

# North in News

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## EC can examine citizenship for inclusion in electoral rolls

### Supreme Court upholds constitutionality of SIR

**NEW DELHI, MAY 27:** The Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld the constitutional validity of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls carried out by the Election Commission of India, holding that it is well within the powers of the poll panel to undertake such an exercise and that it advances the constitutional goal of free and fair elections. Holding that the SIR exercise, which began with Bihar and was later



extended to 12 States and union Territories, could not be invalidated merely because it did not conform in every respect to the ordinary modalities con-

templated for revision under Section 21(2) read with Rule 25, a Bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joyymalya Bagchi said that the revision of electoral rolls does not violate the Representation of the People Act and instead "breathes life into the constitutional mandate of Article 324 through the precise statutory conduit provided by Section 21(3)." On the contentious issue of whether the Election Commission could engage itself in ascertaining the citizenship of a person for inclusion in the voters' list, the judgment said, "The Commission is empowered, in the exercise of its constitutional mandate, to undertake a limited enquiry into citizenship for the purpose of satisfying itself as to eligibility for inclusion in the electoral roll. Such an enquiry does not amount to a

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## LG Sinha Reviews Progress Of Ongoing Nasha Mukt Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan



**SRINAGAR, MAY 27:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday directed the J&K Police and UT Administration to further intensify the crackdown against the narco-terror ecosystem operating with in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The Lieutenant Governor was chairing a high-level meeting with the senior officials at Lok Bhavan Srinagar. The Lieutenant Governor took appraisal of the progress of the ongoing Nasha Mukt Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan and emphasized the need for a stronger anti-drug mechanism. He directed the Director General of Police to further strengthen the Anti-Narcotics Task Force

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## Rs 1,150 Crore Cocaine seized off Gujarat coast in International Drug Bust; 3 Foreigners Held

**AHMEDABAD, May 27:** In a major drug haul, the Gujarat ATS and the Indian Coast Guard have busted an international trafficking network, seizing 115 kg of cocaine valued at nearly Rs 1,150 crore from a vessel off Mundra port, and apprehended three foreign nationals, officials said on Wednesday. The consignment travelled through Latin America, Mexico, the United States and Karachi (in Pakistan) before the cargo vessel 'Europe' anchored near Mundra port in Kutch district. Gujarat's Director General of Police KLN Rao said at a press confer-

ence here. According to one of the accused, the contraband was loaded onto the vessel in Brazil and secretly hidden in the motor room in November last year without the knowledge of other crew members, the Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) said. While a Tanzanian national named Jama Nasir Omar was arrested from the boat, the Gujarat ATS, with help from Delhi police, apprehended from the national capital the Dwarka area two other foreign nationals who were supposed to take the delivery, he said. Search was on

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## Demolish all illegal structures within 15 Km of International Border: Amit Shah

**NEW DELHI, May 27:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah has directed the authorities to strictly enforce a 'zero tolerance' policy against illegal constructions within 15 km of the country's borders and demolish all such structures that have come up over the years.



The Ministry of Home Affairs has assigned enhanced responsibility to the district magistrates to ensure legal and financial compliance of banking transactions in the border areas by all banks, verify big business establishments, examine their fund-

ing sources, track mule accounts and false companies, identify fake Aadhaar cards and control cross-border smuggling officials said. Chaiting a security review meeting in Bikaner on Tuesday, Shah assessed security related issues concern-

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## ED Raids Ex-Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan's House, Others In CMRL-Linked Money Laundering Case

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, May 27:** The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday conducted searches at the residences of former Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his family members as part of its money laundering probe linked to the CMRL case involving his daughter, officials said.



A total of 10 premises in the capital city, Ernakulam, Kannur and Bengaluru (Karnataka) were covered under the raids that began around 7 am accompanied by a security escort provided by CAPF personnel. The searched premises included the rental house

of the 81-year-old former chief minister located at the Bakery Junction area here, the Kozhikode residence of his son-in-law and former minister P.A. Mohammed Riyas, a Vijayan family house in Kannur and other locations linked to "key persons" of Cochin Minerals And Rutile Ltd (CMRL), a private entity. The action was taken under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), officials said. Vijayan's house has been searched as the probe

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## BRIEF NEWS

### Govt Orders inquiry into Bhargi-Kunan road Tragedy, Suspends Two Engineers

**SRINAGAR, MAY 27:** The Jammu and Kashmir Government has constituted an inquiry committee to investigate the tragic incident that occurred during the execution of work on the Bhargi to Kunan road in Block Gandoh of Doda district. As per Government Order No. 184-PW(R&B) of 2026 dated May 26, Engineer-in-Chief (Secretary Technical), Public Works (R&B) Department, Er. Purshotam Kumar, has been appointed as the Inquiry Officer to probe the incident related to the construction of a 6.00-meter span culvert on the road stretch. The government has directed the Inquiry Officer to submit a detailed report

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### 10 Months on, Locals rely on Boats as washed-away bridge leave Jammu Villages cut off

**NAGROTA, MAY 27:** Nearly ten months after flash floods washed away a crucial bridge over the Tawi river connecting several villages and the famous Raja Pad Devta shrine on the outskirts of Jammu, hundreds of residents of the Katal Batal area in Nagrota continue to rely on boats for their daily commute, with the impending monsoon season triggering fresh fears of prolonged isolation. The bridge was the sole road link for several hamlets with populations of 4,000 to 5,000 and a major access route to the revered temple. It was swept away during devastating

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## Technology Must Be Used For Improving Trust Between Citizens, Institutions: Jitendra Singh

**NEW DELHI, May 27:** Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Wednesday told a group of civil servants that technology must be used not merely for efficiency but also for improving trust between citizens and institutions. Interacting with trainee officers of the 2024 batch of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) here, he said modern governance no longer functions through rigid hierarchies and one-way communication. Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel, encouraged the officers to remain open-



minded learners throughout their careers, saying the ability to adapt, unlearn and evolve is now more valuable than static knowledge. He said the nature of

administration has changed significantly in the last decade with greater emphasis on transparency, responsiveness and citizen participation. Referring to Prime

Minister Narendra Modi's philosophy of "maximum governance, minimum government," the minister said technology must be used not merely for efficiency but also for improving trust between citizens and institutions. Singh said future administrators would be expected to combine technological competence with empathy, sensitivity and ethical public conduct. During the interaction, the minister also exchanged views with the trainee officers on district

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## Justice Arun Palli Recommended For Supreme Court, Supersedes Himachal Pradesh CJ

**Srinagar, May 27:** The Supreme Court Collegium has recommended the elevation of Chief Justice Arun Palli of the Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court as a Judge of the Supreme Court, superseding Himachal Pradesh High Court Chief Justice Gurmeet Singh Sandhawalia. Both judges belong to the parent Punjab and Haryana High Court. The recommendation was made during the Collegium meetings held on May 22 and May 27, 2026, where in five names were cleared



for appointment as Judges of the apex court. Justice Arun Palli, currently serving as the Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, was earlier elevated from

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## Tourists Dash to Shimla as Plains Sizzle; 70K Vehicles reach city in 72 Hours



**SHIMLA, MAY 27:** Tourists are flocking to the hill destinations in Himachal Pradesh to beat the scorching heat in the plains, with as many as 6,31,000 vehicles reaching Shimla in the past 24 days, including 70,000 in the last 72 hours, officials said. With the summer tourist season yet to reach its peak, Shimla, the "Queen of Hills", is already choked with vehicles, leading to frequent traffic jams and prompting police to make a special appeal to tourists to

adhere to traffic rules and conduct themselves as responsible citizens. During the past 24 days, 3,70,000 vehicles reached the state capital from the Chandigarh-Kalka side, while a sizable number was routed via Kinnaur, Bilaspur and Kullu. The sudden surge in tourist inflow has further compounded the perennial parking problem in Shimla, ASP Abhishek told PTI Videos on Tuesday. Over the past week, 1,54,450

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## L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena launches Sindhu Jal Samridhhi Abhiyan to address seasonal water scarcity in Ladakh

**Leh, May 27:** An innovative Rock Check Dam, the first of its kind in India, aimed at achieving long-term water and agricultural sustainability in Ladakh, was today inaugurated by Lieutenant Governor, Vinai Kumar Saxena, at Upshi in Leh. The Rock Check Dam, built over River Indus, 44 km from Leh, at an altitude of 11,400 feet, has been conceptualised by L-G Saxena as an eco-friendly, cost-effective and a sustainable remedy to Ladakh's water crisis.

### Under project, first-ever rock check dam over River Indus inaugurated in Leh



This rock check dam has been built using large rocks, sourced from the riverbed and the surroundings, to hold the water in the river. L-G Saxena has named the project as "Sindhu Jal Samridhhi Abhiyan (SISA)" that aims at augmenting the water level by creating rock check dams at specific locations of the river, particularly the narrow passages where tapping the river water is relatively easier and more effective. The location of the check dam is identified in

consultation with the villagers/locals. The Lieutenant Governor has directed the Irrigation & Flood Control Department to construct three more such check dams within a month on experiment basis. In many parts of Ladakh, the Indus River becomes too shallow. As a result, standard motors and pumps fail to lift water from the river, to the uphill fields. This is where these rock check dams would play a crucial role.

These check dams would create a big pondage area storing ample water for use during the peak sowing season. Because the rocks have been sourced directly from the riverbed, there is no use of cement or concrete in the construction of this check dam. This makes it a completely eco-friendly project. The L-G said that the Sindhu Jal Samridhhi Abhiyan would help improve irrigation facilities, strengthen

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## Cabinet Approves Extension Of Sarthak-PDS With Central Outlay Of Rs 25,530 Cr

**NEW DELHI, May 27:** The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved extension of 'Sarthak-PDS' scheme, with an outlay of Rs 25,530 crore to provide assistance to state agencies for intra-state movement of food grains and modernisation of public distribution system. The Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the 'Scheme for Assistance in Ration Transport and Handling-Income with Automation in PDS' (Sarthak-PDS) as an umbrella scheme, in the 16th Finance Commission cycle award period, with an outlay of Rs 25,530 crore as the Central share. The scheme will be implemented during five years - April 2026 to March 2031, informed I&B Minister Ashwin Vaishnaw while briefing media about the Cabinet decision.

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## EC can...

determination of citizenship in the strict sense, and any action taken pursuant thereto is confined to electoral consequences alone. "The Court further said, "The consequence of such a determination is correspondingly limited. It affects the individual's entitlement to be included in the electoral roll, and thereby their right to participate in the electoral process. It does not, however, operate to divest the individual of claims of citizenship, nor does it foreclose a determination of that question by the Competent Authority under the Citizenship Act. Upholding the constitutionality of the SIR exercise undertaken by the Election Commission of India, Chief Justice Surya Kant, speaking for the Bench, said, "The Impugned SIR exercise neither stands in direct conflict with the RP Act and the 1960 Rules, nor does it detract from the constitutional imperative of free and fair elections. It is, instead, an exercise traceable to Section 21(3) of the RP Act read with Article 324 of the Constitution, undertaken to advance the very objective which Part XV of the Constitution is designed to protect. "Stating that the SIR exercise was founded upon a "legitimate and constitutionally grounded purpose" of restoring the "accuracy, completeness, and integrity of the electoral rolls", the 124-page judgment said, "The measures adopted bear a rational nexus to the objective sought to be achieved, are not manifestly excessive, and are accompanied by sufficient procedural safeguards to prevent arbitrary exclusion. "On the proportionality of the exercise, the judgment said, "Having regard to the nature of the problem sought to be addressed, the scale of the exercise undertaken, and the procedural safeguards incorporated during its implementation, the measures adopted by the Commission cannot be said to be disproportionate to the object sought to be achieved." On the issue of citizenship, the judgment said that in cases where the Commission is not satisfied that a person meets the statutory conditions for inclusion in the electoral roll, it would be incumbent upon it to refer such an individual to the competent authority within the Central government for adjudication in accordance with law. "The Commission's determination, being confined to electoral purposes, cannot assume finality on the question of citizenship. Any deletion effected on this ground shall, therefore, remain subject to the outcome of such adjudication by the appropriate authority," the judgment said. In respect of people excised from the electoral rolls in 2003, the judgment said, "Regarding persons whose names have been deleted from the 2003 roll on account of the Commission being of the opinion that they are not citizens, the Commission shall refer such cases within four weeks to the Competent Authority under the Citizenship Act, 1955, for adjudication of their citizenship." The Court further directed that the Competent Authority should take a decision in accordance with law, preferably before the next Parliamentary, Assembly or local body elections, whichever is earlier, after giving notice and an opportunity of hearing to the deleted individuals. It added that if such individuals are held to be citizens, their names shall be restored to the electoral rolls. In addition, all persons domiciled in Bihar whose names were erroneously deleted on the ground that they were absent, dead, shifted or duplicated would be entitled to challenge the Commission's decision through judicial review.

## LG Sinha...

by deploying additional manpower. Reviewing the rehabilitation measures for drug abuse victims, the Lieutenant Governor directed for scaling up the number of police and health department-run de-addiction and rehabilitation centers across the UT, ensuring regular monitoring by health officials for proper counseling and treatment. He further directed for identifying and monitoring vulnerable locations like abandoned buildings and river bunds to prevent their misuse for narcotics-related activities. He called for wider public disclosure of high-profile drug peddlers to deter narcotics-related crimes and create greater public awareness.

The Lieutenant Governor entrusted the School and Higher Education Departments to organise sports tournaments and youth engagement programs to steer youth away from drug abuse. The meeting was attended by Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Nalin Prabhat, DGP; Shailendra Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department; Anil Kumar Singh, Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works (R&B) Department; Ashwani Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Power Development Department; Chandraker Bharti, Principal Secretary, Home Department; Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Ram Niwas Sharma, Commissioner/Secretary, School Education Department; M Raju, Commissioner Secretary, Health & Medical Education; Vikranjit Singh, Commissioner Secretary Industries & Commerce and other senior officials.

## Rs 1,150 Crore...

for another suspect to a Tanzanian national, who jumped into the sea during the operation, the DGP added. GPS devices, satellite communication equipment and AirTags were also seized from the consignment bags, indicating the contraband may have been electronically tracked during transit, officials said. The Anti-Terrorist Squad and the Coast Guard jointly carried out the operation following specific intelligence inputs gathered by an ATS officer about a large consignment of cocaine being smuggled from Brazil via the maritime route, Rao said. Acting on the intelligence, ATS officers sailed to Mundra on the night of May 25 and coordinated with the Coast Guard for a joint operation. "In the early hours of May 26, the joint team intercepted the vessel 'Europa' at the outer anchorage and initiated a search operation," Rao said. During the operation, the team learned that six bags containing narcotics had been concealed aboard the ship. As the Coast Guard vessel approached, two crew members on deck allegedly threw several heavy bags into the sea. Officials said five floating bags were successfully recov-

ered from the water despite poor visibility, while one bag could not be traced. Preliminary testing of samples using a drug detection kit confirmed the substance to be cocaine, they said.

A total of around 115 packets weighing nearly 115 kg were recovered from the five bags, the officials said. The estimated value of the seized cocaine is around Rs 1,150 crore, calculated at roughly Rs 10 crore per kg in the international market, they said.

The ATS team also recovered four Apple AirTags from the seized bags, indicating the narcotics consignment may have been electronically tracked during transit, Rao said. Two Tanzanian nationals aboard the vessel, identified as Ngingite Nassoro Jumanne and Juma Nasir Omar, were allegedly transporting the cocaine shipment, the DGP said.

The contraband was meant to be handed over at sea and delivered further to two Delhi-based persons — Kelvin Chukwuama and Bairunge James — who are Nigerian and Ugandan nationals, respectively, an ATS release said. "Currently, three accused are in police custody — one apprehended from the vessel and the two intended receivers detained from Delhi," Rao said. The ATS teams, with assistance from Delhi Police, caught two suspects from the Dwarka area of Delhi and were bringing them to Gujarat for further investigation, he said. One of the crew members working in the vessel's steam motor room, who had allegedly hidden the cocaine consignment inside the ship, jumped into the sea after spotting the ATS and Coast Guard teams, the DGP said. Search operations involving the Coast Guard are still underway to trace the missing suspect, Tanzanian national Jumanne, he added.

During interrogation, Omar disclosed that the cocaine had been loaded onto the vessel in Brazil and secretly concealed in the motor room in November 2025 without the knowledge of the other crew members, the ATS release said. Omar further told that he was supposed to deliver the consignment as instructed by his handler, it said.

On questions about the narcotics' final destination after Delhi and whether the drugs were intended for distribution within India or abroad, Rao said further details would emerge only after sustained interrogations of the accused. Officials also recovered GPS and satellite communication devices concealed inside the boat's steering room during searches carried out after boarding the vessel.

The seized contraband and related electronic equipment have been taken into custody and further investigation under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act is underway.

The operation also involved personnel from the Special Operations Group (SOG) in Kochi-Bhat, Coastal Police, Marine Police and the Mundra Port Authority. Officials described the seizure as a major success against international maritime drug smuggling and an example of close coordination between multiple security and enforcement agencies.

This was the 15th successful anti-narcotics operation jointly conducted by the ICG and ATS Gujarat in the last five years, they added.

## Demolish...

border districts — Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Barmer, Sri Ganganagar and Phalodi — were present at the meeting. In a statement, the home ministry said the border districts have been directed to carry out an in-depth study of the sources, patterns and networks behind crimes and the drug menace, and to develop lasting solutions so that these problems do not resurface. Shah stressed formulating a 360-degree security cover for every border district involving citizens, state machinery and security agencies.

The home minister called for strict enforcement of the zero tolerance policy against illegal constructions, particularly within 0 to 15 km of the internal borders, and to demolish all such structures, officials said.

He underscored the importance of a coordinated approach to border management involving the BSF, CBN, NCB and the state machinery to address issues of infiltration, narcotics smuggling, encroachment, terror financing and other trans-border crimes.

"Emphasis was laid on the successful implementation of the Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP)-II for strengthening last mile governance, curbing economic crimes, fulfilling infrastructural gaps and supporting border population," the ministry statement said.

At the meeting, Shah also directed to ensure 100 per cent saturation of all government schemes in the border villages, and called for the effective use of the '1930' call centre to tackle cybercrimes.

"A review and feedback on these issues will be undertaken again after two months; therefore, the districts will have to ensure result-oriented action," the statement said.

## ED Raids...

involves his daughter Veena Vijayan, they said. The former CM was at his house during the searches. The officials added that documents related to investments and fixed deposits were recovered during the searches.

As the ED team was leaving Vijayan's residence, violence broke out. Suspected CPI(M) workers gathered outside his Bakery Junction residence who were protesting the raid. The situation escalated as some protesters allegedly blocked the vehicle carrying ED officials and three stones at it. Police and central security personnel struggled to control the crowd. The vehicle, which also had women officials on board, was allegedly targeted during the incident. The windshield of a vehicle was also broken in the incident.

ED officials said they would lodge a police complaint regarding the "attack" on their teams. The veteran CPI(M) leader later alleged that the searches at his premises were part of a targeted crackdown on opposition leaders across the country.

Speaking to reporters after ED officials left, Vijayan said such actions would not weaken him or the CPI(M). "This is only a beginning. Nobody should harbour the illusion that such actions can intimidate or weaken us," he said.

