

Srinagar
 Sunday
 May 17 | 2026
 29 Dhul Qadah, 1447 AH
 Issue No: 119
 Volume: 16
 Pages: 12
 Price: Rs 02/-

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“No Tree Grows Tall By Abandoning Its Roots”: LG Sinha

Says India’s future strength depends on preserving cultural heritage

HT NEWS NETWORK

MUMBAI, MAY 16: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday said that a nation which remains connected to its cultural roots and civilisational values can never lose its direction, asserting that India’s future strength will depend on how deeply the younger



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Lok Bhavan J&K Celebrates Sikkim Statehood Day in Srinagar

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: Jammu Kashmir Lok Bhavan celebrated the Statehood Day of Sikkim, at Srinagar.

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“Scientific Sewage Treatment to Transform Urban Sanitation”: CM Omar Abdullah

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: In a major push to strengthen urban sanitation infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir, the government led by Omar Abdullah has approved Used Water Management Projects worth more than Rs. 72 crore for Baramulla and Rajouri. The projects, sanctioned at an estimated cost of Rs. 37.96 crore for Baramulla



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CM hails Mohammad Yasser’s historic gold medal win at Asian Boxing Championship

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today congratulated Rajouri’s young boxer Mohammad Yasser on winning the gold medal at the Asian Boxing Championship held in Uzbekistan.

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IWT Will Remain in Abeyance: India Rejects Court Award

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: India on Saturday firmly rejected the latest award issued by the Court of Arbitration in the ongoing Indus Waters Treaty dispute with Pakistan, asserting that the tribunal had been constituted illegally and that New Delhi does not recognise its authority or jurisdiction.

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Pakistan Must Decide Whether It Wants To Be Part Of Geography Or History: Army Chief

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAY 16: Upendra Dwivedi on Saturday delivered a strong warning to Pakistan, stating that continued support for terrorism and hostile activities against India could threaten its very future.

Speaking during an interactive

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Self-Enumeration for Census 2027 to Began From Midnight

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: The process of self-enumeration for Census 2027 will commence from midnight tonight across the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, marking the formal beginning of Phase-I of the census exercise in the region.

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NRPC Forecasts Over 42% Surplus Power for J&K, Ladakh

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh are expected to witness a major improvement in electricity availability this month, with the Northern Regional Power Committee (NRPC) forecasting more than 42 percent surplus power for May



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J&K Jal Shakti Dept Gets Major Cadre Revamp

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: In a significant step aimed at enhancing the water supply, quality monitoring and engineering administration across Jammu and Kashmir, the government has approved a comprehensive cadre review and restructuring of the J&K

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OUR CENSUS, OUR DEVELOPMENT

(First Phase of Census 2027)

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Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh

Self-Enumeration


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Houselisting

1st – 30th June

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CensusIndia2027

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

“No Tree.....

generation honours its heritage and traditions.

Addressing the 9th Maati Samman Samaroh in Mumbai, a festival celebrating the art, culture, cuisine and tourism of Purvanchal, the Lieutenant Governor said that Purvanchal represents not merely a geographical region but a living consciousness that has shaped India's spiritual, cultural and intellectual identity for centuries.

“No tree grows tall by abandoning its roots. It rises because its roots reach deep into the earth. The deeper the roots, the stronger the branches that stretch toward the sky,” Sinha said while urging the younger generation to remain connected with the nation's traditions and values.

Highlighting the deep historical and spiritual links between Purvanchal and Maharashtra, the Lieutenant Governor said the relationship between the two regions has strengthened India's cultural traditions over centuries. Referring to the journey of Lord Ram during exile and the significance of sacred places including Panchvati, Kashi Vishwanath and Trimbakeshwar, he said these traditions continue to bind the regions through shared faith and history.

Describing Purvanchal as “a living energy” and “an idea,” Sinha said the region symbolises spirituality, devotion, art and cultural richness. He said Purvanchal reflects the confluence of knowledge, faith and selfless service that has guided Indian civilisation through generations.

The Lieutenant Governor paid tribute to Ahilyabai Holkar and the Holkar rulers for their contribution in restoring and preserving several important religious and cultural sites at a time when Purvanchal was struggling to reclaim its spiritual identity. He said many temples and riverfront structures, including those associated with Kashi Vishwanath, Manikarnika and Dashashwamedh, were revived through their patronage.

He also highlighted the contributions of saints and spiritual leaders from Maharashtra and Purvanchal, including Sant Tukaram, Sant Dnyaneshwar, Kabir and Ravidas, saying their teachings awakened social consciousness and guided society towards truth and harmony.

Sinha said Purvanchal has played a decisive role in shaping India's literature, music, philosophy and freedom movement. He referred to literary figures, musicians and freedom fighters whose contributions enriched the country's cultural and national life.

The Lieutenant Governor also underlined the contribution of migrant workers from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to Maharashtra's economy and noted that both Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh today rank among the country's leading economic drivers.

He said Purvanchal's legacy extends beyond India, with generations of workers carrying Indian culture and traditions to countries across the world, making the region an enduring symbol of cultural continuity and human connection.

Lok Bhavan.....

The event brought together students, security personnel and people of Sikkim living in the Union Territory.

Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha extended his heartiest greetings to the people of Sikkim on the occasion.

“Sikkim, the sacred land of Guru Padmasambhava, shines like a radiant star among Himalayan states and UTs. It is recognised globally as a model of organic farming, peace and spirituality. The incredible linguistic diversity and rich cultural heritage distinguish Sikkim on the world stage,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that under the guidance of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Sikkim is scaling new heights of development and stands at the forefront of the nation's vision.

The Lieutenant Governor stated that the emotional bond shared among all Indian states/UTs is deeply rooted in the core values of unity, compassion and brotherhood.

The Lieutenant Governor also highlighted that the landmark July 2022 J&K-Sikkim horticulture agreement has yielded groundbreaking results in fostering interaction among youth, farmers and researchers from both regions.

“I regard this thriving collaboration as a prime example of the 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'. This spirit of mutual partnership will prove instrumental in realizing our collective resolve for a 'Viksit Bharat'.

May Sikkim, known for its breathtaking natural beauty and remarkable

achievements in sustainable development and organic farming, continue to scale new heights of growth and development. I pray for the well-being and prosperity of all its citizens,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

“Scientific.....

and Rs. 34.43 crore for Rajouri, aim to establish scientific sewage treatment systems, prevent pollution of water bodies and improve public health and hygiene in the two towns.

Officials said the projects have been approved under the CAPEX component of the Swachh Bharat Mission and are intended to address growing wastewater management challenges in urban areas.

According to the government, the Housing and Urban Development Department has prepared Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for both municipal councils, which were technically vetted by National Institute of Technology Srinagar.

The projects will be executed using Sequential Batch Reactor (SBR) technology, a modern sewage treatment method designed to deliver high treatment efficiency through a single-stage biological process.

Officials said the new infrastructure will help create sustainable wastewater treatment systems, improve sanitation facilities and enhance overall living conditions for residents of Baramulla and Rajouri.

Both projects are scheduled for completion within 18 months, marking a significant step towards strengthening environmental and urban infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir.

CM hails.....

In his congratulatory message, the Chief Minister said that the young athlete's remarkable achievement has brought pride and honour to Jammu & Kashmir and the entire country. He lauded Mohammad Yasser's dedication, hard work and determination, saying that his success on the international stage reflects the immense sporting talent emerging from the region.

The Chief Minister extended his best wishes to the boxer for his future endeavours and expressed hope that his achievement would inspire aspiring sportspersons across Jammu & Kashmir to pursue excellence in sports with commitment and perseverance.

He reiterated the Government's commitment towards promoting sports infrastructure and providing opportunities to talented youth to excel at national and international platforms.

Fourteen-year-old Mohammad Yasser scripted history by becoming the first boxer from Jammu & Kashmir to win a gold medal at the Under-15 Asian Boxing Championship held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

A trainee at the Khelo India Centre in Rajouri, Yasser delivered a dominant performance throughout the tournament. He defeated boxers from Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Iran before overcoming host nation Uzbekistan by 4-1 in the final to clinch the gold medal in the 58-kg category.

IWT Will.....

Responding to media queries, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India “categorically rejects” the award issued on May 15 concerning matters related to the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).

Jaiswal stated that India has consistently opposed the formation of the arbitral body and considers all proceedings and decisions issued by it as “null and void.”

“The illegally constituted so-called Court of Arbitration has issued what it termed an award concerning maximum pondage supplemental to the award on issues of general interpretation of the Indus Waters Treaty,” he said.

Reaffirming India's position, the MEA spokesperson said the country's decision to keep the treaty in abeyance would continue. India had suspended implementation of the treaty framework following the April 22, 2025 terror attack in Pahalgam in which 26 civilians were killed.

The Indus Waters Treaty, signed in 1960 with mediation by the World Bank, governs the sharing of waters of the Indus river system between India and Pakistan.

Under the agreement, India has rights over the eastern rivers – Ravi, Beas and Sutlej – while Pakistan has rights over the western rivers – Indus, Jhelum and Chenab – subject to certain usage provisions granted to India.

The present dispute centres on hydroelectric projects being developed by India on the western rivers, including the Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project and the Ratle Hydroelectric Project,

which Pakistan has challenged under the treaty's dispute resolution mechanism.

India has maintained that disputes under the treaty must first be addressed through the Neutral Expert mechanism outlined in the agreement and has objected to parallel proceedings before the Court of Arbitration constituted under the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

New Delhi has argued that initiating arbitration proceedings without following the agreed dispute resolution sequence violates the provisions of the treaty.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration, based in The Hague, facilitates arbitration and dispute resolution between states and international entities. India has refused to participate in the proceedings linked to the Indus Waters Treaty dispute.

Pakistan Must.....

session at the Manekshaw Centre, General Dwivedi said Pakistan must decide “whether it wants to remain part of geography or become part of history” if it continued harbouring terrorists and sponsoring actions against India.

The Army Chief made the remarks while addressing the event “Sena Samwad,” organised by Uniform Unveiled, nearly a year after the launch of Operation Sindoor.

Responding to a question on how India would react if conditions similar to those that triggered Operation Sindoor emerged again, General Dwivedi asserted that India's position on cross-border terrorism remained firm and unchanged.

“If Pakistan continues to harbour terrorists and operate against India, it will face dire consequences,” he said, reiterating India's resolve to respond decisively to terror threats originating across the border.

Operation Sindoor was launched last year after a series of terror-linked attacks attributed to Pakistan-based groups. During the operation, Indian armed forces carried out precision strikes targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The situation later escalated into a four-day military confrontation between the two countries. According to official accounts, Indian air defence systems successfully intercepted multiple swarm drones launched by Pakistan, while no major Indian military installation suffered damage during the escalation.

The hostilities ended after Pakistan's Director General of Military Operations contacted his Indian counterpart seeking a ceasefire.

Self-Enumeration.....

Director of Census Operations for Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, Amit Sharma said citizens will be able to submit their household details online through the official census portal beginning at 12:00 am on May 17.

“The facility of self-enumeration under Phase-I of the Census will remain available from May 17 to May 31,” Sharma said, adding that all details submitted online would be verified during the Houselisting Operation scheduled from June 1 to June 30 in both Union Territories.

Sources said Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha is likely to complete the self-enumeration process on Saturday as part of the nationwide exercise. Officials added that Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Vinay Kumar Saxena is also expected to submit his census details during the day.

Officials said the Houselisting Operation constitutes Phase-I of Census 2027, while Population Enumeration will form Phase-II of the exercise. The second phase is scheduled to be conducted in September 2026 in snow-bound areas and in February 2027 across the plains.

The upcoming census is expected to carry significant political and administrative importance for Jammu and Kashmir, as the data collected will form the basis for future delimitation of Assembly and Parliamentary constituencies. It is also likely to play a key role in determining community-wise beneficiaries under reservation and quota policies in the Union Territory.

NRPC Forecasts.....

2026, marking the first such projection in nearly six months.

According to the updated anticipated power supply position released by the NRPC, the two regions are likely to have an availability of 4,310 Megawatts (MWs) against an estimated requirement of 3,024 MWs during the ongoing month. The forecast indicates a surplus of 1,286 MWs, translating into 42.5 per cent excess availability.

The projected surplus comes after a

difficult winter season when Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh remained heavily dependent on imported electricity due to reduced hydel power generation.

Official figures for January 2026 had shown that the regions were utilizing nearly 999 MWs of thermal energy, including 870.14 MWs generated from coal and 129.7 MWs from gas-based sources allocated through central and joint sector utilities.

The data had revealed that out of the total allocated power of 3,767.44 MWs, nearly 2,673.1 MWs came from renewable sources, while hydel generation accounted for 1,115.88 MWs. Nuclear energy contribution stood at 95.13 MWs.

The winter power crisis had forced the regions to rely heavily on external supply, with Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh depending on nearly 66 per cent imported power in January. In December, the dependence reportedly crossed 95 per cent during several periods.

Officials had earlier stated that Jammu & Kashmir was importing between 2,900 MWs and 3,100 MWs during peak demand hours, while off-peak imports ranged between 2,400 MWs and 2,800 MWs.

The latest NRPC forecast is being seen as a significant relief for consumers and power authorities after months of severe electricity shortages during the winter season.

J&K Jal.....

Engineering (Gazetted) Service of the Jal Shakti Department.

The reforms have been sanctioned vide Government Order No. 91-JK(JSD) of 2026 dated 15.05.2026, following concurrence from the Finance Department and approval by the Council of Ministers.

The restructuring exercise was undertaken to enhance the administrative efficiency, improve technical supervision, streamline field operations and address the emerging challenges in the water sector, particularly in remote and underserved regions.

As part of the approved reforms, the government has sanctioned creation of the post of Secretary Technical in the Jal Shakti Department to strengthen technical coordination and policy implementation at the departmental level.

To improve water quality surveillance and monitoring mechanisms, the government has also approved the setting up of a separate Drinking Water Inspection and

Quality Control (DIQC) wing within the department.

Further strengthening the field engineering setup, new offices of Superintending Engineer have been created for Hydraulic Circle Jammu-I and Hydraulic Circle Bandipora to ensure better operational management and supervision of water supply infrastructure.

The government has also approved creation of six new divisions, including Hydraulic Divisions at Gandoh, Gurez and Tangdar, PHE Division Mendhar and two Water Quality and Monitoring Divisions for the Jammu and Kashmir provinces. These divisions are expected to significantly improve the service delivery in geographically challenging and border areas.

In another major reform, Mechanical Sub-Divisions of the department have been restructured to optimize manpower utilization and improve efficiency in mechanical operations and maintenance.

The order also provides for creation of 43 posts through rationalization and corresponding reduction of 62 existing posts besides encadrement of 10 posts and reassignment of 137 posts within the cadre structure.

Additionally, the government has revised deputation and leave reserve provisions across various engineering levels to ensure better human resource management and career progression opportunities within the department.

The cadre review is expected to substantially strengthen the institutional capacity within the Jal Shakti Department and enhance delivery of safe drinking water and allied public utility services across Jammu and Kashmir.

Notably, under the leadership of Jal Shakti Minister Javed Ahmed Rana, the department has witnessed major human resource reforms aimed at revitalizing the engineering and technical workforce while expediting the long-pending promotions and direct recruitment processes.

In a major breakthrough for the sector, nearly 300 engineers were appointed recently, significantly strengthening the human resource capacity of the department.

