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# “Recruitment Into Terror Ranks Has Become Almost Negligible”: LG Sinha

Praises CM Omar For Tough Action Against Drug-Terror Network

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MAY 18:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said recruitment into militant ranks in Jammu and Kashmir has become “almost negligible,” asserting that terrorism has been pushed to the margins due to sustained security operations and growing public support for peace.

In an interview with a national television channel, Sinha said security agencies were closely monitoring digital platforms and maintaining strict vigilance to counter militancy and related activities.

“Our security agencies are working with complete seriousness. Whether it is Telegram, WhatsApp or any other platform, agencies are monitoring ev-

ery aspect and the situation will remain under control,” he said.

The Lieutenant Governor alleged that narcotics smuggling and terrorism were operating through interconnected networks, with drugs being pushed into Jammu and Kashmir from across the Line of Control through sectors such as Gurez, Tangdhar and Uri, besides

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LG conducts on-site inspection of Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board's Yatri Niwas at Pantha Chowk

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MAY 18:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today conducted an on-site inspection and reviewed the ongoing construction works and pilgrim facilities at Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) Yatri Niwas at Pantha Chowk, Srinagar.

The Lieutenant Governor interacted with the officials and directed them for expediting the progress and ensure completion of pending works well before commencement of Shri Amarnathji

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## Parliamentary Panel Summons NTA Chief Over NEET Paper Leak Probe

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, MAY 18:** The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports has summoned top officials of the National Testing Agency (NTA) and the Education Ministry to review reforms in the examination system and assess the ongoing investigation into the alleged NEET-UG 2026 paper leak case.

According to an official notice issued by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, the committee will hold deliberations on May 21 regarding the implementation of recommendations made by the K. Radhakrishnan Committee on NTA reforms and the status of the probe into the alleged examination irregularities.

The panel, headed by Congress leader Digvijaya Singh, has called Higher Education Secretary Vineet Joshi and NTA Chairperson Pradeep Kumar Joshi to appear before it for discussions on the matter.

The development comes amid mounting concerns over the conduct of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate), one of the country's largest competitive examinations, which witnessed

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## Norway Always Stood With India Against Terrorism: PM Modi

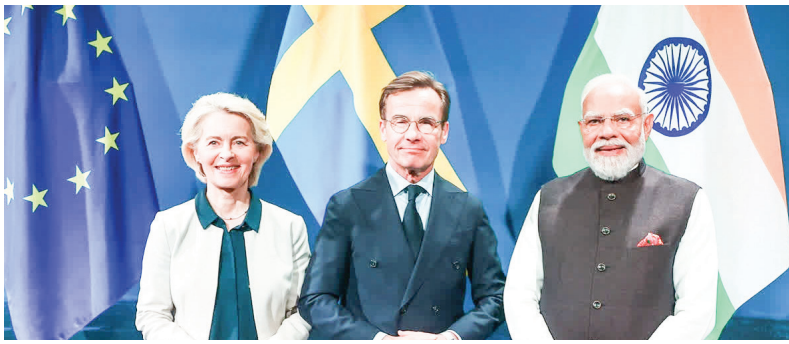
PM Says Norway deepens strategic ties with India during historic Oslo tour

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**OSLO, MAY 18:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the deadly terror attack in Pahalgam had delayed his scheduled visit to Norway, while expressing gratitude to the Norwegian government for standing firmly with India in its fight against terrorism.

Addressing a joint press

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## Thajwas Glacier Lost 86% of Its Area Since Neoglaciation: Study

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR, MAY 18:** The Thajwas Glacier in the Kashmir Himalaya has lost nearly 86 per cent of its area and close to 88 per cent of its ice volume since the Neoglaciation period, according to a new scientific study that highlights the growing impact of climate change on Himalayan glaciers.

The study, published in the journal *Geoscience Frontiers*, reconstructed the ancient glacial history of the Thajwas Glacier using cosmogenic Beryllium-10 exposure dating and geomorphological mapping, offering one of the most detailed glacier chronologies from the Kashmir Himalaya.

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## Administration Committed To Equal, Transparent Opportunities For Every Youth: LG Saxena

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**JAMMU, MAY 18:** Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh Vinai Kumar Saxena on Monday approved the reconstitution of the Ladakh Police Subordinate Service Recruitment Board, reaffirming the Union Territory administration's commitment to ensuring transparent, fair and merit-based recruitment for local youth.

Announcing the decision, Saxena said the administration was dedicated to providing equal and transparent opportunities in public service to every young aspirant in Ladakh.

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## CS assesses Mission YUVA progress during Apex Committee review meeting



HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MAY 18:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today chaired the Apex Committee Meeting of Mission YUVA and reviewed the progress achieved under the ambitious initiative

aimed at fostering entrepreneurship, generating employment and establishing Jammu & Kashmir as a thriving hub of enterprises and sustainable livelihoods.

The meeting was attended by senior officers from different departments including ACS, Fi-

nance; Commissioner Secretary, School Education; Secretary, Labour & Employment; Secretary, RDD; Director, Employment; Executive Director, EDI representatives from J&K Bank and other financial institutions, district

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## J&K Scorched by Abnormal Heat as Temperatures Surge Far Above Seasonal Average

Srinagar Hits 31.5°C, Jammu Crosses 41°C; MeT Warns of Thunderstorms, Gusty Winds From Today

Ht News Desk / Agencies

**SRINAGAR, MAY 18:** Jammu and Kashmir remained in the grip of intense heat on Monday as temperatures across the Union Territory climbed significantly above normal, prompting the

Meteorological Department to issue a weather advisory warning of thunderstorms, gusty winds and hailstorms over the next three days.

Official data revealed that most parts of Kashmir as well as the Jammu plains recorded temperatures several degrees above the seasonal average, marking one of the hottest spells of the season so far.

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 31.5 degrees Celsius, which was 6.1 degrees

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**Heatstroke A Medical Emergency, Seek Immediate Help: DGHS**

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, MAY 18:** The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) on Monday

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# OUR CENSUS OUR DEVELOPMENT

(First Phase of Census 2027)

Common queries on Self-Enumeration (SE) and their Answers (Part-1)

### WHAT IS SELF-ENUMERATION?

Self-Enumeration is an online process in which you fill and submit your household details on the SE portal ([se.census.gov.in](http://se.census.gov.in)) yourself, without waiting for an enumerator

- ❖ **Is Self-Enumeration mandatory?**  
No, it is an additional facility. If you do not do it, an enumerator will collect data during field visit
- ❖ **Can I do Self-Enumeration in any language?**  
This facility is available in Hindi, English and 14 Indian languages
- ❖ **Is internet required for Self-Enumeration?**  
Yes, internet is required to access the portal
- ❖ **Is my information safe?**  
Yes, all data is secure, encrypted and stored on government servers
- ❖ **What is SE ID and its use?**  
After submission of information, you will receive a unique 11 digit SE ID (Also via SMS/email) which must be shown to the enumerator during her/his visit to your house
- ❖ **What if SE ID is forgotten?**  
It can be retrieved using the registered mobile number on the portal
- ❖ **Will an enumerator visit after Self-Enumeration?**  
Yes, the enumerator will visit your home and confirm your details using the SE ID
- ❖ **Do I need to upload any documents?**  
No documents are required to be uploaded
- ❖ **Is help available on the portal?**  
Portal has user guide, flowcharts, tutorial videos, FAQs and tooltips

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**CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....**

**“Recruitment.....**

the use of drones.  
“Drugs are directly linked to terror funding and terrorism,” Sinha said, adding that the administration had intensified its anti-drug campaign following concerns over rising addiction among the youth.  
Highlighting the scale of the crackdown, he said 766 FIRs had been registered, 856 people arrested and 677 kilograms of narcotics seized during the last 38 days. He added that authorities were using measures such as passport verification, Aadhaar tracking, lookout notices and demolition of properties linked to accused persons to dismantle the network.  
“Our focus is on breaking the supply chain and creating awareness against drugs,” he said.

Sinha further claimed that nearly 90 per cent of the police force was currently engaged in anti-drug operations and said public co-operation had increased significantly, with residents voluntarily sharing information about alleged drug peddlers.  
“Some people have problems with our fight against drugs, but I want to assure that no innocent person has been touched. Those found guilty will be punished,” he said.

Referring to the April 22, 2025 Pahalgam terror attack, the Lieutenant Governor said people across Jammu and Kashmir had strongly condemned the incident and extended support for peace.  
“People of Kashmir now believe that their future lies with India and people are against terrorism,” he said.

Sinha also praised the Army and the CRPF for carrying out what he described as “precise operations” after the Pahalgam attack, asserting that infiltration attempts and militant activities were being dealt with firmly.

“None of their top commanders have survived. Infiltration attempts will also face the same fate,” he said.  
On the political process in Jammu and Kashmir, Sinha said the Centre had fulfilled its commitments made after the abrogation of Article 370 by conducting delimitation and peaceful elections without violence or repolling. He reiterated that statehood would be restored as assured by the Prime Minister and the Union Home Minister.

Praising Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, the Lieutenant Governor said he was “doing great work.”

**LG conducts.....**

yatra. He also reviewed the arrangements for sound and light show dedicated to Baba Barfani.

The Lieutenant Governor was accompanied by Dr. Mandeep K. Bhandari, CEO, SASB; Shri Mukesh Garg, Member, Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board; Shri Rajiv Pandey, DIG CKR; Dr. GV Sundeeep Chakravarty, SSP Srinagar; Shri Akshay Labroo; Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar and other senior officers.

**Parliamentary.....**

allegations of malpractice shortly after it was conducted on May 3. Nearly 23 lakh candidates had registered for the medical entrance test held across India.

The NTA had cancelled the examination after reports of suspected irregularities surfaced on May 7, prompting widespread criticism and demands for greater transparency and accountability in the conduct of national-level examinations.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan recently announced that the re-examination for NEET-UG would be conducted on June 21 and stated that the examination would shift to a computer-based format from next year in an effort to strengthen the system against leaks and malpractice.

Apart from the NEET issue, the committee will also deliberate on the impact of Artificial Intelligence on the education sector and measures required to improve employability among students. Representatives from Anthrop India, Pratham, Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, Infosys and Indian Institute of Technology Madras have also been invited for consultations.

In a separate sitting, the committee is expected to discuss issues concerning reservations, faculty vacancies and implementation of the National Education Policy at Aligarh Muslim University and review reports related to teacher education and training reforms under NEP 2020.

**Norway Always.....**

conference with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre in Oslo, PM Modi said Norway had shown “true friendship” by supporting India during a period of national grief and heightened security concerns following the April 2025 terror attack in Kashmir.

“I could not come to Norway earlier because of Pahalgam,” the Prime Minister said, adding that Norway had “stood with India against terrorism and showed true friendship.”

PM Modi also thanked the Norwegian leadership for the warm reception accorded to him and said he looked forward to congratulating the people of Norway on the occasion of Constitution Day celebrations.

The visit marks the first by an Indian Prime Minister to Norway in 43 years and forms part of PM Modi’s ongoing five-nation diplomatic tour focused on strengthening India’s strategic, economic and technological engage-

ment with European nations.

During his two-day stay in Oslo, the Prime Minister is scheduled to participate in the third India-Nordic Summit, hold bilateral discussions with Norwegian leaders and meet King Harald V and Queen Sonja.

The Prime Minister’s remarks came against the backdrop of the April 22, 2025 terror attack in Pahalgam that left 26 civilians dead after terrorists opened fire in the tourist town in south Kashmir.

The attack triggered a major response from India, including “Operation Sindoor,” launched on May 7, 2025, targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. According to official figures, Indian armed forces destroyed multiple terror launchpads linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed and Hizbul Mujahideen.

The military action was followed by cross-border hostilities, including drone attacks and shelling, before both countries agreed to a ceasefire on May 10.

India also suspended the Indus Waters Treaty and halted bilateral trade with Pakistan in the aftermath of the attack.

**Thajwas Glacier.....**

Researchers identified four major glacial advances over the last nearly 21,000 years, corresponding to the global Last Glacial Maximum, the Younger Dryas period, the Early Holocene and the Neoglaciation phase.

According to the study, the glacier advanced nearly 20,770 years ago during the global Last Glacial Maximum, followed by further advances around 11,460 years ago, 9,120 years ago and nearly 4,190 years ago.

The researchers found that the glacier experienced extensive retreat over successive climatic phases. The study noted that the glacier lost around 64 per cent of its area and nearly 73 per cent of its volume between the global Last Glacial Maximum and the Neoglaciation stage.

The retreat accelerated significantly in later centuries. From the Neoglaciation period to the present day, the glacier lost approximately 85.74 per cent of its area and 87.67 per cent of its volume, the study stated.

Scientists said the findings establish a strong relationship between increasing global temperatures and glacier melt in the Himalaya, one of the world’s most climate-sensitive mountain regions.

The study also examined changes in the glacier’s Equilibrium Line Altitude, the elevation where snowfall accumulation and ice melting remain balanced. Researchers found that the Equilibrium Line Altitude rose from nearly 3,365 metres above sea level during the global Last Glacial Maximum to around 4,238 metres at present.

According to the researchers, the lower Equilibrium Line Altitude during the earlier glacial period reflected colder climatic conditions and a stable glacier mass balance, while rising temperatures over thousands of years led to continuous glacier retreat and severe ice loss.

The scientists noted that detailed records of past glaciations remain limited across the Himalaya, particularly in Kashmir, making the study significant for understanding long-term climatic changes in the region.

They added that reconstructing the glacial history of the Kashmir Himalaya could help scientists better understand regional climate evolution and glacier response to sustained warming.

Experts have repeatedly warned that rapid glacier retreat in the Himalaya may have serious consequences for water availability, river systems, agriculture, hydropower generation and ecological stability across South Asia, where millions rely on glacier-fed rivers.

Often referred to as the “Third Pole,” the Himalaya contains one of the largest reserves of ice outside the polar regions and remains highly vulnerable to climate change.

**Administration.....**

Officials said the move followed a proposal submitted by the Police Headquarters in view of administrative changes and the earlier unavailability of certain members of the board. The reconstituted body is expected to ensure the smooth and timely conduct of recruitment examinations in the police department.

The board will oversee recruitment for all notified Group ‘B’ non-gazetted posts, including Sub-Inspector positions, as well as Group ‘C’ posts such as Constables and Followers in the Ladakh Police.

Authorities said the recruitment process would be conducted through a transparent and technology-enabled mechanism incorporating biometric verification, CCTV surveillance, digital attendance systems and online applications to maintain the integrity and credibility of selections.

The newly reconstituted board will be headed by DIG Leh-Kargil Range Koshal Kumar Sharma as Chairman, while SSP Traffic Ladakh Vikas Kumar will serve as Member Secretary. Other members include senior police officers from Leh and Kargil districts.

Officials said the initiative is aimed at strengthening public confidence in the recruitment process while creating greater employment opportunities for the youth of the Union Territory.

**CS assesses.....**

administrations and other stakeholders associated with implementation of Mission YUVA.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary took a comprehensive review of the performance recorded under the four foundational pillars of Mission YUVA constituting the creation of Culture, Capital, Capacity and enhancing Connectivity for the ease and welfare of the applicants.

Besides this the Chief Secretary assessed district-wise achievements, institutional preparedness, credit facilitation, entrepreneurship development and implementation bottlenecks. He emphasized the need for coordinated efforts by the departments, financial institutions and district administrations to ensure that Mission YUVA evolves into a transformative movement for youth empowerment and economic growth across the Union Territory.

During the review, special attention was given to pendency at different stages of application processing. The Chief Secretary directed district administrations, SBDUs and banking institutions to expedite clearance of pending cases and strictly adhere to timelines prescribed under the scheme. He stressed on time-bound verification of applications, DLIC approvals and loan sanctioning to maintain the momentum achieved under the mission.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed progress achieved under the capacity-building component of the mission. It was informed that more than 21,000 applicants had completed hybrid-mode entrepreneurship training, while over 300 training centres and more than 200 trainers had been activated across the UT. Plans are also underway for collaboration with JKEDI to strengthen entrepreneurship and management training for Mission YUVA applicants.