Vijayan was unseated from power after the Congress-led UDF won the Assembly elections in Kerala last month. The two-term former chief minister (2016-2026) has now been nominated for the position of leader of the opposition in the Kerala Assembly by his party.

The ED probe pertains to an allegation that CMRL made fraudulent payments worth Rs 2.78 crore to Veena's company Exalogic Solutions Private Limited under the guise of IT Consultancy Services.

Another company named Empower India Capital Investment Private Limited (EICPL), operated by CMRL MD Sasidharan Kartha, also extended Rs 50 lakh worth of loans to Exalogic despite the company (Exalogic) failing to make timely repayments, according to the ED.

The agency claims that the management of CMRL (led by Kartha) and Veena generated "proceeds of crime" in this process.

The central agency launched the action after the Kerala High Court on Tuesday dismissed a writ petition filed by CMRL seeking to quash the ED proceedings in the case. The court held that the initiation of the PMLA investigation is valid saying the SFIO prosecution complaint was the predicate offence for starting ED proceedings.

The agency filed the PMLA case based on the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) prosecution complaint filed before a court in Ernakulam in April 2025. The SFIO is the investigation arm of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

CMRL drew the attention of central probe agencies after it was raided by the Income Tax Department in January 2019 during which certain alleged fake expenses to the extent of about Rs 120 crore were identified. Officials said these "fake" expenses were admitted by CMRL before the Income Tax Settlement Commission and later a complaint was made to the SFIO.

The SFIO said in its prosecution complaint that fictitious cash expenses of Rs 182 crore were made in CMRL over a span of 15 years and that it paid Rs 91 crore towards transport services to the companies owned by the Kartha family.

## Technology...

administration, governance challenges, leadership responsibilities and changing public expectations from civil servants.

He encouraged them to maintain neutrality, remain accessible to citizens and focus on meaningful public outcomes rather than visibility. He said that the government is committed to Describing India@2047 as a national mission rather than merely a milestone, Singh said the officers of this generation would become the principal drivers of India's rise in the coming decades.

He urged them to approach public service with humility, discipline and a larger sense of national purpose.

Referring to nearly 41 per cent representation of women officers in the 2024 batch of IAS, marking one of the highest-ever gender participation in the history of the service, Singh said the changing character of India's civil services mirrors the transformation taking place across the country, where access to opportunity is expanding beyond traditional social and regional boundaries and young Indians are shaping a new governance culture driven by aspiration, technology and accountability.

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The interaction formed part of the assistant secretary programme, under which 184 IAS officers of the 2024 batch have been attached with 49 ministries and departments of the Government of India for an eight-week period from May 4 to June 25, 2026, to gain first-hand exposure to policy making, coordination mechanisms and administrative functioning at the Centre. Singh said the Assistant Secretary programme, introduced under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, has fundamentally changed the early administrative exposure available to young IAS officers.

Recalling the evolution of the initiative over the last decade, he said the programme has helped create a generation of officers that is more confident, policy-oriented and institutionally connected from the very beginning of their service.

Singh also spoke about the changing regional profile of civil services selections, noting that states which earlier had limited representation are now producing large numbers of successful candidates, while several traditionally dominant regions are witnessing a shift in career preferences towards emerging sectors and global opportunities. He said these changes indicate the rise of a more aspirational and dynamic India. The minister said 78 officers in the present batch came from engineering backgrounds, alongside professionals from medicine, law, management and humanities.

He said that governance today increasingly requires technological understanding and interdisciplinary thinking, particularly at a time when government programmes are becoming more data-driven, digital and innovation-oriented.

## Justice...

the Punjab and Haryana High Court and took oath as the Justice of the J&K and Ladakh High Court in April 2025.

The Collegium's recommendation assumes significance as Justice Pali has been preferred over Justice Gurmeet Singh Sandhawalia, Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court, despite both tracing their parent High Court to Punjab and Haryana.

With Justice Pali's proposed elevation, the representation of the Punjab and Haryana High Court in the Supreme Court is set to increase further. At present, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice A.G. Masih also hail from the same High Court.

Apart from Justice Arun Palli, the Collegium has also recommended the names of Justice Sheel Nagu, Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court; Justice Shree Chandrashekar, Chief Justice of Bombay High Court;

Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva, Chief Justice of Madhya Pradesh High Court; and senior advocate V. Mohana for appointment as Judges of the Supreme Court.

## Tourists...

vehicles entered Shimla, with nearly 70,000 arriving in just the last 72 hours, mounting pressure on the traffic infrastructure, the ASP said.

"In response to the ever-increasing vehicular pressure, special arrangements have been made across the city. Shimla has been divided into five zones and the responsibility to manage traffic has been entrusted to a gazetted officer in each," the officer said.

"Volunteers are also being enlisted to assist in managing traffic, while police are facilitating the use of alternative routes to ease congestion within the city," he said. Accordingly, vehicles heading to Upper Shimla are being diverted via the Shoghi-Mehli route, the officer said. Anticipating a further increase in tourist inflow from June, extra police force would be made available after the ongoing panchayat polls are over on May 31, officials said.

Normally, the peak tourist season starts in Himachal in the first week of June, which has been advanced this year due to heatwave-like conditions sweeping large parts of north and western India, including Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and the Capital Delhi.

## L-G Vinal...

water security and support sustainable agriculture in remote villages. "It is another innovative and eco-friendly project, aimed at achieving long-term water security in Ladakh after the successful launch of Project Him Sarovar. The Rock Check Dam has been conceived as a model of sustainable water and agricultural security, while preserving the fragile ecological character of Ladakh's ecosystem. The initiative has received encouraging response from villagers," L-G Sh. Saxena said.

Unlike the engineered cement-concrete check dams, a rock check dam is a semi-permanent barrier built across the river channel. It slows down the velocity of the water and creates large pondage area behind, while allowing the excess water to flow through, creating a cascading effect and increasing oxidation in the river. The rock check dam at Upsihi is nearly 200 feet long. It has the base-width of 30 feet on the river bed for greater stability, while its top deck is 15 feet wide and is 5 feet high from the riverbed. The rock check dam has been designed to withstand the high pressure of the water. At present, the flow of water in the Indus is approx. 25 Cusec (Cubic feet per second) that would increase nearly eight-times to 200 Cusec during July-August. The design of the rock weir would ensure that it does not get washed away when the volume of water increases substantially. Remarkably, construction of this check dam has been completed in just seven days — from 12 — 18 May 2026 — during which the L-G conducted three site visits to oversee the construction of this project. Nearly 180 MT of rocks, each weighing 500 KG to 10 MT, have been meticulously interlocked within the riverbed to construct this check dam. The rock check dam has successfully created a vast pondage area, stretching up to 1500 feet (500 meter) upstream and storing nearly 40 million litres of water. The depth of the water on the edges of the river is 4.5 feet, while in the middle of the river the depth goes up to 10 feet.

water security and support sustainable agriculture in remote villages. "It is another innovative and eco-friendly project, aimed at achieving long-term water security in Ladakh after the successful launch of Project Him Sarovar. The Rock Check Dam has been conceived as a model of sustainable water and agricultural security, while preserving the fragile ecological character of Ladakh's ecosystem. The initiative has received encouraging response from villagers," L-G Sh. Saxena said. Unlike the engineered cement-concrete check dams, a rock check dam is a semi-permanent barrier built across the river channel. It slows down the velocity of the water and creates large pondage area behind, while allowing the excess water to flow through, creating a cascading effect and increasing oxidation in the river. The rock check dam at Upsihi is nearly 200 feet long. It has the base-width of 30 feet on the river bed for greater stability, while its top deck is 15 feet wide and is 5 feet high from the riverbed. The rock check dam has been designed to withstand the high pressure of the water. At present, the flow of water in the Indus is approx. 25 Cusec (Cubic feet per second) that would increase nearly eight-times to 200 Cusec during July-August. The design of the rock weir would ensure that it does not get washed away when the volume of water increases substantially. Remarkably, construction of this check dam has been completed in just seven days — from 12 — 18 May 2026 — during which the L-G conducted three site visits to oversee the construction of this project. Nearly 180 MT of rocks, each weighing 500 KG to 10 MT, have been meticulously interlocked within the riverbed to construct this check dam. The rock check dam has successfully created a vast pondage area, stretching up to 1500 feet (500 meter) upstream and storing nearly 40 million litres of water. The depth of the water on the edges of the river is 4.5 feet, while in the middle of the river the depth goes up to 10 feet.

## Govt Orders...

within 15 days from the date of issuance of the order. Meanwhile, pending inquiry into their conduct, the government has placed two officials under suspension with immediate effect. The suspended officials include Er. Naveen Kumar, Incharge Assistant Executive Engineer, and Er. Intiaz Ahmed Shah, Junior Engineer of PMGSY Division Tharhi Sub Division Gandoh.

The order further states that during the suspension period, both officers shall remain attached with the Office of the Chief Engineer, PMGSY Jammu, and will be entitled to suspension allowance as per rules. The order was issued by Financial Commissioner (Additional Chief Secretary), Public Works (R&B) Department, Anil Kumar Singh IAS.

## 10 Months...

flows last year. Since then, villagers, students, government employees, labourers, traders and pilgrims have been forced to cross the river in boats to reach schools, workplaces and markets.

Residents said their lives come to a virtual standstill whenever the Tawi swells during the rains, as boat services are suspended for safety reasons.

"We are facing the most difficult period of our lives. For more than ten months, we have remained disconnected after our bridge, the only road connectivity to several villages, was washed away in flash floods. The government has done nothing during this period," said Rajesh Kumar, a resident of Katal Batal.

The villagers alleged that repeated assurances from ministers, political leaders and government representatives have failed to translate into action, leaving the area cut off and its residents struggling with daily hardships.

"For the first several months after the bridge collapsed, there was only one boat available for students, employees, labourers and traders. Now there are three boats, which cater to hundreds of people from several villages every day," said Santosh Singh.

He said MLAs promised to connect the bridge here on the Tawi, but did nothing till now. "We are ignored and isolated. It is a shame from this government," he added.

The boat service, currently the only viable means of connectivity, was introduced to ease the daily commute and prevent the complete isolation of the affected villages after the bridge was destroyed.

However, residents fear the arrangement will become ineffective once the monsoon rains intensify and water levels rise in the Tawi River. "The bridge is broken, there is water everywhere, so there is no way to go. We request the authorities to look into the matter. Many people have visited the area and made promises, but no one has done anything," said Anju Gupta, a pilgrim from Jammu.

## Ashok Koul addresses BJP SC Morcha meeting on Jan Sampark Abhiyan, welfare programmes

Jammu, May 27: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Jammu & Kashmir Scheduled Caste (SC) Morcha convened an organizational meeting at party headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, to discuss upcoming programmes, including the Jan Sampark Abhiyan, and to strengthen the Morcha structure up to the booth level. BJP J&K General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul chiefly addressed the meeting. He was accompanied by BJP J&K Vice-President and Morcha Prabhari Bharat Bhushan, SC Morcha President Dharminder Kumar, Morcha Seh-Prabhari Jagdish Bhagat, and Morcha General Secretaries Mohinder Bhagat and Rahul Hans. Senior Morcha leaders, office bearers, and prominent SC Morcha activists from various districts attended the meeting. Addressing the gathering, Ashok Koul called upon the SC Morcha



leadership to intensify efforts for further strengthening the party at the grassroots level. Stressing the significance of the Jan Sampark Abhiyan, he directed the Morcha leaders to constitute teams across all 162 Mandals and further extend the organizational network to every booth to ensure that the party's message effectively reaches every section of society. Koul emphasized the need to conduct extensive public outreach pro-

grammes highlighting the achievements of the Narendra Modi-led government during the past 12 years of good governance. He particularly stressed taking the landmark developmental initiatives, welfare schemes, and transformative policies of the Modi government to the masses. Ashok Koul further asked the Morcha leaders to organize programmes commemorating the birth anniversaries and Nirvan Diwas of revered Gurus and saints with active participation from all sections of society to promote social harmony and communal unity. Reiterating the party's commitment towards social cohesion and public welfare, he also directed the Morcha leaders to actively organize World Environment Day, Jan Kalyan Shivirs, participation in cleanliness campaigns, awareness regarding the PM Surya Ghar initiative, and other social welfare activities in the coming days. Dharminder Kumar, speaking on the occasion, reaffirmed the commitment of the SC Morcha leadership and activists to work tirelessly for strengthening the BJP across Jammu and Kashmir. He said that the Morcha workers would continue to take forward the mission of public welfare and inclusive development under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

## Army strengthens Anti-Drug awareness through community outreach in Rajouri



Rajouri, May 27: The Indian Army conducted two awareness initiatives under the ongoing Nasha Mukti Abhiyan at Gunda in Rajouri and Surankote in Poonch to promote a healthy and drug-free society. At Gunda, an interactive session was organised with Panchs, Sarpanchs and Numberdars to sensi-

At Surankote, a door-to-door campaign was conducted to reach households in remote border areas. Army representatives interacted with residents, distributed anti-drug pamphlets and educated families about preventive measures against narcotics. Parents were encouraged to guide and monitor their children, while villagers were urged to remain vigilant and report suspected drug-peddling activities to the authorities. Both initiatives witnessed active participation and a positive response from the local population, who appreciated the Indian Army's continued efforts towards social welfare, youth empowerment and building a drug-free society.

## Indian Army organised a drawing competition under Nasha Mukti Abhiyan at Jourian



Akhnoor: 27 May 2026 As part of the ongoing Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyan, the Indian Army organised a drawing competition at Gowr Girls High School, Imthar, Akhnoor. The initiative witnessed enthusiastic participation by girl students, who expressed their ideas, creativity and vision for a Nasha Mukti J&K through art. The competition aimed to spread awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and encourage young minds to become active messengers of a healthy and drug-free

society. The vibrant artwork reflected the confidence, awareness and determination of the students, highlighting the spirit of Nari Shakti and their role in shaping a progressive future. The Indian Army encouraged the students to promote positive values, discipline, education and social responsibility among their peers. Winners were felicitated for their creativity and meaningful messages. The event reaffirmed that empowered girls are true torchbearers of a stronger, healthier and brighter Bharat.

## Vikram Randhawa listens to public issues at BJP headquarters

Jammu, 27 May 2026:

Senior BJP leader and MLA Bahu Assembly Constituency Ch. Vikram Randhawa listened to the grievances and issues of the public during a public grievance camp at the BJP headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu. BJP Swachhata Abhiyan Incharge Er. Dil Bahadur Singh Jamwal and Abhiyan Co-Incharge Er. TK Sharma were also present on the occasion. Several deputations from different areas met Vikram



Randhawa and apprised him of various civic and developmental issues affecting their localities. A deputation from Gangyal raised the issue of leakages in the rising main, causing inconvenience to the residents and affecting water supply in the area. Deputations from Sanjay Nagar, Sector-2, Channi,

Meena Mohalla Trikuta Nagar, and Deva Palace Preet Nagar complained about the acute scarcity of drinking water and demanded immediate intervention from the concerned department. Similarly, deputations from Gandhi Nagar and Preet Nagar Dargana highlighted the poor condition of lanes and

drains and sought their early repair and maintenance. Residents from Trikuta Nagar, Sanjay Nagar, and Preet Nagar also requested repair and restoration of damaged street lights in their respective localities. A deputation from Mahore urged the MLA to take up the matter regarding deployment of a

muters and residents alike. Vikram Randhawa, speaking on the occasion, assured the visiting deputations that all genuine public issues would be taken up with the concerned departments on priority. He said that the BJP-led government remains committed to ensuring better civic amenities and development for every section of society. He stated that public outreach programmes help in bridging the gap between the administration and the people, while enabling timely redressal of public grievances. Er. Dil Bahadur Singh Jamwal said that BJP workers remain actively engaged in addressing public concerns at the grassroots level. Er. TK Sharma stressed the need for coordinated efforts between departments to ensure prompt resolution of civic issues.

## Chor Chor Mausere Bhai: Gaurav Gupta slams China-Pakistan nexus over J&K remarks

J&K was, is and will Remain India's: Gaurav

Jammu, May 27: BJP spokesperson and Convenor, International Affairs, Gaurav Gupta on Wednesday launched a blistering attack on Pakistan and China over their joint statement on Jammu & Kashmir, calling the two countries "chor chor mausere bhai" and accusing them of conspiring against India's sovereignty through "lies, illegal occupation and propaganda." Gupta said the China-Pakistan nexus stands fully exposed before the world, with both nations attempting to interfere in India's internal affairs while themselves violating interna-



tional norms and territorial integrity. "Pakistan is a global hub of terrorism and China is shamelessly backing its anti-India agenda for strategic gains. Both are united in their hatred for India and their illegal designs in Jammu & Kashmir," Gupta said. He asserted that Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh are

inseparable parts of India and warned that no amount of joint statements, propaganda or diplomatic gimmicks can alter this fact. "Pakistan first illegally occupied Indian land and now China is trying to legitimise that occupation through CPEC projects in PoJK. India will never tolerate any attempt to compromise its sovereignty. Both countries should remember that Jammu & Kashmir belongs to India and will remain India's forever," he said. Gupta praised the Ministry of External Affairs for issuing a "strong and befitting reply" to Islamabad and Beijing, saying India has once again sent a clear message that third-party interference in Jammu & Kashmir will not be accepted under any circumstances. He further said Pakistan is repeatedly raising Kashmir to divert global attention from its collapsing economy, political instability and contin-

## BSP begins a series of review meetings: Darshan Rana

Jammu, May 27: The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has begun a series of review meetings with committees formed at the Sector and booth levels in Jammu and Kashmir, in preparation for the District Development Council (DDC) and Panchayat elections. On Wednesday, BSP State President Darshan Rana launched the review meetings. Addressing the crucial review meeting under the Chairmanship by Party Assembly in-charge Yash Paul Bhagat, Bahujan Samaj Party State President Darshan Rana stated that the purpose of the review meetings is to energize party workers so



that the party can participate strongly in all upcoming elections in Jammu and Kashmir and perform well. Rana stated that review meetings have been initiated at the sector and booth levels in the Jammu Zone, and that review meetings will be held in other assembly constituencies in the coming days. He stated

that the party will participate strongly in the DDC, DDC, and Panchayat elections in Jammu and Kashmir, and will strive to nominate promising candidates who can serve the people after winning. During the meeting, Zone Incharge Charanjit Chargoira, stated in his address that the party,

## SMVDU Organizes NCC Rank Ceremony to Honour Cadets with Leadership Roles

Katra, May 27: A Rank Ceremony for NCC cadets was organized at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University with great enthusiasm and pride. The ceremony marked the formal conferment of ranks upon cadets in recognition of their dedication, discipline, and leadership qualities. Col. Sumit Kumar, Commanding Officer, 6 J&K Bn NCC, formally awarded ranks to the cadets. Senior Under Officer (S/O) ranks were conferred upon Cadet Karthik and Cadet Dhanu, while Junior Under Officer (J/UO) ranks were awarded to Cadet Raman and Cadet Danish. In addition, ranks



of Sergeant, Corporal, and Lance Corporal were also bestowed upon deserving cadets during the ceremony. Speaking on the occasion, Lieut. (Dr.) Varun Dutta stated that these ranks carry significant responsibility and provide cadets with opportunities to demonstrate leadership, discipline, and commitment towards the NCC and society. Prof. (Dr.) Pragati Kumar, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of SMVDU, and Sh. Ajay Kumar Sharma conveyed their best wishes to the cadets and appreciated their dedication and achievements. They encouraged the cadets to continue striving for excellence and uphold the values of discipline, patriotism, and leadership.

