



Terrorists, Their Backend Supporters Will be Dealt With Firm and Decisive Measures : PM Modi

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, MAY 3: Terrorism is the "biggest threat" to humanity and India is committed to take "firm and decisive" action against the terrorists and their backers, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday, against the backdrop of escalating tensions between New Delhi and Islamabad over the horrific Pahalgam terror attack.

He made these remarks after holding wide-ranging talks with visiting Angolan President Joao Manuel Goncalves Lourenco. Modi announced a defence credit line of USD 200 million for the African nation.

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Before Pahalgam Attack, Intel Agencies Had Flagged Potential Targeting Of Tourists In Srinagar's Outskirts: Officials

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR, MAY 3: Days before the deadly terror attack in Pahalgam, intelligence agencies had flagged the potential targeting of tourists especially those staying in hotels on the outskirts of Srinagar in the foothills of the Zabarwan range, officials in the know said Saturday.

This prompted a heightened security presence

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CM Omar Abdullah calls on PM Modi, discusses key issues concerning J&K

■ HT News Network



NEW DELHI, MAY 3: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday and discussed various issues, including last week's terror attack in Pahalgam, officials said.

The meeting at the prime minister's residence lasted around 30 minutes, they said.

This is the first meeting between the two leaders since the April 22 terror attack in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed.

The officials said Abdullah briefed the prime minister about the ground situation, especially the outrage among the people over the deadly attack and their spontaneous protests in every nook and corner to convey their disapproval of the violence, which had happened for the first time since the eruption of terrorism in 1989.

He also highlighted the sacrifice of pony ride operator Syed Adil

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India Bans Import and Transit of Goods from Pakistan

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR: The Government of India on Saturday imposed an immediate ban on the direct or indirect import and transit of all goods originating in or exported from Pakistan, citing concerns related to national security and public policy.

According to a notification issued by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), a new clause—Para 2.20A—has been inserted into the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2023 under the provisions of the Foreign Trade (Development & Regulation) Act, 1992.

"Direct or indirect import or transit of

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Killing tourists humiliation of humanity, PM Modi led Govt won't spare Pahalgam terror attack perpetrators: LoP Sharma

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, MAY 03: BJP senior leader and Leader of Opposition in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, Sunil Sharma, on Saturday said the Government of India will not spare those involved in the April 22, Pahalgam terror attack, which left 26 civilians, mostly tourists dead. Talking



to reporters in Bandipora,

Sharma, according to the news agency said, "This is the first such incident in the history of India where tourists have been targeted. Tourists are the backbone of Kashmir's economy. They are now scared and uncertain. What happened on April 22 was a humiliation of humanity."

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NEWS BRIEF

CRPF Dismisses Jawan Who Married Pak Woman Without Intimation

New Delhi, May 3: The Central Reserve Police Force has dismissed from service its jawan Munir Ahmed for "concealing" his marriage with a Pakistani woman as his action was found to be detrimental to national security, official sources said Saturday.

The jawan was last posted with the 41st battalion of paramilitary CRPF, the lead internal security force of the country.

He was "dismissed from service" under the rules that do not require conducting an enquiry, official

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NIA Interrogates Two Jailed Militants in Pahalgam Attack Probe

SRINAGAR: As the investigation into the Pahalgam attack gains sharp momentum, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) is interrogating two militants—Mushtaq and Nisar—who have been imprisoned in Jammu since April 2023, NDTV reported.

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The duo is being questioned over their suspected involvement in the Pahalgam attack, which claimed

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JK Police Raid Homes Linked to UAPA Cases in Srinagar

SRINAGAR: Srinagar Police on Saturday conducted search operations at multiple locations in connection with cases registered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), continuing its action against terror associates and related infrastructure.

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A police spokesperson said in a statement said that searches were carried out at the residences of individuals linked to proscribed militant outfits and

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Kashmir will always remain integral part of India: Dr Farooq Hands Over Pahalgam MLA's Salary to Adil's Father

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR: National Conference President Dr Farooq Abdullah on Saturday visited the family of Syed Adil Hussain Shah, who lost his life



while protecting tourists during the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, which left 26 people, mostly visitors, dead.

Dr Farooq handed over the one-month basic salary of the concerned Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Pahalgam, Altaf Kaloo, to Adil's father, Hyder Shah, at his residence in Pahalgam. The father of the Pahalgam braveheart

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Dr Jitendra Issues Directions For Survey Of Ramban's Landslide Prone Areas

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, MAY 3: In a move aimed at long-term disaster mitigation, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh has issued directions for a detailed scientific survey to identify landslide-prone areas and zones across the Ramban region. He suggested that the Geological Survey of India (GSI) be engaged to conduct a comprehensive mapping exercise, citing the increasing frequency of cloudbursts in the



area as a serious concern.

"Ageological survey would scientifically identify the landslide-prone areas in this region to prevent future catastrophes," Dr. Jitendra Singh

said. The Minister also revealed that Banihal town will soon have a new weather forecasting system, providing localized updates, and announced that Banihal

Hajj 2025: First batch of 178 pilgrims to leave from Srinagar on Today

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 03: The first batch of Hajj pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir is all set to embark on their sacred journey as the inaugural flight for Hajj-2025 will depart from Srinagar International Airport on Sunday.

The flight, as per the officials, will carry 178 pilgrims, comprising 96 males and 82 females, marking the beginning of this year's pilgrimage season from the region. According to the

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Sajad Lone calls for temporary pause on political infighting Calls accusations between parties "unwanted and undesirable"; Students, traders outside scared

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 03: Peoples Conference president Sajad Gani Lone on Saturday called for a pause for political infighting among regional parties.

Taking to X as per news agency—Kashmir, Lone expressed concern over the "political mudslinging", stating that while parties



would have ample opportunities to engage in political discourse, the current situation demands restraint.

"We will have many more moments to fight it out politically. But these are trying circumstances. We have lakhs of students and traders outside Kashmir who are scared. There are war clouds. There are You-Tubers who have descended here in Kashmir to create a narrative that fits the typical stereotype of a hostile

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Pahalgam Terror Attack Aftermath: Sonamarg sees dip in tourist footfall Visitors praise Kashmir's hospitality, appeal people to enjoy Valley's beauty

■ HT News Network

SONAMARG, MAY 03: The persistent flow of tourists at Sonamarg, one of the most scenic hill stations in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, has declined following the recent terror attack in Pahalgam, thereby casting a shadow over the region's tourism sector.

A deadly terrorist attack in Pahalgam on April 22 claimed the lives of 26 people, mostly tourists, and left many others injured.

In the wake of the attack, the major tourist destinations across the Kashmir Valley, including Sonamarg, have witnessed a significant decline in tourist



arrivals. Once-busy streets and market-places have fallen quiet. Shops are deserted, and hotels have reported near-total cancellations.

Following the attack, the government swiftly heightened security measures across the region. According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), an increased security deployments are now in place, especially at major tourist hotspots, in a bid to reassure visitors and prevent further incidents.

Despite the drop in numbers, a few tourists remain undeterred.

Over the past couple of days, Sonamarg has continued to host a small number of

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

PM

His assertion on strongly dealing with terrorism came even as India announced fresh punitive measures against Pakistan including complete ban on imports from Pakistan, suspension of all postal services from that country and banning entry of Pakistani-flagged ships at Indian ports.

"We are unanimous that terrorism is the biggest threat to humanity. I expressed my gratitude to President Lourenco and Angola for their condolences to those killed in the terrorist attack in Pahalgam," Modi said in his media statement.

"We are committed to take firm and decisive action against the terrorists and those who support them. We thank Angola for their support in our fight against cross-border terrorism," he said.

It is learnt that the Pahalgam terror attack figured prominently in Modi-Lourenco talks.

At a media briefing, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the global community has come out in large numbers and strongly condemned the terror attack on Indian soil.

"They have also conveyed a very strong sense of solidarity and support for India. And, they stand with the people of India in this hour," he said.

Citing "cross-border linkages" to the April 22 attack, India has promised severe punishment to those involved in the strike.

After the talks between Modi and Lourenco, India and Angola signed three pacts that will provide for bilateral cooperation in areas of ayurveda and other traditional systems of medicine, agriculture and culture.

The Angolan president, accompanied by a high-level delegation, arrived in Delhi on Thursday on a four-day trip.

In his remarks, Modi said India is one of the largest buyers of Angola's oil and gas and it was decided to expand the bilateral energy partnership.

"I am happy to announce that a defense credit line of USD 200 million has been approved for the modernisation of Angola's forces," he said.

"There was also discussion on repair and overhaul of defence platforms and supplies. We would be happy to assist in training Angola's armed forces," Modi said.

The prime minister also said that India will share its capabilities with Angola in digital public infrastructure, space technology, and capacity building.

"Today we have also decided to further strengthen our ties in the areas of healthcare, diamond processing, fertiliser and critical minerals," he said.

"The popularity of yoga and Bollywood in Angola is a symbol of the strength of our cultural ties," he said.

Modi welcomed Angola's decision to join the International Solar Alliance.

India has also invited Angola to join its initiatives — Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, Big Cat Alliance and Global Biofuels Alliance.

The prime minister greeted Angola on its presidency of the African Union.

"It is a matter of pride for us that during India's G20 presidency, the African Union got permanent membership of the G20," Modi said.

"India and the countries of Africa had raised their voices in one voice against colonial rule. They had inspired each other. Today we have stood together as the voice of the interests, hopes, expectations and aspirations of the Global South," he said. (Agencies)

ATTACK

in these areas with top police brass camping in Srinagar to oversee combing operations around Dachigam, Nishat, and adjacent areas.

These areas gained attention and security forces increased patrolling because of a terrorist attack on a construction site in Gangangir, Sonamarg in October last year in which seven people including a doctor were killed. The area is located on the other side of Zabarwan range overlooking the Srinagar city.

Despite a two-week operation, security forces conducted extensive searches on the outskirts of Srinagar based on the intelligence, but these efforts did not yield any breakthroughs and the operation was called off on April 22, the day when terrorists targeted tourists in Pahalgam area killing 26 of them.

There were inputs to suggest that terrorists wanted to carry out such nefarious designs during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier last month to flag off the first train from Katra to Srinagar.

Definitely, Pakistan is not happy over the impending railway link that aims to connect the Kashmir Valley with the rest of the country, the officials cited above said.

However, they said the visit of the prime minister, earlier scheduled for April 19, was postponed due to adverse weather forecasts predicting high-speed winds in the Katra area.

The officials made it clear that while weather conditions are the sole reason for the postponement, fresh inauguration dates are expected to be announced soon.

The state and non-state actors sitting across the border never want the powerful

visuals of flagging off the first train to get international attention and hence may have planned to overshadow the event with such barbaric killings, the officials said.

On the Pahalgam attack, the officials said what is emerging was that two local terrorists had already mingled with the tourists and as soon as the first shots were fired, they herded the tourists to a food court complex, where two other terrorists, reportedly Pakistanis, fired and killed 26 of them.

The aim of the attack seems to be creating fear among the citizens and possibly to lead to retribution attacks against Kashmiris elsewhere in the country, sources said.

But quick action by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who talked to top brass in New Delhi, prompted the directions being given to state governments to make sure the Kashmiri locals in their respective states were safe, they said.

The officials have also reported a worrisome trend in the type of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir following the recovery of advanced weaponry like M-series rifles, sniper rifles, and armour-piercing bullets from encounter locations more and more, which are suspected to be leftover weapons and ammunition of NATO troops in Afghanistan.

The authorities also warned against depending on the tourist arrivals in Jammu and Kashmir solely as a marker of peace and noted the case of former chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, who had used tourist arrivals as an index of normalcy in the past. Shortly after this statement, in May 2006, four tourists were killed, and six others injured when terrorists attacked a bus carrying tourists from Gujarat in Srinagar as it was reaching the Mughal Gardens.

According to the officials, in a conflict zone, tourism should primarily be viewed as an economic activity rather than a barometer for gauging normalcy.

Regarding reports about Baisaran not being granted clearance for opening to tourists, officials clarified that the area remains accessible throughout the year, except during the Amarnath Yatra or periods of heavy snowfall.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration had, in fact, issued a tender for Baisaran, which was awarded to an individual from South Kashmir last August for a three-year period at a cost of Rs 3 crore. The entire Baisaran meadow has since been fenced, and even a zipline facility has been established.

On the practice of blasting houses, recently used in counter-terrorism operations, the officials said it had been halted at the request of the elected government of Jammu and Kashmir.

New Delhi was advised to take note of the spontaneous protests in the entire Kashmir valley in the aftermath of Pahalgam killings on April 22 which were reminiscent of the public movements seen during the Nirbhaya case in New Delhi. (Agencies)

CM

Hussain Shah, who had tried to snatch a weapon from one of the terrorists in a courageous attempt to protect the tourists.

The fallout of the attack on the booming tourism industry and the upcoming Amarnath Yatra also came up for discussion, the officials said.

The 38-day annual Amarnath Yatra is scheduled to start on July 3 from the twin routes — the traditional 48-kilometre Pahalgam in Anantnag district and the 14-kilometre shorter but steeper Baltal route in Ganderbal district.

INDIA

in or exported from Pakistan, whether or not freely importable or otherwise permitted, shall be prohibited with immediate effect, until further orders," the new provision states.

Any exception to this restriction will require prior approval from the Government of India.

The DGFT, in the notification signed by Director General Ajay Bhadoo, confirmed that the move has been taken in the interest of national security and will remain in force until further notice.

NIA

Sheikh Usama Yaseen, Umar Fayaz Sheikh, and Afnan Mansoor Naik under relevant sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, Explosive Substances Act, and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)."

The three accused are currently in judicial custody. Usama and Umar were arrested on November 7, just four days after the attack, while Afnan was arrested on November 8, for his active role in the criminal conspiracy. The NIA investigation revealed that the accused were involved in a plot to wage war against India through targeted terrorist attacks on both security forces and civilians. NIA officials also uncovered possible involvement of other terror groups in the conspiracy behind the attack.

The statement further reads, "During investigations, it was found that the trio had planned, conspired, and executed the grenade attack with the intent to create panic and terror in the region. The attack was part of a

broader strategy to disrupt public order and further the violent agenda of terrorist outfits operating with support from across the border."

The case (RC-01/2025/NIA/JMU) was registered by NIA on January 31, 2025, and investigations are ongoing to identify the wider network involved in the attack, reads the statement. (JKNS) Modi's "Swachhata" call from Red Fort turned into a mass campaign, which motivated a spontaneous voluntary effort to maintain cleanliness

DR JATINDRA

will be brought under Mission Mausam. The announcement came during a high-level review meeting following the recent spate of incessant rainfall and a devastating cloudburst that triggered landslides and caused widespread damage in the region.

MLA Banihal, Sajad Shaheen, and MLA Ramban, Arjun Singh Raju — both from National Conference — along with DDC Chairperson Shamshad Shan from National Conference and DDC Renuka Katoch from BJP actively participated in the meeting and shared their inputs. Representatives from Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and various public delegations also voiced their concerns and sought urgent assistance for the affected communities.

Dr. Jitendra Singh also directed the district administration to expedite the restoration of water and electricity supply in the affected areas. He emphasized that unauthorised construction in environmentally-sensitive zones must be discouraged, and called on society to play a role in identifying and prohibiting construction in such areas.

Dr. Jitendra Singh also announced the provision of critical care ambulances under the Member of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) fund to support emergency healthcare in disaster-hit areas of Ramban region.

Dr. Jitendra Singh stated that the MPLAD funds would be flexibly deployed for relief and rehabilitation wherever necessary, including convergence with other government schemes. "These funds will be available wherever the government finds it necessary, either for convergence purposes or otherwise, to assist in the ongoing relief and rehabilitation processes," he said, highlighting the urgency of swift response mechanisms in such calamities.

During the meeting, Dr. Jitendra Singh was informed that the natural calamity claimed the lives of three individuals and led to the loss of 1,442 livelihoods. A total of 515 structures, including 465 residential houses, were damaged. Nearly 400 households remain without drinking water, and six habitations continue to face power outages due to the washing away of transformers. The Horticulture sector alone has suffered an estimated loss of 3,300 crore, while 27 schemes under the Jal Shakti Department have been affected.