The Chief Secretary underscored the importance of outcome-based monitoring and directed all Deputy Commissioners to focus on improving application conversion, training completion, market linkage and enterprise sustainability.

He reiterated that Mission YUVA should not merely remain a financial assistance programme but must evolve into a comprehensive ecosystem capable of nurturing entrepreneurship culture and creating long-term livelihood opportunities for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Secretary, L&E, Kumar Rajeev Ranjan took this occasion to apprise the meeting that Mission YUVA envisions creation of employment opportunities through nano enterprises, new MSMEs, business acceleration initiatives and neo-innovative enterprises.

He added that the programme seeks to build an entrepreneurship ecosystem through targeted interventions in awareness generation, credit enablement, capacity building, market linkages and business support mechanisms.

The meeting especially reviewed the status of credit facilitation under Mission YUVA. The Secretary informed that over 1.07 lakh applications had been received so far, out of which more than 57,000 applications had been approved by District Level Implementation Committees (DLICs). Banks have sanctioned loans in more than 25,000 cases involving credit support exceeding 1,200 Cr, while loan disbursement of around 1,119 Cr had already been achieved in over 21,000 cases.

The meeting was informed that Mission YUVA has set an ambitious target of establishing 50,000 enterprises during 2026-27, including 44,000 nano enterprises, 4,000 new MSMEs and 2,000 existing MSMEs to be supported for expansion. District-wise targets and performance indicators were also reviewed in detail.

Reviewing the progress under the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) component, the Chief Secretary was apprised that Udyam Jagriti 4.0 campaign during 2025-26 achieved outreach to nearly 3.4 lakh citizens, while more than 5.3 lakh individuals had been covered cumulatively through various awareness campaigns.

It was given out that the campaign covered students, SHG women, certified trainees and existing MSMEs across Jammu and Kashmir. Further it was divulged that more than 2.5 lakh app downloads had also been recorded, while awareness drives covered almost all blocks and a majority of Panchayats across the UT.

The meeting was further informed by the Director Employment, Harvinder Singh that Udyam Jagriti 5.0 for the year 2026-27 is going lay focus on targeted mobilization among college students, SHG women, trained youth and existing MSMEs with a special emphasis on converting awareness into enterprise creation and credit linkage.

Under the proposed interventions, he gave out that the department is also planning conducting hackathons, entrepreneurship competitions, innovation support systems and application facilitation camps are planned to be organized at institutional and Panchayat levels.

While reviewing institutional strengthening measures, the Chief Secretary was informed that substantial progress had been achieved in recruitment and empanelment under the Institutional Business Support Mechanism (IBSM). More than 900 motivators, over 100

SBDU personnel and a large number of BHD members had already been engaged across districts to provide on-ground support, handholding and enterprise facilitation to aspiring entrepreneurs.

On the connectivity and market linkage front, the meeting was informed that significant progress had been achieved in onboarding stores and products on the Mission YUVA Seller App and ONDC-linked platforms to facilitate digital market access for local entrepreneurs. District dashboards and monitoring systems have also been operationalized to strengthen performance tracking and outreach.

The meeting also discussed several key policy interventions and operational reforms aimed at improving mentorship support, strengthening institutional outreach and enhancing the efficiency of enterprise facilitation systems across the districts here.

**J&K Scorched.....**

above normal for this time of the year. Qazigud emerged among the hottest places in the Valley at 33 degrees Celsius, registering a sharp departure of 8.6 degrees above normal, while Kokernag settled at 30.8 degrees Celsius, seven degrees above the average.

Even the hill stations witnessed unusually warm conditions. Gulmarg recorded 23.6 degrees Celsius, 7.3 degrees above normal, while Pahalgam registered 26.4 degrees Celsius, remaining 4.5 degrees above the seasonal average.

In north Kashmir, Kupwara recorded a maximum temperature of 29.5 degrees Celsius, which was 3.7 degrees above normal.

The Jammu division also continued to witness sweltering conditions. Jammu city recorded 41.1 degrees Celsius, nearly three degrees above normal, while Katra settled at 38.4 degrees Celsius.

Among other stations, Banihal recorded 33.2 degrees Celsius, Batote 31.7 degrees Celsius and Baderwah 32 degrees Celsius.

The Meteorological Department said weather conditions are expected to change from May 19, with partly cloudy skies accompanied by spells of light rain, thundershowers, gusty winds and possible hailstorms at scattered to many places across Jammu and Kashmir till May 21.

The forecast stated that weather is likely to remain generally dry from May 22 to May 25 during the forenoon hours, although brief showers may occur at isolated places later in the day. Dry weather conditions are expected to return between May 26 and May 28.

The MET office has issued an advisory warning of thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds with speeds of 40 to 50 kilometres per hour at several places across both divisions during the three-

day period.

Authorities have advised people to suspend boating and shikara rides during afternoon and evening hours in view of the possibility of strong winds over lakes and other water bodies.

The department also urged residents, particularly those living in the plains of Jammu division, to take precautions against the prevailing hot and dry weather conditions.

**Heatstroke A.....**

issued a nationwide advisory warning that heatstroke should be treated as a medical emergency requiring immediate attention, as large parts of the country continue to reel under intense heatwave conditions.

The advisory, issued by the DGHS under the Union Health Ministry in coordination with the Ministry of Ayush, called upon citizens to take urgent preventive measures to protect themselves from heat stress and related illnesses during the peak summer season.

Highlighting the growing health risks associated with prolonged exposure to extreme temperatures, the advisory urged people to remain alert for symptoms such as dizziness, headache, nausea, dehydration, confusion, seizures and loss of consciousness. In severe cases, citizens have been advised to immediately contact emergency helplines 108 or 102.

The Centre said infants, children, pregnant women, elderly persons, outdoor workers and people suffering from chronic illnesses, including heart disease and hypertension, are among the most vulnerable groups during heatwave conditions.

As part of the preventive guidelines, people have been advised to avoid direct exposure to sunlight during afternoon hours, wear loose cotton clothing, consume adequate fluids and include water-rich fruits and vegetables in their daily diet.

The advisory also stressed the need for precautionary arrangements at workplaces, construction sites, public gatherings and outdoor events, including shaded rest areas, regular hydration breaks and awareness regarding early signs of heat-related illnesses.

Recommending both conventional and traditional preventive practices, the advisory encouraged the use of cooling drinks, coconut water, lemon-based beverages and other hydrating refreshments to maintain body temperature and prevent dehydration.

It also suggested breathing exercises and gentle yoga practices aimed at reducing heat stress, while advising citizens to regularly monitor weather alerts issued by the India Meteorological Department and strictly follow official advisories during heatwave warnings.

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# Sakeena Itoo reviews proposed interventions for transforming, strengthening ECCE in J&K

Calls for holistic, inclusive, child-centric learning ecosystem across J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MAY 18:** Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health & Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo today chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the interventions proposed for transforming and strengthening Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) by the Social Welfare department across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare department, Sarmad Hafeez; Commissioner Secretary Education, Ram Niwas Sharma; Mission Director ICDS, Sajad Hussain Ganai; Project Director Samagra, Bhawani Rakhwal; Director School Education Kashmir, Naseer Ahmad Wani; Director Health Services Kashmir, Director Finance/Director Planning of Health, Social Welfare, School Education and Higher Education departments, other senior officers, while as Director School Education Jammu, Director Health Services Jammu, Director Social Welfare Jammu, representatives of BISAG-N and other concerned officers attended the meeting through virtual mode.

During the meeting, the Minister undertook a comprehensive



review of the ongoing Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) initiatives, infrastructural preparedness, teacher training modules, learning outcomes, enrolment trends and convergence mechanisms aimed at ensuring quality foundational learning for children in the age group of 3 to 6 years.

Addressing the officers, Sakeena Itoo underscored the critical importance of ECCE in shaping the cognitive, emotional and social development of children. She stated that ECCE forms the bedrock of the education system and plays a pivotal role in nurturing young minds during their most formative years.

Stressing on the proper implementation of ECCE framework in coordination with School Education department, the Minister directed all concerned departments to work in close synergy to achieve measurable improvements in nutrition, school readiness and foundational learning outcomes.

She also directed the officers to remove duplicity if any regarding children registered in Anganwadi Centres and schools.

The Minister emphasized that the government is committed to building an inclusive, equitable and child-friendly ECCE framework. She directed the concerned authorities to ensure

effective implementation of play-based and activity-oriented learning methodologies across all pre-primary institutions and Anganwadi centres.

Sakeena Itoo stressed the need for strengthening coordination between the School Education department and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) to ensure seamless delivery of early learning and nutrition support. She further called for enhanced parental awareness and community participation to create a supportive ecosystem for young learners.

Highlighting the importance of trained educators, the Minister asked the concerned officers to

intensify capacity-building programmes for ECCE teachers and Anganwadi workers to equip them with contemporary teaching techniques and child psychology-based learning approaches.

Reaffirming the government's commitment towards quality education and child welfare, Sakeena Itoo said that sustained efforts are being made to strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy while ensuring that every child in Jammu and Kashmir receives a nurturing, stimulating and safe learning environment.

The Minister also directed the concerned officers to strengthen Anameia checkups in AWCs so that maximum beneficiaries are covered.

During the meeting, Commissioner Secretary Social Welfare, Sarmad Hafeez gave a detailed on proposed interventions regarding ECCE. He informed that innovative mentorship models are being implemented to bridge Anganwadis and primary schools, with mentor teachers providing pedagogical support and on-site guidance. He also said that that internship collaborations are being rolled out to strengthen service delivery at the grassroots.

## Kulgam Police Destroy Illegal Poppy Cultivation in Behibagh

Case Registered Under NDPS Act

FAROOQ RATHER

**KULGAM, MAY 18:** Under the ongoing Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, Kulgam Police intensified its anti-narcotics drive and destroyed illicit poppy cultivation in Hanger area of Behibagh on Sunday.

According to officials, acting on specific information, a team from Police Station Behibagh conducted a raid and detected illegal cultivation of poppy plants in the premises of Fayaz Ahmad Mir, son of Abdul Gaffar Mir, a resident of Hatipora.

The illicit crop was immediately destroyed on



the spot in the presence of an Executive Magistrate. In this connection, a case vide FIR No. 28/2026 under Section 8/18 of the NDPS Act has been registered at Police Station Behibagh, and investigation has been initiated.

Kulgam Police reiterated its commitment towards ensuring a drug-free society and appealed to the public to cooperate with law enforcement agencies by sharing information regarding drug-related activities in their respective areas.

## 2 drug peddlers arrested in Handwara; contraband substances recovered: Police

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

**SRINAGAR, MAY 18:** Continuing its zero-tolerance drive against the drug menace, J&K Police in Handwara arrests 02 drug peddlers in separate operations and recovered contraband substances from their possession. As per the statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), in the first operation at Manzgam Crossing Vilgam, a naka was established on the general road where a person moving under suspicious circumstances was intercepted. He has been identified as Altaf Ahmad Mir son of Abdul Samad Mir resident of Matipora Tarathpora.

During personal search, a charas-like contraband substance was recovered from his possession. In another operation at Utingroo Qalamabad, a suspect was apprehended during naka checking. He has been identified as Naseer Ahmad Ahanger son of Khazir Mohd Ahanger, resident of Audoora Qalamabad. During search, a Charas like substance was recovered from his possession.

All the accused have been arrested and accordingly, cases under relevant sections of law have been registered at respective Police Stations, and further investigation is underway to unearth the broader network involved.

J&K Police reiterates its firm commitment to eradicate the drug menace and urges the general public to cooperate by sharing any information related to drug peddling or illegal activities—(KNO)

# 179-Bn CRPF Holds Anti-Drug Awareness Drive at Warpora School Under Civic Action Programme

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SOPORE, MAY 18:** In a significant step towards strengthening community outreach and promoting a drug-free society in north Kashmir, the 179th Battalion of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) on Monday organised a Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (Drug-Free India Campaign) at Makhdoomia Model High School, Warpora, under its Civic Action Programme.

Officials said a similar anti-drug awareness programme was also conducted at GMT Nowpora as part of the campaign aimed at educating youth about the harmful effects of substance abuse.

Commanding Officer of 179-BN CRPF, Vinay Kumar Choudhary, and Principal of Higher Secondary School Botingoo, Athar Hussain, attended the event as chief guests.

Second-in-Command officers Vipin Yadav and Mange Ram, Chief Medical Officer Dr Vipin Kumar Singh, and Deputy Commandant Abhay Singh Bhatia were present as guests of honour.

During the programme, Athar Hussain delivered a special lecture highlighting the growing



threat of drug abuse among youth and the collective responsibility of society to curb the menace.

Guest speakers included Dr Javid Ahmad Bhat, Medical Of-

ficer at Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Sopore, and Dr Javid Ahmad Monga of 179-BN CRPF.

Dr Javid Ahmad Bhat spoke extensively on drug abuse and

various types of narcotics affecting society, particularly the youth. Dr Javid Ahmad Monga delivered an awareness lecture on drug de-addiction and rehabilitation.

Students of Makhdoomia Model High School presented a skit portraying the devastating impact of substance abuse on individuals, families, and society. The performance received appreciation from attendees and highlighted the importance of collective efforts in combating the drug menace.

Prominent civil society members and local representatives also participated in the programme, including Awqaf President Fayaz Ahmad Wani, General Secretary of Makhdoomia School Ab Rasheed, school Principal Shabir Ahmad War, and Traders Federation Warpora Ab Latif War, Lumberdar Afroze Ahmad, besides teachers, students, and other dignitaries.

A felicitation ceremony was also organised to honour individuals contributing towards anti-drug awareness initiatives and social welfare activities.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks presented by Principal Shabir Ahmad War, who appreciated the efforts of the 179-BN CRPF in organising such awareness campaigns for the betterment of society.

## Buyers flock to Srinagar's Eidgah market to purchase sacrificial animals

We have just entered main season; rush will increase, say livestock sellers

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

**SRINAGAR, MAY 18:** Activity at Srinagar's famous Eidgah sheep market has started rising as buyers flock to purchase sacrificial animals ahead of Eid-ul-Adha, which will be observed on May 27. From early morning, buyers from different parts of the city thronged the market, inspecting sheep and negotiating prices.

Livestock sellers from Budgam, Bandipora, Ganderbal and south Kashmir districts have started bringing livestock to Srinagar,



hoping for strong sales in the coming days.

"We have just entered the main season. The rush will increase with

each passing day till Eid," Nazir Ahmad, a livestock dealer from Budgam, told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

Many families said they preferred shopping early to avoid last-minute crowds and expected price hikes. Children accompanying parents added to the festive mood at the market.

"Zil Hajj has just begun, and the market is already seeing good footfall. We expect the real rush in the coming days," said Bashir Ahmad, another sheep seller from Pulwama.

Besides Eidgah, temporary livestock stalls have also started appearing in several areas of Srinagar and other districts—(KNO)

## One-Day Workshop on Traditional Theatre Held in HHS Sgr

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MAY 18:** National Bhand Theatre "NBT" Wathoor Chadoora in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Govt of India New Delhi organised a one-day workshop at Highland High School, Syed Hameedpora Nowabazar Srinagar with the aim of promoting traditional theatre and its educational importance.

During the programme, speakers and theatre experts highlighted the significance of traditional theatre, describing it as an effective and powerful medium of education and training in society. They stated that theatre not only provides healthy entertainment but also plays an important role in creating social awareness, promoting moral values and preserving cultural heritage for future generations.

