



E-ZERO FIR ; Smart Way to Nab Cyber Criminals With Unprecedented Pace : HM Amit Shah

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, MAY 19: The Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), which comes under the Ministry of Home Affairs, introduced the new e-Zero FIR initiative to nab cyber-criminals with unprecedented speed, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Monday.

Launched as a pilot project for Delhi, the new system will automatically convert cyber financial crimes filed on the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) and helpline number 1930 to FIRs, initially above the threshold limit of Rs 10 lakh, he said.

The minister said the initiative will



soon be extended to the entire nation. "The MHA's Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) introduced

the new e-Zero FIR initiative to nab any criminal with unprecedented speed.

"Launched as a pilot project for Delhi, the new system will automatically convert cyber financial crimes filed at NCRP or 1930 to FIRs, initially above the threshold limit of ₹10 lakh. The new system, which will drive investigations swiftly cracking down on cybercriminals, will soon be extended to the entire nation," Shah wrote on 'X'.

The home minister said the Modi government is bolstering the cyber-security grid to build a cyber-secure Bharat.

The I4C was established by the MHA in New Delhi to provide a framework and ecosystem for law enforcement agencies for dealing with cyber

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India supports peace, will act against those who support terrorism: Rijiju

Says all-party delegations visiting key partner countries to showcase our continuous fight against terrorism

■ HT News Network

LEH, MAY 19: Asserting that India supports peace and will act against those who support terrorism, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday said that all party delegations are going to various countries to present the nation's viewpoint.

Talking to the reporters here, Rijiju, according to the news agency—said, "The all-party delegations are visiting key partner countries to showcase India's continued fight against terrorism." Referring to April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, which left 26



No 'nuclear signalling' by Pak in Op Sindoor-FS

■ HT News Network/UNI

NEW DELHI, MAY 19 (UNI) The recent military conflict between India and Pakistan after the Pahalgam terrorist attack was "conventional" and there was no 'nuclear signalling' by Islamabad, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri told the Parliament Standing Committee

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CM Omar Abdullah reviews reorganisation proposals of Housing & Urban Development Department Stresses on better urban governance & operational efficiency in urban development set-up

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 19: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today chaired a meeting to review proposals for the reorganisation of departments and agencies under the Housing & Urban Development Department (HUDD), emphasising the need to strengthen institutional capacity to ensure effective implementation and long-term sustainability.



TURN ON.....PAGE 02

NEWS BRIEF

Police bust immoral trafficking racket in north Kashmir, 4 held

SRINAGAR, MAY 19 (UNI) The police busted an alleged immoral trafficking racket in Kunzer and apprehended four people, including a woman, in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Police on Monday said that acting on specific and credible input they busted a racket in the Barzulla Kunzer area. They said a team from police station Kunzer conducted a swift and well-coordinated raid, resulting in the apprehension of

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Dy CM meets delegations; emphasises seamless public service delivery across govt offices

SRINAGAR, MAY 19: Several delegations and individuals today called on Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, at Civil Secretariat Srinagar and projected their issues and demands. A delegation of people from Seer, Jagir and other villages led by MLA Sopore, Irshad Rasool Kar, called on the Dy CM and raised the issue of illegal sand mining in Sopore. The Dy CM assured them of firm and immediate measures

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Sakeena Itoo visits Madri Meherban Welfare Institute Srinagar, reviews its functioning

SRINAGAR, MAY 19: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, today visited Madri Meherban Welfare Institute Miskeen Bagh and reviewed the functioning of the institution.

Director Social Welfare Kashmir, Director Finance Social Welfare department, District Social Welfare officer Srinagar and other senior officers of the department accompanied the Minister during the visit.

On the occasion, the trustees and staff of the institute briefed the Minister about the services being provided by the

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Mehbooba urges Omar to reconsider hiring ex-servicemen

■ HT News Network/UNI



SRINAGAR, MAY 19 (UNI) PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti on Monday urged Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to reconsider the Jammu and Kashmir government's recent decision to employ 4,000 ex-servicemen to guard key installations across the Union Territory.

Mehbooba expressed her deep concern over the rising unemployment crisis warning that overlooking their plight in favour of retired personnel could exacerbate existing socio-economic challenges.

"Wrote to Omar sahab urging him to reconsider his government's decision to employ 4,000 ex-servicemen to guard key installations. While I have utmost respect and gratitude for our ex-servicemen, we mustn't & cannot overlook

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Lieutenant Governor Reconstitutes Shri Amarnath Ji . Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Boards

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, 19 MAY 2025: The Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha has reconstituted the Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board (SASB) and nominated nine eminent luminaries, from various walks of life, as members for three years.

A notification approving the reconstitution of SASB and nomination of members was issued by the Lieutenant Governor, who is also the Chairman of the Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board .



The nine members include Swami Avdheshanand Giri Ji Maharaj, Prof. Kailash Mehra Sadhu, Shri K.K.Sharma, Shri K.N.Rai, Shri Mukesh Garg, Dr. Shailesh Raina, Dr. Simridhi Bindroo, Shri Suresh

Haware and Prof. Vishwamurti Shastri. mean while The Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha has reconstituted the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board and nominated nine distinguished personalities, from various walks of life, as members for three years.

A notification approving the reconstitution of the board was issued by the Lieutenant Governor, who is also the Chairman of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Haryana YouTuber Jyoti Malhotra in touch with Pak intel during conflict, being trained as 'asset', claims police

■ HT News Network

CHANDIGARH, MAY 19: Pakistani intelligence operatives were developing Haryana YouTuber Jyoti Malhotra, who was arrested.1 on espionage charges, as an asset, a senior

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



Op Sindoor: 7 Out Of 9 Strikes Carried Out From Areas South Of Pir Panjal, Says Top Army Official

■ HT News Network

AKHNOOR, MAY 19: India carried out seven out of nine strikes under Operation Sindoor from areas south of the Pir Panjal range in Jammu and Kashmir, effectively destroying terror infrastructure across the border, a top Army official said on Monday. Jammu dining guide

The morale of Pakistani troops is low following



Operation Sindoor, the official said.

"We are in a high state of readiness. We are fully prepared along the Line of Control to respond to any eventuality from across the

border," he said.

He warned that any misadventure by the adversary would be responded to decisively and "on their own soil".

"Our troops are in high morale. They are maintaining a high degree of vigilance along the border," he said.

The officer said the Army carried out seven out of nine operations under Operation Sindoor from areas south of

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

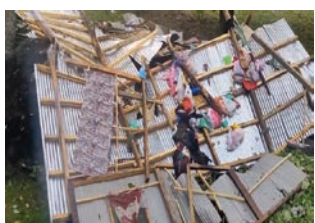
Strong gusty winds claim girl's life, livestock losses, widespread damage across Kashmir

Houses, shops, masjids, shrines affected; 600 trees in Pulwama apple farm uprooted

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, May 19: A girl died while three others were wounded after a tree fell on a temporary tent in Kellar area of Shopian district following strong gusty winds late Sunday night, which caused huge damage to public properties.

The strong winds damaged the rooftops of several houses, shops, masjids as well as shrines across the valley. Extensive damage has been



reported to the apple farms in south Kashmir's Pulwama district.

As per the details obtained by the news agency, a tree fell on a temporary tent in the Kellar area of Shopian,

resulting in the on-spot death of a girl, Sobiya Riyaz, daughter of Muhammad Riyaz.

Three others, who sustained injuries in the incident, have been identified as Muhammad Riyaz, Rubeena and Saima Kousar. They belong to Rajouri and were presently putting up in a tent in Gadder forests.

Reports of damage have been received from Pulwama district, where High-Density

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

IAS playing vital role in strengthening India's federal governance: Dr Jitendra Singh

Says service continues to attract some of finest minds; launches electronic civil list, 2025 in form of e-book

■ HT News Network

New Delhi, May 19: Union Minister of State (independent charge) Dr Jitendra Singh on Monday said that the Indian Administrative Service is playing a vital role in strengthening India's federal governance.

Speaking at the launch ceremony of the electronic Civil List, 2025 in the form of an e-book - a digital com-



pendium of serving IAS officers across the country, Dr Singh, according to the news agency said, "The IAS continues to attract some

of the finest minds in the country and plays a vital role in strengthening India's federal governance."

Dr Singh said the e-book marks a significant milestone as it's the 70th edition of the Civil List and the fifth to be presented in a fully digital format.

He highlighted the Civil List as an important tool for transparency, offering a structured view of the coun

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

SHAH

crime in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

The I4C is envisaged to act as the nodal point to curb cybercrime in the country. (Agencies)

KIRRAN

civilians, mostly tourists dead, Rijiju said, "India has always supported peace, the terrorism sponsored by Pakistan and the killing of our innocent civilians (Pahalgam attack) led to PM Modi launching Operation Sindhoor, and the Indian Armed forces showed what they can do."

He said, "All party delegations are going to various countries and will put forward India's side. It is important to let the world know that India supports peace and will act against those who support terrorism, and the world should support the same."

Pertinently, seven multi-party delegations tasked with briefing various countries on Pakistan sponsored cross-border terrorism will leave for their destinations from May 21 and the assignment is likely to end in the first week of June.

The seven delegations with 59 members, including eight veteran diplomats, are headed to 32 countries and the European Union—

CM

tion & Management Authority and other senior officials.

At the outset, Commissioner Secretary H&UDD presented a comprehensive overview of the proposed departmental reorganisation, aimed at restructuring various constituent bodies of the department to enhance operational efficiency, clarify roles and responsibilities and improve service delivery across Jammu and Kashmir.

She informed the meeting that the proposals, which have received financial concurrence, seek to optimise human resource deployment, increase efficiency, and strengthen urban governance mechanisms in Jammu & Kashmir.

Among the key proposals, the restructuring of the J&K Housing Board seeks to address the current staff imbalance—where over 50% of employees are Class IV—by rationalising and creating posts to improve technical capacity and overall functionality.

The reorganisation of the Lakes Conservation & Management Authority (LCMA) involves the re-designation of scientific and technical posts to align with Pollution Control Committee standards, along with rationalisation of administrative roles. This is expected to enhance scientific capabilities and eliminate redundancy.

For the Town Planning Organisation (TPO), the focus is on strengthening town planning functions to meet the growing demands of modern urban development. The restructuring includes creation of specialised units, establishment of policy cells, and realignment of field offices for better coordination and project execution, the meeting was informed.

The Architects Organisation, established in 1971 and responsible for high-value infrastructure projects across J&K, will also undergo structural changes to revitalise its functioning and align with present-day infrastructural needs.

The Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), which has seen a significant expansion in functions following the 74th Constitutional Amendment, currently faces manpower and budgetary constraints. The proposed reorganisation aims to redefine its administrative setup for better efficiency and service delivery.

In the Directorate of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) for Jammu and Kashmir, the proposed restructuring addresses staffing gaps, administrative overlaps, and urban sanitation issues. The proposals discussed place particular emphasis on the creation of posts relating to environmental protection and rationalisation of enforcement and revenue staff.

Jammu Development Authority (JDA) has already received approval from its Board for its restructuring proposal, which has been forwarded to the Administrative Department for further consideration.

Srinagar Development Authority (SDA) shall see a detailed comparative restructuring of both gazetted and non-gazetted posts to enhance project execution capabilities and improve policy implementation across expanding urban areas.

The meeting was also told about the Urban Environmental Engineering Department (UEED) reorganisation which focuses on strengthening technical manpower and introducing reforms to improve scientific waste management, drainage, and sanitation systems.

The meeting also reviewed the newly framed recruitment rules of the Jammu Municipal Corporation, formulated in light of the reorganisation.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that the implementation of these proposals would significantly enhance the operational capabilities of the Housing and Urban Development Department, generate substantial financial savings, and streamline

urban governance across Jammu and Kashmir.

He affirmed that the reforms are aligned with the broader vision of sustainable urban development, transparency and administrative efficiency.

FS

here on Monday.

Mr Misri also told the Standing Committee on External Affairs that US had no role in the cessation of the conflict and Pakistan had reached out to India on May 10 afternoon after the precision strikes by Indian Defence forces on Pakistani military installations including the Nur Khan air base.

Mr Misri who gave a detailed briefing to the Standing Committee on Operation Sindoor, said there was no 'third-party mediation, sources said.

The Foreign Secretary said the government had made it very clear that neither Mr Trump nor his administration played any significant role. The plea for a ceasefire came from Pakistan and India agreed to listen and cease hostilities because targets set under Operation Sindoor had been met when nine terrorist camps including five in POK, were destroyed.

Plea for a ceasefire came from Islamabad, specifically from Pakistan's Director-General of Military Operations who reached out to his Indian counterpart, Mr Misri told the Committee.

He, however, declined comment if any Indian fighter jet had been shot down by Pak, citing national security constraints.

LG

Board. The nine members include Smt. Sudha Murty, Mahamandaleshwar Shri Swami Vishveshvaranand Giri Maharaj, Dr Ashok Bhan, IPS (Retd.), Shri Baleshwar Rai, IAS (Retd.), Smt. Gunjan Rana, Dr. K.K. Talwar, Shri Kulbhushan Ahuja, Shri Lalit Bhasin and Shri Suresh Kumar Sharma.

SIA

Hari Safeda, Surankote.

Investigations have revealed that Abdul Aziz carried out the grenade attack on instructions received from Nazir Ahmed, who is currently operating from Pakistan.

Nazir Ahmed had infiltrated to Pakistan in 2001, where he joined the proscribed terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) and later became associated with the Jammu Kashmir Gaznavi Force (JKGF), he said.

He added that towards the end of 2022, Nazir Ahmed re-established contact with Abdul Aziz, his relative, through encrypted messaging applications using Pakistan-based numbers. During this time, he radicalized and recruited Aziz into HM/JKGF, instructing him to carry out grenade attacks in District Poonch to further the terror outfit's agenda and ideology.

Nazir Ahmed not only indoctrinated and recruited Abdul Aziz but also supplied him with hand grenades and detailed instructions for the execution of the attack through encrypted communication channels, the spokesman said.

He added that the investigation revealed a wider conspiracy by the Pakistan-sponsored Hizbul Mujahideen to destabilize the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

"The act aimed to spread terror, incite communal violence, and undermine public peace by creating fear among the common people," he said.

He added that the filing of the chargesheet underscores the SIA's unwavering resolve to dismantle terror networks and safeguard the peace and security of Jammu and Kashmir.

SINDOOR

the Pir Panjal range in Jammu and Kashmir, targeting and destroying terror infrastructure across the border.

"In our area of operation, we carried out seven of the nine precision strikes under Operation Sindoor, effectively destroying terror infrastructure," he added.

Pakistan's retaliatory attacks targeted civilian and Army areas but caused no significant damage, he said.

"There was hardly any damage from their side. They targeted multiple locations using drones, missiles, and artillery, but our air defence systems responded meticulously and neutralized all threats," he said.

Under Operation Sindoor, India on early May 7 destroyed nine terror infrastructures in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) in retaliation to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack. Following the Indian action, Pakistan attempted to attack Indian military bases on May 8, 9 and 10. The two sides reached an understanding on cessation of hostilities on May 10 after four days of confrontations.

The Army official said Pakistan also attempted to attack a divisional headquarters and two brigade headquarters, but no damage was inflicted.

"In retaliation by our troops south of Pir Panjal, around 50 fatalities were inflicted on the adversary as we targeted their military formations," the official said. Jammu dining guide

"We did not target civilian areas, unlike

Pakistan," he added.

The morale of Pakistani troops is low following Operation Sindoor and the subsequent Indian response, he said.

"All intercepted communications point to the fact that the morale of Pakistani troops is down," he said, adding that Indian troops are maintaining high morale.

He stated that the proxy war waged by Pakistan has forced India to respond in a befitting manner.

"We will not tolerate such actions," the officer asserted.

Men and machines are in full operational readiness along the LoC, maintaining a high degree of vigilance over adversary movements south of the Pir Panjal range.

"We are on high alert round the clock, monitoring every movement along the border. We are fully prepared," said an officer commanding a unit deployed along the LoC. (Agencies)

YOUTUBE

Haryana police officer claimed on Sunday.

She was allegedly in touch with a Pakistani officer posted at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi during the four-day military conflict between India and Pakistan that followed the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam, the officer said.

Hisar Superintendent of Police Shashank Kumar Sawan said Malhotra did not have any direct access to any information related to the military or defence operations which could be said at this stage that she could have shared.

But she was directly in touch with PIOs, he said addressing mediapersons in Hisar, Haryana.

"Certainly, they were developing her as an asset. She was in touch with other YouTube influencers. They were also in touch with PIOs," the SP said.

"This is also (a kind of) warfare, in which they try to push their narrative by recruiting influencers," he said.

