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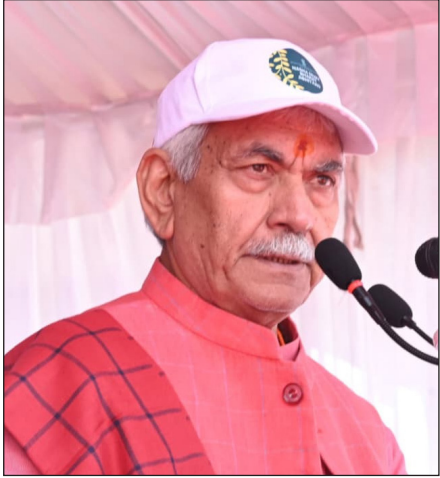
NASHA UKT J&K;
Not A Single Drug Smuggler Will Escape Accountability: LG Sinha

Launches community-driven anti-drug push in Budgam

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 5: Manoj Sinha on Tuesday led a major public outreach campaign in Budgam, reaffirming the administration's resolve to eliminate drug trafficking and substance abuse through decisive enforcement and community participation.

Addressing a large gathering, the Lieutenant Governor declared that no drug smuggler would be spared, asserting that law enforcement agencies have been directed to identify and act against all active narcotics networks within a strict time-frame. He said financial trails linked to drug cartels are under close surveillance



and warned that assets built through illegal trade would face demolition.

In a significant community-focused initiative, Sinha announced the formation of a "Parents Brigade" in villages and urban areas to strengthen early intervention. The voluntary network, comprising parents, women and youth, will be trained to detect early signs of drug use and connect affected families with support services.

Describing drug addiction as a grave social and national challenge, the Lieutenant Governor said it weakens the country's future workforce and undermines societal stability. He emphasized that individuals

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Omar Abdullah Stresses Tangible Outcomes from Budget Announcements

CM directs time-bound implementation of Targets



HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 05: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday directed all departments to ensure time-bound implementation of Budget announcements for 2026-27, emphasizing that policy decisions must translate into visible and measurable outcomes on the ground.

Chairing a high-level review meeting at the Civil Secretariat, the Chief Minister underscored the importance of efficiency, transparency, and accountability in executing key initiatives. He stressed that the primary objective of the Budget is to deliver timely welfare benefits to the people across Jammu and Kashmir.

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No drug peddler will be spared, 4 lakh join awareness drives: DC Budgam

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

BUDGAM, MAY 05: Deputy Commissioner Budgam Athar Aamir Khan on Tuesday said the administration has adopted a zero-tolerance approach against drug abuse, with massive public participation and intensified enforcement measures underway across the district.

Speaking during the anti-drug padyatra led by Manoj Sinha, which was held from New Bus Stand to Old Bus Stand in Budgam, the Deputy Commissioner, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that around 4 lakh people have participated in awareness programmes conducted across the district.

"Awareness programmes were conducted in which approximately 400,000 people participated. Our commitment is that no individual and no household in Budgam will remain untouched by this campaign," he said.

Highlighting enforcement actions, Khan said that in the last 25 days, 20 FIRs have been registered and 14

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"Targeting Civilians and Infrastructure Is Unacceptable": Narendra Modi

India stands in firm solidarity with UAE

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAY 5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday strongly condemned the recent attacks on the port city of Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates, which left three Indian nationals injured, asserting that targeting civilians and critical infrastructure is unacceptable.

The attack, involving drone strikes that caused a fire at a major oil facility in Fujairah, occurred amid escalating tensions in the Gulf

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"Surge in Occupancy from 82 to 96 Per Cent Is a Matter of Immense Pride"

Jammu-Srinagar Vande Bharat Express carries over 16,300 passengers in first four days,

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, MAY 5: The Vande Bharat Express operating between Jammu and Srinagar has received a strong response from passengers, with more than 16,300 travellers availing the service within the first four days of its

launch, officials said on Tuesday.

The train, introduced on May 2, has recorded an average occupancy of around 82 per cent, reflecting its growing popularity among commuters opting for faster and more comfortable travel.

Railway officials reported a consistent rise in passenger numbers, with occupancy reaching 96 per cent on May 5. On that day, a single pair of trains—Nos 26404 and 26403—was in operation, carrying approximately 2,744 passengers in each direction.

Earlier, on May 4, the service

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Police Target Financial Networks To Dismantle Drug Trafficking In Anantnag

Property worth ₹85 lakh attached under NDPS Act in sustained crackdown on narcotics trade

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

ANANTNAG, MAY 5: Intensifying its campaign against drug trafficking, police in Anantnag have

attached immovable property worth approximately Rs. 85 lakh under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, marking a significant step in dismantling the financial networks supporting the narcotics trade.

The action was carried out by Police Station Srigufwara under Section 68(F) of the Act. The attached property, a single-storeyed

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Indigenous Defence Systems Drive Success Of Operation Sindoor: Sanjay Seth

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAY 05: Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth on Tuesday said the success of Operation Sindoor reflects the effectiveness of indigenously developed weapons and systems, underlining the increasing role of domestic manufacturing in strengthening India's military



capabilities.

Speaking at the North Tech Symposium 2026 in Prayagraj, Seth credited the armed forces for their courage and determination in executing the operation, stating that their efforts were supported by advanced equipment developed within the country.

He said India's military

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Drug Menace: Enforcement, Prosecution & Rehab Crucial: CS

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 5: The 17th Union Territory-level meeting of the Narco Coordination Centre (NCC) was today chaired by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, who undertook a comprehensive review of the Union Territory's performance in stringent enforcement of drug laws, prosecution of offenders, and treatment and rehabilitation of victims affected by substance abuse.



The meeting was attended by the Director General, Police; Director General, Prosecution; Principal Secretary, Home; Administrative Secretaries; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir; and other senior civil and police officers, while Deputy Commissioners and

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Haj 2026 departures conclude from Srinagar, 3,952 pilgrims airlifted in 28 flights

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, MAY 05: The outbound Haj movement from Srinagar for Haj 2026 concluded on Tuesday with the final flight taking off, marking the successful completion of a coordinated and smooth airlift operation that saw thousands of pilgrims depart for the holy journey.



Executive Officer of J&K Haj Committee, Dr Shujaat Ahmad Qureshi, told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that a total of 3,952 pilgrims departed from the Srinagar Haj Embarkation Point in 28 flights to Madina.

He said the departing pilgrims included 2,201 males and 1,751 females, while the overall number of pilgrims from Jammu & Kashmir scheduled to

perform Haj this year stands at 4,692.

"Remaining pilgrims are using Delhi and Mumbai embarkation points," Dr Qureshi said, adding that 12 pilgrims had to cancel their journey at the

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Dr Jitendra at Prayagraj Meet: Defence Output Up 174%

HT News Desk / Agencies

PRAYAGRAJ, MAY 5: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, and MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh today said that India has entered a decisive phase in its defence journey, where technology, indigenous innovation and private sector participation are shaping a new global identity for the country.

Addressing the North Tech Symposium 2026 in Prayagraj, the Minister said that warfare is no longer defined by physical



strength alone but increasingly driven by advanced technologies, real-time data systems and automated platforms. He said this transformation has significantly enhanced India's operational capabilities

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Not A Single.....

struggling with addiction must be treated with compassion and support, not stigma, calling them victims in need of care.

Sinha also highlighted the broader security implications of narcotics trafficking, stating that the drug trade is closely linked to terrorism and radicalization. He cautioned that external elements are attempting to destabilize the region by pushing drugs into society, making the fight against narcotics a matter of national importance.

Calling for collective action, the Lieutenant Governor urged citizens, community leaders and institutions to actively participate in the ongoing anti-drug campaign. He stressed that the success of the initiative depends on public cooperation alongside administrative measures.

Reiterating the urgency of the 100-day campaign launched in April, Sinha said the remaining period must be used to demonstrate unity and resolve in eradicating the drug menace. He encouraged citizens to report suspicious activities and assured them of swift action.

"With the support of the people, we will ensure a drug-free future and safeguard our youth," he said.

Omar Abdullah.....

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, senior ministers, advisors, and top administrative officials, including Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo.

During the session, Additional Chief Secretary (Finance) Shailendra Kumar presented a detailed assessment of the progress made under various Budget announcements. Administrative Secretaries from key departments briefed the Chief Minister on actions taken and milestones achieved so far.

A wide range of departments, including Planning, Finance, Power Development, Agriculture, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development, and School Education, were reviewed during the meeting.

Issuing a series of directions, the Chief Minister called for strengthened coordination among departments and strict adherence to implementation timelines. He also emphasized equitable development, directing that resources and funding be distributed fairly across all regions.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to development and good governance, Omar Abdullah instructed officials to closely monitor progress, remove bottlenecks, and ensure that the benefits of Budget provisions reach the public without delay.

No drug peddler.....

arrests made in connection with drug-related offences.

"A zero-tolerance approach is being adopted. No drug peddler will be spared, and all will be dealt with strictly under the law," he said.

He added that poppy cultivation in the district has been brought down to zero, while strict regulatory mechanisms have been put in place to monitor pharmaceutical distribution. "Approximately 850 pharmacies have been equipped with CCTV cameras and computerised billing systems to ensure transparency and prevent misuse," he said.

The DC said strict action has also been taken against erring drug shops. "Licenses of 11 such shops have been revoked, 22 suspended and six sealed," he said.

He said action has also been taken against vehicles and individuals linked to drug activities. "Registration Certificates of 24 vehicles and 27 driving licences have been cancelled," he added.

On rehabilitation, Khan said the administration has strengthened treatment facilities in the district. "Addiction treatment facilities are operational round-the-clock at the District Hospital. A drug de-addiction centre is functional, and from April 11, a 15-bed IPD facility has also been made operational," he said.

Reaffirming the administration's commitment, the DC said, "No drug peddler will go unchecked, and no youth or child who has fallen victim to drugs will remain without rehabilitation or treatment."

The padyatra witnessed massive participation from officials, students, youth and civil society members, reflecting a strong public resolve against drug abuse—(KNO)

"Targeting....."

region. The United Arab Emirates has attributed the strike to Iran.

In a statement shared on social media, the Prime Minister reaffirmed India's solidarity with the UAE and emphasized the need for resolving conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy.

He further highlighted the strategic importance of maintaining safe and uninterrupted navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global energy corridor through which a significant share of the world's oil and gas supplies transit.

The incident comes at a time when tensions between the United States and Iran remain high, with a fragile ceasefire under pressure. Disruptions in shipping through the Strait of Hormuz have already contributed to rising oil prices and concerns over global energy stability.

The UAE's defence ministry stated that its air defence systems successfully intercepted multiple threats, including ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and drones, and affirmed its readiness to counter any challenges to national security.

"Surge in....."

recorded an occupancy of 82 per cent, with nearly 4,680 passengers travelling across two train pairs.

Authorities attributed the increasing demand to the train's modern features, including a smooth ride across difficult terrain and improved onboard services such as catering. Tourists and pilgrims, in particular, have shown a growing preference for the service over conventional train options.

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Uchit Singhal said the rising occupancy reflects both passenger satisfaction and the ongoing modernisation of Indian Railways. He added that passenger feedback is being closely monitored to further improve service quality.

Officials expressed confidence that with the tourism season gaining momentum, the train is likely to achieve near full occupancy in the coming days.

Police Target.....

residential house located in Shalgam, belongs to Imtiaz Ahmad Ganie. Investigations established that the property had been acquired using proceeds generated through illegal drug trafficking.

The accused is involved in a case registered in 2022 at Police Station Srigufwara under relevant sections of the law. Officials said due legal procedures were followed before the attachment was executed.

Authorities described the move as part of a broader and sustained offensive aimed at weakening the economic foundations of drug trafficking. By targeting assets derived from illegal activities, police seek not only to prosecute offenders but also to disrupt the financial structures that sustain the trade.

Reiterating their commitment to eliminating the drug menace, police warned that strict action, including attachment of properties linked to illicit earnings, will continue against those involved in narcotics activities.

Indigenous.....

strength is increasingly rooted in its defence manufacturing ecosystem, driven by coordinated efforts of the government, public sector undertakings, private industry, start-ups, and micro, small and medium enterprises.

Referring to Operation Sindoor, the minister said security forces successfully dismantled terror hideouts and countered hostile threats, highlighting the role of indigenous technology in enhancing operational effectiveness.

Seth noted that India's defence manufacturing sector has seen significant growth, with rising production and export figures signalling the country's emergence as a capable participant in the global defence market. He said this progress reflects sustained efforts towards self-reliance.

Emphasising innovation, he described micro, small and medium enterprises as the backbone of the economy and start-ups as key drivers of future growth. He added that these sectors will play an important role in achieving the vision of a developed India by 2047.

The minister also called for continued technological advancement to address evolving global security challenges, urging stakeholders to invest in research and development and explore emerging areas.

Highlighting initiatives such as the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor, he said such projects have strengthened the defence ecosystem and created new opportunities for industry participation.

At the event, Lieutenant General Anindya Sengupta, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Central Command, stressed the need for closer collaboration between the armed forces and industry to meet changing operational requirements, adding that self-reliance is essential for strategic autonomy.

The three-day symposium, organised by the Indian Army in collaboration with the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers, brought together private defence manufacturers, start-ups and academic institutions to showcase technologies including unmanned systems, counter-drone solutions and surveillance equipment.

Drug Menace.....

Senior Superintendents of Police from all districts participated through video

conferencing.

During the deliberations, the Chief Secretary laid emphasis on strengthening the legal framework and plugging procedural gaps in handling NDPS cases. He directed the Law Department to explore the feasibility of recording statements of in-service witnesses through video conferencing, particularly in cases where officials are transferred outside their districts, to ensure continuity and avoid delays in trials. Stressing accountability, he called for a thorough analysis of acquittals in NDPS cases and fixing responsibility wherever investigative or procedural lacunae are identified.

Highlighting the need for a more impactful enforcement strategy, the Chief Secretary underscored the importance of investigating both backward and forward linkages in drug trafficking cases and actively challenging bail orders to enhance deterrence. He called for a well-defined strategy to dismantle drug peddling networks, with strict action against identified offenders by law enforcement agencies.

Advocating a broader approach, he stressed the use of non-kinetic measures against violators, including cancellation of driving licences, passports, and vehicle registrations, besides scrutiny of financial transactions through bank accounts to choke illicit proceeds.

He also emphasized capacity building in the rehabilitation ecosystem, directing for the training of a large pool of counselors to be made available across schools, colleges, Primary Health Centres, and at the block level through trained Self-Help Group members.

The Chief Secretary further directed the Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS) to create a pool of master trainers, ensuring at least three to four trained resource persons per district, supplemented with periodic refresher courses to continuously upgrade their skills.

The Chief Secretary also enjoined upon Deputy Commissioners to ensure the functionality of inpatient (IPD) facilities in drug de-addiction centres in all district hospitals and asked the Health Department to strictly adhere to protocols for the availability of essential medicines at all health institutions.

Additionally, he called for strict action in cases involving seizure of vehicles under Section 52A of the NDPS Act to ensure effective enforcement of legal provisions.

On the occasion, Commissioner Secretary, Law, Achal Sethi, gave a detailed presentation on the incidence and categorization of NDPS cases across districts, highlighting trends in intermediate and commercial quantity cases. He elaborated on delays in disposal of such cases, the ratio of cases instituted versus those disposed of in special NDPS courts, and the stages at which these cases are pending. He also suggested a series of remedial measures aimed at reducing backlog and ensuring expeditious disposal of cases.

Earlier, IGP Crime, Sarah Rizvi presented a comprehensive overview of enforcement efforts, acquittals, and actions taken by law enforcement agencies to combat the drug menace in Jammu and Kashmir. She informed that during 2026 so far, 542 NDPS cases have been registered across police stations, leading to the arrest of 716 individuals and seizure of 640 kilograms of narcotics valued at approximately Rs. 18.49 Cr.