The speakers urged educational institutions and cultural organisations to encourage theatre activities among the youth in order to nurture creativity, positive thinking and social harmony. They appreciated the efforts of National Bhand Theatre for actively working towards the preservation of traditional folk theatre while also addressing contemporary social issues through meaningful theatrical performances. Students of Highland High School participated enthusiastically in the works and gained valuable knowledge about various aspects of traditional theatre along with practical training sessions.

It is pertinent to mention that the workshop was organised with the financial support of the Repertory Grant "Guru Shishya Parampara" Scheme of the Ministry of Culture Govt of India New Delhi.

# Javid Dar completes Self-Enumeration for Census 2027, calls it a milestone in digital governance

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MAY 18:** Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, today completed the Self-Enumeration process for Census 2027, marking participation in what is being described as India's first fully digital and paperless Census exercise.

The Minister termed the initiative a significant milestone in the country's digital governance framework. He stated that the Census integrates advanced digital technologies, mobile-based data collection systems and self-enumeration mechanisms to ensure greater efficiency, transparency, accuracy and real-time monitoring of operations.

Javid Dar said that the digital Census exercise reflects the government of India's commitment towards leveraging the



technology for improved governance and data-driven policy planning. He urged the citizens

to actively participate in the self-enumeration process within the stipulated timeline to facilitate comprehensive and accurate data collection.

The Self-Enumeration phase, being conducted from May 17 to May 31, 2026, will gather information on several critical aspects relating to housing and building conditions.

The questionnaire covers key parameters including housing conditions, household assets, amenities and facilities, access to sanitation and drinking water, type of construction, communication and transport facilities as well as the availability of electricity and internet connectivity.

The Minister observed that reliable census data is essential for effective planning and implementation of developmental schemes, enabling the governments to formulate targeted policies for socio-economic progress and public welfare.

## Budgam witnesses widespread awareness activities under NMBA

HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, MAY 18:** A series of awareness programmes, rallies, workshops, cleanliness drives and cultural activities were organised across district Budgam under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) to promote the message of a healthy and drug-free society.

Government Degree College (GDC) Magam organised a workshop under NMBA aimed at sensitising participants about the harmful effects of substance abuse and the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles. Speakers highlighted the role of youth and educational institutions in combating the menace of drug addiction through awareness and collective responsibility.

Similarly, GDC Budgam conducted a Mega Cleanliness Drive under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan with active participation of students and volunteers. The drive focused on promoting cleanliness, social responsibility and the vision of a healthy and drug-free society.

Agriculture Department Budgam also organised an awareness programme and rally in Khan-



shaib Sub Division under NMBA. Participants spread awareness regarding the harmful effects of drug abuse and encouraged people to contribute towards building a safe and addiction-free community.

At Higher Secondary School (HSS) Chadoora and HSS BK Pora, various awareness activities were organised under the campaign. Students actively participated in awareness programmes and pledged to stay away from substance abuse while spreading the message of healthy living among the community.

Meanwhile, Doodganga Forest Range of Pir Panjal Forest Division Budgam, in collaboration with Government Middle School Ranger Chadoora, organised a plantation drive, pledge ceremony, awareness programme and NMBA rally.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, teachers and officials who reaffirmed their commitment towards a cleaner, greener and drug-free society.

Cultural programmes and awareness activities were also held in different educational institutions and public spaces across the district where students, artists and participants delivered inspiring performances carrying the message against substance abuse.

## Shopian youth unites against drug abuse, Mega sports activities kick off under '100 Day Campaign'

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SHOPIAN, MAY 18:** In a major push to promote a drug-free society and foster a vibrant sports culture, the Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYSS), District Shopian organized a massive series of sports and awareness activities across multiple zones.



The events are part of the ongoing "Nasha Mukta Abhiyan" (100 Day Campaign), aimed at engaging youth in healthy competition, physical fitness, discipline and spreading critical awareness regarding the harmful effects of substance abuse.

The District Level Inter-School Basketball Tournament for under-17 (U/17) and under-19 (U/19) Girls commenced with great enthusiasm at the YSS Play Field, Sindo Shirmal, Shopian.

Multi-disciplinary events including Volleyball, Yoga, and Kho-Kho were organized across various institutions to instill a healthy and disciplined lifestyle among students.

Yoga and Badminton activities were conducted at different institutional levels to advocate for a healthy body and mind, completely free from the menace of drugs.

Inter-School Zonal Level Chess competitions for Boys (U/14 and U/17 age groups) were hosted at High School (HS) Homehuna and NIPS Zainapora.

The Pledge for a drug-free society to reinforce the core mission of the campaign was solemnly administered to participants, highlighting the collective responsibility to build a drug-free society.

## National Commission for Women to hold Mahila Jan Sunwai in Srinagar under "Rashtriya Mahila Aayog Aapke Dwar" initiative

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR MAY 18:** The National Commission for Women is conducting series of Mahila Jan Sunwai sessions at Srinagar on May 19, 2026, at Banquet Hall M A Road Srinagar as part of its flagship outreach programme "Rashtriya Mahila Aayog Aapke Dwar" aimed at hearing women's grievances and ensuring their prompt redressal.

The initiative is being organized under the nationwide Mahila Jan Sunwai programme to provide a direct platform for women of Srinagar District to voice their concerns and seek resolution of issues related to their rights, welfare and safety.

The programme aimed to strengthen outreach mechanisms and facilitate direct interaction between women and the Commission so that grievances can be addressed in an effective and time-bound manner.



The initiative also aims to enhance awareness among women regarding their legal rights and the institutional support available for redressal of complaints.

Through the "Rashtriya Mahila Aayog Aapke Dwar" initiative, the Commission is reaching out to women at the grassroots level to ensure their voices are heard and their concerns

are addressed through coordinated institutional intervention.

Women from Srinagar District can attend the session at the Banquet Hall Conference Complex on May 19, 2026 at 9:30 AM and directly interact with the Chairperson of the Women Commission to raise issues concerning their welfare, safety, and rights.

## DC Budgam chairs interdepartmental meeting on mining and mineral extraction

Directs for ensuring zero tolerance to illegal mining in district

HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, MAY 18:** An Inter-Departmental District Level meeting was today convened under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan to review the regulatory and monitoring mechanisms for mineral extraction and transportation in the district.

During the meeting, a review of the existing enforcement framework was undertaken and the functioning of various departments involved in mineral regulation was assessed in detail.

The DC directed the Irrigation and Flood Control Department, Budgam, to maintain strict vigil over Nallah Sukhnag, Doodhganga, and Shaliganga and

other nallah's of the District to ensure that no illegal extraction of minerals takes place from these water bodies.

The District Mineral Officer (DMO), Budgam, was directed to further strengthen the vigilance and ensure real-time monitoring across district.

The Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO), Budgam, was instructed to initiate strict action against vehicles and machinery, found involved in illegal mineral extraction and transportation activities.

The DC stressed that illegal mining and unauthorized transportation of minerals shall not be tolerated under any circumstances and reiterated that a zero-tolerance policy shall be adopted against all violators.



All Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) were directed to closely monitor incidents of illegal mining within their jurisdictions and ensure prompt legal action against offenders.

The R&B Department was directed to closely monitor road infrastructure affected by the movement of overloaded vehicles and to ensure the installation of

proper checkpoints and barricades at vulnerable locations.

The department was further instructed to coordinate with enforcement agencies to prevent damage to public infrastructure caused by illegal mineral transportation. The DC also directed all concerned departments to ensure time-bound implementation of the decisions taken

during the meeting and to submit regular progress reports for review. He further emphasized that coordinated enforcement drives shall be conducted jointly by all stakeholder departments and accountability shall be fixed in cases of negligence or lapses in enforcement. The DC stated that these measures are aimed at strengthening governance, ensuring regulatory compliance, and protecting the natural resources of the district.

The meeting was attended by ADDC Budgam, Vivek Agarwal, ADC Budgam, ACR Budgam, all SDMs, Divisional Forest Officer, Executive Engineer I&FC, District Mineral Officer, ARTO, representatives of R&B department and other concerned officers.

## Jammu, Srinagar mark International Museum Day with "Museums Uniting a Divided World" exhibitions

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MAY 18:** The J&K Department of Archives, Archaeology & Museums today celebrated the International Museum Day under the theme "Museums Uniting a Divided World" in conjunction with Mission Gyan Bharatam.

Specially curated exhibitions of artifacts and rare manuscript collections were organized at the Dogra Art Museum, Jammu and the SPS Museum, Lalmandi, Srinagar, with free entry for all the visitors.



At the Dogra Art Museum Jammu, the exhibition was inaugurated by Yudhvir Sethi, MLA, Jammu East.

At the SPS Museum, Srinagar, the event was inaugurated by Brij

Mohan Sharma, Principal Secretary, Department of Culture in presence of Kuldeep Krishan Sidha, Director, Archives, Archaeology & Museums and Parvez Ahmad, Special Secretary, Department of Culture.

The exhibitions featured unique manuscripts and artifacts, including the 5th-century Gilgit Manuscript on birch bark, Tafseer-i-Kabeer, Shah Nama-i-Firdousi, a bronze sculpture of Bodhisattva Padmapani, 3rd-century terracotta tiles, Shah Jahan's gold-plated bow, the Royal Armoury,

Basohli paintings, Sudhama paintings and gold coins from the Kushan period.

To make the event inclusive and accessible, refreshments and gifts were arranged for over 1,000 visitors across both the museums, including students, ex-servicemen, scholars, authors and tourists.

On the occasion, wheelchairs and helpers were also provided for the persons with disabilities.

The visitors expressed appreciation for the department's initiative, calling it a first-of-its-kind, well-facilitated exhibition.

## DLSA Shopian empowers youth with vital awareness Program on NALSA Scheme for Disaster Victims

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SHOPIAN, MAY 18:** In a proactive effort to bridge the gap between legal aid and citizens during times of crisis, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Shopian, in collaboration with the Education Department Shopian, organized a comprehensive awareness program today.

The event focused on the NALSA Scheme for Disaster Victims and was hosted at the Higher Secondary School Narapora, Shopian. The program witnessed enthusiastic participation from a large number of students and educators, highlighting a growing community interest in understanding legal rights and disaster-related support mechanisms.

Rafie Ahmad Ganie, Chief Legal Aid Defence Counsel (LADC) Shopian, led an insightful session detailing the core provisions of the NALSA Scheme for Disaster Victims. He explicitly emphasized the critical importance of accessing timely, free legal assistance during crises. The event was well-supported by Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs), Sadaf Manzoor and Sajad Ahmad who actively engaged with the attendees. The primary objective of the initiative was to educate vulnerable populations, ensuring they are fully informed of their statutory rights and the legal support infrastructure available to them during natural or man-made disasters.

# Rana reviews departmental performance at Mendhar Sub-Division; convenes public outreach camp

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**MENDHAR, MAY 18:** Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today chaired a review meeting at Mendhar to assess the functioning of various line departments at Sub-Division Mendhar besides evaluating the progress of various developmental and public welfare initiatives being implemented in the area.

During the meeting, the Minister had a comprehensive review of the ongoing developmental works, water supply position, functioning of irrigation infrastructure, maintenance of public utility systems and implementation of welfare schemes in the subdivision. He directed the officers and engineering staff to ensure efficient service delivery, timely completion of projects and uninterrupted public utilities for the convenience and welfare of the people.

The Minister stressed upon the engineering staff to remain vigilant in maintenance and upkeep of water supply schemes, pump stations, pipelines and irrigation infrastructure so that the people, particularly those living in rural and far-flung areas, do not face any inconvenience. He instructed the concerned departments to ensure prompt



response to public grievances and maintain close coordination at the field level for smooth and effective execution of developmental works.

Emphasising the commitment of the government towards strengthening public infrastructure and improving essential services, Javed Rana said that the administration is making every possible effort to accelerate the development and provide better facilities to people at the grassroots level. He added that transparent governance, accountability and quality execution of works remain the top priorities of the government.

The Minister further directed the officers to maintain strict quality standards and ensure

transparency in implementation of all projects.

Earlier, the Minister also conducted a public outreach camp at Mendhar, where several delegations, public representatives and individuals apprised him of various issues and developmental concerns affecting their areas.

During the outreach programme, which was aimed at assessing the overall development scenario and addressing public grievances at the grassroots level, the Minister patiently listened to the concerns raised by the locals regarding drinking water supply, healthcare facilities, implementation of the Forest Rights Act, benefits under PMAY-G, road connectivity and

other developmental requirements.

The delegations also projected demands for strengthening healthcare infrastructure, improving road networks, establishment of Eklavya Model Residential Schools and expediting various pending developmental works in the region.

Responding to the issues raised by the people, Javed Rana assured the delegations that all their genuine concerns would be addressed in a time-bound manner. He reiterated the government's resolve to deliver public services at the people's doorstep and ensure that developmental benefits reach every section of society without delay. "We are fully committed

to deliver in responsive and effective governance while ensuring that public grievances are addressed on priority," the Minister asserted during the interaction.

Highlighting the key initiatives being undertaken by the government, the Minister said that focused measures are being implemented to provide safe drinking water to every household, strengthen healthcare services, improve road connectivity, address issues concerning tribal communities and ensure effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act across the region.

The Minister further directed the Irrigation, Flood Control and Forest Departments to prioritise water and soil conservation measures, with special emphasis on rainwater harvesting and protection of natural resources. Stressing the significance of clean and sustainable water sources in transforming communities,

Rana called upon the officers to devise effective strategies for tapping and conserving natural water resources. He observed that the government's vision for water conservation and sustainable development can only be achieved through coordinated efforts and active public participation.

## Secretary Transport reviews Vibrant Villages Programme at Suchetgarh

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, MAY 18:** Secretary, Transport Department, Avny Lavasa, today visited Block Suchetgarh to conduct a comprehensive review of the Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP) for border villages Kushalpur and Nai Basti Gulabgarh.



During the review meeting, the Secretary emphasised the need to identify and bridge development gaps in a planned and measurable manner. She directed all line departments to carry out a detailed gap assessment based on baseline data in both villages, so that the impact of developmental interventions can be effectively evaluated after a period of one to two years.

Avny Lavasa underlined that public expenditure, particularly on construction and built infrastructure, must be prudent and outcome-oriented, ensuring optimal utilisation of resources and elimination of waste.

She reiterated the importance of inter-departmental convergence and active community participation as essential prerequisites for the inclusive and sustainable development of border villages, so that the mandate of the Vibrant Villages Programme is realised on the ground to the tangible benefit of border residents.

The meeting was attended by Special Secretary, Transport Department, Musheer Ahmad Mirza; Tehsildar Suchetgarh, Block Development Officer and Block Medical Officer, RS Pura besides the farmers, former Panchayati Raj Institution members, prominent citizens and officers of the Border Security Force.

Representatives of key line departments including Agriculture, Power Development Department, Public Health Engineering, School Education, ICDS, J&K NRLM, Youth Services and Sports, Public Works Department and Irrigation and Flood Control were also present.

## Rana hands over engagement orders to Anganwadi Workers, Helpers in Mendhar, Balakote

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**MENDHAR, MAY 18:** Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today handed over engagement orders to newly selected Anganwadi Workers and Helpers from Mendhar and Balakote under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme, reaffirming the government's commitment towards strengthening the grassroots welfare and public health services in rural and border areas.

The event marked an important step towards enhancing the delivery of early childhood care, nutrition, maternal healthcare and community welfare services in the region.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister underscored the significant contribution of Anganwadi Workers in promoting child welfare, women empowerment and community health awareness.

The Minister said that the government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is firmly committed to fulfil its promises in the sectors of health, education and social welfare and is taking concrete measures to strengthen grassroots institutions across Jammu and Kashmir. He said the administration is working with dedication to ensure that welfare schemes reach every deserving household, especially in rural and tribal regions.

Highlighting the objectives of the ICDS scheme, the Minister said that Anganwadi centres play a vital role in improving the nutritional and health status of children, while also creating awareness among mothers regarding healthcare, balanced nutrition, immunisation and child development.