Dr. Jitendra Singh also directed the district administration to expedite the restoration of water and electricity supply in the affected areas. He emphasized that unauthorized construction in environmentally-sensitive zones must be discouraged, and called on society to play a role in identifying and preventing such activity. The Minister revealed that Banihal town will soon have a new weather forecasting system, providing localized updates every three hours, and announced that Banihal has now been brought under Mission Mausam.

Recalling his earlier commitments to the region, the Minister commended the district administration's swift response to the recent emergency, terming it "commendable under the circumstances." He lauded the coordinated efforts of civil society, local bodies, and government agencies, describing it as a reflection of a "whole-of-government and whole-of-society" approach.

Dr. Jitendra Singh also held discussions with the Chief Minister and various local stakeholders, assuring them that this would not be a one-time meeting but part of a continued engagement to strengthen disaster response systems. He remarked that while topographical and climatic shifts — including new highways and changing rainfall patterns — pose forecasting challenges, proactive scientific interventions can go a long way in minimising risks.

CRPF

sources said. "Munir Ahmed has been dismissed from service with immediate effect for concealing his marriage to a Pakistani national and knowingly harbouring her beyond the validity of her visa.

"His actions were found to be in violation of service conduct and detrimental to national security," CRPF spokesperson Deputy Inspector General (DIG) M Dhinakaran said. Ahmed's marriage with Menal Khan came to light after India asked Pakistani nationals to leave the country as part of diplomatic measures taken in the wake of the Pahalgam terrorist attack in which 26 persons were killed.

The two got married over a video call on May 24 last year.

HT - NEWS

A CRPF probe found the jawan had "not intimidated" his wedding and her overstaying in India to the authorities concerned. (Agencies)

JAILESD MILITANTS

the lives of 26 civilians and left many others injured.

Both men were arrested for their alleged role in an attack on civilians in Rajouri district, followed by an IED explosion. That incident resulted in the deaths of seven people, including two children, and injured several others.

The NIA formally took over the Pahalgam case by registering an FIR in Jammu on April 27. Multiple agency teams have since begun collecting evidence and questioning eyewitnesses, including family members of the victims across Maharashtra, Odisha, West Bengal, and other states, in an effort to uncover the wider conspiracy.

Preliminary findings suggest that between five to seven terrorists may have been involved in the attack. Investigators believe the perpetrators were aided by at least two local militants, both of whom reportedly received training in Pakistan.

RAIDS

ongoing investigations across various police stations in the district.

"The residence of Imtiyaz Ahmad Parray, son of Gh Rasool Parray, of Kalamdanpora, Zainakdal, was searched in connection with FIR No. 29/2005 under sections 7/25 of the Arms Act registered at Police Station M.R. Gunj. Similarly, police searched the house of Arsh Koul, son of Ashiq Ahmad Koul, from Dalal Mohalla Zainakdal, linked to FIR No. 35/2022 under sections 13, 18, 20, 23, 49 of the UAPA and section 7/25 of the Arms Act," the statement reads.

It adds, "The residence of Mutaib Zahoor Bhat, son of Zahoor Ahmad Bhat, of Bilal Colony, Soura, was searched in relation to FIR No. 41/2021 under section 13 of the UAPA and sections 188 and 269 of the IPC, registered at Police Station Soura. A raid was also conducted at the home of Basit Ashraf Malik of Nowpora, Safakadal, involved in FIR No. 156/2024 under sections 13, 19, 39 of the UAPA at Police Station Safakadal."

In addition, police searched the residence of Mohd Rafiq Shah, son of Noor Mohammad Shah, from Hazari Bazar, Rainawari, linked to FIR No. 48/2024 under section 109 of the BNS and sections 13, 16, 19, 20, 39 of the UAPA at Police Station Khanyar.

DR FAROOQ

thanked Dr Farooq Abdullah and other leaders for expressing solidarity and sharing their grief.

Meanwhile, speaking to reporters, Dr Farooq, in response to a query, said it is time to review the Indus Water Treaty, stating that people are facing a water crisis despite Jammu and Kashmir having significant water resources.

"We have been saying for a long time that the Indus Water Treaty needs to be reviewed. We are facing hardships because of this treaty. Despite having our own rivers, we are experiencing a water crisis. We are not asking to stop water to them (Pakistan), but we also have a right to it," he said.

He added that Jammu has been facing an acute water shortage. "We tried to supply water to Jammu residents from the Chenab, but the World Bank did not support the proposal, citing the Indus Water Treaty. It is time to bring water from the Chenab to Jammu," he said.

"We are also facing a power crisis. We can generate thousands of megawatts of electricity from these rivers. We should not remain deprived of electricity. These issues must be addressed," Dr Abdullah said.

He said that the biggest message today is that tourists are not afraid and have defeated the objectives of those behind the Pahalgam attack.

"Those who tried to spread fear have failed. The terrorists involved in the act have failed. It has been proven today that we are not going to be frightened. Kashmir was and will always remain a part of India," he said.

SONGMARG

tourists, who have taken in the breathtaking beauty of the snow-covered landscape.

Among them is a family from Ahmedabad, who described the Pahalgam incident as "an unfortunate and tragic event," but emphasized that such acts should not prevent people from experiencing Kashmir.

"We have visited Kashmir along with our family and the hospitality of the Kashmiri people is unbelievable. They welcomed us with smiles. We urge the people of India: don't be afraid—come to Kashmir and enjoy its beauty."

It's worth mentioning that prior to the attack, Sonamarg witnessed a surge in tourism. In early 2025, from January 1 to March 10, a total of 1,33,854 tourists visited the picturesque place.

In January alone, 55,934 tourists arrived, including 1,114 foreign nationals and an equal number of domestic travellers.

February maintained the momentum with 57,186 tourists, comprising 2,019 foreign visitors and 1,565 local tourists. The first 10 days of March added another 20,734 visitors to the count.

Notably, nearly 8 lakh tourists had visited Sonamarg throughout 2024 — a sign of strong recovery and growing interest in the Valley's tourism offerings.

As the Valley copes with the aftermath of the Pahalgam attack, both officials and locals are hopeful that peace will prevail and the tourism sector will soon return to its upward trend—

LOP

are the backbone of Kashmir's economy. They are now scared and uncertain. What happened on April 22 was a humiliation of humanity."

Referring to the way victims were killed, he said, "To shoot a husband in front of his wife, to kill a father in front of his son, there can be no worse act than this."

He said the Government of India, led by the BJP, will not spare the culprits at any cost. "Even if I say this from a small corner of Bandipora, I am saying it with full responsibility. The culprits will be killed and buried," he said.

He said the Union Home Minister has made it clear that perpetrators of Pahalgam terror attack will be dealt with strictly. "Whoever wants to continue such incidents will also meet the same fate. This is our oath," Sharma added.

On the remarks made by National Conference leader Dr Farooq Abdullah, Sharma said he does not take Abdullah's statements seriously. "In the last few years, he has spoken in the language of China, of Pakistan, of Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Sometimes he said Modi will need ten births to abrogate Article 370," Sharma said.

He added, "He is a senior leader, and I am not as experienced, but people should look at his statement history and ask themselves whether such statements can be trusted."

Sharma said that Abdullah's latest statement that Pakistan should be taught a lesson was welcome but urged him to stay consistent. "If you have taken a stand against Pakistan, which I haven't seen before, then stick to this statement and don't say something else in the evening," he said—

HAJJ

Jammu & Kashmir Hajj Committee, over 3,600 pilgrims from J&K are scheduled to perform Hajj this year under the government quota.

Pilgrims scheduled for Sunday's flight, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) were instructed to report at Haj House, Bemina, between 5:00 and 5:30 AM. Security measures at the venue have been tightened, and only registered pilgrims with valid passes will be allowed entry.

As per the officials, the entire Hajj departure process from Kashmir will span from May 4 to May 15, with a total of 11 flights scheduled. The last flight, on May 15, will carry 321 pilgrims. "Pilgrims are expected to stay in Saudi Arabia for 42 to 46 days, depending on their flight schedule," officials said.

Officials added that this year's preparations included three rounds of training and orientation for pilgrims, covering safety protocols, rituals, and travel instructions.

"A vaccination drive has also been completed, with pilgrims receiving mandatory vaccines, including those for influenza and polio. Pilgrims have been informed about baggage limits," officials added.

Pertinently, there were concerns following Saudi Arabia's recent suspension of Umrah, tourist, and visit visas ahead of the Hajj season. However, officials later clarified that this was a routine measure aimed at preventing the misuse of non-Hajj visas for pilgrimage and ensuring better management of facilities for officially registered Hajj pilgrims.

"This step helps reduce overcrowding and logistical issues like what we witnessed during Hajj 2024," said Dr Shujaat Ahmad Qureshi, Executive Officer of the J&K Hajj Committee. "Legitimate pilgrims will now have smoother access to accommodation and services."

To ensure seamless movement, especially for pilgrims coming from North Kashmir, authorities have created a dedicated traffic crossing near the Hajj House in Bemina—

SAJAD LONE

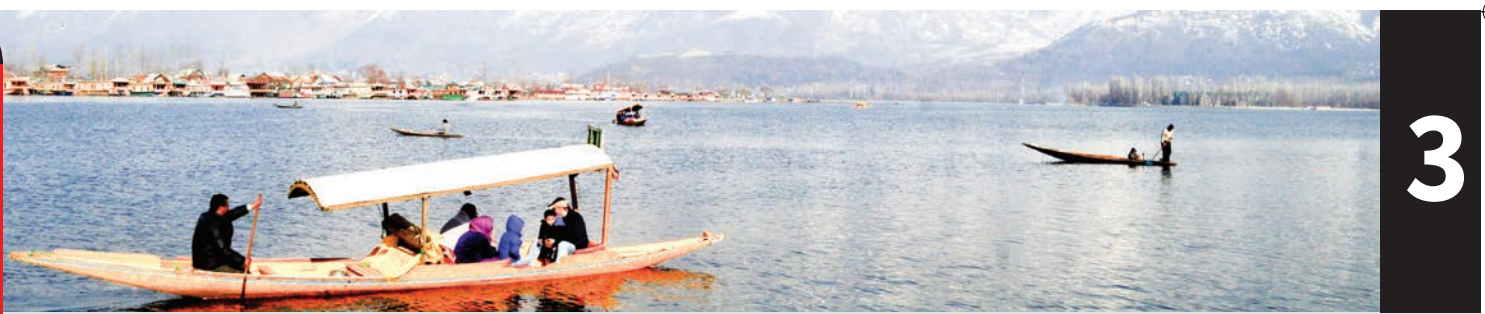
Kashmiri. In the midst of all this, accusations and counter-accusations by local parties will not help. It is most unwanted and undesirable," Lone said.

He urged politicians to momentarily pause politicking for at least the coming month.

"Let us face it—there is nobody squeaky clean out here. Time to take a hiatus for at least the coming month. This is not a sermon. Trust me—I too am itching for a fight. But not now," he added.

Lone said he would refrain from engaging in political mudslinging during these tense moments—(KNO)





Pak Nationals Married To Indian Citizens Have No Right To Stay In India: J&K BJP

HT News Network

Jammu, May 3: The Jammu and Kashmir unit of BJP on Saturday welcomed the Centre's decision to deport Pakistani nationals in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack, saying "they have no right to stay in the country even if they are married to Indian citizens".

J-K BJP's chief spokesperson Sunil Sethi said such individuals may be potential "sleepers cells", and there is a possibility that some of them have been planted by Pakistani spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) as part of a "nefarious" design.

Sethi's remarks came even as his party colleague and advocate Ankur Sharma legally aided Minal Khan, the Pakistani wife of CRPF trooper Munir Khan from Jammu, from getting deported at the last minute on Wednesday. The Pakistani woman, who entered into wedlock with the trooper last May, came to Jammu on February 28 on a short-term visa, which expired on March 22, before applying for a long-term visa (LTV). Official sources said the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) on Saturday dismissed Munir Ahmed from service for "concealing" his marriage with the Pakistani woman after find-



ing his action "detrimental" to national security. "Whatever may be the circumstances or justifications, these overstaying Pakistanis, even if they have matrimonial ties with Indian citizens, have no right to stay in India, nor do they have a right to claim LTV merely on this emotional ground," Sethi, also a lawyer by profession, said. Minal returned to Jammu after the high court granted her interim relief by staying her deportation when she was about to return to her country through the Attari border in Amritsar. Questioning the support to Pakistani nationals, Sethi said, "Pleading their claims for political

gains or sympathy is fraught with the danger of playing with the security of the nation." While leaving Jammu on Tuesday, Minal termed her deportation "injustice", saying they had nothing to do with the Pahalgam terror attack. The BJP spokesperson, however, claimed that incidents like Pahalgam cannot happen without local support, suggesting the possible involvement of some local people. However, Sethi also said the majority of Kashmiris strongly opposed the terror strike and extended help to the victims and their families during the attack on April 22 that left 26 people.

NEET exam: Shutdown cancelled for 33 KV Bemina I/II, Bemina Exhibition line on 04 May, 2025

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 03: The office of Chief Engineer, Distribution, KPDCL today informed that in view of the forthcoming NEET (UG) examination scheduled to be held on Sunday, 04 May, 2025 at various examination centres across Kashmir, the shutdown of 33 KV Bemina I/II line and the

33KV Bemina Exhibition line previously approved vide letter no. CE/ D/TS/ 18343-62/TS dated 25-04-2025 scheduled on 04.05.2025 stands cancelled to ensure smooth conduct of the NEET exam. Further, any other approved power shutdowns that coincide with the NEET exam date are also hereby cancelled.

CEO Ganderbal congratulates the successful students of class 10th and 12th

HT News Network

GANDERBAL, MAY 03: In a truly remarkable move, Chief Education Officer Ganderbal, Shri Oneel Kumar Bhat, extended his warmest congratulations to the bright stars of the district who have achieved phenomenal success in the JKBOSE Part 1st and Part 2nd examinations! The Officer lauded the unwavering dedication, unrelenting perseverance, and sheer brilliance of the students, whose outstanding results have brought immense pride and glory to the district. He emphasized that this remarkable achievement is a testament to the district's growing culture of academic excellence.

The CEO also applauded the tireless efforts of the Teachers, School Heads, and all stakeholders, whose invaluable

support and expert guidance played a pivotal role in shaping these young minds. "Our educators are the unsung heroes of our education system, and their commitment to nurturing the next generation is truly commendable," he stated. In a remarkable move that underscores the department's commitment to excellence, the CEO announced plans to further strengthen academic mentoring programs and recognize schools and teachers who contribute to outstanding board results. The Officer urged the students to continue striving for greater heights, using this success as a springboard toward a brighter, more illustrious future. He reaffirmed the department's unwavering commitment to providing quality education and a supportive learning environment for all.

Altaf Bukhari extends greetings to pilgrims embarking on Hajj this year

HT News Network

Srinagar, May 3 (KNS): As the first batch of Hajj pilgrims is all set to embark on their sacred journey from Srinagar to Jeddah tomorrow, on Sunday, Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari has extended his greetings to all the pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir undertaking the holy pilgrimage this year. In his message, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari said, "My warm greeting to all those from Jammu and Kashmir who are undertaking the spiritual journey of Hajj this year. May Allah shower His blessings upon you and grant you spiritual awakening and enlightenment through this sacred pilgrimage. I congratulate all of you on embarking



upon this pious journey in the coming days and weeks." He appealed to the Hajj aspirants to pray for the lasting peace, prosperity and well-being of the people of Jammu and Kashmir during the holy pilgrimage. He said, "I humbly request that you remember the people of J&K in your prayers during Hajj and pray for lasting peace and stability in this region, as its people continue to endure hardships and suffering due to the ongoing violence.

