



Joint Commanders' Conference

Remain prepared for future conflicts: Rajnath to armed forces

Says terrorism will be answered with strength | 'Op Sindoor reflected India's growing military capabilities'

Sajid Raina

Jaipur, May 08: Asking armed forces to remain prepared for future conflicts shaped by emerging technologies and hybrid threats, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday described 'Operation Sindoor' as a "short-duration, deep-penetration, high-intensity and high-impact" military operation that reflected India's growing military capabilities and collective resolve.

Addressing the second edition of the Joint Commanders' Conference in Jaipur, the Defence Minister, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Operation Sindoor showcased India's ability to compel its adversary to surrender and reflected the nation's new



military ethos."

"Terrorism will be met with a strong and decisive response.

Operation Sindoor reflected India's resolve and military capability to protect national

interests," he added.

Singh called upon commanders of the Army, Navy and Air Force to remain future-ready by learning from recent operations and the evolving global security environment.

The Defence Minister said future conflicts would increasingly involve hybrid warfare, information dominance and simultaneous operations across cyber, space, electromagnetic and cognitive domains.

He stressed the need to strengthen capabilities in artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, data analytics and secure communication networks to effectively deal with emerging security challenges.

"Future wars will not be won solely through weaponry, but through innovative thinking and enhanced | More on P6

Three youths drown in Jhelum while washing tent in Hajin

LG, CM, political leaders express grief; hundreds join funeral prayers

Sajid Raina

Bandipora, May 08: A pall of gloom descended on Hajin town of north Kashmir's Bandipora district on Friday after three young men drowned in the River Jhelum while washing tent material along its banks, officials said.

The incident took place in the Check Chandergar area of Hajin, where the youths had gone to clean tent material near the river.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that all three slipped into the water and were swept away by the strong current.

Residents and volunteers immediately launched rescue efforts and managed to retrieve two bodies during



the initial operation, while the third body was recovered later after an extensive search.

The deceased were identified as Aadil Ahmad Dar (18), son of Bashir Ahmad Dar,

Sameer Ahmad Dar (22), son of Mohammad Jamal Dar, and Sohail Ahmad Dar (22), son of Ghulam Nabi Dar — all residents of Chandergar, Hajin. The bodies | More on P6

Army, police, civil admin rescue 24 stranded tourists at Gulmarg

CM Omar hails efforts

Waris Fayaz

Srinagar, May 08: In a joint rescue operation Army, J&K Police and administration on Friday rescued 24 tourists who got stranded at Sunshine Peak in Gulmarg after a civil helicopter they were travelling in developed a technical snag.

Officials told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the rescue mission was carried out jointly by the Indian Army, Baramulla district administration, Gulmarg Development Authority and Jammu and Kashmir Police.

They said Army aviators responded immediately after receiving information about the incident and safely evacuated all the stranded tourists from



the peak. The operation was completed successfully without injury to tourists, they said.

In a statement, the Army said its personnel acted swiftly to ensure timely evacuation and reiterated its commitment towards safeguarding civilians during emergencies.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah appreciated the coordinated rescue operation carried out by | More on P6

HM Shah to chair high-level flood, heatwave preparedness meet tomorrow

KNO DESK

New Delhi, May 08: Union Home Minister Amit Shah will chair a crucial high-level meeting in New Delhi on Sunday (May 10) to review the country's preparedness for dealing with possible floods and heatwave conditions.

In a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said, "Meeting assumes special significance in light of the proactive and decisive Whole of the Government and Whole of Society Approach of the Government of India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi towards disaster management."

"Under the guidance of HM Shah, Ministry of Home Affairs has significantly strengthened the nation's disaster



management framework in recent years. This includes better coordination between Central and State Government agencies, massive strengthening of NDRF, and sustained focus on zero casualty approach during natural calamities," the statement said.

It said, "This high-level review reflects PM Modi led Government's unwavering

commitment to proactive governance, citizen-centric disaster management, and building a disaster-resilient India."

During the meeting, the Union Home Minister, according to the statement, will assess the readiness of Central Government agencies, review early warning systems, resource deployment and inter-agency coordination, to ensure zero loss of life and minimal loss to property.

"The Union Home Minister will also review the progress of long-term flood mitigation measures being taken across the country, including protection of critical infrastructure projects, river management initiatives and scientific advancements in forecasting. He will also take stock of the implementation of decisions taken in last year's review meeting, ensuring | More on P6

'There's no Eknath Shinde in NC; all our MLAs stand firmly with party': Omar

Says LoP 'impatient to occupy' CM's chair | Accuses opposition of 'blackmail politics'

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, May 08: "There is no Eknath Shinde in the National Conference and all its legislators stand firmly with the party," Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said on Friday.

The CM alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would not restore statehood to Jammu and Kashmir until it forms a government in the Union Territory. He further accused the opposition of using the issue of statehood for political pressure and "blackmail politics".

Talking to reporters here, Omar, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer



(KNO), ruled out any possibility of a split within the NC. "I will only say this to the LoP — there is no Eknath Shinde in

the National Conference. All our MLAs are with the party," he said. The Chief Minister also dismissed speculation that the

delay in cabinet expansion was linked to political instability or fear within the ruling alliance, saying the process has stalled solely because Jammu and Kashmir has not been granted statehood.

"The expansion of the cabinet has stopped because we have not been given the status of a state. The cabinet expansion has not stopped because of fear," he said.

Omar further alleged that the delimitation exercise conducted in Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370 was designed only to benefit the BJP and its allies. "We have | More on P6

Cabinet discusses 200 units of free power to AAY families

Approves reorganisation of Jal Shakti Dept

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, May 08: The cabinet on Friday discussed the implementation of 200 units of free electricity for AAY families in Jammu and Kashmir and also approved the reorganization of the Jal Shakti Department, sources disclosed.

According to sources told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah deliberated on the modalities of providing 200 units of electricity to AAY families.

According to sources, there was a variation in the data of AAY families, with figures

from the Department of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs conflicting with those of the Power Development Department.

"The data of the Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department will be used for providing free electricity to families," sources revealed.

The 200 units of free electricity will be provided every month to AAY families under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana (PMSG-MBY).

Sources further disclosed that the cabinet also approved the proposal for the reorganization of the Jal Shakti Department. (KNO)

Day temps soar across Kashmir

Wet spell likely from May 11

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, May 08: Day temperatures continued to rise across Kashmir on Friday with Srinagar recording a maximum temperature of 30 degrees Celsius, around 5.9 degrees above normal, while the Meteorological Department forecast a fresh spell of rain and thunderstorms from May 11.

According to the Meteorological Centre Srinagar, Qazigund recorded 29.6 degrees Celsius, Kupwara 28.3 degrees, Kukulnag 27.6 degrees and Pahalgam 24.1 degrees. Gulmarg, the famous ski resort, recorded a maximum temperature of 21.2 degrees Celsius. In Jammu | More on P6

RAABITA

MLAs, deputations call on CM; raise dev, public issues

KT News Desk

Srinagar, May 08: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday met several public representatives, various deputations and individuals at his Public Services & Outreach Office Raabita here and discussed a range of public welfare and developmental issues concerning Jammu & Kashmir.

MLA Zaidal, Tanvir Sadiq, called on the Chief Minister and discussed issues related to parks and gardens in his constituency. MLA Banihal, Sajad Shaheen, also raised



several issues of public importance concerning his constituency. Former Minister Javid Mustafa Mir also separately called on the Chief Minister. Grand Mufti Nasir-ul-Islam also met the | More on P6

Children with Thalassemia major require lifelong blood transfusions every few weeks to survive: Doctors

'Without proper treatment, disease can lead to growth retardation, bone deformities, heart complications'

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, May 08: Thalassemia, a hereditary blood disorder that affects the body's ability to produce healthy haemoglobin, continues to remain a growing health concern in Jammu and Kashmir, with doctors and health experts stressing the urgent need for awareness, timely diagnosis and preventive screening to reduce its spread. Haemoglobin is an important protein present in red



blood cells that carries oxygen throughout the body. In people suffering from thalassemia, the body either produces insufficient haemoglobin or abnormal haemoglobin, resulting in severe anaemia and several related complications.

Medical experts say that thalassemia is not an infectious disease but a genetic disorder passed from parents to children. A child develops severe thalassemia when both parents carry the defective

thalassaemia gene. If only one parent carries the gene, the child may become a carrier without developing severe symptoms.

Dr Javid Ahmad Reshie, posted in south Kashmir, explained to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the primary cause of thalassemia is inherited genetic mutations affecting haemoglobin production. The disease is commonly divided into two major forms — Alpha | More on P6

Sustained efforts being made to ensure inclusive, equitable development across J&K: Sakeena Itoo

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MAY 08: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, on Friday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress of various ongoing developmental projects being executed by the Education, Health and Social Welfare departments across Jammu and Kashmir.

During the meeting, the Minister, as per an official statement, conducted a detailed department-wise review and assessed project monitoring mechanisms, fund utilization and inter-departmental coordination to ensure effective execution of developmental initiatives across Jammu and Kashmir.

Reviewing the Education department projects, the Minister assessed the progress on construction and upgradation of school buildings, establishment of smart classrooms, augmentation of laboratory and library facilities and improvement of basic amenities in educational institutions. She directed officers to ensure quality infrastructure in schools and colleges so that students receive a better and more conducive



learning environment.

The Minister also highlighted the importance of modern educational facilities in rural and far-flung areas and instructed officials to expedite pending works on priority. "Special focus should be laid on enhancing digital learning infrastructure and ensuring adequate basic facilities in educational institutions", she stated.

While reviewing the Health Department initiatives, the Minister took stock of ongoing works related to hospital infrastructure, upgradation of medical facilities and strengthening of healthcare delivery systems. She stressed on the importance of providing accessible and affordable healthcare

services to the people, especially those residing in remote and underserved areas.

The Minister directed the concerned authorities to accelerate the pace of work on healthcare projects and ensure availability of essential medical equipment, medicines and manpower at all health institutions. She also asked the officers to constitute a committee for assessing the status of lifts, Oxygen plants, public utilities and other aspects in the hospitals and submit its report within a weeks time.

Regarding social welfare sector, the Minister instructed officials to ensure that all eligible beneficiaries are covered under different social welfare schemes and directed them to conduct awareness drives so that people

are fully informed about the government initiatives available for their welfare and empowerment.

Reaffirming the government's commitment towards inclusive and equitable development, Sakeena Itoo maintained that sustained efforts are being made to strengthen public service delivery and create robust infrastructure in these key sectors across J&K. "Ensure timely completion of all projects so that benefits reach the people without delay", Sakeena Itoo stated.

She urged officers to work with dedication, maintain transparency and ensure that all developmental projects are completed within stipulated timelines.

She instructed the officers to consult local MLAs of the respective areas while planning developmental projects in these places. She also directed the officers to execute all the projects and works announced under the Budget and complete them within the stipulated time frames.

The meeting, among others, was attended by Director Finance and Director Planning of Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education departments, senior officers of these departments and other concerned officers.

Nasha Mukh J&K Abhiyan

Community participation key to drug-free society: Sheetal Nanda

KT NEWS DESK

REASI, MAY 08: In an effort to spread awareness about the ill effects of drug abuse and make Reasi a drug-free district, the district administration on Friday organised a mega awareness programme under the Nasha Mukh Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan at the Deputy Commissioner's Office Complex.

Commissioner Secretary, Forest, Ecology and Environment, Sheetal Nanda, was the chief guest on the occasion.

The programme, as per an official statement, aimed at sensitising and strengthening the role of Mahila Nigrani Samitis in combating the menace of drug abuse and promoting a drug-free society.

Addressing the gathering, Sheetal Nanda expressed concern over the growing menace of drug abuse and underscored the need for sustained community participation to effectively tackle the issue. She said that a collective and coordinated approach involving families, educational institutions, civil society and government agencies is essential to build a drug-free society.

Appreciating the role of women in grassroots awareness and social reform, she observed that Mahila Nigrani Samitis can play a pivotal role in identifying the vulnerable cases, counselling affected families and guiding youth towards constructive and positive activities. She also stressed the importance of parental involvement and urged the parents to maintain close engagement with their children and encourage them to adopt a healthy and disciplined lifestyle.

The Commissioner Secretary appealed the participants to actively support the individuals affected by substance abuse and contribute towards creating a socially responsible



and aware society. She also highlighted the importance of mental health support and informed the participants about the Tele MANAS helpline service, encouraging the people facing stress, anxiety, addiction or emotional distress to avail counselling and healthcare support through the 24x7 toll-free helpline number 14416.

Sheetal Nanda further called upon the public to extend full cooperation to the district administration Reasi in its ongoing efforts to eradicate the drug menace and make Reasi a drug-free district.