Hisar-based Malhotra (33), who runs a YouTube channel, 'Travel with JO', was arrested from New Aggarsain Extension on Friday, they said.

She has been booked under relevant sections of the Official Secrets Act and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, police said.

She was sent to a five-day police remand after being produced before the court on Saturday.

SP Sawan told reporters that Malhotra is being questioned by Haryana Police. "We are analysing her financial transactions, travel details, where she went and whom she met," he said, adding that the police are also in touch with the central agencies.

The officer said Malhotra was in touch with PIOs, and that she has visited Pakistan "multiple times" and China once.

Asked about any information on her movements during the Pahalgam terror attack and whether she was in contact with the Pakistani officer posted at the Pakistani High Commission during Operation Sindoor, the SP said during the (India-Pakistan) conflict, she was "in touch with the PIOs and the person who was declared persona non grata".

"We will do a forensic analysis of her laptop and other electronic gadgets. It will then be clear what information she shared," he said. While she did not have any access to information on military operations, she was directly in touch with PIOs, he added.

He added that multiple teams of financial experts were analysing her financial transactions and travel details.

The officer said she has been to Pakistan on what appeared to be "a sponsored trip". In one of her videos, she was requesting a visa to visit China, he said.

The SP said she went to Kashmir before the Pahalgam attack and visited Pakistan before that, and added that police are also trying to establish the "link" between these visits.

Sawan said she was allegedly also in touch with other YouTube influencers. "They were also in touch with PIOs," he said.

"Through her, we are also investigating other Indian contacts. We have got some leads that some more could be involved.

Police are trying to look into who were being provided with "information", he said.

Odisha Police have started an investigation into the alleged links between a Puri-based YouTuber and Jyoti Malhotra. The state's police said on Sunday that Malhotra allegedly visited Puri in September 2024 and came in contact with a female YouTuber from the coastal town.

Asked about one of Malhotra's videos in which she could be seen visiting the Pakistani Embassy on March 28, 2024, the SP said, "Socialisation is allowed but one should understand their intentions. Pakistan is not a not a normal country for us."

"Undertaking multiple visits, doing socialisation with them and remaining in touch with them during the conflict and exchanging favours, it endangers the unity and sovereignty of the country," he said.

He said Malhotra had allegedly met some high-profile people in Pakistan. "Why did she meet them and what information she shared with them — all of this will be asked,"

he said, adding that she has been on the radar of intelligence agencies for quite some time.

The SP refused to share details of any chat between Danish and Malhotra, saying it was a sensitive matter. "We are investigating the case from all angles," he added.

Malhotra, whose YouTube channel and Instagram account have 3.77 lakh subscribers and 1.33 lakh followers respectively, allegedly was in contact with the Pakistani staffer working at the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi.

In 2023, Malhotra came in contact with Ehsan-ur-Rahim alias Danish at the Pakistan High Commission where she went to seek a visa to visit the neighbouring nation, according to an FIR lodged at Civil Lines Police Station on May 16.

Malhotra, who visited Pakistan twice, had met Danish's acquaintance Ali Ahwan who arranged her stay there, the FIR read.

She met Danish several times at the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi and was found to be in touch with PIOs, it said. Ahwan arranged Jyoti's meeting with Pakistani security and intelligence officials. She was in contact with them through WhatsApp, Telegram and Snapchat, and passed on sensitive information, according to the FIR.

On May 13, India expelled the Pakistani official working at the High Commission for allegedly indulging in espionage. Later on Friday, Malhotra was arrested in Hisar. — (PTI)

MEHBOOBA

the mounting crisis of unemployment afflicting youth in J&K whose numbers have now crossed into lakhs," Mehbooba said in a post on X.

"This soaring unemployment is not just an economic issue but a social emergency. With few opportunities amidst utter despondency, many youngsters are falling into the grip of drug addiction and tragically some are even driven to suicide. We must come to their rescue by being more mindful of their future," she added.

Mehbooba was responding to reports that the Sainik Welfare Board of Jammu and Kashmir had proposed a plan to engage retired military personnel to safeguard vital infrastructure. The J&K government has reportedly approved the proposal, paving the way for what is being described as a unique collaboration between veterans and civil authorities.

According to these reports, 4,000 ex-servicemen volunteers have been identified under the plan.

WINDS

Apple farm suffered massive damage. A local farmer said nearly 600 trees were damaged in the gusty winds, causing extensive losses to them. He appealed to the government to look into the matter.

Moreover, several houses got partially damaged in south Kashmir areas in the gusty winds.

In north Kashmir's Baramulla district, several structures, the rooftops of houses and a Dar-ul-Uloom were damaged. Several trees were uprooted during the gusty winds in the district.

Similar reports of damage were reported from Sopore areas. Besides, over half a dozen sheep belonging to a nomad family were killed while nine others were injured in Peerina forests in Baramulla.

The incident, as per the officials, occurred at around 10:30 pm after trees fell on the livestock in the forests.

Reports of damage were also reported from the Tangmarg area where multiple shops and houses suffered damage last night.

The rooftop of a shrine in Wakura area in Ganderbal was damaged while several houses in Kangan sub-division suffered damage during the strong gusty winds. Massive damage has been reported from Gagangarhama village as well. The trees got uprooted at multiple places, including Peerpora Ganderbal, causing panic among the masses.

In Srinagar, the windowpanes of dozens of houses were damaged in multiple areas while the rooftop of a Masjid in Gadood Bagh area was also damaged—

JATINDRA

try's administrative leadership. Dr Singh proposed AI based options like AI based search option into the e-Civil List. "This enhancement can allow domain-specific searches to help identify suitable officers for mission mode and other targeted government projects, while ensuring that access to such features remains appropriately restricted," he said.

The Minister also stressed the importance of regularly updating the digital list to maintain its relevance and utility.

The e-book, published by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), as per KNO, contains comprehensive details of IAS officers—including their name, batch, cadre, present posting, pay level, educational qualifications, and retirement dates—as updated

on January 1, 2025. It also provides cadre-wise strength, the number of officers retiring over the next five years, and appointment data from 1969 onwards.

For the first time, officers' photographs have been included in the digital document. Designed as a searchable PDF with embedded hyperlinks, the e-book offers a user-friendly interface that enables instant access to information. "The Civil List is an important resource not just for administrators and decision-makers but also for the general public," Dr Singh said, adding that the move reflects the Centre's larger push for digital governance.

The Minister described the initiative as part of the Government of India's Digital India mission, aimed at modernizing systems and improving citizen-centric services. By discontinuing the printing of hard copies, the department is also saving on government expenditure and contributing to eco-friendly governance practices.

He congratulated the Secretary and the entire DoPT team for their successful effort in bringing out this digital initiative.

The DoPT, as the cadre-controlling authority of IAS officers, compiles the Civil List annually using inputs from central records and state cadres. The 2025 edition reflects a total authorized cadre strength of 6,877 officers, with 5,577 officers in active service across 25 state cadres.

The launch event was attended by several senior dignitaries, including Director General of the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) Mr. S.N. Tripathi, Director and Chairperson of the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) Srimam Taranikanti, IAS, and Secretary, Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), Rachna Shah, along with other senior officials.

The e-book Civil List, 2025 is now available to the public on the DoPT website at <https://dopt.gov.in>—

POLICE

four people engaged in immoral activities.

The arrested were identified as, Abdul Ahad Waza of Utikoo Sheikhpora; Moham-mad Abdullah Waza of Barzulla Kunzer; Bilal Ahmad Bhat of Bamroda, currently living at Utikoo and a woman whose name has been withheld.

Police said a case was registered at Police Station Kunzer under relevant sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (PITA).

"Further investigation is underway to identify and dismantle any larger network linked to this operation,

DYCM

to address the issue.

A delegation of J&K Contractor Coordination Committee also met the Dy CM and apprised him of various issues and difficulties faced by them.

Another delegation of Assistant Engineers from PWD (R&B) department also put forward their issues regarding seniority list and promotion pending since long.

Meanwhile, several individuals met the Dy CM and apprised him of various issues being faced by them, mainly pertaining to roads, water scarcity, irregular power supply, transfers and road connectivity.

The Dy CM gave a patient hearing to the individuals and assured that all their genuine issues would be looked into for redress on priority.

While highlighting several initiatives meant for welfare and development of common masses, the Dy CM emphasised seamless service delivery to the general public across all government offices.

SAKEENA

institute to orphans, Tribal students, economically disadvantaged children, destitute women and other needy people.

Engaging with the trustees, staff and beneficiaries of the institute on the occasion, the Minister highlighted that this centre has been serving as a vital support centre from last many decades to people in need.

Appreciating the selfless efforts of the institute, the Minister highlighted the commitment of Omar Abdullah led Government towards inclusive growth and upliftment of underprivileged communities. "Institutions like Madri Meherban embody the spirit of compassion and resilience. Government is firm to support such institutions so that no underprivileged individual is left behind," Sakeena stated.

The Minister further highlighted that the Government is committed towards strengthening grassroots welfare infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir for the welfare of common masses.

She assured the institute of full support of Government in addressing operational challenges, adding that the genuine issues and concerns faced by the institute will be addressed promptly. She assured the institute of full support of Government in addressing operational challenges, adding that the genuine issues and concerns faced by the institute will be addressed promptly.



Aga Syed Mohmmad Hadi Al-Mousvi Stands with Windstorm Victims, Calls for Immediate Relief Measures

HT News Network



Srinagar, May 19, : In the aftermath of the devastating windstorm that struck Jammu and Kashmir last night, community leader Aga Syed Hadi expressed heartfelt solidarity with the affected families. Extending his prayers and condolences, he conveyed deep concern for those who have suffered losses to life and property. “I stand with the people of Jammu and Kashmir in this difficult time. My thoughts and prayers are with every family impacted by this calamity. We must come together with compassion and unity to support those in need,” he said. Aga Syed Hadi urged the administration to act swiftly by conducting prompt damage assessments, ensuring timely delivery of aid, and taking necessary steps to restore normalcy. He emphasized the need for an empathetic and efficient response from authorities. He also called upon civil society groups, volunteers, and citizens to actively participate in relief and rehabilitation efforts. “Let us all come forward to help rebuild lives and strengthen the spirit of resilience that defines our community,” he added.

Midnight Blaze Guts 20 Shops, 5 Houses in Sumbal; PDP Leader Announces Relief

HT News Network

Sumbal, May 19, : A devastating fire broke out at midnight in the main market of Sumbal in North Kashmir’s Bandipora district, reducing at least 20 shops and five residential houses to ashes, officials said on Monday. According to fire department sources, the blaze is believed to have started from one of the commercial structures and quickly spread to nearby buildings, engulfing both residential and commercial properties in the vicinity. Fire tenders from Sumbal, Batwina, and Safapora fire stations, operating under the Ganderbal command, were rushed to the spot to control the inferno. With the help of police and local residents, the flames were eventually doused after several hours of intense firefighting. “There was chaos in the area as the fire spread rapidly during the night. It took several hours of coordinated efforts to bring the situation under control,” said a local eyewitness. Fortunately, no loss of life was reported, but the material losses are estimated to be significant. Many shopkeepers, especially those without insurance, are now facing severe financial distress. Visiting the site of the incident, PDP leader and former MLC Yasir Reshi expressed solidarity with the victims and announced immediate relief of Rs 50,000 each for affected families and uninsured shopkeepers. He called for swift government intervention to assist those who have lost their livelihoods and homes. Reshi also criticized the poor preparedness of the fire services in the area and urged the government to upgrade the local fire station. “The fire station at Sumbal is ill-equipped. In the past, it had three fire tenders, but now only one remains. This needs immediate attention from the administration,” he said. Locals echoed the demand, stressing the need for better emergency response infrastructure to prevent such incidents from escalating in the future.

Illegal Constructions Defy Court Ban in Sonamarg; Authorities Accused of Turning a Blind Eye

HT News Network

Sonamarg, May 19, : Despite a standing ban imposed by the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court in 2017 on all construction activities in the ecologically fragile health resort of Sonamarg, illegal constructions continue unabated, sparking widespread public anger and concern over the degradation of the area’s natural beauty. Reliable sources revealed that unauthorized construction is taking place in several areas under the jurisdiction of the Sonamarg Development Authority (SDA), including Sarbal, Kokri Kadal, Nilagrath, and the main Sonamarg zone. Alarmingly, the SDA, tasked with safeguarding the region’s pristine environment, has allegedly failed to act, with its enforcement teams appearing ineffective on the ground.

Relentless Efforts Amid Crisis: Control Room at GHSS Uri Evacuates 15,000 in 48 Hours

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 19: Srinagar, May 19: In the face of a grave humanitarian crisis triggered by continuous shelling and cross-border hostilities, the Sub-Division Uri witnessed an extraordinary display of dedication, coordination, and public service. On 7th May 2025, a 24x7 Emergency Control Room was swiftly established at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Uri, under the direct supervision of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Uri. The situation in Uri had rapidly escalated, with heavy shelling endangering civilian lives and disrupting normal life. In response, a specially assigned team was tasked with round-the-clock evacuation and relief operations, ensuring the safety of thousands residing in high-risk zones.

The team included:

1. Javid Gani Bandy
2. Aijaz Ahmad Lone
3. Javed Iqbal Budoo
4. Aftab Ahmad Kakroo
5. Aijaz Ahmad Chalkoo
6. Mohammad Iqbal Bandy

Mr. Yasir, representing the Jammu & Kashmir Police, was stationed with the team 24x7, playing a vital role in maintaining law and order and facilitating safe passage during evacuations. Amid the thun-



der of exploding shells and looming threats, this team remained stationed at the Control Room,

receiving thousands of distress calls from residents seeking urgent help. With remarkable composure and tireless effort, the team coordinated with field units and local authorities to ensure timely and safe evacuation. Within just 48 hours, approximately 15,000 people—including women, children, and elderly—were successfully evacuated to safer locations. Their efforts were further bolstered by inter-departmental cooperation, with active involvement from all wings of the administration, including revenue, police, health, civil defence, and local volunteers. Despite working under extreme stress and danger, no member of the team sought recognition for their selfless contributions. Their focus remained solely on safeguarding lives and restoring a sense of security in a region gripped by fear. The Administration—from the District Level to the Sub-Divisional Level—remained on high alert, working hand in hand with community stakeholders and volunteers to ensure the operation’s success. This episode stands as a testament to what can be achieved through courage, unity, and unwavering commitment to public service. The sacrifices made by these silent heroes have not gone unnoticed by the people of Uri and the wider Kashmir Valley. As normalcy begins to return, let us take a moment to honor these efforts and look ahead with hope. Let us make the people smile again.

Let peace prevail.

Exercise Equipment in Disrepair, Visitors Upset Over Neglect at Raj Bagh’s Joggers Park

HT News Network

Srinagar, May 19, : Once a popular green retreat for fitness enthusiasts and families, the Joggers Park in Srinagar’s upscale Raj Bagh area is now drawing attention for all the wrong reasons. Visitors to the park have expressed frustration over the poor condition of workout equipment and lack of maintenance by the concerned authorities. A section of the park dedicated to outdoor fitness activities lies neglected, with most of the installed exercise equipment, commonly used for warm-up stretches and light workouts, either damaged or entirely defunct. As a result, joggers and morning walkers say they are unable to complete their fitness routines. “We come here every day for our morning run, but the fitness corner has been lying in a shambles for months. Almost all machines are non-functional,” said a local resident



and regular park visitor. “It’s disappointing, especially when this park is one of the few well-located public spaces in Srinagar.” Residents have appealed to the Floriculture Department, which maintains the park, to replace the damaged fitness equipment. However, they allege that their repeated pleas have been ignored. “To add to the neglect, a swing for children was removed nearly a year ago and has not been replaced. It feels like the department has forgotten this park altogether,” said a visitor to the news agency Kashmir News Trust.

DC Srinagar Inspects Bemina Grid Station, 93% Power Restored After Windstorm

HT News Network

Srinagar, May 19, : In response to the widespread disruption caused by powerful gusty winds during the intervening night of May 18 and 19, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, conducted an on-ground inspection of the Power Grid Station at Bemina on Monday morning to oversee the restoration efforts. Accompanied by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Srinagar, the DC assessed the damage and reviewed the progress of work being carried out by the Power Development Department (PDD) teams, who have been working round-the-clock to restore electricity across the city. According to officials, 93 percent of power feeders have already been restored in Srinagar, and full restoration is expected to be completed by 3:00 PM today. Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat commended the field teams for their swift response in challenging conditions and urged them to ensure timely restoration in the remaining areas.



