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# Stay Hydrated, Take Precautions as Heat Intensifies: Narendra Modi

PM Urges Citizens to follow Official Advisories Amid Soaring Temperatures

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, MAY 31:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday called on people across the country to remain vigilant and take necessary precautions as severe heat conditions continue to affect large parts of India.



Addressing the nation during his monthly radio programme, Mann Ki Baat, the Prime Minister stressed the importance of staying hydrated and exercising caution while venturing outdoors during peak daytime temperatures.

"With temperatures soaring across much of the country, it is important to take extra care. Stay hydrated. If you need to step out in the sun, do so cautiously and take necessary precautions," Modi said, urging citizens to regularly drink

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# Governance Set To Dominate CM's June 3rd Meeting With Legislators

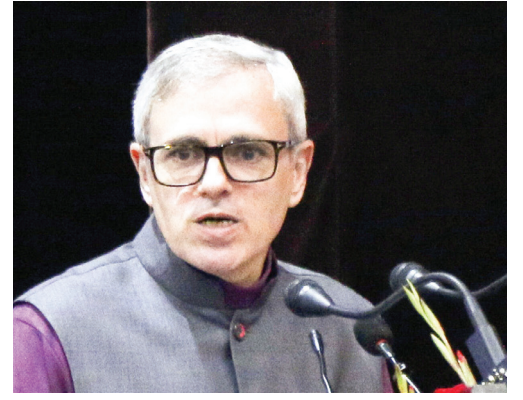
Functioning of Ministers Also Likely To Come Under Review

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MAY 31:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will chair a crucial meeting of legislators at his Gupkar residence on June 3, with governance and public welfare expected to be at the centre of deliberations, according to sources.

The meeting assumes significance amid growing concerns over administrative performance and development priorities in different constituencies. Besides National Conference legislators, all independent MLAs supporting

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## No Decision Yet on Resumption of Gulmarg Gondola Services

HT NEWS NETWORK

**GULMARG, MAY 31:** Authorities have not yet taken a decision on the resumption of operations of the Gulmarg Gondola, which has remained suspended since May 25 following a technical fault, officials said on Sunday.

Managing Director of the

Turn on Page 2

## Tri-Services Integration, Military Reforms Will be on Top Priority: CDS Gen Subramani

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, MAY 31:** NS Raja Subramani on Sunday assumed charge as India's new Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), outlining an agenda focused on accelerating military reforms, strengthening tri-services integration, and advancing the induction of indigenous defence systems into the armed forces.

Gen Subramani succeeded Anil Chauhan, who completed his tenure as the

Turn on Page 2

## Operational Readiness Will Be Top Priority: Navy Chief Admiral Swaminathan

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, MAY 31:** Admiral Krishna Swaminathan on Sunday assumed charge as the Chief of the Naval Staff, pledging to maintain the Indian Navy at the highest level of operational readiness and combat effectiveness amid an increasingly complex regional security environment.

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## 12 Years Of Technological Transformation Laid Foundation Of 2047: Dr Jitendra

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES


**NEW DELHI, MAY 31:** Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, and Minister of State for PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh said that the last 12 years of technological transformation has laid the foundation for 2047 and under PM Narendra Modi, India has moved from being a technology follower to a technology leader.

Turn on Page 2



# OUR CENSUS OUR DEVELOPMENT






## Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh

### Houselisting & Housing Census

1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> June

### What will you be asked?



**Information of house:**

- Building number
- Materials of the floor, walls & ceiling
- Ascertain use of the house- (Residential/Non-residential)
- Condition of the house

**Others:**

- Main cereal consumed
- Mobile number (Only for Census communication)

**Basic information about the family:**

- Number of family members
- Name, sex and caste of the head of the family (SC/ST or others)
- Ownership status of the house
- Number of rooms
- Number of married couples living in the house

**Amenities:**

- Source of drinking water
- Availability of drinking water source
- Main source of lighting
- Access to latrine
- Type of latrine
- Waste water outlet
- Bathroom facilities
- Kitchen and LPG/PNG connection
- Main fuel used for cooking

**Assets:**

- Radio/Transistor
- Television
- Access to internet Computer/Laptop
- Mobile phone /Telephone
- Two-wheeler/ Four-wheeler

» This stage lays the foundation for population enumeration    » All your information will remain completely confidential and secure

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

**Stay Hydrated.....**

water and follow heat-related advisories issued by government departments.

The appeal comes amid an intense summer season that has seen temperatures rise sharply in several regions. The Prime Minister had earlier this week also advised people to adopt preventive measures against heat-related illnesses, emphasizing hydration as a key safeguard.

In a lighter segment of his address, Modi highlighted India's rich diversity of mango varieties, describing the fruit as an integral part of the country's summer culture. He noted that different regions are known for distinctive varieties, each with its own flavour and identity.

Referring to popular varieties such as Alphonso and Kesar in western India, Dussehri and Langra in the north, and Banganapalli, Totapuri and Malgovala in the south, the Prime Minister said the fruit reflects India's cultural and agricultural diversity.

He also pointed to the growing global demand for Indian mangoes, noting that the journey of the fruit now extends from village orchards to international markets, creating new opportunities for growers and exporters.

The Prime Minister's remarks combined a public health message with a celebration of India's agricultural heritage, as the country navigates another season of extreme summer temperatures. (Agencies)

**Governance.....**

the government have also been invited to participate.

Sources said the invited independents include Akram Choudhary (Surankote), Dr. Rameshwar Singh (Bani), Muzaffar Iqbal Khan (Thanamandi) and Pyare Lal Sharma (Inderwal).

Apart from reviewing governance-related matters, the meeting is also expected to discuss the functioning of ministers and the pace of development initiatives across Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier, the Chief Minister, in his invitation to party legislators, stated that the gathering would deliberate on "matters of collective importance and issues concerning public welfare."

The meeting comes against the backdrop of reported dissatisfaction among some legislators over the performance of a minister. Sources said three MLAs from a particular region met the Chief Minister before Eid-ul-Adha and raised concerns regarding the allocation of development projects and funds. They alleged that their constituencies were being overlooked while the minister's own constituency was receiving a disproportionately larger share of resources.

Concerns about the minister were also reportedly voiced during a recent provincial committee meeting of the National Conference in Srinagar, where a legislator from Central Kashmir alleged that he had been threatened with disciplinary action after raising issues related to a development project.

Party leaders, however, declined to comment on the agenda of the June 3 meeting or on the allegations levelled against the minister, maintaining that they were unaware of the details.

The meeting is expected to provide an important platform for legislators to raise constituency concerns and review the government's governance agenda in the months ahead.

**No Decision.....**

Gondola Project, Syed Qamar Sajjad, said that no timeline has been finalized for restarting the cable car service, one of Kashmir's most visited tourist attractions.

He said the administration would begin processing refunds from Monday for tourists who had booked Gondola tickets between May 25 and June 3 and were affected by the suspension of services.

"The refund process is being initiated for visitors affected by the suspension," Sajjad said, adding that passengers who could not avail themselves of the service during the closure period would receive reimbursement.

The Gondola service was suspended on May 25 after a technical snag developed in the system, resulting in hundreds of tourists being stranded in cabins. A large-scale rescue operation involving technical staff and emergency response agencies was immediately launched, leading to the safe evacuation of more than 300 tourists.

Officials said all passengers were rescued without injuries, and a detailed technical assessment of the system is underway before any decision is taken on restoring operations.

The suspension has affected tourist movement to higher reaches of Gulmarg during a peak travel period, while visitors and tourism stakeholders continue to await an official announcement on the reopening of the cable car service.

**Tri-Services.....**

country's senior-most military commander on Saturday. Before his appoint-

ment, Gen Subramani served as Military Adviser at the National Security Council Secretariat and had retired as Vice Chief of Army Staff in July last year.

Soon after taking charge, the new CDS said the transformation of the armed forces and organisational reforms aimed at enhancing coordination among the Army, Navy and Air Force would remain his foremost priorities.

"We will accelerate the development, induction and integration of indigenous weapons in our armed forces," Gen Subramani said, reaffirming the military's commitment to safeguarding the nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

He assured citizens that the armed forces would continue to serve the country with "dedication, courage, honour and professionalism," while maintaining operational readiness in an evolving security environment.

A key responsibility before the new CDS will be the implementation of the government's long-pending military theatre command model, which seeks to create integrated commands for improved joint planning and operational effectiveness among the three services. The theatreisation initiative is regarded as one of the most significant structural reforms undertaken by the Indian military in recent decades.

Gen Subramani brings more than four decades of military experience to the post, having served in diverse operational environments ranging from counter-insurgency operations to conventional military deployments. During his career, he held several critical command, staff and instructional appointments.

He served as Vice Chief of Army Staff from July 2024 to July 2025 and earlier headed the Army's Central Command. A graduate of the National Defence Academy and the Indian Military Academy, he was commissioned into the 8th Battalion of the Garhwal Rifles in December 1985.

An alumnus of the Joint Services Command and Staff College and the National Defence College, Gen Subramani holds a Master's degree from King's College London and an M.Phil. in Defence Studies from University of Madras.

His operational commands included leading the 16 Garhwal Rifles during counter-insurgency operations in Assam under Operation Rhino, commanding an infantry brigade in Jammu and Kashmir, and heading the 17 Mountain Division in the central sector. He also commanded two Army corps, including a premier strike corps on the western front.

Throughout his distinguished career, Gen Subramani held several important staff appointments, including Defence Attaché to Kazakhstan, Deputy Director General of Military Intelligence, Chief Instructor at the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, and Chief of Staff at Northern Command Headquarters.

For his distinguished service to the nation, he has been awarded the Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Sena Medal and Vishisht Seva Medal.

**Operational.....**

Taking over from Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi, who retired from service, Admiral Swaminathan outlined a vision focused on preparedness, modernization and sustained capability enhancement.

Addressing reporters after assuming office, the new Navy chief described the prevailing maritime security landscape as "challenging, complex, unpredictable and uncertain," emphasizing that the Navy remains vigilant and actively deployed to safeguard India's national and economic interests.