The latest cadre restructuring and recruitment initiatives are being viewed as transformative measures for improving the governance, efficiency and public service delivery in the Jal Shakti sector across the Union Territory.

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Equitable, inclusive development across J&K priority of Government: Sakeena Itoo

Holds mega Public Darbar at Nihama Kulgam

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, MAY 16: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today visited Nihama area of district Kulgam, and held a mega public darbar to listen the grievances, issues and demands of the local residents and other adjoining areas.

During the Darbar, the locals highlighted several issues related to healthcare infrastructure, road connectivity, drinking water supply, electricity, educational facilities, social welfare schemes, irrigation, employment opportunities and other developmental concerns affecting the area.

They also demanded upgradation of PHC Nihama, upgradation of schools, establishment of a Tehsil, macadamization of various roads, augmentation of safe drinking water supply, installation of street lights in the market and other public welfare issues.



While addressing the gathering, Sakeena Itoo reiterated the Omar Abdullah led Government's commitment towards equitable and inclusive development of all regions, particularly rural and far-flung areas. "Present Government is focused on strengthening public service delivery as well as ensuring that the benefits of welfare and developmental schemes reach every deserving

household of Jammu and Kashmir", she stated.

The Minister added said that the government is continuously strengthening the healthcare sector in all areas, particularly in rural regions, to ensure better medical facilities and improved healthcare services for the people. She further stated that sustained efforts are also being made for the development of roads and

infrastructure across J&K to improve connectivity and public amenities.

The Minister assured the people that all genuine issues and demands raised during the darbar would be addressed on priority. She also gave on spot directions to concerned officers for resolution of various grievances and public issues.

Sakeena Itoo also assured the

locals that such Public Darbars will be held on routine basis as they provide an important platform for understanding grassroots concerns and formulating responsive governance mechanisms.

The Minister also urged the officers to maintain close coordination with the public and work with dedication, accountability and transparency for overall public welfare.

Senior officers from various departments accompanied the Minister during the visit and responded to several grievances on the spot, while many issues were resolved immediately through on-site directions issued by the Minister.

The locals, while interacting with the Minister appreciated her for conducting this massive public Darbar, highlighting that it provided them an opportunity to directly project their concerns and developmental aspirations before the Government.

Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo nominated for prestigious UK distinctions

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo, a distinguished physician, and public health fellow from Jammu and Kashmir, India has been nominated for the prestigious Chartered Scientist (CSci) and Chartered Biologist (CBIol) status by leading UK professional bodies – the Science Council and the Royal Society of Biology.

These internationally recognized designations are conferred upon individuals who demonstrate exceptional expertise, leadership, academic excel-



lence, and a sustained commitment to professional development, along with impactful contributions to science and society. The CSci designation acknowledges advanced competence across scientific disciplines, while CBIol recognizes distinguished achievement in the biological sciences.

The dual recognition further strengthens Dr. Itoo's standing as an internationally acknowledged professional and underscores his continued contributions to research, writing, education, and medicine.

Dr. Itoo, who graduated in Biology from the University of Kashmir and later pursued medicine at the University of Jammu, already holds multiple international credentials, including Fellow of the Royal Society for Public Health (FRSPH, UK), Fellow of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF Fellow, Belgium), Member of the Academy of Medical Educators (AMedEd, UK), International Practitioner of the Faculty of Public Health under Royal Colleges of Physicians (IPFP, UK) and Member of the Royal Society of Biology (MRSB, UK). He is affiliated with several other prestigious international medical and scientific organizations and remains committed to advancing healthcare through innovation, research, and education.

He was recently appointed as an assessor by the Academy of Medical Educators (UK), becoming the first medical professional from Jammu and Kashmir to receive this role.

Nisar Ahmad Ganie Assumes Charge as DYSSO Kulgam, Calls for Stronger Sports Culture

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, MAY 16: Mr. Nisar Ahmad Ganie on Friday formally assumed charge as District Youth Services and Sports Officer (DYSSO) Kulgam amid a warm welcome by officers and officials of the department.

Soon after taking over the charge, Mr. Ganie convened an introductory-cum-review meeting with the office staff in his chamber to discuss the functioning of the department and future plans for promoting sports and youth-related activities across the district.

During the meeting, the newly appointed DYSSO stressed the importance of discipline, punctuality, teamwork and dedication in strengthening the sports ecosystem in Kulgam. He urged the officials and field staff to work with commitment, coordination and a sense of responsibility to ensure the upliftment of sports activities and provide better opportunities to budding sports persons across the district.

Mr. Ganie emphasized the need for conducting sports activities in a transparent, organized and result-oriented manner so that talent from both rural and urban areas receives equal opportunities for growth and recognition. He also highlighted the importance of identifying young talent at the grassroots level and providing them proper guidance and exposure.

Appreciating the efforts and dedication of the departmental staff, he expressed confidence that Kulgam district would achieve new milestones in the field of sports and youth services through collective cooperation and sincere efforts.

The meeting also focused on improving coordination among officials, enhancing participation of youth in sports activities and ensuring effective implementation of departmental programmes in the district.

On the occasion, the officers and employees of the department assured Nisar Ahmad Ganie of their full support and cooperation in carrying out departmental responsibilities efficiently and successfully.

Kulgam Police Bust Covert Drug Network, Supplier Held with Brown Sugar

FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, MAY 16: In a major breakthrough against narcotics trafficking under the ongoing War on Drugs campaign, Kulgam Police have busted a covert drug supply network operating through indirect channels and arrested two persons involved in drug peddling.

According to police, on May 2, 2026, a police party during naka checking at Kurigam near the railway crossing apprehended one Sajad Ahmad Dar, a resident of Nishat, Srinagar, after he tried to flee on noticing the naka party. During his personal search, around five grams of a heroin-like substance was recovered from his possession.

Following the recovery, Police Station Qazigund registered FIR No. 110/2026 under Section 8/21 of the NDPS Act and initiated an investigation.

tion.

During the course of investigation, police traced the backward linkage of the arrested accused, which led them to Firdous Ahmad Bhat, son of Ghulam Rasool Bhat, a resident of Pehlipora, Waripora Safapora in Ganderbal district.

Acting on credible inputs and after obtaining a legal search warrant from the Court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate concerned, a police team conducted a raid at the identified location and apprehended the accused. During the operation, approximately 20 grams of brown sugar was recovered from his possession.

Police investigations revealed that the accused had allegedly been operating discreetly for nearly a year while maintaining a clean profile to avoid suspicion. The probe further disclosed that the network used a

highly secretive modus operandi, avoiding direct contact with drug peddlers and consumers and instead relying on agents and intermediaries for the supply of narcotic substances.

Most of the transactions, police said, were carried out during night hours through indirect communication and delivery methods to evade police detection. Police stated that further investigation is underway and more arrests and recoveries are expected in the case.

Senior Superintendent of Police Kulgam, Anayat Ali Chowdhary reiterated that Kulgam Police remain committed to dismantling drug networks and taking strict action against those involved in narcotics trafficking. He also appealed to the public, particularly the youth, to cooperate with police in eradicating the drug menace from society.

Committee for establishment of AD&SC calls on Speaker Legislative Assembly

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: A Committee for establishment of Additional District and Session Court Chadoora led by its chairperson Advocate AR Hanjoora today called on Speaker Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather with a demand to establish an Additional District and Session Court at Chadoora.

The delegation highlighted

severe hardships faced by the locals due to absence of a higher-level court in the area. Chadoora, which comprises of three vast tehsils, is currently burdened with a heavy backlog of litigations. As a result, the residents and the legal professionals are forced to travel nearly 60 kilometers to the District Court in Budgam for ordinary legal proceedings.

The Committee apprised the

Speaker that Chadoora represents a massive population base that generates significant legal volume. The sheer volume of pending litigations justifies a localized court to de-congest the main Budgam District Court and speed up the judicial process.

The Committee also impressed upon the Speaker to get the funds released for construction of new building of the Munsiff and Sub-judge court complex

which is long-pending due and DPR stands prepared already.

The Speaker listened patiently to the issues presented by the Committee. Acknowledging the merits of the case, the Speaker assured the Committee that the matter would be taken up with the concerned authorities immediately to ensure an early redressal of the genuine grievance.

The Speaker emphasized that

establishing this court is not just an administrative convenience but a critical step toward ensuring "justice at the doorstep" for the people of Chadoora.

The delegation included Advocate Waseem Rasool Mir, Convenor of the Committee, Advocate G.M Baba, Advocate Javid Iqbal Dar, Advocate Nasir Dar, Advocate Iliyas Dangroo, Advocate Firdous Ahmed and Advocate Javid Iqbal.

Breathing New Life: Ayush Department Leverages Yoga to Battle Drug Menace in Bhadarwah

AMIR IQBAL KHAN

BHADARWAH, MAY 16: As the 100-day 'Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan' (Drug-Free India Campaign) gathers momentum across Jammu and Kashmir, the Ayush Department on Saturday organised a comprehensive drug de-addiction and yoga awareness camp in Bhadarwah aiming to weave traditional wellness practices into the grassroots fight against substance abuse.

Held at the Ayush Arogya Mandir (AAM) in Drudhu, the initiative sought to mobilise community efforts and educate the local populace on the profound impact of holistic health

in overcoming addiction. The event witnessed a robust turnout, with more than 50 local participants actively engaging in the sessions.

Addressing the gathering, Yoga Instructor Faizan Ul Haq delivered a detailed lecture on how Ayush interventions can act as a primary defense line against narcotics.

"Traditional medicinal systems and simple, disciplined lifestyle modifications can be instrumental in eradicating the deep-rooted menace of drug abuse from our society," Haq stated urging the community to turn to natural wellness to build mental fortitude. Transitioning from theory



to practice, Haq, alongside Yoga Therapist Anil Kumar, led the participants through a live fit-

ness and wellness demonstration. The experts guided the public through accessible, day-to-day

yoga postures and Pranayama (breathing) techniques. These practices were spe-

cifically highlighted for their proven ability to improve mental resilience, reduce stress and enhance overall physical well-being – critical factors in both preventing and recovering from addiction.

Reaffirming their commitment to a healthier, substance-free society, all participants and Ayush staff members collectively took a solemn 'Nasha Mukht' pledge. Participants vowed to strictly stay away from narcotics and pledged their support to help rehabilitate those currently struggling with addiction.

To ensure the campaign's educational impact resonates well beyond the single-day

event, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials detailing the dangers of drug abuse and the benefits of Ayush practices were distributed among the public by Multi-Purpose Worker (MPW) Masooda Sadiq.

The camp was executed under the official directives of J&K Ayush Director Dr. Ajay Tickoo and Deputy Commissioner Doda Krishan Lal and was closely supervised by the District Ayush Officer Doda.

The proceedings were successfully managed and assisted by the AAM Drudhu staff including Supervisory Pharmacist Bodraj and MTS Official Farooq Ahmed.

Avian conservation key to ecological balance, climate resilience: Javid Dar

Calls for strengthened research, conservation action at national symposium on Avian Biology

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: Emphasizing the critical role of birds in maintaining ecological balance and addressing the emerging climate challenges, Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, today said that avian conservation is indispensable for sustaining biodiversity, ensuring ecosystem stability and strengthening the climate resilience in fragile regions like Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister was addressing the valedictory function of the National Symposium on Avian Biology organized at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST)-Kashmir, where he attended as the chief guest.

Addressing a distinguished gathering of scientists, conservationists, researchers and students from across the country, the Minister highlighted Jammu and Kashmir's extraordinary avian wealth, noting that the Union Territory hosts nearly 600 recorded bird species across its wetlands, forests, alpine habitats and riverine ecosystems. He said several of these species are rare, migratory and habitat-sensitive, making the region one of India's most significant biodiversity hotspots.

"Birds are not merely components of our natural heritage; they are essential indicators of environmental health and play a foundational role in sustaining



ecosystems through pollination, seed dispersal, pest regulation, scavenging and nutrient cycling," the Minister said.

He observed that avian species serve as natural sentinels of environmental change, with shifts in bird populations often providing early warning signals of habitat degradation, climate disruption and ecological imbalance.

Expressing concern over mounting climate-related pressures, the Minister said that rapid habitat loss, shrinking wetlands, changing migratory patterns, erratic weather events and rising anthro-

pogenic pressures are posing serious threats to avian diversity globally and particularly in ecologically sensitive Himalayan landscapes.

He stressed that addressing these challenges requires a multi-dimensional approach rooted in scientific research, habitat restoration, stronger policy interventions and active community participation.

Javid Dar described the symposium as a timely and visionary initiative that would significantly contribute towards advancing avian research, ecological monitoring and collaborative conservation efforts in

India. He said that such academic platforms are essential for fostering dialogue between scientists, policymakers and local stakeholders to evolve sustainable conservation frameworks capable of responding to present and future environmental challenges.

Highlighting the economic and ecological opportunities linked to avian biodiversity, the Minister said Jammu and Kashmir's pristine lakes, marshes, mountain ranges and river valleys attract birdwatchers, wildlife photographers, researchers and eco-tourists from across the globe.

He said that bird-based ecotourism and nature tourism hold immense potential for generating sustainable livelihood opportunities for the local communities while simultaneously incentivizing habitat conservation.

The Minister congratulated SKUAST-Kashmir, the organizers and the Association of Avian Biologists in India (AABI) for successfully bringing together the leading experts, scholars and conservation practitioners on one platform to deliberate upon issues of avian biology and conservation.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to ecological preservation, he said the Jammu and Kashmir government remains steadfast in protecting the region's rich natural heritage and promoting development models that balance economic growth with environmental sustainability.

"Conservation of birds is intrinsically linked to the conservation of our forests, wetlands and water systems. Protecting avian biodiversity is, therefore, central to safeguarding our ecological future," he remarked.

Among the distinguished dignitaries present on the occasion were Professor Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Vice-Chancellor SKUAST-Kashmir,

Dr. Khursheed Ahmad, Professor L. S. Shashidhara, Director NCBS Bangalore, Professor Anand S. Dixit, President AABI besides eminent scientists, researchers and students from various institutions across the country.

JKAACL organizes Literary cum Cultural Programme at Keran to promote Pahari Art, Culture & Languages

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) organized a one-day Literary cum Cultural Programme at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS), Keran.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, writers, poets, artists and members of the local community, reflecting the rich literary and cultural heritage of the border area.

Various literary presentations, poetry recitations and colourful cultural performances added vibrancy and enthusiasm to the event.



The programme was organized in line with the mandate of JKAACL to preserve, promote and develop the diverse languages, literature, art and cultural traditions of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in remote and border areas. The Academy continues to provide a vibrant platform for writers, artists and young talent to showcase their creative abilities and strengthen cultural identity among the younger generation.

In his welcome address, Additional Secretary, JKAACL, Lal Chand dwelt in detail on the activities of the Academy and various schemes being carried out for the preservation, promotion and development of languages, literature and culture across Jammu and Kashmir.

Special Secretary, IT, Dr. Abdul Hafiz Shah graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and appreciated the efforts of JKAACL in promoting literature, art, culture and linguistic diversity in the border area of Keran. He encouraged the youth to actively participate in literary and cultural activities for preservation of their heritage and traditions.

Dr. Shah stated that cultural and literary programmes play an important role in strengthening social harmony and preserving the unique identity of different communities.

He emphasized that the younger generation must remain connected with their mother tongues and traditional values to safeguard the rich heritage of the region. He also appreciated the people of Keran for their keen interest in literature and culture despite living in a far-flung border area.