Deputy Commissioner Kumar Abhishek, while speaking on the occasion, said that the special 100-day campaign under the Nasha Mukh Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan aims to curb the menace of drug abuse through coordinated community participation. To achieve this objective, ASHA Workers, Anganwadi Workers and retired teachers have been included as members of the Mahila Nigrani Samitis

to strengthen the campaign at the grassroots level, he informed. He urged the public to actively support the administration in eradicating the drug menace by sharing information regarding persons affected by substance abuse or those involved in drug peddling, if they come across any such cases in the district.

During the programme, Additional Superintendent of Police Iftakhar Ahmed, along with other speakers and psychiatrists from District Hospital Reasi, highlighted the growing threat of drug abuse. They stressed the need for collective efforts, public awareness, counselling and family support to prevent the substance abuse, particularly among the youth.

A pledge was also administered to the participants, who resolved to contribute actively towards building a drug-free and healthy society.

ADDC Krishan Lal, ADC Rakesh Kumar, ACR Nitin Verma and other district officers were present.

Director JKEDI chairs maiden review meeting with DNOs, ROs, In-charge officers

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MAY 08: Director, Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), Mohammad Younis Malik, chaired his maiden comprehensive review meeting at the Sempora campus of the institute to assess the progress of various entrepreneurship and youth engagement initiatives being implemented across the Union Territory.

The meeting, as per an official statement, witnessed participation of all District Nodal Officers (DNOs) Range Officers (ROs)

and In-charge officers of various sections of JKEDI, who joined both physically and through virtual mode from different districts of Jammu & Kashmir.

During the review, detailed deliberations were held on the implementation and progress achieved under key government initiatives, including the RAMP Scheme, Mission YUVA, and various self-employment programmes. The meeting also reviewed the status of loan repayments and recoveries under different employment generation schemes, besides discussing other operational and institutional matters.

GOVERNMENT OF UT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL IRRIGATION DIVISION BARAMULLA
Email: amitabhman.721013@jk.gov.in
This office eNIT No: 04 of 2026-27 Dated: 16-04-2026
Tender ID No. 2026_IFC_307928_1 for Corrigendum No. 01.
Sub: - Extension of dates:
In view of poor response, to this Office e-NIT No. 04 of 2026-27 ("Construction of Lift Irrigation Scheme Reban Rafiabadd"), the time extension is being given to ensure healthy competition/competitive bidding as under: -

1. Tender Submission date Ends	=	14/05/2026 upto 06.55 pm
2. Date of Opening	=	15/05/2026 at 01:00 pm, in the Office of the Executive Engineer Mechanical Irrigation Division Baramulla

All other terms/conditions and stipulation as contained in the eNIT shall remain unaltered/unmodified.

No. MIDB/CC-02/623-29 DATED: 08/05/2026
DIPK-1138/26 DATED: 08-05-2026
Sd/- Executive Engineer Mechanical Irrigation Division Baramulla

JAMMU AND KASHMIR PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
SHAM CHAR COLONY, BAKSHI NAGAR, JAMMU-180016
Website: http://jkpsc.nic.in

Subject:- Filling up of the posts of Veterinary Assistant Surgeon in Sheep Husbandry Department- Result of Written Test and Verification of documents thereof.

Notification No. PSC/Exam/S/2026/47 Dated:- 07-05-2026

In pursuance of Jammu & Kashmir Sheep Husbandry (Gazetted) Service Recruitment Rules, 1987 dated 06.03.1987 read with amendments notified vide SRO 547 dated 10.12.2018 and Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission (Conduct of Examinations) Rules, 2022 read with AK Public Service Commission (Business & Procedure) Rules, 2021 as amended up to date and on the basis of the performance of the candidates in the written test held on 05.04.2026, the result of the candidates, in order of merit, who appeared in the said Written Test in response to Notification No. 06-PSC(DR-P) of 2024 dated 14.11.2024 is annexed as Annexure-A to this notification.

Consequent upon the above-

a) The list of candidates called for verification of original certificates/documents in support of their claim pertaining to age, educational qualifications, internship, registration by State Veterinary Council or equivalent, category and disability, if any, etc, in terms of Rules 27 & 28 of the MK Public Service Commission (Business & Procedure) Rules, 2021, are annexed as Annexure B (Select List) and Annexure-C (Walt List) against notification NO. 06-PSC (DR-P) of 2024 dated 14.11.2024 to this notification. The inclusion of the candidates in Annexure-8 and Annexure-C is provisional and solely for the purpose of verification of documents and does not confer any preferential right or claim upon these candidates for selection/recommendation/appointment, which shall be made in terms of the rules and shall further be subject to the outcome of writ petition(s), if any, pending disposal before Court(s) of Law. The onus (or non-appearance for verification of documents lie upon candidates.

b) The schedule for verification of documents shall be notified separately.

Sachin Jamwal JKAS,
Controller of Examination,
J&K Public Service Commission

No: PSC/Ex-Secy/2026/21 Dated:07-05-2026
DIPK-1126/26 DATED: 08-05-2026

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
HOME DEPARTMENT CIVIL SECRETARIAT, JAMMU/SRINAGAR

Subject: Final Seniority List of Members of Jammu and Kashmir Police (Gazetted) Service, [Deputy Superintendent of Police (Telecom) Level-8 (47600-151100) of the Pay Matrix].

Government Order No. : 263-Home of 2026
Dated: 30.04.2026

Whereas, in pursuance of Rule 10 of the Jammu and Kashmir Police (Gazetted) Service Recruitment Rules, 2024, notified vide SO 500 of 2024 dated 10.10.2024, it is imperative to maintain an up-to-date seniority list of the members of the Service in accordance with Rule 24 of the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Classification, Control & Appeal) Rules, 1956; and

2. Whereas, a Tentative Seniority List of the members of the Jammu and Kashmir Police (Gazetted) Service, Deputy Superintendent of Police (Telecom), was issued vide Government Order No. 587-Home of 2025 dated 08.12.2025, inviting objections, if any, from the officers regarding the inter-se-seniority position assigned to them within a period of 21 days from the date of issuance of the said order; and

3. Whereas, in response thereto, certain representations were received by the Police Headquarters, J&K which were duly examined and found devoid of merit, and accordingly disposed of at the level of PHQ, J&K;

Now, therefore, the Final Seniority List of the members of the Jammu and Kashmir Police (Gazetted) Service [Deputy Superintendent of Police (Telecom Cadre)], as it stood on 01.01.2026, forming Annexure-A to this order, is hereby notified for the information of the concerned members of the Service, subject to the following conditions:

i. The inter-se-seniority position of the members of the Service shall be without prejudice to the outcome of writ petition(s), if any, pending before any competent court of law;

ii. The date(s) of birth reflected in the Seniority List shall not be construed as final and shall remain subject to the entries recorded in the respective Service Books/Date of Birth Certificates issued by the Competent Authority.

By order of the Lieutenant Governor. Sd/- (Chandraker Bharti), IAS
Principal Secretary to the Government

No. HOME-PG/113/2023/CC-7186047 Dated: 30.04.2026

[Tentative Seniority List of Members of the Jammu and Kashmir Police (Gazetted) Service, Deputy Superintendent of Police (Telecom) as it stood on 01.01.2026.]

S. No.	Name of the Officer S/Shri	PID No.	Date of Birth	Date of Promotion to Present Rank
1.	Lekh Raj SC	TEL984708	03/04/1971	13/07/2022
2.	Neeraj Sarna	TEL987396	04/05/1974	13/07/2022
3.	Adil Rasheed Zargar	TEL987401	31/05/1971	13/07/2022
4.	Devinder Gupta	TEL987400	03/11/1975	13/07/2022
5.	Mohd Abass Dar	TEL984949	10/01/1970	13/07/2022
6.	Mohammad Ashraf Ganie	TEL984194	02/03/1969	13/07/2022
7.	Derminder Chand RBA	TEL987429	14/04/1972	13/07/2022
8.	Sheikh Mushtaq Ahmad	TEL984187	13/09/1970	13/07/2022
9.	Neeraj Kumar OSC	TEL984916	21/07/1972	13/07/2022
10.	Riyaz Ahmad Wagay RBA	TEL984707	24/07/1969	13/07/2022
11.	Ms. Shagufta Shabnam	TEL984195	11/05/1971	13/07/2022
12.	Abid Hussain	TEL984188	17/01/1976	13/07/2022
13.	Khurshid Ahmad Malik	TEL984193	07/02/1971	13/07/2022
14.	Shahnawaz Ahmad Sheikh RBA	TEL987508	15/11/1970	13/07/2022
15.	Shahnawaz Wakil	TEL984812	15/02/1972	13/07/2022
16.	Muzaffar Ahmad Mir	TEL984190	25/12/1973	13/07/2022
17.	Javeed Hussain Vaid	TEL983889	28/02/1970	13/07/2022
18.	Ashok Kumar	TEL987399	10/03/1973	13/07/2022
19.	Manzoor Ahmad Khan RBA	TEL984189	18/06/1971	13/07/2022
20.	Kuldeep Raj SC	TEL006735	13/10/1973	13/07/2022
21.	Abdul Qayoom Lone	TEL003318	17/09/1971	13/07/2022
22.	Khalid Raza Moon RBA	TEL003323	01/06/1976	13/07/2022
23.	Reyaz Ahmad Bhat	TEL003319	09/03/1973	13/12/2022

DIPK-1156/26 DATED: 08-05-2026 (Monish Kumar) JKAS Under Secretary to the Government

Teenager kills friend with cricket bat after love dispute

YOGESH

Kathua, May 08: In a chilling case of friendship turning fatal over a suspected love rivalry, police in Kathua have arrested a 19 year old youth for the brutal daylight murder of his close friend, 18 year old Nakul Singh. The accused has been identified as Parth Verma alias Sumit, who allegedly bludgeoned Nakul to death with a cricket bat inside the victim's home over love rivalry.

The shocking crime, which has sent shockwaves across Kathua town, occurred on May 6 at Nakul Singh's residence in Ward No. 10 near Rajbagh. Nakul was found dead in a pool of blood, while his younger brother, 16 year old Nikhil Singh, was critically injured in the attack.

Addressing the media, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kathua Mohita Sharma said the case was cracked using technical surveillance,



including tracking the missing mobile phone of the deceased.

"After registering the FIR, multiple police teams were constituted. During the investigation, the missing iPhone

of the deceased was traced with the help of technical inputs. Sustained interrogation of suspects led to a confession by the accused. The stolen mobile phone was also recovered

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After registering the FIR, multiple police teams were constituted. During the investigation, the missing iPhone of the deceased was traced with the help of technical inputs. Sustained interrogation of suspects led to a confession by the accused. The stolen mobile phone was also recovered on his disclosure, in the presence of a magistrate," the SSP said.

According to police, the accused visited Nakul Singh's house around 11.40 am on the day of the incident and even made a phone call to another friend using Nakul's mobile phone before the situation escalated.

Investigators revealed that a heated argument broke out between the

two friends over a girl, exposing what police described as a "love angle" behind the murder.

"The argument quickly escalated into a physical altercation driven by jealousy and personal rivalry. In a fit of rage, the accused allegedly picked up a cricket bat lying inside the room and struck Nakul Singh on the head, killing him on the spot," SSP Sharma

said. Police said the violence did not stop there. When Nakul's younger brother Nikhil entered the house during the attack, the accused allegedly panicked and repeatedly assaulted him with the same cricket bat in an attempt to eliminate an eyewitness.

"The accused fled the scene after leaving behind the blood stained cricket bat and taking away the victim's mobile phone," the officer added. The murder weapon has since been recovered and forensic evidence from the crime scene has been collected.

Nikhil Singh remains in critical condition and is undergoing treatment at AIIMS Jammu, where he is currently on ventilator support.

Police said the investigation is being strengthened to ensure strict punishment for the accused. "Justice will be delivered only through conviction," SSP Sharma said—(KNO)

CM interacts with public representatives, deputations at Raabita



KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, May 08: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday met several public representatives, various deputations and individuals at his Public Services & Outreach Office Raabita here and discussed a range of public welfare and developmental issues concerning Jammu & Kashmir.

MLA Zaidib, Tanvir Sadiq, called on the Chief Minister and discussed issues related to parks and gardens in his

constituency.

MLA Banihal, Sajad Shaheen, also raised several issues of public importance concerning his constituency.

Former Minister Javid Mustafa Mir also separately called on the Chief Minister.

Grand Mufti Nasir-ul-Islam also met the Chief Minister and discussed various social and public issues.

Educationist G. N. Var met the Chief Minister and expressed gratitude over the passing of the J&K Private

Universities Bill while also apprising him of several issues related to the education sector.

Several deputations and individuals from different areas of Kashmir valley also called on the Chief Minister and apprised him of various public issues and grievances.

The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to all the visiting delegations and individuals and assured appropriate consideration of the issues and matters projected before him.

Joint delegation call on LG Sinha



KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, May 08: A joint delegation of Nirbhay Bharat Foundation and Sarhad NGO headed by Tarun Uppal called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday.