He stated that ensuring peak operational readiness would be his foremost priority, stressing that a combat-ready Navy is essential for protecting the country's security and supporting its strategic objectives.

Admiral Swaminathan also underscored the importance of modernization, saying the Navy is firmly on course to strengthen its capabilities through ongoing programs and the induction of advanced and emerging technologies. He pledged to sustain the momentum of growth within the force while sharpening operational effectiveness across all domains.

Reaffirming the Navy's commitment to self-reliance and indigenous development, he highlighted the importance of strengthening domestic defence capabilities and fostering greater integration among the armed forces.

The new Navy chief paid tribute to his predecessor, describing Admiral Tripathi as one of the finest military professionals and acknowledging his contribution to the service.

Commissioned into the Indian Navy on July 1, 1987, Admiral Swaminathan is a specialist in communication and electronic warfare. Over a distinguished career spanning nearly four decades, he has commanded several frontline warships, including the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya, and held a range of key operational, training and staff appointments.

A recipient of the Param Vishisht Seva

Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal and Vishisht Seva Medal, Admiral Swaminathan brings extensive operational and strategic experience to the Navy's top post at a time of growing maritime challenges and expanding national security responsibilities.

**12 Years Of.....**

This transformation has fundamentally altered India's position in the global scientific landscape as well, he added.

During a podcast with Doordarshan News, Dr Jitendra Singh said that for decades, India largely adopted technologies developed elsewhere, often entering new technological domains years after leading nations. Today, he said, India is increasingly participating in the development of frontier technologies at the global level and, in several sectors, is helping shape the future direction of innovation itself.

"The last twelve years have witnessed India's transition from a technology follower to a technology leader. The scientific capabilities, innovation ecosystem and technological infrastructure created during this period have laid the foundation of Viksit Bharat @2047," Dr Jitendra Singh said.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said, PM Modi brought science and technology to the centre of national policy making, encouraging greater participation of the private sector, promoting innovation-led entrepreneurship and ensuring that scientific advancements translate into benefits for citizens. This approach, he said, has enabled India to build a technology ecosystem that supports economic growth, strategic capability and public service delivery simultaneously.

Referring to India's growing stature in frontier technologies, Dr Jitendra Singh said the country has registered major advances in space, nuclear energy, quantum technologies, biotechnology, artificial intelligence and clean energy. He said these sectors are collectively creating the scientific and technological foundation required for a developed India by 2047.

On the space sector, the Minister said India has built one of the world's most dynamic space ecosystems following the opening of the sector to private participation. He said the number of space startups has grown from single digits to more than 400, while India's space economy, currently estimated at around USD 9 billion, is projected to expand significantly in the coming years.

Dr Jitendra Singh said India's space achievements have transformed public engagement with science and inspired a new generation of innovators and entrepreneurs. He added that space technologies today support communications, infrastructure planning, governance, disaster management, agriculture and national security, making them increasingly relevant to everyday life.

The Minister described the advancement of the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor as a major milestone in India's long-term energy strategy. He said the achievement takes forward the three-stage nuclear programme envisioned by Dr Homi Jehangir Bhabha and strengthens India's pathway towards energy security and self-reliance.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said recent reforms enabling greater private sector participation in the nuclear sector have opened new opportunities for startups, entrepreneurs and technology-driven enterprises. The reforms, he added, are expected to accelerate innovation and expand India's capabilities in advanced energy technologies.

Highlighting progress under the National Quantum Mission, Dr Jitendra Singh said India has already achieved nearly half of its targeted 2,000-kilometre quantum communication capability within the initial years of implementation. He said the pace of progress reflects India's growing competence in one of the world's most strategic technology domains. The Minister said quantum communication technologies will play a crucial role in strengthening secure communications, defence preparedness and next-generation digital infrastructure, positioning India among a select group of countries working at the cutting edge of quantum science.

On biotechnology, Dr Jitendra Singh said India is preparing for a biotechnology-driven industrial transformation through the BioE3 Policy. He said the future economy will increasingly be shaped by advances in biotechnology, genetics and bio-manufacturing, and India is taking proactive steps to establish leadership in these domains. He referred to ongoing initiatives in genome sequencing, rare disease diagnosis and treatment, indigenous drug development and gene-therapy breakthroughs as examples of India's growing scientific capability. He said these developments are strengthening the country's ability to deliver solutions with both national and global relevance.

Speaking about Artificial Intelligence, the Minister said AI is emerging as a transformative force across governance, healthcare, agriculture, communications, scientific research and public service delivery. He said India is pursuing a balanced approach that combines human expertise

with AI-enabled systems to improve efficiency, innovation and citizen-centric governance. Dr Jitendra Singh said the IndiaAI Mission is creating a strong foundation for future leadership in advanced digital technologies through investments in computing infrastructure, datasets, innovation and emerging applications.

The Minister said India's broader innovation ecosystem has expanded rapidly over the last decade, reflected in the country's rise as one of the world's leading startup destinations, significant growth in patent filings, improved global innovation rankings and increasing scientific publications. He said India is no longer viewed merely as a consumer of technologies developed elsewhere but is increasingly recognised as a nation capable of generating original innovations and solutions for global challenges.

Referring to clean energy, Dr Jitendra Singh said India is pursuing a diversified strategy encompassing nuclear energy, green hydrogen, solar power and emerging ocean-based en-

ergy systems. These initiatives, he said, are aligned with the country's long-term commitment to sustainable development and net-zero emissions by 2070.

The Minister said the next phase of India's growth will increasingly be driven by underexplored sectors such as the blue economy, deep ocean resources, Himalayan bio-resources, advanced biotechnology and next-generation manufacturing technologies. He said India possesses unique natural and scientific advantages in many of these domains and is well-positioned to convert them into engines of national growth.

Concluding, Dr Jitendra Singh said that the journey of the last twelve years should be viewed as the beginning of a larger national transformation. He said the scientific confidence, technological capabilities and innovation ecosystem built during this period have positioned India to emerge as a leading knowledge economy and achieve the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

**This Is Crucial Juncture For Space Missions: Shubhanshu Shukla As He Preps For Second Space Voyage**

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, MAY 31:** He's been there, done that and is raring to get back into space, humankind's final frontier. Shubhanshu Shukla, India's first man on the International Space Station, says he is drawing from his background as a IAF test pilot in his training for the Gaganyaan mission.

Fly any new aircraft that comes in and prove that it has safe operational limits is the principle he followed then, and now too, said Group Captain Shukla, Shux to his friends, describing ISRO's first human spaceflight programme as a developmental or 'prototype' mission.

"Globally, there is a lot of respect for the Indian space community, specifically ISRO... transitioning to a human space mission is a change of magnitude — it is a big shift from what we have been doing and what we are going to do," Shukla told PTI Videos.

He said Gaganyaan will position India uniquely in the global race for space exploration.

Last June, Shukla was one of the four astronauts who travelled to space and spent 18 days aboard the International Space Station as part of NASA's Axiom-4 mission. It marked the return of an Indian to space after 41 years — Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma was the first to do so in 1984.

Exactly a year later, and Shukla is now based in Bengaluru, as one of the four astronaut-designates selected for Indian Space Research Organisation's Gaganyaan mission. He lives with his family in Bengaluru at the Human Space Flight Centre as he preps for a second space voyage.

Tentatively scheduled for mid-2027, the mission aims to demonstrate India's capability of human spaceflight by launching a team of three members to a low-Earth orbit of 400 kilometres for three days and bringing them back safely by landing in Indian sea waters.

Comparing Axiom-4, an international, commercial collaboration and Gaganyaan, India's indigenous, flagship programme, Shukla said, "I think in terms of outcomes, they're quite different, and especially, when India pursues this (Gaganyaan) and we are able to do it successfully, it will give a lot of courage to other nations who are looking at doing something like this, because it feels possible. You're not able to relegate it to, OK, this is for somebody else." The astronaut, who was at the Ashoka University in Sonapat to talk to students, is involved in the design and refinement of the design of the system that will carry the astronauts to space. Once finalised and frozen, mission specific training will commence. In April, ISRO successfully conducted the second Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-02) for Gaganyaan at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. IADT-02 is among the precursor, unmanned missions through which safety and reliability will be proven.

If successful, India will be only the fourth nation in the world to have shown a capability of doing manned space missions, after the US, Russia and China. "I think it is monumental in terms of capability that we as a coun-

try will possess when we are able to execute Mission Gaganyaan because it involves (the) development of a lot of new technologies which are otherwise not existing, with nations who do not pursue these missions," the Lucknow-born astronaut said.

New technologies comprising engineering and human centric systems are being developed and realised for ensuring human safety, which is of paramount importance in Gaganyaan mission, ISRO said in a factsheet. This a crucial juncture for space missions, said Shukla. "... especially as you see, there is a kind of race that is happening right now (of) going back to space and back to the moon and onwards." In January, the 40-year-old was awarded the Ashoka Chakra, India's highest peacetime gallantry award. Discussing his unforgettable 18 days in space last year, Shukla said scientific experiments from India conducted during the Axiom-4 mission, including researching stem cells for preventing muscle damage in space or looking at growth of microalgae in microgravity, were all curated with "a basic theme in mind that we want to execute our own human space missions in the future".

"Living in space is exactly like going to school. You follow a timetable," he said. A typical day aboard the ISS started at 6 am. The first briefing of the day was at 7.30 am. Activities would start at 8 am and continue through the day till 6 pm. Evenings, sometimes after a 13-hour work day, usually involved sipping tea in a pouch and looking outside the window, next to where Shukla slept.

He described the experience of seeing both the Earth and Moon "surreal". Shukla said that while there are people on-board the space station to talk to and things to do, sometimes not being able to communicate exactly the unique, first-time experience of space-flight to his loved ones made him feel lonely.

"Very few people have gotten a chance to see or feel that kind of perspective that you are getting to witness, and there is no good way to communicate it to your loved ones back home. You can just talk, you can just speak to them, but it doesn't even come close to doing the justice of communicating of what it is exactly," he said.

Ever so often, the immensity of what is happening would hit him. "It's unbelievable, you know, after 41 years that we were able to send an Indian to space, and you happen to be that person who's going to space, so there are definitely emotional moments.