10th National Community Radio Awards presented

Union Minister of State Dr. L Murugan honours 12 Community Radio Stations for their outstanding contributions

HT News Network

Srinagar, May 3 (KNS): The 8th National Community Radio Conference was organized by the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, on the sidelines of the World Audio-Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES), in Mumbai today. Union Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, Dr. L. Murugan honoured 12 outstanding community radio stations with the 10th National Community Radio Awards at the event.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. L. Murugan congratulated the winners and said that the national conference is aimed to strengthen the community media landscape in India through innovation, inclusiveness, and impact. The Union Minister of State said that Community Radio



is a tool to reach out to citizens in all corners of the country. The Community Radios around the country are serving some or the other welfare purpose and supporting good causes, including promotion of Indian tradition and culture, he added. The community radio stations are also taking PM Shri Narendra Modi's vision and important

development initiatives of the central government to all parts of the country. These stations are adding a new dimension of welfare activities for various communities and groups, like women and tribal community among others. Speaking about the first edition of WAVES 2025, Dr. L. Murugan stated that new ideas will evolve from it and that

creative economy is a sunrise sector that will play a major role in the coming days.

List of Community Radio Stations which were awarded under four different themes

Sanjay Jaju, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Prithul Kumar Joint Secretary (Broadcasting) and MD, NFDC, and IIMC Vice Chancellor Dr. Anupama Bhatnagar were present amongst the dignitaries on the occasion. The conference brought together representatives from more than 400 Community Radio (CR) Stations across the country on one platform to provide an opportunity for dialogue and collaboration. At present, there are 531 CR Stations across the country. The conference emphasized the seminal role of Community Radio in public communication and awareness generation and also their potential in social development. (KNS)

NEET Probe: NMC Cancels Admission Of 14 Students, Orders Suspension Of 26 More

HT News Network

New Delhi May 3 (KNS): The National Medical Commission (NMC) has directed immediate suspension of 26 MBBS students found complicit in NEET-UG 2024 malpractices and cancelled admission of 14 students for the academic year 2024-25 for resorting to unfair means during the entrance exam, an official source said. National Eligibility cum Entrance Test, or NEET, is a pan-India exam to taken by aspirants to get admission into the country's medical colleges.

As part of the ongoing investigations by multiple agencies into the NEET-UG 2024 paper leak case, the National Testing Agency identified instances of unfair means and debarred 42 candidates for three



years — 2024, 2025, 2026 — from taking the NEET-UG. It also debarred nine candidates for 2025 and 2026 sessions. The candidature of 215 candidates who appeared in the NEET-UG 2024 exam has been put on hold pending an investigation, the source said. The action against the students has been initiated based on the findings of the Central Bureau of Investigation which is investigating the cases. "Given the severity of these violations and their potential to undermine the cred-

ibility of the medical education system, the National Medical Commission has issued directives to the concerned medical colleges and institutions to immediately suspend the 26 MBBS students found to be complicit," the source said. The Commission stressed a "zero-tolerance" policy towards academic fraud and said it was committed to taking all measures to uphold integrity, transparency, and accountability in medical admissions. The directive comes ahead of the NEET-UG 2025 scheduled for May 4. (AGENCIES)

Sagar chairs meeting with R&B, City roads officials

Reviews pace of work on underway projects; asks officials to monitor the progress on day to day basis

HT News Network

Srinagar May 03 (KNS): The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference General Secretary, Ali Muhammad Sagar and MLA Khanyar presided over a meeting of officials from R&B, City Roads, and R&B core.

A comprehensive review of ongoing projects related to these departments, including the formulation of DPRs and fund availability for projects such as road widening of Koolipora Khanyar road, additional G+2 block for Gousia Hospital, extension of JLN Hospital, construction work of S.R Gunj Hospital, development of Malkha as Central Cemetery, remaining work at 50-bedded Ayush Hospital at Harwan, renovation and development of premises of Khawja Naqashband Sahib (RA) Shrine, extension of Imam Bargah Koolipora, community centers at Dalgate, Brane, Nishat, Abi Buchwara, Harwan, and macadamization works



in Khanyar constituency were discussed in detail.

He directed the officials to prepare documentation within two weeks and personally monitor the progress on these projects for timely execution. The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference General Secretary, Ali Muhammad Sagar and MLA Khanyar presided over a meeting of officials from R&B, City Roads, and R&B core.

Drugs free J&K Initiative: Srinagar admin organizes awareness programme on drug abuse at GBHS Panzinara

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 03: To sensitize students about the harmful effects of drug abuse and encourage them to help eradicating the menace of drugs from the society, district administration Srinagar today organized an awareness programme on drug de-addiction at Government Boys High School (GBHS) Panzinara.

The event was held on the directions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat as a part of an ongoing Drug Free Jammu and Kashmir initiative of the government to



educate school children, staff members, and local residents about the growing menace of drug addiction and the collective responsibility to curb it. During the event, informative sessions

addressing the physical, mental, and social consequences of substance abuse were held to effectively sensitize the participants. The program witnessed active par-

ticipation from school faculty, students, local community members, and officials from various departments.

The event featured active participation from departmental resource persons representing social welfare, police, health, education, excise and others, all working together to raise awareness among students and the local population. Students contributed through speeches, skits, and discussions, further emphasizing the message.

Block Development Officer Panzinara emphasized the crucial role of education, awareness, and community involvement in eradicating the menace of drugs from society.

EDITORIAL

In times of pressure
press freedom
becomes casualty

The world press freedom day was observed on May 3 and in this connection many programmes, seminars and symposia were held. The participants in these programmes including journalists emphasized the need for having freedom for the media men so that they can present the real picture before the people. The people as a whole look upon the media as a responsible means of communication and as such the journalists have to be responsible in their professional obligations.

Journalism is one of the important pillars of democracy and democracy cannot flourish in a biased set up. It is important that the journalists are allowed to work independently without any pressure from any quarter. In the present day context important concepts of journalism like fairness and unbiased reporting have been relegated to the dustbin. There is pressure from various quarters on journalists and as such they are not able to work in an independent and transparent manner.

As on date there are very few investigative stories that are filed by journalists even though such stories need to be carried out in a free journalist set up. The present day reporters are not willing to go an extra mile and file investigative stories since they are afraid of many forces. The journalists are not willing to extract information from the government departments and are in defensive mode. At the same time the editors and owners of the newspapers are not ready to publish such stories.

The influx of social media on mainstream journalism has dented the image of serious journalism. The social media influencers have assumed the centre stage and they are being viewed as journalists by the common masses. There is no scope for serious journalism in the present day scenario and the mainstream journalists are losing the race to people who don't know the basics of journalism. These social media influencers have been given a free hand by the serious journalists and the people at helm and there is no end to their activities.

Since the newspapers of this place depend on government advertisements the editors and owners of these newspapers don't want to take cudgels with the people at helm. Even though chief minister Omar Abdullah has given a green signal to the newspaper editors to go ahead with anti-government stuff whenever it is applicable, still then the scribes are not ready to do the same. In such a manner the press freedom becomes a casualty at the end of the day.

Post-Pahalgam attack: Kashmir's
resilient welcome to tourists



MUSHTAQ WANI

The recent tragic attack in Pahalgam, Kashmir, which resulted in the loss of 26 innocent lives, has undoubtedly cast a shadow over the region's tourism industry. However, in the face of adversity, Kashmir's spirit remains unbroken. The people of Kashmir, renowned for their warmth and hospitality, are determined to showcase their resilience and commitment to welcoming tourists with open arms.

The Tragedy in Pahalgam

On April 22, 2025, a terrorist attack occurred in the picturesque town of Pahalgam, targeting a group of tourists. The assailants, believed to be militants, opened fire on the unsuspecting visitors, leading to the unfortunate deaths of 26 individuals. This incident not only shocked the nation but also sent ripples of fear and uncertainty among potential tourists considering a visit to Kashmir.

Immediate Aftermath and Global Reactions

In the wake of the attack, there was a significant decline in tourist arrivals, with many opting to cancel their planned trips. The Indian government condemned the attack and vowed to bring the perpetrators to justice. International reactions were mixed, with some nations expressing concern over the safety of their citizens traveling to the region.

However, amidst the turmoil, there were voices of support, emphasizing the need to distinguish between the actions of a few and the hospitality of the many. Reuters

The Resilience of Kashmir's People

Despite the tragedy, the people of Kashmir have demonstrated remarkable resilience. Local communities, especially in areas like Pahalgam, have come together to ensure the safety and comfort of tourists. Tour operators, hoteliers, and local guides have reiterated their commitment to providing a secure environment for visitors. Many have voluntarily enhanced security measures and collaborated with authorities to restore confidence among travelers. In the peaceful town of Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir, a wave of resilience and optimism is sweeping through the region.

While the number of visitors had dropped drastically to a mere 50-100 in the immediate aftermath, down from the usual 5,000 to 7,000 daily, a heartening shift is now taking place.

On Sunday, the streets of Pahalgam witnessed a heartwarming sight - both foreign and domestic tourists strolling through the town, bringing a sense of normalcy and renewed hope to the area.

Heartwarming Stories of Hospitality

In the midst of the crisis, there

have been numerous instances of Kashmiri hospitality shining through. Nazakat Ahmad Ali Shah, a local tour guide from Baisaran Valley, became a symbol of courage and compassion when he risked his life to save 11 tourists during the attack. His selfless act not only saved lives but also highlighted the unwavering spirit of Kashmir's people in the face of adversity. Wikipedia

Government Initiatives to Revive Tourism

Recognizing the importance of tourism to the region's economy, the Jammu and Kashmir government has launched several initiatives to revive the industry. Efforts include enhancing security infrastructure, promoting lesser-known destinations, and offering incentives to tourists. The government has also collaborated with travel agencies to organize awareness campaigns, emphasizing the safety and hospitality of the region.

The Role of Media and Social Platforms

Media outlets and social media platforms have played a pivotal role in reshaping perceptions about Kashmir. While initial reports focused on the attack, subsequent coverage has highlighted the region's beauty, culture, and the resilience of its people. Travel bloggers and influencers have shared positive experiences, encouraging their followers to visit Kashmir and experience its charm firsthand.

Testimonials from Recent Visitors

Despite the initial apprehensions, many tourists who visited Kashmir post-attack have shared positive experiences. A tourist from Kolkata mentioned, "We were a little anxious at first, but after reaching here, we didn't face any problems. Locals are treating us like guests."

The Path Forward

The road to recovery for Kashmir's tourism industry requires a collective effort. It necessitates collaboration between the government, local communities, and tourists. By promoting the region's rich cultural heritage, ensuring safety, and fostering mutual respect, Kashmir can once again become a sought-after destination for travelers worldwide.

Conclusion

The Pahalgam attack was a tragic event that tested the resilience of Kashmir and its people. However, in the face of adversity, the spirit of Kashmir remains unbroken. With unwavering hospitality, enhanced security measures, and a collective effort to promote peace and understanding, Kashmir is ready to welcome tourists with open arms once again. The region's beauty, culture, and the warmth of its people await those who choose to experience it firsthand.

The Virtues of a Great Teacher – The Torchbearer
Who Illuminates Generations

JAWAID IQBAL ZONE MAWER

“Ustaad” – a word composed of merely a few letters, yet it encompasses an entire universe. A teacher is that silent architect who reshapes the destiny of nations. A great teacher is not merely a dispenser of knowledge, but a nurturer of dreams, a transformer of thoughts, and a guide through life's labyrinth.

1. A Devotee of Knowledge, an Adversary of Ignorance:

An exceptional teacher remains perpetually engaged in the pursuit of learning. Within his soul resides an unquenchable thirst for wisdom and a sincere devotion to his pupils. He transcends the confines of textbooks, imparting the truths of life and the subtleties of existence.

2. One Who Conquers Hearts Through Affection:

Such a teacher does not rely on harshness, but on the gentle power of love. His smile, his demeanor, and his genuine warmth work an ineffable magic, endearing him to his students in ways no compulsion

could achieve.

3. One Who Regards Mistakes as Gateways, Not Offenses:

When a student errs, a great teacher does not erupt in anger. Rather, he views that error as a pivotal moment for learning. He offers encouragement instead of rebuke, whispering, “To stumble is not a shame – to remain fallen is.”

4. A Craftsman of Character:

A teacher is not only a subject-matter expert; he is also a sculptor of integrity. His words are lessons, and his actions, silent sermons. Through his own adherence to honesty, punctuality, and respect, he instills these virtues in his students without uttering a word.

5. A Weaver of Dreams and Architect of Possibility:

A noble teacher discerns the latent dreams flickering in his students' eyes – and dedicates himself to forging paths that transform those visions into realities. He inspires belief with the mantra: “You can become anything – only



dare to trust yourself.”

6. A Fresh Dawn Each Day:

Routine is foreign to him. Each day he enters the classroom bearing a new flame. His classroom is not a sterile chamber of instruction, but a vibrant laboratory of exploration – where minds expand, hearts connect, and dreams are awakened.

Conclusion: The Teacher – A Flame That Kindles Other Flames

History's greatest figures stood not alone; behind every luminary stood a guiding teacher. Without teachers, there would have been no Quaid-e-Azam to lead a nation, no Iqbal to dream of awakening, and no Newton to unveil gravity's secret.

The true hallmark of a teacher is not in his students' grades, but in the lives they shape – in their humanity, their achievements, their transformations.

For a teacher does not merely educate –

He radiates enlightenment, kindles flames, and breathes dawn into the soul of a nation.

Regaining Pahalgam’s lost paradise

RAJDEEP PATHAK

Holidaying in happiness turned into a nightmare at the idyllic landscape of Pahalgam, often described as a ‘heaven on earth’, as a scene of unimaginable horror broke open on April 22, 2025.

A brazen terrorist attack on a group of tourists in the Baisaran Valley – mainly men being killed based on their religious identity – resulted in the tragic and unfortunate loss of at least 28 lives and left over 20 others critically injured.

This barbaric act, claimed by ‘The Resistance Front’ (TRF), a shadow outfit of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), has not only devastated families and shattered dreams but has also ripped apart the fragile veneer of normalcy that authorities had been attempting to bring back in the Kashmir Valley.

The gruesome incident unfolded in the afternoon of 22 April when a group of four to six heavily armed militants, disguised in military – style uniforms, emerged from the dense forests surrounding Baisaran Valley (a meadow accessible only by foot or pony and an open area with no hideouts for safety). According to eyewitness accounts, the assailants systematically targeted non-Muslim tourists after checking their identities and religious affiliations.

This selective targeting underscores the malicious intent to sow communal discord and further destabilise the region. The victims included 24 tourists from various parts of India, two local residents, and two foreign nationals from Nepal and the UAE. The serene meadow erupted into chaos and grief in the attack’s immediate wake.

Social media feeds flooded with harrowing videos – terrified cries for help mingled with the grim sight of lifeless bodies scattered across the once-picturesque landscape.

The emotional wounds inflicted on the bereaved families are immeasurable. While the Government’s offer of ‘20 lakhs for information on the terrorists’ location



is one step to involve citizens’ participation in nabbing the culprit, it cannot erase the haunting memories of this devastation.

The image of the young woman beside her fallen Navy officer husband, a honeymoon tragically cut short; the local pony owner’s family, now without their sole provider after his courageous son tried to shield tourists; the woman forced to witness the brutal murder of her husband and son; the recently married IAF officer from Arunachal Pradesh on vacation – these stories of unimaginable loss and despair paint a stark and enduring picture of terrorism’s human cost, shattering the illusion (read deception) of calm in this vulnerable region.

Following the Pahalgam attack, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) recommended a set of five decisive actions against Pakistan – that included holding the ‘Indus Waters Treaty of 1960’ in abeyance until verifiable cessation of cross-border terrorism; immediate closure of the ‘Integrated Check Post Attari’ with a grace period until 1

May for those with valid endorsements to return; the cancellation of all ‘SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme’ (SVES) visas for Pakistani nationals with a 48-hour deadline for those currently in India to depart; the declaration of Pakistan’s Defence/Military, Naval, and Air Advisors in New Delhi as ‘Persona

Non Grata’ with a week to leave (and a reciprocal withdrawal of Indian counterparts from Islamabad along with five support staff from each mission); and a significant reduction in the overall strength of High Commissions from 55 to 30 personnel by May 1, 2025.

The Pahalgam attack has triggered widespread condemnation across India, with many viewing it as a direct assault on the nation’s unity and secular fabric. Many countries, including the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, and several European and Middle Eastern nations, especially the UAE, issued strong statements condemning the attack.

