



Achieve goal of terror-free J&K: LG Sinha to security, intelligence agencies

Chairs UHQ Meet, Reviews Security and Yatra Preparedness

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, 20 MAY 2025: THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, Shri Manoj Sinha today chaired Unified Headquarters (UHQ) meeting at Raj Bhawan in Srinagar to review the current security scenario in the Union Territory and the security arrangements for the annual Shri Amarnathji Yatra.

The meeting was attended by Northern Army Commander Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, Chief Secretary Shri Atal Dulloo, DGP Shri Nalin Prabhat, GoC 15 Corps Lt Gen Prashant Srivastava, GoC 16 Corps Lt Gen P K Mishra, GoC 9 Corps Lt Gen Rajan Sharawat, Air Vice Marshal Vikas Sharma, AOC J&K, Principal Secretary Home Shri Chandraker Bharti, ADGP CID Shri Nitish Kumar, Principal Secretary to Lieuten-



ant Governor and CEO SASB Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, senior officials of Armed Forces, CAPFs, J&K Police, Intelligence Agencies and civil administration. The Lieutenant Governor congratulated armed forces, Security agencies and J&K Police for 'Operation Sindoor' and successfully neutralising the terrorists in the past few days.

The Lieutenant Governor directed all the security agencies for precise, intelligence-led operations to neutralise terrorists and dismantling of support cells. He discussed the key strategies and broader counter-terrorism approaches for security and intelligence agencies to achieve the goal of 'Terror-Free J&K'.

He also reviewed the security preparedness for Shri

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Operation Sindoor Not Over, Only Suspended: Brigade Commander Poonch

■ HT News Network

POONCH, MAY 20: Asserting that Operation Sindoor is not over and it only remains suspended for the time being, a senior Army official on Tuesday said the Indian Army remains alert, ready and, if challenged once more, will respond yet again.

The Poonch sector wit-



nessed heightened tensions and artillery shelling attacks nearly two weeks ago, with

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Will ensure smooth, safe conduct of Amarnath Yatra, Mela Kheer Bhawani: CM Omar

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 20: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said all arrangements will be made to ensure the safe and smooth conduct of the upcoming Kheer Bhawani Mela and the Amarnath Yatra.

Abdullah visited Ganderbal, a constituency that he represents in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, and paid his respects at the revered Kheer Bhawani temple in the district.

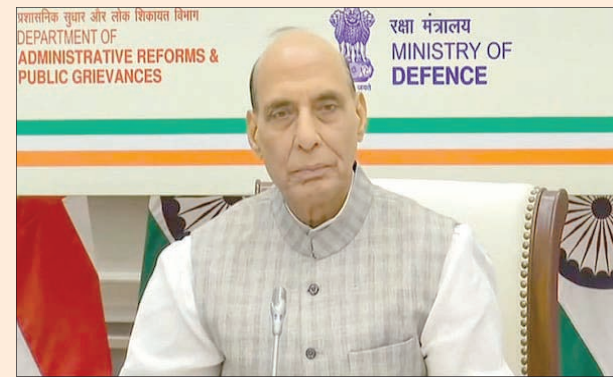
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Indian armed forces operated like expert surgeons: Rajnath Singh

Our soldiers punished perpetrators, left innocents untouched

■ HT News Network



SRINAGAR, MAY 20: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday said the Indian armed forces "operated like expert surgeons" during "Operation Sindoor," targeting terrorist camps with precise strikes, similar to how a surgeon removes infected part, ensuring minimal impact beyond the intended areas.

He said the strikes brought down the operational network of the Pakistani army that supports terrorist activities. Singh, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) was speaking at the 25th anniversary function of Dr KNS Memorial Hospital (Mayo Medical Center) in Lucknow.

Addressing the gathering, he said the Indian forces operated with the focus and precision of surgeons, selecting only the intended targets.

"Our forces acted just like expert doctors or surgeons. A surgeon uses his instruments precisely where the disease lies, and the Indian forces have done the same —

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NEWS BRIEF

Live Shell Defused Near LoC Village in Poonch

POONCH, MAY 20, : A major tragedy was averted in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district after the bomb disposal squad of the Indian Army successfully defused a live shell discovered near a roadside in Dara Bagyal village, close to the Line of Control (LoC). According to official sources, the shell, believed to have been fired from across the border, was first spotted by local residents. Positioned dangerously close to a road frequently used by villagers, the unexploded

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Minor girl dies after being hit by scooter in Srinagar's Soura, driver arrested

SRINAGAR, MAY 20: A three-year-old girl died after being hit by a scooter in Soura area of Srinagar today afternoon, while the driver has been arrested, officials said. An official said that the girl was hit by the scooter in the Awantabhawani area of Soura and was critically injured in the incident. "Soon after she was rushed to SKIMS Soura where she succumbed to her injuries. The scooter rider has been arrested and further probe is on," he said.

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Udhampur Police Freeze Assets Worth Rs 4 Crore Of Notorious Drug Peddler

UDHAMPUR, MAY 20: As part of their ongoing "Drug Free Udhampur" initiative, the Udhampur police have arrested 50 drug peddlers so far and seized a significant amount of narcotic substances.

Udhampur District SSP Amod Ashok Nagpure said that the police have intensified their crackdown on the district's drug trade, registering 40 cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act in 2025.

"Udhampur Police has registered 40 cases in the year 2025 under the NDPS Act and

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S.J.M Gillani appointed Special DG Coordination PHQ

■ HT News Network/UNI

SRINAGAR, MAY 20: Government on Tuesday appointed with immediate effect S.J.M Gillani (IPS) as Special DG Coordination PHQ. According to government order, a copy of which lies with GNS, the 1994-IPS officer shall continue to hold charge of MD, J&K Police Housing Corporation. Gillani was

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India won't tolerate terror that hides under nuclear blackmail: Foreign Secretary

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, MAY 20: Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Tuesday asked the members of the All-Party Delegation to tell the world that India won't tolerate terror that hides under nuclear blackmail.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the Foreign Secretary while briefing the three of the seven All-Party Delegation members, who



are going to represent India's stand on the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, which left 26 civilians, mostly tourists dead and "Operation Sindoor" said, "No distinction will be made between the

terrorists, their leaders and the government that sponsors them."

He told the delegation members that India's zero tolerance against the terrorism needs to be conveyed to the world.

During the meeting, officials said, the Foreign Secretary discussed all the important issues with the members of the delegation. "He (Foreign Secretary) also discussed the points which members are expected to

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Modi-led Govt committed to safety, security of border communities: LoP Sharma

■ HT News Network/

JAMMU, MAY 20: The Leader of Opposition and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, Sunil Sharma on Tuesday visited the border areas for the fourth straight day to assess the damage caused by Pakistan shelling.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Sharma was accompanied by several Party leaders and legislators including Sham Lal Sharma, Dr Narinder Singh and others.

They visited Geeta Bhawan and Gurudwara Sahib in

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Mehbooba Mufti Urges Rs 50 Lakh Compensation for Border Shelling Victims,

Demands Jobs for Kin of Deceased, Aid for Uninsured Shopkeepers

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 20, : Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti has strongly urged the government to compensate border residents who have suffered total losses due to cross-border shelling, recommending a minimum of Rs



50 lakh for each affected family. She also demanded that these residents be formally recognized as "war victims"

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given the extent of destruction they have faced over the years.

After her recent visits to Poonch, Tangdhar, and other border areas, Mehbooba Mufti said she was left shocked at the deplorable conditions in which civilians are living. "Even today, people are spending nights under

CS demands timely delivery on high-impact PPP projects through CITaG

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 20: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today chaired the 2nd Empowered Committee Meeting of the Centre for Innovation and Transformation in Governance (CITaG) in which he emphasised upon laying of focus on implementation of projects in Public-Private Partner-



ship (PPP) mode after their identification by the Departments.

Those who attended includes Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST-K; Director, IIM-

Jammu; Commissioner Secretary, IT; Commissioner Secretary, Tourism; Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD; Commissioner

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Director Information JK reviews Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra arrangements Stresses on seamless arrangements, coordination at all designated stations

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 20: The Director Information, Jammu and Kashmir, Nitish Rajora today chaired a meeting of officers at the Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Srinagar, to review the arrangements for the upcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY).

At the outset, the Director took a detailed review of logistical arrangements, including the installation of public address systems (PAS), staff deployment, and the



formulation of a comprehensive media and publicity plan. He emphasized the need for robust staff deployment

and seamless coordination across all designated locations. Stressing the importance of early preparedness,

the Director instructed that foolproof arrangements be made in advance for the smooth installation and operation of PAS at all earmarked spots to ensure better convenience for the pilgrims.

He further directed that preparations related to installation of hoardings, banners, and other publicity materials be completed well in advance at all identified locations. He issued strict instructions for effective coordination among the des

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Legislators in J&K Admit Feeling Powerless, Blame PDP for Present Crisis

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 20, : A growing sense of frustration is brewing among ruling legislators in Jammu and Kashmir, many of whom privately admit they have little say in governance and are perceived by the public as powerless. Several legislators, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said they feel disempowered in the absence of full statehood and believe people know it very well.

"Everyone knows we are powerless. There is nothing substantial we can do on the ground, and the public is very much aware of that

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

LG

Amarnathji Yatra which is scheduled from 3rd July to 9th August 2025 and directed the senior officials of Armed Forces, CAPFs, Intelligence Agencies and J&K Police to take all necessary action to ensure safe and peaceful sacred pilgrimage.

RAJNATH

striking at the root of terrorism with unmatched precision," Singh said.

He said the operations were planned and executed with care to ensure that civilian areas were not affected.

According to him, the Indian armed forces ensured that those responsible for spreading violence were targeted, while non-combatants remained unharmed.

Referring to the response from across the border, Singh said Pakistan attempted to retaliate after the Indian strikes.

He said Pakistan targeted Indian civilians and religious sites in its counteractions.

"Pakistan started trying to attack Indian soil, and attempts were made to target common citizens. Temples, gurdwaras and churches were targeted. The action taken by the Indian forces in response brought the Pakistani army to its knees," Singh said.

He said that India's response remained focused on neutralising terrorist hideouts. He stated that the Indian forces took full care to avoid civilian casualties in their retaliatory operations.

"Our soldiers made sure that while punishing the perpetrators, innocent lives were not affected," Singh said.

He also added that the intent was to hit only the locations where terrorist activities were being supported and planned.

The Defence Minister said that India's operations were limited to those directly involved in violence. He said the action sent a clear message regarding India's policy on cross-border terrorism.

He said the Indian armed forces acted with full responsibility to secure national interests and ensure the safety of Indian citizens—

CM

"We have started our preparations (for the yatra). As far as security is concerned, all arrangements will be put in place. It will be our endeavour to have a successful Mata Kheer Bhawani Mela first, and then an Amarnath Yatra via both routes of Sonamarg and Pahalgam. We want all yatries to return safely," he told reporters Mela Kheer Bhawani, an important religious event for Kashmiri Pandits, is likely to be celebrated in the first week of June. Kashmiri Pandits from all parts of the country assemble at the temple of Ragnya Devi. The annual Amarnath Yatra will begin on July 3.

Asked about the effects of the Pahalgam attack on tourism, the chief minister said the government will wait for the situation to stabilise before working on the revival of the tourism sector.

"It has been hit, but as of now, we are not doing anything about it. Let the situation stabilise first, then we will sit with the stakeholders and take steps to revive tourism under a programme.

"The good thing is that the tour operators outside J&K also want it to revive. Some groups have started coming. But let the yatra pass off peacefully, then we will focus on tourism," he added.

The chief minister also inaugurated a slew of developmental projects in Ganderbal.

"Delighted to inaugurate the Water Supply Scheme at Bakura, Ganderbal — a vital project that will ensure clean and dependable drinking water for over 4,000 people. Joined by Hon'ble Ministers @sakinaitoo, @javedRanaa, and Advisor @nasirsogami on this important step forward for the community. This reflects our government's commitment to improving basic amenities and the quality of life for all," Abdullah said on X.

He inaugurated an old age home at Pandach in Ganderbal and termed it "a significant step towards ensuring dignity and care for our senior citizens".

Abdullah also laid the foundation stone of the Science Block at the Government College of Engineering and Technology at Safapora.

"Technology is the backbone of modern entrepreneurship — our youth must be equipped to lead the future," he said.

SINDOOR

the recent attacks here by Pakistan followed by India's retaliatory Operation Sindoor, which targeted terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that claimed the lives of 26 civilians. Jammu dining guide

A wave of artillery shelling, missile and drone strikes in the Jammu region, particularly Poonch, killed 27 people and injured over 70 from May 8 to 10. Thousands have fled from the Line of Control (LoC) and International Border (IB) areas to seek refuge in government-run relief camps.

"Operation Sindoor is not over, it only

remains suspended for the time being," Poonch Brigade Commander Brig Mudit Mahajan told reporters here.

Maintaining operational preparedness, he said, "The Indian Army remains alert, ready and, if challenged once more, we will respond yet again, not with words but with fire and the resolve of the nation."

In sum, he said, the Pakistan Army's losses were not just in numbers but also in morale and initiative. "Today, they have lost their credibility before their own nation. So far, we have inputs suggesting heavy fatal and non-fatal casualties inflicted upon the enemy."

He further said the number of fatal casualties is still increasing with each passing day, as intelligence agencies are working to corroborate and verify these inputs.

The Poonch Brigade was not merely involved but played a central role in the Indian Army's powerful response to the recent cross-border aggression during Operation Sindoor, he said.

"We did not wait to react, we prepared to respond. To that extent, I will say that the Poonch Brigade was not a part but the heart of Operation Sindoor," Mahajan said.

He spelled out the Brigade's active and continuous involvement in countering Pakistani aggression along the LoC.

"The Pakistan-sponsored terror strike at Pahalgam was met with a calibrated response from the Indian Army, initially focusing solely on terrorist infrastructure. The Army struck with unmatched precision and purpose — six of nine critical terrorist targets struck were opposite Poonch, Rajouri and Akhnour, and these were neutralised effectively that night," he said.

DG

also holding the additional charge of Commandant General, Home Guards, Civil Defence and SDRF, J&K.

Also Alok Kumar, IPS (1997), Director, J&K Fire and Emergency Services, has been asked to hold the charge of Commandant General, Home Guards, Civil Defence. (GNS)

FS

discuss with the world leaders as well as diplomats of various nations," they added.

Pertinently, seven delegations are visiting the United States, Japan, Gulf nations and other important capitals of the world in coming days to present India's viewpoint on the recent skirmishes and India's zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism—

CRISIS

reality," said one legislator. He squarely blamed the People's Democratic Party for the current political vacuum, claiming it was their alliance with the BJP that gave New Delhi the opportunity to systematically erode the political authority of J&K's elected representatives.

Another legislator echoed the sentiment, saying: "Without statehood, we are merely representatives in name. There is no real decision-making power left with us."

Amid this growing chorus of discontent, senior legislator Dr Bashir Ahmed Veeri—who defeated Iltija Mufti, daughter of PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, in the Assembly elections, also weighed in on the issue. He rejected PDP's attempts to pin the blame on the current dispensation.

"PDP has no moral right to blame anyone. They were the ones who invited the BJP into Jammu and Kashmir through their alliance. That partnership opened the door for everything that followed," said Dr Veeri.

He also accused PDP of spreading misinformation. "They uploaded a twisted video on social media, trying to project it differently. I was expressing genuine concerns about the deteriorating law and order situation in the Valley, not endorsing PDP's narrative," he said.

Dr Veeri maintained that legislators like him cannot be blamed for the current state of affairs. "We are disempowered. When nothing lies in your hands, how can you be held accountable?" he asked. [KNT]

DIRECTOR INFO

ignated staff to ensure that all stations remain functional and operate smoothly until the culmination of the sacred pilgrimage.

The chair was briefed on the current status of arrangements, including the availability of staff and the installation of necessary equipment and machinery for the hassle-free functioning of stations during the Yatra. Officers also apprised the Director of the facilities being put in place, in line with past practices.

The Director underscored the importance of effective publicity campaigns to disseminate vital information about the Yatra.

The meeting was attended by Joint Director Headquarters Vivek Puri, Joint Director Kashmir Syed Shah Nawaz Ahmad Bukhari, Joint Director Jammu Deepak Dubey, Deputy Director Information PR, Deputy Director Central, concerned District Information

Officers, and other officials.

MEHBOOBA

the open sky with no shelter, no security, and no support from the government. Lives have been lost, homes have been flattened, and livelihoods destroyed. Yet, there is no sign of relief," she said while addressing the media.

Mufti criticized the administration for failing to respond meaningfully to the crisis. "Not a single rupee has been given to the shelling victims so far. The government's apathy is painful," she remarked. She demanded that the next of kin of those killed in shelling incidents be provided government jobs and that shopkeepers who suffered losses without any insurance coverage be compensated adequately.

The former CM also expressed serious concern over the crumbling healthcare system in Poonch, saying that the absence of ventilators in hospitals has become a "source of death" rather than healing. "Improving the health infrastructure in border districts like Poonch must be treated as an urgent priority," she said.