He noted that the scheme aims to provide a strong foundation for the psychological, physical and social development of children besides helping reduce malnutrition, morbidity and mortality among women and children.

Emphasising the need for further strengthening Anganwadi services, the Minister called for sustained efforts to improve their effective functioning and outreach. He assured continued government support for enhancing infrastructure, ensuring timely availability of resources and creating better working conditions for Anganwadi Workers and Helpers so that they can discharge their responsibilities efficiently.

Congratulating the newly selected workers and helpers, Javed Rana urged them to serve the people with dedication, sincerity and compassion.

He encouraged them to work actively for the welfare of women and children and contribute meaningfully towards building a healthier and more aware society in their respective areas.

The programme was attended by officials of the concerned departments, local representatives and the public, who appreciated the government's efforts towards strengthening grassroots welfare institutions and expanding employment opportunities in the region.

## Satish Sharma calls for stronger digital infrastructure, greater youth engagement through sports

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MAY 18:** Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, today highlighted government's initiatives towards strengthening the digital infrastructure, promoting technological innovation and encouraging youth participation in sports and recreational activities across Jammu & Kashmir.

The Minister was speaking during a one day seminar organised by the Institution of Engineers (India), Jammu & Kashmir State Centre (IEI-JKSC) in observance of World Telecommunication & Information Society Day 2026 on the theme "Digital Lifelines - Strengthening Resilience in a Connected World."

The seminar was attended by the engineers, policymakers, telecom professionals, experts and public representatives to deliberate upon the growing importance of resilient digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, broadband connectivity and inclusive technological development in an increasingly interconnected

world. Addressing the gathering, Satish Sharma said that robust digital connectivity has become the backbone of modern governance and socio-economic development. He stated that the Government is focused on ensuring equitable access to digital services and strengthening communication infrastructure across Jammu & Kashmir to bridge the digital divide. The Minister emphasised the importance of adopting modern technologies and building secure and resilient digital systems capable of meeting future challenges. He appreciated the role of professional institutions like IEI-JKSC in promoting technical awareness, innovation and constructive dialogue on emerging technological issues. Later, Satish Sharma also appreciated the successful organisation of an Indoor Games Competition by the Red Team aimed at promoting sportsmanship, youth engagement and healthy recreational activities among youngsters.

The competition witnessed enthusiastic participation from youth and sports lovers who took part in various indoor games including carrom, chess, table tennis, badminton

and other recreational activities. The participants displayed remarkable talent, discipline and team spirit throughout the event.

The Minister said that sports play a crucial role in shaping the personality of youth by promoting discipline, confidence, leadership and teamwork. He stressed that both indoor and outdoor sports activities provide constructive avenues for youth engagement and contribute towards physical as well as mental well-being. The Indoor Games Competition concluded with a prize distribution ceremony in which the winners and outstanding performers were felicitated for their achievements. The organisers thanked all participants, officials and supporters for making the event successful and memorable.

The programme commenced with a formal introduction by Er. Irfan Ahmad Reshi, MIE, Honorary Secretary, IEI-JKSC, who highlighted the significance of the occasion. He emphasised the transformative role of communication technologies in governance, education, healthcare, public service delivery and economic development.

## Deputy CM completes Self-Enumeration for Census 2027, urges public participation

Other Ministers also participate in Digital Census Drive at Srinagar Civil Secretariat

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MAY 18:** In a major push towards promotion of Self-Enumeration under Census 2027, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today successfully completed his Self-Enumeration exercise at Civil Secretariat in Srinagar.

The exercise was done under the guidance of Amit Sharma, Chief Principal Census Officer and Director Census Operations & Citizen Registration, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

Ministers including Sakeena Itoo, Javid Ahmad Dar and Satish Sharma also undertook the Self-Enumeration for Census-2027.

The Self-Enumeration exercise was also undertaken by several legislators including MLAs including Tanvir Sadiq, Altaf Ahmad Wani, Hasnain Masoodi and Iftikhar Ahmad.

During the exercise, Amit Sharma guided the dignitaries regarding various features of the Self-Enumeration process and assisted them in successfully completing their digital Census submissions through the online platform.



The Deputy Chief Minister appreciated the simple, citizen-friendly and technology-driven nature of the Self-Enumeration system and expressed satisfaction over the ease and efficiency with which the Census details were submitted digitally. He described the initiative as an important step towards transparent, modern and participatory governance.

The Deputy Chief Minister called upon all citizens and

residents of Jammu & Kashmir to actively join in the Self-Enumeration process at se.census.gov.in and complete their Census submission by 31st May 2026. He stated that Census is an exercise of national importance and accurate demographic data plays a crucial role in planning, governance and implementation of welfare and developmental programmes.

He further appealed to youth, students, government employ-

ees, urban households and digitally aware citizens to come forward and actively participate in the Self-Enumeration initiative and also motivate their families and communities to undertake the exercise. The Ministers and legislators also appreciated the efforts of the Directorate of Census Operations, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, for introducing citizen-friendly digital initiatives and carrying out extensive awareness campaigns regarding Cen-

sus 2027 and Self-Enumeration across Jammu and Kashmir.

While interacting with the participants, Amit Sharma highlighted that Census 2027 is going to be India's first fully digital and paperless Census exercise and will incorporate several technology-driven features including Self-Enumeration, mobile-based digital data collection, geo-referenced mapping and real-time monitoring systems.

He informed that under the Self-Enumeration facility, the citizens can voluntarily submit their Census details online during the notified self-enumeration period before household visits by Enumerators. He stated that the initiative has been introduced to enhance convenience, transparency, citizen participation and accuracy in Census operations.

Sharma also informed the dignitaries that the Self-Enumeration portal has been designed as a secure and user-friendly digital platform with built-in validation systems and multilingual support to facilitate smooth participation by citizens across different regions.

HT EDITORIAL

## Smart signal system; need of the hour in Srinagar

The Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS) is one of the important components of the traffic management system in the cities especially in those which have been designated as smart cities in the country. This type of traffic management system provides an insight to the motorists as well as those who have to cross the roads in cities located across the country. People as a whole have welcomed ITMS and hailed the same as a revolutionary step in the traffic management system.

Like the other cities of the country Srinagar too was entitled to have this type of traffic management system. Since the summer capital of the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir is one of the smart cities of the country, people of the city should have all the up-to-date facilities. Some months back the people at helm had claimed that ITMS would be installed in the Srinagar city and people would feel relieved while driving their vehicles and moving around.

Some of the steps might have been taken by the traffic police department in this regard but a lot more needs to be done. As part of ITMS, cameras have been installed at some of the traffic lights across the city so as to catch the people found violating the traffic rules and regulations. These cameras need to be installed at all the traffic lights not only in Srinagar, but at the other district headquarters as well as towns of Kashmir division.

A significant and important feature of ITMS is the timers installed at the top of a traffic light. In this regard the Srinagar city is lagging behind and there are one or two traffic lights that have the timers installed at their top. The other traffic lights don't have this facility and as such both the motorists as well as pedestrians experience difficulties. Once the timer is working at the traffic lights it gives an idea to the motorist as well as a pedestrian as when to start and when to stop.

Yet another interesting step related to this concept is that it depends upon the wish of the traffic police personnel to keep the timer system on or not. One fails to understand the thinking of the traffic police personnel in not making the timer system a regular feature at the traffic lights. There is no need to finker with the timer system and the same needs to be understood by the traffic police personnel posted at the traffic lights.

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# THE SILENT CRISIS: Paper Leaks Eroding India's Merit and Youth Dreams

"If four things are followed — having a great aim, acquiring knowledge, hard work, and perseverance — then anything can be achieved." (Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam)



■ MUZAMIL ARIF

India's competitive examination system, the cornerstone of access to higher education and government jobs, is facing a deepening crisis of credibility. The recent cancellation of NEET-UG 2026 following allegations of a paper leak has once again exposed systemic vulnerabilities. Affecting over 22 lakh aspirants, such incidents go beyond administrative failures — they undermine the principles of fairness, merit, and the aspirations of millions of young Indians.

■ **A Recurring Nightmare for Hardworking Students**

For countless sincere students who sacrifice sleep, health, and social life in rigorous preparation, paper leaks are a bitter betrayal. Years of disciplined effort are overshadowed when seats and opportunities are allegedly secured through illicit means. This not only displaces deserving candidates but also discourages genuine talent. Families pour in hard-earned savings into coaching, only to see hopes shattered by repeated scandals.

From teacher recruitments to national entrances, reports indicate dozens of major leaks in recent years. Each episode triggers re-exams, delays, and uncertainty, intensifying pressure on an already overburdened generation of students.

■ **The Human Cost: Depression, Anxiety, and Tragedies**

The psychological impact is profound. Hardworking aspirants often battle helplessness, societal scrutiny, and family expectations, leading to chronic anxiety, loss of motivation, and eroded self-worth. In extreme cases, the despair has driven students to suicide, signalling a serious mental health crisis among the youth. Repeated scandals erode trust in institutions. Students who



prepared earnestly find their efforts nullified, pushing many into prolonged depression. This "exam scam" culture not only damages individual futures but also weakens India's long-term human capital.

■ **Questionable Competence: When Scams Secure Seats and Jobs**

An often-overlooked concern is the long-term effect on public service. Candidates who enter through compromised means may lack the depth of knowledge and skills that rigorous preparation builds. In vital professions — whether as doctors, teachers, or administrators — such gaps can compromise public welfare and institutional effectiveness.

Society rightfully expects professionals chosen on merit, not connections to unfair networks. This raises fundamental questions about equity, service quality, and public trust in governance.

■ **Legal Framework and Accountability Gaps**

The government has taken steps through the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, which came into force in June 2024. It provides for imprisonment of 3-5 years and fines up to Rs. 10 lakh for individuals, with stricter 5-10 year terms and higher penalties for organised rackets. Offences are cognisable and non-bailable.

While investigations, often led by the CBI, result in arrests, leaks continue. Weaknesses persist in question paper security, printing, transport, and

digital circulation, alongside alleged insider involvement and coaching mafias. Stronger implementation, advanced technology, and time-bound probes are urgently needed.

■ **Restoring Faith: The Way Forward**

India's youth represent its greatest demographic asset. Restoring faith in meritocracy demands collective action: technology-enabled secure examination processes, stricter regulation of coaching centres, robust mental health support systems, and swift delivery of justice.

Examination bodies, policymakers, and society must work together to prioritise transparency and reform. Reactive cancellations alone are insufficient; systemic overhaul is essential.

As student protests highlight widespread anguish, one principle remains non-negotiable: safeguarding the integrity of public examinations is a national duty. Only then can hard work remain the surest route to success, ensuring that the dreams of India's youth do not leak away.

**The author is an independent writer and social commentator who writes on various contemporary issues including environmental, social, health, political, regional, and youth-related topics. His writings focus on public awareness, social responsibility, and issues concerning society and nation-building**

## Degrees Without Jobs: India's Biggest Youth Crisis



■ SYED YUNIS BUKHARI

India is often celebrated as the "youngest nation in the world," with millions of ambitious students graduating every year from schools, colleges, and universities. Degrees are distributed in large numbers, educational institutions are expanding rapidly, and families continue to invest their life savings in the hope of securing a brighter future for their children. Yet, behind this optimistic picture lies a painful reality: a growing number of educated youth remain unemployed, underpaid, or directionless. The crisis of "degrees without jobs" has become one of the most serious challenges facing modern India.

For decades, Indian society has treated academic degrees as the ultimate symbol of success and security. Students are taught from childhood that good marks and higher qualifications guarantee employment and respect in society. As a result, lakhs of young people pursue undergraduate and postgraduate degrees every year. However, many graduates eventually discover that possessing a degree does not necessarily mean possessing employable skills. The gap between education and industry requirements has

widened dramatically.

One of the primary reasons behind this crisis is the outdated nature of the education system. In many institutions, learning still revolves around memorization, theoretical examinations, and textbook-based teaching rather than practical understanding, innovation, and problem-solving skills. Students often graduate without gaining real-world exposure, communication abilities, technical competence, or industry experience. Employers today seek candidates who can adapt, think critically, and work efficiently in practical environments, but many graduates are not adequately prepared for these demands.

Another major factor is the intense competition for limited opportunities. Every year, millions of applicants compete for a small number of government jobs because these positions are viewed as stable and prestigious. This unhealthy dependence on government employment has created frustration, anxiety, and disappointment among youth. At the same time, private sector jobs often fail to provide financial security, work-life balance, or fair salaries, leading many educated individuals to feel trapped between unemployment and exploitation.

The rapid advancement of technology and artificial intelligence has further transformed the employment landscape. Traditional jobs are disappearing while new skill-based roles are emerging. Unfortunately, many educational institutions have failed to update their curriculum according

to modern industry needs. Degrees that once guaranteed employment now struggle to provide career security in a highly competitive and technology-driven world.

The psychological impact of unemployment among educated youth is equally alarming. Many young people experience stress, depression, low self-esteem, and social pressure after repeated failures in securing employment. Families invest emotionally and financially in their children's education, expecting stability and success in return. When these expectations remain unfulfilled, frustration spreads not only among students but throughout society.

This crisis also raises serious questions about the commercialization of education in India. In recent years, numerous institutions have emerged promising quality education and successful careers, yet many fail to deliver meaningful skill development or placement opportunities. Education should empower individuals with knowledge, confidence, and practical competence, not merely provide certificates.

To address this issue, India must urgently reform its education and employment systems. Skill-based learning, vocational education, internships, entrepreneurship training, digital literacy, and industry collaboration should become central parts of academic programs. Students must be encouraged to develop creativity, communication skills, leadership qualities, and practical expertise alongside academic qualifications.

Career counseling and mental health support should also be strengthened in educational institutions to help students navigate uncertainty and pressure.

Moreover, society itself must change its mindset regarding success. Every student cannot follow the same path or secure the same type of job. Skilled trades, entrepreneurship, freelancing, and innovation should receive equal respect and encouragement. True education is not merely about earning degrees; it is about building capability, confidence, and contribution to society.

India possesses immense youth potential, but this demographic advantage can become a burden if employment opportunities and skill development do not improve. The nation must act before frustration among educated youth turns into a larger social and economic crisis. Degrees should open doors to opportunities, not become symbols of disappointment. The future of India depends not only on how many students graduate, but on how meaningfully they are prepared for life and work.

**Syed Yunis Bukhari is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Medical Lab Science, UIAHS, Chandigarh University. His writings focus on education, healthcare, youth issues, and social awareness. He can be reached at Email: yunicare786@gmail.com**

# WHEN RELIGION BECOMES A BATTLEFIELD ON SOCIAL MEDIA



WARIS NISSAR

Social media today has become one of the most powerful platforms shaping discussions within society. While it has the ability to spread knowledge, awareness, and positivity, it is increasingly being used to spread hostility, division, and unnecessary confrontation within the Muslim Ummah.

It has now become a routine on social media to witness scholar-versus-scholar content, "strong replies," and endless videos or posts attacking opposing views. Instead of encouraging wisdom, understanding, and respectful dialogue, such content often turns religious discussions into public confrontations driven by ego, mockery, and hostility.