Sakina Itoo calls for collective fight against drug menace



JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, May 08: Asserting that the responsibility of curbing drug peddling lies with the Home Department, Health Minister Sakina Itoo on Friday said that Health Department is actively working on treatment, counselling and rehabilitation of drug addicts.

Talking to reporters here, Itoo said the government has been tirelessly working to tackle the growing drug menace in Jammu and Kashmir through awareness campaigns, rehabilitation programmes and medical support for affected youth.

She said that action against drug peddlers is a "welcome step," but stressed that the fight against narcotics requires a collective and balanced approach.

"The Home Department is responsible for stopping drug peddling, while treatment, counselling and rehabilitation come under the Health Department. We are working tirelessly on that front," she said.

The minister appreciated the efforts of the Lieutenant Governor's administration in launching action against drug peddlers, but cautioned that only those genuinely involved in the illegal trade should be targeted.

"I appreciate the action being taken against drug peddlers, but it must be ensured that innocent people are not harassed or falsely implicated,"

she said.

Itoo remarked that the government also need to remain vigilant if drugs are found anywhere and they must work to identify how and from where such substances are reaching.

"But if one individual has committed a mistake, the entire family should not become a victim," she added.

Meanwhile, commenting on the alleged harassment incident at Amar Singh College, the minister termed the matter "extremely unfortunate," especially as it occurred within an educational institution.

"We have zero tolerance for such incidents. The moment we received the complaint, we suspended both the principal and the assistant professor. An inquiry has been ordered and the report will be submitted within a week. Strict action will be taken against whoever is found guilty," Itoo said.

The controversy surfaced after a female student allegedly accused the Head of the Department of Media Studies of harassment, triggering protests within the college campus.

Authorities had earlier removed the HoD from all academic responsibilities pending inquiry. The college administration also constituted a proctorial inquiry committee and assigned interim charge of the department to another faculty member till completion of the investigation—(KNO)

Transporters call off May-12 strike after Govt assurance



REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, May 08: Transporters in Kashmir Valley on Friday deferred their proposed indefinite strike scheduled for May 12 after a marathon high-level meeting with government officials in Srinagar, following days of tension over the Smart City bus operations and other sectoral issues.

Transport Association Kashmir President Shabir Matta said the decision came after a detailed meeting held with senior officials from the Transport Department, SMC, Transport Commissioner's office, finance wing,

RTO Kashmir, estates department and security officials, along with representatives of transport unions from across the Valley. Matta said the meeting, which continued for several hours, was held in a cordial atmosphere where both sides presented their concerns.

"We had already given a call for a strike on May 12 and earlier on April 20 due to continued issues, especially related to Smart City buses, permits, green tax and operational concerns affecting the livelihood of transporters," he said.

The transporters' leader said the government has agreed

to constitute a committee comprising stakeholders and officials to examine all transport-related issues, including Smart City bus operations, permits, green tax concerns and route rationalisation. "The committee will meet to review all genuine issues. We have also been assured that no decision affecting the transport sector will be taken without involving stakeholders," he said.

Matta further clarified that the strike call has been deferred and not withdrawn. "We have deferred the strike in view of the assurance and formation of the committee.

If our issues are not resolved within a reasonable time, we will be compelled to reconsider our decision," he said.

Transporters had announced on May 6 an indefinite strike from May 12, warning of a complete halt in public transport if demands were not met. They had also cited concerns over Smart City bus expansion and the alleged impact on the livelihoods of thousands of transporters.

The announcement had come after a Valley-wide "chakka jam" on April 20 that disrupted public transport and caused inconvenience to commuters, including students and patients.

Transporters had warned that the proposed strike would lead to a complete shutdown of public transport across Kashmir from May 12 if their demands were ignored, particularly over the Smart City bus issue, which they said was affecting the livelihood of thousands of drivers, conductors and vehicle owners across the Valley—(KNO)

Harassment Allegation Case

Govt suspends Amar Singh college Assistant Professor: Sakeena Itoo

KNO

Srinagar, May 08: Following an alleged harassment complaint filed by a student against HoD Media Studies Department, Education Minister Sakeena Itoo Friday said that government has suspended both the Assistant Professor and Principal of the College.

According to the details available, Itoo has said, "We have a zero tolerance policy of such behaviour. We received a complaint yesterday and immediately I urged the Secretary Higher Education Department to issue a suspension order against the assistant professor and the principal of Amar Singh College."

"We have ordered an inquiry about the matter and the report shall be submitted in a week," she said.

Itoo further said, "Strict action will be taken against whosoever will be found involved in the matter."

Pertinently, Authorities on Thursday removed the

Head of the Department of Media Studies at Amar Singh College following an alleged harassment complaint filed by a student.

Interestingly, Principal of Amar Singh College Srinagar in an order issued on Thursday in an order said, "In response to the demonstration held by the students of the College regarding the alleged harassment of a female student, Dr Parvaiz Ahmad Lone, HoD, Department of Media Studies, is disassociated from all academic affairs of the Department with immediate effect, pending the outcome of the inquiry."

It also said that the Proctorial Board has been entrusted with conducting a transparent and time-bound inquiry into the matter and shall submit its report within two days.

"In the meantime, Prof Nusrat Sayed shall look after the affairs of the Department of Media Studies till the completion of the investigation," it reads—(KNO)

Traffic advisory issued for anti-drug rally in Anantnag

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, May 08: Traffic Police Rural Kashmir has issued a detailed traffic advisory ahead of the scheduled mega Padyatra being organised in Anantnag on May 9, 2026, as part of the ongoing Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan campaign.

The advisory has been issued to ensure smooth traffic regulation, avoid congestion in the town, and facilitate hassle-free movement of vehicles carrying participants from different areas of south Kashmir who are expected to attend the anti-drug awareness rally in large numbers.

Officials said that the designated routes and parking spaces have been earmarked for vehicles arriving from various regions to maintain an effective traffic management system throughout the event.

As per the traffic movement plan, vehicles ferrying participants from the Pahalgam, Aishmuqam, Mattan and Kehribal areas will

travel through the Sarnal Crossing-Laizbal route and park at the General Bus Stand parking slot in Anantnag.

Similarly, vehicles coming from Kokernag, Achabal and Brakpora areas have been directed to use the NH-244 route via Brakpora Bypass, Shirpora and Janglatmandi. These vehicles will be parked at the Ahli-Hadith Eidgah parking area. Additional parking facilities have also been arranged at Hamdania Sumo Stand, New Achabal Adda, Old Achabal Adda, Mechanical Parking and Hanfia Eidgah in Anantnag town. Vehicles arriving from the Kulgam and Qazigund areas have been advised to use the Alstop-Wanpoh route and park near the Railway Station parking slot.

Meanwhile, participants travelling from the Bijbehara side will move through Pazalpora and Batengoo, where parking arrangements have been made at the Fruit Mandi and Sumo Stand parking slots.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.

EDITORIAL

A Much-Needed Step For Police Martyrs' Families

Over the past thirty years, 1,620 police personnel have been killed while on duty in Jammu and Kashmir. That is not a small number. Behind each death is a family that lost its breadwinner. A child grew up without a parent. A wife became a widow. J&K Police Chief Nalin Prabhat said something very important: taking care of these families is not just a government policy, but a solemn duty. He is right. Policies can change. Duty does not. The new agreement between J&K Police and J&K Bank is

a big and welcome step. The insurance cover for a policeman has gone up from Rs 25 lakh to Rs 75 lakh. For SPOs, it has gone up from Rs 25 lakh to Rs 35 lakh. Total help for the family of a martyred policeman is now Rs 1 crore, instead of Rs 40 lakh. For SPOs, it has gone up from Rs 31 lakh to Rs 50 lakh. The new package also covers disability, medical needs, and air ambulance support. If a policeman becomes permanently disabled, he will now get Rs 75 lakh instead of Rs 10 lakh. For SPOs, it has gone up from Rs 10

lakh to Rs 60 lakh. This is very important. Many policemen come back from duty with serious injuries. They need money for treatment and to run their homes. Now they will get it. SPOs have also been given equal benefits for disability. This was a long-pending demand. SPOs work in the same dangerous situations as regular police. They face the same bullets and bombs. They deserve the same care. The welfare package sends a clear message to every policeman and SPO: if you protect us, we will protect your family. The

peace we see today in J&K has come at a very high cost. Many families have lost their loved ones. Those families must be able to live without financial worry. Every injured policeman must get the best treatment. Every martyr's child must get a good education. Now the government must ensure that these benefits reach every family without any delay. No one should have to run from office to office. The promise has been made. The families are waiting. They deserve nothing less.

India's Pension Landscape: Expanding Coverage, Ensuring Sustainability

India's pension system has evolved into a multi-pillar framework. It includes contributory Government and private-sector schemes, voluntary citizen participation and non-contributory social pensions.

Press Information Bureau

India transitioned from defined-benefit pension schemes to a diversified contributory framework. The shift promotes greater financial sustainability, shared responsibility and long-term retirement security. National Pension System (NPS) has over 2.17 crore subscribers, while Atal Pension Yojana (APY) reached 8.96 crore enrolments as on 31.3.2026. They are securing lives and supporting economic growth through large asset creation. The nation's retirement system continues to expand with Assets Under Management reaching 15.95 lakh crore under NPS and APY assets at 51.4 thousand crore as on 31.3.2026. As India progresses, its pension system evolves through digital reforms and stronger governance.

Transforming Pension Systems for Inclusive Old-Age Security

With rising life expectancy and increasingly diverse employment patterns, strengthening retirement security has become an important public policy priority. In this context, India's pension system has evolved significantly over time, shaped by successive policy decisions and institutional reforms. What was largely a defined-benefit arrangement for Government employees has expanded into a broader framework. It now includes contributory schemes and targeted social support for senior citizens. There is also more focus now on expanding social security coverage and improving service delivery through digital platforms. Administrative efficiency has also improved to support old-age income security.

What is Pension?

A Pension provides a steady monthly income to people during their unproductive years. Declining earnings, rise of nuclear families, migration of earning members, rising living costs and longer lifespans weaken financial security. Pensions ensure a dignified and independent life.

Pension Architecture in India

India's pension architecture comprises a diverse set of schemes designed to provide income security to different segments of the population. It includes various components that operate under distinct funding mechanisms, eligibility criteria and benefit structures.

Defined benefit pension systems for eligible Government employees, which guarantee a fixed post-retirement income.

Contributory pension arrangements where individuals or/and employers contribute to retirement savings.

Statutory payroll-linked schemes for organised private-sector workers that mandate employer and employee contributions.

Tax-funded social assistance pensions, which support elderly, widowed and vulnerable individuals with limited or no formal income sources.

Defined Benefit Pensions for Eligible Government Employees

Government employee pensions have evolved from the budget-funded Old Pension Scheme (OPS) to contributory and revised arrangements. These include the National Pension System (NPS) and the recently introduced Unified Pension Scheme (UPS). However, Defence pensions, continue under separate provisions.

From CCS to UPS: Evolution of Government Pension Schemes

Prior to 1st January 2004, Central Government employees were covered under a defined-benefit, DA Indexed pension system. It was governed by the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 1972, commonly known as the OPS. Under this system, government employees were entitled to a guaranteed pension funded by the government after retirement. The pension was determined on the basis of the employee's last drawn salary and length of qualifying service. State Government employees were covered under their respective State Pension Rules, which were broadly modelled on these provisions.

From 1st January 2004, the Central Government discontinued OPS for new



entrants and introduced the NPS. It is a defined-contribution framework in which both employees and the Government contribute. NPS is regulated and supervised by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA). The retirement benefits depend on the accumulated corpus and annuitisation rather than a guaranteed payout. The scheme encourages long-term retirement savings through a structured and portable pension system. It also supports fiscal sustainability by moving towards a contributory pension framework. Most State Governments subsequently adopted the NPS for new recruits, although a few continued with defined-benefit arrangements.

Did you Know? Accumulated Pension Corpus refers to the monetary value of the pension investments. These are accumulated in the pension account of a subscriber under the NPS.

More recently, Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) came into effect from 1st April 2025. It is an option under the National Pension System (NPS) for eligible Central Government employees covered under NPS and choose this option under NPS. The scheme follows a contributory structure, with contributions from both employees and the Central Government. UPS aims to provide assured and inflation-linked retirement income. It also addresses concerns related to longevity and income predictability. It is regulated by the PFRDA and is applicable to both serving and retired employees subject to specific conditions. To be eligible for benefits under UPS, an employee must have completed at least 10 years of qualifying service. In case of death of the employee after retirement, the legally wedded spouse is eligible for family pension/payout under UPS.

While both NPS and UPS have the objective of providing payout/pension, they have structural differences. For instance, under UPS, the Government contributes 10% (of Basic Pay + Dearness Allowance) along with an additional 8.5% to a pool corpus. Whereas NPS provides a 14% direct government contribution in the individual NPS account. Additionally, UPS offers an assured payout/pension subject to conditions, while NPS does not guarantee any assured payouts and depends upon market returns.

