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No Drug Smuggler Will Be Spared From Jammu and Kashmir: LG Sinha

LG leads massive anti-drug march in Bandipora, vows intensified crackdown on narco-terror networks

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday declared an uncompromising offensive against narco-terror networks in Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that the campaign against drug smugglers would continue until the region is completely freed from the menace of narcotics.

Leading a large anti-drug public march in Bandipora, the Lieutenant Governor said the administration had launched an unprecedented operation to dismantle drug trafficking networks and punish those responsible for destroying the lives of young people and families.



"The action against narco-terrorists and drug smugglers will continue. It will not stop until every drug smuggler is eliminated from the sacred soil of Jammu and Kashmir," Sinha said while addressing a massive gathering.

The Lieutenant Governor said the government's campaign was not limited to law enforcement alone but was also focused on rehabilitation, awareness and restoring dignity to families affected by drug addiction.

Recalling his pledge made 45 days ago, Sinha said the administration had committed itself to dismantling the narco-terror ecosystem while simultaneously building a social

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LG visits sacred Hazratbal Shrine; reviews preparations for the upcoming auspicious festival of Eid ul-Adha

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today visited the sacred Hazratbal Shrine to review the prepara-



tions for the upcoming auspicious festival of Eid ul-Adha.

He was accompanied by Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi.

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Jammu City Sizzles at 40.3°C Amid Continuing Heat Wave

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, MAY 25: Jammu city continued to reel under intense heat wave conditions on Sunday as the maximum temperature touched 40.3 degrees Celsius, offering little relief to residents across the region.

According to data released by the Meteorological Department, Jammu district recorded a minimum temperature of 24.6°C, while Katra emerged as the second hottest location in the Jammu division with a maximum temperature of 37.8°C and a minimum of 22.6°C.

Other areas in the region recorded comparatively moderate temperatures, with Banihal registering 25.6°C, Batote 28.1°C, and Baderwah 27.2°C.

A MeT official said the region experienced generally dry weather

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Planned Blasts Targeted Key Government Buildings In Lucknow : NIA

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAY 25: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has uncovered an alleged conspiracy by accused linked to the Red Fort car blast case to carry out major terror attacks in Lucknow, targeting government buildings and crowded public locations, official sources said on Monday.

According to investigators, two key accused — Dr Muzammil Shakeel and Dr Shaheen Saeed — travelled from Faridabad to Lucknow between August 25 and 30 last year as part of what officials described as a carefully planned reconnaissance mission.

The probe revealed that the accused surveyed several prominent sites,

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"Work With Sincerity And Dedication": CM To Regularised School Education Workers



HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: Omar Abdullah on Sunday handed over regularisation orders

to Contingent Paid Workers (CPWs) of the School Education Department, asking the employees to serve with sincerity,

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Govt Committed To Inclusive Development And Strong Public Institutions : Omar Abdullah

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Sunday reaffirmed his government's commitment to inclusive development, strengthening public institutions and responsive governance while holding a series of high-level meetings with legislators, university heads and senior officials at the

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CM Omar Hands Over SRO-43 Appointment Letters

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today handed over appointment orders to beneficiaries under SRO-43 and the J&K Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme (RAS) at the Civil Secretariat here, reaffirming the government's commitment towards supporting families who have suffered irreparable personal loss.

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Over 300 Tourists Rescued In 7-Hr Operation After Gulmarg Gondola Malfunctions Amid Heavy Rain



HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: Over 300 tourists were left stranded mid-air for hours inside 65 cabins of the famous Gulmarg Gondola cable car after a major technical snag halted Asia's highest ropeway, causing panic among the holidayers before they were rescued. A massive, multi-agency rescue operation that lasted seven hours ensured the safe evacuation of all passengers, some of whom were trapped in cabins dangling nearly 500 ft above the ground, officials said.

Operations for both phases of the cable car

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I Am Monitoring The Rescue Operation: LG Sinha

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: A joint rescue operation is currently underway in Gulmarg to ensure the safe evacuation of tourists stranded in cable car cabins following a technical malfunction earlier today.

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Situation Completely Under Control, No Cause For Panic: CM Omar

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: More than 300 tourists stranded mid-air inside 65 cabins of the famed Gulmarg Gondola were rescued safely on Monday after a

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West Asia Crisis Will Lead To Higher Fuel Costs For Common People: FM

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

MUMBAI, MAY 25: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday warned that the continuing crisis in West Asia is no longer merely a diplomatic or geopolitical concern, but a growing economic challenge that will directly affect ordinary citizens through rising fuel costs and disruptions in trade and supply chains.

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CS reviews implementation of PM's reform agenda

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high-level review meeting with Administrative Secretaries of all departments to assess the Action Taken Reports (ATRs) on implementation of actionable points emerging from the Prime Minister's interaction with Secretaries to the Government of India, with special emphasis on strengthening the "Whole of Government" approach, enhancing Ease of Living through end-to-



end digitization of public services and undertaking comprehensive process reforms across the country.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary reiterated that the core objective of these re-

forms is to establish integrated governance, citizen-centric administration and technology-driven systems aimed at ensuring efficient, transparent and accountable delivery

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SEC Clears UNDP Tie-Up for Disaster Response in J&K: CS

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today chaired the meeting of the State Executive Committee (SEC) of the Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRR&R) to review and

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

No Drug....

movement to protect the youth from substance abuse.

"Our agencies have launched an unprecedented drive to dismantle narco-terrorists and their hidden networks. No drug smuggler, drug peddler, or anyone seeking to poison our society is beyond reach," he said.

He stated that several hidden drug supply chains operating for years were now being identified and dismantled, adding that drug cartels which had flourished for decades were being systematically destroyed.

The Lieutenant Governor said Jammu and Kashmir stood united in its resolve to eradicate the drug menace and called upon families, teachers, religious leaders and citizens to actively participate in the fight against addiction.

"The government alone cannot win this battle. We need the support, vigilance and commitment of every responsible citizen to protect our society and our future generations," he said.

Sinha also announced that the administration would soon introduce a comprehensive rehabilitation policy aimed at helping affected youth return to mainstream life through employment opportunities, education and skill development programmes.

"Our goal is that not a single young person is left behind. The success of a drug-free Jammu and Kashmir will be measured not only by arrests but by the number of lives we rebuild and families we restore," he said.

During the programme, the Lieutenant Governor inaugurated the Waqar Knowledge Centre in Bandipora under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan initiative.

The centre has been established to provide constructive engagement and rehabilitation support for recovering addicts through sports facilities, a library, counselling support and guidance on education, employment and government welfare schemes.

Officials said similar centres are planned across all blocks of Bandipora district as part of a broader effort to strengthen community resilience against drug abuse and support long-term rehabilitation initiatives.

LG visits sacred....

Chairperson, J&K Waqf Board; Mufti Reyaz ul Haq, Chief Imam Hazratbal Shrine; Shri Anshul Garg, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Shri Rajiv Omprakash, DIG CKR; Dr. GV Sundeeep Chakravarthy, SSP Srinagar; Shri Akshay Labroo, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar; Shri Faz Lul Haseeb, Municipal Commissioner Srinagar and officials from all line departments.

During his visit, the Lieutenant Governor took appraisal of the water supply, sanitation, electricity and other facilities being put in place for smooth conduct of the festival. He instructed the senior officers to ensure that every arrangement is carried out with diligence.

"The festival reminds us of the virtues of humility and charity, inspiring us to dedicate ourselves to the greater good of humanity. We will ensure that the celebration is not only well-organized but also truly grand, marked by devotion and festive fervor," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Spiritual leaders, Waqf officials, senior officers of Police and Civil administration and prominent citizens were also present.

"Work With.....

commitment and dedication for the improvement of the department and public service delivery.

The regularisation orders were distributed during an official function held at the Civil Secretariat in Srinagar in the presence of Sakina Itoo and senior government officers.

Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Special Secretary School Education Ghulam Rasool Mir, Director School Education Kashmir Naseer Ahmed Wani and other senior officials attended the programme.

The Chief Minister personally handed over the orders to workers from Ganderbal and Bandipora districts and congratulated them on their regularisation. He said the employees now carried greater responsibility towards strengthening the School Education Department and ensuring better services for the public.

Omar Abdullah expressed hope that the regularised workers would continue to perform their duties with honesty and dedication while contributing to the functioning of educational institutions across Jammu and Kashmir.

The beneficiaries thanked the government for resolving their long-pending issue and said the decision had brought stability and relief to their families after years of uncertainty.

Govt Committed.....

Civil Secretariat here. The Chief Minister said the government remains focused on addressing public concerns effectively and ensuring balanced development across all regions of Jammu and Kashmir.

During the meetings, several legislators from the Pir Panjal region raised issues related to infrastructure, public welfare and developmental requirements in their constituencies. The delegation included Javid Iqbal, Muzaffar Iqbal Khan, Choudhary Mohammed Akram and Ifthikhar Ahmed.

Separately, M. Y. Tarigami and Shabir Ahmad Kullay met the Chief Minister and discussed constituency-related developmental matters and public issues.

Aga Syed Muntazir Mehdi also called on the Chief Minister and discussed the overall situation in Budgam district, including arrangements linked to the forthcoming month of Muharram.

The Chief Minister also reviewed progress in

the education sector during meetings with senior academic administrators. Vice Chancellor of Cluster University Srinagar, Prof. Mohammad Mobin, briefed him about recent academic and developmental initiatives undertaken by the university.

Vice Chancellor of Central University of Kashmir, Prof. A. Ravinder Nath, also apprised the Chief Minister of ongoing academic expansion and institutional development programmes.

In the healthcare sector, Director of Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, Prof. M. Ashraf Ganie, discussed several important issues concerning the functioning and future development of the institute.

The Chief Minister also held discussions with Arjun Dhawan, Vice Chairman and Managing Director of Hindustan Construction Company, regarding ongoing infrastructure projects being executed in Jammu and Kashmir.

Officials said the meetings focused on accelerating development works, improving public service delivery and strengthening coordination between the government and public institutions.

CM Omar....

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Satish Sharma, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar and other senior officers were present during the distribution event.

The outstation Minister, officers and beneficiaries participated in the event through video conferencing.

A total of 52 appointees hailing from different districts of Jammu and Kashmir received appointment orders under SRO-43 and RAS during simultaneous events held in Srinagar and Jammu.

Addressing the newly-appointed beneficiaries, the Chief Minister said that the government was only fulfilling its responsibility and not extending any favour.

"The first thing I would like to say is that the government that has given you these orders here and in Jammu is not doing you a favour; it is our duty. While fulfilling this duty, we also realise that you have had to make a huge sacrifice to get these government orders," the Chief Minister said.

Drawing a distinction between ordinary recruitment process and the circumstances under which the beneficiaries had become eligible for compassionate appointment, the Chief Minister said that unlike regular aspirants who secure jobs through examinations and interviews, the appointees under these schemes have endured profound personal tragedies.

"To get a government job, we usually ask our children to pass examinations and interviews. But the test you have faced has been far more difficult because you had to lose someone dear to you to reach this stage. That is why I say we are not distributing these orders as a favour, but rather repaying a moral obligation," he added.

The Chief Minister observed that the government functions as one collective family and emphasized the importance of standing together in times of grief and hardship.

"We want this government and all of us working within it, whether in the Secretariat or outside, to function as one larger family. We must not only share each other's pain but also support one another during difficult circumstances. This initiative is a small step in that direction so that your families can move forward and not suffer any further hardship," he said.

Urging the appointees to discharge their duties with sincerity and dedication, the Chief Minister said public service should always remain centred on helping people and contributing positively to society.

"Our only expectation from you is that wherever you are posted, you serve the people of Jammu and Kashmir with honesty, commitment and dedication. Whatever role we hold in government, our purpose remains the same—that when we return home in the evening, we should feel satisfied that our day's work has benefited someone. If you perform your duties honestly, that itself will be the greatest tribute to those whose memories brought you here today," he said.

The Chief Minister also reiterated the government's resolve to ensure that eligible beneficiaries are not made to run from office to office for compassionate appointments.

"We are committed to ensuring that you do not have to move from pillar to post to obtain your appointment orders. That would be a grave injustice to all of you. We will ensure that the process is expedited and all remaining cases are cleared at the earliest," he assured.

The beneficiaries expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister and the administration for facilitating timely appointments and extending support to families during difficult times.

Jammu City....

conditions during the day, although brief showers, gusty winds and hailstorms were reported at scattered places during the late afternoon hours.

The department has forecast generally hot and dry weather for May 26 and 27. However, weather conditions are expected to change on May 28 and 29, with predictions of cloudy skies, rain, thunder-showers, hailstorms and gusty winds at scattered to fairly widespread locations across Jammu and Kashmir.

From May 30 to June 3, the weather is expected to remain largely dry, though isolated areas may witness brief spells of rain and thundershowers during the late afternoon hours.

Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir School Education Department has announced summer vacations for schools in view of the prevailing heat

conditions. Classes 1 to 6 will observe vacations from June 1 to July 22, while Classes 7 to 12 will remain closed from June 8 to July 22.

The ongoing heat wave has also triggered a sharp increase in tourist movement towards cooler destinations in the Jammu division. Popular hill resorts including Bhaderwah, Kishtwar, Patnitop, Nathatop, Sanasar and Bani witnessed a heavy rush of visitors seeking relief from the soaring temperatures.

Planned Blasts....

including the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, Babu Bhawan civil secretariat, and densely populated areas such as Imbarra, Lal Bagh and Aminabad. Investigators believe the group intended to use a vehicle loaded with explosives near these locations.

Officials said the accused considered the identified sites suitable targets due to their administrative significance and heavy public movement.

The NIA investigation further found that Muzamil searched online for chemical suppliers in Lucknow capable of providing precursor materials required to manufacture Triacetone Triperoxide (TATP), a highly volatile explosive used in the Red Fort blast in Delhi on November 10 last year.

According to sources, Shaheen allegedly copied the names of chemical shops in her own handwriting, and the list was later recovered from her mobile phone during the investigation.

The accused are also believed to have explored remote locations in Lucknow where explosives could allegedly be assembled secretly, similar to operations carried out from a rented house in Faridabad.

Investigators said a local resident familiar with Lucknow was asked to make enquiries at chemical shops on behalf of the accused to avoid attracting suspicion.

The findings are part of a 7,500-page chargesheet filed by the NIA on May 14 in connection with the high-intensity blast case.

The agency has alleged that the terror module, linked to Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind and inspired by Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent ideology, was attempting to establish a covert operational base in Lucknow before the network was dismantled.

Officials said the wider conspiracy was uncovered through forensic analysis, technical evidence, financial tracking and witness statements collected during the investigation.

Over 300....

service were immediately suspended following the glitch, which occurred around noon.

The rescue operation was hampered by heavy rain in the area, they said. Teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Indian Army's Chinar Corps worked jointly for hours to complete the safe evacuation of all people, the officials said.

The trained teams used ropes and ladders to bring the tourists down safely. "The rescue operation has concluded, and all the stranded persons have been evacuated safely," an official said this evening.

Earlier, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said his government was "closely monitoring" the situation.

"All cabins are intact and rescue operations to safely evacuate stranded tourists are underway with trained teams on the ground. The situation is completely under control and there is no cause for panic," the chief minister said in a post on X.

On the instructions of the chief minister, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, accompanied by local MLA Farooq Ahmed Shah and senior administrative officials, visited the tourist resort to oversee the ground coordination.

Officials said that since several cabins were hanging at a height of 500 ft, technical extraction protocols took considerable time.

By late afternoon, 179 tourists had been brought down, with the remaining passengers safely evacuated in subsequent phases as teams cleared the cabins one by one.

Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha said he had directed DGP Nalin Prabhat to proceed to Gulmarg to oversee the rescue operation.

"I'm monitoring the rescue operation for tourists stranded in cable car cabins following a technical fault in Gulmarg. I have directed the DGP to proceed to the site. Joint rescue teams of Police, Army and SDRF along with DC and SSP are conducting the operation to ensure the safety of all tourists," Sinha posted on X.

The Army said in a post on X that swift and coordinated rescue efforts were launched with the assistance of the Chinar Corps.

