



Pahalgam Terror Strike Was Attack On India's Soul, Our Response Decisive: PM Modi

Terrorists tried to divide Indians, but we gave them a befitting reply

■ HT News Network/KNO

GANGTOK, MAY 29: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the Pahalgam terror strike last month was an attack on the soul and unity of India, and subsequent Operation Sindoor was a "decisive response" to terrorists.

He asserted that the country was united in its fight against terrorism, adding that India gave a befitting reply and destroyed terror infrastructure and several airbases in Pakistan.

Describing the Pahalgam attack as a "deliberate attempt" to create a rift in India on religious lines, Modi said, "We sent out a clear message that India is united despite the terror strike which erased sindoor of some of our sisters." At least 26 people, mostly tourists, died in the April 22 ter-



ror attack in Pahalgam. The execution-like killing by terrorists after reportedly asking about the

victims' faith left the entire country grieving and outraged.

Addressing the 50th anniversary of Sikkim's statehood function at Paljor Stadium here, Modi said the Himalayan state is the "pride of the nation" and its people believe in democracy.

The prime minister regretted that he could not attend the function at the statehood celebrations due to inclement weather, but assured that he would visit the state in future.

"Operation Sindoor against terrorists in the wake of the Pahalgam attack was a befitting reply to those who unleashed terror in India. What terrorists did in Pahalgam was an attack on humanity, and we are now united in the fight against terrorism," the PM said virtually from Bagdogra in West Bengal.

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Post 'Operation Sindoor,' HM Amit Shah arrives in J&K for 2-day visit

Chairs security review meeting in Jammu, will visit Poonch tomorrow; asses Amaranth Yatra preparation

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MAY 29: Union Home Minister Amit Shah arrived here on Friday evening amid tight security arrangements on a two-day visit to review the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir and reach out to shelling-hit affected people in Poonch, officials said.

This is Shah's first visit to the Union Territory post Operation Sindoor, they said.

Shah will during his stay in the Jammu region also visit religious places, meet shelling-hit people and the BSF personnel in the district, which recorded the highest number of 14



civilian deaths among the total 28 lives lost in the indiscriminate Pakistani shelling and drone attacks during the skirmishes between May 7 and 10, officials said.

Soon after his arrival in Jammu, Shah was received by Lieutenant Governor

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Centre Sanctions 581 CAPF Companies For Amarnath Yatra

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, MAY 29: N: The Centre has ordered deployment of a total 581 on-ground personnel, of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) for the annual Amarnath Yatra in Jammu and Kashmir, official sources said on Thursday. Jammu dining guide Jammu and Kashmir real estate

While 424 companies are being sent to the Union Territory (UT), the rest, including about 80 companies that moved to the UT during Operation Sindoor, will be "relocated" to secure the yatra route, the pilgrims and other areas, including Srinagar, they said.

The Union home ministry, officials said, has directed that these forces move "immediately" and take position in Jammu and Kashmir by the second week of June.

The Amarnath Yatra will begin on July 3 and end on August 9. The security deployment plan for the pilgrimage is being prepared keeping in mind the challenges emerging from the April 22 Pahalgam terrorist attack in which 26 persons, mostly tourists, were killed, they said.

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MHA schedules major civil defence exercise in J&K, Chandigarh UTs, other border states on May 31

■ HT News Network/UNI

NEW DELHI, MAY 29: The Ministry of Home Affairs on Thursday announced that the second phase of a large-scale civil defence exercise "Operation Shield", will be held on May 31 (Saturday) across all districts adjoining the western border of the country. The exercise will be conducted at 1700 hours. The States and Union Territories that would participate in the drill include Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, and Chandigarh. According to a circular issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), a copy of which lies with the news agency—, the exercise aims to test and strengthen the nation's preparedness against hostile threats, including air raids,

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Day not far when PoK will rejoin India voluntarily: Rajnath Singh

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, MAY 29: People of Pakistan-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) are part of India's "own family" and the day is not far when they will return to the Indian mainstream by listening to their inner voice, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Thursday.



Laying out India's policy approach towards Pakistan, Singh said New Delhi has "re-designed and redefined" its strategy and response to terrorism and that possible dialogue with Islamabad will be only on terrorism and PoJK.

In an address at the CII Business Summit, he said 'Make-in-India' in the defence sector

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Rahul Gandhi writes to PM, urges rehabilitation package for shelling affected residents in Poonch

■ HT News Network/UNI

JAMMU, MAY 29: Congress leader and Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging the immediate creation of a comprehensive rehabilitation package for residents of Poonch and other border areas in Jammu and Kashmir affected by recent cross-border shelling by Pakistani troops.

In his letter, dated May 29, accessed by the news agency—Gandhi highlighted the severe impact of the shelling that took place between



May 7 and 10, following India's Operation Sindoor.

The unprovoked attacks resulted in 28 deaths, including 14 in Poonch district, injured over 70 people, and caused widespread destruction of homes, religious sites, and livelihoods. Thousands were forced to flee their villages near the Line of Control (LoC) and seek refuge in government relief camps.

During his visit to Poonch on May 24, Gandhi met with affected families, toured damaged sites, including Gurudwara Shri Guru Singh Sabha, Geeta Bhawan temple,

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Kashmir reports first COVID-19 cases in new wave: Two GDC students test positive

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 28: Kashmir has reported its first COVID-19 cases in the current wave, with two female MDS students from Government Dental College (GDC) Srinagar testing positive for the virus. Health officials, however, have assured the public that the current strain is behaving mildly and does not pose a serious threat.

The two students, both dentists and residents of Kerala, had recently returned to Srinagar after visiting their hometowns. Upon feeling unwell, they were advised to undergo testing at the Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, where they tested positive for COVID-19.

"They have been isolated as per the protocol," a health official said, adding that both are asymptomatic or experiencing only mild symptoms and do not require hospitalisation.

Professor (Dr) Sandeep Kour Bali, Principal of GDC Srinagar, told the news agency—that the students are isolated in the college hostel, with a separate washroom facility arranged for them. She said all staff and students at the college have already received both doses of

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Weatherman predicts rains, flash floods, stormy weather for next 2 days

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 29: The light rains lashed the plains while the hailstorm wreaked havoc in northern parts of Kashmir on Thursday with the weatherman predicting unstable weather conditions until Saturday. According to the news agency—Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, and other adjacent areas received fresh rainfall today while the hailstorm has wreaked havoc in multiple areas in north Kashmir, causing losses to

the farmers. Director Meteorological department, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that there is a possibility of spell of light to moderate rain and thundershower at most places with heavy rain accompanied with intense showers and gusty winds at few places for the next two days.

However, he said that a brief spell of light rain and thundershower is expected at isolated places from June 01 to June 03, adding that generally dry weather is expected with brief spell of rain and showers towards late afternoon at isolated places from

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Centre notifies ESZ around Tral wildlife sanctuary

Move to secure last remnants of endangered Hangul population

■ HT News Network/KNO

SRINAGAR, MAY 29: : The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified an eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) around Tral Wildlife sanctuary. In a notification, a copy of which is in possession of news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Union Ministry notified that an area to an extent of zero to 3.26 kilometers from the boundary of Tral Wildlife Sanctuary as its ESZ.

"The extent of the eco-sensitive zone around the Tral Wildlife Sanctuary ranges from 0 kilometer to 3.26 kilometer from its boundary,

encompassing an area of 127.10 square kilometers, which includes 26 villages," reads the notification.

Historically- parts of the protected area, namely Shikargah and Khangund, previously designated as Conservation Reserves- have the distinction of being among the oldest notified protected areas in the country. Their notification dates back to 1945, when they were governed by the game laws of the Maharajah of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. In 2019, these conservation reserves, along with the adjoining areas comprising territorial forest

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Shattered by shelling, border resident Daat Hussain loses home and hope in Rajouri's Dehri village

■ By M S Nazki
HT CORRESPONDENT

In the remote and often-forgotten border village of Dehri in Manjakote, tragedy struck when the modest home of 60-year-old Daat Hussain, a daily wage labourer, was reduced to rubble in a recent bout of cross-border shelling. What was once a newly built dream home—filled with aspirations, memories, and a future planned with care—now lies in ruins.

Daat, who sustained critical injuries during the attack, is currently recovering at a relative's

home. While his physical wounds are healing, the emotional scars run far deeper. "We had just begun to live with dignity," he murmured, his voice trembling as he looked over what used to be his family's only shelter.

The house, built just months ago with a loan of 5 lakh, had recently been furnished and painted, symbolizing the family's slow but steady progress. That fragile progress was obliterated in an instant. Everything—household items, new tiling, and electrical fittings—was destroyed in the blast.

Daat lives with his 55-year-old wife and three daughters, each at



a critical juncture in life. His eldest daughter was married just two

months ago, a rare moment of celebration for the family. His second daughter, a bright college student in her final year, was scheduled to be married in just ten days. Instead of wedding bells, the family faced the deafening silence of grief and loss as the marriage had to be cancelled. The youngest daughter, a second-semester student at Government PG College, Rajouri, continues her studies under the growing shadow of insecurity.

"This was not just a house," said a family member, holding back tears. "It was a promise to our daughters—a symbol of security and stability. Now there's nothing

left." The family has no alternative income, no property elsewhere, and no resources to rebuild. What's left is grief, broken dreams, and a desperate plea for help. Community members and local panchayat representatives have rallied around the family, urging the district administration to act swiftly.

There is a growing public sentiment that the government must step in immediately, not just with temporary relief, but with a comprehensive rehabilitation package. "This family has lost everything through no fault of their own. It's not just about bricks and cement

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



Bollywood Celebrity Huma Qureshi visits Patnitop to promote tourism in Jammu Region

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAY 29: On the second day of her visit to the Jammu region, acclaimed Bollywood actor Huma Qureshi explored the scenic landscapes of Patnitop and Nathatop, where she experienced a firsthand taste of adventure through activities such as camping and nature walks.

At Skyview by Empyrean, Patnitop, she took a ride on the highest gondola in Asia above the tree line, a marvel of engineering constructed without cutting a single tree. The initiative stands as a significant step towards eco-tourism and sustainable tourism practices in Jammu & Kashmir.

During her visit to Skyview by Empyrean, Huma Qureshi interacted with officials and stakeholders including Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Saloni Rai, Director Tourism

Jammu, Vikas Gupta, CEO Patnitop Development Authority, Devander Singh Bhau, Joint Director Tourism Jammu, Aijaz Qaiser and members of the Patnitop Hotels Association, where discussions were held on strengthening tourism prospects in the region. Officials urged her to encourage more celebrities to visit and promote the scenic and cultural richness of Jammu.

Speaking on the occasion, Huma Qureshi said that she was absolutely awestruck by the beauty of Patnitop. She added that the warmth and hospitality of the people here are truly unmatched. Referring to the larger Jammu region, she mentioned that destinations like Katra, Bhaderwah, Bani, Billawar, Basohli, Marwah-Warwan, Rajouri, Poonch and several others are blessed with abundant natural beauty and rich cultural heritage.

She further stated that Jam-



mu & Kashmir is safe, serene, and one of the most breathtaking destinations in India. She wholeheartedly invited all tourists from across the country and the world to come, explore and experience this unmatched

beauty of Jammu and Kashmir.

Later in the day, she visited some of the well-known restaurants in Jammu city, where she enjoyed the authentic local flavors including GI-tagged Kalari Kulcha, Anardana Chut-

ney, Gucchi Pulao, Rajma and other traditional delicacies.

Director Tourism Jammu informed that the visit was planned as part of a strategic initiative to promote the diverse tourist destinations of the Jam-

mu region. He added that more celebrity visits are scheduled in the coming days, with the aim of showcasing the region's potential and inviting tourists from across India and around the world to experience the unmatched beauty and cultural vibrancy of the region.

The members of the Patnitop Hotels and Restaurant association wholeheartedly thanked the Government of J&K, Commissioner/Secretary Tourism, Yasha Mudgal and Director Tourism Jammu for conceptualizing and supporting this initiative. They also extended their full support for similar promotional events in the future to strengthen Jammu's position on the national and international tourism map.

Huma Qureshi's visit marks the beginning of a focused campaign by the Directorate of Tourism, Jammu, aimed at rebuilding traveller confidence and showcasing Jammu as a prime des-

ination for adventure, culture, cuisine and natural beauty. This initiative is expected to significantly boost the tourism profile of the region and reaffirm Jammu & Kashmir's identity as The Crown of Incredible India. Later in the day, she visited some of the well-known restaurants in Jammu city, where she enjoyed the authentic local flavors including GI-tagged Kalari Kulcha, Anardana Chutney, Gucchi Pulao, Rajma and other traditional delicacies.

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PM

The PM inaugurated a slew of infrastructure projects and laid the foundation stones of several others.

The projects inaugurated by Modi included a 500-bed District Hospital in Namchi, 'Swarna Jayanti Maitreya Manjari' (at White Hall, Ridge Park), a passenger ropeway at Pelling to Sangacholing Monastery, a 'gaushala' at Mamring and a statue of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Gangtok district.

He also laid the foundation stones for a district hospital at Pakyong, a visitor experience centre at Nathula, and the conversion of Singshore Bridge into a glass skywalk.

He also unveiled the Bhaleydunga Skywalk project, a working women's hostel at Gangtok (Tadong), Swarna Jayanti Convention Centre at Namli, and Swarna Jayanti Sports and Cultural Centre near Gangtok.

The prime minister congratulated the people of Sikkim on the completion of 50 years of statehood and said he was glad that the people of the Himalayan state chose to join a democratic India to be part of development and prosperity.

Modi hailed Sikkim for being a "shining example of the blending of biodiversity and spiritualism".

Sikkim is rich in biodiversity and has set examples in nature conservation, he added.

The state has also become a big tourist destination despite being small in size and welcomes around 10 lakh visitors annually, he said.

Recalling the contributions of great sportspersons Bhaichung Bhutia, Tarundeep Rai and Jaspal Pradhan, he said that Sikkim has the potential to become a hub of sports activities.

The prime minister said the NDA government was dedicated to making India a sports superpower.

"We want Northeast, including Sikkim, to move in this direction. Sikkim has the potential to become a hub of adventure sports," he added.

The prime minister said Sikkim was increasing organic exports, which was a big achievement for the state.

He added that connectivity was the main focus of the Centre, and the Sevoke-Rangpo project will link the Himalayan state with the country's rail network. (Agencies)

SHAH

Manoj Sinha at the airport and drove straight to the Raj Bhawan.

Shah will chair a high-level security review meeting at the Raj Bhawan late tonight. Besides the lieutenant governor, senior officials of the army, paramilitary forces, police, intelligence agencies and civil administration will be attending the one-and-a-half hours meeting, they said.

Apart from discussion on the security situation and ongoing anti-terrorist operations, he will be reviewing the security and administrative measures concerning the Amarnath Yatra beginning from July 3.

After a night stay in Jammu, Shah will fly to Poonch and interact with shelling-hit families during his visit to Poonch on Friday.

He will also visit damaged religious places, including Singh Sabha Gurdwara and hold a meeting with officers to assess the damage in the worst-hit district, officials said.

The minister will also visit the Border Security Force (BSF) camp in Poonch and interact with the jawans.

He will address the civilians affected by

Pakistani shelling at Dak Bungalow in Poonch and the BSF soldiers at their Unit Headquarters at Khanetar.

Shah is likely to distribute appointment letters among the next of kin of civilians killed in the shelling, they said.

This will be the Home minister's third visit to Jammu and Kashmir since April 6 and first after the Indian armed forces struck terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in the early hours of May 7 in retaliation to the Pahalgam terror attack that left 26 people, mostly tourists, dead.

RAJNATH

has been an essential component in the country's national security and it played a key role in India's effective action against terrorism during Operation Sindoor.

In the remarks, Singh appeared to be largely attempting to reach out to people of PoJK saying India considers them to be part of its "own" family and exuded confidence that they will return voluntarily.

"I believe that the people of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoJK) are our own, part of our family," he said.

"We are committed to the resolution of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' (One India, Best India) and we have full faith that those of our brothers who are geographically and politically separated from us today, will also return to the mainstream of India someday or the other with self-respect, listening to their voice of soul," he said.

Most of the people there feel a deep connection with India, there are only a few who have been misled, he said.

The defence minister said the unification of the PoJK with India depends on "the cultural, social and economic prosperity of this country".

He said most of the people in PoJK feel a "deep connection" with India and only a few of them have been "misled".

"The situation of our brothers and sisters living in PoJK is similar to that of Shakti Singh, the younger brother of brave warrior Maharana Pratap." "Even after separation, the confidence and faith of the elder brother towards his younger brother remains intact," Singh said.

"India always talks about connecting hearts, and we believe that by walking on the path of love, unity and truth, the day is not far when our own part, PoJK, will return and say, I am India, I have returned," he said.

In a clear message to Pakistan, Singh also said the business of terrorism is not cost effective and it will come with a heavy price as Islamabad has realised now.

His comments came three days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi said it is for the youth of Pakistan to step forward and "free Pakistan from the disease of terrorism".

The defence minister described 'Make-in-India' as crucial for national security and prosperity, stating that the use of indigenous systems during Operation Sindoor has proved that India has the power to penetrate any armour of the enemy.

"We destroyed the terrorist hideouts and then the military bases. We could have done a lot more, but we presented a great example of coordination of power and restraint," he said.

In his remarks, Singh also highlighted India's domestic defence capabilities.

India's defence export was less than Rs 1000 crore 10 years ago but it has now reached a record figure of Rs 23,500 crore, he said.

Today, it has been proven that Make-in-

India in defence is essential for both India's security and prosperity, he said.

Today, we are not just building fighter jets or missile systems and we are also preparing for new-age warfare technology, he said.