Prominent writers, poets, artists, teachers and students participated in the programme and appreciated the initiative of the Academy in organizing such events in border areas.

Candle Marches held across Shopian under Nasha Mukt Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan.

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, MAY 16: On the occasion of International Day of Light, candle marches were held across District Shopian under the banner of Nasha Mukt Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan to spread awareness against drug abuse and to promote the message of a drug-free society.

The Municipal Council Shopian organized a candle march led by ADC Shopian, Dr Zakir Husain Faaz, CEO, MC Shopian, Suhail Ahmad, Civil Society members, Traders Federation, youth, officials, and general public also participated in the programme.

The Rural Development Department conducted candle marches across all CD Blocks and panchayats of the district as part of the awareness campaign.

Educational institutions across the district also illuminated school premises to mark the occasion and to express solidarity with the message of a drug-free society.

Various other departments also organized candle marches and awareness activities under Nasha Mukt Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan in different parts of the district.

Participants carrying candles and Nasha Mukt banners and posters marked the occasion as a symbol of awareness, unity, and social responsibility in the fight against drug abuse.

Pledges were also taken at various places to work collectively for the prevention of substance abuse and to support the vision of a drug free society.

The programmes were carried out peacefully across the district with active participation from officials, field functionaries, local representatives, youth, civil society members, and the general public.

District Kulgam fully prepared for launch of Self-Enumeration for Census 2027

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, MAY 16: District Kulgam is fully geared up for the launch of the Self-Enumeration process for Census 2027 commencing from tomorrow.

To facilitate smooth and hassle-free registration, dedicated Self-Enumeration Help Desks have been established across Panchayat Bhawans, Patwar Halqas, Block Offices, and Tehsil Offices throughout the district.



The District Administration has put in place trained manpower, digital infrastructure, and comprehensive on-ground support systems to assist citizens in completing the self-enumeration process efficiently and conveniently.

Citizens are encouraged to participate actively in the Census process by completing their self-enumeration online through se.census.gov.in or visit the nearest help desk for guidance and assistance.

DC GANDERBAL APPEALS TO RESIDENTS OF GANDERBAL TO PARTICIPATE IN CENSUS 2027 SELF-ENUMERATION DRIVE

Self-enumeration process to begin from May 17; residents urged to complete online survey easily from home

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, MAY 16: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore today addressed a press conference here and appealed to all residents of Ganderbal to actively participate in the self-enumeration process for Census 2027, which is scheduled to begin from tomorrow, May 17 in Ganderbal district.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC said that self-enumeration is the first phase of

Census 2027 and provides citizens an opportunity to fill census details themselves from the comfort of their homes.

He informed that the process can be completed through the official website, <https://se.census.gov.in>, and said that tutorials and flow charts explaining the process will also be shared for public convenience.

Highlighting the benefits of self-enumeration, the DC said that once the process is completed, a unique code



will be generated which should be noted and saved by the residents.

He further said that during the houselisting exercise starting from June 1, enumerators visiting households can use this unique code, eliminating the need for asking the same questions again and thereby saving time for both citizens and enumerators.

The DC urged all residents to participate in large numbers and make the Census 2027 exercise

Sports, Awareness, Enforcement Activities continue across Pulwama under NMBA

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, MAY 16: As part of the ongoing 100-day campaign under the Nasha Mukt Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, a series of awareness, outreach, sports and enforcement activities were conducted today across district Pulwama to spread awareness against drug abuse and promote a healthy and drug-free society.

Awareness programmes

were organised at Tral-e-Payeen (E), Sangerwani and Chandhara, where participants were sensitised regarding the harmful effects of substance abuse and the importance of collective efforts in curbing the menace of drugs.

Various activities including awareness sessions, pledge ceremonies, signature campaigns, plantation drives and padyatras were conducted to encourage collective respon-

sibility towards building a drug-free society.

Meanwhile, SHG members organised awareness and counselling activities at Barsoo Awantipora to educate the local population regarding the ill effects of drug abuse and to strengthen community participation under the campaign.

Furthermore continuing its enforcement measures under the campaign, the Drug Control

Department Pulwama conducted a thorough inspection of Mohamma Nursing Home in Pulwama town.

During the inspection, an on-spot notice was issued for violation related to improper storage of drugs against prescribed norms. Directions were also issued to arrange adequate space for accommodating all medicines under one roof within the hospital premises.

Meanwhile, the Department of Youth Services and Sports (YSS) Pulwama, organised a series of sports and awareness activities across several educational institutions of the district under the campaign.

In Zone Pulwama, zonal-level tournaments for AAG Girls in Volleyball, Kho-Kho and Kabaddi were organised at GMS Pulwama. In Zone Tahab, a zonal-level tournament in Volleyball, Kho-Kho and Kabaddi

for U-17 boys was conducted at HS Tahab.

In Zone Pampore, awareness programmes and group discussions were organised under the campaign.

Similarly, Zone Tral organised NMBA awareness programmes at Town Hall Tral and HS Mandoora, besides group discussions at UPS Naibugh and UPS Mandoora. In Zone Shadimarg, a zonal-level AAG Boys Badminton Tournament was

conducted at Indoor Stadium Rajpora, while Zone Awantipora organised a zonal-level AAG Boys Table Tennis Tournament at GHSS Dadsara.

Officers and officials of the department along with Heads of Institutions inaugurated the events with pledge ceremonies, where participants pledged to work collectively towards building a drug-free and healthy Pulwama and Jammu & Kashmir.

Javed Rana inspects Eco Hut project at Chatta Pani, Poonch

Reiterates govt's commitment towards environmental conservation, sustainable tourism development

HT NEWS NETWORK

POONCH, MAY 16: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today inspected the ongoing construction work of the Eco Hut near Chatta Pani, Poonch being developed at an estimated cost of 1.27 crore.

The Eco Hut project is being developed with the objective of promoting eco-tourism in the region and providing modern, eco-friendly resting and recreational facilities for the tourists, trekkers, and nature lovers.

The project, being executed by the Forest Department under the Eco-Tourism Development Plan, is expected to significantly enhance the tourism potential of the region while ensuring conservation of its rich natural and ecological heritage.

The Minister interacted with the concerned officers and ex-



cuting agency. He directed them to ensure that the project is completed within the stipu-

lated timeframe without compromising on quality standards or environmental safeguards.

He said that such initiatives not only promote tourism activities but also create livelihood and

employment opportunities for the local youth, particularly those associated with tourism, hospitality, transport and allied sectors.

Emphasizing the need for integrated development of the area, the Minister instructed the concerned departments to undertake extensive landscaping and plantation drives around the Eco Hut site.

He also directed the officials to establish an efficient waste management and sanitation system to preserve the pristine environment and natural beauty of Chatta Pani.

The Minister said that eco-tourism projects must strike a balance between development and preservation of natural resources.

Senior officers of the Forest Department, Jal Shakti Department and district administration accompanied the Minister during the inspection visit.

DC Bandipora participates in Amavasya Celebrations at Nandkishwar Bhairava Asthapan Sumbal

Huge gathering marks event

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, MAY 16: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, today participated in the Amavasya celebrations at the historic Nandkishwar Bhairava Asthapan in Sumbal and joined devotees in the religious observances held on the occasion.

This year, a large number of devotees, including Kashmiri Pandits from various parts of Kashmir, participated in the celebrations with great devotion and enthusiasm.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner, along with SDM Sumbal Sheikh Murtaza, interacted with devotees, members of the shrine management committee, and local residents, and extended greetings on the auspicious occasion. She also prayed for peace, prosperity, and communal harmony in the district.

Locals in Bandipora expressed joy over the vibrant celebrations at the temple and requested the Deputy Commissioner to ensure the upkeep and development of the temple premises to facilitate similar events in the future.

Devotees and members of the management committee highlighted the need for additional facilities, including the construction of toilets and a sarai for the accommodation of visiting pilgrims.

Former Municipal Chairman Sumbal, Jahangir Ahmad; President Traders Association Sumbal, Nazir Ahmad Reshi; members of civil society; and local residents warmly welcomed the devotees and extended support during the mela. They also urged the administration to create adequate facilities to accommodate larger gatherings in the future.

The Mandir Committee members present on the occasion included Veer Ji Raina (Chairman), Ashok Kumar Bhat (President), and Veer Ji Bhat (Vice President) and other members.

The Deputy Commissioner appreciated the support extended by local residents, traders, and volunteers in ensuring the smooth conduct of the event and said such occasions strengthen communal harmony, brotherhood, and shared cultural heritage.

On the occasion, SDM Sumbal and other officers remained present to oversee arrangements related to sanitation, traffic regulation, drinking water, and other facilities for the smooth conduct of the celebrations.

WMDA Organises Sanitation, Anti-Drug Awareness Rallies Around Manasbal Lake

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, MAY 16: The Wullar Manasbal Development Authority on Saturday organised a series of sanitation drives and anti-drug awareness rallies in the catchment areas of the famous Manasbal Lake to spread awareness about environmental conservation and the harmful effects of substance abuse.

The programmes were conducted in collaboration with Sainik School Manasbal, local volunteer group QRT and a local educational institution. The initiatives witnessed active participation of students, volunteers, teachers and officials of the Authority.

The rallies and cleanliness drives were organised as part of the ongoing "100 Day Nasha Mukta Abhiyan" launched across Jammu and Kashmir on April 11, 2026, with an aim to eradicate the growing drug menace from society and encourage public participation in awareness campaigns.

During the programme, participants carried placards and raised slogans highlighting the importance of preserving the ecological balance of Manasbal Lake, which is considered one of the most scenic freshwater lakes of Kashmir. They also stressed the need for maintaining sanitation in and around the lake to protect its natural beauty and biodiversity.

Speakers on the occasion underlined that environmental degradation and drug addiction are serious concerns requiring collective efforts from all sections of society.

The students and volunteers appealed to people, especially the youth, to stay away from drugs and contribute towards building a clean and healthy society.

Chief Executive Officer of Wullar Manasbal Development Authority, Ahsanul Haq Chishti, while addressing the participants, said that the Authority has placed cleanliness within and around the lake among its top priorities. He said such awareness programmes with active citizen involvement would continue in the coming days as well.

He also sought cooperation from the public in preserving the fragile ecosystem of Manasbal Lake and supporting the campaign against drug abuse for the betterment of society.

ARTO BARAMULLA LEADS MASSIVE TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT DRIVE ACROSS DISTRICT

HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, MAY 16: Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) Baramulla launched a massive enforcement drive across various parts of Baramulla district under the supervision of ARTO Baramulla, Mudasir Ahmad Wani to curb traffic violations and strengthen road safety measures.

The special checking campaign was conducted by the MVD enforcement team, including MVI Danish, MVI Abdul Hamid and other officials, targeting violators involved in breaches of transport and traffic regulations.

During the drive, authorities imposed 31 challans against violators for various offences and realised fines amounting to nearly 1 lakh. In addition, 19 vehicles were black-listed for repeated violations and non-compliance with transport norms.



In a major action, 21 Driving Licences (DLs), Registration Certificates (RCs) and Route Permits (RPs) were recommended for suspension for serious traffic violations and breach of permit conditions.

The enforcement team also seized 14 vehicles during the operation for offences including overloading, op-

erating without valid documents and other traffic violations.

ARTO stated that the enforcement drives will continue across Baramulla district to ensure strict implementation of traffic laws, promote responsible driving behaviour and enhance road safety for the general public

100 Lives, One Mission: Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Superspeciality Hospital Celebrates a Unique Century of Joint Replacement Surgeries in Rajouri

HT NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI, MAY 16: Rajouri celebrated a unique century on May 12, 2026 not on a cricket field, but in the lives of patients who had once accepted living with pain as their destiny.

More than 100 beneficiaries of the Ayushman Bharat Scheme gathered with their doctor, local citizens, and senior joint replacement surgeon Dr. Vikas Padha from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Superspeciality Hospital. The event marked the successful completion of over 100 Knee Replacement and Hip Replacement surgeries for patients from the remote tribal and border areas of Rajouri and Poonch.

Many of these patients had

suffered for years from severe knee and hip pain. Even walking had become difficult, and surgeries costing lakhs of rupees were nothing more than a distant dream for them. The challenge was not just treatment, but access to treatment.

Nearly two years ago, Dr. Vikas Padha started monthly Outreach OPDs in Rajouri to reach patients living in remote areas who were unable to travel to the hospital in Katra. Through these outreach programs, patients were identified village by village, provided consultations, and guided regarding treatment under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme.

What followed transformed many lives. Patients who once could not walk without support

are now standing on their own feet and living normal lives again.

This initiative became possible due to the continuous support of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, under whose administration the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Superspeciality Hospital operates. By prioritizing outreach healthcare and public welfare, the Shrine Board has played a significant role in delivering advanced healthcare services to remote and tribal regions.

This initiative reflects a new model of healthcare — where patients no longer have to reach hospitals; instead, the hospital reaches the patients' doorstep.

Through outreach programs, modern healthcare facilities, and

affordable treatment services, the Shrine Board has helped bridge the gap between remote regions and world-class healthcare.

On this occasion, Dr. Vikas Padha thanked the patients and their families for their trust and said that the Ayushman Bharat Scheme made expensive surgeries accessible to poor and needy patients.

He said: "This would not have been possible without the Ayushman Bharat Scheme. Costly procedures like Knee Replacement and Hip Replacement surgeries became accessible to those who needed them the most."

Dr. Yashpal Sharma, Executive Director of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excel-

lence (SMVDIME), said:

"This unique century is not just a medical achievement, but proof of how outreach healthcare can transform people's lives. The Shrine Board's goal has always been to ensure that quality healthcare services reach remote areas." At the ceremony held at New Ashirwad Hotel in Rajouri, beneficiaries shared their experiences. During the event, a short film titled "Broken Birds Take Flight Again - A Tale of Unique Century" was also premiered and widely appreciated by the audience.

This achievement once again proves that compassionate doctors, outreach healthcare, and institutional support together can truly transform lives.

YSS Sets Up District-based Monitoring and Participation Framework for Sports Sector

Step to ensure equitable and balanced regional sports infrastructure development

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: The Department of Youth Services & Sports carried out a comprehensive Union Territory-level review of sports infrastructure, youth engagement programmes and district action plans for 2026-27, while laying down a time-bound and outcome-oriented roadmap for expanding sports access and strengthening youth development initiatives across Jammu & Kashmir.

The review meeting was chaired by Commissioner Secretary, Youth Services & Sports, Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, and attended by Director General Youth Services & Sports, senior officers of the Department and newly posted District Youth Services & Sports Officers from all 20 districts. The exercise aimed at a structured monitoring and planning framework focused on participation,

infrastructure utilisation, inclusion and execution efficiency. The Department outlined a district-driven approach aimed at ensuring that sports infrastructure translates into regular sporting activity, youth engagement and talent development at the grass-roots level. A detailed review of 521 projects involving an investment of over 644 crore was undertaken during the meeting. The portfolio includes 344 ongoing works with an estimated cost of 396.72 crore and 177 new projects proposed under the Action Plan 2026-27 involving an estimated investment of 247.34 crore. During the review, district-wise progress, expenditure patterns, project execution timelines and implementation bottlenecks were examined in detail. Districts were asked to move towards measurable outcomes in terms of participation, outreach and in-

frastructure usage rather than limiting focus to physical construction alone. Dr Shahid Iqbal said the Department intends to build a more participatory and inclusive sports ecosystem in which schools, panchayats, local communities, clubs, associations, federations and youth institutions play an active role in identifying talent and sustaining sporting activity. He said sports infrastructure must function as community assets that promote discipline, fitness, leadership and constructive youth engagement. The Commissioner Secretary directed all districts to strengthen monitoring mechanisms and ensure faster completion of projects through close coordination with district administrations and executing agencies. A clear implementation timeline was prescribed under which land identification is to be completed within 30 days, parallelly techni-

cal sanctions within 45 days, administrative approvals and tendering within 60 days. The Department is presently developing infrastructure across 16 sports and activity categories including multi-purpose playfields, volleyball, badminton, football, cricket, basketball, athletics, kabaddi, wrestling and indoor sports facilities. Out of the total projects reviewed, 176 relate to multi-purpose playfields while 98 are linked to volleyball infrastructure, reflecting the Department's focus on accessible, community-based sports infrastructure with high youth participation. Several major initiatives proposed across districts were also reviewed, including Khel Gaons, Khel Bhawans, Border Sports Academies, sports science centres, synthetic courts, indoor stadiums, youth hostels, wrestling akharas and district-level training facilities.