She further highlighted that the current year has witnessed a significant rise in cases involving commercial quantities, with 31 such cases registered compared to 19 during the corresponding period last year. Details of major FIRs and seizures linked to interstate drug cartels were also shared during the meeting.

The meeting was informed that a total of 10,956 NDPS cases are pending across various courts, including 6,156 cases in five Special NDPS Courts. In 2025, 1,991 cases were instituted while 483 were disposed of. It was further revealed that prosecution had challenged 91 bail orders in 2025 and 57 in 2026 so far in intermediate and commercial quantity cases.

Regarding convictions, the figures stood at 135 in 2024, 140 in 2025, and 23 in 2026 till date. Out of 1,435 prosecution witnesses who attended court proceedings, 839 were examined, while 596 returned without examination due to various reasons, indicating areas needing procedural improvement, the meeting was apprised.

The meeting also noted that in 24 cases, backward and forward linkages were successfully established, leading to attachment of properties worth Rs. 53.77 lakh and freezing of bank accounts amounting to Rs. 22.63 lakh. Non-kinetic measures were also actively pursued, with 489 driving licences recommended for cancellation and 700 vehicle registrations for suspension between January and March this year due to their involvement in illicit activities.

The participants held detailed deliberations on strengthening enforcement mechanisms, enhancing rehabilitation

measures for affected individuals, and ensuring speedy disposal of cases to secure maximum punishment for offenders, thereby creating an effective deterrent against drug trafficking and abuse in the Union Territory.

Haj 2026.....

final stage due to health issues.

With the last flight taking off today, the embarkation process from Srinagar has officially closed.

Srinagar International Airport confirmed the successful culmination of the Haj operations, stating that all 28 flights carrying 3,952 pilgrims departed smoothly as part of a well-coordinated effort involving multiple agencies.

In a message, the airport authorities extended prayers and best wishes to the pilgrims for a safe and spiritually fulfilling journey, while thanking all stakeholders and staff for ensuring seamless operations.

The Haj departure process from Srinagar had commenced on April 18, with arrangements reviewed earlier by Haj Committee of India CEO Shanavas C. (IAS), who inspected facilities at Haj House Bemina and the airport, directing officials to ensure smooth, hygienic and pilgrim-friendly services.

Officials had earlier informed that around 4,700 pilgrims from J&K would undertake the pilgrimage this year, with departures conducted in phases.

Meanwhile, Dr Qureshi said that refunds ranging between Rs 17,000 and Rs 31,000 have been credited to Haj 2025 pilgrims, depending on deficiencies in facilities such as accommodation in the Markazia area of Madina and availability of transport services in the Mashair region—(KNO)

Dr Jitendra.....

and global standing.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said that in the last decade, India has transitioned from being a major importer of defence equipment to an emerging exporter, with defence production reaching Rs. 1.54 lakh crore recording 174% rise in one decade and export growth rising to Rs. 23,622 crore recording 34 times rise in one decade.

The Minister said a substantial contribution of around Rs 15,000 cr to total exports came from the private sector, reflecting a major shift towards collaborative defence manufacturing.

Referring to the increasing support from the government, the Minister said, the current budget 2026-27 earmarks Rs 681000cr for budget, which is 9.5% more than last year.

Referring to India's expanding technological base, the Minister said sectors such as space, atomic energy, artificial intelligence and quantum technologies are now integral to defence preparedness. He said India has already achieved rapid progress in quantum-secure communication capabilities, which will play a critical role in future warfare systems.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said reforms in key sectors have opened new opportunities for industry participation, enabling faster innovation cycles and

scaling of indigenous technologies. He added that government support through funding mechanisms and policy initiatives is creating a strong ecosystem for research, development and deployment.

Emphasising the importance of synergy, Dr. Jitendra Singh said that the alignment of operational requirements of the Armed Forces with scientific research and industrial capability is essential for building a resilient and self-reliant defence ecosystem. He called for accelerated timelines from design to deployment, with focus on reliability, scalability and long-term sustainment.

The Minister also spoke about the evolving role of the Armed Forces, highlighting their critical contribution not only in national security but also in disaster response and humanitarian assistance, recalling recent instances where timely intervention saved lives.

The North Tech Symposium 2026, being held in Prayagraj from May 4 to 6, is themed "Raksha Triveni Sangam-Where Technology, Industry and Soldiering Converge." The event is jointly organised by the Northern and Central Commands of the Indian Army in collaboration with the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM).

The symposium serves as a premier platform bringing together the Armed Forces, industry, academia and start-ups to develop mission-oriented indigenous solutions for evolving operational requirements. Key focus areas include artificial intelligence, unmanned systems, counter-drone technologies, robotics, cyber and electronic warfare, communication systems, mobility platforms and high-altitude operational support.

Over 280 industry partners are participating in the event, with 284 exhibition stalls showcasing cutting-edge defence technologies. The programme includes live demonstrations, structured interactions, and extensive stakeholder engagement through one-to-one meetings, conferences and technology showcases aimed at accelerating indigenous capability development.

The event was attended by senior Army commanders from Northern and Central Commands, senior officers of the Armed Forces, representatives of SIDM, leading industry stakeholders, scientists, academia and start-ups engaged in defence and advanced technology domains.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said that India's pursuit of self-reliance in defence is rooted in technological sovereignty, with a focus on developing, owning and sustaining critical technologies within the country. He expressed confidence that collaborative efforts between the Armed Forces, industry and research institutions will accelerate India's emergence as a leading defence technology nation.

He said the outcomes of the North Tech Symposium will play a significant role in strengthening India's defence preparedness and advancing indigenous innovation for future battlefield requirements.

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Dy CM reviews progress on PWD works; sets deadline for completion of restoration works

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 5: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today chaired a high-level meeting to review progress on the ongoing Public Works Department (PWD) projects being executed across Jammu and Kashmir.

While reviewing the division-wise status of works, the Deputy Chief Minister directed the officers to ensure timely completion of projects under R&B, PMGSY, Cities and Towns, Potholes, Mechanical and NABARD, with zero tolerance for delays, spill overs, lapses or quality standards.

Emphasizing quality and efficiency, the Deputy Chief Minister called for strict adherence to timelines in execution of all PWD works, including those related to health and education sectors. He warned that contractors causing undue delays would face strict action. He directed for expediting the renovation and upgradation works of PWD Guest Houses, ensuring comple-



tion within the set timelines. He also stressed the timely execution of blacktopping works across J&K.

Highlighting the need for faster implementation of major infrastructure projects, he directed for taking up the big road projects under SASCI for smooth and prompt initiation.

The Deputy Chief Minister reviewed the progress under various sectors, including R&B, PMGSY, Cities & Towns, CRIF, RIDF, Pothole and other infra-

structure components. He instructed the senior officers, including Superintending Engineers and Executive Engineers, to conduct regular site visits to ensure quality and pace of work.

During the comprehensive review, he underscored strict adherence to quality benchmarks in all ongoing and upcoming projects, asserting that there would be no tolerance for sub-standard execution, delays or administrative lapses. "There is

no room for quality compromise. Accountability must be visible at every level," he stated, directing the officers to ensure close supervision and timely completion of works.

He also emphasized expeditious resolution of land, Forest and compensation cases to avoid project delays and directed that bar charts be prominently displayed at all the project sites for monitoring progress.

The Deputy Chief Minister specifically called for accelera-

tion of work on key projects, including Ramban Bridge, Malta Bridge, PWD Guest House Udhampur, New Assembly Complex Jammu, Pragwal-Inderpati Bridge, PWD Guest House Hyderpora, Boulevard Road and other major road and bridge projects across J&K.

He further directed for removal of bottlenecks hindering the road widening projects. He stressed that all procedural requirements, including technical sanctions, tendering and allotments, be completed in the shortest possible time to ensure timely execution.

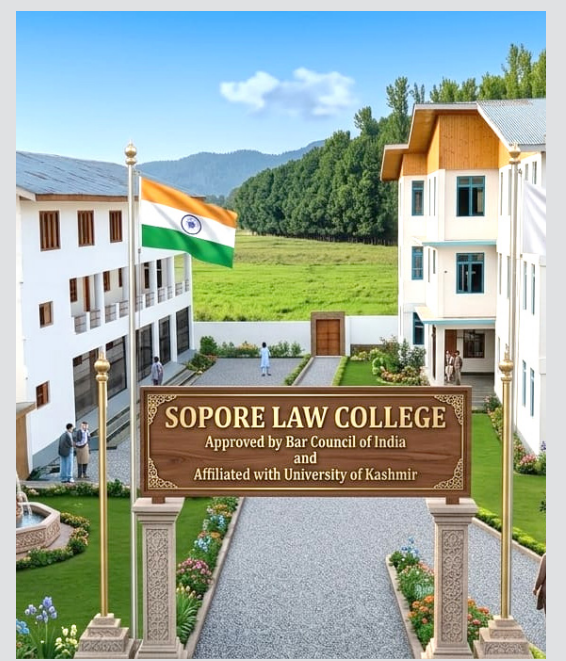
He directed the concerned officials to submit a detailed report on the Ramban accident and instructed immediate replacement of poorly constructed parapets at identified locations to enhance public safety.

The meeting was attended by Chief Engineers, Director Finance, Planning officials, Superintending Engineers, and Executive Engineers from all engineering wings of Jammu and Kashmir.

Sopore Law College Scales Up 'Nasha-Mukt' War; Launches Digital Podcast to Drive LG's Anti-Drug Vision

HT NEWS NETWORK

SOPORE, MAY 05: Leading the charge against substance abuse through digital innovation, Sopore Law College has officially integrated its outreach efforts with the Nasha-Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan. In a strategic move to support the mission spearheaded by the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha, the college has launched a high-impact podcast series dedicated to creating a drug-



free Jammu & Kashmir.

The initiative bridges the gap between legal education and social reform, using the podcast format to engage the youth in a language they understand.

Voices of Leadership

The campaign is driven by the college's top leadership, who emphasized that the fight against drugs requires both legal vigilance and social empathy.

Ms. Maryam Bacha, Chairperson of Sopore Law College, underlined the institution's commitment: "The menace of drug addiction is a silent war against our future. At Sopore Law College, we believe that awareness is the first step toward eradication. This podcast series is our contribution to the LG's visionary drive, ensuring that our students and the community at large are equipped with the knowledge and moral courage to reject narcotics entirely."

Ms. Tamkeena Bacha, Vice Chairperson, highlighted the institutional responsibility:

"As an institution of law, we have a unique responsibility to highlight the legal consequences of drug abuse while offering a message of hope and recovery. Our broadcast aims to break the stigma surrounding addiction and create a support system that aligns with the 'Nasha-Mukt J&K' mission. We are proud to stand with the administration in this noble endeavor."

A Digital Front Against Addiction

The podcast series serves as a virtual seminar, featuring deep dives into the NDPS Act, the psychology of addiction, and success stories of recovery. By aligning with the LG's "Nasha Mukt Abhiyaan" (People's Movement), Sopore Law College is transforming legal students into foot soldiers for a healthier society.

Students, Daily Passengers Hit by Sudden Fare Hike in Dist Kupwara

ARTO Clarifies: No New Fare Until Official Implementation

DR. AB QAYOOM

KUPWARA, MAY 05: A row has erupted across Kupwara district after transport unions allegedly enforced revised passenger fares without official approval, leaving commuters especially students and daily wage earners distressed.

The controversy follows the government's Passenger Fare Revision 2026 order issued under S.O. Notification No. 126 and Notification No. 01-P-MVD of 2026 dated April 29, 2026. However, before formal implementation by authorities, several transport associations, particularly in Handwara sub-division, reportedly circulated and began enforcing their own fare charts for different routes. Passengers claim the sudden hike has led to



arbitrary overcharging. Javid Ahmad, a resident of Kulangam, said he had to pay Rs 20 extra for a short journey compared to the previous fare. "There is no official clarity, yet we are being forced to pay more," he said.

Students from Monabal village in Mawar area expressed serious concern, alleging they are now being charged Rs 15 for a 3-kilometre ride, up from Rs 5 earlier. "We belong to poor families. This increase is unjustified and unaffordable," they said.

While talking to HEADLINESTODAY, the Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO) Kupwara has clarified that no additional fare charges are applicable at present. He stated that the revised fares are yet to be officially implemented and that it may take a few days to finalize route-wise rates. Commuters, he said, should continue paying the existing fares until formal notification.

Meanwhile Tehsildar Handwara Vikram Jeet Singh has urged the ARTO office to expedite the process and warned transport unions against issuing or enforcing self-made fare lists. He stressed that only the competent authority can finalize and notify fare structures.

The public, particularly students and daily commuters, has appealed to authorities to conduct ground level verification of route distances with departments like R&B and PMGSY and ensure fair implementation of the revised fare order.

The situation underscores growing concerns over unregulated fare hikes and the need for swift administrative intervention to protect commuters from exploitation.

SKUAST-Kashmir Organizes Awareness Programme, Distributes Silkworm Rearing Hut Material to Boost Sericulture in South Kashmir

HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG/KULGAM, MAY 5: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir, through its College of Temperate Sericulture (CoTS), organized a one-day Awareness-cum-Silkworm Rearing Hut Material Distribution Programme under a National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development-funded project titled "Intervention of Newly Developed Low-Cost Sericulture Technologies for Income Augmentation and Employment Generation in Sericulture Areas of Central and South Kashmir." The programme was conducted at Anantnag and Kulgam.

Dr. Khursheed, Principal Investigator (PI) of the project, welcomed the guests and briefed the audience about the objectives and scope of the initiative, emphasizing its role in promoting low-cost technologies for enhancing productivity and income generation among silkworm rearers.

The programme witnessed participation from a large number of beneficiaries from both districts, reflecting growing interest in modern sericulture practices.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Mushtaq Rasool Mir (Associate Dean, CoTS Mirgund), Dr. Ishtiyak Khan (Head, KVK Anantnag), Dr. Shakoorkhanday (Head, KVK Kulgam), and Dr. K. A. Dar (Associate Professor,



CoTS Mirgund) highlighted the importance of such interventions in the socio-economic upliftment of farmers. They stressed that adoption of improved sericulture technologies can significantly enhance livelihood opportunities in the region.

Mr. Rouf Zargar (District Development Manager, NABARD Kupwara) and Mr. Junaid Hakeem (District Development Manager, NABARD Kulgam) appreciated the initiative and assured continued support to silkworm rearers for the development of the sericulture sector.

A key highlight of the programme was a live demonstration on the erection of low-cost silkworm rearing huts, which provided practical exposure to the participants. This was followed by the distribution of hut construction material among the beneficiaries to facilitate on-ground implementation.

The Sericulture Assistant Officers expressed their gratitude to the dignitaries and silkworm rearers for their active participation and cooperation, making the programme a grand success.

Reimagining Education in Grasslands: Himalayan Pastoral Trust Organises Two-Day Workshop for Seasonal School Teachers

ZUBAIR QURESHI

SRINAGAR, MAY 05: In a pioneering effort to strengthen educational access and quality for children of nomadic pastoral communities, the Himalayan Pastoral Trust (HPT), a Kashmir-based non-profit organisation, successfully conducted a two-day residential workshop for Seasonal Mobile School teachers from May 4 to 5, in collaboration with Nature Classrooms, a Bengaluru-based NGO working to integrate environmental literacy into everyday learning.

Organised under HPT's flagship Grasslands to Classrooms initiative, the workshop aimed to equip teachers with innovative, low-cost, and context-sensitive teaching methods better suited to the realities of mobile schooling in remote alpine pastures.