Highlighting the need for better civilian protection, Mufti demanded the immediate construction of more underground bunkers. "It is heartbreaking that in the 21st century, when the rest of the world talks about progress, our border residents are forced to ask for bunkers and roofs over their heads instead of education or healthcare," she added.

In response to a question, Mehbooba Mufti said that war is not an option.

Mufti concluded by expressing deep grief over the continued neglect of border dwellers and called upon the government to respond with compassion and accountability to those living under constant threat. [KNT]

CS

Secretary, GAD and Information; Secretary, Planning; Secretary, Revenue; Secretary, Transport; MD, JKSPDC; MD, Housing Board; VC, LCMA, representative from NHLML and other concerned officers.

Outstation officers participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

During this meeting the Chief Secretary took note of the progress made in hiring of technical resource persons for making this institution fully functional here. He also enquired about the capacity building programs initiated by CITaG to enhance the efficiency of the officers working here across the UT.

Taking note of the dozens of projects identified for taking up under PPP mode here, the Chief Secretary directed for showing team efforts and ensuring that each of them is implemented in a definite time-frame.

He made out that besides the equity from the private players and credit from 5he financial institutions the funding from Department of Economic Affairs, GoI and other relevant centrally sponsored schemes could also be explored to see these projects grounded here in the UT.

The Chief Secretary took this occasion to enjoin upon the different stakeholders to show utmost coordination with each other and took it upon themselves for making these projects to see the light of the day in a time-bound manner.

The Secretary, PD&MD, Talat Parvez presented a detailed status report and roadmap for ongoing and upcoming initiatives under the CITaG framework, highlighting the government's resolve to build a future-ready, innovation-driven governance model for J&K.

The agenda if this Empowered Committee Meeting included updates on Action Taken Report (ATR) of decisions from the previous meeting held in the month of March, recruitment progress by IIM Jammu for sectoral experts and young professionals, deliverables aligned with the national vision of Viksit Bharat @2047 and Agenda 2030 (SDGs) and review of 57 Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects across key development sectors.

In addition to that the Future Ready Governance (FRG) training modules for J&K government officials were also discussed in detail.

It was given out that the first phase of recruitment under CITaG has been completed by IIM Jammu. The second phase, as per the MoU, will induct domain specialists in infrastructure, social sectors (education, health), HRD, IT, data analytics, legal affairs, and environment, along with 7 young professionals.

Moreover it was given out that a total of Rs8 Cr had been allocated for FY 2025–26 under UT Capex, of which Rs7.20 Cr had been released. It was said that additional funding is expected from NITI Aayog and the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA).

Significantly during this meeting the main highlight was the rollout of 57 PPP projects with an estimated investment of Rs21.375 Cr to be taken-up through CITaG here.

These projects span 11 critical sectors, including Tourism (Heritage hotels, ropeways, eco-tourism circuits), Urban Development (parking facilities, amusement parks), Industry & Commerce (Ekta Malls,

IT Parks), Transport (E-bus services, ropeway connectivity), Energy (hydropower projects), Agriculture (Food processing, floriculture, tissue culture labs), Waste Management etc.

As far as the funding mechanisms are concerned the presentation outlined two critical PPP funding models like India Infrastructure Project Development Fund (IIPDF) and Viability Gap Funding (VGF) up to 40% project cost support for select sectors like health, education, and sanitation.

Among the noted challenges some cross-cutting issues were identified that need redressal for timely execution. These constitute delays in land and environmental clearances, connectivity and seasonal constraints at remote sites, infrastructure gaps and operational risks in tourism projects, institutional coordination and convergence challenges in many of the cases listed here.

With respect to Future Ready Governance (FRG) IIT Jammu and IIM Jammu have curated specialized training modules for government officers. These modules focus on digital governance, public policy, artificial intelligence and data analytics, and project management in a more professional and efficient manner.

POONCH

ordnance had the potential to cause widespread damage and casualties.

Upon noticing the suspicious object, residents immediately alerted the authorities, prompting the swift deployment of a bomb disposal team from the Indian Army. The squad arrived at the site, cordoned off the area, and safely defused the shell before carrying out a controlled detonation.

"The timely response by both the locals and the Army prevented what could have been a devastating incident," a senior official said. "The situation was extremely sensitive given the shell's location near a civilian area."

Security agencies have launched an investigation into the origin of the shell, although initial assessments suggest it may have been fired from Pakistani territory during recent cross-border firing episodes. [KNT]

GIRL

The girl has identified as Nabeeha Safer (3) daughter of Safer Ahmad Bhat, of Hamza Colony, Soura—(KNO)

POLICE

arrested 50 drug peddlers so far under the Drug Free Udhampur initiative. At the same time, four famous drug peddlers have been arrested under the strict provisions of the NDPS Act. A huge amount of narcotic substances have been seized from these drug peddlers," he said.

Further highlighting the police's efforts, he continued, "Taking this battle forward, Udhampur police have so far registered four cases attaching illegal properties of drug peddlers, the total value of which is around 4 Crores. We have also freed the bank accounts of 32 peddlers from which 16 Lakhs have been recovered."

Udhampur Police have also frozen movable assets of Rs 1.50 crore belonging to notorious drug peddler Mohammad Asif of Hartayan village, Rehambal

SSP Udhampur Amod Ashok Nagpure said, "The operation, carried out under Section 68(F) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, focused on assets allegedly purchased through illegal drug trafficking activities."

SSP Udhampur added that "confiscated property comprises three commercial trucks with registration numbers JK14J-6362, JK14J-8369, and JK20C-4698 and a Bolero vehicle (JK14J-4983). The attachment order was made today under ongoing legal proceedings in respect of FIR No. 14/25, registered at Rehambal Police Station under Sections 8/21/22 of the NDPS Act."

Mohammad Asif, son of Sanak Mohammad and a resident of Hartayan Rehambal, has been named as a key figure in the area's drug trade. The enforcement action reflects the district police's staunch commitment to their zero-tolerance approach to narcotics distribution and trafficking.

Nagpure explained that this attachment is one part of their "overall approach to dismantle the drug networks by going after their economic pillars."

Udhampur Police have vowed to continue a tough stand against drug crime perpetrators across the district. He added that our Motive is to Drug free Udhampur District. (Agencies)

LOP

Poonch town to assess the damage caused by Pakistani shelling.

The leaders interacted with local residents, took stock of the situation, and assured coordinated relief and rehabilitation efforts in collaboration with local authorities.

Pertinently, Sharma held a meeting with Poonch residents late Monday night.

After listening to their concerns, Sharma assured them of prompt support and essential supplies.

"The Narendra Modi government remains committed to ensuring the safety, security, and development of border communities, focusing on infrastructure enhancement and sustained relief efforts," he said.

Meanwhile, as per a statement issued here, a senior delegation of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) visited the shelling-affected areas of Poonch district to assess the ground situation and coordinate relief and rehabilitation measures for the affected population.

The delegation comprised Leader of Opposition in J&K Assembly Sunil Sharma, BJP National Secretary and MLA Dr. Narinder Singh, J&K BJP Vice President and MLA Sham Lal Sharma, J&K BJP General Secretary Adv. Vibodh Gupta, MLA Adv. Ranbir Singh Pathania, and District President S. Gurdeep Singh Khalsa.

The BJP leaders held a detailed meeting with the district administration to review the relief measures being undertaken in response to the recent unprovoked shelling by Pakistani forces along the Line of Control (LoC). They emphasized the need for immediate relief, long-term rehabilitation, and infrastructure enhancement in the border areas to support the resilience of local communities.

The delegation also visited Geeta Bhawan and Gurudwara Sahib in Poonch town to assess the structural damage caused by the shelling. Interacting with affected families, the BJP leaders offered their solidarity and assured that their concerns would be taken up with the Central Government on priority.

Sunil Sharma, while speaking on the occasion, said, "The courage and resilience of the people of Poonch in the face of constant danger is deeply inspiring. The BJP stands firmly with our border residents and will ensure that no family is left behind in the rehabilitation process."

Dr. Narinder Singh, remarked, "Our priority is to ensure that essential supplies reach every household impacted by the shelling. The Government of India is committed to providing all necessary support to rebuild lives and restore normalcy."

Sham Lal Sharma, stated, "The hardships faced by residents due to enemy aggression must be met with swift and coordinated action. We urge the administration to accelerate relief operations and strengthen infrastructure in vulnerable areas."

Adv. Vibodh Gupta, J&K BJP General Secretary, noted "Border communities are the first line of defense for our nation. Their security, dignity, and well-being must be our top concern, and the BJP will continue to be their strongest voice."

Adv. Ranbir Singh Pathania, said "We have seen firsthand the devastation caused by this shelling. It is imperative that our response is not just reactive, but proactive, focusing on preparedness, safety, and sustainable development."

The BJP delegation reaffirmed that the Narendra Modi-led government is fully committed to the development and security of border regions. Emphasis was placed on long-term infrastructure upgradation, construction of reinforced bunkers, and improved emergency response mechanisms—

Congress launches 'Jai Hind

Yatra' from Jammu, takes swipe

at BJP's 'Trianga Yatra'

Srinagar, May 20 (KNO): Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) President Tariq Hameed Karra on Tuesday launched the 'Jai Hind Yatra' from Jammu, terming it a tribute to the courage and sacrifice of India's armed forces.

Karra, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the yatra aims to showcase patriotism and national unity across 35 cities from May 20 to 30.

Speaking to reporters in Jammu, Karra took a sharp dig at the BJP's 'Trianga Yatra', accusing the ruling party of politicising and misusing the name of 'Operation Sindoor'. "If Trianga Yatra is being misused, it is the BJP," Karra alleged. "They are using it to divert attention from uncomfortable questions."

He said the Congress's 'Jai Hind Yatra' stands in honour of the valour of the Indian Army and is rooted in national pride, not politics. "This is not a counter to anyone. This is to salute our jawans and stand by the values of the Republic," he said.

Recalling Indira Gandhi, the JKPCC chief said the former Prime Minister never compromised on India's dignity. "She gave her life for the honour of the nation. Today, the country is once again remembering her bravery and resolve," he added. On India's foreign policy, Karra said the Congress was committed to a foreign policy position against third-party intervention in India-Pakistan relations. "Any discussion with Pakistan must be bilateral. That is our stated position, and there can be no compromise on that," he said.

He said the 'Jai Hind Yatra' will witness widespread participation from Congress leaders and supporters, with events planned across the country highlighting issues of national interest and honour—(KNO)





Finance Department, IUST Conducts Workshop on Procurement Amendments

HT News Network

Awantipora, May 20: The Finance Office of the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) organized a workshop to apprise university staff of recent amendments in the mode of procurement. The session, chaired by the Finance Officer, witnessed active participation from over 40 participants representing various departments that included Heads of Departments, faculty members and administrative staff.

The workshop aimed to foster a better understanding of the updated procurement procedures, emphasizing the principles of accountability and transparency. Participants engaged in meaningful discussions and received clarity on the revised guidelines, ensuring a consistent and informed approach to procurement practices across the university.

Empowering MSMEs through RAMP: Awareness Workshop held at ITI Ganderbal

HT News Network

GANDERBAL, MAY 20: A district-level awareness workshop on the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) programme was successfully conducted today at ITI Ganderbal.

The event was organized by Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO), in collaboration with the State Programme Implementation Unit (SPIU) – Grant Thornton Bharat LLP, and the District Industries Centre (DIC) Ganderbal. JKTPO is the nodal agency for RAMP under the Department of Industries and Commerce, Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

The workshop aimed to sensitize local stakeholders, enterprises, and departmental officials on the objectives and interventions under the RAMP scheme.

Officials from DIC Ganderbal, JKTPO, Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Lead Bank Ganderbal, and a large number of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) of the district participated in the awareness programme.

Chandigarh Group of Colleges Jhanjeri Under Fire After J&K Student Dies by Suicide in Hostel Room

HT News Network

Srinagar, May 20, KNT: Authorities on Monday attached the immovable property of Pakistan-based militant handler Owais Feroze Mir, son of Feroze Ahmad Mir, under Section 88 of the CrPC, following court directions.

The property, measuring 02 marlas and 79 square feet and located in Frestabal area of Pampore (Drangabal estate), was seized after the Special Designated Court under the NIA Act in Pulwama—Hon'ble Court of Additional Sessions Judge—issued an attachment order in connection with a militancy case.

The court order was executed jointly by revenue officials and Pampore police in the presence of local residents.

According to police, Owais Feroze is involved in FIR No. 42/2018 registered at Police Station Pampore under Sections 18, 20, and 38 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. He has been declared a proclaimed offender by the NIA-designated court in Pulwama.

Officials said Owais Feroze, currently based in Pakistan, is actively involved in promoting militancy in Kashmir by facilitating the infiltration of arms and ammunition and attempting to revive local militant networks. [KNT]

Lightning Kills Over 40 Sheep and Goats in Central Kashmir Forest

HT News Network

Ganderbal, May 20, KNT: Nearly 40 sheep and goats were killed after being struck by lightning in the forested area of Hariganiwan in Central Kashmir's Kangan area of Ganderbal district late Monday night.

The livestock belonged to Abdul Wahid Khattana, a nomadic herder from Sunderbani in Rajouri district, who had set up camp at Chechi Pati in Hariganiwan as part of his seasonal migration to the upper pastures.

Officials confirmed that the lightning strike occurred during a sudden and intense thunderstorm that hit the region. The animals, caught unprotected in the open grazing field, died on the spot. "The incident happened around midnight when a bolt of lightning struck the area where the livestock were gathered. The sheer intensity left no chance of survival," said a local forest official.

Chief Justice visits District Court Complex Srinagar

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 20: Justice Arun Palli, Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, alongwith Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Administrative Judge for District Srinagar, today paid visit to the District Courts Srinagar. The visit marked a significant step toward strengthening the judiciary at the grassroots level and reinforcing the commitment of the High Court to ensure accessible and efficient justice delivery.

On the arrival at the District Court Complex, Srinagar, Chief Justice was warmly received by the Principal District & Sessions Judge, Srinagar, and other judicial officers.

Chief Justice was accompanied by Mohinder Kumar Sharma, Registrar General (Officiating) and Rajiv Gupta, Registrar Vigilance, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir, who joined Chief Justice in inspecting the facilities and administrative arrangements at the court complex.

Justice Palli inspected the court facilities and interacted with the members of the District Judiciary, appreciating their efforts in maintaining the



rule of law and ensuring the timely dispensation of justice.

DC Srinagar chairs District Level Committee meeting of NCORD

Emphasizes intensified IEC campaign, strengthening ATFs, proper rehabilitation of drug victims

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 20: A meeting of District Level Committee on Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) was Tuesday held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat here at Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex to review and strengthen ongoing measures to combat drug abuse, its peddling and proper rehabilitation of drug victims in district. The meeting deliberated on key issues, including stringent enforcement actions against drug peddlers, intensified awareness campaigns and enhanced treatment and rehabilitation facilities for those affected by substance abuse.

At the outset, DC took first hand appraisal from officers of all line departments and other stakeholders regarding the progress achieved in ongoing fight against the drug menace in order to curb it and tighten the noose against drug peddlers.

Dr Bilal emphasized for intensifying sustained IEC campaigns across the district to sensitize masses particularly youth about detrimental and harmful effects of drug abuse. He also laid stress on strengthening Addiction Treatment Facilities (ATFs) at SMHS, SKIMS Bemina and at IMHAANs to provide better treatment facilities and proper rehabilitation of drug victims.

During the meeting, DC assessed the performance of private drug de-addiction centers and stressed their effective functioning as per the laid guidelines. He sought a detailed report on the performance of these centers.

He also called for early operationalization of the Drug De-addiction & Rehabilitation Centre at Sanath Nagar.

DC also underlined the need to keep proper vigil on private coaching centers and courier service agencies and asked Sub Divisional Magistrates to conduct surprise inspections of such



institutions and establishments. He further asked them to conduct audits of the private coaching centers and proper regulation of courier services agencies in the district. Dr Bilal emphasized the importance of a holistic approach involving prevention as well as education, treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of drug victims back into the society, at the same time strict enforcement measures as a strong deterrent.

On the occasion, DC was given a brief regarding ongoing deterrent measures taken by the Police, Excise, Anti-narcotics and Drug Control department. He was also apprised about the patients visiting IPD and OPD sections of ATFs at SMHS, SKIMS Bemina and IMHAANs with present trending scenario of the drugs related patients.

Besides, Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz; Superintendent of Police, Umar Shah; Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Lone; SDM, East, Zubair Ahmad; SDM West, Irfan Bahadur and District Social Welfare Officer Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad, the meeting was attended by the Officers of Education, Excise, Drug Control Organization, Health, Post Office, Airport Heads of ATFs at SMHS, SKIMS Bemina & IMHAANs and other concerned Departments.

DC Srinagar reviews implementation of Dharti Aaba Abhiyan

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 20: In order to review the implementation of Dharti Aaba Abhiyan in tribal villages of the district, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat today chaired a meeting at the meeting hall of the DC Office Complex.

At the outset, DC discussed in detail the action plan for conduct of awareness campaign under Dharti Aabha Abhiyan scheduled from 15 June to 30th June, 2025 in tribal village Faqir Gujri of Srinagar district aimed at saturating all Government schemes and other beneficiary oriented programmes at the grassroots level.