BOPEE conducts Common Entrance Test for Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing Courses 2026-27

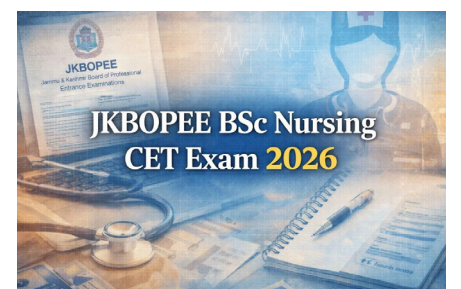
HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of Professional Entrance Examinations (J&K BOPEE) today conducted the Common Entrance Test (CET) for Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing Courses-2026 for the academic session 2026-27 at the designated Centres within the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The test was conducted at the Government Women College M.A. Road, Srinagar Centre in the Kashmir division and Government SPMR Commerce College Centre in Jammu division, with 1161 appeared in the examination out of 1238 applicants.

To ensure smooth conduct of the Entrance Test, arrangements were made in collaboration with the respective institution/college administration and law enforcement agencies, under the guidance of Professor Minu Mahajan, Chairperson, J&K BOPEE.

During the examination, under the keen oversight of the staff members from



the respective institutions/colleges, no untoward or unfair incident was reported.

The Chairperson, along with the members, the Secretary, the Controller of Examinations and officials of the J&K BOPEE actively monitored conduct of the Entrance Test at Srinagar and Jammu. They thanked the staff members of the respective institutions/Colleges and the staff deployed under the overall supervision of Deputy Commissioners in the respective District Headquarters for smooth conduct of the test.

HT EDITORIAL

KPDCL's laidback approach pesters valley residents

Over the past few years, the Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) has embarked upon a mission to improve the power infrastructure across the Kashmir valley. Under this scheme smart meters have been installed in most parts of the valley and cabling has also been done. However, an important aspect of the modernization was left out and the same is being done at present.

The aspect being referred to here is the improvement and upgradation of the high tension (HT) line network. Given the fact that the HT line network is being either changed or laid across the Kashmir valley people have to face power cuts in the form of shutdown every now and then. The frequent shutdowns means that the people have to face prolonged cuts right from the morning and during the entire day. This creates problems for the people and at times they feel frustrated.

In an ideal situation the HT network should have been upgraded or improved or laid in the first instance and this should have been followed by other steps in improving the overall infrastructure. In the Kashmir valley strange things happen every now and then and the same happened with the modernization and improvement in the power infrastructure. In the first instance smart meters were installed in the Srinagar city and other districts of the Kashmir valley. These were installed despite protests from people at multiple places in the valley.

Once the process of installing the smart meters was completed the contractors were entrusted with the task of laying low tension insulated cables. This process also took a lot of time and it took months for the concerned department to connect a particular feeder with the grid while ensuring round the clock power supply. Once the installation of smart meters was done along with the laying of HT cables people were hoping that their woes were over but that was not to be. They were in for a surprise and that still haunts them.

The improvement of the HT network has virtually upset the plans for the people across the Kashmir valley. Since there is a prolonged shutdown of eight to nine hours in a day the people face multiple problems on the day when there is shutdown in their particular areas. As the summer season is approaching people are hoping that the process will be completed soon. If that is not the case then people would be up against many odds during the hot and sultry days.

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The Silent Threat Around Us: Why Cybersecurity Awareness Matters More Than Ever



■ DR. SYED IRFAN YAQOOB

The modern world is driven by technology. Smartphones, laptops, online banking, digital payments, social media, cloud storage, and internet-based communication have become essential parts of everyday life. From ordering groceries to attending online classes, people rely on digital platforms for convenience, speed, and connectivity. However, behind this technological advancement lies a growing danger that many people fail to recognize – cybercrime.

Cybercrime is no longer limited to skilled hackers attacking government systems or multinational corporations. Today, ordinary citizens are becoming the primary targets of cybercriminals. Students, teachers, business owners, homemakers, senior citizens, and even children are vulnerable. What makes the situation more alarming is that many cyber threats appear harmless and often go unnoticed until serious damage has already occurred.

The Rise of the Digital Age and Cyber Threats
Over the last decade, internet usage has increased rapidly across the world. Digital India initiatives, online banking services, UPI transactions, e-learning platforms, and social networking applications have transformed the way people communicate and conduct daily activities. While these developments have improved efficiency and accessibility, they have also created opportunities for cybercriminals.

Cybercriminals operate silently. Unlike traditional crimes, cybercrimes do not always involve physical presence. A criminal sitting in another city – or even another country – can steal sensitive information, hack accounts, manipulate financial transactions, or blackmail victims within seconds. In many cases, victims never meet or even see the person responsible for the crime.

The internet has become a powerful tool, but without awareness and caution, it can also become a dangerous trap.

Understanding Cybercrime
Cybercrime refers to criminal activities that involve computers, networks, mobile devices, or digital systems. These crimes are designed to gain unauthorized access, steal data, disrupt services, manipulate users, or commit financial fraud.

Cybercrimes are increasing every year because digital dependency is increasing. Criminals continuously develop new techniques to deceive people. Most attacks are based not only on technology but also on human psychology.

Below are some of the most common cybercrimes occurring around us.

Common Cybercrimes Happening Around Us

1. Phishing Attacks
Phishing is one of the most widespread forms of cybercrime. In phishing attacks, criminals send fake emails, SMS messages, or social media notifications pretending to be trusted organizations such as banks, government departments, courier services, or online shopping companies.

These messages usually contain urgent warnings like:
■ "Your bank account will be blocked."
■ "Your KYC is pending."
■ "You have won a reward."
■ "Your parcel delivery failed."

Victims are asked to click a link and enter sensitive details such as passwords, OTPs, debit card numbers, or Aadhaar information. Once the information is entered, cybercriminals use it to steal money or access accounts.

Many people fall victim because these messages look professional and create panic or excitement.

2. Online Banking and UPI Fraud
Digital payment systems have made transactions easy, but they have also become major targets for fraudsters. Cybercriminals use fake customer care numbers, screen-sharing applications, QR code scams, and fraudulent payment requests to deceive users.

In many cases, victims unknowingly share OTPs or install malicious apps that allow criminals to control their phones remotely.

A common scam involves fraudsters pretending to help with refunds or payments. Instead of receiving money, the victim unknowingly transfers money to the criminal's account.

Such frauds can wipe out bank savings within minutes.

3. Social Media Account Hacking
Social media platforms have become a part of daily communication. People share photographs, personal moments, opinions, travel details, and even confidential information online. Hackers exploit weak passwords and security loopholes to gain access to these accounts.

Once hacked, accounts may be used for:
■ Sending fake messages to friends



and relatives
■ Spreading scams
■ Demanding money
■ Posting inappropriate content
■ Blackmailing victims

Many people underestimate the importance of securing social media accounts, believing they contain "nothing important." However, personal information available on these platforms can easily be misused.

4. Identity Theft
Identity theft occurs when criminals steal personal information and use it illegally. Documents such as Aadhaar cards, PAN cards, voter IDs, passport copies, and mobile numbers are often targeted.

Criminals may use stolen identities to:
■ Open fake bank accounts
■ Apply for loans
■ Conduct illegal activities
■ Commit financial fraud

Victims often discover the crime only after receiving legal notices or financial liabilities.

5. Fake Online Shopping and Investment Scams

Cybercriminals create fake e-commerce websites and advertisements offering expensive products at extremely low prices. People are attracted by huge discounts and make payments without verifying authenticity.

After payment, the products are either never delivered or are completely different from what was promised.

Similarly, fake investment schemes promise unrealistic profits through cryptocurrency, online trading, or quick-return plans. Many individuals lose significant amounts of money by trusting such fraudulent platforms.

6. Cyberbullying and Online Harassment
Cybercrime is not limited to financial fraud. Social media abuse, online threats, trolling, and cyberbullying have become serious concerns, especially among teenagers and young adults.

Victims often face:
■ Emotional trauma
■ Anxiety and depression
■ Social isolation
■ Loss of confidence

In extreme cases, cyberbullying can severely affect mental health and academic performance.

Why Cybercrime is Increasing
Several factors contribute to the rapid increase in cybercrime:

Lack of Awareness
Many people are unaware of cyber threats and basic online safety measures. They trust unknown messages, links, and calls without verification.

Increased Internet Dependency
People depend on digital platforms for banking, education, healthcare, shopping, and communication. Greater digital activity creates more opportunities for criminals.

Weak Security Practices
Simple passwords, outdated software, and careless online behavior make users easy targets.

Human Psychology
Cybercriminals manipulate emotions such as fear, greed, urgency, and curiosity. Messages claiming prizes, emergencies, or account suspension often force people into making quick decisions.

Technological Advancement
As technology becomes more advanced, cybercriminals also use sophisticated tools such as malware, artificial intelligence, spyware, and deepfake technology to conduct attacks.

Impact of Cybercrime on Society
Cybercrime affects individuals, businesses, and nations. Its consequences extend beyond financial loss.

Financial Damage
Victims may lose savings, business revenue, or sensitive financial information.

Emotional and Psychological Stress
Cybercrime victims often suffer anxiety, fear, embarrassment, and mental stress.

Loss of Privacy
Personal photographs, messages, and confidential data may be leaked or misused.

Damage to Reputation
Hacked social media accounts and fake content can harm an individual's image and credibility.

Threat to National Security
Large-scale cyberattacks can target government institutions, healthcare systems, transportation networks, and critical infrastructure.

Cybersecurity: The Need of the Hour
Cybersecurity refers to the practices and technologies used to protect systems, networks, devices, and data from cyber threats. In today's world, cybersecurity is no longer optional – it is a necessity.

Every internet user must understand that prevention is far easier than recovery.

Remedies and Preventive Measures

1. Create Strong Passwords
Passwords should be unique, complex, and difficult to guess. Avoid using names, birthdays, or simple combinations.

A strong password includes:
■ Uppercase and lowercase letters
■ Numbers
■ Special characters

Passwords should also be changed regularly.

2. Enable Two-Factor Authentication (2FA)
Two-factor authentication adds an extra security layer by requiring OTP verification or authentication apps during login.

Even if a password is stolen, 2FA can prevent unauthorized access.

3. Never Share OTPs or Confidential Information

Banks, government agencies, and genuine organizations never ask for OTPs, CVV numbers, or passwords over phone calls or messages.

Users must remain cautious and avoid trusting unknown callers.

4. Verify Links and Websites

Before clicking any link:
■ Check the website address carefully

■ Look for "https"

■ Avoid suspicious or shortened URLs

Small spelling differences in website names are often used to trick users.

5. Keep Software Updated

Software updates fix security vulnerabilities. Ignoring updates increases the risk of malware attacks.

Devices, applications, and antivirus programs should always remain updated.

6. Use Trusted Applications

Applications should only be downloaded from official platforms such as Google Play Store or Apple App Store.

Unknown apps may contain spyware or malware.

7. Avoid Public Wi-Fi for Sensitive Transactions

Public Wi-Fi networks are often insecure. Banking and confidential activities should not be performed on open networks.

Using VPN services can provide additional security.

8. Educate Children and Senior Citizens

Children and elderly users are more vulnerable because they may not recognize online threats easily.

Families and educational institutions should regularly discuss cybersecurity awareness and safe internet practices.

9. Report Cybercrime Immediately

Victims should immediately report incidents to cybercrime authorities and banks.

Quick reporting can:

■ Freeze fraudulent transactions
■ Prevent further damage
■ Help authorities trace criminals

Delaying action often reduces the chances of recovery.

The Role of Educational Institutions and Society

Schools, colleges, universities, and workplaces must actively promote cybersecurity awareness.

Awareness campaigns, workshops, seminars, and training sessions should become regular activities.

Students should be taught:

■ Responsible social media usage
■ Safe online communication
■ Data privacy protection
■ Ethical internet behavior

Cybersecurity education should begin at an early age because digital exposure now starts in childhood.

A Shared Responsibility

Cybersecurity is not only the responsibility of governments or IT professionals. Every internet user plays a role in creating a safer digital environment. Awareness, caution, and responsible online behavior can significantly reduce cyber threats.

As technology continues to evolve, cybercriminals are also becoming smarter. Therefore, staying informed and alert is no longer optional – it is essential.

The digital world offers endless opportunities, but safety must always come first. A single careless click can lead to serious consequences. Cyber awareness today is as important as road safety or personal security in everyday life.

By spreading awareness and practicing safe online habits, society can work together to build a secure and trustworthy digital future.

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SUNDAY GOSSIP

We Do Not Belong to This City!



■ USUF MIR

At the foot of the mountains lay a small settlement where every morning arrived with the cheerful songs of birds, and every evening wrapped itself in a soft blanket of mist before sinking into silence. Vast green fields stretched far into the distance, cool winds swayed through the grass, and the fragrance descending from the hills made the village feel completely detached from the artificial world of the cities.

At the far edge of this quiet settlement stood a small wooden house where Sahil lived. He owned a few sheep, some goats, and a handful of rabbits. His life was simple, peaceful, and silent. During the day, he worked in the fields or sat beside the waterfall for hours, watching the flowing water in deep silence. He loved quietness more than noise, and perhaps that was why he always avoided the cities.

One night, while the entire village slept beneath the calm sky, Sahil left the window of his room open and drifted into sleep. Moonlight was scattered across the mountains, the wind moved gently through the silence, and the waterfall murmured softly in the darkness. In those deeply peaceful moments, he saw a strange dream.

He found himself standing inside a city overflowing with light but completely empty of peace. Towering buildings, colorful lights, endless traffic, ringing mobile phones, and restless

crowds surrounded him from every side. Everyone seemed to be running somewhere, yet no one appeared to know where they truly belonged.

People smiled warmly at one another, but only moments later spoke badly behind each other's backs. Somewhere, trust was being used for personal gain; elsewhere, innocent hearts were being trapped behind sweet words and false kindness. As Sahil wandered through the noise and confusion, his eyes fell upon two completely different groups standing by the roadside.

On one side stood an elderly man dressed in loose white clothes. His face carried an unusual calm, and his eyes reflected deep compassion. Beside him stood three young men — Ali, Mili, and Wali. Quiet, respectful, and composed, they looked untouched by the chaos around them, as if they belonged to a different world altogether.

On the other side stood a group of loud young men laughing carelessly. Torn jeans, untidy hair, expensive smartphones, and reckless conversations defined them. Among them was one particularly arrogant young man, accompanied by Ooni, Booni, and Toni. They mocked strangers passing by, recorded videos for amusement, and spoke to people with fake sweetness only to gain personal advantage.