The workshop brought together seasonal teachers engaged with the Seasonal Mobile Schools established in the upper reaches of Jammu and Kashmir under the Samagra Shiksha initiative—a centrally sponsored programme committed to ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all children, particularly those from geographically isolated and socially marginalised communities.

Coordinator Samagra Shiksha Kashmir, Asif Mehrj Shah, graced the event and appreciated the initiative, while stressing the need for nature-based, innovative, and context-sensitive educational practices for children living in migratory and geographically remote regions. A total of 25 teachers associated with Samagra Shiksha seasonal centres from different districts of Jammu and Kashmir



actively participated in the workshop. These teachers, who spend several months each year teaching children of nomadic families in high-altitude grasslands and alpine meadows, brought with them a wealth of firsthand classroom experience shaped by unique geographical, climatic, and social challenges.

The workshop provided a rare opportunity for participants to come together on a common platform to

share their day-to-day realities, discuss the constraints of running classrooms in temporary migratory settlements, and reflect on learning levels, attendance patterns, and behavioural responses of children studying in these seasonal settings. Speaking on the occasion, initiative coordinator Arif Hussain emphasised that education in migratory grasslands cannot be confined to blackboards and textbooks

alone. "Children in pastoral landscapes live amidst a vibrant natural classroom. The aim is to help teachers recognise that nature itself can become a powerful source of literacy, curiosity, and critical thinking," he said.

Participants described the workshop as highly enriching and relevant, stating that the practical strategies could provide simple and affordable ways to make seasonal schooling more engaging despite difficult terrain, short academic windows, and multi-grade classroom settings. The workshop concluded with a shared commitment from organisers, teachers, and government representatives to work together to improve foundational learning among nomadic children and make Seasonal Mobile Schools more joyful, meaningful, and connected to community life.

Sakeena Itoo inaugurates Digital X-Ray unit, Thyroid Analyser at PHC Parigam Pulwama

HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, MAY 05: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today undertook an extensive visit of the Pampore constituency of Pulwama district and took stock of works on various public utility projects as well as reviewed healthcare facilities.

MLA Pampore, Justice (Retd) Hasnain Masoodi; Director School Education Kashmir, Naseer Ahmad Wani; Director Health Services Kashmir, Dr. Jehangir Bhakshi; CEO/CMO Kulgam senior officers of district administration and other sectoral officers also accompanied the Minister.

During her visit, the Minister inaugurated state-of-art Digital X-Ray unit and a Thyroid Analyser at the Primary Health Centre (PHC) Parigam.

Addressing a gathering on the occasion, the Minister highlighted that the Government led by Omar Abdullah is committed to strengthen the medical infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir, with special focus on



rural and underserved areas. She underlined that the introduction of these advanced diagnostic facilities will greatly enhance early detection and timely treatment of diseases, reducing the need for patients to travel to tertiary care hospitals.

She emphasized the government's commitment to equipping

rural healthcare institutions with modern technology to ensure accessible and affordable healthcare for all.

The Minister also took round of the PHC Parigam and took stock of medical facilities available. She also interacted with medical staff and local residents.

The Minister outlined the

government's commitment to equipping peripheral health institutions with modern technology and adequate manpower.

Later, the Minister also inspected the under-construction 50-bedded hospital at Kakapora. She reviewed the progress of ongoing works and directed

the executing agencies to expedite construction while maintaining quality standards.

Stressing the importance of timely completion, she noted that the hospital will play a crucial role in providing accessible and affordable healthcare services to the people of the area.

Meanwhile, Sakeena Itoo also visited the site for 50-bedded Integrated AYUSH Hospital and Yoga Training Centre at Ratnipora. She highlighted the growing importance of traditional systems of medicine and holistic wellness, stating that the proposed facility will promote preventive healthcare, wellness tourism, and community well-being through AYUSH practices and yoga.

The Minister reiterated the government's resolve to strengthen healthcare infrastructure across all regions, with a special focus on rural and underserved areas. She assured that all necessary measures will be taken to ensure that people receive quality healthcare services closer to their homes.

Pulwama continues activities under 100-Day Nasha Mukta J&K Campaign

HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, MAY 05: As part of the ongoing 100-day campaign under the Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, a series of awareness and outreach activities were conducted across Pulwama district by multiple departments to sensitise the public about the harmful effects of drug abuse.

The Youth Services and Sports Department organised rallies and sports competitions across various zones of the district, witnessing active participation of students and staff from several educational institutions.



In Zone Pulwama, institutions including GHSS Pulwama, HSS Hawl, HS Malangpora, HS Payer, GHS Gadoora, NIE Institute, GMS Karimabad, GMS Booner and UPS Chewakalan organised anti-drug rallies. In Zone Tahab, HS Naina conducted chess and table tennis competitions, UPS Patipora organised badminton events, while MS Chandgam held an awareness rally.

In Zone Pampore, inter-zonal chess and table tennis competitions were held at BHSS Pampore, while GHSS Khrew organised an anti-drug rally. In addition, the Zonal Office Tral conducted zonal-level badminton and volleyball tournaments for U-14 boys.

Participants in these activities also participated in the pledge taking ceremonies committing to work towards a drug-free society.

Furthermore, the Drug Control Department Pulwama organised a rally at Sub-District Headquarters Tral under the campaign, with participation from members of the Chemists and Druggists Association and students from a local educational institutions.

Moreover, multi-sectoral awareness programmes were conducted at Lalpora Tral, Hatiwara Pampore and Sirmoo Pulwama. The Education Department also organised awareness rallies across the district.

The activities form part of the district action plan to involve all sections of society in addressing the issue of drug abuse.

District Admin Bandipora organises Anti-Drug Awareness rallies, IEC activities across Educational Institutions

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, MAY 05: The ongoing 100-Day Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan continued across Bandipora district on Tuesday with a series of anti-drug awareness rallies, IEC activities, yoga sessions and community outreach programmes organised in various educational institutions to spread awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse.

Awareness rallies under the Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan were organised by PM SHRI Girls High School Sumbal, Boys Middle School Pethkoot, BHSS Aloosa, HS Jurniyal Tulail, PM SHRI Government High School Odina, High School Ahmshareef, PM SHRI HSS Shadipora, Govt High School Garoora, High School Achoora, MS Mirpora, HSS Gadakhud, HSS Shahgund, HSS Chuntimulla, HSS Budoab, HS Panar, H.S Onagam and HS Tarabal.

During the rallies, students and staff carried placards and banners displaying anti-drug messages and raised slogans highlighting the ill effects of drug addiction. The rallies passed through different localities to sensitise the public, especially youth, about the importance of a healthy and drug-free lifestyle.

At HSS Gadakhud, students, teachers and members of civil society participated in a large anti-drug rally, while speakers highlighted the adverse impact of substance abuse on society and youth.

Meanwhile, awareness activities including poster redesign competitions and interaction programmes with local shopkeepers regarding tobacco control and ban on sale of related products near educational institutions were also organised at various institutions including HSS Chuntimulla and HS Ketson.

In addition, a yoga session under the Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan was conducted at Government Degree College Sumbal by the Department of Ayush Bandipora to promote physical and mental well-being among students.

The programmes witnessed active participation of students, teachers and community members, reflecting the collective commitment towards creating a drug-free and healthy society under the Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan.

DC Srinagar reviews progress of Solarization of Government Buildings in the District

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR MAY 05:- Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today convened a meeting of concerned Engineers of JAKEDA and KPDCCL here at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex to review the progress and latest status of solarization of Government buildings in the District.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner took a detailed appraisal of ongoing works related to solarization of Government buildings aimed at reducing dependence on conventional power sources, promoting clean energy generation and lowering electricity expenditure of Government establishments.

The meeting was informed that 917 government buildings have been identified for installation of rooftop solar systems, out of which 602 build-



ings have been covered so far, while work on the remaining buildings is underway.

The DC was further given a detailed report regarding installation of smart meters in government buildings.

While reviewing the pace of progress, DC stressed the need to accelerate the pace of work to expedite the solarization process in Srinagar District. He directed the concerned agencies to ensure timely completion of all pending works within the stipulated time frame.

During the meeting, the District Statistics and Evaluation Officer apprised the DC of the status of physical verification of solarized Government buildings conducted so far.

The Meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Alfred Thomas, IAS Probationer, District Statistics and Evaluation Officer, Shah Ismail Bangroo, Engineers of KPDCCL & JAKEDA and other concerned Officers.

DC SRINAGAR REVIEWS PROGRESS IN INSTALLATION OF ROOF TOP SOLAR SYSTEMS UNDER PM SURYA GHAR MUFT BIJLI YOJANA

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR MAY 05: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today chaired a comprehensive meeting of KPDCCL Engineers, Banks and scheme vendors here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex to assess progress of target achievements under the PM Surya Muft Bijli Yojana for the financial year 2025-26 in the district.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Executive Engineers of KPDCCL, Zonal Head J&K Bank, Lead District Manager (Banks), empanelled vendors of the scheme and other officials of KPDCCL. At the outset, the Depu-

ty Commissioner, who is also the Chairman Monitoring and Management Committee of the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana conducted a detailed review of performance across all four Electric Divisions of Srinagar District focused on targets achieved, applications received and installations completed under the scheme during year 2025-26.

The DC was informed that as more than 5300 solar rooftops have been installed across Srinagar District under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.

Emphasizing the need to accelerate implementation, the DC directed all stakeholders to work in close coordination to reach all eligible beneficiaries.



On the occasion, the DC emphasized the need to accelerate the pace of implementation to reach the eligible beneficiaries within the stipulated timelines.

He urged Banks to clear pending approved applications promptly and ensure swift loan disbursement to facilitate timely installation of rooftop

solar systems.

During the meeting, the DC also directed KPDCCL executing engineers to ensure steady progress, timely delivery of benefits to consumers, promoting the adoption of renewable energy solutions, and minimizing consumers' electricity bills.

Highlighting the importance of awareness, the DC instructed officers to intensify outreach efforts and improve overall performance under the scheme. He underscored the multiple benefits of rooftop solar installations, including reduced electricity expenses for households, promotion of clean energy and contribution to environmental sustainability.

Dr. Piyush Singla visits Shopian; assesses ongoing campaign, emphasizes strict action against drug trafficking

HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, MAY 05: Secretary, Information Technology Department and District Mentor of Nasha Mukta JK Abhiyan for Shopian, today chaired a grand anti-drug awareness camp under the 100 day Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan at the Mini Secretariat, Shopian. Dr. Piyush Singla inspected the multiple stalls set up by various departments showcasing government schemes, skill development programmes and awareness materials aimed at sensitizing the participants about various livelihood, self-employment schemes and other skill

based initiatives available for youth. During the visit, the departments were directed to strengthen efforts to combat the drug abuse by facilitating access to welfare schemes, vocational training, counselling and employment oriented programmes. Emphasis was laid on integrating affected individuals into the mainstream through structured support systems. Addressing the gathering, Dr. Piyush Singla appreciated the proactive role of the district administration in effective organisation of the 100 day Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan.

He highlighted the serious

social and economical consequences of drug addiction and called for a unified and sustained response. He emphasized that the fight against drug abuse cannot be undertaken by the government alone and requires collective efforts from the society, educational institutions and the families.

Dr. Piyush Singla encouraged the youth to adopt positive and productive paths and urged the parents to guide and support their children with care and vigilance. He stressed that the issue must be addressed with compassion, dignity and collective responsibility.

Earlier, Deputy Commis-

sioner Shopian, Shishir Gupta, in his inaugural address, stated that sustained efforts are underway across the district under the Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan. He urged the public to confidentially share information about the individuals affected by substance abuse to ensure timely intervention, treatment and rehabilitation. He highlighted the importance of promoting self employment opportunities as a means of recovery and reintegration into society. Cultural performances formed an integral part of the programme with the students from Gujjar and Bakerwal Hos-

tel Shopian, New Greenland Higher Secondary School Shopian, and Upper Primary School Safanagri presented impactful performances. A skit depicting the harsh realities of drug abuse and its adverse effects on individuals and families received appreciation for its realistic portrayal and strong message of awareness and recovery.

Additionally, a theme based song titled "Say No to Drugs," composed and presented by NIPS Zainapora, further reinforced the message of the campaign.

Following the awareness camp, Dr. Piyush Singla took a comprehensive review of the

Abhiyan with the district administration officers at Mini Secretariat.

During the review meeting, the Deputy Commissioner Shopian briefed the Secretary on the district-wide activities and department-wise measures taken to involve the local population and other stakeholders in the fight against drugs. He highlighted the proactive engagement of civil society, former PRI members, revenue officials, youth and other frontline functionaries in the district.

"Police have a very important role to play in the fight against drugs," said Dr. Piyush Singla. He sought details of

police action being undertaken against drug peddling and was briefed about the ongoing demolition drives against structures raised by accused drug peddlers, registration of FIRs and other measures being taken.

Poppy cultivation identification and destruction was also taken stock of by the Mentor and the role of Narcotics Control Bureau and Income Tax and other stakeholders was emphasised in the fight against drugs. He called for stringent enforcement by police and effective implementation of the police action plan and media visibility.

Satish Sharma assures prioritizing solarization over conventional electricity in J&K; pitches for green energy

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 05: Minister for Science and Technology, Satish Sharma, today reaffirmed government's strong commitment towards accelerating the solar energy adoption across Jammu and Kashmir, while directing the officials to ensure time-bound resolution of all issues related to ongoing and proposed solar initiatives.

A delegation from the Jammu and Kashmir Solar Association called on the Minister here today to discuss key concerns regarding promotion of renewable energy in the region. The Minister assured the delegation of full support from the government, particularly in facilitating installation of the rooftop solar systems in far-flung and underserved areas.

Emphasizing the strategic importance of solar energy, Satish Sharma said that expanding clean energy infrastructure is central to the government's vision of building a sustainable, energy-efficient and environmen-



tally responsible Jammu and Kashmir. He said that increased adoption of solar power would not only help meet rising en-

ergy demands but also reduce the dependence on conventional energy sources. Demonstrating a proactive

approach, the Minister directed the officers to resolve all pending issues of the Association in a time-bound manner.

He stressed that delays in approvals, clearances or implementation must be addressed urgently to ensure seamless execution of solar projects across the Union Territory.

Satish Sharma further called for improved coordination among the government departments, implementing agencies and private stakeholders to eliminate bottlenecks and fast-track solar initiatives. He assured that the government would extend all necessary policy and administrative support to strengthen the renewable energy ecosystem.

Reiterating his commitment to inclusive development, the Minister highlighted that special focus is being placed on extending the solar benefits to remote and underserved regions, ensuring equitable access to clean energy solutions.

The delegation appreciated the Minister's decisive leadership and proactive intervention, expressing confidence that his continued support would significantly boost growth of the solar sector in Jammu and Kashmir.

Hilal Malik wins inaugural forestry, wildlife photography competition

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAY 05: Hilal Malik has emerged as the winner of the inaugural Forestry and Wildlife Photography Competition organised by the Planning and Publicity Division of the Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department, with his evocative captures of the region's rich biodiversity and scenic landscapes earning wide appreciation from the jury. Malik was awarded for his documentation of wildlife, people and forest-life across the region.

Minister for Forests, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, congratulated Hilal Malik on his remarkable achievement and lauded his contribution towards promoting environmental awareness through the art of photography. The Minister underscored the importance of such initiatives in inspiring the youth to forge a deeper connect with nature and take an active role in conservation efforts.

In recognition of his accomplishment, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), J&K, felicitated Hilal Malik at a function held at the Forest Complex, Srinagar. Senior officers and officials of the department were present on the occasion and commended the participant for showcasing the natural splendour and wildlife of Jammu and Kashmir through their lenses.

Notably, Hilal Malik has been working behind the lens for more than two decades since joining the forest department, passionately capturing the region's wildlife, forest-life, and its people. Others adjudged winners in their respective categories included Abdul Qayoom Sofi (Birds) and Amir Shafi Rather (Landscape).