They emphasised the need for international cooperation to eradi-

cate terrorism and called for the perpetrators to be brought to justice. This incident has added a new dimension to Kashmir’s intricate geopolitical scenario.

For decades, this region has been a fiercely contested territory between India and Pakistan, leading to repeated conflicts and border tensions and solidifying its status as a highly sensitive area. The situation has become even more complex with China’s bordering presence. Adding to this volatile mix, Bangladesh has recently emerged as a neighbour in dispute with India, further intensifying regional dynamics.

The timing of this unrest could be a calculated move to draw international attention to the Kashmir issue and undermine India’s attempts to showcase normalcy, particularly as it coincided with US Vice President JD Vance’s visit and the ongoing WAQF debate. Moreover, striking at the height of the tourist season – a critical period for the local economy – is a calculated attempt to inflict maximum

economic harm and cultivate an atmosphere of fear, thereby disrupting peace and stability.

Since the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, the Indian Government has been actively pursuing peace-building and confidence – regaining measures in Jammu and Kashmir, while also promoting local entrepreneurship and development, recognising the practicalities of the situation on ground, which had begun to yield positive results, thereby projecting a return to normalcy in the region.

The recent attack has severely impacted its sector, specifically, the recovering tourism sector in Jammu and Kashmir. Travel agencies in Delhi experienced nearly 90 per cent booking cancellations, as per media reports.

This reverses the remarkable growth from 1.62 crore tourists in 2019 to 2.36 crore in 2024, which had significantly boosted local economies and livelihoods dependent on the hospitality industry, including hotels, houseboats, guides, and artisans, thereby reig-

ning fear and uncertainty.

Amidst the tears of this tragedy, the response of the Kashmiri people showcased a powerful display of humanity. Immediately following the attack, residents rushed to the scene to assist the injured tourists.

They helped with evacuations, offered first aid, and provided emotional support to those traumatised by the event. A day later, on April 23, religious organisations condemned the attack and large numbers of Kashmiri citizens took to the streets in protest of this massacre, holding peaceful demonstrations with the Tricolour, besides candlelight vigils, further underscoring the rejection of violence by the local population and their desire for peace and stability.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the insidious nature of terrorism often finds fertile ground in the tilled soil of human emotions – fear, anger, and envy – emotions that are tragically amplified by the harsh realities of systemic inequalities and sometimes, forced acts of blind belief.

It is a matter of grave national concern to observe the seeds of violence taking root even in our villages, and growing children’s aggressive behaviour. This early violence is often a bitter harvest of neglect, stemming from a lack of fundamental education that instils mutual respect, and the gnawing anxiety of unemployment, that darkens the horizons of their future. These interconnected issues demand serious and sustained attention to prevent the escalation of individual frustrations into larger societal threats.

While the Government is taking strong counter-terrorism measures in light of this barbaric attack, the participation of citizens in rebuilding the shaken confidence is crucial. Despite this barbaric act that threatens to undermine the hard-won progress in the Valley, rebuilding trust is now paramount. The time is now to act – in all directions, for peace is the only way. **(The writer is a programme executive Gandhi Smriti Sansthan. Views are personal)**

Press Freedom Day: When journalism was alive

PRIYANKA SAURABH

Every year on May 3, when ‘Press Freedom Day’ comes, a question arises with deep silence: Is journalism still really free? Is this day still a symbol of the fearlessness, responsibility, and truth that was once called journalism? Or has this day also become just a ceremonial formality—like the anniversary of a dead tradition?

The journalism that once had the courage to confront the power today seems to be sitting in the lap of the power. The pen is no longer sharp; it has started shining in the light of advertisements and sponsorships. Editorial policy is no longer value-based; it is market-based. On news channels, there is shouting instead of news, noise instead of debate, and scripts instead of truth.

This is the time when a new group was born—social media influencers. These are the people who have no formal education in journalism but have the art of appearing in front of the camera. They gave importance to filter instead of truth and reel instead of research. For them, every issue is a ‘content idea’—whether it is a farmer’s suicide or the atrocities committed against a girl.

Today’s influencers have taken on the role that journalists once played. The only difference is that a journalist would look for the truth behind a story, while an influencer only looks for views and engagement. A journalist may be proven wrong, but he is accountable; an influencer only counts the number of views—whether his statement has any basis or not.

If a journalist’s report does not reach the public, he is rewarded for his honesty in the form of unemployment. On the other hand, if an influencer makes an emotional reel, he gets brand deals and followers. If a journalist questions the government, he is called a traitor, but if an influencer says the same thing laughingly, he is called ‘bold.’

In fact, today we are in an era where the public has also lost the habit of listening to the truth. People do not want facts; they want emotions. They do not want analysis; they want entertainment. Asking questions now creates depression, and jokes give relief. This is why the silence of the press does not bother us, but the noise of the reels gives us relief.

Imagine, in the coming times, on May 3, we will celebrate ‘Influencer Day’ instead of ‘Press Freedom

Day.’ Children will be asked in schools, “Son, what will you become when you grow up?” And the answer will be, “I will change the country by making videos.” Trending reels will be invited on the platforms, who will tell how a reel is made on democracy. And the press? It will be sitting in a corner—like forgotten memories.

This is a ridiculous reality, but equally true. Because the soul of democracy lies in its free press. And if that soul is now lost in counting followers on Instagram, then the Preamble of the Constitution will also start looking like a profile bio.

Poets, writers, thinkers, and journalists have to come together to understand this decline. Democracy does not run only on elections; it runs on the expression of ideas and the search for truth. We have to revive the journalism that questions, tells the truth, and does not bow down to power.

Otherwise, the day is not far when we will start a trend on social media—#ThrowbackToJournalism, and the most viral reel of that day will be: “When journalism was alive...”

Priyanka Saurabh is a Research Scholar in Political Science, Poet, freelance journalist, and columnist

Changing Marriage Preferences in Kashmir is mandatory

ALJAZ AHMAD

SHOWKAT AHMAD KUTHOO

Call for Broader Perspective In the contemporary socio-cultural landscape of Kashmir Valley, a notable trend has emerged in the realm of matrimonial choices many girls and their families are increasingly giving preference to suitors who are employed in the government sector. While this inclination stems from the notion of job security, fixed income, and social status, it inadvertently creates challenges for countless capable and ambitious young men who are either working in the private sector or striving to establish themselves in alternative professional fields.

The issue becomes even more pressing when we consider the socio-economic realities of modern Kashmir. Government jobs are limited and highly competitive, with thousands of qualified youth vying for a handful of posts. In such a scenario, expecting every prospective groom to be a government employee is not only unrealistic but also unfair. Many hardworking and educated boys who contribute significantly to society through private enterprises, startups, teaching, IT, and other sectors are being



overlooked simply because their jobs are not labelled as “secure” in the traditional sense.

This narrow criterion for marriage is gradually leading to a delay in the marriage age for many girls as well, as families continue to wait for a “perfect match” with a government tag. This creates a ripple effect that can pose social and psychological challenges for both genders. On one hand, capable boys face rejection and frustration despite being financially stable and morally upright; on the other hand, girls miss timely opportunities for companionship and stability due

to unrealistic expectations.

In a time when Kashmir is struggling with unemployment and economic instability, it is crucial for society especially the youth to shift its mindset. Employment in the private sector, freelancing, entrepreneurship, and self-employment are equally respectable and contribute immensely to the region’s progress. Girls must be encouraged to see beyond job titles and assess potential partners based on character, values, mutual understanding, and long-term compatibility.

It is a high time we should challenge this deeply

ingrained mindset. Parents and girls need to understand that in the modern epoch, work is work whether in a government office or in a private firm. By embracing this broader view, we can foster more meaningful and timely marriages and support a more balanced and just society.

Kashmir needs a new vision one that values honesty over hierarchy, ambition over appointment letters and real connection over rigid societal standards.

Authors are traditional persons of the valley. Presently working for the noble cause of the society.



Javid Dar conducts extensive tour of Rafiabad, Zaingair Directs to accelerate work execution for timely completion

HT News Network

BARAMULLA, MAY 3: Minister for Agriculture Production Department, Rural Development Department & Panchayati Raj, Javid Ahmed Dar, today conducted an extensive tour of Rafiabad and Zaingair areas of Baramulla to review progress on various ongoing development works in the district. During his visit, the Minister assessed the pace and quality of infrastructure projects, interacted with locals and had a firsthand account of the issues faced by the residents and farmers of the area.

While reviewing developmental works, the Minister expressed concern over the slow pace of work on some projects. He directed the officers to accelerate the pace of progress on these vital work, ensuring completion within fixed timelines. He emphasized the need for ensuring high quality infrastructure that meets the needs of the local community. The Minister also listened to the grievances of the locals and assured them of prompt redressal of the same. He instructed the officials to work in tandem with the local community to address their con-



cerns and ensure that the benefits of development reach the ground level.

The Minister met various delegations, including general public, youth groups and farm-



ers. They raised concerns related to irrigation, road infrastructure, water supply, power

supply and employment opportunities. The Minister assured them that the Government is committed towards addressing these concerns and urged the community to actively engage with the government to ensure effective development in their respective areas. Dar stated that the government's commitment towards transparency, accountability and citizen-centric governance is incomplete without the public participation. He urged the public to be part of every initiative of the government. The Minister also listened to the grievances of the locals and assured them of prompt redressal of the same. He

instructed the officials to work in tandem with the local community to address their concerns and ensure that the benefits of development reach the ground level. The Minister met various delegations, including general public, youth groups and farmers. They raised concerns related to irrigation, road infrastructure, water supply, power supply and employment opportunities. The Minister assured them that the Government is committed towards addressing these concerns and urged the community to actively engage with the government to ensure effective development in their respective areas.

Mehbooba Mufti Criticises Farooq Abdullah Over Pahalgam Remarks

HT News Network

SRINAGAR: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti on Saturday criticised National Conference (NC) patron Dr Farooq Abdullah for his remarks on the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, calling them misleading and harmful.



Abdullah had told media that such attacks could not happen without local support. Mehbooba said his statement risked fuelling divisive narratives and could further stereotype and stigmatise Kashmiris and Muslims. In a post on X, Mehbooba said, "Farooq sahab's statement implicating Kashmiris in the Pahalgam attack is deeply disturbing and regrettable. As a senior leader, that too a Kashmiri, his words may give certain media channels more reason to target Kashmiris and Muslims." She said such comments come at a time when students and traders from Jammu and Kashmir are already facing attacks and threats across India. "This isn't just misleading, it is fatal," she added. Mehbooba also praised Himanshi Narwal, the widow of Lt Vinay Narwal, who was among the 26 killed in the Pahalgam attack. Himanshi had appealed for peace and urged people not to blame any community. "We should draw inspiration from her," Mehbooba said. Lt Narwal was gunned down in Baisaran, Pahalgam, days after his wedding. His wife's appeal has been widely shared, with many calling it a strong message against communal division.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written as HAJI QUIYUM PEERZADA in my driving licence bearing licence no JK-05 2008 0006337 while my corrected name is ABDUL QUAYAM as per aadhar card which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he / she may file his/her objection in the office of ARTO BARAMULLAH within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name: ABDUL QUAYAM
S/O PIR GHULAM HASSAN

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer WAGOORA) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to death of GHULAM MOHI UD DIN THOKER S/O ABDUL GANI THOKER R/O KALANTRA BALA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of death as 16/02/2023 and event has been shown to be occurred at Home for issuance of delay order. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is inform to all general public notice to all general public through the medium of notice that i nisar ahmad malik s/o Ab rehman malik R/o mirchimar that my son namely firdous ali malik is born on 19-02-2017 now i want to obtain DoB certificate he she the context of bdo singpora with in period of seven days

YOURS FAITH FULLY
NISAR AHMAD MALIK
S/O AB REHMAN MALIK R/O MIRCHIMAR

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified that my daughter's Name and dob has been incorrectly mentioned on his Adhar card, 534112099840as name and DOB 09/07/2016 irfat Bano while his correct name and DOB IS, Aaliya Qayoom DOB 23/05/2016 now I have applied for the correction. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection concerned authority /UIDAI office within a period of 07 days after that no objection will be accepted.

Name: AALIYA QAYOOM DOB : 23/05/2016
D/O ABDUL QAYOOM JEENDER
R/O: Khanpora satkoji TEHSIL ZACHALDARA DIST KUPWARA

Gold Prices Rebound Strongly Amid Global Uncertainty, Silver Also Gains

HT News Network



SRINAGAR: Gold prices rose sharply by Rs 1,080 to Rs 96,800 per 10 grams in the national capital, supported by renewed demand from jewellers and a positive trend in international markets, media reports said, citing the All India Sarafa Association. The rebound follows a steep fall in the previous session when gold of 99.9 per cent purity had plunged Rs 2,830 to Rs 95,720 per 10 grams. On Friday, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also edged up Rs 180 to Rs 96,350 per 10 grams after falling Rs 1,930 in the prior session. Silver prices mirrored gold's trajectory, climbing Rs 1,600 to Rs 97,100 per kilogram. The white metal had slipped Rs 2,500 to Rs 95,500 per kg on Thursday. Markets had remained closed during the morning session on Thursday due to International Labour Day, before reopening in the evening. Traders attributed Friday's surge in gold prices to local buying interest and gains in the global market, where spot gold rose USD 23.10, or 0.71 per cent, to USD 3,262.30 per ounce.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer WAGOORA) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of MUNEEB AHMAD DAR & AISHA MEHRAJ S/O MEHRAJ UD DIN DAR R/O SALOOSA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 16/11/2016 & 8/11/2018 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Mohsin Nazir Bhat, have lost my wallet, which contains some important documents and cards. I traveled from Sanatnagar to Dangerpora. The wallet contains a SIM card with the number 9877186880, along with my Aadhaar card, PAN card, and ATM cards. If anyone finds it or has any information, please contact me. You will be considered fortunate for helping.

My contact number is: 6006277265

IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is for general information that my below mentioned ward have registered name without caste in school records of G.D. Goenka Public School Srinagar. Now I want to correct it in school records.

The name is Ahmad Yamin instead of this Ahmad Yamin Rather, Class L.K.G. In this regard if anybody have any objection may kindly contact the concern office of the said school within 7 days. After completion of time no objection will be entertained.

Shabir Ahmad Rather
Dara Harwan Srinagar

IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is for general information that my below mentioned wards have registered names without caste in school records of G.D. Goenka Public School Srinagar. Now I want to correct it in school records.

The names are 1. Rayed Jaan instead of this Rayed Jaan Rather, Class 8th 2. Rayef Jaan instead of this Rayef Jaan Rather, 3rd Class.

In this regard if anybody have any objection may kindly contact the concern office of the said school within 7 days. After completion of time no objection will be entertained.

John Mohammad Rather
Dara Harwan Srinagar

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Ghulam Qadir Bhat S/O Abdul Jabbar Bhat Father's of Iqbal Qadir Bhat R/o Kenyal Tehsil Tarathpora I have applied for DOB Certificate of my son's Namely Iqbal Qadir Bhat Dob 04/05/2016 in this record if anybody has any kind of objection He/she may contact concerned authority within 7 days no objection will be entertained after the date of expire.

IQBAL QADIR BHAT
S/O GHULAM QADIR BHAT
R/o KENYAL TEHSIL TARATHPORA DIST KUPWARA
DOB 04/05/2016

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform that the name and date of birth of my son, Mohammad Zuhair Shah, son of Javid Ahmad Shah, a resident of Saloosa, Tehsil Kreeri, District Baramulla, have been incorrectly recorded on his Aadhaar Card 416154659869. This error occurred due to unknown reasons. The correct date of birth is 11-05-2012. I have also applied for a correction in his school records. If anyone has any objections regarding this matter, they may submit their objections to the concerned authority, Assistant Collector Kreeri, within a period of seven days. After that period, no objections will be entertained.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR BLOCK MEDICAL OFFICER RAJPORA

Tender Notification Letter

Subject: Tender Notice for Rental of Orthopaedic Items (Tender ID: 2024_HME_261293_3) for CHC Rajpora 2024

On behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, a Short-Term e-NIT is issued for suppliers registered with the Food and Drug Controller Department of J&K. The tender is for the rental of orthopaedic items for specified procedures, as detailed in the tender documents.

