



World's dangerous criminals, terrorists exploiting technology to destroy peace, spread fear: LG Sinha

» Lauds J&K Police for counter-terrorism, internal security achievements
» Says cybercrime, narco-terrorism, digital fraud stark realities of present

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, May 10: Lauding Jammu and Kashmir Police for its achievements on counter-terrorism front and internal security over the past five to six years, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday said the world's most dangerous criminals and terrorists do not always carry weapons instead they exploit technology to disturb peace.

Addressing the attestation-cum-passing out parade and appointment letter distribution ceremony for newly recruited constables at the Armed Police Complex Zewan here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Today, the world's most dangerous criminals and terrorists do not always carry weapons; instead, they exploit code, data and encrypted networks to operate across borders. Cybercrime, narco-terrorism, digital fraud and narrative warfare are no longer threats of the distant future; they are the stark realities of the



present. They are claiming lives, destroying livelihoods and eroding the trust upon which the stability of every system ultimately rests," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Referring to the achievements of J&K Police, LG Sinha said, "If I talk about the achievements of the past five to six years, there have been major successes in

counter-terrorism operations, intelligence coordination and internal security management. The close synergy among Jammu and Kashmir Police, intelligence agencies, CRPF and other security forces have helped in achieving success on all the fronts."

Referring to operations against terror infrastructure, including "Operation Mahadev," the Lieutenant Governor said the security forces have given a befitting response to terror attacks and dismantled terror ecosystems operating in the region.

He also referred to the response following the Pahalgam terror attack, saying the administration and security agencies acted firmly against the perpetrators and networks supporting terrorism.

The Lieutenant Governor said the police force continues to remain a strong warning for those who think they are above the law. "This is a clear warning to those who consider themselves above the law. No terrorist, criminal, drug trafficker or anti-national element will be spared," he said.

He said Jammu and Kashmir Police have consistently worked for the safety, security and welfare of the people and has strengthened its bond with society through sacrifice and public service.

WELCOMES NEW RECRUITS
LG Sinha welcomed the new recruit constables and their families on joining the police force. "Recruits must accept the realities of modern policing and constantly upgrade their capabilities to face emerging threats," he said, "Future-ready policing requires courage, impartiality, honesty and commitment. I hope all of you will live up to these expectations and serve the people with dedication."

He also complimented the senior police officers, trainers and all agencies involved in the recruitment and training process for successfully preparing the new batch of recruits.

He said the newly recruited constables will add fresh strength to the force and further strengthen public confidence, asserting that J&K Police is not merely a security

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West Asia crisis

PM Modi urges judicious use of fuel

» Pitches energy conservation



PTI

Hyderabad, May 10: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that the need of the hour, in the wake of the West Asia crisis, is to use petroleum products judiciously. Speaking at an event in Telangana, where he virtually laid the foundation stone and inaugurated development projects worth around Rs 9,400 crore, Modi said imported petroleum products should be used only as needed, as this would not only save foreign exchange but also reduce the adverse impact of war.

Observing that India has, in recent years, emerged among the leading countries in solar power capacity, he said unprecedented progress has also been made in ethanol blending in petrol.

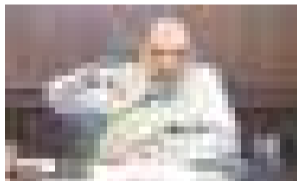
He noted that the

government first focused on achieving 100 per cent LPG coverage and is now working towards expanding piped gas supply more affordably.

The government is also promoting the use of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), he said. Acknowledging that such initiatives are helping India navigate the global energy crisis, the PM stressed the importance of energy conservation, reiterating that imported energy resources must be used judiciously and only when necessary.

Underscoring both financial and geopolitical benefits, he said, "Today, the need of the hour is to use petrol, gas, diesel and similar resources with restraint. We must use imported petroleum products only as needed. This will not only save foreign exchange but also reduce the adverse impact of war."

Create Flood Crisis Management Teams in every state: HM Shah



KT NEWS DESK

New Delhi, May 10: In a decisive move to bolster India's disaster resilience, Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah, directed a comprehensive review of the country's preparedness to tackle floods and heat waves. The high-level meeting, held in New Delhi, underscored the government's renewed commitment to implementing a "Zero Casualty Disaster Management" vision under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Amit Shah emphasized the urgent need for

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J&K Police fighting terrorism under LG Sinha's leadership: DGP Prabhat

Says joining force not just job, but symbol of sacrifice, service to nation Over 4,000 youth, including 600 women, selected in biggest recruitment drive

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, May 10: Asserting that J&K Police are continuously fighting Pakistani-sponsored terrorism and carrying forward the anti-narcotics campaign under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat on Sunday said that force stands firm in every situation and remains committed to safeguarding the nation.

Addressing the presentation ceremony of appointment letters to newly recruited



constables at Armed Police Complex Zewan here, the DGP as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), welcomed the recruits into the police family and congratulated them and their families for earning the opportunity through

hard work and discipline. "A police uniform is a symbol of discipline, honesty, loyalty, bravery, passion and sacrifice. Most importantly, it represents service to the nation," he said.

He said Police

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Golf tourism getting major push in J&K: CM Omar

» Tees off 'India Golf Carnival' at RSGC
» Says golf courses in UT among finest in country



REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, May 10: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Sunday said the government is planning more national-level golfing events to promote Jammu and Kashmir as a premier golfing destination, asserting that the Valley's golf courses are among

the finest in the country.

Speaking to media after teeing off the 'India Golf Carnival 2026' at the Royal Springs Golf Course here, CM Omar as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said Jammu and Kashmir shares a long and historic association with golf and possesses

world-class golfing infrastructure.

"Jammu and Kashmir has a very old relationship with golf. If you look at the most beautiful golf courses in the country, Kashmir's courses in Srinagar, Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sidra in Jammu can easily be counted among them," he said.

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CM Omar launches dev projects in Ganderbal

KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, May 10: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Sunday inaugurated and laid foundation stones for multiple development projects worth ₹42.38 crore across Ganderbal district, aimed at strengthening healthcare infrastructure, road connectivity,

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Omar dedicates ₹2.25 crore medical equipment to public at JLNM Hospital

KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, May 10: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Sunday dedicated medical equipment worth ₹2.25 crore to the public at Jawahar Lal Nehru Memorial Hospital, further strengthening critical healthcare facilities at the hospital.