DC Bandipora reviews proposals under Vibrant Village Programme-II

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, MAY 05: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, on Tuesday chaired a meeting of the District Level Screening Committee to review and finalize departmental proposals under the Vibrant Village Programme-II (VVP-II) for identified border villages in the district.

During the meeting, various departments presented action plans for approval under VVP-II, focusing on infrastructure development, renewable energy, education, healthcare, disaster management, skill development, public utilities, and live-



lihood generation initiatives.

Detailed discussions were held on proposals aimed at strengthening educational institutions, healthcare facilities, rural infrastructure, power supply, water conservation, disaster preparedness, tourism promotion, and employment generation in the identified villages.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed the importance of practical, sustainable, and community-oriented project planning under the programme. She directed departments to ensure proper convergence, avoid duplication of works, and prioritize projects that directly benefit the local population while improving essential services in remote border areas.

Emphasizing coordinated implementation, the Deputy Commissioner underscored the need for effective inter-departmental coordination to ensure smooth execution of approved works under VVP-II.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Planning Officer Bandipora, Assistant Commissioner Development Bandipora, officers from various line departments, and other concerned officials.

GCOE Srinagar announces Admissions for FYUG Honours in Education

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 05: Government College of Education Srinagar, functioning under Cluster University Srinagar, has announced admissions to its four-year undergraduate programme (FYUG Honours in Education) for the academic session 2026-27. According to an official notification, candidates who have completed their 10+2 from recognized boards, including JKBOSE

and CBSE, are eligible to apply. Admissions will be granted strictly on a merit basis, determined by Class 12 examination scores. The registration process will be conducted through the centralized admission portal: <https://jkadmissions.in> from May 9 to May 27, 2026. Applicants have been advised to select Government College of Education, M.A. Road, Srinagar as their top preference while filling out the online form.

The FYUG programme offers Education as the major subject, with minors available in Psychology, Geography, English, and History.

Notably, the college claims to be the only institution in Srinagar offering the FYUG Honours programme in Education with both research and non-research tracks.

In addition to the FYUG Honours programme, the institution offers a range of courses includ-

ing PG Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), B.Ed., M.Ed., Integrated B.Ed.-M.Ed., M.A. Education, Ph.D. in Education, and the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), comprising B.Sc. B.Ed. and B.A. B.Ed.

To assist applicants, the college has set up a Counselling and Facilitation Centre on campus. Aspirants are encouraged to seek guidance for form submission and preference filling to avoid

errors during the application process.

Applicants are required to upload scanned copies of essential documents, including Class 10 and 12 mark sheets, a recent passport-size photograph, Aadhaar card, domicile certificate (if available), and category certificate (if applicable).

For further assistance, candidates may contact the helpline numbers: +91 7006599228; +91 7006178850.

Baramulla clinches UT-Level U-17 Cricket Title at Kishtwar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, MAY 05: In a remarkable display of skill, determination, and team spirit, District Baramulla emerged victorious in the UT-Level Under-17 League of Classics Cricket Tournament organized by the Directorate of Youth Services and Sports J&K at Kishtwar, under the supervision of Director General Youth Services and Sports J&K, Anuradha Gupta.

In the highly anticipated final, Baramulla faced District Anantnag and, after winning the toss, elected to field first. The decision proved strategic as Baramulla's bowling unit delivered an exceptional performance.

Captain Tanzeel Nabi led from the front with a classic spell, claiming 4 crucial wickets. He was well supported by Shah Aasan, who picked up 3 wickets, while Asim contributed with 2 wickets. Their combined bowling effort restricted District Anantnag to a modest total of 119 runs in 18 overs.

Chasing the target, Baramulla displayed composure and confidence with the bat. Irfan contributed a steady 27 runs, while Aasan Bhat played a crucial knock of 31 runs. Rizwan added 16 valuable runs, and Aasin chipped in with 24 runs, ensuring a smooth and comfortable chase. The team successfully surpassed the



target, sealing a well-deserved victory and bringing laurels to District Baramulla.

The achievement stands as a testament to the dedication of the players and the continuous efforts of the Department in nurturing young sporting talent across the district.

DYSSO Baramulla, Sheikh Shafiqat Iqbal, congratulated the team for their outstanding performance and appreciated their commitment, discipline, and sportsmanship. He also acknowledged the role of coaches and field staff in guiding the players to this remarkable success.

The victory has further strengthened Baramulla's position as a rising powerhouse in cricket at the UT level and reflects the positive impact of structured sports initiatives undertaken by the department.

AA&M takes custody of Rare Artifacts recovered from Lolab Kupwara

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 05: A team of the Department of Archives, Archaeology & Museums (AA&M), J&K lead by Dr. Javed Ahmad Mantoo, Surveyor Cum Excavation Assistant of the Department has taken over the possession of the recovered artifacts from the SDM Lolab in presence of Tehsildar Lolab and Police officials for their detailed examination, preservation, identification as per established procedures.

District Administration Kupwara recently reported the recovery of rare Artifacts which includes a stone sculpture stela, from the bed of the local nallah in village Sever at Khurhama in Lolab District Kupwara and a stone slab with rare tubular impressions.

Preliminary observations suggest that the sculpted stone may represent a memorial Stela, tentatively attributable to the late medieval period (circa 12th-14th centuries CE), and bearing features consistent with regional folk artistic traditions. Traces of possible Sharada script inscriptions have also been noticed; however, their reading and authentication are presently under examination.

In addition, a stone slab displaying tubular impressions has been reported, which may be of paleontological interest.



Initial assessment indicates the possibility of these being traces, fossils associated with the geological formations of the Lolab Valley. Their precise identification and scientific evaluation are also under process.

The Department extends its gratitude and appreciation to the District Administration Kupwara and District Police Kupwara for their cooperation, facilitation, and coordination.

Further, the Department appeals to the citizens to report any such findings to the District Authorities or to the nearest Police Authorities for their takeover by the Department for their preservation, restoration and reference.

HKM GDC Bandipora organises Awareness Rallies under Nasha Mukt J&K Abhiyaan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, MAY 05: As part of the ongoing Nasha Mukt Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyaan, HKM Degree College Bandipora on Tuesday organised a series of awareness rallies aimed at promoting a drug-free society and spreading awareness on road safety among the general public.

The programmes were conducted under the guidance of the Principal, Prof. Suresh Kumar Dogra. The NSS Units in collaboration with the NCCD Cell, and the Road Safety Club of the college organised sepa-

rate rallies involving active participation of students and faculty members.

Students carried banners and placards displaying messages against drug abuse, rash driving, and intoxicated driving, while advocating healthy and responsible lifestyles.

College coordinators for the 100-day campaign, Dr. Manzoor Ahmad Parey and Dr. Wasia Hamid, addressed the participants and interacted with shopkeepers, chemists, drivers, and commuters during the rallies. They sensitised the public about the harmful effects of drug abuse, the importance of road safety, adherence to

traffic rules, and the collective responsibility of society in curbing substance abuse.

The Road Safety Club rally, organised under the mentorship of Convener Dr. Mubashir Hamid Mir, also focused on discouraging negligent driving and promoting the use of safety gear. During the outreach, faculty members counselled pillion riders found without helmets and distributed helmets to some riders as part of the awareness initiative.

The programmes witnessed active cooperation from the District Police Department, which ensured the smooth conduct of the rallies.

Department of Social Welfare Srinagar organizes Facilitation Camp

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 05: Department of Social Welfare Srinagar, through its SANKALP - Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW), organized a facilitation camp at Ganderpora, Srinagar today.

The initiative aimed to extend welfare services and create awareness among the local population about various government schemes.

The camp witnessed enthusiastic participation from residents, with officials from SANKALP-HEW Srinagar providing on-the-spot assistance and guidance on a wide

range of social welfare schemes. Beneficiaries were informed about eligibility criteria, required documentation, and application procedures for pensions, scholarships, financial aid, and other social security initiatives and nearly 50 beneficiaries were onspot linked to various schemes.

A special emphasis was placed on reaching marginalized and vulnerable sections of society, ensuring that no eligible individual is left out of the government's welfare framework. Officials also actively addressed public queries and grievances, facilitating immediate solu-

tions wherever possible.

Speaking on the occasion, officials from SANKALP-HEW Srinagar highlighted the importance of such outreach programs in bridging the gap between the administration and the public. They reiterated the department's commitment to inclusive development and ensuring easy access to welfare services for all.

The camp concluded on a positive note, receiving appreciation from the local community, who welcomed the initiative and expressed the need for more such programs in the future.

HT EDITORIAL

Parents need to show more responsibility

Over the past one week or so some of the tragic incidents of drowning have taken place especially in the South Kashmir's Shopian district. A couple of children lost their lives in such unfortunate incidents while yet another child was rescued by the authorities. These tragic incidents sent shock waves among the people across the Kashmir valley and everybody was sad and somber over the deaths of the blooming buds.

In the first incident at Dubjan-Shopian a four year old child drowned in a stream while his parents were busy taking selfies near the water body. In the second incident a two year child was washed away by a stream flowing nearby. Both these incidents clearly point out the negligence of the parents towards their children. It is imperative that the parents are always on lookout for their children and they should not leave them at any cost.

It needs to be understood by the people that each and everything cannot be done by the law enforcing agencies or the government. People need to be responsible in general and more so when their children are playing near the water bodies. There is no harm in taking selfies at a picnic spot or a water body but that should not be at the cost of the life of your child. Proper procedure and due care need to be taken in this regard and there should not be any compromise.

It has been observed that children tend to get attracted towards water and the little ones could be seen rushing towards rivers once they see water gushing. In such a scenario it is the primary responsibility of the parents to ensure that no harm whatsoever is caused to their children. Even if a child insists on going near a water body or a river he or she should be accompanied by his or her parents. Children should not be left alone and once this is done then unfortunate incidents cannot be ruled out.

At the same time if anyone from the law enforcing agencies is present near any water body it is the duty of that particular person to warn the parents about the impending danger. But at the end of the day the primary responsibility lies more on the shoulders of the parents rather than anyone else. Parents need to be careful and there is no scope for taking chances in this regard.

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**Budgam's Anti-Drug Rally:
Public Awareness, Strong Leadership, and
a Decisive Resolve Against Narcotics**



■ REYAZ BADHANA

The "Nasha Mukht" (Drug-Free) rally held in Budgam emerged as an extraordinary public gathering, reflecting not only a growing awareness against drug abuse but also a collective commitment to building a healthier and safer society. An estimated 30,000 to 40,000 people participated in the rally; however, it is important to note that this figure is not definitive and is based on an approximation, which may vary. Nevertheless, the ability to mobilize such a large number of people in a short span of time stands as a remarkable achievement and a clear indication of rising public consciousness.

A significant aspect worth noting is that much of the credit for organizing this massive gathering goes to the dynamic and proactive district officer, Athar Aamir Khan (Deputy Commissioner Budgam). His effective leadership, strategic planning, and strong public outreach transformed this campaign into a meaningful movement. His efforts were not confined to administrative measures alone; he also succeeded in mobilizing the public around this crucial cause, reflecting both his professional competence and sincere commitment.

The rally saw participation from political leaders across various parties in Budgam district, prominent social activists, respected citizens, and a large number of women. The active involvement of women underscores their vital role in social reform and in safeguarding the future of their families. Equally encouraging was the notable partici-



pation of students, which indicates that the younger generation is taking this issue seriously and is determined to protect its future from the menace of drugs.

The rally was presided over by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who, in his address, not only highlighted the ongoing developmental initiatives in Jammu and Kashmir but also announced firm and decisive measures against drug abuse. He categorically stated that individuals involved in drug-related activities, as well as properties built from drug money, would be demolished.

He further emphasized that drug abuse and narco-terrorism are deeply interconnected and pose a serious threat not only to society but also to internal security. According to him, hostile elements are targeting the youth through drugs in an attempt to weaken the social fabric. However, public awareness and collective resistance have the power to defeat such designs. The Budgam rally stands as a strong example of this people's power, where thousands came together to raise

their voice against this menace.

Addressing the youth, the Lieutenant Governor remarked that drugs are neither "fashionable" nor "cool," but rather chains that rob individuals of their freedom. He urged young people to channel their energy towards sports, education, and skill development, encouraging them to build a brighter future. The significant presence of students at the rally clearly reflects that the youth are responding positively to this message.

In continuation of this resolve, Athar Aamir Khan (Deputy Commissioner Budgam) reiterated that strict action would be taken against drug peddlers in the district and that no one involved in such activities would be spared. His statement underscores the district administration's firm commitment to eliminating the problem at its roots through a policy of zero tolerance.

Under the leadership of Manoj Sinha, Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed notable progress in infrastructure development and public welfare, creating a positive environment. His vision extends beyond

physical development to encompass social reform, youth welfare, and the creation of a healthy society. This is why initiatives like "Nasha Mukht" receive full support and encouragement under his leadership.

During the rally, participants carried placards and banners bearing slogans such as "Say No to Drugs, Embrace Life" and "Save Youth, Strengthen Society," reflecting the public's wholehearted acceptance of the campaign. The rally was not merely an awareness drive but a powerful statement that society now stands united against drug abuse.

Overall, the "Nasha Mukht" rally in Budgam marks a significant milestone. It has not only awakened public consciousness but also demonstrated that with strong leadership, active administration, and an aware citizenry, any social evil can be confronted and overcome. This rally represents the beginning of a broader movement, one that is expected to grow stronger in the coming days. There is hope that Budgam, along with the entire region, will move steadily towards a drug-free, safe, and brighter future.

No drugs, yes to happiness



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Today, in all corners of India, especially in the Kashmir Valley, anti-drug campaigns are being carried out on a large scale. Intellectuals, senior citizens, and the Governor's administration are leaving no stone unturned to eradicate the drug menace from society.

Schools, colleges, universities, and government departments are conducting anti-drug campaigns and spreading awareness in society to eradicate this curse and transform the nation in an impressive manner.

To control this menace, we must remain vigilant and keep our youth aware of drug addiction. We should provide them with alternative ways to enjoy life and keep themselves healthy and happy.

This requires continuous efforts from the police, senior citizens, and families. This evil has no place in our pious society.

Kashmir's renowned doctor, Mr. Mohammad Sultan Khuroo, recently highlighted that during the last fifteen years, cases of fatty liver and Helicobacter pylori have increased due to people's lifestyle. This is very alarming. We must seriously reflect on our lifestyle and improve our diet.

Today, young people are becoming victims of obesity, which is very unfortunate. Youth should be physically fit because they are the future of the nation. We live in an era of awareness and cutting-edge technology, yet we lack a basic understanding of how important physical fitness is and how dangerous junk food and an unhealthy lifestyle can be. Fast food is not entirely bad, but we must

take every health-related matter seriously and never be careless in this regard.

During the 1990s, the Kashmir Valley suffered for various reasons, and young people did not have enough opportunities to explore their interests and careers. Today, however, we have numerous opportunities to fulfil our dreams and live comfortably. Our parents, teachers, relatives, and well-wishers have great expectations of us. We must keep our promises and do our best for the nation and for humanity.

Routine Exercise Reflects Discipline
Routine exercise reflects discipline and keeps us fit and healthy. Therefore, regular exercise is vital for good health. Today's era is full of stress and anxiety, and people often complain about fatty liver, high cholesterol, obesity, and many other health issues. To overcome these problems, we need discipline in our lives. We must follow a balanced diet, exercise regularly, and go for routine medical check-ups.

Healthy People, Healthy Nation
Today, people face severe health problems such as obesity, gastrointestinal disorders, fatty liver, heart disease, orthopedic issues, and many other health risks. Our body performs countless functions such as digestion, blood circulation, and waste removal. When we observe these processes, we realize how perfectly they work. We are blessed with intelligence to study and research what already exists in the universe. We should always be grateful and hopeful for the future.