Singh also spoke about India's ambitious plan to build a fifth-generation stealth fighter jet — the advanced medium combat aircraft (AMCA).

The defence ministry this week cleared the "execution model" to design and produce the aircraft.

Singh emphasised that through the AMCA "execution model", the private sector will get an opportunity to participate in the project along with public sector companies for the first time.

"Under the AMCA project, the plan is to develop five prototypes, which will be followed by series production. It is a key milestone in the history of the Make-in-India programme," he said. (Agencies)

RAHUL

Madrasa Zia-ul-Uloom and Christ High School, and interacted with students who lost classmates in the shelling.

He described the situation as a "huge tragedy" and praised the resilience of Poonch's residents, saying, "Poonch embodies the harmony, unity, and patriotism of Hindustan."—(UNI)

MHA

drone attacks, and mass casualty scenarios.

The initiative follows the first Civil Defence Exercise conducted on May 7, during which several critical gaps in emergency response systems were identified. In response, emergency powers were invoked, and support was arranged through the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).

The upcoming drill will simulate a range of high-stakes emergency scenarios to assess and enhance the preparedness of Civil Defence and allied forces.

These will include the silent recall of Civil Defence volunteers, supported by youth organizations such as NCC, NSS, NYKS, and Bharat Scouts & Guides, to assist in various civil defence measures. Simulations will also involve air raids by enemy aircraft, missiles, and drones, along with the activation of hotlines between the Air Force and Civil Defence control rooms and the use of centrally operated air raid sirens.

Complete blackout measures will be implemented in sensitive zones, excluding critical services, to test civilian response under wartime conditions.

A scenario involving a drone attack on a military station will also be enacted, requiring the evacuation of 20 civilian victims to a safer location.

Also, the drill will include mass casualty management exercises, with the mobilization of medical teams and the provision of 30 units of blood for the injured.

As part of the rear area security plan, the exercise will also simulate the deployment of Border Wing Home Guards in coordination with Indian Army units.

All participating districts have been directed to coordinate with local administration and relevant stakeholders to ensure full-scale implementation.

The Ministry has requested that an action taken report be submitted following the exercise—

COVID

the COVID-19 vaccine, including the booster shot. "There is no need to panic. COVID-19, in its current form, is manifesting as a mild infection in many parts of the country and around the world," she added.

Dr Bali said one student is experiencing mild symptoms while the other shows no symptoms at all. Both are reported to be in good health, and there is no cause for alarm.

Health experts have urged the public to remain vigilant but not alarmed, saying the present strain typically results in mild illness or no symptoms at all. They reassured that facilities have been upgraded since the first wave of COVID-19, and everything is in place to handle any potential escalation.

"Most positive cases recover on their own, and only a few may need hospital visits, which can be managed in OPDs," they said, adding that there is no need for panic.

Authorities continue to monitor the situation closely and have urged the public to follow safety protocols and stay alert—

TRAL

compartments, were upgraded to a Wildlife Sanctuary.

The sanctuary came into existence on October 23, 2019 through a notification issued by J&K government.

The Tral Wildlife Sanctuary forms an important corridor for the movement of Hangul.

"The declaration of the eco-sensitive zone shall help in creating a buffer around the sanctuary area leading to a secure, suitable and viable habitat for the last remnant Hangul population," reads the notification

The Sanctuary is among the few areas outside Dachigam National Park where critically endangered Kashmiri Red Deer (Hangul), a Schedule I species as per the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and designated as 'critically endangered' in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red Data Book, still survives.

It is also home to other endemic species like Kashmir Musk Deer (*Moschus cupreus*) and Kashmir Gray Langur (*Semnopithecus ajax*)—

WEATHER

June 04 to 06.

In its advisory, the MeT has stated that there is a possibility of moderate to heavy rain, thunder and gusty winds at scattered places during 30-31 May, adding that there is also a possibility of landslides and mudslides at few vulnerable places.

Intense showers may generate flash floods at isolated places, the Advisory reads, appealing people to stay away from loose structures, electric poles, cables and trees etc.

Moreover, an independent Weather Forecaster, Faizan Arif Keng has said that Jammu and Kashmir is expected to witness unstable weather conditions over the next 72 hours until Saturday.

"Thundershowers are expected to affect most parts of the UT, with a stronger system expected to move in from Friday night into Saturday. Periods of intense showers, gusty winds, and isolated hailstorms may occur during this time," Keng said.

He added that persistent cloud cover will likely keep daytime temperatures below seasonal averages.

Meanwhile, Keng said that intense showers may trigger landslides, shooting stones on Jammu-Srinagar National Highway.

"Cloudbursts and cloud to ground lightning

strikes are possible," he said, adding that the timings and intensity of showers will vary from area to area.

"Intense showers may trigger flash floods in a few spots," he added—

SHALLING

—it's about restoring dignity and hope," said a local resident.

Citizens and local leaders are calling on Deputy Commissioner Rajouri to personally intervene and ensure that Daat Hussain's family receives the financial aid required to rebuild their home and restart their lives.

This tragedy, one among many in India's vulnerable border regions, serves as a grim reminder of the human cost of conflict. For Daat Hussain and his family, what they need now is not just sympathy, but swift, tangible action — to restore a home, a future, and a sense of peace.

Anjum Altaf Qureshi is new President of Private Schools Association Kupwara



Kupwara, May : In a significant development, Anjum Altaf Qureshi has been elected as the new president of the Private Schools Association Kupwara. The decision was made during a key meeting held on Tuesday, which brought together school leaders from across the district. The meeting, convened under the banner of the Private Schools Association Kupwara, witnessed participation from elected zonal presidents representing all 14 zones of the district.

Besides the heads of all zones, the other senior and reputed members, including the whole district body, were part of it. All enjoyed their participation and heard each other patiently.

With regard to the school and its academics, it was decided to make more efforts for its bright and result-oriented future. A healthy discussion took place regarding the election, which was the basic and fundamental issue of the meeting.

Keeping in view the political and social scenario and the directions/advice of the state committee, it was decided that since the term of the previous body has been completed, and to revive the system, there must be an election through the zonal presidents to form a new body.

So, after the formal election and recommendations of the executive council, the names to lead the Association at the district level for the next two years have been declared as:

Anjum Altaf Qureshi (President)
Mustafa Bashir Bhat (Vice President)
Mohammad Ashraf Baba (Secretary)
Zahoor Ahmad (Incharge Finance)
Further expansion of the council is the authority of the president to decide.



Javid Dar launches Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan at SKUAST-Kashmir

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 29: The inaugural ceremony, marking commencement of the Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan in Jammu & Kashmir, was held at Convention Centre Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST) Kashmir today, with Minister for Agriculture Production, Javid Ahmad Dar presiding over the event.

This 15-day Abhiyan aims to educate the farmers about modern, region-specific technologies for major Kharif crops, raise awareness about key government schemes and

policies, promote use of Soil Health Cards for crop selection and balanced fertiliser application and collect grassroots feedback to guide farmer-centric innovations and agricultural research.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister encouraged the farmers to engage directly with the agricultural scientists, assuring them of dedicated support to address their queries and challenges. He highlighted the vast potential of agriculture and allied sectors to enhance the productivity through technology-driven practices.

"The government is committed towards supporting the farmers through various Cen-



tral and UT schemes with the goal of increasing farm income

and making agriculture a viable livelihood for the younger

generation," stated the Minister. "Principal Secretary,

Agriculture Production Department, Shailendra Kumar, also addressed the audience, underscoring the department's achievements and the transformative impact of government interventions in improving farmer livelihoods across the region.

As part of the event, a documentary film showcasing agricultural milestones in the Kashmir Division was screened and two publications related to agricultural advancements were formally released.

Earlier, the Minister visited the Chrysanthemum Nursery to inspect the ongoing transplantation activities and review the progress on floriculture initiatives.

The event was attended by several dignitaries including Chairman DDC Srinagar, Altaf Malik; Member Legislative Assembly Hazratbal, Salman Sagar; Vice Chancellor SKUAST-K, Professor (Dr.) Nazir A. Ganai; and Director Extension, SKUAST-K, Dr. Raihana Habib Kanth. As part of the event, a documentary film showcasing agricultural milestones in the Kashmir Division was screened and two publications related to agricultural advancements were formally released.

Earlier, the Minister visited the Chrysanthemum Nursery to inspect the ongoing transplantation activities and review the progress on floriculture initiatives.

Self defence instructor calls on LG Manoj Sinha

HT News Network



SRINAGAR, MAY 29: Ms. Ashmita Paul, a self-defence instructor from Guwahati, Assam, called on Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha, today.

Ms. Paul is on a solo two-wheeler journey spanning from Guwahati to Kashmir to Kanyakumari, promoting the cause of 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' initiative.

The Lieutenant Governor congratulated Ms. Ashmita Paul and extended his best wishes for her inspiring journey. He commended Ms. Paul's efforts to raise awareness on 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' initiative and her dedication to promoting girls' education and empowerment.

Food Safety Team Inspects Markets for Proper Storage Practices

HT News Network

Srinagar, May 29: The Food Safety Srinagar DFCO conducted intensive market inspections led by Assistant Commissioner Food safety, food safety officer Hakeem Adil Rashid, Khalid Bashir Syed Dillpazir along with team of Mobile food testing van across several key areas, including Sanat Nagar, Bagh-i-Mehtab, Lal Nagar Chanapora, and Housing Colony Chanapora, to assess adherence to food storage guidelines. During the drive, Food Business Operators (FBOs) were sensitized on the importance of proper storage practices, particularly for high-risk food items such as packed drinking water, carbonated water, milk, and milk products. Officials emphasized that exposing such items to direct sunlight can compromise their quality and safety of the products. All FBOs were directed to strictly follow food safety regulations, ensuring that high-risk food items are stored in appropriate conditions to prevent contamination and degradation. Non-compliance will attract action under the Food Safety and Standards Act, reinforcing the department's commitment to consumer welfare and public health. The Food Safety Department urges businesses to uphold safe storage practices and assures continued vigilance through routine inspections to prevent violations. (KNS)

Police Organizes Awareness Programme on New Criminal Laws In Budgam

HT News Network

Budgam May 29: Under the supervision of SSP Budgam Shri Nikhil Borkar-IPS, Police in Budgam organized an awareness programme on the New Criminal Laws (NCLs) at Police Station Khansahib.

The programme was chaired by SHO PS Khansahib DySP (Prob.) Smriti Sharma and was accompanied by SI Aijaz Ahmad. The event witnessed the participation of respected citizens, community representatives, members of the traders' federation, members of Auqaf Committees, and other officers/officials of Police Station Khansahib.

R&R Commissioner reviews arrangements for Kheer Bhawani mela

Inspects progress on transit accommodation for PM package employees

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 29: Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (M), Dr. Arvind Karwani, today took on the spot stock of arrangements being put in place for the ensuing Mata Kheer Bhawani Mela-2025.

Pertinent to mention that the Mata Kheer Bhawani Mela is scheduled to be held on 3rd June, this year, on the auspicious occasion of Jyeshtha Ashthami. The Yatra, as part of the mela, will be flagged off from Jammu on 1st June at 6 am. After a brief halt at Ramban, the Yatra will proceed for different destinations like Tulmulla (Ganderbal), Tikker (Kupwara), Devsar

(Kulgam), Manzgam (Kulgam) and Logripora (Anantnag) and reach the destination by afternoon.

The Relief Organization will facilitate transportation of the devotees from Jammu, as per past practice.

Dr Karwani interacted with the concerned district administration of Ganderbal, Kulgam, Anantnag and Kupwara besides the Mandir Prabandhak Committee members and devotees. He reviewed the arrangements related to accommodation, sanitation, logistics, security and basic amenities for the Yatris.

Dr Karwani accompanied by the site engineers inspected various transit accommodations for PM Package employees under construction in the

North, South and Central Kashmir. He also interacted with the PM package employees putting up at various locations in the Valley. He was apprised of various demands of the employees like allotment of quarters, basic amenities and education for their children.

The Commissioner assured the employees that all their genuine issues will be addressed in a phased manner.

He asked the Engineers to ensure quality work and speedy completion of the transit accommodation so that the possession of the quarters can be given to the eligible employees at the earliest, as per the criterion laid down by the government.

Satish Sharma meets delegations; reiterates commitment to public welfare

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 29: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, held a series of meetings today with various delegations to address the pressing public concerns.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment towards ensuring timely redressal of issues faced by the people.

A deputation from the Mega Tourist Taxi Association raised objections to private vehicles operating in the commercial sector. They also expressed opposition to the government's plan to introduce electric buses during the upcoming Yatra season, stating that it may adversely impact their livelihoods. The association demanded implementation of a distinct color-coding system to differentiate between aggregator vehicles and registered tourist cabs. Additionally, they appealed for concessions on EMLs to support the taxi operators financially.

Another deputation of ex-SRTC employees submitted a memorandum demanding reimbursement of 6th Pay Commission arrears. They also requested a time-bound



resolution of their pending dues.

A delegation of Women's Wing of the National Conference (NC) sought upgradation of existing sports infrastructure at the Kulingam Sports Stadium. They emphasized the need for enhanced facilities to promote sports activities, especially for the youth and women in the region.

Meanwhile, some other deputations from different areas also called on the Minister and projected several issues related to Food and Civil Supplies, Transport and Upgradation of youth related infrastructure and sports facilities.

The Minister assured all delegations that their demands would be examined and appropriate action will be taken to redress the same in a time bound manner.

Ahead of Eid Ul Adha: DC Srinagar holds meeting of various Trade Associations

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 29: Ahead of upcoming Eid-Ul-Adha celebrations, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat chaired a meeting with representatives of various Traders Association at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex here today regarding, regulation, quality and availability of food items in the district.

The meeting was among others attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed; Assistant Commissioner Food Safety, Yamin Ul Nabi and other concerned besides, representatives of different trade Associations including Bakers Association, Butchers Association and Street Vendors Association.

At the outset, DC emphasized on ensuring best quality and hygienic food items at all Food Business establishments across the City. He urged



the representatives of the trade associations to ensure self regulations at their respective food establishments by strictly adhering to the laid guidelines with regard to quality, and rates of the food items including bakery, meat, chicken, confectionary, fruits etc, particularly on upcoming Eid-Ul Adha.

Dr Bilal asked the representatives of the Trade Associations to sensitize their respective members regarding the self regulation, hygiene and to maintain quality and standard of essential commodities. He further asked them to ensure that all essential commodities are sold at Government approved rates.

Jal Shakti Minister reviews Parnai Hydro Power Project at Buffliaz

HT News Network

SURANKOTE, MAY 29: Jal Shakti Minister, Javed Ahmed Rana, today reviewed the Parnai Hydro Power Project in Buffliaz, Surankote, highlighting the importance of prioritising the local communities' interests in water resource management.

The Minister emphasized that the people of Jammu and Kashmir have the first right over their water resources, and it is essential to protect and promote their interests. He emphasised the need to prioritise their interests in water management and utilisation.

The Minister highlighted the JK government's focus on hydropower development and energy self-sufficiency in Poonch.

Reviewing the progress on Parnai Hydro Power Project, he emphasized



upon the executing agency to ensure timely completion.

The Minister was informed that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Phagla Hydro Electric Project has been formulated and is awaiting implementation to harness the region's hydropower potential.

Under Phase-2 of the Parnai Project, initiation has been planned to make various areas of Mendhar adequately irrigated, promoting the local farming development and improving the quality of life for residents.

The Minister emphasized the importance of sustainable utilization of water

resources, ensuring that the benefits of hydropower projects are shared equitably among the local communities. He stressed the need for community engagement and participation in decision-making processes related to water resource management.

He said that JK government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah remains committed towards protecting the interests of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and ensuring that they receive a fair share of benefits from the region's water resources. "Parnai Hydro Power Project underscores this commitment, aiming to promote equitable development and protect the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir over their natural resources, he added."

The Parnai Project aims to enhance energy security, promote economic growth and improve living standards in Poonch, he added.

EDITORIAL

Doctors need to choose between a govt job and a private one

Jammu & Kashmir is probably the only place in the world where the doctors are at liberty to work both in the government sector and private sector. This dual nature of the discharge of the duties affects the healthcare in the government hospitals. It has been observed that many doctors reach the hospitals late in the morning and in the evenings they tend to leave early.

At places outside Jammu & Kashmir the doctors have to choose between the government job and private job. In such a way the doctors give their best and the patients feel satisfied at the end of the day. Some of the doctors working at Sher-I-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, (SKIMS) Soura have adopted a unique way of carrying out the private practice. Even though some raids have been conducted on their clinics, surprisingly these medicos managed to flee.