## BJP celebrates 12 years of Vikas, Vishwas and Jan Kalyan: Rekha Mahajan reviews preparations in Samba

Samba, May 27: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) organised an important organisational meeting at Samba organised by District President Asha Rani to review and finalise preparations for the forthcoming campaign marking "12 Years of Vikas, Vishwas and Jan Welfare" under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. BJP J&K State Vice President and Prabhari District Samba, Rekha Mahajan, State Secretary and Programme Incharge Arun Sharma, MLA Chander Prakash Ganga, Seh Prabhari Manmohan



Singh, District General Secretaries Rakesh Samyal, Amit Dubey, district office bearers, Mandal presidents, Morcha representatives and senior party functionaries from across the district attended the meeting. Addressing the gathering, Rekha Mahajan

while working for the upliftment of poor, exploited and underprivileged sections of society. She also highlighted the government's focus on women empowerment under "Nari Shakti" welfare schemes for farmers, infrastructure development and welfare initiatives aimed at building a "Viksit Bharat." She directed party leaders and workers to strengthen public outreach at booth, Mandal and district levels and ensure active public participation in every programme. During the meeting, Arun Sharma held detailed discussions regarding the programmes

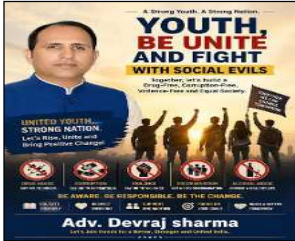
scheduled from June 5 to June 21 across Jammu and Kashmir. He reviewed preparations related to media interactions, special outreach programmes, Jan Kalyan Shivirs, plantation drives, cleanliness campaigns, exhibitions, Pragati Path Yatras, Viksit Bharat Sankalp Conventions, Natural Farming Workshops and International Yoga Day celebrations. Chander Prakash Ganga said the campaign would help connect people with the achievements and welfare schemes of the Central Government.



# Adv. Devraj Sharma launches 'Youth Be Unite' Campaign

**Calls upon youth to fight drugs, corruption, violence and discrimination for a stronger and united India**

JAMMU, MAY 27: Senior BJP leader and advocate Devraj Sharma has launched a youth awareness campaign titled "Youth, Be Unite and Fight With Social Evils", urging youngsters to come together against drug abuse, corruption, violence, discrimination and alcohol addiction to build a stronger and progressive nation. Launched under the slogan "A Strong Youth, A Strong Nation", the campaign seeks to inspire young citizens to actively participate in creating a Drug-Free, Corruption-Free, Violence-Free and Equal Society. The campaign poster prominently carries the message "United Youth, Strong Nation" and appeals



to the younger generation to "Rise, Unite and Bring Positive Change." As part of the initiative, the youth have been encouraged to reject social evils by saying no to drugs, alcohol abuse, corruption, violence and discrimination while adopting a healthy, disciplined and responsible lifestyle. Highlighting the importance of youth participation in nation-building, Adv. Devraj Sharma said the future of the country

depends on the awareness, unity and responsibility of the younger generation. He stressed that youth must channel their energy towards constructive and social causes instead of falling prey to destructive habits. The campaign also outlines five key action points for youngsters — Educate Yourself, Respect Everyone, Support One Another, Focus on Your Goals and Build a Better Tomorrow. Through these messages, the initiative aims to promote social harmony, mutual respect and collective growth among the youth. Highlighting five key social evils, the campaign urges youth to say no to drugs and choose a healthy life over alcohol abuse, say no to corruption and say no to violence, say no to discrimination. A key message displayed in the campaign visual reads, "Together We Can Change Tomorrow," reinforcing the appeal to young citizens to "Be Aware, Be Responsible, Be the Change." Adv. Devraj Sharma said the campaign is intended to motivate and mobilize youth towards positive social transformation and active participation in nation-building. He added that the outreach drive will be carried forward through educational institutions and social platforms to directly engage with young people across society.

# "Eid prayers at all shrines & mosques held amid complete arrangements throughout J&K": Dr Syed Darakhshan



Srinagar, May 27: The Chairperson of Jammu & Kashmir Waqf Board Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi offered Eid Namaz at Dargah Hazratbal where the largest prayer congregation of J&K was held today. After the prayers Andrabi met people and enquired about the facilities made available by the Waqf Board in coordination with many departments involved in preparations. Later Waqf

Chairperson spoke to media and said that she was encouraged by the positive reactions of the people regarding the facilities put in place here and at all other shrines and mosques under Waqf Board control. She said that the feedback from whole of J&K was thrilling for us as a team. "Eid prayer congregations at all shrines & mosques held amid complete arrangements throughout J&K."

Special sermons against drug menace were made all over the UT", said Dr Syed Darakhshan. She mentioned about the release of salaries, pensions of this month in advance by Waqf Board in view of Eid festival. "While we are acting hard on our staff for making required facilities available to the people, we take all bold steps to ensure employees welfare also", said the Chairperson.

# Jhangar Battalion begins early Celebration for 12th International Day of Yoga

Nowshera, May 27: Jhangar Battalion begins celebration for the 12th International Day of Yoga by organising a vibrant yoga event at the Jhangar Battalion base on the occasion of International Day of Yoga.



The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from young boys of nearby villages, reflecting the growing awareness and acceptance of yoga as a means of achieving physical fitness, mental well-being, and social harmony. The programme commenced with a brief introduction highlighting the importance of yoga in maintaining a healthy lifestyle and reducing stress in day-to-day life.

Participants performed various yoga asanas and breathing exercises under guided supervision, promoting the message of unity, discipline, and holistic wellness. The event aimed to encourage the local youth to adopt yoga as a regular practice for improving health, concentration, and overall personality development. The enthusiastic involvement of the participants showcased the strong bond between the security forces and the local community. At the conclusion of the event, participants were motivated to continue practicing yoga regularly and to spread awareness regarding its benefits among their families and peers.

# Farmers highlight irrigation, crop damage issues before Kissan Congress Chairman in Kathua

Kathua, May 27: A deputation of farmers on Wednesday called on JKPC Kissan Congress Chairman Bharat Priye at Nagri Parole in Kathua district and apprised him of several pressing issues affecting the agriculture sector in the region. The farmers highlighted that Nagri Parole, located near the Punjab border and adjoining the Kandi belt, faces unpredictable rainfall and an acute shortage of natural water resources, making irrigation a major challenge for cultivators. They also expressed concern over frequent crop damage caused by wild animals and stray cattle, which continues to pose a serious threat to standing crops and farmers' livelihoods. The deputation further pointed out that erratic weather conditions, including unseasonal



hailstorms and sudden temperature fluctuations, are adversely affecting both traditional and horticultural crops in the area. Farmers also raised concerns regarding shallow soils filled with boulders, shrinking landholdings and excessive dependence on chemical fertilizers, which have collectively

led to declining soil fertility. Addressing the farmers, Bharat Priye stressed the need for systemic improvements in the agriculture sector and encouraged farmers to adopt sustainable and modern farming practices to overcome the prevailing challenges. He urged cultivators to explore high-yield and economically viable alternatives such as bamboo cultivation, mushroom farming and exotic horticulture, which can provide better returns and generate additional employment opportunities for rural youth. He also highlighted the role of local agriculture departments and institutions like Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu in promoting climate-resilient farming practices, including protected cultivation through polyhouses and vermicomposting techniques. Bharat Priye informed the farmers that various government initiatives, including PM-KISAN, subsidized seedlings and soil health cards, are being implemented to support the farming community and promote balanced fertilizer use.

# Jasrotia launches Rs.21 lakh greywater treatment plant, reviews public issues in Ladoli, Sounthal, Logate

Kathua, May 27: In a significant step towards strengthening rural sanitation infrastructure and promoting sustainable water management, BJP MLA from Jasrotia, Rajiv Jasrotia, on Tuesday inaugurated a 15 KLD DEWAT (Decentralized Wastewater Treatment) plant for greywater filtration at Panchayat Hamirpur. Constructed at an estimated cost of ₹21 lakh, the project has been designed to scientifically treat household greywater and facilitate its reuse for non-potable purposes, thereby helping improve sanitation standards and groundwater recharge in the area. The newly commissioned DEWAT facility is expected to play an important role in reducing water pollution and ensuring better utilization of wastewater generated from households. The treated water can be used for irrigation



and other secondary purposes, reducing pressure on freshwater resources while contributing to environmental conservation. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Rajiv Jasrotia emphasized the importance of sustainable water management and public participation in maintaining community assets. He said that the initiative reflects the government's commitment towards rural development and environmental protection. He urged local residents to take collective responsibility for the upkeep of the plant and adopt

water-conservation practices in their daily lives. "The DEWAT system will not only help in improving sanitation but will also create awareness among people regarding the importance of wastewater management and water reuse. Such projects are crucial for ensuring a cleaner and healthier environment in rural areas," Jasrotia said while addressing the gathering.

Following the inauguration programme, the MLA continued his public outreach campaign by holding a series of meetings in different villages under Panchayat Mangloor East. The first interaction was held at Village Ladoli, after which he visited Village Sounthal and Village Logate to directly interact with residents and review developmental requirements in the area.

# Eid outreach strengthens bonds of brotherhood in RS Pura: Badrinath Sharma

RS Pura, May 27: Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party Kissan Wing President Badrinath Sharma today conducted an extensive visit across various areas of the RS Pura constituency on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha and extended warm greetings to the Muslim community, while emphasizing the values of communal harmony, peace

and social brotherhood. During his outreach programme, Sharma interacted with local residents, party workers, social activists and prominent citizens, conveying his heartfelt wishes to the people celebrating the festival. He said that Eid-ul-Adha carries the message of sacrifice, compassion and humanity and serves as an important occasion to strengthen the bonds of unity and mutual respect among all sections of society. Speaking on the occasion, Sharma stated that Jammu and Kashmir has always been known for its rich cultural diversity and communal harmony, adding that it is the collective responsibility of every citizen to preserve and further strengthen this legacy.

NORTHERN RAILWAY		
E-Auction Notice		
The Senior Divisional Commercial Manager (S.D.C.M.) Northern Railway, Ferozpur for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Auction from eligible and registered bidders for the following work under Ferozpur Division.		
Catalogue No.	Auction Start	Name of work
BJP/28/2026	08.06.2026 at 11:00 Hrs.	Allocation of contract for leasing of panel space in Train No. 5411 compartment 348101/1, 12/1861/1, 15136/F1, 04624/F1, 14625/F1, 10529/F1 & 19614/F1.
BJP/29/2026	10.06.2026 at 11:00 Hrs.	Allocation of contract for leasing of panel space in Train No. 5411 compartment 22662/F1, 19026/F1, 18102/F1, 15523/F1, 19612/F1, 14620/F1, 14620/F1, 14622/F1 & 22465/F1.
BJP/30/2026	10.06.2026 at 11:00 Hrs.	Allocation of contract for packing of new sleepers and other panel packages at J.A.C.
For other details and registration, please visit Railway website www.rweps.gov.in. No. 178-CE-auction/2026 Date: 28.05.2026		
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE		

# Central University of Jammu organized International Conference 'Climate Samvaad 2026' and Inks MoU for Bharat Climate Observation Network Site in Collaboration with IITM Pune

Jammu, 27 May 2026: Under the dynamic leadership of Honorable Vice Chancellor Prof. Sanjeev Jain, and with the blessings and unwavering support of Union Minister Dr. Jiendra Singh Ji, the Central University of Jammu (CUJammu), in collaboration with Tribhuvan University, Nepal, organized the three-day international conference, "CLIMATE SAMVAAD 2026: A Stride Towards Climate-Resilient Society," from 25th - 27th May, 2026. The inaugural sessions featured a gathering of eminent environmental and academic dignitaries where Prof. Yashwant Singh, Registrar, CUJammu, warmly welcomed the national and international delegates, setting

an optimistic tone for the collaborative future. Chief Guest Prof. Deepak Aryal, Former Vice Chancellor, Tribhuvan University, Nepal delivered a compelling address highlighting the shared climate vulnerabilities across the borders of India and Nepal. Guest of Honor Dr. Suresh Yadav (Director, CSIR-IHBT, Palampur) and Sh. Vasu Yadav, IFS (Chairman, JKPC) emphasized the urgent need to operationalize scientific data into practice. The landmark event was further distinguished by a historic, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony between Central University of Jammu and the Indian Institute of Tropical



Meteorology (IITM), Pune (under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Govt. of India) to advance collaborative efforts in climate and atmospheric sciences. This strategic partnership will lead to establishment of a premier long-term Climate Observation Site under the Bharat Climate Observation Network (BCON) program at

CUJammu's Himalayan High Altitude Atmospheric and Climate Research (H2A2CR) Centre, located at an altitude of approximately 2250m amsl in Village Mandote, District Udhampur, J&K. The agreement was signed by Dr. A. Suryachandra Rao, Director, IITM, Pune, and Prof. Sanjeev Jain, VC, CUJammu, in the presence of senior scientists Dr. Sumana Fadnis, Dr. Anoop Mahajan and Dr. Yogesh Tiwari from IITM. BCON is a national observational initiative conceptualised and implemented by IITM under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), GoI, to develop a long-term, high-precision climate monitoring

framework across the country. The network is designed to systematically collect continuous, high-quality measurements of essential climate variables across diverse geographical regions, from coastal and urban areas to remote and high-altitude locations. The integration of the H2A2CR Centre into BCON significantly enhances the network's coverage in the Himalayan region, which is highly sensitive to climate variability and change. While signing the MoU, Dr. A. Suryachandra Rao expressed immense optimism regarding this MoU, emphasizing its role within the wider framework of national climate resilience. In his presidential address, Prof. Sanjeev Jain, shared his vision of positioning Jammu & Kashmir at the forefront of global climate change mitigation and academic exchange, thanking the administration and leadership for making this collaboration possible. Dr. Shweta Yadav (Associate Dean, International Affairs & Convener) presented formal Vote of Thanks and expressed deep gratitude to the outstanding gathering for making Climate Samvaad 2026 a great success. She thanked MoES and ANRF for providing financial support to this conference. Dr. Yadav as Incharge of H2A2CR Centre welcomed the BCON collaboration with IITM and thanked leaders of both institutes for planning to make H2A2CR Centre.



# Feeling the heat? It might be ageing you faster than you think---- Shahnaz Husain

If you've ever felt like the summer heat is draining your energy, you're not alone. Feeling tired during hot weather is common, especially in peak summer. Many people experience low energy, feel tired, and struggle to stay focused.

Throughout the day, even without doing heavy work during the hot summer season. People often dismiss 'afternoon lethargy' as a normal part of life. But summer fatigue isn't just about being exhausted; it's a physical reaction to heat.

When temperatures rise, your body spends more energy cooling itself through sweating and increased blood circulation.

When we sweat, we also lose water and electrolytes (i.e., "salts" such as sodium, chloride, potassium). Sweating removes not only water but also electrolytes (i.e., "salts" such as sodium, chloride, potassium).

That help maintain normal body function. This process uses extra energy, which can leave you feeling drained even without much physical activity.

Summer fatigue differs from typical tiredness. Environmental factors create specific energy drains unique to warm seasons. We lose fluids and electrolytes.

Loss of electrolytes can affect muscle and nerve function. Electrolytes affect the amount of water in your body, the acidity of your blood (pH), your muscle function, and other important processes.

Mild dehydration underlies most summer fatigue, and it doesn't always feel like 'dehydration'. It feels like laziness, low mood, or lack of focus, leading to a drop in energy level.

Prolonged exposure to severe, scorching temperatures triggers stress and damage to the body that goes far beyond a simple sunburn. Consistent exposure to high temperatures might also be making you age more quickly at a molecular level.

Repeated exposure to extreme heat waves

can do more than make you sweat. It can quite accelerate the ageing process in people and increase vulnerability to health issues. The more extreme heat events an individual is exposed to, the more quickly they age.

Exposure to outdoor heat accelerates ageing among the physically weak adults living in poorly ventilated spaces or working in outdoor settings because they remain exposed to heat for longer periods.

Prolonged exposure to high temperatures may increase oxidative stress, inflammation, and strain on vital organs.

1---Pre-hydration----  
When the temperature climbs, you might only be "feeling the heat", but your body is actively fighting to protect your vital organs.

Prevention does not come about by just drinking water when you're thirsty; it works when you understand the biological mechanisms of heat and stay one step ahead of it. From a clinical perspective, thirst is a late signal of dehydration. The body begins to lose fluids much earlier, especially in high heat.

The pre-hydration rule during summer means hydrating in advance by drinking adequate fluids and electrolytes.

2 to 3 hours before stepping into the heat or engaging in physical activity to set up a hydration reserve in the body.

Pre-hydration is simply staying hydrated before you hit a deficit. This is where you give your body a hydration head start, ensuring it's well-prepped for the challenges ahead.

The body benefits more when fluid intake begins early in the morning and continues steadily before stepping out.

This approach helps maintain your body's fluid balance, enhancing your endurance, focus, and overall performance.

Everyone's hydration needs are different. Pay attention to how your body feels and adjust your fluid intake accordingly. Don't consume



all your fluids at once. Sip consistently throughout the morning.

Infuse the water with vetiver (khus), fennel seeds (saunf), or a slice of cucumber. These are naturally "cooling" and make plain water less boring to drink.

On the flip side, becoming over-hydrated can be serious as well. This condition, known as hyponatremia, occurs when someone drinks too much water, thereby diluting electrolytes.

This is also a serious and potentially deadly condition that needs immediate medical attention.

If you drink a lot of water in a short period, you may move from mild overhydration to what's known as water toxicity, intoxication, or water poisoning.

2---Local dist to stay naturally cool----  
Beat the blistering heat with a bowl of Curd Rice or a chilled glass of Sattu Sharbat.

A glass of kokum sherbet will keep you cool in this heat, reduce the acidity and get rid of bloating.

These traditional Indian cooling foods drop your internal body temperature naturally, rehydrate lost electrolytes, and are incredibly light on your digestion.

Kokum sherbet is a refreshing, tangy, and naturally cooling Indian summer drink.

Made from dried kokum fruit, the drink has a deep pink colour and a pleasantly tangy taste. To prepare it, kokum is soaked in hot water to cover until soft.

and mixed with sugar or jaggery, along with roasted cumin powder and a pinch of salt. Add a large glass of ice-cold water and mix well. Serve chilled with ice.

Kokum sherbet is often consumed in the afternoon or after meals during summer. Many families store kokum concentrate so they can quickly prepare the drink whenever the heat becomes overwhelming.

Low in fat and high in probiotics, buttermilk soothes the stomach and boosts hydration. It's perfect after a heavy meal or during midday when the heat peaks.

You can make a quick satru drink by taking 2 tablespoons of Sattu powder, 1 glass of cold water, 1/2 teaspoon roasted cumin powder, a pinch of black salt, and a squeeze of fresh lemon. Mix all the ingredients in a glass until completely smooth. Gamish with a few fresh mint leaves and enjoy immediately.

Bajre ki Rabi/ Raab: A centuries-old summer superfood made of fermented pearl millet (bajra) flour or sorghum mixed with buttermilk is a highly nutritious, traditional Rajasthani porridge.