Unfortunately, even in the age of advanced technology, we still lack complete treatments for certain diseases like cancer, AIDS, and several genetic disorders. This reminds us that every part of the universe has value and that we must remain humble.

Health Comes First
Today, people are motivated to achieve success and wealth but often forget to prioritize health. In reality, health comes before

money, buildings, and fame.

Workers and labourers are fortunate because their jobs involve physical activity, which keeps them fit, although their income is often low. They deserve appreciation and better support. Sportspeople are also fortunate because regular physical activity keeps them healthy while bringing recognition and financial stability.

Many people complain that they do not have time for exercise. For them, a home gym is a great solution.

Importance of a Home Gym
A home gym means setting aside a room or a small space with basic equipment to exercise daily. You can gradually add equipment as your financial condition improves. You may even request friends and relatives to gift fitness equipment on special occasions.

Benefits of Exercise
I started gym exercises in the 8th class. In Kashmir, it is often called the "iron game." During this journey, I met kind and supportive people who motivated me. I experienced great positivity, increased energy, and improved confidence. Exercise helps remove fatigue and brings freshness to daily life.

I encourage young people to join gyms, stay away from drugs, develop an interest in sports, and become confident and disciplined individuals. Before starting a home gym, consult a trainer for proper guidance. Involve your parents and siblings to make fitness a family habit.

Schools should establish mini gym centres to create awareness among students. Colleges should open gym facilities for students to reduce stress and promote healthy activities. In villages, many youngsters fall into harmful habits such as smoking and drug use. It is our collective responsibility to replace these habits with healthy activities.

Regular exercise keeps us happy, healthy, and energetic.

sahilmanzoor411990@gmail.com

Separated by Circumstances

A father and son remained bound only by letters and silence throughout their lives



■ SYED MAJID GILANI

Syed Mohammad Yousuf Gilani was born on 15 April 1934 at Khanquah Moulla, Srinagar, to Maulana Syed Mohammad Yasin Shah Gilani, a respected religious scholar and Unani practitioner. He was the youngest, the fourth child in the family.

From an early age, he showed a deep interest in learning. Under his father's personal guidance in religious education, he pursued both formal academics and Islamic studies, eventually earning qualifications and the titles of Aalim, Maulvi, and Fazil. Known for his discipline, knowledge, and character, he later became an educationist.

He passed away on 27 July 1979 at the age of 45 due to complications arising from stomach ulcers.

His life, however, was not easy. In 1949, at the age of fifteen, he was married. His wife, only fourteen at the time, was his cousin. Both families lived in the old locality of Khanquah Moulla in Srinagar. Their bond began in familiarity and tradition, slowly growing into affection, understanding, and deep emotional attachment. He loved her sincerely, and her presence brought him quiet comfort.

But life soon began to test him. He struggled to earn a stable income. His earnings were small, and living in a large joint family added silent pressure. Though no one spoke harshly, there was an unspoken expectation that he should do better. That quiet atmosphere weighed heavily on him. He did not want to become a burden and often felt a sense of inadequacy.

His wife also encouraged him to find better opportunities. Her words were gentle, but they touched his pride. He began to feel the need to rise above his limitations for the sake of his family.

When his first son, Syed Iftikhar Gilani, was born, his heart filled with

both joy and fear. Holding his child, he felt the full weight of responsibility. He wanted to give him a better life, free from struggle, but he did not know how. This thought stayed with him constantly.

After deep internal struggle, he made a painful decision.

Still very young, he left his home in search of education and better opportunities. It was not a choice of comfort, but of necessity. He believed that by leaving, he could one day return stronger and provide dignity to his family.

The night he left was the hardest moment of his life.

His wife and his forty, day, old son were asleep. Quietly, he went to his child, kissed his forehead, and stood there for a long time. He did not wake them, knowing he might not be able to leave if he did. With tears in his eyes, he stepped into the darkness carrying hope, pain, and uncertainty. He left with a few clothes, limited money, and his educational certificates.

Life took him far away from home.

In a completely unfamiliar environment, he survived alone, without family, comfort, or emotional support. He taught tuition during the day and studied whenever possible. Slowly, through perseverance and sacrifice, he built a stable life and eventually secured a government teaching position.

From the outside, life appeared settled.

But inside, he remained deeply lonely.

He constantly thought of his wife and son. Letters became his only connection to home, carrying his love, pain, and longing across distance. Through writing, he lived moments of home that reality had taken away. At times, he also expressed his emotions through poetry.

Eventually, he asked his wife and son to join him. She once agreed and prepared to leave with hope for a new beginning. She even adorned her hands with mehndi, but at the last moment, family pressure, especially from her mother, stopped her, and she remained behind. The dream of reunion collapsed silently.

Later, her family asked him to return permanently, but he hesitated. Fear of



losing his job and concern about social judgment kept him away.

Years passed, seven long years of separation.

During this time, his health deteriorated. He developed severe stomach ulcers, worsened by emotional stress and loneliness.

Eventually, under family pressure, his marriage ended in divorce. It was not his wish, but he could not prevent

it. The life he had tried to hold together slowly fell apart.

Despite this, his love did not end. It transformed into silence, memory, and lifelong pain. People suggested remarriage. At first, he resisted, but later he accepted responsibility again. Still, a part of his heart always remained with his past.

His greatest sorrow remained his son, Iftikhar.

He could not see him grow, guide him, or share even a single moment of life with him. That absence became a permanent wound in his heart.

Over time, when Iftikhar reached adolescence, fragments of truth began reaching him through letters and family conversations. Understanding came slowly. What once felt like abandonment began to appear as sacrifice.

Yet the father and son never met again. They never saw or spoke to each other in life. Their bond survived only through letters, memory, and silence.

Iftikhar was raised with care, dignity, and stability by his uncle and aunt, Syed Abdul Rashid Gilani and Syeda Sakina Gilani. Syed Abdul Rashid Gilani, the third son of Maulana Syed Mohammad Yasin Shah Gilani, was a government officer with literary and poetic interests. The couple had no children of their own and raised him with deep affection, giving him a stable upbringing and a sense of belonging.

Even then, the memory of his biological father remained quietly alive within him.

Despite everything, Syed Mohammad Yousuf Gilani never blamed anyone, not his wife, not her family, and not fate. He accepted life with patience and dignity.

In his final years, he made a legal will, declaring Syed Iftikhar Gilani the sole heir to his ancestral property. It was his final act of responsibility and love.

On 27 July 1979, he passed away far from his home and was laid to rest away from the place where his life had begun.

His life may appear simple, but it carries a deep truth.

He loved deeply.

He suffered silently.

He endured without complaint.

He was not defeated by people, but by circumstances.

Even today, his story lives on, in memory, in letters, and in the silence of emotions that never fade.

The author is a Government Officer, storyteller, and opinion writer. He writes on family, faith, resilience, and moral values. He can be reached at syedmajid6676@gmail.com)

Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan

Can India Achieve a Drug-Free Future in 100 Days?



■ GULFAR BARJI

Drug abuse has emerged as one of the most pressing challenges of the modern world, silently eroding the foundations of individuals, families, and societies. It is not merely a health issue but a complex socio-economic problem that affects productivity, security and the overall well-being of a nation. India, with its vast population and youthful demographic, is particularly vulnerable to this growing menace. Recognizing the gravity of the situation, the Government of India launched the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan an ambitious initiative aimed at combating drug abuse and creating a drug-free society.

The campaign reflects a strong commitment to addressing the issue at multiple levels. However, it also raises an important question: Can a country as vast and diverse as India realistically become drug-free within 100 days? While the goal is inspiring and necessary the answer requires a balanced and practical perspective.

Drug addiction does not develop overnight, nor can it be eradicated in a short period. It is deeply rooted in various socio-economic and psychological factors. Unemployment, lack of opportunities, mental stress, broken family structures, peer pressure and easy availability of narcotics



all contribute to the spread of drug abuse, particularly among the youth. Therefore, expecting complete elimination within 100 days may not be realistic. However what can certainly be achieved is the creation of a strong and sustainable foundation for long-term success.

The first and most crucial step in this direction is awareness. A large section of society, especially young people often underestimates the harmful consequences

of drug use. Through well-planned awareness campaigns, seminars, workshops and community programs, people can be educated about the physical, mental, and social damage caused by drugs. Schools, colleges and universities must play a proactive role in this regard, as they are the primary platforms for shaping young minds.

The role of media is equally significant. Newspapers, television channels, and digital platforms have the power to in-

fluence public opinion and behavior. Consistent and impactful messaging against drug abuse can create a strong social stigma around substance use and discourage individuals from experimenting with drugs.

At the same time, strict enforcement of laws is essential. Drug trafficking networks operate with sophistication and often exploit geographical and systemic vulnerabilities. Law enforcement agencies must intensify their efforts to dismantle these networks. In regions like J&K authorities have taken commendable steps by crack down on drug peddlers, seizing illegal assets, and strengthening surveillance. Such actions send a strong message that involvement in drug-related activities will not be tolerated. Border management also plays a critical role especially in areas prone to cross-border smuggling. Enhanced vigilance, advanced technology, and coordinated efforts among security agencies can significantly reduce the inflow of illegal substances.

While preventive and punitive measures are necessary, the importance of rehabilitation cannot be overstated. Individuals suffering from addiction should not be viewed as criminals but as patients in need of care and support. Establishing well-equipped de-addiction centers, providing counseling services, and ensuring community reintegration are vital components of a successful anti-drug strategy. A compassionate approach can help individuals recover and rebuild their lives.

Parents and families form the first line of defense against drug abuse. Open communication, emotional support, and active involvement in children's lives can prevent

them from falling into harmful habits. Similarly, teachers and mentors have a responsibility to guide students, identify early signs of addiction, and intervene appropriately.

The success of the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan ultimately depends on collective responsibility. Government efforts alone are not sufficient to tackle such a widespread issue. Civil society organizations, community leaders, and citizens must come forward to support the cause. A societal movement built on awareness, responsibility, and cooperation can create lasting change.

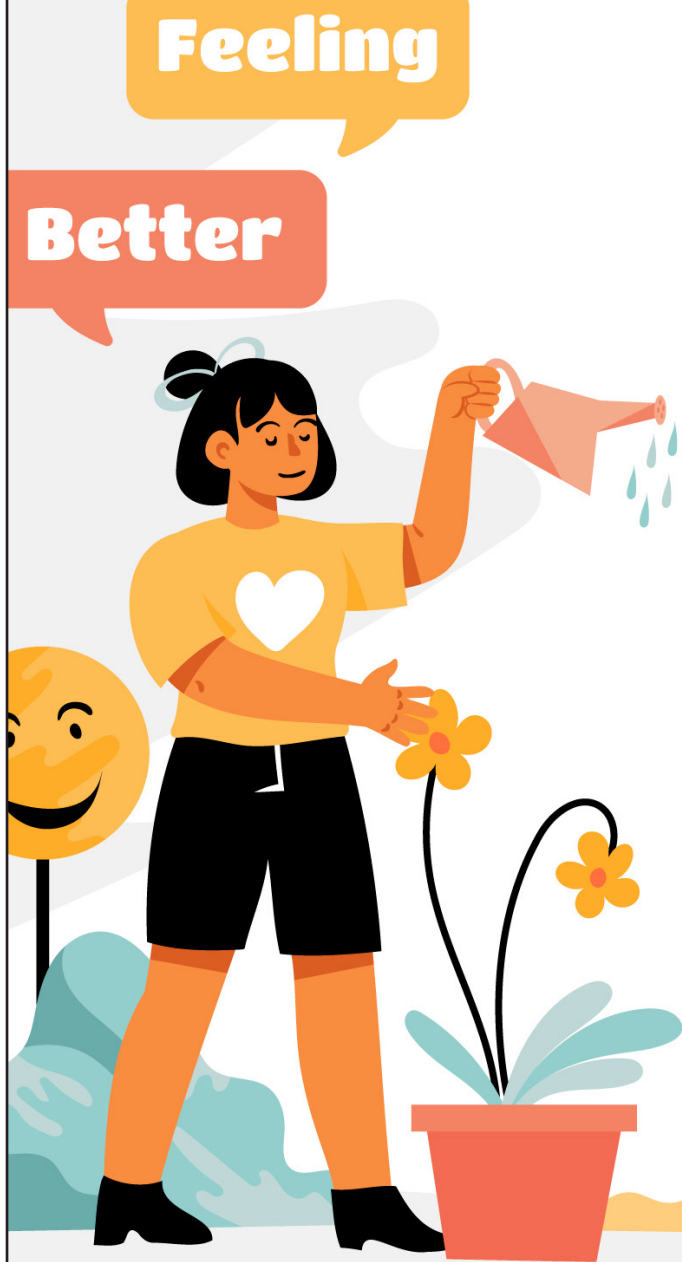
Moreover, addressing the root causes of drug abuse is equally important. Providing employment opportunities, promoting mental health awareness, and strengthening social support systems can reduce the vulnerability of individuals, especially the youth.

In conclusion while it may not be feasible to make India completely drug-free within 100 days this period can serve as a crucial starting point for a long-term transformation. With sustained efforts, strong policies, and active public participation, the vision of a drug-free India can gradually become a reality. The Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan is not just a campaign—it is a call to action for every citizen to contribute towards building a healthier, safer, and more prosperous nation.

A drug-free India is not merely a government objective it is a shared dream and a collective responsibility that demands commitment, awareness, and continuous effort from all sections of society.

The author from Harwan Srinagar

Youth and Mental Health Awareness



■ DR TASADUK HUSSAIN ITOO

Mental health, for today's youth, is often understood as feeling happy, managing emotions effectively, coping with stress, and developing a sense of mastery over life's challenges. Interestingly, these personal perceptions closely align with the scientific understanding of mental well-being. As youth constitute a significant proportion of our population, their mental health deserves urgent and sustained attention.

The period of youth is marked by immense potential, growth, and opportunity, but it is also a phase characterized by vulnerability. Research shows that a large proportion of mental health disorders begin before the age of 30 in current times. Despite this, only a small percentage of young people who need professional support actually seek or receive it. This gap can largely be attributed to lack of awareness, social stigma, hesitation, and limited access to mental health services.

Among college-going youth, several factors contribute to psychological distress. Intense academic competition, career uncertainty, and social pressures often create overwhelming stress. Additionally, the unrealistic expectation of remaining "stress-free" at all times can itself become a source of anxiety, as it does not reflect the inevi-

table frustrations and setbacks of everyday life. Many young people also struggle to emotionally connect with parents and teachers about the challenges they face, often leading to feelings of isolation and the recurring frustration of "not being understood."

Urban youth, particularly those migrating from smaller towns to metropolitan cities for higher education, frequently encounter cultural adjustment difficulties, loneliness, and alienation during the early stages of adaptation. At the same time, encouragingly, young people are increasingly recognizing that speaking about mental health does not signify weakness, nor does it automatically imply severe psychological illness. Common concerns for which youth seek help include depression, relationship conflicts, career confusion, social anxiety, and emotional turmoil.

Peers often become the first line of support when young individuals experience emotional distress. This highlights the importance of equipping youth with the skills to support one another responsibly, while also encouraging them to recognize professional mental health care as a valuable complement to peer support. Young people can also play a transformative role in dismantling stigma and fostering a culture of openness around mental health.

Conclusion

Mental health awareness is the need of the hour, and youth engagement is central to this movement. By empowering young people with knowledge, emotional skills, and supportive platforms, society can promote early intervention, reduce stigma, and build a healthier, more resilient generation. The media, educational institutions, families, and mental health professionals must work together to create an environment where conversations about mental health are normalized, encouraged, and acted upon.