UPS also ensures a minimum assured payout/pension of 10,000 per month for eligible employees with at least 10 years of service, which is not available under NPS. Dearness Relief is also provided in UPS but not in NPS. This is similar to Dearness Allowance (DA) given to serving employees. In case of death after retirement, the legally wedded spouse, at the time of retirement, is entitled to 60% of the payout/ pension as family payout/pension. Whereas NPS benefits depend on the market returns and annuity selected.

In addition, UPS provides a lump sum amount at the time of retirement, calculated as 10% of monthly emoluments (Basic Pay + DA) for every completed six months of qualifying service. This is paid in addition to the pension benefits.

Key features of the UPS include:

(a) Provision of a minimum assured payout/pension after retirement to employee & thereafter family payout/pension to legally wedded spouse; and

(b) Pension/payout amount that is linked to the employee's years of service and last drawn salary.

These provisions aim to provide greater income certainty and stability after retirement. Overall, the system reflects a gradual shift from OPS to NPS, with UPS functioning as an optional alternative within this framework.

Defence Pensions: Separate Defined-Benefit Structure

Administered separately by the Ministry of Defence, defence pensions are financed through budgetary allocations from the Government. Reflecting the distinct service conditions and career structure of armed forces personnel, it is non contributory in nature. It has unique features like One Rank One Pension (OROP) and Disability pension provisions. OROP (2015) ensures defence personnel retiring at the same rank and service length receive equal pension. This applies irrespective of their date of retirement.

Organised Private-Sector Pension Framework

Pension coverage for organised private-sector employees is built around statutory, payroll-linked arrangements rather than budget-funded entitlements. It operates primarily through two mechanisms namely the EPS and the corporate model of the NPS.

Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS)

The EPS is administered by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) under the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act. It forms the statutory foundation of pension coverage for organised private-sector workers. Introduced in 1995, it applies to employees in establishments covered under the EPF law and is funded through contributions. A portion of the employer's EPF contribution is allocated to EPS and pension benefits are calculated based on pensionable salary and years of service. Unlike market-linked systems, EPS operates through pooled contributions. It provides superannuation, disability and family pension benefits to eligible members.

Corporate National Pension System In addition to EPS, private employers may offer the corporate model of the NPS. Under this both employer and employee contribute to individual pension accounts. This is regulated by the PFRDA.

Corporate NPS functions as a defined-contribution system, where retirement benefits depend on the accumulated corpus rather than a fixed formula. While EPS remains the statutory base for eligible establishments, corporate NPS serves as a supplementary or alternative retirement savings option. It offers greater portability and investment choices.

All-Citizen Contributory Pension Mechanisms

To extend retirement savings beyond formal employment, voluntary contributory options are available. These include the NPS and the APY (Atal Pension Yojana) for individuals outside statutory payroll coverage.

NPS: All Citizen Model

The NPS all-citizen model extends pension access beyond formal employment. It allows voluntary enrolment within prescribed age limits, flexible contributions and choice of investment options. It operates through a two-tier account structure:

Tier I, which is the primary retirement account with certain withdrawal restrictions and;

Tier II, a voluntary savings account offering greater liquidity.

Subscribers can make flexible contributions subject to prescribed minimums. They can also choose investment options across asset classes, including government securities, corporate bonds and equities. It can be subscribed by any Indian Citizen (resident/non-resident/overseas citizen). NPS is an Individual Pension Account and cannot be

opened on behalf of a third person. The applicant should be legally competent to execute a contract as per the Indian Contract Act.

NPS Vatsalya: Pension Account for Minors NPS Vatsalya (2024) is a contributory pension scheme, designed specifically for minors. Under this scheme, parents or legal guardians can open and operate a pension account for a minor. The minor remains the sole beneficiary and the subscriber of the account. Contributions are made until the minor attains the age of majority. Thereafter, the account is seamlessly converted into a regular NPS account and operated by the subscriber.

The scheme promotes early retirement savings and long-term financial planning by enabling investments to accumulate over an extended time horizon.

Atal Pension Yojana (APY)

APY (2015) aims to expand pension coverage among workers in the unorganised sector. It covers workers not included under statutory social security schemes. It is a contributory scheme for low-income subscribers, with enrolment facilitated through banks and post offices.

Subscribers can choose a fixed monthly pension ranging from 1,000 to 5,000. The pension is payable from the age of 60 years. The required contribution is predetermined based on the selected pension level and the subscriber's age at entry.

Non-Contributory Social Pension Framework

Non-contributory social pensions provide basic income support through tax-funded transfers to elderly individuals in informal employment who lack retirement savings. Unlike employment-linked pensions, they focus on preventing destitution, forming a vital social assistance layer within the pension system.

National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)

At the Union level, NSAP is implemented across rural and urban areas to provide social assistance to eligible beneficiaries. NSAP provides financial assistance to the economically vulnerable individuals. States/UTs are encouraged to provide top-up of at least an equivalent amount to the assistance provided by the Central Government. This ensures that the beneficiaries avail decent level of assistance.

Did You Know?

As of August 2025, States/UTs have added top-up amount ranging from 50 to 3800/month per beneficiary under NSAP. This results in an average monthly pension of around 1,000 in most of the States/UTs.

State-Level Social Pension Schemes

Alongside central assistance under NSAP, the State Governments also implement independent or supplementary social pension schemes. These schemes allow states to enhance pension benefits in line with their fiscal capacity and policy priorities. They also enable states to expand social pension coverage to a wider group of vulnerable beneficiaries. It includes the elderly, widows and persons with disabilities.

Certain examples of state-funded pensions: Madhu Babu Pension Yojana in Odisha, Aasara Pension Scheme in Telangana, and the Mukhyamantri Vridhjan Pension Yojana in Bihar

Wide Pension Coverage in India

Pension coverage in India has expanded over the past decade, with rising enrolment across major Government-backed schemes. Regulatory improvements and the strengthening of digital systems have supported this growth. As the workforce continues to grow and diversify, expanding formal pension participation remains important. It is a key pathway to further strengthening the pension system.

The NPS and APY together reflect strong and sustained growth in India's pension landscape. NPS enrolments exceeded to 2.17 crore subscribers as on 31.3.2026. The APY also expanded significantly. It reached 8.96 crore enrolments in the same period.

The EPS has also demonstrated robust

growth, with contributory membership expanding to 7.98 crore members as of April 2026. It reflects continued expansion in formal sector employment and compliance.

The non-contributory social pensions form a significant layer of income support alongside contributory pension systems. As of April 2026, the central social pension component covers more than 2.92 crore beneficiaries. During the same period, State Governments covered over 1.41 crore beneficiaries.

A substantial segment of India's pension landscape continues to be shaped by defined-benefit pension arrangements, paid to Central Government employees. It includes more than 34 Lakhs Defence and 14 Lakhs Railways pensioners.

Performance and Policy Reforms of the Pension Sector

India's pension system has also witnessed sustained asset growth, stable investment outcomes and strengthening institutional capacity.

As on 31.3.2026 Assets Under Management (AUM) under the NPS have expanded to approximately 15.95 lakh crore. The assets under the APY stand at around 51.4 thousand crore, reflecting steady corpus accumulation.

What is AUM?

AUM is a measure of the total market value of assets managed by a financial institution on behalf of its clients at any given point in time. These assets comprise equities, fixed income securities, cash and cash equivalents, mutual funds, real estate and alternative investments.

Alongside improvements in performance and asset growth, India's pension system has also undergone sustained policy reforms. It aims at strengthening regulatory oversight, expanding coverage and improving institutional efficiency.

Under the PFRDA, several regulatory initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen the pension ecosystem and enhance its efficiency and transparency. These measures include:

Refinement of investment and compliance guidelines;

Strengthening of supervisory and monitoring mechanisms and;

Operationalisation of new pension frameworks such as the UPS.

Balanced Life Cycle Fund (2024), is under the Auto Choice option of NPS. It allows subscribers to maintain 50% equity exposure until age 45, as compared to 35 years age previously. It supports long-term growth during early working years while ensuring a gradual risk reduction thereafter.

To expand pension participation beyond organised employment, several measures have been undertaken to improve access and enrolment among informal-sector workers. These include:

Strengthening outreach and enrolment under the APY.

Simplifying account opening through banking and post office networks and;

Leveraging digital infrastructure to widen access to voluntary pension accounts under the NPS.

Pension related provisions are covered in one of the new Labour Codes (2025). The Code on Social Security, 2020 provides enabling provisions to extend social security coverage. It includes pension-linked benefits to gig and platform workers, creating scope for future operational expansion.

Towards an Inclusive and Sustainable Pension System

India's pension system has evolved into a multi-pillar framework. It includes contributory Government and private-sector schemes, voluntary citizen participation and non-contributory social pensions.

As demographic transition accelerates, retirement income security becomes vital for long-term stability. Wider coverage, prudent asset management and efficient service delivery are also essential. Ongoing policy and institutional evolution strengthen the pension system. It supports inclusive and sustainable old-age income security in the years ahead.

The views expressed by contributors on this page are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies or positions of the newspaper

Govt committed to balanced, efficient public transport system in J&K: Satish Sharma

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, MAY 8: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, Information Technology, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, Friday chaired a comprehensive meeting with the representatives of transport associations and unions of Kashmir Division to discuss a wide range of issues concerning the transport sector and deliberate on measures aimed at ensuring a balanced, sustainable and people-centric transportation system across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by senior officers including Secretary, Transport; Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation; Transport Commissioner; Director Finance, Transport Department; Additional Secretary, Transport Department; Regional Transport Officer Kashmir; Joint Director Planning & Statistics, Transport Department besides representatives of various transport associations and unions from Kashmir Division.

During the meeting, the representatives of transport bodies projected several demands, grievances and operational concerns being faced by the private transport sector. Detailed deliberations were held on issues relating to public transport operations, Smart City bus services,



J&K RTC operations, traffic management, transport regulations and livelihood concerns of private transport operators.

The representatives expressed concern over the proposed procurement of buses for free public transport services in Jammu & Kashmir. They said that any large-scale expansion of government-operated free transport facilities should be undertaken in a balanced manner so that the livelihood and functioning of private transport operators are not adversely affected. They also highlighted the adverse impact of the free travel facility for women in Smart City buses on the sustainability and financial viability of private transport services operating across the region.

Another major issue highlighted during the meeting was the operation of transport vehicles registered outside Jammu & Kashmir. The representatives demanded that strict

regulations should be enforced to restrict unauthorized operation of outside-registered vehicles within the region in accordance with the existing laws and regulations, so as to safeguard the interests of local transport operators.

The transporters further demanded that Smart City buses should operate strictly within the notified municipal limits of Srinagar city and should not be allowed to operate beyond designated areas in a manner that affects the functioning of private transport services.

Taking note of the concerns raised, the Minister directed that a Committee headed by the Chief Executive Officer, Srinagar Smart City Corporation Limited, shall examine the issue relating to the extension of routes beyond the municipal limits of Srinagar city and submit appropriate recommendations.

To streamline transport operations and avoid route conflicts,

the representatives also called for framing and implementation of a proper and coordinated timetable mechanism involving Smart City buses, J&K RTC buses and private transport vehicles operating in the twin cities.

A detailed discussion was also held on the increasing number of e-rickshaws operating in Jammu & Kashmir. The representatives urged the Government to formulate a comprehensive policy for regulated and limited registration of e-rickshaws to ensure organized growth of the sector. They suggested adoption of the principle of "one person, one registration" and demanded that multiple registrations in the name of a single individual should not be permitted.

The issue regarding enhancement of Green Tax by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) also came up for discussion during the meeting. It was decided that the

matter would be examined in detail by the concerned authorities.

While discussing the concerns and demands raised by the transporters, the Minister assured the participants that the Government is committed to address the genuine concerns of all stakeholders through a transparent, practical and consultative approach.

The Minister stated that the Government fully recognizes the contribution of the transport sector towards public mobility, employment generation and economic activity in Jammu & Kashmir. He emphasized that while the administration is focused on strengthening affordable and efficient public transportation facilities for the common people, equal importance would be given to protect the interests and livelihoods of local transport operators.

Satish Sharma further said that all grievances and demands projected during the meeting would be examined sympathetically by the concerned departments and appropriate action would be taken strictly in accordance with the rules, feasibility and public interest.

The Minister stressed the need for better coordination among various transport agencies and directed the concerned officers to work closely with all stakeholders to resolve operational issues related to Smart City buses and other transport services in a time-bound manner.

Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan

Ayush Department Srinagar holds yoga, counselling session on healthy lifestyle



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, MAY 08: As part of the ongoing Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, a Yoga and Counselling Session was organized at Delhi Public School Srinagar under the directions of District Ayush Officer Srinagar, Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Parry.