Suddenly the young man burst into laughter.

"Today I fooled that man perfectly," he said proudly. "He called me his brother while I kept thinking about how to use him for my own benefit."

Ooni, Booni, and Toni laughed loudly with him.

A strange uneasiness settled inside Sahil's heart. The city lights appeared bright on the outside, yet hollow and dark within.

Just then, the elderly man slowly

walked toward the young man.

"My son," he said gently, "the happiness that comes from breaking someone's trust never lasts for long."

The young man looked at him mockingly and replied,

"Perhaps you belong to another time, old man. In today's world, decent people do not survive for long."

The elder listened patiently before saying in a calm voice,

"If survival demands the loss of your humanity, then only the body remains alive... not the human being."

For a few moments, silence spread between them. Then the young man laughed again and said,

"If you people do not belong to this city, then why are you here at all?"

The elder looked toward the glowing skyline. A faint sadness appeared in his eyes.

"We did not come here to stay," he said softly. "We only came to see what humanity has achieved in the age of progress... and how much of its humanity it has lost along the way."

Ooni, Booni, and Toni exchanged amused glances.

"This old man speaks like a philosopher," one of them whispered mockingly.

At that very moment, the young man's phone buzzed. A smile immediately spread across his face.

"See? This is the real world," he said proudly. "Another person is about to fall into my trap."

The elder looked at him sorrowfully and asked,

"Why do you find happiness not in winning hearts, but in using people?"

"Because that is what success means today," the young man replied without hesitation.

A few moments later, an old man stumbled and collapsed onto the road

nearby. People walked past him without stopping. Some took out their phones and began recording videos, while others merely glanced at him before moving on.

"Make a viral video!" Ooni, Booni, and Toni laughed.

But the elder immediately rushed forward. Ali, Mili, and Wali quickly helped the old man and seated him safely by the roadside. The city continued moving at its usual pace. Cars kept passing, phones kept ringing, and crowds kept rushing forward, yet humanity itself seemed to be sitting silently at one corner, struggling to breathe.

The young man stood there quietly, watching everything. For the first time, the phone in his hand felt heavy. For the first time, his laughter felt empty.

The elder gently placed his hand on the old man's head. There was such warmth in his eyes that it seemed he was comforting not a stranger, but someone deeply close to his own heart.

For several moments, the young man stood silently watching him. For the first time, confusion appeared upon his face. Amid the noise, the laughter, and the endless ringing of phones, he suddenly felt a strange silence growing within himself.

The elder slowly stood up and said to him,

"My son, progress and convenience are not evil in themselves. Evil begins when human beings use them not for humanity, but for selfishness."

The young man lowered his eyes for the first time. His phone screen continued glowing in his hand, yet its light no longer felt meaningful.

After a long silence, he spoke in a broken voice,

"And if a person truly wishes to change... can he really change?"

The elder looked at him gently. There

was softness in his eyes, but hope as well.

"A human being changes," he said softly, "the day he begins hearing the voice of his conscience."

At that very moment, the entire scene began to blur. The city lights faded. The young man looked frightened.

"Are you leaving?" he asked anxiously.

The elder replied softly,

"We do not belong to this city."

And slowly, he disappeared into the mist along with Ali, Mili, and Wali.

Sahil suddenly woke up, breathing heavily. Outside, the same village rested peacefully beneath the mountains. The waterfall still flowed softly in the distance, and the silence of the night remained unchanged.

His phone screen was glowing beside him...

But for the first time in his life, he quietly turned it off.

Then he sat there for a long time, staring into the silent darkness while one sentence echoed again and again inside his mind:

"We Do Not Belong to This City."

(This story is dedicated to those young minds of the modern age who use scientific inventions and modern conveniences not for the collective good of humanity, but for selfish desires and personal gain. It is a symbolic tale whose characters represent different attitudes and moral realities of our society. Somewhere within these characters, every reader may discover a reflection of himself.)

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Dogri Theatre: Rooted in Tradition, Rising with Innovation



■ RAHUL SINGH

In a rapidly changing cultural landscape where regional identities often struggle to sustain themselves, Dogri theatre from Jammu stands as a powerful example of how tradition and innovation can coexist to create something truly enduring. Over the past few decades, Dogri theatre has not only survived but evolved into a vibrant cultural force, drawing strength from the rich folk traditions of the Dugar region while embracing modern theatrical techniques.

The journey of Dogri theatre reflects a deeper truth about art itself. Theatre is not merely entertainment. It is a mirror of society, reflecting its aspirations, conflicts, and collective memory. This understanding becomes central when examining the growth of Dogri theatre, which has increasingly moved beyond superficial performance to engage with the social and cultural realities of the region.

One of the most striking aspects of Dogri theatre is its deep connection with folk traditions. The vitality of this theatre form lies in its ability to preserve and creatively reinterpret indigenous forms of music, dance, storytelling, and ritual performance. These traditions are not simply aesthetic elements but form the very foundation of Dogri theatre's identity. When theatre remains rooted in its cultural soil, it gains authenticity and emotional depth, making it more impactful for audiences.

Landmark productions such as Bawa Jitto and Ghumayee exemplify this synthesis of tradition and modernity. These plays have drawn heavily from local history, folklore, and cultural memory, and their success has not been accidental. Instead, it is the result of a conscious effort by theatre practitioners to integrate

folk elements into contemporary theatrical narratives. This approach has enabled Dogri theatre to achieve both artistic excellence and widespread recognition.

Despite these achievements, the theatre movement in Jammu faces significant challenges. A considerable portion of contemporary productions still suffers from limitations in scope and artistic depth. Many plays fail to leave a lasting impact because they do not fully utilize the rich cultural resources available in the region. This gap between potential and execution highlights the need for a more serious engagement with Dogri's cultural heritage.

The cultural wealth of the Dogra community is vast and diverse. It encompasses folk songs, heroic ballads, oral narratives, ritual performances, and a history of courage and sacrifice. Yet, much of this heritage has remained underexplored. For Dogri theatre to reach its full potential, it must draw more consistently and creatively from these resources. As noted by scholars, the neglect of such a rich cultural tradition raises important questions about the historical marginalization of Dogri culture and the need for its revival.

Theatre has also proven to be an effective medium for social awareness in the region. Plays like Suno Eh Kahani, which addresses the issue of child marriage, demonstrate how theatre can function as a tool for education and social change. By incorporating familiar cultural elements, such productions are able to connect with audiences at a deeper level and communicate important messages in a relatable manner.

Another significant factor contributing to the growth of Dogri theatre has been institutional support. Financial assistance and initiatives by the Central Government and cultural organizations have played a crucial role in encouraging young artists and sustaining theatre activities. Workshops, festivals, and grants have provided opportunities for experimentation and skill development, enabling a new generation of theatre practitioners to emerge.

However, challenges remain, particularly in attracting urban audiences. In cities like Jammu, there has been a noticeable shift in audience preference towards



Hindi and English productions. This trend has influenced many directors to work in these languages to gain wider recognition. As a result, Dogri theatre sometimes struggles to retain its audience base in urban areas.

The political and social context of Jammu and Kashmir has also had an impact on cultural activities. Decades of instability, cross-border tensions, and political uncertainty have often overshadowed cultural achievements. In such an environment, theatre assumes even greater significance. It becomes not just a form of artistic expression but also a means of fostering social harmony and preserving cultural identity.

The evolution of Dogri theatre has also been shaped by its engagement with

global and national literary traditions. Translations and adaptations of works by writers such as William Shakespeare, Rabindranath Tagore, and Anton Chekhov have introduced new ideas and techniques into Dogri theatre. These adaptations have made classic literature accessible to local audiences and have helped attract younger generations to theatre.

At the same time, there has been a renewed focus on original Dogri writing. Since the 1980s, theatre practitioners have increasingly recognized the value of their own folk narratives and cultural traditions. This shift has led to the emergence of a strong and distinctive theatrical movement that emphasizes originality and cultural authenticity.

One of the key challenges facing Dogri

theatre today is sustainability. Many productions are created primarily for participation in festivals and are performed only a limited number of times. As a result, even high-quality plays fail to achieve long-term impact. There is a need for a more sustained approach that ensures repeated performances and wider audience engagement.

Despite these challenges, the achievements of Dogri theatre are significant. Productions have been successfully staged at national and international platforms, earning recognition for their originality and artistic excellence. The integration of traditional forms such as Geetru and Bhagatan has given Dogri theatre a unique theatrical vocabulary that sets it apart from other regional traditions.

The role of institutions like the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages has been particularly noteworthy. By increasing financial incentives and organizing workshops and festivals, these institutions have helped strengthen the theatre movement and provide opportunities for young artists to grow.

Ultimately, the story of Dogri theatre is one of resilience and creativity. It is a testament to the ability of a regional art form to adapt, innovate, and thrive in challenging circumstances. By staying rooted in its cultural heritage while embracing new ideas, Dogri theatre has created a unique identity that resonates with audiences both within and beyond the region.

The future of Dogri theatre depends on continued efforts to preserve its folk traditions, encourage young talent, and expand its reach. With sustained support and creative commitment, it has the potential to become an even more influential force in Indian and global theatre.

Dogri theatre is not just a cultural expression. It is a living, evolving narrative of a people, their traditions, and their aspirations. Its journey serves as a reminder that true artistic strength lies in the ability to remain connected to one's roots while reaching out to the world.

The writer is a Scholarship and Fellowship Holder from Ministry of Culture, Government of India in the field of Theatre

Forests: Beauty and health

Forests are the Oxygen Oceans of Our Planet

■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Forests are the oxygen oceans of our planet. Deforestation is not merely the cutting down of trees it is an act of murder, the murder of life itself. Anyone who destroys forests commits a crime against nature, and such acts must be dealt with under strict laws.

The Almighty has blessed us with countless gifts, each serving the welfare of humankind. Yet humans have become selfish and destructive, turning into the very culprits who damage the Earth's natural assets. Forests are not just clusters of trees; they are the lifeline of existence. They provide timber and fodder and act as shields against natural disasters such as flash floods, landslides, and soil erosion.

Deforestation the large scale cutting of trees leads to soil erosion, flash floods, and climate imbalance. It decreases oxygen levels while increasing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, accelerating global warming. Forests maintain the essential balance of gases that sustains life a balance that no human innovation can replace.

Every academic subject has its own importance, but when it comes to solving environmental challenges, science holds the key. Through scientific understanding, we can analyze, preserve, and protect the planet's ecosystems effectively.

Unfortunately, some selfish individuals exploit forest resources for personal



profit. Forests are not lifeless timberlands they are golden assets of our nation. Our government and forest departments must step beyond office walls to educate citizens through public campaigns, counselling sessions, and awareness drives.

In recent years, I have personally visited forest regions across Budgam, Gulmarg, and Pahalgam. It is heartbreaking to see large scale destruction where once dense greenery thrived all sacrificed to greed.

Forests have long inspired poets, artists, and filmmakers. The lush green leaves, the majestic pines, and the gentle hum of insects reflect nature's unmatched beauty. Forests beautify our Mother Earth, offer recreation, and refresh the human spirit.

According to recent data, about 7,12,249 sq. km of land in India is under forest cover, including 20,230 sq. km in Jammu and Kashmir. The Pir Panjal range of the

Lesser Himalayas, stretching from Himachal Pradesh to Azad Kashmir, is home to diverse flora and fauna, acting as a guardian of biodiversity and ecological wealth.

Forests for Recreation and Research For centuries, forests have provided spaces for recreation trekking, camping, and mountaineering. They also serve as living laboratories for researchers studying rare herbs, shrubs, and unique eco-

logical patterns.

Uses and Benefits of Forests

Forests maintain ecological balance through food chains and food webs. They provide shelter for wildlife, grazing lands for nomads, and medicinal plants for humans. Communities living near forests depend on them for their livelihood, which must be sustained responsibly.

Causes of Deforestation

The major causes of deforestation include smuggling, construction, urbanization, and the demand for timber in various industries. Human interference and negligence remain the primary reasons for ecological imbalance.

Solutions and Way Forward

Afforestation planting trees in deforested areas is the most effective solution to deforestation. However, since forests take decades to grow, awareness, strict monitoring, and public participation are essential. The government must conduct regular awareness drives, ensure forest protection through patrolling, and promote community involvement.

Conclusion

Deforestation is a crime against life—against air, water, wildlife, and humanity itself. Forests are living treasures, the golden lungs of our Earth. Let us pledge to protect them for the sake of today and future generations.

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Online mindfulness may boost mental health during Covid pandemic

New York: The fear, anxiety and stress associated with the Covid-19 pandemic has taken a toll on mental health. However, a new study suggests these symptoms may be eased through safe and convenient online mindfulness practices.

The study, published in the journal Global Advances in Health and Medicine, showed that 76 per cent of participants reported decreased anxiety, 80 per cent reported decreased stress and 55 per cent had decreased Covid-19 concern.

"We found that online mindfulness interventions may improve psychological health at a time of uncertainty. We were also encouraged by the survey

responses, which showed a sense of connectedness and a desire to help others," said researcher Rebecca Erwin Wells, Associate Professor at the Wake Forest Baptist Health in the US.

"Helping others during the pandemic demonstrates the beautiful capacity of the human spirit to find positivity despite the extraordinary negative circumstances," Wells added.

The researchers said that they recognised the tremendous impact of this pandemic on emotional health and wanted to evaluate how a safe, online mindfulness meditation strategy might help.

For the study, the team included 233 participants from



across the world in this non-randomised clinical trial, which included a pre-session survey, a single 15-minute online mindfulness meditation session

and a post-session survey. The pre and post-session surveys evaluated momentary stress, anxiety and Covid-19 concern. Most of the participants (63

per cent) had never practiced mindfulness before, and 89 per cent of participants said the session was helpful, and that the online platform was effective for practicing mindfulness.

Of note, 21 per cent of participants were retired, suggesting that age did not prevent accessibility. The participants were also surveyed on how they were helping others during the pandemic.

The responses varied with common themes including following public health guidelines, conducting acts of service and connection such as reaching out to elderly neighbours, and self-care activities such as staying positive and calm. Courtesy EMJ

An easy guide to your pre and post-workout hair care routine

NEW DELHI: As the temperature starts soaring in this part of the year, working out gets increasingly difficult. Sweating in combination with summer heat can make working out tedious and also play havoc on the health of our hair, especially for those who exercise every day. There is always a dilemma of washing your hair every day to get rid of sweat and dirt, as dealing with greasy, sweaty, messy hair is not worth it.

If you are also struggling with your messy hair -- Agnes Chen, Technical Head, StreaX Professional, shares a pre-and post-workout hair care regime to help you achieve healthy hair!

Find a Workout hairstyle that works for you

Always keep your hair fresh for the workout session and find a hairstyle that works with your workout plans. Relaxation exercise people prefer a loose bun to keep their mediating state comfortable. However, if you are doing cardio, something more secure like a braid or ponytail could work to keep your hair away from your face so that your workout sessions continue for a long time without any obstruction.

Use hair accessories

It's important to tie your hair in a neat style, away from the face. Use hair accessories and headgears like sweatbands, scrunchy clips, pins and hairbands to tame flyaway caused by humidity and hold your style in place.