Every day, Muslims are seen attacking fellow Muslims on social media, questioning each other's faith, and speaking as though Paradise and Hell are in human hands. In this growing

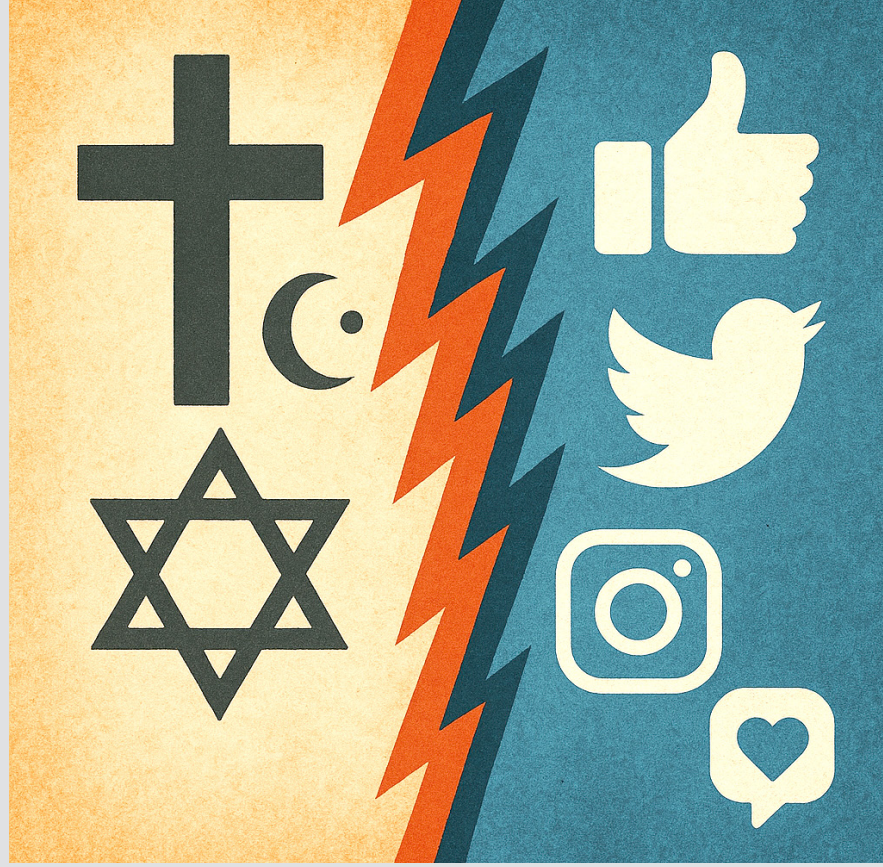
atmosphere of hatred and division, the spirit of brotherhood, compassion, and mutual respect is slowly fading away.

Islam, however, teaches a completely different path. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) did not guide people through insults, humiliation, or abusive language. He transformed hearts through mercy, patience, wisdom, humility, and noble character. Even while correcting others, he maintained dignity and compassion. His life remains a timeless reminder that guidance is spread through character and sincerity, not through hatred and arrogance.

Unfortunately, many people today focus more on exposing the faults of others than correcting themselves. Religious discussions have increasingly become competitions of ego rather than sincere efforts for reform and understanding. Calling someone towards goodness should always be done with wisdom, humility, and respect, because ultimate guidance belongs to Allah alone.

Our responsibility is to improve ourselves and encourage others towards goodness with kindness and sincerity. Whether someone accepts that advice or not is between them and Allah. It is not for us to abuse people, force them, or lower ourselves to behaviour that itself goes against the teachings of Islam.

No human being has been given the authority to decide who will enter



Paradise and who will be condemned. Such judgments belong solely to Allah. The responsibility of a believer is to

spread goodness, maintain good character, and contribute towards unity within the Ummah.

Islam does not even permit insulting people of other religions, yet today Muslims themselves are increasingly engaged in insulting and humiliating one another. This is far removed from the spirit of Islam, which teaches mercy, dignity, and respect in dealing with all people.

It is equally important to understand that not every scholar or religious speaker promotes hatred and division. Many continue to guide people towards peace, wisdom, understanding, and unity. However, certain voices fuel unnecessary hostility and sectarianism, and society must avoid becoming influenced by narratives rooted in hatred and conflict.

The Muslim Ummah was never meant to be weakened by internal hostility. Differences may exist, but they should never destroy humanity, dignity, and mutual respect. Communities rise through compassion, understanding, wisdom, and strong moral character — not through insults and division.

May Allah guide us all, unite our hearts, protect us from arrogance, hatred, and division, and grant us the ability not only to speak about the Qur'an and Sunnah, but to truly implement them in our lives with sincerity, wisdom, and good character. Aameen

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## The First Teacher at Home: Mothers and Changing Parenting



DR. SATYAVAN SAURABH

Mother is not just a word, but the deepest feeling in life. A child's first identity, first touch, first trust, and first education in the world begin with their mother. The civilization and sensitivity of any society can be gauged by the respect and importance it gives to motherhood. While modern educational institutions, digital technology, and the pursuit of careers have changed the course of life, the truth remains as strong today: a child's first teacher is their mother.

When a child is born, they don't know the language of this world. They don't understand words, but they feel emotions. They find security in their mother's lap, a sense of belonging in her touch, and trust in her voice. This is the initial education that no book or school can provide. A mother not only teaches a child how to walk and talk, but also how to understand life. What love is, how to respect others, how to be patient in grief, and how to maintain relationships—these are the first lessons taught at home by a mother.

Schools teach children science, math, and language, but moral values come from home. A child observes his or her mother's behavior every day. He or she sees how she cares for the entire family, tirelessly worries about each member, and prioritizes the family by sacrificing her own desires. These very scenes instill in a child a sense of sensitivity, empathy, and responsibility. A child learns to observe before speaking, and these observations become part of his or her personality.

A mother is the foundation of a child's character. If the home environment is loving and respectful, the child will develop a positive attitude toward society. If the mother shows kindness and empathy toward others, the child will learn the same. This is why the true education of society occurs in the home; schools merely extend it.

But with changing times, the nature of parenting is also changing. Today's world is no longer the same. Inflation,

career competition, and modern lifestyles have affected the structure of families and the nature of relationships. Previously, children grew up in joint families surrounded by grandparents, uncles, aunts, and the entire family. Now, most families have become smaller. Both parents are working, and time spent with children is becoming limited.

One of the biggest challenges facing working mothers today, especially, is balancing career and motherhood. Society often assumes that if a mother is working outside the home, she must not be devoting enough time to her children. But this assumption is incorrect. Today's mother is not limited to managing the household, but also shouldering financial responsibilities. She works in the office, returns home to care for her children, and also meets the emotional needs of her family. This dual responsibility is not easy.

Working mothers often feel guilty about not being able to devote as much time to their children as they should. However, parenting isn't determined solely by the quantity of time, but rather by the quality of that time. Even with limited time, if a mother communicates with her children, understands their feelings, and instills the right values, the impact is profound.

Today's children are becoming more self-reliant than ever before. With their parents busy, they are learning to handle even small tasks on their own. They are learning to manage their time, live independently, and adapt to changing environments. Many children are also turning to new, creative activities during their time alone. This change can be positive if children receive the right guidance and emotional support.

But this changing parenting environment also has its risks. Today, technology has completely transformed children's lives. Mobile phones, social media, and the internet have become a major part of their lives. Sometimes, parents' busy schedules leave children emotionally isolated. Instead of sharing their problems, they lose themselves in the digital world. At such times, a mother's role becomes even more crucial. She shouldn't limit herself solely to her children's education or food, but should also understand their mental state.

Communication is what a child needs most. If a mother speaks openly to her child, listens to their problems, and provides an environment for them

to express their feelings without fear, the child becomes mentally strong. However, if communication is lost at home, the child begins to feel a sense of loneliness. This loneliness can later lead to stress, depression, and behavioral problems.

Unfortunately, modern society has created an artificial image of motherhood. Social media displays images of the "perfect mother"—one who is always smiling, tirelessly works on everything, and never gets upset. But real life is different. Mothers are human, too, with their own fatigue, worries, and emotions. Therefore, it's unfair to view motherhood solely as an idol of sacrifice and self-denial. Mothers also need emotional support, respect, and rest.

Mothers have always been held in the highest regard in Indian culture. "Matru Devo Bhava" is not just a religious phrase, but a fundamental philosophy of our social life. Ironically, the labor of a mother, who is considered a symbol of respect, is often taken for granted. Housework, childcare, and family responsibilities are still not considered "work." This mindset must change. Children must be taught from childhood that a mother's labor is not merely a duty, but a wonderful example of love and dedication.

Both society and the government have a responsibility to develop policies that support motherhood. Working women need safe workplaces, adequate maternity leave, daycare facilities, and mental health support. Because stress and insecurity in mothers can affect their children.

Ultimately, it wouldn't be wrong to say that a mother doesn't just give birth to a child, she also shapes their personality. She is a child's first school, where they learn life's most important lessons. In her arms, a child learns not just letters but humanity. She teaches them the value of relationships, how to sacrifice for others, and how to maintain hope even in difficult circumstances.

Even today, when the world is rapidly changing, the importance of a mother hasn't diminished. In fact, her role has become even more crucial in these changing times.

Dr. Satyawan Saurabh, PhD (Political Science), is a poet and social thinker

## Gift to parents



SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

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

Today, young people are becoming victims of obesity, which is very unfortunate. Youth should be physically fit because they are the future of the nation. We live in an era of awareness and cutting-edge technology, yet we lack basic understanding of how important physical fitness is and how dangerous junk food and an unhealthy lifestyle can be. Fast food is not entirely bad, but we must take every health-related matter seriously and never be careless in this regard.

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

### Routine Exercise Reflects Discipline

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

### Healthy People, Healthy Nation

Today, people face severe health problems such as obesity, gastrointestinal disorders, fatty liver, heart diseases, orthopedic issues, and many other health risks.

Our body performs countless functions such as digestion, blood circulation, and waste removal. When we observe these processes, we realize how perfectly they work. We are blessed with intelligence to study and research

what already exists in the universe. We should always be grateful and hopeful for the future.

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

### Health Comes First

Today, people are motivated to achieve success and wealth but often forget to prioritize health. In reality, health comes before money, buildings, and fame.

Workers and labourers are fortunate because their jobs involve physical activity, which keeps them fit, although their income is often low. They deserve appreciation and better support.

Sportspeople are also fortunate because regular physical activity keeps them healthy while bringing recognition and financial stability.

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

### Importance of a Home Gym

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

### Benefits of Exercise

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

I encourage young people to join gyms, stay away from drugs, develop interest in sports, and become confident and disciplined individuals.

Before starting a home gym, consult a trainer for proper guidance. Involve your parents and siblings to make fitness a family habit.

Schools should establish mini gym centres to create awareness among students. Colleges should open gym facilities for students to reduce stress and promote healthy activities.

In villages, many youngsters fall into harmful habits such as smoking and drug use. It is our collective responsibility to replace these habits with healthy activities.

Regular exercise keeps us happy, healthy, and energetic.

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# The Brain Pacemakers

(Pros, Cons and the Future of Electrical Psychiatry)

Surinderpal Singh

The depression is one of the most disabling mental health disorders which is affecting millions of people across the globe. The person suffering from depression suffers physical and psychologically with symptoms ranging from persistent sadness, loss of interest in life and fatigue to suicidal thoughts. The most common traditional treatments used to counter depression includes antidepressant medications, psychotherapy and lifestyle interventions. Although this could help many persons but a significant proportion of patients suffer from treatment-resistant depression (TRD). With the advancement in medical science neuroscientists and clinicians have turned to the advanced neuromodulation therapies among which the brain pacemaker or deep brain stimulation (DBS) has emerged as a promising intervention. This therapy involves the surgical implantation of electrodes that delivers weak electrical impulses to the specific brain regions with the aim of restoring normal neuronal activity and alleviating depressive symptoms.

## The Science Behind Brain Pacemakers

A brain pacemaker is conceptually similar in functioning to a cardiac pacemaker. Whereas cardiac pacemakers are used in regulating abnormal heart rhythms the brain pacemakers modulates the dysfunctional brain circuits.

**The device typically consists of:**  
**Electrodes implanted into targeted areas of the brain which needs to be stimulated by weak electrical impulses.**

An electrical impulse generator usually implanted under the skin in the chest which can produce controlled electrical signals.

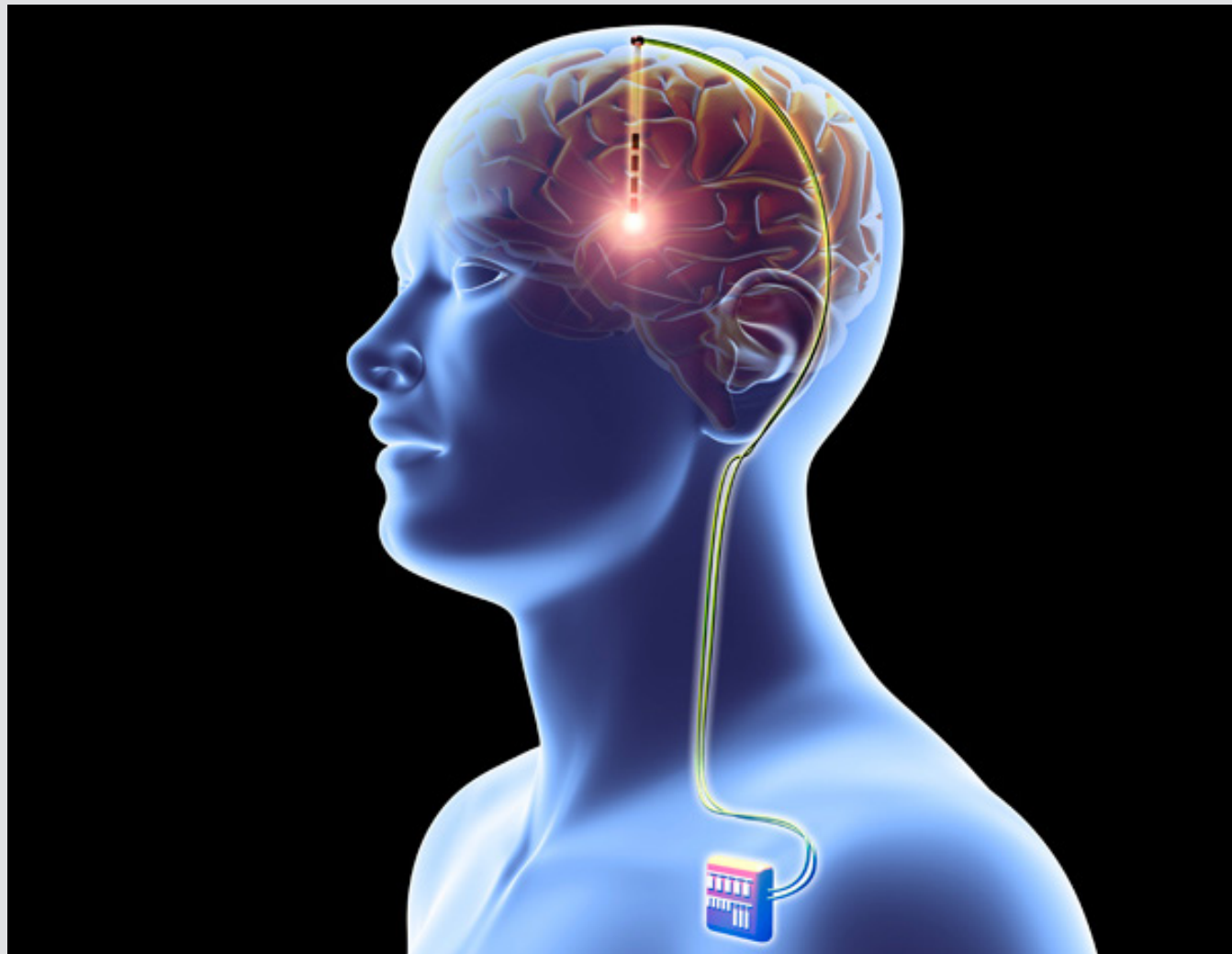
Connecting wires that link the electrodes to the electrical impulse generator.

By delivering finely tuned electrical impulses, Deep Brain Stimulation therapy aims to rebalance the neural circuits that are underactive or overactive in the brain during the depression. This therapy thus improves the mood regulation and cognitive function of the brain.