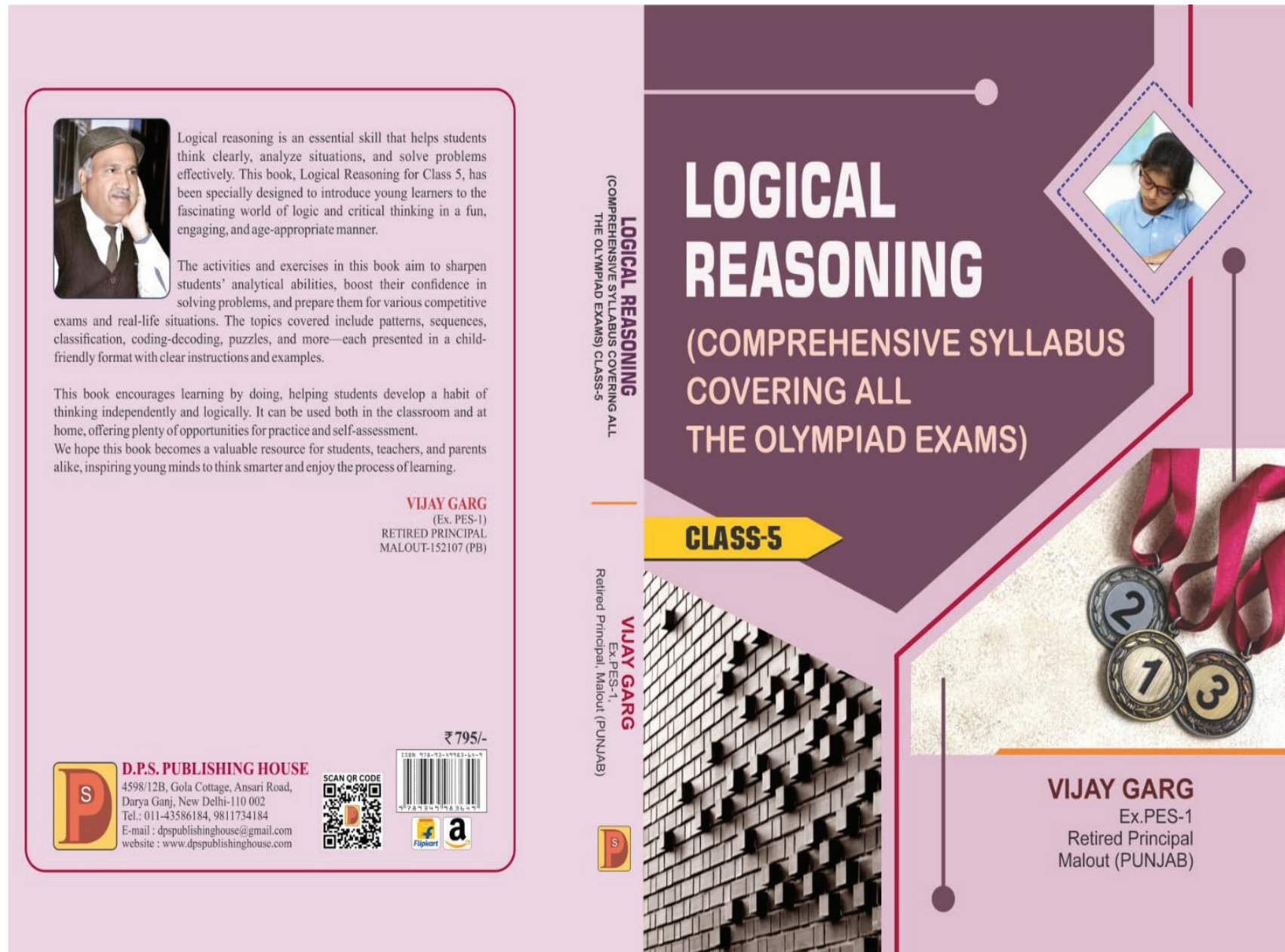
These doctors have not erected boards at their clinics, instead they pass on the message to the patients visiting them at SKIMS Soura in the outpatient department. The medicos say that it is not possible for them to provide best treatment to the patients at the hospital and as such they would have to visit the clinic. They provide the contact details of the person managing their clinics to the patients or their attendants.

At the clinics the patients have to stand and there is no seating arrangement not to talk of other facilities. Since the patients have no option they are forced to visit the clinics of such doctors while braving the vagaries of weather. Ironically the people at helm know that such things are going on in the society but no action whatsoever has been against the doctors who have defamed the noble profession of medicine.

The time to draw a line has come and the administration should make it clear to the medicos to either take up a government job or work in a government hospital. In the recent past a disturbing development in the medical scenario has taken place and that is the poaching of doctors working at SKIMS, Soura. A leading corporate hospital managed to poach upon super specialists working in different departments at the only super speciality hospital of Kashmir.

This development has forced the patients to visit the concerned corporate hospital and receive the treatment there only. The mentioned corporate hospital charges a huge amount from the patients and they are left high and dry. The doctors working at this corporate hospital are given a target of roping in a particular number of patients and carrying out a particular number of surgeries on a given day or a week.

Endorsed with Pride: A Toolkit for Tomorrow's Thinkers



BY AUBAID AHMAD AKHOON
 COLUMNIST | MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER |
 ASSOCIATE EDITOR - EDUCATION QUILL

"In the garden of knowledge, logic is the fragrance that never fades."

In the formative years of a child's education, it is not just knowledge that matters—but the ability to think, reason, and question. In a world filled with distractions, nurturing logical thinking is like handing our children a compass—so they may navigate life with clarity, confidence, and courage.

This book, Logical Reasoning - Class 5, is a brilliant step in that direction. Authored by the seasoned educator Mr. Vijay Garg, a man of wisdom and clarity, the book acts not merely as a subject guide, but as a toolkit to awaken the reasoning faculties of our children.

With thoughtfully designed chapters that span analogies, sequences, coding-decoding, puzzles, and Olympiad-level challenges, this book empowers students not just to learn, but to think deeply, creatively, and critically. It builds the essential habit of inquiry, the joy of discovery, and the discipline of independent problem-solving.

As a passionate advocate for educational reform and critical thinking, I believe reasoning is not merely a subject—it is a skill for life. This book transforms complex ideas into enjoyable exercises, turning every page into a mental playground for young learners. With puzzles, analogies, sequences, patterns, and riddles, it challenges not just the mind—but awakens a spirit of curiosity.

More importantly, it encourages our children to ask why, explore the how, and embrace the joy of solving the what next.

To students: may this book sharpen your intellect and awaken your imagination.

To parents and educators: may this

resource serve as a powerful tool to inspire minds and cultivate a deeper love for learning.

A Message to the Students of Kashmir

To the bright, resilient minds of Kashmir—you are the torchbearers of a land that has always cherished wisdom, from the scholars of ancient Sharada Peeth to the poets of timeless verses. Let this book be your companion in kindling that sacred fire of thought.

As you work through these pages, let your thoughts flow as freely as the Jhelum, and your understanding grow as vast as the meadows of Gulmarg. Remember, the ability to think logically will not only prepare you for competitive exams—it will prepare you for life's most important challenges.

Each puzzle solved is a mountain conquered. Each question cracked is a step toward a stronger mind and a brighter future.

To the Parents and Teachers
 I urge you to encourage the spirit of inquiry among your children. Praise their questions as much as their

answers. Help them see learning not as a burden but as a beautiful process of self-discovery. This book provides you with a resource that supports both school curriculum and Olympiad aspirations.

To Mr. Vijay Garg
 With deep appreciation, I commend your lifelong dedication to education. Your expertise and vision have shaped a book that is both accessible and profound. You have not only authored a learning resource—you have gifted a generation the power of thought.

May this book light a thousand minds, and may each of those minds shine back with wisdom, clarity, and compassion.

With warm regards and thoughtful wishes,

Aubaid Ahmad Akhoun
 Columnist | Motivational Speaker
 Associate Editor, Education Quill
 Manager Operations, Genagogy
 (Gen Alpha Pedagogy)
 In association with Technoglobe Jaipur
 A Renowned IT Training Institute
 Contact: 9205000010 / 9205000016
 Email: akhoun.aubaid@gmail.com

We couldn't see, they were still singing: Memories flying from the village balcony



PRIYANKA SAURABH

While we are living our lives in the prison of busyness behind the glittering roads, tall buildings and closed windows of the city, life is still breathing under the open sky in the balconies of villages far away. There, mornings still begin with the chirping of birds, afternoons are adorned with the tune of the cuckoo, and nights resonate with the hooting of owls. This article is a journey of those memories and experiences - of that world felt while sitting in the balcony of a village, which was once ours, but which we lost somewhere in the noise of the city.

When I recently came to the village, I was sitting in my balcony one evening. Suddenly a bird caught my attention. It looked familiar - brown

and white, nimble and very playful. As soon as I saw it, a voice came from some corner of my mind - "Dhaurairaiya!" Yes, this is what we used to call it when we children used to visit our grandmother's house. When the whole family gathered in the village during summer vacations, all of us children would sit in the courtyard and chase these birds, feed them, and argue over their names. "This is not a sparrow, it is a Dhaurairaiya," my cousin would say proudly.

Living in the city limits the ability to recognise birds. Crows, pigeons, parrots and sometimes sparrows - these are all that we see. But here in the village, it is as if the pages of a forgotten book have opened up again. There is a tree in front of my balcony, on which mynas and bulbuls come early in the morning. Peacocks dance in the fields far away, and their chirping is like a part of some traditional music. A glimpse of the Neelkanth is also visible, and that blue colour refreshes the eyes.

The tit-tit of the sandpiper, the agility of the water hen, the cooing of the cuckoo and the running of the partridge - all these together create a lively world which we have never known properly in the cities.

Living in crowded cities, we tend to lose our senses. There, the morning starts with the mobile alarm, here with the crowing of the rooster. There the air is from the AC, here from the mango tree. There the sky is filled with mist, here with the flying of birds.

Living in crowded cities, we tend to lose our senses. There, the morning starts with the mobile alarm, here with the crowing of the rooster. There the air is from the AC, here from the mango tree. There the sky is filled with mist, here with the flying of birds.

In the silence of the night, when two owls come regularly to the village and sit on an old neem tree, a different feeling is felt. In the city, the word owl is associated with an insult or superstition, but here they are like teachers of the night - silent sentinels who maintain the balance of nature.

When I asked my grandmother if this bird was called Dhaurairaiya, she smiled and nodded, "Yes, daughter, it is the same. Now where do you see it in cities? You people don't live there that you will be able to see it."

This shook me to my core. Are these birds really going extinct, or have we become extinct from the places where life and nature breathe together?

This balcony in the village had become a window - not just to look outside, but to look inside. I started remembering grandmother's stories, those afternoons when we used to sit in the shade of a tree and watch the

birds' nests, those pea fields in which the partridges used to run, and those ponds where the water hens used to swim with their chicks.

Our generation has seen bird emojis on mobile screens, but not their true colours. We have heard bird calls on Google, but never seen the morning congregation of birds sitting under the open sky.

Coming to the village, I realised that in our hustle and bustle, we have left behind everything that used to make our soul smile. Birds are not just flying creatures, they are a part of our past. They are companions in our folk songs, stories, and emotions. "Kaaga sab tan khaiyo, choon-choon khaiyo maan" - from this couplet of Kabir to Mirabai's cuckoo and Tulsi's chatak, every bird has been an essential part of our culture.

I remember when I first came to the city, I used to think that the dazzling light of the city is the goal of life. But now I understand that light is necessary, but not every light is the sun. There are some lights that dazzle the eyes but make the mind dark.

While sitting in this balcony of the village, a small bird comes again and again, sits for a few moments,

and then flies away. Looking at it, it feels as if it is adding wings to my memories. Every time it flies, an old memory floats away in the air.

The more we are getting away from nature, the more emptiness is increasing within us. From mental health to social distancing, a major reason for the problems of modern life is that we are getting disconnected from the land, trees, birds and our origins.

This article is a request - to myself, and to all of you. Go to villages, breathe in the open air, recognise the sounds of birds, teach children their names, and realise that life exists not only in human noise, but also in chirping.

The city gives us height, but the village gives us depth. The city is the race of development, the village is the lap of heritage.

And most importantly - these birds are not extinct. They are still singing, it's just that we have stopped listening. Let's start listening again. Not from our balcony, but from the window of our mind.

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

Lesson plan in Edu. - A wastage of time

BY MOOL RAJ

Modern education is about producing workers to perpetuate the secularised, capitalist system and not about producing thinkers. Thinkers change system and shift paradigms and so modern education is as careful as it can be avoided producing too many people who are capable of sustained critical thinkers. We all know that teachers spend a lot of time preparing lesson plans rather than focusing on how well they deliver those lessons. This is a complete wastage of time. This is one hell of a statement. In our Distt. Doda a process of providing quality education to students is at its peak where DIET Doda issued 31 point programme to every school to be follow in letter and spirit .It is impressed upon all Teachers, Masters and Lecturer to prepare lesson plans for teaching students from primary to higher secondary level including other 30 points to be followed. I realise I have not written anything for this blog for quite some time .So I am really glad to write some thing about the teacher's pedagogic abilities .Without this it would be impossible to determine the extent of the teacher's teaching abilities. Every one know a great planner when one read their lesson plan, but one know a great teacher when one see them. While the lesson plan might reveal some interesting things about the decision taken by the teacher, I don't think it is necessary to determine the extent of the teacher's teaching abilities, because the only thing it does determine is the extent of teachers planning abilities. And is just one of many skills of effective English teachers .What I definitely object to though are the incredibly detailed lesson plans we are obliged to write for formal observations. Firstly they do not reflect how we plan on a day to day basis .Let's be honest any good teacher will prepare and plan for their classes in one way or the other .I will often visualise the different stages, interaction pattern, lesson aims and go over the various options. I could use in the class without writing too much down. The best decision come to me on the spot. They depend on students on their mood ,on what happens in the class, and on countless other unpredictable factors .Which brings me to my second objection .One can't plan for the unpredictable. And what happens in class is to a lesser or greater extent about the lesson, it's aims ,possible interaction patterns, predicting set-backs and devising solutions to them are all part and parcel of preparing for a successful lesson ,I can't see how writing them down in their former of an ever more complex and detailed lesson plan will help one effectively respond to what happens in the classroom.

Teaching is not about managing the delivery of a lesson plan .Unfortunately though both teacher training courses as well as in house observations place great importance on thorough lesson planning. Because as we are told there is a direct correlation between a good lesson plan and a lesson success. Really ?When preparing for my last observation I spent several hours writing the plan and preparing materials. According to the feedback I received the lesson went well but I did not feel the hours of prepaid off. I didn't feel it was a particularly outstanding lesson. And I am pretty sure I would have taught a similarly effective lesson with 10% of the time put into planning .And would have been much less stressed about to stick to the lesson stages. So might have respond to students immediate queries and needs better too. So why are we told by trainers and observers to prepare a detailed lesson plans? Perhaps because they provide comfort to the novice and to certify the novice's ability. Perhaps because it is part of what most teachers to do. Perhaps because the observers or trainees actually believe that how the plan looks reflect in a way how the lesson is going to plan out. It shows that the trainee is diligent and had carefully thought about the lesson .This belief though is underpinned by the misconception that teachers can control what students learn. Lesson plan doesn't prepare the trainee for the daily teaching and planning routine. It is stressful time consuming and not environmental you friendly .Successful teaching is much more than a well written lesson plan. Our attitude to lesson plans is full of hypocrisy too. On the one hand ad teachers we produce long lesson plan each time we are observed, because we are required to by the observer even though we doubt whether they help us develop professionally or deliver a more effective lesson .On the other hand as observers we expect adherence to one and only true attitude to planning even though we know that it's neither the only one nor the best nor the most practical or realistic one While the ability to plan is important and needs to be cultivated we must not forget about the countless other skills which a successful teacher needs. And to help the teacher develop them we don't need to see an agonisingly long lesson plan every time we observe a class. Last but not least our higher authority of education DSEJ and DIET Doda should read and follow this detailed letter that is published throughout the all daily newspapers of J&K State and not stick decade old method of teaching in this present 21st century.

The author is a regular columnist and freelance writer .

Treating TB beyond medicine

DR MANISHA VERMA

At the recently concluded World Health Assembly at Geneva, the announcement of India's trachoma-free certification by the World Health Organization (WHO) is more than just a public health triumph; it's a profound testament to the power of a collective national will. This achievement, born from decades of proactive efforts in hygiene, cleanliness, and awareness, offers a compelling blueprint for how India is now tackling another ancient scourge, tuberculosis (TB). Indeed, the echoes of the trachoma victory resonate strongly in the nation's ambitious drive towards a TB-Mukt Bharat.

Just as a sustained focus on fundamental public health principles underpinned the fight against trachoma, the current war on TB is being waged with an equally comprehensive, and crucially, deeply ingrained Jan Bhagidari –people's participation–philosophy. This isn't merely a catchphrase; it's the very bedrock of the government's strategy. The recent 100-day TB elimination campaign provides a vivid illustration of this resolve. The sheer scale of the undertaking, with 12.97 crore people screened and over 7.19 lakh TB patients notified, is staggering.

Yet, what truly sets this effort apart is the parallel commitment to dismantling the social symptoms of TB. The organization of 13.46 crore "Ni-kshay Shivirs," or community screening and awareness camps, speaks volumes about a recognition that effective treatment extends beyond medicine to encompass the eradication of stigma, myths, and misinformation.

Jan Bhagidari, in the context of TB elimination, is a vibrant, multi-faceted phenomenon. It's an ecosystem that supports the tireless dedication of community health workers like ASHAs and Anganwadi workers, who are the most valuable point of contact in remote villages. They are the unsung heroes identifying presumptive cases, ensuring treatment adherence, and providing vital nutritional support. Building on this foundation, the mobilization of resources by local self-help groups, NGOs, and faith-based organizations further strengthens this community-led effort by establishing critical patient support networks.

Before these frontline warriors even step onto the field, however, the ground is already being prepared by India's dynamic media ecosystem. The catchy slogan for the 100-day campaign, 'Jan Jan Ka Rakhe Dhyaan, TB-Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan', is not just a clever turn of phrase; it's a national clarion call, resounding across television, radio, and public spaces in myriad local languages. This comprehensive awareness generation has



been significantly bolstered by unwavering political will, with the highest echelons of government, including the Honourable Prime Minister, consistently championing India's progress. And under the aegis of the Honourable Minister of Health and Family Welfare, a "whole-of-government" approach, fostering collaborations across ministries and proactive efforts at the state level, signifies a unified national commitment.