Hair perfume and shine spray are the best

Traditional fragrance techniques tend to be loaded with alcohol, which can cause dryness if applied to hair. Hair perfumes have been designed pointedly for scenting your tresses, so they are free from any drying ingredients. Hair perfumes give your hair a boost of fragrance and leave it smelling fresh when you need it the most. Shine spray is excellent for giving your hair a lightweight polish, as well as long-lasting smoothness.

Refresh your roots with shampoo and conditioning

Your hair care after workout sessions is key to refreshing your strands -- and it does not have to be complicated. Schedule hair washes, according to your workout using a gentle, purifying shampoo. It helps cleanse even those harder to reach areas like your bangs -- instantly absorbing excess sweat and oil. This helps to remove all sweat, grime, and dirt from the hair and scalp. Courtesy Healthline

Here's how to modify your skincare routine with a change in season

As the weather changes, most of us notice changes in the texture and appearance of our skin as well. A shift from dry to oily feeling, increase in skin flare-ups and breakouts are common experiences.

Seasonal changes bring with them a lot of environmental changes as well. Along with temperature shifts, humidity levels also fluctuate. The type of pollens or allergic elements in the environment also change, so do microorganisms. All these changes do have an impact on skin, particularly for those who have sensitive skin, points out Dr Pankaj Chaturvedi, Dermatologist from Medlinks, New Delhi.

With summer, some people tend to experience skin irritation or acne. As hot weather induces sweating, bacterial growth may also result in bad odour and rashes on sensitive areas.

"Sometimes, even as temperature and humidity increase, we overlook the need to shift to lighter non-comedogenic skincare products. This in turn may further induce episodes of flare-ups or breakouts. Some people even report flare-up in skin conditions such as eczema or psoriasis. Often, the use of heating devices in winters sucks away all moisture from the indoor air, exacerbating skin dryness and related conditions," he says.

A study published in the British Journal of Dermatology concluded that a shift of season does not just change the environmental conditions but also induces changes at skin's cellular level. The study found that a seasonal shift unleashes a breakdown in filaggrin, a protein that helps modulate the skin's barrier function, along with changes in cerneocytes, the cells that form



the skin's outer layer. When the skin's barrier function is interrupted, the skin tends to become more vulnerable to irritation and damage, he adds.

The expert says it is important therefore as weather changes, our skincare regimen also changes to address the needs of our skin. Here are a few suggestions from him:

Change your skincare routine

While, a good cleansing, toning and moisturising routine must be followed round the year, an important thing to do is to modify your skincare products as the weather changes occur. So, shifting to lighter non-comedogenic products is the first thing to do as we transition into the summer. If you have been using a cream-based face wash or moisturiser, now is the time to switch to water-based light formulations.

Consider some skin procedures

If you have been considering a skin procedure, a seasonal shift is perhaps the appropriate time to undertake it. Not only will it pave the way for a dermatologist visit, it will also help prepare your skin better against the sudden trauma of weather change.

A dermatologist will examine your skin in-depth and help you make an informed decision of which skin procedure you need. If your skin is experiencing dryness, flakiness and signs of ageing are troubling you, you may consider a hyaluronic acid-based treatment such as Prophilu. Similarly, if you are experiencing oiliness and clogged pores, exfoliating and deep cleansing procedures such as hydradermabrasion and carbon peels may help. Courtesy Healthline

TB is World's Deadly Infectious Disease – Good News is, it is Curable

In India, nearing to 2, 20, 000 die each year due to this deadly disease, it is a major health problem and it is a heavy burden on the Indian Economy. The Indian Government has spent nearing USD 1 billion between 2006 to 2014, in the mere span of 8 years.

Why World TB day is observed?

Every year, this day is observed to raise public awareness about this deadly disease and its devastating social, economic and health consequences. Varied steps are also undertaken to end this global epidemic.

What is the theme of World TB Day 2021?

The clock is ticking, this is the theme, it helps convey the message that, entire world is running out of time and there is greater need to join hands with Global leaders to end TB.

What Causes TB?

Mycobacterium Tuberculosis, bacteria causes TB. It spreads in the air and it is very contagious. Hence people who are in close contact with a person who is already infected are prone to higher risk of getting infected to this disease.

What are the types of Tuberculosis?

There are 2 types first one Latent TB, here no symptoms are visible and it is not contagious, but the risk is, infection can become active and become active in later stages. The other one is, Active TB, this is contagious.

What are the symptoms of Tuberculosis?

- Few popular symptoms include
- Individual suffering bad cough above 3 weeks
- Chest Pain
- Having sputum or blood in your cough
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Sweating at night
- Feeling of fatigue

How to prevent this deadly disease?

- BCG Vaccine for children, acts as a shield against TB
- Use both mask and a respirator near a TB patient
- Take steps to prevent latent TB patient developing into active TB
- Respiratory hygiene must be maintained
- TB education as well as awareness can reduce its spread
- TB patient must cover their mouth while coughing or sneezing

How TB is treated?

TB is curable if treated by using the right drug combination for period of minimum six months. After two or four weeks, you will start feeling good but you should complete the course of antibiotics, so that your condition does not worsen due to the above disease.

What is drug resistant TB?

Those individuals who fail to seek right treatment or if they do not follow the instructions advised by the doctor, then the TB bacteria would become stronger and its symptoms might reappear and this is referred as drug resistant TB. Courtesy Healthline

MLA Bandipora promotes Youth Development, Rural Growth through Sport, Horticulture Initiatives

HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, MAY 16: Member of Legislative Assembly for Bandipora Constituency, Nizamuddin Bhat, today participated in two significant programmes aimed at promoting youth empowerment and strengthening the economy.

Earlier, the MLA opened the KCFL Football Trials at SK Stadium Bandipora, organised by the Jammu and Kashmir sports council. Interacting with aspiring footballers, he highlighted the values of discipline, consistency, teamwork and perseverance, stating that sports not only nurture talent but also shape character, confidence and responsible citizenship.

The MLA appreciated the continued efforts of the Sports Council in providing a meaningful platform for young athletes to showcase their potential and pursue excellence, adding that sports play a vital role in steering youth towards positive and constructive engagement.

Later, the MLA attended a District Level Horticulture Awareness Camp as chief guest, organised by the Department of Horticulture Bandipora at Public Park Watpora.

Addressing orchardists, farmers and the general public, the MLA emphasized the importance of horticulture in strengthening the rural economy and generating employment opportunities for farmers and youth.

He stressed the need for adopting modern techniques and scientific methods to enhance fruit production and improve the quality of horticultural produce in the district.



Experts from the Horticulture Department sensitized participants about various government welfare schemes, high-density plantation, pest management, pruning techniques and measures for increasing orchard productivity. The participants appreciated the initiative and expressed hope that such awareness programmes would continue in future for the benefit of the farming community.

The awareness camp witnessed participation of Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Chief Horticulture Officer Bandipora, LDM Bandipora, officers from Agriculture and allied departments, former PRI members, orchardists, farmers and the general public.

ARCHEX 2026 Srinagar Inaugurated with Great Enthusiasm

Receives Overwhelming Response from Industry and Public

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: The inaugural ceremony of ARCHEX 2026 Srinagar, Kashmir's premier exhibition dedicated to architecture, construction, interiors, and building technologies, was held successfully today at the Government Polytechnic for Women. The expo, powered by Asian Paints Limited, commenced with an impressive turnout of architects, builders, developers, students, and members of the general public. The grand inauguration was graced by Sh. Satish Sharma, Cabinet Minister, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, Jenab Farooq Ahmed Shah, Hon'ble MLA, Tangmarg, and Jenab Salman Ali Sagar, Hon'ble MLA, Hazratbal, who formally inaugurated the exhibition and appreciated the initiative for bringing the latest innovations in architecture and construction to the Kashmir Valley.

Among the distinguished guests present on the occasion were:

Mr. Aqib Chaya, President, Gulmarg J&K Hoteliers Club

Mr. Tariq Ghani, President, Chamber of Commerce & Industry Kashmir

Ar. Irshaad Majid, Chairman, Indian Institute of Architects (IIA), Srinagar Centre

Mr. B. S. Rana, Director, Minds Media and Management Pvt. Ltd.

Mr. Inder Dhingra, Director, Minds Media and Management Pvt. Ltd.

Soon after the inauguration, the exhibition witnessed a tremendous response from visitors, who explored a wide range of innovative products, advanced technologies, and modern design solutions showcased by leading brands from across the country. The event provided an excellent opportunity for architects, engineers, contractors, students, and business professionals to gain firsthand knowledge of cutting-edge developments in the building and construction sector. The chief guests and other special guests visited various exhibitor stalls, including Asian Paints Limited, KONE Corporation, Greenlam Industries Limited and several other renowned brands. They interacted with company representatives and appreciated the innovative products and technologies on display.

The dignitaries highly praised the outstanding management and professional execution of the exhibition. They described ARCHEX 2026 as a visionary initiative that will significantly boost business opportunities, promote adoption of advanced technologies, and strengthen the architecture and construction industry in Jammu & Kashmir.

They remarked that ARCHEX is a meaningful step toward showcasing world-class products and connecting the local business community with national and international brands, contributing to the region's economic and infrastructural development. ARCHEX 2026 will continue until 18 May 2026, featuring product exhibitions, technical presentations, networking opportunities, and interactive sessions for architects, builders, consultants, students, and industry professionals.

One-Day Seminar on Non-Fiction Literature Held at GDC Hajin by JKAACL

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: The J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages in collaboration with Govt Degree College "GDC" Hajin organised a one-day seminar titled "Non-Fiction Literature in Jammu and Kashmir," bringing together noted scholars,



writers, critics, students, and literature enthusiasts. The seminar focused on various aspects of non-fiction writing, literary criticism, and essay literature. A special session on essay writing was also held as part of the programme. The event was presided over by Professor Irfan Alam, while Professor Altaf Anjum attended as the chief guest. Principal of the college, Professor Ghazala Firdous, welcomed the guests and participants. Mohammad Saleem Salik highlighted the aims, objectives, and literary contributions of the Academy. During the first session, Dr Mohammad Yaseen Ganie presented a detailed review of Ghulam Hassan Talib's book "Phul Jhadi," which was widely appreciated by the audience. On the occasion, Ghulam Hassan Talib was felicitated and the formal release of his essay collection "Phul Jhadi" was also held. Later, Dr Mohammad Yousuf Wani shared his views on Dr Falak Feroz's books "Husn-e-Intikhab" and "Nida-e-Noor," while Dr Sabir Shabeer presented a critical review of his book "Shama Farozan." The speakers received appreciation from the audience for their scholarly presentations. The books of Dr Falak Feroz were also formally released during the event. Dr Javed Ahmad presented his remarks in English. The second session featured a special essay symposium in which student Abida Manzoor presented "Main Aur Mera Mobile," Mohammad Saleem Salik presented "Facebook Status," Dr Falak Feroz presented "Galiyon Ki Zad Mein Qatilon Ke Khanjar," Engineer Shafi Ahmad presented "Akhbaar Bani," Zunfar Khokhar presented "Mazloom," and Ghulam Hassan Talib presented "Intezaar."

In the concluding session, Kacho Asfandiyyar Khan presented an essay titled "Fun-e-Naqadi" along with his presidential address. Professor Altaf Anjum and Professor Irfan Alam also shared their thought-provoking remarks.

The proceedings of the seminar were conducted by Dr Mohammad Iqbal Lone. A large number of prominent personalities, writers, intellectuals, students, and lovers of literature attended the event.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION SOURA SRINAGAR

Engineering Complex, SKIMS, Soura Srinagar - 190011

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas Plot No. 174 size 30'x50' i.e. 1500 Sft situated at Government Housing Colony EllahiBagh Srinagar has been allotted in favour of Ab Ahad Wani Son of Gh. Mohammad Wani R/o EllahiBagh Buchpora Srinagar vide No. LRIP/4585-93 Dated: 09-01-1999 by the Executive Engineer Erstwhile (R&B) LRCR Division Srinagar on conditions as contained in the allotment order and lease deed; and

Whereas Mr. Ab Ahad Wani Son of Gh. Mohammad Wani R/o EllahiBagh Buchpora Srinagar has filed an application before the Executive Engineer R&B Division Soura, Srinagar with the request to issue NOC for transfer of ownership rights of the Plot No. 174 size 30'x50' each i.e. 1500 Sft each situated at Ellahibagh Housing Colony Srinagar and the applicant has produced sale deed / attorney in respect of Plot No. 174.

Whereas, as per the terms and conditions of the allotment the Plot has been allotted on Lease for a period of 20 years and thereafter ownership rights will be transferred to the allottees; and

Whereas, in light of the allotment letter dated 09-01-1999, the 20 years lease period of the Plot No. 174 stands already completed on 09-01-2019.

Now therefore, it is hereby notified that in case any person/ persons has any objection with respect to the transfer of ownership rights i.e. from lease hold rights to proprietary ship of Plot No. 174 situated at Ellahibagh Housing Colony Srinagar, they may submit their objections, with reasons thereof within a period of fifteen days from the date of publication of this notice in the local newspapers.

No: EE/R&B/Soura/ 926 | Dated: 15-05-2026

Sd/- Er. Sheikh Suhail Rashid
Executive Engineer (R&B Division Soura)

DIPK: 1355/26 | Dated: 16-05-2026

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER DISTRICT INDUSTRIES CENTRE SRINAGAR

Email: gmdic-srinagar@jk.gov.in | Tel. No: 0194-2427478

PUBLIC NOTICE

M/s Kohinoor Fabrics, I/E Integrated Textile Park, Zakura, Srinagar, formally registered with this office under No. 01/003/09438/PMT/MSME dated 27.06.2022 for the activity of "Weaving of Silk, Woolen and Cotton Cloth on Power Looms" with additional line of activity namely "Machine Embroidery" (on provisional basis) as partnership concern of 1. Mr. Mushtaq Ahmad Rather S/o Mohammad Yousuf Rather R/o Soura, Srinagar and 2. Mr. Mohammad Imran Changa S/o Mohammad Rafiq Changa R/o Syed Sahib Rajouri Kadal, Srinagar.

The promoters have applied for transfer of the lease hold rights of the said unit in favour of Mr. Asif Ahmad Mattoo S/o Ab. Rashid Mattoo R/o Koli Pora, Khanyar, Srinagar.

Any person having any objection to the proposed transfer may submit the same in writing to the office of General Manager DIC Srinagar within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice.

Sd/- General Manager
District Industries Centre Srinagar

DIPK: 1354/26 | Dated: 16-05-2026



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Admission (1st Round)	01 June - 06 June 2026
2nd Merit List	09 June 2026
Admission (2nd Round)	10 June - 15 June 2026
Spot Round	18 June - 25 June 2026

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Satish Sharma inaugurates ArchEx Srinagar 2026, calls for sustainable, modern infrastructure development in J&K

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, Science & Technology and ARI & Trainings, Satish Sharma, today inaugurated "ArchEx Srinagar 2026", a mega architecture and building material exhibition, here today.

He underscored the need for sustainable urban planning, modern infrastructure development and promotion of innovation-driven construction practices in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister inaugurated the three-day exhibition in presence of Legislators, Farooq Ahmad Shah and Salman Sagar, Sheikh Ovais, Tariq Ghani and several prominent architects, engineers, entrepreneurs, industry leaders and stakeholders from construction and infrastructure sectors.

Described as North India's largest architecture and build-

ing material exhibition and the first of its kind in Jammu and Kashmir, ArchEx Srinagar 2026 has brought together more than 100 reputed companies from across the country. They showcasing the latest technologies, sustainable construction materials, modern architectural innovations, smart infrastructure solutions and interior products.