## Pros of Brain Pacemakers

### 1. Hope for treatment-resistant patients:

This therapy provides relief for the individuals who do not respond to



medication or psychotherapy.

### 2. Targeted therapy:

Unlike systemic drugs DBS therapy acts directly on the specific brain regions resulting in minimizing the widespread side effects which are a must in other therapies.

### 3. Adjustable and reversible:

The physicians can modify stimulation parameters without the need for another surgery and the device can be turned off or removed if needed.

### 4. Continuous effect:

Offers sustained symptom relief compared to medications that require daily compliance.

### 5. Potential neuroplastic benefits:

This therapy may promote long-term reorganization of neural circuits leading to lasting improvements.

## Cons of Brain Pacemakers

### 1. Invasive surgery:

The DBS Therapy requires neurosurgical implantation, which carries risks

such as infection, bleeding or device malfunction.

### 2. Cost and accessibility:

High costs limits the availability of this unique therapy to the wealthy patients or those in advanced healthcare systems.

### 3. Variable effectiveness:

The numbers of patients responding positively to the therapy is considerable but not without notable exclusions; some patients may experience little or no benefit at all during the course of the therapy.

### 4. Possible side effects:

Mood swings, anxiety, speech problems or cognitive changes may occur during the duration of the therapy.

### 5. Ethical concerns:

Direct brain manipulation raises a number of heated debates about identity, autonomy and consent of the patients.

## Cost of Brain Pacemaker Therapy

The cost of deep brain stimulation varies by country and healthcare system. On average DBS therapy is quite expensive and even its annual maintenance is costly. In regions with universal healthcare, partial or full coverage may be available, but in most cases, the expense remains a major barrier for patients.

## The Future of DBS Therapy

The field of neuromodulation is rapidly evolving. Promising directions include:

### 1. Closed-loop systems:

Future pacemakers may automatically adjust stimulation based on real-time brain activity, offering personalized therapy for the patients.

### 2. Smaller, wireless devices:

Advances in bioelectronics may make devices less invasive and more energy-efficient to use.

### 3. Combination therapies:

DBS may be paired with psychotherapy or pharmacological treatments

The cost of deep brain stimulation varies by country and healthcare system. On average DBS therapy is quite expensive and even its annual maintenance is costly. In regions with universal healthcare, partial or full coverage may be available, but in most cases, the expense remains a major barrier for patients

for synergistic effects.

### 4. Expansion of targets:

Ongoing research is testing new brain regions that may yield higher success rates.

### 5. Ethical frameworks:

With the growing circle of DBS therapy bioethicists and policymakers will develop clearer guidelines to protect patient rights while encouraging innovation.

The concept of a brain pacemaker is amongst the most exciting breakthroughs in psychiatry and neuroscience. By directly modulating dysfunctional brain circuits this therapy provides new hope for patients with symptoms of treatment-resistant depression. However the high cost of therapy combined with expensive annual maintenance, invasive nature and ethical complexities are few hurdles that need to be crossed if the therapy is to be developed as universal solution for depression. With the scientific and technological advances and development the brain pacemakers may become safer, cheaper and more effective tools for countering depression with potential for transforming the future of mental health treatment.

The author is a Faculty in Science Department Sri Amritsar Sahib Punjab

# A Call to Embrace Millets for a Healthier India

Prof. Dinesh Chandra Rai

As India marks National Nutrition Week from September 1st to 7th, under the theme "Eat Right for a Better Life," I find myself reflecting on a critical paradox. While our nation has made great strides in food production, we are still battling an unseen crisis of malnutrition. The Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2024 classifying our hunger situation as "serious." This data shows me that our problem isn't just a lack of calories; it's a deficiency of essential nutrients. In my work as a food scientist, I've come to believe that the key to creating a truly healthy and sustainable food system lies in returning to our agricultural roots: the humble millet.

In my view, the decline of millets from our national diet was a critical turning point. Following the Green Revolution, our agricultural focus shifted dramatically to high-yield, water-intensive crops like rice and wheat. This move, while successful in achieving food self-sufficiency, led to a dangerous lack of variety in our diets. We abandoned the rich diversity of our native grains for a narrow range of starches. My research confirms what our elders always knew: millets are a nutritional powerhouse. They are packed with protein, dietary fibre, and essential minerals such as iron, calcium, and zinc, which are crucial for combating common deficiencies like anaemia and bone density issues. Their low glycemic index makes them a valuable food for managing diabetes, and their naturally gluten-free nature makes them suitable for an increasing number of people with dietary sensitivities.

Beyond their health benefits, millets also offer a compelling environmental and agricultural solution. They are rightly called "climate-smart crops" because they are remarkably resilient. Compared to rice, which demands thousands of litres of water per kilogram, millets require significantly less, making them ideal for dry regions and a smart way to manage our water resources. Furthermore, their deep root systems help



prevent soil erosion and improve soil health, reducing the need for chemical fertilizers and pesticides. By bringing millets back, we are not just addressing a nutritional crisis; we are also building a more resilient and sustainable farming landscape that can adapt to the unpredictable effects of climate change.

Despite this clear potential, millets face significant hurdles. From a scientific and practical perspective, I see that farmers lack assured market prices and struggle with the high effort required for post-harvest

processing. The tough outer hull of millets demands specific machinery, which is often expensive and hard for small-scale farmers to get. On the consumer side, there's a persistent lack of awareness, particularly in urban areas, and the higher cost of processed millet products compared to staple grains like rice and wheat presents a barrier to adoption.

To truly make millets a part of our national diet, we must look to science for a new approach. My own work and that of my team have shown that millets can be

transformed from a simple grain into high-value functional foods. For instance, we use advanced analytical tools to perform bioactive profiling of millets, identifying specific anti-inflammatory or anti-cancer compounds. This allows us to move beyond a general health food and create specialized nutritional products. I have personally been involved in developing healthy snacks that blend millets with other traditional foods, such as my work in creating nutri-bars from millet and makhana (foxnut). We've also explored updating traditional methods, for example, by creating probiotic-fortified fermented millet drinks. This kind of innovation, which creates convenient, scientifically-backed, and appealing products, is essential for winning over the modern consumer.

Beyond the lab, these innovations must be supported by a comprehensive plan. We must continue to push for the integration of millets into public welfare schemes, as this creates a strong, stable demand. At the same time, we need to invest in making processing technology more widely available and helping companies bring new products to market. It is my firm belief that with the right combination of scientific innovation, smart policy, and a new appreciation for our agricultural heritage, we can build a food system that is both healthy for our people and strong for our planet.

This National Nutrition Week, let millets be more than just a passing trend. Let them be a powerful symbol of our shared effort to build a healthier, more prosperous India for generations to come.

Prof. Dinesh Chandra Rai is the Vice-Chancellor of BRA Bihar University in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, India. A distinguished academic and leading food scientist, his expertise and leadership continue to shape advancements in food science and nutrition, particularly in the context of public health and rural development. Email: dcr@bhu.ac.in

# J&K Traffic Police Gets 350 Modern Vehicles, 685 Bodycams To Strengthen Road Safety

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, MAY 18:** The Jammu and Kashmir Traffic Police has received 350 modern vehicles equipped with road safety gadgets, including 685 body-worn cameras, interceptor vehicles and patrol units, to strengthen traffic monitoring, management and regulation, officials said.

The Union Territory has registered a steady decline in accidents over the last three years owing to intensified induction of modern equipment, enforcement measures, awareness campaigns and strengthening of road safety infrastructure.

"As many as over 350 vehicles and over 1000 enforcement assets have been procured out of road safety funds to improve enforcement capabilities and ensure effective implementation of road safety measures across J&K", they said.

According to official figures, the department has procured 213 Pulsar motorcycles, 69 Royal Enfield motorcycles, 19 mobile interceptor vehicles, 16 highway patrol Innova vehicles, seven Hydra cranes, 23 cranes and three Tata Winger vehicles for field enforcement and highway management.

The enforcement agencies have also been equipped with 685 body-worn cameras to improve transparency and accountability during traffic regulation and enforcement operations.

Besides this, the department has procured 1,625 traffic night safety belts, 560 iron barricades, 687 LED traffic batons, 687 traffic safety jackets, 437 moveable barricades, 231 fixed barricades, 562 traffic cones with iron chains, 64 breath alcohol analysers and 100 first responder kits, they said.

The officials said traffic en-

forcement agencies have shifted completely to a 100 per cent e-challan system to ensure transparent and technology-driven enforcement against violators.

Official data revealed that during 2025, the Motor Vehicles Department issued 52,543 e-challans as against 40,197 in 2024. In the current year, 1,528 vehicles were seized, 1,641 driving licences suspended, 10,439 vehicles blacklisted, 1,192 registration certificates cancelled, and 300 route permits withdrawn.

Such steps to modernise the department and enhance its presence and reach to stop traffic violations have registered a steady decline in accidents over the last three years.

The number of road accidents in J&K dropped from 6,120 in 2023 to 5,726 in 2024 and further to 5,287 in 2025, they said. (Agencies)

## Kathua-Udhampur Emerge as Development Hub in Over One Decade

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, MAY 18:** Reflecting a broader shift in the development narrative, the Kathua-Udhampur Parliamentary Constituency in Jammu and Kashmir in over one decade has undergone a visible and measurable transformation.

Represented for a third consecutive term by union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh in the Lok Sabha, the constituency today presents a model of integrated growth from high-impact infrastructure to education, industry, connectivity, pilgrimage facilities, and rural upliftment.

"The last ten years in this constituency having five districts namely Kathua, Udhampur, Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban have changed the development culture and we moved from promises to performance, from files to fieldwork," said Dr Jitendra Singh.

Highlighting the developmental transformation and infrastructural progress in the constituency, Dr Singh said, "Kathua-Udhampur charts this development journey and the region stands as a living example of how sustained political will, scientific intervention, and infrastructure investment can reshape the destiny of a geographically challenging constituency into a hub of opportunity and progress."

A defining symbol of this change is the Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Tunnel on the Jammu-Srinagar highway, inaugurated by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said adding that upcoming Katra-Delhi Expressway is expected to reduce travel time to five to six hours, while the Border Roads Organisation has built over 200 bridges across the constituency.

He further said that in Udhampur, the Rs 190-crore Devika Riverfront Project has rejuvenated the sacred Devika riverfront into a modern urban space, adding, "iconic Atal Setu in Basohli over the Ravi and the Keediyān-Gandiyāl bridge in Kathua have enhanced regional mobility."

On rail connectivity he said, "the rail connectivity too has touched new heights with the dedication of the Chenab Rail Bridge, the world's highest railway bridge, and the introduction of two Vande Bharat trains between Katra and Delhi via Udhampur and Kathua."

Moreover, he said that Udhampur railway station has been renamed after Shaheed Tushar Mahajan, North India's first Industrial Biotech Park in Kathua, the BioNEST incubator set up by CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine nurtures innovation at Ghatti in Kathua, foundation stone for Orchid Bio-Pharma in Kathua signals a pharma leap with global footprints. The Central Minister said that under Aroma Mission, the "Purple Revolution" in Doda, also got a mention in the Prime Minister's 'Mann Ki Baat' and in this mission, farmers were connected to science through which the lavender cultivation changed local economies.

Dr Singh also said that the International Yoga Centre at Mantalai in Udhampur, Mansar Lake's inclusion in Swadesh Darshan and improved facilities during the Machail Yatra in Kishtwar further reflect inclusive planning. "A degree college in hilly Paddar under RUSA brought higher education to remote belts while Pakal Dul, Kiru, Kwar, Dul Hasti, and the revived Rattle project, all alone in the Kishtwar district, promise energy security and employment," he said, adding, "the Shahpur Kandi project in Kathua, revived after decades, is a testament to sustained political follow-up."

Alongwith, Dr Singh said that the past one year alone witnessed 21 major works in the constituency including, tunnel projects under NH-244 worth nearly Rs 9,800 crore approved for Doda, Kishtwar and Udhampur, the Chattergala Tunnel, Udhampur airport operationalisation and Kishtwar inclusion under UDAN signal aviation outreach to hilly terrain."

### Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office of the Naib Tehsildar, Pahalgam

#### PUBLIC NOTICE FOR OBTAINING RBA CERTIFICATE

Applicants: Riyaz Ahmad Rather S/O Nazir Ahmad Rather Sami Jan D/O Nazir Ahmad Rather Residents of Laripora Pahalgam, are applying for issuance of RBA Certificate. If anybody has any objection in this regard, he/she may file the objection in the office of the Naib Tehsildar Pahalgam within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which the case shall be processed accordingly.

Naib Tehsildar, Pahalgam

### Government Of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KALANTRA / KREERI

Subject: Application of TABASUM.NABI D/O GH NABI BHAT R/O SHEIKHPORA Tehsil KREERI for issuance of RBA certificate in favour of self for the issuance of RBA in his own favor

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of RBA in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of SHEIKHPORA of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the BHAT community having annual income 603936// the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1..GH NABI BHAT Father 59 years Govt employee
- 2...NASEEMA BAGUM Mother 54 years H/W
- 3...SABREENA NABI sister 24 years student
- 4...TABASUM.NABI self 21 years student
- 5.. HAIFA NABI sister 14 years student
- 6... ABIROO NABI sister 10 years student

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

NAIB TEHSILDAR KALANTRA

#### Public Notice

This is to notify the general public that the name recorded in the Aadhaar database is incorrect. Name shown in Aadhaar: Aimana Jan

Correct name: Ayman Jaan, Fathers name : Showkat Ahmad Mir

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

#### Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that I, Peerzada Jasarat, son of Pir Atiqullah, resident of Behnipora, Tehsil Zachaldara, District Kupwara (Jammu & Kashmir), intend to change my name as recorded in my passport. My present name in the passport is, Peerzada Jasarat

I wish to change it to, Pir Jasarat Atiq, Reason for change: To reflect the correct name as per family and academic records. If any person has any objection to the above proposed change of name, they may raise the same within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice.

#### Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill ) power connection is registered on my husband's name HASSAN MIR Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040002609 wants to be registered on my name HAFIZA BEGUM W/O HASSAN MIR If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name....HAFIZA BEGUM W/O...HASSAN MIR R/O...KALANTRA BALA BLOCK.... WAGOORA

#### Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill ) power connection is registered on my father's name Lt BASHIR AHMAD GANAI Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040000007 wants to be registered on my name ADIL BASHIR S/O BASHIR AHMAD GANAI If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name....ADIL BASHIR S/O...Lt BASHIR AHMAD GANAI R/O ...KREERI BLOCK.... WAGOORA

#### Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that the name mentioned in the Aadhaar Card of my daughter is incorrectly printed as Sheikh Mehnoor. However, her correct and official name, as per school records and other valid documents, is Mahnoor Hilal Sheikh. The details are as follows: Incorrect Name in Aadhaar Card: Sheikh Mehnoor

Correct Name: Mahnoor Hilal Sheikh, Father's Name: Hilal Ahmad Sheikh, Date of Birth: 09/11/2011, Address: Hanji Shart, Kupwara, Jammu & Kashmir - 193302. Any Objection to this correction should be brought to the attention of the UIDAI and their Seva Kendra Offices within 7 days from the date of Publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, the necessary correction procedures may be undertaken.

Mahnoor Hilal Sheikh Father's Name: Hilal Ahmad Sheikh Date of Birth: 09/11/2011 Address: Hanji Shart, Kupwara, Jammu & Kashmir - 193302

#### Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill ) power connection is registered on my Father's name MALLA MOHDA (GHULAM MOHI UD DIN MALLA ) Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040002549 wants to be registered on my name MANZOOR AHMAD MALLA S/O late MALLA MOHDA If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name....MANZOOR AHMAD MALLA S/O ...LATE MALLA MOHDA ( Ghulam Mohi ud Din Malla), R/O...KALANTRA BALA BLOCK.... WAGOORA

#### Public Notice

It is here by notified that my son's name has been incorrectly mentioned on his Aadhaar card as AZAAN BILAL bearing aadhar no 7747 5509 2197 while his correct name is IZHAAN BILAL BHAT S/O BILAL AHMAD BHAT which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office concerned Aadhaar authority of India within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name....BILAL AHMAD BHAT F/O ... IZHAAN BILAL BHAT , R/O ...KREERI

## CONDOLENCE MEETING

The Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs headed by Mr. Achal Sethi, Commissioner/Secretary to Government, Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs today held condolence meeting to express deep sorrow over the demise of Mr. Fida Hussain S/o Mohammad Akbar Rangrez who has served as Legal Assistant in the Department for more than 30 years.

