

NEW DELHI/JAMMU, MAY 21: A two-day National Review Meeting and Conclave on Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0 concluded in New Delhi, bringing together Ministers, senior officers and representatives from various States and Union Territories to deliberate on the progress and future roadmap of urban sanitation and waste management initiatives across the country. Jammu & Kashmir participated in the conclave with a delegation led by Minister for Rural Development, Agriculture Production, Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmed Dar. The delegation also included Commissioner Secretary HUDD, Mandep Kaur and Director Swachh Bharat Mission Urban, Dr. Devansh Yadav. During the two-day deliberations, extensive discussions were held on key aspects of Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0, including bioremediation of legacy waste, operationalisation of waste processing plants, ensuring visible cleanliness in urban areas and transforming the mission into a mass movement through the concept of "Jan Abhiyaan". Ministers from different States, Secretaries from various Ministries and senior officials presented best practices and shared successful models being implemented in their respective regions.

The conclave also focused on addressing challenges being faced in implementation and evolving practical solutions for strengthening urban sanitation systems across the country. The proposed Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026 were also discussed in detail during the sessions. Deliberations were held on strategies for effective implementation of the rules in compliance with the directions of the Supreme Court, and a comprehensive action plan was framed up for their execution.

Principal Secretary DMRRR reviews ration distribution, extension of welfare schemes for migrants

JAMMU, MAY 21: Principal Secretary Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRRR) Chandrak Barhi today reviewed the progress on implementation of the ration distribution in terms of the Special Relief Ration Scheme for Kashmiri/Jammu Migrants as well as extension of benefits of social sector/welfare schemes to eligible migrants, after integration of their ration cards on the national database. The meeting was attended by Director Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) Jammu, R.K. Shavan, Relief & Rehabilitation Commissioner (M), J&K, Dr Arvind Karwani and senior officers from DMRRR,

FCS&CA, Social Welfare Departments and National Informatics Centre. During the meeting, the Principal Secretary directed the concerned departments to take proactive steps to reach out to all households and ensure ration supply to all migrant beneficiaries who have enrolled for integration on the NFSA database, even if e-KYC formalities are pending in process. He asked the FCS&CA Department to provide free ration of April and May as a one-time exception during the transition period into the NFSA database to all such beneficiaries from the FPS dealers indicated by them in the NFSA application, and issue necessary order on same. The Principal Secretary also asked the

officers of the Relief Organization to reach out to all such households that have still not lifted the ration despite the completion of e-KYC formalities and facilitate them. He asked the FCS&CA Department to explore the possibility of establishing a Ration ATM at Mini-Township Jagti, which houses more than 5,000 migrant families and Relief Organization shall identify and provide suitable space for the purpose. The Principal Secretary also called for conducting an extensive IEC campaign through print, electronic, and social media to make migrants aware that the integration of migrant cards into the NFSA database is purely a welfare-oriented governance reform aimed at

inclusion of migrants into the mainstream welfare architecture, extension of social security benefits, digitization and modernization of records, transparency, and accountability in beneficiary management. He highlighted that the continuation and protection of all the existing relief provisions/guidelines/entitlements available to Kashmiri/Jammu Migrants is ensured. He also directed the officers of Social Welfare department to organise special camps in coordination with the Relief Organization in at migrant camps and prominent non-camp areas at Jammu to reach out to potential migrant beneficiaries of social sector/welfare schemes and facilitate them in filing.

MD JPDC, DC review progress of power Sector projects in Kishtwar District

KISHTWAR, MAY 21: Managing Director Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (JPDC) Gurpal Singh along with Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma today reviewed the status of the ongoing the Power Sector projects in Kishtwar district. Executive Engineer (ExEn) JPDC, Abdul Hamid delivered a detailed presentation regarding the progress of the ongoing projects under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), Smart Metering Programme and Solar



Roof top installation under PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana. The MD JPDC directed executing agency to speed up the pace of work under RDSS for timely completion of the projects. He also directed the concerned agency to expedite the progress, to speed up the Smart Metering across the district and ensure

Maiden Iris Flower Bloom Festival organized at Dherian Top- Gool DC inaugurates Mega Youth Engagement event held under Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan

GOOL, MAY 21: In a major initiative to promote eco-tourism and showcase the rich natural heritage of the region, the Sub-Divisional Administration Gool, under the aegis of District Administration Ramban, today organised maiden Iris Flower Bloom Festival here at the scenic Dherian Top-Toungali. Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Atyas Khan inaugurated the festival as the Chief Guest in the presence of SDM Intiaz Ahmed, Tehsildar S. Harjeet Singh, officers



from civil and police administration, prominent citizens, local artists, school children and a large gathering of citizens. Speaking on the occasion,

the Deputy Commissioner congratulated the SDM and the organising team for successfully hosting the first ever festival of its kind in the area. He said the event reflects the immense tourism potential and rich cultural identity of Gool and adjoining areas. Highlighting the importance of environmental conservation, he said the blooming Iris fields symbolize the need for harmonious coexistence with nature and collective responsibility towards preserving the environment.

The Deputy Commissioner said that such festivals would help attract tourists and create livelihood opportunities for local communities. He also appreciated the vibrant cultural performances presented by school children and local folk artists, which showcased the traditions and heritage of District Ramban. A major attraction of the event was the presentation of awareness skits and cultural programmes by students focusing on social issues, particularly the menace.

CS reviews afforestation progress; calls for accountability-linked plantation works

Over 1.06 lakh hectares treated, 746 lakh saplings planted since inception

SRINAGAR, MAY 21: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today reviewed the physical achievements and implementation progress of afforestation and ecological restoration works being undertaken across Jammu and Kashmir under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), emphasizing sustainable restoration of degraded forests, scientific monitoring and enhanced protection of vulnerable forest landscapes across the UT. The meeting was held during the 27th meeting of the Steering Committee of J&K CAMPA and was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Commissioner

Secretary, Forests; PCCF (HoF); Chief Wildlife Warden; CEO, CAMPA and other senior officers of the Forest Department. During the meeting, the Chief Secretary directed the Forest Department to ensure complete digitization of forest maps and boundary pillars for effective demarcation and protection of forest land. Stressing the need for improving the survival rate of plantations, he called for linkup payments to contractors with the survival of planting material and directed the Finance Department to vet future tenders for incorporation of suitable clauses in this regard. He also instructed the department to ensure greater field presence



of staff up to the rank of Rangers for safeguarding forests and enhancing green cover across Jammu and Kashmir. The Chief Secretary also reviewed year-wise trends in forest diversion and compensatory afforestation. The presentation revealed that diversion of forest land for non-

forestry purposes has sharply declined after 2020, while the area treated under afforestation and ecological restoration programmes has nearly doubled in recent years, reflecting the administration's increasing emphasis on ecological conservation and restoration. Additional Chief Secretary,

Finance, Shalendra Kumar stressed upon recreating missing forest records on the pattern of the Revenue Department and advocated staggered payments linked with survival of planting material in phases of growth for ensuring accountability and better outcomes. Commissioner Secretary, Forests, Sheetal

Nanda highlighted the sustained plantation efforts undertaken by the department over the years and informed the meeting that a robust mechanism of monitoring and multi-layer evaluation has been institutionalized to ensure efficient execution of works on the ground. The meeting was informed that since inception of CAMPA activities in 2010-11, more than 1,06,023 hectares of degraded forest area across Jammu and Kashmir has been treated through afforestation, assisted natural regeneration and ecological restoration measures. During the same period, nearly 746.65 lakh saplings have been planted across different forest divisions, reflecting

sustained expansion in plantation activities over the years. Meanwhile the PCCF (HoF), Sarvesh Rai, informed the meeting that during the financial year 2025-26, nearly 2,952 hectares of area was treated under different CAMPA components across the Union Territory. He stated that over 12.65 lakh running feet of fencing was completed along with 19.32 lakh patch sowing and dibbling interventions were carried out, while 68.70 lakh saplings were raised in nurseries and maintenance of more than 164 lakh nursery saplings was undertaken during the year. He further apprised that the department executed 37,001 cubic metres of soil.

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