The Gulmarg Gondola, one of the highest cable cars in Asia, has experienced technical halts in the past, including a temporary suspension in January last year.

A major tragedy occurred on June 25, 2017, when an uprooted tree struck a cabin during high winds, leading to a crash that claimed seven lives.

Monday's incident comes a day after a 16-year-old boy died in Agra after a zipline cable snapped at an amusement facility here, causing him to fall nearly 45 ft.

I Am Monitoring....

The Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha is personally monitoring the situation. He spoke to the Chief Secretary, Shri Atal Dulloo and has directed the Director General of Police Shri Nalin Prabhat to proceed to the site to oversee the rescue mission.

In a post on X, the Lieutenant Governor has said:

"I'm monitoring the rescue operation for tourists stranded in cable car cabins following a technical fault in Gulmarg. I have directed DGP to proceed to the site. Joint rescue team of Police, Army

& SDRF & DC, SSP is conducting the operation to ensure the safety of all tourists".

Situation....

major technical malfunction halted the cable car service amid heavy rain, triggering a massive seven-hour rescue operation involving multiple agencies.

The incident occurred around noon when both phases of Asia's highest ropeway system were suspended following a technical snag, leaving tourists trapped in cabins hanging nearly 500 feet above the ground.

Rescue teams from the National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force, Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Indian Army's Chinar Corps carried out the operation in difficult weather conditions, using ropes and ladders to evacuate passengers cabin by cabin.

Officials said persistent rain and the considerable height of several suspended cabins slowed down the operation, requiring specialised extraction procedures to ensure the safety of the stranded tourists.

"The rescue operation has concluded, and all the stranded persons have been evacuated safely," an official said after the operation ended in the evening.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said the government was closely monitoring the situation and assured the public that all cabins remained secure during the rescue effort.

"All cabins are intact and rescue operations to safely evacuate stranded tourists are underway with trained teams on the ground. The situation is completely under control and there is no cause for panic," the Chief Minister said in a post on X.

On the directions of the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, accompanied by local MLA Farooq Ahmad Shah and senior administrative officers, visited Gulmarg to supervise rescue coordination.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said he had directed DGP Nalin Prabhat to proceed to Gulmarg and oversee the operation.

The Army later confirmed that coordinated rescue efforts involving the Chinar Corps helped ensure the safe evacuation of all passengers.

The Gulmarg Gondola, one of the region's biggest tourist attractions, has witnessed technical disruptions in the past. In June 2017, seven people lost their lives after a cabin crashed when a fallen tree struck the ropeway during strong winds.

West Asia....

Addressing the 27th foundation day event of Small Industries Development Bank of India in Mumbai, Sitharaman said the prolonged conflict has already begun to impact businesses and consumers, particularly through higher transportation and energy costs.

"The West Asia crisis is not only a diplomatic or geopolitical issue. For businesses and common people, it can mean higher fuel cost, delayed cargo, costlier shipping, shortage of inputs, pressure on working capital and uncertainty in export orders," the Finance Minister said.

Her remarks came hours after petrol and diesel prices were increased for the fourth time in 11 days. Petrol prices rose by Rs 2.61 per litre while diesel prices increased by Rs 2.71 per litre, taking the cumulative hike since May 15 to nearly Rs 7.50 per litre.

The increase reflects the delayed impact of rising global crude oil prices triggered by tensions in West Asia. Sitharaman said the Centre has already taken steps to reduce the burden on citizens by cutting excise duties on petrol and diesel, resulting in a revenue sacrifice of nearly Rs 1 lakh crore.

She acknowledged that the uncertainty caused by the conflict has made future planning difficult for small business units and exporters. The crisis, now continuing for more than 80 days, has also created economic challenges for countries dependent on stable trade and energy supplies, she added.

The Finance Minister said the government remains focused on protecting consumers, supporting micro, small and medium enterprises, safeguarding exporters and ensuring uninterrupted supply chains.

She also highlighted measures taken to simplify customs procedures, enabling businesses to reroute, store and recover stranded cargo more efficiently amid global disruptions.

CS reviews....

of services. He emphasized that departments must move beyond conventional silo-based functioning and work in close coordination to achieve larger developmental goals envisioned under Viksit Bharat @2047.

A detailed presentation on the Action Taken Reports pertaining to various reform initiatives was given by the Planning Department & Monitoring Department. The meeting was informed that several departments including Finance, School Education, Skill Development, Health & Medical Education, Housing & Urban Development, Agriculture Production, Social Welfare, Public Works, Tourism and Higher Education Departments have already adopted convergence-based governance models involving inter-departmental coordination, digital integration and collaborative implementation mechanisms.

Regarding the points of School Education Department it was revealed that vocational education has been expanded to more than 1,350 schools across Jammu & Kashmir with enrolment of over 1.41 lakh students, besides integration of digital platforms, ICT laboratories and smart classrooms under the framework of NEP-2020.

Similarly with respect to the Skill Development Department it was highlighted that flagship initiatives including Mission YUVA and PM Vishwakarma are being implemented through coordinated institutional mechanisms involving multiple departments, financial institutions and academic organisations.

The Health & Medical Education Department proposed integrated planning with allied departments for convergence of health, sanitation, nutrition, education and livelihood initiatives, while the Housing & Urban Development Department highlighted its focus on technology-driven governance, sustainable urban planning and citizen-centric reforms for improving urban living standards.

The meeting was further informed that departments including Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, ARI & Trainings, Disaster Management, Labour & Employment and Information Department have introduced integrated digital governance systems, interoperable platforms and real-time monitoring mechanisms aimed at improving transparency, accountability and ease of access to public services.

Reviewing reforms aimed at enhancing Ease of Living, the meeting was apprised that under the J&K Jan Vishwas reforms, around 32 criminal provisions across 20 Acts have been decriminalized to reduce compliance burden and improve citizen convenience, while 19 obsolete laws have been repealed for simplification of the statutory framework and promotion of ease of doing business.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the proposal for achieving 100 percent end-to-end digitization of Government-to-Citizen (G2C) services across the Union Territory. The meeting was informed that 1,548 G2C services have already been digitized under the E-Unnat platform, while nearly 300 additional services are presently under development.

The meeting was informed that in the first phase, 302 services across key departments including Agriculture, Higher Education, Housing & Urban Development, Revenue, Health and Power Development Departments have been identified for elimination of offline processes and full digital transformation.

SEC Clears....

approve a series of significant initiatives aimed at strengthening disaster mitigation, preparedness and response mechanisms across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Principal Secretary, DMRR&R; Commandant General, SDRF; Commissioner Secretary, Law; Secretary, Revenue; besides other senior officers of the DMRR&R.

During the meeting, the SEC deliberated upon several key agenda items concerning disaster preparedness and resilience-building measures in the UT and accorded approval to a number of important decisions aimed at enhancing the institutional and operational capacity of the administration to effectively deal with natural disasters and emergencies.

Among the major decisions taken was the formal approval for entering into partnership with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for implementation of disaster mitigation measures in various districts of Jammu and Kashmir. The Committee also approved constitution of a Project Steering Committee to oversee coordination and effective implementation of the programme. The committee will be headed by the Principal Secretary, DMRR&R and co-chaired by UNDP along with several other members from concerned Departments.

In order to strengthen technological preparedness and scientific assessment capabilities, the SEC also approved procurement of Digital Terrain Models (DTMs) for vulnerable districts to facilitate simulation, prediction and mitigation of natural disasters. The Committee further gave nod for procurement of satellite phones for high-risk subdivisions and tehsils across all districts to ensure seamless communication during emergency situations and disaster events.

The meeting also discussed the constitution of hazard-specific task forces for disasters such as earthquakes, floods, Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) and landslides. These task forces would comprise experts and members drawn from reputed national and local institutions including IITs, universities and other technical organizations to provide specialised inputs for disaster risk reduction and preparedness planning.

In another significant decision, the SEC revalidated funds amounting to Rs 10.69 crore for procurement of rescue and emergency response equipment to ensure safe, secure and efficient conduct of the annual Shri Amar Nathji Yatra in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Chief Secretary emphasized the need for robust preparedness, coordinated response mechanisms and adoption of modern technology-driven systems to minimize risks and strengthen resilience against disasters across the Union Territory.



Govt Promoting Offbeat, Adventure Tourism in J&K: Sakeena Itoo

Inaugurates Tourism Capacity Building Camp at Panchanpatri Kulgam

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, MAY 25: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today inaugurated a Tourism Capacity Building Camp at Panchanpatri Kulgam and also flagged off an All-Terrain Rally (ATR), trekkers' expedition, cycle rally and other tourism promotion activities. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that the Government is committed to strengthening the tourism sector in Jammu & Kashmir by developing offbeat destinations and promoting adventure tourism activities across Jammu and Kashmir. She said that such programmes provide a valuable platform to inform and aware youth about various government schemes and programmes related to tourism, employment generation and self-employment opportunities.

The Minister emphasized that



the promotion of unexplored tourist destinations will not only attract visitors but also create

sustainable livelihood opportunities for local communities. She highlighted the importance of involving youth and local stakeholders in tourism-related initiatives for the overall economic development of the region.

The programme was organized with an aim to promote tourism awareness, adventure tourism and enhance the participation of youth in the tourism sector across the district.

Tourism stakeholders, tour and travel operators, local representatives, district officers and large number of youth participated in the camp. They appreciated the efforts being made to boost tourism infrastructure and adventure activities in the area.

The event also witnessed enthusiastic participation in trekking, cycling and other adventure activities aimed at showcasing the tourism potential of Panchanpatri and adjoining areas.

DG NCC calls on Minister Sakeena Itoo at Srinagar

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: Director General of the National Cadet Corps (NCC), Lt. General Virendra Vats today called on Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, and apprised her of the activities and outreach programmes being undertaken by the NCC across Jammu and Kashmir.

During the meeting, the Director General high-



lighted the role of the NCC in shaping youth through discipline, leadership, patriotism and community service. He informed the Minister about various initiatives being carried out to encourage greater participation of students in NCC activities, especially in remote and border areas of the Union Territory.

Lt. General Virendra Vats also briefed the Minister about the ongoing training programmes, adventure activities, awareness campaigns and social service initiatives being conducted by NCC units in J&K. He underscored the organisation's efforts towards youth empowerment and nation-building by engaging cadets in constructive and character-building activities.

He also briefed the Minister about the participation of J&K Youth in NCC, especially the girls/women folk.

The Minister appreciated the contribution of the NCC in nurturing discipline, confidence and a spirit of service among the youth. She lauded the organisation for providing young students with opportunities for personality development, leadership training and national integration.

The Minister also assured the Director General of all possible support from the Government for carrying out various activities across J&K for the welfare of youth.

Sakeena Itoo reiterated the Government's commitment towards supporting initiatives aimed at empowering the youth and promoting their holistic development.

ADG, NCC, Major General, Anupinder Bevli was also present.

Govt promotes Incharge IOs, AIOs as Information Officers

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: The J&K government today ordered the regularisation and promotion of 3 In-charge Information Officers and 14 Assistant Information Officers as Information Officers and equivalent in the Information Department.

According to a Government Order issued here by the Information Department, the promoted officers included Showket Ahmad Khan, Riyaz Ahmad Fazili, Parshotam Dass, Rajinder Paul Singh, Gulshan Sumbria, Majeeb Ahmad Ganai, Gulshan Ara, Ashok Kumar Sharma, Sayed Gulam Jeelani Qadiri, Shabir Ahmed Bhat, Gurpreet Singh, Liyaqat Ali Mir, Mohammad Owais Gurkoo, Natyapal Singh, Parvaiz Ahmad Lone, Sajad Ahmad Shah and Hardeep Singh Choudhary. Showket Ahmad Khan, Riyaz Ahmad Fazili and Parshotam Dass have been regularised with effect from September 5, 2018, while the promotions of the remaining officers will take effect prospectively, according to the order.

The officers shall continue to work at their present places of posting until further orders.

Awareness programmes organised across Budgam under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, MAY 20: A series of awareness programmes, pledge ceremonies and outreach activities were organised across district Budgam under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) to spread awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and to encourage collective responsibility towards building a healthy and drug-free society.

A Mental Health Awareness Programme under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan was organised at PM SHRI Government Higher Secondary School Dagher Budgam. During the pro-



gramme, students were sensitized about emotional well-being, stress management, healthy living and the importance of staying away from substance abuse. Participants actively took part in the awareness session and were encouraged to seek support and guidance whenever needed.

Meanwhile, a Nasha

Mukht Bharat pledge ceremony was organised at the office of Sub Divisional Agriculture Officer Budgam. Officials and staff reaffirmed their commitment towards spreading awareness against drug abuse and promoting a healthy and responsible social environment.

Officials and staff of different departments of

Budgam also participated in a pledge and awareness programme organised under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan. The programme highlighted the importance of collective responsibility, awareness and community participation in safeguarding youth from substance abuse and creating a disciplined, healthy and addiction-free society.

The awareness initiatives witnessed active participation from students, officials and staff members who collectively pledged to contribute towards the fight against drug abuse and support the vision of a drug-free district.

SEET Hosts Grand Youth Inspiration Event in Trehgam

HT NEWS NETWORK

TREHGAM, MAY 25: A grand and inspiring event was organized by SEET (Society For Education Empowerment Trehgam), a platform established with the vision to inspire, encourage, and recognize the talent, hard work, and potential of youth. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from more than 300 participants from different walks of life, making it a remarkable celebration of achievement, education, and social motivation.

SEET is not merely an organization but a movement dedicated to promoting hope, learning, leadership, creativity, and excellence among young people. Through recognition programmes, awareness initiatives, and community-driven activities, SEET aims to motivate youth to dream big and contribute positively towards society.

During the event, around 30 outstanding individuals were felicitated for their exceptional achievements in different fields and for qualifying prestigious national-level examinations. The felicitation ceremony was conducted to acknowledge their dedication, perseverance, and success, while also inspiring other young minds to work hard and pursue excellence.

The programme was attended by several distinguished dignitaries including the DySP Headquarters Kupwara, Tehsildar, Treasury Officer, and noted academician Dr.



Manzoor A. Mir, besides other respected officers, educators, social workers, and members of civil society.

Addressing the gathering, the speakers appreciated the efforts of SEET in creating a positive and motivating environment for the youth. They emphasized that recognition of talent and hard work plays a vital role in building confidence and encouraging young people to contribute meaningfully to society. The dignitaries also highlighted the importance of values such as honesty, discipline, dedication, and

community service in shaping responsible future leaders.

The organizers reiterated that the youth are the true strength of society and that empowering them through encouragement and opportunities is essential for building a progressive and prosperous future. The event concluded with a message of unity, inspiration, and collective responsibility towards nurturing the next generation.

SEET expressed gratitude to all guests, participants, supporters, and attendees for making the event successful and memorable.

District NCORD meeting

DC Srinagar, SSP review impact of ongoing 100-day anti-drug campaign

Call for continued collective enforcement efforts

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR MAY 25: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today chaired a meeting of the District Level NCORD Committee to review the impact and progress achieved under the ongoing 100-day anti-drug campaign being implemented across the district.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Dr. Sundeeep Chakravarty was also present in the meeting.

The meeting was attended by Regional Transport Officer Kashmir, Qazi Irfan; Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Aadil Fareed; SP Headquarter, Umar Shah; IAS Probationer, Alfred Thomas; SDM West, Irfan Bahadur; SDM East, Zubair Ahmad; and Officers from Excise, Drug Control Organisation, DYS&S, heads of ATF's and Officers of other concerned departments.

At the outset, the meeting held a comprehensive review of the District's anti-drug strategy, enforcement actions and preventive interventions undertaken during the ongoing 100-days anti-drug Jammu and Kashmir Nasha Mukht Abhiyan.

During the meeting, it was informed that intensified enforcement operations and coordinated action against drug peddling networks have yielded significant results across Srinagar district. Giving detailed figures, the meeting was informed that 84 FIRs

have been registered under NDPS cases and 117 persons have been arrested during the ongoing campaign. It was further reported that 100 driving licences and 46 vehicle Registration Certificates (RCs) linked to NDPS-related violations have been suspended to date, as part of sustained and strict enforcement measures aimed at disrupting drug networks and deterring drug-related activities in the district.