He also assured the public that the administration is closely monitoring the situation and will take all necessary steps to stabilize essential services affected by the windstorm. Several parts of Srinagar and other districts were plunged into darkness following the storm, which uprooted trees, damaged power lines, and disrupted normal life across the Valley. [KNT]

Javid Dar attends virtual meeting for Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan

HT News Network

SRINAGAR MAY 19: Minister for Agriculture Production Department, Rural Development Department, Panchayati Raj, Cooperative, and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, participated in a virtual meeting from Civil Secretariat Srinagar today. The meeting focused on preparations for the Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan. The Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan aims to promote agricultural development and empower farmers. It also envisages creating awareness among the farmers about modern technology and new seed varieties. The meeting discussed various strategies to achieve the set goals under the Abhiyan. The meeting was organised by the Krishi Bhawan Dehli, under the Chairmanship of Union Agriculture Minister, Shivraj Singh Chouhan. He addressed all the State and UT Agriculture Ministers to discuss the preparedness roadmap of Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan’ which will be conducted from May 29 to June 12, 2025. Highlighting broad contours of the 15 day campaign,



Chouhan said that under the campaign, each district across the country will be covered reaching out to

maximum farmers. He stressed on improving the agricultural extension services to boost the productivity and production of all major crops.

It was informed that 2000 teams of agricultural scientists, officials and progressive farmers will be formed so that the farmers get benefit of all the schemes of agricultural department at their doorstep. The Abhiyan would facilitate seed distribution among the farmers besides ensuring registration of left out farmers under different schemes.

Javid Dar briefed that the J&K Agriculture Department has already organised awareness camps in all 20 districts having 1200 locations at UT as well as Panchayat level. Besides, about 25 lakh farmers have been registered with the departmental portal so that they get benefits of the schemes being run by the Central government. Javid Dar said that Omar Abdullah government committed to fulfil the vision of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, to double the income of the farmers communities. He assured that the J&K Agriculture Production Department shall take all necessary measures to ensure successful implementation of this ambitious Abhiyan.

Hakeem Yaseen urges centre, seeks urgent relief package for devastated orchardists and families

HT News Network

Srinagar, May 19: In the wake of the catastrophic windstorm that ravaged large parts of the Kashmir Valley, Jammu and Kashmir People’s Democratic Front (PDF) President and former minister Hakeem Muhammad Yaseen has issued a fervent appeal to the government to declare the calamity a National Disaster, citing unprecedented damage to both livelihoods and lives. Terming the situation as “an economic and humanitarian catastrophe of grave proportions,” Yaseen



said over 80 percent of apple orchards—the backbone of Kashmir’s rural economy—stand

destroyed, with thousands of families staring at financial ruin. “This is not merely a weather event—it is a disaster of national scale. Traditional survey methods will only deepen despair. The government must act swiftly, decisively, and compassionately,” he said in an urgent statement on Monday. Yaseen stressed that this is the time to abandon red-tape and inertia. “This devastation demands fast-track assessments, direct compensation, and a comprehensive special relief package. Growers have lost hope. Their saplings, their trees,

Immoral Trafficking Racket Busted in Kunzer, Four Arrested

HT News Network

Srinagar, May 19, : Baramulla Police busted a prostitution racket operating from the Barzulla area of Kunzer in North Kashmir, arresting four people, including a woman. The police said that acting on specific intelligence, a team from Police Station Kunzer carried out a swift raid, uncovering the illegal activity. The arrested individuals have been identified as Ahad Waza of Utikoo Sheikhpura, Abdullah Waza of Barzulla Kunzer, and Bilal Bhat of Bamroda, currently residing in Utikoo. The identity of the arrested woman has been withheld. Police have registered an FIR (No. 37/2025) under sections 3, 4, and 5 of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act at Kunzer Police Station. Officials said further investigation is underway to expose any broader network involved in the racket. [KNT]

EDITORIAL

Operation Sindoor needs to be celebrated by all and not few

Ever since Operation Sindoor has culminated and a ceasefire has taken place between India and Pakistan the political parties are upbeat over the success of armed forces in the same. Leaders of different political parties are issuing statements hailing the contribution of the Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Indian Navy in dealing with the forces of Pakistan in Operation Sindoor. The heartening feature in this whole process was that all the political parties were on the same page.

However, over the past few days the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) is trying to take credit for the same. Some of the party leaders and activists are acting in a manner as if they were directly involved in the mini-war. Some of them don't know what to say while talking to media persons and at times they get overwhelmed by the situation. On some occasions some of the party leaders and activists seemed to be unaware about the ground situation.

The top leadership of BJP had asked the party leaders and workers to carry out Tiranga rallies across the country so as to celebrate the success of the Indian forces in the Operation Sindoor. The leaders, workers and activists of the party in the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir have not lagged behind in this regard. Tiranga rallies were held across the length and breadth of the union territory with the top, middle and lower rung leadership taking part in such rallies.

It is highly unfortunate that the BJP is taking all the credit for Operation Sindoor even though the central government got all the support from the other political parties of the country. The Operation Sindoor is not a cricket match or a football match where there is a winner or a loser. The same has to be viewed through the prism of national security and there should not be a compromise in this regard. At the same time there is no harm in celebrating Operation Sindoor but not at the cost of criticizing other parties.

Since the ceasefire is in place at present the leaders of all the major national and local political parties should sit and discuss the rehabilitation plan for the border residents living both in Jammu and Kashmir divisions. It is important to give a sense of confidence to the people affected by shelling from across the border. Providing them a proper shelter would go a long way in inculcating confidence among the border residents.

Vanishing Fields: India's elderly farmers watch as farmland turns to factories

SAHIL JAHANGIR
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With 15% of J&K's cultivable land lost in 12 years, a way of life—and food security—hangs in the balance. As elderly farmers in Kashmir and beyond sell their ancestral fields, a nation risks losing more than crops; it's losing centuries of wisdom, one bulldozed acre at a time. Once vibrant with the sounds of ploughs, rustling crops, and birdsong, the farmlands of India are today increasingly silent. Where golden wheat once swayed and buffaloes bathed in canal water, now stand steel warehouses, factories, and concrete industrial complexes. For many elderly farmers, this transformation is not a sign of development, but a painful reminder of a disappearing way of life.

Across India, land that was lovingly cultivated for generations is being sold off or acquired for industrial use. With it, not only is the agricultural output declining, but a cultural and ecological loss is also unfolding. Elderly farmers, once the backbone of India's food economy, now watch helplessly as their heritage turns into commercial zones.

Agriculture: The Declining Backbone

Agriculture has historically been the mainstay of Jammu and Kashmir's economy. Crops like rice, maize, wheat, saffron, and vegetables thrived across the Kashmir Valley and parts of Jammu. The region's apples, walnuts, and almonds were once symbols of its agrarian strength and cultural pride.

But over the past decade, agricultural land has been shrinking rapidly. According to government data, over 15% of cultivable land has been diverted for non-agricultural use in the last 12 years. This includes land allocated for industrial estates, government offices, brick kilns, road expansion, and private construction.

The trend is most noticeable on the outskirts of cities like Srinagar, Anantnag, Pulwama, Jammu, and Udhampur – where lush farmland is being flattened to accommodate commercial warehouses, cement plants and malls.

The loss of agricultural land may not be immediately visible amid the new buildings and roads, but its impact will be deeply felt in food supply, employment, culture, and ecology.

The Shift to Industry

The economic lure of converting farmland into industrial zones is undeniable. As cities grow, their demands for infrastructure, logistics parks, and factories push urban



boundaries deeper into rural areas. State governments, eager to attract investments and create jobs, often promote the development of industrial estates and special economic zones (SEZs) on agricultural land.

While these developments may create employment in the short term, they often come at the cost of self-sustaining local economies and food security.

According to a 2024 report by the National Agriculture Commission, India has lost over 12 million hectares of farmland to non-agricultural use in the past two decades – a significant portion of which came from small-holder farmers, many of them elderly.

Elderly Farmers: A Dying Breed

Elderly farmers possess knowledge that has been passed down for generations – knowledge of soil health, natural pest control, crop timing, and water conservation. But with the decline of farming, this wisdom is being lost. Few young people are willing to inherit this profession, preferring urban jobs and lifestyles.

"There's no one to carry forward what we know," laments 75-year-old Kamalamma from Karnataka. "Our children say farming is hard work and gives nothing. But without food, what will their industries eat?"

In many villages, ageing farmers

now live alone on shrinking plots or survive on government pensions after selling their land. They feel abandoned, not just by their families, but by a country that once celebrated them as "annadatas" – providers of food.

Environmental and Food Security Concerns

The rapid conversion of farmland into industrial zones also poses serious environmental threats. Factories bring pollution, deplete groundwater, and often make surrounding areas unfit for cultivation. The disappearance of green cover also contributes to rising temperatures and climate imbalance.

Moreover, with fertile land disappearing, India's agricultural output is under strain. The country, which once boasted self-sufficiency in food, is now facing increasing reliance on imports for pulses, edible oils, and even some cereals.

Dr Arvind Rao, an agricultural economist, warns, "If we continue to trade agriculture for industry without balance, we are risking both food security and rural livelihoods. Elderly farmers know how to farm sustainably. Their knowledge is an asset we are discarding."

A Cry for Balance
Activists and rural development

experts are urging governments to protect agricultural land through stricter zoning laws, offer better incentives for sustainable farming, and create programs that involve elderly farmers as mentors and guides.

In some states like Kerala and Himachal Pradesh, grassroots initiatives have started to reclaim abandoned land for organic farming, with elderly farmers leading the way. They're training young volunteers and reviving indigenous crops – but these efforts are still limited and need broader support.

Conclusion

The story of elderly farmers and their lost lands is not just about economics – it's about identity, sustainability, and respect for those who built the foundations of the nation's food systems.

Elderly farmers are not just watching their fields vanish – they're witnessing the erasure of an entire way of life. In the race for industrialisation, let us not forget the quiet wisdom in the fields we leave behind. Because when the last elder hangs up their plough, it may be more than farming that we lose – it may be our roots.

The writer is an environmental researcher and columnist
SOURCE: KASHMIR READER

Who is the beneficiary?
Reservation: Generational Privilege or Real Justice?



DR. SATYAWAN SAURABH

The issue of reservation in India has always been a sensitive and controversial topic. It is considered an important tool for social justice, economic equality, and redressal of historical oppression. But as time passed, the concept of reservation seems to have deviated from its original objectives. Recently, the statement of Supreme Court judge Justice B.R. Gavai takes this debate in a new direction, in which he said that the decision to exclude affluent people from reservation should be taken by the Parliament. His statement raises many questions—is the real benefit of reserva-

tion reaching the class for which it was created? Does this system now demand reform and reconsideration?

The basic purpose of reservation

Reservation was introduced with the aim of eliminating the deep social inequalities prevalent in Indian society and bringing the deprived communities into the mainstream for centuries. It was a means by which social, educational, and economic backwardness could be removed and all sections of the society could get equal opportunities. Constitution maker Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar presented reservation as a temporary measure so that Dalits, tribals, and backward classes could get justice and opportunities. His aim was to create a society where there is no place for caste discrimination and social oppression. It was not limited only to government jobs and education but was a bold step towards a holistic social reform.

The real face of the problem

But, gradually, this system is

becoming a generational privilege for those families who have already been empowered. Justice Gavai's observation that when a person becomes an IAS or IPS, his children do not face the hardships of the same society points to an important truth. An officer's family is far removed from the real underprivileged due to higher education, a better lifestyle, and easy access to resources. This situation can be seen not only in government services but also in the private sector, higher education institutions, and other professional sectors. In such a situation, the question arises whether it is justified for these families to continue getting the benefit of reservation.

The necessity of economic support

The main objective of reservation was not only to eliminate caste discrimination but also to eliminate economic inequality. But today the basis of reservation is mostly based on caste identity, whereas in reality economic status should also be an important factor. Talking about excluding the afflu-

ent classes from reservation can be a necessary step in this direction so that the benefits can reach the people who are really in need. This approach will not only ensure a more equitable distribution of resources but will also promote a sense of real equality and justice in the society.

Social challenges of reservation

The system of reservation often falls prey to political gains and vote bank politics. This leaves the truly needy sections behind. In addition, a kind of class division has started emerging even within the reserved categories, where some families are continuously taking advantage of this facility, while others are still marginalized. This trend not only weakens the basic purpose of reservation but also increases social tension and a sense of injustice.

Responsibility of Parliament

Now the time has come for the Parliament to seriously consider this issue. It has to be decided whether the benefit of reservation should be limited to those fami-

lies who are actually deprived and backward. This change will be in line with the basic spirit of social justice for which the system of reservation was created. This decision is important not only from a legal but also from a moral and social point of view. Also, it demands a system that can review the relevance of reservations from time to time.

Direction of solution

The benefit of reservation should be limited to one generation only.

Caste and economic backwardness should be properly assessed by including an economic basis. Children from affluent families should be kept out of the reservation so that its benefits reach the real needy. Reservation should be reviewed at a fixed period so that its real beneficiaries can be identified. Inclusive policies in education and employment should be promoted so that all sections can get equal opportunities. Transparent research and surveys should be conducted from time to time

on the effectiveness of reservation so that the status of its real beneficiaries can be assessed. Education and skill development should be improved at the regional and rural level so that the real potential of the deprived sections can be enhanced. Reservation policy should be viewed from a long-term and impartial perspective by limiting political interference.

A new dawn

Reservation is a sensitive and complex subject, but its framework needs to change with time. Justice Gavai's statement points to an important debate that can shape the progress of our society and the new definition of justice. If we truly want to build an equitable society, we must reform and restructure the policy of reservation with time. This will not only respect the basic objectives of the Constitution but also be a necessary step towards a better and more just society.

Writer is a Poet, freelance journalist and columnist, All India Radio and TV panelist

Gaza’s graveyard of Illusions: How Israel’s narrative collides with military failure

RAMZY BAROUD

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is a skilled salesperson, though the product he peddles is deeply flawed. His current challenge is to convince himself, his people, the region, and the world that, despite significant setbacks, he is winning the strategic war against his adversaries.

Former Israeli national security officials, while employing different terminology, essentially convey the same conclusion. They describe Netanyahu as a “master tactician” but “not a master strategist,” as reported by CNN. In an article detailing one of Netanyahu’s grandiose, yet hollow, pronouncements of aspiring to control the Middle East, CNN’s headline declared that “The Endgame is unclear as ever.”

Netanyahu and his extremist allies are acting in defiance of reality. They either believe, or wish to believe, that the endgame is perfectly clear.

According to Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, Israel is operating under a grand military strategy, one that will culminate in “Syria being dismantled, Hezbollah being severely defeated, Iran being stripped of its nuclear threat, Gaza being cleansed of Hamas, and hundreds of thousands of Gazans being displaced to other countries.”

Smotrich’s extensive list, communicated at the end of April, concluded with Israel emerging “stronger and more prosperous.” This wish list aligns closely with a similar list presented by Netanyahu last March.

However, Netanyahu, desperate for immediate political capital, chose to boast about purported achievements rather than future goals. He claimed to have already brought his enemies to their knees



and “destroyed the remnants of the Syrian army.”

This latter claim refers to Israel’s unilateral actions against Syria last December, a nation embroiled in internal strife and not actively engaged in war with Israel. In essence, Israel fabricated a major war front in the absence of actual conflict and declared itself the decisive victor.

Rarely do Israeli leaders publicly articulate their nation’s true intentions with such stark language. They often frame war, colonial expansion, and even genocide using terminology palatable to Western mainstream media and public: Israeli aggressions are portrayed as self-defense, and the construction of illegal settlements as self-preservation.

However, the political discourse emanating from Israel lately strikes

a different tone. One might argue that Israel, ostracized by much of the world and led by individuals facing criminal charges, no longer feels compelled to conceal its genuine aims. This is incorrect, however, as Israel is now more than ever desperate to provide any rationale, however feeble, to justify its extermination of the Palestinian people in Gaza.

Indeed, were Israel not concerned about accountability, it would not dedicate significant time and resources to defending itself in the world’s highest legal and criminal courts, nor would it issue travel warnings to its soldiers or conceal their identities for fear of prosecution.

Israel’s inflated political rhetoric and its pronouncements of imaginary achievements are a form of hype aimed at preserving its image

as a powerful regional player capable of not only influencing political outcomes but fundamentally shaping the entire Middle East.

The irony of this hype is that Israel has been attempting, and failing at an unprecedented cost, to conquer Gaza, a devastated, tiny territory with a starving population still reeling from the impact of the ongoing Israeli genocide. Even venturing a few hundred meters into Rafah or Khan Yunis continues to result in deaths and injuries within the Israeli army, which is struggling to amass the necessary numbers for large-scale offensives within the Strip.

One must, however, distinguish between Israel’s intentions and its failure to realize them. Indeed, dominating the Middle East has been the formula driving Israel’s actions for decades. In fact, there

is an official document that details Israel’s regional ambitions: “A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm.”