Another cornerstone of India's fight against TB lies in the pervasive reach of its Panchayati Raj Institutions. These over 2,50,000 local governments are pulling TB out of the shadows, normalizing conversations, and engaging sarpanches and gram pradhans as public health champions. What was once taboo is now openly discussed, and more importantly, acted upon, at the village level.

Media as a public health ally

The media's role in this monumental endeavour is indispensable. By spotlighting governmental interventions, social protection schemes, and inspiring stories of community-led initiatives, it cultivates public confidence and encourages individuals to step forward for care. This decentralized, people-centric model finds its most profound expression in the novel Ni-kshay Mitra initiative. The extensive media coverage around the Indian Council of Medical Research's evidence linking nutrition and TB treatment outcomes ignited a powerful wave of community action, bringing corporations, NGOs, individuals, and even children for-

ward to become Ni-kshay Mitras. The distribution of over 3.06 lakh food baskets to TB patients and their families by more than 1.05 lakh Ni-kshay Mitras during the recent 100 days campaign vividly highlights the far reaching impact of this approach at the grassroots level.

Perhaps most powerfully, the emergence of TB survivors as champions has transformed the narrative. These individuals, having successfully navigated their own journeys of recovery, are now integral allies, offering empathy, guidance, and living proof that TB is entirely curable. Their structured training - where they understand the science of TB, the ways in which it affects a patient psychosocially, and techniques to build community networks - and public sharing of experiences inspire treatment adherence and build crucial community empathy.

As India accelerates towards a TB-Mukt Bharat, the continued synergy between these key catalysts and the spirit of Jan Bhagidari will be paramount. Their combined power to inform, inspire, and mobilize is undoubtedly India's greatest asset. By strategically leveraging technology, fostering innovative communication strategies, and deepening community involvement, India is not merely striving to eliminate a disease; it is forging a healthier, more engaged society where every citizen is aware, every patient is supported, and where TB, truly, becomes a relic of the past.

Writer is a Additional Director General (Media), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India

Top career paths for students with average marks in class 12



VIJAY GARG

The job market now teems with dynamic, skill-based options that value creativity, innovation, and personal interests. For generations, we've been conditioned to believe that marks are the ultimate measure of success. The idea that only top scorers achieve great things in life has become deeply ingrained, shaping how young learners are guided and judged. But as Bruce Lee famously said, "The successful warrior is the average man, with laser-like focus." So, if you find yourself somewhere in the middle and are doubting your potential, know this – your journey is far from over.

The Creator Economy

If you love storytelling, design, or self-expression, the digital and creative economy offers endless possibilities. Welcome to the world of "Creative Hustles" – where originality meets opportunity. Think of creators like Anubhav Singh Bassi, Bhuvan Bam, Technical Guruji, or Prajakta Koli. They didn't follow conventional routes, but with consistency, creativity, and courage, they've become some of India's most recognised digital stars.

Whether your passion lies in YouTube, animation, graphic design, music, dance, filmmaking, or voice-over artistry – there's a niche for you. Best of all? You don't need a fancy degree, just the willingness to learn and create. Platforms like Coursera, edX,



Udemy, and YouTube offer free and paid courses to help you sharpen your skills and turn your passion into a profession.

Fashion & Lifestyle

If fashion, beauty, or lifestyle content excites you, welcome to "Runway to Real Life" – a glamorous yet competitive industry for trendsetters. Career options include makeup artistry, hairstyling, fashion designing, costume design, modelling, photography, fitness coaching, dietetics, social media management, and public relations.

While some of these careers require formal education and internships, many others can begin through short-term certifications or apprenticeships. This space demands confidence, creativity, and persistence – but the rewards, both creative

and financial, can be immense.

Service Industry

If you enjoy connecting with people and making them feel valued, the hospitality and service sector could be a great fit. These are the "Experience Makers" – individuals who help craft memorable moments for others.

Career options span across cabin crew, chefs, hotel and event management, wedding planning, travel consultancy, human resources, motivational speaking, caregiving, nursing, childcare, counselling, and therapy. While some roles require professional training or degrees, the most essential trait is a genuine desire to help others and make a difference in their lives.

Corporate Careers

If a structured 9-to-5 life, software, coding, or the buzz of corporate boardrooms appeals to you, you might be drawn to "Club Corporate." Here, you can become an SAP consultant, AI or machine learning engineer, data scientist, business analyst, product manager, or web/app developer.

While a computer science degree helps, many of these roles value certifications and project experience just as much. You can also explore finance roles like financial planner, analyst, risk manager, or actuary – usually starting with a degree in economics, commerce, or finance, followed by certifications such as CFP, CFA, or FRM.

Marketing is another fast-growing field, with roles in digital marketing, brand management, and social media strategy in high demand. A degree in business or marketing, paired with hands-on experience, can

pave the way.

Skill-Based Jobs

These are the "Skill Smiths" – professionals who build and fix the world around us. These include electricians, plumbers, mechanics, aircraft technicians, HVAC experts, carpenters, agricultural technicians, nurses, and paramedics.

Such careers often begin with ITI diplomas, polytechnic courses, or apprenticeships. They are sometimes wrongly labelled as "low-paying" or "less prestigious," but in reality, skilled professionals are highly sought-after and can earn handsomely with experience.

Government Jobs

Finally, we come to the perennial favourite – the "Government Job Dream." If you're disciplined, patient, and eager to serve the nation, government careers offer power, prestige, stability, and a well-respected lifestyle.

With a bachelor's degree in any field, you can prepare for exams like UPSC, state civil services, or join the defence forces through NDA or SSB. SSC exams open up roles in various government departments, and there are also options in the police and paramilitary forces.

Final Thoughts

To all students with average marks who feel lost or uncertain – don't be disheartened. Marks are just numbers, not your identity or destiny. Discover your passion, build your skills, and keep moving forward. As Swami Vivekananda once said, "If hard work becomes your habit, success will become your destiny."

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



DDC reviews status of upcoming telecom projects in District Kishtwar

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MAY 29: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Rajesh Kumar Shavan today chaired a meeting to review the status of ongoing projects of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Reliance JIO & Airtel Telecom Ltd in District Kishtwar. At the outset, the representatives of BSNL, Reliance JIO and Airtel apprised the meeting about the range of telecom services and progress of work on the ongoing projects. Reviewing the BSNL projects, the DC directed to expedite the process of installation of all accessories required to make the completed Mobile Towers fully functional and operational at Chanjer, Yardoo, Margi and Brayan in Sub- Division Mar-

wah. The Sub Divisional Engineer (SDE) BSNL was directed to ensure the completion of the process of deployment of vendors within a week's time to facilitate start of the work on the installation & erection of Towers at Qaderna & Pathgam and the completion of the same in a time bound manner. The SDE, BSNL was further directed to follow and pursue with the higher authorities of BSNL to grant approval for installation of Towers at Gurni, Dherna and Mungli. He was further directed to conduct a joint survey in Ranie & Mungli areas on priority. Further, the DC directed the JIO to complete the process of laying of fiber by August 10, 2025 to put in operation its services by August 15, 2025.



The Airtel Ltd was directed to expedite the process of planning approval, vendor deployment / allotment for Execution of works so that the projects shall be completed within stipulated timeline.

Telecom companies assured the DC that all the directions shall be implemented in letter and spirit on ground. District Development Commissioner (DDC) Rajesh Kumar Shavan today chaired a meeting to

review the status of ongoing projects of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Reliance JIO & Airtel Telecom Ltd in District Kishtwar. At the outset, the representatives of BSNL, Reliance JIO and

Airtel apprised the meeting about the range of telecom services and progress of work on the ongoing projects. Reviewing the BSNL projects, the DC directed to expedite the process of installation of all accessories required to make the completed Mobile Towers fully functional and operational at Chanjer, Yardoo, Margi and Brayan in Sub- Division Mar-

wah. The Sub Divisional Engineer (SDE) BSNL was directed to ensure the completion of the process of deployment of vendors within a week's time to facilitate start of the work on the installation & erection of Towers at Qaderna & Pathgam and the completion of the same in a time bound manner. The SDE, BSNL was further directed to follow and pursue with the higher authorities of BSNL to grant approval for installation of Towers at Gurni, Dherna and Mungli. He was further directed to conduct a joint survey in Ranie & Mungli areas on priority. Further, the DC directed the JIO to complete the process of laying of fiber by August 10, 2025 to put in operation its services by August 15, 2025. The Airtel Ltd was directed to expedite the process of planning approval, vendor deployment / allotment for Execution of works so that the projects shall be completed within stipulated timeline. Telecom companies assured the DC that all the directions shall be implemented in letter and spirit on ground.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost the R/C of my Vehicle Scooty Having Registration No :- JK 01AF -3694 From Barzullah To Iqbal park Srinagar. Now I have applied for its Dublicate. if any body having objection he/she may contact RTO office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days no objections will be accepted.

Name :- Tanveer Ahmad

S/O :- Late Gulzar Ahmad Mir

R/o Barzullah

PUBLIC NOTICE

My daughter's name wrongly mentioned In Date of Birth certificate as RIDA WASEEM D/O WASEEM AHMAD WANI R/O SHRAKWARA JAHINGEERPIRA bearing id No 101002640108 while her correct name is RIDA WASIM D/O WASIM AHMAD WANI R/O SHRAKWARA JAHANGEEPORA .which needs to be corrected ...if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his / her objection in the office of SDH kreeri / BMO office kreeri within seven days from publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name ... WASIM AHMAD WANI

F/O RIDA WASIM

R/O SHRAKWARA JAHANGEEPORA

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change then Name in my electricity Connection From Haji Habibullah Dar S/O Ghulam Mohammad Dar to my brothers Name I.e Mohd Aslam Dar S/O Haji Habibullah Dar bearing consumer Id 0206050002182. Anybody having any objection in this regard, may file his/her objection in the office of Concerned PDD Department within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection shall be entertained.

Name.... Mohd Aslam Dar S/O Haji Habibullah Dar

Under consumer I'd 0206050002182

PUBLIC NOTICE

My son's name , parentage name & residence has been wrongly written as SEHRAN UMAR S/O UMAR RASHID SHEIKH R/O TARZUA SOPORE while his correct name , parentage & residence is SEHRAN UMAR BHAT S/O UMAR RASHID BHAT R/O KREERI which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may file his/her objection in the office of HANFIA MODEL HR. SEC SCHOOL KREERI within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name....UMAR RASHID BHAT

S/O SEHRAN UMAR BHAT R/O ...KREERI

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is being informed that By mistake My DOB in my aadhar card having aadhar card number 482637460010 is wrongly mentioned as 20/09/2004 The actual DOB as per school records is 02/01/2005 NOW I want apply for its correction if any body having any objection in this regard he/she may contact Rubeena Bashir c/o Bashir Ahmad Mir R/O Iaripora Khalam Pahalgam Ph 9622292863 within 7 days .

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is being informed that By mistake My DOB in my aadhar card having aadhar card number 482637460010 is wrongly mentioned as 02/01/2005 The actual DOB as per school records is 02/01/2005 NOW I want apply for its correction if any body having any objection in this regard he/she may contact Rubeena Bashir c/o Bashir Ahmad Mir R/O Iaripora Khalam Pahalgam Ph 9622292863 within days .

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI

Subject: Application for issuance of OBC certificate in favour of ASIF MAJEED S/O AB MAJEED GANIE R/O KOHLINA Tehsil KREERI for the issuance of OBC (Other Backward class in his / her / their favor

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of OBC in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of KOHLINA of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the GANIE community having annual income 92000/(NINTY TOW THOUSAND) the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1....AB MAJEED GANIE Father 52 years Labour
- 2....HAJIRA BEGUM mother 50 years Housewife
- 3....ASIF MAJEED SELF 23 years student
- 4....KAMREENA Sister 21 years //
- 5....KAISER MAJEED BROTHER 16 years student
- 6....KAUSIR MAJEED sister 22 years House maker

if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of said certificate certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine

NAIB TEHSILDAR KREERI

اطلاع عام

ہر خاص عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ غلطی سے سکول رکاز میں میری بیٹی کی ازواج ہوئی ہے جب کہ میری بیٹی کی اصل DOB 25/09/2011 ہے اب اس کی دہائی کرانی مطلوب ہے کسی کو DOB 30/09/2011 کوئی عربی عربی و تودہ سات پیم کے اندر اندر گورنمنٹ مڈل سکول مائل کے دفتر میں پیش کرے بعد از معاد کوئی عربی قبول نہیں ہوگا

المستہتر

محمد اسرف لاویے والد جاسمین اسرف ساکن مامل پھلگام

ازنیابت ہندواڑہ

اطلاع بابت خاص وعام

مکتبہ عبدالرشید چوپان ولد عبدالعزیز چوپان ساکن ہندواڑہ تحصیل آفس ہندواڑہ سے وارنٹ جاری کرنا (لیگل سپر سٹیفیکٹ) حاصل کرنی مطلوب ہے من مظهر / مظهرہ کی والدہ مورخہ 11/11/2020 کو فوت ہوئی ہے اور مندرجہ ذیل وارثان کو اپنے پیچھے چھوڑ گئی ہے

1. رفیقہ بیگم دختر محبتی دختر عمر 48 سال پیشہ گھر بیگام
2. سیدہ بیگم دختر محبتی دختر عمر 60 سال پیشہ گھر بیگام
3. عبدالرشید پسر محبتی پسر عمر 55 سال پیشہ مزدوری
4. رطبہ دختر محبتی دختر عمر 40 سال پیشہ گھر بیگام

وارثان مندرجہ بالا ہے اس کے علاوہ اور کوئی وارثان جابز نہیں ہے اجراء سیرفیکٹ ہندواڑہ کے نسبت اگر کسی بھی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی نذر یا اعتراض ہو تو سات یوم کے اندر اندر دفتر حذا سے رابطہ کریں یا ذیل فون نمبر سے رابطہ کریں میں معاذ تمہ ہونے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا وارثان مندرجہ بالا ہے اس کے علاوہ اور کوئی وارثان جابز نہیں ہے اجراء سیرفیکٹ ہندواڑہ کے نسبت اگر کسی بھی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی نذر یا اعتراض ہو تو سات یوم کے اندر اندر دفتر حذا سے رابطہ کریں یا ذیل فون نمبر سے رابطہ کریں میں معاذ تمہ ہونے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا فون نمبر 7006615728

اطلاع عام

نمبر id ہر خاص عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے جو بجلی کنکشن زیر

0209020006029

جو کہ میرے والد علی محمد بٹ کے نام درج تھی اب تبدیل کر کے جاوید احمد بٹ ولد علی محمد بٹ ساکن لاری پور راگواڈ پھلگام کے نام پر ادراج کرنی مطلوب ہے کسی کو کوئی عربی و تودہ سات یوم کے اندر اندر سب ڈو جن عسقم کے دفتر میں پیش کرے بعد از معاد کوئی عربی قبول نہیں ہوگا

المستہتر

جاوید احمد بٹ

ولد مرحوم علی محمد بٹ

ساکن لاری پور راگواڈ پھلگام

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to be informed that the dob of my daughter jasmeen ashraf have been wrongly in her school records as 25/09/2021 but her correct dob is 30/09/2011 now i want update it her school record if anyone has queries plz inform to office of government middle school manal pahalgam. Mohd ashraf lawe R/o mamal pahalgam

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my husband name MUKHTA BANDAY S/O MOHD AKBAR BANDAY R/O KREERI .Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 02120400000210 wants to be registered on my name SYEEDA BEGUM W/O LATE MUKHTA BANDAY R/O KREERI .if anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name....SYEEDA BEGUM

S/O...MUKHTA BANDAY R/O KREERI

DISTT.....BARAMULLA

SSP Doda attends Thana Diwas at Police Station Dessa

HT News Network

DODA, MAY 29: Police Station Dessa successfully organized Thana Diwas at Gai Dessa, drawing participation from hundreds of local residents. The event was graced by the Chief Guest Senior Superintendent of Police Sandeep Mehta and the Guest of Honour, Commanding Officer CO 10RR Doda. The guests were welcomed by the Incharge of the Model E-Governance Centre, GP Gai Dessa Hiteshwar Thakur. DSP OP Vishal Manhas and other police officials were also present at the event. Hiteshwar Thakur, representing the civil society of



Dessa, raised several key public issues during the interaction. These included the urgent need for a mobile tower in Gai Dessa, blacktopping of the Gai Bus Stand, and construction of a Defense Road from Gai to Chandraini Rudhra Ganga via Urad-Baggi Dessa — to connect 36

high-altitude meadows. He also highlighted the need for installing CCTV cameras at local Government Higher Secondary School and J&K Bank to curb thefts, along with the development of a sports ground at Sheeti Gai Dessa, for which a DPR has already been submitted to the DC

Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan 2025 launched in R.S. Pura

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAY 29: A mega farmers' awareness camp was today organized at Panchayat Purobhana, Khanachak, to mark the inauguration of the Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan (VKSA) 2025 in Sub-Division R.S. Pura. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation, bringing together farmers and experts on one platform to promote sustainable agricultural development. In the programme, latest technologies and different Agriculture schemes were discussed

with around 150 participating farmers. The event was graced by the presence of Joint Director Union Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Dr. Jasbir Singh and Director of Agriculture Jammu S. Arvinder Singh Reen. Both dignitaries addressed the gathering, sharing valuable insights and motivation for the farming community. Dr. Jasbir Singh emphasized the importance of farmer-centric policies being implemented by the Government of India. He highlighted that Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan is not

just a campaign but a mission to ensure the transformation of Indian agriculture through scientific interventions, smart resource utilization, and access to direct benefits. He urged farmers to proactively engage with the departments, adopt sustainable practices, and take advantage of the numerous schemes and subsidies made available under the leadership of Prime Minister. S. Arvinder Singh Reen, in his address, reaffirmed the department's commitment to working at the grassroots level. He stated that VKSA 2025 is

an opportunity for farmers to directly interact with field experts and scientists to resolve their issues and upgrade their practices. He encouraged farmers to adopt organic and climate-resilient agriculture while taking full advantage of government-supported initiatives for irrigation, seeds, fertilizers, and crop insurance. Adding further value to the occasion, Dr. Amitesh and Dr. Imran, scientists from Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Jammu, SKUAST-J, educated the farmers on best practices for kharif crop management.