The meeting was further informed that licences of 17 chemists were suspended for violations related to drug regulations and unauthorized handling of controlled substances. In addition, red entries have been recorded in revenue records against identified drug peddlers to strengthen legal and administrative action against repeat offenders.

Additionally, illegal properties worth nearly Rs 40 crore linked to drug peddlers have been attached or demolished in Srinagar as part of the intensified crackdown on narcotics networks and illegal assets generated through drug trafficking.

The Deputy Commissioner and SSP appreciated the coordinated efforts of all departments and agencies involved in the campaign and emphasized the need to sustain the momentum through continued enforcement, public participation and preventive outreach initiatives.

On the occasion, the DC directed

all concerned departments to further strengthen inter-departmental coordination and intensify action against drug peddlers and trafficking networks to ensure a drug-free and safer environment in the District. He emphasized renewed focus and coordinated efforts to curb drug abuse and dismantle the ecosystem supporting narcotics trafficking in Srinagar District.

The DC further stressed the importance of a multi-pronged strategy combining strict law enforcement with awareness generation, counselling and rehabilitation measures to effectively tackle the menace of drug abuse, particularly among youth.

The SSP Srinagar reiterated the commitment of the Police in collaboration with civil authorities towards sustained action against narcotics-related activities and called for active support from the public in identifying and reporting drug-related offences.

The meeting also reviewed measures related to intensified surveillance of identified hotspots and vulnerable areas, close monitoring of repeat offenders, strict regulation of pharmaceutical outlets, and effective implementation of awareness programmes across the district.

It further deliberated on strengthening counselling support and rehabilitation initiatives for affected individuals, with a focus on ensuring a coordinated, sustained, and outcome-oriented response to the drug menace.

DC Srinagar visits B&J Hospital Barzulla; Inspects progress of work on alternate entry gate, additional parking space

Takes onsite review of Sunner Kul Bund road development for decongestion of traffic around SMHS & Super Specialty Hospitals

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today conducted a comprehensive visit to Bone and Joint (B&J) Hospital and the Sunner Kul Bund Road behind Super Specialty Hospital Shreen Bagh to inspect ongoing traffic decongestion measures and infrastructure upgradation works around key healthcare facilities in Srinagar district.

The visit aimed at assessing the progress of ongoing interventions undertaken to streamline vehicular movement and improve accessibility for patients, attendants and staff visiting the hospitals.

At Bone & Joint Hospital, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the development of an alternate entry gate to the Bone & Joint Hospital, construction of ramps and small Link Road connecting the main road with the Parking facilities through the Bund side along Bone and Joint Hospital Barzulla aimed at reducing congestion at the main gate and ensuring smooth passage for ambulances and other emergency vehicles.

While taking an on-site assessment of the new parking facility developed to address space constraints around the hospital, the DC was informed that the parking space for attendants and hospital staff is almost completed and will be made functional by June 15, 2026.

The DC also reviewed the progress on improvement works of alternate hospital entry gate to minimize bottlenecks to reduce

roadside congestion, particularly during peak hours. He was informed that this part of the project is also nearing completion.

On the occasion, the DC directed all concerned departments to work in close coordination and ensure early completion of the works to facilitate smooth movement of ambulances and vehicles carrying patients, while reducing traffic interruptions in the larger public interest.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner inspected the progress of the Sunner Kul Bund Road development behind the Super Specialty Hospital as part of traffic decongestion and management measures in the critical medical zone surrounding the SMHS Hospital, Super Specialty Hospital and Dental College.

The road development forms part of the broader mobility improvement and traffic regulation plan along the Nawab Bazar-Kaksaraie-Darish Kadal corridor aimed at streamlining vehicular movement through the Sunner Kul route.

During the inspection, the DC carried out an on-site assessment of the ongoing works being executed to improve mobility and decongest the critical medical area around the hospitals. He was informed that the alternate route project is nearing completion and that protection works, utility relocation and allied development works within the corridor have already been completed.

The DC said that the dedicated parking facilities around



the high-priority hospital zone encompassing SMHS Hospital, Dental Hospital and the Super Specialty Hospital would prevent roadside congestion and facilitate

smoother access for patients, attendants and emergency vehicles along the Nawa Bazar-Kak Saraie-Darish Kadal corridor via the Sunner Kul bund link. He

directed the executing agencies to expedite the remaining works under the project by June 10, 2026, emphasizing the need to prioritize interventions ensuring swift patient movement and timely ambulance access while minimizing inconvenience to local residents, traders and commuters.

The DC said the ongoing initiatives, including alternate access routes, expanded parking facilities and improved traffic management are expected to improve vehicular movement and make hospital access more convenient for patients and attendants. He added that the District Administration is actively implementing traffic decongestion measures across Srinagar, especially around major healthcare institutions to ease congestion and facilitate smoother movement in surrounding areas.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mir Imtiaz Ul Aziz, Chief Planning Officer Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Superintending Engineer R&B Tatheer Manzoor, Superintending Engineer R&B, Shabir Ahmad, Executive Engineer R&B, Khalid Mehmood, Executive Engineer R&B, Abdul Qayoom, Executive Engineer KPDC, MS Bone & Joint Hospital Dr. Adil, MS Superspeciality Hospital, Dr Rubeena, DySP Traffic Suhail Ahmad MS SMHS Hospital, Tehsildar South Sajad Rasool, Tehsildar Chanapora, Kifayat Ali, Dr Andleeb and other concerned Officers and Officials accompanied the Deputy Commissioner during the visit.

Market checking intensified across Kupwara on Eid-ul-Adha

HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, MAY 25: On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, market checking drive was conducted across Kupwara ahead of Eid ul-Adha to ensure the availability of essential commodities at government approved rates and to curb hoarding, black mar-



keting and profiteering.

The district administration has constituted special inspection teams to monitor market activities across various areas of the district.

The inspection teams comprising officers from the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), Revenue, Food Safety, Municipality, Legal Metrology, Sheep Husbandry and Police departments are conducting regular market inspections in their respective jurisdictions.

The teams are checking the availability, quality and pricing of essential commodities to safeguard consumer interests ahead of the festive occasion.

A joint market checking team headed by the Assistant Director FCS&CA Kupwara today inspected various markets of Kupwara town including Bypass Road Market, Jamia Market, Iqbal Market, Hajaj Market, Dar Gali, Old Chowk and Reigpora. During the inspection, several shopkeepers were penalised for violations and a fine amounting to Rs 2400 was realised from the erring traders.

The team also directed the shopkeepers to strictly follow the government approved rates and maintain quality standards.

Similar market checking drives were also carried out in Handwara, Karnah, Sogam and other tehsil headquarters of the district.

The administration reiterated its commitment to ensuring smooth supply of essential commodities and protecting consumers from overpricing and unfair trade practices during the Eid-ul-Adha period.

SDM Khansahib conducts tour to review Moharram Arrangements in Shia dominated Areas

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, MAY 25: On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Khansahib, Jahangir Ahmad Giri along with officials of various line departments today conducted an extensive tour of Shia dominated areas including Bukchil, Tallapora, Batpora, Gatipora, Yarisatroo and Hardhpanzoo to take stock of the arrangements being put in place for the smooth and hassle-free conduct of upcoming



Moharram processions. During the visit, the SDM was accompanied by AEEs and officials from R&B, PHE, PDD and Rural Development departments besides local representatives of the concerned areas. The officers inspected the availability of essential facilities including road connectivity, drinking water supply, electricity, sanitation and other necessary arrangements for the devotees.

Interacting with the local representatives and residents, the SDM assured that the administration is committed to ensuring all basic facilities for the mourners and devotees during the holy days of Moharram. He further directed the concerned officials to immediately address the issues and provide all required facilities wherever needed to ensure smooth observance of Moharram across the subdivision.

The locals appreciated the proactive approach of the administration and expressed satisfaction over the ongoing preparations.

Intensive market checks conducted across Shopian markets

HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, MAY 25: On the directions of Deputy Commissioner, Shopian, Shishir Gupta market checking drives were conducted today across various areas of Zainapora, Keegam, Herman, Keller and Barbugh and other places in district Shopian under the supervision of concerned Tehsildars and Naib Tehsildars in collaboration with officials from Food Safety, Police and other line departments to ensure quality control, rate regulation and hygiene standards in markets.

During the inspections, various shops and business establishments were checked for quality and pricing



of essential commodities. Several expired food items were seized and destroyed on the spot, while violators were fined during the drive.

An amount of Rs 2200 was realized during market checking in Zainapora, Rs 900 during market inspection in Herman, whereas Rs

4900 was collected from violators during inspections conducted in Keller. The fine amount was remitted into the Red Cross Account.

At Keegam, the market checking team comprising officials from Food Safety Department, TSO Keegam and SHO Keegam conducted extensive inspections in various markets to check the quality and rates of goods. The teams stressed strict adherence to government guidelines and warned shopkeepers against sale of expired and substandard items.

Such drives will continue across the district to safeguard consumer interests and maintain transparency in the market system.

DC Ganderbal reviews Implementation of HADP & JKCIP schemes

Approves 987 fresh applications under HADP, JKCIP

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, MAY 25: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore today chaired a detailed review meeting to assess the implementation and progress of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) and Jammu & Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement Project (JKCIP) in the district.

During the meeting, the DC undertook a comprehensive department-wise review of progress achieved under various components of HADP and JKCIP.

A detailed assessment of progress under Kisan Khidmat Ghar (KKG), particularly concerning L2 and L3 registration of farmers was also carried out.

Stressing the need for timely achievement of goals, the DC issued strict directions to all concerned departments to accomplish the assigned targets within the stipulated timeframe. He emphasized that regular sharing and review of progress reports must be undertaken so that the targets are achieved at the earliest.

The meeting also reviewed the status of credit linked cases under HADP and JKCIP. It was observed that the disposal rate of cases at the bank level has remained slow. Taking serious note of the delays, the DC directed the Lead District Manager (LDM) and all Agriculture and allied departments to maintain close coordination with banking institutions and expedite the clearance of all pending cases. Progress under the Prime Minister Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme was also reviewed. Banks were instructed to expedite disposal of nearly 60 pending cases lying at different branches to facilitate timely benefits to eligible beneficiaries. Besides, the meeting reviewed implementation of the PM-Krishi Maan Dhaan Yojana. The DC directed all Agriculture and allied departments to ensure wider outreach, improved coverage and effective achievement of the scheme objectives.

The DC reiterated the importance of coordinated efforts, regular monitoring and proactive follow-up by all stakeholders for successful implementation of flagship schemes aimed at strengthening the agriculture and allied sectors in the district.

Later, the DC chaired District Level Implementation Committee to review and finalize beneficiaries under Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) and the Jammu & Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement Project (JKCIP).

The committee discussed sector-wise proposals received from various agriculture and allied departments including agriculture, animal husbandry, Sheep Husbandry and fisheries sectors. The Committee discussed the submitted proposals in detail and approved 987 beneficiaries aimed at boosting farm productivity, strengthening value chains and improving livelihood opportunities for farmers and allied sector stakeholders in the district.

DC directed the concerned officers to ensure that the schemes are implemented in a transparent and time-bound manner so that eligible beneficiaries can avail the benefits without delay. The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner, Manzoor Ahmad, General Manager DIC, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Chief Planning Officer, Chief Agriculture Officer, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Chief Horticulture Officer, Lead District Manager, District Nodal Officer HADP and other officers and officials of line agri-allied departments.

Javid Dar visits Kissan Ghar, J&K agro cold storage facilities in New Delhi; reviews ongoing works, services

HT NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI, MAY 25: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Departments, Javid Ahmad Dar, today visited Kissan Ghar and J&K Agro cold storage facilities in New Delhi

and reviewed the progress of ongoing works as well as the functioning of these facilities.

The Minister was accompanied by Managing Director, J&K HPMC, Mohammad Farooq Ahmad, along with other senior officers.

During the visit, the Minister inspected the ongoing

construction of a Common Facility Centre under the Additional Market Development project, being developed at an estimated cost of 1986.57 lakh with NABARD support. The facility is aimed at strengthening the post-harvest management and marketing support for horticulture

produce from Jammu and Kashmir.

The officials informed that the new cold storage facility will have a capacity of 3800 metric tonnes, comprising 10 multi-purpose chambers with advanced insulation systems and five deep-freeze chambers with dual temperature options

for preservation of perishable produce.

The Minister also reviewed the upgraded existing cold storage infrastructure of 4000 metric tonnes capacity, originally constructed in 1976 and presently being modernised under a NABARD-funded project costing 1024.34 lakh.

Emphasising the importance of modern storage and marketing infrastructure, the Minister stated that such facilities are vital for improving farmers' returns and reducing post-harvest losses in the horticulture sector.

Later, the Minister inspected the ongoing construction

of the additional block at Kissan Ghar. He directed the officials to expedite the works for timely completion. He also urged the officers to extend all possible support to residents from Jammu and Kashmir during their stay and also ensure that best possible services are provided to the visitors.

Satish Sharma attends Education Expo Jammu; exhorts youth to embrace education, sports

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAY 25: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, IT, Youth Services & Sports, Transport and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma today called upon young people to embrace education, discipline and sports as the pillars of personal growth and nation-building.

The Minister was addressing the Education Expo Jammu 2026 organised by The Times of India at Country Inn, Jammu.

Stressing the need for holistic development of youth, the Minister underscored the importance of nurturing values, character and resilience alongside academic excellence to shape a stronger and progressive society.

Addressing the students, educators, parents and dignitaries present on the occasion, the Minister described education as a transformative force that extends far beyond academic achievement. He emphasized that education must nurture character, discipline, integrity and social responsibility alongside intellectual growth.



Satish Sharma appreciated The Times of India for creating a platform that connects the students with opportunities and inspiration, stating that such initiatives play a significant role in shaping aspirations and guiding young minds towards meaningful careers and brighter futures.

Highlighting the importance of health and nutrition in shaping future generations, Satish

Sharma underlined the need for adopting healthy lifestyles and making informed choices. He urged the youth to value natural and wholesome food habits, stressing that a healthy body forms the foundation for academic excellence and overall success.

Satish Sharma strongly advocated the role of sports in building discipline, resilience and character among young

people. Expressing concern over the growing menace of drug abuse, he cautioned that substance abuse threatens the future of society and can derail promising lives and careers.

"Sports create strong minds and strong character. A culture of sports encourages discipline, determination and positive engagement among youth. We must collectively strengthen this cul-

ture and inspire our young generation to choose healthy pathways," he said.

The Minister reiterated the government's commitment towards strengthening the sports infrastructure, expanding opportunities for youth participation and creating a supportive ecosystem for talent development across Jammu and Kashmir. He urged the students to reject drugs and embrace sports, discipline and constructive pursuits.

Calling for a broader understanding of education, Satish Sharma remarked that true education is not merely the accumulation of information but the cultivation of complete human beings capable of thinking clearly, acting responsibly and serving society selflessly.

"The future of Jammu and Kashmir lies in the strength, character and aspirations of its youth. We must empower them with opportunities, values and confidence," he added.

The Minister encouraged the students to remain confident, work hard and contribute positively towards society and nation-building.

SCERT J&K Jammu organises Capacity-Building Programmes on DIKSHA, ECCE/FLN

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAY 25: The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) J&K, Divisional Office Jammu organized two major programmes simultaneously aimed at strengthening digital education and Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) initiatives across Jammu Division.

The events were held under the mentorship of Dr. Naseem Javaid Chowdhary, Director SCERT J&K, and the able guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Sindhu Kapoor, Joint Director, SCERT J&K Divisional Office Jammu.

A 3-Day Workshop on "DIKSHA Platform: Creation, Curation and Effective Utilization of Digital Content" was organized by the Department of ECT & CS and DIKSHA Team, SCERT Jammu. The workshop witnessed participation of 30 District DIKSHA Coordinators comprising one Academic and two Technical Coordinators from each district of Jammu Division.