"There are times I tried to suppress them so that I could keep functioning normally and keep doing what I'm supposed to do, because sometimes the weight of emotions can be crushing, can cripple you, the weight that comes with just the sheer understanding of what is happening," said Shukla. The fantastic crew helped a lot, he said.

"... the conversations, talking to each other because you know it is a very similar place that they are also in from their own side, so it was very easy to communicate, talk to them about things, figure it out, and then move on and do things," he said. (Agencies)

# Dy CM inaugurates double-lane bridge at Greater Kailash; says govt prioritising surface connectivity in J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, MAY 31:** Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today inaugurated the newly constructed double-lane bridge over the Nallah at Greater Kailash in Jammu.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the government is deeply focused on creating robust surface connectivity across Jammu and Kashmir. He added that the inauguration of the bridge marks a significant step towards strengthening the urban connectivity and improving the public infrastructure in the region.

The newly constructed bridge is expected to provide seamless connectivity, ease traffic movement and enhance convenience for the residents of Greater Kailash and adjoining areas. The project has been executed to improve accessibility and support the growing transportation needs of the locality.



Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the government is working under a well knit system to ensure robust, inclusive and people-centric development across

Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized that strengthening the basic infrastructure remains a key priority for the government, as it plays a crucial role in improving the quality of life of the

people and accelerating socio-economic growth.

"The government is creating durable and modern infrastructure that directly benefits the public. Projects like this bridge

not only improve the connectivity but also contribute to the overall development of the region," he asserted.

The Deputy Chief Minister also highlighted the government's continued efforts towards upgrading the road networks, bridges and other essential public infrastructure to meet the aspirations of the people and facilitate balanced development across the Union Territory.

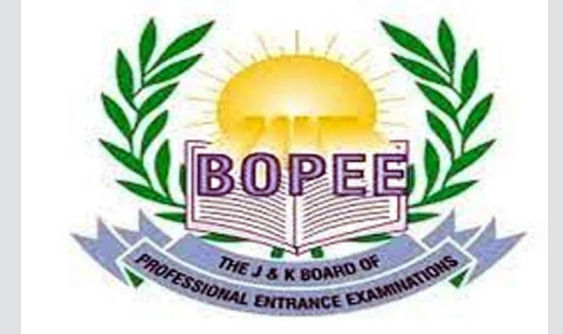
Chief Engineer, Roads and Buildings (R&B), along with other senior officers of the department, were present on the occasion. They briefed the Deputy Chief Minister about the technical aspects of the project and other ongoing infrastructure works in the area.

The local residents expressed satisfaction over the completion of the bridge and appreciated the government's efforts in enhancing the civic infrastructure and public convenience.

## BOPEE conducts Pharmacy Common Entrance Test; 1684 candidates appear with no unfair means reported

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MAY 31:** The Jammu and Kashmir Board of Professional Entrance Examinations (J&K BOPEE) today conducted the Common Entrance Test (CET) for B-Pharmacy and D-Pharmacy courses for the academic session 2026-27 at Jammu and Srinagar Centres. The test was conducted at the University of Kashmir, Srinagar, in the Kashmir division and the Government College for Women, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu, in the Jammu division, with 1684 candidates appearing from across Jammu and Kashmir.



To ensure smooth conduct of the Entrance Test, adequate arrangements were made in collaboration with the respective institution/college administration and law enforcement agencies, under the guidance of Professor Minu Mahajan, Chairperson, J&K BOPEE. The examination concluded without any untoward incidents or unfair means, under the supervision of staff from the host institutions.

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

## SMC bids farewell to four Senior Officers on their Superannuation

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MAY 31:** Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) today organised a farewell ceremony in honour of four of its senior officers on their superannuation after years of dedicated service.

The officers who retired from service include Joint Commissioner (Works) Shafat Ahmad Khan, Chief Sanitation Officer Mudasir Ahmad Bandy, Executive Engineer Nisar Ahmad Wangoo, and Executive Engineer Mushtaq Ahmad Nowshehri.

The function was presided over by Commissioner SMC, Faz Lul Haseeb, and attended by Joint Commissioners, Secretary, Health Officer, Superintending Engineer Drainage, and other senior officers and officials of the Corporation.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner congratulated the retiring officers on the successful completion of their distinguished careers and appreciated their valuable contributions towards strengthening municipal governance, improving civic services, and serving the people of Srinagar. He wished them good health, happiness, and success in their future endeavours.

The retiring officers expressed their gratitude to the SMC administration and their colleagues for their support and cooperation throughout their service. They described their tenure in the Corporation as a rewarding and enriching experience and thanked the staff for their dedication and teamwork.

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of mementoes and best wishes to the retirees in recognition of their dedicated service and contributions to Srinagar Municipal Corporation.

## Speaker inaugurates NTPHC at Challyan; emphasises easy access to essential amenities

HT NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM, MAY 31:** In a major boost to the local healthcare infrastructure, Speaker Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, today formally inaugurated a New Type Primary Health Centre (NTPHC) at Challyan, Charari-Sharief constituency.

The Speaker underscored that NTPHC is set to significantly augment the medical services in the area, bringing quality healthcare directly to the doorsteps of the local population.

Following the inauguration, the Speaker addressed a large public gathering, where he highlighted the government's ongoing developmental achievements and welfare initiatives aimed at transforming the socio-economic landscape of the region.

Addressing the gathering, the Speaker emphasized that the primary focus of the administration remains the equitable development of all regions, with a special emphasis on ensuring easy access to essential amenities.

"The government is deeply committed to provide top-tier basic facilities to the public. Our core pri-



ority sectors like Health, Roads, Education, Power and Clean Drinking Water are receiving unprecedented focus. The inauguration of this NTPHC is a testament to our resolve to ensure that no citizen has to travel long distances for fundamental medical care," the Speaker said.

Recalling establishment of this health centre in 1979-80, he said it reflected his commitment to work for the remote, under developed and underprivileged communities of the region.

"Today, I see infrastructure like roads, drinking water, healthcare, electricity, education has reached

every nook and corner of this constituency and people are harping on the benefits of these facilities at their doorsteps", he said.

He further elaborated on various ongoing government schemes and urged the public to actively participate and avail benefit of these initiatives. He assured the community that the government will continue to accelerate infrastructure projects to ensure comprehensive growth and improve the overall quality of life for the common citizens.

The event was attended by CMO Budgam, senior administrative officials, prominent citizens and representatives from the health department

# DC Anantnag attends ongoing Holy Adhikmas Kumbh at Mattan, Interacts with devotees

Stresses seamless facilities for ease, convenience of pilgrims

HT NEWS NETWORK

**ANANTNAG, MAY 31:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, today visited Mattan and attended the ongoing Holy Adhikmas Kumbh 2026 alongside the representatives of Shri Martand Tirath Trust (SMTT) and a large congregation of devotees.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Tariq Ahmad Malik, Tehsildar Mattan, senior officers of line departments and other concerned officials.

Notably, the month long religious congregation which commenced on May 17, is witnessing participation of devotees from different parts of the country. The pilgrims are visiting the revered place including the Holy Temple as well as the nearby Sacred River with enthusiasm and religious fervor to pay their obsequance and perform traditional rituals and prayers.

During the visit, the DC attended the celebrations and ceremoniously participated in the rituals alongside the devotees. Interacting with them, the DC stated that the place has long



stood as a great symbol of brotherhood and communal harmony, defining the region's shared heritage. He appreciated the

spirit of unity among the people and urged everyone to continue preserving the rich cultural and religious heritage of the area.

On the occasion, the DC reviewed the arrangements and impressed upon the concerned departments to ensure all nec-

essary facilities are provided to the devotees in a smooth and uninterrupted manner. He instructed that all efforts be made to facilitate devotees enabling them to undertake a safe and comfortable pilgrimage.

The DC observed that the Holy Adhikmas Kumbh is not only a significant religious occasion but also presents apt opportunity to showcase the district's hospitality so the pilgrims leave with pleasant and lasting memories. He stressed upon the officers to ensure that all arrangements remain functional and effective on the ground.

Reiterating district administration's commitment for smooth conduct of the event, Dr. Bilal directed all departments to make sustained efforts, remain vigilant, address the grievances promptly and provide best possible facilities to the devotees during their stay. He urged officers to work in close coordination with the Shri Martand Tirath Trust and other stakeholders for the successful culmination of the Holy Adhikmas Kumbh.

The devotees expressed gratitude to the district administration for extending proper support during the holy days.

## Khet Bachao Abhiyan to be conducted across Jammu Division from June 1 to June 30

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, MAY 31:** Under the directions of Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Rural Development, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who during a recent meeting through video conferencing emphasized that the "Khet Bachao Abhiyan" should not remain merely an awareness programme but evolve into a comprehensive national campaign connecting farms, farmers and villages, Director Agriculture Jammu, Anil Gupta today chaired a high-level meeting to review and finalize preparations for the month-long campaign to be conducted across Jammu Division from June 1 to June 30.

During the meeting, Anil Gupta issued detailed directions to officers for ensuring the effective and result-oriented implementation of the campaign, with special focus on saving farms, reducing cultivation costs and providing timely, need-based technical guidance to farmers at the grassroots level.

Addressing the meeting, Director Agriculture emphasized that minimizing the indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers would be one of the prime objectives of the campaign. He said that farmers would be sensitized about the balanced use of fertilizers and other agricultural inputs based on soil testing. Special efforts will be made for the distribution of Soil Health Cards and motivating farmers to adopt green manures, organic inputs and bio-products to improve soil health and farm sustainability.

Anil Gupta informed that multidisciplinary teams comprising officials from Agriculture Universities, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and the Agriculture Department have been constituted for the campaign. These teams will undertake Panchayat-level visits across Jammu Division and directly interact with farmers to create awareness and provide field-specific advisories.

The Director urged all Chief Agriculture Officers (CAOs) to ensure the successful implementation of the campaign in their respective districts. He said that efforts would also be made to involve the participation of Ministers, Members of Parliament, Members of Legislative Assembly and other public representatives so that the campaign transcends the boundaries of an administrative programme and emerges as a robust model of public participation.