It provides hydration, electrolytes, and acts as a natural body coolant. In rural areas, it has long been considered one of the best natural ways to survive the harsh desert heat.

Many locals see it as a natural cooling remedy that helps the body stay hydrated and energised during peak summer months.

In the summer, it is consumed cold, and keeps the body cool and protects from heat stroke.

3---Seasonal Fruits ---  
Water-rich fruits are rich in natural sugars, fibre, and antioxidants. They are not only an excellent source of hydration but also protect

the body against damage caused by heat and sun exposure. Many fruits naturally contain high amounts of water along with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Including hydrating summer fruits such as watermelon (92%), strawberries (91%), cantaloupe (90%), and peaches (89%) not only provides essential nutrients like vitamin C, vitamin A, potassium, and antioxidants, helping with hydration, immunity, and overall energy.

4---Watch your medicines during the summer. Medicine may raise the risk during the summer season.

Certain medications significantly raise your risk of heat exhaustion, dehydration, and sunburn during the summer.

Certain medications, such as those for high blood pressure or heart disease, may raise your risk for fainting in high heat. Know if any drugs or supplements you take could make you less tolerant to the heat.

Never leave medications in hot cars, direct sunlight, or humid areas like the beach. Heat breaks down active ingredients.

Some medicines, like diuretics, lower your fluid levels. They're often part of treatment for high blood pressure.

If you're taking certain medicines, you'll want to be extra careful. They can make your skin extra sensitive to sunburns, which can lead to heat exhaustion.

Heat can also degrade drugs like inhalers or EpiPens. Always store medicines in cool, dry places, stay hydrated, and consult your doctor before altering any prescriptions.

Summer heat and humidity can quickly degrade the chemical structure of prescription and over-the-counter medications, rendering them ineffective or even dangerous. Proper storage and awareness are essential for your medications during peak seasonal temperatures.

The author is an internationally famous beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India

## Strategic Meeting Held for Preparations of the 24th Chhari Mubarak Yatra of Maa Chamunda Sarvadhhar, Senawati Pongal Paristan, Ramban

Jammu May 27th An important meeting was held to discuss the preparations and arrangements for the 24th sacred Chhari Mubarak Yatra, with special focus on improving facilities for devotees participating in the pilgrimage. During the meeting, detailed discussions were held with members of the Chintaharan Mahadev Mandir, Ukhral Committee including Shri Dhan Singh, Shri Aji Katerial, Shri Rashpal Singh, Shri Namal Singh, Shri Bhim Singh and Shri Ramal Singh. Deliberations were made regarding accommodation facilities, community kitchen arrangements and transportation management for the devotees. It was unanimously decided that, as in previous years, the sacred 24th Chhari Mubarak Yatra will commence on 5th July from the Ancient Rameshwar Mandir, Bahu Fort, Jammu. The first night halt of the Yatra will be at



Chintaharan Mahadev Mandir, Ukhral. On the morning of 6th July, devotees will proceed towards Base Camp Sarvadhhar, where the night stay will also take place. Thereafter, on Tuesday, 7th July, after the holy darshan of Maa Chamunda Ji, the Yatra will return to Jammu. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Patron of the Chhari Mubarak

Yatra, Rajeev Chadhak, stated that this is the largest religious pilgrimage of District Ramban and that the administration and government must ensure proper arrangements for its successful conduct. He emphasized that the roads along the route are damaged at several places and require immediate repair. He further stated that since the pilgrim-

age involves nearly 14 kilometres of trekking through difficult and forest terrain, strong security arrangements were being ensured for the safety of devotees.

He also urged the administration to arrange adequate tent facilities at Base Camp Sarvadhhar for night stay so that adverse weather conditions do not affect the pilgrimage. He added that in earlier years the district administration used to make these arrangements on priority, but in recent years tent facilities have gradually disappeared, causing inconvenience to pilgrims. He appealed to the Deputy Commissioner Ramban to personally review the preparations and issue necessary directions to ensure all arrangements are properly made. All devotees are humbly requested to participate in this sacred pilgrimage and seek the divine blessings of Maa Chamunda Ji.

## Jammu (Rural) Police Tightens Noose on Drug Traffickers; Two Accused Arrested with Poppy Straw and Heroin-Like Substance

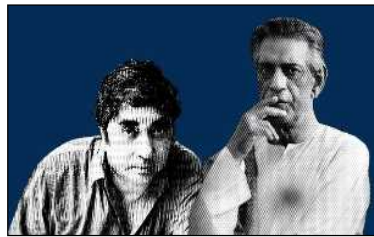
Jammu, May 27, 2026  
Continuing its sustained drive against drug trafficking under the ongoing Nasha Mukht Abhiyan, Rural Police Jammu achieved two significant successes under the jurisdiction of Police Station Jhajjar Kotli. In the first incident, a police party of PP Manwal, while performing routine naka duty at Nadhal Naka, intercepted one container goods carrier Ashok Leyland during naka checking at PB10HP-4190 coming from Udhampur. Dhar Road towards Batal. During checking of the vehicle, approximately 3/4 kg of poppy straw-like substance was recovered from the cabin of the vehi-

cle. The driver, identified as Vicky S/o Ratan Singh R/o Ham Bowel, Nurpur Lubhana, Kapurthala, Punjab, failed to produce any valid explanation regarding the possession of the contraband.

Accordingly, FIR No. 77/2026 U/S 8/15 NDPS Act has been registered at PS Jhajjar Kotli and investigation has been taken up. In another incident, the police party of PP Manwal during naka checking at Nadhal intercepted one Motorcycle bearing Registration No. JK14L-3298 (Hero Splendor) coming from Batal side towards Udhampur. During checking, approximately 13/14 grams of heroin-like substance was recovered from the possession of the rider identified as Anwer Bhutt S/o Ghulam Mohd Bhutt R/o Sambal, Tehsil and District Udhampur. The accused failed to give any satisfactory explanation regarding the possession of the contraband substance. In this regard, FIR No. 78/2026 U/S 8/21/22 NDPS Act has been registered at PS Jhajjar Kotli and further investigation is underway. Jammu (Rural) Police remains committed towards eradicating the menace of drugs and urges the general public to cooperate with police by sharing any information related to drug peddling or narcotics smuggling.

## Anik Dutta did not really imitate Satyajit Ray. He argued with him. Bengali Cinema is poorer without both

Anik Dutta was one of Bengali cinema's most respected voices. His films carry a distinct personality. They are witty, rooted in Kolkata, and soaked in nostalgia. But there is another quality that runs through all of them: a deep, visible debt to Satyajit Ray. That debt is not a weakness. It is the spine of his creative life. To understand Dutta's cinema, you have to understand what Ray meant to him and how that meaning translated onto the screen over more than a decade of filmmaking. Growing up in Ray's shadow, Dutta grew up in Jodhpur Park in south Calcutta. He describes his cinematic education as being shaped by what he calls the "Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwari" of Bengali cinema: Ray, Mrinal Sen, and Ritwik Ghatak. Of the three, Ray was the most inescapable. Dutta has spoken about how Ray is not just a filmmaker but an atmosphere. "You breathe him in Calcutta," he had said. "His influence paralyses you sometimes, you think, what's the point, Ray has already done it. But the answer is not to compete, but to continue the conversation began." That framing, continuing a conversation, matters. Dutta did not simply copy Ray. He responded to him. His films picked up threads from Ray's work and pull them in new directions. Sometimes



the references are clear and deliberate. Other times, they surface in tone, structure, moral outlook. 'Bhooter Bhabishyat' Debut soaked in Ray Dutta's debut feature, 'Bhooter Bhabishyat' (2012), arrived as a major surprise. Made on a budget of Rs 0.6 crore, it earned Rs 3 crore over its theatrical run and became one of the biggest Bengali hits of that year. The film is a fantasy-comedy about ghosts from different eras of Kolkata's history who are threatened by real estate developers. The Ray influence is woven into every layer of the film. Several reviewers noted that the dynamic between the film's narrator and its protagonist closely mirrors the relationship between Feluda and his assistant Topshere from Ray's detective

ished, old culture erased. The satirical thread Ray's 'Hirak Rajar Deshe' remains one of Bengali cinema's most pointed political satires. Released in 1980, it used a fantasy setting to criticise authoritarianism.

The film is part of Ray's Goopy-Bagha trilogy and is famous for its brainwashing machine and its portrait of a vain ruler who suppresses dissent.

Dutta has cited this film repeatedly as a touchstone. His use of rhyming dialogue is directly lifted from that tradition. But the influence goes further than technique. Dutta has consistently used satire as his mode for political commentary. His 2019 film 'Bhoobishyoter Bhoot' was pulled from cinemas in West Bengal just days after release. Dutta is a known critic of the Mamata Banerjee-led government, and the film was widely read as a political satire. The parallels with what happened to Ray, who also faced pressure over politically charged work, were not accidental. In 'Bhoobishyoter Bhoot', Dutta again used supernatural imagery and rhyming verse to construct social critique, keeping alive the tradition Ray had established in 'Hirak Rajar Deshe'. It was a statement of artistic lineage.

Apurajito: The most personal trib-

## Governor trailer out: Manoj Bajpayee plays RBI chief who stopped India from going bankrupt

The official trailer of 'Governor: The Silent Saviour' is out. This film is an upcoming historical drama starring Manoj Bajpayee in lead role. It is backed by Vipul Amrutlal Shah under banner of Sunshine Pictures and reportedly draws inspiration from real events linked to India's economic crisis in the 1990s. The trailer presents a tense narrative set during a period when the country was reportedly facing severe financial instability and stood on the verge of economic collapse. Bajpayee plays A. Ramanan, appointed as the Governor of the RBI, here referred to as the Rashtriya Bank of India, during the country's economic crisis in the 1990s. The character is tasked with pulling the nation back from the brink of financial collapse while the entire system works against him. Sharing the trailer on social media, Manoj Bajpayee wrote, "I fail... India fails." The actor described the film as the untold story of a brave unsung hero who saved the country during one of its most difficult economic periods. The film dramatises India's worst economic meltdown of the 1990s, when foreign and gold reserves depleted sharply and the nation faced a balance-of-payments crisis. The government was forced to pledge gold to international lenders and undertake urgent policy reforms, including liberalisation of the economy. The narrative is thought to be based on the life of S. Venkataramanan, who was instrumental in the 1991 financial crisis, though this is inspired



by actual events. The makers have not yet officially confirmed this connection. Bajpayee plays the role of an RBI Governor tackling an intense national economic crisis, while Adah Sharma plays a key lead. The film is directed by Chinmay Mandekar and produced by Vipul Amrutlal Shah. The movie also stars Noushad Mohamed Kunju in an important role. 'Governor: The Silent Saviour' marks the second directorial outing for Chinmay D. Mandekar, who is also known for his work in Marathi cinema and television. The music for the film is composed by Amit Trivedi. Manoj Bajpayee, Adah Sharma, Madhoo, Vipul Amrutlal Shah, Chinmay Mandekar, and Aashin Shah attended the trailer launch event in Mumbai. The movie releases in cinemas on June 12, 2026. The film falls under the Biography, Drama, and Political genres. No OTT release date has been announced yet.

North in News

EDITORIAL

Women empowerment: from self help groups to 33 percent reservation changed the dynamics

BY ABHIK ROY

India's journey of bringing women from the margins of the household to the center of political and economic decision-making has been gradual, layered, and deeply structural. The shift that began with small thrift-and-credit collectives in villages has now culminated in a constitutional guarantee of one-third seats for women in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. This arc represents more than policy change. It is a social revolution that has altered household bargaining, village governance, market participation, and national legislation. India has 90 lakh SHGs covering 10 crore women with cumulative savings of ₹58,000 crore and credit of ₹7.5 lakh crore, and the SHG movement did three things simultaneously. It gave women financial identity through bank accounts and credit history. It created a platform for collective voice where women who never spoke in front of men began to audit ration shops and attend gram sabhas, and it built skills in bookkeeping, negotiation, and enterprise that became the foundation for micro-enterprises in dairy, food processing, textiles, and services. The economic confidence spilled into social spaces as SHG women contested for panchayat posts after the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments. The confidence gained in panchayats created a pipeline of leaders who later contested Assembly and Parliament seats, and parallel to this, schemes like Ujjwala, Jan Dhan, PM Awas, and Sukanya Samridhi put assets and services in women's names, and MUDRA gave 68 percent of its 46 crore loans to women entrepreneurs. The Lok Sabha had only 14.4 percent women in 2019 and Rajya Sabha 13 percent, far below the global average of 26.5 percent, and this democratic deficit led to the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, the 106th Amendment Act 2023, which reserves 33 percent seats for women in Lok Sabha, State Assemblies, and Delhi Assembly, to be implemented after delimitation post-2026 Census. Reservation in Parliament means little if women still spend 7 hours a day on care, and the law must be implemented without delay after delimitation because postponement will erode credibility, and the real success will be when a woman from an SHG in Kishtwar can become an MP without a surname, when a tribal woman from Bastar can chair the Public Accounts Committee and that is the deepest empowerment of all, and it will define India's democracy, demography, and development for the next century.

RAJNI SHARMA, EDITOR

In the age of social media, diplomacy is no longer confined to closed-door meetings, carefully drafted communiqués and formal state dinners. Every gesture, glance, stumble and awkward interaction can now become viral political theatre within minutes. Diplomacy has become performance, and nowhere was this more evident than during Donald Trump's recent visit to China. Almost immediately after the visit, social media platforms exploded with clips, memes and commentary dissecting what many interpreted as a series of cultural faux pas committed not only by Trump himself, but also by members of his entourage and sections of the American media accompanying him. Whether every circulating interpretation is factually accurate is difficult to determine in the chaotic ecosystem of viral content. Yet the speed with which these moments spread across the digital world revealed something profound about the current state of U.S.-China relations: the collapse of trust, cultural curiosity and mutual generosity. Perhaps the first controversy emerged even before the summit formally began. Social media quickly erupted with claims that Xi Jinping had intentionally "snubbed" Trump by not personally greeting him at the airport. Chinese Vice President Han Zheng instead received Trump on the tarmac. Chinese officials and several diplomatic analysts pointed out that such arrangements are often consistent with Chinese protocol. Yet social media users immediately contrasted Trump's arrival with Xi Jinping's visibly warmer and more personal interactions with leaders such as Vladimir Putin and Emmanuel Macron during recent visits. Even when protocol can technically explain an action, optics often shape public perception more powerfully than official explanations. One of the most discussed moments involved President Xi personally escorting Trump through a historic Chinese garden while explaining the symbolism of the ancient trees and sur-

roundings. In Chinese culture, such gestures are deeply meaningful. Classical gardens are not merely decorative spaces; they embody centuries of philosophy, aesthetics, scholarship and civilizational continuity. Yet social media users focused on Trump appearing less interested in the cultural significance of the garden and more interested in asking whether other world leaders had received similar access. Whether fair or unfair, the optics created the impression of a guest more concerned with exclusivity and status than cultural appreciation. Another widely circulated incident involved Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent reportedly being stopped by Chinese security officials for not wearing the required identification badge or pin before entering a restricted area. In many Western countries, such an incident might be dismissed as a trivial procedural oversight. In China, however, protocol, hierarchy and ritual carry enormous importance. Rules are expected to be followed meticulously, particularly during state functions involving senior leadership. Even members of the American media became part of the story. Fox News anchor Bret Baier drew criticism on Chinese social media after video clips appeared to show his crew obstructing traffic while filming in Beijing. Chinese netizens reacted angrily, interpreting the behavior as an example of foreign visitors criticizing Chinese rules while casually disregarding them in practice. Once again, whether the outrage was exaggerated mattered less than the optics themselves. Perhaps the most visually symbolic moment came near the end of the visit when reports and viral clips suggested that members of the American delegation discarded Chinese-issued phones, badges, gifts and souvenirs before boarding Air Force One. Security concerns may well have motivated such actions. Yet the optics were unmistakable: even ceremonial tokens of hospitality had become objects of suspicion in an atmosphere poisoned by distrust. Social media users were equally

fascinated by Elon Musk bringing his young son to parts of the high-level diplomatic visit. In the American media ecosystem, the gesture may have appeared humanizing or charming. In China's more formal political culture, however, many observers interpreted it as strangely informal and performative given the gravity attached to state-level meetings. Then came the endless online speculation and conspiracy theories. Social media became flooded with claims that banquet servers and hospitality staff might actually have been Chinese intelligence operatives monitoring the American delegation. No credible evidence has emerged to support such accusations. Nevertheless, the viral spread of these rumors reflected the extraordinary atmosphere of paranoia and suspicion now surrounding relations between the world's two largest powers. The banquet itself became a symbolic story. Chinese state dinners are carefully choreographed diplomatic rituals designed to project refinement, history and hospitality. Reports suggested that Beijing's chefs consciously modified the elaborate multi-course menu to accommodate Trump's famously uncomplicated culinary preferences, including dishes such as beef ribs and milder flavors more familiar to American tastes. In many ways, the dinner seemed to symbolize an ancient civilization attempting to meet a populist American president halfway. Even the ceremonial toast attracted enormous online attention. Trump, who has long publicly emphasized his abstinence from alcohol, appeared on video raising a glass and possibly taking a symbolic sip during Xi's toast. Whether the drink actually contained alcohol mattered less than the symbolism itself. In Chinese diplomatic culture, the toast is not simply about drinking; it is a ritual of respect, hierarchy and relational harmony. Perhaps no moment better captured the age of viral diplomacy than the now widely circulated clip of a staff member quietly removing a cushion from Trump's chair before his meeting with Xi Jinping.

Social media users instantly speculated that the adjustment was intended to make Trump appear shorter than the Chinese leader during official photographs. Whether true or entirely innocuous ultimately mattered less than the reaction itself. In today's hyper-digital political culture, even the height of a chair can become geopolitical theatre. What ultimately made these moments so fascinating was not merely whether Trump or his team committed cultural blunders. The larger issue was how instantly every action became weaponized through social media narratives. In the digital age, perception often matters more than reality. A brief glance, an awkward gesture or a misunderstanding interaction can now shape global opinion within minutes. At a deeper level, the viral reactions revealed two dramatically different political cultures colliding with one another. China approached the visit as a highly choreographed civilizational performance rooted in symbolism, ritual and historical continuity. Trump and sections of his entourage, on the other hand, projected a distinctly American culture of informality, celebrity, improvisation and spectacle. Perhaps the most troubling aspect of all this is the disappearance of goodwill. In an earlier era, cultural misunderstandings during diplomatic visits might have been interpreted charitably as innocent mistakes. Today, every incident is filtered through nationalism, ideological hostility and geopolitical rivalry. Social media does not merely document diplomacy anymore; it amplifies suspicion, outrage and mockery. In the end, the real story may not be Trump's alleged cultural insensitivity at all. The real story may be how the age of viral politics has transformed diplomacy itself into a global reality show where symbolism overwhelms substance and every diplomatic gesture risks becoming content for the next viral outrage cycle.

UP's green agenda offers a template for India

BY SHEHZAD POONAWALLA

Amid global turmoil and resultant impacts on global energy networks, India has firmly stood on its climate and clean energy agenda, towards its long-term goal of Viksit Bharat 2047. Its revised climate commitments, in the wake of West Asia crises, demonstrate its commitment on energy transition, power sector reform and protection of natural systems. Aligned closely with the national vision is Uttar Pradesh which is integrating sustainability into its development narrative with increasing focus on solar, compressed biogas, green hydrogen and climate adaptation measures.