1 Tender Submission: Tenders must be submitted electronically on <http://jktenders.gov.in> before the due date. The electronic tenders will be opened in the Office of the Block Medical Officer, Rajpora, in the presence of attending tenderers who wish to be present.

Note: If the due date falls on a holiday, tenders may be submitted on the next working day, and the opening date will be adjusted accordingly.

Key Details:

1 Tender ID: 2024_HME_261293_3

2 Purpose: Rental of Orthopaedic Items for Specified Procedures at CHC Rajpora

3 Contact:

Email: bmochnrajpora@gmail.com

Phone: 9797972297, 962222018

DIPK-1091/25
Date: 03-05-2025

Block Medical Officer
Rajpora



Mohammad Shafi Ratthar
Chairman JKTF
Mob. No. 9103250870

Office Of The Chairman Jammu Kashmir Teachers' Forum
Teachers' Forum Leadership for the ease of access and facilitation of teachers



Javid Ahmad Bhat
Provincial President JKTF
Mob. No. 7006282681



Fayaz Ahmad
Malik
District
President
Bandipora
9906411511



Ghulam
Hassan Mir
District
President
Pulwama
9906680706



Sahil Bashir
District
President
Kupwara
9906872787



Ayaz Ahmad
District
President
Srinagar
7006286301



Irshad Ahmad
District
President
Ganderbal
9596177060



Naseer
Ahmad Shah
District
President
Budgam
7006826043



Bashir
Ahmad Shah
District
President
Anantnag
9797160868



Muzamil
Ahmad
District
President
Kulgam
9622498990



Shabir
Ahmad Shah
District
President
Baramulla
9149404079





Bandipora Legislators discuss roadmap for District Emphasize public participation, timely execution

HT News Network

BANDIPORA, MAY 03: In order to ensure inclusive developmental planning, Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) from the Bandipora district—representing the constituencies of Bandipora, Gurez, and Sonawari—Saturday jointly chaired a meeting at the Mini Secretariat Bandipora to discuss the formulation of District Capex Plan for the financial year 2025-26.

The meeting threadbare discussed sector-wise proposals across all three

constituencies of the district besides discussing the progress of ongoing developmental works under the 2024-25 Capex Plan, taking stock of their financial and physical status. On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri gave a detailed overview of the progress made under the District Capex Plan 2024-25, and also highlighted key focus areas for the District Capex Plan 2025-26. While deliberating on the Capex Plan for 2025-26, MLAs emphasized prioritizing projects based on public demand.



The legislators stressed the need for effective implementation of schemes at the grassroots level in alignment with the actual needs and aspirations of the people. MLA Gurez, Nazir Ahmad Khan highlighted key issues of the Gurez constituency, regarding developmental needs, availability of staff, and school infrastructure besides urging the administration to address public issues on priority. MLA Bandipora, Nizam-ud-Din Bhat highlighted key infrastructure and welfare projects proposed for the Bandipora constituency. He called for enhanced inter-depart-

mental coordination and timely fund release to ensure efficient implementation of government schemes. MLA Sonawari, Hilal Akbar Lone discussed critical areas requiring intervention in the Sonawari constituency. While reviewing the performance of irrigation facilities, pump stations, and other services, he urged departments to focus on improving delivery mechanisms. All three legislators collectively urged district officers to involve public representatives while formulating developmental plans.

DC Kupwara inspects arrangements in NEET Examination Centres

HT News Network

KUPWARA, MAY 3: In order to ensure fair and smooth conduct of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) to be held tomorrow on May 4, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ms. Ayushi Sudan today inspected various examination centers established in the district to review the arrangements put in place by the District Administration for conduct of the examination.

The Deputy Commissioner visited various designated examination centres which include Government Degree College (GDC) Boys Kupwara, GDC Women Kupwara, GDC Handwara, GHSS Handwara and BHSS Kupwara. During the visit, she inter-



acted with the centre superintendents and staff and took stock of the arrangements made in

these centres. She enjoined upon the concerned officers to ensure strict adherence to the pre-

scribed guidelines for smooth and transparent conduct of the examination.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by ACR Kupwara, Peerzada Mumtaz Ahmad and other concerned officers. Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner appreciated the efforts of the district administration, law enforcement agencies, and examination staff for their coordinated efforts to facilitate smooth conduct of the examination. She reiterated the administration's commitment to upholding the integrity and transparency in the conduct of the examination.

Meanwhile, five centres have been established in the district to facilitate the local students to appear in NEET examination to be held tomorrow.

Training program on PMAY-U 2.0 held at Kulgam

HT News Network

KULGAM, MAY 03: In order to equip field staff with the necessary knowledge and skills for the upcoming survey, scheduled to begin from Monday, a training program under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U 2.0) was conducted today at the Auditorium Hall, DC Office Kulgam.

The session was attended by Enumerators, Supervisors, and allied staff involved in the implementation of PMAY-U 2.0 in the district. Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Kulgam, Altaf Ahmad Khan, inaugurated the session and provided an overview of the PMAY-U 2.0 scheme. He



emphasized that the scheme aims to provide all-weather pucca houses to eligible beneficiaries residing in urban areas. Addressing the gathering, District Statistics and Evaluation Officer (DSEO) Kulgam, Suhail Ahmad discussed technical aspects of the PMAY mobile application, which is used for survey and data collection. Master Trainer, Showkat Hussain conducted a detailed

training session on the use of the application, ensuring that participants clearly understood its functionalities for conducting efficient and accurate field surveys. The primary objective of the training is to ensure the collection of accurate and verifiable data on urban households to identify eligible beneficiaries under the various verticals of the PMAY-U scheme.

Operation of 03 Medical stores suspended for violating conditions of licences at Kulgam

HT News Network

KULGAM, MAY 03: A team of Drug Control Officers of district Kulgam today closed the operation of three medical stores at Frisal Kulgam for violating the conditions of license. Records of various medicines which are prone to addiction and those which have been prescribed/dispensed in violation of norms to the patient were demanded during inspections and discrepancies were found in the sale records. On spot operation of 3 medical stores was disallowed.

Seminar on 'Drug Addiction: A Curse' held at GDC Frisal

HT News Network

KULGAM, MAY 03: Government Degree College (GDC) Frisal in collaboration with district administration Kulgam, today organised a Seminar on 'Drug Addiction: A Curse,' under the banner of IEC Campaign against Drug Abuse-2025, within the college premises here. Principal of the College, Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad Shah in his introductory speech emphasized the role of educational institutions against drug addiction. Drug Control Officer Kulgam, Dr. Mustafa, the resource person from district administration highlighted the technical points about drug addiction. Prof. Mehnaza Jan, resource person from Anti-Drug Addiction Cell of the college, deliberated on the importance of holding such programs in educational institutions vis-a-vis controlling the menace of drug addiction in the society. In addition to staff members and students of the College many guests from civil society, district administration and Deptt. of Social Welfare Kulgam attended the program.

Dr. Bashir Ahmad Mir Appointed Dean Academic Affairs at NIT Srinagar

HT News Network

Srinagar, May 03 (: National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar has announced the appointment of Dr. Bashir Ahmad Mir as the new Dean Academic Affairs. A distinguished academic from the Department of Civil Engineering, Dr. Mir brings extensive experience, insight, and a forward-looking vision aimed at fostering interdisciplinary academic excellence and innovation. His appointment follows the commendable tenure of Prof. Mohammad Shafi Mir, whose leadership was marked by dedication, integrity, and a strong commitment to academic advancement. Prof. Mir's contributions have left a lasting impact and are widely appreciated by the NIT community.

SHEW, Mission Shakti Shopian conducts awareness programme at Keller

HT News Network

SHOPIAN, MAY 03: To sensitise and empower women at the grassroots level, Sankalp Hub for Empowerment of Women (SHEW), Mission Shakti Shopian Saturday conducted a comprehensive awareness programme at Anganwadi Centre Keller Shopian. The programme focused on raising awareness among local women about a variety of government schemes and welfare services available to them. During the session, resource persons from SHEW provided detailed information on pension schemes for widows, elderly and specially-abled persons, marriage assistance schemes for economically weaker sections, support and services provided by the One Stop Centre for women in distress, various employment generation programmes and livelihood opportunities, key



helpline numbers related to women's safety and support services, skill development programmes aimed at enhancing self-employment and vocational capabilities. In addition, special emphasis was laid on the importance of girl child education, urging families to actively support and invest in their daughter's futures. Other women-centric welfare schemes and social support mechanisms

were also highlighted to ensure maximum community benefit. The programme was well-attended by Anganwadi Workers, members of Self Help Groups (SHGs), representatives of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) and a large number of local women from the area. The interactive session allowed participants to ask questions and seek clarifications on how to avail the schemes effectively.

Awareness program under Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan held at ITI Kangan

HT News Network

GANDERBAL, MAY 03: To combat drug abuse, an awareness program under the Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan was organized today at Industrial Training Institute (ITI) Kangan with the aim of sensitizing youth about the harmful effects of drug abuse and encouraging a drug-free lifestyle. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, faculty members, and local dignitaries. Various activities, including interactive sessions, lectures, and a pledge ceremony, were conducted to engage participants and foster awareness about the menace of substance abuse. Speakers highlighted the growing threat of drug addiction in society and emphasized the collective responsibility of educational institutions, families, and the community in combating this issue. Students were encouraged to act as ambassadors of change and spread the message of a healthy, drug-free future. The program was part of the ongoing initiatives under the Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan, a campaign aimed at eradicating drug abuse through awareness, counseling, and community outreach. Principal ITI Kangan reiterated the institute's commitment to supporting such socially significant initiatives. Students were encouraged to act as ambassadors of change and spread the message of a healthy, drug-free future. The program was part of the ongoing initiatives under the Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan, a campaign aimed at eradicating drug abuse through awareness, counseling, and community outreach.

Tourism Faces Major Setback After Pahalgam Attack: Hotels Nearly Empty

Aaqib Khan

Srinagar, May 3 The recent terror attack in Pahalgam has delivered a major blow to Kashmir's vital tourism sector, with a sharp decline in tourist footfall at prominent destinations such as Gulmarg and Tangmarg. The picturesque hill station of Gulmarg, once bustling with tourists during this time of year, now presents a deserted look, with only around 48 out of approximately 1,150 hotel rooms currently occupied. This sudden and dramatic drop in occupancy has deeply unsettled hotel operators, travel agencies, and other stakeholders in the hospitality industry. Many had hoped for a fruitful tourist season after months of preparation. "We haven't seen such a severe decline in years," said Altaf Ahmad Rather, General Manager

of Hotel Hilltop, while speaking to Headlines Today. The downturn has also taken a heavy toll on hotel staff, many of whom are now working significantly reduced hours. "Each employee has been directed to report for only 15 days of duty per month. Naturally, this will impact our earnings," said one hotel employee, requesting anonymity. Some hotels in Gulmarg have already started laying off staff quietly, worsening the crisis for local workers and their families. While smaller hotels in Tangmarg have not yet initiated layoffs, the situation there remains grim. Hoteliers in Tangmarg, which serves as the main gateway to Gulmarg, are witnessing a substantial decline in bookings. "There is a worrying silence here. This is supposed to be our busiest season," said a local hotel owner. The tourism slump is sending

shockwaves through related sectors. The local transport industry has been severely hit, with taxi operators, bus drivers, and travel service providers struggling to



find work. "Our vehicles remain idle for most of the day. There's barely any business," said Mush-taq Ahmad, a taxi driver from Gulmarg. Local markets, too, are bearing the brunt of the crisis. Shopkeepers, particularly those who supply groceries and daily essentials to hotels, report a drastic fall in demand. "Our sales have plum-

meted. We rely on bulk orders from hotels, and with most of them empty, our stock remains unsold," said Momin Rather, a grocery shopowner in Tangmarg. Industry insiders blame the slump on rising safety concerns following the Pahalgam incident, in which tourists were targeted, resulting in several casualties. The attack has shaken the confidence of both domestic and international travellers, leading to widespread cancellations and a steep drop in new bookings. In an effort to ease public fears and restore confidence, the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department has urged tourists not to panic. In a recent public statement, the department assured that robust security arrangements have been made at all major tourist locations across the Valley. Further strengthening the reassurance, SSP Baramulla, Gurindar

paal Singh, recently visited Gulmarg. He emphasized that foolproof security measures have been implemented in the area and appealed to the public to continue their travel plans without fear. Tourism remains one of the key pillars of Kashmir's economy, providing livelihoods to thousands. The current crisis has sparked concerns about long-term damage to the sector. Industry stakeholders are now calling for immediate intervention from the government in the form of financial relief, stronger security visibility, and strategic confidence-building initiatives aimed at reviving tourism in the region. Unless swift and effective action is taken, what was supposed to be a thriving season may turn into one of the most challenging periods for Kashmir's tourism industry in recent memory.





Nazki recieves Best World Journalist Award

■ HT News Network

Jammu, Senior Journalist, M S Nazki, was presented by widely known Organization namely 'Manam Foundation World Best' Journalist Award to mark his best doing efforts in his allotted field in Journalism.

MS Nazki is a Analyst, Columnist and Author was presented the award for his outstanding achievement and pioneer works in the field of Media / Journalism On the the occasion of World Press freedom day. The above said organization was mentioned his brilliant and outstanding work in his own field. It's head said that M S Nazki's writings were really so nice and he was absolutely good named for the precious award on the occasion of 'The World Press Freedom Day'. The organization's official said that whether this time Press or Media is not free so much and facing many types of strangle struggle. Despite of this, like M S Nazki the journalists are on right track and serving the nation without having any single threat the job is doing so well. On this occasion, one lady journalist who is also from Jammu and Kashmir Ladakh (UT) namely Rigzin Wangmo being presented Best World Award after noticing her good performance in her field.

GDC Ganderbal organises annual road race

■ HT News Network

Srinagar: The department of physical education & sports of government degree college Ganderbal successfully organized Annual College Road Race for Boys and Girls on Saturday as part of its annual sports activities. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students across various semesters, showcasing their athletic spirit and commitment to a healthy lifestyle.

The race for boys began at College gate to Thuroo, Dangerpora, Tulmulla and then return back to college covering a distance of 10 kms approximately while as girls race started from Tulmulla bus stand and finished at College gate covering a distance of 5 kms. The participants demonstrated commendable endurance and sportsmanship throughout the event.

Principal of the college, Prof Fouzia Fatima flagged off the race for boys and girls and appreciated the efforts of the Physical Education Department in promoting physical fitness and organizing such events the encourage student participation in extracurricular activities.

Following the conclusion of the race, a valedictory function was held in the college to honour the participants and winners. The event began with a welcome address by the Convener Sports Committee who congratulated all participants for their spirited involvement.

Principal, Prof Fouzia Fatima presided over the function as the chief guest and awarded a cash prize of Rs 2500 to the winner of the race in both the categories and distributed trophies, medals and certificates to the next 10 position holders. In her address, she emphasized the importance of such events in overall personality development and encouraged students to participate actively in future activities.

The proceedings of the event was conducted by Sakhira Bashir and Heena Yousuf of 2nd semester.

Ghagwal unites to promote community cleanliness Movement

■ HT News Network



SAMBA, MAY 03: The transformative "Saturdays for Ghagwal" initiative continues to build impressive momentum as residents, officials, and security personnel joined forces for the second consecutive weekly cleanliness drive. The successful drive focused on the vital corridor connecting Shri Narsingh Dev Ji Dham to the National Highway, demonstrating the growing community commitment to civic responsibility.

"What began as a simple initiative has quickly evolved into a powerful movement that brings together people from all walks of life," said SDM K.S. Bali. "We're seeing unprecedented collaboration between government departments, religious institutions, and citizens—all united by a shared vision for a cleaner Ghagwal."

The campaign, launched on April 19 at the revered Shri Narsingh Dev Ji Mandir, strategically targets key religious, social, and governmental areas each week. The focused approach ensures meaningful impact while building sustainable civic engagement habits among residents.