The programme, as per an official statement, was aimed at promoting the benefits of a healthy daily lifestyle among students and creating awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse.

The session was jointly conducted by trained Yoga

Instructors from the Directorate of AYUSH Srinagar, Mohammad Younis and Shahida Fayaz.

During the session, students were introduced to various yoga practices, breathing techniques and simple exercises that help improve physical fitness, mental well-being, concentration and emotional balance.

The students actively participated in the yoga demonstrations and counselling interaction.

The programme concluded with a pledge to work collectively towards building a healthy, drug-free society through awareness, discipline and wellness-oriented activities.

Nasha Mukht J&K Campaign

Massive public participation across Shopian

Religious scholars emphasized moral responsibility, social harmony, collective efforts to safeguard youth from menace of substance abuse



KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, MAY 08: A wide range of awareness and outreach activities were Friday conducted across district Shopian under the ongoing 100 Day Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, witnessing enthusiastic participation from students, youth, teachers, religious leaders, transporters, government departments, educational institutions and members of civil society.

The day-long campaign, as per an official statement, featured pledge ceremonies, awareness rallies, sports activities, yoga sessions, poster display campaigns, counselling sessions, seminars, debates and public interaction programmes aimed at spreading awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and promoting a healthy, disciplined and drug-free society.

Educational institutions across the district actively participated by organizing anti-drug awareness programmes, storytelling sessions, sports activities and yoga sessions to encourage students towards responsible and healthy lifestyles. Students and staff members pledged to remain away from drugs and to act as ambassadors of awareness in society.

Special awareness drives and

outreach programmes were also carried out by various government departments including Health, Education, RDD, AYUSH, ICDS, Co-operative, Labour, Transport, Jal Shakti, MC, Agri allied departments, and other departments as part of the intensified campaign.

Religious institutions also played an important role in the movement, as special sermons and awareness messages against drug abuse were delivered during Friday congregational prayers in mosques across different villages and tehsils of the district.

Religious scholars emphasized moral responsibility, social harmony and collective efforts to safeguard youth from the menace of substance abuse.

Transporters, farmers, traders, youth groups and local communities joined hands in spreading the message of "Say No to Drugs, Say Yes to Life" through public pledges, poster displays and community awareness activities held at various locations.

The campaign witnessed overwhelming public response and reflected the collective resolve of the administration and society to build a safer, healthier and drug-free Shopian through sustained awareness, prevention and community participation.

MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi visits Sumerbugh, Shalina in Budgam

Reviews restoration, flood safety measures



KT News Desk

BUDGAM, MAY 08: Member Parliament (MP) for Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency, Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, Friday conducted an extensive tour of the breach sites at Sumerbugh and Shalina areas of Budgam to assess the damage caused by recent water level fluctuations and review the restoration and flood safety measures.

During the visit, the MP, as per an official statement, inspected the points where the embankments of the Jhelum River and its flood spill channels have suffered breaches.

Local delegations met with the MP and put forth their demands.

Aga Syed Ruhullah directed the officers for accelerated restoration work to plug the

breaches using modern engineering standards to ensure long-term stability. He asked for a comprehensive reinforcement of the vulnerable stretches along the Shalina and Sumerbugh axis. He instructed the department to maintain a constant vigil on water level and the structural integrity of the embankments.

Aga Syed Ruhullah assured the inhabitants of Sumerbugh and Shalina that he would personally monitor the progress of the restoration works.

He also inspected the Sempor-Seerbagh Bridge project where he was briefed about project's financial and physical status.

Aga Syed Ruhullah was accompanied by SDM Chadoora, Executive Engineers of Flood and Irrigation, BDO B.K. Pora and other concerned officials.

Red Cross Committee Srinagar organises programme at GGHSS Nawa Kadal

DC Srinagar highlights significance of Red Cross teams, volunteers

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR MAY 08:- To mark the celebrations of World Red Cross Day-2026, an impressive function was organized by District Red Cross Committee Srinagar at Government Girls Higher Secondary School (GGHSS) Nawa Kadal here Friday.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, who is also the Chairman District Red Cross Committee was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

Besides, Additional District Development Commissioner, Rifat Aftab Qureshi, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Adil Fareed, IAS Probationer, Alfred Thomas, SDM, East, Zubair Ahmad, Chief Education Officer, Ghulam Mohi-Ud-Din, District Social Welfare Officer, Mohammad Yousuf, Tehsildar Eidgah, Mohammad Iqbal Zargar, Dy CMO, Dr Farhana, Principal GGHSS Nawa Kadal School, Dr Be Nazir Chalku, Dy CEO, Anjum Raja, Staff and large number of students were present in the event.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, highlighted the vital role played by Red Cross teams and volunteers in providing timely assistance to the needy during emergencies, disasters and other humanitarian



situations. He said the spirit of humanity, compassion and voluntary service reflected by Red Cross volunteers serves as an inspiration for society.

The DC emphasized that Red Cross volunteers continue to extend support to vulnerable sections of society not only during emergencies but also in everyday life through various acts of kindness and humanitarian service. He appreciated the dedication and commitment of Red Cross workers and urged students to actively participate in humanitarian and social welfare activities for the betterment of society, particularly during any calamity or exigent situation.

The DC further emphasized that focusing on the mental health and well-being of students is equally important to properly channelize their talent and potential. He advised students not to come under pressure or indulge in overthinking and instead continue their studies in a positive and

healthy atmosphere.

The DC appreciated the School administration and the District Red Cross Committee for organizing the meaningful programme aimed at promoting humanitarian values among the younger generation.

During the programme, the Deputy Commissioner handed over appreciation certificates for their participation and achievements.

On the occasion, awareness was also generated among students regarding the importance of humanitarian values, social responsibility and voluntary service. The speakers highlighted the significance of World Red Cross Day and underscored the invaluable contributions of Red Cross volunteers across the globe.

The programme also featured cultural performances and awareness activities presented by students, reflecting the themes of humanity, peace and service to mankind.

Census 2027 preparedness reviewed in Shopian

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, MAY 08: A meeting regarding preparations for Census 2027 was Friday held under the chairmanship of ADC Shopian, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz.

During the meeting, a detailed review of various agenda points related to the upcoming Census exercise was carried out.

Discussions were held regarding tehsil wise appointment and registration status of Enumerators and Supervisors on the CMMS portal, besides preparations for the training programmes of field functionaries.

It was informed during the meeting that the training schedule for Supervisors and Enumerators has been scheduled from May 14 to May 23, 2026.

The ADC directed all concerned officers to ensure timely completion of the training process and proper coordination for smooth conduct of the Census activities.

The meeting also discussed



issues related to completion of formation of House Listing Blocks (HLBs) and implementation of self-enumeration targets in the district.

Emphasising the importance of public participation, ADC Shopian directed all officers to intensify publicity and awareness activities at the grassroots level so that people are adequately informed about the Census process and self-enumeration facilities.

He also instructed concerned departments to maintain close coordination and ensure timely completion of all preparatory activities well before commencement of the Census operations.

Among others, the meeting was attended by ACR Shopian, Shakoor Ahmad Dar; DSEO Shopian, Bilkeesha Zahoor; DIO Shopian, Showkat Hussain Ganie, Tehsildars, CEO MC Shopian and other officials.

6000 Pregabalin capsules seized in Shopian

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, MAY 08: In continuation to the leads received during the recent operation at Batpora Shopian, wherein 200 capsules of Pregabalin 300 mg were seized, another major consignment comprising 6000 capsules of Pregabalin 300 mg worth approximately Rs 2,53,000 were seized by joint teams of Drug Control department, Shopian and Pulwama.

The consignment, as per an official statement, was being transported through illegal means for unlawful sale and distribution in the district.

Acting swiftly on specific inputs developed by the Drug Control Office Shopian, a joint team of the Drug Control Department Shopian and Drug Control Department Pulwama, in close coordination with Police counterparts, conducted the operation and successfully intercepted the persons and seized the consignment.

Pregabalin is increasingly



being misused by abusers, leading to serious public health and social concerns. The authorities have intensified surveillance and enforcement measures against the illegal trade, transportation and misuse of drugs.

The seizure was made following sustained tracking and verification of leads generated during the earlier crackdown in Shopian. The team chased

the suspected movement of the consignment and acted promptly to prevent its illegal circulation in the market.

Officials stated that strict monitoring of pharmaceutical distribution networks is underway and that such drives shall continue in the coming days as well.

The administration and enforcement agencies are

maintaining a close watch on the illegal movement and sale of habit-forming drugs, with special focus on protecting the youth from substance abuse.

People have also been urged to cooperate with enforcement agencies and share credible information regarding illegal drug trade so that timely action can be taken against those involved.

CM-elect Adhikari stakes claim to form Bengal's first BJP govt

PTI

Kolkata, May 08: West Bengal chief minister-elect Suwendu Adhikari on Friday evening met Governor RN Ravi and staked a claim to form the first BJP-led government in the state.

Adhikari reached Lok Bhavan barely two hours after being elected leader of the BJP legislature party at a meeting chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

The CM-elect was accompanied by several top leaders of the BJP, including Union ministers Bhupendra Yadav, Sukanta Majumdar and Santanu Thakur, Odisha Chief Minister and co-observer of the BJP legislature party meeting, Mohan Charan Majhi, BJP Bengal chief Samik Bhattacharya, other senior leaders of the party's state unit like Dilip Ghosh, Lockett Chatterjee, and Tapas Roy.

In the recently concluded state polls, the BJP romped home with 207 seats in the



294-member Assembly, reducing the TMC to just 80.

Adhikari and his council of ministers are scheduled to be sworn in at a grand ceremony at the Brigade Parade Grounds on Saturday in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, top Union ministers and some 20 chief ministers of BJP-ruled states.

Adhikari would take oath as the ninth chief minister of Bengal and the first in 55 years to helm the state's administration with origins in the

districts.

The last time Bengal had a chief minister from its rural backyards and not from its capital in Kolkata was in 1971 when Ajoy Mukherjee, representing the Indian National Congress (Requisitionists), a breakaway faction led by Indira Gandhi after the Congress split in 1969, took charge for his third stint as the state's CM.

Mukherjee hailed from undivided Medinipur, the region Adhikari also owes its roots to.

Sanjeev Verma attends SVEEP awareness prog at GDC Purmandal



KT News Desk

Samba, May 08: A comprehensive Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) awareness programme was organized on Friday at Government Degree College Purmandal in Sub-Division Vijaypur, with the objective of strengthening the voter awareness and promoting greater electoral participation. Chief Electoral Officer, J&K, Sanjeev Verma, attended the programme as the chief guest.

The programme witnessed participation of officers and

officials associated with the electoral process, including EROs, AEROs and BLOs of Samba district. Besides, representatives from recognized political parties, students and local citizens also attended the awareness session.

On the occasion, the students of Government Degree College Purmandal delivered speeches highlighting the importance of voting and democratic participation. A Nukkad Natak was also presented by the local artists to spread awareness regarding the electoral rights, ethical voting and the significance of active

participation in elections.

During the programme, voter ID cards were distributed among the newly registered young voters who have recently become eligible to vote, encouraging them to actively participate in the democratic process.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Electoral Officer emphasized the importance of voter awareness and greater participation in elections. He urged the youth and citizens to contribute towards strengthening the democracy through informed and ethical voting.

UPSC declares results of Indian Forest Service exam

PTI

New Delhi, May 08: The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on Friday declared the results of the Indian Forest Service examination 2025. Basavaraj Kempwad has achieved the first rank, Anshuman Kumar Singh secured second position and Siddharath got third rank, the Commission said.

Based on the result of the written part of the Indian Forest Service examination held by the UPSC from November 16-23, last year and the interviews for personality test held from April 6 to 15, 148 candidates have been recommended for appointment, it said. Of the total 148 candidates, 42 belong to the general category, 21 to the economically weaker section (EWS), 52 from other backward classes (OBC), 22 from the Scheduled Caste (SC) and 11 are from the Scheduled Tribe (ST) category.

The candidature of 71 recommended candidates has been kept provisional, the Commission said in a statement.

The claims of the recommended candidates with regard to their reservation status under EWS/OBC/SC/ST and persons with benchmark disabilities (PwBD) are subject to verification by the concerned authorities, it said.

Public employment cannot be converted into instrument of fraud: SC upholds constable's dismissal

PTI

New Delhi, May 08: Observing that public employment, particularly in the police force, cannot be converted into an "instrument of fraud", the Supreme Court on Friday restored the dismissal of a Jharkhand constable accused of impersonation, fraud, and dual employment.

In this case, the accused, Ranjan Kumar, was appointed as a constable in Jharkhand Police on May 18, 2005. While serving at Dhurki Police Station as a reserve guard, he was granted compensatory leave for two days from the afternoon of December

20, 2007, till December 23, 2007, but failed to rejoin duty on December 23, 2007, and remained unauthorisedly absent.