The Chief Minister

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DATED: 10-05-2026

Govt committed to strengthen sporting infrastructure across J&K: Satish Sharma

Visits Kheer Bhawani, Mir Baba Hyder Shrines, reviews arrangements, assures improved facilities

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MAY 10: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, Information Technology, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, Sunday visited the revered Kheer Bhawani shrine at Tulmulla and paid obeisance there.

The Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment towards ensuring better facilities and smooth conduct of religious events across Jammu and Kashmir.

During the visit, the Minister, as per an official statement, undertook a detailed review of the arrangements being put in place for the forthcoming annual Kheer Bhawani Mela. He interacted with the officers from various departments regarding preparedness for the pilgrimage.

He directed the concerned departments to ensure that all necessary arrangements, including sanitation, uninterrupted power and water supply, healthcare facilities, security coordination, cleanliness and transportation facilities are put in place well in advance for the convenience of devotees expected to participate in large numbers during the mela.

Emphasising the importance of hassle-free transportation for the pilgrims, the Minister instructed the Transport Department to ensure



seamless bus connectivity to the shrine from different locations, particularly during the festival days.

Satish Sharma said that religious and cultural events form an important part of Jammu and Kashmir's rich heritage. The government remains committed towards facilitating the devotees and preserving the spiritual ethos associated with

such revered places, he added.

Later, the Minister visited the revered Mir Baba Hyder shrine, where he reviewed the infrastructure and civic amenities available for the devotees. He instructed the concerned officers to undertake solarisation of the shrine complex as part of the government's push towards sustainable and eco-friendly

infrastructure development at important religious places.

The Minister also directed the authorities to augment other facilities at the shrine, including lighting, sanitation and public convenience infrastructure, so as to improve the overall experience for the devotees.

During the visit, Satish Sharma also met several deputations representing different areas and communities. The deputations projected various public welfare and developmental issues before the Minister.

Giving a patient hearing to the concerns raised, the Minister assured the deputations that their genuine issues would be examined sympathetically and appropriate measures would be taken for their early redressal.

The Minister also interacted with a deputation of Kabaddi players and young sportspersons, who apprised him of issues related to sports infrastructure and training facilities.

Satish Sharma appreciated the enthusiasm and commitment of the youth towards sports. He reiterated the government's resolve to strengthen the sporting infrastructure and provide greater opportunities for youth engagement across Jammu and Kashmir.

Sakeena Itoo inaugurates Shaheed Wali Mohammad Itoo Memorial Cricket Tournament at DH Pora Kulgam

KT NEWS DESK

KULGAM, MAY 10: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo inaugurated the much awaited Shaheed Wali Mohammad Itoo Memorial Cricket Tournament at DH Pora here Sunday to energize youth towards constructive activities and physical well being.

Addressing a large gathering on the occasion, Minister, as per an official statement, Sakeena Itoo highlighted the transformative role of sports in shaping a healthy and progressive society. "Sports not only foster discipline, teamwork and physical fitness but also serve as a powerful medium to engage youth positively and keep them away from social evils", she stated.

The Minister reiterated the government's commitment towards strengthening sports infrastructure and creating more opportunities for talented youth across Jammu and Kashmir. She assured that every possible support would be extended to encourage budding sportspersons, particularly in rural and far-flung areas. The Minister also



interacted with players and organisers, appreciating their efforts in successfully organising the tournament. She encouraged the participating teams to play with true sportsmanship and use sports as a platform for personal growth and community development.

The tournament, organised in memory of the late Shaheed Wali Mohammad

Itoo, witnessed enthusiastic participation from local youth, sports lovers, civil society members and prominent citizens from across the district.

The inaugural match drew huge public enthusiasm, with spectators cheering enthusiastically as teams displayed remarkable talent and competitive spirit on the field.

Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan Marathon witnesses huge participation in Kulgam



KT NEWS DESK

KULGAM, MAY 10: A marathon organised under the banner of Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan witnessed enthusiastic participation from youth, students, sports lovers, and citizens across Kulgam Sunday.

The event was flagged off by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam from the Sports Stadium Kulgam and culminated at the Mini-Secretariat Kulgam.

The marathon, as per an official statement, was organised with the objective of spreading awareness against drug abuse and encouraging youth to adopt a healthy and active lifestyle through sports

and positive engagement.

Participants from different areas of the district took part in the event with great zeal and enthusiasm, reflecting strong public support for the campaign against substance abuse.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC appreciated the overwhelming participation of the youth and reiterated the administration's commitment towards making Kulgam a drug-free district through sustained awareness and community participation.

A pledge against drug abuse was also administered during the event, with participants reaffirming their commitment towards building a healthy and drug-free society

DLCC finalizes 11th Agriculture Census-Phase III data at Poonch

KT NEWS DESK

POONCH, MAY 10: The 11th Agriculture Census phase III data, pertaining to usage of agricultural inputs for district Poonch has been finalised by District Level Coordination Committee

The data, pertaining to the usage of seeds, fertilizers, irrigation facilities, machinery etc. was finalized by the DLCC at a meeting convened under the Chairmanship of Deputy

Commissioner Ashok Kumar Sharma.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the DLCC members Mohammad Sayeed-Assistant Commissioner; Javaid Ahmed-District Statistics and Evaluation Officer; Member Secretary, Jog Raj Singh; Chief Agriculture Officer- Member, representative from office of the Financial Commissioner Revenue J&K and all Tehsildars of district Poonch.

FSTP made operational in Kulgam

Becomes first district in UT to have such facility in rural area

KT NEWS DESK

KULGAM, MAY 10: In order to strengthen sanitation infrastructure and sustainable waste management, the Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP) has been made operational and thrown open Sunday after the first trial was successfully conducted at Li-roo Kulgam.

It was informed by the Assistant Commissioner Development, Bilal Ahmad Kamgar, as per an official statement, that it is the first such facility in the rural sector of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The initiative marks a major milestone in improving sanitation services and environmental protection in rural areas.

The FSTP has been established to scientifically manage and treat faecal sludge collected from septic tanks and soak pits, ensuring safe disposal and reducing environmental pollution, he added.