Notable participation from the 41 Battalion of TBP, local women's groups, and public representatives highlights the initiative's broad appeal and ability to transcend traditional participation barriers.

"We invite all residents to join us this coming Saturday as we continue this vital work," added Tehsildar Ghagwal. "Together, we are not just cleaning our region—we are strengthening the bonds that make Ghagwal special."

Allots modern Kiosks, Rehris to registered vendors in Bahu Fort Area

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MAY 03: In a significant step towards supporting local livelihood, the Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) today conducted a draw for the allocation of modern kiosks and rehries among registered vendors operating in the Bahu Fort area.

As many as 23 spaces among registered vendors, comprising 13 Modern kiosks and 10 rehri holders, were allotted these facilities through a transparent draw of lots. All beneficiaries were previously registered with the Jammu Municipal Corporation and held valid licenses to operate in the area.

The event was held in the presence of Member of Legislative Assembly, Vikram Randhawa and Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation, Dr. Devansh Yadav. Addressing the gathering, the MLA congratulated the allottees and urged them to work with commitment, maintain discipline, and offer high-quality products and services to the public. He emphasized



the importance of self-employment initiatives in strengthening the local economy and improving livelihoods.

The Commissioner highlighted that the infrastructure, modern kiosks, has been developed by the Jammu Smart City Limited with financial assistance from the

Union Government to empower local vendors and promote organized vending and Jammu Municipal corporation handed over them to registered vendors. He advised allottees to maintain hygiene and cleanliness in and around their allotted spaces, contributing to the beautification and

environmental health of the area.

The initiative is part of JMC's broader vision to modernize urban vending and promote sustainable livelihood opportunities for the urban poor in the city.

Among others, Joint Commissioner (R&E) Rakesh Gupta, Deputy Commissioner (N) Sanjay Badyal, Deputy Commissioner (S) Lal Chand, Tehsildar Bahu Raju Samyal, Chief Revenue Officer Sunil Gupta, SHO Bahu, were also present on the occasion. The event was held in the presence of Member of Legislative Assembly, Vikram Randhawa and Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation, Dr. Devansh Yadav. Addressing the gathering, the MLA congratulated the allottees and urged them to work with commitment, maintain discipline, and offer high-quality products and services to the public. He emphasized the importance of self-employment initiatives in strengthening the local economy and improving livelihoods. The Commissioner highlighted that the infrastructure, modern kiosks, has been developed by the Jammu Smart City Limited.

PMAY-U 2.0 House-to-House Survey Supervisors, Surveyors imparted training at Rajouri

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, MAY 03: A one-day training programme on House-to-House Survey under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U) 2.0 was successfully conducted today here in the Conference Hall of the Deputy Commissioner's Office.

The programme was held under the overall supervision of Additional District Development Commissioner and Nodal Officer for PMAY-U Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa.

Organized by District Statistics & Evaluation Officer Sandeep Kumar Sharma, the training witnessed participation from supervisors and field investigators of the three Municipal Committees of District Rajouri—Sunderbani, Kalakote and Nowshera. Master trainers from the Statistical Cadre led the sessions, providing participants with a detailed orientation on the objectives, methodology, and operational framework of PMAY-U 2.0. The training featured live dem-



onstrations and hands-on practice on the use of the dedicated mobile application, which is integral to the successful and accurate execution of the house-to-house survey.

The training programme marks a crucial step in ensuring the effective rollout of PMAY-U 2.0 across the urban areas of Rajouri district. A one-day training programme on House-to-

House Survey under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U) 2.0 was successfully conducted today here in the Conference Hall of the Deputy Commissioner's Office.

The programme was held under the overall supervision of Additional District Development Commissioner and Nodal Officer for PMAY-U Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa.

District administration Jammu launches awareness van to promote Common Service Centres

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MAY 03: An awareness van was flagged off today here from the Deputy Commissioner's Office as part of a campaign to promote the Common Service Centres. (CSCs).

Deputy Commissioner Sachin Kumar Vaishya, who launched the awareness vehicle, highlighted the importance of reaching every corner of the district to ensure that citizens are informed about the services available at CSCs. "The mission is to ensure that people are well-informed about these opportunities and can easily access them at their



nearest CSC," the DC said while addressing the gathering.

The flag-off ceremony was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner Sher Singh, Senior Director IT & District Informatics Officer NIC Jammu Sanjeev Kapoor, along with various district officers and members of the public. District Manager CSC, Bhawna Mahajan, elaborated on

the range of services offered through CSCs. "Common Service Centres serve as digital access points for a multitude of services, including Aadhaar enrollment and updates, PAN card applications, banking and financial services, insurance, utility bill payments, and applications for government certificates such as birth, death and income certificates," she stated.

ADC Poonch chairs meeting to verify SDRF relief cases

■ HT News Network

POONCH, MAY 03: Additional Deputy Commissioner Tahir Mustafa Malik convened a meeting of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Committee today in the Conference Hall of the DC Office to review relief claims under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).

ACR, Mohd Sayeed, officers from the Revenue Department and other committee members participated in the meeting, which focused on the verification of relief cases in accordance with established SOPs.

After a thorough review of 19 relief and rehabilitation cases, recommendations were made to enhance the effectiveness of the relief process.



The ADC emphasized the critical importance of adhering to SDRF guidelines, highlighting the necessity to ensure that genuine beneficiaries receive timely support. He urged for a collaborative approach among all stakeholders to facilitate smoother operations and expedite assistance to those in need.

Intra college Quiz competition held at GDC Ramgarh

College hosts special lecture to mark World Press Freedom Day

■ HT News Network

SAMBA, MAY 03: To promote awareness about social justice and constitutional rights, Government Degree College (GDC) Ramgarh organized a "Quiz Competition on Ensuring the Rights of SCs, STs, OBCs, and Minorities" and a special lecture to mark World Press Freedom Day under the patronage of the College Principal, Prof. (Dr.) Meeru Abrol.

The quiz competition was held under the broader framework of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to enlighten students about policies related to inclusive development, access to education and employment, and anti-discrimination measures.

Dr. Shivali Panigotra coordinated the event and welcomed the participants. Four teams participated in the quiz com-



petition, each team comprising two students.

Team A, consisting of Amandeep Kaur and Malika Choudhary, emerged as the winner, securing the first position. Team C, repre-

sented by Janvi and Sakshi, secured the second place, while Team B, with participants Neeraj Kumar and Lucky Bhagat, stood third.

Meanwhile, a thought-provoking lecture

was organised on the campus to mark World Press Freedom Day, observed every year on May 3.

The lecture centered on this year's global theme, "Reporting in the Brave New World – The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Press Freedom and the Media."

The event featured an informative and engaging lecture by Ashok Kumar, the Resource Person for the day.

In his lecture, Kumar explored how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping the landscape of journalism and press freedom. He spoke about the benefits of AI in the media sector, such as faster reporting, content generation, real-time fact-checking and multilingual content creation.

At the same time, he cautioned against the emerging risks of AI misuse—particularly the spread of misinformation through deep fakes, algorithmic bias, and threats to journalistic revenue models.



MLA convenes Public Outreach camp at Block Inderwal

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MAY 03: To strengthen grass-roots governance and address public concerns, Member Legislative Assembly (MLA) Inderwal Pyare Lal Sharma convened a Public Outreach Program today at Dak Bunglow Chatroo-Block Inderwal. The event witnessed active participation from residents of various panchayats, including members of the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities. During the interaction, locals raised multiple grievances and demands, seeking Advertisement of seasonal teacher posts for Gujjar and Bakarwal communities, speedy completion of ongoing recruitment processes, restoration of damaged bridges in higher reaches causing inconvenience to nomadic communities, upgradation of the Zonal Education Officer (ZEO) post to Deputy Chief Education



Officer (CEO), repair of damaged water pipelines, notification of transport fare for vehicles operating across the region.

Officials from the PMGSY Department informed the MLA that under PMGSY-IV, 15 new road projects are in the pipeline,

of which 12 have already been vetted by the STA, NIT Srinagar through both offline and online modes. In his address, the MLA emphasized the need for enhanced tourism infrastructure in the region. He called for the revival and upgrading of tourist facilities in Chatroo and Mughal Maidan, including the proper functioning of the Tourist Reception Centre (TRC). The MLA directed the R&B authorities to submit Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for proposed infrastructure initiatives at the earliest, to accelerate developmental activities in the constituency. The Program was attended by all Sub Divisional Level Officers, Social Worker Jaffer Bhawani and concerned staff. The MLA directed the R&B authorities to submit Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for proposed infrastructure initiatives at the earliest, to accelerate developmental activities in the constituency.

Empowering Youth: 67 cases of Mission Youth schemes approved at Kishtwar

HT News Network



KISHTWAR, MAY 03: In an initiative towards youth empowerment and entrepreneurship development, the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC), under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Shavan, today approved 67 new cases under various components of the Mission Youth initiative.

The approvals include 35 cases under the Mumkin Scheme, 08 under Tejaswini and 24 under the Spurring Entrepreneurship Initiative (SEI). These schemes are designed to provide financial aid, skill development, and infrastructure support to youth, promoting self-reliance and employment generation.

At the outset, AD Employment Shafqat Ali Keen provided a comprehensive overview of the schemes, highlighting their impact and outreach. The Deputy Commissioner also held one-on-one interaction with beneficiaries availing loans under these programs, assuring them of continuous support and guidance.

The DC nominated the Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO) as the Nodal Officer to initiate a Driving Training Course, enhancing employability under Skill Development Course. Beneficiaries expressed heartfelt gratitude to the district administration for facilitating access to vital support mechanisms and pledged to utilize the resources effectively for personal and community growth.

The meeting was attended by CPO Shah Nawaz Bali, AD Employment/FCS&CA Shafqat Ali Keen, ARTO Tasleem Wani, LDM and other concerned stakeholders.

ANU Recognised as Centre of Excellence by the Government of Gujarat

HT News Network

Srinagar/ May: 3 Anant National University has been recognised as the Centre of Excellence (CoE) by the Government of Gujarat. This distinction underscores Anant's unwavering pursuit of academic and institutional excellence. As the youngest university to earn this honour, this reaffirms the university's resolve to lead with purpose and to inspire the next generation of leaders, innovators and solutionaries. ANU now joins an elite list of nine other renowned universities and institutions, further establishing its status as a pioneer in education. The Centre of Excellence initiative by the Government of Gujarat focuses on developing strategies for the high growth of professional education. The 'Centre of Excellence' title recognises institutions that exemplify quality education, ground-breaking research, innovative teaching methodologies, quality extension services, high employability and entrepreneurial development. After a rigorous and comprehensive audit conducted by the High-Level Committee, ANU received this recognition for outstanding performance across key assessment criteria. The assessment criteria evaluate a wide range of parameters, including merit rankings, PhD programmes, gender diversity, scholarships, cultural activities, student engagement, start-ups, placement records, land holdings and financial audits. Academic parameters like curriculum flexibility, review systems, teaching methods and examination procedures also play a vital role.

Inter-School Zone Level Tournament kicks off in Rajouri

HT News Network

RAJOURI, MAY 03: The Department of Youth Services and Sports, District Rajouri, under the chairmanship of Joint Director Youth Services and Sports Jammu, has launched the Inter-School Zone Level Tournament across various zones of the district. This exciting event is being held in accordance with the Annual Calendar of Activities for U 14 and U 17 boys and girls of government and private schools.

School Zone Level Competition 2025-26 U-14 boys compete in Carrom, Chess, Badminton, Yoga & Wrestling at Ghat

HT News Network

DODA, MAY 03: The third day of the Inter-School Zonal Level Competition 2025-26 for U-14 boys witnessed a spectacular display of athletic talent under the esteemed guidance of District Youth Services & Sports Officer Pritam Singh. The event was meticulously supervised by Zonal Physical Education Officer Ghat Surinder Kumar ensuring its smooth and successful execution. A total of 47 students/players drawn from far flung schools competed in Badminton, Chess, Carrom, Yoga and Wrestling, showcasing their skills and sportsmanship. The dedication and hard work of the field staff of Zone Ghat were instrumental in the success of the event. Their commitment and efforts ensured a well-organized and competitive environment, allowing the young athletes to perform at their best. Pritam Singh expressed satisfaction with the proceedings.

DC, SSP chair civil society meeting to address local developmental issues in Mendhar

HT News Network

POONCH, MAY 03: A meeting was convened today by Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Vikas Kundal and Senior Superintendent of Police Shafakat Hussain, bringing together civil society members to discuss pressing developmental challenges in the Sub Division Mendhar. The gathering served as a platform for community feedback and collaborative efforts aimed at enhancing local conditions. In attendance were local SDM Imran Kataria, Tehsildar Rahul Basotra, Executive Engineers, SDPO, SHO and other officers. Participants voiced a range of concerns, seeking augmentation of water supply, rationalization of ration depots, adequate medical facilities, and other developmental needs. The meeting emphasized the importance of unity and communal harmony, with attendees reaffirming their commitment to support the administration in addressing these challenges.



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SSP stressed the importance of safety and security for all residents, calling for collaboration as a fundamental element in building a peaceful community. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to work together for the betterment of the district ensuring that the voices of the community are heard and acted upon.

DC Reasi reviews implementation, extension of e-Office upto Block/Tehsil level

HT News Network

REASI, MAY 03: Deputy Commissioner Reasi Nidhi Malik chaired a critical meeting today in the video conference hall of the DC Office Complex here to review the implementation, extension, and operationalization of the E-Office system across all government offices in the district.

The major focus of the meeting was the implementation of E-Office 2.0, under which the system will be extended up to the tehsil and block levels. The Deputy Commissioner emphasized that this initiative is part of a broader effort to streamline government operations by digitizing processes and significantly reducing paper usage. She further added that the extension of E-Office to the block level will improve efficiency, productivity, and transparency.

The meeting was attended by line department officers, including those from subdivisions, tehsils, blocks and sectoral departments within Reasi. The District Information Officer (NIC) provided a detailed presentation on IT infrastructure requirements, network infrastructure, templates, connectivity issues and more.



The Deputy Commissioner directed all district officers to take timely action and ensure that the required data is submitted within a week to facilitate a smoother implementation process. She also instructed officials to ensure their network and IT infrastructure are up to date to support the operationalization of E-Office. The DC directed all officers to coordinate closely with the District Informatics Officer (NIC) to ensure a hassle-free rollout of the E-Office system at the block level. The initiative is expected to enhance operational efficiency and contribute to the broader goal of digital governance within the region.

GBHSS Rajouri organises maiden INTROFEST 2025 to welcome fresher

HT News Network



RAJOURI, MAY 03: In a vibrant celebration of talent and togetherness, Government Boys Higher Secondary School Rajouri proudly organised the first-ever INTROFEST 2025 under the supervision of the school Principal. The event marked a joyous and memorable welcome for the new entrants of the institution, setting a positive tone for their academic journey ahead. The fest witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, teachers, and parents alike, fostering a warm and inclusive environment. The event featured a series of captivating performances, creative self-introductions by freshers, and an atmosphere brimming with youthful energy and expression. A special felicitation ceremony was held during the programme to acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of select students and guests, adding an element of pride and honour to the occasion. The celebration concluded with a tea and refreshments session, providing an opportunity for attendees to connect, interact, and share the spirit of camaraderie. INTROFEST 2025 stood as a testament to the school's commitment to nurturing not just academic excellence, but also cultural and interpersonal growth among its students.