اطلاع عام

میں مسیحی پرویز احمد میر ولد مرحوم عبدالجبار میر ساکن راجپورہ ہر خاص وعام کو بذریعہ اشتہار کے آگاہ کرتا ہوں کہ مجھے بجلی بل باپ کے نام پر آتی تھی بنام عبدالجبار میر ولد مرحوم محمد نبیان میر کے نام پر اب مجھے اپنے نام پر درج کرنی مطلوب ہے بنام پرویز احمد میر ولد مرحوم عبدالجبار میر کے نام پر درج کرنی اس بارے میں اگر 021410004325 مطلوب ہے کمز یوم آئی ڈی نمبر کسی بھی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی نذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر اندر گورنمنٹ بجلی ڈپارٹمنٹ آفس چٹھی پورہ ہندواڑہ میں پیش کریں میں معاذ تمہ ہونے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

المستہتر

پرویز احمد میر

ولد مرحوم عبدالجبار میر ساکن راجپورہ

تحصیل زلڈاڑہ

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information of general public I RUKHSANA AKHTER D / O GH MOHAMMAD BEIGH R/O DEWA BUG TANGMARG BARAMULLA have been married to SAJAD AHMAD WANI S/O AB RASHID WANI R/O KHANPETH SINGHPORA PATTAN due to my marriage with SAJAD AHMAD WANI the address has been changed from DEWA BUGH TANGMARG to KHANPETH SINGHPORA PATTAN now i want to add the name of my husband and present on the all documents include Bank record if anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may contact with J&K Bank SINGHPORA PATTAN within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

المستہتر

جاوید احمد وانی والد ریحان احمد

ساکن پھلگام

اطلاع عام

ہر خاص عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ سچے اسپن پٹے ریحان حمد وانی ولد جاوید احمد وانی ساکن پھلگام کی DOB سرٹفکٹ مطابق پوکیو کا 27-07-2020 منسلک ہے اگر کسی کو کوئی عربی و تودہ سات یوم تک منسلک کٹی کے دفتر میں پیش کرے بعد از معاد کوئی عربی قبول نہیں ہوگا

المستہتر

جاوید احمد وانی والد ریحان احمد

ساکن پھلگام



Javed Rana visits Pir Ki Gali; reviews key infra initiative along Mughal Road Inspects Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary, assesses Markhor revival efforts

HT News Network

SHOPIAN, MAY 29: Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department is all set to undertake several initiatives aimed at enhancing pilgrim infrastructure at Pir Ki Gali and promoting environmental conservation along the Mughal Road.

As part of these efforts, the department will construct transit camps, build eco-friendly huts and undertake an aggressive and extensive plantation drive.

Minister for Forest, Ecology & Environment, Javed Ahmed Rana, issued on-spot directions to senior officers of the department in this

regard during his visit to Pir Ki Gali today.

The Minister emphasized the importance of these initiatives in creating a sustainable and welcoming environment for the pilgrims while protecting the scenic splendour of the area. He said that the department will construct transit camps for the pilgrims at Pir Ki Gali, providing them with comfortable and well-equipped resting places, he added. Eco-friendly huts will be built to cater to the needs of travellers, minimising the environmental impact while ensuring a comfortable stay, he added.

The Minister said that an extensive plantation drive will be undertaken



along the Mughal Road to promote greenery and environmental conservation.

During his visit, the Minister also inspected the Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary, where he reviewed Markhor revival efforts. He assessed the impact of human activities and livestock grazing by the non-traditional migratory herders on Markhor and its habitat.

Javed Rana directed for timely removal of fallen timber in the Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary to prevent forest fires and maintain forest health. He also directed the wildlife authorities to engage with local communities to promote sustainable liveli-

hoods and reduce human impact on Markhor habitats, emphasising focussed conservation efforts to protect the Pir Panjal Markhor and its habitat.

Javed Rana said that the government led by Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, remains committed towards protecting the region's natural resources and promoting sustainable development.

He said the initiatives along Mughal Road are part of a broader effort to balance the economic growth with environmental conservation, ensuring a better future for the region's ecosystem and communities.

DC Kulgam chairs DLRC/DCC meeting; reviews performance of Banks & Line Deptts

HT News Network

KULGAM MAY 29: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan today chaired the District Level Review Committee / District Consultative Committee meeting (DLRC/DCC) to review the performance of Banks and Line Deptts. for the quarter ending March 31, 2025 under Annual Credit Plan and Govt. schemes.

Meeting was attended by RBI, NABARD, Distt Officers of line deptts and District Coordinators of various banks.

LDM, Ifitkhar Ahmad Padder revealed that the deposits of Banks stand at Rs 2526.01 cr as on 31.03.2025 witnessing growth of 11.25% over March 2024. Advances stand at Rs.2347.24 cr as on 31.03.2025 witnessing growth of 5.61% over March 2024.



The Credit Deposit Ratio of District Kulgam stood at 83.06%, quite above the National benchmark of 60%.

It was informed that under the District Annual Credit Plan (2024-25) of Rs.1937.00 Cr, Banks have disbursed Rs.1767.64 Cr to 68124 beneficiaries during quarter Q4 ended March 31, 2025 thus achieving 91% of ACP target. DC while reviewing sector wise achievements, instructed banks to improve credit dispensations

in Agriculture, MSME, and more focus should be given to Farm Mechanization, Education and Housing and Renewable Energy sectors.

He directed the banks to ensure 100% saturation in KCC loans pertaining to Agriculture allied sectors besides timely disposal of all cases from the bank side. He stressed the need to enroll all KKGs as business units owing to their huge potential in reaching out to the farmers.

DC directed the concerned to hold financial literacy camps, simulations in all Colleges and Higher Secondary Schools of the district for the students to get first hand information regarding finances, accounting and other professional business modules. The house was informed by the LDM that the district has achieved the targets of PMEGP, Artisans/Weavers Credit Card & PM Weavers Mudra scheme. The district has disbursed 337 vehicles till date under Mumkin scheme, 32 under Tejaswini cases and 65 cases disbursed under Spurring till date, with Kulgam district leading in UT of J&K.

DC instructed for proper & timely implementation of govt schemes PMEGP, REGP, NRLM & NULM in order to generate self-employment opportunities in the district.

District Shopian launches Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan with enthusiasm & unified commitment

HT News Network

SHOPIAN, MAY 29: In a major step towards strengthening agricultural development and empowering farmers at the grassroots level, Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan (VKSA) was launched today in district Shopian with great enthusiasm.

The campaign initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Rural Development is being jointly implemented by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, and will begin from May 29 until June 12, 2025.

The rally marking the beginning of the campaign was flagged-off from the Mini Secretariat Shopian by Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone, Additional District Development

Commissioner (ADDC) Shopian, in the presence of the nodal officers of the programme, Dr. Zaffar Afroz Badri, Sr. Scientist & Head, KVK Shopian and Mohammad Rafiq, Chief Agriculture Officer Shopian.

The rally witnessed active participation from scientists of Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Shopian and enthusiastic involvement from officers and officials of the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Department of Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, Sericulture, and Fisheries, Shopian.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Lone emphasized the importance of VKSA in creating awareness among farmers regarding improved agricultural practices, government schemes, and available scientific support.

He urged all stakeholders to remain vibrant, proactive, and engaged throughout the campaign to ensure tangible benefits reach farmers.

Dr. Badri, outlined the strategic plan under VKSA, announcing that nine intensive awareness and outreach programs will be conducted across key locations in the district, focusing on the Pro-Kharif campaign.

These events will ensure farmers gain direct access to expert guidance, improved technologies, and government services related to agriculture, livestock, poultry, fisheries, and more.

Chief Agriculture Officer Shopian and nodal officer of VKSA, emphasized the importance of determination and dedication to the outreach plan. He urged all teams to maintain strong engagement with farmers.

Program on Landslides in Kashmir Himalaya – Fundamentals held at IUST

HT News Network

Awantipora, May 29: The Centre for Disaster Risk Reduction (CDRR) at the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), organised a program on the pressing issue of landslides in the Kashmir Himalaya. The event aimed to bolster disaster preparedness and risk reduction awareness among students and faculty, aligning with the Centre's commitment to fostering a culture of safety and resilience.

The key expert of the program was Mr. Abdul Qayoom Paul, Director, Geological Survey of India (GSI), Kashmir, who provided in-depth insights into the triggers, impacts, and mitigation strategies related to landslides, which are increasingly affecting the fragile Himalayan ecosystem.

This academic gathering served as a platform for knowledge-sharing and dialogue on disaster risk reduction (DRR), enhancing the capabilities of future professionals and academics in managing and mitigating geohazards.

Dr. Aabid Hussain Shalla, Dean, School of Sciences, while speaking on the occasion, emphasized the importance of scientific understanding in addressing natural hazards. "Equipping our students with scientific knowledge and practical tools to tackle geohazards like landslides is vital for building resilient communities in the Himalayan region," he said. The program was coordinated by Dr. Irfan Maqbool Bhat, Coordinator, CDRR.

CUKashmir's Maths deptt holds workshop on 'Vedic Mathematics'

HT News Network

Ganderbal, May 29: Department of Mathematics, School of Physical and Chemical Sciences, Central University of Kashmir (CUK), today conducted a National Level online workshop on "Vedic Mathematics: Unlocking the Power of Ancient Indian Maths".

The workshop received an overwhelming response with about 700 registrations from across the country, representing around 300 academic and research institutions. The participants included 211 Assistant Professors, 24 Professors, 42 Associate Professors, and 50 Research Scholars, with the remaining attendees comprising teachers and UG/PG students from diverse institutions.

In his keynote address, Vice-Chancellor, Prof. A. Ravinder Nath highlighted the contributions of ancient Indian mathematicians and drew attention to the role of mathematics in Indian defence systems, particularly in missile interception technologies. He encouraged the department to expand its offerings and conduct more such events to maximize outreach and impact.

DC Kupwara Reviews the progress of Mission YUVA Programme

HT News Network

KUPWARA, MAY 29: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ms. Ayushi Sudan, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the ongoing implementation of the Mission YUVA programme across the district.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner Kupwara, Mufti Fareed-u-Din; General Manager DIC Kupwara, Sameer Jan; Assistant Director Employment, Arshid Qadri; YUVA Doots, and other concerned.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need for a proactive and mission-driven approach to maximize the enrollment of unemployed youth under the Mission YUVA initiative. She urged all stakeholders, particularly the YUVA Doots, to intensify their efforts and ensure meaningful engagement with youth across



the district. To expedite the outreach, the DC assigned a target of enrolling a minimum of 10 youth in each panchayat within the next 10 days. She directed the YUVA Doots to conduct field visits and facilitate on-the-ground registration of eligible youth, thereby ensuring access to opportunities in skill development, entrepreneurship, and employment.

Speaking on the occasion, the General Manager, DIC Kupwara, briefed participants about the core objectives and modalities of

the programme, which is designed to create a robust ecosystem for youth empowerment. Mission YUVA is a flagship initiative of the Government aimed at equipping educated unemployed youth with necessary skills and support to pursue sustainable livelihoods. The programme focuses on enterprise creation and high-skilled employment generation, enabling the youth to build dignified careers through skilling, entrepreneurship, and self-employment ventures.

SAATHI Campaign Launched in Kupwara to Identify and Support Vulnerable Children

HT News Network

KUPWARA, MAY 29: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Kupwara today convened a meeting-cum-orientation session to initiate the implementation of the SAATHI Campaign (Survey for Aadhaar and Access to Tracking & Holistic Inclusion), a national mission launched by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA). The campaign aims to ensure that no child is left without a legal identity, access to welfare schemes, or legal protection.

The meeting was chaired by the Secretary/Sub-Judge, DLSA Kupwara, Moneer Ahmad and attended by senior officers including the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Chief Education Officer (CEO), Tehsildars from all tehsils, members of the Juvenile Justice Board, CDPO and ICDS officials, representatives from orphanages and Darul Uloom, Panel Lawyers, and Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs).

Under this campaign, Tehsil-Level SAATHI Committees are being formed, headed by the respective Tehsildars, and comprising ASHA and Anganwadi workers, ICDS supervisors, PLVs, and representatives of the Child Development Project Offices. These committees will conduct extensive surveys from 1st June 2025 to identify destitute, orphaned, or undocumented children, particularly those residing in orphanages, Darul Uloom, shelter homes, and Child Care Institutions.

The survey will focus on Facilitating Aadhaar enrolment, Linking children to government entitlements, Providing legal aid where required, Ensuring educational and healthcare access.

Amazon Fashion announces 16th edition of 'Wardrobe Refresh Sale'

Jeangir Malik

SRINAGAR, May 29: Amazon Fashion today announced its 16th Wardrobe Refresh Sale (WRS), running from May 30th to June 4th, featuring its most expansive brand portfolio of 4 lakh+ styles, now with strategic new additions from over 20+ brands and their collections including Carat Lane, GAP, Wildcraft and more, and the rebranded Gen Z destination SERVE along with the exclusive new Premium destination The Premium Edit. This edition brings together top brands at great value, offering customers unprecedented selection with Amazon's hallmark convenience, trust, and delivery speed. Premium fashion enthusiasts can shop from GUESS, Armani Exchange, Calvin Klein, Lacoste, Alexander Christie, Michael Kors, Mokobara, Tommy Hilfiger, Louis Philippe, Fossil and more, along with trend-conscious consumers can explore the newly launched American



classic brand GAP with minimum 30 percent off. The sale also introduces Carat Lane's fine jewellery, providing customers with trusted craftsmanship delivered with Amazon's renowned convenience. "At Amazon Fashion, we bring you an extensive collection of brands, trending styles, and exciting new launches—all at great value with Amazon's trust and convenience. With the 16th edition of the

Wardrobe Refresh Sale, customers can explore a wide range of trendy apparel, premium watches, chic handbags, edgy sneakers, and much more. Our curated selections cater to every fashion enthusiast across the country, making it easy to complete their look with Amazon Fashion's wide offerings," said Nikhil Sinha, Director, Amazon Fashion India. For luggage and travel needs, WRS fea-

tures exciting new launches from Genius by Safari, Movement by Liberty, Provogue and Wildcraft. In apparel, customers can refresh their wardrobes with top brands like Vero Moda, Bliss Club, Janasya, True Brown, Myx, Highlander, Tokyo Talkies, Symbol Premium, Locomotive, Skechers, Killers, Adidas Kids, Reid & Taylor and Barcino. It will also feature dedicated collections for diverse customer needs, with summer essentials showcasing breathable cotton and linen selections. Amazon's "Wear it with" feature helps customers build complete looks, solving a key online fashion shopping pain point by suggesting perfectly matched style combinations. Other exciting deals include same day delivery on 4 Lakh+ styles, Buy More and Save More, limited-time 8 PM deals and exclusive first-time offers of up to 60 percent off on top trending styles. Customers can also earn 10 percent extra cash back* on all prepaid offers and 10 percent savings on ICICI bank credit and debit cards.





Dy CM inspects development works in GMC Udhampur, Bailey

Directs executing agency to complete project by July 2025

HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, MAY 29: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today conducted an extensive tour of Udhampur to inspect the ongoing construction works on the Government Medical College Udhampur at Bailey, being executed by the Public Works Department.

He was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Prem Singh along with senior officers from the line departments and executing agencies.

During the visit, Executive Engineer, PWD Udhampur, briefed the Dy CM

about the current status and progress on the ongoing construction works. The Deputy Chief Minister issued necessary directions to the executing agencies to accelerate the pace of work and ensure completion of the project within the stipulated timeline of July 2025. He instructed the executing agencies to deploy additional manpower, introduce double-shift work schedules and improve overall site efficiency. He emphasised the importance of timely execution without compromising on the quality of construction. The Dy CM also directed the Execu-



tive Engineer PWD, to monitor progress regularly and conduct joint inspections to ensure seamless and uninterrupted execution. He stressed the importance of rigorous quality checks for construction materials like sand and bricks. He also directed for strict compliance with labour laws and safety protocols for on-site workers.

During the inspection, the Dy CM reviewed all components of the project including construction status. He called for immediate resolution of any bottlenecks impeding the project progress.

Surinder Choudhary also directed the executing agencies to mobilize resources efficiently and work with enhanced synergy and commitment to achieve optimal outcomes. He further instructed the Executive Engineer PWD, to maintain close coordination with the construction agency to ensure accelerated work on the ground. Earlier, the Deputy Chief Minister visited the Baglamukhi Temple in Udhampur, where he paid obeisance and prayed for peace and prosperity of the people of J&K.

HC Jammu wing holds Full Court Reference to condole demise of Senior Advocates, Advocates

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAY 29: A Full Court reference was held today in the Court room of Chief Justice at Jammu Wing of the High Court to condole the demise of distinguished members of the legal fraternity including Senior Advocates Ashok Vijay Gupta and Prem Saroop Dutta, Advocates Ramesh Chander Arora and Vinod Kumar Bakshi.