The participants underwent intensive hands-on training on various advanced features of DIKSHA including DIKSHA 2.0, AI-enabled tools such as Ask DIKSHA, Video Keyword Search, Read Aloud and Translation Tools, Personalized Adaptive Learning (PAL), Coupon-Based Courses, content uploading and course creation on the new DIKSHA LMS. A significant outcome of the workshop was the successful implementation of a Coupon-Based Course on DIKSHA for the participants, making SCERT J&K the first Union Territory in the country to introduce this initiative on the DIKSHA platform.

The workshop was coordinated by Vivek Jandial, DIKSHA Technical Coordinator, SCERT Jammu, who also conducted various technical sessions on DIKSHA and its emerging features. The programme was actively supported by Mohd Shabir, Associate Professor & Head Academic Unit-III, Ms. Reeta Charak, Wing Head and the dedicated team of the ECT & CS Department and DIKSHA Team.

Meanwhile, a 2-Day Initial Professional Preparation Programme for ECCE Educators was conducted with the dedicated support of Vinod Bhat, Head Academic Unit-II and the organizing team. The programme focused on strengthening foundational learning, classroom practices, academic planning, assessment and community participation.

Dr. Sanjeevani, Head ECCE, presented the welcome address, while Rajni Kumari, Assistant Professor & Programme Coordinator, delivered the keynote address.

Academic Officer Anil Sharma deliberated on ECCE and FLN, role of DIETs, academic planning, curriculum and TLM development. Senior Academic Officer Kamini Verma discussed teacher mentoring and capacity building, while Academic Officer Neeraj Jamwal highlighted monitoring, community participation and coordination. Shazia Kousar conducted sessions on assessment, research, innovation and sustainability, followed by group work and presentations by participants.

The programmes concluded with a formal vote of thanks and distribution of certificates among the participants.

CLUJ hosts 2-Day Faculty Orientation Workshop at PSPS Gandhi Nagar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAY 25: A Two-Day Faculty Orientation Workshop on "Strengthening Project-Based Learning & Design Your Degree (DYD) Pedagogy" was successfully organized by Cluster University of Jammu at PSPS Government College for Women Gandhi Nagar.

The workshop aimed to familiarize faculty members with innovative teaching methodologies under the Design Your Degree (DYD) framework and promote experiential and project-based learning practices in higher education.

The programme was inaugurated by Dr. K. S. Chandrasekar, Vice Chancellor, Cluster University of Jammu in the presence of Dr. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, Director Colleges, who attended as Guest of Honour. Among the distinguished dignitaries present were Ankur Mahajan, Registrar, CLUJ; Dr. Twinkle Suri, Dean Academic Affairs, CLUJ; Dr. Shobha Baghai and Dr. Alpana Vohra.

Faculty members and Principals from various colleges across Jammu division participated enthusiastically in the programme.

Welcoming the participants, Dr. Twinkle Suri highlighted the growing need for learner-centric and interdisciplinary approaches in higher education. Principal of GCW Gandhi Nagar, Dr. Kulvinder Kour, encouraged faculty members to actively adapt to evolving educational practices that promote creativity, collaboration and critical thinking among students.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir emphasized the significance of project-based learning in making education more practical, skill-oriented, and meaningful for students. Dr. Shobha Baghai shared valuable insights into the implementation of the Design Your Degree framework and stressed the importance of flexible and interdisciplinary learning models for holistic student development.

Speaking on the objectives of the DYD initiative, Dr. Alpana Vohra elaborated on how the pedagogy empowers students to design their academic pathways in accordance with their interests, abilities and career aspirations.

During the event, the Vice Chancellor formally unveiled the banner of the Design Your Degree initiative and appreciated the efforts of faculty members working towards academic innovation and excellence. In his address, Dr. K. S. Chandrasekar underlined the importance of transformative education in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. He remarked that project-based learning and the DYD framework would help students emerge as independent learners, critical thinkers and socially responsible citizens.

The workshop also featured a series of academic sessions conducted by eminent experts. Prof. Shobha Baghai delivered a session on "Introduction to DYD: Pedagogical Challenges in Adopting DYD," focusing on the conceptual framework and institutional challenges in implementing learner-centric education.

Another session by Mohammad Saleem Mir, Assistant Professor, University of Kashmir, explored "Experiential and Community-Based Learning under DYD," highlighting the role of community engagement and experiential methodologies in strengthening practical understanding among students.

Prof. Alpana Vohra further shared the successful implementation strategies of the DYD model at GCW Parade.

The workshop witnessed active participation from faculty members of various colleges and provided a meaningful platform for academic exchange and collaborative learning.

The programme concluded with a formal vote of thanks delivered by Prof. Vijender Sharma, Head Department of Sanskrit, followed by the National Anthem.

Udhampur Admin hosts Mushaira under Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan campaign

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR, MAY 25: A theme-based Mushaira under the ongoing Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan campaign was organized today by the District Administration Udhampur here at Bhartiya College of Education. The initiative aimed to spread awareness against drug abuse and encourage youth towards a healthy and positive lifestyle. Deputy Commissioner Minga Sherpa was the chief guest on the occasion, while Superintendent of Police Amritpaul Singh was the guest of honor at the inaugural session of the programme.

Addressing the gathering, the DC highlighted the importance of collective social responsibility in eliminating the menace of drugs from society. "The fight against substance abuse requires active participation from educational institutions, youth, parents and civil society," the DC emphasized and urged students to

become ambassadors of the anti-drug campaign and motivate others to stay away from drugs.

Earlier, the Chairman of Bhartiya College of Education accorded a warm welcome to the Chief Guest and other guests. He appreciated the initiative of the District Administration in organizing awareness programmes through literary and cultural mediums. The Mushaira witnessed enthusiastic participation from renowned as well as budding poets of different colleges of the district. They presented thought-provoking poetry and literary works centered on the theme 'Say No to Drugs, Yes to Life.' Through their powerful verses, the poets conveyed a strong message against drug abuse and inspired the audience to adopt a healthy and drug-free lifestyle. Students, faculty members and guests attended the programme in large numbers and appreciated the initiative taken by the District Adminis-

tration Udhampur in creating awareness through literary and cultural platforms. DIG Udhampur Reasi Range Shiv Kumar Sharma joined the concluding session and delivered an inspiring speech. He acknowledged that such programmes play a vital role in creating awareness among youth and society against the ill effects of drug abuse. He stressed the need for greater investment in sports and constructive youth activities to defeat the menace of drugs from society. He hailed multiple efforts of the administration to promote the goal of a drug-free society through "Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan" across the district. Among others present at the programme included Additional Deputy Commissioner, Prem Singh, Additional SP Sandeep Bhat, Chairperson Bharatiya Group of Colleges Madhu Khajuria, Managing Director Ashok Khajuria, Director Shiv Kumar Sharma, renowned and budding poets, students.

From Green School Award to National Innovation Platforms- GHSS Dablehar continues to script story of excellence

Institution secures prestigious National-Level Recognition under ToFEI School Challenge

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAY 25: Government Higher Secondary School Dablehar has earned national recognition by securing the prestigious National-Level Consolation Prize under the ToFEI (Tobacco-Free Educational Institutions) School Challenge: Towards a Tobacco Free Generation organized by the Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India.

The honour was conferred after a comprehensive evaluation process conducted at the district, state and national levels. The GHSS Dablehar emerged among the best-performing institutions of the country for its remarkable efforts in promoting awareness against tobacco use and fostering a healthy and tobacco-free environment among students.

The achievement has been widely hailed as a proud moment for the entire education fraternity of Jammu and Kashmir.

The success of the institution has been credited to the visionary leadership and dedicated efforts of Principal Irvinder Kour, whose consistent guidance and commitment played a pivotal role in steering the campaign successfully. The tireless contribution of staff members, particularly Bhader Singh, Lecturer

in Economics and in charge of these events and initiatives, along with the enthusiastic participation of students, and staff members proved instrumental in securing this prestigious recognition at the national level.

Chief Education Officer Jammu Ajeet Kumar Sharma felicitated Principal Irvinder Kour and appreciated the collective efforts of the school administration, staff members and students for bringing laurels to Jammu district and the Union Territory.

The CEO lauded the institution for transforming awareness campaigns into meaningful social initiatives. He described the achievements of the school as an inspiring example of how government educational institutions can play a transformative role in shaping a healthier, aware, and socially responsible society. He also encouraged other schools to take inspiration from GHSS Dablehar and emulate its commitment towards building tobacco-free educational institutions.

The Ministry of Education, Government of India, in its official communication, appreciated the active involvement of students and the support provided by teachers, school authorities and the Education Department in spreading awareness about the harmful effects



of tobacco among young learners.

Pertinently, GHSS Dablehar has, over the years, carved a distinct identity for itself through a series of remarkable achievements at the national and regional levels. The institution is notably the only Government School to secure a prestigious 5-Star rating in the Swachh Harit Vidyalaya Rating Survey 2025 after successful national-level validation, with formal national felicitations expected shortly.

Adding further glory to the institution, two students of the school, Karnveer and Aryan, represented the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir in a National-Level Prototype Exhi-

bition held at the prestigious Plaksha University Mohali-Punjab. The school also participated in the Viksit Bharat Buildathon 2025, launched by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, where its innovative idea and prototype successfully cleared multiple levels of evaluation and were submitted for recognition at the national level.

In another major accomplishment, the institution secured the coveted Green School Award, for which a felicitation ceremony was held in New Delhi. Further strengthening its reputation for innovation and scientific temperament, the school's idea and prototype were selected under

IIT Jammu's flagship programme Prayan. During the event, students from various schools of Ladakh UT and Jammu & Kashmir UT visited the school's stall and appreciated the innovative work displayed by the young students. Former Deputy Chief Minister Kavinder Gupta also visited the stall and applauded the creativity, talent and efforts of the budding innovators.

Apart from these achievements, the institution has consistently performed exceptionally well in various state-level competitions and activities organized from time to time, further reinforcing its reputation as one of the leading government educational institutions of the region.

As part of the latest recognition under the ToFEI School Challenge, a National Level Felicitations Ceremony is scheduled to be held on May 29, 2026 at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre (DAIC), New Delhi, where the winning schools from across the country will be formally honoured for their achievements.

The accomplishment of GHSS Dablehar stands as a shining testimony to the dedication, teamwork, innovation and social commitment of government schools in nurturing responsible, aware, talented and health-conscious citizens.

HT EDITORIAL

Power shock continues to haunt Kashmir valley residents

The Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited's promise of providing round the clock power supply to the fully cabled and metered areas of Kashmir valley has fizzled out in a short span of time. People living in most of the areas of Srinagar city and Kashmir valley had a short lived joy in this regard since they received the round the clock power supply for a few months only.

Over the past few days, the people of the Kashmir valley living in both the metered and non-metered areas are facing frequent power cuts and that too at different time slots. In most of the metered areas the power cuts vary between three and four hours while the position is worst in the non-metered areas. People living in these areas are facing power cuts in the range of 10-12 hours on a daily basis. The power cuts have come as no less than a shock for the people.

Most of the people were elated over the completion of cabling and metering in most of the areas of Srinagar city and other important towns of the Kashmir valley. The valley residents were happy that since cabling and metering had been completed, they too would be entitled to 24x7 power supply like the people living in the other parts of the country. This dream was fulfilled but the joy has turned out to be short lived with frequent power cuts haunting the people.

There is a perception among the people that the power is being diverted to the Jammu division since the winter capital of the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir along with the other districts is facing severe heat wave conditions. Since the discharge of Tawi river in Jammu division is very low the residents of Jammu division are facing tremendous power cuts. The JPDC officials have maintained that since the water discharge in Tawi is low they are not able to generate the power up to the desired level.

It is imperative that the Power Development Department takes the corrective measures so that the people of Jammu division don't face frequent and longer cuts. Round the clock power supply should be ensured in Jammu division but that should not be done at the cost of causing trouble to the residents of Kashmir valley. The government should import electricity from the Northern Grid so that the people of Jammu & Kashmir are saved from further power cuts.

Eid al-Adha and the Philosophy of Sacrifice: The Life and Legacy of Prophet Ibrahim (AS)



■ BIN AZIZ MOHAMMAD ALTAF

Was it the grace of a blessed glance, or the miracle of the school? Who taught Ismail the etiquettes of perfect sonship

Dr Iqbal "Indeed, Ibrahim was a leader, forbearing and devoutly obedient to Allah, inclining toward truth, and he was not of those who associate others with Allah." (Surah An-Nahl 16:120)

His life was not merely a sequence of events; it was a complete school of faith, sacrifice, patience, obedience, truth, and unwavering trust in Allah. Every stage of his journey carries profound lessons for us, especially as we commemorate his sacrifices every year during Eid al-Adha.

The story of Prophet Ibrahim (AS), Hazrat Hajirah (AS), and Prophet Ismail (AS) goes far beyond the slaughtering of an animal. It delivers a timeless message about surrendering one's desires, ego, attachments, and worldly ambitions for the pleasure of Allah. The philosophy of Qurbani continues to inspire millions because it touches the deepest realities of human faith and devotion.

The Society and Traditions of the Time Prophet Ibrahim (AS) was born in ancient Babylon, in present-day Iraq. The society he grew up in was deeply immersed in idol worship, superstition, and the veneration of stars, planets, the moon, and the sun. Massive idols stood in temples where people bowed before them seeking blessings and protection.

The political atmosphere was equally dark. The ruler Nimrod claimed divinity and demanded absolute obedience. The weak were oppressed, truth was silenced, and religion had become a tool of power. Even his own father, Aazur, earned his living by carving idols that the people worshipped.

Despite this environment, Ibrahim (AS) was blessed with extraordinary wisdom and purity of heart. He questioned the false beliefs around him and sincerely searched for the truth. The Qur'an beautifully describes his intellectual journey as he observed the stars, moon, and sun, realizing that anything which disappears cannot be worthy of worship.

"Indeed, I have turned my face toward He who created the heavens and the earth, inclining toward truth, and I am not among those who associate others

with Allah." Surah Al-An'am This marked the beginning of his mission to establish Tawheed the worship of One Allah alone.

The Blessed Lineage Prophet Ibrahim (AS) belonged to the noble lineage descending from Prophet Nuh (AS). His genealogy is recorded as:

Ibrahim ibn Tarikh (Aazur) ibn Nahur ibn Sarugh ibn Raghu ibn Faligh ibn Abir ibn Shalikh ibn Arfakhsadh ibn Sam ibn Nuh (AS).

He became the father of many prophets. Through his descendants came Prophet Ishaq (AS), Prophet Yaquub (AS), Prophet Yusuf (AS), Prophet Musa (AS), Prophet Isa (AS), and finally Prophet Muhammad . (SAW) This is why he is rightly called the spiritual father of the monotheistic faiths.

Aazur: The Father of Ibrahim (AS) The Qur'an mentions his father as Aazur, a respected idol maker in society. Though Aazur opposed his son and even threatened him, Ibrahim (AS) always addressed him with kindness and respect:

O my father, why do you worship that which neither hears nor sees and will not benefit you at all? Surah Maryam

This teaches us the importance of wisdom, patience, and good manners when inviting others to truth.

The Courage of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) Ibrahim (AS) openly challenged the idols of his people. He broke them to show their helplessness. When questioned, he fearlessly exposed the foolishness of idol worship. This led to severe punishment. Nimrod ordered a massive fire and had him thrown into it.

But Allah commanded: O fire, be coolness and safety upon Ibrahim." Surah Al-Anbiya

The fire became cool and peaceful. This miracle stands as a powerful symbol of Allah's protection for those who stand firm on truth.

Migration for the Sake of Allah

After facing persecution, Prophet Ibrahim (AS) migrated for the sake of Allah. He traveled through Palestine, Egypt, and eventually reached Makkah. His life shows that we may need to leave behind comfort and homeland to preserve our faith. The Prayer for a Righteous Child in his old age, he made this beautiful supplication:

My Lord, grant me a righteous child." Surah As-Saffat

Allah answered his prayer with the birth of Prophet Ismail (AS) through Hazrat Hajirah (AS).

Hazrat Hajirah (AS): A Symbol of Trust and Patience

Hazrat Hajirah (AS) remains one of the most inspiring figures in Islamic history. When Ibrahim (AS) was commanded to leave her and infant Ismail (AS) in

the barren valley of Makkah, she showed complete trust. Upon confirming the command came from Allah, she said: "Then Allah will never abandon us."