DC Reasi inspects ongoing cleanliness of water structures under Jal Shakti Abhiyan

HT News Network

REASI, MAY 03: As part of the ongoing cleanliness and maintenance campaign under Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain 2025, Deputy Commissioner Reasi Nidhi Malik today visited several sites to assess the cleanliness and maintenance works of water structures. She reviewed the cleanliness status of the pond at Panchayat Agarbhallian and assessed the preparedness of the administration in maintenance of water resources ahead of the monsoon season. The week-long campaign, started from May 1, 2025, focuses on the

rejuvenation, cleaning and maintenance of water recharge structures, traditional water bodies, and storage tanks across all 12 blocks of Reasi. A detailed weekly roster with 1003 blockwise activities has been prepared to ensure the systematic execution of planned activities, which include the cleaning and maintenance of 110 water harvesting tanks, 194 Water Ponds, 508 water bowlies, and 191 other water-related structures. The work is being carried out under the supervision of the respective Block Development Officers (BDOs). The Deputy Commissioner highlighted the importance of this initiative in promoting sustainable water



conservation. She noted that the timely cleaning and restoration of

these structures would help maximize rainwater storage during the

upcoming monsoon. Additionally, the campaign provides an opportunity to identify water bodies requiring repair or long-term maintenance, which can be incorporated into future development plans. The DC encouraged workers and the public to continue coordination and community participation to ensure the success of the Jal Shakti Abhiyan across the district. She reaffirmed the administration's commitment to protecting water resources and strengthening Reasi's water infrastructure through proactive, ground-level interventions. The Deputy Commissioner highlighted the importance of this initiative in promoting sustainable water conservation. She noted

that the timely cleaning and restoration of these structures would help maximize rainwater storage during the upcoming monsoon. Additionally, the campaign provides an opportunity to identify water bodies requiring repair or long-term maintenance, which can be incorporated into future development plans. The DC encouraged workers and the public to continue coordination and community participation to ensure the success of the Jal Shakti Abhiyan across the district. She reaffirmed the administration's commitment to protecting water resources and strengthening Reasi's water infrastructure through proactive, ground-level interventions.



PM vows firm and decisive action against Pahalgam terrorists, their backers

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAY 3 (UNI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today again vowed firm and decisive action to bring the perpetrators and backers of the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack to book.

Addressing a media event post his talks with visiting Angolan President João Lourenço, Prime Minister Modi said:

"We are committed to take firm and decisive action against the terrorists and those who support them."

He thanked Angola for its support in India's fight against cross-border terrorism.

PM Modi also said that the two countries are united in their opposition



to terrorism which the biggest danger to humanity.

He thanked the Angolan leader for the condolences of his country for the victims of the Pahalgam terror attack.

Notably, PM Modi has vowed to bring the perpetrators and backers of the

Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were brutally gunned down, to book and go to the ends of the earth to hunt them down. He has also given the Indian armed forces operational freedom to deal with their reprisal action in the matter.

Pahalgam effect: India suspends postal links with Pakistan, bans imports, prohibits Pak-flagged ships

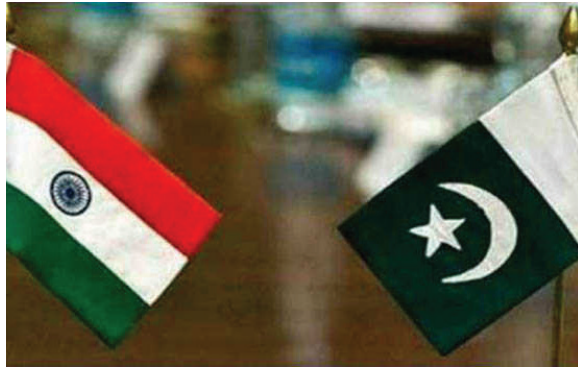
AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAY 3 (UNI)

In a slew of rapid punitive measures against Islamabad, India has suspended all postal linkages with Pakistan, banned the direct or indirect import of goods from that country, and banned Pakistani-flagged ships from entering Indian ports and vice versa.

The measures come as part of India's retaliatory steps against Pakistan, in the aftermath of the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam of Jammu and Kashmir in which Islamist gunmen brutally shot dead 26 people, mostly tourists.

The Ministry of Communications, Department of Posts, in a notification issued today, said



the Government of India has "decided to suspend exchange of all categories of inbound mail and parcels from Pakistan through air and surface routes".

Earlier, the Directorate General of Shipping, Mumbai, issued a directive under the Merchant Shipping Act, banning Pakistani-flagged ships from entering Indian ports and

prohibited Indian-flagged vessels from visiting ports in Pakistan.

The restrictions are effective immediately.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in a notification issued on Friday, "prohibited the import or transit of all goods originating in or exported from Pakistan", with immediate effect.

India has already shut the Attari land crossing, which is the sole trade route between the two countries, in the aftermath of the Pahalgam attack.

The measures are the latest by New Delhi to crack down on Islamabad following the Pahalgam terrorist attack, which has led to embittering of relations between the two sides.

India has taken several measures to hit back at Pakistan, including suspending the Indus Waters Treaty, closing the Attari border, telling all Pakistani nationals to leave, thinning the staff at the Pakistan HC and its own in Islamabad, and vowed to pursue the perpetrators and planners of the attack to the ends of the earth.

Israel terms Damascus airstrikes a warning to Syria to not harm its Druze community

AGENCIES

TEL AVIV/DAMASCUS, MAY 3 (UNI)

The Israeli Defence Forces said that its latest strikes in Damascus were a warning to Syria's new Islamic rulers to not harm its Druze minority, who have been targets of increased state oppression since the ouster of President Bashar Al Assad's regime.

The airstrikes, which were carried out less than a day after the attack on the presidential palace in Damascus, was followed by a targeted strike against enemy infrastructure.

The IDF in a statement said that on late Friday night, it "targeted a military site, anti-aircraft artillery and surface-to-air missile infrastructure," as the Kan public broadcaster reported that Israel was readying a list of military and government targets to potentially attack in Syria, the Israel Times reported.

The military's statement came two hours after Syria's state news agency SANA reported Israeli airstrikes near Damascus and in the west, at Latakia and Hama, as well as in Daraa in the south. SANA said one civilian was killed at Harasta near Damascus, and four people were wounded near Hama.

The airstrikes saw a series of some of IDF's deadliest attacks in Syria this year, as it targeted more than 20 positions in at least six provinces, according to the UK-based watchdog - the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and state media.

Resolve undisputed inheritance cases with 15 working days: Yogi

AGENCIES

LUCKNOW, MAY 3 (UNI)

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday, directed officials to fast-track the timely settlement of revenue disputes and accelerate land record digitisation, calling them key to public trust, investment and transparent governance.

During a high-level review of the Revenue Department, the CM emphasised a people-centric, tech-driven and accountable work culture in the department.

He directed the officials to expedite the digitisation for a user-friendly redesign of the Revenue Council portal and the creation of an integrated dashboard, from Lekhpal to Commissioner, for better monitoring and public benefit.

He also emphasised displaying land use data of authorities in Khatauni and simplifying the land use change process to ensure greater transparency.

Emphasising the need for full automation of transfer cases, Yogi highlighted its potential to provide citizens with timely justice and ease. He directed the implementation of technical intervention and transparency in the consolidation process, urging sensitivity in handling complex consolidation cases to avoid social disputes.

He directed that undisputed inheritance cases be resolved within 15 working days.

He also directed the mandatory resolution of all pending cases related to Khatauni, Aadhaar seeding, farmer registry, measurement and Khasra investigation within the set time frame, with additional human resources allocated as needed.

The department informed the issuance of over 36 lakh caste, residence and income certificates last year, with 85 percent processed online within seven working days.

The CM commended this progress and directed the officials to further enhance service delivery for greater effectiveness and transparency.

He praised the department for its swift response during natural disasters, noting that over 3.5 lakh affected families received assistance through DBT in 2023-24.

Pakistan conducts Abdali surface-surface missile test in wake of heightened tensions with India

AGENCIES

ISLAMABAD, MAY 3 (UNI)

Amid escalating tensions with India after the Pahalgam terrorist attack, Pakistan has reportedly conducted a successful testing of its Abdali surface-surface missile, which is said to have a 450-km range.

The test was part of the Pakistan Armed Forces' Indus drill, to ensure operational readiness in wake of any attack.

"The launch was aimed at ensuring the operational readiness of troops and validating key technical parameters, including the missile's advanced navigation system and enhanced manoeuvrability features," said the military's official media-wing, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) in a press release, Dawn reports.

It noted that the launch was a part of "Ex Indus" and was witnessed by the commander of the Army Strategic Forces Command (AFSC), senior officials



from the Strategic Plans Division and the AFSC, as well as scientists and engineers from Pakistan's strategic organisations.

President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza and the services chiefs extended their congratulations to the participating troops, scientists, and engineers, as per the ISPR statement.

"They expressed complete confidence in the operational preparedness and technical proficiency of Pakistan's Strategic Forces to ensure credible minimum deterrence and safeguard national security against any aggression," the statement added.

Pakistan has engaged in panic-driven-reckless aggression after Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave the Indian military complete operational freedom to take retaliatory steps in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were gunned down in a brutal assault overseen by handlers in Pakistan.

Apart from conducting frequent military cross-fire, Islamabad has hurriedly intensified its naval drills in the Arabian Sea, conducting more missile tests, and has frequent warnings of 'nuclear retaliation' against New Delhi in case of any attack, attempting to maintain a tough posture.

Claims about removal of Director General of Defence Intelligence Agency false: govt

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAY 3 (UNI)

The government on Saturday dismissed as false the claims circulating on Pakistan-backed social media accounts that Lieutenant General DS Rana, Director General of Defence Intelligence Agency, has been removed from his post and deputed to the Andaman and Nicobar.

The false claims about Lt Gen DS Rana being "removed" are being circulated by Pakistan-based news channel @ARYNEWSOFFICIAL and several social media accounts.

The Press Information Bureau (PIB) of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in a post on social media platform X said, "Lt Gen DS Rana has been promoted to the prestigious rank of Commander-in-Chief, Andaman & Nicobar Command. He is the first Chief



of Defence Intelligence who has been elevated to the rank of Commander-in-Chief."

The PIB said, "Andaman & Nicobar Command is the first Tri-Services Command, which is of immense strategic significance for Indian Armed Forces in the Indian Ocean Region".

Earlier too, Pakistan-

based media had made false claim about Lieutenant General Suchindra Kumar alleging that he was removed after the Pahalgam terror attack.

Notably, the Ministry of Home Affairs had banned several Pakistani YouTube channels for disseminating provocative, false and misleading contents against India.

Dr Poonam Gupta takes over as Dy Governor of RBI

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, MAY 3 (UNI)

Poonam Gupta has taken over as the Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The government appointed her as Deputy Governor on April 2, 2025 for a period of three years from the date of assumption of charge or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

As Deputy Governor, Dr Gupta will take charge of the monetary policy department, financial markets operations department, economic and policy research department, department of financial stability, international department, department of statistics and information management, corporate strategy and Budget department and department of communications.

Prior to this appointment, Dr Gupta was the Director General of the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), dealing with issues related to economic development,



international financial architecture, central banking, macro economic stability, public debt and state finance.

She also served as a member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister and Convenor of the Advisory Council of the 16th Finance Commission.

Prior to joining NCAER, Dr. Gupta held senior positions at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank for nearly two decades. Dr. Gupta also taught at the Delhi School of Economics, University of Maryland (USA) and also served as a visiting faculty at the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI),

Delhi.

She has been an RBI Chair Professor at the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) and a Professor at the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER).

Dr. Gupta has published several research papers and authored an edited book 'Emerging Giants: China and India in the World Economy'. She holds a Master's degree and PhD in Economics from the University of Maryland, USA, and a Master's degree in Economics from the Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi.

Goa: 6 killed, over 30 injured in Shirgao Jatra stampede



AGENCIES

PANAJI, MAY 3 (UNI)

Six people were killed and more than 30 others injured in a stampede during the famous Sri Lairai Jatra pilgrimage in Goa's Shirgaon district on Saturday, police said.

Police and rescue teams reached the spot as soon as the incident was reported. The injured have been admitted to Goa Medical College and North Goa District Hospital in Mapusa.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the loss of lives in

the accident. "Saddened by the loss of lives due to stampede in Goa's Shirgaon. Condolences to those who lost their loved ones, wishing the injured a speedy recovery."

The local administration is assisting the affected people.

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has reached the hospital. He has asked for free treatment of the injured. Goa Congress has also expressed grief over the incident.

The incident took place when there was a sudden panic in the huge crowd,

due to which people started running to save their lives. Witnesses said people kept falling on each other, resulting in deaths.

Police and emergency services rushed to the spot and relief and rescue operations were immediately started. The injured have been admitted to nearby hospitals.

Authorities are yet to officially confirm the reason behind the stampede, but according to initial reports, overcrowding and the lack of proper arrangements led to the chaos.

Trump administration plans military parade on June 14

AGENCIES

NEW YORK, MAY 3 (UNI)

The Trump administration will hold a military parade on June 14, said White House spokesperson Anna Kelly in a post on social media on Friday.

"To celebrate the U.S. Army's 250th Birthday on June 14, President Trump will honor American Veterans, active-duty servicemembers, and military history with a military parade!" said Kelly.

The parade planning is actively underway, and approximately 150 vehicles, 50 aircraft, and 6,600 soldiers are anticipated to be involved, said a report by AFP quoting U.S. Army spokeswoman Heather Hagan.

The celebration also will feature fireworks and a festival on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., said Hagan.

The U.S. Army plans to have a week of celebrations for its 250th birthday, according to a planning document.

Notably, June 14 also marks U.S. President Donald Trump's 79th birthday.

Trump floated the idea of holding a military parade in Washington, D.C., during his first term but the idea was shot down on high costs and concerns over possible damages to streets from military vehicles.

The previous major military parade in the U.S. capital was held in 1991 to mark the end of the Gulf War.

Kashmiri medico honored with Bharat Seva Puraskar

Kashmiri doctor and columnist Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo has been honored with the prestigious Bharat Seva Puraskar 2025 by Bharat Seva Society for his outstanding contributions to healthcare, medicine and research.

This esteemed award recognizes Dr. Itoo's efforts in advancing healthcare, promoting health awareness, academic leadership, dedicated medical writing, research and improving the well-being of communities through his exceptional work in medicine and public health.

Currently serving as a doctor at Narayana Health, Dr Itoo besides having affiliations with

leading medical organizations, also holds the distinguished title of Fellow of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF Fellow, Belgium).

The Bharat Seva Pur-skar 2025 consists of a certificate and citation acknowledging Dr. Itoo's achievements in the health and medicine and research. The Bharat Seva Society congratulates Dr.



Itoo on this well-deserved recognition and wishes

him continued success in his future endeavours.

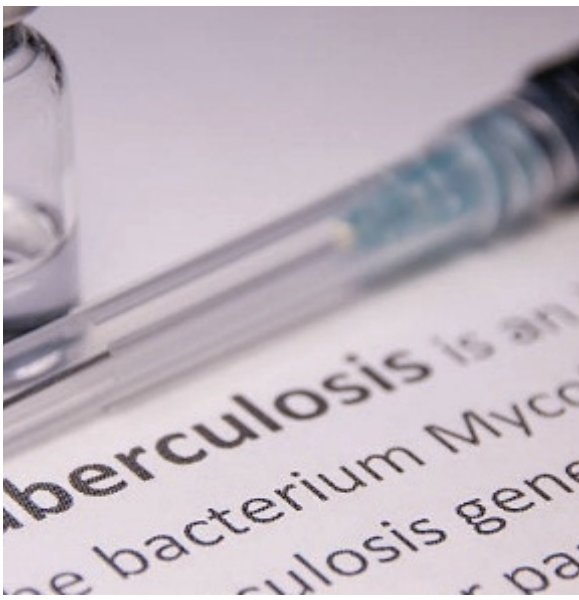
Screening for both active and dormant TB infection key to improve detection: Study

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

Screening for both active and dormant tuberculosis (TB) infection simultaneously can help improve detection, which is key for better outcomes, according to a study.

The new strategy, proposed by a team of researchers led by Queen Mary University of London, can curtail infection rates, potentially save lives. It provides a solution to problems with current TB screening, which does not always accurately detect disease.

"Global TB control requires early identification and treatment of TB in risk groups. Our novel screening algorithms show that screening for active and dormant TB can be done simultaneously with high accuracy for migrants from countries where TB is common to improve individual and population benefits," said Dr Dominik



Zenner, Clinical Reader in Infectious Disease Epidemiology at Queen Mary.

Researchers hope that this new approach, published in the European Respiratory Journal, will inform guidance from global health organisations and key decision-makers on the most effective way to screen for TB.

TB is the deadliest infectious diseases globally, with 10.8 million new cases and 1.25 million deaths in 2023.