He further informed that during the campaign, farmers will be made aware of the benefits of Natural Farming and sustainable agricultural practices. Simultaneously, enforcement drives will be intensified to ensure the quality of pesticides and other agricultural inputs available in the market.

Director Agriculture stated that saturation drives under the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) and PM-KISAN schemes will also be undertaken to ensure that all eligible farmers are covered and receive the benefits of these flagship programmes. Awareness programmes on the Mission on Aatmanirbharta in Pulses and the National Mission on Edible Oils will also be organized and farmers will be encouraged to actively participate in these initiatives.

The campaign will also provide farmers with constructive suggestions regarding suitable crop options, crop diversification and climate-resilient farming practices, particularly in areas facing water scarcity or other agricultural risks. The objective is to help farmers make informed decisions that enhance productivity, profitability and sustainability.

**HT EDITORIAL**

**Summer's Deadly Trap : Kashmir Must Act Against Rising Drowning Deaths**

With temperatures rising across Jammu and Kashmir, an alarming increase in drowning incidents has cast a shadow over the summer season. Across the Kashmir Valley, children and teenagers are increasingly venturing into rivers, streams, canals, and other water bodies to escape the heat, often unaware of the dangers posed by strong currents, deep channels, and slippery banks. Tragically, several young lives have already been lost this season.

What makes these incidents particularly heartbreaking is that most are preventable. The absence of adequate safety measures at many vulnerable locations, coupled with a lack of awareness about water hazards, continues to put lives at risk. While authorities have a responsibility to install warning signboards, identify danger zones, strengthen rescue preparedness, and launch sustained public awareness campaigns, the role of parents and guardians is equally crucial.

Parents must ensure that children are not allowed to visit rivers and streams unsupervised and should educate them about the risks associated with swimming in unsafe locations. Schools, community organizations, and local leaders can also play an important role in spreading water-safety awareness.

Every drowning incident leaves behind devastated families and grieving communities. As the Valley experiences another hot summer, preventing such tragedies must become a collective responsibility. Greater vigilance, stronger awareness campaigns, and timely intervention can help ensure that a search for relief from the heat does not end in irreversible loss.

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**Smell of Loneliness**



■ **USUF MIR**

It was Sunday evening, May 20. Gulzar was sitting in the veranda of his house, quietly sipping a cup of herbal tea, when Sahil hurried inside. There was an unusual anxiety on his face, and his eyes looked moist. "What happened, Sahil? Is everything alright?" Gulzar asked with concern.

Sahil sat down silently. For a few moments, he said nothing. Then, in a heavy voice, he spoke:

"Gulzar... today, I witnessed a reality of life that shook me to my core. It felt as if the sky had come crashing down over my head."

Gulzar looked at him in surprise. "What happened?"

Sahil took a deep breath and began:

"Today, I went to visit a friend's house to inquire about his son's health. While I was there, I thought I should also ask about his elderly father. But when I asked about him, the family members tried to avoid answering. Someone casually said that he might have gone to his daughter's house. Yet, when I insisted again and again, one person quietly said: 'Perhaps he is in the inner room...'"

Sahil paused for a moment, as though the scene had returned before his eyes.

"I slowly opened the door of that room... and what I saw there is something I may never forget for the rest of my life."

Gulzar kept staring at him silently.

"The room was filled with such a terrible stench that breathing became difficult. It seemed as if it had not been cleaned for years. The mud floor had turned damp and sticky like clay. The old mats spread across it had merged into the dirt itself. Torn and filthy clothes hung from



nails on the walls. In one corner stood a broken cot with a worn-out mattress, but no one was lying on it."

Sahil's voice trembled.

"In a dark corner of the room, leaning against the wall with old quilts and clothes behind him for support, sat an old man... It was Bilal, known to everyone as Boo Lala."

Gulzar asked softly, "What did you say to him?"

"I walked closer and asked, 'Boo Lala, how are you?' He looked at me with eyes filled with years of loneliness and helplessness. Then he replied slowly: 'Son, how can I be fine? No one comes near me. My daughter-in-law only leaves a cup of tea near the door and walks away.'"

Sahil's eyes filled with tears as he continued.

"I asked his daughter-in-law why he was being kept in such a miserable condition. Helplessly, she replied: 'The room smells terribly bad. I get infections, so I do not go inside. Sometimes his daughter comes and cleans the room...'"

For a few moments, silence filled the air. Then Gulzar quietly asked, "Doesn't Boo Lala have children of his own?"

"Of course he does," Sahil replied

immediately. "He has four sons and two daughters. One son has passed away, but the other three are earning well. Two are government employees and one runs a business. They all have families, children, comfortable homes... yet none of them has time for their own father."

Sahil fell silent for a moment before speaking again in a low voice:

"Gulzar, you may not believe this, but Boo Lala was once known throughout the area for his strength, courage, and hard work. In his younger days, he used to bring firewood and coal from the forests and sell them. Alongside farming, he worked tirelessly as a laborer. From morning till evening, he struggled to provide for his family. After years of hardship and sacrifice, he managed to build a decent life for his children. People used to speak of his physical strength and determination with admiration. But time has reduced that same strong man into a helpless figure, abandoned within his own home."

Gulzar lowered his head in sorrow.

Sahil continued: "Sometimes, Gulzar, a person witnesses scenes in life that do not

merely wound the eyes — they wound the soul. Changing times may have brought people closer to material comforts, but they have also weakened the warmth of relationships and human compassion. Parents who spend their entire lives sacrificing for the happiness of their children are often left alone, helpless, and neglected in old age."

His voice choked with emotion.

"If people today cannot take care of their own parents, then what hope can we have that they will ever stand beside the poor, the helpless, or those crushed by suffering?"

Both friends fell silent. A heavy stillness spread through the atmosphere. Perhaps hidden within that silence was a question... A question that demands an answer from society itself.

**(This short story reflects a painful reality in which an old father is forced to live a life of loneliness, neglect, and helplessness within his own home.)**

**The writer is a regular contributor to Headlines Today and can be reached at --- Email: yousufmir55@gmail.**

**Chief Education Officer Kulgam, Mr. Abdul Gani Bhat an icon of education Retires from Service**



■ **SUBZAR AHMAD BHAT**

Chief Education Officer Kulgam, Mr. Abdul Gani Bhat, retired from his service in May 2026. He served the Department of Education for more than thirty-five years and discharged his responsibilities with great dedication and commitment. On 30th of May 2026 a super annuation function was organised in auditorium hall of district headquarter kulgam. The farewell function was attended by the District Development Commissioner Kulgam, Mr. Shahzad Alam, the Additional Deputy Commissioner, the Assistant Commissioner Revenue, the Sub-Divisional Magistrate Noorabad, all ZEOs, principals, teachers, members of civil society, and the family members of the outgoing officer. Speakers paid rich tributes to his exemplary leadership, dedication, and unwavering commitment to the cause of education. The programme concluded with the presentation of gifts and mementos to the outgoing Chief Education Officer in recognition of his distinguished services and remarkable contributions to the department.

Mr. Abdul Gani Bhat was born in 1966 in the remote village of Watigam, Noorabad, in district Kulgam. His father's name was Habib ullah Bhat and his mother's name was Raja bagum. Along with his parents, his maternal uncle, Mr. Mohammad Sultan mir of Avil, played a great role in his early education. He completed his first and second grades at Primary School Chachamulla, where his uncle was serving as a teacher. After his uncle's transfer, he continued his studies from third to fifth grade at Primary School Avil under his supervision. He later completed his middle and high school education at High School Manzgam. Mr. Bhat has always acknowledged the contributions and guidance of his late uncle with deep respect.



Although his parents were not formally educated, they possessed great wisdom and foresight. They worked tirelessly and made countless sacrifices to ensure their son received a proper education, ultimately enabling him to reach the position of Chief Education Officer.

Mr. Bhat completed his matriculation and higher secondary education from Government Higher Secondary School Kulgam. He earned his Bachelor of Science from Government Degree College Anantnag. He then completed his Master's degree in Chemistry from Kashmir University and obtained his B.Ed from IGNOU, thereby completing his academic journey.

He began his professional career in 1990 as a teacher at Government Higher Secondary School Kulgam. Abdul Gani Bhat proved himself a responsible, dedicated, hardworking and honest administrator. Through his dedication, competence, he steadily rose through the ranks—being promoted to Lecturer in 1992, Senior Lecturer in

2011, and Principal in 2014. In 2025, he assumed the prestigious position of Chief Education Officer.

Throughout his career, Mr. Bhat worked tirelessly to improve the education system. He served as Principal at several institutions, including Higher Secondary School Kulgam, Higher Secondary School Yarikshupora, Girls Higher Secondary School Kulgam, Higher Secondary School Damhal Hanjipora, Higher Secondary School D.K. Marg, Higher Secondary School Devsar, and Higher Secondary School Turtuk Nubra (Leh, Ladakh). In addition, he carried out responsibilities as Drawing and Disbursing Officer (DDO) at various places.

Furthermore, he served as Principal DIET Kupwara and also held the charge of Chief Education Officer Kupwara. Eventually, he retired as Chief Education Officer Kulgam, marking the conclusion of a distinguished and impactful career.

Mr. Abdul Gani Bhat has always been a strong advocate of providing quality education to students. Respect for teachers and the dignity of the teaching profession remained among his top priorities. He listened attentively to teachers, addressed their concerns with sincerity, and considered it his duty to resolve their issues. Spending time with students, interacting with them, and guiding them was a regular part of his routine. He often said, "Children are our real asset; their proper education and upbringing is our foremost responsibility."

Without exaggeration, it can be said that he never compromised on his duties.

Today, as Mr. Abdul Gani Bhat retires, a void is deeply felt in the Department of Education. On a personal note, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to him for this successful journey and commend him for performing his duties with honesty and grace. It is hoped that even after retirement, he will continue to benefit the department through his wisdom, experience, and valuable guidance.

Mr. Abdul Gani Bhat has also been my teacher, which is a matter of great pride for me. The impact of his work will resonate far and wide for years to come.