Her running between Safa and Marwah in search of water led to the miracle of Zamzam. Millions still honor her struggle through the Sa'i during Hajj and Umrah.

The Noble Character of Prophet Ismail (AS)

Prophet Ismail (AS) grew up in the sacred valley of Makkah under the guidance of his noble parents. He was known for his truthfulness, patience, gentleness, and extraordinary obedience. The Qur'an praises him beautifully:

Indeed, he was true to his promise, and he was a messenger and prophet." Surah Maryam

What stands out most in his character is his hilm (forbearance and maturity) beyond his years. When his father shared the dream of sacrifice, Ismail (AS) did not hesitate or argue. Instead, he responded with calm conviction and complete submission.

This reflects the deep spiritual training he received and his own strong connection with Allah.

In books on Falsafa-e-Qurbani (the Philosophy of Sacrifice), scholars highlight how Ismail's (AS) response embodies the true spirit of submission. It was not blind following but a conscious, heartfelt choice rooted in love for Allah. His willingness to offer his own life shows that real sacrifice begins with conquering the self letting go of fear, attachment, and personal will for the sake of divine command. This philosophy teaches that Qurbani is ultimately about inner transformation: purifying the soul from ego, greed, and disobedience while cultivating taqwa and ethical living.

The Greatest Sacrifice The ultimate test came when Allah commanded Ibrahim (AS) in a dream to sacrifice his beloved son. He consulted Ismail (AS):

"O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I must sacrifice you, so see what you think." Surah As-Saffat

Ismail (AS) replied without hesitation: "O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, among the patient." Surah As-Saffat

At the final moment, Allah replaced Ismail (AS) with a ram from Paradise:

"And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice." Surah As-Saffat

This became the foundation of Qurbani on Eid al-Adha.

The True Philosophy of Qurbani The Qur'an explains:

Neither their meat nor their blood reaches Allah, but what reaches Him is your piety." surah Al-Hajj As discussed in works on Falsafa-e-

Qurbani, the sacrifice is not about the animal or the meat. It is a powerful act of obedience and self-purification. It calls upon us to abandon negative traits like ego, corruption, dishonesty, and selfishness. True Qurbani motivates us toward ethical reform, compassion for the poor, and complete submission to Allah in every aspect of life.

A Guide for Youth: Lessons from Ismail (AS)

The character of Prophet Ismail (AS) offers especially powerful guidance for our youth today. In an age full of distractions, peer pressure, and worldly temptations, his example lights a clear path:

Obedience with Understanding: Ismail (AS) was young, yet he chose faith over fear.

Our youth should learn to obey Allah and parents not out of pressure, but with maturity and conviction.

Sacrifice of Desires: He was ready to give up his life for Allah's pleasure. Today's youth can apply this by sacrificing bad habits, excessive screen time, unhealthy friendships, or material obsessions that pull them away from deen. Patience and Forbearance: His hilm teaches emotional control. In difficult situations exams, relationships, or identity struggles stay patient and trust Allah's plan. Building Strong Character: Raise yourself with truthfulness and sincerity. Let your actions reflect your words, just as Ismail (AS) was "true to his promise."

Purpose Over Pleasure: He lived for a higher mission. Our young people should focus on skills, knowledge, and service to the ummah rather than chasing temporary joys. By following this guidance, our youth can become leaders who carry the spirit of Tawheed and sacrifice into the future.

Lessons for Today The life of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) gives us clear guidance:

Place faith above everything else. Build strong, righteous families. Remain patient through trials.

Obey Allah even when it is difficult. Sacrifice personal flaws and sins for the greater good.

Eid al-Adha is not just a festival of meat and celebration. It is a powerful reminder to place Allah above our desires, to stay patient in hardship, and to sacrifice what we love for truth and righteousness. May Allah strengthen our faith, purify our hearts, and allow us to follow the beautiful legacy of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and his family with sincerity. Ameen.

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From Paper Diaries to Predictive Analytics: A Small Vendor's AI Awakening



■ DR. GURWINDER SINGH

In the bustling lanes of a typical Indian market, where the aroma of fresh vegetables and spices fills the air, 52-year-old Rajesh Kumar once managed his modest vegetable stall the traditional way — using a worn-out notebook, a ballpoint pen, and years of personal experience. Today, he begins each morning by checking his smartphone for AI-generated predictions on demand for tomatoes, cauliflower, and other seasonal produce. Rajesh's transformation from handwritten ledgers to data-driven decisions marks a quiet but significant shift in India's vast informal retail sector.

■ The Old Ledger

For more than 25 years, Rajesh relied on two thick registers — one for daily sales and another for credit transactions. Every evening, he would calculate the next day's stock based on intuition. Sudden weather changes, festivals, or weddings often left him unprepared. Some days, unsold produce would go to waste; on others, he would lose sales due to stock shortages. "Paani ki tarah

paisa beh jaata tha," he recalls. "Money used to flow away like water. I could never fully understand the ups and downs of my own business." In 2024, his life changed when his son, a software engineer, introduced him to a simple AI-powered inventory application developed through a government-backed digital initiative in partnership with a local startup.

■ The AI Awakening

The app analyses weather patterns, festival calendars, historical sales data, and even social media trends to deliver accurate daily demand forecasts. Within just three months, Rajesh's daily wastage dropped sharply from nearly 18% to under 4%. His monthly profits increased by 47%. Encouraged by the results, he expanded his stall with pre-cut vegetables and ready-to-cook packs — items the AI had identified as high-potential sellers. "I never imagined a machine could understand my customers' needs better than me," Rajesh says with a smile. "Now it tells me that during major festivals, demand for potatoes and green peas will rise by over 60%. I prepare accordingly."

■ A Growing Trend

Rajesh's story is becoming increasingly common. According to a recent NITI Aayog report, more than 1.2 lakh small retailers and kirana stores across India have started adopting AI and data analytics tools in the last 18 months, many through platforms like ONDC and various state-level digital programmes.

"What we're witnessing is the democratisation

of advanced technology," says Dr. Meenakshi Sharma, Professor of Digital Business at a leading Indian university. "Predictive analytics was once limited to big retail chains. Now, with affordable smartphones and easy-to-use vernacular tools, even small vendors can benefit." The AI system also helped Rajesh navigate last year's unpredictable weather. While many vendors suffered heavy losses, his app adjusted forecasts in real-time, allowing him to minimise risks.

■ Human Touch Remains Key

Even after embracing AI, Rajesh believes technology cannot replace human relationships. He continues to greet regular customers by name, remembers their family preferences, and offers credit to trusted buyers. "I use AI as my smart junior assistant," he says. "It handles the calculations. I handle the personal connections." His daughter has now joined the business and is using AI tools to explore social media marketing to attract younger customers. As India aims for a \$1 trillion digital economy, stories like Rajesh Kumar's highlight how artificial intelligence is reaching small entrepreneurs who form the backbone of the nation's economy. From scribbling numbers in faded diaries to reading smart predictions on a smartphone screen, Rajesh's journey is proof that the future belongs to those willing to adapt — regardless of their age or background.

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What is hajj and how to perform it exactly



ER ISHFAQ KHALIQ

How to perform hajj Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam and a sacred pilgrimage to Makkah that every financially and physically able Muslim must perform at least once in their lifetime. It takes place during the Islamic month of Dhul Hijjah and commemorates the devotion, sacrifice, and obedience of Prophet Ibrahim, Hazrat Hajara, and Prophet Ismail. (R.A)

Hajj teaches:

- **Unity of Muslims from all nations**
- **Patience, humility, and sacrifice**
- **Complete submission to Allah**
- **Spiritual purification and forgiveness**

Based on my research and my recent travel to mecca I have noted the principle and the way to perform Hajj. People may get benefited if they understand it very well here are some steps where people can easily understand how to perform haj exactly

■ **STEP 1: Hajj**

The night of 7th Dhul Hijjah Your group may decide to travel to Mina on the night of 7th Dhul Hijjah for the convenient and to avoid the rush.

Note: This is permissible. The date 8th Dhul Hijjah starts after the Maghrib prayer of 7th Dhul Hijjah The Sunnah is to travel on 8th Dhul Hijjah after Fajr Salah.

Take the best option that is convenient for you.

IMPORTANT: Follow step 2 to Step 4 if you have decided to travel on the night of 7th Dhul Hijjah .

■ **STEP 2: Hajj**

Before travelling to Mina (7/8 Dhul Hijjah)

Take a shower. Remove all un-wanted body hairs Clip your nails. Trim any facial hairs . You may use perfume before wearing Ihram.

Recommended You may perform 2 Raka'ah Nafil with Surah Kafirun and Ikhlas at home or at the airport. (Before or after wearing the Ihram).

If time permits (Optional) You may also perform a Nafil Tawaf.

■ **STEP 4: Hajj**

Wearing Ihram for the Hajj (7/8 Dhul Hijjah)

WARNING: Before travelling to mina you MUST be in Ihram.

- **Wear Ihram (Men).**
- **Women are allowed to wear any clothing.**
- **Make Niyyah for the Hajj.**
- **Do not cover your head, not even with your Ihram. towel**

WARNING: All Ihram restriction will now apply .

NOTE: The Niyyah can be in Arabic or in your own language.

Labbayk Allahumma Hajj. "O Allah, here I am to perform Hajj."

- **Perfumes are not permissible after wearing the Ihram.**
- **Start and continue reciting the Talbiyah.**

■ **STEP 5: Hajj**

Arrival in Mina - 8 Dhul Hijjah You should arrived around mid-day in Mina .

- **Go to your designated tent.**
- **Find/choose your sleeping area in the tent.**
- **Get freshened and take shower if necessary.**
- **Have breakfast/lunch (depending on arrival)**

NOTE: The Hajis who arrived on the night of 7th Dhul Hijj ah, would have already taken the steps above .

ADVISE: If time permits, get familiar with your tent surroundings. If you get lost you can spend hours looking for your tent.

■ **STEP 6 : Hajj**



How to prey Salah in Mina You need to shorten your Salah (Qasr) for all your Mina stay.

- **Fajr: 4 (2+2)**
- **Dhuhr: 2**
- **Asr: 2**
- **Maghrib: 3**
- **Isha: 5 (2 +3)**
- **Pray in Jamm'ah either in your tent or you may join other Jamm'ah from different tent.**

NOTE: Some Jamm'ah may not shorten the Salah, do not get into any dispute, you have the option to join or not to join.

IMPORTANT: Relax and rest often , today is a day of preparation for the Arafat tomorrow.

Spend a portion of day and the night in (Ibadah) Dhikr, Azkar and Istighfar.

ADVISE: For Arafat and Muzdalifah , pack some energetic dry fruits and dates.

■ **STEP 7: Hajj**

Day of Arafat - 9 Dhul Hijjah

WARNING: If you miss Arafat, you miss Hajj

Offer Fajr Jam'ah in the tent and spend some time on Istighfar, Dhikr and Azkar. Also make a long Du'a until the sunrise.

Get ready and reach Arafat by Zawal (declining of the sun).

- **Travelling with the group that is the best option for travelling to Arafat.**
- **Continue reciting Talbiyah toward travelling and throughout the whole day.**
- **Upon arrival, your group may/will have a designated area setup for rest of the day.**
- **Continue reciting the Duas for Arafat until sunset (Maghrib). (Dua listed on step 8).**
- **If possible, go to the Nimrah Mosque or be near and listen to the Khutbah which starts at Zawal.**
- **After the khutbah, the Imam will be leading**

Dhuhr and Asr prayers combined and shortened, with one Adhan but separate Iqamahs .

- **Due to heavy crowd, this may not be possible.**
- **Pray at your camp in Jam'ah without combining (recommended) .**

■ **STEP 8: Hajj**

Dua of Arafat

Dua for Arafat: La ilaha illa allahu wah dahu la sha-reeka lahu,

Lahul mulku wa lahum hamdu, Wa huwa 'ala kullee shay'in qadeer

Also recite: Rabbana atina fid -dunya hasanatan wa fil' akhirati hasanatan waqina 'adhaban -nar

Open your heart and shed tears and make sincere Tawba, Dhikr Istighfar in your own language at every opportunity.

■ **STEP 9: Hajj**

Arafat until sunset

Reciting Talbiyah and Duas of Arafat are to be continued at all time s.

- **After Salah (Dhuhr/Asr) have lunch and get some rest.**
- **Try to be nearer to Jabal Al Rahmah, otherwise follow your group instruction s.**
- **Remember Allah SWT immensely , make lots of Dua, Dhikr and Istighfar either in Arabic or in your own l**

anguage by raising your hands and facing the Qibla (Sunnah) .

- **It is also permissible to make Dua's from authentic books (Group dua's are not recommended) . This day is between you and your Lord, no one knows what is in your heart better than you!**
- **Remain in Arafat until sunset (Maghrib)**

IMPORTANT: DO NOT pray Maghrib in Arafat (Maghrib and Isha are delayed . Pray together in Muzdalifah) .

Now proceed to ward Muzdalifah.

■ **STEP 10: Hajj**

Going toward Muzdalifah

- **You can walk or take transport arranged by your group (Mu'allim) .**
- **Continue reciting Talbiyah, Dhikr and Dua on the way.**
- **DO NOT delay your Salah past half of the night.**
- **If delayed or stuck in traffic, pray wherever you are on the road .**

■ **STEP 11: Hajj**

Upon arriving in Muzdalifah Your group (Mu'allim) may have set up or arrange a tent/area for you to stay the night.

- **If not, find a suitable area to spend the night. Offer your Salah, Maghrib and Isha (combined)**
- **For both prayers there is one Adhan and one Iqamah .**
- **Pray in Jama'ah.**
- **For Maghrib - 3 Rak'ah Fard.**
- **For Isha - 2 Rak'ah Fard and 3 Witr.**
- **Have food and rest.**

Collecting Pebbles Collect 49 pebbles . 70 pebbles if spending 13th

- **10 Dhul Hijjah, 7 Pebbles.**
- **11 Dhul Hijjah, 21 Pebbles.**
- **12 Dhul Hijjah, 21 Pebbles.**
- **13 Dhul Hijjah, 21 Pebbles (Optional/Sunnah).**

IMPORTANT: This is a blessed night, spend some part of the night in Ibadah, Dhikr, Dua and Azka r.

- **Prey Fajr in Jama'a h.**
- **Spend time in Dhikr or Azkar and make long Dua's facing the Qibla until dawn.**

Now proceed to Mina

■ **STEP 12: Hajj**

10 Dhul Hijjah (Jamarat) After Sunrise , return to your camp in Mina Upon arriving Mina, leave all you belonging in your tent .

- **Now proceed to Jamarat (Al -Aqabah).**
- **Continue reciting Talbiyah.**
- **You will require only 7 pebbles.**
- **Get some energetic dry fruits , nuts and Water. Upon reaching the Jamarat (Al -Aqabah)**
- **Stop reciting Talbiyah.**

IMPORTANT: Consider the safety of others, DO NOT throw sandals, umbrellas or throw the pebbles from a distance as you can hit other Hajis head.

- **keep Makkah to your left and Mina to your right, start throwing each of the seven stones at Jamarat by reciting:**

Allah-hu Akbar

IMPORTANT: There is NO DUA after completing the Jamarat.

- **Jamarat are to be completed by mid -day.**

Note: Old, weak or sick can perform Rami a little before sunset or during

the night.

■ **STEP 13: Hajj**

10 Dhul Hijjah (Slaughtering) Upon completing the Jamarat (Al -Aqabah)

- **Proceed to the slaughterhouse.**
- **Make arrangement to sacrifice an animal.**

IMPORTANT: There are many option available on slaughtering an animal.

- **Go with best option that suits you most .**
- **Wait for your confirmation.**

NOTE: If you are feeling weak or tired, the sacrifice can be performed on the 10, 11 or 12 of Dhul Hijjah.

ADVISE: It is best to have the slaughtering completed on 10th Dhul Hijjah, so you can come out of Ihram and be on your normal clothing.

- **Now you need to wait for your slaughtering confirmation.**

Once you have the confirmation, proceed for hair cut.