The infection can remain dormant in the body for some years without causing the symptoms of the disease but may cause active disease in the future especially among

certain people at high risk. Accurate testing of both active and dormant infection is therefore of critical importance in screening programmes, explained the researchers.

The team examined data on 13 different TB tests as described in 437 original studies and published systematic reviews. These data were then used to estimate how good screening tests are at both correctly identifying TB and avoiding false positive results.

They found that including some immunological tests for dormant TB infection (TBI tests) added value to TB screening algorithms. TBI tests could also support earlier diagnosis of harder to detect TB, including extrapulmonary TB (disease that occurs outside the patient's lungs) or TB in children.

This novel approach challenges existing protocols for TB testing, which reserve TBI tests for diagnosing dormant TB only.

Scientists find cellular culprit behind age-related abdominal fat

AGENCIES NEW YORK

A team of US researchers has uncovered the cellular culprit behind age-related abdominal fat, providing new insights into why our midsections widen with middle age.

Published in the journal Science, the findings suggest a novel target for future therapies to prevent belly flab and extend our healthy lifespans.

Preclinical research by City of Hope, one of the largest and most advanced cancer research and treatment organisations in the US, has done this research.

"People often lose muscle and gain body fat as they age – even when their body weight remains the same," said Qiong (Annabel) Wang, an associate professor of molecular and cellular endocrinology at City of Hope's Arthur Riggs Diabetes and Metabolism Research Institute.

"We discovered aging



triggers the arrival of a new type of adult stem cell and enhances the body's massive production of new fat cells, especially around the belly," Wang added.

In collaboration with the UCLA laboratory co-corresponding author Xia Yang, the scientists conducted a series of mouse experiments later validated on human cells.

Wang and her colleagues focused on white adipose tissue (WAT), the fatty tissue responsible for age-related weight gain.

While it's well-known that fat cells grow larger with age, the scientists suspected that WAT also expanded by producing

new fat cells, meaning it may have an unlimited potential to grow.

To test their hypothesis, the researchers focused on adipocyte progenitor cells (APCs), a group of stem cells in WAT that evolve into fat cells.

The team first transplanted APCs from young and older mice into a second group of young mice. The APCs from the older animals rapidly generated a colossal amount of fat cells.

When the team transplanted APCs from young mice into the older mice, however, the stem cells did not manufacture many new fat cells. The results

confirmed that older APCs are equipped to independently make new fat cells, regardless of their host's age.

Using single-cell RNA sequencing, the scientists next compared APC gene activity in young and older mice. While barely active in young mice, APCs woke up with a vengeance in middle-aged mice and began pumping out new fat cells.

A signalling pathway called leukemia inhibitory factor receptor (LIFR) proved critical for promoting these CP-A cells to multiply and evolve into fat cells.

"We discovered that the body's fat-making process is driven by LIFR. While young mice don't require this signal to make fat, older mice do," explained Wang. "Our research indicates that LIFR plays a crucial role in triggering CP-As to create new fat cells and expand belly fat in older mice."

New study links ultra-processed foods to preventable premature deaths

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

Do you regularly eat ready-to-eat-or-heat foods? Beware, a global study on Monday showed that the consumption of such ultra-processed foods (UPFs) can significantly increase the risk of preventable premature deaths.

Previous studies have linked UPFs -- rich in sodium, trans fats, and sugar -- with 32 different diseases including cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, some types of cancer, and depression.

The new study analysed data from nationally representative dietary surveys and mortality data from eight countries (Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, United Kingdom, and the US).

The findings published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, show that premature deaths attributable to consumption of UPFs increase sig-



nificantly according to their share in individuals' total energy intake.

The study reinforces the call for global action to reduce UPF consumption, supported by regulatory and fiscal policies that foster healthier environments.

UPFs are ready-to-eat-or-heat industrial formulations made with ingredients extracted from foods or synthesised in laboratories, with little or no whole foods in their composition.

"UPFs affect health

beyond the individual impact of the high content of critical nutrients (sodium, trans fats, and sugar) because of the changes in the foods during industrial processing and the use of artificial ingredients, including colourants, artificial flavours, and sweeteners, emulsifiers, and many other additives and processing aids, so assessing deaths from all-causes associated with UPF consumption allows an overall estimate of the effect of industrial food processing

on health," said lead investigator Eduardo AF Nilson, from the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil.

The team initially estimated a linear association between the dietary share of UPFs and all-cause mortality so that each 10 per cent increase in the participation of UPFs in the diet increases the risk of death from all causes by 3 per cent.

Then, using the relative risks and the food consumption data for all countries (ranging from 15 per cent of the total energy intake in Colombia to over 50 per cent of the calories in the US), they built a model.

The results estimated that the percentage of all-cause premature preventable deaths due to the consumption of UPFs can vary from 4 per cent in countries with lower UPF consumption to almost 14 per cent in countries with the highest UPF consumption.

Robots will surpass best human surgeons within 5 years: Elon Musk

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

Amid significant medical breakthroughs being achieved by robots, billionaire Elon Musk on Monday said they have the potential to surpass the best human surgeons within five years.

The Tesla and SpaceX CEO said that his brain-computer interface company Neuralink depended on robots for the brain-computer electrode insertion as the task was impossible to achieve with humans.

"Robots will surpass good human surgeons within a few years and the best human surgeons within five years," Musk shared in a post on the social media platform X.

"Neuralink had to use a robot for the brain-computer electrode insertion, as it was impossible for a human to achieve the required speed and precision," he added.

The post came in



response to another post by influencer Mario Nawfal who highlighted a recent breakthrough of robotics in medicine by the US-based medical device company Medtronic.

Nawfal said that Medtronic successfully

deployed its Hugo robotic system in "137 real surgeries -- fixing prostates, kidneys, and bladders".

The surgery results were "better than doctors expected" and saw "a success rate of over 98 per cent".

The complication rates were also significantly low for prostate surgeries (3.7 per cent), kidney surgeries (1.9 per cent), and bladder surgeries (17.9 per cent).

Of the 137 surgeries, only two needed to switch back to regular surgery -- one because of a robot glitch, and one because of a tricky patient case, Nawfal said.

Meanwhile, Musk's Neuralink is currently engaged in a clinical trial of its brain-computer interface technology. The company aims to create brain-controlled devices for people with paralysis or neurodegenerative diseases.

While none of the devices are yet commercial, three people have successfully received a Neuralink brain implant.

"If all goes well, there will be hundreds of people with Neuralinks within a few years, maybe tens of thousands within 5 years, millions within 10 years," Musk said, on X in 2024.

Is Your Watermelon Safe to Eat? Here's How to Check

As summer peaks, watermelons become one of the most consumed fruits across India. However, growing concerns over chemically injected watermelons have raised alarms among health experts. These watermelons, enhanced with artificial substances to improve colour, sweetness, and shelf life, may pose serious health risks if not properly checked before consumption.

Health Hazards of Chemical Injection

To meet high seasonal demand, some sellers are reportedly injecting watermelons with synthetic colours like Erythrosine-B (Red-B) and using chemicals such as calcium carbide for faster ripening. These substances can be harmful to the human body. Calcium carbide releases acetylene gas, which mimics the natural ripening process but may contain dangerous compounds like phosphorus



hydride and arsenic.

Consumption of such adulterated fruits may lead to health problems such as:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Weakness
- Skin ulcers
- Headaches
- Neurological issues like memory loss
- Long-term liver and kidney damage
- Food poisoning

How to Identify Chemically Treated Watermelons

Before buying or eating

a watermelon, here are some tips to spot if it has been tampered with:

Cotton Ball Test: Cut the watermelon and dab a clean cotton ball on the red pulp. If the cotton turns red, it may contain artificial dye like Erythrosine-B.

Visual Inspection: Avoid fruits that are unnaturally bright red or have a perfectly uniform colour.

Touch and Texture: If the fruit feels soft in one area and firm in others, or if there are unusual cracks on the rind, it may

be chemically injected.

Thump Test: A naturally ripened watermelon will produce a deep, hollow sound when tapped gently.

Tips to Buy Safe Watermelons

Buy from trusted vendors who are known for selling fresh or organic produce.

Check the field spot: According to FSSAI, a naturally ripened watermelon will have a creamy yellow or orange field spot on its underside. A white or missing spot may indicate premature picking.

Wash and peel thoroughly before eating, even if the fruit is not visibly damaged.

Watermelons are a refreshing and healthy choice during summer, but consuming chemically treated ones can lead to serious health consequences. Always check before you eat -- your health depends on it. Stay alert, shop smart, and enjoy summer safely.



Watson breaks men's speed climbing world record

AGENCIES

BALI, MAY 3 (UND)

American Samuel Watson claimed the men's speed climbing gold in a world record time of 4.64 seconds at the IFSC World Cup Bali, marking his fifth record-breaking performance in this event.

During recent winter training, both Watson and China's 15-year-old rising star Zhao Yicheng - who has not yet reached the age limit for international competition this year - posted consecutive performances under 4.70 seconds.

Sikandar Raza returns as Zimbabwe confirm squad for historic England Test

AGENCIES

HARARE, MAY 2 (UND)

Zimbabwe have named a 15-member squad for the one-off Test against England later this month.

The match, beginning on May 22, marks Zimbabwe's first Test on English soil since 2003.

The announcement follows a fiercely-contested Test series against Bangladesh, wherein the African side took the first Test before the Tigers fought back to tie the series.

For their game against England, Zimbabwe have introduced three changes to the squad that toured Bangladesh.

Jack Draper beats Lorenzo Musetti to reach Madrid Open final

AGENCIES

MADRID, MAY 3 (UND)

Jack Draper booked his spot in the Madrid Open final with a hard-fought 6-3 7-6 (7-4) victory against Lorenzo Musetti.

The British number one will contest his third ATP final of the year against Norway's Casper Ruud on Sunday.

Draper, 23, was broken in the opening set but claimed a double break of his own to come through comfortably on Friday. It is the first time the 2024 US Open semi-finalist has reached the final of a clay-court event.

He is the first Englishman to reach the final of the Madrid Open and the second Briton after Scotland's Andy Murray, who appeared in three finals and won two titles.

Draper is aiming for his second ATP title of the year after beating Holger Rune at Indian Wells in March, the BBC reported.

PBKS bank on openers as LSG battle for survival

AGENCIES

DHARAMSALA, MAY 3 (UND)

Punjab Kings' explosive opening duo, Prabhsimran Singh and Priyansh Arya, who have piled up close to 700 runs between them this season, will aim to extend their scintillating run and take a giant stride towards the IPL 2025 playoffs when they meet a struggling Lucknow Super Giants side in Match 54 at the HPCA Stadium on Sunday.

Riding high on a four-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings, Punjab enter the contest with momentum and form firmly on their side.

Skipper Shreyas Iyer has marshalled his troops with composure, and the team's batting depth—featuring Iyer, Nehal Wadhwa, Sha-shank Singh and keeper Josh Inglis, makes them one of the most complete sides in the tournament.

On the bowling front, Arshdeep Singh and Marco Jansen have struck early blows consistently, while Yuzvendra Chahal's guile in the middle overs continues to be a major asset. His four-wicket haul against CSK was crucial in turning the game. Allrounders Azmatullah Omarzai, Harpreet Brar and Suryansh Shedge



further bolster Punjab's arsenal.

In stark contrast, Lucknow, led by Rishabh Pant, are battling both form and pressure, sitting sixth on the points table after losing three of their last four games. A 54-run drubbing by Mumbai Indians has left them teetering on the brink, with Sunday's match effectively a must-win to keep their playoff hopes alive.

Lucknow's batting has lacked cohesion, with Aiden Markram and Mitchell Marsh struggling to provide a steady start. Nicholas Pooran's bursts of brilliance at No. 3 have been offset by Pant's lean patch, while David Miller and Abdul Samad have lacked the platform to finish strong.

Their bowlers too have been erratic—Mayank Yadav, Prince Yadav, and

Avesh Khan leaking runs in key phases. Leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi remains their most dependable weapon, with Markram and Digvesh Singh Rathi offering part-time support.

The scenic HPCA Stadium is expected to favour seamers early on but traditionally flattens out for batting as the game progresses. With five of the last six matches here won by teams batting first, the toss could prove vital in determining the course of the game.

Punjab, who beat Lucknow by eight wickets earlier this season, hold a narrow edge in the head-to-head record. With red-hot form, better balance, and in-form match-winners, they start as favourites, though Lucknow will be desperate to script a turnaround and stay in the hunt.

Legia beats Pogon to win Polish Cup

AGENCIES

WARSAW, MAY 3 (UND)

Legia Warsaw claimed the Polish Cup after a thrilling 4-3 victory over Pogon Szczecin at the National Stadium here on Friday.

Legia made a strong start, launching an aggressive attack from the very first whistle. In the 13th minute, Ryoya Morishita dribbled past two opponents on the right wing and delivered a precise pass to Luquinhas, who tapped the ball into the net from close range to put his team ahead.

Led by coach Goncalo Feio, the players did not slow down. In the 25th minute, they had a perfect opportunity to double their lead when the referee pointed to the penalty spot after goalkeeper Valentin Cojocarou fouled Radovan



Pankov. However, the 29-year-old goalkeeper redeemed himself by saving Marc Gual's penalty effort.

Pogon responded with a shot from Rafal Kurzawa in the 32nd minute, which hit the crossbar from long range. Four minutes before the break, Robert Kolendowicz's team equalized after a stunning cross from Kamil Grosicki allowed Danijel Loncar to score with a well-placed header, making it 1-1.

The second half began in the best possible way for Legia. In the 46th minute, Pawel Wszolek's shot was blocked, but Morishita found the rebound and powered a shot past Cojocarou to restore the lead for Legia.

In the 64th minute, Feio's team showcased its quality once again. After a brilliant through pass from Morishita, Ilya Shkurin dribbled past Cojocarou and scored into the empty net to give Legia a two-goal

advantage.

Pogon fought relentlessly to score its second goal just three minutes later through Efthymis Koulouris, whose shot deflected off Ruben Vinagre and into the net after a low pass from the left wing.

In the 85th minute, Vinagre made amends as he confidently curled a precise shot into the far post to make the score 4-2.

Despite Kacper Smolinski giving Pogon some hope of a comeback as he collected a rebound to score during stoppage time, Legia secured a 4-3 victory.

This victory marked Legia Warsaw's 21st Polish Cup triumph in the club's history, while Pogon suffered its second consecutive final defeat after having lost to Wisla Krakow in the previous edition.

Mohammed Shami's form a concern for India as England tour nears

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, MAY 3 (UND)

With the high-profile tour of England on the horizon, India will be boosted with veteran quick Mohammed Shami back in the mix.

Shami, who had been out of action for over a year's time following



the 2023 Men's Cricket World Cup owing to a knee injury, had

returned back in Indian colours at the ICC Men's Champions Trophy.

As India wrapped up an unbeaten campaign to seal the title, Shami finished with nine wickets under his belt. However, the 34-year-old's recent form in the ongoing IPL 2025 season will give India a

cause to worry for the tour of England, believes former India opener Aakash Chopra.

"He's not looking good," Chopra told ESPN Cricinfo, elaborating on how the right-arm quick hasn't been able to make an impact since his return to competitive cricket."

Scheffler leads by six after storm delay

AGENCIES

TEXAS, MAY 3 (UND)

World number one Scottie Scheffler is on track for his first win this year as he extended his lead to six shots in a storm-affected second round of the CJ Cup Byron Nelson.

Friday's play in Texas was held up for more than six hours and many players did not complete the second round, with 18

yet to tee off.

American Scheffler carded an eight-under-par 63 at TPC Craig Ranch to move to 18 under and set the lowest 36-hole total of his PGA Tour career.

His combined score of 124 after Thursday's 61, is the second-lowest 36-hole total in Tour history after Justin Thomas' 123 at the 2017 Sony Open.

American Sam Stevens is second on 12 under,

with the second round due to resume on Saturday, followed by the third round.

Scheffler eagled the 18th after starting on the back nine before play was suspended. When he resumed he added six birdies on the front nine.

"Feeling good," said the Texan. "I've had two nice days. Overall, very pleased with how I played.

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