This document was prepared in 1996 by Richard Perle, a prominent neoconservative intellectual and a close associate of Netanyahu, for the so-called Study Group on a New Israeli Strategy Toward 2000. It aimed to guide Israel toward a more assertive policy that rejects the “comprehensive peace” notion, advocating for destabilizing the region and “rolling back” threats, specifically those emanating from Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran, among others.

The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 presented a golden opportunity for some of these goals to be achieved, though the ultimate outcome fell short of the overall objectives.

Humiliated by the failures of his

army and intelligence throughout the Gaza war, and facing immense pressure from a deeply discontented public, Netanyahu knows that his legacy, which he had hoped would be remembered as the greatest among all Israeli leaders, will instead be marred by controversy and disgrace.

Thus, Netanyahu is re-engaging in Perle’s old strategy, though under entirely different circumstances. To “secure the realm” would imply that Israel is indeed in control, possesses incomparable military strength, and that its adversaries are willing to accept their diminished role in this Netanyahu-crafted Middle East.

But even a skilled salesman, or “great tactician,” cannot market genocide as a victory, nor can a disreputable and dysfunctional army secure a strategic triumph.

Israel has clearly failed to secure any genuine or lasting victory, and the obvious solution is for Israel to be reined in and held accountable for its crimes in Gaza and throughout Palestine. The Middle East would then be poised for true stability, peace, and even prosperity, free from Israeli scheming and the relentless pursuit of more war fronts and illusory victories.

– Dr. Ramzy Baroud is a journalist, author and the Editor of The Palestine Chronicle. He is the author of six books. His latest book, co-edited with Ilan Pappé, is ‘Our Vision for Liberation: Engaged Palestinian Leaders and Intellectuals Speak Out’. His other books include ‘My Father was a Freedom Fighter’ and ‘The Last Earth’. Baroud is a Non-resident Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Islam and Global Affairs (CIGA). His website is www.ramzybaroud.net

The teacher who carries an entire school in his bag

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In a remote Budgam school, a limping educator with a magic bag becomes parent, nurse and cultural guardian to children who shout ‘Me first!’ for his affection

Got a chance to visit an elementary government school in a remote area of my district, Budgam, as an educator-cum-academic monitor. I met a gifted teacher spreading fragrance amid a bunch of doleful kids at a primary government school. I saw a teacher with a white beard, sitting with one leg stretched out among beautiful kids.

In excitement, I started asking questions to the kids based on FLN—that is my duty. They answered all the questions. The teacher, whom I initially considered a weak and ordinary educator, shouted in amusement, “It is we who taught them!”

Then suddenly, a blooming bud, perhaps from a pre-primary class, started shouting at the teacher in smattering Urdu: “Shar... Shar... Shar... shirt ka button gir gayal” – “Sir, the button of my shirt fell off.” It sounded so cute.

I carefully watched the situation. Instead of taunting the child, the teacher pulled out a thread and needle from his handy bag and stitched the button back on. I was happy to see the educator in focus with his armoury.

We started walking on the school lawn. The teacher was limping—perhaps suffering from gout, which he was, in fact, when I enquired. On the school lawn, I saw an innocent kid with dust on his face who had fallen down. The teacher rushed towards him, took him to the washroom, pulled off his clothes, and bathed him. He had soap in his handy bag.

I started realising that I had a great opportunity to learn a lot from this great teacher. Therefore, I stretched the discus-

sion longer and decided to stay at this small government primary school located on a hill with lush greenery for the whole day.

There were almost 15 students in the pre-primary classes (nursery, LKG, etc.). Then came lunchtime. The bell rang: Than... Than... Than...

I was curiously watching the scenario, intending to know what next from this great educator. Then came the 15 blooming buds, who sat and formed a beautiful half-moon on the green park. They were served with MDM.

This great educator folded the sleeves of his shirt and started mouth-feeding them one by one. The kids started shouting, “Me first, me first, me first...” It was ecstatic to watch. I was in a poetic frenzy.

They were very happy. How could these kids miss their parents in such a setting with this great educator? I asked myself.

After lunch, the kids started playing, and we began our lunch. All of a sudden, we heard a scream. I smiled and thought—what next?

The great educator left his lunch and ran towards the scream with his handbag. I too followed. A kid had a bruise near his left elbow, perhaps struck by the school fencing.

The educator opened the zip of his handbag and pulled out an antiseptic tube with pure love and affection, covering the bruises of the kid. I was very surprised to see all this. I, as an educator, got to learn so much.

The walls of the school were painted with beautiful colours and pictures depicting discipline, character, and moral behaviour. When I asked this legend about the source of the money used for painting the walls so beautifully, the reply shocked me: “From my salary. Getting 70K, I can afford to spend 10K.”

I could see some kids aged 3 to 4 sitting

in his lap, trusting him more than their parents.

The corner of the lawn attracted me. I saw a tin shed of 6 by 8 feet. I was very eager to enter this tin shed. There were Kashmiri cultural items placed so beautifully. The teacher intended to help the kids learn about their Kashmiri culture, to link culture with education. “The articles placed here were collected by me from nearby villages,” he replied.

The paintings of great personalities on the corridor walls were awesome. Each painting contained a brief life history of that personality.

I was intending to spend more time with this great personality to learn more, but the last bell of the school rang: Than... Than... Than...

The legend disappeared. I saw him at the school gate, hugging and kissing these little angels one by one, reciprocating love, wishing them well. It appeared as if the students did not want to leave him. He, too, was going to miss them.

The handy bag was still there, hanging from his arm, ready to come to the rescue of these angels. I was completely moved.

I bid him goodbye. I learnt a lesson to follow.

This all reminded me of Khalil Gibran: “Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life’s longing for itself.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The Archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the Archer’s hand be for gladness;

For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He also loves the bow that is stable.”

The writer is a teacher at the Boys High School, Narbal

Unstoppable: The secret power of youth who rise when no one believes

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There’s something powerful about being young. You have time, energy, and a heart that still dares to dream. But sometimes, the world tells you otherwise. “You’re too young.” “You’re not ready.” “You don’t know how the real world works.”

And that’s exactly when you need to stand taller, not shrink. Because the truth is: every great revolution, every legendary success, every future world-changer once sat exactly where you are now – young, unsure, and underestimated.

When the World Doubts You – Believe Even More

Maybe your teachers doubt you. Maybe your parents don’t understand your dreams. Maybe your own friends mock your goals. It hurts. But here’s the secret: Being doubted is fuel.

Being ignored is a blessing.

And being underestimated is a gift.

Because when no one expects you to win, you’re free to train in silence. To build in the dark. To become so strong, so sharp, and so unstoppable – that one day, you walk into rooms you were once kept out of. And everyone wonders how you did it.

Discipline is Cooler Than Excuses

Most youth wait for motivation. But the real winners create discipline. While others scroll, you study. While they waste time, you build skills. While they party, you plan your future. That doesn’t make you boring. That makes you dangerous – because you’re playing the long game.

Every champion you admire – from athletes to authors, scientists to CEOs – started with one decision: to do what others won’t, so they can live how others can’t.

Turn Pain Into Power

Maybe you’ve been through tough times. Family problems. Bullying. Loneliness. Failure. It’s okay. You’re human. But don’t let it break you. Let it build you.

Some of the greatest youth leaders, creators, and thinkers of history came from struggle. They weren’t lucky. They were resilient. Pain didn’t stop them – it trained them.

So don’t hide your scars. Wear them like medals. They show the world: I survived. I learned. And I’m still standing.

Write Your Own Story

You don’t have to follow the path others chose for you. You don’t have to live by someone else’s expectations. You don’t have to fit in – especially when you were born to stand out.

Be the youth who writes a new story. One where failure is just a lesson. One where pain is turned into purpose. One where, despite every doubt and delay, you keep moving forward.

Final Message: The Future Fears the Focused Youth

You have something special. You have time. You have fire. You have imagination. But above all, you have a choice.

Will you scroll through your dreams? Or will you build them?

Will you follow the crowd? Or will you lead it?

Will you give up after failure? Or will you rise, smarter, faster, stronger?

The world is not waiting to hand you success. But it is watching. Watching to see if you’ll rise – when no one believes, when everything feels heavy, and when most would give up.

So rise anyway.

Because this world doesn’t belong to the loudest voices.

It belongs to the boldest youth



DC Kishtwar assesses ground impact of governance interventions across different sectors

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MAY 19: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rajesh Kumar Shavan today reviewed the progress made in meeting the District Good Governance Index (DGGI) indicators till March 2025. The meeting assessed the impact of the governance interventions across all sectors based on the predefined parameters of the DGGI. The DC conducted a comprehensive review covering sector-specific performance in Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture, Employment,

Education, Health, Rural Development, Public Infrastructure, Jal Shakti, Banks and other departments. The DC asked the departments to focus on improving their performance and issued a string of directions. He asked for increasing poultry production through counseling and support, expanding KCC coverage, enhancing food grain production, boosting the growth of major horticulture produce, promoting crop insurance, and supporting MSME units, among others. The DC further directed efforts to improve gender parity and retention rates of students at



the secondary school level, with the support of Village Level Committee members and the Education Department, through the organization of awareness camps across all villages in the district. Additionally, he instructed the RDD, Revenue, and other concerned departments to identify land for the construction of Anganwadi Centers, aiming to shift them from private accommodations to government-owned buildings on a large scale. He further urged officers to analyze past indices to identify gaps and formulate strategies to bridge them, in order to achieve the desired

outcomes. The meeting was attended by CEO KDA/ACD Kaiser Bhawani, DSEO Akhil Thakur, EO MC Mirza Mumtaz Iqbal, AD Handicrafts Pardeep Shan, CMO Dr. Rajinder Kumar, CHO Sajid Mustafa, DSHO, Dy. CEO, Executive Engineer PMG-SY and other sectoral officers. He further urged officers to analyze past indices to identify gaps and formulate strategies to bridge them, in order to achieve the desired outcomes. The meeting was attended by CEO KDA/ACD Kaiser Bhawani, DSEO Akhil Thakur, EO MC Mirza Mumtaz Iqbal, AD Handicrafts Pardeep Shan, CMO Dr. Rajinder Kumar.

Police organizes awareness programme on New Criminal Laws in Kupwara

HT News Network

Budgam May 19: As part of its ongoing community outreach and legal literacy initiatives, Police in Kupwara today organized an awareness programme on the recently introduced criminal laws under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA) at My New School, Dragmaulla.

The session was chaired by Shri Javed Ahmad-JKPS and attended by a panel of legal experts who explained the key changes and reforms introduced by the New Laws. The programme specifically emphasized on victim-centric measures ensuring faster and more sensitive handling of criminal cases. Cybercrime awareness, highlighting preventive measures and legal remedies for students in the digital age and Drug abuse prevention, focusing on the legal, social, and health impacts of substance abuse. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from over 100 students and teaching staff, who engaged actively in the discussions and Q&A sessions. The programme was also attended by DSP Probationer Mr. Raghav, Incharge Dragmaulla Mr. Bilal Ahmad. Students and staff were encouraged to become informed citizens and share the knowledge within their communities. Police reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening community-police relations and empowering the youth through legal literacy and public engagement. Police reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening community-police relations and empowering the youth through legal literacy and public engagement.

School of Sciences IUST Launches Extensive Outreach Programme

HT News Network

Awantipora, May 19: As part of its commitment to promoting scientific education and guiding young minds towards academic excellence, the School of Sciences at the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) has launched an extensive outreach programme across various Higher Secondary Schools. The initiative aims to raise awareness among prospective students about the wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate science programmes offered at IUST. Faculty members from departments including Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Environmental Science, the Centre for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Frontier Institute of Interdisciplinary Sciences actively participated in the programme.

During the outreach visits, faculty conducted interactive sessions and presentations detailing the structure of academic programmes, admission procedures, research opportunities, and career prospects in science. Students were introduced to the university's emphasis on interdisciplinary learning, hands-on lab training, fieldwork, and state-of-the-art research facilities.

SBI RSETI hosts 31-Day Tailoring Training for women at village Haldanu- Ramban

HT News Network

RAMBAN, MAY 19: The SBI Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI) Ramban has organised a 31-day skill development programme on "Tailor – Women's Garments" here at Haldanu village, Block Batote. The course will cover all key aspects of tailoring women's garments, including stitching, measurements, machine handling, and finishing. The initiative aims to promote sustainable livelihood options and economic empowerment for rural women in Ramban. The programme was formally launched by Director, SBI RSETI Ramban S. Harvinder Singh, in the presence of local dignitaries, community members, and enthusiastic women participants. The event witnessed



strong community support and participation. In his address, the Director emphasized the role of skill-based training in fostering self-reliance among women. He encouraged the trainees to utilize the opportunity to gain practical skills and become financially independent. He also briefed the participants about the government schemes like the

MUDRA Loan Scheme, PMSBY, PMJJBY, and APY. He elaborated on their benefits, eligibility, and how these schemes could support their entrepreneurial journeys. The Director shared inspiring success stories of past trainees who now run their own tailoring units. He urged the women to stay committed and assured them of guidance throughout the training.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is certify that Muneeb ul niyaz S/o Niyaz Ahmad Wani D/o Razia nasreen has lost DOB Certificate (03/03/2024) with registration number N17460090122. If any body has any objection in that regard, they will contact jkbose within the period of seven days, After said period, no objection will be entertained.

Muneeb Ul imtiyaz
S/o Niyaz Ahmad Wani
D O B : 03/03/2004
Reg No : N17460090122

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is certify that Muneeb ul niyaz S/o Niyaz Ahmad Wani D/o Razia nasreen has lost Marks Certificate of class 10th Under with registration number N17460090122. Now I Have applied for its Duplicate. If any body has any objection in that regard, they will contact jkbose within the period of seven days, After said period, no objection will be entertained.

Muneeb Ul imtiyaz
S/o Niyaz Ahmad Wani
D O B : 03/03/2004

PUBLIC NOTICE

I WANT TO CHANGE MY PARENTAGE IN

J&K BANK ACCOUNT, ACCOUNT

NO:068304080000269, NAME:SOQRA

BANOO D/O MOHD ISHAQ R/O CHULICHAN

TO SOQRA BANOO W/O AKBAR ALI R/O

SILMOO. ANYBODY HAVING ANY

OBJECTION MAY CONTACT J&K

LALCHOWK KARGIL WITHIN THE PERIOD

OF 7 DAYS

SOQRA BANOO

W/O AKBAR ALI R/O SILMOO.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is certify that name Momina Bano and D O B 01/02/2003 at aadhar card is wrongly mentioned. The correct name is Momina Shaban and D O B is 03/09/2009. The aadhar number is 583200483441. If any one has choas in this regard, they will contact teshil office Magam within the period of one week, After completion of said period, No objection will be accepted.

Momina Shaban
D/o ; Mohammad Shaban kumar
R/o ; Magam
D O B : 03/09/2009
Aadhar number ; 583200483441

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to be informed that the Mother's Name of my daughter Sunaina Mukhtar have been wrongly Written in her school records as Zubaida Akther but her correct mothers name is Zubaida Bano now I want updating it her school record if anyone has queries plz inform to office of Hillway Public High school Ashmukam anntnag Name:- Mukhtar Ahmad khanday F/O :- Sunaina Mukhtar R/O Mamal pahalgam

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE PAHALGAM. (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (EXECUTIVE OFFICER MUNICIPAL COUNCIL PAHALGAM / BLOCK DEVELOPMENT OFFICER PAHALGAM has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of SUBZAR AHMAD MAGHUL S/O MOHAMMAD YOUSUF MAGHUL R/O MAIN MARKET PAHALGAM Tehsil PAHALGAM Distt. Anantnag with verified the date of Birth, as 01/11/2000 and event has been to be occurred at Home. In this connection. If anyone have any objection to the issuance of said registration shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate
1st Class PAHALGAM

از نیابت پھلگام

درخواست منجانب سائل بمسجد جان دختر مسعود احمد پنج ساکنہ ڈاؤ تحصیل پہلگام ضلع اننت ناگ بمرا وصول RBA سر تقیبت محکمہ دختر

اشتہار بمرا داد اگامی ہر خاص و عام

معاملہ مندرچہ عنوان میں درخواست سائل دفتر پنا میں زیر کاروانی ہے اس نسبت پناوری علاقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ فتوالا ت ریکارڈ طلب کے جس سے عیاں ہوتا ہے سال موضع سائل اڈو پہلگام میں رہائش پذیر ہے۔ سائل بیک واڈ زمہ میں اتائیے سائل دھرم کو رکھا متقبل باشندہ ہے۔ سائل کا کمنہ بنیل افراد متقبل ہے۔

1	مسعود احمد پنج ولد غنی شیخ	56 سال	سرکاری ملازم	LPC
2	عطیہ بیانو زو پد مسعود	52 سال	گھریلو کام	
3	... شمیم احمد پسر	27 سال	مزدوری	5000
4	فیضان احمد پسر	25 سال	تعلیم	5

... بمسجد جان دختر, 21 مئی //

اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد میں بتلایا گیا سائل کی کل آمدنی IPC+2500 مطابق سر تقیبت زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو عور یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عور یا اعتراض ساتھ ندر کے اندر اندر پیش کریں معاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عور یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا کہیں معاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عور یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

نایب تحصیلدار

اطلاع عام

ہر خاص عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ میرے بنگ اکاؤنٹ زیر نمبر 0136040100124965 میں میرا نام کوٹ احمد ازان ہوا ہے جب کہ میرا اصل نام مطابق ادھار کاڈ شوکت احمد سیر گوجری ہے اب اس کی کٹی کرانی مطلوب ہے کسی کو کوئی عور ہو تو وہ مات یوم کے اندر اندر بے کے بنگ براچ میں پیش کرے بعد از معاد کوئی عور قبول نہیں ہوگا

شوکت احمد سیر گوجری ولد عبدالرحمان
سیر گوجری ساکن ولرہامہ سسر

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE PAHALGAM. (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

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Executive Magistrate
1st Class PAHALGAM

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from Umar bashir Hakeem to Umar bashir Darzi. If any body has any objection in this regard, contact passport office srinagar within the period of seven days, after completion of said, no objection will be entertained.