On the occasion, DC asked the line departments to conduct house to house survey based on gap analysis to collect requisite data for successful implementation of Dharti Aaba Abhiyan in tribal villages of the district.

DC passed directions for constituting survey teams who will be visiting the households of the target population and submit reports by May 26, 2025.

During the meeting, DC underscored differ-



ent dimensions of the centrally sponsored flagship scheme launched to uplift tribal communities and ensure their socio-economic development.

Besides Additional District Development Commissioner, Rifat Aftab; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed; Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; the meeting was attended by Chief Medical Officer, District Social Welfare Officer, Programme Officer ICDS, Lead District Manager, Officers of Rural Development Department, Education and other concerned Officers.

Drug Free J&K initiative: Distt Admin Srinagar organizes awareness programme at Noorbagh

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 20: Continuing its intensified Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaigns under the drugs free Jammu & Kashmir initiative, District Administration Srinagar today organized awareness programme at Shaheen Public School Noorbagh.

The awareness programme was held on the directions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, to raise awareness about the illicit impacts of the drugs on the individuals, their families and the society. The event saw active participation from officials representing the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Departments of Education, Health, Excise, Social Welfare and other concerned. School



staff and students also took part in the programme. During the programme, speakers highlighted the importance of collective community responsibility in addressing the growing challenge of substance abuse.

They urged the youth to channel their energy into constructive and developmental pursuits. Students pledged to become active change-makers and advocates for a drug-free society within their own communities.

Secretary, DLSA Bandipora holds introductory/ review meetings with Panel Lawyers, LADCs & PLVs

HT News Network

BANDIPORA, MAY 20: Secretary, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Bandipora, held three separate meetings with Panel Lawyers, Legal Aid Defense Counsels (LADCs), and Adhikar Mitras (PLVs) to discuss key initiatives and challenges in providing legal aid services to the marginalized sections of society. Meetings aimed to enhance prompt delivery of legal services to vulnerable people, ensure competent representation, improve case management and legal representation

standards, strategize qualitative legal services in criminal matters and review effectiveness of Adhikar Mitras (PLVs) in delivering legal services in the most effective and time bound manner.

During the meeting, Secretary DLSA Bandipora emphasized LADCs and Panel Lawyers to regularly interact with legal aid beneficiaries for feedback and improvement, provide them diligent and effective representation in court, professional management of the legal aid system in criminal trials, timely and free legal aid to needy individuals,

awareness of government schemes and benefits, support to aggrieved women and vulnerable individuals. He also stressed Adhikar Mitras (PLVs) to provide legal assistance at police stations and educating individuals about their rights, conduct door-to-door awareness campaigns in far-flung areas, identify and support vulnerable individuals, including children who dropped out of school due to financial constraints, senior citizens in distress or abandoned by their children, mentally ill persons requiring medical attention.

Magam Road Blocked as Locals Demand Clean Drinking Water

HT News Network

Budgam, May 20, KNT: Angry over an eight-day-long water outage, residents of Beerwah town in Central Kashmir's Budgam district staged a protest on Tuesday, blocking the Magam Road near the State Bank.

The demonstrators expressed outrage at the Jal Shakti Department, accusing it of failing to provide basic amenities like clean drinking water. Protesters said daily life has been thrown into chaos, with no response from the authorities despite repeated complaints.

The protest led to a major traffic disruption in the area before local officials, including SHO Beerwah and other administrative officers, intervened and assured immediate redressal of the issue. [KNT]

EDITORIAL

Social media has changed the landscape of modern day journalism

Technology has invaded the life of each and every individual in the nook and corner of the world. Each and every sphere of life has been impacted by technology and there is no going back in this regard. Since all the professional fields have seen the influence of the digital invasion how can journalism remain apart? With the passage of time the social media platforms of the different media outlets have assumed centre stage across the globe.

There was a time when physical circulation of newspapers was considered to be the ultimate. The day started with the reading of a newspaper and there were people who used to have the morning tea while having a newspaper in their hand. With the passage of time there has been a change in the newspaper reading. As on date the hard copies of newspapers have been replaced by the soft copies and there are very few people who still rely on the hard copies.

The e-paper and PDF versions of newspapers have virtually revolutionized newspaper reading. The biggest advantage of the latest trend of newspaper reading is that one can go through the local, national and international newspapers while surfing the mobile phone. The e-paper and PDF versions of newspapers are available early in the morning and these provide an insight to the happenings taking place at the local, national and international level. It is due to this reason that the circulation of newspapers has come down.

Given this situation the people managing the affairs of the Department of Information should understand that in the present day context the reach of a newspaper should be gauged by its popularity on the different social media platforms. The same should also form a basis for the distribution of advertisements to the different newspapers getting published from Kashmir and Jammu divisions of the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir. The physical circulation of newspapers should not be made a condition for the distribution of advertisements for such media outlets.

In case conditions are attached to the distribution of advertisements for newspapers there are chances the newspapers would either close down their publications or lay-off the staff working in these organizations. In such a scenario a huge army of youth would be left jobless thus leading to crisis for many families across the union territory. This would be detrimental to the interests of the public at large and especially for the families that will be impacted.

Overhaul Consumer Protection Act to empower consumers

SUBHASH CHANDRA AGRAWAL

Consumer Protection Act 2019 needs root-level changes either in the Act itself or by modifications in rules so that need for filing complaints may not be arise. A very-little fraction of consumers approach consumer-forums for their consumer-rights against malpractices of big manufacturers because of very cumbersome procedure and spent of so many man-days in consumer-courts.

Portal Jago-Grahak-Jago on the website of the Department of Consumer Affairs (Government of India) acts like a post office to deliver eye-wash replies from companies against whom complaints are lodged. Consumers are advised to approach Consumer Court if they are not satisfied with the replies of the companies received through the portal. The portal must be made practically effective with the Department made to scrutinise replies from the companies, and take the matter further in case replies are found unsatisfactory.

All companies should compulsorily put on their websites contact details including names of concerned senior officers and Directors. All such websites of companies should compulsorily give details of Government portals and consumer forms. Annual-Maintenance-Contracts (AMCs) should be practically made Extended Warranties since most companies fool consumers by not entertaining many aspects covered under AMCs.

All packaged commodities must be packed in the true metric spirit in either unit of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, or 1000 and thereafter in multiples of 1000 basic units abolishing any need for printing unit-price on packs. A popular milk brand (Namaste-India) has started packaging milk packs at 950 meters and 1900 meters to look like earlier packs of 1000 meters and 2000 meters respectively. There are so many packages in milk and milk products like 400 mltrs, and 450 mltrs, confusing consumers to look like 500 mltrs.

Commodities like Ghee are packed in litres in packs of 1 or 5 litres, but in kgs in packs of 15 kgs. A uniform system should be for marketing such products either by weight or by volume.

Drug manufacturers at times cheat consumers by packing commonly advertised medicines like cough lozenges in eight per strip rather than the normal ten. Many drug manufacturers started packing medicines in strips of 15 rather than 10 simply to increase sales. The suggested packaging system may be for medicines also unless exemption is sought from the competent authority for dose-wise administration. At times gifts given



by manufacturers to promote other products are swallowed by traders. The system should be to tie gifts with marketed products. "Not for sale alone" should be prominently printed on the gift.

Since the Supreme Court has allowed the use of A-4 size paper, any further production of legal-size paper must be banned. A slight modification in A-4 size paper is made from the present 29.5 cms x 21 cms to 30 cms x 20 cms to be in tune with the metric spirit.

Commodities and services with Government-administered prices should be in round figures of rupee one per unit like for petrol-diesel and in multiples of rupee fifty for commodities like LPG refill. Likewise, all postal-tariffs can be in multiples of rupee ten except for ordinary post-cards and registered newspapers which may have subsidised postal-tariff of rupee one. It will not affect consumers, since delivery-persons never return balance coins. Rounding-off prices can earn extra revenue for the Governments.

It is welcome that the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Association of India and the National Restaurant Association of India have lost the case at the Delhi High Court challenging guidelines issued by the Central Consumer Protection Authority on levying service in bills of hotels and restaurants. Consumer Protection Act should be amended so that hotels and restaurants may not be able to impose any extra levy other than Government-taxes. Moreover, the Consumer Protection Act should ban the colonial practice of paying tips directing hotels and restaurants to prominently display "No Tips" boards.

India being the largest consumer base, can impose conditions on foreign companies exporting commodities to India to set up their manufacturing units in India especially when many such foreign companies flood Indian markets with products manufactured in countries other than the country of origin. An example is the setting up of the biggest manufacturing plant of Samsung mobile phones in Noida (UP). It will result in huge earnings of foreign exchange by way of export from India rather than the drain of foreign exchange in importing such commodities. The union Government should ban the import of items that are already available in India of much superior quality.

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) should call a meeting of printer manufacturers including representatives of foreign companies to minimise types of ink cartridges. The largest selling foreign company Hewlett-Packard (HP) has too many types of ink cartridges of similar shape and size for their vast range of inkjet and laser printers.

Such standardisation will heavily reduce the cost of ink cartridges. The condition should be that such accessories may be allowed to be manufactured by Indian manufacturers. Standardisation of mobile chargers on lines of electrical plugs and sockets should also be done for mobile phones of all makes and companies.

Union Government should also induce standardisation of common accessories like tyres and batteries so that the same parts may be used in different models of cars produced by various car manufacturers. It will heavily bring down the cost of consumables through their bumper production in extra large numbers in

some limited sizes and specifications. It can be achieved by merging some nearing sizes and specifications.

Such guidelines though also mentioned in the auto-policy of the Union Government, are never followed in actual practice. There may be just two variants apart from the third with automatic gears, one basic Lx for economy customers and the other Vx with all company-fitted extra accessories and luxuries for affording customers.

Presently there is no limit to the allowed total profit margin on a commodity between the maximum retail price (MRP) and the Ex-factory price of commodities allowing huge total trade margins. Even economically priced generic medicines have printed MRP which is ten times higher than their wholesale price. Such big trade margins induce corruption in purchases.

Moreover, victims are normal consumers, especially in rural areas, who do not have access to and knowledge of wholesale markets. Department of Consumer Affairs must fix the maximum total trade margin for any commodity to bring down the MRP of commodities.

Even renowned confectioners having daily sales in lakhs of rupees, do not issue bills resulting in big losses to the exchequer. Confectioners should be directed to compulsorily stick a copy of the GST invoice on each box of unbranded sweets sold in loose. GST authorities should be advised to have a common GST rate of say 12 per cent on all food items where presently luxury sweets attract a GST rate of just 5 per cent while salted items attract 12 per cent GST giving liberty to confectioners often selling both items to show more sale of sweets to save GST under composite-scheme.

Such can be the case with other unbranded commodities taxable under GST sold loose. Fear psychology should be developed whereby traders may themselves voluntarily issue GST invoices to customers even without being asked for.

National Anti-Profitteering Authority (NAPP) should entertain suggestions coming from experts and members of the public. A consumer forum in Chandigarh once imposed a fine of rupees 9000 on a renowned shoe company for charging rupees three as the cost of paper bags.

But the same company and many famous branded shopping malls, are still charging the cost of paper bags from the shoppers. Department of Consumer Affairs should prohibit by law the "selling" of shopping bags just for packing goods.

(The writer is a RTI consultant. Views expressed are personal)

GeM – Making Public Procurement sparkle



BY PIYUSH GOYAL

The Government e Marketplace (GeM) has rapidly emerged as a world leader in providing a transparent, inclusive and efficient platform for public procurement. It connects more than 1.6 lakh government buyers with 23 lakh sellers and service providers, becoming a key engine of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

In nine years since PM Modi launched the transformative digital initiative, GeM has revolutionized the way government buys goods and services by weeding out corruption and giving business opportunities to startups, MSMEs,

women and businesses in small town.

The user-friendly platform is a true gem that has replaced the notorious Directorate General of Supplies and Disposals, which had opaque and uncompetitive systems that gave an unfair advantage to a privileged few. Befittingly, the Commerce and Industry Ministry's new office, Vanijya Bhawan, has been built on the land once occupied by this obsolete body.

Spectacular Growth - Since its inception in 2016, orders worth more than Rs 13.4 lakh crore have been transacted on the GeM portal. Public procurement at the platform rose to a record Rs 5.43 lakh crore in 2024-25. GeM aims to raise its annual business to Rs 7 lakh crore in the current fiscal. GeM has undoubtedly emerged as a technological behemoth in the public procurement landscape.

The magnitude of business transacted is likely to make GeM the world's largest public procurement portal, surpassing well-established institutions like South Korea's KONEPS, in the near future.

GeM has given greater opportunities to honest businesses, created jobs and supported India's economic growth. In this context, GeM's significance goes far beyond its phenomenal growth in financial terms, which itself would make any e-commerce giant jealous.

Engine of Equitable Growth - GeM serves as a critical engine of equitable growth in line with PM Modi's mission of sabka saath, sabka vikaas. It provides startups, small businesses and women-led enterprises an easy path to showcase their products and services to government buyers without any intermediaries. By eliminating barriers to entry, the platform empowers small homegrown businesses to participate in e-tenders and expand their businesses.

Guided by the principle of inclusivity, GeM has incorporated various strategic initiatives to support the growth of small businesses. These include systems to help government buyers identify and select products and services offered by MSMEs and women-led businesses.

Exceeding targets - Dedicated

storefronts on GeM like "Startup Runway" and "Womaniya" have effectively increased the visibility of these businesses as well as their share in public procurement. This has helped the government meet and exceed its goals of 25% procurement from Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) and 3% from women-led businesses. Nearly 38% of the business transacted on GeM is awarded to MSEs, and procurement by women enterprises stands at nearly 4%.

As of April 2025, more than 30,000 Startups have conducted business worth over Rs 38,500 crore through GeM. Further, 1.81 Lakh Udyam-verified women entrepreneurs have secured orders worth nearly Rs 50,000 crore on GeM portal.

Big Savings - These changes have translated into savings ranging from 33% to 96% for certain order sizes. This remarkable reduction is a welcome change in line with the Modi government's mission to enhance Ease of Doing Business and Ease of Living for the benefit of the common citizens of the coun-

try.

An independent evaluation by the World Bank shows that buyers on GeM save about 9.75% on the median price. This has led to huge savings of an estimated Rs 1,15,000 crore in public procurement using taxpayer money. GeM procurement helped state-run NTPC save Rs 2,000 crore using reverse auction in a Rs 20,000 crore contract. GeM has also helped transparent and cost-effective procurement of defence equipment, vaccines, drones and services like insurance.

In a major relief to small enterprises, GeM has significantly reduced its transaction charges recently. Orders exceeding Rs 10 lakh will incur lower transaction charge of 0.30%, while orders worth over Rs 10 Crore will incur a capped fee of Rs 3 lakh - a significant decrease from the previous Rs 72.50 lakh.

Technology, AI - With a robust technological infrastructure, the platform is continuously evolving by offering new and easier ways to do business using technological solutions. GeM has deployed an AI-

powered chatbot called "GeMAI" - a tool trained in conversational analytics and business intelligence. The smart chatbot is available in 8 vernacular languages and is equipped with latest technologies including voice command functionality to further enhance Ease of Doing Business on GeM portal.

GeM also offers financing products for MSE sellers. This gives collateral-free financing in less than 10 minutes for eligible purchase orders. The platform has introduced GeM Sahay 2.0, which serves as a single window to secure loans up to Rs 10 lakh. More initiatives and technological solutions are in the works to make the platform more inclusive and competitive.

The GeM portal stands as a pivotal engine in driving India's economic growth and development objectives of PM Modi. It will always run the extra mile to empower and uplift the marginalized sections of the society and promote entrepreneurship, while ensuring that taxpayer money is efficiently used to procure high-quality products at a competitive price

The missing Tatimas: How undocumented land subdivisions fuel endless disputes in J&K

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Thousands of land transfers lack Tatima Shajras, leaving ownership in legal limbo. There is an urgent need to fix J&K's broken land records system.

In the complex and often contested world of land administration in India, the Tatima Shajra—or the sub-division map of a survey number—plays an indispensable role in defining and demarcating ownership, boundaries, and possession. Nowhere is this more vital than in regions like Jammu & Kashmir, where land ownership history is tangled with historical reforms, customary transfers, and evolving legal frameworks. Yet, in thousands of cases, lands transferred by way of civil court decrees, oral gift deeds (commonly known as hiba), or landmark land redistribution measures such as the Jammu & Kashmir Agrarian Reforms Act of 1976 were never accompanied by Tatima Shajras. This omission has caused serious practical and legal problems for landowners, revenue officials, and courts alike.