■ **STEP 14: Hajj**

10 Dhul Hijjah (Hair cut) Upon receiving the slaughtering confirmation.

- **Men are to either shave or trim. (Shaving is highly rewarded)**
- **to cut one inch (1") from the tip of their hair by a Mahram.**
- **You can now come out of Ihram .**

OPTION 1: Slaughtering and Tawaf Az-Ziyarah can be done within next 2 days.

NOTE: You can only come out of Ihram after the slaughtering confirmation and hair shaved or cut.

Skipped Slaughtering and Tawaf Az -Ziyarah

- **Return to your tent in Mina.**

WARNING: You must be in Ihram and all restriction applies.

- **Return to your tent in Mina.**
- **Come out of Ihram, take shower and wear normal clothing.**

NOTE : You perform Tawaf Az -Ziyarah within next 2 day.

■ **STEP 15: Hajj**

10 Dhul Hijjah (Tawaf Az -Ziyarah) After slaughtering, If time permit go to your tent in Mina, get freshened and wear normal clothing.

NOTE: Tawaf Az -Ziyarah is exactly same as you performed Umrah . (Follow the Umra's steps)

- **Must be in Wudu status.**
- **Make 7 tawaf.**
- **Pray behind Maqam -e-Ibrahim.**
- **Make Sa'i**
- **Hair shave/cut ????? please confirm**
- **May need to be completed before Maghrib upon completing Tawaf Az -Ziyarah , return to your camp in Mina.**
- **Get rest, eat and spend portion of your spare time in Dua, Dhik r and Azkar.**

■ **STEP 16: Hajj**

11 Dhul Hijjah

NOTE: The stoning begins at Dhuhr.

- **Ideal to offer your Dhuhr in the tent (Shorten)**
- **Proceed to Jamarah anytime after Dhuhr.**
- **You need 21 pebbles.**
- **Upon reaching 1st Jamarat (?) Start throwing seven pebbles (one at a time) at Jamarat by reciting: Allah -hu Akbar**
- **IMPORTANT: Make Dua facing Qi-**

bla. Upon reaching 2nd Jamarat (?)

Start throwing seven pebbles (one at a time) at Jamarat by reciting: Allah -hu Akbar

IMPORTANT: Make Dua facing Qibla.

Upon reaching 3rd Jamarat (?)

Start throwing seven pebbles (one at a time) at

Jamarat by reciting: Allah -hu Akbar

IMPORTANT: There is NO DU'A after stoning the

3rd Jamarat.

- **After completing return to your tent in Mina.**
- **In Mina recite Quran, glorify Allah, repent on your sins, and seek forgiveness. Ask Allah whatever you want .**

IMPORTANT: You may wish to perform Tawaf Az-Ziyarah only if you DID NOT perform yesterday (10 Dh ul Hij-jah).

See Umrah steps on how to perform Tawaf Az - Ziyarah.

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The author from Dadasara Tral

Why Eating Potato Chips, Chocolates May Harm Your Kidneys

Love to binge on potato chips, bread, bakery products and chocolate? Then beware, as a new rodent-based study revealed that eating processed foods can cause leaky gut syndrome, which in turn increases the risk of kidney disease.

The study, led by researchers at Monash University in Australia, showed that heat-treated or

processed foods are rich in harmful chemical compounds called Advanced Glycation End Products (AGEs). These chemicals give the browned, roasted, fried, grilled and baked foods their flavour and aroma.

The AGEs trigger a process called the Maillard reaction and switch on the body's danger

signals leading to an inflammatory response and chronic kidney disease.

However, eating foods that contain high resistant starch fibre such as oats, cooked and cooled rice, barley, bean and legumes such as black beans and peas, raw potato starch (as a supplement), cooked and cooled

potatoes, can help restore gut health and improve kidney health, revealed the study published in the journal 'Science Advances'.

"These foods are important as they get down into your lower gut and basically serve as food for your gut bacteria. The gut bacteria ferment these food-producing metabolites that are

anti-inflammatory," said lead author Melinda Coughlan, Associate Professor at Monash Central Clinical School's Department of Diabetes.

Globally, 10 per cent people are affected with chronic kidney disease. Consumption of processed food is also associated with the risk of all-cause mortality, diabetes,

hypertension, obesity, cancer and gastrointestinal diseases.

"Dietary change, as with most behaviour change, can be difficult to maintain long term, but by adding more food high in resistant starch fibre and steaming and stewing cooking practices we can help dampen the harmful effects," Coughlan said. IANS

Low-calorie diet, exercise may improve survival for leukemia adolescents: Study

According to a new study, overweight children and adolescents receiving chemotherapy for treatment of leukemia are less successful battling the disease compared to their lean peers. In some cancers, including leukemia in children and adolescents, obesity can negatively affect survival outcomes. Obese young people with leukemia are 50 per cent more likely to relapse after treatment than their lean counterparts.

Now, a study led by researchers at UCLA and Children's Hospital Los Angeles has shown that a combination of modest dietary changes and exercise can dramatically improve survival outcomes for those with acute lymphoblastic leukemia, the most common childhood cancer.

The findings of the study were published in the American Society of Hematology's journal Blood Advances.

The researchers found that patients who reduced their calorie intake by 10 per cent or more and adopted a moderate exercise program immediately after their diagnosis had, on average, 70 per cent less chance of having lingering leukemia cells after a month of chemotherapy than those who did not go on the diet-and-exercise regimen.

While it has already been established that those with Type II diabetes and a high body mass



index (BMI) are at greater risk of experiencing hospitalizations.

Lingering cancer cells in the bone marrow, which are more likely to be found in overweight individuals, are associated with worse survival and a higher risk of relapse, often leading to more intense treatments like bone marrow transplants and immunotherapy.

"We tested a very mild diet because this was our first time trying it, and the first month of treatment is already so difficult for patients and families," said senior author Dr Steven Mittelman, chief of pediatric endocrinology at UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital and a member of the UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Mittelman added, "But even

with these mild changes in diet and exercise, the intervention was extremely effective in reducing the chance of having detectable leukemia in the bone marrow."

As part of the clinical trial, which took place at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, researchers worked with registered dietitians and physical therapists to create personalized 28-day interventions for 40 young people between the ages of 10 and 21 who were newly diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

The intervention was designed to cut participants' calorie intake by a minimum of 10 per cent in order to reduce both fat gain and lean muscle loss. The physical activity component included a target level of 200 minutes per week

of moderate exercise.

The results showed a decrease in fat gain among those who were overweight and obese, as well as an improved insulin sensitivity and an increase in the beneficial hormone adiponectin, which is involved in regulating glucose and breaking down fatty acids. Most importantly, the researchers found a 70 per cent decrease in the chance of having lingering leukemia cells in the bone marrow -- known medically as a minimal residual disease -- when compared with a historical control group.

"We hoped the intervention would improve outcomes, but we had no idea it would be so effective," Mittelman said. Mittelman noted, "We can't really add more toxic chemotherapies to the intense initial treatment

phase, but this is an intervention that likely has no negative side effects. In fact, we hope it may even reduce toxicities caused by chemotherapy."

"This is the first trial to test a diet-and-exercise intervention to improve treatment outcomes from a childhood cancer," said principal investigator and lead author Dr Etan Orgel, Director of the Medical Supportive Care Service in the Cancer and Blood Disease Institute at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. "This is an exciting proof-of-concept, which may have great implications for other cancers as well," added Orgel.

Next steps include further testing of the approach in a multicenter randomised trial, which will be launched later this year, the researchers said. EMJ

Study finds new risk factors linked to increased risk of Covid-19 infection

As Covid-19 runs rampant across the world, a team of researchers have found associations between certain lifestyle factors and a person's risk of getting infected. While it has already been established that those with Type II diabetes and a high body mass index (BMI) are at greater risk of experiencing hospitalizations and other severe complications related to Covid-19, they are also at greater risk of getting the symptomatic infection in the first place.

This is the finding of a recent study conducted by researchers at the University of Maryland School of Medicine that was published today in the journal PLoS ONE.

Using data from the UK Biobank of 500,000 British volunteers over age 40, the researchers examined health factors in those who tested positive for Covid-19 and compared them to those who tested negative. They found that those who had positive Covid-19 test results were more likely to be obese or have Type II diabetes. Those who tested negative were more likely to have high levels of "good" HDL cholesterol and be at a healthy weight with a normal body mass index (BMI).

In some cancers, including leukemia in children and adolescents, obesity can negatively affect survival outcomes. "Certain baseline cardiometabolic factors appear to either protect a person from Covid-19 infection while others make a person more vulnerable to infection," said study author Charles Hong, MD, PhD, professor of medicine and director of cardiology research at the University of Medicine School of Medicine.

Dr Hong added, "But this study wasn't designed to determine what factors actually cause Covid-19 infections. These are statistical associations that point to the importance of a healthy functioning immune system for protecting against Covid-19 infection."

He and his colleagues controlled potential confounding factors like socioeconomic status, age, gender, and ethnicity. Courtesy Healthline

Here's how a sugary diet early in life could cause memory trouble later

A new research has shown how drinking sugary beverages early in life may lead to impaired memory in adulthood. The findings of the study were published in the journal 'Translational Psychiatry'. The study is the first to show how a specific change to the gut microbiome -- the bacteria and other microorganisms growing in the stomach and intestines -- can alter the function of a particular region of the brain.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, sugar-sweetened beverages are a leading source of added sugars in Americans' diets. Nearly two-thirds of young people in the United States consume at least one sugary drink each day.

Neuroscientist Scott Kanoski, associate professor of biological sciences at the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, has studied the link between diet and brain function for years. His research has shown that consumption of sugary beverages impairs memory function in rats and that those same drinks change the gut

microbiome.

In the current study, Kanoski and researchers at UCLA and the University of Georgia, Athens, sought to find out if a direct link exists between changes to the microbiome and memory function.

While it has already been established that those with Type II diabetes and a high body mass index (BMI) are at greater risk of experiencing hospitalizations.

In some cancers, including leukemia in children and adolescents, obesity can negatively affect survival outcomes.

When the rats grew to be adults after about a month, the researchers tested their memories using two different methods. One method tested memory associated with a region of the brain called the hippocampus. The other method tested memory function controlled by a region called the perirhinal cortex.

The researchers found that, compared to rats that drank just water, the rats that consumed high levels of sugary



drink had more difficulty with memory that uses the hippocampus. Sugar consumption did not affect memories made by the perirhinal cortex.

"Early life sugar consumption seems to selectively impair their hippocampal learning and memory," said study lead author Emily Noble, assistant professor

in the UGA College of Family and Consumer Sciences and a former postdoctoral fellow at USC Dornsife.

The scientists then checked the rats' gut microbiomes and found differences between those that drank the sweet beverage and those that drank water. The sugar drinkers had larger populations of two particular

species of gut bacteria: Parabacteroides distasonis and Parabacteroides johnsonii.

The researchers then asked if the Parabacteroides bacteria could, without the help of sugar, affect the rats' memory function. They transplanted Parabacteroides bacteria that were grown in the lab into the guts of adolescent rats that drank

just water. The rats receiving the bacteria showed memory impairment in the hippocampus when they grew to adulthood much the same as the sugar-drinking rats.

The scientists also found that, unlike the sugar-drinking rats, the transplanted rats also showed memory impairment in the perirhinal cortex. This difference provides further evidence that altered brain function associated with diet may actually be rooted in changes to the gut microbiome.

Previous studies have transplanted the entire gut microbiome from one group of animals to another, producing similar changes to brain function. However, this study is among the first to do so with just two specific species.

"It was surprising to us that we were able to essentially replicate the memory impairments associated with sugar consumption not by transferring the whole microbiome, but simply by enriching a single bacterial population in the gut," said

Kanoski, who is a corresponding author on the study.

Finally, the scientists examined the activity of genes in the hippocampus, comparing rats that drank the sugary beverage to those that drank just water and comparing water drinkers to those transplanted with Parabacteroides.

Gene activity did, in fact, change in both the rats that consumed the sugar-sweetened beverages and the rats transplanted with Parabacteroides. The genes that were affected control how nerve cells transmit electrical signals to other nerve cells and how they send molecular signals internally. The results of this study confirm a direct link, on a molecular level, between the gut microbiome and brain function.

In future studies, Kanoski and the researchers hope to determine if changing habits, such as eating a healthier diet or increasing exercise, can reverse the harm to memory caused by elevated sugar consumption earlier in life.

Courtesy Healthline

Eid-ul-Azha! Markets wear festive look across Kashmir, shoppers flock busy bazaars in Srinagar, other major towns

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: Markets across Kashmir, especially in Srinagar, wore a festive look on Monday as thousands of shoppers thronged major business hubs ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

According to the details available with the news agency Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the Valley witnessed hectic buying of clothes, footwear, bakery items, sacrificial animals and other items.

The famous Lal Chowk markets, Goni Khan, Maharaja Bazar, Residency Road, Jamia Market, Maisuma and Bohri Kadal remained abuzz with activity throughout the day as families, youth and children rushed to complete Eid shopping.

The historic markets around Jamia Masjid and Pather Masjid areas, also witnessed good footfall, with shoppers purchasing traditional wear, spices, bakery items, perfumes and prayer essentials.

Despite intermittent rainfall in the afternoon, markets continued to remain crowded, with the cool weather adding to the festive atmosphere as shopkeepers extended business hours amid growing customer rush.

Traders said business picked up during the past few days. Shops dealing in readymade garments, footwear,



cosmetics, bakery products and more witnessed brisk sales.

Mehendi stalls set up in several markets attracted large numbers of women and young girls, especially during evening hours. Popular beauty parlours and salons also reported heavy bookings ahead of Eid celebrations.

Meanwhile, reports of good shopping rush were also received from other districts including Baramulla, Anantnag, Kupwara, Pulwama, Budgam, Shopian, Bandipora and Ganderbal, where markets remained busy till late evening.

In south Kashmir, markets in

Anantnag, Pulwama and Shopian witnessed significant rush at garment stores and bakeries, while in north Kashmir, Baramulla and Kupwara markets saw increased activity as people purchased Eid essentials.

Meanwhile, livestock markets across the Valley also witnessed a steady flow of buyers as people continued purchasing sacrificial animals for Eid-ul-Azha.

Shopkeepers and traders expressed hope for better business in the final day of tomorrow as the Eid will be celebrated on Wednesday across Jammu and Kashmir (KNO)

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PW (R&B) DIVISION ZAINPORA
NOTICE INVITING TENDER | CIVIL WORKS
SINGLE COVER SYSTEM (up to Rs. 2.50 Crores)
NIT No: **Fresh 16/ZNP/RnB/e-Tendering/2026-27** | Dated: **25-05-2026**
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 and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Major Head Of Account	Advertised cost (in Lacs)	Earnest Money Deposit (Rs.)	Class of Contractor	Time of Completion	Cost of T/Doc (Rs.)	Technical sanction No. & Date
1	Minor Repair at Middle School Dachoo.	SAMAGR A	Adv. Cost without GST: 0.838 Adv. Cost with GST: 0.988	1976/-	DEE	20 Days	200/-	06/TS/SAMAGR A (PAB) of 2026-27 Dated: 11-04-2026
2	Minor Repair at Middle School Pargochi.	SAMAGR A	Adv. Cost without GST: 0.846 Adv. Cost with GST: 0.998	1996/-	DEE	20 Days	200/-	07/TS/SAMAGR A (PAB) of 2026-27 Dated: 11-04-2026
3	Minor Repair at Middle School Herman.	SAMAGR A	Adv. Cost without GST: 0.837 Adv. Cost with GST: 0.987	1974/-	DEE	20 Days	200/-	08/TS/SAMAGR A (PAB) of 2026-27 Dated: 11-04-2026

Position of funds: -Committed
Project Authority: Project Director, Samagra Shiksha J&K
AAA No. Date: 396-CHIRAG of 2026 Dated:04-02-2026
The Payment shall be made strictly as per the release of funds by the Competent authority.