Following the inauguration, Satish Sharma toured various stalls and interacted with exhibitors, architects, engineers, builders and young entrepreneurs participating in the exhibition. He had detailed feedback regarding emerging trends in architecture, sustainable building technologies and modern infrastructure practices being adopted across the country.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that Jammu and Kashmir is undergoing a significant phase of infrastructural growth and urban transformation and such exhibitions can play an important role in



connecting the local talent and industries with national-level expertise and technological advancements.

He said the government is committed towards encouraging sustainable and environmentally responsible development while preserving the

unique cultural and architectural identity of Jammu & Kashmir. He observed that modern architecture must go hand in hand with ecological sensitivity, efficient urban planning and the promotion of indigenous design and construction practices.

Satish Sharma emphasised that the participation of leading national companies and professionals in the exhibition reflects the growing investment potential and developmental momentum of Jammu and Kashmir. He said such platforms create opportunities for the

local youth, students and professionals to gain exposure to advanced technologies, innovative ideas and emerging trends in the architecture and construction sectors.

The Minister further stated that the government is focusing on modernisation across sectors including infrastructure, transportation, sports facilities, information technology and public service delivery and highlighted the importance of integrating innovation and technology into developmental planning.

He appreciated the efforts of the organizers for successfully conceptualising and hosting a large-scale professional exhibition in Srinagar. He said that such initiatives would contribute significantly towards boosting the economic activity, entrepreneurship and professional collaboration in the region. A massive public response was witnessed during the inaugural day of the event, with thousands of visitors thronging the exhibition ven-

ue. The organisers informed that more than 20,000 visitors are expected during the three-day expo, including architects, engineers, interior designers, builders, students, entrepreneurs and consumers from different parts of Jammu & Kashmir and outside.

The exhibition is being organised by the Indian Institute of Architects Srinagar Centre in association with Minds Media & Management Private Limited with the aim of creating a vibrant platform for networking, knowledge exchange and promotion of contemporary architectural practices and modern construction technologies.

On the occasion, noted hotelier and entrepreneur Mush-taq Chaya was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award for his remarkable contributions and achievements in the hospitality sector. The recognition was widely appreciated by the dignitaries and participants present at the event.

Vikramjit Singh reviews implementation of NMBA in Pulwama

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, MAY 16: Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce Department, Vikramjit Singh, who is the District Mentor for overseeing the implementation of Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan in Pulwama district, today chaired a meeting to review implementation of the activities being conducted under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) in the district. While reviewing the activities, the Commissioner Secretary highlighted the need to sensitise youth regarding the harmful effects of drug abuse and emphasised the importance of preventive awareness at the grassroots level. He further directed the departments to make effective use of audio-visual means including documentaries, short films and testimonials of rehabilitated victims for impactful outreach and wider public awareness.

Emphasising the importance of community participation, Vikramjit Singh directed the concerned departments to intensify awareness programmes, outreach activities and youth engagement initiatives across educational institutions and rural as well as urban areas of the district.

He called for coordinated efforts among the administration, police, civil society and community stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of the Nasha Mukta Abhiyan and to make it a mass movement.

The officers on the occasion also informed regarding various activities being conducted under NMBA including awareness programmes, counselling sessions, sports activities, pledge ceremonies, padyatras, signature campaigns and community outreach programmes across different zones and institutions of the district.

During the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, briefed regarding the department-wise activities being carried out across the district under the ongoing campaign. The Deputy Commissioner apprised of the district action plan, activities conducted by the Department of Youth Services and Sports, involvement of SHG members, revitalisation of youth clubs and their trainings, constitution of Mahila Nigrani Samitis in Panchayats and urban wards, participation of religious leaders and elderly clubs besides drug de-addiction and counselling facilities available in the district along with rehabilitation and follow-up mechanisms for affected individuals.

On the occasion, Senior Superintendent of Pulwama, Tanushree and Senior Superintendent of Police Awantipora, Sajad Ahmad Shah, also apprised the chair regarding the enforcement measures and anti-drug operations being undertaken in the district to curb the menace of drug abuse. Later, the Commissioner Secretary visited Sports Stadium Pulwama to take stock of the arrangements being put in place in connection with the mega padyatra and the forthcoming VVIP visit to Pulwama scheduled on May 19.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Pulwama; and senior officers from Civil Administration and Police.

J&K Judicial Academy conducts Training Programme on "Code of Civil Procedure" for Judicial Officers

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: Under the patronage of Justice Arun Palli, Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and Patron-in-Chief, J&K Judicial Academy, a one-day training programme on the Code of Civil Procedure was conducted today at the J&K Judicial Academy, Moominabad, Srinagar, for Judicial Officers of Kashmir Province under the guidance of the Chairman and Members of the Governing Committee of the Academy.

Justice Rajnesh Oswal, Judge, High Court of J&K and Ladakh and Chairman, J&K Judicial Academy, in his keynote address, observed that the Code of Civil Procedure, though procedural in nature, is rooted in the principles of natural justice and serves as an effective instrument for implementation of substantive law.

He emphasized that civil adjudication is foundational to a progressive civil society and stressed the need for judicial officers to handle civil litigation with procedural discipline, sensitivity and commitment. Refer-

ring to Section 89 CPC, He highlighted the importance of Alternate Dispute Resolution mechanisms in facilitating amicable settlement of disputes and ensuring accessible and efficient justice delivery.

Naseer Ahmad Dar, Director, J&K Judicial Academy, in his welcome address, stated that the Code of Civil Procedure forms the backbone of civil adjudication and its effective application is essential for fair, efficient and timely administration of justice. He informed that the programme was designed to deliberate upon practical application of procedural provisions, strengthen judicial efficiency, improve case management and reduce delays in civil trials. He further stated that the sessions would focus on pre-trial proceedings, framing of issues, pleadings, admissions and procedural tools available under the CPC for effective adjudication.

The first and second technical sessions were delivered by Justice Mohammad Yaqoob Mir, Former Chief Justice, High Court of Meghalaya, on "Role of Court in Pre-Trial Proceedings and Effective Case Facilitation" and



"Case Management, Framing of Issues and Discovery Procedures." He emphasized the importance of judicial intervention in effective pre-trial management for narrowing controversies and ensuring expeditious disposal of civil cases.

The sessions covered examination of parties under Order

X CPC, use of Section 89 CPC for Alternate Dispute Resolution, summoning and attendance of witnesses under Order XVI CPC, framing of issues under Order XIV CPC and discovery and inspection under Order XI CPC.

The concluding session was delivered by Mohammad Ashraf Malik, Former District and Ses-

sions Judge, on "Pleadings, Admissions and Expeditious Adjudication." The resource person emphasized the importance of continuous judicial learning, effective case management and procedural discipline in civil adjudication. Drawing from his judicial experience, he highlighted challenges arising from heavy dockets, prolonged litigation and procedural delays, and stressed that such delays can be minimized through timely judicial intervention, proper prioritization of cases and effective exercise of judicial discretion. He underscored the importance of pleadings, admissions and procedural mechanisms under the CPC in narrowing controversies and facilitating expeditious adjudication.

All the technical sessions were followed by interactive discussions wherein participating Judicial Officers engaged with the resource persons on practical and procedural challenges in civil adjudication.

The programme provided a valuable platform for exchange of ideas and deliberations aimed at ensuring efficient and expeditious justice delivery.

Vibrant, participative anti-drug awareness programmes held across Shopian

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, MAY 16: Under the ongoing Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan campaign, a series of awareness and outreach programmes were organised across District Shopian today to educate the people about the ongoing 100 Day Nasha Mukta JK Abhiyan. Yoga sessions, awareness lectures and interactive programmes were conducted in educational institutions of the district where students and staff actively participated and pledged to promote a healthy & drug-free lifestyle. An inter-school

debate competition was also organised at HSS Vehil under the banner of NMJKA, where students highlighted the growing menace of substance abuse and stressed the collective responsibility of society in eradicating it. Similarly, awareness activities were held at HS Pinjoora and HS Mantribugh Shopian, sensitizing participants about the social, psychological and health-related consequences of drug addiction.

Other departments also organised scheduled activities. GDC Shopian, KPDC, ICDS, Ayush and Revenue department conducted various aware-

ness events where officials, students, youth and local residents participated enthusiastically.

Speakers highlighted the hazards effects of drug abuse and urged people especially youth to stay away from narcotics and stressed the need for coordinated and committed efforts towards the goal of drug free society.

Participants were also encouraged to proactively spread awareness at the grassroots level and contribute actively towards building a healthy, safe and drug-free Shopian.

District Admin Srinagar's Rolling Trophy for Inter-College Cricket Tournament inaugurated at S.P. College

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar, Dr. G.V. Sandeep, on Saturday inaugurated the District Administration Srinagar's Rolling Trophy for the Inter-College Cricket Tournament (Men & Women)-2026 at S.P. College Srinagar under the Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme. The inaugural ceremony was attended by several dignitaries, including Dr. Seem Naz, Nodal Principal, Kashmir Division Colleges; Elford Thom-

as, IAS Probationer; Dr. Haris Izhar Tantray, Principal, S.P. College Srinagar; Dr. Hudda Gazali, Principal, Government College for Women Nawa Kadal Srinagar; Dr. Tehmeena Yousuf, Principal, Islamia College of Science and Commerce Srinagar; and Dr. Deeba Sarmad, Principal, GDC Eidgah Srinagar, besides SSP Traffic Srinagar, SP East Srinagar, and SHO Kothi Bagh. Officials from the Youth Services and Sports Department Srinagar, the Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Srinagar, Physical Training Instructors (PTIs), Assistant Phys-

ical Training Instructors (APTIs), and other officers were also present on the occasion.

The inaugural match of the tournament was played between Amar Singh College and Government Degree College Hyderabad. Amar Singh College won the toss and elected to field first.

A total of 18 teams from various Government Degree Colleges have registered for the tournament, including nine men's teams and nine women's teams.

The participating men's teams include Government College of Education (IASE) Srinagar, GDC

Hyderpora, Amar Singh College, GDC Bemina Srinagar, GDC Women M.A. Road Srinagar, S.P. College Srinagar, GDC Eidgah, Islamia College of Science and Commerce Srinagar, and Gandhi Memorial College Srinagar.

The women's category included teams from GDC Zakura, Vishwa Bharati College, Amar Singh College, GC Women M.A. Road Srinagar, S.P. College Srinagar, Gandhi Memorial College Srinagar, Islamia College of Science and Commerce Srinagar, and GC Women Nawa Kadal Srinagar. Speaking on the occa-

sion, SSP Srinagar highlighted the importance of sports in character building and youth development. He said that tournaments and sporting events not only nurture talent but also channel the energy of young people towards productive and meaningful activities. He emphasized that the discipline learned through sports plays a vital role in shaping responsible citizens.

He further urged students to stay away from drugs and adopt healthy lifestyles, stating that drug abuse poses a serious threat to society and the future of youth.

DLTFC approves 31 applications under JKREGP in Anantnag

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, MAY 16: District Development Commissioner (DDC), Anantnag Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat today chaired the meeting of the District Level Task Force Committee (DLTFC) under J&K Rural Employment Generation Programme (JKREGP) at the DC Office.

CPO, District Officer, KVIB, LBM, FM DIC, officials from Bank and KVIB and others attended the meeting. During the meeting, 37 applicants appeared before the committee for sanction of loans and establishment of different types of units under the JKREGP. After detailed interaction and assessment, the committee recommended 31 candidates for establishing their units under the scheme. The approved cases involve a total project cost of Rs. 312.05 lakh, with a proposed margin money assistance of Rs 109.375 lakh under the JKREGP scheme. Speaking on the occasion, the DDC stressed that the sanctioned loan amount be swiftly disbursed in favor of the approved cases for establishing their units in a time bound manner adding that proper guidance be provided to the beneficiaries so their units become profitable and sustainable. He said that proper implementation of the self-employment and sponsorship schemes is vital to ensure meaningful employment for youth of the district.

The DDC advised the beneficiaries to work hard and make sustained efforts while keeping themselves updated with the market trends for securing the future of their units. Sustainable units will not only generate employment for the unit holders but will also provide livelihood opportunities to others, he remarked.

Rupee fall reflects sentiment-driven weakness, not macro fundamental deterioration: N ArunaGiri

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAY 16: Rupee breaching one level after another is more a reflection of sentiment-driven weakness than any serious deterioration in macro fundamentals, said N ArunaGiri, CEO of TrustLine Holdings.

He warned that the real risk is that, if left unchecked, this loss of confidence can turn into a self-fulfilling vicious cycle, triggering further pressure on the rupee that is not warranted by underlying fundamentals.

"If one looks at India's macro position today, the situation is far from alarming. The current account deficit remains manageable, forex reserves are reasonably comfortable with import cover of nearly eight to nine months, and the fiscal deficit trajectory continues to remain relatively stable. Given these macro metrics, there is little justification for such a sharp depreciation in the rupee," Giri said.

He highlighted that currency markets are often driven as much



by perception as by fundamentals.

Basically, when investment flows weaken and markets begin anticipating further outflows amid an uncertain geopolitical backdrop, that expectation itself starts exerting pressure on the currency.

Giri warned that if such sentiment is allowed to build unchecked, then it can create its own cycle of panic and accelerated depreciation.

"This is precisely why it is extremely critical for the RBI to step in proactively and announce

confidence-building measures, similar to the steps initiated by former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan during the 2013 currency crisis. Any delay in action risks aggravating market nervousness and intensifying pressure on the rupee further," he suggested.

The 2013 currency crisis is widely known as the "Taper Tantrum," a period of severe financial panic that caused emerging markets, most notably the Indian Rupee, to plummet against the US dollar.

At that time, then RBI Governor

Raghuram Rajan introduced a lucrative foreign currency swap scheme (FCNR-B) to attract billions in NRI deposits, which was provided by subsidised dollar swap windows for oil marketing companies (OMCs).

Rajan also hiked short-term interest rates to aggressively defend the crashing currency.

Pointing towards the country's premier central bank, Aruna Giri said, "The RBI cannot afford to remain a passive spectator at this stage. What the market needs immediately is a strong policy signal that restores confidence and breaks the negative sentiment cycle."

"One possible measure could be launching FCNR dollar deposits, which can help attract foreign currency inflows and provide immediate relief to near-term pressure on the rupee. The government, on its side, could look at tax concessions for FII investments, like cutting TDS on bond sales, reductions in capital gains taxation, etc. It is time for action now," he concluded.

RIFAH Chamber of Commerce annual conference held

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHENNAI, MAY 16: The annual conference of the RIFAH Chamber of Commerce (RCC) was held in Chennai on Saturday.

RCC State President, Younus Sait delivered the inaugural address at the conference which was attended by more than 500 business people, over ten speakers, influential thinkers, and distinguished guests.

At the event, five companies that have made a remarkable contribution to the commercial growth of Tamil Nadu were honoured by presenting them with RIFAH Awards, a RCC release said.

The conference featured special addresses on various topics that included "Let Us Grow Together as One Community" by Umar Mukhtar, CEO of Go Buttons Group, "A Better Vision for the Development of Tamil Nadu" by Mr. Ahmed Bukhari, President of UEF, "Building International Business Partnerships" by international guest Dato Veera Shahul Dawood, "Creating Women Entrepreneurs" by Mrs. Janaki Maya, Founder of Cake Square, "The Perspective of Jamaat-e-Islami on the Contribution of Muslims to the Development of Tamil Nadu" by Maulavi Muhammad Hanifa Manbai, State President of Jamaat-e-Islami, "An Integrated Sustainable Develop-



ment Plan" by Maulana Khalil Ahmed Muneeri, "Expanding Business - A Social Responsibility" by Fathi, and "The Role of RIFAH in India's Development" by Janab Mirza Afzal Baig.