Umar Bashir Darzi
S/o Bashir Ahmad Darzi

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT YOUTH SERVICES & SPORTS OFFICER Budgam

NOTICE- Inviting Objections

The Tentative Seniority List of Physical Education Teachers of District Budgam, prepared by this office is made available in whats-app of district bugam DYSSO Budgam Hotline" as such as all the PETs of district Budgam advised to submit their objections if any with documentary evidence within 7 days from the publication of this Notice for finalization of seniority List. The objections received after expiry of time framed shall not be entertained.

DIPK-1603/25
Send Date:-19/05/2025
PUB Date:-20/05/2025

Sd/-
District Youth Services and Sports Officer
Budgam

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT DISTRICT HOSPITAL GANDBAL

Tender Notice

For and on behalf of His Excellency the Governor of UT of J&K, sealed tenders are hereby invited from Parties/Firms/Vendors dealing in accommodation facilities (Preferably Hostel, Paying Guest type along with Mess Facility) in the Vicinity of Gandarbal (Beehama, Duderhama, Gangerhama and Saloora Gandarbal) for DNB/PG/DRP candidates /resident doctors. The detailed requirement along with the terms and conditions etc. can be collected from the office of undersigned, against non refundable cash payment of Rs.500/- from 23-05-2025 to 02/06/2025 on the written request on the letter head of firm/party/vendor. The tenders must be submitted & properly sealed in double waterproof envelopes duly Super scribed as "Tender for Accommodation & Mess Facility for DNB/PG/DRP -Resident Doctors" addressed to Medical Superintendent District Hospital Gandarbal and should reach to the same office by or before 03-06-2025 up to 4:00 PM. The tenders will be opened on 04/06/2025 at 2:00 PM or any other date which may be convenient to the tender opening committee in the office chamber of Medical Superintendent District Hospital Gandarbal.

The intending tenderers shall have to deposit an amount of Rs 2500/- (Two Thousand Five Hundred Only) in the shape of FDR/CDR from any National Bank/J & K Bank Ltd. having validity not less than 12 Months from the date of issue pledged to the undersigned.

DIPK-1593/25
Send Date:-19/05/2025
PUB Date:-20/05/2025

Sd/-
Medical & Superintendent
District Hospital Gandarbal





DDC, MD JJM review Jal Jeevan Mission implementation in Kulgam

Farooq Rather

KULGAM, MAY 19: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, along with Mission Director (MD), Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Khurshid Ahmad Shah, today jointly chaired a review meeting to assess the progress and implementation status of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in the district.

Chief Engineer PHE Kashmir, Superintendent Engineer PHE HYD Circle Anantnag/Kulgam, ACD, Technical Advisor Kashmir JJM- JK, Executive Engineers of PHE Division Kulgam/Qazigund, PHE-Mechanical and other concerned officers were present in the meeting.

Both the officers were apprised about the present position of projects

through a powerpoint presentation. As per the figures, the district consists of 61,122 rural households out of which 53,871 households have been provided with Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs) till date. 143 civil schemes and 16 mechanical schemes are in the scope of execution under JJM out of which 108 and 7 respectively have been commissioned. 259 works have been executed comprising of one Dug well, 4 Bore wells, 18 Rapid Sand Filtration Plants (RSFPs), 131 Pipe Networks, 15 Slow Sand Filtration Plants (SSFPs) and 92 General Service Reservoirs' (GSRs).

District Development Commissioner and Mission Director JJM impressed upon all the officers of Jal Shakti Department to take responsibility of



the execution of works under JJM and work with utmost dedication

and sincerity, and provide FHTCs to the remaining 7251 households. They

stressed upon the officers to gear up the execution of works without further delay so that the remaining people of the district are facilitated with the piped drinking water.

District Development Commissioner & MD fixed timelines on execution of different works and directed the concerned officers to ensure completion of these works within the given timelines. They also took a detailed review of various other schemes sponsored under JKIDFC and NABARD, besides reviewing the Mechanical schemes. The chair was also informed that 42 villages in the district have been certified as Har Ghar Jal (HGJ) villages. MD directed the Executive Engineers to certify all HGJ reported villages as per the guidelines of National Jal Jeevan Mission, Min-

istry of Jal Shakti, Government of India. Further Executive Engineer water quality was directed to expedite the water testing of samples in all schools, Anganwadi centres and in individual households. It was also emphasized that at least 5 women among the Pani samiti members in each village be trained for water quality testing.

Chief Chemist was directed to regularly monitor the water quality testing as per the revised protocol review of various other schemes sponsored under JKIDFC and NABARD, besides reviewing the Mechanical schemes. The Mission Director later took an extensive tour of the district and inspected the Water supply schemes Yaroo, Watigam, Chadmullah, Jaibal, Mirhama, Langam and Tragbal.

DC Budgam assesses progress on construction of 125-bedded New Distt Hospital, 100-bedded Cr. Care Unit

HT News Network

BUDGAM, MAY 19: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Akshay Labroo, today visited the construction site of the 125-bedded District Hospital and the 100-bedded Critical Care Unit at Reshipora Budgam to review the ongoing progress of the work.

During the inspection, DC reviewed various components of the under-construction health infrastructure and took stock of the pace and quality of the work. He expressed satisfaction over the acceleration in construction activities and appreciated the coordinated efforts of all concerned departments and agencies involved in the execution of these important projects.

He also took overview of the significant progress made on-site. The plinth beam, ground



floor column, and ground floor slab have all been completed. Additionally, the first floor column and slab, along with the second floor column, have also been completed. Work on the formwork and reinforcement for the second floor slab is currently in progress. The overall physical progress of the work

now has substantial progress. DC reiterated the importance of timely completion of both the district hospital and the critical care unit, noting that these projects are vital for strengthening the healthcare infrastructure of Budgam.

He emphasized that the administration is committed to provid-

ing quality healthcare facilities to the residents and that regular monitoring and multi-departmental coordination are being ensured to address any issues in real time and to maintain the momentum of progress.

He stated that both projects are progressing on schedule and that all departments involved are working in a focused manner to ensure early completion. Upon completion, these facilities will play a crucial role in delivering advanced medical care, including specialized and critical services, to the people of Budgam. DC was accompanied by the Chief Planning Officer Budgam, Chief Medical Officer Budgam, Medical Superintendent District Hospital Budgam, SE & Executive Engineers of R&B, AEEs, and representatives of the executing agencies.

DC Kupwara reviews arrangements for Kheer Bhawani Mela

HT News Network

KUPWARA, MAY 19: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today convened a meeting of concerned officers to review the arrangements for celebration of annual Kheer Bhawani Mela at Tikker Kupwara.

A threadbare discussion was held on availability of power and water supply, health care facilities, security and sanitation, essential commodities and other arrangements to ensure smooth celebration of the Mela Kheer Bhawani by the devotees.

DC directed the concerned departments for making necessary arrangements for uninterrupted power and drinking water supplies, transport, security, ration, medical facilities, sanitation in and around the temple and



other arrangements. Municipal Committee Kupwara was directed to ensure proper sanitation within the premises as well as approaching road stretch of the temple at Tikker. FCS & CA was directed to ensure availability of all essential commodities for the devotees at the venue. DC directed the officers to ensure that all requisite arrangements are put in place well in advance for the devotees who are visiting to pay obeisance, and to work

in close coordination to ensure smooth conduct of the mela. ADC was designated as Nodal Officer for ensuring the arrangements at the venue and shall liaise with the concerned Ashtapan Committee. He was also directed to visit the Temple along with concerned officers for inspection of the arrangements made there. The meeting was attended by ADC Kupwara, Gulzar Ahmad, Tehsildar Kupwara, besides.

JCB Operator Killed in Budgam Landslide

HT News Network

Budgam, May 19 A JCB operator lost his life after a massive landslide struck during excavation work in the Jawalapora Wudder area of Central Kashmir's Budgam district late Sunday night.

Officials said the machine, owned by a resident of Jawalapora, was carrying out earth-cutting operations when a sudden landslide buried it under a heavy mass of clay and debris.

The operator, identified as Tasir Ahmad Bhat, son of Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat from Dulipora Waterhail, was trapped inside and died on the spot.

Police have registered a case and started an investigation into the incident.

Shantmanu chairs awareness event on self, civil defence

HT News Network



GANDERBAL, MAY 19: In a remarkable initiative aimed at fostering student safety, resilience and civic responsibility, the NSS Unit of Government Degree College Ganderbal, in collaboration with the Department of Physical Education & Sports, organized a one day awareness programme on Self and Civil Defence.

The initiative was designed to impart essential self-defence techniques and civil preparedness skills, enabling the participants to respond effectively to emergencies and contribute proactively towards community safety. Additional Chief Secretary, Education, Shantmanu was the chief guest on the occasion while Director Colleges, Professor Sheikh Aijaz Bashir, Director Colleges was the guest of honour. The ACS commended the college administration for its proactive role in cultivating life saving skills and nurturing a culture of safety, awareness and community responsibility among the students. The programme began with an eloquent welcome address by Dr. Shabana Aslam, Convener, Sports Committee, who expressed heartfelt appreciation for the overwhelming student participation and the enthusiastic support extended by the faculty.

DC Srinagar launches Constituency Development Information System 'e-Nigrani' App

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 19: With an aim to improve transparency, efficiency and accountability in the allocation and implementation of development funds, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat Monday launched a Constituency Development Information System, 'e-Nigrani' an application/system for managing and tracking development projects within the Assembly Constituencies of Srinagar District.

The App was launched in presence of Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz; Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; District Informatics Officer, Syed Mujadid; Superintending Engineers, Executive Engineers of R&B, SMC, PHE and other departments. On the occasion, DC said that the system would be a significant step towards improving transparency, efficiency and account-



ability in the allocation and implementation of development funds with public scrutiny of development activities.

Dr Bilal remarked that the 'e-Nigrani App' will establish better coordination between Government officials and Legislatures for efficient execution of development works. He said the Legislatures can monitor ongoing development works in the areas

of their respective Assembly Constituencies.

DC added that the system would collect and store data on various aspects of development projects, including project details, funding sources, implementation agencies, timelines, and progress reports besides enabling real-time monitoring of project progress, and timely identification of bottlenecks and issues, if any.

Key Diagnostic Machine Defunct at MCCH Anantnag for 3 Months, Patients Suffer

HT News Network

Anantnag, May 19, Patients at the Maternity and Child Care Hospital (MCCH) in Anantnag continue to suffer as the hospital's Biochemistry Analyzer, essential for conducting critical diagnostic tests like Liver Function Tests (LFT), Kidney Function Tests (KFT), and others, has been non-functional for over three months.

The absence of this vital diagnostic equipment has forced many patients, particularly pregnant women and children, to either approach private diagnostic centres at high costs or travel to the main GMC Anantnag, which adds both logistical and financial burden.

Principal of Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag, Dr. Rukhsana Najeeb, confirmed the development to KNT, saying that the analyzer is indeed defunct and a tendering process for a new machine is currently underway. "Yes, we are aware of the issue. A new Biochemistry Analyzer will be procured soon, but the process takes time," she said.

However, for hundreds of patients visiting MCCH daily, the wait has meant disrupted treatment and added stress during already critical health conditions.

Locals and attendants have raised concerns about administrative delays, questioning why no interim arrangement has been made to ensure uninterrupted testing services. "This is not just a machine, it's a lifeline for patients, especially expectant mothers who need regular monitoring," said a local resident outside the hospital. [KNT]

Pulwama continues its IEC campaign under Nasha Mukh J&K Abhiyan Panchayat-level awareness drives stepped up to combat drug abuse

HT News Network

PULWAMA, MAY 19: As part of the ongoing Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaign under the Nasha Mukh Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, District Administration Pulwama today organised a series of impactful awareness programmes at various Panchayats across all blocks of the district.

The events witnessed active participation from officials of key departments including Health, Education, Social Welfare, Rural Development and Police while representatives from Women Self Help Groups (SHGs), Panchayat representatives, civil society members, students and youth also attended the event enthusiastically. During these programmes, resource persons sensitised the public, particularly youth, about the devastating effects of drug abuse on individuals, families,



and communities. Special emphasis was laid on preventive education, early signs of addiction, role of families in providing emotional support and the availability

of rehabilitation services within the district.

Participants were also encouraged to act as ambassadors of change within their

villages, promoting a drug-free lifestyle and spreading awareness among peers. To strengthen the outreach, a wide range of IEC materials including posters, pamphlets, and booklets were also distributed among the attendees. The distribution of these informative materials aimed to ensure that the anti-drug message reaches every household and community in the district.

Besides, a collective pledge was also taken by participants, affirming their commitment to fostering a drug-free environment in their respective localities. The IEC campaign under Nasha Mukh J&K Abhiyan will continue with similar activities planned across both rural and urban areas and educational institutes in the coming weeks, with the aim of ensuring that every household is made aware of the menace and that affected individuals are guided towards timely help and rehabilitation.





United Against Drugs: Social Welfare, YSS lead NMBA Campaign across Kishtwar Panchayats

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MAY 19: In a significant move to combat drug abuse, the District Social Welfare and District Youth Services & Sports Departments, organized an extensive awareness campaign under the "Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyan" (NMBA) across several of this mountainous district. With the slogan "Say No to Drugs, Yes to Life," the campaign reached out to panchayats of Lohidar A, Lohidar B, Gar Thalam, Patnazi B, Lower Palmar C, as well as GHSS Thumb Ishtyari Paddar, GHSS Sounder, and MS Sounder Dachhan. A range of impactful activities marked the campaign, including awareness rallies, motivational talks, poster and banner exhibitions, student-led skits, and interactive community sessions. The events witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, teachers, local youth clubs, PRI members, and civil society representatives. Officials underscored the pivotal role of education and sports in steering youth away from harmful habits. Representatives from the Social Welfare Department discussed various government schemes, helplines, and rehabilitation services available under NMBA, while Youth Services & Sports officials highlighted the availability of district-wide sports and talent development initiatives designed to engage and inspire local youth. The campaign culminated in a collective pledge by all attendees to foster a drug-free society and champion the NMBA message within their communities.

Inter-School Zonal Level Tournaments Around 700 Boys, Girls participate in athletics, other competitions across Doda Zones on Day 4

■ HT News Network

DODA, MAY 19: The fourth day of inter School zonal level tournament witnessed Taekwondo, Chess, Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, Yoga, Badminton and Carrom competitions with the participation of U14 and U17 Boys & Girls from across five educational zones of District Doda. Around 700 enthusiastic Boys and Girls participated in the tournament organised under the directions of Director General YSS Rajinder Singh Tara and supervision of District Youth Services and Sports Officer Pritam Singh. The ZPEOs of Doda, Bhagwah, Thathri, Ghat and Gundana also attended the event along with the staff of the Youth Services and Sports Department. This initiative aims to channel the energy of youth into positive and productive pursuits, helping them grow as responsible, healthy, and confident individuals.