During this period, Kumar allegedly secured an appointment as a constable in the Bihar Police under the name Santosh Kumar by using forged certificates and fabricated credentials. It is further alleged that without any information or permission, he abandoned duty from the Patna district police on January 6, 2008.

An enquiry later found that Ranjan Kumar and Santosh Kumar were the same person.

The top court remarked that

a member of the police force is expected to maintain the highest degree of integrity, honesty, and discipline, adding that fraud at the threshold of entry into service strikes at the very root of public employment.

A bench of justices Ahsanuddin Amanullah and R Mahadevan said the material available goes far beyond mere suspicion and reasonably establishes a conscious course of deceit adopted by the accused for obtaining employment benefits from two sovereign employers in a disciplined force.

"Public employment, particularly in the police service, cannot

be converted into an instrument of fraud. If individuals entrusted with enforcing the law themselves secure entry into service through deception and fabricated credentials, it would seriously erode the rule of law.

"In these circumstances, while restoring the disciplinary action, it is both necessary and appropriate to direct initiation of criminal proceedings in accordance with law," the bench said.

The apex court rejected the submission of the accused that some witnesses were not examined, or certain documents were not formally proved.

"Departmental enquiries are not criminal trials. So long as a fair opportunity is afforded and the conclusion is based on relevant material having probative value, the court would not interfere.

"In the present matter, Respondent No. 1 was served with a charge memorandum, furnished with the materials relied upon, permitted to submit his defence, supplied with the enquiry report and heard at every departmental stage," it said.

The top court said since the allegations levelled against the accused pertain to impersonation, fraud, use of forged credentials,

dual employment in police departments, and unauthorised absence, the continuance of such an employee in service would be wholly detrimental to institutional discipline, public confidence, and the credibility of the police force.

It said the order of dismissal passed against him was a proportionate and justified administrative measure arising out of a fair and lawful enquiry.

"We are further of the considered view that the matter does not rest merely within the realm of departmental misconduct. The allegations, now reinforced by forensic findings, prima facie

disclose the commission of cognisable offences such as cheating, impersonation, forgery, use of forged documents, and furnishing false information to public authorities under the Indian Penal Code or the corresponding provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, as applicable.

"Accordingly, the Director General of Police, Bihar and the Director General of Police, Jharkhand, shall ensure that the matter is examined by the competent jurisdictional police authority and appropriate steps be taken, in accordance with law," the bench said.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Remain prepared

synergy," Singh said, emphasising greater integration and jointness among the three services.

He also underlined the importance of maintaining the "element of surprise" during military operations to retain strategic advantage over adversaries.

"The armed forces must remain unpredictable to adversaries while also staying alert to any surprise moves from the enemy," he said.

Singh reiterated PM Modi led government's commitment to modernising the armed forces through advanced weapons systems and platforms, adding that special emphasis was being placed on research and development in niche and emerging domains.

RELEASES DOCUMENTARY FILM ON OPERATION SINDOOR

During the conference, the Defence Minister released a documentary film on Operation Sindoor, which highlighted operational preparedness and India's capability to mount a decisive national response during crises.

He also unveiled the Hindi version of Vision 2047 and the Joint Doctrine for Integrated Communication Architecture aimed at improving interoperability, doctrinal clarity and integrated communications among the armed forces during multidomain operations.

The conference, themed "Military Capability in New Domains", brought together the top leadership of the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces to deliberate on future warfare, technological transformation and joint operational readiness.

According to officials, detailed discussions were held on cognitive warfare, cyber resilience against AI-enabled and quantum threats, indigenous innovation and AI-driven warfighting concepts.

Advanced systems and platforms developed for intelligence fusion, operational planning and information management were also showcased during the event.

Chief of Defence Staff Anil Chauhan, Army Chief Uday Shankar Dvivedi, Navy Chief Dinesh Kumar Tripathi and Air Chief Marshal A. P. Singh attended the conference along with senior civil and military officials. (KNO)

Three youths drown

were shifted to a nearby hospital for medical formalities, an official said.

The tragedy triggered scenes of grief across Hajin, with hundreds of people joining the funeral prayers of the three youths.

Residents described the atmosphere in the area as sombre, with mourners gathering at the homes of the victims throughout the day to offer condolences to the bereaved families.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha expressed deep sorrow over the incident and said he was "deeply pained" by the loss of the young lives.

"My thoughts and prayers are with the grieving family members. We stand in solidarity with the bereaved in this difficult hour," he said in a condolence message.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also expressed

grief over the drowning incident and conveyed condolences to the families of the deceased.

He prayed for eternal peace for the departed souls and strength for the families to bear the loss.

MLA Bandipora Nizamuddin Bhat and MLA Sonawari Hilal Akbar Lone also expressed condolences and solidarity with the bereaved families.

Apni Party president Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari termed the incident "deeply saddening" and said no words could ease the pain of the grieving families. (KNO)

Massive anti-drug

at Police Post Wagoora.

Officials said further proceedings, including cancellation of the lease, have been initiated.

In Kulgam, police and Revenue authorities retrieved five kanals of kahcharai land worth nearly Rs 60 lakh from persons allegedly involved in drug trafficking cases registered under the NDPS Act.

Police in Anantnag also destroyed illegally cultivated opium poppy crops at two locations in Achabal and Aishmuqam areas and registered separate cases under the NDPS Act against the accused persons.

Meanwhile, three alleged drug peddlers were arrested in Anantnag, Sopore and Handwara during separate naka checking and patrolling operations. Police said charas-like substances and codeine phosphate were recovered from their possession.

In Pulwama, police recovered a drug consignment during a joint operation with the Drug Control Department and conducted searches at houses of suspected drug peddlers as part of a cordon and search operation (CASO).

Several medical shops were also inspected in the district, and one shop was sealed for alleged violation of mandatory record-keeping norms, officials said.

Police also intensified checking operations and destroyed wild hemp in vulnerable areas of Handwara to prevent narcotics cultivation and trafficking.

Alongside enforcement measures, extensive anti-drug awareness programmes, rallies and student outreach campaigns were organised across Shopian, Sopore, Awantipora, Ganderbal, Handwara and Pulwama districts.

Hundreds of students, teachers, civil society members and government officials participated in rallies, cross-country races and awareness sessions aimed at sensitising youth about the harmful effects of drug abuse.

Police said awareness programmes were conducted in schools and public spaces to encourage community participation in combating substance abuse and narcotics trafficking.

Officials reiterated that strict action against drug peddlers and those facilitating narcotics trade would continue as part of the government's ongoing campaign to make Jammu and Kashmir drug-free. (KNO)

Army, police, civil

the Army and civil administration after tourists were stranded in the higher reaches of

Gulmarg.

The Chief Minister, Omar said the prompt response by the Army and district administration ensured the safe rescue of all stranded tourists.

He also directed the administration to take all necessary measures to further strengthen safety protocols and ensure a secure experience for tourists visiting the Valley.

He stressed the need to prevent the recurrence of such incidents and asked the concerned authorities to review existing safety mechanisms related to tourist activities in high altitude areas of Gulmarg. (KNO)

HM Shah to chair

accountability and accelerated coordinated execution of activities," it said.

The statement said that the key focus areas of the high-level meeting include: "Strengthening flood forecasting and early warning systems through advanced technology and real-time data integration. Enhancing preparedness for dealing with simultaneous disasters, particularly the challenges of floods and heatwaves. Community awareness and resilience-building programmes for preventing loss of life and property. Ensuring adequate stock of essential relief materials and medical preparedness." (KNO)

'There's no Eknath

suffered what we had to suffer. We have suffered their delimitation, and we know how the delimitation was done. It was carried out only to benefit the BJP and its allies. Now let us see what happens next. This is how the intentions of the BJP become clear," he said.

He said the recent political developments and statements from the opposition exposed the BJP's intentions towards Jammu and Kashmir and its elected government.

Referring to political developments in Maharashtra and the split in Shiv Sena, the Chief Minister said the BJP had played a direct role in encouraging defections.

"Eknath Shinde left because the BJP helped him to leave. It is obvious that the LoP is impatient to occupy the Chief Minister's chair in Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

He alleged that the BJP was deliberately preventing the elected government from functioning effectively and withholding restoration of statehood for political reasons.

"That is why I repeatedly say that the LoP proves through his statements that until the BJP gets a government here, they will not let us work properly and they will not make Jammu and Kashmir a state," he said.

Abdullah also accused the opposition of indulging in what he termed blackmail politics and attempting to politically pressure the people of Jammu and Kashmir over the issue of statehood.

"The people of Jammu and Kashmir, especially those who voted for the BJP in the last election, should remember that the LoP and his party indulge in blackmail politics," he said. "The people of Jammu and Kashmir are being threatened in the name of statehood."

CM Omar said there was no justification for

stopping democratic processes when constitutional mechanisms exist to test the majority on the floor of the House.

"If we go by the judgments of the Supreme Court, then there should be no President's Rule in such situations. There are many cases in which the Supreme Court has clearly said that after elections, the single largest party should be invited to form the government and should be given an opportunity to prove its majority in the Assembly," he said.

He further cited the example of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's 13-day government to underline his point that constitutional conventions require inviting the single largest party first.

"This is what happened when Mr Vajpayee formed the 13-day government. The President of India did not wait for him to show his numbers. At that time, the President called him and the 13-day government was formed. When Mr Vajpayee did not have the required numbers, he resigned," he added.

"Even today, if you go by the judgments of the Supreme Court, there is no reason to stop this process. Whoever is invited to form the government should be given a chance to prove a majority in the Assembly. If he proves the majority, he remains there. If he does not prove the majority, then he has to resign," he added. (KNO)

Day temps soar

division, Jammu city recorded 32.8 degrees Celsius, while Katra settled at 29.7 degrees, Banihal at 24.7 degrees, Batote at 22 degrees and Bhaderwah at 25.4 degrees.

The MeT department said weather is expected to remain generally dry on May 8 and 9, although brief showers at isolated places during late afternoon hours cannot be ruled out.

On May 10, the weather is likely to remain mainly dry till evening, with chances of brief showers at a few places towards evening or night.

"A generally cloudy weather with one or two spells of light to moderate rain or thundershower is expected at many places from May 11 to 13," the MeT office said, adding that hailstorms, thunder, and gusty winds are also likely at a few places during the period.

The department has issued an advisory warning of thunder, lightning and gusty winds with speeds of 40-50 kmph at a few places in both Kashmir and Jammu divisions between May 10 evening and May 13.

It also said day temperatures are expected to rise gradually by 2-3 degrees Celsius during the next three days before witnessing a fall of 3-5 degrees till May 13 due to the approaching wet spell.

Farmers have been advised to continue farm operations till May 10, the advisory added. (KNO)

MLAs, deputations

Chief Minister and discussed various social and public issues. Educationist G. N. Var met the Chief Minister and expressed gratitude over the passing of the J&K Private Universities Bill while also apprising him of several issues

related to the education sector.

Several deputations and individuals from different areas of the Kashmir valley also called on the Chief Minister and apprised him of various public issues and grievances.

The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to all the visiting delegations and individuals and assured appropriate consideration of the issues and matters presented before him.

Children with Thalassemia

Thalassemia and Beta Thalassemia — depending on which part of haemoglobin production is affected.

He said that in several cases, parents remain unaware that they are carriers until a child is diagnosed with severe thalassemia major.

"Children born with Thalassemia Major often require lifelong blood transfusions every few weeks to survive. Without proper treatment, the disease can lead to growth retardation, weakness, bone deformities, enlarged spleen, heart complications and iron overload due to repeated transfusions," he explained.

Dr Mohammad Ayoub Lone, another doctor at DHSK, said that common symptoms include persistent weakness, pale skin, fatigue, delayed growth, shortness of breath and recurrent infections. In severe cases, symptoms may appear within the first two years of life.

"Families dealing with thalassemia often face emotional and financial burdens because patients require continuous blood transfusions, iron chelation therapy and regular medical monitoring throughout life," Dr Lone said.

Doctors say that although treatment facilities have improved over the years, many patients from remote areas still struggle to access specialised care and a regular blood supply.

They believe that many carriers in the region remain undiagnosed because routine premarital or prenatal screening is still not widely practised.

Experts warn that without mass awareness and testing programmes, the burden of the disease may continue to rise.

Doctors particularly emphasise the need for screening among young couples and families with a history of blood disorders.

They said thalassemia can largely be prevented through awareness and genetic screening. The most effective preventive measures include premarital screening to identify carriers, genetic counselling for carrier couples, prenatal testing during pregnancy, public awareness campaigns in schools and colleges and voluntary blood donation support for patients.

If both partners are found to be carriers of thalassemia, they should seek proper genetic counselling before planning a family, the doctors advised.

They called for removing social stigma and encouraging open discussions regarding genetic disorders, which is essential for effective prevention.