This article delves into the importance of the Tatima Shajra, the consequences of its absence, and the legal and administrative pathways available to remedy this lacuna. It draws upon the Jammu & Kashmir Land Revenue Act, relevant case law, and practical insights from the ground to highlight why accurate and subdivided mapping of land is not merely a bureaucratic exercise, but a fundamental prerequisite for clarity in ownership, dispute resolution, and lawful land transactions

Understanding Tatima Shajra: The Visual Anchor of Land Rights

The Tatima Shajra is a scaled subdivision map derived from the original Shajra Nasab or village map, which marks out the entire layout of a village and its constituent khasra (survey) numbers. While Jamabandi entries and mutation registers may define the ownership and tenancy records on paper, the Tatima visually translates those rights onto the ground, specifying the dimensions, location, and boundaries of subdivided plots.



This document becomes critical when:

A portion of a larger khasra number is sold or transferred.

Multiple heirs or co-sharers divide land among themselves.

Land is acquired or distributed under state-led reforms.

Courts issue decrees for part-possession of a land parcel.

In each of these situations, without a Tatima, landowners are left in a grey zone—legally owning something whose physical boundaries remain undefined.

Historical Context: How Tatimas Went Missing

The absence of Tatimas in thousands of land transfers is not accidental. It is the result of systemic gaps and historical oversight.

Civil Court Decrees Without Demarcation

For decades, civil courts in Jammu & Kashmir passed decrees awarding portions of land to claimants without mandating the production or attachment of a Tatima Shajra. This was particularly common in partition suits, specific performance cases, and declaratory suits where the emphasis was on ownership rights rather than spatial delineation.

As a result, even after winning in court, decree-holders found themselves entangled in fresh disputes

during execution proceedings due to the absence of a demarcated sub-plot.

Oral Gift Deeds (Hiba) Without Measurement

In Muslim-majority regions, oral gifts or hiba were—and still are—common modes of land transfer, especially among family members. But such gifts, being oral, were often executed informally, without written documentation or accompanying Tatima. Over time, this created layers of ambiguity, particularly when co-sharers or successors challenged the exact location or extent of the gifted land.

Agrarian Reforms and Mass Transfers

The Jammu & Kashmir Agrarian Reforms Act, 1976, led to the transfer of ownership of vast tracts of land from landlords to tillers. While this was a progressive reform, the administrative machinery was overwhelmed. In many cases, ownership rights were updated in revenue records, but no effort was made to produce or attach Tatimas reflecting the exact parcels transferred

Consequences of Missing Tatimas

The absence of a Tatima creates a cascade of problems, including:

- a) Disputed Possession
- Even if a person is recorded as

the owner of a portion of a khasra number, the absence of a Tatima means that exact physical possession remains vague. Co-sharers may contest the boundaries, leading to clashes, encroachments, and police complaints.

b) Non-Execution of Court Decrees

Civil court decrees awarding partial land ownership or possession cannot be meaningfully executed without a Tatima. Execution petitions stall or are dismissed due to ‘non-identifiability’ of the land.

c) Mutation and Revenue Disputes

Revenue officials often refuse to mutate records or demarcate land without a Tatima. This leaves transactions in limbo and exposes buyers to legal risk.

d) Obstacles in Sale, Mortgage, and Partition

Banks and registration authorities insist on clear demarcation for sale deeds, mortgages, and family partitions. The absence of Tatimas delays or blocks such transactions

Legal Provisions and Judicial Interpretations

The Jammu & Kashmir Land Revenue Act, Svt. 1996 (1939 A.D.), while not directly mandating a Tatima for every transfer, empowers revenue officers under Section 107 to carry out partitions and demarcations. The Standing Order 23-A further outlines procedures for demarcation, and Stand-

ing Order 22 elaborates the process for preparing Tatimas during partitions or boundary fixation.

Recent judicial interpretations emphasise the necessity of proper mapping. In several rulings, the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has highlighted that a decree lacking spatial definiteness is incomplete for execution purposes, and parties must first approach the revenue authorities for a Tatima-based demarcation

Administrative Bottlenecks

Even when landowners are willing to rectify the absence of a Tatima, they encounter numerous challenges:

Revenue officials demand bribes or delay demarcation indefinitely.

Surveyors are overburdened or unavailable, particularly in remote tehsils.

Old khasras are mismatched with new computerised records, leading to confusion.

Boundary disputes obstruct site visits, with police reluctant to intervene.

Moreover, the Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP) has yet to fully address the issue of historical Tatima gaps, focusing instead on digitising existing records

What Can Be Done: Legal and Policy Recommendations

Mandatory Tatima with Decrees and Mutations

Civil courts must insist on a Tatima wherever a decree involves part of a khasra number. Likewise, tehsildars should not allow mutations of undivided portions without proper mapping.

Revenue Camps for Legacy Rectification

Special camps should be held to allow landowners to request Tatimas for past oral gifts, court decrees, or Agrarian Reforms-based titles. These camps can be modelled on the Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani initiative.

Training and Staffing of Patwaris and Girdawars

Survey staff need regular training in Tatima preparation, GPS surveying, and digital mapping tools. Additional patwaris should be posted in areas with backlogs.

Online Tatima Request Portals

Just as revenue records are being digitised, citizens should be able to request and track Tatima preparation online, with fixed timelines and fee structures.

Judicial-Administrative Coordination

Courts and revenue departments must establish protocols for the execution of decrees involving land, ensuring that Tatima mapping is treated as the first step, not an afterthought

Conclusion

The missing Tatima is not merely a missing map—it is a missing piece of justice, clarity, and certainty in land ownership. In a region like Jammu & Kashmir, where land disputes are frequent and emotionally charged, restoring the role of Tatima in every land transaction, transfer, or declaration is essential.

Without it, titles remain paper-thin, court decrees lie unexecuted, and peace in rural communities remains elusive. It is time the administration, judiciary, and citizens recognise the Tatima not as a technicality, but as the foundation of lawful landholding.

The writer is a columnist and researcher focusing on land laws and governance reforms in Jammu & Kashmir

Honesty, Integrity and Responsibility Pillars of Strong Character



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Character is not something that can be bought, borrowed or built in a day. It is shaped slowly, through our values, our choices and how we carry ourselves especially when no one is watching. In my journey as a teacher, father and citizen, I have come to realize that three powerful values stand at the heart of strong character.

Honesty, Integrity and Responsibility.

These are not merely weighty words we put on school walls or utter during morning assemblies. These are the intangible fibers that weave together our relationships, our communities and our country. Without them, knowledge rings empty, achievement is fleeting and respect becomes impossible.

Here are a few personal anecdotes which made me realize just how indispensable these values actually are.

Honesty, The Foundation of Trust.

I still vividly remember an experience from my schooldays when I was studying in the 9th grade. I had not done a mathematics homework. Fearing that I would be punished, I decided to copy my friend's homework. But something within me prevented me from doing so. I approached the teacher and told him, "Sir, I haven't done

it." The teacher glanced at me and rather than scolding, he smiled and said, That's okay, Mukhtar. I appreciate your honesty. But do it tomorrow.

That lesson taught me a lesson in life: honesty might be tough in the moment, but it creates lifelong trust.

As a teacher now, I always encourage my students to tell the truth, irrespective of how small or great the situation is. One time, a student broke a model in our activity room and confessed. Instead of punishing him, I complimented him in front of the class. Many others felt motivated to be honest that day too.

Honesty saves us not only from deception, it establishes credibility. In relationships, friendships, and even the workplace, individuals can forget your errors, but they will never forget your honesty.

Integrity, Doing Right Even When No One Is Watching.

Honesty is speaking the truth, whereas integrity is living the truth.

A few years back, while attending an examination in our school, I was in charge of handling a team of invigilators. There was one day when I spotted a teacher quietly providing a hint to a student during the examination. It was a tough decision whether to ignore it since it was a colleague or do what was right?

It wasn't simple, but I tackled the problem head-on and respectfully. The situation was handled with respect, and most importantly, it sent a clear message: integrity counts.

We're living in a world where taking shortcuts is appealing. Folks believe success is about "who you know" or "how cleverly you get around the system." But

the reality is integrity provides you with something no shortcut can: peace of mind and long-term respect.

I say to my students frequently: when you cheat, you don't cheat your teacher you cheat your own future.

Responsibility, Owning Your Words and Actions.

Responsibility is the third pillar that makes up a solid character. It is about taking responsibility for your actions, honoring your commitments, and embracing the good and bad consequences.

Being a parent, I always wonder how I instill responsibility in my son, Saffullah. One day, he kept his school bag outside in the rain and his books were drenched. Rather than shouting, I asked him to sit down, dry the books, and write what he learned from it. He replied, I learned that when I neglect small responsibilities, big issues arise.

That was enough.

Similarly, in my professional role, I've realized that true responsibility is not about waiting to be told what to do it's about doing what needs to be done without being reminded. Whether it's preparing a lesson plan, mentoring a junior teacher, or attending a community event, taking initiative shows commitment.

Responsibility is also about not blaming. When something does not go well in your team, own up to it. When a plan fails, learn from the failure. Growth occurs only when we stop pointing fingers and raise hands.

How These Values Shape Society.

Suppose a society in which all citizens were honest, exercised integrity, and accepted responsibility. Corruption would vanish. Alliances would prosper. Insti-

tutions would conduct themselves with honor. Would this not be the world we wish to create for our children?

Too often, we see the opposite. Students cheating on exams, leaders promising what they do not intend to deliver, professionals deflecting blame from themselves onto others. These are not isolated failures they erode the moral fabric of our society.

That is why character education is more vital now than ever. And it has to begin at home and in our schools. We have to teach by example. Kids learn more from what they see than what they hear. If we demand they be truthful, we have to tell the truth before them. If we desire them to behave with integrity, we need to not cut corners ourselves. If we demand they be responsible, we have to cease excuses in our own lives.

The Legacy We Leave.

Honesty, Integrity, and Responsibility are not moral values alone. They are investments in a better world. They determine who we are when the lights are off and no one is clapping.

I do not want my students to be mere doctors, engineers or officers. I want them to become honest citizens, people of integrity and good human beings. That is the true accomplishment. That is the kind of person the world should have more of.

If we can construct our lives on these three values, perhaps we will not become celebrities but we certainly will be remembered respectfully, and that in my view is the greatest reward.

(Writer is An Author, Writer and Columnist hails from Boniyar Baramulla and He Can Be Contacted on mukhtar.qur@gmail.com)

Education beyond academic grade s

VIJAY GARG

"Education beyond academic grades" emphasizes learning that goes deeper than test scores and report cards. It values holistic development, where knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values are just as important as marks. Here's how this idea plays out:

1. Skills over Scores

Critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration are essential 21st-century skills.

These aren't always reflected in exams but are crucial for real-world success.

2. Emotional Intelligence

Understanding and managing emotions, empathy, and interpersonal skills play a huge role in personal and professional life.

Social-emotional learning is often overlooked in traditional academics.

3. Creativity and Innovation

Arts, music, design, and creative thinking aren't always measured by marks but are vital in fields like entrepreneurship, tech, and media.

4. Ethics and Values

Integrity, compassion, and responsibility matter just as much—if not more—than academic performance in shaping character.

5. Lifelong Learning

Learning doesn't stop at school. A growth mindset and adaptability help people thrive in a changing world, beyond formal assessments.

6. Experiential Learning

Internships, volunteering, group projects, and real-world challenges provide learning that grades can't capture.

Vijay Garg Retired Principal Educational columnist Eminent Educationist street kour Chand MHR Malout Punjab



DC Samba reviews working of Municipal Bodies

HT News Network

SAMBA, MAY 20: Deputy Commissioner Samba Rajesh Sharma convened a comprehensive review meeting to assess the functioning of the Municipal Council Samba and the Municipal Committees of Vijaypur, Ramgarh and Bari Brahmana. The meeting was held in the Meeting Hall of the DC Office complex. During the proceedings, the Executive Officers presented detailed progress reports encompassing ongoing developmental works, administrative procedures, town profiling, beautification drives, and other key urban initiatives. The Deputy Commissioner undertook a town-wise and depart-

ment-wise review and issued directions for the time-bound completion of critical projects to ensure efficient and effective service delivery. Special emphasis was laid on the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) - Urban 2.0, with the Deputy Commissioner directing the concerned officials to conduct regular drives for identification, verification, and execution under the scheme. Officers were also advised to remove bottlenecks to ensure timely benefits reach eligible beneficiaries. On the sanitation front, the Deputy Commissioner underscored the importance of dedicated cleaning teams for each municipal ward, identification of proper garbage dumping



sites, and systematic installation of dustbins. He further called for intensified efforts to transform Samba into a garbage-free model town, while

advocating for the installation of modern urban structures, cleanliness of public toilets and urinals, and complete elimination of single-use plastic.

The DC urged all stakeholders to work in coordination, adopt best governance practices, and uphold accountability to enhance the overall urban liv-

ing standards across the district. The meeting was attended by ADDC Samba Champa Devi, Tehsildar HQ, ALC and Executive Officers of the respective Municipal Bodies. Special emphasis was laid on the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) - Urban 2.0, with the Deputy Commissioner directing the concerned officials to conduct regular drives for identification, verification, and execution under the scheme. Officers were also advised to remove bottlenecks to ensure timely benefits reach eligible beneficiaries. On the sanitation front, the Deputy Commissioner underscored the importance of dedicated cleaning teams for each municipal ward, identification

of proper garbage dumping sites, and systematic installation of dustbins. He further called for intensified efforts to transform Samba into a garbage-free model town, while advocating for the installation of modern urban structures, cleanliness of public toilets and urinals, and complete elimination of single-use plastic. The DC urged all stakeholders to work in coordination, adopt best governance practices, and uphold accountability to enhance the overall urban living standards across the district. The meeting was attended by ADDC Samba Champa Devi, Tehsildar HQ, ALC and Executive Officers of the respective Municipal Bodies.

GDC Ramgarh hosts Poster Making Competition on Mental Healthcare

HT News Network

SAMBA, MAY 20: Government Degree College Ramgarh organized a Poster Making Competition on the theme "Mental Healthcare Act, 2017" today under the purview of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The event was held under the guidance of the Principal of the college, Prof. (Dr.) Meeru Abrol. The competition was meticulously organized by Priya Sharma, who played a key role in coordinating the event and encouraging student participation. The objective of the competition was to raise awareness about mental health rights and to sensitize students on the significance of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, which ensures the protection and dignity of individuals with mental illness. Students from different semesters took part in the event with great enthusiasm, showcasing their understanding through creative and impactful posters. Ashu Verma secured the first prize, while Chetna Sanotra and Amandeep Kaur won the second and third prizes respectively.

DC Ramban reaches out to Specially-Abled Girl in remote Kriya Village, ensures immediate support

HT News Network



RAMBAN, MAY 20: In a compassionate outreach to underserved and remote communities, Deputy Commissioner, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, today visited Kriya village of Tehsil Ramban, where he personally interacted with a specially-abled young girl and ensured immediate support for her well-being and dignity.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner was moved by the girl's situation and took prompt action to facilitate her inclusion in key welfare schemes. He directed officials on the spot to enroll her for an AADHAAR card, process her Disability Pension, and extend other relevant assistance from the District Administration. Accompanied by senior district officers, DC Ramban also issued instructions for the immediate opening of a bank account in her name to ensure direct and timely transfer of financial assistance and pension benefits. This humanitarian intervention is part of the district administration's ongoing commitment to inclusive governance and social justice, ensuring that the benefits of welfare schemes reach even the most marginalized and remote individuals. Locals lauded the proactive approach of the Deputy Commissioner, calling it a heartening example of governance with empathy that brings real change to the lives of the needy.

Deputy Commissioner Poonch reviews damage assessment, sanctions relief cases

HT News Network

POONCH, MAY 20: A meeting to review damage assessment and relief sanctioning was held here today under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal. The meeting focused on evaluating the extent of damage caused by recent cross-border shelling and ensuring timely relief to affected families. The meeting was attended by the ADDC, ADC, ACR, Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs), Tehsildars and Executive Engineers of PDD and PHE from across the district. Discussions centered around field reports, verification of damage claims and the status of financial assistance disbursement. During the meeting, it was informed that a total of 691 cases have been sanctioned under



the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) guidelines. The compensation is being provided at the rates prescribed under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) norms, ensuring fairness and uniformity in relief delivery. The Deputy Commissioner directed the officers to expedite the disbursement process and maintain complete transparency. He emphasized the importance of timely sup-

port to the affected families and called for close coordination among departments to address any pending cases without delay. The district administration reaffirmed its commitment to standing with the people in times of crisis and assured that all necessary steps are being taken to provide relief and rehabilitation in a just and efficient manner.

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 jkbse 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

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

DISTRICT LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY, GANDERBAL DISTRICT COURT COMPLEX, GANDERBAL

Email: dlsaganderbal@gmail.com

Phone No: +91-1942950922

Notice

It is hereby notified for the information of all stakeholders, litigants, and advocates in particular, that the 2nd National Lok Adalat, which was earlier deferred due to prevailing circumstances, has now been rescheduled to May 31, 2025 (Saturday) across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, as directed by the Hon'ble Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority, wherein the following types of cases shall be taken up for amicable settlement and final disposal.