Higher Secondary School Bhalra Launches IEC Campaign on Drug Abuse

■ Amir Iqbal Khan



Bhaderwah, May 19: An impactful IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) Campaign on drug abuse (awareness) was launched today at PM Shri Government Higher Secondary School Bhalra involving Misrata Panchayat of Bhaderwah. The programme commenced with a thought-provoking address by Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Koul, Associate NCC Officer and Counseling & Cultural Incharge, Zone Bhaderwah. He highlighted the devastating effects of drug abuse on individuals, families and society at large. Meena Kumar, Community Health Officer from the Health Department Bhalra, along with Sub Inspector Sh. Gourav Sumbaria (J&K Police Department) and Inspector Tariq Hussain of the Excise Department, further sensitized the students and faculty about the physiological and social consequences of drug addiction. They emphasized the importance of awareness, early intervention and a collective commitment for a drug-free society. In this connection, Suhani and Kashish students of Class 11th described the dangers of drug use and foreseeable consequences. The impactful speeches of the students captivated the community members. The campaign notably was launched in the leadership of Dr. Koul with the guidance of Irshad Ahmed, In-charge Principal and under the overall supervision of Rajinder Singh Bhall, Principal of the institution. The event concluded with a pledge against drug abuse that was administered by Dr. Koul. Students and NCC cadets solemnly vowed to abstain from drugs and lead a healthy and a productive life.

Udhampur: DIPR hosts Symposium on "Nasha Mukht Bharat" 4 students deliver powerful speeches highlighting dangers of drug addiction

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, MAY 19: To spread awareness among the youth about the harmful effects of drug abuse and to promote the message of a "Nasha Mukht Bharat" (Drug-Free India), a symposium competition was organized today by the Cultural Unit, Department of Information & Public Relations, Jammu at Aryan Oriental Convent Higher Secondary School (AOC HSS), Udhampur. A total of 14 students participated in the event, delivering powerful speeches that highlighted the dangers of drug addiction and the importance of leading a healthy, productive life. The competition served as a vibrant platform to engage the students in a meaningful dialogue on substance abuse and the role of youth in building a drug-free society. The officials from the Department of Information sensitized the students on the growing threat of drug addiction and emphasized the importance of awareness, education, and community support in combating the issue.



The Chairman of the School, Upkar Singh lauded the Information Department for organizing such a thought-provoking and socially relevant program and appreciated the active participation of the students. He emphasized that such initiatives

play a crucial role in shaping responsible citizens.

The first prize was bagged by Naman, second prize by Panthveer third prize by Akshita & consolation prizes were given to Akshra and Janvi

DC reviews civic amenities, address public grievances at Omarah Morh, Kotli Pain- Udhampur

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, MAY 19: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Saloni Rai today conducted an extensive visit to Omarah Morh, T-Morh, Kotli Pain and adjoining areas to review the status of civic amenities and address public grievances. During the visit to Omarah Morh, local residents demanded improvement of lanes and cleaning of drainage system to prevent water logging. Responding to demands, the EO Municipality was directed to conduct a special sanitation drive in the area. These include thorough drain cleaning, intensified sanitation efforts, and fogging operations to improve hygiene and pre-



vent vector-borne diseases. Emphasizing the importance of proactive civic management, the DC instructed the concerned officers to take immediate measures to decongest and clear all choked drains in the vicinity to ensure smooth water flow and avoid waterlogging during

rains. Later, the DC visited Kotli Pain, where she interacted with the local residents. The public highlighted their long-pending demand for the construction of a road and a bridge over the local nallah, which would provide critical connectivity and ease daily commuting

challenges.

While responding to the demands, the DC assured the residents that their grievances would be taken up with the concerned departments and resolved at the earliest possible time. During the visit to Omarah Morh, local residents demanded improvement of lanes and cleaning of drainage system to prevent water logging.

Responding to demands, the EO Municipality was directed to conduct a special sanitation drive in the area. These include thorough drain cleaning, intensified sanitation efforts, and fogging operations to improve hygiene and prevent vector-borne diseases. Emphasizing the importance of proactive civic management.

Process initiated to streamline house construction permissions in Doda Town

■ HT News Network

DODA, MAY 19: In view of the increasing number of requests from stakeholders for residential construction permissions within the municipal limits of Doda town, Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh, today chaired a meeting in his office chamber. The meeting aimed to streamline the process for granting construction permissions and to ensure adherence to the provisions outlined in the Housing and Urban Development Act. The meeting was attended



by Additional Deputy Commissioner Ani Kumar Thakur; Chief Planning Officer Manesh Kumar Manhas; Executive Engineers from PW(R&B), JPDCL Division, Jal Shakti (PHE); and the Executive Officer of the Municipal Council Doda. Officials were asked to present their inputs and assist in

identifying genuine applicants who have fulfilled all required formalities, with the objective of facilitating provisional construction approvals within a regulated framework. The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned officers to ensure the submission of affidavits by the

stakeholders and emphasized the need to fulfill all norms while avoiding any violations during house construction.

Key discussions focused on standardizing the verification process, improving transparency in granting permissions, and enhancing inter-departmental coordination to avoid procedural delays. Emphasis was placed on curbing unauthorized constructions and promoting planned urban development in line with infrastructure capacity, public safety, and environmental guidelines.

DC Rajouri assesses requirement of bunkers in shelling-affected, vulnerable areas

■ HT News Network



RAJOURI, MAY 19: Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma today chaired a meeting to review the status of panchayats affected by recent cross-border shelling and assess the requirements for the construction of bunkers.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner took a detailed review of the panchayats impacted by the recent shelling incidents. He inquired about the number of affected and vulnerable panchayats. Special focus was laid on assessing the estimated requirement for the construction of both individual and community border bunkers to ensure the safety and security of residents in vulnerable areas.

The concerned officers provided the chair with updated data and shared inputs on the field situation. The DC emphasized the need for timely planning and coordination among departments to expedite the preparation of proposals for bunker construction and ensure comprehensive protection measures for the residents.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned departments to complete the assessment at the earliest and submit detailed proposals for necessary action.

The meeting was attended by the CPO Maqsood Ahmed; ACR Mohammad Jhangir Khan; ACP Sheraz Chowhan; ACD Auqil Nuvaidd; DSEO Sandeep Sharma; EXEN PWD (R&B), Sardar Khan and BDOs. The ADCs concerned and Tehsildars also attended the meeting through online mode. The concerned officers provided the chair with updated data and shared inputs on the field situation. The DC emphasized the need for timely planning and coordination among departments to expedite the preparation of proposals for bunker construction and ensure comprehensive protection measures for the residents. The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned departments to complete the assessment at the earliest and submit detailed proposals for necessary action.

DDC Vice Chairperson Udhampur meets Public Delegations Orders Time-Bound Resolution of people's Grievances, accelerated Jal Jeevan Mission Rollout amid Soaring Temperatures

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, MAY 19: Vice Chairperson District Development Council (DDC) Udhampur Juhi Manhas Pathania today visited Government Higher Secondary School, Tikri where she met with students, staff, and local residents to assess public grievances firsthand. The visit was followed by a review meeting at her office, attended by public delegations, PRIs, and senior officers from key departments. The meeting served as a platform for civic representatives to voice pressing concerns, particularly those exacerbated by the ongoing heat-wave, and for the administration to reaffirm its commitment to proactive and responsive governance. Delegations from across the district pre-



sented detailed memoranda seeking augmentation of water supply, adequate electricity supply, meeting of infrastructure gaps and better health care facilities to cope with health vulnerabilities due to extreme weather conditions. Notably, DDC Member from Latti-Marothi

Pinki Devi, also took the opportunity to highlight the longstanding demand for a public bus service between Udhampur and Panchoud (Chappar). She stressed that lack of reliable transport is severely affecting students, patients, and daily commuters in the area. The Vice Chairperson atten-

tively engaged with each delegation, acknowledging the urgency of their concerns and issuing firm directives for immediate redressal.

She emphasized that essential services must not falter under seasonal pressure, and directed officers to adopt a zero-delay approach in providing relief to the affected population. "We cannot allow the public to suffer due to administrative inertia. Departments must respond with speed, seriousness, and sensitivity," she stated.

A key agenda of the meeting was an in-depth review of the Jal Jeevan Mission, the national flagship programme aimed at providing assured tap water supply to every rural household. The Vice Chairperson instructed concerned departments to mobilize resources, eliminate delays, and ensure last-mile delivery with urgency.





DC Poonch reviews functioning of Social Welfare Department Emphasizes Effective Implementation of Schemes

HT News Network

POONCH, MAY 19: Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal today chaired a meeting to take a comprehensive review of the working of the Social Welfare Department.

He assessed the implementation of different welfare schemes in the district. He stressed the importance of delivering the benefits of government schemes to the last eligible beneficiary and ensuring full transparency in operations.

Stress was laid on effective implementation of all social welfare schemes, with a special focus on achieving saturation in pension coverage across all eligible categories, including old age, widow, and disability pensions. The Deputy Commissioner emphasized that no eligible beneficiary should be left out and instructed the department to expedite the process of identifying and enrolling pending cases.

To strengthen outreach and improve public awareness, the Deputy Commissioner



sioner also directed the department to organise camps at the village level. These camps will serve as a platform for on the spot registration, grievance redressal, and dissemination of information regarding welfare schemes and entitlements.

Underlining the need for eradication of substance abuse, the Deputy Commissioner called for proactive collaboration with all stakeholders to contribute to the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (Drug-Free India Campaign). He directed the Social

Welfare Department to intensify awareness activities, especially targeting vulnerable groups and youth, and to work closely with educational institutions and Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Special attention was also given to the rehabilitation and monitoring of rescued children, particularly those previously involved in child labour. The Deputy Commissioner instructed that such children must be regularly enrolled in schools and their attendance and progress monitored to ensure they do not return to exploitative conditions. He emphasized the importance of continuous follow up and coordination with child protection services, schools, and local bodies to safeguard their rights and future.

The Deputy Commissioner reiterated the district administration's commitment to strengthening the social safety net and ensuring that the welfare mechanisms reach the most marginalized sections of society. He called upon the officers to work with dedication, compassion, and accountability to translate welfare objectives into visible outcomes on the ground.

Deputy Commissioner Poonch appreciates District Hospital Staff for dedicated services

HT News Network

POONCH, MAY 19: Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal today visited the District Hospital Poonch, where he commended the efforts of doctors, paramedics, and the entire hospital staff for their proactive and dedicated service amid the challenging times. He was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) and Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR). The Deputy Commissioner interacted with medical officers, nurses, technicians, and ambulance drivers, acknowledging their tireless work and commitment towards patient care. He lauded the hospital staff for maintaining standards of responsiveness and professionalism, especially under pressure. During the visit, the hospital staff assured the Deputy Commissioner.

DC Poonch holds interaction with Media Fraternity, Assures redressal of genuine demands

HT News Network

POONCH, MAY 19: In a significant outreach effort, Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Vikas Kundal today held an interaction with the media fraternity here in the Conference Hall of the DC Office.

The meeting was organized to strengthen coordination between the district administration and the media. The Deputy Commissioner was warmly welcomed by the District Information Officer,



who also expressed gratitude to the media for their continued support and constructive engagement. During the meeting, media representatives highlighted various issues related to their professional environ-

ment and working conditions. Journalists raised demands for the establishment of a Press Club and provision of safety kits, to which the Deputy Commissioner assured a positive response and necessary fol-

low up. He gave a patient and empathetic hearing to all concerns and assured that genuine issues would be addressed in a time-bound and appropriate manner. He emphasized the importance of responsible journalism and committed to maintaining open communication channels between the administration and the press. The Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) and Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) also participated in the meeting.

Javed Rana flags off Wildlife Rescue Vehicle Fleet at Jammu to combat human-wildlife conflict Says "sustainable solutions needed to reduce man-animal conflict"

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAY 19: In a significant step towards enhancing the wildlife conflict mitigation measures, Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmad Rana, today flagged off a fleet of 10 specialised Wildlife Rescue Vehicles.

The newly procured vehicles aim to strengthen mobility of the established Wildlife Control Rooms across the Union Territory. These will also ensure swift response in handling incidents of human-wildlife conflict, particularly in vulnerable and high-risk areas.

Speaking on the occasion, Javed Rana emphasized the urgent need to address the growing threat of wildlife conflict, which poses serious social, economic and safety challenges. He asked the department to make every possible effort to protect human life and property while maintaining the ecological balance. He said that multiple steps are being taken at various levels to create awareness among the locals about animal behaviour and the protective measures they could adopt to reduce the man-animal conflict. "Wildlife Rescue Vehicle Fleet is expected to significantly reduce response time and enhance the department's ability to respond effectively to conflict situations, thereby safeguarding both," maintained



the Minister. Rana further highlighted the urgent need to balance conservation and development while ensuring coexistence. "We have to find sustainable solutions that protect both. While human lives must be safeguarded, the survival of wildlife is equally important," he said.

Rana asked the wildlife department for adoption of best practices from other parts of the country that have successfully managed human-wildlife conflicts.

Rana also appreciated the forest department in managing human-wildlife interactions effectively despite the challenges faced by the officials on ground. Rana asked the wildlife department for adoption of best practices from other parts of the country that have successfully managed human-wildlife conflicts.

Rana also appreciated the forest department in managing human-wildlife interactions effectively despite the challenges faced by the officials on ground.

Youth sporting spirit soars in B'la: Inter-Zonal/ Inter School Competitions engage 300 students

HT News Network

BARAMULLA, MAY 19: Youth Services and Sports, District Baramulla, today successfully organised the Inter-Zonal District Level Chess Competition for All Age Groups (AAG) under 14, 17, and 19 boys and girls at two separate venues. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from student players across 18 zones of the district.

The Boys' Chess Competition was held at High School Khawaja Bagh. In the under-14 category, 34 students participated, while the under-17 category saw participation from 32 students, and the under-19 category included 8 students from various higher secondary schools. Simultaneously, the Girls' Chess Competition was conducted at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Baramulla. A total of 36 students competed in the under-14 category, 35 students in the under-17 category, and 2 students participated in the under-19 category.

In addition to the chess event, several inter-school zonal level badminton competitions were also held today. YSS Zone Rohama organised the Under-14 Girls Badminton Competition at HS Tragpora, with 42 students from different schools participating. YSS Zone Dangiwa conducted Under-14 and Under-17 Boys Badminton Competitions at HSS Dangiwa, which saw participation from 50 students in the under-14 category and



21 in the under-17 category.

Meanwhile, YSS Zone Singpora Kalan organised the Under-14 and Under-17 Boys Badminton Competitions at HS Delina, attracting 75 players from various government and private institutions. In the Under-14 Singles category, Munawar from DPS Delina emerged victorious, while in the Under-17 category, Saqib Mohammad from HSS Delina clinched the title. In Doubles, Mohammad Fahiq and Mohammad Saman from DPS Delina won the Under-14 category, and Sahil Manzoor and Kabir Khurshid from HSS Delina bagged the Under-17 title.

DYSSO Baramulla commended the participation and sportsmanship of all students and reiterated the department's commitment to nurturing young talent and promoting physical education and sports culture across the district.

DC Reasi reviews readiness for Outreach Camps in 44 Tribal Villages

HT News Network

REASI, MAY 19: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Reasi Nidhi Malik chaired a comprehensive review meeting today to assess preparedness for a district-wide outreach campaign covering all 44 tribal villages under the union government's flagship—Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN) and Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DA-JGUA) programmes. The initiative, part of the ongoing Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh celebrations, aims to deliver individual entitlements and raise awareness among the tribal people about key govern-

ment welfare schemes.

As part of the Dharti Aaba Abhiyan campaign, Awareness and Benefit Saturation Camps will be organized from June 15 to June 30, 2025. These camps are designed to ensure saturation of welfare schemes at the grassroots level by facilitating door-step delivery of essential services to tribal communities in the remote and underserved areas of District Reasi.

The DC also reviewed the ground-truthing status of all 44 tribal villages, conducted block-wise by Gram Sabhas through Block Development Officers (BDOs), based on 25 key indicators—including the availability of pucca houses, piped chlori-



nated water, electricity, schools, Primary Health Centres (PHCs), and Community Health Centres (CHCs), among others.

The ground-truthing exercise, conducted through Gram Sabhas, focused on identifying both fulfilled and pending gaps. The DC added that

insights from this assessment will inform the preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) and enhance service delivery during the campaign.

During the meeting, DC Reasi emphasized that village-level and cluster-level targeted service delivery camps

will focus on services such as Aadhaar enrollment, ration card issuance, Ayushman Bharat (PM-JAY) health coverage, caste certificate issuance, PM-KISAN registration, and Jan Dhan account facilitation, among others. The objective is to ensure that every eligible tribal individual and family receives the benefits of these schemes without delay or exclusion.

To ensure effective implementation, the DC directed all BDOs and line departments to conduct thorough awareness campaigns in each tribal village. These efforts will support the targeted delivery of entitlements and strengthen monitoring mechanisms. She also instructed district officers to ensure active participation of their

staff in upcoming block-level committee meetings and service delivery camps for better coordination and execution.