The trial was conducted under directions of the Deputy Commissioner, Shahzad Alam by ACP Kulgam, Bilal Ahmad Kamgar in the



presence of Tehsildar/EO Kulgam, Nisar Ahmad and other technical experts, who inspected the functioning and operational mechanisms of the plant. Officials stated that the facility will cater to both urban and rural areas of the district by providing an efficient and eco-friendly solution for faecal waste management. The project is expected to significantly improve public health standards, sanitation practices, and cleanliness across the district.

During the inspection, officers expressed satisfaction over the successful trial and said that whoever wants the facility of sucker can contact on phone number 7889708711 / 7780823608 and the sucker service will be provided by Municipal Council Kulgam.

People can also contact the District Emergency Operations Centre (DEOC) at +91-9103424365 for booking requests related to Municipal Council Kulgam services.

DLA Kishtwar organises 2nd National Lok Adalat

KT NEWS DESK

KISHTWAR, MAY 10: In pursuance of the activities outlined in the National Calendar and under the directions of the J&K Legal Services Authority, the Second National Lok Adalat was organised here by the District Legal Services Authority (DLA) Kishtwar.

The Lok Adalat, as per an official statement, took up criminal compoundable cases, matrimonial disputes, matters related to maintenance, civil, recovery, labour, MACT, pre-litigation and other related cases were taken up before four benches constituted for the purpose.

The first bench comprised Sudhir Kumar Khajuria, Principal District & Sessions Judge and Karan Bijyal, Munsiff/JMIC. The second bench included Deputy Kumar, Chief Judicial Magistrate and Deepika Sharma, Additional Special Mobile Magistrate. The third bench consisted of Meera Bangotra, Secretary DLSA and Jalil Ahmed Waza Deputy Chief LAD. The fourth bench included Mamta Sudershan, ALC, and Naveed Khurshid Dev, Chief LAD.

In all, 321 cases were taken up, out of which 264 cases of different nature were amicably settled.

An amount of 18,23,300 was awarded to claimants in MACT, labour dispute and other cases.

DHJ visits Ramban, reviews horticulture activities

KT NEWS DESK

RAMBAN, MAY 10: Director Horticulture Jammu Gul Syed Sunday visited district Ramban and reviewed horticulture activities and awareness camps being conducted in the district. He was accompanied by Chief Horticulture Officer Rajinder Kumar and Assistant Director Sunil Gupta.

During the tour, the Director, as per an official statement, visited the Horticulture Farm Ramban and later inspected the nurseries at Gool and Sangaldan. The Director exhorted officers and officials to ensure propagation of quality planting material in departmental nurseries for the benefit of orchardists.

He also attended farmers' awareness camps organised by the department and interacted with growers, briefing them about the horticulture schemes and modern cultivation practices. He informed farmers about the Horticulture schemes including HADP, MIDH, CSS and ATMA.

Later, the Director inspected a High-Density Apple Orchard and interacted with orchardist. He stressed adoption of advanced cultivation techniques, scientific orchard management practices and better productivity measures.

Also present on the occasion were Farm Manager, ACHD Pardeep Dindra, concerned Horticulture Development Officers and staff members of the District Horticulture Department.

DC XI wins friendly Cricket Match against SSP XI in Poonch



KT NEWS DESK

POONCH, MAY 10: The District Administration Poonch and Poonch Police organised a Friendly Cricket Match at Sports Stadium Sunday under the banner of Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan to promote fitness, sportsmanship and drug-free society awareness.

The match between DC XI and SSP XI, as per an official statement, witnessed enthusiastic participation from officers, officials and spectators. Deputy Commissioner Ashok Kumar Sharma and SSP Shafiq Hussain

Bhat also participated in the match, encouraging youth towards healthy and disciplined lifestyles.

Batting first, SSP XI scored 149 runs in 20 overs. In reply, the DC XI successfully chased the target and registered an impressive 7-wicket victory.

Dr. Jontay was declared Man of the Match for his brilliant innings of 56 runs, while Pervaiz Malik Afridi scored 46 runs and Pawan Kumar contributed 27 runs for DC XI.

The programme concluded with the message: "Say No to Drugs, Yes to Life."

Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan Poonch administration organises Red Cross awareness rally

KT NEWS DESK

POONCH, MAY 10: The District Administration Poonch, in collaboration with the District Youth Services & Sports Department, Education Department and Social Welfare Department, Sunday organised a grand awareness rally to mark World Red Cross Day. The event was organised under the banner of Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan.

Around fifteen hundred students from 12 schools took part in the march. Students carried awareness placards and raised slogans promoting humanity, social service, a drug-free society, peace and unity. The rally, as per an official statement, aimed to spread awareness

about the importance of the Red Cross movement, humanitarian values and the collective responsibility of society towards building a healthy and drug-free nation. Participants marched through main town areas, reflecting the strong commitment of the youth towards social awareness and nation-building initiatives.

Officials from the district administration, DYSS, Education Department and Social Welfare Department joined the students and staff members, highlighting the importance of such awareness programmes in guiding youth towards positive and constructive activities under the ongoing Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan.

Operation Sindoor

Army commemorates first anniversary in Rajouri

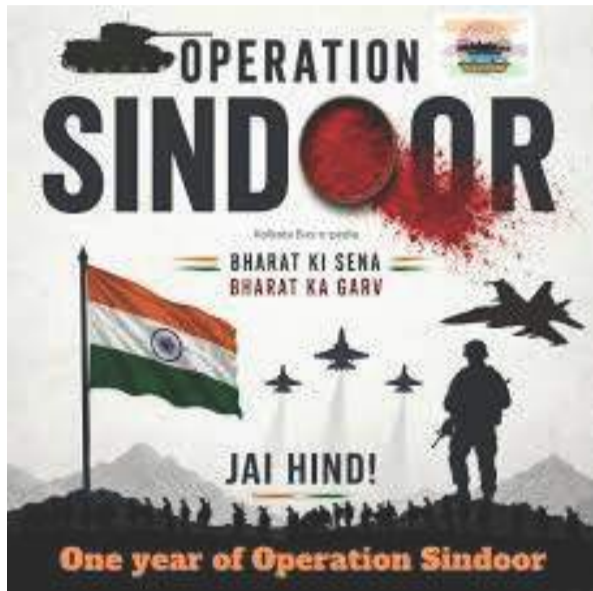
PTI

Rajouri/Jammu, May 10: The Indian Army on Sunday organised a commemorative event in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri to mark the first anniversary of Operation Sindoor, paying tributes to soldiers and civilians who lost their lives in cross-border shelling during the military action last year.