Pre-Litigation Cases:

1. Cheque Bounce Cases under Section 138, NI Act.
 2. Bank Recovery Cases
 3. Labour Dispute Cases
 4. Electricity and water bill disputes (excluding non-compoundable)
 5. Challans under Municipal Act.
 6. MGNREGA Wage Payment Cases.
 7. BSNL Bill Cases.
- #### Pending in the Courts:
1. Criminal Compoundable Cases;
 2. Cheque Bounce Cases under Section 138, N.I Act
 3. Bank Recovery Suits
 4. MACT Cases
 5. Labour Challans
 6. Matrimonial disputes
 7. Land Acquisition Cases
 8. Maintenance Cases under Domestic Violence Act (488 JK Cr. P. C, 125 Cr.P.C) and 144 BNSS.
 9. Civil cases involving disputes of rent, easement rights, specific performance of contracts

Any person interested in amicable settlement of his/ her case/ dispute through Lok Adalat, may approach to the office of District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal with the details of his/ her case (title, cases number and date of hearing) for getting the same listed before the 2nd National Lok Adalat to be held on 31st of May, 2025. (By Order)

DIPK-1631/25
Send Date: 20/05/2025
PUB Date: 21/05/2025

Sd/-
Sub-Judge/Secretary
District Legal Services Authority
Ganderbal

ازنیات ہندواڑہ

اطلاع بابت خاص وعام

منکد عبد الرشید چوپان ولد عبد العزیز چوپان ساکن ہندواڑہ تحصیل انفس ہندواڑہ سے وارث جائزہند (لیگ ہیر سرٹیفکیٹ) حاصل کرنی مطلوب ہے من مظہر/مظہرہ کی والدہ مورثہ 11/11/2020 کو فوت ہوئی ہے اور مندرجہ ذیل وارثان کو اسے پیچھے چھوڑ گئی ہے

1 رفیقہ بیگم دختر منکد 48 سال پیشہ گھر بیوکام
2 لیسہ بیگم دختر منکد 60 سال پیشہ گھر بیوکام
3 عبد الرشید پسر منکد 55 سال پیشہ مزدوری
4 رطیہ دختر منکد 40 سال پیشہ گھر بیوکام

وارثان مندرجہ بالا ہے اس کے علاوہ اوکوئی وارثان باہر نہیں ہے اجراء سیر فکلیٹ ہذا کے نسبت اگر کسی بھی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی غدر یا اعتراض ہو تو سات یوم کے اندر اندر دفتر ہذا سے رابطہ کریں یا بذیل فون نمبر سے رابطہ کریں میعاد ختم ہونے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا وارثان مندرجہ بالا ہے اس کے علاوہ اوکوئی وارثان باہر نہیں ہے اجراء سیر فکلیٹ ہذا کے نسبت اگر کسی بھی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی غدر یا اعتراض ہو تو سات یوم کے اندر اندر دفتر ہذا سے رابطہ کریں یا بذیل فون نمبر سے رابطہ کریں میعاد ختم ہونے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا فون نمبر 7006615728

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change the name of my Electricity Connection Having Consumer Id No 0203050008806 from Haji Mohammad Sultan Sheikh S/O Ghulam Ahmad Sheikh R/O Shalteng Srinagar to Manzoor Ahmad Sheikh S/O Haji Mohammad Sultan Sheikh R/O Shalteng Srinagar. If anyone have any objection to the issuance of said registration shall present his/her claim this Concerned PDD office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Name:-Manzoor Ahmad Sheikh
S/O Haji Mohammad Sultan Sheikh
R/O Shalteng Srinagar.

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

Srinagar airport sees over 31,000 passengers in 5 days despite disruptions

HT News Network

Srinagar, May 20: Despite the earlier tension and escalation between India and Pakistan, the Srinagar International Airport recorded a passenger footfall of over 31,000 in the last five days, official data reveals. As per data accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), between May 15 and May 19, a total of 210 flights, including scheduled and Hajj departures, operated through the airport, carrying 31,511 passengers. However, more than 50 flights were cancelled during this period. Earlier, the flight operations and footfall were low because of the fallout of the deadly Pahalgam incident, where at least 27 people, mostly tourists, were killed, which led to widespread disturbance. But now the flights are back on track, and operations are normalising again. "The airport operations are working smoothly, and passengers are coming and departing from Srinagar airport without any disturbance, and the Haj movements are also ongoing smoothly," an official from the Srinagar International Airport told KNO. As per the data, the busiest day was May 17, with 7,841 passengers and 50 scheduled flights. However, 21 of those were cancelled due to reasons not yet known. The lowest movement was recorded on May 18, with 4,915 passengers and 9 cancellations. Notably, on May 15, the airport facilitated the departure of 641 Hajj pilgrims along with regular traffic, bringing the day's total to 6,844 passengers.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change the name of my Electricity Connection Having Consumer Id No 0203010002011 from Ghulam Qadir Gashroo S/O Ab Rahman R/O Near Rampora Qamarwari Srinagar to Mohamad Amin Gashroo S/O Ghulam Qadir Gashroo R/O Near Rampora Qamarwari Srinagar. If anyone have any objection to the issuance of said registration shall present his/her claim this Sub division wtal Kadal office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Mohmad Amin Gashroo
S/O Ghulam Qadir Gashroo
R/O Near Rampora Qamarwari Srinagar.

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 tehsil 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





Chairman DLSA Bandipora reviews preparations for 2nd National Lok-Adalat rescheduled on May-31

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 20: As a preparatory measure, a meeting of all the judicial officers was held today to review preparations for the upcoming 2nd National Lok Adalat, scheduled on 31st of May. The meeting was chaired by Khalil Ahmad Choudhary, Chairman District Legal Services Authority (Pr. District and Sessions Judge), Bandipora, and attended by Sushil Singh, Additional District & Sessions Judge, Bandipora; Iqbal Ahmad Akhoun, Chief Judicial Magistrate, Bandipora;

Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary District Legal Services Authority, Bandipora; Amandeep Singh, Additional Munsiff/Judicial Magistrate, Bandipora; Munsiff/ JMIC, Sumbal and Munsiff/ JMIC, Gurez. During the meeting, discussions centered around identifying cases amenable to amicable settlement during the upcoming National Lok Adalat. Chairman DLSA, Bandipora stressed judicial officers to verify the records and identify cases in all categories which are fit for settlement and to focus on old pending cases to be



taken up in the said National Lok Adalat. He directed judicial officers to conduct Pre- Lok Adalats sessions for all identified matters/cases with conciliation sittings before the scheduled date of the National Lok Adalat, so that the opportunities for negotiations may be offered to the parties to arrive at an amicable settlement. The meeting emphasized the importance of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms in reducing pending cases. During the meeting, all judicial officers exchanged valuable insights,

discussed crucial agendas, and formulated an action plan to execute the 2nd National Lok Adalat flawlessly and successfully. Moreover, Chairman DLSA, Bandipora stressed for settlement of Pre-Litigation matters and also directed that interested parties be made aware who desires to settle their cases in the said National Lok Adalat. As such all the interested parties who desire to settle their pre-litigation matters can approach the office of Secretary, DLSA Bandipora for settlement in any working day from today onwards.

MP Mian Altaf chairs DISHA meeting at Kulgam Reviews progress of key schemes, dev projects

HT News Network

KULGAM, MAY 20: Member of Parliament (MP), Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha constituency, Mian Altaf Ahmad Larvi, today chaired a meeting of the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) at the Conference Hall of the Mini Secretariat, Kulgam. The meeting was convened to review the implementation and progress of various centrally sponsored schemes and developmental projects in the district. Chairperson, DDC Kulgam, M Afzal; MLA Kulgam, M.Y. Tariq; MLA Devsar, Peerzada Feroze Ahmad Shah were present in the meeting while Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Ather Aamir; SSP Kulgam, Sahil Saranag, ADDC, ADC, JDP, ACD, Executive Engineers, and other senior officers also attended the meet-



ing. During the session, District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kulgam, Ather Aamir Khan, presented a PowerPoint overview, highlighting achievements under flagship schemes such as MGNREGA, Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), PMGSY, PMAY-G, and various social schemes and programmes. It was informed that under MGNREGA, a total of 58,709 job cards have been issued, generating 26.62 lakh

man-days during the financial year 2024-25. Under PMAY-G, against a target of 5,881 houses, 5,345 have been completed. Additionally, a total of 21,245 households were surveyed under PMAY-G Survey 2.0. Reviewing the Jal Jeevan Mission, MP emphasized the need to achieve 100% household access to clean drinking water, urging officials to maintain quality standards in execution. Stressing the impor-

ance of infrastructure, he directed the concerned departments to ensure all unconnected habitations are linked through quality road networks under PMGSY. He also called for intensified public awareness campaigns to educate people about government welfare schemes. MP assessed the staffing and equipment availability at the District Hospital and other vital departments to ensure seamless public service delivery. He reiterated that MGNREGA remains a critical instrument for rural employment generation. Further, he laid emphasis on the scientific collection and disposal of waste. During the meeting, MP Mian Altaf attentively listened to suggestions and demands raised by MLAs and officials, reaffirming his commitment to the holistic development and welfare of the district.

DC visits Shopian town, inspects ongoing development works

HT News Network

SHOPIAN, MAY 20: To track the pace of ongoing developmental works in the town, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta today visited various areas of Shopian town. DC took first-hand stock of the progress of different developmental projects which are currently under execution in the district through Municipal Council, Shopian. These projects and works which were visited include a new vending zone at the main town, footpath construction at Gagren and car parking at hospital road. During the visit, Gupta emphasized the early completion of the vending zone for proper/systematic rehabilitation of street vendors. This, he said, shall ease the congestion problem in the town. DC called for proper and effective utilization of available land resources for the sustainable development of the town. Arrangement of adequate facility of parking was also stressed and MC Shopian was asked to work towards that end. Instructions were issued for early completion



of the pathways development project and other beautification works in the town. DC was accompanied by ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone; ACR, DIO, ARTO, Secretary MC, and other officers and officials.

MD NRLM inaugurates one-day training prog. for SHG members at Anantnag

HT News Network



ANANTNAG, MAY 20: In a significant step towards strengthening rural financial inclusion, Mission Director (MD) Jammu & Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), Dr. Shubra Sharma today inaugurated a one-day training programme for Self Help Group (SHG) members engaged as Banking Correspondents at Achabal Anantnag. The training provided by J&K Bank officials aimed to empower SHG members with essential skills and knowledge to function as effective Banking Correspondents, facilitating doorstep banking services for rural communities. Addressing the participants, MD NRLM emphasized the importance of financial empowerment at the grassroots level. She stated that the engagement of SHG members as Banking Correspondents will play a pivotal role in bringing financial services to the doorsteps of the rural population. This initiative is expected to not only boost the rural economy but also significantly contribute to holistic rural development, she added. Dr. Sharma further said the programme reflects NRLM's commitment to creating livelihood opportunities and enhancing financial literacy and access among rural women through capacity building and institutional support. The event witnessed active participation from SHG members from various clusters of the district, NRLM officials, local bankers, and community members.

Civil Defense Workshop held at Kupwara to boost response to emergencies

HT News Network

KUPWARA, MAY 20: Zila Sainik Welfare Officer (ZSWO) Kupwara in collaboration with District Administration Kupwara organized a Civil Defense Workshop for volunteer ex-servicemen at Zila Sainik Welfare Office Kupwara. The aim of the workshop was to enhance and to facilitate appropriate response to emergencies such as Armed Conflict, Warfare, Natural Disaster or similar exigencies by using the experience of volunteer ex-servicemen. In this regard, a list of volunteer ex-servicemen has been prepared to facilitate the timely deployment and operationalization of ex-servicemen.

DC Budgam inspects progress on construction of New Tehsil Office, B.K. Pora

HT News Network

BUDGAM, MAY 20: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Akshay Labroo today visited the construction site of the Tehsil Office at B.K. Pora to review the progress of work. The upcoming two-storey building is being constructed as a permanent, state of the art Tehsil Complex for residents of BK Pora. At present, 55 percent of the work has been completed and the project is expected to be completed by the end of August 2025. The building comprises a Public Facilitation Centre, waiting room for the public, office of the Tehsildar, Naib Tehsildar and revenue staff of the Tehsil besides meeting room, establishment rooms, revenue record room, etc. During the visit, DC reviewed the ongoing work and directed the concerned authorities to maintain pace and ensure quality standards. Speaking on the occasion, DC



said that once operational, the new office will provide better access to administrative services and ease the difficulties faced by residents in availing routine services. DC also said that work is progressing on other revenue offices in the district as well including the Nayabat Nagam, Nayabat Kachwari, Additional NT Complex, Pakherpora, NT Office Soi-

bugh. He highlighted the focus of district administration to complete all infrastructural projects in a timely manner to improve service delivery to the people. During the visit, DC was accompanied by SDM Chadoora, CPO Budgam, Executive Engineer PHE Chadoora, Executive Engineer R&B Chadoora, Tehsildar B.K. Pora, and other concerned officers.

DLSA Srinagar raises awareness on NALSA scheme 2010 at Women's College Zakura

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 20: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar, in collaboration with Srinagar Women's College Batpora, Zakura, Srinagar organized an awareness programme on NALSA (Legal Services to Disaster through Legal Services Authorities) scheme 2010, within the college premises, here. The event was part of a broader initiative to inform the public about the legal rights and remedies available to disaster-affected individuals under this national scheme. The programme was held under the chairmanship of Tasleem Arief, Principal District and Sessions Judge, Srinagar, and under the supervision of Sajad Ur Rehman, Sub-Judge/Secretary, DLSA Srinagar and Prof. Syed Ifat Ara, Principal of Srinagar Women's College. In her welcome address, Prof. Syed Ifat Ara highlighted the importance of integrating legal awareness with higher education. She applauded the collaborative initiative and emphasized that such awareness programmes are vital to building informed and empowered communities, especially in disaster-prone regions. She noted that bridging legal knowledge with academic spaces strengthens the social fabric by ensuring students and citizens are aware of the support systems available to them. Panel Lawyer of DLSA Srinagar, Advocate Suhaila Ali served as the resource person for the event. She elaborated on the objectives and key provisions of the NALSA Scheme 2010, explaining how it ensures legal aid to victims of natural and man-made disasters. She emphasized the need for timely legal support in crisis situations and encouraged participants.

DLSA Budgam organizes awareness prog. at Central Jail Srinagar Inmates informed about the SCLSC in jails of India for filing SLPs

HT News Network

BUDGAM, MAY 20: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam organized an awareness programme on the 'SCLSC campaign in Jails of India for filing SLPs,' at Central Jail Srinagar, today. The event was conducted under the supervision of O.P. Bhagat, Chairman DLSA, Budgam and under the guidance of Nusrat Ali Hakak, Secretary DLSA Budgam. The objective of this campaign was to inform the inmates about the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee (SCLSC) in jails of India for filing SLPs & to educate them about the process and availability of filing special leave petitions (SLPs) through legal aid, and it also aimed to ensure access to justice for the inmates who remain unrepresented despite having viable legal remedies.



DLSA Budgam had deputed Legal aid defense Counsels as resource person for the said awareness session. Speaking on the occasion, Chief LADC, Lateef Ahmad Khan said that the campaign is aimed to help the 'legally vulnerable' inmates, particularly those requiring urgent legal intervention aside from

prisoners who have not filed appeals against conviction and those who failed to secure bail despite serving more than half of their maximum punishment. Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsels, Shahistah Gani and Fozia Shafi also spoke on the occasion and informed the inmates about the SCLSC campaign in jails of India

for filing SLPs and educated them about the process & availability of filing special leave petitions (SLPs) through legal aid. Legal aid defense counsels Budgam were deputed by DLSA Budgam to Central Jail in order to actively engage in promoting the campaign by conducting visit to central jail and by informing the eligible convicts of their legal rights and in accessing legal aid to approach the Hon'ble Supreme Court to identify convicts who may be eligible for remission of sentence or premature release & sensitize them in availing the remedy of filing special leave petition (SLPs) similarly through legal Services for getting enoverated from their conviction. The programme witnessed the active participation of Shahbaz Hussain, incharge Superintendent Central Jail Srinagar, officials of Prison Legal aid Clinic and PLVs existing at Central jail Srinagar, police personnels, jail inmates, PLVs of DLSA Budgam, etc.





GDC Kishtwar develops Vertical Garden using Recycled Bottles

HT News Network



KISHTWAR, MAY 20: In a shining example of innovation, teamwork, and environmental responsibility, the Department of Botany at Government Degree College (GDC) Kishtwar has established the institution's first-ever vertical garden — a sustainable project built entirely with recycled plastic bottles.

The initiative was made possible through the visionary support of Principal Prof. Basharat Iqbal and the leadership of Head of the Department of Botany, Prof. Satish Kumar, who has consistently encouraged green and student-led innovations on campus.

Under the dedicated supervision of Prof. Asma Javaid, the project came to life with active participation from Semester VI students, who enthusiastically embraced each stage — collecting, preparing, and planting over 50 reused plastic bottles. The garden now features a colorful collection of plants such as Salvia, Catharanthus, Dianthus, Geraniums and succulents, breathing new life into the campus environment.

The project reflects the remarkable commitment and collaboration of the faculty. Prof. Asma Javaid brought creativity and hands-on leadership to the effort, while Dr. Deepak Chauhan, Dr. Hassan Jaleel, Dr. Arshad, and Dr. Opendar Sumal offered their expertise and tireless support throughout. Their collective efforts ensured the scientific, aesthetic, and educational success of the initiative.