Justice Arun Palli, Chief Justice, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, in his condolence address, remembered the contribution of departed souls. He said that their firm commitment to the law, hard-working nature and dedication to justice has left a mark on the judicial community and their demise is a big loss to the legal fraternity. The Chief Justice on his behalf and on behalf of other Judges of the High Court prayed to the Almighty to rest their souls in peace and bestow immense strength to the bereaved members of the families to bear the irreparable loss.

Cyclothon Rally held in Ghat to raise awareness about hazards of Plastic Pollution

HT News Network

DODA, MAY 29: As part of the post World Environment Day 2025 (celebrated every year on June 5) activity campaign, the Block Development Office Ghat in collaboration with School Education Department organized a Cyclothon rally to spread awareness about the harmful effects of single-use plastic.

Students from different schools of Block Ghat took part in the rally with great enthusiasm. They rode bicycles to send a strong message about protecting the environment and using eco-friendly alternatives instead of plastic.

BDO Ravi Kumar said that the rally was a symbolic and meaningful step to make people aware of the need to reduce plastic use. He added that such events are part of their continuous efforts to educate the public about the dangers of plastic pollution and the importance of sustainable living. The rally also aimed to involve the local community and encourage everyone to play a role in protecting the environment. It helped inspire young people and citizens to become active in bringing positive change.

Through this Cyclothon, Block Ghat proudly joins the global efforts to fight plastic pollution and protect nature for future generations.

SANJY-2025: Kathua admin starts off refurbishment of lodgment centers, civic amenities

HT News Network

KATHUA, MAY 29: In view of the upcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY) 2025, a preparatory meeting was convened today under the chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner Kathua Vishavjeet Singh, here in the Conference Hall of DC Office complex. The meeting was attended by the Nodal Officer for Lodgement Centres established at different locations of the Kathua to accommodate yatrias. The deliberations centered on finalizing the logistic arrangements, ensuring availability of basic amenities, and streamlining coordination for the smooth conduct of the Yatra.

During the meeting, the ADC informed that the capacities of all 36 Lodgement Centres have been finalized and communicated to the respective Nodal Officers. For efficient communication and real-time coordination, a dedicated WhatsApp group has been created involving all key stakeholders. It was further directed that all Nodal Officers shall conduct immediate inspections to verify the status of essential amenities such as safe drinking water, electricity, toilet facilities, and cleanliness at the identified lodgement centres. The ADC issued clear instructions to submit status reports by tomorrow evening, highlighting any deficiencies or urgent requirements.

Director Health Services Jammu takes stock of patient care scenario in District Reasi

HT News Network

REASI, MAY 29: Continuing the interactive touring pattern, Director Health Services Jammu Dr. Abdul Hamid Zargar visited District Reasi and took detailed review of overall healthcare services and different programmes being run by the Health Department for the well being of the public.

The Director was accompanied by Deputy Director Schemes Dr. Poonam Sethi and Assistant Director Schemes Dr. Ila Gupta. Chairing a meeting, the DHSJ took stock of the current challenges after a threadbare discussion with all present.

Dr. Abdul Hamid Zargar directed Chief

Medical Officer Dr. M A Kohli to ensure effective execution and monitoring for better implementation of every programme to benefit the public at grassroots level. He assured to meet the requirements of manpower and infrastructure for improving patient care and effective functioning of the Health services in all the facilities of the District Reasi. Expressing satisfaction over working of the Health Department in the District, he instructed the BMOs to strengthen the system by ensuring time to time training of the medical staff.

The meeting was attended by Medical Superintendent, District Hospital, Dy CMO, BMO Katra, Pouni and I/C BMO Reasi and Mahore, besides Nodal Officer RBSK, DPMU Reasi. Later, the Director visited District

Hospital Reasi and inspected the facilities in the health institution. The DHS took a round of all sections of the institution including Emergency Room, ICU, X-Ray section, Wards, Labour Room, OT, Dental section, Laboratory etc and found the facilities were functioning well. During interaction with patients and attendants, it was observed that services are being provided to the satisfaction of the public. The DHS emphasized the importance of patient satisfaction and efficient service delivery and highlighted the department's commitment to improve public healthcare in the region. Meanwhile, Dy. Director Schemes inspected the MCH section, SNCU and Labour Room along with AD Schemes. The DD Schemes appreciated the working

of all these Sections and instructed the incharge to continue working in the same spirit for the benefit of the public.

The visit aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of healthcare delivery in the district and ensure optimal functioning of medical facilities for the well being of the public. Later, the Director visited District Hospital Reasi and inspected the facilities in the health institution. The DHS took a round of all sections of the institution including Emergency Room, ICU, X-Ray section, Wards, Labour Room, OT, Dental section, Laboratory etc and found the facilities were functioning well. During interaction with patients and attendants, it was observed that services are being provided to the satisfaction of the public.

ADGP Alok Kumar reviews preparedness of Civil Defence, SDRF at Jammu

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAY 29: After taking over additional Charge of the Commandant General Homeguards, Civil Defence and SDRF, Additional Director General of Police J&K Alok Kumar, on his maiden visit to Jammu, chaired a review meeting in his Jammu office here the other day.

The meeting was attended by officers of SDRF, Homeguards & Civil defence, wherein threadbare discussions were held on CD preparedness, awareness programmes, conduct of simulated exercises & CD training modules for different stakeholders.

Stock position of available CD tools and deficiency also came up for the



discussion and necessary instructions were given to all stakeholders to remain ready to respond to any natural, man-made disaster anytime. Stress was laid on co-ordinated efforts of NDRF, civil defence volunteers, village Homeguards volunteers and Fire and emergency services.

Continuing his programme of inter-

action with the Officers/Jawans of SDRF 2nd Bn today, the Commandant General also inspected Guard of Honour organised in his honour at Bn. Hqrs. He participated in the farewell function of Gurvinder Kour, Dy. SP SDRF 2nd Bn, who is attaining superannuation on May 31, -2025 after rendering unblemished service of 34 yrs.

Reiterating that the retired police officers are our veterans, he pitched for hosting half yearly conferences of retired police officials to keep them roped in and to take advantage of their working experience for civil defence activities. DIG, CD, HG & SDRF/Director CD and HG Mohammed Arshad supervised the interaction programme.

Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan 2025 launched in R.S. Pura

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAY 29: A mega farmers' awareness camp was today organized at Panchayat Purobhana, Khanachak, to mark the inauguration of the Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan (VKSA) 2025 in Sub-Division R.S. Pura.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation, bringing together farmers and experts on one platform to promote sustainable agricultural development. In the programme, latest technologies and different Agriculture schemes were discussed with around 150 participating farmers. The event was graced by the presence

of Joint Director Union Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Dr. Jasbir Singh and Director of Agriculture Jammu S. Arvinder Singh Reen.

Both dignitaries addressed the gathering, sharing valuable insights and motivation for the farming community.

Dr. Jasbir Singh emphasized the importance of farmer-centric policies being implemented by the Government of India. He highlighted that Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan is not just a campaign but a mission to ensure the transformation of Indian agriculture through scientific interventions, smart resource utilization, and access to direct benefits. He urged farmers to proactively

engage with the departments, adopt sustainable practices, and take advantage of the numerous schemes and subsidies made available under the leadership of Prime Minister.

S. Arvinder Singh Reen, in his address, reaffirmed the department's commitment to working at the grassroots level. He stated that VKSA 2025 is an opportunity for farmers to directly interact with field experts and scientists to resolve their issues and upgrade their practices. He encouraged farmers to adopt organic and climate-resilient agriculture while taking full advantage of government-supported initiatives for irrigation, seeds, fertilizers, and crop insurance.

D&FCO issues Advisory for FBOs, Consumers on Artificial Fruit Ripening

Recommends use of approved source of Ethylene Gas; Warns against applying banned calcium carbide

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAY 29: The Drug and Food Control Organisation (D&FCO) has advised the Food Business Operators (FBOs) dealing with storage, packaging, distribution and sale of Fruits & Vegetables to strictly adhere to the prescribed guidelines during and post artificial ripening treatment to ensure safe and compliant ripening practices, failing which penal action as warranted under FSS Act 2006 shall be initiated. The Organization has specially issued advisory for repining of Climacteric Fruits- Fruits which are harvested at full maturity and can be further ripened during transit or storage like Banana, Guava, Avocado, Mango, Apple, Pear, Apricot, Peach and Tomato etc

Artificial Ripening is the process by which ripening is controlled to achieve desired characteristics intended for better consumer acceptance. Fruit trade involves

transporting fruits to distant places. It said that considering the issue of use of banned calcium carbide and non-availability of alternative ripening agent, Food Safety & Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) permitted the use of ethylene gas for ripening of fruits in India vide notification dated 23.08.2016, subject to adherence to the SoPs by the Food Business Operators (FBOs).

A detailed SoP for use of Ethylene gas for artificial ripening has been notified by FSSAI and available at the official website <https://fssai.gov.in/cms/guidance-notes.php>.

Artificial Ripening with Calcium Carbide, popularly known as 'Masala' has been strictly banned in terms of sub-regulation 2.3.5 of Food Safety & Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulation, 2011, due to its potential health hazards. Recommending the use of Ethylene Gas, D&FCO said that Ethylene is a hormone produced naturally within the fruits to

stimulate ripening process. Ethylene, being a natural hormone, does not pose any health hazard to consumers.

Ethylene gas, ethanol, ethephon, etc. can be used on fruits to trigger the ripening process in fruits, under controlled conditions of Humidity, Temperature and Exposure Time.

However, any source of ethylene gas coming in direct contact with fruits is not permitted.

Further, only the approved source of Ethylene Gas is allowed to be procured and used, besides ensuring authenticity/purity of the sachets containing ethephon in powdered form and other components.

"Only those sachets must be used that are properly labelled mentioning details of manufacturer, composition, instructions for use etc. Use of Ethylene Gas for artificial ripening can be done upto the concentration of 100 ppm (100 µl/L) only" the organization advised further.

Fruit should not occupy more than 75% of the volume of the chamber (as well as crate) during the treatment.

Gas leakage monitoring system should be installed in the commercial ripening chambers.

Stacking of boxes should be done keeping minimum 4-6 inches space from the walls and between the adjacent crates.

For detailed guidance note all the stakeholders have been advised to visit https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Guidance_Note_Ver2_Artificial_Ripening_Fruits_03_01_2019_Revised_10_02_2020.pdf

Consumers also are advised to remain vigilant in the market and purchase fruits from known sellers/reputed stores/dealers who declare that fruits sold have not been ripened using harmful/banned chemicals and to wash fruits thoroughly with potable water before its use/consumption to ensure its safety and quality.



India's orthopaedic, cardiac implant industry to reach \$5 billion by FY28

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

India's orthopaedic and cardiac implant sector, including exports, is expected to reach \$4.5 to \$5 billion by FY28, driven by strong domestic demand and gradually growing export presence, according to a report released on Monday.

The sector (including exports) stood at \$2.4 to \$2.7 billion in FY24, according to CareEdge Ratings.

The Indian implant manufacturers are making rapid strides in the domestic market and are gradually expanding their presence in the export market.

The report cited that with only 7.5 per cent customs duty on the import of most coronary and orthopaedic implant products, any potential trade deal with the US resulting in tariff reduction is not likely to materially change



the market dynamics for domestic manufacturers.

However, material changes in non-tariff barriers, such as the relaxation of price caps, can significantly alter the competitive landscape for domestic manufacturers compared to MNCs, it added.

Sales of homegrown implant manufacturers have grown at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 28 per cent (including a CAGR of 37 per cent for exports) during the four years ended FY24, outpacing the sales CAGR of 12 per cent for foreign multinational corporations

(MNCs) during the same period.

The sales volume growth of domestic entities was even higher, driven by their competitive pricing and increased participation in government-sponsored insurance schemes.

"India's medical implant sector is on a robust growth trajectory, driven by strong domestic demand and growing exports," said Krupal Modi, Director at CareEdge Ratings.

India's export growth rate for implants has significantly outpaced the

implant imports during the last 5-6 years.

Increasing per capita income and affordability, rising healthcare awareness, an ageing population, expansion in healthcare infrastructure, and increasing insurance penetration are expected to drive the domestic demand for implants in the long term, said the report.

Price caps adversely affected the foreign MNCs' high-margin products, forcing them to discontinue some of their premium products from the Indian market.

However, it significantly improved affordability, especially for implants manufactured by domestic companies, thereby enabling them to expand their market share. Schemes like Ayushman Bharat further improved the affordability and expanded the market, according to the report.

Study shows why psoriasis patients may be at risk of obesity, fatty liver disease

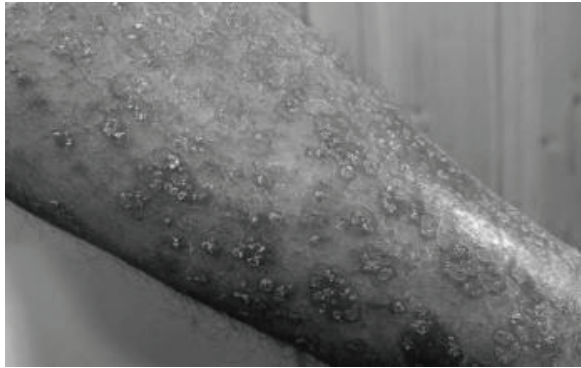
AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

While patients with psoriasis -- a chronic skin condition -- respond well to treatment with biologics, inflammation can linger, leading to broader health implications such as obesity and cardiovascular and fatty liver disease, according to a study.

Psoriasis, with its systemic inflammatory nature, high risk of cardiovascular disease, and frequent use of biologic drugs, could provide a valuable framework for studying residual inflammation.

The study, published in the Journal of Investigative Dermatology, could lead to more targeted and effective treatments that address the systemic aspects of psoriasis, beyond just the skin.

"Despite excellent control of skin disease, a substantial percentage of psoriasis patients demon-



strate residual systemic inflammation," said Joel M. Gelfand, Department of Dermatology, at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine, US.

"These findings emphasise that just treating the skin signs of psoriatic disease is not sufficient, and patients often need additional approaches to lowering systemic inflammation," Gelfand added.

For the observational study, the team assessed residual inflammation in 209 psoriasis patients across three international

cohorts (Spain, the US, and Sweden) who had achieved a no or mild psoriasis on stable biologic therapy.

They found that residual inflammation was present in 36.3 per cent of these patients and was significantly linked to higher body mass index (BMI), metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), increased baseline systemic inflammation, and greater adipose tissue.

"The findings underscore a critical unmet need to address the systemic

inflammatory burden beyond skin symptoms in psoriasis, potentially requiring interventions targeting obesity and metabolic dysfunction to improve overall patient outcomes," said lead investigator Álvaro González-Cantero, from the Department of Dermatology at Hospital Universitario Ramón y Cajal in Spain.

The researchers suggest a more intensive cardiovascular risk assessment and management of psoriasis patients.

This could involve closer monitoring of inflammatory markers like high-sensitivity C-reactive protein, as well as parameters related to liver health, by integrating lifestyle modifications or weight management strategies, potentially leading to earlier detection and intervention for associated comorbidities, the team said, while also calling for further studies to confirm the findings.

Experts dismiss rising Covid cases in Southeast Asia as seasonal trends of flu

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

With media reports citing cases of Covid-19 infections surging in Southeast Asia, bringing fresh fears about the disease that affected millions of people and the global economy, health experts on Tuesday dismissed them as seasonal trends of flu.

As per media reports, the weekly Covid-19 infections in Singapore surged by 28 per cent from 11,100 in late April to 14,200 in the first week of May, with hospitalisations also rising 30 per cent.

Hong Kong recorded 31 virus-related deaths in the week ending May 3, the city's highest weekly toll in a year. New infections in Hong Kong rose to 1,042 in the week ending May 10, up from 972 the previous week.

"Rising Covid cases in Southeast Asia are attributed to seasonal trends of flu cases. Most of the cases



are mild and do not need any hospitalisation," Dr. Harshal R Salve, Additional professor at, the Centre for Community Medicine at AIIMS, New Delhi, told IANS.

India also is seeing a slight uptick in cases. A review held on Monday by the Ministry of Health concluded that the current situation in India is "under control," with just 257 active cases reported nationwide as of May 19.

"Covid-19 is a cyclical disease, which means that cases will rise every few months. The inter-

vals can range from six to nine months. As with other Asian countries, we are seeing Covid cases in India too. But they are not overwhelming hospitals and are not any more severe than they used to be. In fact, most cases are so mild, they are being treated as outpatient," said Dr. Rajeev Jayadevan, Convener, Research Cell, Kerala State IMA.

"Due to widespread immunity due to prior vaccination and from surviving past infections, Covid-19 is no longer the destructive force it used to be. There

is no indication of any major genetic shift having occurred in the virus that could alter the character of the disease it causes," he added.

China and Thailand have also reported a notable increase in new infections. The surge is being largely attributed to the spread of new Omicron subvariants, including JN.1 and its related descendants -- LF.7 and NB.1.8, which make up over two-thirds of sequenced cases.

The increase in cases may also be attributed to waning immunity, with periodic waves being anticipated.

While the cases reported so far are generally mild in severity, "the outcome also depends on the host. For instance, infection in a frail elderly individual could lead to more severe outcomes," Jayadevan said.

The experts urged cough hygiene and cleanliness to fight the virus.

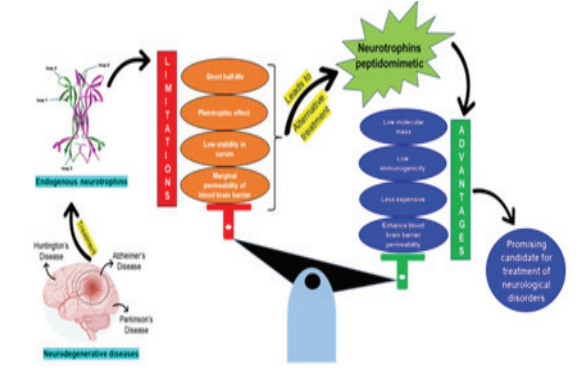
Indian scientists find drugs with potential to treat neurodegenerative disorders

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

A team of scientists at the Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology (IASST), an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), has found drugs with potential to treat neurodegenerative disorders -- a major global health challenge.