Educational institutions, religious scholars, civil society groups and healthcare workers must work collectively in spreading awareness about the disorder and encouraging timely medical consultation, the doctors said. (KNO)

India faces no immediate public health threat from hantavirus: NIV chief

PTI

New Delhi, May 8: Amid concerns over two Indian nationals reportedly infected with the hantavirus aboard a cruise ship, Director of the ICMR's National Institute of Virology Dr Naveen Kumar on Friday said the cases appear to be isolated ones and there is no immediate public health threat to India.

Kumar said there is no evidence of community spread as of now.

Hantaviruses are mainly transmitted to humans through contact with infected rodents or their excreta such as saliva, urine and faeces, he told PTI.

People usually get infected by inhaling aerosolised virus particles from rodent urine, droppings, or saliva in closed or poorly ventilated spaces such as warehouses, ships, barns and storage areas, he said.

"The reported hantavirus cases appear to be isolated ones and there is no immediate public health threat to India," he said.

His remarks come after reports that two Indian nationals aboard a cruise ship were detected with hantavirus.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the two Indian passengers were among a small cluster of suspected infections identified aboard the vessel, and health authorities were monitoring contacts and undertaking precautionary measures.

WHO officials noted that hantavirus infections are rare and are



generally linked to rodent exposure rather than sustained human transmission.

Kumar stressed that unlike COVID-19, hantavirus does not spread easily among people.

"Human-to-human transmission is extremely uncommon. Most hantaviruses, especially those reported in Asia and Europe, do not spread between humans. Limited person-to-person transmission has only been documented with some South American strains such as Andes virus," he explained.

WHO Director General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who briefed the media on the virus, said "while this is a serious incident, WHO assesses the public health risk as low".

Given the incubation period, he said, "it is possible that more cases

may be reported".

Public health experts say hantavirus infections can initially resemble influenza, dengue or severe respiratory illness, making early diagnosis challenging.

On India's preparedness, Kumar said the country has adequate laboratory surveillance capacity to identify suspected cases.

"India has diagnostic capacity for hantavirus infection through the ICMR-National Institute of Virology and the nationwide Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratory Network of 165 labs, where RT-PCR facilities are available for confirmation of suspected cases," he said.

According to Kumar, symptoms generally appear one to five weeks after exposure and initially

resemble flu-like illness.

"Common warning signs include sudden fever, severe body ache, headache, fatigue, chills, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and dry cough," he said.

"In severe cases, patients may develop breathing difficulty, low blood pressure, or kidney involvement with reduced urine output," he added.

The NIV director advised people working or travelling in rodent-prone environments such as ships, warehouses, storage facilities and poorly ventilated spaces to maintain hygiene and avoid exposure to rodent-infested areas.

Kumar also cautioned that environmental changes could increase the long-term risk of rodent-borne diseases globally, including in India.

"Climate change, flooding, unplanned urbanisation, poor waste management and increased human encroachment into rodent habitats can raise the risk of rodent-borne infections," he said.

"Heavy rainfall and floods often increase rodent population movement into human dwellings and storage areas, increasing exposure risk. Rapid urban growth with poor sanitation can further support rodent proliferation," Kumar added.

He, however, underlined there is currently no indication of wide-spread transmission linked to the cruise ship cases and that standard rodent-control and sanitation measures remain the key preventive strategies against hantavirus.

Shah in Kolkata to attend BJP's LP meeting, swearing in of new govt

PTI

Kolkata, May 8: Union Home Minister Amit Shah arrived in Kolkata on Friday morning to attend the BJP's legislature party meeting, in which its leader will be elected, and the swearing-in ceremony of the party's first government in West Bengal.

Shah was received at the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport by BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari, among others.

From the airport, he went to a hotel in New Town.

In the afternoon, Shah will attend the legislature party meeting of the BJP at the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre.

On Saturday, he will be attending the swearing-in ceremony at the Brigade Parade Ground, along with PM Narendra Modi, BJP president Nitin Nabin, and the chief ministers of all NDA-ruled states.

The BJP registered a historic



victory in the just-held assembly elections, ending the TMC's 15-year rule and dealing Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee one of the biggest setbacks of

her political career. Governor RN Ravi dissolved the assembly on Thursday, paving the way for the formation of the new government.

Cong observers for Kerala submit report to Kharge on CM pick

PTI

New Delhi, May 8: The two Congress observers, appointed to seek the opinion of newly-elected MLAs in Kerala, submitted their report to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday and urged the party high command to take a final decision on the chief ministerial candidate.

Ajay Maken and Mukul Wasnik spoke to all the MLAs of the Congress as well as party MPs and submitted their observations to the party leadership. The duo had gone to Kerala on Wednesday and met all the legislators and MPs on Thursday before returning to the national capital.

Sources said a majority of the party MLAs are in support of making AICC general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal the chief minister while the public is favouring senior party leader V D Satheesan, who was the leader of opposition in the outgoing Kerala assembly.

Maken and Wasnik discussed with Kharge the



observations made by the new party legislators when they met each one of them individually. They have also spoken to the party MPs and some ex-MPs, the sources said.

Besides Venugopal and Satheesan, senior party leader Ramesh Chennithala is also in the race for chief ministership.

The sources said Kharge has called all the three contenders for talks before taking a final

decision. They said Venugopal is also keen on assuming the role of chief minister and is using his influence with the party leadership for the selection. His proximity to Rahul Gandhi is also well known and that may come in his favour.

The Congress won 63 seats of its own in the 140-member assembly, while the United Democratic Front (UDF) alliance has won 102 seats staging a comeback in the southern state.

'DMK to decide on alternatives after TVK's govt formation deadline of May 10'

PTI

Chennai, May 8: Senior DMK leader T K S Elangovan on Friday stated that the party would consider alternative political moves only after the deadline set by the Governor for TVK to form the government expires.

Speaking to reporters, Elangovan noted that the Governor has granted time until May 10 for TVK to prove its ability to form a government. "We have to wait and see. The Governor has given time until the 10th. Only after that can we think of any other plans," he said, responding to queries regarding the current political impasse.

When asked about the possibility of the DMK providing outside support to the AIADMK, Elangovan said no such decision has been made. He emphasised that the party is currently observing the efforts being made by other players in the field.

On the stance of alliance partners like the VCK and CPI, the DMK leader said he was unaware of their final decision, suggesting that those parties would determine their own course of action. The remarks come at a sensitive time in Tamil Nadu politics as the state awaits the outcome of the TVK's efforts to consolidate numbers following the recent Assembly proceedings.

Oil companies bleed Rs 30,000 cr as fuel prices held steady despite global energy shock

PTI

New Delhi, May 8: India's state-run oil marketing companies have bled an estimated Rs 30,000 crore in losses since mid-March as they kept fuel and LPG supplies flowing without raising retail prices despite facing an energy disruption that is bigger than all previous crises combined.

Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) have maintained uninterrupted supplies of petrol, diesel, LPG, aviation turbine fuel and other petroleum products since the start of the West Asia conflict, without raising retail prices despite a more than 50 per cent surge



in input costs.

Their supply networks were stretched to the limit, as panic buying triggered a sharp spike in demand after the war disrupted traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, a key route for the majority of India's energy imports. Yet there was no dry out or price increase.

In doing so, the three companies together incurred an estimated Rs 30,000 crore in under-recoveries - the gap between input costs and realised retail

prices - since mid-March, two sources with direct knowledge of the matter said.

This loss would have swelled to nearly Rs 62,500 crore had the government not cut excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 10 per litre each, they said.

Brent crude - the world's most traded oil benchmark - was hovering around USD 72 per barrel before the United States and Israel launched strikes on Iran on February 28, triggering a sharp escalation in West

Asia tensions. Prices then surged as the conflict widened and shipping risks intensified in the Strait of Hormuz, with reports of disrupted tanker movement and heightened supply fears.

At the peak of the escalation, Brent briefly jumped to levels near USD 144 per barrel as Iran retaliated and closed the Strait, effectively freezing parts of global oil transit and amplifying volatility across energy markets.

Sources said the government intervention included excise duty reductions and absorption of part of the fuel cost burden. The Centre's effective absorption at peak crude prices was estimated at around Rs 24 per litre for petrol and Rs 30 per litre for diesel.

Surveillance intensified in Bengal border districts as killers of Suvendu's PA may flee

PTI

Kolkata, May 8: Police stations in border districts of West Bengal intensified surveillance and searches as investigators suspect the involvement of professional shooters from neighbouring states in the killing of BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari's close aide, a senior officer said on Friday.

The police are also investigating the role of local criminals who might have provided logistical support to the assailants, he said.

More than 36 hours after Adhikari's personal assistant Chandranath Rath was assassinated by motorcycle-borne gunmen at Madhyamgram in North 24 Parganas district, the police are yet to make any arrest.

"A detailed investigation is underway. The manner in which the attack was carried out suggests extensive reconnaissance and the possible involvement of hired sharpshooters from outside the state," a senior police officer told PTI. He also said

all police stations in border districts have been alerted.

"Checks are being carried out at multiple points, and CCTV footage from areas along Jessore Road is being thoroughly scanned," another senior officer said.

According to probe findings, the gunmen allegedly followed Rath's vehicle before launching the attack. "The escape route of the gunmen indicates that they were familiar with the locality, or local criminals might have assisted them. Without local support, fleeing through the lanes so quickly would have been difficult," the officer added.

The police, however, are yet to ascertain the motive behind the murder.

The police and detective department officers have launched extensive searches in and around Madhyamgram near Kolkata.

Heavy deployment of police and central forces has also been made in the area since the murder occurred on Wednesday night.



PTI

New Delhi, May 8: In a rare moment of candour, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant shared an anecdote when as a young lawyer he was rebuked by a high court judge for aspiring to become a judicial officer, and was told, "The bar is waiting for you."

The story came in a way of encouragement to a judicial services aspirant, who was seeking reevaluation of an examination paper.

Though the plea of Prerna Gupta was dismissed by a bench comprising the CJI and Justice Joymalya Bagchi, she left the court smiling.

As Gupta pressed her case, the CJI intervened and said, "Let me share my personal story and I hope you will go happily as we cannot allow your petition."

The CJI recounted his time as a final-year law student when he, too, wanted to become a judicial officer, had cleared the written test, and was to appear for the interview.

"When I was in the final year, I applied for judicial services. At that time, final-year students could apply. By the time the results came, the procedure had changed. Earlier, the public service commission used to conduct the selection. Then a Supreme Court judgment came, pursuant to which judges of the high court were to act as subject experts, and their opinion would be binding on the commission," he said. The CJI recalled that around the same

period, he had shifted to the Punjab and Haryana High Court and started practising there. The senior-most judge on the interview panel happened to be the judge before whom he had recently argued two significant matters.

"The senior-most judge who had been nominated for the interview panel already knew me because I had argued two matters before him. One of the matters was Sunita Rani vs Baldev Raj, where he had allowed my appeal in a matrimonial case and set aside the decree of divorce granted by the district judge on the ground of schizophrenia," Justice Surya Kant shared.

"One day, he called me into his chamber and asked, 'Do you want to become a judicial officer?' I said yes. He immediately said, 'Get out from (my) the chamber.'"

The courtroom fell silent as he related the rebuke.

"I came out trembling. All my dreams were shattered. I thought he had snubbed me and that my career was over," the CJI said.

However, the story took another turn the next day when the judge summoned him again, this time offering a piece of advice that would change the trajectory of his life.

"He said, 'If you want to become (a judge), you are welcome. But my advice is, don't become a judicial officer. The Bar is waiting for you,'" Justice Surya Kant recalled.

The CJI said he decided to skip his interview and didn't even tell his parents at first, fearing their disappointment, and instead chose to dedicate himself to his practice as an advocate.

"Now tell me did I make a bad right or bad decision," the CJI asked the litigant lawyer, as he advised her to look forward to the future rather than dwelling on the reevaluation of a single paper.

"Apply for superior judicial services next time. The Bar has much to offer," he said.

Gupta, who had entered the court seeking a legal remedy, left with a smile despite dismissal of her plea.

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS SOPORE

In the case of: Sakeena Mehnar W/o: Mehnaz Ahmad Najar R/o: Chinkipora.

Versus
C.E.O Municipal Council Sopore/BDO Sangrama/BDO Sopore

(Registrar of Birth and Death)

...Non Applicant

NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE

Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of Birth event of the applicant's Daughter namely Amina Mehnaz D/o: Mehnaz Ahmad Najar as 20-05-2015 at M.C.H Sopore.

Whereas through the medium of this proclamation the public at large is informed that in case any one has any objection for issuance of direction with respect to the registration of aforementioned Birth event he/she shall file the same before this court in person or through counsel within 7 days from the date of the publication of this proclamation. If the date fixed is declared holiday, the matter will be taken on the next working day.

Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Sopore

US, Iran trade fire, threatening fragile truce

REUTERS

Washington, May 8: US President Donald Trump said the ceasefire with Iran was still in place despite an Iranian attack on three American destroyers in the Strait of Hormuz on Thursday, which he dismissed as "a trifle."