Strong Liver, Strong Life



■ DR. VINOD CHANDRASHEKHAR DIXIT

World Liver Day is observed every year on 19th April to spread awareness about liver health and the growing burden of liver diseases. Organized in association with international and local health bodies, the day focuses on educating the public about the seriousness of liver conditions, the importance of early detection, and ways to prevent them. This year the theme for World Liver Day 2026 is "Solid Habits, Strong Liver". It highlights how consistent lifestyle choices like eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, limiting alcohol, and going for routine health check-ups can protect the liver and reduce the risk of disease. The liver is the second largest and one of the most vital organs in the human body. It performs critical roles in metabolism, digestion, immunity, detoxification, and storage of nutrients like vitamins, minerals, and glucose. Remarkably, the liver can self-heal and regenerate even after 60-70% damage, but persistent neglect can still lead to severe complications.

The liver processes nutrients by converting carbohydrates into glucose for energy, storing excess as glycogen, and breaking down fats and amino acids for use across the body. As the body's natural filter, it continuously removes toxins from medications, pollutants, and metabolic waste, converting them into harmless compounds excreted through urine or faeces. It also produces essential substances like clotting proteins for wound healing, albumin to support immunity, and bile for digesting fats. The need for awareness is urgent. Globally, nearly 20 lakh people die each year from liver diseases. Cirrhosis accounts for almost half of these deaths, while the rest are due to viral hepatitis and liver cancer. Together, cirrhosis and liver cancer cause 3.5% of all

deaths worldwide, making cirrhosis the 11th leading cause of death globally and liver cancer the 16th.

In India, liver cancer ranks as the 10th major cause of death. Around 200 crore people worldwide consume alcohol, with 7.5 to 10 crore at risk of alcohol-related liver disease. Additionally, 200 crore adults are overweight or obese, and 40 crore live with diabetes, both key risk factors for non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) and liver cancer. While viral hepatitis remains widespread, drug-induced liver injury is now emerging as a major cause of acute hepatitis. Compared to 2005, new liver disease cases are projected to rise by 35% annually by 2030. Much of this rise is linked to low awareness about risk factors, late detection, and preventable lifestyle habits. On World Liver Day, hepatologists, healthcare policymakers, and liver specialists come forward to educate the public on prevention through diet, exercise, and lifestyle changes. Since most liver diseases remain silent in early stages, WLD also stresses the value of regular screening and knowing the warning signs. Protecting your liver starts with daily choices — because a strong liver means a stronger you. World Liver Day serves as a vital reminder that liver health cannot be taken for granted.

Despite the liver's remarkable ability to heal and regenerate, rising cases of cirrhosis, fatty liver disease, hepatitis, and liver cancer show how lifestyle choices and lack of awareness continue to put millions at risk. The 2026 theme, "Solid Habits, Strong Liver", reinforces that prevention truly begins with daily discipline — a balanced diet, regular exercise, limited alcohol, and timely medical check-ups. Since most liver diseases remain silent until advanced stages, early detection and informed choices are our strongest defence. On this World Liver Day, let us pledge to protect this life-sustaining organ through awareness, action, and consistent healthy habits, because a strong liver is the foundation of a strong life.

The author is a Free-Lance Journalist, Writer & Cartoonist Limca Book of Record Holder (8 Times) dixitpatrakar@yahoo.in B-15 Jyoti-Kalash Society, Jodhpur Tekra Satellite Ahmedabad

Skin Tan During Summers



■ SHAHNAZ HUSAIN

Tired of your skin getting darker every time you step into the sun? You're not alone.

The scorching summer heat brings more than just rising temperatures. For many, the most visible impact is uneven skin tone and dark patches on the skin. Skin tan is the skin's natural way to act as a defence mechanism against UV radiation, primarily from the sun.

When your skin is exposed to UVA and UVB rays, the melanocytes in the skin produce melanin, the pigment responsible for the colour of skin, hair and eyes. This pigment absorbs the radiation to prevent further DNA damage. However, excessive sun exposure can lead to an overproduction of melanin, resulting in a tan that can lead to premature ageing and increase the risk of skin cancer.

While a sun tan will fade naturally over time as your body goes through its normal cycle of shedding dead skin cells, playing the waiting game can be incredibly frustrating.

With the right skincare routine, sun protection habits, and science-backed natural ingredients treatments, you can effectively reduce tanning and prevent long-term skin damage.

Here is how you can shed that summer tan safely and naturally.

Yoghurt-----Yoghurt is an effective natural remedy for removing sun tans due to its high lactic acid content, which acts as a gentle exfoliant, breaks down dead skin cells, and brightens the complexion.

Applying plain curd directly to the affected areas helps reduce tan and cool the complexion.

It also soothes sun-exposed skin, hydrates to restore a natural glow, and reduces pigmentation. The probiotics in yoghurt calm the skin by promoting



cell renewal and repairing the lipid barrier in dehydrated skin.

Mix 2 tablespoons of yoghurt with a pinch of turmeric. Apply evenly and leave for 20 minutes. Rinse with lukewarm water. Use 3 times a week for a natural glow

Lemon and Honey Mask: Lemon acts as a natural exfoliant, while honey hydrates the skin. Mix equal parts lemon juice and honey, apply for 15-20 minutes, and rinse with lukewarm water 2-3 times a week. Lemon will gently exfoliate the skin, and honey retains the moisture.

Mix 1 teaspoon of lemon juice, 1 teaspoon of honey and 1 tablespoon of yoghurt to make a smooth paste of equal consistency.

Apply the mixture evenly to the face, neck and open area. Leave it on for 15-20 minutes. Wash off with cool water.

Avoid using lemon on sensitive, broken, or inflamed skin. Do not apply lemon before direct sun exposure

Cucumber Juice: Cucumber has 98% water content, which means that it is quite helpful when it comes to hydrating your skin.

It soothes the skin and helps brighten the complexion.

The astringent property in cucumber not only helps in reducing skin tan but also gives a fresh glow to the face.

Regular application helps rejuvenate sun-exposed skin and restore its natural glow.

Simply blend a fresh cucumber, apply the juice to your face, and leave it

on for around 15-20 minutes. It will soothe sun-exposed skin while keeping the routine easy.

Peel the skin and grate 1 cucumber in a bowl. Squeeze all the water out. Apply it all over your face with your hands or a cotton pad. Let it sit for 20 mins before washing it off

Cucumber juice (or pulp) and watermelon can be mixed with two teaspoons of powdered milk. Put the ingredients in a blender for a smooth paste. Apply to the face and neck and rinse off with water after half an hour.

Mix the cucumber and ripe papaya pulp with curd and two teaspoons of oats. Lemon juice can also be added. Apply to the face and neck twice a week. Wash it off after half an hour.

Add a little turmeric (haldi) to gram flour (besan) and curd into a paste and apply daily. Wash it off after 20 to 30 minutes.

Mix one teaspoon each of honey and orange juice with egg white. Apply to the face and wash off after 20 minutes. It removes tan and also nourishes the skin, making it soft and smooth.

Add cream of milk, a pinch of turmeric, and oats to the tomato pulp and half a teaspoon of honey. Apply to the face to remove tan and nourish the skin.

Mix ground almonds with curd and a pinch of turmeric. Apply to the face. After 15 minutes, rub gently with circular movements. Wash it off with water.

Mix two teaspoons of honey, a little milk, and rose water, dried and powdered lemon peels into a paste. Apply two or three times a week on the face and neck. Wash it off after 20 minutes.

Soak one tablespoon of moong dal in water for a few hours. Make a paste and add one tablespoon of tomato pulp. Apply to the face with a light massage. Wash off with water after 20 minutes.

Take one tablespoon of choker (wheat bran), one teaspoon of each orange peel powder and curd, and one tablespoon of aloe vera gel. Mix and apply to the skin, washing it off after 30 minutes.

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

Major Drug Racket Busted in Kulgam; 202 Grams Heroin Seized, Kingpin Among Three Arrested

■ FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, MAY 5: In a significant breakthrough under the ongoing War on Drugs campaign, Kulgam Police have dismantled a major drug trafficking network by arresting three accused, including a key kingpin, and recovering a substantial quantity of heroin along with cash.

Acting on credible intelligence inputs, police learnt that two individuals—Hilal Ahmad Ganai of Kanispora Baramulla and Parvaz Ahmad Bhat of Wagoora Baramulla—were actively involved in smuggling and distribution of narcotic contraband. The duo was reportedly transporting heroin from Banihal towards Qazigund via National Highway-44 in a Baleno vehicle, intending to supply the drugs among local youth.

Following the tip-off, Police Station Qazigund registered FIR No. 108/2026 under relevant

provisions of the NDPS Act and launched a swift operation. A naka checking point was established at Choimulla under the leadership of SHO Qazigund, Shri Manav Dhanetiya (IPS Probationer).

During the operation, the suspected vehicle was intercepted, and both accused were apprehended. Upon their search, police recovered 50 grams of heroin-like substance. The vehicle used in the commission of the crime was also seized.

Further investigation led to the identification of a major supplier and kingpin, Sadiq Hussain alias Showki, a resident of Rakh Barothian, Vijaypur in Samba district. Acting promptly, a police team from Qazigund, in coordination with Samba Police, conducted a raid at his residence after obtaining a search warrant from the competent court.

The kingpin was successfully apprehended, and during



the search of his premises, particularly a stable, police recovered an additional 152 grams of heroin along with Rs. 52,000 in cash.

Preliminary investigations suggest that the accused was running a well-organized drug network with an extensive client

base across Jammu and Kashmir, supplying narcotics on a daily basis and posing a serious threat to society, especially the youth.

Police officials stated that further investigation is underway, and more arrests and recoveries are expected in the coming days. The entire operation was

conducted under the supervision of SDPO Qazigund Shri Mansoor Ayaz (JKPS) and Additional SP NHW Shri Mumtaz Ali Bhatti (JKPS).

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kulgam, Shri Anayat Ali Chowdhary (IPS), while reiterating the police's firm commitment to eradicate drug menace, appealed to the public—particularly the youth—to stay away from drugs. He also urged parents to remain vigilant and encouraged citizens to share any information related to drug trafficking, assuring confidentiality of informers.

The SSP warned that strict legal action will be taken against anyone found involved in drug peddling or related activities.

Kulgam Police reaffirmed its resolve to continue its crackdown against drug abuse and trafficking, emphasizing that those indulging in such illegal activities will face the full force of law.

Public Notice

This is certify that Hilal Ahmad is incorrectly mentioned in character rules . Actually the correct name is Hilal Ahmad Bhat . The addhar number is 7891 0755 9340 . If any body has objection in that regard , invoke concerned department within the period of seven days , After completion of said period , No objection will be entertained.

Hilal Ahmad Bhat
12/02/1982

R/o Maloora Srinagar Parimpora , Srinagar , Jammu and Kashmir, 190017

Public Notice

This is to notify the general public that the name recorded in the Aadhaar database is incorrect. Name shown in Aadhaar: Aimana Jan Correct name: Ayman Jaan, Fathers name : Showkat Ahmad Mir, Address: Humpora Kralgund Kupwara Jammu and Kashmir 193302. The above mentioned person (Aimana Jan) hereby declares that the name printed on the Aadhaar is incorrect and that her correct and legal name is Ayman Jaan. Any objection to this correction should be brought to the attention of the UIDAI Aadhaar Seva Kendra, Office Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, the necessary correction procedures may be undertaken.

Public Notice

IT is hereby notified that my daughter's applying Birth certificate in chief executive officer municipal council Baramullah namely Ayesha Shabir DOB 15/11/2017 Aneesa Shabir DOB 13/08/2022 Prantage Shabir Ahmad Dar, R/o Duligund Rafiabab Tehsil Dangiwach District: Baramullah. Bron at GMC Baramullah if anybody having any objection in this regards he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the chief executive officer municipal council Baramullah within 07 days .After that no objection shall be entertained.

AYESHA SHABIR
DOB 15/11/2017 ANEESA SHABIR
DOB 13/08/2022

S/O, SHABIR AHMAD DAR
R/o DULIGUND RAFIABAD TEHSIL DANGIWACHA
DISTRICT BARAMULLAH

Renowned Actor Rafiq Matoo Passes Away, Kashmir's Artistic Community Mourns Loss

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 5: The demise of renowned radio, stage, and television drama artist Mohammad Rafiq Matoo has cast a deep shadow of grief over the artistic community in the Kashmir Valley. His passing has come as a profound shock, and several literary organizations and prominent personalities have expressed heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.



The All Jammu & Kashmir Radio and Television Artists, Freelance Producers and Directors Association, in its condolence message, expressed deep sorrow over the loss, stating that the news of his demise has deeply saddened the entire artistic fraternity.

The association noted that with his passing, the community has lost a highly talented artist, creating a void that will be difficult to fill. The statement highlighted that late Rafiq Matoo was not only an exceptionally skilled and versatile performer but also a humble, sincere, and kind-hearted human being. His warm and friendly nature endeared him to friends, colleagues, and relatives alike, making him a beloved figure among all who knew him.

President of the Association, Sheikh Tariq Javed, in his condolence message, said that the artistic community has lost yet another invaluable asset, and that the contributions of the late artist will always be remembered.

The Association prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and strength and patience for the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss.

Mega Drug Awareness Programme Held at GHSS Herman in Shopian

■ FAROOQ RATHER

SHOPIAN, MAY 05: A mega drug awareness programme was organised at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Herman in collaboration with the Cancer Society of Kashmir, aiming to educate youth about the harmful effects of substance abuse.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students of various schools across district Shopian, members of civil society, and prominent dignitaries.

On the occasion, noted speakers including Dr. Ishtiyahq Ahmad Shah, Prof. Nisar Ahmad, Dr. Nazir Ahmad, and Dr. Tariq Rasool addressed the gathering and highlighted the growing menace of drug addiction, particularly among the youth. They stressed the urgent need for collective efforts from society, educational institutions, and families to combat this issue.

The speakers elaborated on the physical, psychological, and social consequences of drug abuse, urging students to stay away from such

harmful practices and instead focus on education, sports, and constructive activities.

They also emphasized the role of awareness programmes in shaping a drug-free society and encouraged students to act as ambassadors of change by spreading awareness within their communities.

The programme concluded with a strong message of unity and responsibility, reinforcing the commitment of all stakeholders towards building a healthier and drug-free future for the younger generation.

Awareness Rally Under NMBA organised in schools across Ganderbal

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, MAY 05: Under the ongoing Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (*NMBA)@100 Days, awareness rallies* were today organized across various *schools of District Ganderbal,* carrying a strong message of consciousness, responsibility, and hope for a healthier society.

From the silent *hilly terrains of Zone Hariganiwan and Kanganu to the vibrant plains of Zone Ganderbal and Tullamulla,* students, teachers, and communities walked together with one voice against substance abuse and social evils. The rallies reflected not merely a campaign, but a collective awakening of minds and hearts.

Chief Education Officer Ganderbal attended several rallies and appreciated the enthusiastic participation of students and teaching fraternity. Addressing



the gatherings, it was emphasized that the future of a nation is not safeguarded by buildings and roads alone, but by the character, discipline, and moral strength of its younger generation.

The programme echoed the timeless truth that mountains may separate habitations, but noble values unite humanity. Education is not only the illumination of intellect, but also the purification of soul and conduct. A society becomes truly prosperous when its youth walk on the path of wisdom, dignity, and self-restraint.

The rallies concluded with pledges by students to spread awareness against drug abuse and work as ambassadors of peace, health, and social responsibility in their communities.