In the last nine years, installed solar capacity has surged by 1,150 per cent, from 400 MW in 2017 to over 5,000 MW by March 2026, underpinning one of the most striking accelerations of renewable energy at the sub-national level. This transformation is not merely about megawatts. It is about accessibility, affordability, and reliability in a state long afflicted by power deficits, regional energy discrepancies and exclusion. Agreements with foreign investors signal maturing of state's green agenda, supported by improved law and order and massive infrastructure push. Since 2017, the Yogi Adityanath government has made structural power transformation one of its top priorities. The state, historically reliant on thermal and hydropower, is now moving decisively toward solar and other renewables, laying robust foundations for its \$1 trillion economy goal. This shift reflects a broader change in governance mindset where investors, entrepreneurs, and households are treated not merely as taxpayers or revenue generators but as partners in growth. The 2022



Solar Policy sets an overarching framework setting an ambitious target of 22,000 MW by 2027, backed by subsidies, streamlined processes and a push for self-reliance in solar equipment and raw materials. Additionally, the state is actively implementing central schemes such as PM Surya Ghar with Uttar Pradesh leading in rooftop solar capacity, over 1,524 MW generating nearly 7 million units of green energy daily and PM KUSUM for solar powered water pumps. Bundelkhand's green energy corridor and multiple solar parks reflect forward-looking infrastructure planning. Compressed biogas (CBG) is emerging as a credible alternative to natural gas, and Uttar Pradesh being an agricultural state and producing sizable agricultural residue annually has actively seized the opportunity. The 2022 Biogas Policy eases land access and plant feasibility, while offering capex subsidies to developers, with the ambitious target of one biogas plant in each tehsil, directly benefiting farmers and communities. At scale, CBG could cut India's dependence on imported natural gas which is now at 50 per cent, while delivering environmental and eco-

nomomic gains. More recently, green hydrogen production in Gorakhpur reflects the state's forward-looking vision, exploring applications from industry to cooking fuel. In order to expand its renewable ecosystem, the state aims to establish deeper synergies with REC discoms, modernize the grid, and regularise transmission network and vendor integration, informed by infrastructure including highways, expressways, airports and logistics centres across the state. Uttar Pradesh is also pioneering local climate action to enhance resilience through climate-smart gram panchayats and over 40 district climate action plans are grounded in scientific assessments. Under Amrit Sarovar, the state leads in restoring water bodies by linking conservation with employment schemes and rural livelihoods. This has raised ground water levels while adding recreation value. Similarly, Jal Jeevan Mission scales rainwater harvesting, while drip and sprinkler technologies are transforming water-stressed regions such as Bundelkhand. Uttar Pradesh's energy story is not just about solar panels or transmission reform. At its core

lie humans and inclusivity and it aims to deliver comfort, dignity and livelihoods alongside clean energy to a population long deprived of even basic needs. The benefits of rooftop solar are not limited to subsidies. It has slashed electricity bills by up to 90 per cent, drastically saving money while ensuring reliable power supply. More than 60,000 jobs have emerged across manufacturing, logistics, and technical services while solar pumps have benefited over 93,000 farmers, towards sustainable agriculture. Even forest communities that had faced exclusion are being provided solar PV, underscoring the leadership's sincerity of purpose.

The state has positioned women and youth as key drivers of this transition. Initiatives like DEWEE empower women-led enterprises provide clean cooking fuels and reduce drudgery. Capacity-building programmes aim to train 30,000 youth as Surya Mitras and women as Solar Didis to work as technicians, managers, and operators, and capacity builders. Women are also central to rural adaptation programmes such as the Jal Jeevan Mission, where they lead household resilience and community water management. A clearer understanding of the renewable sector and a drive for self-reliance have led the state leadership into global partnerships including with Japanese and Singaporean investors with a view to building a skilled workforce, and a renewable ecosystem. UP's green drive is outward-looking yet inward-rooted, combining global investments and building local resilience towards self-reliance while positioning itself as a significant contributor in national climate and energy objectives.

# Hottest food trends: Power bowls to spirialized vegetable

**W**HEN it comes to nutrition trends, this year will see several comebacks. Experts predict that new trends like power bowls (a bowl full of foods that charge you up) and spirialized vegetable (vegetables that are cut using spiraling machines to avoid chopping) will also make a mark. Whether old or new, all these trends have a common goal to help you maintain a healthy diet minus the monotony.

**1 Grains and pulses:** Experts are of the opinion that sprouted grains and ancient grains (such as quinoa and millet) will make a comeback this year. Quinoa is being touted as the new kid on the protein block. It has fibre that is known to reduce bad cholesterol. Alfalfa, too, is set to gain popularity this year. In fact, the United Nations has declared 2016 as the 'International Year of the Pulse'. With the vegan diet also gaining more popularity, pulses like mung and matki will also be in high demand.

**2 Spirialized vegetables:** Vegetables like carrots, turnips, beetroots, cucumbers and zucchini are being spirialized into pasta-like forms using julienne peelers and spiraling machines. The idea behind this is to chop a vegetable as little as possible to keep its nutritional value intact. The spirialized forms are definitely a treat to the eyes, and surely give the usual salads a more interesting spin.

**3 Sustainable diets:** 'Does my diet contribute to environ-



mental harm?" is a question many are asking. Such health and fitness enthusiasts will make a conscious effort to choose foods that will leave minimal carbon footprint. The 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee report suggests that the environmental impact of food production is a cause for concern. Therefore, sustainable diets are set to be a rage this year.

**4 Full-fat dairy products:** The fat component of milk is packed with bioactive compounds like conjugated linoleic acid. Research suggests that these bioactive compounds decrease the risk of coronary heart disease, obesity, Type-2 diabetes, and metabolic syndrome. They also reduce the growth of cancer cells. This news has led to the acceptance of dairy

in its wholesome form. Experts believe that this year will see a drop in the demand for fat-free dairy products.

**5 Mindfulness:** The key to maintaining a healthy diet lies in knowing that everything consumed in moderation is okay. This is where mindfulness comes in. It encourages you to become aware of the food you are consuming.

**6 Soups:** Soups will be more than just appetizers this year. Nutrition experts advise you to switch over from watery broths to thicker soups, such as those made with lentils or mixed vegetables. These soups are considered more satiating than traditional dinner meals, and can help avoid obesity as well.

**7 No sugar:** A recent research stated that people living in Blue Zones (places with

maximum population of centenarians like Ikaria, Greece; Okinawa, Japan; Ogliastra Region, Sardinia; Loma Linda, USA; and Nicoya Peninsula, Costa Rica), lived longer because of their sugar-free diets. The bad effects of sugar (its carcinogenic properties; and it increases the risk of heart diseases) were known, but in the light of these findings, it became quite clear that if one wants to live a healthy life, then one needs to discard sugar from their diets.

**8 Power bowls:** Instagram feeds of popular food-bloggers such as Rens Kroes and Lisa Van Cuijk attracted a lot of attention to terms such as 'power food' and 'power bowls' (a bowl full of foods that keep you charged). Given how attractive these colourful power bowls look, it comes as no surprise that health enthusiasts have eagerly dug into this trend, which is set to gain even more popularity this year.

**9 Probiotics:** The phrase 'gut feeling' got a whole new meaning when a recent research established the connection between our brain and our guts. The study looked into the relationship between our gut's microbiome (bacteria) and our brain. Experts say that 90% of all neurotransmitters like serotonin are present in our guts.

This makes the guts our secondary brain. Since food items like curries and kefir contain probiotic bacteria, health conscious people will opt for them in order to maintain their microbiome levels.

## Vitamin D levels may have nothing to do with sleepless nights



**C**ONTRADICTION common perception, researchers have found that low levels of vitamin D are also known as the 'sunshine vitamin' does not cause or worsen sleep apnea.

Sleep apnea causes repeated awakenings and pauses in breathing during the night. Obesity appears to contribute to the adverse effects.

"The link between obesity and vitamin D deficiency can be explained in a number of ways one of which is that obese individuals are likely to be physically active thereby limiting their sun exposure," said senior investigator Ken Kunisaki, associate professor of medicine at University of Minnesota in the US.

Although our study was not designed to figure out why obese people have lower vitamin D levels, our results ultimately suggest that low vitamin D levels do not cause or worsen sleep apnea," Kunisaki said. The study involved a cohort of 187 participants who were generally healthy and elderly males with an average age of 76.4 years. "Taking additional vitamin D supplements is not likely to prevent or improve sleep apnea," Kunisaki said. The researchers also found no evidence to support a link between vitamin D deficiency and increased risk of sleep apnea in non-obese study participants. The study appeared in the journal *Annals of the American Thoracic Society*.

## Switch off email notifications on your phone to reduce stress

**W**HAT is the secret to happiness? Well, it may be switching off email notifications on your smartphone, say researchers who found that their devices report high levels of 'email pressure'.

Since the creation of emails in the 1970s, its growth has been unprecedented, facilitating quick and easy communication between people across borders and time zones, for both business and personal use.

However, despite its widespread usage and popularity as a communication tool, for some individuals and employees, it can be a source of major frustration, anxiety and lost productivity, the researchers said.

As the volume of email continues to rise, many struggle to prioritise work effectively and are constantly interrupted by the flow of messages and demands, resulting in decreased productivity and stress.

In order to understand more about how email both facilitates and negatively impacts the employees' experience, researchers from UK-based Future Work Centre conducted a survey of about 2,000 people across a variety of industries, sectors and job roles in the UK.

Researchers wanted



to explore whether factors such as technology, behaviour, demographics, work-life balance and personality play a role in perceptions of email pressure and in coping strategies.

"We found a strong relationship between using 'push' email and perceived email pressure. People who leave their email on all day were much more likely to say that they experienced email pressure," the researchers found.

Checking email earlier in the morning or later at night is also associated with higher levels of email pressure, they said.

According to the study, managers experience significantly higher levels of email pressure when compared to non-managers.

The research also highlighted some inter-sonal differences in the role personality plays in email use and how email has the potential to both positively and negatively impact work-life balance.

People who reported higher levels of email pressure also experienced greater interference between work and home.

Researchers found that personality plays a key role in determining how much email pressure one feels and the extent to which it interferes with work-life balance.

"You may want to consider launching your email application when you want to use email and closing it down for periods when you don't wish to be interrupted by incoming emails," they said.

Using email when you intend to, not just because it's always running in the background," researchers said.

# Diet diary: Make these new year promises and keep them

**E**XERCISE regularly along with resistance exercises like weight training. Exercise is a must. Exercise combined with diet helps to preserve lean body mass (like muscle and bone mass) more efficiently during weight loss compared to weight loss with diet alone. When diets are combined with exercise, weight loss is likely to be sustained for longer. Research has compared individuals on calorie restricted diets and those on calorie restricted diets with moderate to intense exercise. While the results showed the same amount of total weight loss in both the groups, increased physical activity prevented relapse after weight loss. Several studies have shown that those who keep up a higher level of physical activity are more successful in maintaining their reduced body weight. Exercise also makes you feel wonderfully alive because it triggers the release of endorphins, chemicals in the brain that make you feel generally happier, calmer and less stressed. Choose something that you enjoy doing. It could be the gym, yoga or a sport. Make it a fun thing and make it a part of your time together. Again, remember that a variety of exercises is better than one single one. Aerobic, flexibility through stretches, and muscle strength all are needed.

**Plan your diet on a daily basis:** Plan your activities and food in advance. Shop smart. Ensure access and availability of appropriate foods. Choose adequate amounts of fresh fruits and vegetables like amla, citrus fruits, tomatoes, green peppers, green leafy vegetables, kiwi, broccoli and strawberries to ensure adequate Vitamin C. Choose whole grains like oats, barley, brown rice and whole wheat; pulses; nuts and seeds; low fat dairy; seafood; lean meats; green leafy vegetables and wheat germ to ensure adequate intake of Vitamin B and zinc.

**Minimise intake of white flour, white rice and sugar:** Avoid junk food and poor quality fat (hydrogenated, trans-fats). Include good quality fat through natural sources like nuts, seeds, fatty fish and cold pressed oils. Snack smart on fresh fruits, dry fruits, nuts, seeds, roasted whole grains, soups, salads, and yogurt.

**Drink plenty of fluids and remain well hydrated:** Green tea, jasmine tea, camomile tea help calm the mind.

**Take tea, coffee and alcohol in moderation:** Maintain a food diary. The first step to improve your diet is to increase awareness about what you eat, when you eat and how much you eat. This is virtually a reality check and there is nothing more powerful than a food diary. A simple objective tool helps you track exactly what you really eat. Food diary will show you whether you include all the food groups in adequate amounts, the variety of foods you con-



sume, the amount of sugar and undesirable foods and the frequency of intake. After completing your food diary, you can analyse the foods you have listed by comparing them to the five recommendations for healthy eating. So next time you resolve to improve your diet, start by reaching out for a pen and a paper.

**Pamper your skin:** Clear, glowing skin reflects overall health. This requires a well-balanced fibre-rich diet, plenty of fluids, regular exercise, quitting smoking and avoiding excessive exposure to sun. The important nutrients for skin include proteins, essential fats, vitamin A, E, C, B complex, selenium, zinc and copper. A good combination of plant and animal protein would include soy, low-fat dairy, lean meat and fish. Essential fatty acids (linoleic, and alpha-linolenic acid) which are found in seed oils are important in maintaining lustrous skin. Fatty fish, flaxseeds and evening primrose oil provide essential fatty acids needed for skin maintenance.

**Foods that must be included on regular basis include:** fresh vegetable juices, yogurt, turmeric, wheat germ, plant proteins (daals, sprouts, soy), brightly coloured vegetables and fruits, amla, fish flaxseeds and other seeds, nuts, avocados and plenty of fluids. Holiday regularly! Be it a cruise, hill holidays or beach vacation, a vacation in itself helps recharge your energies and refresh you to cope with routine and work pressures. Some checks and balances are all that is needed to avoid gaining extra kilos during your vacation.

If possible, schedule holiday dinners at normal meal times.

**Watch your drinks:** Avoid sweetened beverages, fruit juices, mocktails and cocktails. Diet beverages may contain artificial sweeteners can help control calories at celebrations. Count your alcohol, as it can be a major source of hidden calories as well as being a diuretic. Limit alcohol on the day and plan the other meals accordingly. Keep them light, with plenty of salads, vegetables and fruits.

If you are very keen on desserts, then take a bite. If you want a full portion, just have a very small one.

**Carry appropriate snack food to munch like seeds, roasted nuts or whole grains.** Focus on making lifestyle changes, which include eating right.

## Forget blackberries, black raspberries are the new superfood

**B**LACK raspberries may be the new superfood of the block as they show greater health benefits than their better known cousins - raspberries or blackberries. Researchers led by Anna Malgorzata

Costecka-Gugala measured the content of antioxidants in black raspberries, red raspberries and blackberries, assessing their antioxidant potential and health benefits. They were able to confirm that the antioxidant activity of

natural products correlates directly with their health-promoting properties. It turns out that the amount of antioxidants in black raspberries was three times higher than the other fruits under investigation. The number was even higher for phenolics or the amount of anthocyanines with black raspberries topping their humble cousins by over 1000%.

Most interestingly, black raspberries are characterised by a higher content of secondary antioxidants, which have been proved beneficial for human health. The Central Europe-grown raspberries showed greater health benefits than raspberries and blackberries, researchers said.

## Is your workout making you sleepless? Find out

**T**HOUGH exercise helps you sleep better, evidence also supports that a heavy sweat session in the gym, especially in the late hours, might eat into your sleep cycle. The culprit: the increased levels of adrenaline and cortisol due to strenuous exercise that can prevent you from falling asleep.

What a study found: While a 2013 by the National Sleep Foundation found that those who slept better after exercise and woke up fewer times during the night, what was also found was that overdoing it in the gym was a major cause of insomnia. Aggressive exercising or overexercising backfired when it came to helping folks cool down and feel calm a crucial state of being for sleep. This



overexercising also causes tissues to break down and get inflamed and make for longer recovery time. Due to the rise in the body's stress response to this, it causes the secretion of adrenaline and norepinephrine. This increases the heart rate, flow of blood to muscles, metabolism and overall alertness, which makes it take longer to drift off to sleep.

The trick is to adapt to a workout that provides mild exercise and leaves you feeling refreshed rather than going the

strenuous way and staying fit. **HACKS THAT CAN HELP YOU DO BOTH:** If your schedule is such that you can only exercise late evening or at night, here are ways to boost your chances of sleeping well...

**Try low-impact exercise:** Don't opt for intense cardio sessions every day. Try alternating things with yoga or a light run, which help you unwind. Cool down sensibly you can't jump into bed as soon as you get home from the gym.

**Widely squats:** This exercise helps to tone the inner muscles of your thigh. How to: Stand with your feet a little wider than your shoulder and then bend till your knees are at a 45 degree angle. Tighten your core and hold for five seconds. Release and repeat. Repeat 10 to 15 times.

**Lunges:** Lunges help build your quadriceps as well as your hamstrings and quads helps tone them the best. How to: Use an exercise bench. Stand in front of the bench and place your left foot on it. Hold your arms by your sides or hold weights in front of your

**Leg extensions:** Says Shah, "Leg extension helps to target and tone the quadriceps. This exercise can be done with the help of leg extension machines at the gym." How to: Select your weights. Ask your gym instructor for the amount of weights suitable for your body type. Using your quadriceps, extend your legs to the maximum as you exhale. Ensure that the right leg of the body remains stationary on the seat. Pause for a second. Slowly, lower the weight back to the original position.

**How to:** Use an exercise bench. Stand in front of the bench and place your left foot on it. Hold your arms by your sides or hold weights in front of your

**forms a 90 degree angle.** Hold this position till a count of five, then push back with your right leg. Repeat twice, 10 times on each side.

**Walking Lunges:** Walking lunges are excellent to tone your quadriceps, hamstrings and thighs.

**How to:** Start by standing upright. Lunge forward with one leg, but don't make your knee go further than your hip. When you lunge, use the back leg to get back to the standing position.

**Step-ups:** Says Wadia, "Step-ups work on the muscle of the glutes, hamstrings and quads helps tone them the best."

**How to:** Use an exercise bench. Stand in front of the bench and place your left foot on it. Hold your arms by your sides or hold weights in front of your

**chest.** Straighten your left leg, transferring the weight onto it, to step on to the bench. Don't lock the leg. Your right leg should be behind you a little and your right foot should not touch the bench. Hold position for a few seconds. Bend your left leg. Bring the right leg down and just enough so that you tap the floor with your toes, and then extend the left leg again. Repeat twice, 10 to 20 times.



## Ananya Birla Reacts After RCB Demolish GT to March into IPL 2026 Final

New Delhi, May 27: Royal Challengers Bengaluru marched into the IPL 2026 final after a 92-run win over Gujarat Titans in Dharamsala on Tuesday. The defending champions stayed true to their potential by first notching the highest-ever total in IPL playoffs - 254.5 in 20 overs - and then got GT all out for 162.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru is making news both on and off the field. Before the IPL 2026, RCB became the costliest IPL franchise after a consortium led by the Aditya Birla Group (ABG) acquired the side for a whopping USD 1.78 billion (approximately Rs 16,706 crore) from United Spirits Limited.