The event held at the war memorial established at Gujjar Mandi Chowk to honour the heroes of Operation Sindoor was attended by senior Army officers, civil officials, police officers, locals and students, a defence PRO said.

General Officer Commanding of the 'Ace of Spades' division of the Army, Major General Kaushik Mukherjee, led the tribute ceremony by paying homage to the martyrs, lauding their courage, sacrifice and dedication to the nation.

Floral tributes were offered in memory of the fallen heroes, including Raj



Kumar Thappa, then-additional deputy commissioner (ADC), Rajouri, and four Army personnel - Subedar Major Pawan Singh, Havildar Sunil Singh, Lance Naik Dinesh Singh and Agniveer Mood Murlinaik, the PRO said.

A 'mashaal' rally, led by Army personnel and

students, passed through various parts of Rajouri that came under heavy shelling on May 10, 2025.

In response to the Pahal-gam terror attack, India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7 last year, carrying out airstrikes on nine terror infrastructures in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied

Kashmir (PoK) that eliminated at least 100 terrorists.

The strikes triggered a rapid escalation in tensions, with Pakistan launching retaliatory strikes, though most of them were thwarted by the Indian military.

The hostilities ended with an understanding on halting the military actions on May 10 following talks over the hotline between Army officers from the two sides.

Officials said Rajouri witnessed intense shelling on May 10 last year, in which three civilians, including Thappa, were killed while several areas suffered extensive damage.

Students from the Delhi Public School, Doon International School, Government Boys Higher Secondary School and Army Goodwill Public School participated in the event to pay tributes to the martyrs.

Rajouri-Poonch range DIG Sandeep Wazir and ADC Malikzada Sheraz-ul-Haq also attended the event.

'NC slams PDP Chief for parroting BJP-RSS script'

KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, May 10: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference State Spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar launched a scathing attack on PDP President Mehbooba Mufti, accusing her of parroting the BJP-RSS script and manufacturing political noise to destabilize the democratically elected government in Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing the media, Imran said Mehbooba Mufti appears to be reading directly from the RSS playbook, leveling baseless and politically motivated allegations only to obstruct governance and create an atmosphere of uncertainty in the region.

He said that the people of Jammu and Kashmir delivered a massive mandate to the National Conference to undo the political blunders and betrayals committed during the PDP regime. "PDP today stands politically exposed. From facilitating the BJP at crucial moments, including the recent Rajya Sabha elections; facts that even surfaced through RTI disclosures to now indulging in desperate political theatrics, the party continues to function as an extension of



the BJP's larger agenda in J&K," he said. He said her corruption allegations are completely baseless. The party's treasurer is Shammi Oberoi, who is a Rajya Sabha member, not a minister.

Taking a sharp dig at Mehbooba Mufti, Imran advised the former Chief Minister to rise above headline-hunting politics and embrace constructive opposition instead of indulging in perpetual fear-mongering and manufactured outrage.

"Peddling hollow narratives and indulging in political grandstanding will not help Mehbooba Mufti reclaim the credibility and political space she squandered by bartering the identity, dignity, and interests of Jammu and Kashmir for the sake of power," he said.

Suspected drug peddler's shop demolished in Baramulla

PTI

Srinagar, May 10: Police demolished a shop linked to an alleged drug peddler on Sunday and attached other structures belonging to him in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. The action was carried out in the presence of the Baramulla executive magistrate and in strict compliance with legal formalities, a police spokesperson said. "In a major action against drug-related activities, police in Baramulla demolished a shop and attached structures belonging to notorious NDPS accused Riyaz Ahmad Khan, a resident of Janbazpora, Baramulla," he said.

"The demolished property was linked with the accused, who is involved in narcotics-related offences, as part of the ongoing drive against drug peddlers and their support networks," the spokesperson said. Police has intensified its campaign against the drug menace and continues to take firm action against individuals involved in narcotics trafficking, he said.

Mother's Day 2026

Dr Farooq highlights sacrifices of Mothers

KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, May 10: On the occasion of Mother's Day, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, described motherhood as the most sacred and selfless bond in the world and urged the younger generation to honour, respect, and care for their parents, especially mothers, whose sacrifices form the foundation of every family and society.

In a statement issued from the party headquarters, Nawa-e-Subha, Dr. Farooq paid glowing tributes to Begum Akbar Jehan Abdullah, recalling her immense sacrifices and resilience during some of the most difficult periods in Jammu and Kashmir's history. He said that while Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Abdullah remained incarcerated in different jails, Begum Akbar Jehan courageously shouldered the responsibilities of both mother and guardian, raising her family with determination and dignity despite immense hardships.

Dr. Farooq also highlighted the vision of the historic Naya Kashmir Manifesto as well as the party's election manifesto, stating that the welfare of mothers and children has



always remained a cornerstone of the National Conference's socio-political agenda. He said the government led by Omar Abdullah continues to work towards strengthening healthcare, education, social security, and welfare measures aimed at empowering women and ensuring the well-being of mothers and children across Jammu and Kashmir.

Meanwhile, on the eve of Mother's Day, the State Women's Wing of the National Conference organised a

function at Nawa-e-Subha. The event was addressed by State Women's Wing President Shameema Firdous, who highlighted the invaluable role of mothers in shaping society and preserving values of compassion, unity, and resilience.

Among others present on the occasion were Provincial President Kashmir Women's Wing Er. Sabyia Qadri and Provincial Secretary Ayesha Jameel.

Ladakh LG launches plantation of 2,100 cherry saplings in Phyang belt

PTI

Leh/Jammu, May 10: Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Sunday launched a plantation drive of 2,100 cherry saplings at Phyang village in Leh as part of efforts to promote environmental conservation and sustainable development in the region.

Addressing the gathering, Saxena described the initiative as a significant step towards securing Ladakh's future and preserving its fragile ecosystem.

The plantation drive was organised by the Drikung Dharma Foundation in collaboration with SankalpTaru Foundation under the guidance of Drikung

Skyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche.