Ladakh sees massive turnout for Lord Buddha's relics: Rijiju

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

LEH, MAY 05: Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Tuesday said that thousands of people from across Ladakh are visiting Leh to pay obeisance to the sacred relics of Lord Buddha, terming it a rare and fortunate opportunity for the region. Speaking to reporters, Rijiju, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said his visit was primarily aimed at participating in events linked to the relics currently housed in Leh. He said people in large numbers are thronging the venue for darshan, adding that such an opportunity is otherwise available only abroad.

The Union Minister also delivered the Kushok Bakula Rinpoche Memorial Lecture, where he underlined the need for younger generations to understand the life and legacy of Kushok Bakula Rinpoche. He said Bakula Rinpoche's contribution towards modernising Ladakh and reviving Buddhism in Mongolia remains unparalleled. Highlighting development, Rijiju said several schemes are being implemented in Ladakh through the Ministry of Minority Affairs and other central initiatives. He hailed the support extended to the region over the years under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Describing his visit as brief, the minister said he felt a sense of peace after paying respects to the relics and interacting with the local people—(KNO)

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DC Anantnag invites stakeholders to Nasha Mukta J&K Padyatra on May 09

HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, MAY 05: In preparation for the upcoming Nasha Mukta J&K Mega Padyatra scheduled in the district on May 09, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat today held a comprehensive meeting with civil society members, traders, transporters, and other stakeholders at Dak Bunglaw, Khanabal.

ACR, Tariq Ahmad Malik and other concerned officials besides members from civil society, prominent trader and transport associations along with representatives from KP, Sikh and Tribal Communities and others attended the meeting. Extending formal invitation to the stakeholders for their participation in the Mega Padyatra, the DC said it is essential to engage all stakeholders in the fight against drug abuse and to build a narcotics-free society. He called the rally a major moment for the district to further its collective fight against the drug menace and hoped that all stakeholders will join



wholeheartedly, demonstrating their support and commitment to the 100 day intensified NMJK campaign. During the interaction,

the Deputy Commissioner appreciated the proactive role of these stakeholders in the Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyaan, noting their par-

ticipation will make the event vibrant and inclusive and also enhance community engagement for the collective cause.

He emphasized that the role of civil society traders, and transporters is indispensable in combating the menace of narcotics and safeguarding the youth. He said the drug abuse poses grave threat to the individuals, families and society which needs sincere and concerted efforts by all stakeholders for its timely control and eradication.

Dr. Bilal stated that all associations and sections of the society may participate to send a strong and unified message against the drug abuse. The rally will provide a great opportunity for the district to unite and further its resolve against the menace, he stressed.

The participants on the occasion shared valuable suggestions and assured full cooperation and active participation in the upcoming padyatra, reinforcing their collective commitment to the fight against drug abuse in the district.

IUST hosts Workshop engaging diverse Stakeholders for Community-led action, Ethical Accountability to combat Drug Menace

HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, MAY 05: Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) reaffirmed its commitment to addressing pressing social challenges by hosting the second day of a two-day workshop on "Drug-Free Society: Call for Collective Action."

The programme, through its multiple sessions, brought together a wide spectrum of stakeholders including representatives from the administration, religious leaders, NGOs, academia, and civil society, coordinating a comprehensive and inclusive dialogue on tackling substance abuse.

The programme was coordinated by Prof. G. N. Itoo, Director, Centre for Good Governance and Policy Analysis, who asserted that the fight against drug abuse must begin at the family level, with parents playing a central role in guiding and monitoring their children.

He also called upon religious leaders to contribute meaningfully towards spreading awareness about this menace and also participate in preventive initiatives.

During a dedicated session with religious leaders, the Grand Mufti of Jammu & Kashmir called for a strong, com-



munity-driven response to curb the growing menace of substance abuse. Highlighting the alarming scale of the issue, he noted while thousands of cases have been registered, and significant arrests made the challenge of tackling the issue of drugs is staggering and needs collective efforts. He described substance abuse as a "Shaitani act".

Emphasizing the institutional role of IUST in promoting awareness and social responsibility, the Grand Mufti appreciated the university's proactive efforts in creating platforms for dialogue and action on critical societal issues. He stressed that lack of parental supervision is among the primary causes of substance abuse.

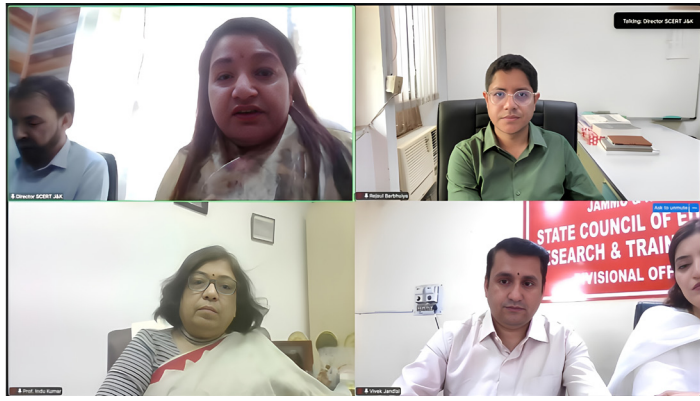
SCERT J&K organises online orientation on AI-enabled features and PAL courses on DIKSHA

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAY 5: The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) Jammu & Kashmir, Divisional Office Jammu, in collaboration with CIET-NCERT, on Tuesday organised an online orientation programme on AI-enabled features and Personalised Adaptive Learning (PAL) courses on DIKSHA.

The orientation programme aimed to build the capacity of DIET faculty, who will further lead district-level orientations to promote effective utilisation of DIKSHA among teachers, school heads and students.

The event was held under the leadership of Dr. Naseem Javaid Chowdhary Director School Education Jammu and Director SCERT J&K and under the guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Sindhu Kapoor,



Joint Director, SCERT Jammu Division,

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from all 20 District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) of the Union Territory along with teams from both SCERT Divisional Offices, reflecting a strong collective commitment towards

strengthening technology-integrated education.

The session commenced with a welcome address by DIKSHA Coordinator SCERT Jammu Vivek Jandial, who outlined the objectives of the programme and emphasised the need to enhance the effective utilisation of DIKSHA across the Union Territory.

The session was further enriched by the addresses of Prof. Indu Kumar and Dr. Rejaul Karim, National DIKSHA Coordinators, who underscored the transformative potential of DIKSHA as a dynamic digital learning platform and highlighted key national-level initiatives shaping the evolving digital ecosystem in education.

The programme featured technical sessions by members of the DIKSHA PMU Team, including Abhinav Pratap Singh and Ankit Asthana, who provided a comprehensive overview of the platform.

Demonstrations included AI-powered features such as Ask DIKSHA (Chat with Books), AI-based video keyword search, DIKSHA Read Aloud and translation tools, along with navigation of DIKSHA courses, PAL

courses and coupon-based course functionality.

The event also witnessed active participation from the Kashmir Division, coordinated by Dr. Amarpreet Kour, DIKSHA Coordinator, ensuring pan-UT representation and collaboration.

The programme was actively supported by the SCERT Jammu team, comprising Reeta Charak (Assistant Professor), Dr. Bhuvi, Dr. Seema, Arsh Kour and Roopse Kapoor, whose collective efforts contributed significantly to its successful organisation.

The programme concluded with a formal vote of thanks, expressing sincere appreciation to the CIET-NCERT team, resource persons, coordinators and all participants for their active involvement and collaborative spirit.

DC Poonch reviews preparations for Census 2027

HT NEWS NETWORK

POONCH, MAY 05: Deputy Commissioner Poonch Ashok Kumar Sharma, who is also the District Principal Census Officer for Census 2027, today chaired a meeting to review the preparedness for the smooth conduct of Census 2027 in the district.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Tahir Mustafa Malik; Assistant Commissioner Development; Shakeel Ahmed; District Statistics and Evaluation Officer (DSEO) Javed Ahmed; District Informatics Officer Parvinder Singh; Tehsildar Azhar Majid; Chief Education Officer Mohammad Hafeez; AD statistical and other concerned officers and officials.

The meeting was informed that the Self-Enumeration phase shall be conducted from May 17 to May 31, 2026. The citizens can complete their online on the official portal (<https://se.census.gov.in>).



The DC asked officials to encourage residents to actively participate and ensure timely submission of their details through the self-enumeration facility. To ensure maximum outreach, the Deputy Commissioner directed the Education Department to educate students about the importance of census at morning assemblies and encourage them to motivate their families to complete the self-enumeration process within the stipulated timeframe. Further, the Deputy Commissioner instructed Tehsildars and concerned officials to ensure that all preparatory activities are completed well in time, facilitating a seamless and efficient census process.

It was also informed that the House Listing and Housing Census (Phase-I) shall be conducted from June 1 to June 30, 2026. The Deputy Commissioner emphasized on close coordination among all departments to ensure the successful conduct of house listing & Housing (HLO) Census 2027 Phase-I in the district.

DC Rajouri inaugurates Cash Recycler Machine at Gujjar Mandi

HT NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI, MAY 05: In a significant step towards strengthening banking infrastructure and enhancing public convenience, a Cash Recycler Machine (CRM) has been made operational here at Gujjar Mandi by Jammu & Kashmir Bank.

The CRM, which facilitates both cash deposit and withdrawal, was inaugurated today by Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma in the presence of ADDC Malikzada Sheraz Ul Haq; ADC Ravi Kumar Sihag; ADC Nowshera Pritam Lal Thapa; DGM J&K Bank, Lead District Manager and other senior bank officials.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner appreciated the proactive role of the banking sector in expanding modern and accessible financial services in the district. He emphasized that such facilities are instrumental in ensuring seamless banking access, especially for people residing in far-flung and underserved areas.

Highlighting the utility of the CRM, the DC stated that it will enable customers to carry out cash transactions beyond regular banking hours, including on holidays, thereby providing enhanced flexibility and convenience.

Encouraging the public to make optimum use of the facility, he observed that despite the challenges associated with Rajouri being a border district, the administration is making sustained efforts to improve financial inclusion and banking accessibility.

The Deputy Commissioner further informed that an ATM facility was recently set up at Block Khawas—marking the first such service in the area since independence—reflecting the administration's commitment towards inclusive and equitable development. The initiative has been widely appreciated by the local residents, who are expected to benefit significantly from the improved banking services in the area.

DC Ramban reviews functioning of Rural Development Department Sets priorities for Need-Based Development

HT NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN, MAY 05: Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the functioning of the Rural Development Department and discuss the formulation of the developmental plan for the financial year 2026-27, with a special focus on sustainable development across rural areas of the district.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Development Sheraz Ahmed; Chief Planning Officer Dr. Shakeeb Ahmed Rather; Block Development Officers of all eleven blocks of the district, besides other concerned officers.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the proposed developmental framework for this finan-

cial year and directed the Block Development Officers to prepare the plan with the involvement of all stakeholders, prioritizing basic infrastructure and area-specific developmental needs. He stressed the importance of adopting a grassroots-oriented approach to ensure equitable and effective development in rural areas.

Highlighting key priorities, the Deputy Commissioner instructed officers to focus on the development of playfields, restoration and preservation of water bodies, strengthening educational infrastructure and execution of projects based on local requirements. He emphasized that developmental planning should be practical, inclusive and aligned with the aspirations of the people.

The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed both physical and finan-

cial achievements registered under the District Capex Budget 2025-26, besides taking stock of progress under various Centrally Sponsored and flagship schemes being implemented by the department. He called for timely completion of ongoing works and directed officers to maintain transparency and quality in execution.

Assistant Commissioner Development briefed the chair on the progress achieved during the previous financial year and highlighted key accomplishments under different schemes.

Earlier, the Chief Planning Officer provided detailed guidance to the Block Development Officers regarding preparation of the developmental plan, urging them to ensure proper planning, realistic projections and effective utilization of available resources.

Four bedded Drug De-Addiction Centre established at District Hospital Reasi

HT NEWS NETWORK

REASI, MAY 05. In a significant step towards strengthening the fight against substance abuse, a four-bedded Drug De-Addiction Centre has been established here at District Hospital under the aegis of the District Administration, Reasi. The initiative is aligned with the objectives of the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan and aims to provide accessible, affordable and quality treatment services to individuals struggling with

drug dependence.

The newly established facility is equipped to offer initial detoxification, counseling and referral services. It will function as a crucial support system for individuals seeking to overcome addiction, ensuring both medical and psychological interventions under one roof. The centre will be staffed with trained medical professionals and counselors to provide comprehensive care and rehabilitation support.

Speaking on the occasion,

Deputy Commissioner Kumar Abhishek emphasized the importance of DDAC. "This facility will address the growing concern of substance abuse in the district through a multi-pronged strategy that includes prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. The establishment of this centre marks an important milestone in expanding healthcare infrastructure and ensuring timely intervention for affected individuals," he noted.

He further appealed to the

general public to make use of the facility and seek assistance without hesitation by either accessing the facility in person or by calling Dr. Vijay Bharti, Psychiatrist (Ph 9419179966), Vaishno Kumar, Psychologist (Ph. 9596911934) and Ritu, Councillor (Ph 7006603146).

DC Kumar Abhishek stated that community participation remains vital in identifying and supporting individuals in need of de-addiction services. He further stated that such a facility shall

also be functional soon at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Superspecialty Hospital, Kakryal.

The DDAC will be operated under the supervision of Medical Superintendent, District Hospital Reasi.

The District Administration also appealed to all stakeholders, including civil society organizations, educational institutions and local communities to actively contribute towards creating a drug-free society.

Centre launches AI skilling programme for creative sector, offers 15,000 scholarships

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAY 5: The Centre on Monday launched a large-scale AI skilling programme for the creative sector, offering 15,000 scholarships to equip young talent with industry-focused skills in generative AI, digital content creation, and storytelling.

Launched by the Ministry of Information AND Broadcasting (MIB), in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT), the programme is developed in partnership with Google and YouTube.

The programme aims to provide scholarships to equip emerging talent in media, entertainment, animation, gaming, and digital storytelling with industry-relevant AI skills.

In a statement issued here, the ministry said that interested candidates are encouraged to take advantage of this initiative and acquire AI skills that will enhance their careers in creative fields. Enrolment for the programme is open.

The programme adopts a structured two-phase approach to ensure both foundational understanding and applied expertise. The Phase I Foundational (Online) is designed to build core AI literacy at scale. 15,000 participants will receive



scholarships for Google Career Certificates and Google Cloud's Gen AI learning paths. Google's Career Certificates program offers professional training designed by Google and the opportunity to connect with top employers, democratizing access to foundational AI concepts and responsible practices.

Selected participants will undergo approximately 33 hours of online training covering generative AI fundamentals, prompting techniques, and responsible AI practices. The curriculum includes access to Google Career

Certificates and Google Cloud's Generative AI learning pathways, enabling learners to acquire essential knowledge and problem-solving skills applicable to real-world scenarios.

Participants who complete the foundational stage will progress to advanced training focused on practical application, under Phase II. Delivered through a hybrid model, this phase includes project-based learning in storytelling, creative production, and the use of advanced AI tools. The curriculum, co-developed by IICT and YouTube, also incor-

porates platform best practices to enhance content reach and engagement. Learners will gain exposure to tools and platforms through guided modules such as Google Developers Codelabs.

The programme will also be supported through the "AI Skills House" platform, offering accessible and structured learning tracks, including generative AI applications, workflow automation, and decision-making tools. By combining technical proficiency with creative application, the initiative aims to build a skilled talent pool capable of

driving innovation across India's rapidly evolving media and digital landscape.

Aligned with the Government's vision of strengthening India's creative economy, the initiative is a significant institutional step towards integrating AI into mainstream content creation and production practices. The programme is designed as a selective, impact-focused skilling pathway, tailored specifically for high-potential talent across media, entertainment, animation, gaming, and digital storytelling.