RIFAH is a non-profit business network that empowers entrepreneurs through mutual cooperation, mentorship, and ethical growth. It provides support in areas such as business consultation, startup guidance, financial advice, and international business expansion. These are essential elements for the growth of a successful entrepreneur.

It is functioning across 18 states in India and in Tamil Nadu, it operates through branches in Chennai, Trichy, Theni, Kumbakonam, Krishnagiri, Vaniyambadi, Tirupattur, Pudukkottai, Thirumangalam, Mannargudi, and Tenkasi. More than 500 entrepreneurs are journeying together with RIFAH.UNI

US Senate Panel Clears Landmark

Cryptocurrency Bill

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI, MAY 16: The United States Senate Banking Committee on Thursday cleared the Digital Asset Market Clarity Act, advancing what is being described as the most comprehensive cryptocurrency legislation in American history and triggering reactions across global digital asset markets.

The bill, if enacted into law, will formally define which digital assets fall under the jurisdiction of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and which come under the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), ending years of uncertainty over regulatory authority in the sector, a financial analyst said.

The proposed legislation also addresses regulation of stablecoins, protections for decentralised finance and bankruptcy safeguards for crypto customers. Following the committee's approval, both Bitcoin and Ethereum registered gains in the market.

The bill must still pass a full Senate floor vote before being sent to the President for final approval.

Indian cryptocurrency industry leaders said the development carries significance beyond the United States market.

Ashish Singhal, co-founder of CoinSwitch, said the bill addresses a major structural issue that has affected the global crypto ecosystem.

"The CLARITY Act is a significant moment for the global crypto industry because it finally attempts to address one of the ecosystem's biggest unresolved challenges - regulatory clarity around digital assets. Despite over 40 per cent of Americans already having exposure to crypto, the industry has largely operated without a clearly defined legislative framework for nearly a decade," Singhal said.

He added that the market views the legislation as a strong indication that cryptocurrency regulation in the United States is entering a more mature phase and that such frameworks could eventually become important global reference points for integrating digital assets into the broader financial system.

Nischal Shetty, founder of WazirX, said the absence of regulatory clarity in the US had directly affected market growth.

"For years, exchanges operating in the US did not know which regulator they answered to. Both the SEC and the CFTC claimed authority over the same assets, with no clear boundary between them. Platforms caught between them could not build products with confidence. Institutions stayed out," Shetty said.

He said the development also offers lessons for India, where millions of virtual digital asset holders continue to operate without a comprehensive regulatory framework.

Shetty added that the US move could serve as a reference model for Indian policymakers alongside frameworks such as the European Union's Markets in Crypto-Assets (MiCA) regulation implemented in 2024.

Vikaas M Sachdeva, Chief Executive Officer of BitDelta India, said the bill reflects the growing maturity of the digital asset sector.

"Every financial category reaches a stage where growth alone is no longer enough and the conversation begins shifting towards accountability and long-term legitimacy.

Frameworks like these help move the market from interpretation to greater operational clarity," Sachdeva said.

He noted that India already has strong participation, a rapidly evolving compliance structure and one of the world's most digitally active investor bases.

The White House has indicated that it wants the legislation signed into law by July 4.

Telangana emerging as global exports hub, says Sridhar Babu

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, MAY 16: Telangana IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu on Friday said the state was making significant progress in engineering exports and that the government was working systematically to transform Telangana into a global exports hub.

The minister was speaking as the chief guest at the "48th The Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC) of India Southern Region Awards for Export" event organised at a private hotel in Begumpet.

Addressing the gathering, Sridhar Babu said the Telangana government was giving special emphasis to the development of industrial parks, electronics manufacturing clusters, logistics

infrastructure, skilling ecosystems, and innovation networks in line with international standards and future industrial requirements.

He noted that India's engineering exports had crossed a record USD116.67 billion during the 2024-25 financial year and accounted for 27 per cent of the country's total merchandise exports. He stated that Telangana was playing a key role in driving the country's engineering export growth.

According to the minister, Telangana's contribution in sectors such as aerospace, defence, electronics, pharmaceuticals, and EV mobility was steadily increasing at the national level. He said the state's engineering exports reaching US 7.5 billion during the last financial year



reflected Telangana's rapid industrial growth.

Sridhar Babu observed that manufacturing and technology could no longer be viewed separately and stressed that integra-

tion of both sectors was essential for becoming globally competitive in supply chains.

He stated that the government was working towards creating a strong ecosystem integrating

artificial intelligence, automation, robotics, and digital manufacturing to strengthen the global presence of the "Made in Telangana" brand.

The minister also said the government had taken responsibility for creating a "ready-to-work" skilled workforce required for export-oriented industries. He invited industrialists to collaborate with the Telangana government and assured that efforts would be made to reopen the regional office of Engineering Export Promotion Council of India in Hyderabad.

Former NITI Aayog CEO B V R Subrahmanyam, along with EEPC India representatives Pankaj Chadha, Raman Raghu and Shashi Louis, attended the programme.UNI

EEPC India holds Roadshow in Hyderabad ahead of Pharma MachTech & LabNext Expo 2026

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, MAY 16: The Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC) of India on Friday organised a roadshow in Hyderabad ahead of the second edition of Pharma MachTech & LabNext Expo 2026, highlighting India's growing role in the pharma machinery and laboratory equipment sectors.

The roadshow, held at a private hotel in Begumpet, featured interactive sessions focused on strengthening India's position as a global innovation hub in pharma machinery and lab equipment manufacturing.

The Pharma MachTech & LabNext Expo 2026 is scheduled to be held from September 7 to 9 at Bharat Mandapam and will be co-located with iPHEX, one of the major pharmaceutical expos globally. The event will showcase the complete pharma and healthcare engineering value chain on a single platform.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Guest Akshay S.C. Joint Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), RA Hyderabad said the future growth of India's pharmaceutical sector depended significantly on the strength of the domestic steel and

manufacturing industries.

He stressed the need for manufacturers to align with global market requirements and accelerate indigenous production of specialised machinery.

In his welcome address, Adhip Mitra, Executive Director & Secretary, EEPC India, said India was targeting pharmaceutical exports worth USD 130 billion by 2030 and called upon manufacturers and exporters to focus on innovation and value-driven excellence.

He noted that the Expo would provide opportunities to explore emerging technologies in Pharma 4.0, automation, precision drug delivery systems, and advanced laboratory equipment.

He added that seminars, conferences, and buyer-seller meetings with global delegations would create valuable business opportunities and knowledge-sharing platforms.

During the roadshow, a seminar titled "Transforming Pharma & Biotech Industries through Smart Manufacturing and Next-Gen Laboratory Solutions" was conducted. Rakesh Suraj Regional Director, EEPC India delivered a presentation on the upcoming Expo, while industry

experts discussed government initiatives, sustainability, digital transformation, and advanced manufacturing practices in the sector.

The speakers highlighted Hyderabad's strategic importance in the pharmaceutical industry, noting that the city contributes nearly one-third of the global vaccine supply and around 40 per cent of India's bulk drug production. Engineering clusters such as Jeedimetla, Balanagar, and Kukatpally were described as key components of the pharma engineering supply chain.

According to EEPC India, India's domestic pharma machinery sector is currently growing at a CAGR of 8-10 per cent, though the country continues to depend heavily on imports for high-end equipment. Pharma machinery exports have recorded a CAGR of 15.3 per cent over the past five years, while imports grew by 10.5 per cent during the same period.

The programme was also attended by Pankaj Chadha, Chairman, Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC India) K. Narendran, Deputy Drugs Controller (India), Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO); and Suresh Babu, among others.UNI

Fuel price revision a course correction, but more needs to be

done: Crisil Intelligence

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAY 16: India's decision to raise retail prices of petrol and diesel by Rs 3 per litre marks a meaningful, if partial, step toward unwinding one of the more prolonged under-recovery cycles in recent memory, said Sehul Bhatt, Director Crisil Intelligence, in a statement here on Friday. "At their peak, oil marketing companies were absorbing losses of Rs 23-30 per litre on petrol and diesel, translating to a combined daily loss of Rs 1,300-1,400 crore across petrol, diesel, and LPG," Bhatt said. He noted that government interventions through excise duty relief of Rs 10 per litre narrowed these Rs 14-17 per litre on petrol and diesel, respectively. It has reduced the run rate of daily loss to around Rs 1,000 crore.

The Rs 3 hike with marginal softening of crude oil prices brings estimated residual under-recoveries down to Rs 10 and Rs 13 per litre.

According to Bhatt, it will offer Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) a degree of operational breathing room. He noted that cumulative losses since the onset of conflict had already reached Rs 70,000 crore across the three fuel categories by April. It is expected to cross Rs 1 lakh crore by the end of May. The latest price increase is aimed at containing incremental balance sheet stress rather than restoring marketing margins. This is better read as a policy acknowledgement that absorbed costs must eventually reflect in price.UNI

Adani Airports, IHG to develop five hotels across airport cities

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI, MAY 16: Adani Airport Holdings Ltd (AAHL) has officially announced that it has inked a deal with global hospitality firm IHG Hotels & Resorts to develop five hotels across key airport-linked and high-growth urban destinations, including Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thiruvananthapuram.

Presently, AAHL operates airports in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Lucknow,

Guwahati, Mangalore and Thiruvananthapuram.

Speaking about the development, Adani Enterprises Limited (AEL) Director Pranav Adani said, "As the Adani Group expands its presence across hospitality and airport-led urban infrastructure, our vision is to create world-class destinations that seamlessly integrate travel, stay and urban experiences around India's rapidly growing aviation ecosystem."

The portfolio includes a Kimpton

hotel in Jaipur, as well as Holiday Inn and Holiday Inn Express hotels within upcoming hospitality-led mixed-use development projects as part of the Adani Airport cities.

"We are building this platform in partnership with leading international hotel brands that bring global standards, operational excellence and scale. Our collaboration with IHG Hotels & Resorts and the development of five hotels across key gateway destinations marks an important

step in strengthening high-quality hospitality infrastructure aligned with India's long-term travel and economic growth," Pranav Adani said.

Known globally for its designed hotels, chef-driven dining experiences and boutique luxury positioning, Kimpton's entry reflects the growing demand for premium lifestyle hospitality experiences in India.

"Our partnership with Adani Airport Holdings Ltd (AAHL) reflects the scale of opportu-

nity we continue to see in India's hospitality sector, particularly across gateway cities and airport-led developments that are witnessing strong demand from business, leisure and transit travellers alike," IHG Hotels & Resorts Managing Director, South West Asia, Sudeep Jain said.

IHG Hotels & Resorts currently operates 52 hotels across six brands in India and has a pipeline of 98 additional hotels expected to open over the next three to five years.UNI

RCB sign Gleeson as replacement for Thushara

CSK HAVE REPLACED KHALEEL AHMED WITH KULDIP YADAV

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHANDIGARH: Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) have signed England quick Richard Gleeson as a replacement for Sri Lanka slinger Nuwan Thushara, who couldn't join the squad for IPL2026 after being denied a No-Objection Certificate (NOC) by Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC). Gleeson, 38, has previously been part of Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Mumbai Indians (MI) in the IPL. He played two matches for CSK in 2024 and the lone game for MI in 2025. Gleeson has been signed by RCB for INR 1.6 crore. RCB had signed Thushara for INR 1.6 crore in 2025 and he made one appearance in their title-winning campaign. He was retained by the franchise ahead of the 2026 season, but was denied an NOC by SLC on grounds of him not reaching SLC's required fitness standards.

Thushara had initially filed a lawsuit against SLC over the matter, but he withdrew it and also issued a written apology to the board. In his original court petition, Thushara had also stated his desire to retire from international cricket, but it is unclear whether he intends to stand by that decision or not. CSK, meanwhile, have named Indian left-arm fast bowler Kuldip Yadav as an injury replacement for Khaleel Ahmed. Khaleel played five matches this season, picking up two wickets at an economy rate of 8.67, before suffering a right quadriceps injury against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) that ended his campaign. Kuldip has previously played in the IPL for Rajasthan Royals (RR), making three appearances for them across the 2021 and 2023 seasons. He has been signed by CSK for INR 30 lakh.



'They don't need my service any longer' - Mushfiqur Rahim rules out ODI comeback

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

KOLKATA: Mushfiqur Rahim has ruled out a return to Bangladesh's ODI side, confirming that he was asked to come back after announcing his retirement from the format last year following the team's early exit from the Champions Trophy. "I did get the message (to return to the ODI side), but I feel that they don't need my service any longer. They are doing well, and they will keep getting better," he said during the pre-match press conference in Sylhet on Friday. Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Bangladesh's ODI captain, is understood to have initiated those discussions over the last couple of months and had also spoken in favour of Mushfiqur's comeback in recent me-



dia interactions. The prospect of Mushfiqur's return came amid concerns over Bangladesh's fragile middle order in ODIs. The issue was evident in the home series against New Zealand, where the line-up struggled for stability, most notably in the collapse in the first ODI. Miraz had said that Mushfiqur's experience and presence could strengthen the side. Following his retirement from ODIs, Mushfiqur has remained available only for Tests, having also retired from T20Is in 2022. He featured in 10 matches in last season's Dhaka Premier League and has signed for Mohammedan Sporting Club for the current campaign, although he is yet to play a game this season. Mushfiqur finished his ODI career as Bangladesh's second-highest run-getter with 7795 runs including nine hundreds in 274 matches. Widely regarded as one of Bangladesh's ODI greats, he rose to prominence during the 2007 World Cup after being selected ahead of veteran wicketkeeper Khaleel Mashud. He was Bangladesh's middle-order mainstay from 2009 to 2025, a period in which the team grew into a consistently competitive ODI outfit.

Ravindra leaves KKR camp to prepare for England Tests

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

RAIPUR: Rachin Ravindra, the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) allrounder, has left the IPL to focus on New Zealand's upcoming Test tour of England. He will now work on red-ball cricket in New Zealand before the Test squad leaves for the UK. The first Test between England and New Zealand starts at Lord's on June 4.

Ravindra's exit from the IPL was confirmed by KKR on Friday. He was bought by KKR for a base price of INR 2 crore (approx. US\$208,450) at the auction for IPL 2026, but did not get a game all season. He was one of eight overseas players in the KKR roster, missing out on a spot in a playing XI stacked with Indian batters and Cameron Green in the middle order.

Ravindra is a regular in the middle-order in New Zealand's



Test XI, and the upcoming series will be his first Test tour of the UK. Across New Zealand's last

two Test series, Ravindra has been prolific. He scored an unbeaten 165 against Zimbabwe in August 2025, and followed it up with a knock of 176 in Christchurch and unbeaten scores of 72 and 46 in Mount Maunganui - both against West Indies in December 2025.

The upcoming series in England will be their second assignment in this cycle, with Test matches at Lord's (June 4-8), the Oval (June 17-21) and Nottingham (June 25-29). Before going to England, though, New Zealand will play a four-day Test against Ireland in Belfast starting May 27.

New Zealand are currently second on the 2025-27 World Test Championship (WTC) points table with two wins and a draw. The last time New Zealand toured England for a Test series was in 2022, where they were blanked 0-3 by the hosts.

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