Saxena urged people to actively participate in plantation drives and environmental conservation activities and announced a new public participation programme under which every family in Ladakh would be encouraged to plant at least 10 saplings and ensure their survival.

The L-G said families achieving the highest survival rate of planted trees would be recognised and awarded.

Highlighting the ecological challenges faced by the cold desert region, Saxena said Ladakh requires extensive plantation efforts and nature-based solutions to combat environmental

degradation and secure the future of the coming generations.

He said the plantation of cherry saplings marked a new initiative aimed at introducing diverse plant species suited to Ladakh's climatic conditions and enhancing the region's green cover.

According to the L-G, more than 8,000 saplings have already been planted across Ladakh since he took charge, and the latest plantation drive marks another milestone towards improving the region's floral diversity.

Saxena also lauded the efforts of the Drikung Dharma Foundation for its continued contribution towards environmental protection and social welfare in different parts of Ladakh.

SP visits Octroi border outpost along IB in Jammu Calls for drug-free society

PTI

Jammu, May 10: Superintendent of Police (SP) Anna Sinha on Sunday made a strong appeal for a united fight against drug abuse, saying that the movement for a drug-free society is crucial for Jammu and Kashmir as well as the entire country.

She visited the Octroi border outpost (BoP) along the International Border at R S Pura in Jammu district, where she interacted with BSF personnel, members of the public and NCC cadets, urging people to adopt a drug-free lifestyle.

Addressing a public awareness programme, SP Anna said that patriotism is not limited to armed service but is also reflected in responsible civic behaviour and collective efforts to eliminate drug addiction from society.

"Drug de-addiction is very important for Jammu and for the



whole of India. It is our collective responsibility", she said.

She urged citizens to actively participate in preventing drug abuse and to remain alert about suspicious activities in their surroundings.

"Being patriotic does not only mean going to fight. We have our forces for that. As responsible citizens, we can show patriotism

by keeping ourselves away from drugs and helping others stay away from it," she said.

Addressing parents and youth, she stressed the need for vigilance at the family level.

If you see teenagers or young people going towards drugs, please pay attention. Mothers and fathers must ensure their children do not fall into

addiction," she added.

SP Anna said that every individual is a valuable human resource for the nation and their progress directly contributes to national development.

"If you do well in studies, career and life, the country will move forward. That itself is your patriotism," she said.

She also appealed to the public to report drug-related activities through emergency helpline 112. "If you see drugs being sold or people involved in it, dial 112 and report it. Raise your voice."

She further assured that the police department is open to assisting in both action against drug trafficking and rehabilitation of those affected by addiction, calling for a collective effort to build a "drug-free society".

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

LG Saxena approves installation of 500KWp Solar Photovoltaic Plant in Leh

PTI

Leh, May 10: The UT of Ladakh is all set to achieve a unique fusion of renewable energy generation and modern sporting infrastructure, with Lt. Governor, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, giving approval for the installation of a solar plant atop the famous Ice-Hockey Rink in Leh.

The 500 Kwp on-grid Solar Photovoltaic (SPV) Plant on the rooftop of the NDS Ice Hockey Rink in Leh will be installed at an estimated cost of Rs 2.38 crore. It is a significant step towards promoting renewable energy and sustainable sports infrastructure in Ladakh. The project will be developed under the Special Development Package (SDP) of the Youth Services and Sports Department, UT Ladakh.

The project will serve as a model for integrating renewable energy solutions into public infrastructure projects across the Union Territory. Under the



guidance of Lieutenant Governor Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, efforts are ongoing to actively promote solar energy and other sustainable initiatives in line with its broader objective of environmental protection, clean energy transition and sustainable development in Ladakh.

"The installation of the rooftop solar plant at the NDS Ice Hockey Rink is an important step towards integrating clean energy solutions with modern sports infrastructure. As Ladakh moves towards becoming

a carbon-neutral and environmentally sustainable region, such initiatives will help reduce the carbon footprint while promoting green and energy-efficient development. At the same time, the project reflects our commitment to strengthening sports infrastructure and creating world-class facilities for the youth of Ladakh," said Lieutenant Governor Shri Saxena.

Ladakh, being an ecologically sensitive Himalayan region, requires sustainable and climate-responsive infrastructure development. The installation of the Solar Photovoltaic Plant at the NDS Ice Hockey Rink, apart from harnessing the abundance of sunlight, would also contribute towards reducing carbon emissions and further strengthen Ladakh's efforts to emerge as a carbon-neutral region.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Dr Shahid Flags Off J&K U-20 Men's Football Team

REHAN QAYOUM MIR

Srinagar, May 10: Commissioner Secretary, Youth Services and Sports Department, Jammu and Kashmir, Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary on Sunday expressed concern over what he termed as attempts by certain vested interests to create confusion regarding the participation of the Jammu and Kashmir football team in national-level competitions.

Speaking during the flag-off ceremony of the J&K U-20 Men's Football Team at TRC Ground Srinagar, Shahid Iqbal Choudhary said misleading reports about the team being dropped from the tournament had caused unnecessary anxiety among players and parents.

He said the J&K Sports Council had been



authorised by the All India Football Federation (AIFF) to conduct football-related activities, including player selection and team participation, till the formation of an elected football association in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The selection process has been conducted in a fair and transparent manner. Players from different districts of Jammu and Kashmir participated in the camps and were selected purely on merit," he said.

Referring to the controversy over the team's participation, the Commissioner Secretary said some individuals had attempted to stop the team from participating by raising objections regarding the absence of elections in the football association.

He said the matter was taken up with the AIFF

and Union Ministry officials, following which the participation of the J&K team was formally cleared.

Choudhary further said sports should be kept away from vested interests and controversies, adding that the focus must remain on providing opportunities to young athletes to compete at the national level.

He also appealed to the media to verify facts before publishing reports related to sports administration and team participation, saying unverified news creates confusion among sports-persons and parents.