The meeting was attended by senior most officers of the Department and the supporting staff. The participants expressed heartfelt condolence with the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul. They also prayed that Almighty Allah grant him the highest place in Jannah and give strength and patience to the family to bear this irreparable loss.



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IMPORTANT DATES

Event	Date
Registration & Preference Filing	09 May - 27 May 2026
1st Merit List	30 May 2026
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

COMMENCEMENT OF CLASSES

- Winter Zone Colleges: 15 June 2026
- Summer Zone Colleges: 15 July 2026

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OR VISIT COLLEGE ADMISSION FACILITATION CENTER

ADMISSION COORDINATOR: Dr. Khurshed Wani (9682169453)

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Space Devoted by Headlines Today in Public Interest

# Advisor Nasir Aslam reviews summer, Yatra and Eid preparedness in Jammu

Directs uninterrupted utilities, adequate essential stocks, robust traffic management and anti-profiteering measures during Yatra and Eid season

■ **HT NEWS NETWORK**

**JAMMU, MAY 18:** Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, today chaired a high-level meeting with senior officers to review summer preparedness, arrangements for upcoming pilgrimages, availability of food and essential supplies, and preparedness for Eid-ul-Adha celebrations across Jammu division.

The meeting was attended by Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar, IGP Jammu Bhimsen Tuti, DIG Traffic J&K Dr Haseeb Mughal, Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation Devansh Yadav, Managing Director JP-DCL Gurpal Singh, Deputy Commissioner Jammu Rakesh Minhas, heads of various departments and other senior officers.

At the outset, the Divisional Commissioner Jammu briefed the meeting about the overall summer preparedness across the division, including measures being taken by various departments to ensure uninterrupted public services during the

peak summer season.

He also presented an overview of major developmental works underway in the region, including roads, highways, bridges and other key infrastructure projects aimed at improving connectivity and public convenience.

The meeting was informed that, in view of the prevailing crisis in West Asia, sufficient stocks of essential commodities, including food grains and fuel, are available across Jammu division and supplies are being continuously replenished to avoid any disruption. The officers assured that adequate buffer stocks are being maintained to meet any eventuality during the summer and pilgrimage season.

The Divisional Commissioner further briefed the meeting about arrangements being put in place for the forthcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra, Machail Mata Yatra and Budha Amarnath Yatra in Jammu division. He informed that comprehensive preparations are underway to ensure smooth conduct of the pilgrimages,



particularly in view of the monsoon season. Measures relating to road connectivity, sanitation, health facilities, traffic regulation and emergency response systems are being strengthened to facilitate hassle-free movement of pilgrims.

The meeting also reviewed the present power supply scenario in Jammu region. The Managing Director, JP-DCL, briefed the meeting regarding ongoing measures to improve power supply infrastructure

and ensure uninterrupted electricity supply to consumers during the summer months.

He informed that steps are being taken for advance maintenance of transformers and strengthening of distribution networks to minimize disruptions.

The meeting also discussed arrangements being made for the smooth celebration of the upcoming Eid-ul-Adha in Jammu region. The Divisional Commissioner informed that market checking teams would

be constituted to prevent black marketing, hoarding and profiteering during the festival period. He said all departments are working in coordination to ensure availability of essential commodities and smooth civic services during the festival.

During the meeting, the IGP Jammu and DIG Traffic J&K briefed the chair about the security and traffic management plans being formulated for the upcoming Eid festival and major Yatras in Jammu and

Kashmir. They informed that foolproof security arrangements and comprehensive traffic regulation plans are being put in place to facilitate smooth movement of pilgrims and the general public.

Speaking during the meeting, the Advisor directed the Power Development Department and Jal Shakti Department to ensure uninterrupted electricity and drinking water supply during the peak summer season. He stressed the need for advance maintenance of transformers, rational deployment of water tankers and establishment of 24x7 grievance redressal mechanisms to address public complaints promptly.

The Advisor also directed the Health Department to keep all hospitals and Primary Health Centres fully equipped to handle heat-related illnesses. He instructed the department to maintain adequate stocks of essential medicines and ensure deployment of mobile medical units in vulnerable areas, particularly during the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra and

other pilgrimages.

He further directed the Traffic Police and Transport Department to properly regulate vehicular movement on vulnerable stretches of the National Highway and ensure adequate public transport facilities during the Yatra period.

The Advisor instructed the FCS&CA Department to maintain sufficient buffer stocks of essential commodities and intensify market checking drives to curb hoarding and profiteering of perishables during Eid and the Yatra season.

Stressing the importance of coordinated functioning among departments, the Advisor said that real-time monitoring, inter-departmental coordination and prompt response to public grievances are essential to mitigate inconvenience to the public during the summer months and upcoming festival and pilgrimage season. He called upon all departments to work in close coordination to ensure efficient service delivery and seamless management of all arrangements.

## DC Shopian launches self-enumeration drive for census-2027 at GDC Shopian

■ **HT NEWS NETWORK**

**SHOPIAN, MAY 18:** In a major push toward public awareness and community participation, a mega district-level self-enumeration awareness programme

Commenced from 17th May, will continue till 31st May, 2026 for census 2027 was successfully conducted today here at the Government Degree College (GDC) Shopian.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) who is also Principal Census Officer, Shopian, Shishir Gupta was the Chief Guest on the occasion, who emphasized the landmark shift toward citizen-led digital data collection.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner under-

scored the critical importance of accurate, timely data and called upon the entire administrative machinery to act as catalysts for public engagement and also ensure 100% data collection and message to all to aware about self-enumeration.

"Coordinated administrative efforts and grassroots public awareness are the absolute pillars for the smooth, successful execution of census 2027 across the district," the DC remarked.

He strictly urged all officers and employees to not only actively participate in the process themselves but also to rigorously motivate the general public for maximum digital onboarding, the Self-Enumeration Windows.

The DC emphasized the significance of accurate data collection and urged all officers and officials to approach the training with utmost dedication to ensure the successful implementation of census-2027 across the district.

While speaking on the occasion, the DSEO (Additional District Census Officer), Shopian, Bilqees Zahoor said that the primary aim of self-enumeration process is the counting of the population and moving away from paper-based operations to now digital census. She stressed that all details of the households must be provided and urged for taking part in the process of self-enumeration with dedication.

The comprehensive training

initiative was split into two separate, intensive sessions to ensure detailed coverage of the census modalities.

During the event, district coordinator, Naveen Ragu, master trainers, Irfan Ahmed and Bilal Ahmed and Field Trainer (FT), Feroz Ahmed Lone imparted crucial technical training to the participating officers, officials and other key stakeholders.

FT briefed the participants about the question-answer hour of self-enumeration programme, highlighting its significance in ensuring accurate data. The sessions focused on equipping the staff with the necessary skills to seamlessly manage and execute the self-enumeration

process.

The district administration has finalized a comprehensive outreach framework to assist citizens during this 15-day window, ensuring that the transition to India's first heavily paperless census model is seamless and inclusive for every household in District Shopian.

During the sessions, participants were briefed about digital registration, data accuracy and public awareness measures to ensure smooth conduct of census-2027 activities.

Among others, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz, Principal, GDC, Tariq Ahmed, officers, officials and stakeholders were present.

## DFCO conducts intensive inspections of Hotels, Canteens, Government Residential Facilities housing Move Employees

■ **HT NEWS NETWORK**

**SRINAGAR, MAY 18:** A special drive, on the directions of the Commissioner Food & Drugs Administration, J&K has been launched by the Food Wing of Drugs & Food Control Organization (DFCO), J&K, to ensure availability of safe, hygienic and quality food to employees residing in government accommodations and hotels during the ongoing move.

In this regard, a special team under the supervision of respective Assistant Commissioner, Food Safety and comprising Food Safety Officers has been constituted to carry out extensive inspections across various food establishments and residential accommodation lease for move employees by the Estates Department.

The teams inspected 14 establishments which include Government Residential Quarters Sempora, Pampore, TRC Srinagar and several other hotel accommodations hired by the Department of Estates for lodging of employees.

During the inspections, the Food Business Operators (FBOs) engaged by the Department of Estates were directed to strictly adhere to the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act and Regulations.

The inspecting officers laid special emphasis on maintaining hygiene and sanitation standards as prescribed under Schedule 4 of the Food Safety and Standards Regulations.

The food business operators concerned were also directed to ensure full compliance with the standards and regulations prescribed under Food Safety & Standards Act, 2006.

The inspection teams also instructed all FBOs to provide fresh and hygienic meals to employees and strictly refrain from the use of synthetic food colours or any unsafe ingredients in prepared food items. The officers sensitized the operators regarding safe food handling practices, cleanliness of kitchens, proper storage of raw materials and maintenance of personal hygiene by food handlers.

The Food Safety Department reiterated its commitment towards safeguarding public health and ensuring that employees staying in government accommodations are provided with safe, wholesome and quality food during the move period.

The inspection drives shall continue in the coming days across various locations to monitor compliance and enforce food safety regulations effectively.

## Committees on Govt Assurances from Bihar, Jharkhand call on Speaker JKLA

■ **HT NEWS NETWORK**

**SRINAGAR, MAY 18:** The delegates of Committee on Government Assurances of Legislative Council Bihar, Minority Welfare Committee of Committee of Legislative Assembly Bihar and Committee on Government Assurances of the Legislative Assembly Jharkhand, today visited the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly and called on the Speaker, J&K Legislative Assembly Abdul Rahim Rather.

The Speaker welcomed the committee members and highlighted the important role of the Committee on Government Assurances in ensuring accountability and transparency in governance.

He stated that engaging with the committees from other states is essential to understand the diverse legislative landscapes across our country. It is through this collaborative spirit that all assemblies can work together to uphold and strengthen the democratic values of the nation.

The high-level visit was focused on a bilateral exchange of knowledge, aiming to deepen the mutual understanding of legislative work cultures and the specific procedural functions of their respective committees.

The visit also marks a significant step in fostering inter-state cooperation between the legislative bodies.

During the interaction, the delegates shared best practices and discussed the evolving mechanisms used to ensure government accountability through the assurance process.

By studying the work culture and functioning of their counterparts, the committees aim to implement more robust frameworks for tracking and fulfilling government promises made on the floor of the House.

The visiting delegations appreciated the functioning of the J&K Legislative Assembly and expressed satisfaction over the exchange of knowledge and best practices during the visit.

## DC Budgam chairs interdepartmental meeting on mining and mineral extraction

Directs for ensuring zero tolerance to illegal mining in district

■ **HT NEWS NETWORK**

**BUDGAM, MAY 18:** An Inter-Departmental District Level meeting was today convened under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan to review, assess, and strengthen the regulatory and monitoring mechanisms for mineral extraction and transportation in the district. During the meeting, a review of the existing enforcement framework was undertaken and the functioning of various departments involved in mineral regulation was assessed in detail. The DC directed the Irrigation and Flood Control Department, Budgam, to maintain strict vigil over Nallah Sukhnag, Doodhganga, and Shaliganga and

other nallah's of the District to ensure that no illegal extraction of minerals takes place from these water bodies. The District Mineral Officer (DMO), Budgam, was directed to further strengthen the vigilance and ensure real-time monitoring across district. The Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO), Budgam, was instructed to initiate strict action against vehicles and machinery, found involved in illegal mineral extraction and transportation activities. The DC stressed that illegal mining and unauthorized transportation of minerals shall not be tolerated under any circumstances and reiterated that a zero-tolerance policy shall be adopted against all violators. All Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) were directed to

closely monitor incidents of illegal mining within their jurisdictions and ensure prompt legal action against offenders. The R&B Department was directed to closely monitor road infrastructure affected by the movement of overloaded vehicles and to ensure the installation of proper checkpoints and barricades at vulnerable locations.

The department was further instructed to coordinate with enforcement agencies to prevent damage to public infrastructure caused by illegal mineral transportation.

The DC also directed all concerned departments to ensure time-bound implementation of the decisions taken during the meeting and to submit regular progress reports for review. UNI

## DYSS Baramulla accelerates Youth Engagement through Multi-Zonal Sporting Events

Inspiring Fitness, Discipline, Drug-Free Living

■ **HT NEWS NETWORK**

**BARAMULLA, MAY 18:** District Youth Services and Sports (DYSS) Baramulla, continues to successfully organize Inter-School Zonal Level Competitions across various educational zones of the district under the inspiring banner of Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan, aiming to channelize the energy of youth towards sports, wellness, and a drug-free future.

In a vibrant display of enthusiasm, discipline, and sporting

spirit, multiple zones conducted a series of competitions in different disciplines, witnessing active participation from hundreds of young athletes from various government and private educational institutions.

Zone Dangerpora organized the Inter-School Zonal Level Yoga Competition for Under-14 and Under-17 Boys at High School Shiva, where around 80 students participated with great zeal and showcased remarkable flexibility, focus, and dedication.

The event highlighted the

importance of yoga in promoting physical and mental well-being among students. Meanwhile, Zone Dangiwaacha successfully conducted the Inter-School Zonal Level Kho-Kho Competition for Under-14 Girls at two clusters—Cluster Bahrapora and Cluster Dangiwaacha.

The competitions witnessed overwhelming participation, with 156 students competing in Cluster Bahrapora and 120 students participating in Cluster Dangiwaacha.

The spirited performances and sportsmanship displayed by the young participants added vibrancy and excitement to the event. Adding further momentum to the district-wide sporting campaign, Zone Singpora Pattan organized the Inter-School Zonal Level Kabaddi Competition for Under-14 and Under-17 Boys, where more than 150 students participated enthusiastically. The event served as a platform for students to demonstrate teamwork, strength, and tactical skills while embrac-

ing the values of discipline and healthy competition.

Similarly, Zone Fatehgarh conducted the Inter-School Zonal Level Sports Competition for Under-14 and Under-17 Boys at Government Higher Secondary School Fatehgarh, with participation from around 70 students.

The event witnessed energetic performances and reinforced the department's commitment to nurturing sporting talent at the grassroots level.

# Jairam Ramesh urges Rajnath Singh to reconsider Great Nicobar Project, warns of 'Ecological Disaster'

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, MAY 18:** Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Sunday urged Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to reconsider the controversial Great Nicobar Island Project, arguing that the massive infrastructure plan was being justified on "overriding security considerations" despite being "essentially a commercial venture" that could trigger severe ecological damage.

In a statement shared on platform X, Ramesh said he had earlier written to the union Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change and the union Minister of Tribal Affairs regarding concerns over the project, and had now addressed a detailed letter to the Raksha Mantri questioning the government's rationale behind the development initiative.

Referring to the government's May 1, 2026 press note titled "The Great Nicobar Island Project: FAQs," the Congress leader alleged that the official clarifications pre-

sented a "completely false picture" regarding environmental and tribal clearances granted to the project.

"On May 10, 2026, I had written to the union Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change on how these FAQs present a completely false picture on the project's environmental clearances which, in reality, have been given on very dubious grounds," Ramesh said.

He added that he had also written on May 13 to the union Minister of Tribal Affairs, alleging that the government had "totally misrepresented" compliance with the provisions of the Forest Rights Act, 2006 during the project's approval process.

According to Ramesh, the clearances "flagrantly violate, in letter and spirit, the individual and collective rights given to tribal communities by Parliament."