The interdisciplinary spirit was further strengthened by Dr. Shazia Tabassum from the Department of Zoology, whose collaboration enriched the outcome.

Special acknowledgement goes to Jahangeer Sheikh and Shahid Hussain Giri, whose technical assistance and dedication were invaluable, as well as Talat Samreen and Rehan Kousar for their enthusiastic contributions.

Govt Polytechnic Jammu conducts admission awareness Campaign in Bhalwal schools

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAY 20: Government Polytechnic College Jammu conducted an admission awareness programme in the schools of Bhalwal Zone inviting eligible youth for 3-year Diploma in Engineering/Non-Engineering Programmes.

On the orders of the Principal Er. Talet Mahmood, a group of faculty consisting of Er. Raj Shekhar (HoD Automobile), Mehmood Ahmed, Manjeet Singh, Vicky Sharma and Rakesh Kumar visited Government Higher Secondary School Bhalwal and Government Higher Secondary School Gharota (Zone Bhalwal) and informed the students regarding courses/Scholarships offered in Government Polytechnic College Jammu.

The team further motivated the students for taking admission in the technical courses offered in Government Polytechnics to improve their skill and employability.

Speaking on the occasion, Er Vicky Sharma said, "Polytechnic education offers practical skills, hands-on training, and faster employability. "Our awareness campaign will help students and parents make informed decisions about technical careers. Interested students are encouraged to take admission in Government Polytechnic College Jammu," he invited the students.

Floriculture Department conducts cleanliness drive in Udhampur, Reasi districts

HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, MAY 20: The Department of Floriculture, Parks and Gardens conducted a comprehensive cleanliness drive across all parks in Udhampur and Reasi districts.

A total of 10 parks were covered under this initiative. With the onset of summer, a significant number of visitors frequent these parks, especially during the evening hours. Recognizing the importance of maintaining a clean and welcoming environment, the Department is giving top priority to cleanliness and sanitation across all its parks and gardens.

This cleanliness drive is not a one-time effort but part of a continuous process aimed at enhancing the overall experience for visitors. The Department is committed to ensuring that these green spaces remain clean, hygienic and enjoyable for all. Additionally, the Department is actively discouraging the use of plastic and related items within the parks.

Awareness efforts are underway to promote eco-friendly practices among visitors, ensuring the preservation of the natural beauty and ecological balance of these public spaces.

Agriculture Department Jammu celebrates World Bee Day with Progressive Beekeepers

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAY 20: The Department of Agriculture, Jammu, today celebrated World Bee Day with great fervour and commitment across the Jammu Division. The central event was organized here at the Directorate of Agriculture, Krishi Bhawan, Talab Tillo, under the global theme "Bee inspired by nature to nourish us all." The celebration highlighted the indispensable role of bees and other pollinators in sustaining ecosystems, enhancing biodiversity, and ensuring food security. Several progressive farmers and beekeepers shared their experiences, including Babli Devi, Neelam Devi from Samba, Jeffi Kumari, Rajinder Baru and young entrepreneur Vasu Sharma, who spoke about his journey in organic honey production. The event was presided over by Director Agriculture, Jammu, S. Arvinder Singh Reen and was attended by Joint Director (Extension), Satish Sharma, Joint Director (Inputs), Dr. Ashwani Kumar and Joint



Director (SLUB), S. Sohan Singh among others. The proceedings began with a welcome address by Assistant Entomologist, Apiculture Development Scheme Jammu Rajesh Verma. He provided an insightful overview of World Bee Day, emphasizing

its importance in educating the participants about the vital role bees play in ecological balance and agricultural productivity. Speaking on the occasion, the Director emphasized the ecological and economic significance of bees. He said,

"Bees are not just pollinators; they are vital contributors to our food systems and biodiversity. Jammu has immense potential for commercial beekeeping, which can serve as a sustainable income source for our farming community." He also highlighted initiatives like honey testing labs, diagnostic centres, and processing units set up in Jammu to enhance quality production and provide support to beekeepers. The Director urged the public and farmers to engage in pollinator-friendly practices such as planting native flowering plants, minimizing pesticide use, supporting local honey producers, and spreading awareness about bee conservation.

The event also witnessed participation from senior officials including Deputy Director (Central), Sanjeev Rai Gupta, Deputy Director (Planning) Jammu, Priyanka Parihar, Agronomist (VIS) Jammu, Vikas Padha, Deputy Director (Trainings), Karuna Nidhi, SMS RL, Madan Lal, SMS RL, Dharmesh Vaid, SMS RL, Sanjay Anand, Chief Agriculture Officer Jammu.

DC Kishtwar launches Skill Development Program for Project-Affected Families

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MAY 20: Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Shavan today inaugurated a comprehensive Skill Development Training Program for families affected by major hydroelectric projects including Rattle HEP, Pakal Dul HEP, Kiru HEP, Kwar and others.

The training is being offered at the Industrial Training Institute (ITI), where the first batch of trainees began a Plumbing Training Course under the district's skill development training initiative. Over 20 youth from project-affected families have enrolled in the free, year-long training.

Speaking at the launch, the



DC emphasized the administration's commitment to promote sustainable livelihoods, stating that it is a priority of both the Government and the project authorities. He stated that the initiative is aimed at empowering the youth of affected families with the skills they need to become self-reliant. "More trades will be introduced soon, based on the interests of local youth," he added.

He also mentioned that, as a part of this program, the

administration will also roll out courses in cutting and tailoring, to be set up in the respective villages of the project-affected communities and the initiative offers a comprehensive support system, including free meals, accommodation, stipends, and field exposure visits during the training period, besides toolkits of respective trade to be provided after Successful Completion of the Training. Principal ITI Kishtwar Anoop Sharma, representa-

tives from Power Projects besides other staff was present during the occasion. He stated that the initiative is aimed at empowering the youth of affected families with the skills they need to become self-reliant. "More trades will be introduced soon, based on the interests of local youth," he added.

He also mentioned that, as a part of this program, the administration will also roll out courses in cutting and tailoring, to be set up in the respective villages of the project-affected communities and the initiative offers a comprehensive support system, including free meals, accommodation, stipends, and field exposure visits during the training period, besides toolkits.

SDM reviews implementation of "PARIKSHA 2.0" Initiative in Gool

HT News Network

RAMBAN, MAY 20: Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Imtiaz today convened a meeting with Principals and Headmasters of the government educational institutions from across Sub Division Gool to take a comprehensive review of academic initiative "PARIKSHA 2.0".

The meeting assessed the current academic performance of schools, identify existing challenges and devise effective strategies to improve educational outcomes in the region.



The SDM conducted a detailed analysis of academic trends and initiatives undertaken to enhance Class 10th and 12th board exam-

ination results in the upcoming session. He instructed the school heads to identify critical areas requiring immediate attention and to

formulate a concrete, actionable roadmap focused on academic excellence.

Emphasizing the importance of collaboration and accountability, the SDM urged all educational heads to prioritize student-centric learning, ensure timely syllabus completion, and implement regular assessment practices to track progress. The SDM reiterated the administration's commitment to fostering a robust educational ecosystem in Sub-Division Gool, aimed at raising academic standards and expanding future opportunities for students.

DDC Doda inaugurates Space, STEM Labs at GHSS Chilly- Bhallessa

HT News Network



DODA, MAY 20: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Harvinder Singh today visited Chilly Bhallessa (Doda) and inaugurated the newly established Space Lab and STEM Lab at Government Higher Secondary School (HSS) Chilly. The inauguration was held in the presence of Chief Education Officer Mohammad Hafiz, and Principal of the school Shafiqa Banoo.

The DDC assessed the functioning of both labs and interacted with the students. A series of engaging events, including a debate competition and cultural performances, were presented by the students, showcasing their talents and enthusiasm.

While addressing the gathering, the DDC emphasized the transformative power of education in shaping individual lives and building a stronger society. He highlighted the significance of establishing modern educational infrastructure, such as the Space and STEM Labs, in remote areas like Bhallessa to bridge the gap in access to quality education.

The DDC also announced that a well-equipped functional library will soon be established in the school, stocked with quality books to encourage reading habits among students. He urged students to cultivate the habit of reading to strengthen their cognitive abilities and become informed, responsible citizens.

Additionally, the DDC Doda informed that one-month extra academic classes are conducted for students in the district who underperformed in the recent examinations. This initiative aims to support students in overcoming academic challenges and ensure that no learner is left behind. Additionally, the DDC Doda informed that one-month extra academic classes are conducted for students in the district who underperformed in the recent examinations. This initiative aims to support students in overcoming academic challenges and ensure that no learner is left behind.

Anti- drug IEC campaigns organised across all 17 blocks of Doda district

HT News Network

DODA, MAY 20: to combat the menace of drug abuse, a series of IEC (Information, Education & Communication) campaigns were organized today across all 17 blocks of Doda district under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh, and the supervision of District Social Welfare Officer (Nodal Officer IEC Campaign) Tariq Qazi.

The awareness programs aimed to educate students, youth, and local communities about the harmful effects of drug use and to encourage a healthier, addiction-free lifestyle.

The campaigns were held at Assar, Bhagwah, Bhalla, Bhaderwah, Bharat, Changa, Chilly Pingal, Dali Udyanpur, Ghat, Gandoh,



Gundna, Kahara, Kastigarh, Marmat, Thathi, Phagsoo, and Doda (Ghat) blocks, covering both rural and semi-urban areas. Each block organized targeted events in schools, panchayats, and community halls to ensure maximum outreach. The entire district witnessed large gatherings where community members, especially the youth, raised their voices in unison against the

drug menace. Activities included awareness rallies, street plays, poster-making, slogan-writing competitions, and lectures by health experts, educators, and motivational speakers. Resource persons emphasized the importance of early intervention, parental support, and mental health awareness in the fight against substance abuse. One of the key events was held at Govern-

ment Higher Secondary School Bhalra, located in Panchayat Misrata, Block Bhaderwah. The campaign witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, staff, and local residents, who were sensitized about the importance of saying no to drugs and yes to life. Interactive sessions and motivational talks formed a crucial part of the initiative, empowering youth with knowledge and confidence to lead a drug-free life. Similarly, another impactful IEC campaign was conducted at Panchayat Lower Behota in Block Marmat, where community members, especially the youth, came together to support the cause. The sessions highlighted the social, mental, and physical consequences of substance abuse and emphasized the role of education, awareness, and community support in preventing drug addiction.





DDC Chairman Udhampur tours Tirchi, Gandala panchayats

HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, MAY 20: Chairman District Development Council Udhampur Lal Chand today conducted an extensive and productive tour of Tirshi and Gandala Panchayats.

The tour focused on reviewing ongoing development initiatives, inaugurating crucial water infrastructure and engaging with educational institutions. He was accompanied by former Sarpanch Pawan Kumar and other prominent citizens. During the visit, the Chairman DDC took note of the various development works underway in the area, assessing their progress and impact on the local community.

A highlight of the tour was the inauguration of a new hand pump installed at Ward No-7 in Panchayat Tirshi. The project was sanctioned under the ADP (DDC grant)



2024-25, and is expected to significantly alleviate water scarcity issues in the ward. Later, the Chairman DDC also inaugurated a newly constructed 'Bowli' in the same vicinity. This project, sanctioned under the Capex Budget Plan (DDC grant)

was specifically undertaken to address the dearth of water in the area, underscoring the DDC's commitment to ensuring access to basic amenities for all citizens. Concluding his comprehensive tour, the Chairman DDC visited High School Narore.

He extended his heartfelt congratulations to the students and staff for their commendable academic results, acknowledging their hard work and dedication.

The Chairman DDC also engaged with the school authorities, attentively listening to the problems and challenges faced by the institution. He expressed his deep appreciation for the tireless efforts of the teachers in delivering quality education to the students, emphasizing the crucial role they play in shaping the future generation. A highlight of the tour was the inauguration of a new hand pump installed at Ward No-7 in Panchayat Tirshi. The project was sanctioned under the ADP (DDC grant) 2024-25, and is expected to significantly alleviate water scarcity issues in the ward.

Later, the Chairman DDC also inaugurated a newly constructed 'Bowli' in the same vicinity.

JMC intensifies efforts to make Jammu City Garbage-Free

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAY 20: Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) is making continuous and determined efforts to transform Jammu into a completely garbage-free city in a sustainable manner. As part of this mission, the Corporation regularly organises awareness programs and activities to educate and engage citizens on waste management. To further streamline waste management, the JMC has established a Material Recovery Facilities (MRF) Center at Bandhu Rakh. The center caters to municipal wards in Zone III, in an effort to convert waste to wealth; wet waste collected from households, vegetable markets, and fruit markets is brought in for processing. At the MRF Center.

Dharti Abha Janjatiya Gramin Utkarsh Abhiyan

DC Kishtwar reviews preparedness for launch of IEC campaign

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MAY 20: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rajesh Kumar Shavan today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the preparations for launch of Information Education and Communication campaign under Dharti Abha Janjatiya Gramin Utkarsh Abhiyan in the district. The DC directed PO ICDS and District Social Welfare Officer to submit a detailed plan for conducting the IEC campaign across the 19



tribal Villages in the district. He emphasized the need for a well-structured and integrated plan to ensure effective execution of the initiative aimed at uplifting tribal communities. The DC directed for the

constitution of Village-Level Committees comprising male and female youth from tribal villages to actively lead the campaign and help line departments in identification of Institutional gaps. These committees will play

a pivotal role in spreading awareness and assisting in the smooth implementation of the Dharti Abha Janjatiya Gramin Utkarsh Abhiyan on Ground level.

The DC directed the line departments to identify and address critical gaps in the delivery of services to tribal populations. Special emphasis was laid on generating mass awareness about the benefits of Centrally Sponsored Schemes meant for tribal population at the Sub-Division, Tehsil, and Block levels.

Kishtwar: District Advisory Committee on accessible Elections reviews Action plan

DC calls for polling station-wise mapping of PwD electors

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MAY 20: A meeting of the District Advisory Committee on Accessible Elections was convened today in Kishtwar under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Shavan (Chairman, DAC).

The committee aims to ensure the inclusion, support, and welfare of Persons with Disabilities (PwD) in the electoral process. During the meeting, the DC emphasized the importance of polling station-wise mapping of PwD electors to ensure accessible voting facilities.

The District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) was directed to compile and submit a comprehensive list of young voters who have attained the age of 18 years and have a disability of more than 40%.

Further, the Education Department and



Higher Education Department was directed to conduct awareness campaigns across all Higher Secondary Schools and Colleges in the district. These campaigns will focus on identifying and facilitating the registration of eligible PwD voters who have attained the age of 18 years.

Daljeet Singh Parihar has been appointed as a member of the DAC for PwD voters.

World Bee Day celebrated at Udhampur to promote Pollinator Conservation

HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, MAY 20: World Bee day was celebrated in Udhampur District with the theme "Bee inspired by nature to nourish us all". The theme highlights the vital role of bees and other pollinators in the Agrifood system, biodiversity and global food security.

Emphasis was given to the importance of bees and other pollinators for the environment, Agriculture and human well-being. Farmers were educated about pollinators' crucial role towards sustainable development of the planet earth and to raise awareness about the threat they face in different locations of the District. Chief Agriculture Officer Harbans Singh and apiculture Development Officer Pawan Talwar organised programme in meeting Hall of CAO Office Udhampur which was attended by children of India Kids public school. CAO informed that



the world Bee day promotes efforts to protect and conserve bees and highlights their importance. He reiterated that the campaign aims to educate people about pollinators and the challenges they face such as habitat loss, climate change, pesticide use and disease.

As many as 88 farmers are engaged in beekeeping activities in the District by rearing Apis mellifera species and approximately 200 farmers are also rearing Apis Cerana species in Moungr, Pancheri and Dudu Basantgarh blocks of the District.

Cultural Unit DIPR Jammu convenes 'Nasha Mukh' Bharat awareness programme at GHSS Bhalwal

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAY 20: Cultural Unit Department of Information & Public Relations (DIPR), Jammu, in collaboration with District Administration Jammu, convened a Cultural Awareness Programme titled 'Nasha Mukh

Bharat' (Say No to Drugs) today at the Government Higher Secondary School Bhalwal.

The aim of the initiative was to enhance awareness regarding the detrimental effects of drug abuse and to promote a drug-free community. Artists from the Cultural Unit, Jammu captivated



the audience with thematic

songs, effectively demonstrating the repercussions of drug addiction on individuals, families, and society at large. The programme was attended by officials of Health, Jammu Kashmir Police Department, staff of school and students. The students showcased Nukkad Natak centered

on the theme. Principal, Harpreet Kour, expressed her insights on the subject, highlighting its significance to the audience. She commended the Department of Information and Public Relations for organizing such a meaningful programme designed to enhance awareness.

SBI RSETI organises Vegetable Nursery Management Training at Behri Neghal-Ramban

HT News Network

RAMBAN, MAY 20: To promote self-employment and sustainable agriculture in rural areas, SBI Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI) Ramban inaugurated a 12-day training programme on "Vegetable Nursery Management & Cultivation" at Panchayat Behri Neghal, Block Ramban.