In the study, published in the Journal Drug Discovery Today, the team highlighted the potential of peptidomimetics to treat neurodegenerative diseases, like Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, by promoting neuronal growth and survival.

Peptidomimetic drugs -- or synthetic molecules that mimic the structure of natural proteins -- can be repurposed to provide an effective therapeutic strategy to treat neurodegenerative diseases by promoting neuronal growth and survival.



While neurotrophins, proteins crucial for neuronal survival and function, have shown promise as potential treatments, their instability and rapid degradation have hindered their therapeutic application.

IASST scientists have been exploring peptidomimetics, synthetic compounds designed to mimic neurotrophins, as a potential solution to these limitations.

"Neurotrophin peptidomimetics are developed to target specific biological functions and can be

valuable tools in drug discovery, especially when natural peptides have limitations like poor oral bioavailability or susceptibility to degradation," said the team led by Prof. Ashis K. Mukherjee.

"One of the significant advantages of peptidomimetics is their improved stability and bioavailability compared to endogenous neurotrophins. This means they can be delivered more effectively to the brain and maintain their therapeutic activity for a longer duration," the team added.

In addition, peptidomimetics can be designed to be more specific to their target receptors, reducing the risk of side effects.

The research focused on understanding the signaling pathways involved in neuronal growth and survival, the potential pharmacological targets of peptidomimetics, and their therapeutic applications for neurodegenerative diseases.

The team also explored the possibility of repurposing existing peptidomimetic drugs for other diseases, such as cancer, and the potential for developing new drug prototypes based on neurotrophins mimetics.

As research progresses, the team said that peptidomimetics could become a key therapeutic strategy, offering new hope for managing and treating neurodegenerative disorders for future generations.

India reaffirms global health commitment at 78th World Health Assembly

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

India has reaffirmed its commitment towards global health equity at the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva on Wednesday.

Addressing the plenary session, the Indian delegation led by the Union Health Secretary Punya Salila Srivastava emphasised on the transformative strides made under flagship initiatives like Ayushman Bharat, which has dramatically expanded access to comprehensive healthcare.

"The programme has expanded access to comprehensive healthcare, improved infrastructure, provided financial protection for advanced treatments and accelerated digital health adoption -- paving the way toward Universal Health Coverage," she stated.

The Union Health Secretary highlighted that



India's efforts in maternal health, family planning, childhood mortality and stillbirths' reduction.

"India was recently certified as Trachoma-free by WHO, and the nation is committed to eliminating diseases such as tuberculosis (TB), leprosy, lymphatic filariasis, measles, rubella, and kala-azar (also known as visceral leishmaniasis)," Srivastava added.

She pointed out that in a major policy step, India

has extended health coverage under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana to all citizens above 70 years of age, regardless of economic status.

"We have also doubled the number of medical colleges from 387 to 780 in the past decade to train future healthcare professionals," the health Secretary stated.

Srivastava also reiterated India's strong support for a legal, binding

framework that enhances global cooperation while respecting national sovereignty and capacities.

Srivastava also congratulated the WHO and member states on the historic progress made toward advancing the Pandemic Treaty.

The Agreement, adopted by consensus by member countries of the WHO at the WHA, aims to bridge global healthcare gaps and inequities in case of future pandemics.

Srivastava emphasised the importance of confronting future health challenges with a commitment to ensuring that no one is left behind.

"The Pandemic agreement must ensure equitable access to medical countermeasures, timely and transparent data and pathogen sharing; and promote technology sharing and capacity building, particularly for the Global South," she said.

Study shows ageing can reduce effectiveness of CAR-T cell cancer therapy

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Age-related decline in the immune system can have a measurable impact on CAR-T cell therapy -- one of the most advanced forms of cancer immunotherapy, according to a study.

CAR-T therapy works by engineering a patient's T cells to recognise and destroy cancer cells.

The study led by Swiss researchers found that CAR-T cells from aged mice had poor mitochondrial function, lower "stemness," and reduced antitumour activity.

It was due to a drop in levels of nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD) -- a molecule essential for cellular energy and metabolism of mitochondria, said the team from the University of Lausanne (UNIL), the Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV), the Geneva University Hospitals (HUG) and the Ecole



Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL).

"CAR-T cells from older individuals are metabolically impaired and significantly less effective. What's exciting is that we were able to rejuvenate these aged cells by restoring their NAD levels -- reviving their antitumour function in preclinical models," said Dr. Helen Carrasco Hope.

"Our findings strengthen the growing recognition that ageing fundamentally reshapes immune cell function and metabolism.

"They highlight the urgent need to model age more accurately in preclinical studies so that therapies are developed with the real-world cancer population in mind -- where most patients are older adults," Hope said.

For the study, published in the journal Nature Cancer, the team used NAD-boosting compounds currently under clinical investigation for other conditions, demonstrating that this approach is translatable and potentially applicable in humans.

"This is a major step toward personalised and age-conscious immunotherapy," said senior author Dr. Nicola Vannini.

"By correcting age-related metabolic defects, we could improve outcomes for a large segment of cancer patients."

The study adds to a growing body of work showing that age is not just a chronological number, but a biological factor that can shape therapy response.

The researchers called for age to be systematically considered in the development and evaluation of cell-based immunotherapies.



PM lays foundation for gas distribution project in Bengal's Alipurduar, Cooch Behar

UNI

ALIPURDUAR, MAY 29

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday laid the foundation of a Rs 1,010 crore City Gas Distribution Project in West Bengal's northern district of Alipurduar and said that the state's development is key to India's future.

The project aims to supply Piped Natural Gas (PNG) to 2.5 lakh households, over 100 commercial establishments, and establish 19 CNG stations.

"The City gas distribution project in Alipurduar is our commitment to strengthening the region's clean energy infrastructure," Modi said at the outset.

"Bengal's development is key to India's future," Modi said after laying the foundation of the mega project.

"Today, as India moves towards becoming a



developed nation, Bengal's participation is both expected and essential. Bengal's development is the foundation of India's future. Today is the day to add another strong brick to that foundation. A short while ago, the City Gas Distribution Project in Alipurduar was inaugurated. This will provide families with a safe gas supply," Modi said.

He said the city gas distribution project in Alipurduar showed government's commitment to strengthening the region's clean energy infrastructure.

'I've better things to do': Shashi Tharoor on Cong leaders' criticism

UNI

NEW DELHI, MAY 29

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, who is under attack from leaders within his own party for projecting India's case as part of global outreach on Operation Sindoor, on Thursday took a dig at his critics saying "I have better things to do."

"I don't really have time for this...critics and trolls are welcome to distort my views and words as they see fit. I genuinely have better things to do. Good-night," Tharoor tweeted before he left Panama for Colombia to educate them about India's policy of zero tolerance against terrorism. Tharoor earlier visited US and Panama.

He said that after a long and successful day in Panama, he had to wind up at midnight here with departure for Bogota, Colombia, in six hours.



He said his remarks were preceded by a reference to the several attacks that had taken place in recent years alone during which previous Indian responses were both restrained and constrained by "our responsible respect for the LoC and the IB".

Congress leader Udit Raj had on Wednesday criticised Tharoor calling him a "super spokesperson of the BJP." His party colleagues Pawan Khera and Jairam Ramesh joined the offensive against Tharoor and retweeted Udit Raj's comment.

CDS to attend Shangri-La Dialogue to boost defence ties, engage with global military leadership

UNI

NEW DELHI, MAY 29

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan will visit Singapore to attend the 22nd edition of the Shangri-La Dialogue, hosted annually by the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

During the visit from May 30 to June 1, General Anil Chauhan will hold bilateral meetings with Chiefs of Defence Forces and senior military leadership from several foreign countries including Australia, European Union, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, UK and USA, a Defence Ministry statement said.

The CDS will address the academia, think tanks and researchers and speak on the topic 'Future Wars and Warfare'. He will also participate in the simultaneous special sessions as part of the event and address on the topic 'Defence Innovation Solutions for Future



Challenges'.

Shangri-La Dialogue is Asia's premier defence and security summit that brings together defence ministers, military chiefs, policy makers and strategic experts across the globe.

The event will witness leaders from 40 nations addressing the Indo-Pacific security challenges. The engagements will provide a platform to strengthen defence cooperation, discuss mutual security interests and enhance India's strategic partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region.

PoK is part of India and will voluntarily return to our mainstream: Rajnath Singh

UNI

NEW DELHI, MAY 29

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday made it clear that Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) is a part of India and the people who got geographically and politically separated will, sooner or later, voluntarily return to India.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government is committed to its resolve of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat. Most of the people in PoK have a deep connection with India. There are only a few who have been misled," Rajnath Singh said while addressing the Inaugural Plenary of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Annual Business Summit here.

Lauding the success of Make in India during Operation Sindoor, Rajnath said the Indian Armed Forces would not have been able to take effective action against terrorism in Pakistan and PoK if the nation had not strengthened its indigenous defence capabilities.



He described Make-in-India as crucial for security and prosperity, stating that the use of indigenous systems during Operation Sindoor had proved that India has the power to penetrate any armour of the enemy.

"We destroyed the terrorist hideouts and then the military bases. We could have done a lot more, but we presented a great example of coordination of power and restraint," he said.

Rajnath asserted that India has redesigned and

redefined its strategy and response against terrorism and Pakistan has realised that running the business of terrorism is not cost-effective, rather it may have to pay a heavy price.

He added that India has recalibrated its engagement and scope of dialogue with Pakistan, and now talks will only be held on terrorism and PoK.

The Defence Minister highlighted that Make in India is a crucial element of the country's national security and played a sig-

nificant role in India's successful counter-terrorism efforts during Operation Sindoor.

He told the industry captains, "Through the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) programme Execution Model, the private sector will get an opportunity to participate in a mega defence project along with public sector companies for the first time, further bolstering indigenous defence capabilities.

He termed the Execu-

SC dismisses Christian Michel's plea against bail condition in AgustaWestland case

UNI

NEW DELHI, MAY 29

The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed a petition filed by British national Christian Michel, who is facing trial in the AgustaWestland VVIP chopper scam, challenging a bail condition imposed by the Delhi High Court in the money laundering case being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

A bench of justices Vikram Nath and Sanjay Kumar rejected Michel's objection to the condition requiring him to furnish the address where he intends to reside after his release from Tihar Jail.

Dismissing the plea, Justice Nath remarked, "You have a permanent address inside the Tihar jail, stay there only. Finished. What to do? You have been granted bail. You don't even want to fulfil a con-



dition of providing a local address."

Michel had moved the Supreme Court against the Delhi High Court's March 2025 order, which modified his bail conditions in the ED case.

While relaxing certain conditions such as allowing a personal bond of 5 lakh and a cash surety of Rs 10 lakh instead of earlier personal and surety bonds of Rs 5 lakh each, the High Court had directed that Michel's new passport, once issued, must be deposited directly by the

British High Commission with the trial court.

Crucially, the High Court also mandated that Michel must provide the address where he will reside post-release, and that the address be verified before his actual release.

Michel's counsel argued that the condition was impractical, stating that he had no local address in India and could not arrange accommodation until released. The counsel also questioned the Delhi High Court's authority to issue directions to the

British High Commission, contending that it was a foreign sovereign entity.

However, the Supreme Court was not convinced. Justice Nath responded, "If you can arrange to appear, you can pursue your matter. There must be some contact you have. Give that address." When the counsel replied that the only available address was in the UK, the bench queried, "Somebody must be giving instructions to you (Michel's lawyer), who is it?" The counsel clarified it was Michel's family.

Justice Kumar then pointed out, "If they can give you instructions, they can take him in," referring to Michel's ability to find a verified place of residence. The counsel added that the British High Commission had made arrangements, but Justice Nath retorted, "Let the British High Commission take care of him. This

is all an excuse."

Michel, who was extradited from Dubai to India in December 2018, is accused of being the middleman in the Rs 2,666 crore AgustaWestland VVIP chopper deal. According to the CBI, the scam caused a loss of approximately €398.21 million to the exchequer. The ED filed a chargesheet in June 2016, alleging that Michel received €30 million (about Rs 225 crore) in kickbacks.

Michel was granted bail by the Supreme Court in the CBI case on February 18, 2025, and subsequently by the Delhi High Court in the ED case on March 4, 2025. However, he continues to remain in Tihar Jail due to non-compliance with the bail conditions.

Advocates Aljo Joseph, Sriram Parakkat, and M.S. Vishnu Shankar represented Michel before the Supreme Court.

Chouhan launches Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan to ensure full Food reserves in the Country

UNI

PURI, MAY 29

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Thursday launched the Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan, a 15-day nationwide campaign, from Sakshigopal in Puri aimed at ensuring that the country's food reserves remain full.

Speaking at the launch event alongside Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Chouhan urged farmers to actively participate in the campaign.

He said the initiative would promote modern agricultural technologies, awareness of government schemes, soil health, and natural farming.

Chouhan noted that the campaign, running until June 12, 2025, aims to engage 1.5 crore farmers across over 700 districts

and 65,000 villages. The goal is to promote best practices in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Lab to Land" vision.

The campaign mobilizes 2,170 teams, including 3,749 agricultural scientists from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and 2,980 staff from Krishi Vigyan Kendras. These teams will visit villages to guide farmers on sustainable practices for the Kharif season.

According to the Union Minister, the initiative is designed to increase agricultural productivity, lower production costs, ensure fair prices, promote crop diversification, and encourage organic farming.

It is expected to contribute to a 3-3.5 percent growth in India's agricul-

tural sector for the fiscal year 2025-26.

He emphasized the campaign's focus on bridging the gap between scientific research and farming practices, ensuring that innovations reach farmers directly to improve yields and reduce input costs.

Chouhan described the initiative as a collaborative effort under the guiding principle: "One Nation, One Agriculture, One Team."

Before the launch, Chouhan offered prayers at the Shree Jagannath Temple, Puri highlighting the campaign's spiritual and national importance in securing food abundance and boosting farmers' incomes.

He also announced plans to visit nearly 20 states to engage directly with both farmers and agricultural scientists.

Kavitha slams BRS leaders: 'Loyal to KCR, not to arrogance'

UNI

HYDERABAD, MAY 29

BRS MLC K. Kavitha launched a scathing attack on her own party leaders while reiterating her unwavering loyalty to BRS chief and father, K Chandrashekar Rao (KCR).

Speaking to the media in Hyderabad on Thursday, Kavitha voiced her anguish over the treatment she has received within the party, questioning the silence and inaction of senior leaders while defending herself against internal criticism.

"What's wrong if I write a letter to my father? Why does it bother you?" she asked pointedly, expressing dismay over the moral policing by BRS leaders. She slammed those "working in the shadow of KCR" for their arrogance and alleged betrayal.

Kavitha revealed that her internal feedback to the party was deliberately leaked and that she was being maligned on social media by "paid artists." "Is it polite to talk about the daughter of the house like this?" she demanded, warning leaders not to test her patience.

Taking aim at working president K T Rama Rao (KTR), she questioned the party's silence in the face of notices served to KCR by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. "What is tweeting without action?" she asked, challenging BRS to confront the Congress and BJP rather than targeting her.

In a dramatic claim, Kavitha hinted at a conspiracy to merge BRS with BJP, saying she had advised KCR from jail not to rush such decisions. "Should we now assume there are BJP covert

FS Vikram Misri meets US Deputy Secretary Christopher Landau in Washington

UNI

WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI, MAY 29

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, who is visiting the US, met US Deputy Secretary Christopher Landau in Washington, during which they discussed the India-US bilateral agenda and shared priorities.

The US side "underscored the importance of fair and reciprocal market access to fostering economic growth and prosperity in both countries", and "emphasized the importance of enhanced cooperation on migration and counternarcotics".

The two sides agreed that Tech-Trade-Talent will shape the India-US partnership in the 21st century.

The Indian Embassy said in a post on X:

"Foreign Secretary @VikramMisri had a great first meeting with @DeputySecState @ChrisLandauUSA.

"They discussed the full breadth of the India-US bilateral agenda and shared priorities.

"They agreed that Tech-Trade-Talent will shape the India-US partnership in the 21st century.

"They reaffirmed their commitment to advancing the leadership's vision and to strengthen the India-US comprehensive global strategic partnership."

The US Deputy Secretary said in a post on X:

"Had a great lunch with Indian Foreign Secretary @VikramMisri today to talk about the [U.S.]-[India] relationship, which is at a historic zenith and represents a key partnership in the 21st century.

"We discussed the importance of expanding fair and reciprocal trade, combatting illegal immigration, and expanding counternarcotics cooperation."

Gukesh checkmates Nakamura at Norway Chess Tournament

UNI
STAVANGER (NORWAY), MAY 29

World Chess Champion GM Gukesh Dommaraju marked his 19th birthday with a vital victory against GM Hikaru Nakamura in the third round of the Norway Chess 2025 tournament here on Wednesday.

After a shaky start to the event with two narrow losses, Gukesh bounced back emphatically, showcasing improved time management and resilience under pressure.

The match, unfolding in the classical time control, featured the Giuoco Piano opening, where Gukesh surprised World No.2 Nakamura early with the aggressive queenside pawn thrust 13.b4!, disrupting Nakamura's setup. Attempting to counterattack on the kingside, Nakamura came close to salvaging a draw, but a critical misstep with



28...Rd8? gave Gukesh the upper hand.