Ananya Birla, a prominent face in the Aditya Birla Group, was at the Dharamsala Stadium when



RCB beat GT. "What a Win. Congratulations @royalchallengers.bengaluru. Today was so inspiring to witness. Here we come, finals," she wrote on her Instagram story.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru director of cricket Mo Bhat credited Rajat Patidar's hard work with batting coach Dinesh Karthik and head coach Andy Flower after the

RCB captain produced a stunning unbeaten 93 to help the defending champions reach their second consecutive IPL final.

Patidar's explosive knock powered RCB to a record-breaking 254.5 against Gujarat Titans in Qualifier 1 before the bowlers completed a dominant 92-run victory at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium when

Tuesday. "He's worked incredibly hard on his game with both DK (Dinesh Karthik) and Andy Flower," Bhat said in the post-match press conference. "One thing about Rajat is that he muddles the ball a lot. Whether it's pace or spin, front foot or back foot, the ball often hits the middle of his bat. That's usually a very good sign. He has really strong basics and a fearless intent. Over the last couple of years, we've tried hard to make that the identity of our team," he added. Bhat praised Patidar's growth as a batter over the last two seasons and revealed how much effort the captain has put into improving every aspect of his game. "He's certainly batting brilliantly right now and has done so throughout the competition. That was a really special knock today, and I'm

sure he'll be very pleased to have stood up in such a big qualifier. Any team whose captain is playing well gets greater confidence from that," he said.

Bhat was especially impressed with Patidar's ability to manage the innings smartly under pressure. After RCB lost quick wickets in the middle overs, the captain briefly rebuilt the innings before launching another brutal attack in the death overs

## Norway Chess: Firouzja Downs Praggnanandhaa to Extend lead; Divya Pips Humpy

Norway, May 27: Norway Chess continued to deliver intense contests in its second round as French grandmaster Alireza Firouzja emerged as the early leader after securing his second consecutive classical victory in Oslo. Firouzja registered the only decisive result in the open section, defeating Indian teenager R Praggnanandhaa in a strategic encounter. The French player gradually built an advantage from the middlegame before converting it into a convincing win through composed endgame play. The victory moved Firouzja clear at the top of the standings after two rounds, strengthening his position in one of the world's premier over-the-board chess tournaments. Meanwhile, World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen was pushed hard by Germany's Vincent Keymer before prevailing in Armageddon.



Their classical game ended in a draw after a closely fought contest in which Carlsen held a slight endgame edge for long periods. Keymer defended resiliently to force the tiebreak, but Carlsen secured the bonus point in Armageddon. In another open-section clash, reigning world champion D Gukesh and American grandmaster Wesley So played out a tense classical draw following a lengthy strategic battle. So later won the Armageddon game to claim the additional points.

In the women's section, all

three classical games ended in draws before being decided in Armageddon. Kazakh player Bibisara Assaubayeva maintained her lead in the standings after defeating China's Zhu Jiner in the tiebreak. After a complex classical encounter, Assaubayeva held her composure in the faster format to continue her unbeaten run in the tournament.

The round also featured an all-Indian contest between Divya Deshmukh and veteran grandmaster Koneru Humpy. Following a balanced classical draw, Divya emerged victorious.

## 'Handhold' Vaibhav Sooryavanshi: Before India Comes Calling, BCCI Gets Urgent Plea



New Delhi, May 27: The clamour for Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's fast-tracked inclusion into the senior Indian men's team is growing deafening. Barely a year since his IPL debut, the cricketer world is already convinced the 15-year-old prodigy is ready for the highest level. Fans won't have to wait long for a glimpse of his talent as the teenager is set to feature for India-A as early as next

month, when the Tilak Varna-led squad heads to Sri Lanka for a tri-series. Sooryavanshi has scored nearly 600 runs (583) in the IPL this term. 'Handhold' Vaibhav Sooryavanshi: Before India Comes Calling, BCCI Gets Urgent Plea

For now, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has a big responsibility on his young shoulders - taking his team to the final of the IPL, and earning the opportunity to dethrone Virat Kohli's RCB. 'Handhold' Vaibhav Sooryavanshi: Before India Comes Calling, BCCI Gets Urgent Plea

## Sabalenka, Osaka bring Style to Paris but Medvedev comes undone

Paris, May 27: World number one Aryna Sabalenka sealed a stylish win to make the second round of the French Open, while Naomi Osaka brought runway flair to Roland Garros, but sixth seed Daniil Medvedev unravelled on a searing Tuesday in Paris.



Reigning Paris champion Coco Gauff recovered from a sluggish start to outlast Taylor Townsend 6-4 6-0 with several Americans also progressing despite a heat wave in the French capital making conditions challenging for players and fans. Jannik Sinner began his quest for a maiden French Open title to complete the career Grand Slam with a 6-1 6-3 6-4 win against Frenchman Clement Tabur in the evening session on Court Philippe Chatrier.

Dressed in a black-and-red mesh outfit and wearing a diamond necklace, Sabalenka dismissed Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro 6-4 6-2 before brushing off concerns about the

added flourish by saying she was completely at ease. "I like to challenge myself," the Belarusian told reporters. "But at the same time, the dress is super tight... I don't feel the dress on me. I was thinking it's going to be super hot wearing black, but it doesn't feel like black colour on me. I feel really comfortable."

"And the diamonds, I don't really feel the heaviness of it, but I can imagine how it looks from the outside... for me, it's important to look good. If I feel good looks-wise, I perform better and I feel great."

While Sabalenka set the tone, former world number one Osaka added a touch of Parisian flair as she walked onto Court Suzanne Lenglen in a sequined blouse and a black mesh floor-length train before unveiling a layered yellow-brown and gold match dress. The tennis was equally sparking as the 16th seed overcame tricky German Laura Siegemund 6-3 7-6(3) before hinting at the inspiration behind her match outfit. "I feel like... you know the Eiffel Tower at night when it's sparkly? I think I look like that a bit," Osaka said.

## Bangladesh stars make major gains in latest ICC Test rankings after Pakistan series sweep

New Delhi, May 27: Bangladesh's dominant 2-0 Test series sweep over Pakistan in the ICC World Test Championship has resulted in significant gains for several players in the latest ICC Men's Test rankings. Veteran batter Mushfiqur Rahim emerged as one of the biggest movers after finishing as the leading run-scorer of the series with 259 runs in four innings. The experienced Bangladesh batter climbed 10 places to joint 16th in the ICC Test batting rankings. Liton Das also enjoyed a strong rise, moving up 14 spots to 24th after scoring 239 runs across the two-match series. Bangladesh's bowlers were equally rewarded following the historic away triumph. Left-arm spinner Tajul Islam climbed two places to 11th in the ICC Test bowling rankings while also reaching a new



career-best rating. Off-spinner Mehdi Hasan Miraz moved up to 25th, while pacer Nahid Rana made a jump of 10 spots to 54th. Tajul additionally gained three places in the ICC Test all-rounder rankings to reach 29th. Despite the disappointing series result, Pakistan had a positive takeaway

with fast bowler Khuram Shahzad returning to the ICC Test bowling rankings in 49th place after making his comeback in the second Test in Sylhet. Meanwhile, there were several notable movements in the ODI rankings following the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League 2 tri-series involving

Nepal, Scotland and the United States. Nepal, who secured three wins during the tri-series, saw wicketkeeper-batter Aasif Sheikh climb five places to joint 81st in the ODI batting rankings, while all-rounder Dipendra Singh Airee moved up eight spots to joint 91st. Nepal bowlers Sandeep Lamikichane and Lalit Rajbanshi also made gains, rising to 32nd and joint 47th, respectively, in the ODI bowling rankings. For Scotland, Brandon McMullen advanced four places to 49th in the ODI batting rankings after another impressive showing with the bat. USA spinner Nostush Kenjige climbed 10 spots to 49th in the ODI bowling rankings, while teammate Milind Kumar rose four places to joint 18th in the ODI all-rounder rankings.

## Ravichandran Ashwin Exposed Cricket's Toxic War Long Back, Now Its Actual Cost Has Been Revealed

New Delhi, May 27: This season, it's Travis Head and Shreyas Iyer. Earlier, it was Hardik Pandya. The list is endless - of cricketers caught in the crossfire of fan wars. A few days back, Australian and Sunrisers Hyderabad cricketer Travis Head's family was targeted after he was involved in a handshake snub with Virat Kohli. Before that, Shresta Iyer, Punjab Kings captain Shreyas Iyer's sister, was the target of trolls for putting out a video after a washed-out match against Kolkata Knight Riders. Before that, Hardik Pandya had been bashed on social media after a captaincy change in Mumbai Indians. The list goes on endlessly. Opinions, sometimes which can be very strong, can be given, but the scary part is most of it nowadays is not organic.



A very insightful report by news agency PTI delved into the depths of the toxic fan war and exposed how much it costs to run a 'negative' campaign against players. "There are agencies that can charge anything between Rs 25,000 to Rs 2 lakh for spreading unmitigated hatred against a particular player," an industry insider told PTI. "To run a campaign, customized stats could be given. Now it's up to them to make the topic trend. Obviously, the rates will be different for hours of trending and trending for days," the insider added. The report went on to further reveal how the social media game around crick-

eters changed dramatically nearly a decade ago when platforms stopped being merely tools of engagement and became commercial gold mines. A player's social media following increasingly determined the value of his digital endorsement deals at a time when traditional advertising revenue through linear television began shrinking. "And here entered a very important component: the sports management firms that handled players' image and commercials," a senior BCCI official told PTI. "The managers would comb through profiles of social media aggregators with decent followings. They would be engaged to improve a player's social media traction," the official explained. Ashwin's prophecy Ravichandran Ashwin is perhaps the first high-profile cricketer who spoke out against the fan war. "There's something of a disease going around right now. Many of the opinions that surface on social media through fan armies - I've heard them before, first-hand. Sometimes, I've heard these exact views at a breakfast or lunch table, only to see them later appear online under a different name. That's when you start to wonder: how is this happening?" Ashwin said at the Repsvortz Conclave. "I'm not saying players themselves are planting these opinions, but it is concerning. Is there some kind of orchestration? I can't say for certain, but there does seem to be a structured ecosystem at play. Today, every player is an entrepreneur, and amplifying opinions externally can enhance brand value or improve PR. I understand that. But speaking negatively about another cricketer is something I would never do." Ashwin has always been known to call a spade a spade. This time too, he was right.

## West Bengal: Lionel Messi statue secured with ropes after locals report swaying in wind

Manchester, May 27: A statue of Argentine football legend Lionel Messi installed on VIP Road in Lake Town, Kolkata, was secured with ropes on Wednesday after local residents reported that it was swaying in strong winds, prompting authorities to inspect the structure. Officials visited the site following the complaints to assess the stability and safety of the installation. Precautionary measures were taken to ensure the structure remained secure amid changing weather conditions and public safety concerns. A contractor present at the site told ANI, "We came to inspect Messi's statue after reports that it was swaying in the wind. The higher authorities will decide the next course of action." Authorities are continuing



to monitor the structure and are evaluating whether additional reinforcements or modifications are required to ensure its long-term stability. The development comes days after controversy surrounding Messi's "GOAT Tour" event in Kolkata. Last week, Satadru Dutta,

the main organiser of the tour, filed a complaint against former West Bengal Sports Minister Arup Biswas, alleging misconduct, including misuse of tickets for Messi's Kolkata event and pressure regarding the issuance of access cards. Messi's appearance

in Kolkata had earlier witnessed disorder at Salt Lake Stadium after spectators who had purchased high-priced tickets allegedly began throwing bottles and attempting to breach gates between stands following the footballer's early departure from the venue. Several fans also criticised the event management, alleging that VIPs and political figures monopolised access to Messi, leaving many attendees unable to see the Argentine star. The situation escalated further when some spectators allegedly attempted to enter restricted areas and damage parts of the event setup, including tents and goalposts. Police later intervened and used mild force to disperse the crowd and restore order.

# ICG, Gujarat ATS seize 115 kg cocaine worth Rs 1,150 crore off Mundra Coast

New Delhi, May 27: In a major blow to maritime drug trafficking networks, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) seized approximately 115 kg of cocaine, valued at an estimated Rs 1,150 crore in the international market, during a joint anti-smuggling operation off the Mundra coast in Gujarat. The intelligence-based operation, conducted between May 25 and 26, was launched following specific and actionable inputs provided by ATS Gujarat regarding suspected narcotics trafficking through the maritime route. According to officials, ICG interceptor boats, carrying ATS personnel onboard, carried out an extensive search in the Mundra anchorage area. During the operation, security personnel detected suspicious activity linked to a container vessel anchored in the region.



Acting swiftly on the intelligence, the joint team moved to the location and recovered five bags that had been discarded into the sea. Preliminary examination revealed the bags contained packets filled with a white powdery substance that tested positive for cocaine. Officials said a total of 115 pack-

ets, each weighing approximately one kilogram, were recovered, taking the total seizure to around 115 kg. The contraband is estimated to be worth nearly Rs 1,150 crore based on international market assessments. Following the recovery, the container vessel suspected to be connected to the smuggling

attempt was escorted to port for detailed investigation and further legal proceedings. The operation marks the 15th successful anti-narcotics mission jointly conducted by the Indian Coast Guard and Gujarat ATS over the past five years, highlighting the growing effectiveness of inter-agency coordination in combating maritime crime and drug trafficking. Officials described the seizure as a significant achievement in safeguarding India's maritime borders and disrupting international narcotics networks. The successful operation also reinforces the agencies' commitment to strengthening coastal security and supporting the national campaign for a "Nasha Mukht Bharat" (Drug-Free India). Further investigations are underway to identify the source, intended destination and wider network linked to the seized consignment.

# Personal tragedy inspires Odisha businessman to support poor students' higher education

Bhubaneswar, May 27: Adevastating personal tragedy transformed the life of 65-year-old Anil Kumar Mahalik, turning him from a successful businessman into a committed philanthropist dedicated to supporting underprivileged students pursuing higher education. Mahalik's life changed irreversibly on September 26, 2022, following the loss of a loved one.



The emotional trauma left him shattered, but over time, he sought solace in serving society and helping young students realise their academic dreams. Driven by a desire to "give back to society", Mahalik disposed of substantial portions of his immovable properties and utilised the proceeds to establish the Biswa Bhushan Memorial Trust on April 6,

mission. Since its inception, the Trust has provided annual BB Scholarships to 30 deserving students whose higher education prospects were threatened by financial constraints. The initiative has already helped several students continue their studies and pursue professional careers. The Trust has now invited fresh applications for BB Scholarships from meritorious students who qualify in NEET-UG examinations. Apart from medical aspirants, deserving students from other streams of higher education will also be considered for financial support. Mahalik, who prefers to stay away from publicity, said that the initiative has brought him emotional healing and renewed purpose in life.

# Miscreants attack residence of former SP cabinet minister Gayatri Prasad Prajapati in Amethi



Amethi, May 27: According to reports, miscreants attacked the residence of former Samajwadi Party cabinet minister Gayatri Prasad Prajapati in Awas Vikas Colony late Tuesday evening. The MLA wife of former minister Gayatri Prajapati lives in this residence with her family. Her son filed a written

complaint with the Kotwali police. Police are currently investigating the entire matter. Anurag Prajapati, son of the former minister, alleged in his police complaint that around 8 pm on Tuesday, two to three dozen people—including Sher Bahadur Yadav, Brijesh Yadav, Jai Singh Pralap Yadav, Balram Yadav, Anurag Yadav, Manu Pal, Vipin Yadav, Rajesh Yadav, and Shubham Yadav—arrived at the gate of the MLA's residence in Awas Vikas Colony on motorcycles and in a black Scorpio car. Standing outside the gate, they started abusing his mother, MLA Maharaji Prajapati, former cabinet minister Gayatri Prasad Prajapati and the entire family, and threatened to kill them. When family member Surendra Prajapati and the women of the house were making a video, they snatched their mobile phones, slapped them several times and threatened to kill them if they complained about this anywhere.

# Congress leaders remember Nehru on death anniversary, hail his role as architect of modern India

New Delhi, May 27: Senior leaders of the Congress party on Wednesday paid tributes to India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, on his death anniversary, remembering him as the architect of modern India and praising his contributions to democracy, scientific progress, social justice, and institution-building. Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said Nehru's vision and leadership continue to inspire the nation and guide its democratic foundations. In a post on social media platform X, he said, "On the death anniversary of the country's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, humble tributes are paid to him." He further said that while laying the "strong foundation of modern India," Nehru dedicated his life to building "an inclusive, harmonious, and progressive nation."



"His visionary leadership, rooted in freedom, democratic principles, constitutional rights, social justice, and a scientific temper, will continue to guide us forever," Rahul Gandhi wrote. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also remembered Nehru's commitment to public welfare and inclusive development, sharing one of his reflections on governance and compassion. "Kaam ka painama

yeh hai ki mulk mein aise kitne log hain jinki aankhon se aansoo behne humne ponche, kinte aansoo humne kam kiye." ("The true measure of our work is how many people in the country have tears in their eyes, and how many of those tears we have wiped away or reduced"), she wrote on X. She said Nehru believed that a nation could progress only when its mil-

lions of citizens prospered and lived with dignity and happiness. She credited him with establishing key institutions in education, healthcare, science, technology, industry, and agriculture that continue to serve as the backbone of India's development. "It is on the foundation of these institutions that India stands strong today," she said, describing Nehru as "the great freedom fighter, the country's first Prime Minister, and the architect of modern India." Congress leader and party's communications in-charge Jai Ram Ramesh also paid tribute to Nehru while launching a sharp attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi over what he described as efforts to undermine Nehru's legacy. "Jawaharlal Nehru passed away 62 years ago today. He continues to be studied and analysed, as well as both criticised and applauded.

# BJP does not need TMC defectors to join the party: BJP MP Rahul Sinha

New Delhi, May 27: Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and Rajya Sabha MP on Wednesday said that the party does not need defectors from the Trinamool Congress (TMC) to join its ranks. Sinha said that the TMC was facing an internal collapse after losing access to what he described as the "cut money culture". Several TMC leaders have stepped down from organisational positions, including councillors from various municipal bodies such as the On Wednesday, Trinamool Congress MP also resigned from all her posts within the party organisation, further fuelling speculation of unrest within the TMC ranks. Several others have



openly criticised the functioning of the TMC following its defeat to the BJP in the West Bengal Assembly elections. Sinha said the BJP had come to power in West Bengal solely through the efforts of its own grassroots cadre. "We have come to power

us," he added. Sinha also said that TMC leaders were abandoning party posts because the illegal financial benefits they had allegedly enjoyed while in power had disappeared. "Their source of ill-gotten money is now gone because the BJP has formed the government here in Bengal. They have realised that this party is running a very clean government and will not allow wrongdoing or corruption at any level," Sinha said. Sinha also said that TMC leaders refused to "follow wherever the tide of money flows". "They cannot swim against the tide. Wherever the tide of money flows, the TMC leadership follows. I had earlier said that the TMC leadership would not even get begging bowls when they went out of power. Now everyone can see that this has turned out to be true," he added. The BJP MP also targeted claiming that he would either go to jail or leave the country", although he did not provide evidence to support the allegation. Sinha further said that was "fortunate" that no immediate action had been taken against her after the change of government, while adding that the BJP would act "in haste". He also claimed that the TMC should consider disbanding itself following what he described as poor electoral results in Falta.