The campaign will involve active participation from Common Service Centres (CSCs), frontline workers, and departmental teams to ensure seamless service delivery. Emphasis will be placed on inter-departmental convergence and last-mile delivery, ensuring no eligible beneficiary is left behind.

ADDC Sukhdev Singh, CPO Narinder Kumar, PO ICDS Rakesh Kumar, ACR Nitin Verma, DSWO, CEO, CMO, DIO, CAO, and other district and sectoral officers were present during the meeting.

Christ School Students Observe Silence to Mourn Twin Siblings Killed in Pak Shelling

HT News Network

POONCH, May 19: Students and staff at Christ School in Poonch district of Jammu region on Monday observed a two-minute silence to mourn the tragic deaths of twin siblings, Ayan and Zoya, who lost their lives in cross-border shelling by Pakistan along the Line of Control.

The emotional tribute was held during the school assembly, where students, teachers, and administrators stood in solemn silence, expressing grief over the heartbreaking loss of the young lives.

Ayan and Zoya, both students from the border area, were among the civilian casualties in recent shelling by Pakistani forces that left several others injured and caused significant damage to homes and infrastructure.

Amazon Fashion rebrands its Gen Z online store as 'SERVE'

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, May 19: Amazon Fashion is doubling down on its commitment to Gen Z with the re-launch of its dedicated online storefront, formerly known as Next Gen Store, now named 'SERVE', Dishing Out Style. The word 'Serve'—meaning "to present oneself with confidence and style, often in a way that is considered impressive or striking"—is deeply rooted in contemporary Gen Z speak but has also surfaced in trending lexicon across generations, capturing the spirit of confident, standout self-expression across fashion, beauty, and beyond.

'SERVE' responds to this evolution, functioning not just as an online store but as a continuously refreshed destination that delivers on-trend styles while empowering individual expression. The online store has seen 3X increase in Gen Z customers and a 4X surge in shoppers from Tier II and III cities like Chandigarh, Kochi, Patna, Nagpur, Jaipur, and Surat. 'SERVE' is set to redefine how this crucial demographic engages with fashion.

'SERVE' offers an unparalleled selection with over 2 million products from more than 350 domestic and global brands, including new additions like Barcino, Tokyo Talks, Highlander, The Bear House, Diljit x Levi's, Mokobara, Casio, Chumbak, Cosrx, and Moxie. 'SERVE' caters to Gen Z's dynamic tastes with a unique blend of fast fashion, sustainable options, and affordable styles. The store features monthly trend updates, seasonal lookbooks, and creator-curated style edits, reflecting micro-trends like Y2K revival, gender-fluid fashion, dopamine dressing, K-beauty, minimal glam, and conscious fashion.

This new identity includes a fresh logo and design language that is visually compelling and authentic, and scalable across platforms. The on-site experience has been enhanced, prioritizing discovery, community, and trend-forward curation, with updated imagery styles and voice & tone that reflect Gen Z's diverse interests and subcultures. "After pioneering India's first dedicated Gen Z store in 2023, we are elevating our commitment with 'SERVE'," says Nikhil Sinha, Director, Amazon Fashion India. "Our research consistently reveals this demographic values individuality and trend-alignment alongside affordability. With 'SERVE', we are democratizing trend-forward fashion—bringing inclusive, accessible style to all of India, particularly Tier II and III cities where we have seen over 40% YOY growth. We have created not just a shopping destination, but a cultural platform that empowers authentic self-expression through affordable style, making fashion a tool for confidence and creativity accessible to everyone."

Leveraging extensive research, Amazon identified key Gen Z archetypes—from 'The Trend-Hacker' driving fast-paced micro trends to 'The Elevated Everyday-ist' seeking polished relevance. These insights now guide SERVE's curation, featuring trending aesthetics like Clean Girl, Mob Wife Core, and Soft Boy Energy alongside practical categories like Budget Buys and Seasonal Drops. The platform's digital-native experience, optimized for on-the-pulse discovery, brings Amazon's speed and vast selection to a generation that values self-expression. With color curation spanning metallics to monochrome and over 350 brands, SERVE positions Amazon Fashion as the definitive destination democratizing trend-forward style across India's diverse Gen Z landscape.





SC: Equal pension for all retired HC judges, including additional judges

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAY 19 (UNI)

The Supreme Court has ruled that all retired high court judges are entitled to equal pension and retirement benefits, regardless of whether they served as permanent or additional judges.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) BR Gavai and Justice AG Masih held that making a distinction in post-retirement benefits among judges based on their mode of appointment violates Article 14 of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to equality.

The court stated, "Any discrimination among judges for terminal benefits after retirement is violative of Article 14. All high court judges, including those who retired as additional judges, are entitled to full pension."

It further clarified that no difference can be made based on whether a judge was promoted from the district judiciary or elevated from the bar.

The court also extended the benefit of parity to the families of additional judges, ruling that they too are entitled to the same family pension and post-retirement benefits as those granted to the families of permanent judges.

Key directions issued by the court include, retired chief justices of high courts shall receive a full pension amounting to Rs 15 lakhs per annum.

Retired high court judges, including those who served as additional judges, shall be paid Rs 13.6 lakh per annum as full pension.

All judges, irrespective of how they entered the judiciary by elevation from the bar or promotion from the subordinate judiciary are entitled to the same pension benefits. Family pension and

SC to hear plea of Ashoka University's prof held over Op Sindoor post

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAY 19 (UNI)

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to urgently hear a plea filed by Ashoka University professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad, who was recently arrested by the Haryana Police over a Facebook post related to 'Operation Sindoor'.

Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal mentioned the matter before Chief Justice of India B R Gavai, seeking an urgent listing.



"A professor at Ashoka University has been proceeded against for an entirely patriotic statement on Operation Sindoor. This may be listed immediately," said Sibal.

Taking note of the urgency, the Chief Justice directed that the matter be listed for hearing on May 21.

The professor was remanded in two-day police custody by a magistrate on Sunday following his arrest.

SC grants interim relief to DICCI in graft charges linked to TN scheme

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAY 19 (UNI)

The Supreme Court on Monday granted interim relief to the Dalit Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DICCI) in a case pending before the Madras High Court, which alleges corruption in the execution of the Tamil Nadu government's Annal Ambedkar Business Champions Scheme (AABCS).

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) BR Gavai and Justice AG Masih stayed an interim order passed by the high court last week and directed that DICCI be impleaded as a party to the proceedings.

"Let the present petitioners (DICCI) be impleaded as respondents. Let the high court consider the application

and pass an order after hearing all parties. Till such an order is passed, let this order be kept in abeyance," the Supreme Court ordered.

The court further directed that the high court must hear DICCI before taking any further steps in the case.

The DICCI was not initially a party in the high court proceedings, which are next scheduled for hearing on May 21.

During the hearing, the Supreme Court also questioned the urgency with which the high court took up the matter during its summer vacation. "What was the urgency that the court took this up on vacation?" CJI Gavai asked.

The case in question was initiated through a public interest litigation (PIL) by YouTuber Savuk

ku Shankar, who alleged that the AABCS scheme was arbitrarily and illegally entrusted to DICCI.

He further claimed that DICCI leaders had links to Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) president and MLA K Selvaperunthagai, and that the scheme's benefits were diverted to those politically connected instead of the intended Dalit beneficiaries.

Shankar has sought a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the matter, alleging misappropriation and political favoritism. The PIL is being heard by a vacation bench of the Madras High Court comprising Justices GR Swaminathan and V Lakshminarayanan.

On May 14, the High Court had issued notice to the State and impleaded several government

departments, including the Municipal Administration and Water Supply Department, the MSME Department, and the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB). The court had also directed the production of relevant documents.

On May 16, additional advocate general J Ravindran, appearing for the Municipal Administration Department, sought more time to furnish documents. Both AAG Ravindran and Advocate General PS Raman denied any wrongdoing, asserting that the PIL was filed for publicity and that the CBI lacked jurisdiction in Tamil Nadu without court direction. The matter before the high court has been adjourned to May 21.

Parameshwar assisted the court as amicus curiae in the matter. The detailed judgement is awaited.

Biden diagnosed with 'aggressive' prostate cancer

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON, MAY 19 (UNI)

Former US President Joe Biden has been diagnosed with prostate cancer that has spread to his bones, an official said.

Biden, who left office in January, was diagnosed on Friday after he saw a doctor last week for urinary symptoms, a statement from his office said on Sunday.

The cancer is a more aggressive form of the disease, characterised by a Gleason score of 9 out of 10. This means his illness is classified as "high-grade" and the cancer cells could spread quickly, according to Cancer Research UK.

Biden and his family are said to be reviewing treatment options. His office added that the cancer was hormone-sensitive, meaning it could likely be managed.

"On Friday, he was diagnosed with prostate cancer, characterised by a Gleason score of 9 (Grade Group 5) with metastasis to the bone, BBC reported.

"While this represents a more aggressive form of the disease, the cancer appears to be hormone-sensitive which allows for effective management."

After news broke of his diagnosis, the former president received support from both sides of the aisle.

President Donald Trump wrote on his social media platform Truth Social that he and First Lady Melania Trump were "saddened to hear about Joe Biden's recent medical diagnosis".

"We extend our warmest and best wishes to Jill and the family," he said, referring to former First Lady Jill Biden. "We wish Joe a fast and successful recovery."

Former Vice-President Kamala Harris, who served under Biden, wrote on X that she and her husband Doug Emhoff are keeping the Biden family in their prayers.

"Joe is a fighter - and I know he will face this

Modi wishes 'quick and full recovery' of Biden

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAY 19 (UNI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday wished quick and full recovery to former US President Joe Biden who has been diagnosed with prostate cancer.

PM Modi posted on X and said, "Deeply concerned to hear about Joe Biden's health.

Extend our best wishes to him for a quick and full recovery. Our thoughts are with Dr Jill Biden and the family."

Joe Biden has been diagnosed with an aggressive form of prostate cancer that has spread to his bones.

According to the statement, "he was diagnosed with prostate cancer, characterised by a Gleason score of 9 (Grade Group 5) with metastasis to the bone.

The 82-year-old Biden and his family are currently consulting with doctors to determine the best course of action.

"While this represents a more aggressive form of the disease, the cancer appears to be hormone-sensitive which allows for effective management."

After news broke of his diagnosis, the former president received support from both sides of the aisle.

Biden, then the Democratic nominee vying for re-election, faced mounting criticism of his poor performance in a June televised debate against Republican nominee and current president Donald Trump. He was replaced as the Democratic candidate by his vice-president, Kamala Harris.

challenge with the same strength, resilience, and optimism that have always defined his life and leadership," Harris said.

In a post on X, Barack Obama - who served as president from 2009 to 2017 with Joe Biden as his deputy - said that he and his wife Michelle were "thinking of the entire Biden family".

"Nobody has done more to find breakthrough treatments for cancer in all its forms than Joe, and I am certain he will fight this challenge with his trademark resolve and grace.

We pray for a fast and full recovery," Obama said. In 2016, Obama tasked Biden with leading a "cancer moonshot" government-wide research programme.

The news comes nearly a year after the former president was forced to drop out of the 2024 US

presidential election over concerns about his health and age. He is the oldest person to have held the office in US history.

Biden, then the Democratic nominee vying for re-election, faced mounting criticism of his poor performance in a June televised debate against Republican nominee and current president Donald Trump. He was replaced as the Democratic candidate by his vice-president, Kamala Harris.

Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer affecting men, behind skin cancer, according to the Cleveland Clinic.

The US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says that 13 out of every 100 men will develop prostate cancer at some point in their lives.

Age is the most common risk factor, the CDC says.

Shivakumar vows solution as rains flood Bengaluru

AGENCIES

BENGALURU, MAY 19 (UNI)

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Monday assured Bengalureans of his government's commitment to long-term, sustainable solutions to the city's recurring rain-related woes, as heavy downpour triggered widespread flooding in several areas, including Sai Layout.

"Let us be clear: the issues we face today are not new. They have been ignored for years, across governments and administrations. The only difference now is we are working to solve them," Shivakumar said in a post on social media platform X, expressing deep concern over the havoc caused by the rains.

He said he has been in continuous touch with officials and is closely monitoring the situation. "I will be visiting the BBMP War Room and flood-affected areas personally to take stock on ground," he added.

The Deputy CM's remarks came as nearly 40 mm of rainfall over 24 hours brought life to



a standstill in parts of the city. Sai Layout was among the worst hit, with residents reporting inundated homes, submerged vehicles, and damaged belongings. Many blamed clogged drains and civic negligence, saying their complaints had gone unheeded for years.

BBMP chief commissioner M Maheshwar Rao, who visited Sai Layout and other flooded zones using a tractor, said widening a blocked railway vent and building a temporary pump were among the corrective steps under consideration.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) recorded 10.3 mm of rainfall till Monday morning

and warned of stronger spells expected on May 23, with wind speeds of up to 50 kmph. A yellow alert remains in place for Bengaluru and 22 other districts until May 22, with isolated thunderstorms and cloudy skies forecast through May 25.

Meanwhile, strong winds uprooted trees in several neighbourhoods, disrupting traffic and prompting the Bengaluru Traffic Police to issue advisories.

"To my fellow Bengalureans - I am one among you. I understand your concerns, I share your frustration, and I assure you of my commitment to resolve them. I stand with you," Shivakumar said.

Five killed as car falls off bridge on Mumbai-Goa highway

AGENCIES

RATNAGIRI (MAHARASHTRA), MAY 19 (UNI)

A car carrying seven people plunged nearly 100 feet from a bridge into the Jagbudi river on the Mumbai-Goa Highway near Bharne Naka in Ratnagiri district early Monday morning, killing five people.

The victims were travelling from Mira Road in Mumbai to Devrukh when the tragedy struck around 5:30 am. According to reports, the vehicle veered off the bridge near Khed and fell into the river. Five passengers died on the spot, while two others, including the driver, sustained serious injuries.

The deceased have been identified as Medha Parmesh Paradkar, Saunabh Parmesh Paradkar, Mitali Vivek More, Nihar Vivek More and Shreyas Rajendra Sawant. The victims belonged to two families - the Paradkars, residents of Nalasopara, and the Mores, from Mira-Bhayander.

Visuals from the site showed the mangled remains of the car being pulled from the river using a crane. The roof of the vehicle was completely crushed. Local residents, police personnel, and the highway police rushed to the site upon receiving information.

The injured - Parmesh Paradkar and Vivek More - were initially taken to a hospital in Kalambani. Paradkar was later shifted to Ratnagiri District Government Hospital, while More was also moved to another facility for advanced treatment. Their condition is reported to be critical.

Rescue efforts were supported by locals and officials, including former Khed mayor Vaibhav Khedekar. All the occupants were pulled out of the submerged vehicle before it was lifted from the riverbed.

An investigation is underway to determine the cause of the accident.

Trinamool declines participation in govt's anti-terror outreach abroad

AGENCIES

KOLKATA, MAY 19 (UNI)

The Trinamool Congress (TMC), led by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, has informed the Centre of its decision to withdraw its MP from the seven all-party delegations scheduled to visit multiple countries as part of India's global outreach following the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor.

Sources said the Trinamool Congress has instructed Lok Sabha MP Yusuf Pathan, the sole representative from the party among the 51 political leaders, parliamentarians, and former ministers selected for the delegations, to withdraw from participation.

However, the decision was conveyed to the central government by Trinamool Congress without any official explanation. The TMC has confirmed that neither Pathan nor any of its other lawmakers will take part in the diplomatic missions.

Party insiders said the decision stems from dissatisfaction with the govern-



ment's selection process, which they claim was carried out without consulting the TMC leadership. The Union government had nominated Pathan after TMC's Lok Sabha floor leader, Sudip Bandhyopadhyay, cited health issues and expressed inability to join.

Pathan, who received a call from Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju on Saturday night, said he would consult his party before making a decision; he was later contacted by the External Affairs Ministry for his passport details.

Pathan was among the nine members of a delegation led by JDU MP Sanjay Kumar Jha, which will

travel to Indonesia, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Singapore. The delegation is scheduled to depart on May 21.

The other members in this team are Aparajita Sarangi (BJP), Brij Lal (BJP), John Brittas (CPI-M), Pradan Barua (BJP), Hemang Joshi (BJP), former minister Khurshid and former diplomat Mohan Kumar.

Trinamool Congress is in the third political party after Shiv Sena (Uddhav) and Congress that openly criticised the Central government's plan to send a delegation to 31 countries and the European Union to assert India's firm stance against terrorism in light of Operation Sindoor.

This cholesterol pill may fight high risk of heart attack, stroke: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

An international team of researchers found that a cholesterol-lowering drug may offer a more effective and convenient way to protect people at high risk of heart attack and stroke.