**The author fro Avil, Noorabad**



# The Silent Influence: How Media, Social Media, and Politics Shape the Minds of Today's Youth



■ SHAHNAWAZ NAZIR

The youth of every generation have been influenced by the ideas, values, and narratives of their time. In earlier eras, these influences came primarily from families, schools, communities, and religious institutions. Today, however, a new and powerful force has emerged that shapes opinions, beliefs, and behaviors on an unprecedented scale: the combined influence of traditional media, social media, and political messaging.

While technology has brought remarkable opportunities for learning and communication, it has also created an environment where young minds are constantly exposed to information, persuasion, and manipulation. As a result, many young people are increasingly finding it difficult to distinguish between independent thinking and opinions that have been subtly implanted by external influences.

Media was once regarded as a trusted source of information, responsible for informing the public and holding those in power accountable. However, the modern media landscape has become highly competitive and often driven by ratings, clicks, and audience engagement. News organizations frequently present stories through ideological lenses, emphasizing certain facts while downplaying others. This selective presentation of information can influence how people perceive reality.

Young people, who often rely on media to understand complex political and social issues, may unknowingly absorb these biases. When information is repeatedly presented from a particular perspective, it gradually begins to shape beliefs and attitudes. What is

repeated often enough can start to feel like unquestionable truth, even when alternative viewpoints exist.

The rise of social media has amplified this phenomenon dramatically. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, and YouTube have transformed the way information is consumed. Unlike traditional media, social media algorithms are designed to maximize user engagement. Their primary goal is not necessarily to inform but to keep users scrolling, clicking, and interacting for as long as possible.

To achieve this, algorithms show users content that aligns with their existing interests, beliefs, and emotions. Over time, individuals may find themselves trapped within "echo chambers" where they are exposed only to opinions similar to their own. In such environments, opposing viewpoints are rarely encountered, and critical thinking can gradually weaken.

The consequences are significant. Young people may begin to believe that the opinions they see online represent universal truths, when in reality they are viewing a carefully curated stream of content selected by algorithms. Their understanding of society becomes narrower, and their ability to engage with diverse perspectives diminishes.

Another concern is the role of emotional manipulation. Content that provokes anger, fear, outrage, or excitement tends to attract more attention than balanced and nuanced discussions. As a result, emotionally charged posts often spread faster than factual information. Political groups, influencers, and even media outlets are aware of this dynamic and frequently use emotional appeals to gain support and influence public opinion.

Politicians have always sought to persuade citizens, but modern technology has provided them with tools that previous generations could scarcely imagine. Through targeted advertising, social media campaigns, and sophisticated data analysis, political messages can now be tailored to specific audiences with remarkable precision.



Young voters are particularly vulnerable to these strategies because many are still developing their political identities. Political narratives often simplify complex issues into emotionally appealing slogans and promises. Rather than encouraging critical examination, such messaging can promote blind loyalty to parties, leaders, or ideologies.

The danger arises when political affiliation becomes a substitute for independent thought. When individuals accept information solely because it comes from their preferred political group, they risk becoming participants in a culture of division rather than contributors to meaningful democratic dialogue.

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing today's youth is misinformation. False information can spread across the internet within minutes, reaching millions before fact-checkers have an opportunity to respond. Deepfake videos, manipulated images, misleading headlines, and fabricated stories have become increasingly common.

Many young people receive their news primarily through social media feeds, where accurate reporting appears alongside rumors, propaganda, and outright falsehoods. Without strong media literacy skills, distinguishing fact from fiction becomes increasingly difficult.

The problem is not limited to any particular political ideology or social group. Misinformation can emerge from various sources and appeal to people across the ideological spectrum. The common factor is that it exploits human psychology, particularly our tendency to believe information that confirms our existing beliefs.

Yet it would be unfair to place all blame on media, social media, or politicians. These tools and institutions are not inherently harmful. Social media has enabled educational opportunities, global communication, and social movements that have brought attention to important causes. Traditional journalism continues to expose corruption and inform the public.

Politics remains an essential mechanism for addressing collective challenges.

The real issue lies in how these systems are used and how individuals respond to them.

The solution is not censorship, isolation, or withdrawal from public discourse. Instead, society must cultivate critical thinking and media literacy. Young people should be encouraged to question information respectfully, verify sources, examine evidence, and consider multiple perspectives before forming conclusions.

Educational institutions have a crucial role to play. Schools and universities should teach students not only what to think but how to think. The ability to evaluate information critically may be one of the most important skills of the twenty-first century.

Parents and communities also bear responsibility. Open discussions, exposure to diverse viewpoints, and encouragement of intellectual curiosity can help young people develop independent judgment. Rather than telling youth what to believe, adults should help them develop the tools necessary to arrive at informed conclusions on their own.

Ultimately, the strength of a society depends upon the ability of its citizens to think independently. Media, social media, and politicians will always seek to influence public opinion. This is a reality of modern life. The challenge is ensuring that influence does not become control.

Today's youth possess tremendous potential, creativity, and intelligence. They have access to more information than any generation in human history. If they learn to navigate this information wisely, they can become informed citizens capable of making thoughtful decisions based on evidence, reason, and conscience rather than manipulation.

The future of democracy, social harmony, and human progress may well depend on their ability to do so.

The author from Zangipora  
Charar-e-Sharief

## Remembering Bashir Badr: The Poet Who Turned Pain into Poetry



■ MOHAMMAD ARFAT WANI

The world of Urdu literature has been left in deep grief after the passing of the renowned poet Bashir Badr, a literary figure whose poetry transcended pages and became the voice of countless hearts across generations. He was not merely a poet who composed ghazals; he was an emotion in himself, a living expression of human feelings, and a mirror reflecting the ordinary yet profound experiences of life. His words carried an extraordinary simplicity that concealed immense depth, blending warmth with pain, love with loneliness, hope with despair, and silence with meaning in a way that touched people at their very core. From literary gatherings and academic classrooms to tea stalls, radio programs, newspapers, and the vast world of social media, his poetry found a home everywhere, becoming part of everyday human expression rather than remaining confined to books alone.

Bashir Badr was born on February 15, 1935, in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh. His family had always been known for its education level. As a child, Bashir was interested in poetry and literature; thus, it is often claimed that at the age of

seven, Bashir composed his very first sher.

He completed his higher studies from the Aligarh Muslim University from where he attained his Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, and later a PhD in Urdu literature. He gained popularity as a writer early on, and soon became a prominent figure among the academics of Urdu literature. He taught Urdu literature and later became the Head of the Urdu Department of Meerut College. In addition to being a teacher, he was a poet too, whose poems gradually made their way into every part of the Urdu-speaking world.

The thing that set Bashir Badr apart from all the other poets is that he was simple. He didn't use fancy language that would make people think that they were reading an exceptionally brilliant poem. His poems were written in language which had a lot of feeling in it, and talked about love, loneliness, broken heart, memory, relation, silence, and changeability of life.

The well-known couplet of Bashir Badr: "Log toot jaate hain ek ghar banane mein, Tum taras nahi khate bastiyan jalane mein"

is one of the most commonly quoted lines in Urdu poetry. This couplet has affected many because it is loaded not only emotionally but socially too.

There is another immortal couplet written by Bashir Badr:

"Ujale apni yaadon ke hamare saath rehne do, Na jaane kis gali mein zindagi ki shaam ho jaye."

These poems still have an impact on the minds of people as they touch upon various issues related to memories, emotions, and the unpredictability of life.

Bashir Badr has gained enormous popularity at mushairas in India and abroad. The manner in which he performed poetry was calm, elegant, and deeply emotional. The audiences would be eagerly waiting to hear him perform. As against most poets who used hard vocabulary and exaggerated performances, Bashir Badr used simplicity.

However, behind this beautiful poetry were many years of pain and agony. One of the hardest events that took place in his life happened in 1987 when communal riots erupted in Meerut. His house was burnt, and in that fire, thousands of books, letters, and unpublished manuscripts perished forever. To an author, losing years of literary works would be equivalent to losing an important part of oneself. This incident affected him very deeply.

What made Bashir Badr outstanding in the world of poetry was the fact that even after going through all those tragedies, there was no trace of anger or rage in his poetry. In spite of his pain and suffering, he kept speaking of man, of peace, of mercy, and of love.

He left Karachi after the riots and settled down in Bhopal where he passed his entire latter part of life. Regardless of all the hardships and problems that he faced, he continued to pen poetic verses that had an impact on the lives of people for generations. Some of his renowned poetry books include "Aamad," "Aahat," "Ikai," "Image," and "Ujale Apni Yaadon

Ke." His total literary contributions appeared in a collection called "Kulliyat-e-Bashir Badr." Bashir Badr's poetry was translated into various languages including English and French.

There could have been many factors responsible for his popularity, but one among them is his contribution that can be enjoyed by every generation. The youth found him appealing because of his simplicity in penning emotional expressions in verses. Even in today's era of social networking sites, his couplets are used for declaring love, pain, memories, and other such feelings.

He had an influence not only in literature. Politicians, journalists, actors, singers, and public speakers cited lines from his poems frequently. He has authored many memorable verses. Here is one such couplet which demonstrates wisdom and dignity even during conflict:

"Dushmani jam kar karo lekin ye gunjaish rahi, Jab kabhi hum dost ho jayin to sharminda na hon."

Such poems proved Bashir Badr's understanding of human relations and social dynamics.

Bashir Badr received numerous awards and honors throughout his life. The poet was conferred Padma Shri, one of the most esteemed Indian civil awards. Apart from this, he won the Sahitya Akademi Award and various other awards from literary societies across India. Despite being a celebrated poet, Bashir Badr always maintained his humility and soft nature.

Later on in his life, he was affected by dementia along with various other

age-related ailments. Gradually, he started withdrawing himself from public mushairas and literary functions. His admirers were heartbroken when the news of the poet, who kept a lot of people's memories alive in his poems, gradually began forgetting some memories of his own.

Bashir Badr died on May 28, 2026, in Bhopal, at the age of 91, following an illness. He was mourned throughout the country and the world. Writers, poets, journalists, students, fans, and others paid their last respects to him. He was not just regarded as a wonderful poet but a very humane person too.