The programme was formally inaugurated by Director SBI RSETI S. Harvinder Singh, along with SMS Agriculture Department Jyoti Prakash, JK Bank Associate Mangeet Singh and Lambardar Sanjay Singh. The ceremony began with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp, symbolizing the start of this farmer-centric initiative.

Addressing the trainees, Director RSETI highlighted the significance of skill-based agricultural training in enhancing rural livelihoods, especially for women. He also introduced various government-sponsored self-employment and social security schemes such as PMSBY, PMJJBY, APY, and the MUDRA Loan Scheme.

Subject Matter Specialist Jyoti Prakash elaborated on modern practices in nursery management, emphasizing eco-friendly disease control methods and integrating scientific knowledge with traditional farming. JK Bank's representative discussed financial assistance and credit schemes available to farmers, urging them to utilize banking services for agricultural growth.

The Lambardar and trainees expressed gratitude to SBI RSETI Ramban for organizing the localized training. The 12-day course will cover nursery bed preparation, seed treatment, irrigation, pest management, and post-harvest techniques—empowering participants with practical skills to enhance productivity and income.

GHSS Dradhu felicitates meritorious students, discusses developmental priorities

HT News Network

DODA, MAY 20: Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Dradhu witnessed a momentous occasion as Block Development Officer Bhaderwah and Prabhari Officer of the school Yasir Wani, paid a special visit along with his team. The visit aimed to review key developmental issues concerning the school's infrastructure, academic growth, and overall student welfare.

Yasir Wani interacted with the school staff and students, emphasizing the importance of quality education, regular attendance, and strengthening subject-wise academic performance, particularly in core areas such as Science, Mathematics, and English.

The visiting team assured full support in addressing infrastructural gaps and promoting a positive learning environment. Former Sarpanch Ashok Sharma also graced the event, showing his continued commitment to community and educational development.

A highlight of the day was the felicitation of the toppers of Class 10th and calls 12 (2024-25 session). The meritorious students were honoured with certificates and mementos in recognition of their hard work and academic excellence. This gesture not only encouraged the achievers but also motivated their peers to strive for similar success.

The entire program was meticulously organized under the supervision of the Principal, Satish Kumar, whose dedication ensured the smooth conduct of the event. Teachers, students, and local dignitaries appreciated the initiative, marking the day as a step forward in the journey of educational excellence at GHSS Dradhu.



10-day Entrepreneurship Programme under Tejaswini Scheme concludes at JKEDI Jammu

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAY 20: The Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), District Centre Jammu, successfully concluded a 10-day Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) under the Tejaswini Scheme of J&K Mission Youth.

The programme was conducted under the overall supervision of Khalid Jahangir, Director, JKEDI and was specifically designed to promote entrepreneurship among aspiring female entrepreneurs from District Jammu.

A total of 17 candidates had regis-

tered for the training programme, out of which 16 successfully completed the course. The participants were provided with comprehensive training on key business aspects, including business plan formulation, marketing strategies, financial and accounts management, record keeping and customer relationship management.

The training was facilitated by Ms. Monika Salaria and Ms. Humera Nazir, while the Guest Lectures were delivered by officials from J&K Bank, District Employment and Counselling Centre (DECC), Jammu, and the Labour Department, among others.

The programme was tailored for enterprise creation in the retail and



service sectors, with a focus on ventures such as boutiques, dental clinics, cosmetics outlets, readymade garments, electrical goods, and restaurants, across various areas of District Jammu.

A notable feature of the programme was an interactive session with a successful entrepreneur, which offered participants practical guidance, shared experiences, and inspiration to pursue their entrepreneur-

ial aspirations with greater confidence.

On the concluding day of the programme, Dr. Vinod Sharma, Incharge Trainings, JKEDI, and Dr. Amit Sharma, Incharge Centre for Business Development (CBD), JKEDI, interacted with the participants, offering valuable insights, practical suggestions, and encouragement to the aspiring entrepreneurs.

At the valedictory ceremony, Rajesh Kotwal, District Nodal Officer, JKEDI Jammu, highlighted the critical role of entrepreneurship in fostering economic development and self-reliance. He commended the participants for their initiative and commitment. Mukhlis Ali, Assistant Director, DECC

Jammu, also addressed the gathering and presented certificates of completion to the successful trainees.

The programme concluded on a positive note, with participants expressing enthusiasm to establish their own ventures and contribute meaningfully to the economic growth of the Union Territory. Kotwal, District Nodal Officer, JKEDI Jammu, highlighted the critical role of entrepreneurship in fostering economic development and self-reliance. He commended the participants for their initiative and commitment. Mukhlis Ali, Assistant Director, DECC Jammu, also addressed the gathering and presented certificates of completion to the successful trainees.





Netherlands backs India in fight against terrorism in wake of Pahalgam attack

AGENCIES

THE HAGUE/NEW DELHI, MAY 20 (UND)

Netherlands' PM Dick Schoof today expressed support for India's fight against terrorism in the wake of the horrific attack last month in Pahalgam, and also said it is good that the violence between India and Pakistan did not escalate further.

The Netherlands PM said this during his meeting with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar at The Hague.

EAM thanked the Netherlands PM for his country's firm and resolute stance against terrorism.

The EAM also met with the Netherlands Defence Minister and the Foreign Minister.

In a post on X, the EAM said during his meeting with PM Schoof, he conveyed the warm greetings of PM Modi. The Netherlands PM took office a year ago, in July 2024.

"Delighted to call on PM Dick Schoof today in The Hague.

"Conveyed the warm greetings of PM @narendramodi and thanked him for the Netherlands' firm and resolute stance against terrorism.

"Appreciate his commitment to taking the India-

Netherlands partnership to newer heights. Assured that our teams will work hard to achieve these goals."

The Netherlands PM in a post, said:

"Pleased to welcome India's Minister of External Affairs, @DrSJaishankar, to the Catshuis.

"First of all, I expressed my support for India's fight against terrorism in the wake of the horrific attack last month in Pahalgam. It is good for all parties that the violence between India and Pakistan has not escalated further.

"We also spoke about our Strategic Partnership. This concerns long-term cooperation between the Netherlands and India in areas including trade, innovative technology, agriculture and security.

"In a changing world, it is important for both the Netherlands and India that we can continue to count on one other.

"I look forward to welcoming Prime Minister Modi to our country soon to discuss this further."

On his meeting with the Defence Minister Ruben Brekelmans, the EAM posted:

"Pleased to meet Defence Minister Ruben Brekelmans in The Hague today.

"Exchanged views on our respective security perspectives and challenges. Also spoke about the benefits of forging a bilateral defence partnership."

The Netherlands Defence Minister posted on X:

"In these turbulent times close cooperation with India is more important than ever.

"Great honour to receive Minister of Foreign Affairs @DrSJaishankar. We discuss security challenges in Asia/Europe and our Defence partnership.

"Looking forward to deepening our cooperation!"

On his meeting with Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp, the EAM posted:

"Thank FM Caspar Veldkamp @ministerBZ of the Netherlands for hosting me today in The Hague.

"Appreciate Netherlands' strong condemnation of the Pahalgam attack. And support for zero tolerance against terrorism.

"Had wide-ranging discussions on deepening our bilateral partnership and engagement with the EU."

"Exchanged views on the global situation in an era of multi polarity."

The Netherlands FM in

a post said:

"Good to receive @DrSJaishankar in The Hague, after we spoke last month in #India.

"We talked about the aftermath of the terrible terrorist attack in Pahalgam, and the current ceasefire with Pakistan as a step towards de-escalation.

"In this rapidly changing world, there are many opportunities to further deepen our bilateral cooperation. In this context, we looked ahead to our Strategic Partnership. This will cover key themes such as security and emerging technologies."

The EAM also spoke with strategic experts in the Hague, and met the members of the Indian diaspora.

"A good exchange of views with strategic experts in the Hague this morning.

"Discussed why India and the Netherlands/EU should engage more deeply in an era of multi polarity and strategic autonomy."

"Interacted with representatives of the Indian community this evening. Value the contribution of the community to building a stronger relationship between India and the Netherlands."

Abhishek Banerjee to replace Yusuf Pathan as TMC's representative in India's global outreach against terrorism

AGENCIES

KOLKATA, MAY 20 (UND)

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today nominated Trinamool Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on the Centre's all-party diplomatic mission against terrorism, as replacement for party MP Yusuf Pathan.

Banerjee had expressed dissatisfaction over Pathan's nomination to the team, and had withdrawn his name.

The all-party delegation comprises 51 political leaders, parliamentarians, and former ministers from across party lines who will be part of seven delegations traveling to world capitals to present India's strong stance against terrorism in the wake of Operation Sindoor.

"We're delighted to share that our Chairperson Smt. Mamata Banerjee has nominated National general secretary Shri Abhishek Banerjee to represent Trinamool Congress in the all-party delegation for India's global outreach against terrorism," the party posted on their official X handle.

"At a time when the world must unite to confront the growing threat of terrorism, Shri Abhishek Banerjee's inclusion brings both conviction and clarity to the table. His presence will not only reflect Bengal's firm stand against terror but also strengthen India's collective voice on the global stage," the post read.

Earlier, after the central government nominated Trinamool Congress MP Yusuf Pathan for the delegation, Chief Minister Banerjee had withdrawn his nomination, saying it was done without consulting the TMC leadership.

However, Banerjee on Monday had clarified that the TMC is not boycotting the Centre's multi-party diplomatic mission against



Pakistan-sponsored terrorism and will nominate its representatives once a formal request is received, while stressing that the choice of delegates should be left to the party and not decided by the Centre.

"We were not consulted about this. These days, they only inform the parliamentary party, not the main organisation. The parliamentary party cannot make policy decisions," the Chief Minister said at the airport on Monday while enroute to North Bengal.

"When it comes to combating terrorism and safeguarding national interest, the TMC will stand firmly alongside the Union government. However, the Centre cannot unilateral-

ly decide who represents each party – the delegations should also include family members of terror victims and army officers," Abhishek Banerjee had said in a meeting on Monday.

However, sources in the party said that Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju called Trinamool leader Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday morning and the duo spoke for quite some time, during which the Trinamool Congress supremo proposed that Abhishek Banerjee will represent the party's parliamentary delegation.

According to the list released by the Union Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Abhishek Banerjee will be one of nine members in a delegation led by JDU MP Sanjay Kumar Jha, which is set to visit Indonesia, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Singapore, with departure scheduled for 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 Salman Khurshid and former diplomat Mohan Kumar.

Rubio's surprising statement on Ukraine: US wants peace, Europe desires war

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON, MAY 20 (UND)

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has given out a rather surprising statement, marking a stark contrast in the White House' transatlantic views regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict. He claimed that Europe had a desire to continue war, while the US was focused on peace.

Speaking at the Kennedy Center Board of Trustees in a formal dinner hosted by President Donald Trump at the White House, Rubio recounted a rather strange conversation with one of the cardinals, during a recent visit to Rome for the Pope's appointment.

Rubio quoted a cardinal who observed, "You know, it is very unusual for us... we have an American president that wants peace, and some of the Europe-



ans that are constantly talking about doing the war stuff," reported RIA Novosti.

Describing his own perspective, Rubio said that some European figures had "the world upside down" in their minds. He further highlighted President Trump's consistent desire to reduce large defence expenditures, suggesting such funds could instead be redirected towards economic development.

This reporting sur-

faces amidst a complex and evolving geopolitical landscape. The comments from Secretary Rubio highlight a perceived divide within the Western alliance regarding their approach to tackling the ongoing war.

While the United States, under President Trump's administration has often articulated a desire to de-escalate conflicts and reduce military spending, certain European nations, especially those geographically closer to the conflict

zone, have maintained a more resolute stance. They have advocated for continued robust military aid to Ukraine and a strengthened defence posture against Russian advances into Ukrainian territory.

The renewed dialogue between Putin and Trump, coupled with Rubio's remarks, suggests a potential shift from the largely unified Western front that characterised the initial responses to the Ukraine conflict.

President Trump's consistent advocacy for reduced defence budgets contrasts sharply with calls from some European leaders for increased military investment. This dynamic continues to reshape alliances and strategic priorities globally, bringing these differing viewpoints to the forefront of international discourse.

Rahul unveils sixth guarantee in Karnataka

AGENCIES

HOSAPETE (KARNATAKA), MAY 20 (UND)

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday announced a new land rights initiative, dubbing it the "sixth guarantee" of the Congress government in Karnataka.

Marking the completion of two years of the Siddaramaiah-led government, Rahul Gandhi asserted that the Congress had fulfilled its promise to return the people's tax money through direct benefit schemes and would now focus on ensuring land ownership for the under-



privileged. Speaking at the Samarpane Sankalpa Rally here, the senior Congress leader said the issue of land ownership had long remained unresolved in Karnataka, particularly affecting Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Adivasi communities

living in unrecognised revenue villages. "We noticed that though there is plenty of land, many people do not legally own it. With this sixth guarantee, we aim to rectify that historic injustice," he said. Rahul Gandhi announced that the government would notify

500 new revenue villages and establish local guarantee committees to ensure rightful ownership of land for families currently without formal title. "Karnataka will be the first state in the country to implement universal land ownership. The land belongs to the people. This is our vision for social justice and inclusive development," he said.

Citing discussions with party president Mallikarjun Kharge, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, Rahul Gandhi said the initiative was part of a broader vision to economically empower marginalised communities.

NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal takes oath as Maharashtra cabinet minister

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, MAY 20 (UND)

Senior NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal was on Tuesday inducted into the Maharashtra Cabinet of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

Seventy seven year old Bhujbal took oath as a Minister at the Raj Bhavan. Fadnavis, and Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar were present during the oath-taking ceremony.

Following his swearing-in, Bhujbal commented, "As it is said, 'all's well that ends well'. I have held many key positions, from the home ministry



to various other departments. Whatever responsibility is assigned to me now, I will accept. It's the Chief Minister's prerogative."

Shinde welcomed Bhujbal's induction into the cabinet, highlighting his vast administrative experience. "He has previously served as a minister and handled important departments. He is a seasoned leader, and the state will benefit from his

insights and leadership," Shinde said.

The veteran leader and prominent OBC face in Maharashtra did not find a place in the ministry when Devendra Fadnavis took over a chief minister last December.

Now, Bhujbal has replaced NCP's Dhananjay Munde who resigned in March over the alleged role of his aide in the murder of sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh.

PM to visit Rajasthan on May 22

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAY 20 (UND)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Rajasthan on May 22 during which he will lay the foundation stone for and inaugurate multiple development projects worth over Rs 26,000 crore in Palana, Bikaner.

During his visit, the Prime Minister will also undertake darshan at Karni Mata temple in Deshnoke.

According to an official statement, PM Modi will inaugurate the redevelopment Deshnoke Station under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme and flag-off the Bikaner-Mumbai express train.

Thereafter, he will lay the foundation stone, inaugurate and dedicate to the nation multiple development projects worth over Rs 26,000 crore and also address a public function in Palana.

Moreover, he will inaugurate 103 redeveloped Amrit Stations in 86 districts across 18 states and Union Territories developed at a cost of over Rs 1,100 crore.

Over 1,300 stations are being redeveloped with modern facilities, designed to reflect regional architecture and enhance passenger amenities under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.

Deshnoke railway station, serving pilgrims and tourists visiting the Karni Mata Temple among others, is inspired with temple architecture and arch and column theme. Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone of 58 km-long Churu-Sadulpur rail line and dedicate to the nation the Suratgarh-Phalodi; Phulera-Degana; Udaipur-Himmatnagar; Phalodi-Jaisalmer and Samdari-Barmer rail line electrification.

Pedestrians, cyclists among over 330K deaths from road crashes in SE Asia in 2021: WHO

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Pedestrians and cyclists are among more than 330,000 deaths from road crashes in the Southeast Asia region in 2021, said the World Health Organization (WHO) on Monday, as part of the eighth UN Global Road Safety Week.

The UN Global Road Safety Week is marked biennially, starting on the third Monday of May. The theme this year is "Make walking and cycling safe", urging the world to make walking and cycling safe for everyone.

Saima Wazed, Regional Director for WHO South-East Asia said that road traffic injuries are now the leading cause of death among young people aged 5 to 29 years, and they continue to be a pressing



public health concern in our WHO South-East Asia Region.

"In 2021 alone, our region accounted for more than 330,000 deaths from road crashes, representing 28 per cent of the global total," Wazed said.

"Vulnerable road users -- including pedestrians, cyclists, and operators of

two- and three-wheelers -- are up to 66 per cent of these fatalities," she added.

Wazed noted pedestrians and cyclists already account for more than one in four road traffic deaths. Besides saving lives, making roads safe is also crucial to boost health. Safe roads can not only improve community well-

being but also enhance environmental sustainability.

"Prioritising walking and cycling supports physical activity, which is a key modifiable risk factor for noncommunicable diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer. Walking and cycling also support mental well-being, helping to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety," Wazed highlighted.