The study led by researchers at Monash University in Australia tested a once-daily oral medication called Obicetrapib and found it significantly lowered both LDL or bad cholesterol and lipoprotein(a), [Lp(a)] -- two key contributors to cardiovascular disease.

The findings marked an important step forward for patients who have struggled to reach their cholesterol targets with current therapies, said study lead Professor Stephen Nicholls, Director of Monash University's Victorian Heart Institute.



"We know that many people at high risk of heart attack or stroke don't get their cholesterol levels low enough, even on the best available treatments," Nicholls said. "Obicetrapib offers a promising new option-- not only did it lower LDL cholesterol by over 30 per cent, but we also saw a reduction in Lp(a), which is much harder to treat and has been linked

to increased heart disease risk," he added. LDL cholesterol, often referred to as "bad cholesterol," builds up in blood vessels and increases the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Lipoprotein(a), or Lp(a), is a lesser-known but inherited risk factor that can also accelerate artery damage -- and unlike LDL, there are currently no widely approved

treatments to lower it.

The trial, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, included more than 2,500 participants with established heart disease or genetic high cholesterol who were given either Obicetrapib or a placebo, in addition to their regular cholesterol medications.

After 12 weeks, those on Obicetrapib had dropped their LDL cholesterol by 32.6 per cent and Lp(a) by 33.5 per cent on average -- many achieved guideline-recommended targets for the first time.

Obicetrapib was also well tolerated, with a safety profile similar to earlier trials.

"This could be a valuable tool in the fight against heart disease," Professor Nicholls said. "It's convenient, it's effective, and it may help close the gap for patients who've run out of options."

Study shows weight-loss drugs can cut alcohol intake by almost two-thirds

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Medications such as liraglutide or semaglutide taken for weight loss also have the potential to reduce alcohol consumption by almost two-thirds, according to new research.

Alcohol use disorder is a relapsing condition that accounts for 2.6 million deaths a year -- 4.7 per cent of all deaths globally.

Treatments such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), therapies that aim to strengthen motivation to stop or reduce drinking, and medication can be very successful in the short term, however, 70 per cent of patients relapse within the first year.

The study showed that Glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) analogues -- drugs developed to treat obesity -- likely curb alcohol cravings in the brain.

Average alcohol intake decreased from 11.3 units/



week to 4.3 units/week after four months of treatment with the GLP-1 analogues a reduction of almost two-thirds.

Among the regular alcohol drinkers, intake decreased from 23.2 units/week to 7.8 units/week in four months.

This reduction of 68 per cent is comparable to that achieved by nalmefene -- a drug used to treat alcohol use disorder in Europe, said Professor Carel le Roux, of University College Dublin, Ireland.

"The exact mechanism of how GLP-1 analogues

reduce alcohol intake is still being investigated, but it is thought to involve curbing cravings for alcohol that arise in subcortical areas of the brain that are not under conscious control. Thus, patients report the effects are 'effortless'," Roux said.

The study, published in the journal Diabetes, Obesity and Metabolism, was also presented at the European Congress on Obesity (ECO 2025).

GLP-1 analogues have reduced alcohol intake in animal studies, but research on their effect in

humans is less.

To find out more, the team prospectively collected data on the alcohol intake of patients who were being treated for obesity at a clinic in Dublin.

The real-world study involved 262 adults with a BMI more than 27 kilograms per square metre (kg/m2) (79 per cent female, average age 46 years, average weight 98kg) who were prescribed the GLP-1 analogs liraglutide or semaglutide for weight loss.

A total of 188 of the 262 patients were followed up for an average of four months. None of them had increased their alcohol intake.

"GLP-1 analogues have been shown to treat obesity and reduce the risk of multiple obesity-related complications. Now, the beneficial effects beyond obesity, such as on alcohol intake, are being actively studied, with some promising results," Roux said.

Antibiotics during infancy linked to early puberty in girls

AGENCIES
SEOUL

Girls given antibiotics during their first year of life, especially in the first three months, are more likely to enter puberty at an earlier age, according to new research.

The research, presented at the first Joint Congress between the European Society of Paediatric Endocrinology (ESPE) and the European Society of Endocrinology (ESE), found that the likelihood of early puberty was also higher among those exposed to a greater variety of antibiotic classes.

The findings highlight the importance of using these medicines in infants appropriately and how early-life drug exposure could shape future health outcomes.

Early puberty, also known as central precocious puberty (CPP), is a condition characterised by the early onset of secondary sexual develop-



ment in children. In girls this means before age 8 and, in boys, before age 9.

Early puberty mostly affects girls and often has no obvious cause, while it is less common in boys. Over the past few decades, early puberty has been on the rise and researchers are continuously investigating the potential contributing factors.

In this study, researchers from Hanyang University Guri Hospital and Hanyang University Medi-

cal Center analysed data on the antibiotic intake of 322,731 children, aged 0-12 months, in South Korea.

They followed these children until the girls turned 9 years old and the boys were 10, and found that girls who were prescribed antibiotics before 3 months of age were 33 per cent more likely to start puberty early.

The risk was 40 per cent higher in girls who received antibiotics before 14 days of age, and

overall, the earlier the antibiotic exposure, the greater the risk of early puberty.

Additionally, girls who used five or more classes of antibiotics had a 22 per cent increased risk of early puberty compared to those who used two or fewer classes. No association was found between antibiotic intake and early puberty in boys.

"This population-based study is one of the first to explore this association between early-life antibiotic use, including the timing, frequency and number of classes, and in such a large national cohort of children," said Dr Yunsoo Choe at Hanyang University Guri Hospital in South Korea, who was involved in the study.

The results may encourage doctors and parents to consider the long-term effects of antibiotics when making treatment decisions for young children, added Dr Choe.

Lipolysis more effective in women than men: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

A team of researchers has said that lipolysis is more effective in women than in men, which could partly explain why women are less likely to develop metabolic complications than men, despite having more body fat.

The research focused on lipolysis, the process through which triglycerides - lipids stored in fat cells - are broken down to produce free fatty acids and glycerol, which can be used as energy, during exercise or between meals.

"The breakdown of lipids through lipolysis is essential for energy balance and it is believed that doing it effectively may prevent type 2 diabetes and other metabolic complications of overweight and obesity," said Professor Peter Arner, of the Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden.



"Indeed, lipolysis is more effective in women than in men, which could be one reason why women are less likely to develop metabolic complications than men, despite having more body fat," Arner added.

Hormones called catecholamines play a key role in activating lipolysis and regulating the various steps in the process and it is known that when levels of these hormones increase, due to psycho-

logical stress or during exercise, for example, lipolysis is activated more strongly in women than in men.

According to the study, a better understanding of how this occurs could pave the way for drugs and other treatments that lower the risk of type 2 diabetes in men with overweight and obesity.

To find out more, Professor Arner and Dr Daniel P Andersson of the Karolinska University Hospital

Huddinge in Stockholm, measured lipolysis in abdominal subcutaneous fat cells from adult women and men.

The cells were incubated alone or with increasing concentrations of several catecholamines that are known to act at different steps in lipolysis.

The amount of glycerol released was used to measure the amount of lipolysis.

This revealed that the fat cells from the women were less sensitive to the catecholamines than the fat cells from the men, meaning that that higher concentrations were needed to activate and regulate lipolysis.

However, when lipolysis was activated, it took place at a faster rate in the cells from the women than in those from the men.

"Longer-term, our findings could aid in the development of drugs that lower the risk of type 2 diabetes in men," said Arner.

Traditional medicine key to achieve universal health coverage: Ayush Ministry

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The government has emphasised the growing relevance of traditional medicine in achieving universal health coverage and advancing the goals of 'One Health and Sustainable Development,' it was announced.

The sixth meeting of the Group of Friends of Traditional Medicine (GFTM) was successfully held at the Permanent Mission of India (PMI) in Geneva.

The meeting brought together ambassador's representatives from various countries committed to strengthening the role of traditional medicine in global healthcare systems, according to Ayush Ministry.

Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, delivered a keynote address virtually that underscored India's leadership and commitment in promoting evidence-



based traditional medicine across the world.

He reaffirmed India's commitment through Ministry of Ayush with initiatives like the National AYUSH Mission, the integrative model of Ayush Arogya Mandirs, insurance coverage for traditional medicine, and collaborative research with premier institutions like DBT, DST, ICMR, and CSIR.

He also highlighted India's focus on emerging domains such as AI, genomics, and bioinfor-

matics in traditional medicine -- reflected in the global technical meeting on AI applications in traditional medicine underscoring the country's role in safeguarding traditional knowledge, enhancing capacity, and promoting equitable global health.

"The Group of Friends of Traditional Medicine (GFTM) was created by India in May 2023. This informal platform allows WHO member states to discuss and support the integration of traditional medicine into health systems," he said, calling

for greater collaboration, knowledge exchange, and research partnerships.

India's Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva, which hosted the meeting, reaffirmed its commitment to furthering international cooperation on traditional and integrative healthcare solutions, in alignment with WHO guidelines and national policies.

With platforms like GFTM and the leadership of the Ministry of Ayush, India is not only preserving its traditional wellness heritage but also reshaping the future of global health -- one that is inclusive, preventive, and deeply rooted in the wisdom of nature.

The gathering supported key global initiatives -- particularly the WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025-2034 and the upcoming Second WHO Global Traditional Medicine Summit, to be held in India from December

Global HIV market to cross \$32 billion in 7 major markets in 2033: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

A new report has said that the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) market across the seven major markets is forecast to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 1.9 per cent from \$26.5 billion in 2023 to \$32.1 billion in 2033.

The GlobalData's report, "Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV): Seven-Market Drug Forecast," reveals that market growth will primarily be driven by the increased uptake of long-acting injectable therapies, as well as the anticipated launch of novel single tablet regimens (STRs).

"The pipeline analysis indicates a shift away from 3-drug STRs and towards 2-drug STRs. These are hoped to have reduced toxicities and side effects as a result," said Anaelle Tannen, Infectious Disease Analyst at Global-



Data.

Six products are currently in Phase III development and are expected to launch by 2033, including four two-drug STRs.

These are Gilead Sciences' (Gilead) once-daily combination of bictegravir and lenacapavir, Merck's once-daily doravirine and islatravir, Gilead's once-weekly islatravir and lenacapavir, and a once-weekly regimen of GS-1720 and GS-4182 developed jointly by Gilead and Merck.

"Currently, all STRs require daily adminis-

tration and there is a need for alternative and more convenient options for patients which islatravir+lenacapavir and GS-1720+GS-4182 could address," said Tannen.

Other notable therapies in late-stage development include CytoDyn's once-weekly leronlimab, which is expected to be used in patients with CCR5-type virus, and Gilead's biannual injectable lenacapavir for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

Long-acting injectable therapies will gain signifi-

cant market share across the 7MM as this method requires infrequent dosing and is thus more convenient.

"Lenacapavir, for example, is initially expected to be administered subcutaneously biannually for PrEP, and clinical trials are underway to see its efficacy when administered once a year. Data from a Phase I trial has demonstrated lenacapavir's potential when administered intramuscularly once yearly," Tannen informed.

Subcutaneous lenacapavir has demonstrated 100 per cent efficacy in preventing new HIV infections and, thus, has shown its potential as an important new tool for PrEP.

However, subcutaneous lenacapavir is expected to be more expensive than daily oral PrEP and the key opinion leaders (KOLs) interviewed by GlobalData have highlighted that this may be a barrier to access.

**News in Brief****Rahul Dravid backs Jurel, rues missed finishes****AGENCIES**

NEW DELHI, MAY 19 (UNI)

Rajasthan Royals Head Coach Rahul Dravid has praised young batsman Dhruv Jurel for his composure under pressure and credited him for consistently performing in tough situations despite the team's close defeats this season.

"In every single match that he has come out in, he's been chasing 13-14 runs per over – that is not easy," Dravid said after Rajasthan's latest narrow loss on Sunday. "He played really well, even though we lost a bunch of wickets in the middle overs. He brought us close to the target."

Lauding Jurel's temperament at a difficult position in the order, Dravid said, "It's not like he's walked in needing 7 an over and failed. It's always 12-13, sometimes even more. I think Jurel has done well for us at No. 5. It's a very difficult position to bat in."

Dhoni's farewell watch continues as CSK face RR**AGENCIES**

NEW DELHI, MAY 19 (UNI)

With speculation mounting over MS Dhoni's final appearances in the IPL, Chennai Super Kings will be aiming for a morale-boosting win as they face Rajasthan Royals in a pride-on-the-line contest at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here on Tuesday.

However, Sanju Samson's Royals, bolstered by superior batting form and recent dominance over CSK, head into the match as slight favourites.

Both teams are out of the playoff race, with only three wins apiece from their campaigns so far. The 62nd fixture of IPL 2025 thus becomes a matter of finishing the season on a high and, for CSK fans, offering a possible tribute to their iconic captain.

Chennai enter the game after edging past Kolkata Knight Riders by two wickets, but their top order remains unsettled. RR, despite a ten-run loss to Punjab Kings, have notched up over 400 runs in their last two games and appear the more balanced batting unit.

Stokes gave up alcohol for latest injury recovery**AGENCIES**

LONDON, MAY 19 (UNI)

England Test captain Ben Stokes says he gave up drinking alcohol at the start of the year in the hope the abstinence would help with his recovery from injury.

Stokes, 33, had surgery on his left hamstring in December after suffering a tear during the third Test against New Zealand. He was initially ruled out for at least three months but has not yet featured for Durham in the County Championship.

England's international summer begins with a one-off Test against Zimbabwe at Trent Bridge from May 22.

All-rounder Stokes sustained a similar injury during The Hundred last summer, but he said that he has changed his approach to rehabilitation this time, which included reflection on his relationship with alcohol, an ICC report said.

"After my first major injury, I remember the shock of it and after the initial adrenaline had stopped I was thinking, 'How has this happened?'" Stokes told the Untapped podcast, hosted by Spencer Matthews.

"[I thought] 'We did have a bit of a drink four or five nights ago, could that have played a part?' It wouldn't have helped.



"Then I was like 'OK, I need to start changing what I do.'"

As a result, Stokes said he has not had an alcoholic drink since the beginning of January.

He added that it is unlikely that he will ever give up alcohol entirely but that he has learned to manage his behaviour with it.

He said that when he was younger, his drinking habits were "all or nothing", whereas he is now able to manage having "a social drink".

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RCB sign Muzarabani, KKR bring in Shukla as replacements**AGENCIES**

Bengaluru, May 19 (UNI)

In a busy day of player movements in the ongoing IPL 2025, two franchises have announced key signings to reinforce their squads for the remainder of the season.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) have confirmed the signing of Zimbabwe pacer Blessing Muzarabani as a replacement for South African fast bowler Lungisani Ngidi, who will leave to join his national side on international duty.

The replacement comes



into effect from May 26. Muzarabani, a seasoned international with 70 T20Is and 78 wickets to his name, has also played 12 Tests and 55 ODIs for Zimbabwe. RCB have secured his services for Rs 75 lakh,

expecting the pacer to strengthen their bowling attack in the crucial stages of the tournament.

Meanwhile, Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) have signed Madhya Pradesh's mystery spinner Shivam

Shukla as a replacement for West Indies allrounder Rovman Powell, who has been ruled out due to personal reasons.

Shukla, known for his deceptive spin and variations, has previously served as a net bowler for Sunrisers Hyderabad. His inclusion provides KKR with an exciting domestic talent, aimed at bolstering their bowling resources as they continue their title defence. Shukla is expected to make his debut in KKR's upcoming match against Sunrisers Hyderabad on May 25.

WTC selection no clearer for Australia**AGENCIES**

SYDNEY, MAY 19 (UNI)

The race to feature in Australia's top six at the ICC World Test Championship Final next month further intensified following a range of indifferent results from key batters in England's County Championship.

Australia named their 15-player squad for the World Test Championship Final against South Africa at Lord's last week and a host of their important batters are already in England preparing themselves for the one-off Test from



June 11.

Key batter Cameron Green boosted his chances of selection in Australia's XI with a superb century for Gloucestershire in their four-day contest against Kent in Bristol to further

strengthen his claims of a return to the Test arena for the first time in more than 15 months.

Green has only just returned from back surgery, but looked in excellent touch for Gloucestershire as he scored his second century since arriving on English shores when amassing 128 from just 184 deliveries in his side's first innings.

The powerful right-hander hit 17 fours and one massive six during his knock, boosting Gloucestershire's chances of claiming maximum points and winning the approval of the home fans in a tight Division 2 contest at the County Ground, an ICC report said.

"It was amazing. I definitely wanted a good score in front of the fans," Green said.

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