Even after death, Bashir Badr lives in the form of his poetry. His poetry comforts the broken hearts of people, motivates young poets, and reminds people about the importance of simplicity and honesty in life. Even today, when everything around seems to be artificial, Bashir Badr's poetry is like a soothing balm for everyone. He did not merely write poetry. He gave a voice to human feelings.

And perhaps that is why Bashir Badr will always remain alive in the world of Urdu literature and in the hearts of people who continue to find themselves in his words.

The author is a writer, social activist, and nursing student from Kuchmulla, Tral. He writes on social issues, culture, and public concerns with the aim of raising awareness and inspiring positive change. Email: wania6817@gmail.com

# Satish Sharma launches Volvo fleet; bats for modern transport to boost J&K's growth

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MAY 31:** Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, Transport, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, today underscored the importance of modern transportation, tourism promotion, innovation and entrepreneurship in driving Jammu and Kashmir's economic transformation.

The Minister was speaking after inaugurating a fleet of Volvo buses introduced by Star World Ventures at Countryside Resort, Srinagar. The initiative is expected to strengthen the transportation facilities, improve tourist mobility and enhance connectivity across the Union Territory.

Addressing the gathering, Satish Sharma said that world-class transport infrastructure is essential for promoting tourism, facilitating trade and accelerating economic development. He said that the introduction of

premium transport services would significantly enhance the travel experience for both the tourists and the residents while contributing to the sustained growth of Jammu and Kashmir's tourism sector.

The event was attended by MLA Eidgah Mubarak Gul, senior government officers, representatives of the tourism and business sectors and members of the Chamber of Commerce and Industries Kashmir (CCIK).

The Minister appreciated the efforts of the organisers in introducing the modern transportation facilities and reiterated the government's commitment towards upgrading the transport infrastructure, promoting sustainable tourism and encouraging private sector participation in key developmental sectors.

Later, Satish Sharma visited the Rang-e-Kashmir Exhibition at Sher-i-Kashmir Park, Srinagar, where he interacted with the entrepreneurs, artisans, startups and exhibitors showcasing the local products, handicrafts, in-



novations and the rich cultural heritage of Jammu & Kashmir.

Commending the participants for their contribution to economic activity and employment

generation, the Minister said that entrepreneurship, innovation and technology-driven initiatives are emerging as powerful engines of growth for Jammu and Kash-

mir. He emphasized the need to create a supportive ecosystem that enables the young entrepreneurs and innovators to translate ideas into successful enterprises.

The Minister also emphasized the need to provide greater market access and institutional support to the local artisans, startups and small businesses to help them compete effectively in national and global markets.

Reaffirming the government's vision for a progressive and self-reliant Jammu and Kashmir, Satish Sharma said that sustained investments in infrastructure, innovation, youth empowerment and entrepreneurship would play a pivotal role in creating new opportunities and ensuring inclusive socio-economic growth across Jammu & Kashmir.

He called upon all the stakeholders, including industry bodies, entrepreneurs and civil society, to work collectively towards building a stronger, more prosperous and future-ready Jammu and Kashmir.

## CID CI District Doda bids farewell to ASI Mohd Sikandar Butt on superannuation

HT NEWS NETWORK

**DODA, MAY 31:** A warm and heartfelt farewell was accorded to Mohd Sikandar Butt, Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI), on his retirement from CID CI District Doda after rendering more than 36 years of dedicated and distinguished service in the department.

A farewell function was organized at District Police Lines (DPL) Doda, where officials and staff of CID CI District Doda gathered to honor the retiring ASI and acknowledge his invaluable contributions to the organization.

Family members, friends and colleagues were



also present on the occasion.

Speakers at the function lauded Mohd Sikandar Butt for his sincerity, professionalism, commitment to duty and exemplary conduct throughout his long and successful career. They highlighted his dedication and service to the department, which earned him the respect and admiration of his colleagues.

On behalf of the CID department, officials and staff extended their heartfelt gratitude and best wishes to the retiring ASI for a healthy, happy and prosperous post-retirement life.

As a mark of respect and appreciation for his exemplary service, a special gift was presented to Mohammad Sikandar Butt by the CID department during the farewell ceremony.

Expressing his gratitude, Mohammad Sikandar Butt thanked the department and his colleagues for their unwavering support and cooperation throughout his service career.

# DLSA Ganderbal conducts district-wide Anti-Tobacco Awareness Campaigns on "World No Tobacco Day"

HT NEWS NETWORK

**GANDERBAL, MAY 31:**

In observance of World No Tobacco Day 2026, a series of door-to-door awareness campaigns were conducted across various areas of District Ganderbal under the directions of the Secretary, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Ganderbal, through Adhikar Mitras as part of the ongoing efforts to promote public health awareness and legal literacy. Ghulam Jeelani Raina and Amreena Naaz conducted an awareness campaign from Ganiwan to Dardwooder, educating the public about the harmful effects of tobacco consumption and encouraging a tobacco-free lifestyle. The programme highlighted the serious health risks associated with smoking and

other forms of tobacco use, including cancer, heart disease, and respiratory illnesses, while emphasizing the role of youth in spreading awareness and discouraging tobacco use.

Aasiya Mohi-ud-Din conducted a door-to-door awareness drive in the Kangan area, where residents were sensitized about the adverse effects of tobacco consumption, the importance of quitting tobacco, and the need to protect youth from tobacco addiction.

The participants were also informed about free legal aid services available through DLSA Ganderbal and were encouraged to report violations relating to the sale of tobacco products near educational institutions. Yasir Nissar Bhat carried out an awareness campaign in the Prang area of Manigam,

interacting with local residents and shopkeepers regarding the harmful effects of tobacco, smoking, and drug addiction. Shopkeepers were requested not to sell tobacco products to minors and to strictly adhere to the applicable laws and government guidelines regulating tobacco sales. Nawaz Sharif Khatana conducted an awareness programme at Urpash Shajinagh and adjoining areas, focusing on the harmful effects of smoking, chewing tobacco, and emerging nicotine products such as vapes and nicotine pouches. The participants were also sensitized about the 2026 World No Tobacco Day theme, "Unmasking the Appeal: Countering Nicotine and Tobacco Addiction," and informed about legal provisions prohibiting the sale of tobacco products to minors and

near educational institutions. Bilal Ahmad Kumar and Gh. Nabi Tali conducted awareness programmes in Wakura, Dab, Batwina, and adjoining areas. The campaign focused on creating awareness regarding the provisions of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, and sensitizing the public and shopkeepers about restrictions on the sale of tobacco products to minors and near schools. Participants were encouraged to contribute towards building a healthy and tobacco-free society.

Heaba Mushtaq conducted a similar awareness campaign in Ganderbal, while Mukhtar Ahmad Raina carried out a programme in Gund, Hanan, and adjoining areas. Both programmes focused on the health risks associated with tobacco

consumption, legal safeguards under anti-tobacco laws, and the importance of protecting young people from nicotine addiction.

Bisma Bashir also conducted a door-to-door awareness campaign in Kondbal and Potermulla areas, sensitizing residents and shopkeepers regarding the harmful effects of tobacco consumption and the provisions of COTPA, 2003.

During all the pro-

grammes, special emphasis was laid on preventing tobacco use among youth, creating awareness about tobacco-related diseases, ensuring compliance with anti-tobacco laws, and promoting healthy lifestyles. The public was encouraged to become active participants in the fight against tobacco addiction and to support efforts aimed at creating a healthier and tobacco-free society.

# IGP Jammu reviews SANJY-2026 preparedness in Kathua and Samba

Stresses foolproof security arrangements

HT NEWS NETWORK

**KATHUA/SAMBA, MAY 31:** To review security and facilitation arrangements for the forthcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY)-2026, IGP Jammu Zone Bhim Sen Tuti, accompanied by DIG JSK Range Shridhar Patil; DC Kathua Rajesh Sharma; SSP Kathua Mohita Sharma; SO to IGP Jammu SSP Rajinder Singh and other senior officers, conducted an extensive review of preparations in Kathua and Samba districts.

The IGP first visited Lakhampur and inspected the Base Camp, Langar Points, Lodgement Centres and Reception Centres. Security deployment, CCTV coverage, access control measures, frisking arrangements, traffic management and pilgrim facilities were reviewed on the ground.

A comprehensive security review meeting on SANJY-2026 was later held at DPL Kathua. The meeting was attended by supervisory officers, including SP SOG Jammu, Addl. SP Kathua, SP Operations Upper Kathua, SP Ops Border Kandi Kathua, all SDPOs and SHOs of NHW Kathua. SSP Kathua Ms. Mohita Sharma, IPS gave a detailed presentation on security arrangements, surveillance measures, convoy management, QRT deployment and emergency response plans.

Addressing the officers, the IGP stressed maximum alertness, strict adherence to security protocols and



professional conduct with pilgrims. The DIG JSK Range directed officers to regularly inspect Langars and lodgement centres and maintain close surveillance on suspicious elements.

The IGP subsequently reviewed arrangements in District Samba, where SSP Samba Anuj Kumar briefed him on the district's preparedness for SANJY-2026. A security review meeting was also held, which was attended by DIG JSK Range, senior officers, all supervisory officers and SHOs of the district. The IGP emphasized close coordination among J&K Police, CAPFs, intelligence agencies and Punjab Police to ensure a safe, secure and smooth Yatra for all pilgrims.

During the review meetings in both districts, officers were directed to intensify drone surveillance for real-time monitoring and deploy Dog Squads for anti-sabotage checks at vital installations, Langars and lodgement centres. Emphasis was laid on strengthening surveillance and ensuring swift response capabilities.

Directions were also issued to strengthen security along the National Highway and border areas through round-the-clock domination, naka checking and area patrols. Officers were instructed to expedite tenant verification and census drives and enhance CCTV coverage at all important Yatra locations with 24x7 monitoring.



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# Textile industry hails suspension of cotton import duty

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, MAY 31:** The Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI) welcomed the temporary removal of 11 percent import duty on cotton from June 1 to October 30 as a momentum for the Indian textile and apparel industry.