The Congress leader said that while there could be "no two opinions" on the need to strengthen India's national defense capabilities or project strategic power cred-



ibly, the government's argument that the Great Nicobar Island Project was essential for security purposes required closer scrutiny.

"Now I am writing to you since the project, which is essentially a commercial venture and is facing growing public criticism because of the ecological damage it will cause, is being sought to be justified by the Government of India supposedly on over-

riding security considerations," he wrote in the letter to Rajnath Singh.

Ramesh pointed to existing defence infrastructure in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands that, according to him, could be expanded with far lower environmental costs than the proposed mega project.

He noted that INS Baaz, located in Campbell Bay on Great Nicobar Island, had been

commissioned in July 2012, but plans to extend its runway and build a naval jetty had been awaiting approval for nearly five years.

"Plans for at least trebling the length of the existing runway and making a naval jetty have been awaiting approval for almost five years. These plans have far less adverse environmental impacts as well," he said.

Ramesh also referred to

several long-standing strategic assets under the Andaman and Nicobar Command that could be strengthened instead of pursuing the current project in its present form.

"These include INS Kardip, INS Kohassa, INS Utkrosh, INS Jarawa, and the Car Nicobar Air Force Station," he wrote.

The Congress leader further questioned the strategic justification being offered for the transshipment port and township proposed under the Great Nicobar Island Project.

"The transshipment port and the township that are an essential part of the Great Nicobar Island Project do not enhance our country's military capability in any way. Yet, now that suddenly has emerged as a major justification for them," he said.

The Great Nicobar Island Project, one of the government's most ambitious infrastructure initiatives, envisages the development of a mega transshipment port, airport, township and power infrastructure on the ecologically sensitive island located in the Andaman and

Nicobar archipelago. The project has faced criticism from environmentalists, scientists and tribal rights activists over concerns relating to deforestation, biodiversity loss and the impact on indigenous communities, including the Shompen tribe.

Reiterating his opposition to the project in its current form, Ramesh warned that the development plan could have irreversible ecological consequences.

"Finally, I wish to reiterate that the Great Nicobar Island Project in its present shape and form is a recipe for ecological disaster," he said.

The Congress leader urged the Defence Minister to seriously examine alternative proposals that, according to him, had also been suggested by distinguished naval officers.

"I would urge you, as the nation's Raksha Mantri, to seriously consider the above alternatives that have, in fact, been proposed by distinguished naval officers themselves in their writings," Ramesh said. (UNI)

## Delhi Govt to provide collateral-free loans up to Rs 10 Cr for women startups

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, MAY 18:** The Delhi government has arranged for an option of collateral-free loans up to Rs 10 crore for the women self-help groups and startups. Interestingly, the government has also decided to be the guarantor for these loans, the Chief Minister's Office said.

According to Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, the Delhi Government is working on a large scale to make women of the capital self-reliant, entrepreneurial, and economically empowered.

She has announced that the Delhi Government will now regularly provide suitable platforms for indigenous products in malls and large shopping complexes so that local products can get a wider market.

On Saturday evening, during her address at the inauguration ceremony of the two-day 'Mega Self Help Group (SHG) Mela-2026', she said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has consistently been presenting before the country the vision of 'Vocal for Local', 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', and 'One District, One Product'.



Carrying forward the same vision, this mela is a strong effort to promote indigenous products prepared by women and connect them with the market, Gupta added. She said that women of the country, while staying at home, are not only increasing their family income through small-scale industries and handmade products, but are also strengthening the country's economy.

Gupta said that people often run after foreign brands, whereas handicrafts, khadi, household products, and handmade items made in India are second to none in quality. And the only requirement is better branding and marketing of these products.

Gupta said that currently, there is a need to provide national and international recognition to household and handmade products being prepared by women, and appealed to people to use more local and indigenous products instead of foreign goods.

On the occasion, Member of Parliament Yogendra Chandolia, MLA Kulwant Rana, DM of North-West District Soumya Saurabh, senior officials of the district administration, representatives of various banking institutions, and a large number of women associated with self-help groups were present.

The mela was organised by the North-West District Administration.

Gupta said that the government wants every woman in the capital to join self-help groups, prepare their own products, and take them to the market.

Various banks were also part of the event so that the banking and financial access of self-help groups could be strengthened. Around 24 self-help groups participated in the initiative and exhibited products like handicrafts, crochet work, khadi, household products, food items, and other handmade goods. (UNI)

# Delhi tops logistics rankings, preparing for green warehousing & freight: CM

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, MAY 18:** Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said that the national capital has secured the highest category position across the country, when it comes to the Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) 2025 Index.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta described it as a matter of pride for the national capital. She credited the achievement to the government's continuous efforts towards strengthening logistics infrastructure, enhancing

multimodal connectivity, improving ease of doing business, and promoting technology-driven governance.

According to Gupta, LEADS Index evaluates the States and Union Territories on parameters such as logistics infrastructure, logistics services, regulatory framework, digital integration, sustainability, and stakeholder perception.

In this index, the classification of the states and UTs is done under four categories, including Exemplary, High Performer, Accelerators, and

Growth Seekers, with "Exemplary" being the highest category.

Delhi has shown continuous progress by moving from the "Achiever" category in LEADS 2023 and 2024 to securing the top position in the country this year, Gupta added.

She further shared that under leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Gati Shakti Yojana, the state government has chalked out a plan Logistics Plan for city, which has already received approval and will soon be notified.

This will make urban freight movement, last-mile delivery systems, and urban freight management more streamlined and efficient.

The Chief Minister said that through the Delhi Single Window System, the process of approvals and permissions related to logistics and industrial investments has been simplified and expedited. She also said that as part of the pothole-free roads campaign, large-scale improvements have been carried out on national capital's major and internal roads.

Simultaneously, the major economic corridors such as the Urban Extension Road-II (UER-II) and the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway are being developed, thereby strengthening freight transportation and regional connectivity, Gupta added.

Chief Minister said that her government is finalising the Warehousing and Logistics Policy, which is aimed to reduce congestion in freight movement, eliminate regulatory complexities, and address gaps in logistics infrastructure of the national capital.

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION AWANTIPORA.

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER  
NIT NO: FRESH-16/EEA/R&B OF 2026-27/1277-87 | DATED: 18-05-2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways sand other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost	T.D Cost	Time	MHA	Class
1.	Repairment for DYS Toilet at High School Doodimarg (S.No 1372).	0.35	200/-	15 days	Samagra Shiksha 2025-26	DEE

Earnest money (In Rupees) : 2% of Adv. Cost

Position of AAA: Accorded vide order No: 423-Chirag of 2026 Dated: 13-02-2026.

Project Authority: Directorate of Samagra Shiksha J&K UT.

Position of funds: Committed.

The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be viewed/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	18-05-2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	18-05-2026
3	Bid submission Start Date	19-05-2026
4	Bid Submission End Date	29-05-2026 4:00 PM
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	30-05-2026 12:00 PM

All other terms and conditions shall be available in website www.jktenders.gov.in.

DIPK: 1387/26 | Dated: 18-05-2026

Sd/- Executive Engineer R&B Division Awantipora

## GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR Office Of The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt. Ground Water Division Srinagar

Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar. | E-mail:- suresh05.gupta@jk.gov.in Tel./FaxNo:-0194-2411285

EXTENSION NOTICE 1ST.

Subject: 1. Repair to the Departmental Vehicles and Compressors including POL by way of (M. Oil Change to Elgi Compressor 575-200, of PHE Ground Division Srinagar).  
2. AMC for the Departmental Vehicles namely Scorpio JK01-W9211, Bolero JK01W-5914, Tata Yodha JK01BA-0835 and Bolero Camper JK01BC-1179.  
3. AMC for 35 KVA Generator and Honda 2800 Genset at PHE Ground Water Division Srinagar.

Reference: This office Fresh e-NIT No. 12-JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2025-26, issued vide endorsement No: JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/Camp./ 1011-20, dated: 05-05-2025. Bearing Tender ID No. 2026\_PHE\_309664\_1\_2 & 3.

Due to "NO/ POOR Response" for the above mentioned works advertised vide e-NIT No. and Tender ID No's under reference. Which was scheduled to be downloaded till 18-05-2026 Up-to 11:00 AM are extended as per the details given below: -

S.No.	Item	Fresh Date
1.	Period of submission of bids	01-06-2026 Up-to 11:00 AM
2.	Date of opening of tenders	02-06-2026 11.00 AM

NOTE: All other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the aforesaid e-NIT issued vide above referred endstt: nos.

No: -JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/Camp./1609-18 | Dated: 18-06-2026.

DIPK: 1379/26 | Dated: 18-05-2026

Sd/- Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.  
Ground Water Division Srinagar.

# Rayudu Calls Narine The 'Best IPL Player Of All Time' After Latest Heroics

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**KOLKATA:** Ambati Rayudu has no doubt whatsoever: Sunil Narine is the "best IPL player, according to me. [Of] all time." It came after Narine had returned 2 for 29 from his four overs against Gujarat Titans (GT) to play a key role in a 29-run Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) win in IPL 2026, and it was difficult to argue: Narine has done it year after year for KKR, and doesn't look like he is in the mood to stop.

"Proper match-winner with the ball, [and] with the bat," Rayudu continued on ESPNcricinfo's TimeOut show after Narine was named Player of the Match in his 200th IPL appearance. "There have been such great players in the IPL, but this guy always stands out. He's on the top of the list for me."

Sanjay Bangar, sitting alongside Rayudu, wasn't as effusive, but did place Narine in his "top five" for greatest IPL performers and called him "a legend of the league".

"Some great names have plied their trade in this league, but yes, longevity is a factor," Bangar said. "He had had to also overcome a lot of other problems in terms of how his action was questioned on many occasions, but he seems to have found another way of delivering with the same overspin that you generally associate with his skill set, [while] retaining the ability to get the ball turning both ways. And that puts massive doubts

in the batter's mind. I think some of those qualities make him a legend of the league."

Narine is only behind Yuzvendra Chahal (230 wickets) and Bhuvneshwar Kumar (220 wickets) on the list of highest wicket-takers in the IPL, with 205 against his name.

He is also the most-capped overseas player in the IPL, a one-team man who has played every season with KKR since 2012, which was the first time KKR won the IPL and he took 24 wickets at an economy rate of 5.47. When KKR won the title again in 2014, Narine was back at the forefront, with 21 wickets at 6.35. A decade on, in 2024, when KKR won the title for the third time, Narine picked up 17 wickets at 6.69. This season, he is going at 6.79.

Not once in all these seasons has his economy rate crossed the eight-an-over mark. Which made the 7.25 on Saturday seem "regulation", as Bangar put it: "These are regulation figures for him. He has not done anything extraordinary, he has just done what he does on a regular basis."

Bangar spoke of an off-air discussion on Narine with Rayudu, where he quizzed the former Mumbai Indians (MI) and Chennai Super Kings (CSK) batter - 175 matches in total there across 12 seasons - on his plan of action against Narine when they faced off.

"He [Rayudu] said that he tended to

bat defensively against him [Narine], those ones and two were the ways to go," Bangar said. "But there have been instances where people have tried to slog-sweep him, play off the back foot through the off side, but nobody has actually taken him down in the manner in which the other spinners, some great spinners, have [been dominated] in the IPL."

"He seems to be a complete revelation in terms of [how] none of the batters over the last 12 or 13 years [Narine is in his 15th year] that he has played in the IPL has been able to dominate him."

Rayudu also provided an insight on why Narine is often more successful when some others - Rashid Khan, for example, returned none for 57 on Saturday - struggle for consistency in a batter-dominated world.

"I think Rashid Khan has a unique problem, especially on pitches like that, because everything is a topspinner," Rayudu said. "When that kind of a ball falls on the surface, it tends to come on quickly to the bat. But with Sunil Narine, everything he bowls tends to just hold in the surface. That's something that always happens. His ball never skids onto the bat."

"So I just feel, as a batsman, it's always tough to line up someone like a Sunil Narine, because the ball tends to hold. You tend to lose your shape more often than not."



## 'It is simple math' for GT but the 'upper ceiling' complicates matters

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**LUCKNOW:** Shubman Gill (85), B Sai Sudharsan (53\*) and Jos Buttler (57) all hit half-centuries at Eden Gardens on Saturday and at least one of them was in the middle for every over of the Gujarat Titans (GT) chase, but they still fell short 29 runs. They finished on 219 for 4 in a chase of 248 against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), leaving them without a Q next to their name on the IPL 2026 points table.

On its own, it was a strong batting performance, but not good enough on the day. And Ambati Rayudu, suggested that a score of around 220 is about the best they are capable of, which, as we have discovered in IPL 2026, is often not enough. "They batted well, given the conditions and the kind of bowling they faced. Especially Shubman Gill - some exceptional hitting," Rayudu said. "Buttler struggled a little bit, only because of the nature of the surface and the bowling. Buttler was anticipating balls he was not getting. He was premeditating a lot. Buttler at his best actually just sees and reacts. Sanjay Bangar agreed that Buttler was "not at his very best" but went back to GT not finding batters beyond the top three who instil confidence from the outside. Nishant Sindhu and Rahul Tewatia, the two batters used by GT on Saturday outside of the three half-centurions, scored four runs in eight balls between them.

"If GT accept that or not, that is their prerogative, but from an outside view, it does seem to be an issue," Bangar said. "If you have to score targets further than 225, it will come back and hurt them." Parthiv Patel, GT's batting coach, addressed the press conference at Eden Gardens after the game, and did not find their inability to chase down the stiff target too worrying. Parthiv said Sai Sudharsan's elbow injury, which forced him to retire hurt in the third over and return only in the 17th over, came at the wrong time since he was batting fluently on a 13-ball 23 before the injury. He also defended sending Sai Sudharsan out with three-and-a-bit overs of the chase left instead of a designated finisher.

"If you see the last six matches, we won five games, and we chased and won two-three games. So I don't think [it is worrying]," Parthiv said. "Washington Sundar has made a fifty at the start, now also the way he's been batting, he hasn't got out, and has finished games. So I don't think it is a matter of concern or we are struggling in that department. Even today, chasing nearly 250, we scored 220. So I don't think that's the thing. "Sai Sudharsan has the ability... I know it doesn't look like he hits the ball [hard], but he hits the ball really hard. Even from a strike-rate perspective, there is no problem. He has both the games. Even when he came to bat after the 17th over, he could still hit the ball, he could still hit the sixes, he could still find the boundaries.

## Pathirana walks off with hamstring issue against GT

Pathirana's KKR debut lasted just eight balls after he suggested hamstring discomfort in his second over

AGENCIES

**KOLKATA:** Fast bowler Matheesha Pathirana lasted just eight balls on his debut for Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in IPL 2026, leaving the field after some discomfort to his hamstring during the second innings against Gujarat Titans (GT) in Kolkata.

The slinger from Sri Lanka came in as an Impact Player during KKR's bowling innings and was introduced in the fourth over. He conceded seven runs in



his opening over. But during his second over, Pathirana suggested discomfort near his hamstring region after

delivering the first delivery, and went on the floor. He required treatment from the team physio and attempted another delivery, but it was a half-hearted one, holding himself back from going at full tilt. After a conversation with KKR captain Ajinkya Rahane, Pathirana left the field, two balls into his second over.

Pathirana's participation in IPL 2026 was a much-awaited one at KKR, bought for INR 18 crore (approx US\$ 1.875 million), but one that was delayed owing

to his fitness issues. At the 2026 T20 World Cup, Pathirana left Sri Lanka's game against Australia midway through a spell and eventually missed the whole tournament. Then, when it came to his IPL participation, Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) required Pathirana to pass fitness tests on his calf injury before giving him a no-objection certificate (NOC). The certificate was issued to Pathirana only four games into KKR's IPL campaign, during a time the franchise lost all their games.

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