IICT, as the designated implementation partner, is leading the nationwide rollout, including curriculum development, candidate outreach, and programme execution. IICT, in collaboration with Google and YouTube, has designed a curriculum that integrates advanced AI tools, creative workflows, and platform-level best practices, ensuring participants are equipped with production-ready, industry-relevant skills from the outset.

CEO, IICT, Dr. Vishwas Deoskar states that this initiative is structured to address a clear national requirement, preparing creative professionals for practical, real-world application of AI across content creation, production, and distribution. UNI

Celebrations with dhol beats, jhalmuri, rasogulla and mishti doi at BJP HQ, as party heads for big win in Bengal

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAY 5: Enthusiastic celebrations were held at the BJP headquarters in the national capital on Monday evening, as the party was headed for a massive win in the West Bengal assembly polls.

Party leaders, workers and supporters were seen distributing Jhalmuri, Bengali sweets and were dancing to Dhol beats.

At around 5 pm, the BJP was leading at 197 seats in West Bengal, in accordance with the trends and results for the polls, while Trinamool Congress was at second spot, leading in 90 seats.



Senior party leader Tarun Chugh, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva, along with party workers took out a symbolic procession starting from the national BJP office to the Vistar Karyalya and then back to the headquarters.

The party workers celebrated dancing and applying colors on each other, especially the saffron.

A party supporter who said he has his roots in Bengal said that BJP heading for a big win is a change that people of the state were looking forward to.

BJP workers began arriving at the headquarters from different parts of the city and the NCR as the counting trends started coming out in favor of the party in West Bengal, and preparations began for decorations and mega celebrations, with the arrival of senior party leaders.

To form government the number of seats required is 148. The TMC is staring at defeat after three terms of remaining in power.

In Delhi, the Ministers celebrated by eating Rasogulla and Jhalmuri, while Minister Parvesh Verma was seen distributing Jalebis to party workers.

The minister stated that the joy of winning was shared with party workers with Jhalmuri and Jalebi, which is not just a celebration, but the triumph of that ideology whose foundation was laid by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee and Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay.

He added that the change has come to Bengal "after years of misgovernance, fear and politics of appeasement", and the people have taken a historic decision. UNI

BJP workers take out 'Bengal victory march' near national office, next is Punjab: Tarun Chugh

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAY 5: Led by BJP National General Secretary Tarun Chugh, the state unit chief of the party Virendra Sachdeva, along with Delhi BJP workers took out a "Bengal Victory March" on Deendayal Upadhyay Marg near the party headquarters, accompanied by Dhol beats and celebratory playing with the saffron colors on Monday, with the trends indicating a clear big win for the party.

Chugh, himself played the Daphli (tambourine), while Sachdeva and hundreds of party workers outside the BJP national office celebrated amid music and exchanged sweets, and raised slogans praising the nation, party and the state.

The victory march proceeded from there to the National Office extension and, after circling Deendayal Upadhyay Udyan, returned to the party headquarters. Speaking on the occasion, Chugh said that the party's victory in West Bengal is historic, and now, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and it is Punjab's turn.

He further said that every worker in Bengal deserves to be congratulated, as they have strongly faced the alleged hooliganism of the Trinamool Congress, whether in this election or the previous four elections.

He said that TMC's defeat in Bengal and Stalin's in Tamil Nadu is also a defeat for Arvind Kejriwal, because he had held the final press conferences in both states and claimed their governments would return to power.

Chugh emphasized that now, Kejriwal must get ready to face his own defeat in Punjab during the upcoming assembly polls in the state. Meanwhile, Delhi BJP chief has said that with the victory, PM Modi's dream of making the lotus bloom from Gangotri to Ganga Sagar will be realized, which had been made possible by the election strategy of Home Minister Amit Shah and the tireless efforts of lakhs of party workers. "People of Bengal have paid rich tribute to Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee in his 125th birth anniversary year," the Delhi BJP chief added. UNI

Congress hails Kerala mandate as Priyanka Gandhi, Jairam Ramesh thank voters, vow to honour trust amid mixed national results

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAY 5: Senior leaders of the Congress on Monday welcomed the party-led alliance's emphatic victory in Kerala, expressing gratitude to voters and pledging to translate the mandate into accountable governance, even as they acknowledged that results in other regions fell short of expectations.

In a message posted on social media platform X, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra thanked the people of Kerala for what

she described as "overwhelming support" for the United Democratic Front. "To all my brothers and sisters in Kerala, thank you for your faith and for your overwhelming support. The trust you have placed in us will be the UDF's guiding force as we work hard towards building a better future for each one of you," she said, adding that the alliance's gratitude would be reflected "each day of the next five years" through honest and humble governance.

Highlighting a sweeping performance in Wayanad, Vadra said, "To

my family in Wayanad, you have renewed your belief in the UDF with a resounding mandate — 7 out of 7 seats. You now have 8 representatives working together towards the development of Wayanad. We will do all we can to live up to your expectations." She also congratulated party workers and leaders, noting their "tireless efforts" in taking the message of a "united and progressive Kerala to every household," and expressed hope that the coming years would strengthen their resolve to serve the people.

Suzuki Motorcycle inaugurates its first dealership in Leh-Ladakh Establishes presence across all states & union territories

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 5: Suzuki Motorcycle India Pvt. Ltd. (SMIPL), the two-wheeler subsidiary of Suzuki Motor Corporation, Japan, has entered the Union Territory of Ladakh with the inauguration of its first dealership, Mentokling Suzuki in Leh. This marks its presence in one of India's most challenging and strategically important regions.

A spokesman of the company said that with this dealership, SMIPL has now established its presence across all states & union territories of India through a network of 1,242 outlets, marking a significant milestone in its nationwide expansion journey.

The new dealership was inaugurated by Deepak Mutreja, (Vice-President, Sales & Marketing, Suzuki Motorcycle India Pvt. Ltd.) along with other officials from

SMIPL and Mentokling Suzuki, in the presence of customers. Located at Choglamars, Leh, Mentokling Suzuki has been designed to offer customers a seamless 3S (Sales, Service and Spare Parts) solution under one roof. The new outlet reflects SMIPL's focus on providing customers with a convenient and premium experience across its growing retail network.

Welcoming the new business partner to Suzuki family, Deepak Mutreja, said, "Ladakh holds a special place in India's motorcycling landscape, attracting riders from across the country. Its unique terrain and demanding riding conditions make it an important market for us, where consistent performance and reliability are critical — qualities that Suzuki two-wheelers are known for. With the inauguration of Mentokling Suzuki in Leh, customers & riders will now have easier access to our two-



wheelers along with dependable after-sales support. This step brings us closer to customers in remote regions, offering them a trusted ownership experience. We sincerely thank our dealer partner, Mentokling Suzuki, for their collaboration in making this possible."

Mentokling Suzuki showcases Suzuki's complete range of domestic two-wheelers. This includes scooters like Access, Avenis, and newly launched Burgman Street,

Suzuki's first electric scooter e-ACCESS as well as motorcycles such as the GIXXER & GIXXER SF, GIXXER 250 & GIXXER SF 250 and V-STROMSX. Customers can also experience the entire product lineup first-hand, with test rides available across models including the recently launched Access with ABS variants.

The dealership also houses a fully equipped service workshop with advanced tools to provide

expert maintenance & after-sales support through a team of trained professionals. This dedicated service facility will also support V-Strom riders travelling to Ladakh, by offering authorised service backup and genuine spare parts in the region. Additionally, Mentokling Suzuki offers Suzuki's latest range of genuine accessories, apparel, and merchandise, making it a one-stop destination for customer to experience the complete world of Suzuki.

Suzuki Motorcycle India Private Limited (SMIPL), a subsidiary of Suzuki Motor Corporation, Japan, started its India operations in February 2006 from its manufacturing plant at Kherki Daula, Gurugram, Haryana. The company manufactures scooters (125cc), electric scooter, premium motorcycles (150cc and above) and the Big-Bikes best suited for Indian customers.

Three Fall, Two Hold: India's mega electoral verdict redraws the political map

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAY 5: The curtain has come down on one of India's most high-voltage and closely watched electoral marathons, delivering a verdict that is as emphatic as it is transformative: sweeping regime change in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, even as Assam and Puducherry have firmly resisted the tide, opting instead for continuity and consolidation. After weeks of relentless campaigning, sharp political

exchanges and fluctuating narratives, counting day unfolded like a gripping political finale, where early uncertainty quickly gave way to decisive outcomes that now appear irreversible.

In West Bengal, the day's most dramatic chapter has been written in bold, disruptive strokes. The Bharatiya Janata Party has surged past the halfway mark in the 294-member Assembly, winning 4 seats and leading in 194, according to the Election Commission trends, effec-

tively breaching what was long considered the formidable stronghold of the All India Trinamool Congress led by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Results will be declared today for 293 of the 294 seats in the state, while voting in the Falta constituency is scheduled for May 21, with counting of votes set for May 24.

The Trinamool Congress, which dominated the state's political landscape for over a decade, was reduced to just 1 win and leads in 88 seats at

the time of reporting. The scale and symbolism of this shift are immense: Bengal, which had historically resisted the BJP's expansion, has now emerged as the epicentre of a major ideological and political realignment in eastern India. The election carried added weight amid controversy over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, which saw nearly 89 lakh voters—about 11.6 per cent of the electorate—removed, a figure exceeding the Trinamool's winning margin

in 2021 and a flashpoint in the campaign narrative. Further south, Tamil Nadu has delivered a verdict that is no less seismic, though driven by a different force. Actor-turned-politician Vijay has dramatically altered the state's political equations with his party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam, emerging as a powerful disruptor to the entrenched Dravidian duopoly. In the 234-seat Assembly, TVK had won 2 seats and was leading in 105, placing it firmly ahead of the ruling Dravida Mun-

netra Kazhagam, which had secured 3 wins and was leading in 53 seats.

The All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam-led alliance trailed with 47 seats, while the Pattali Makkal Katchi was ahead in 4. What has unfolded is not merely an electoral upset but a rewriting of Tamil Nadu's political grammar, where personality-driven appeal, youth mobilisation and a palpable appetite for change have upended decades of bipolar dominance. Kerala, by contrast, has fol-

lowed its familiar yet strikingly consistent political rhythm.

The state's deeply embedded pattern of alternating power has once again asserted itself, with the Congress-led United Democratic Front decisively unseating the incumbent Left Democratic Front. In the 140-member Assembly, the UDF had won 50 seats and was leading in 42, comfortably crossing the majority mark of 71, while the Left Front lagged with 24 wins and leads in 10 seats.

Rayudu Slams SRH's Lack of Planning Against KKR



■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD: Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) didn't look like a team that had won five games in a row, it was suggested to Ambati Rayudu after Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) bowled SRH out for 165 to romp to a seven-wicket win in their IPL 2026 game on Sunday.

Rayudu disagreed: "They actually looked like a team after five wins because they have been complacent."

"Proper complacency," Rayudu continued on "because they thought they can get away with no planning or anything would work for them. Once you get on a roll, you feel like everything is going to work. And against a team that is struggling in the tournament, you fancy your chances. And I somehow don't think they got their planning right."

"In an afternoon game in Hyderabad, you know that the ball generally stops and comes. It's not an easy wicket to bat on [SRH chose to bat]. Later on, it becomes better. They should have known that because most of these guys have been playing there for a couple of years or more. I think it's bad planning to start off with."

SRH are still at No. 3. With Punjab Kings (PBKS) losing later in the day to Gujarat Titans (GT), SRH could have moved to the top with a win. They fluffed their lines big time. Their head coach, Daniel Vettori, put it down to losing wickets at key moments in the game, chiefly to Varun Chakravarthy (3 for 36) and Sunil Narine (2 for 31), but also to Kartik Tyagi (2 for 30). None of the six KKR bowlers who bowled came back without at least a wicket. "I think we had got off to a great start [71 for 1 in the powerplay] and couldn't capitalise on that," Vettori said. "Lost some wickets at crucial times and when you're left with 160 [165], it's incredibly difficult to defend even if the wicket was a little bit slow. I think we had enough fight in there after the powerplay [KKR had an identical 71 for 1] to give us a small chance but they managed to chase really well."

"We just lost those wickets at crucial times and I think in a T20 game, even if you have momentum and the opposition can stifle it, then it's hard to regain it. And the wickets of Travis [Head, in the ninth over], Ishan [Kishan, in the 16th] and [Heinrich] Klaassen [in the 11th] were probably just at crucial times. If any of those hadn't happened, we would have been able to continue on."

Katey Martin, also speaking on TimeOut, wasn't as harsh on SRH as Rayudu, but did say the team lacked "thought" with their batting, especially on a day when two of their high-worth top four - Abhishek Sharma (15) and Klaassen (11) - failed. They got 103 runs in 57 balls from Head (61 in 28) and Kishan (42 in 29), but no one else got into double-digits till captain Pat Cummins scored 10 from No. 8.

Test-match skills hold Holder in good stead at the IPL

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD: Gujarat Titans (GT) have been the most successful IPL team since they debuted in 2022 and came within one ball of winning two titles in a row. However, since 2024, they have been a middling team, a decent notch below the top two of Punjab Kings (PBKS) and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB).

The one obvious change, which brought around much consternation in more than one team and one city, was the exit of their captain Hardik Pandya, but this is not even about the captain. They are still well led. It is about the player they lost when they lost Hardik. In their whole existence,



Hardik and Rashid Khan are the only two players from GT who have scored at least 100 runs and bowled at least 120 balls in a season.

As you will appreciate, these aren't even exacting standards for an allrounder. Over the years, GT have had only two players even in a net cast as wide as this. The impact player, and a preference for bowling-friendly tracks, have somehow papered over this absence of someone remotely resembling an allrounder, but if you consistently keep playing with less depth than others, it starts to show in the decisions you make, in the risks you take (and don't), and in the results. Despite the impact player rule, there have been times in the last two years when Rashid has batted at No. 7, which is not ideal even in international cricket when you don't have the luxury of the impact player. It is quite a surprise that a side so in need of an allrounder took as long as GT did to bring Jason Holder into the playing XI. The way GT play their T20 cricket, you would assume they would be a spiritual home for Holder. GT coach Ashish Nehra is well known for avoiding complications. He still values the ability to hit the good length on demand over fancy variations. His bowlers set up matches for his batters, who have the luxury of taking fewer risks than others.

Sydney Sixers appoint James Hopes as new BBL coach

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

SYDNEY: Sydney Sixers have appointed former Australia white-ball allrounder and current Punjab Kings (PBKS) bowling coach James Hopes as their new BBL coach. Hopes, 47, replaces former coach Greg Shipperd on a two-year deal after the veteran coach was sacked halfway through his two-year deal despite leading Sixers to the BBL final in January. Fellow PBKS assistant coach Brad Haddin had already been appointed in place of Shipperd as coach of New South Wales' Sheffield Shield and One-Day Cup teams.

The Sixers role will be Hopes' first as a head coach, but he has a long resume of experience as a bowling coach in the IPL, BBL and MLC as well as working with Queensland and most recently Tasmania in Australia's domestic system. Hopes played 84 ODIs and 12 T20Is for Australia and also captained Queensland to Shield and One-Day titles during a stellar 16-year first-class career.

Hopes played all his BBL cricket with Brisbane Heat across the first six seasons of the BBL but was excited to join Sixers as head coach. "I'm incredibly honoured to join the Sydney Sixers,



a club with a proud history and a strong identity built on con-

sistency, competitiveness and connection with its fans," he said.

"I'm excited to work with a talented playing group and contribute to the next phase of the Sixers' success in the BBL."

Sixers general manager Rachael Haynes said Hopes' depth of coaching experience in T20 franchise cricket made him a valuable acquisition.

"James is an exceptional cricket mind with a proven track record of developing players and building high-performing environments," Haynes said. "His depth of experience across Australian domestic cricket and international franchise competitions makes him an outstanding fit for the Sixers."

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