In a statement released here on Saturday, Ashwin Chandran, CITI Chairman, said, "Amid the ongoing global volatility and uncertainty, the 11percent import duty on cotton was acting as a major hindrance to the Indian textile and apparel sector in raising its global competitiveness since our major Asian competitors already have duty-free access to cotton."

Chandran noted that the cotton import duty is contributing to costs going up across the value chain and having a detrimental impact on scaling India's textile



and apparel exports.

India's textile exports are dominated by cotton. India is aiming for USD 100 billion in textiles and apparel exports by 2030.

"With this temporary relief in

the cotton import duty, India's textile and apparel exporters can better leverage opportunities that are emerging from the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)," he said.

The CITI Chairman noted that

the demand-supply gap arising from steadily decreasing cotton production in India necessitated the need for imports to bridge the gap.

"Cotton imports are largely quality and specification-driven, catering to specialised requirements and back-to-back export orders. They do not displace domestic cotton."

A recent joint study by Gherzi and the International Cotton Advisory Committee noted that Indian industry requires a cotton policy environment that will allow us to compete with our Asian peers that have free access to international cotton without any import duty.

The textile and apparel sector is India's second-biggest employer and a major contributor to the GDP and exports. Textile and Apparel Exports declined 2.2 per cent in dollar terms year-on-year in FY26 to USD 35.79 billion. UNI

# Paradip port ranked no.1 in India for dry bulk cargo handling

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**BHUBANESWAR, MAY 31:** In a major national achievement, the Paradip Port Authority (PPA) has been ranked No. 1 in India for Dry Bulk Cargo handling at the prestigious Sagar Aankalan Awards instituted by the union Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, further consolidating its position among the country's top-performing major ports.

The award was presented at a ceremony held recently in Mumbai, where PPA Chairman P.L. Haranadh received the honour from union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal. Under the Ministry's Sagar Aankalan Certificate for Logistics Port Performance, Paradip Port secured the first rank for outstanding overall performance in handling Dry Bulk Cargo in the category of ports handling five million tonnes and above cargo volumes. The distinction reflects the port's operational excellence, high cargo-handling efficiency and critical contribution to India's industrial and energy supply chains.

Adding to the achievement, Paradip Port also secured the third rank nationally in Container Cargo handling in the



category of ports handling less than 0.5 million TEUs, highlighting its growing capabilities in container operations and logistics management.

The awards recognise excellence across several parameters, including cargo handling performance, turnaround time, infrastructure utilisation, logistics facilitation, customer service and overall operational efficiency. The ceremony also witnessed the launch of the Logistics Port Performance Index (LPPPI) by union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal. Developed under the Sagar Aankalan initiative, the LPPPI serves as a national benchmarking framework to assess and enhance the competitiveness and service standards of Indian ports. UNI

# Reliance Consumer Products Bets On Campa For Multifold Growth By 2030

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**MUMBAI, MAY 31:** Reliance Consumer Products Ltd (RCPL) has positioned its Campa soft drink portfolio for its aggressive expansion plans in the fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector in order to grow its revenue multifold by 2030, according to its FY26 annual report.

According to RIL's FY26 annual report, the aim behind the expansion is to emerge as one of the leading branded consumer products companies in the world.

RCPL's gross revenue doubled year-on-year to Rs 22,000 crore in FY26, driven largely by strong growth in staples and beverages. RCPL, the FMCG unit incorporated in 2022, has become central to Reliance's broader consumer business strategy spanning packaged foods, beverages, home and personal care products, according to the annual report.

Since it was relaunched, Campa has rapidly expanded its market presence and it has crossed Rs 4,700 crore in gross sales during FY26 to emerge as India's fourth-largest carbonated soft-drinks brand by March 2026, securing double-digit market share in key markets. The company plans to disrupt the soft drink market which is traditionally dominated by multinational giants like Coca-Cola and PepsiCo, through aggressive pricing, deep distribution expansion and by leveraging Reliance Retail's nationwide network.

According to its annual report, RCPL has expanded its distribution network which has reached more than 3 million retail outlets through a network of more than 5,000 distributors during the year. Its packaged staples brand Independence also crossed approximately Rs 2,600 crore in sales and was recognised among India's trusted consumer brands in 2026, according to the annual report.

The company's FMCG strategy is built around offering "global quality at affordable prices" while leveraging backward integration, manufacturing scale and supply-chain efficiencies to lower costs. As part of this strategy, Reliance is building integrated food parks aimed at improving sourcing and production efficiencies across categories.

Reliance has also pursued accelerated expansion through acquisitions and partnerships. Last year, RCPL acquired stakes in staples and millet businesses such as Udhaiyam and Manna, while also adding international personal care brands including Brylcreem, Toni & Guy, Matey and Badedas to its portfolio. UNI

# NSE extends F&O trading hours by 10 minutes from Aug 3

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**MUMBAI, MAY 31:** The National Stock Exchange (NSE) officially announced here on Saturday through a circular that it will extend trading hours for equity derivatives, including futures and options (F&O), by 10 minutes, with effect from August 3, 2026. According to the revised schedule announced through the circular, equity derivatives trading will now conclude at 3:40 pm instead of the current 3:30 pm.

The NSE circular also stated that the revised schedule is aimed at aligning derivatives market operations with the new closing auction framework being introduced in the cash segment.

According to the NSE circular, the pre-open session timings in the derivatives segment will remain unchanged, with trading beginning at 9:00 am and the

pre-open session ending at 9:08 am through a system-driven random closure in the final minute. The normal market session will continue to open at 9:15 am.

The trade modification window will also remain unchanged and will continue until 4:15 pm.

The modification follows NSE's March 18, 2026, circular introducing the Closing Auction Session (CAS) in the equity cash segment. The closing auction mechanism is designed to facilitate better price discovery for securities at market close and align Indian market practices with global standards.

Corresponding changes are being made in the derivatives segment to accommodate the auction process and ensure smooth settlement and price dissemination, the circular informed.

The NSE circular stated that the functional changes arising



from the implementation will be made available for testing during mock trading sessions, adding that a separate circular giving details about mock trading sessions will be issued later.

The NSE stated that it will broadcast a message to brokers on National Exchange for Automated Trading (NEAT) trading terminals, right at the start of

the Closing Auction Session in the equity segment, when the operating price range for stock futures is reset. As part of the process, outstanding orders lying outside the revised price range will be cancelled by the NSE in accordance with existing rules.

The exchange stated that any security will cease to be eligible

for the Closing Auction Session (CAS) if it is excluded from the equity derivatives segment on both exchanges. In such cases, its closing price will be determined using the existing methodology, based on the volume-weighted average price (VWAP) of trades executed during the last 30 minutes of trading, the circular mentioned.

However, as long as the security remains part of the equity derivatives segment on at least one exchange, it will continue to be eligible for the Closing Auction Session (CAS).

The circular also stated that the NSE will cancel all unexecuted special orders, including stop-loss and disclosed quantity orders. Also, any pending orders that fall outside the revised price band will also be cancelled, with members receiving an appropriate cancellation message, the NSE circular stated. UNI

# Singareni CMD directs timely completion of New 800 MW Thermal Power Unit

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**HYDERABAD, MAY 31:** Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) Chairman and Managing Director Dr Buddhaprakash Jyoti on Friday directed officials to ensure the timely completion of the new 800 MW Thermal Power Unit at the Singareni Thermal Power Plant (STPP) in Jaipur Mandal of Mancheril district in accordance with the scheduled targets.

During his visit to the project site, the CMD reviewed the progress

of the ongoing construction works and stressed the need to maintain quality standards while adhering strictly to project timelines to strengthen Singareni's power generation capacity.

Reviewing various aspects of the project, Dr Jyoti emphasised that the new thermal power unit would play a key role in enhancing SCCL's contribution to the power sector and meeting future energy requirements. As part of the visit, he planted a sapling on the plant premises and inaugurated the Rescue Safety

Control Room, highlighting the company's commitment to environmental sustainability and workplace safety.

The CMD also reviewed the performance and progress of the thermal and solar power projects being implemented by SCCL and held detailed discussions with officials on operational efficiency, project execution and future expansion plans.

Directors of SCCL and senior company officials accompanied him during the inspection and review meeting. UNI

# Jio continues to lead wireless, home broadband segments in Odisha

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**HUBANESWAR, MAY 31:** Jio continued its strong growth momentum in Odisha by adding the highest over 1.61 lakh new mobile and home broadband subscribers in the state during April 2026, according to the latest telecom subscription data released by TRAI.

The data revealed that more than 1.43 lakh new mobile subscribers and over 17,000 new home broadband users joined the Jio network in Odisha during the month.

As per the TRAI report, Odisha's overall mobile subscriber base increased by more than 2.52 lakh in April, taking the total number of mobile subscribers in the state to 3.84 crore.

Jio further strengthened its dominance in the home broadband segment, driven by the growing popularity of JioFiber and JioAirFiber across urban and rural Odisha.

The company reportedly added more than double the number of home broadband subscribers compared to its nearest competitor during the month. With the latest additions, Jio has further consolidated its leadership position across wireless, wireline and Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) services in Odisha.

The company currently has around 1.8 crore mobile subscribers in the state, along with nearly 3.76 lakh JioFiber subscribers and about 3.9 lakh JioAirFiber users.

Jio stated that its expanding digital infrastructure has helped bring high-speed broadband connectivity to thousands of villages across Odisha's rural hinterlands, accelerating digital inclusion in remote areas.

According to TRAI data, at the national level, Jio added more than 29 lakh new mobile subscribers and over 5.71 lakh new home broadband subscribers in April 2026.

This included over 1.42 lakh new JioFiber subscribers and more than 4.29 lakh new JioAirFiber subscribers across the country.

With its focus on advanced technology, robust network infrastructure and customer-centric services, Jio continues to play a major role in driving digital transformation across Odisha as well as the country. UNI

# India's macroeconomic position reflects "cautious resilience", policy vigilance needed: Monthly Economic Review

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, MAY 31:** India's macroeconomic position reflects "cautious resilience"; however, the rise in global energy prices, a depreciating rupee, rising upstream cost pressures, and the prospect of a below-normal monsoon require policy vigilance, said the Monthly Economic Review (MER) released by the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) here on Saturday.