1. 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 seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	25-05-2026
2	Document downloading Start Date.	25-05-2026
3	Document Downloading End Date.	04-06-2026
4	Bid submission Start Date.	25-05-2026
5	Bid Submission End Date.	04-06-2026
6	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	05-06-2026

1. Bids must be accompanied by a Treasury Challan (dated between the bid start date and the Bid Submission End date) deposited in M.H. 0059 PWD in the name of Executive Engineer R&B Division Zainpora (tender inviting authority) as the cost of the tender document.
Note:- The Date of Treasury Challan must be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date. Any deviation shall render the bidder as Non-responsive.
1.1 At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Zainpora. The successful bidder will have to provide Performance Security @ 5% at the time of contract award, strictly in accordance with the Government's circular instructions from time to time. The earnest money/bid security of 2% will be released to the successful bidder only after the submission of a Performance Security of 5% of the Bid Cost, which will be released after successful completion of the DLP/Maintenance Period beyond 60 Days.
34. All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25 (Double agreement Form) as well as this NIT.
1. District Development Commissioner Shopian for favour of information.
No: R&B/ZNP/DIV/NIT/923-33
Dt: 25-05-2026

Sd/- (Er. H.M Jahangir)
Executive Engineer R&B
Division Zainpora

DIPK: 1591/26 | Dated: 25-05-2026

Operation Sherwali Enters Third Day As Forces Intensify Hunt For Terrorists

Drones, sniffer dogs and additional troops deployed in Rajouri forest operation

■ M S NAZKI
■ HT CORRESPONDENT

RAJOURI, MAY 25: A major counter-terror operation in the forested areas of Rajouri district entered its third consecutive day on Monday as security forces intensified efforts to track down suspected terrorists believed to be hiding in the region.

The operation, codenamed "Operation Sherwali," was launched on Saturday by a joint team of the Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Central Reserve Police Force following specific intelligence inputs regarding the movement of suspected militants in the Dorimal-Gambhir



Moghla belt.

Officials said security forces have maintained a strong cordon around the area while expanding search operations into adjoining forests. Surveillance systems, including drones and sniffer dogs, have been deployed to assist troops operating in the difficult terrain.

An encounter broke out shortly after the launch of the operation on Saturday when security personnel established contact with the suspected terrorists. A brief exchange of fire followed, after which the militants reportedly retreated deeper into the forest cover.

Authorities believe that two to three terrorists may be hiding in the area. Additional troops have been inducted to strengthen the cordon and prevent any escape routes.

The Army's White Knight Corps said contact with the terrorists was established around 11:30 am on Saturday during an intelligence-based joint operation conducted along with police and CRPF personnel.

Officials said the search operation is continuing with heightened vigilance as forces attempt to eliminate the threat and secure the area.

Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my husband's name AB AHAD MALIK S/O AB SAMAD MILAK R/O KHASIPORA Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID No 021204000280 wants to be registered on my name KHATIJA BEGUM W/O late AB AHAD MALIK R/O KHASIPORA .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. KHATIJA BEGUM.
W/O ...late AHAD MALIK
R/O ...KHASIPORA KREERI

Public Notice

This is for the information of the general public that the electric power connection bearing Consumer ID No. 021204000532, presently standing in the name of Late Gh. Mohd Bhat S/o Fatah Bhat R/o Kreeri, is intended to be transferred in favour of his son mohammad Moqbool Bhat S/o Late Gh. Mohd Bhat R/o Kreeri.

If any person has any objection regarding the transfer of the said power connection, he/she may file the objection before the office of Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited KPDC Wagoora within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. Otherwise, the connection shall be transferred in favour of the applicant and no claim shall be entertained thereafter.

Applicant:
Mohammad Moqbool Bhat
S/o Late Gh. Mohd Bhat
R/o Kreeri

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application of MUHAMMAD ASHRAF TELI S/O HABI BULLAH TELI R/O KREERI Tehsil KREERI for the issuance of OBC (Other Backward classes) in Favor of daughter RAFIA ASHRAF

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of OBC in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of KREERI of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the TELI community having annual income 110000/ the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1..MUHAMMAD ASHRAF TELI Father 43 years Farmer
- 2..SHAMEEMA BEGUM Mother 41 years H/W
- 3... RAFIA ASHRAF applicant 16 years student

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

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Event	Date
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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

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Deputy Chief Minister assesses rescue operation following Gondola technical snag at Gulmarg

Interacts with rescued tourists; stresses safety measures, early restoration of services

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GULMARG, MAY 25: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today visited Gulmarg to assess the rescue operations launched after a technical snag disrupted the functioning of the Gondola service.

Despite difficult terrain and slippery conditions caused by continuous movement along steep slopes, the Deputy Chief Minister personally visited the rescue sites and appreciated the dedication and professionalism displayed by the rescue teams under the challenging circumstances.

During the visit, the Deputy Chief Minister reviewed the on-ground situation and inspected the Gondola base station, cabins and related infrastructure. He directed the concerned authorities to ensure that all necessary safety protocols are strictly adhered to and stressed the need for early restoration of services



for the convenience of tourists and locals.

Interacting with the tourists and officials on the spot, the Deputy Chief Minister lauded

the coordinated efforts of the Civil Administration, Police, Army, Disaster Response Force (DRF), local guides and other agencies involved in the rescue operation.

"On the directions of the Chief Minister, I personally supervised the ongoing rescue operation and I am happy to say that all the stranded tourists have been

rescued safely," he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the prompt response and close coordination among all agencies ensured the safe evacuation of every passenger. He reiterated that the safety and well-being of tourists remains the government's top priority. "Tourists are our valued guests and every possible effort was made to ensure their safe rescue. I am thankful that all the passengers are safe and the rescue operation has concluded successfully," he added.

The Deputy Chief Minister further assured that a detailed report regarding the incident would be submitted to the Chief Minister, following which appropriate measures would be taken to ascertain the cause of the technical snag and prevent recurrence of such incidents in future.

Senior officers from Civil, police and army were also present.

DC Kathua reviews arrangements for Eid-ul-Azha celebrations

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA, MAY 25: Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma today chaired a meeting of district officers to review and finalise arrangements for the smooth and peaceful celebration of Eid-ul-Azha across the district.

The meeting was attended by ADDC Surinder Mohan Sharma; ADC Mahima Madan; ADC Basohli ADC Billawar, officers from Police, Health, Municipal Committees, Jal Shakti, Power Development Department, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Rural Development, Transport and other line



departments.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner took a comprehensive review of the preparations being put in place to facilitate devotees and ensure hassle-free observance of the festival. He directed all departments to work in close coordination and make necessary arrangements well in advance.

The DC instructed the Municipal Committees to ensure proper sanitation, cleanliness and waste disposal around Eidgahs, mosques and other congregation venues. He also stressed the need for adequate drinking water facilities and directed the Jal Shakti Department to ensure uninterrupted water supply at all religious places and adjoining areas.

Reviewing power supply arrangements, the Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned officers to maintain uninterrupted electricity supply during the festival and keep emergency response teams on standby to address any contingencies promptly.

The Health Department was instructed to ensure availability of medical teams, emergency medicines and ambulance services at strategic locations. The Deputy Commissioner also directed the Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department to keep a close watch on the availability and quality of essential commodities in the markets.

Emphasising the importance of public convenience and safety, the DC directed the Police and Traffic authorities to put in place adequate security and traffic management arrangements at all major congregation points to ensure smooth movement of devotees and maintain law and order.

The Deputy Commissioner further stressed the need for coordinated efforts among all departments to ensure that the festival is celebrated in a peaceful, orderly and harmonious atmosphere.

DC Ganderbal reviews preparations for Muharram, issues directions for proper civic amenities

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, MAY 25: In order to ensure smooth and peaceful observance of forthcoming auspicious month of Muharram-ul-Haram, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore today convened a meeting here to review preparedness measures, assess departmental readiness and take stock of public requirements related to the festival.

During the meeting, representatives from various Shia dominated areas of district Ganderbal highlighted a range of public issues and sought timely intervention by line departments to strengthen civic facilities and essential services ahead of Muharram.

Key issues raised included filling potholes and macadamization of roads leading to Imbargahs and along procession routes. Participants also highlighted the need for completion of pending infrastructure works, and restoration of damaged road stretches.

Demands were also made for uninterrupted drinking water supply, desilting of drains, sanitation drives, and improved sanitation facilities at major congregation sites. They also sought installation and repair of streetlights and solar lights as well as availability of backup power facilities at religious institutions.

The DC issued a series of directions to concerned departments for timely execution of works and close inter-departmental coordination. He directed all departments to conduct field assessments and make proper arrangements wherever required.

KPDCL was directed to conduct a detailed survey along procession routes and ensure tightening of loose and low-hanging wires to avoid any safety hazards, besides installation of additional street lights and power backup.

Departments concerned were asked to undertake road repairs wherever required, ensure adequate drinking water arrangements including tanker service and address sanitation-related issues, and street lighting on priority.

The Health Department was directed to establish medical camps at key congregation and procession points, besides deploying doctors, paramedical staff, essential medicines and first-aid facilities. The department was further instructed to keep ambulances stationed at strategic locations to provide prompt emergency response and healthcare support during major Muharram gatherings and processions.

DC also directed for deployment of adequate number of fire tenders, ensuring adequate availability of ration, LPG, and fire wood.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Kangan, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Executive Engineers and other district and sectorial officers.

DC Kathua reviews progress of Self Enumeration & NMJKA

Stresses wider public outreach, proper documentation of activities

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA, MAY 25: Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma today chaired a meeting of the district officers to review the progress achieved under the ongoing Self Enumeration initiative of Census 2027 and the Nasha Mukh Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan (NMJKA).

The Deputy Commissioner took a detailed appraisal of the measures being undertaken to promote Self Enumeration. He directed officers to intensify public awareness and outreach efforts to encourage citizens to avail the digital facility from the comfort of their homes.

Emphasising the importance of citizen participation, the DC stressed the need for extensive sensitisation campaigns highlighting the ease, convenience and benefits of Self Enumeration.

He directed all departments to actively publicise the initiative through awareness camps, public interactions and social media platforms. The officers were further asked to involve elected representatives, community leaders, prominent citizens, educational institutions and other stakeholders in motivating the public to adopt the digital



mode of self-enumeration.

The DC underscored the importance of establishing facilitation and awareness camps at prominent locations to assist citizens in completing the self-enumeration process and resolving any queries related to the initiative. He called upon all departments to work in a coordinated manner to maximise public participation and ensure wider dissemination of information regarding the ongoing exercise.

Reviewing the implementation of the Nasha Mukh Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, the DC directed all district and sectoral officers to ensure regular conduct of awareness, outreach and community engagement activities under the campaign. He stressed that every activity under-

taken by departments must be properly documented and uploaded on the designated NMJKA portal for accurate representation of the district's efforts and achievements.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasised that timely and quality reporting is essential for effective monitoring of the campaign. He instructed officers to ensure that events are conducted in a meaningful manner, supported by proper photographic documentation, attendance records and activity reports besides ensuring events uploading on prescribed e-portal. He further directed that daily reports of all NMJKA-related activities should invariably reach the DC Office in the prescribed format for consolidation and review.

The DC called upon all officers to maintain close coordination and ensure effective implementation of both programmes at the grassroots level.

Among others present in the meeting included, ADC Mahima Madan; ADC Basohli Pankaj Bhagotra; ADC Billawar Vinay Khosla, PO ICDS Mohammed Syed Khan; RTO Surinder Sharma; IAS Probationer Nidhi, SDM Hiranagar, DSWO, DSEO and other concerned officers were also present.

GIS-Based Master Plan for Planned Development of Doda Township in offing

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

DODA, MAY 25: Member Legislative Assembly (AC 52-Doda), Mehraj Din Malik along with District Development Commissioner Krishan Lal, today presided over a comprehensive meeting regarding the preparation and implementation of the GIS-based Master Plan for Doda Town. At the outset, the DC provided a detailed overview of the proposed master plan and highlighted the importance of scientific and technology-driven urban planning for the sustainable development of the district.

The meeting was attended by officers from across the line departments, including Town Planning, Revenue, PWD, Rural Development, Forest, Health, Education, Fire and Emergency Services, MVD, Traffic Depart-

ment, Food and Civil Supplies, Municipal authorities, Statistics and Evaluation Office, besides other concerned agencies.

Detailed deliberations were held on the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) technology for planned development, land use mapping, road connectivity, disaster management, environmental conservation, infrastructure development and regulation of construction activities in urban as well as rural areas of the district.

The DDC stressed the need for inter-departmental coordination and directed all departments to provide updated records, maps and field data for the timely preparation of an accurate and people-centric master plan.

Planner Shivani Garg from Guru Nanak Dev University delivered a detailed PowerPoint

presentation on the proposed GIS-based Master Plan for Doda town. The presentation covered important aspects related to zoning, traffic management, public utility spaces, drainage systems, green zones, tourism potential, beautification projects and future infrastructure requirements for the town. Stakeholders also participated virtually and shared valuable suggestions for making the master plan more practical, sustainable and development-oriented. The DDC emphasized that the GIS-based planning system would ensure transparency in decision-making, better resource management, systematic urban expansion and improved civic amenities for the public. The participating departments shared their valuable suggestions and sector-specific inputs for the formulation of a

comprehensive and well-developed master plan. Officers highlighted the need for proper zoning, expansion of road networks, preservation of environmentally sensitive areas, strengthening of drainage systems, development of public amenities, protection of agricultural land and creation of sustainable urban infrastructure. The departments also emphasized coordinated planning to meet future population growth and developmental requirements of the district.

Speaking at the meeting, MLA Mehraj Din Malik highlighted the need for a modern and public-friendly master plan equipped with proper waste disposal systems, beautified parks, open gym facilities, better drainage networks and adequate public utilities. He stressed the importance of uninterrupted electric-

ity supply in schools and other public institutions and urged departments to launch large-scale plantation drives, particularly on vacant forest land and government premises, with special focus on fruit-bearing plants. He also emphasized inclusive public participation from all sections of society in the planning process to ensure balanced and holistic development of Doda town. The MLA emphasized the need for proper demarcation and rationalization of municipal limits to ensure planned urban expansion and effective civic management in Doda town. He also raised concern over the sinking zones identified in certain areas of Doda city and stressed that timely preventive and protective measures must be taken to safeguard public property, infrastructure and human lives.

Training Programme on IPMS Portal organised at Directorate of Agriculture Jammu

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAY 25: A training-cum-awareness programme regarding the rollout of the Integrated Pesticide Management System (IPMS) Portal in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir was organised today at the Conference Hall Directorate of Agriculture, Jammu. The programme witnessed participation from

pesticide distributors from across the Jammu region.

The training programme was organised by the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India-Krishni Bhavan- New Delhi.

Experts delivered a detailed presentation and live demonstration of the IPMS Portal and its stock management modules.

DC Ganderbal reviews arrangements for Eid-ul-Adha at major religious places

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, MAY 25: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, today conducted an extensive visit to major religious places across Ganderbal town to take stock of arrangements in place for smooth conduct of Eid prayers during the upcoming religious occasion of Eid-ul-Adha.

During the visit, the DC visited Syed Qamar-ud-Din Bukhari

Shrine, Meerani Masjid Duderhama and Jama Masjid Beehama, where he interacted with management committees and took stock of the preparations for the smooth observance of the festival.

Emphasising the need for coordinated efforts by all departments, the DC directed the concerned officers to ensure adequate arrangements for the convenience of devotees during the festive occasion.

The Executive Engineers of Jal Shakti and KPDCL were instructed to ensure uninterrupted water and electricity supply at all major religious places to avoid any inconvenience to the public.

He also directed the concerned agencies to undertake intensive sanitation and cleanliness drives in and around mosques, shrines and adjoining areas to maintain proper hygiene and cleanliness during the celebrations.

During his interaction with the management committees, the DC sought feedback regarding the facilities required and assured them that the district administration would make all necessary arrangements to ensure smooth and peaceful conduct of the religious occasion.

He further urged all concerned departments to work in close coordination to ensure all arrange-

Pudumjee Paper reports 18 pc EBITDA, completes Rs 110 cr capex

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHENNAI, MAY 25: Pudumjee Paper Products Ltd. maintained steady revenues at Rs 807.88 crores, compared to Rs 809.08 crores last year.