Globally, road traffic crashes claim the lives of nearly 1.2 million people and leave up to 50 million more with non-fatal injuries every year.

Wazed urged civil society, the private sector, and communities to push for people-centred mobility policies, safer road design, safe vehicles, and lower speed limits.

Scientists find molecule that blocks brain cell death in Parkinson's, Alzheimer's

AGENCIES
SYDNEY

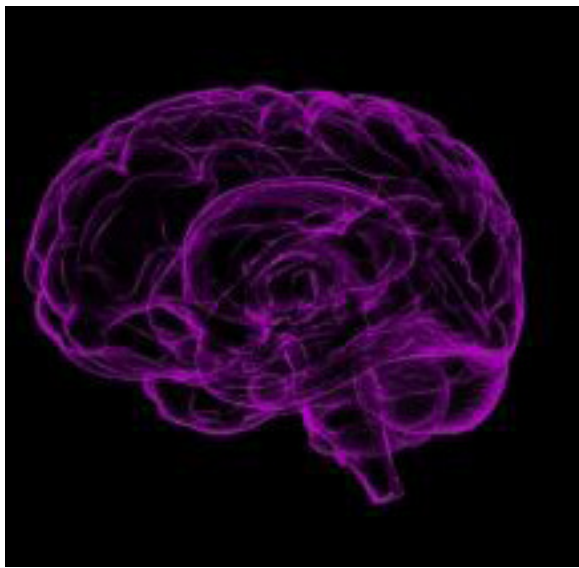
A team of Australian scientists has identified a small molecule that blocks cell death, an advance that could lead to new treatments for neurodegenerative conditions like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

The team from the Melbourne-based Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (WEHI) aimed to find new chemicals that block cell death, which could help treat degenerative diseases in the future.

The findings offer hope for treatments that could slow or stop the progression of neurodegenerative diseases.

After screening over 100,000 chemical compounds, the team found a small molecule that targets a killer protein called BAX.

By interfering with a well-understood cell death protein, the molecule



effectively stopped cells from dying.

"We were thrilled to find a small molecule that targets a killer protein called BAX and stops it working," said Professor Guillaume Lessene from WEHI.

"While not the case in most cells, in neurons turning off BAX alone may be sufficient to limit cell

death," Lessene added.

While drugs that trigger cell death are transforming the treatment of certain cancers, the development of cell death blockers -- that could be similarly game-changing for neurodegenerative conditions -- has proven challenging.

The new molecule targets a killer protein called BAX, which kills cells by

damaging mitochondria, the powerhouse of cells.

"For the first time we could keep BAX away from mitochondria and keep cells alive using this molecule," said lead author and Dewson Lab researcher Kaiming Li.

"This could pave the way for next-generation cell death inhibitors to combat degenerative conditions," Li said, in the paper published in the journal Science Advances.

While drugs that trigger cell death are transforming the treatment of certain cancers, the development of cell death blockers -- that could be similarly game-changing for neurodegenerative conditions -- has proven challenging.

The study demonstrates the potential to identify drugs that block cell death and may open a new avenue to find much-needed disease-modifying drugs for Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, said the researchers.

8,500 tonnes of antibiotics from human use contaminating rivers worldwide: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

About 8,500 tonnes of antibiotics -- nearly one-third of what people consume annually -- end up in river systems around the world each year, significantly promoting drug resistance and harming aquatic life, according to a study.

The study, led by researchers from McGill University in Canada is the first to estimate the scale of global river contamination from human antibiotics use.

"While the amounts of residues from individual antibiotics translate into only very small concentrations in most rivers, which makes them very difficult to detect, the chronic and cumulative environmental exposure to these substances can still pose a risk to human health and aquatic ecosystems," said lead author Heloisa Ehalt Macedo, a postdoctoral



fellow in geography at McGill.

For the study, published in the journal PNAS Nexus, the research team used a global model validated by field data from nearly 900 river locations.

They found that amoxicillin -- the world's most-used antibiotic -- is the most likely to be present at

risky levels. The risk was especially found in Southeast Asia, where rising use and limited wastewater treatment amplify the problem.

While antibiotics are crucial for global health treatments, the "results indicate that there may be unintended effects on aquatic environments and

antibiotic resistance", said Bernhard Lehner, Professor in global hydrology at McGill's Department of Geography.

The research calls for mitigation and management strategies to avoid or reduce their implications, Lehner said.

Notably, the findings did not consider antibiotics from livestock or pharmaceutical factories, both of which are major contributors to environmental contamination.

"Our results show that antibiotic pollution in rivers arising from human consumption alone is a critical issue, which would likely be exacerbated by veterinary or industry sources of related compounds," said Jim Nicell, an environmental engineering professor at McGill.

The team called for monitoring programmes to detect antibiotics or other chemical contamination of waterways.

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Just five minutes of advertising of junk foods -- essentially high in saturated fats, sugar, and/or salt (HFSS) -- is enough to coax children and adolescents to consume significantly more calories during the day, according to a study.

The study showed that 7-15-year-olds with just five minutes of ad exposure, regardless of the type of media advertising, can consume on average 130 kcals per day extra, which is equivalent to the calories in two slices of bread.

"Our findings offer crucial novel information on the extent, nature, and impact of unhealthy food marketing via different types of media on young people's eating behaviour," said lead author Professor Emma Boyland from the University of Liverpool in the UK.

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"Even short exposure to the marketing of foods high in fat, salt, and sugar can drive excess calorie consumption and potentially weight gain, particularly in young people who are more susceptible to advertising and whose eating patterns influence their lifelong health," Boyland added.

The study, based on a randomised crossover trial of 240 volunteers between the ages of 7 and 15 years,

is being presented at the European Congress on Obesity (ECO) in Malaga, Spain.

The analysis found that following exposure to HFSS food ads, children consumed more snacks (+58.4 kcals), more lunch (+72.5 kcals), and more food overall (snack and lunch combined (+130.90 kcals) than after exposure to non-food ads.

"Our results show that unhealthy food marketing leads to sustained

increases in caloric intake in young people at a level sufficient to drive weight gain over time," Boyland said.

Unhealthy weight gain in adolescents may lead to a host of health issues, including obesity, hypertension, diabetes, and cancer.

The study will help in the design of urgent restrictive food marketing policies that can protect children's health, said the team.

Morepen Labs' Q4 net profit declines 29 pc as rising expenses weigh on margins

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Pharmaceuticals company Morepen Labs on Monday reported a decline of 29.3 per cent in its net profit (year-on-year) for the fourth quarter (Q4) of FY25, as rising expenses took a toll on the healthcare company's performance.

The net profit for Q4 stood at Rs 20.3 crore, down from Rs 28.7 crore in the same period last fiscal, according to its stock exchange filing.

The company's total revenue increased by 10.1 per cent, reaching Rs 465.8 crore in Q4, compared to Rs 423 crore in the year-ago period.

Despite this growth in revenue, operating costs surged, which led to a decline in profitability.

The company's earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation (EBITDA) also saw a drop of 12.6 per cent,



standing at Rs 42.3 crore for the quarter, compared to Rs 48.4 crore in Q4 of FY24.

As a result, the margin for Q4 stood at 9.1 per cent, lower than the 11.4 per cent reported in the

same period last financial year.

Total expenditure for Morepen Labs in Q4 increased by nearly 15.5 per cent, reaching Rs 444.7 crore, up from Rs 385.1 crore in the corre-

sponding period last fiscal.

A significant factor contributing to this increase was the rise in the cost of material consumed, which surged by approximately 21.89 per cent, from Rs 220.2 crore to Rs 268.4 crore.

Employee benefits expenses also rose by about 19 per cent, reaching Rs 57 crore in Q4, compared to Rs 47.9 crore during the same period last financial year.

Additionally, depreciation and amortisation expenses saw a sharp increase of 71.56 per cent, rising from Rs 9.6 crore in Q4 FY24 to Rs 16.47 crore in Q4 FY25.

Additionally, the Board of Directors has recommended a final dividend of Rs 0.20 per share for the financial year ended March 31.

However, the dividend is subject to approval by shareholders at the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM).

New wearable smart sensors to protect babies from overexposure to painkillers

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

US researchers have developed a wearable and "smart" lactation sensor to prevent babies from overexposure to the common painkiller acetaminophen.

Acetaminophen, commonly used for postpartum pain management, is also frequently given to babies to treat fever, leading to potential double-dosing through both direct administration and indirectly through breastfeeding.

The drug is the leading cause of acute liver failure in children and the most frequent reason for liver transplants in the US.

The acetaminophen sensor, developed by researchers at the University of Southern California in the US gets incorporated into an ordinary nursing pad and detects acetaminophen in breast milk.

For nursing babies with



immature liver metabolism, the presence of acetaminophen in breast milk poses additional risks, said the team in the paper described in the scientific journal Device.

"Lactating mothers face unique health challenges, including nutritional deficiencies, the risk of developing mastitis -- a breast-tissue infection -- and the potential transfer of medications and other substances through their milk," said Maral Mousavi, Assistant Professor of Biomedical

Engineering, at the varsity.

While the currently available methods for measuring levels of acetaminophen or other ingredients in milk are costly, complex, and unavailable for routine use in the home, the team zeroed in on lactation pads -- worn inside a bra to absorb leaking milk.

The researchers took a simple lactation pad and built tiny microfluidic channels to guide milk to the sensing area. The pads collect milk naturally

released during the let-down reflex throughout the day. There, low-cost electrochemical sensors work, detecting and measuring important health markers in the milk.

The sensor then sends real-time readings to the user's smartphone via a compact, portable detector that works similarly to a glucometer, using electrical pulses to measure levels of acetaminophen.

With this information, users can make informed decisions -- such as choosing to pump and discard milk-containing medication -- ensuring safer feeding for their baby.

Researchers tested the accuracy of the sensor using human milk samples containing various levels of acetaminophen. They also verified that the sensor worked in the presence of antibiotics as well as throughout the changing composition of breast milk, from colostrum to mature milk.

**News in Brief****England must shoot for the stars: McCullum**

UNI

LONDON, MAY 20

England men's Test team are ready to "shoot for the stars" in a defining year, said head coach Brendon McCullum.

They rose to second in the International Cricket Council Test rankings earlier this month, their highest position since McCullum was appointed in May 2022.

After a one-off Test against Zimbabwe, starting on Thursday, they will play marquee series at home against India and the Ashes in Australia.

"We're not trying to pick this team up any more," McCullum told the BBC Radio 5 Live Cricket show.

"It's a matter of taking this team from a good team into being something English people are really proud of."

England have won 22 of the 35 Tests they have played under McCullum, having won one of their previous 17 matches before the New Zealander took over, the BBC reported.

Salah bids to break Premier League records

UNI

LONDON, MAY 20

The wait to break the Premier League's goal involvement record goes on for Mohamed Salah.

But on his 400th Liverpool appearance, he really should have been celebrating equaling the tally.

Quite how the Egyptian side-footed Cody Gakpo's low cross wide of an empty net from just yards out in Monday's defeat at Brighton, no-one really knows. His own wry smile suggested his own disbelief.

Two months ago, he looked set to destroy Premier League records and produce the greatest attacking individual season in the competition's history.

Salah's double against Southampton on 8 March took him to 27 goals and 17 assists in 29 matches, just three goal involvements short of the Premier League record of 47, held jointly by Alan Shearer and Andrew Cole.

He also looked certain to beat the record of 20 Premier League assists in a season, jointly held by Arsenal's Thierry Henry and Manchester City's Kevin de Bruyne.

Bairstow, Gleeson, Asalanka join Mumbai Indians

UNI

MUMBAI, MAY 20

Mumbai Indians (MI) have signed England's Jonny Bairstow and Richard Gleeson, along with Sri Lanka's Charith Asalanka, as temporary replacements for Will Jacks, Ryan Rickelton and Corbin Bosch, the franchise confirmed.

An IPL statement on Tuesday said that Bairstow has been signed for Rs 5.25 crore, while Gleeson and Asalanka were acquired at their reserve prices of Rs 1 crore and Rs 75 lakh respectively. The replacements will be available from the playoff stage onwards, should MI qualify.

Currently, MI and Delhi Capitals (DC) are vying for the final playoff berth, with a crucial fixture scheduled between the two sides on Wednesday. The encounter also marks MI's first outing since the



league resumed on May 17 following a temporary suspension due to heightened cross-border tensions between India and Pakistan.

Jacks, Rickelton and Bosch are set to leave the squad following MI's last league-stage match against Punjab Kings on May 26. Jacks will join England's ODI squad for a home series against the West Indies, while Rickelton and Bosch have been called up for South Africa's World Test Champi-

onship (WTC) final preparations.

Bairstow, who went unsold at the November 2024 mega auction, has not featured for England in any format since June last year. The English keeper-batsman has played 50 matches across five IPL seasons, representing Sunrisers Hyderabad and Punjab Kings. He averages 34.54 and strikes at 144.45, with two centuries to his name — including one during a record run chase at Eden Gardens last year.

DC on brink, MI eye playoffs at Wankhede stadium

UNI

MUMBAI, MAY 20

The Delhi Capitals will be playing for their IPL 2025 survival when they meet Mumbai Indians in a high-octane 63rd league match at the Wankhede Stadium on Wednesday.

A defeat for Delhi will eliminate them from the playoff race, while a win keeps their hopes alive, making this a virtual knock-out clash.

Currently placed fifth on the points table with 13 points from 12 matches, Delhi's net run rate (-0.260) has further complicated their prospects. Meanwhile, fourth-placed Mumbai, with 14 points from the same number of

games, can seal their play-off qualification with a win on home turf.

Mumbai, led by Hardik Pandya, have found rhythm at the right time. The five-time champions have won six of their last seven fixtures and appear well-balanced across departments. Their previous encounter with Delhi this season ended in a thrilling 12-run victory, adding a psycho-

logical edge ahead of this must-win clash.

Suryakumar Yadav has been the standout performer for Mumbai with 510 runs in 12 games at an astonishing strike rate of over 180. Rohit Sharma, Ryan Rickelton and Will Jacks have supported well at the top, while Tilak Varma and Naman Dhir have contributed vital runs in the middle order.

**LSG's Digvesh Rathi suspended for code breach**

UNI

LUCKNOW, MAY 20

Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) spinner Digvesh Rathi has been handed a one-match suspension and fined 50 per cent of his match fee after breaching the Indian Premier League (IPL) Code of Conduct for the third time this season, the league announced on Tuesday.

The latest infraction occurred during LSG's home fixture against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH), where Rathi dismissed Abhishek Sharma in the eighth over of the second innings and gave him a pointed send-off. Rathi waved Sharma off the field and theatrically



entered the dismissal in his imaginary "notebook", before engaging in a verbal exchange with the batsman. On-field umpire Michael Gough had to step in to de-escalate the situation.

This act has taken Rathi's demerit point tally to five for the season, triggering an automatic sus-

pension under the IPL's disciplinary framework. He will consequently miss LSG's upcoming clash against Gujarat Titans (GT) on Thursday.

All five of Rathi's demerit points have been accrued under Article 2.5 of the IPL Code of Conduct, which covers language, actions, or ges-

tures directed at a batsman upon dismissal that may provoke an aggressive response or demean the player. The IPL mandates that four demerit points translate into one suspension point, resulting in a one-match ban.

Rathi's disciplinary record includes one demerit point for a similar "notebook" celebration directed at Punjab Kings' Priyansh Arya on April 1, and two demerit points for another celebration involving Mumbai Indians' Naman Dhir on April 4. The spinner was reportedly warned after the first incident, but he claimed he misunderstood the nature of the charge.

Mountaineers across country pay tribute to India's first Everest climb 60 years ago

UNI

KOLKATA, MAY 20

Adventurers and expeditionists across the country on Tuesday paid glowing tributes to India's first successful Everest expedition.

On this day exactly 60 years ago, a record 10 climbers unfurled the national tri-colour atop the world's tallest peak 8849 meters Mount Everest in Nepal.

"Today marks a historic milestone in Indian

mountaineering. It's been 60 years since Captain Avatar Singh Cheema and Nawang Gombu, part of the Indian Everest Expedition led by (then) Captain M.S. Kohli, proudly unfurled the Indian flag on the summit of Mount Everest on May 20, 1965," Indian Mountaineering Foundation (East Zone) Chairman Debraj Dutta said in a statement.

Dutta, who also unfurled the Indian flag on the Everest, pointed out that this remarkable achievement

was followed by nine team members scaling Everest four times within ten days, a feat that drew global attention and remained unmatched for 17 years.

Nawang Gombu, who also held the post of Director of Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (Darjeeling) became the first person to summit Everest twice.

Before that Gombu, a nephew of famed Tenzing Norgay, climbed the world's highest peak in 1963 with the American

expedition.

The Indian team members who achieved this feat include, Captain Avatar Singh Cheema, Nawang Gombu, Sonam Gyatso, Sonam Wangyal, C.P. Vohra, Ang Kami, H.P.S. Ahluwalia, H.C.S. Rawat and Phu Dorjee Sherpa. The expedition was sponsored by the Indian Army to pay tribute to first Prime Minister Pandit Jawahar Nehru, who had dreamt to see Indian flags being waved atop the world's highest peak.

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