The monthly assessment of the Finance Ministry noted that the West Asia crisis has emerged as a major shock to the fragile global recovery, with its effects increasingly visible across energy markets, supply chains, trade routes, and global financial conditions.

"Elevated energy, transportation and logistics costs have revived inflationary pressures and renewed stagflation concerns across major economies", the

report said.

"Confronted with these pressures, major central banks are expected to maintain restrictive monetary policy stances for longer than previously anticipated, pushing sovereign bond yields in advanced economies to multi-year highs"

The report warned that prolonged disruptions to Gulf energy supplies could hamper global growth and intensify macroeconomic vulnerabilities.

"For India, these external pressures are beginning to transmit, selectively but perceptibly, into domestic economic conditions."

Highlighting the performance of last month, MER said, "The Indian economy maintained its growth momentum in April, with E-way bill generation, PMI indices and electricity consumption remaining in expansionary territory."

The report noted that mod-

eration in the Eight Core Industries and fuel consumption shows that global headwinds are affecting the selected segments of domestic activity.

Inflation dynamics of April reflect a divergence between consumer prices and rising wholesale prices.

"While retail inflation increased only marginally to 3.48 per cent and remained below the RBI's target, pressures intensified in select food items and services such as restaurants and accommodation."

In contrast, wholesale inflation accelerated sharply to 8.3 per cent, driven primarily by elevated global energy prices, currency depreciation and low base effect.

Adding to the future risks, India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicted overall monsoon rainfall at around 92 per cent of the long-period average.

The report noted that buffer

stocks of rice and wheat at 817.53 lakh tonnes and adequate reservoir storage provide a suitable cushion to foodgrains.

"However, any significant rainfall deficit coupled with current geopolitical conditions could translate into food inflation, weakening rural demand and aggregate growth", the report warned.

Industrial activity in April moderated amid global uncertainty and weakness in the hydrocarbon sector.

"Resilience in cement, steel, and electricity generation continued to support overall momentum, reflecting sustained domestic demand from infrastructure and construction activity."

On the external front, India's total exports recorded strong growth in April 2026, with buoyant services exports substantially narrowing the overall trade deficit.

The report said that India also diversified its trade strategy through bilateral and strategic economic partnerships, while policy measures undertaken to manage non-essential imports.

"On the financial side, capital flows remained volatile, with FPI outflows exerting pressure on the Indian rupee. Nevertheless, gross FDI inflows remained resilient, reaching a historical peak of USD 94.5 billion in FY26, indicating continued long-term investor interest in the Indian economy," it said.

Labour market indicators reflect a stable employment landscape with steady participation and employment levels.

The report suggested that navigating FY27 require agility across monetary, fiscal and structural dimensions to safeguard growth momentum, keeping inflation durably anchored. UNI

# The Quiet Captain: Rajat Patidar's Chance To Join The Elite



UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**AHMEDABAD:** When Rajat Patidar leads Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) out for their second straight IPL final in Ahmedabad on Sunday, he will have the chance to join an elite list of captains who have won back-to-back IPL titles. But his route towards this peak has been remarkably different. When MS Dhoni completed the double for Chennai Super Kings in 2010-11, he had already established himself as a bona fide great, having led India to the T20 World Cup in 2007 and taking them to the top of the Test rankings in 2009.

By the time Rohit Sharma led Mumbai Indians to consecutive titles in 2019-20, he was already a multiple-time IPL-winning captain, an Asia Cup-winning India skipper, and the man who had lit up the 2019 ODI World Cup with a record five centuries.

Patidar, in comparison, last played for India in early 2024, and was dropped after poor returns in three Tests. He hasn't come close to national selection since. Yet, the sheer weight of his runs at IPL 2026 - 486 runs at a strike rate of 196.76 - has brought him back into conversations for a T20I spot.

This is why RCB handing him the captaincy in early 2025 felt like such a massive leap of faith. He was tasked to accomplish what legends like Rahul Dravid, Kevin Pietersen, Anil Kumble, Daniel Vettori and Virat Kohli couldn't.

Having led them to a title last year, Patidar now has the chance to carve his legacy. With Diageo in the process of transferring own-

ership to a new consortium - in a sale that had many astounded at the valuation - Ahmedabad could well be the setting for the end of an era and the start of a new one.

It was in Dharamsala two years ago that Patidar was first asked about the prospects of leading RCB. Then, when director Mo Bobat and coach Andy Flower invited him to a review meeting in June that year, they were seriously considering him for captaincy, but it wasn't a done deal. They asked him to put on the captaincy hat and identify a core issue they needed to fix.

Patidar could have easily talked up leadership jargon and cliches, like culture, unity, leading from the front, etc. Instead, he said: "We need to build a gun pace attack." For the management, this was one of the earliest indicators that Patidar was captaincy material.

The visual evidence came during Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2024-25, when he led Madhya Pradesh to the final. It helped that he had a coach in Chandrakant Pandit, who had long believed Patidar possessed leadership qualities. Patidar also finished as the competition's second-highest run-getter. More impressively, he struck those runs at 186.08, showing captaincy didn't weigh on his batting.

Venkatesh Iyer, his current RCB teammate who is also part of the Madhya Pradesh set-up, saw more than a glimpse of Patidar's thought processes as captain then. "I enjoyed playing under him," Iyer said during the latest Ranji Trophy season. "He kept things simple in the dressing room."

## 'Disappointing' - Sangakkara on Sam Curran turning out for Surrey with IPL still on

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**CHANDIGARH:** Sam Curran missed IPL 2026 for Rajasthan Royals (RR) with a groin injury, and Kumar Sangakkara found it "disappointing" when the all-rounder turned out for Surrey in the men's Vitality Blast on May 22 to mark his return to action.

As far as Sangakkara was concerned, England-contracted Curran had a "season-ending injury", even though the player himself had said at the time of his withdrawal from the IPL - the news became public on March 19 - that he would return "whenever it feels right".

"We were told that Sam Curran had a season-ending injury, but I think I saw him playing for Surrey for two games or three games now. So that was disappointing," Sangakkara, RR's head coach, said at a press conference after RR exited the IPL in Qualifier 2 on Friday. "We would have loved to have had him here playing for us."

Since Curran, who had been acquired by RR as part of a trade with Chennai Super Kings (CSK) with Ravindra Jadeja in exchange for Sanju Samson, had communicated his inability to play to RR in advance, Dasun Shanaka was brought in as a replacement on March 23, which led to its own set of problems, as Shanaka had to withdraw from his deal with Lahore Qalandars in PSL 2026 to join RR and was banned from the tournament for a year as a result.

Curran, playing as a batter only and scheduled to not bowl in Surrey's first six Blast fixtures, has played three games so far and is their top run-scorer at this stage with 141 runs from three innings. When he opted out of the IPL, he had said that he had managed the groin problem throughout the T20 World Cup earlier this year. "It's an injury that I've kind of been battling with a little bit," Curran was quoted as saying in British media. "It has gradually got fractionally worse. I went for a couple of scans and it showed reasonable damage, so I had to make the tough decision. It was hindering me quite a bit."

The question has come up from time to time when overseas players have chosen not to honour their IPL commitments, and in September 2024, the BCCI announced a two-year ban on players who pulled out after being picked at IPL auctions.

"Yeah, I think a proper tight policy around that is always a requirement. The BCCI has a strict policy on that," Sangakkara said. "Injuries, every person goes through injuries, and if it's a serious injury, a season ending injury, of course we understand."

## Ros Rivaz appointed to ICC board as independent director

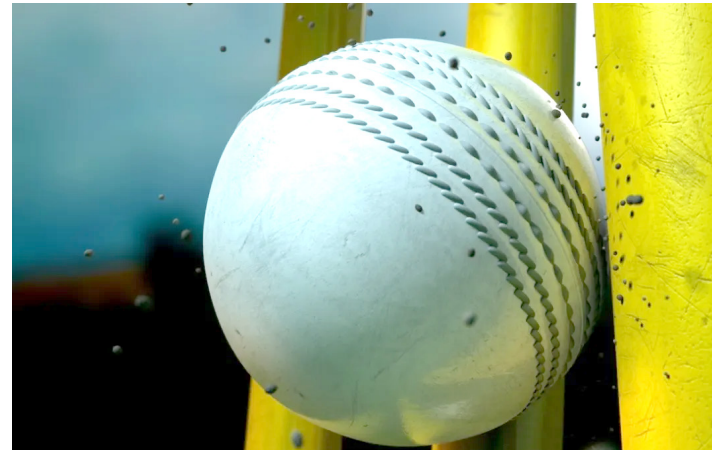
AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI:** Dr Ros C Rivaz has been appointed to the ICC board as an independent director. She is set to join the board on an initial three-year term, which can be extended for a maximum of three more years.

Rivaz, who is currently chair of Anglian Water and the lead independent director at Aperam SA and Victrex plc, Europe-based material science companies, has experience in executive roles in blue chip companies, both in the UK and internationally, "providing a broad perspective on strategy, risk and performance management," as an ICC statement described.

"Throughout her career, Dr Rivaz has been an active and engaged board member, undertaking site visits and stakeholder interactions across government, commercial, and community sectors," an statement said. "Her deep understanding of governance, corporate strategy, and operational effectiveness is complemented by her commitment to diversity and inclusion, making her a strong addition to the ICC Board."

Rivaz has also been involved in several community and educational initiatives, including supporting STEM uptake among young women through the Your-Life campaign, chairing the Council of the University of



Southampton, and actively participating in local community projects and charities such as Water Aid.

"It is a privilege to join the ICC Board at such an exciting time for the sport," Rivaz said. "Cricket continues to reach new

audiences, inspire communities and strengthen its position as one of the world's most influential global sports.

"I look forward to working alongside the ICC Chairman, fellow Board members, and the wider cricket family to support the continued growth of the game. Strong governance, long-term thinking and an inclusive approach to decision-making will be central to ensuring cricket continues to thrive and create opportunities for future generations across all parts of the world."

Previously, former PepsiCo chair and chief executive Indra Nooyi had served on the ICC board as its first independent female director in 2018.

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