The US military said it carried out strikes on Iranian military targets in response, although Tehran charged that it was Washington that had initiated the exchange of fire.

The violence threatened to unravel a fragile truce in effect since April 8 that brought an end to weeks of US-Israeli attacks on the Islamic republic, which has retaliated with strikes across the Middle East and by blocking the strait, a vital route for oil and gas shipments.

Asked in Washington if the Iran ceasefire was still on, Trump said: "Yeah it is. They trifled with us today. We blew them away. They trifled. I call that a trifle."

US Central Command (CENTCOM) said in a post on X that Iranian forces launched "multiple missiles, drones and small boats" at the three US warships, but none were hit, and that it "eliminated inbound threats and targeted Iranian military facilities responsible."

"CENTCOM does not seek



escalation but remains positioned and ready to protect American forces," it said.

For its part, Iran's central military command accused the United States of violating the ceasefire by attacking an oil tanker and another ship, saying Tehran's forces "immediately and in retaliation attacked American military vessels."

Trump had fueled hopes of a deal just the day before, saying an agreement could be near, even as he again threatened to return to bombing if Tehran refused to back down.

He doubled down on that stance after Thursday's clash, posting on his Truth Social platform: "We'll

knock them out a lot harder, and a lot more violently, in the future, if they don't get their Deal signed, FAST!" he said.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said Tehran would communicate its position to mediator Pakistan "after finalizing its views."

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had struck an optimistic tone prior to the exchanges of fire on Thursday, saying in televised remarks: "I firmly believe that this ceasefire will turn into a long-term ceasefire."

Lebanon talks
But, inside Iran, civilians were cynical.

"Neither side in these

negotiations is really capable of reaching an agreement," 42-year-old photographer Shervin told AFP reporters in Paris, messaging from Tehran.

"This is another one of Trump's games; otherwise, why are so many warships and military forces being sent toward Iran?"

Any agreement between the United States and Iran could also help lower tensions in Lebanon, where a separate truce was under renewed strain after an Israeli strike on southern Beirut killed a commander from militant group Hezbollah on Wednesday.

A US State Department official confirmed on Thursday that the new Israel-Lebanon talks would take place on May 14 and 15.

It will be the third meeting in recent months between the two countries, which have technically been at war for decades and have no diplomatic relations.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Tuesday that a peace deal between the two sides was "eminently achievable," insisting Hezbollah was the sticking point, rather than any issue between the two governments.

Lebanon was drawn into the Middle East war when Hezbollah fired rockets at Israel in retaliation for the killing of Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Ships, crew stranded

A ceasefire between the two countries and including Hezbollah was extended after the last round of talks in Washington, but Israel has kept up its strikes on the group, which has claimed attacks of its own on Israeli forces occupying parts of Lebanon's south.

Lebanon's health ministry reported at least 12 people killed in a series of Israeli airstrikes on Thursday.

Following the start of the war with US-Israeli attacks on February 28, Iran largely shuttered the Strait of Hormuz.

Around 1,500 ships and 20,000 international crew are now trapped in the Gulf region because of the conflict, the secretary-general of the UN's International Maritime Organization, Arsenio Dominguez, told a Maritime Convention of the Americas meeting in Panama.

Trump had this week briefly launched a naval operation to force open the strait to commercial vessels, only to stand it down within hours, citing progress on negotiations with Iran.

The US president — who has lambasted Europe for not backing his war against Iran — said Thursday he had a "great call" with European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen, saying they were "completely united that Iran can never have a nuclear weapon."

David Attenborough turns 100, 'overwhelmed' by birthday wishes



REUTERS

London, May 8: David Attenborough said he had been "completely overwhelmed" by birthday greetings as he turned 100 on Friday in a worldwide outpouring of affection for the British wildlife broadcaster after decades of trailblazing work.

After more than 70 years of film-making, Attenborough's instantly recognizable voice is synonymous with the story of nature. He is still at the vanguard of efforts to protect the environment and has produced some of his most influential work in recent years.

In Britain, Attenborough's centenary is being marked with a week of special broadcasts on the BBC, a live concert at the Royal Albert Hall, events at museums, nature walks and tree planting. "I had rather thought that I would celebrate my 100th birthday quietly, but it seems that many of you have had other ideas," he said in an audio message released by the BBC.

"I've been completely overwhelmed by birthday greetings from preschool groups to care home residents and countless individuals and families of all ages." He thanked all those who had sent messages and wished anyone planning an event to mark the milestone "a very happy day." Counting Britain's royal family, former US President Barack Obama and pop star Billie Eilish among his admirers, Attenborough's charisma, humor and warmth, alongside the depth of his knowledge and flair for storytelling, have made him a broadcasting superstar.

"Your ability to communicate the beauty and vulnerability of our natural environment remains unequalled," was how the late Queen Elizabeth summed up his achievements in 2019. "LONESOME GEORGE AND THE FRAGILE ENVIRONMENT"

up his achievements in 2019. "LONESOME GEORGE AND THE FRAGILE ENVIRONMENT"

Attenborough's films have communicated the wonder and also the tragedies of the natural world to viewers across the globe.

Standout scenes include his encounter with two playful young mountain gorillas who clambered on to him during his landmark 1979 series "Life on Earth."

He also made his audience marvel at the teamwork of a pod of orcas hunting a seal by creating waves to break up ice, and his telling in 2012 of the story of "Lonesome George," the last surviving Pinta Island tortoise, moved people to tears.

"He's about 80 years old, and getting a bit creaky in his joints — as indeed am I," said Attenborough, then 86.

George's death, two weeks after he was filmed, marked the extinction of his species.

"He's focused the attention of the world on the fragility of our environment," Attenborough said at the time.

While Attenborough has topped numerous national popularity polls, being named the country's most admired man and the greatest living British cultural icon, friends say he rolls his eyes when he is labelled a "national treasure."

"What he feels is that he's a public servant. He feels that he had the unique opportunity to be the voice for nature, to tell everybody about the wonders of nature," Mike Gunton, a television producer who has worked with Attenborough many times, told Reuters. As climate change has accelerated and the threat to much of the world has become more urgent, Attenborough devoted much of his 90s to raising public awareness.

Fifa World Cup final match ticket priced at \$32,970

REUTERS

New York, May 8: Fifa tripled the price of its best available tickets to the World Cup final, making \$32,970 seats available for the July 19 match at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

Soccer's governing body listed those seats as front category one on its sales site.

It previously had a high price of \$10,990 for category one. The \$10,990 category for the final was available Thursday night only as wheelchair and easy access amenity category one.

Tickets for the July 14 semifinal in Arlington, Texas, were listed at \$11,130, \$4,330, \$3,710 and \$2,705. Seats for the following day's semifinal at Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium were at \$10,635, \$3,545 and \$2,725.

Seats for the US opener against Paraguay on June 12 at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, were available for



\$2,735, \$1,940 and \$1,120, while tickets for the Americans' June 19 game against Australia at Seattle were listed at \$2,715. Tickets for the Americans' group-stage finale against Turkey at Inglewood on June 25 were \$2,970, \$1,345, \$990 and \$840.

Fifa president Gianni Infantino has defended the ticket prices. "We have to look at the market. We are in a market in which entertainment is the

most developed in the world, so we have to apply market rates," he said Tuesday at the Milken Institute Global Conference in Beverly Hills, California.

"In the US it is permitted to resell tickets, as well, so if you were to sell tickets at the price which is too low, these tickets will be resold at a much higher price. And as a matter of fact, even though some people are

saying that the ticket prices we have are high, they still end up on the resale market at an even higher price, more than double of our price."

He added, "You cannot go to watch in the US a college game, not even speaking about a top professional game of a certain level, for less than \$300."

On the Fifa Resale/Exchange Marketplace, tickets for the final were available Thursday ranging from \$11,499,998.85 to \$8,970. The high price was listed for a ticket four rows from the top of the upper deck, in block 307, row 22, seat 12.

Fifa does not control the asking prices on its Resale/Exchange Marketplace but takes a 15 per cent purchase fee from the buyer of each ticket and a 15 per cent resale fee from the seller.

Last month, someone listed tickets for the final at \$2,299,998.85.

Vatican's careful words on Pope-Rubio meeting imply deep Trump tensions

REUTERS

VATICAN CITY: A Vatican statement after Pope Leo's meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, which said the two had pledged to improve bilateral relations, was a recognition of unprecedented tensions, insiders and analysts said. Rubio's meeting on Thursday with Leo, the first US pope, garnered wide public attention as President Donald Trump has repeatedly attacked the pontiff over the Iran war.

The Vatican statement after the 45-minute encounter, the first between the pope and a Trump cabinet official in nearly a year, said two leaders had "renewed the shared commitment to fostering good bilateral relations."

"(The) statement makes it clear that, at present, there is work to do," Peter Martin, a former diplomat at the US Embassy to the Holy See who served during Democratic and Republican administrations, told Reuters.

Austen Ivereigh, a Vatican specialist who co-wrote a book with the late Pope Francis, said the statement's focus on the need to build bilateral relations suggests "that they are at the moment not good."

The US embassy to the Holy See said on X after the meeting that Leo and Rubio had discussed "topics of mutual interest in the Western Hemisphere."

Dhoni got angry when I celebrated too much his wicket: Ashwin recalls



had. Also, you didn't have to worry about anything off the field.

"Family logistics, tickets, rooms, travel, everything was taken care of. If my parents wanted to come, it was all arranged. There were buses, cars and everything in place. So instead of worrying about these things under pressure, you could just focus on cricket. These may seem like small things, but they go a long way. You can't buy that goodwill; it has to be built."

Ashwin, India's second highest Test wicket-taker with 537 scalps from 106 matches, finished his IPL career with CSK as he wanted to end where he started.

"When I got the chance to play for CSK again, the first thought was that I could finish where I started. My intention was to play for 2-3 years. It didn't happen, that's a different story. I won't go there now. But where it started, it finished there."

"And I had another small dream to finish at Chepauk. I couldn't do that. My last IPL game was in Delhi. But if I had played at Chepauk, it would have been even better. Because my last ODI game was at Chepauk. There are many memories on that ground, it's very close to my heart." On his final IPL wicket, that of prodigy Vaibhav Suryavanshi, the spin great said, "It was a bit tactical. Cricket has changed; these Gen Z players hit spinners off their lengths. So, I planned to bowl slightly fuller with drift, which off-spinners get. If extra cover is back, they think I'll bowl wide, but I won't

PTI

New Delhi, May 8: Retired India spin great Ravichandran Ashwin on Friday revealed that his excessive celebration after dismissing Mahendra Singh Dhoni in Challenger Trophy early in his career had actually annoyed the iconic former captain.

Speaking on JioStar's 'The Ravichandran Ashwin Experience', the off-spinner recalled that he thought his dismissal of Dhoni could give him a chance to play for Chennai Super Kings in IPL.

"Muttiah Muralitharan was in the team, a legend, bowling his full quota, so I wasn't getting chances (to play for CSK). I didn't play in 2008, but in 2009, I got my first game in Cape Town, against Mumbai Indians, against Sachin Tendulkar. Between 2009 and 2010, I still didn't get many opportunities," said Ashwin who retired from all forms of international cricket in December 2024.

"In the Challenger Trophy, I got

a chance to bowl to Dhoni. Dhoni got out twice against our team. Once, he hit a shot towards deep cover and I took a diving catch. I celebrated it so much that he actually got annoyed.

"He (Dhoni) was like, 'What's there to celebrate so much?' I told him, 'Getting your wicket was my dream. Maybe this will open a door for me in CSK.' The next year, I got my chance."

On the CSK environment and the secret behind their sustained success, especially during 2010-2015, Ashwin said, "I think Chennai was one of those early teams with not just good batsmen, but many quality bowlers too. Along with that, a few domestic players came through, like me, Murali Vijay, Badrinath, and Shadab Jakati, who many may not know but played a heroic role for CSK, he was the captain of Goa at that time." "Wridhiman Saha was also picked and used in the middle order, and he performed. That was the kind of cricketing environment Chennai

Movies Watchlist

Saturday, 9th May



BHOOTH BANGLA (U/A16+)
HINDI - 10:45 AM, 04:20 PM



Michael (U/A 13+)
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
07:35 PM

The Devil Wears Prada 2 (A)
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
02:00 PM



Dhurandhar: The Revenge (A)
HINDI - 02:05 PM

THE SHEEP DETECTIVES (UA 7+)
ENGLISH - 02:00 PM

DAADI KI SHADI (U)
HINDI - 11:05 AM, 06:30 PM

MORTAL KOMBAT II (A)
ENGLISH ATMOS WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
04:30 PM, 07:00 PM, HINDI - 11:30 AM

INOX
SRINAGAR

Call 95416 13868
For assistance with tickets