"We are committed to promoting a healthy sports culture and ensuring a transparent system for young players in Jammu and Kashmir," he added. (KNO)

EDITORIAL

Flood Crisis Management Teams Need Of The Hour

The high-level review led by Union Home Minister Amit Shah marks a pivotal moment in India's ongoing efforts to strengthen disaster preparedness and climate resilience. As climate change accelerates, the increasing frequency and intensity of floods, heat waves, and other natural calamities demand a proactive and coordinated response from the government and society at large. Shah's emphasis on establishing Flood Crisis Management Teams (FCMTs) across all states underscores the importance of localised, rapid response mechanisms. These specialised teams can make the difference between chaos and coordinated action during emergencies. The push for

an integrated flood forecasting system at both national and state levels reflects a recognition that early warning is critical to saving lives and reducing damage. The proposal to develop early warning infrastructure for high-risk lakes in vulnerable regions further demonstrates an understanding that localised, precise data can significantly enhance response effectiveness. The focus on compliance with existing disaster management guidelines reveals awareness that policy alone is insufficient without proper implementation. Conducting assessments of how well states follow directives related to forest fires, heat waves, and floods is essential to closing gaps and ensuring that disaster preparedness

translates into real-world resilience. The emphasis on water conservation, including constructing check dams and utilising funds like CAMPA, aligns with the broader climate adaptation agenda. Water security is integral to mitigating the impacts of heat waves and ensuring sustainable development. The call for a comprehensive master plan adopting a "Whole of Government" and "Whole of Society" approach highlights the need for integrated efforts—combining policy, technology, community engagement, and environmental management. Improvements in weather forecasting, such as extending forecast lead times from 3 to 7 days, represent significant strides forward. However, the

challenge remains in effectively disseminating these warnings to grassroots levels, ensuring that vulnerable populations are adequately informed and prepared. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, these initiatives signal a resolute commitment to minimising casualties and building resilient communities. While the steps outlined are promising, their success hinges on meticulous implementation, interdepartmental coordination, and community involvement. With climate risks continuing to mount, India's ability to integrate technology, policy, and grassroots action will determine its resilience in the face of future disasters.

Historic Mandate For Change In Bengal

The mandate reflects growing aspirations for development, governance reforms, cultural confidence and institutional accountability, while also marking the rise of the BJP as the principal political force in Bengal

ASEERVATHAM ACHARY

The victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party in West Bengal marks one of the most defining moments in contemporary Indian politics. More than merely an electoral triumph, it signifies a major political and social transformation in a state that has historically been shaped by ideological loyalty, regional dominance, and deeply entrenched political traditions. The verdict reflects a decisive shift in public consciousness, driven by aspirations for development, accountability, security, and governance aligned with broader national priorities. For millions of voters across Bengal, the election became not simply a battle between two political parties but a referendum on the future direction of the state.

The scale of the BJP's victory itself underlines its historic significance. In the 294-member Assembly, the party secured 207 seats, comfortably crossing the majority mark and establishing a commanding two-thirds majority. The All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), which had once dominated the state with 215 seats, was reduced to just 80. This dramatic reversal reflects not only growing dissatisfaction with the incumbent regime but also a powerful endorsement of an alternative political vision centred on governance, stability, and development.

What makes the mandate even more remarkable is the sheer scale of the BJP's expansion. The party retained all 77 seats it had won in the 2021 Assembly elections and succeeded in flipping an extraordinary 129 constituencies from the Trinamool Congress. Such a massive electoral swing is rare in Indian politics and points toward a broad realignment of voter sentiment cutting across regions, communities, and social categories. A large share of these gains came from South Bengal, traditionally considered a Trinamool Congress stronghold. Of the 129 flipped seats, 77 were concentrated in districts such as North 24 Parganas, Hooghly, Paschim Medinipur, South 24 Parganas, Purba Medinipur, Howrah, Kolkata, and Jhargram. North 24 Parganas alone accounted for 18 flipped seats, followed by Purba Bardhaman with 14 and Hooghly with 12. Districts that had previously



delivered near-total victories to the AITC witnessed a dramatic political turnaround, indicating that the change was structural rather than temporary. The BJP's rise in West Bengal was neither sudden nor accidental. It was built over years of organizational expansion, ideological persistence, and sustained grassroots mobilization. Thousands of karyakartas worked under difficult circumstances, often facing intimidation, political hostility, and violence. Many party workers lost their lives while defending democratic participation and political pluralism. For the BJP and its supporters, therefore, the victory is not merely electoral but deeply emotional, symbolising years of sacrifice, resilience, and unwavering commitment.

The ideological roots of this transformation are also linked to the legacy of Syama Prasad

Mookerjee, one of Bengal's most prominent nationalist leaders and the founder of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. His vision of national unity, cultural confidence, and political integrity continues to resonate strongly within the BJP's political narrative in Bengal. The party successfully connected this historical legacy with present-day aspirations for economic development, governance reforms, and institutional accountability.

The election took place against a backdrop of growing dissatisfaction with the Mamata Banerjee-led government. Allegations of corruption, political violence, intimidation, and administrative bias increasingly dominated public discourse. Reports of post-poll violence, booth capturing, and suppression of opposition workers raised concerns about the health

of democratic institutions in the state. At the same time, issues such as illegal infiltration and demographic imbalance became politically significant, particularly in border districts. For many voters, the election became an opportunity to express frustration over governance failures and demand greater stability, security, and fairness in administration.

Another major dimension of the election was the perception among sections of society that cultural and religious expressions were being selectively restricted. Controversies relating to Durga Puja processions, Ram Navami celebrations, and administrative permissions created resentment among many voters, especially within the Hindu community. These concerns were viewed not merely as religious matters but as issues connected to cultural rights and civil liberties. The BJP effectively channelled this sentiment by presenting itself as a defender of Bengal's cultural identity, traditions, and civilisational heritage. At the centre of the BJP's campaign stood Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose leadership played a decisive role in shaping the electoral narrative. Modi's emphasis on development, welfare delivery, national security, and inclusive governance resonated across social groups, particularly among women, youth, and first-time voters. Throughout the campaign, he consistently projected the vision of a "double-engine government," arguing that alignment between the Centre and the state would ensure faster development, smoother implementation of welfare schemes, and more effective governance.

Modi's political instincts became evident during the campaign itself. He repeatedly suggested that the Trinamool Congress would struggle in districts where it had once enjoyed overwhelming dominance. The final results validated much of that assessment. Equally significant was the organisational strategy crafted by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Known for his meticulous electoral planning and booth-level management, Shah played a central role in converting public sentiment into electoral success.