This stable performance was driven by an increased sales volumes of 1,675 MT of paper. To pass manufacturing cost savings directly to customers and sustain market value, the company lowered its average selling price per MT.

Backed by strong operational efficiency, the company maintained a consistent EBIT-

DA margin of 18% for both fiscal periods.

The company has successfully completed its Rs 110 crore capital expenditure program. This investment went into setting up a solar power plant, installing an advanced AFBC boiler, and modernizing critical parts of three paper-making machines to improve efficiency. The new 15.4 MW Solar Power Plant at Bhalwani, near Solapur, was operationalized in December 2025. It will meet about 35% of the company's annual power needs, reducing manufacturing energy costs and lowering its carbon footprint by an estimated 27,000 MT annually, a company

release said here today.

Due to updated regulatory requirements, the company is currently applying for fresh environmental clearance to construct its upcoming project at Mahad.

The company continues to focus on manufacturing biodegradable and compostable specialty papers with barrier properties to protect packaged contents. These papers serve as raw materials for sustainable packaging in high-growth demand sectors, including food products, pharmaceuticals, hospital supplies, hygiene, and confectionery. (UNI)



India to purchase USD 500 billion worth of US goods over five years: Marco Rubio

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAY 25: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Sunday said India has committed to purchasing \$500 billion worth of US goods over the next five years, with a focus on energy, technology, and agriculture.

Rubio highlighted Washington's expanding partnership with India during his ongoing visit, sharing photographs from meetings with senior Indian leaders and discussions focused on trade, security, and regional issues.

He met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. "Huge thanks to @USAmbIndia Sergio Gor and



our American diplomats for their efforts. Because of their great work, India has committed to purchasing USD 500 billion in U.S. goods over the next five years focusing on energy, technology, and agriculture. They're doing terrific work on behalf of President Trump and the American people!" Rubio said.

"In New Delhi, I met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to underscore the importance of the US-India relationship. We discussed the situation in the Middle East and US-India partnership in energy, securing critical supply chains, and collaboration on emerging technologies. I was pleased to invite Prime Minister Modi to the White House on behalf of the President," Rubio said in a post of X.

Prime Minister Modi also shared details of the meeting saying, "Happy to receive the US Secretary of State, Mr. Marco Rubio. We discussed sustained progress in the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and issues related to regional and global peace and security. India and the United States will continue to work closely for the global good."

US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor said, "Great to join Secretary Rubio for a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. We had a productive discussion on ways to deepen US-India cooperation across security, trade, and critical technologies - areas that strengthen both our nations and advance a free and open Indo-Pacific. India is a vital partner to the United States!"

Rubio has arrived in India on Saturday for a four-day visit. (UNI)

FUEL PUMP ACCURACY TO IMPROVE AS GOVERNMENT TIGHTENS VERIFICATION RULES

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAY 25: The Centre five additional categories of fuel dispensing systems under the ambit of Government Approved Test Centres (GATCs). The newly included categories are petrol and diesel dispensers, CNG dispensers, LPG dispensers, LNG dispensers, and hydrogen dispensers.

The inclusion of CNG, LNG and hydrogen dispensers comes at a time when India is rapidly expanding its infrastructure for cleaner and alternative fuels.

The Department of Consumer Affairs, under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, has amended the Legal Metrology (Government Approved Test Centre) Rules,

2013, to expand the scope of verification services for fuel dispensing systems and strengthen the country's legal metrology infrastructure.

The Department of Consumer Affairs under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution has amended the Legal Metrology (Government Approved Test Centre) Rules, 2013, expanding the scope of verification services for fuel dispensing systems and strengthening India's legal metrology infrastructure.

According to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, the move is expected to improve the availability of verification services, enhance operational efficiency, and support the growing adoption of cleaner fuels across the country.



With the latest additions, GATCs are now authorised to verify and re-verify 23 categories

of weights and measuring instruments under the Legal Metrology framework. The government

has also notified verification charges for the newly included dispensing systems.

The verification fee for petrol and diesel dispensers has been fixed at Rs 5,000 per nozzle, while CNG, LPG, LNG and hydrogen dispensers will attract a verification fee of Rs 10,000 per nozzle.

The amended rules also empower state governments to notify additional categories of weights and measures that can be verified through GATCs based on local requirements.

Before the amendment, GATCs were authorised to verify 18 categories of instruments, including water meters, clinical thermometers, gas meters, energy meters, breath analysers, weighing instruments, flow meters and vehicle speed meters. (UNI)

Market valuation of six of top-10 firms spikes by over Rs 74,000 cr

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAY 25: The market valuation of six of the top-10 most valued firms spiked by Rs 74,111.57 crore in a week, with Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest gainer. Reliance Industries added Rs 24,696.89 crore, taking its market valuation to Rs 18,33,117.70 crore.

From the pack, the gainers were Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) while HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India and Hindustan Unilever faced erosion from their valuation.

HDFC Bank's mcap dipped by Rs 2,094.35 crore to Rs 11,79,974.90 crore and that of ICICI Bank surged Rs 14,515.93 crore to Rs 9,06,901.32 crore. State Bank of India declined by Rs 12,784.4 crore to Rs 8,76,077.92 crore.

LIC's valuation climbed Rs 9,076.37 crore to Rs 5,14,443.69 crore while Bajaj Finance edged higher by Rs 3,797.83 crore to Rs 5,70,515.57 crore.

The valuation of TCS jumped Rs 19,338.68 crore to Rs 8,38,401.33 crore. Larsen & Toubro went up by



Rs 2,685.87 crore to Rs 5,40,228.21 crore, Hindustan Unilever eroded by Rs 16,212.18 crore to Rs 5,17,380 crore and the market valuation of Bharti Airtel dropped by Rs 20,229.67 crore to Rs 11,40,295.49 crore.

Indian stock market on Friday ended with gains led by some heavyweights like banking, including ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, and Axis Bank.

During the session, the market remained in positive territory but gains were capped by elevated crude oil prices and rising concerns about inflation.

At close, Sensex gained 231.99 points or 0.31 percent at 75,415.35, while the Nifty rose 64.60 points or 0.27 percent to settle at 23,719.30. (UNI)

Singareni CMD directs officials to ensure uninterrupted coal production during monsoon

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, MAY 25: In view of forecasts indicating the onset of the Southwest monsoon within the next ten days, the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) has initiated special measures to ensure uninterrupted coal production during the rainy season.

The Company Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) Dr. Buddhaprakash Jyoti on Saturday conducted a comprehensive review meeting with General Managers of all areas and di-

rected officials to take advance precautionary measures to prevent disruption to coal production during the monsoon.

According to the company, nearly 95 per cent of Singareni's coal production currently comes from open cast mines, where heavy rains often disrupt mining operations due to water accumulation. To tackle the issue, SCCL has already installed more than 100 heavy-duty pumps and motors across its open cast mines for dewatering operations.

The CMD instructed officials to arrange additional company-

owned and private pumps wherever necessary and strengthen haul roads to prevent water stagnation near overburden and coal benches. He also directed the concerned General Managers at the Corporate Office to expedite tender-related procedures to ensure the availability of adequate pumping equipment before the onset of heavy rains.

Dr. Buddhaprakash Jyoti reviewed mine-wise preparedness plans related to monsoon management and instructed officials to closely monitor weather advisories issued by the Meteorological Department.

The CMD particularly interacted with Area General Managers of open cast mines that had suffered major production losses during rains in the past two years and advised them to remain extra vigilant this monsoon season.

Highlighting the growing power demand due to international developments, he stressed the need to ensure uninterrupted coal supply to thermal power plants having Fuel Supply Agreements with Singareni. He also reviewed coal produc-

tion, transportation and overburden removal achieved by various areas during the current financial year and directed officials to maximise coal output before the onset of the monsoon to offset possible production losses during the rainy season.

The CMD called for optimum utilisation of heavy machinery and effective deployment of manpower and urged officials to create awareness among employees about the challenges facing the company and motivate them to contribute towards organisational growth. (UNI)

Godrej Properties awards Rs 1,100 cr contract to Tata Projects

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI, MAY 25: Mumbai-based real estate developer Godrej Properties officially informed the stock exchange that it has awarded construction contracts worth around Rs 1,100 crore to Tata Projects to construct three luxury residential projects in Gurugram.

Significantly, this deal is the first known collaboration between the Godrej Group and Tata Projects in the residential construction segment.

Godrej Properties stated that the collaboration is aimed at improving construction efficiency, quality standards and project delivery timelines across its upcoming developments, while Tata Projects said that the partnership aligns with its experience in executing large-scale urban infrastructure and residential projects.

Commenting on the partnership, Godrej Properties Chief Operating Officer Sandeep Navlakhe said, "Our partnership with Tata Projects is a strategic step towards strengthening execution across some of our most important luxury developments. Golf Course Road represents one of India's most competitive and quality-conscious residential markets, and delivering here demands a strong focus on precision, scale, and consistency."

"Through this collaboration, we aim to further enhance delivery timelines, construction excellence, and on-ground efficiency, while continuing to create homes that are thoughtfully designed and aligned with evolving customer expectations," Navlakhe added.

The partnership was struck, even as developers continue to focus on the luxury housing market in major metropolitan regions like Gurugram, where premium projects have witnessed increasing interest from affluent buyers and investors.

The three projects to be constructed by Tata Projects are located on Golf Course Road, which is known to be one of Gurugram's premium residential corridors.

As per the deal, Tata Projects will undertake the core and shell construction work for the buildings, namely Godrej Sora, Godrej Astra and Godrej Samaris.

Godrej Samaris is an upcoming luxury residential development spread across 7.41 acres in Sector 53, Gurugram. The project forms part of Godrej Properties' broader expansion strategy in the National Capital Region's (NCR) premium housing market. (UNI)

In A Great Mind Space: Shreyas Iyer

PBKS HEAD COACH RICKY PONTING CALLS IYER "A VERY MATURE PLAYER NOW, A VERY MATURE LEADER," FOR HIS CENTURY



■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

LUCKNOW: It is hard to tell whether he has trained himself to be so or whether it comes to him naturally, but Shreyas Iyer comes across as an unemotional cricketer and captain, which is a prized quality in high-pressure environments. Perhaps to make up for it, he expresses himself more eloquently than other cricketers in interviews.

After scoring his maiden IPL century and giving Punjab Kings (PBKS) a chance to qualify for the IPL 2026 playoffs, he let the words flow as well: he said he was "ecstatic" and "elated" that Prabhsimran Singh, with whom he added 140 for the third wicket against Lucknow Super Giants (LSG), was "temperamentally active" and that "it takes two to tango".

However, this time the emotion also showed. Only after he had hit the winning six with two overs to spare, which also brought up his hundred. The win left them hoping for Mumbai Indians (MI) to beat Rajasthan Royals (RR) on the last day of the league, but the margins made it unlikely for Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) to topple them, should RR lose. Add to it a run of six consecutive defeats after six consecutive wins in completed matches, and the emotions ran wild.

"It's a surreal feeling, especially when you finish off the game and you score a century," Iyer said at the presentation. "I think all the batsmen, they dream of that, and today was one of those days where I personally felt super from within. I was in a great mind space. I knew what I wanted, I knew how the wicket was playing, kind of reading all this situation, it helped me to score my runs. And also the partnership was crucial. I think that creates the momentum in the game and just to win it from there, I'm seriously elated."

Winning captain in 2024 with KKR and runners-up with PBKS last year, Iyer started a chase on Saturday encouraging his batting partner to not worry about his century and instead finish off the game as quickly as possible. If this is indeed the last match for PBKS this year, Iyer will have nicely rounded off a two-year journey in which the list of his admirers has only grown. One of the early ones was Ricky Ponting, who was the coach when Iyer first took over the captaincy at Delhi Capitals (DC).

'Versatile' Josh Inglis a rare bright spot in LSG's hour of darkness

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHANDIGARH: "Both bat and ball performing at the same time was always a challenge," Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) global director of cricket Tom Moody said after they finished bottom of the pile in IPL 2026. Many things at the franchise might change now, after successive poor seasons (they had finished at No. 7 in both 2024 and 2025), but the one positive they have at the end of it is Josh Inglis.

Inglis, who wasn't retained by Punjab Kings (PBKS) at the end of last season following differences with the PBKS management - they called him "unprofessional" after he told them very close to the retention deadline that he would be getting married and miss the best part of IPL 2026. LSG didn't mind that. They got him, fielded him in their last five games, and he gave them 266 runs, with three half-centuries, at a strike rate of 186.01.

In an indictment of the performance of the rest of the LSG batters as well as the team's plans, Inglis' aggregate was the third-highest for them all season, behind Mitchell Marsh (563) and Rishabh Pant (312) and higher than Aiden Markram (231 from 11 innings) and Nicholas Pooran (234 from 14). The closest anyone got to his strike rate was Marsh, with 163.18.

"He's so versatile: He's good against slower deliveries, he's good against every length that has been on offer," Ambati Rayudu said on ESPNcricinfo TimeOut. "I just think he's so suited to playing in these subcontinent conditions. He plays brilliantly against spin. He plays the lap shots well. He hits straight down the ground. He has every shot in the book. And also he has a very, very good head on his shoulders."

"His shot selection is superb compared to a few of the other foreign batters we have seen. For example, Finn Allen [of Kolkata Knight Riders]. Finn Allen takes on the new ball, but he's very, very one-dimensional. But Josh Inglis is not one-dimensional. He plays all around the wicket and plays spin brilliantly."

It's easy to believe that there will be changes at LSG before IPL 2027; Moody has already said there will be a "reset" when it comes to Rishabh Pant's captaincy. In fact, Moody said "we'll consider all things" when it comes to the post mortem of the latest season.

"I think there's many, many things you put your finger on," Moody said at the press conference after the loss to PBKS when asked what went wrong for LSG. "I think the early parts of the season, we bowled particularly well. Unfortunately, the first part of the season, or more than half the season, batting didn't click at all. We didn't have the dynamic starts that we were hoping for. Our middle order failed to really contribute and fire."

IPL 2026 Orange and Purple Cap race:

Sooryavanshi, Archer, Tyagi could shoot up

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI: This is how things stand on the Orange and Purple Cap lists at the end of the Punjab Kings vs Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) game on Saturday, even though a lot could change within 24 hours with two league-stages matches - the last two - to be played on Sunday in IPL 2026.

Orange Cap leaderboard
LSG opener Mitchell Marsh wasn't around for the Saturday game, so there was no real threat to the top five, or six, batters of the season. Marsh ended with 563 runs and the joint-sixth spot (and can go down as the season heads towards its finale). But two PBKS batters got a move on after large-



lean spells. Opening the innings, Prabhsimran Singh scored 69 in 39 balls, a second half-century in five innings, interspersed by three low scores. That took his tally for the season up to 510 runs and the

tenth position. One spot below him was his captain Shreyas Iyer, with 498 runs after scoring 101 not out in 51 balls, which ended a similarly lean run: Iyer had crossed

30 just once in five innings leading up to Saturday. The top six, meanwhile, remained the same: B Sai Sudharsan and Shubman Gill of Gujarat Titans (GT) are one and two with 638 and 616 runs respectively, followed by Heinrich Klaasen of Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) with 606 runs, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi of Rajasthan Royals (RR) with 579 runs, and the SRH duo of Ishan Kishan (569 runs) and Abhishek Sharma (563 runs), before we come to Marsh.

Of these, Sooryavanshi has a big chance to go up tonight when RR play Mumbai Indians (MI).

Purple Cap leaderboard
Prince Yadav, one of the success stories of the season, finished with none for 32 from three overs,

making it the fourth successive game in which he had no wickets to show. He finished with 16 wickets.

The top five are: Bhuvneshwar Kumar of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) with 24 wickets; GT's Kagiso Rabada with 24 wickets as well, but at a poorer economy rate; Anshul Kamboj of Chennai Super Kings (CSK) with 21; GT's Rashid Khan with 19; SRH's Eshan Malinga also with 19 but Rashid has a better economy rate.

Just behind them is Jofra Archer, who, like Sooryavanshi, goes up against MI and can move up if he can add to his 18 strikes. The same as Kartik Tyagi of Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), who play Delhi Capitals (DC).

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