# Supreme Court gives relief to Amazon, quashes Rs.202 Crore CCI penalty

New Delhi, May 27: The Supreme Court on Wednesday, May 27, set aside a June 2022 order of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) that had rejected US e-commerce major Amazon's appeal against the suspension of its investment deal with Future Group by the Competition Commission of India (CCI). A bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta also quashed the CCI's December 17, 2021 order that had imposed a penalty of 202 crore on Amazon and suspended its deal with Future Group. "In view of the findings recorded above, the appeal is allowed. The impugned judgment dated June 13, 2022, passed by the NCLAT and order dated



December 17, 2021 passed by the CCI are set aside," Justice Nath said. The top court further directed that any amount deposited or recovered from Amazon pursuant to the earlier orders be refunded within eight weeks. The verdict came on Amazon's plea challenging the NCLAT order, which had upheld the CCI's decision to suspend the 2019 investment transaction involving Future Group. The dispute relates to Amazon's investment in Future Coupons Pvt Ltd, through which the US company had acquired indirect rights in Future Retail. The transaction later became the subject of intense legal battles after allegations that Amazon had concealed material facts while seeking regulatory approval.

# First indigenous hydrogen train for Jind-Sonapat section all set to roll out

New Delhi, May 27: In a major initiative towards green and sustainable transportation, Indian Railways has approved the introduction of a 10-car Hydrogen Fuel Cell-based train set on the dedicated Jind-Sonapat section of Northern Railway. "The train is all set to start soon and will operate at a maximum speed of 75 km/h, powered by a 1200 KW hydrogen fuel cell propulsion system," the Ministry of Railways informed on Wednesday. Hydrogen fuel cell technology generates electricity through a chemical reaction using hydrogen, with water vapour as the only emission, making it a clean alternative to conventional fossil fuel-based traction systems. Hydrogen-based rail systems are increasingly being recognised globally as a promising solution for sustainable mobility. With this initiative, India joins a select group of countries such as Germany, Japan, China and the United States that are exploring the use of hydrogen for cleaner rail transportation. As the technology is still at a nascent stage, only a limited number of countries are currently operating or testing such systems. The Jind-Sonapat section in Haryana has been identified as the pilot route for these operations. An



indigenous hydrogen storage and refuelling facility has been set up at Jind for the train-set. The Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) has granted the required licence for storage and dispensing of compressed hydrogen gas at the site. A hydrogen compression system has been provided for refuelling operations, along with necessary technical support and critical spares to ensure reliable and fail-safe functioning. Provision of a standby compressor unit is also being ensured.

# Siddaramaiah set to step down as Congress works out Karnataka post power transition

New Delhi, May 27: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is likely to step down from his post following sustained intervention by the Congress high command, with the party leadership now working to facilitate a smooth transition of power to Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar amid mounting speculation over a long-discussed power-sharing arrangement in the state. Sources within the Congress said the broad contours of the transition were discussed during marathon meetings in New Delhi involving Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, senior leader Rahul Gandhi, Congress general secretary K C Venugopal, Karnataka in-charge Randeep Surjewala, Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar. While the party officially denied any discussion on leadership change, insiders indicated that the Congress leadership urged Siddaramaiah to pave the way for what was described as a generational and organisational



transition in Karnataka. According to party sources, the Congress leadership is attempting to execute the change without triggering factional unrest in a state that remains the party's most important southern stronghold. A formal announcement is expected after further consultations with legislators and a possible Congress Legislature Party meeting in Bengaluru. The latest developments have revived political debate over an alleged understanding

reached after the Congress' emphatic Assembly victory in 2023, under which Shivakumar was expected to eventually assume the Chief Minister's post after the government completed roughly half its term. Although the Congress leadership has never publicly acknowledged such an agreement, Shivakumar's supporters have repeatedly maintained that a power-sharing formula existed from the beginning. Sources, familiar with the negotia-



# Bangladesh: 6 newborn babies dead after AC gas leak at Dhaka hospital

Dhaka, May 27: At least six newborn children died in a single ward of the Ad-Din Hospital in Dhaka's Moghbazar in Bangladesh due to a major gas leak in the air conditioning.

The incident took place on Tuesday, May 26, while Sheikh Jahidul Islam, deputy police commissioner of Ramna Division DMP, informed that people have launched an investigation into the matter.

During initial investigation, it was informed that the gas leaked due to a fault in the AC system in a ward of the hospital. Due to this, the condition of the children undergoing treatment deteriorated.

The grandmother of one of the children said that the doctors at the hospital should have informed them in advance to shift their child to another facility if they were unable to handle the situation. She further alleged that the hospital authorities informed that her granddaughter was shifted to the ICU and added that she ultimately spent a large amount of money for



her treatment. After waiting for several hours, she later got to know that the girl was no longer alive. A woman, who lost her child in the incident, claimed that almost all the children were crying and vomiting at night, while none of the hospital authorities were able to understand what exactly happened

to them.

The mother said that as her son's condition started deteriorating in the morning, he was taken to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). Initially, the doctors told her that everything will be fine, but later they reported that the child had passed away.

Sharing details regarding the matter, the hospital's director Dr Nahida Yeasmin said that in total 11 mothers and six children were present in the post-delivery ward. At first, two children fell ill and were taken to the NICU.

Later on, they were brought back to the ward. At around 6 a.m., they fell ill again and were taken to the NICU and put on ventilator.

DMP Commissioner Mosleh Uddin Ahmed said that the mother of a newborn baby had earlier requested the hospital staff to turn off the AC as she was not feeling comfortable. The AC was turned off for about an hour and then switched on again due to hot weather.

# Byju's founder sentenced to six months in jail by Singapore court, says 'I am disappointed'

Washington, May 27: The edtech company Byju's founder Byju Raveendran was sentenced to six months jail term by a Singapore court for contempt. Byju Raveendran was ordered to serve jail time after the court said he had disobeyed multiple orders related to his assets dating back to April 2024, reports said. He has been instructed to surrender himself to officials, pay costs of \$70,500 and provide documents proving his legal ownership of Beaar Investco Pte, a corporate entity that held shares in a related company.

Responding to the court order, Raveendran said settlement discussions with lenders, including GLAS Trust and Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), and other stakeholders were already at an advanced stage.

"I am disappointed that the recent Singapore court matter has been pursued



and reported in a manner that creates a misleading impression about me, especially at a time when all key parties have almost concluded the settlement discussions," he said in a statement. Raveendran has claimed that parties involved in the settlement discussions earlier acknowledged that there was no wrongdoing on his part or on the part of other founders. "That is why it is deeply unfortunate that this matter is being used to create a contrary public narrative at this sensitive stage," he added. The dispute is related to the acquisition of Aakash Educational Services shares. Singapore courts had issued orders linked to asset disclosures and ownership documents, and the court eventually found that Raveendran had failed to comply with multiple orders dating back to April 2024.

Byju's had acquired Aakash in 2021 for nearly \$1 billion. What was supposed to be one of the biggest deals in edtech space, it became another courtroom conflict. As insolvency proceedings unfolded, Aakash proposed a rights issue to raise fresh capital.

# Russian Scientists Develop Vaccine For New Ebola Strain: Moscow



Moscow, May 27: Russia has announced that its scientists have developed a vaccine against a new strain of the Ebola virus linked to the ongoing outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Russian Embassy in South Africa, in a post on social media platform X on Tuesday, said, "Russian scientists have developed a vaccine against a new Ebola strain. Health Minister Mikhail Murashko announced. According to Russian scientists, the vaccine may

also protect against the rare Bundibugyo strain linked to the outbreak in the DRC." The announcement comes amid growing concern over the rapidly spreading Ebola outbreak in the DRC. On May 25, the World Health Organization (WHO) said the outbreak had caused at least 220 suspected deaths, as health officials continue to struggle to contain the epidemic. Although 101 confirmed cases and 10 confirmed deaths have been officially recorded, WHO Director-General Dr.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the actual scale of the outbreak is likely much larger. "There are now more than 900 suspected cases and 220 suspected deaths," Tedros said during a virtual ministerial briefing on the Bundibugyo Ebola outbreak on Monday. The outbreak, which was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on May 17, has also spread to neighbouring Uganda, where five confirmed cases and one death have been reported. On Tuesday, DRC Health Minister Roger Kamba said the Ebola outbreak remains in its early stages, but infections and fatalities continue to rise. Speaking at a press conference, Kamba said health authorities had identified nearly 1,000 suspected cases in affected regions, of which 101 had tested positive.

# 'Architect of October 7 massacre eliminated': Israeli PM Netanyahu claims IDF struck Hamas leader Deif in Gaza

Jerusalem, May 27: The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) today eliminated Muhammad Deif, identifying him as one of the architects linked to the planning and execution of the October 7 assault on Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a post on X, confirmed the strike and reiterated Israel's intent to continue its campaign against those involved in the October 7 attack. "We have now struck in Gaza Muhammad Deif, the leader of Hamas's military wing and one of the architects of the October 7 massacre. We will get to all of them," Netanyahu said, framing the operation as part of a broader push against Hamas leadership.

The Israeli Prime Minister's Office stated that the strike was carried out on the instructions of Netanyahu and Defence Minister Israel Katz. Role of military wing leader Muhammad Deif, Israeli authorities said. Muhammad Deif had served as head of Hamas' intelligence apparatus during the October 7 attack and had recently



been elevated to a senior military leadership position following the killing of Ezzedine al-Haddad in an earlier strike. Officials also accused Muhammad Deif of involvement in killings, kidnappings, and attacks targeting Israeli civilians and security personnel during the October 7 assault.

Underground infrastructure targeted in northern Gaza

Also, the Israel Defence Forces reported the destruction of around 11 kilometres of underground tunnel networks in the Beit Hanoun area of northern Gaza. The military defined the zone as a long-standing Hamas stronghold, with tunnels running beneath residential buildings, roads, and public facilities used for operational activity against Israeli targets.

Benjamin Netanyahu also outlined broader military operations under Operation "Lion's Roar," stating that thousands of Hezbollah operatives had been eliminated since its launch. He said Israeli forces continued to dismantle infrastructure near civilian areas, strengthen security zones, and conduct targeted strikes across multiple fronts, including Beirut, while addressing emerging threats such as explosive

# India Pushes For Urgent UNSC Reforms, Slams 'Entrenched Interests' Blocking Change

United Nations, May 27: India on Tuesday pointed out resistance to long-pending reforms of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), warning that the global body faces a growing crisis of credibility because its structure remains rooted in the geopolitical realities of 1945. Speaking during an open debate at the United Nations on "Upholding the Purposes and Principles of the UN Charter and Strengthening the UN-Centred International System", India's Permanent Representative to the UN Parvathani Harish said progress on reforms was being obstructed by "entrenched interests" determined to preserve the status quo. "Lack of progress in the Inter-Governmental Ne-



gotiations on Council reforms is indicative of entrenched interests of several member states to maintain the status quo and retain the eight-decade-old UNSC architecture," Harish said. India has long argued for expansion of the Security Council's permanent membership, maintaining that the present structure no longer reflects contemporary geopolitical realities. Harish stressed that meaningful reform would require expansion in the permanent

category of membership, saying this alone could alter the Council's decision-making process. "The UN Security Council must be a living instrument, not a fossil," he said, warning that failure to adapt would further erode the Council's authority, legitimacy and effectiveness. Without naming countries directly, India's remarks were seen as aimed at the "Uniting for Consensus" group, which opposes the creation of new permanent seats and has often been accused of delaying negotiations through procedural tactics.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres also underlined the urgent need for reform, saying global institutions must reflect present-day realities rather than the world order that emerged after the Second World War. "A Security Council that does not reflect the geopolitical realities of today's world cannot fully deliver on its responsibilities," Guterres said, adding that reform was essential for restoring the Council's credibility and ensuring more inclusive decision-making. He particularly highlighted the continued exclusion of Africa from permanent membership, calling it a major historical injustice.

Drawing a sharp analogy to illustrate the outdated UN framework, Harish said the organisation was attempting to operate in the modern era using systems designed in the 1940s. "It is akin to running advanced AI technologies on the 1945 version of the computer called the Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer (ENIAC)," he said. He added that adaptability was central to survival and progress throughout history and argued that the UN could not remain different to changing global realities. Making India's case for permanent membership in a reformed Security Council, Harish highlighted India's contributions during and after the Second World War.

# UAE Marks Eid Al Adha With Prayers, Peace Call And Festive Spirit



Dubai, May 27: Thousands of worshippers gathered at mosques across the UAE on Wednesday to perform traditional prayers on the first morning of Eid Al Adha, one of the most significant celebrations in the Islamic calendar. Eid Al Adha, known as the Festival of the Sacrifice, commemorates the Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to God's command. It is the second of the two major Eid holidays observed annually by Muslims across the world. The celebrations this year carry deeper meaning, coming against the backdrop of regional conflict, with many in the Arab world holding out hope for a path to peace following months of upheaval linked to the Iran war. President Sheikh Mohamed bin

# NASA Outlines Vision For Lunar 'City' Amid Renewed Moon Race

Washington, May 27: NASA has outlined an ambitious long-term vision for establishing a sustained human presence on the Moon, signalling a shift from the short-duration Apollo-era missions toward the development of a permanent lunar settlement.

During a presentation at NASA Headquarters on Tuesday, agency officials described plans for a "Moon Base" that could eventually include roads, robotic vehicles, drones, communication systems, power infrastructure and astronauts living and working across

large areas of the Moon's South Pole. "The Moon Base will be America's and humanity's first outpost on another celestial world," NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman said during the event, where scale models of lunar landers and robotic systems were displayed.

NASA officials emphasised that the initiative would evolve gradually through a series of missions, experiments and robotic operations rather than through the construction of a single large base. "The moon base is as beautiful as it is hos-



tile," Isaacman said, noting that temperatures on the lunar surface can range from above 250 degrees in sunlight to below minus 200 degrees in darkness. The lunar South Pole has emerged as a key focus area for NASA because permanently shadowed craters in the region are believed to contain water ice, a resource considered critical for sustaining astronauts and potentially producing rocket fuel for future deep-space missions. However, officials acknowledged that many aspects of the lunar environment remain poorly understood. "It

also unveiled plans for "MoonFall," a mission featuring hopping drones designed to explore difficult terrain and scout future landing sites. Officials said the drones could eventually function as navigation beacons, observation stations or communication nodes after completing short flights across the lunar surface.

A future lunar environment in which habitats, power systems, mining zones and scientific research stations could extend across hundreds of square miles. "It ends up sprawling a little bit

more like a city as you start building it out," NASA chief architect Nijoud Merany said. Unlike the Apollo programme, which relied largely on government-developed systems, NASA said commercial companies would play a central role in building and operating the Moon Base infrastructure. "We are leveraging the NASA playbook from the 1960s, figuring out what works and what doesn't in this epic science of survival," Isaacman said. NASA officials added that the Moon would also serve as a testing ground for future human missions to Mars. "It would be nice to do that when you're four days away from home than many more days away from home," Isaacman said. The renewed lunar push comes amid growing global competition in space exploration, particularly from China, which is advancing plans for an International Lunar Research Station later this decade.

While NASA officials stopped short of describing the programme as a geopolitical contest, they repeatedly emphasised the importance of long-term American.



# Air India Express launches 'Xpress Sale' with 5 million discounted seats

Hyderabad, May 27: Air India Express on Wednesday announced the launch of its 'Xpress Sale', offering five million seats with discounts of up to 50 per cent on domestic and international flights. In a release, the airline said bookings under the sale will remain open from May 27 to May 31, 2026, for travel between June 15 and October 10, 2026. According to the company, the offer covers Lite fares, which come with zero check-in and baggage allowance, as well as Value fares across its domestic and international network. Customers booking through the airline's official website and mobile application will also benefit from zero convenience fees. The airline said exclusive early access to the sale would be available on



May 27 through its official Air India Express website <https://www.airindiaexpress.com> and mobile app before the sale opens on all major booking plat-

forms from May 28. Logged-in Tata NeuPass members will receive additional 20 per cent discounts on Business Class fares, extra baggage allowance, complimentary 'Gourmet' hot meals and priority services under the 'Xpress Ahead' programme. Members can also avail discounts of up to ₹900 on flight bookings and earn NeuCoins. The airline further said passengers could receive discounts of up to 30 per cent on pre-booked meals, seat selection and additional baggage options. Special discounted fares will continue to be available for students, senior citizens and armed forces personnel and their dependents. As part of its ongoing promotional campaign 'Xpress Wali Baat Hai', featuring actor Pankaj Tripathi, the airline said it will offer a range of its onboard services, including hot meals, comfortable seating and expanded connectivity across domestic and international destinations. Air India Express currently operates more than 500 daily flights connecting 43 domestic and 16 international destinations across South, Southeast and West Asia.

# Domestic demand and investors keep Indian markets steady amid West Asia tensions



Mumbai, May 27:

Three months after the outbreak of the West Asia conflict, India's economy continues to face mounting external pressures while demonstrating notable domestic resilience in an increasingly challenging global environment. What began as a sudden geopolitical disruption has now evolved into a prolonged macroeconomic condition, steadily weighing on the country's financial and economic systems. The Indian rupee has

depreciated by nearly five per cent since the conflict began and earlier this month slipped past the 95-per-dollar mark. The currency has come under pressure due to sustained foreign portfolio investor outflows, which have reached 23.5 billion dollars so far in 2026. Meanwhile, wholesale price index inflation rose sharply to 8.3 per cent year-on-year in April, its highest level in 42 months, as rising global energy and commodity prices continued to push up

production costs across sectors. Despite these headwinds, domestic economic indicators have remained resilient. According to the National Stock Exchange's monthly Market Pulse report, the Nifty 50 posted its strongest monthly performance in 28 months in April, rising 7.5 per cent before easing 1.5 per cent in early May. Domestic institutional investors have maintained strong participation, recording net purchases for 33 consecutive months and helping absorb persistent foreign investor selling. The broader economy has also shown signs of stability, supported by strong rural demand and healthy credit growth. Bank credit expanded 16 per cent year-on-year, reflecting sustained underlying economic activity despite global uncertainty.

# Indian scientists develop 'CLEAR' technology for advanced protein imaging, boosting disease detection

New Delhi, May 27: Scientists at the Jawaharlar Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Bengaluru, have developed a novel imaging platform that could transform the way diseases such as cancer and neurological disorders are detected and studied by enabling unprecedented visualization of proteins within biological samples. The technology, named Clearable Light-Erased Antibody Reporter (CLEAR), allows researchers to image a large number of proteins in the same biological sample using just a single fluorescent marker. The breakthrough is expected to open new avenues in disease diagnosis, biological research and precision medicine. Proteins play a central role in biological functions and serve as key indicators of disease as well as targets for therapies. However, cre-

ating a detailed map of proteins within tissues while preserving their natural spatial arrangement has long remained a challenge for scientists. To address this, researchers led by Prof Sarit S Agasti at JNCASR developed CLEAR, an innovative imaging platform capable of visualising numerous proteins at high resolution within the same cell or tissue sample. The technology could prove particularly valuable in cancer biology, immunology and neurological research, where understanding the spatial organisation of proteins is critical. The research team designed and synthesised the CLEAR probes, developed the imaging workflow and validated the platform across a range of biological systems. Researchers from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) collaborated in demonstrating the technology's effectiveness in complex biological settings,

including immune cell systems. Unlike conventional multiplexed imaging techniques, CLEAR employs a light-cleavable probe system that enables repeated cycles of labelling and imaging within the same spectral window. After imaging a set of proteins, a gentle pulse of 365-nanometre LED light erases the fluorescent signal, allowing scientists to label and image a new set of proteins in the same sample. Researchers compared the process to a chalkboard that can be wiped clean and reused repeatedly. By continuously repeating the cycle, scientists can generate highly detailed protein maps ranging from single cells to complex tissue sections without the need for multiple fluorescent dyes. The method combines high multiplexing capability with speed, high spatial resolution and compatibility with delicate biological samples, including live cells.