The BJP's performance in constituencies with substantial Muslim populations further

demonstrated the effectiveness of this strategy. Despite assumptions that such areas would remain politically inaccessible, the party secured important gains, indicating that governance and development narratives were capable of cutting across traditional political boundaries.

The election also highlighted the growing importance of issue-based politics in Bengal. The BJP concentrated its campaign on themes such as infiltration, corruption, governance deficits, economic development, women's safety, and employment generation. This contrasted with the Trinamool Congress's reliance on emotional slogans and personality-driven politics. As a result, the slogan "Khela Hobe" gradually gave way to "Vikas Hobe," symbolising a broader shift in voter priorities toward governance and development.

Overall, the election results reflect a profound transformation in Bengal's political imagination. The BJP's victory is not merely an electoral milestone but evidence of its expanding grassroots acceptance across both urban and rural Bengal. It signifies the emergence of a new political discourse centred on governance, development, cultural identity, and institutional accountability.

For West Bengal, this mandate opens the possibility of a new political era. The challenge before the BJP now lies in translating electoral success into administrative delivery while balancing Bengal's rich cultural heritage with the aspirations of a modern and economically dynamic society. If the expectations of the electorate are fulfilled, this victory may ultimately be remembered not merely as a change in government, but as the beginning of a larger political and developmental transformation in the state.

The election results reflect a profound transformation in Bengal's political imagination. The BJP's victory is not merely an electoral milestone but evidence of its expanding grassroots acceptance across both urban and rural Bengal.

The writer is the National Coordinator for Digital Library, Library and Documentation Department, BJP; Views presented are personal. Source: The Pioneer

What Should We Expect From Trump-XI Summit

The scheduled visit of President Donald Trump to Beijing on May 14-15 2026, marks a pivotal moment in global diplomacy, signalling an attempt to stabilize the world's most critical, yet deeply strained, bilateral relationship.

PRABHU DAYAL

The scheduled visit of President Donald Trump to Beijing on May 14-15 2026, marks a pivotal moment in global diplomacy, signalling an attempt to stabilize the world's most critical, yet deeply strained, bilateral relationship. Coming after a period of intense economic volatility and geopolitical friction, the summit – the first by a U.S. president in nearly a decade – is less likely to yield a transformative "reset" and more likely to focus on damage control and the establishment of "managed competition".

Expectations for this high-stakes meeting are diverse, ranging from hopeful trade deals to apprehensions regarding shifting stances on security. The most immediate expectation is the restoration of regular, high-level communication between the two leaders, which has been severely lacking. In an era marked by "tense stability," the personal interaction between Mr Trump and President Xi Jinping is considered a necessary guardrail to prevent misunderstandings from escalating into open conflict. While both leaders have signalled an interest in dialogue, they are expected to navigate intense domestic pressures.

Trump is seeking to appear strong on China, while Xi wants to project authority aimed at

tightening Party control and ensuring economic stability ahead of the 21st Party Congress in 2027. Trade will take centre-stage, with expectations focused on an extension of the current "trade truce". Following intense trade war friction and heavy tariff adjustments, the summit is likely to yield some important results. China is expected to pledge large-scale purchases of American goods, particularly agricultural products, energy, and Boeing aircraft. This would be a "headline-grabbing" win for the Trump administration.

In exchange, the U.S. may offer partial relief from tariffs and a pause on technology export restrictions on Chinese subsidiaries. Discussions may also focus on establishing new bilateral "boards" for trade and investment to manage disputes in non-sensitive sectors. The geopolitical context of the 2026 visit is complex, influenced by the ongoing U.S. military engagement in Iran, Middle East Stability: A major priority for Trump is securing Chinese leverage to prevent further escalation in the Middle East and stabilize global energy markets, particularly given China's role as a major energy importer.

Securing Chinese leverage to manage Middle East instability and stabilize energy markets is a central, yet complex, goal of the Trump administration's foreign policy. Facing an intensified Iran crisis and a blocked Strait of Hormuz, the

US is pressuring Beijing – a primary importer of Middle Eastern oil – to use its economic influence to curtail Iranian actions. While China has officially called for de-escalation and pledged a "greater role" in restoring peace in the Middle East, it has maintained its own diplomatic engagement with Tehran.

During Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi's recent visit, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi called for an urgent "comprehensive ceasefire," stating that a resumption of hostilities is unacceptable. China urged the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz for international shipping. China will benefit from stability, but it also gains leverage as the US deals with a "muddle" in the region. The Taiwan "Red Line": China considers Taiwan the primary risk factor, viewing US actions as undermining sovereignty.

Beijing is expected to strongly press for a halt to U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, which reached record levels in late 2025. On 17 December 2025, the U.S. government announced a record-breaking arms sales package for Taiwan valued at approximately \$11.1 billion, marking the largest single weapons deal in history between the two sides. This move, authorized by the Trump administration, followed a \$330 million sale of aircraft parts in November 2025, reinforcing a rapid escalation in defense cooperation amid rising tensions in the Taiwan Strait.

The U.S. side aims to manage this tension while navigating concerns that a transactional approach could lead to shifts in long-standing security policies. The meeting between Trump and Xi Jinping highlights an attempt to manage intense rivalry through direct negotiation. The U.S. treats economic and security commitments to Taiwan as re-negotiable bargains, which boosts near-term deterrence but introduces volatility. Technology is the core conflict area of the U.S.-China strategic rivalry, surpassing trade in geopolitical significance by determining future military superiority and economic dominance.

The competition focuses on artificial intelligence (AI), semiconductors, and quantum computing, with both nations employing industrial policy and tech nationalism. While the U.S. has imposed severe restrictions on high-end semiconductors, there is an expectation of discussing guardrails for artificial intelligence (AI) to stop the rivalry from spiralling into a crisis. However, both sides are likely to keep collaboration in advanced technology, military applications, and frontier AI capabilities firmly off the table, focusing instead on risk management. Given the deep-seated structural issues and mistrust, there should not be high expectations for comprehensive breakthroughs.