When Nakamura offered a draw on move 30, Gukesh declined and pressed forward with the move 31.h4!, effectively sealing the game in his favour. Nakamura's last attempt to turn the tide with 31...Na4! was not played, and instead 31...Qd6? hastened his defeat. Gukesh converted the advantage with calm pre-

cision, ultimately securing a hard-fought win.

Reflecting on his performance, Gukesh said, "I feel quite good! I think my time management was much better today than before. He [Nakamura] had some drawing chances, but overall it was a good game." The timing of the victory was particularly poignant, coinciding with midnight in India, allowing fans to celebrate

the young champion's birthday in unison with his triumph.

Gukesh's win is a significant turnaround after his initial struggles in the tournament, where time pressure and narrow losses threatened to derail his campaign. The victory not only boosts his confidence but also keeps him in contention in the highly competitive field, which includes top grandmasters such as Fabiano Caruana and Magnus Carlsen.

Meanwhile, the tournament's leaderboard saw Caruana take sole lead after defeating GM Arjun Erigaisi, while Carlsen, despite a frustrating armageddon loss to GM Wei Yi, remains firmly in second place.

Norway Chess 2025 continues with round four scheduled for Thursday, promising exciting clashes including a high-stakes encounter between Gukesh and Caruana.

Indian Men's Hockey Team Leaves for European Leg of FIH Pro League 2024-25

UNI
BENGALURU, MAY 29

The Indian Men's Hockey Team left from Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport on the night of May 28, ahead of their European leg of the FIH Pro League 2024-25, which is scheduled to take place in Amstelveen, the Netherlands and Antwerp, Belgium from June 7 to 22.

India will kick off their European leg with back-to-back encounters against the Netherlands on June 7 and 9, followed by a double-header against Argentina on June 11 and 12, with all four matches set to take place at the Wagener Stadium in Amstelveen.

The team will then head to Antwerp, Belgium, for their next challenge where they will lock horns with Australia on June 14 and 15 before ending their campaign with two crucial matches against hosts Belgium on



June 21 and 22.

Before their departure, veteran dragflicker and Captain Harmanpreet Singh stated, "This European leg is crucial for us as we face some of the world's best teams. We had a few mixed results in the Bhubaneswar Leg, but we are in a good position in the standings and we will build on this. Our focus is on securing maximum points and qualifying for the next year's World Cup through this tournament."

Vice Captain Hardik Singh echoed a similar sentiment and said, "We have had a very productive training camp over the last few weeks. I am confident that the boys

will deliver in Europe. The atmosphere in the squad is very positive, and everyone is pushing each other to perform at their best. These matches will be a great opportunity to test ourselves against some of the best in the world."

India are currently third in the standings with fifteen points and will be eyeing to build on their position with a spot in the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 up for grabs. The FIH Hockey Pro League 2025-26 (men) matches will be broadcast live on Star Sports Select 1 HD, and streamed live on JioHotstar.

Indian esports eyes PC gaming growth

UNI
NEW DELHI, MAY 29

The 3rd Asian Youth Games (AYG) is set to feature eFootball, Street Fighter, and Rocket League as official medal events, each to be contested in both boys' and girls' categories.

Scheduled to be held in Bahrain from October 22 to 31, the tournament will include 24 sports disciplines, with esports making its debut as an official medal event.

Open to athletes aged between 15 and 18 years as of December 31, 2025, the esports competitions will be governed by the Asian Electronic Sports Federation (AESF).

The inclusion of these PC-based esports titles presents a promising opportunity for India to develop its esports ecosystem at the grassroots level.

Earlier this year, esports made significant strides nationally when the Khelo India Youth Games featured titles such as BGMI, Street Fighter 6, eFootball, and chess as demonstration sports. With continued exposure at events of this scale, young gamers from across the country now have clearer pathways to enter competitive esports.

HT-SPORTS

England reveal playing XI for first ODI against West Indies

UNI

LONDON, MAY 29

The Birmingham contest will be Harry Brook's first outing as England's ODI captain and the newly-appointed skipper will bat at No.4 in a side that looks remarkably different to the one that appeared at the ICC Champions Trophy event in February and March this year.

Pacers Jofra Archer and Mark Wood miss



through injury, Phil Salt and Liam Livingstone are omitted and Brook takes over from long-time captain Jos Buttler as the captain.

India to play Qatar, Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam in AFC U23 Asian Cup Qualifiers

UNI

KUALA LUMPUR, MAY 29

The India U23 men's national team, on Thursday, have been drawn in Group H of the AFC U23 Asian Cup Qualifiers, after the draw ceremony was conducted at the AFC House here in Malaysia.

Drawn alongside India in Group H are Qatar, Bahrain, and Brunei Darussalam. Qatar, the highest-seeded team among the four, will host Group H, with the matches slated to be played between September 1 to 9, 2025.

A total of 44 teams were divided into 11 groups of four each. The group winners and the four best runners-up, alongside hosts Saudi Arabia, will complete the

AFC U23 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2026 Qualifier draw result:

Group A: Jordan (H), Turkmenistan, Chinese Taipei, Bhutan
Group B: Japan, Kuwait, Myanmar (H), Afghanistan
Group C: Vietnam (H), Yemen, Singapore, Bangladesh
Group D: Australia, China (H), Timor-Leste, Northern Mariana Islands
Group E: Uzbekistan, Palestine, Kyrgyz Republic (H), Sri Lanka
Group F: Thailand (H), Malaysia, Lebanon, Mongolia
Group G: Iraq, Cambodia (H), Oman, Pakistan
Group H: Qatar (H), Bahrain, India, Brunei Darussalam
Group I: United Arab Emirates (H), IR Iran, Hong Kong China, Guam
Group J: Korea Republic, Indonesia (H), Laos, Macau
Group K: Tajikistan, Syria, Philippines, Nepal

cast of 16 teams for the seventh edition of the AFC U23 Asian Cup, which will take place in January 2026.

India to host Australia in three-match ODI series

UNI

MUMBAI, MAY 29

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced a three-match ODI series against Australia, set to take place in September this year.

The series will serve as vital preparation for the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025, which will be hosted by India later in the year.

The matches are scheduled for September 14, 17 and 20, with all games to be held at the M. A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai.



The last time the two teams faced off in an ODI series was in December 2024, when India toured Australia for a three-match series, which the hosts won convincingly with a 3-0 sweep.

Alongside the upcoming tour, the Australia Men's 'A' team will also travel to India for a series featuring two multi-day and three limited-overs matches in September-October to be played in Lucknow and Kanpur, respectively.

Mumbai Indians set to crack Gujarat Titan's playoff vulnerability

UNI
CHANDIGARH, MAY 29

The IPL 2025 Eliminator clash between Mumbai Indians (MI) and Gujarat Titans (GT) at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh Cricket Stadium on May 30 is shaping up as a classic battle of resilience versus vulnerability, where MI's seasoned lineup and depth in talent are expected to prove decisive against a Gujarat side reeling from key player absences and recent setbacks.

While both teams have showcased their championship credentials this season, it is Mumbai Indians' ability to absorb pressure through experienced campaigners and versatile replacements that sets them apart in this high-stakes knockout fixture.

The five-time IPL champions have endured a rollercoaster

campaign, losing three of their first four games before rallying to claim seven victories out of their last eight. This remarkable turnaround underlines Mumbai's championship temperament – the hallmark of a side accustomed to knockout battles.

Though MI will be without overseas standouts Ryan Rickelton and Will Jacks, who have returned to national duty, the franchise's bench strength remains formidable. Jonny Bairstow, a seasoned IPL campaigner, is set to slot in at the top order alongside Rohit Sharma and the in-form Suryakumar Yadav. Charith Asalanka adds further depth and flexibility to the batting lineup.

The return of Tilak Varma to his preferred No. 3 spot promises to stabilise the innings further, giving Mumbai a balanced blend of aggression and composure. At the same time, MI's



middle order boasts match-winners Hardik Pandya and Naman Dhir, capable of shifting momentum at critical junctures.

On the bowling front, the twin spearheads – Jasprit Bumrah and Trent Boult – bring a lethal combination of pace, precision, and experience. Bumrah, with 17 wickets at an economy rate of just 6.33, has been a standout since his return from injury. Complementing them is the resurgence of Mitchell Santner,

whose spin options add a crucial dimension on the balanced Mullanpur pitch.

Conversely, Gujarat Titans arrive at the Eliminator under pressure after back-to-back heavy defeats that saw their once-commanding position slip to third in the standings. More crucially, they face the playoffs without their marquee overseas batsman Jos Buttler, whose absence leaves a gaping hole in a top-heavy batting lineup.

Sri Lanka's Kusal Mendis is expected to fill the void but lacks Buttler's explosiveness. While Sai Sudharsan and Shubman Gill have been dependable, the middle order's stability hinges on players like Sherfane Rutherford and Shahruxh Khan stepping up – a tall order given recent performances.

On the bowling front, Mohammed Siraj and Prasidh Krishna remain the Titans' strike weapons, but inconsistent spells from Rashid Khan and Arshad Khan have raised concerns. With Mumbai's in-form batting unit waiting to exploit any weakness, Gujarat's bowlers must lift their game substantially to stay competitive.

The Mullanpur surface offers an even contest between bat and ball, with pace bowlers expected to extract early movement and spinners to find grip in the middle overs. Teams batting first

have held an advantage here, suggesting the toss-winning captain may prefer to set a target in this knockout.

Weather forecasts indicate clear skies and dry conditions, ensuring uninterrupted play under hot and humid conditions.

With the Eliminator effectively a season-defining moment, Mumbai Indians' blend of experience, squad depth, and recent form is tipped to eclipse Gujarat Titans' fightback ambitions hampered by crucial player losses and wavering confidence.

While Gujarat can never be discounted given their talent and prior dominance this season, the balance of power currently favours Mumbai Indians, who appear better equipped to handle the pressure cooker scenario of IPL playoffs.

Match starts May 30 at 7:30 PM IST.

Rankireddy-Shetty in Singapore Open quaters

UNI

SINGAPORE, MAY 29

In an exhilarating Round of 16 encounter at the KFF Singapore Badminton Open 2025, Indian shuttlers Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty displayed remarkable resilience and tactical brilliance to overcome Indonesia's Sabar Karyaman Gutama and Moh Reza Pahlevi Isfahani in a fiercely contested three-game thriller.

Played on Court 2, the match extended for 1 hour and 14 minutes, with the Indian duo emerging victorious by a slender margin, 19-21, 21-16, 21-19.

The Indonesians took an assertive approach in the opening game, launching aggressive attacks that placed Rankireddy and Shetty on the defensive. Despite a spirited Indian comeback, the Indonesians held their nerve to claim the first game 21-19.

Recalibrating their strategy in the second game, the Indian pair focused on precision, employing controlled attacks and sharper net play. This tactical adjustment paid dividends, allowing them to dominate proceedings and secure the second game 21-16, thus leveling the match.

The decider proved to be a grueling test of stamina and mental fortitude, with both pairs exchanging leads on numerous occasions. Ultimately, the experience and composure of Rankireddy and Shetty during critical moments proved decisive, enabling them to edge past their opponents 21-19 and book their place in the quarterfinals. Over the entire match, the Indians won 61 out of 117 points, capitalizing on key momentum shifts through crucial streaks.

The contest was marked by intense rallies and strategic ingenuity from both sides, reflecting their high calibre and determination. Rankireddy and Shetty's triumph is a testament to their resilience and tactical acumen, especially noteworthy following their recent return to competitive action after a brief hiatus.

Their performance earned widespread praise from fans and analysts, who noted their strong potential to progress deeper into the tournament. Moving forward, the Indian duo will aim to maintain consistency while adapting their game plans to counter the challenges posed by upcoming adversaries.



DC Budgam hands-over 15 new 100 KVA Transformers to KPDCL

Transformers procured under District Mineral Fund to augment power infrastructure

HT News Network

BUDGAM, MAY 29: In order to augment power infrastructure in the district, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Akshay Labroo today handed-over 15 new 100 KVA Transformers to KPDCL procured under District Mineral Funds.

This dedicated buffer stock of 15 distribution transformers of 100 kVA each shall be put into use by the Electric Division Budgam to improve power availability in the entire district.

The buffer stock, procured under the District Mineral Fund (DMF), will act as a strategic reserve to be deployed swiftly in case of transformer failures, overloads, or emergency scenarios, particularly during winter when power infrastructure is often stressed due to snow accumulation and increased demand. Speaking on the occasion, DC stated, "This initiative has significantly augmented our winter preparedness. Earlier, the District Administration had provided five Distribution Transformer Assemblies (DTAs) under the Capex Budget. Now, with the addition of 15 more transformers through the DMF, we are better equipped to respond swiftly to any outages. This will greatly help in ensuring reliable and uninterrupted



power supply to our citizens especially during the harsh winter season."

He further added, "Our objective is to minimize downtime and reduce public inconvenience during peak load periods. The availability of these transformers as a buffer ensures that any damaged or overloaded unit can be replaced immediately, without waiting for fresh procurement or lengthy logistics." Labroo said this is part of our ongoing efforts to build resilient infrastructure and improve the quality of essential services. "Reliable power is not just a convenience—it's a critical necessity, especially during winters when people are most vulnerable," he added. DC formally dedi-

cated the buffer stock to the public, reaffirming the district administration's priority of ensuring consistent and quality power supply. Further, he said, the initiative contributes to the broader district strategy aimed at strengthening power distribution systems and enhancing public service delivery in Budgam. The event witnessed the presence of Chief Engineer KPDCL Kashmir, Superintending Engineer KPDCL Budgam, Additional Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Chief Planning Officer, Executive Engineer Electric Division Budgam, along with several other concerned officials and engineers.

SKUAST-K launches major initiative to revitalise Potato Seed Production in Gurez Valley

Move aimed to attain self-sufficiency

HT News Network

BANDIPORA, MAY 29: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, has embarked on a significant project to revitalise the potato seed production system in the Gurez Valley.

This initiative aims to multiply breeder, foundation, and True Potato Seed (TPS) seeds, moving beyond the university's previous focus solely on breeder seeds to meet the growing demand of the valley.

In a landmark event today at Budgam, Tulail, a renowned potato growing area, 150 quintals of breeder seed were distributed among farmers through a participatory approach. This initial phase covers 7.5 hectares (150 Kanals) of land, in addition to over 75 percent of the cultivable area at the Mountain Agriculture Research & Extension Station (MAR&ES) and Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Gurez.

This ambitious program is projected to produce approximately 3,000 quintals of potato seeds in its first year, which is expected to surge to 30,000 quintals in the second year, a quantity anticipated to meet



the seed requirements not only for the Kashmir division but also for the Jammu division, thereby significantly reducing reliance on external seed sources.

A team of experts, including Director Research, Prof. Haroon Rashid Naik; CEO Shalimar Beej, Choudhary Mohammad Iqbal, Head of the Division of Vegetable Science, Prof. Ishfaq Abidi and Principal Investigator AICRP on Potato, Prof. Faheema Mushtaq, along with sci-

entists from various subject matter divisions and the staff of KVK/MAR&ES Gurez, organized a mega programme at Budgam, Tulail to mark the launch. A team of experts, including Director Research, Prof. Haroon Rashid Naik; CEO Shalimar Beej, Choudhary Mohammad Iqbal, Head of the Division of Vegetable Science, Prof. Ishfaq Abidi and Principal Investigator AICRP on Potato, Prof. Faheema Mushtaq, along with scientists from various subject

Nasha Mukht Abhiyan: DIPR, Directorate of School Education Kashmir organize Cultural Awareness program

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 29: Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), in collaboration with the Directorate of School Education Kashmir (DSEK), today organized a day-long awareness-cum-cultural program under the Nasha Mukht Abhiyan at Pandit Bhajan Sopori Auditorium, DIPR complex, Polo View, Srinagar.

The event aimed to sensitize and educate youth about the devastating effects of drug abuse, a growing concern in Jammu & Kashmir through music, dance and theatre as medi-



ums of communication.

Nitish Rajora, Director Information and Public Relations, presided over the event. Among the dignitaries present were Joint Director Information Kashmir, Syed Shahnawaz Bukhari; Deputy Director PR Ahsan-ul-Haq Chishti; Cultural Officer Kashmir,

Burhan Hussain, along with several other officers of DIPR. Program featured vibrant cultural performances that captivated the audience and carried strong social messages.

Highlights included Kashmiri Rouf by Yemberzal Cultural Group, The-matic Dance performance

by MJ Nasir and Group, a powerful short play by Tulkul Arts and Media Collective, theme-based folk music by Feroz Shah and Party, widely acclaimed by the audience.

A large number of students and teachers from DSEK participated enthusiastically, reflecting the collective concern over the rising drug menace.

In his address, Joint Director Information, Syed Shahnawaz Bukhari emphasized the importance of disseminating the powerful messages conveyed through such cultural initiatives. He urged continued efforts in engaging youth across the valley.

DDC Anantnag reviews implementation of DAJGUA

HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, MAY 29: To ensure holistic development and socio-economic upliftment of tribal communities in the district, District Development Commissioner (DDC) Anantnag, Syed Fakhruddin Hamid today reviewed the ongoing implementation of the Dharti Aaba Janatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA) in a meeting held today at the Dak Bungalow Khanabal. The meeting was aimed at finalizing a comprehensive action plan for the upcoming Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaign scheduled to be conducted from 15th to 30th June 2025 in tribal villages across the district. During the meeting, DDC held an in-depth discussion with officers from all line departments to chalk out a clear road-map for successful implementation of the campaign. He emphasized the importance of adopting a convergent approach where all departments work in synergy to identify and plug service delivery gaps.

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