This enables virtually unlimited protein visualisation using a single fluorophore, overcoming a major limitation of existing technologies. Published in the journal Chemical Science, the breakthrough has the potential to significantly improve early disease detection and deepen understanding of immune responses and neurological disorders. Scientists said the technology could eventually support precision medicine by providing comprehensive molecular insights to help guide targeted therapies. The development also aligns with global efforts aimed at advancing space proteomics and personalised healthcare. According to the researchers, CLEAR represents a major step towards creating comprehensive protein maps of tissues and cells, offering a powerful new tool for both biomedical research and clinical diagnostics.

# Jio launches Rs. 200 OTT pass with 15 streaming platforms, Live TV and Unlimited 5G

Hyderabad, May 27: Reliance Jio on Wednesday announced the introduction of a new ₹200 Jio OTT Pass, offering access to 15 premium OTT platforms, including YouTube Premium, JioHotstar Mobile, Hollywood and Prime Video Mobile Edition. Users will also gain access to 12 additional OTT platforms through JioTV, including SonyLIV, ZEE5, Lionsgate Play, Discovery Sun NXT, FanCode, Kancha Lanna, Planet Marathi, Chaupal, Hoichoi, TimesPlay and Tarang Plus. Subscribers will additionally have access to over 1,000 live TV channels on JioTV, including more than 150 paid channels from major broadcasters. These include channels from JioStar such as Star Plus

nearly ₹1,500 per month. The pass includes subscriptions to 15 premium OTT platforms, including YouTube Premium, JioHotstar Mobile, Hollywood and Prime Video Mobile Edition. Users will also gain access to 12 additional OTT platforms through JioTV, including SonyLIV, ZEE5, Lionsgate Play, Discovery Sun NXT, FanCode, Kancha Lanna, Planet Marathi, Chaupal, Hoichoi, TimesPlay and Tarang Plus. Subscribers will additionally have access to over 1,000 live TV channels on JioTV, including more than 150 paid channels from major broadcasters. These include channels from JioStar such as Star Plus

HD and Colors HD; Sony Entertainment channels including SET HD and Sony SAB HD; Sun TV Network channels such as Sun TV HD and KTV HD; Warner Bros. Discovery channels including Discovery Channel and Animal Planet; and ETV regional entertainment and movie channels. On the connectivity front, the ₹200 OTT Pass offers 30 GB of high-speed 4G/5G data along with unlimited 5G access, valid for the duration of the user's active base plan and capped at 28 days. The company said the pass is available through MyJio, Jio.com, retail outlets and third-party recharge applications across all telecom circles in the country.

# EBG Group launches Vajram Electric Manufacturing Hub in Hyderabad with Rs.25 cr initial investment

Hyderabad, May 27: EBG Group on Wednesday announced the inauguration of Vajram Electric, a centralised manufacturing, assembly and distribution hub in Hyderabad. The move is aimed at strengthening domestic manufacturing capabilities and integrated supply chains while generating more than 450 direct and indirect jobs. The facility, launched with an initial investment of ₹25 crore, will expand from 25,000 sq. ft. to 50,000 sq. ft. over the next year, the company said in a release here. It is designed to support 11 business verticals of the Group through a unified multi-brand production platform. Vajram Electric will serve as a production and logistics hub for the Group's diversified portfolio spanning electric mobility, rehabilitation technology, consumer elec-



tronics, construction, food and beverage infrastructure, and sustainable hospitality. The company currently operates an advanced assembly facility on Hyderabad's Outer Ring Road and functions as a fully integrated production and warehousing campus focused on scale, efficiency and faster market turnaround. Dr Irfan Khan, Founder of EBG Group, said "This is a defining milestone for

# Bengal Remake: Major steel, port, rail projects to be speeded up, including IISCO's Rs 45k expansion

Kolkata, May 27: Bengal's planned economic revival will be spearheaded by the public sector. Projects long envisaged are being fast-forwarded in ports, steel making, and railways to script the state's story post-2026. Top officials in Delhi and Kolkata have been burning the midnight oil to work on the final contours of existing plans and to speed them up, and the result is a slew of public sector projects that could catalyse private investment in the long run.

"Rejuvenating the economy by catalysing growth is of the utmost importance," a top West Bengal official in the new government told UNI. The state's gigantic steel plants, Indian Iron and Steel Company (IISCO) and Durgapur Steel Plant, are going in for what is



termed as brownfield expansion. The Steel Authority of India Ltd's capacity expansion is expected to be completed by 2029-30. This virtually means that two new steel plants will function at the sleepy steel-making town near Asansol at a cost of Rs 45,000 crore, making this the single largest investment made in West Bengal

in this century. IISCO's new capacity, which will produce hot rolled coils, sheets, and plates, could bring in investment in downstream industries such as machine building, automobiles, steel fabrication, among others. Similarly, Durgapur Steel Plant, envisaged by the state's first chief minister Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy and set up with British know-how in 1959, is slated to see a capacity increase from 2,088 MTPA to 3.5 MTPA, besides a 40 MW captive power plant. This means that some 20,000 new jobs could be created in downstream industries such as machine building, automobiles, steel fabrication etc, by taking into account the fact that the Indian steel industry has an employment multiplier effect of 6.8 for every job created in a steel

plant. From the colonial-era docks of Kolkata to ambitious ports on a deep-sea coast on the Bay of Bengal coast, the state is witnessing a broad reimagining of its port and logistics ecosystem. The Syama Prasad Mookerjee port, which includes both the docks at Kidderpore and Haldia docks, is undergoing a massive multi-year infrastructure modernisation to expand its capacity from 87.5 million metric tonnes to 115 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) by 2030. Capacity augmentation and mechanisation projects at the Haldia Dock Complex are focused on streamlining dry bulk and cargo operations. The move is expected to reduce vessel turnaround times and strengthen supply chains serving eastern and north-eastern India.

# Himalaya Wealth managers launches Rs.500 crore SME-focused AIF in Mumbai to back high-growth businesses

Mumbai, May 27: Himalaya Wealth Managers LLP has announced the launch of Himalaya SME Scheme-I, a SEI-registered Category I Alternative Investment Fund (AIF), with a target corpus of ₹250 crore and an additional green shoe option of ₹250 crore. The fund has been launched with the objective of supporting high-growth small and medium enterprises (SMEs) across India and addressing the persistent equity risk capital gap in the sector. The newly launched fund will focus on investing in scalable SMEs operating in sectors expected to benefit from India's long-term structural growth trends, including aerospace and defence, industrial automation, healthcare and life sciences, agri-tech and food processing, electronics and semiconductors, renewable energy, and electric vehicles. According to



the company, Himalaya SME Scheme-I aims to generate a gross internal rate of return (IRR) exceeding 20 per cent through a disciplined investment approach, structured transactions, and active value creation initiatives. The fund will primarily back growth-stage enterprises with proven business

models and strong expansion potential. Besides providing financial support, the fund will also offer governance assistance, strategic guidance, and operational mentoring to portfolio companies to help them transition into professionally managed and institutionally governed enterprises. The investment platform is being led by industry veterans Deena Mehta, Manohar Lal Vij, Asit C Mehta and Jatin Behari. Collectively, the leadership team brings more than 135 years of experience across equity and debt capital markets, SME financing, mergers and acquisitions, forensics, due diligence, and specialised corporate advisory services. Commenting on the launch, Deena Mehta, General Partner and Investment Director at Himalaya Wealth Managers Fund, said India's SME sector is entering a phase of rapid formalisation and expansion, although a significant equity risk capital gap continues to limit the growth potential of several promising businesses. She said the fund intends to partner with niche market leaders that demonstrate strong cash flow visibility, high switching costs, and sustainable competitive advantages.

# India's banking sector demonstrates robust performance: Secretary, Financial Services

Agartala, May 27: The Secretary, Department of Financial Services under Ministry of Finance, M Nagaraju, underscored the robust performance of India's banking sector while unveiling several government initiatives to support micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), especially amidst global uncertainties like the evolving situation in West Asia. Addressing a credit outreach programme here, he highlighted that both public and private banks in India achieved an impressive growth rate of 15.9% last year, which marks one of the most significant milestones in the history of Indian banking, and it will continue.



Nagaraju also emphasised that India's banking system is financially robust, supported by a solid capital foundation and significant improvements in asset quality. He pointed out that non-performing assets (NPAs) have dropped dramatically and now stand below 0.4%, indicating enhanced financial discipline and

effective recovery processes. To address emerging global challenges, the centre has rolled out a credit guarantee programme of ₹2,25 lakh crore. This initiative aims to facilitate improved credit access for MSMEs across India, including regions like Northeast, by bolstering business resilience and economic stability.

## Historic MoU signed between ITBP Leh Frontier & Cooperatives Dept UT Ladakh

**LEH, MAY 27:** In a major step aimed at strengthening local farmers and cooperatives, promoting border-area livelihoods and ensuring supply of fresh produce to security personnel, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was today signed between the Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force (ITBP), North West Frontier (NWF) and the Department of Cooperatives, UT Ladakh. The MoU would facilitate the procurement and supply of essential food items and allied products through local Cooperative Societies, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), thereby providing them with assured market linkages for their products. The MoU was signed by Deputy Inspector General, ITBP NWF, Shri Laxman Yadav, and Secretary,



Cooperatives, UT Ladakh, Bhanu Prabha, in the presence of Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena. The agreement has initially been signed for a period of three years. The MoU is a major step towards overcoming the farmers' challenges through registered cooperative societies/FPOs/PACS in Ladakh. Describing the initiative as a historic step, Lieutenant Governor Shri Saxena stated that the MoU would economically empower local cooperative institutions and people of Ladakh, including those

living in the border areas, while also strengthening local supply chains. "The 21 lakh allocation by ITBP for the procurement of vegetables and allied products is a good beginning. This initiative will encourage farmers in border villages to cultivate more vegetables, improve their livelihoods and strengthen local economic activity. Greenhouses being developed under the Vibrant Village Programme will further help farmers increase vegetable production, which can directly supply fresh produce to ITBP personnel

deployed in remote areas," Shri Saxena said. The Lieutenant Governor further observed that the initiative would also contribute towards reverse migration in border villages by creating livelihood opportunities and strengthening rural economies.

The MoU establishes a structured institutional mechanism for the procurement of locally produced agricultural, horticultural, livestock and dairy products through cooperative institutions functioning under the administrative control of the Additional Registrar, Cooperative Societies, UT Ladakh. The arrangement is expected to create assured market linkages for local producers and strengthen the financial sustainability of cooperative institutions operating in remote areas.

## Eid-ul-Azha Celebrated with Religious Fervour and Communal Harmony

DC and SSP Poonch Celebrate Eid-ul-Azha with People, Extend Greetings of Peace and Brotherhood



**POONCH, MAY 27:** Eid-ul-Azha was celebrated across Poonch district with great religious fervour, enthusiasm and communal harmony. On the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Ashok Kumar Sharma and Senior Superintendent of Police Poonch, Shafiq Hussain Bhat along with officers from Police and Civil Administration, religious heads, prominent citizens and members of the public gathered at the



Eidgah to participate in the celebrations and extend festive greetings. The dignitaries interacted warmly with the people and exchanged Eid greetings with each other. Sweets were distributed among the attendees, symbolising the spirit of brotherhood, love and unity. The atmosphere at the Eidgah reflected communal harmony and togetherness as people embraced one another and celebrated the festival with joy and happiness. On the occasion, spe-

cial Eid prayers were offered at the Eidgah where a large number of devotees from various villages and areas of Poonch district participated with religious devotion. After offering prayers, people greeted each other and prayed for prosperity, peace and well-being of the society. Deputy Commissioner Poonch Ashok Kumar Sharma and SSP Poonch, Shafiq Hussain Bhat extended heartfelt Eid-ul-Azha greetings to the people and prayed for lasting peace, communal harmony and prosperity in the district. They also appreciated the spirit of unity and brotherhood displayed by the people during the celebrations. The festival concluded peacefully with people celebrating the occasion in a spirit of mutual respect, harmony and happiness.

## NATF National Chairman Vishal Chopra Meets Former Chief Minister J&K Ghulam Nabi Azad



**NEW DELHI, MAY 27:** Vishal Chopra, National Chairman of the National Anti Terrorism Front (NATF), extended warm Eid greetings to former Jammu & Kashmir Chief

Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad and his family during a visit to his residence in New Delhi. On the occasion, Vishal Chopra met Ghulam Nabi Azad to deliberate on key issues

concerning Jammu & Kashmir and the strengthening of the organization's activities in the region. During the meeting, both leaders held detailed discussions on the prevailing situation in Jammu & Kashmir and emphasized the need for greater public awareness and community participation in maintaining peace and security. Ghulam Nabi Azad suggested that awareness camps should be organized along the border areas of Jammu & Kashmir to educate and sensitize local residents about security concerns and the role they can play in safeguarding the nation. Vishal Chopra appreciated the valuable suggestions and assured that the National Anti Terrorism Front (NATF) will actively work towards implementing such initiatives to strengthen grassroots awareness and national unity.

## People of Kishtwar celebrate Eid-ul-Azha with religious fervor and enthusiasm

Civil and Security arrangements ensured by administration; DC Kishtwar & SSP Kishtwar extend festive greetings



**KISHTWAR, MAY 27:** Eid-ul-Azha was celebrated across Kishtwar district with deep religious devotion, joy and in an atmosphere of peace and harmony.

Thousands of devotees gathered at mosques to offer Namaz-e-Eid, praying for peace, prosperity and the overall development of Kishtwar and the Union Territory.

Comprehensive arrangements including security and logistical measures were meticulously

organized by the district and police administration to ensure the smooth and safe observance of the festival, especially at the Eidgah Chowgan Ground, where around 18000 to 20000 people congregated to perform Namaz-e-Eid. Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Pankaj Kumar Sharma and Senior Superintendent of Police, Naresh Singh were present on the occasion and personally oversaw the implementation of the arrangements.

## Eid-ul-Adha celebrated with religious fervor across Ramban

**RAMBAN, MAY 27:** Eid-ul-Adha was celebrated with great religious fervor and festive spirit across District Ramban as people from all walks of life gathered at mosques and Eidgahs to offer special prayers and mark the auspicious occasion with devotion, brotherhood and communal harmony. The largest congregations were witnessed at Jamia Masjid Sharif Ramban and Eidgahs in Banihal, Gool and Batote, where hundreds of devotees offered Namaz-e-Eid and prayed for peace, prosperity and the well-being of the Union Territory and the nation. Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Mohammad Alyas Khan extended warm Eid greetings to the people and stated that such sacred occasions strengthen the values of unity, mutual respect, compassion and communal harmony in society. Senior officers from the civil and police administration also conveyed their heartfelt



wishes to the Muslim community on this holy occasion. At Ramban, MLA Ramban, Arjun Singh Raju also extended Eid-ul-Adha greetings to the people and wished peace, prosperity and happiness for every household in the Ramban town. Eid prayers were also offered at various mosques and Eidgahs in surrounding areas including Jamia Masjid Maitra, Karol, Chandgor, Upper Ramban, Banihal, Sangaldan, Ramsoo, Ukral, Batote, Gool and Rajgah. The festival was marked by an atmosphere of spiritual reflection, joy and communal togetherness throughout the district.

made elaborate arrangements, including adequate security, traffic regulation, sanitation, drinking water supply and other essential amenities to ensure smooth and safe observance of Eid-ul-Adha across the district. Besides Ramban town, Eid prayers were also offered at various mosques and Eidgahs in surrounding areas including Jamia Masjid Maitra, Karol, Chandgor, Upper Ramban, Banihal, Sangaldan, Ramsoo, Ukral, Batote, Gool and Rajgah. The festival was marked by an atmosphere of spiritual reflection, joy and communal togetherness throughout the district.

## Samba Police arrests drug peddler with 3.11 grams heroin like substance



**SAMBA, MAY 27:** Intensifying its drive against drug smugglers/peddlers in the ongoing Nasha Mukta Abhiyan, Samba Police has arrested a drug peddler in

the jurisdiction of Police Station Bari Brahmana and recovered approximately 3.11 grams heroin-like substance (Chitta) from his possession. A Police team of Police Station Bari

Brahmana during patrolling in the area, intercepted a pedestrian who was coming from Lane No.4 Bari Brahmana and moving towards Hallmark Factory Bari Brahmana under suspicious circumstances. During checking, approximately 3.11 grams of heroin-like substance (Chitta) was recovered from his possession. The drug peddler identified as Mohd Aslam S/o Hakam Din R/o Balolekhad Tehsil Bari Brahmana district Samba has been arrested and contraband item has also been seized. A case FIR No.137/2026 U/S 8/21/22 NDPS Act has been registered at Police Station Bari Brahmana and investigation started.

## District administration, Police officers join Eid-ul-Adha prayers at Eidgah Doda, extend greetings to people

**DODA, MAY 27:** On the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Adha, a large gathering of the Muslim community offered special Eid prayers at Eidgah Doda. The congregational prayers were led by the Imam of Jamia Masjid Doda and witnessed the presence of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda, Krishan Lal, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Doda, Kartik Shrotriya, Additional Deputy Commissioner Doda, Anil Kumar Thakur, besides other senior officers from the civil and police administration. DC Doda, SSP Doda and ADC Doda interacted with religious leaders and members of the public and extended warm greetings on the auspicious occasion. They conveyed their heartfelt wishes for peace, prosperity, happiness and well-being to the people of the district. The officers highlighted the



spiritual significance of Eid-ul-Adha and said that the festival symbolizes sacrifice, compassion, brotherhood and devotion to humanity. They noted that Eid inspires people to strengthen the values of harmony, mutual respect

and social unity. Deputy Commissioner Doda, Krishan Lal, appreciated the people of Doda for reflecting the district's rich tradition of communal harmony, brotherhood and peaceful coexistence. He lauded the

spirit of unity and togetherness displayed by the people and expressed hope that these values would continue to strengthen the social fabric of the district. SSP Doda, Kartik Shrotriya stressed the importance of maintaining peace, communal harmony and cooperation in society. He appreciated the public for their continued support in maintaining a peaceful atmosphere and urged people to uphold the values of unity and collective responsibility. Sweets were also distributed among the people as part of the celebrations, adding to the festive spirit and joy of the occasion. Similar Eid prayers were also offered at various Eidgahs and mosques across different parts of the district, where devotees gathered in large numbers to celebrate the festival with religious fervour and devotion.

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