The Trump-Xi summit is aimed at managing deep-seated structural rivalries rather

than achieving a comprehensive, long-term framework. The summit is more likely to codify new, temporary rules of coexistence, useful for short-term stabilization rather than a durable, long-term framework. The ultimate goal is to move from a state of antagonism to a more predictable form of "managed competition". The 2026 Trump visit to China serves as a crucial test of leadership for both presidents. It is a necessary exercise in ensuring that the world's most significant economic powers can continue to engage despite fundamental differences.

While transactional deals on agriculture or technology are expected to dominate the headlines, the true success of the visit will be measured by the ability to prevent economic and technological competition from turning into military confrontation. The key metric for success is managing the rivalry to prevent it from escalating into military conflict, especially regarding Taiwan and regional disputes, amid a backdrop of significant trade friction. The meeting aims to transition from a "cyclical spiral" of mistrust towards a more structured competition, and lasting success depends on creating long-term frameworks to prevent escalation.

The writer, a retired IFS officer, served as India's Ambassador to Kuwait and Morocco and as Consul-General in New York. Source: The Statesman

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

Why Intelligent People Hate Noise

Arthur Schopenhauer on noise and genius

NEEL BURTON

In August 1821, while living in Berlin, the 33-year-old Arthur Schopenhauer had an altercation with a neighbour, the 47-year-old seamstress Caroline Louise Marquet. On that day, he was enraged by the noise of three women talking in the private ante-room to his apartment. When he demanded that they leave, two of the women complied but Marquet refused.

Later, Marquet claimed that Schopenhauer kicked and punched her and threw her down the stairs, leaving her paralysed on the right side and unable to work. He countered that he had only pushed her, and that she fell to the ground on purpose so that she could sue him.

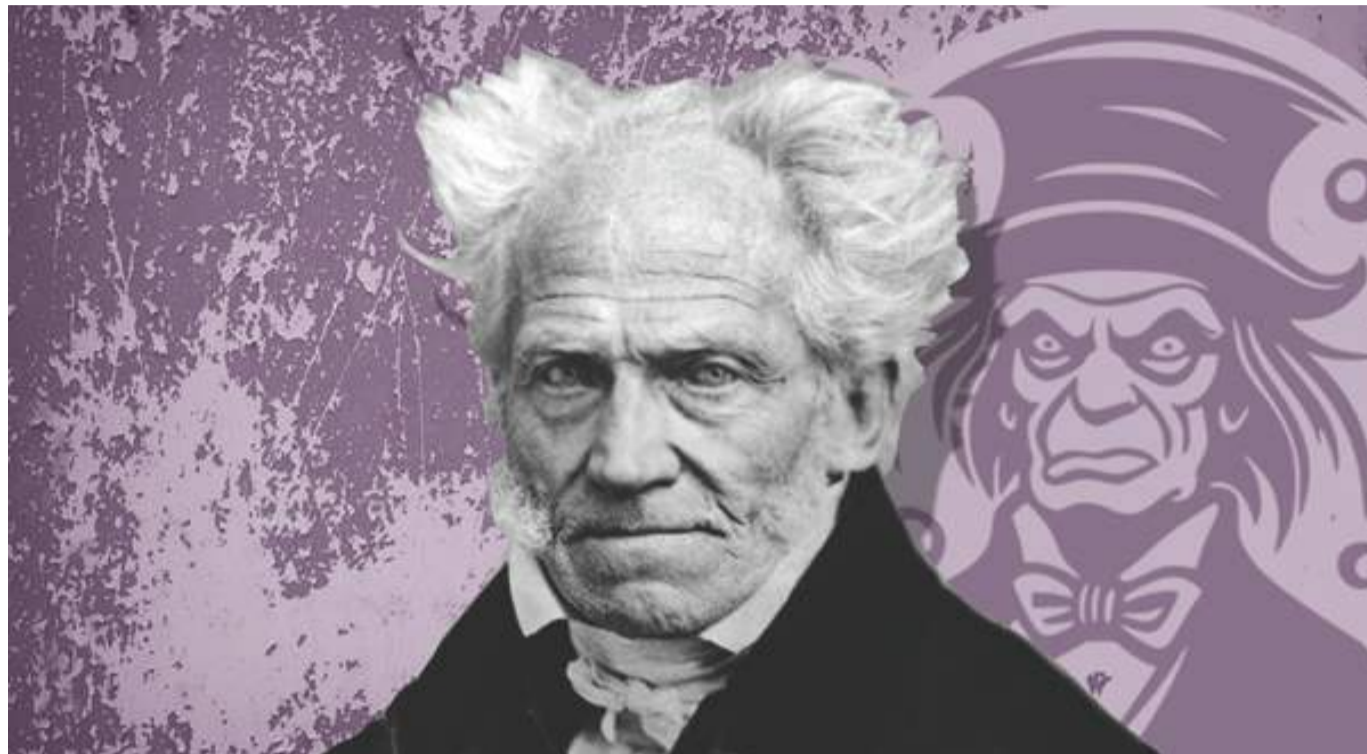
Following a six-year legal battle ending in May 1827, he was made to pay her medical expenses along with a maintenance allowance of 60 thalers per annum for the rest of her life. On the day she died in 1842, the great philosopher of compassion recorded in his ledger, in Latin, *Obit anus, abit onus* [The crone dies, the burden is lifted].

Moral of the story: Don't make noise around philosophers.

The Case of Immanuel Kant

Schopenhauer built his pessimistic philosophy on that of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who also hated noise. Although gregarious and fond of laughter, Kant needed absolute quiet to write. According to lore, he once moved lodgings on account of a crowing rooster.

In May 1784, Kant, who lived all his life in Königsberg (present-day Kaliningrad), penned a letter to the police superintendent to complain about the "stentorian singing of prayers by the hypocritical inmates of the jail" (in the Iliad, the Greek herald Stentor had a voice as loud "as fifty voices of other men"). He was offended not merely by the noise but also by the insincerity of the prayers, which were offered, he thought, simply to appear God-fearing to the jailor.



Schopenhauer on Noise

In his essay *On Din and Noise* (1851), Schopenhauer rails hardest not against the nattering of women but the cracking of whips in narrow resounding streets (the nineteenth-century equivalent of revving motorbikes, or those fart-can cars with modified exhausts): "Hammering, the barking of dogs, and the screaming of children are abominable; but it is only [his emphasis] the cracking of a whip that is the true murderer of thought." To him, the cracking of whips was all the more unbearable for being unnecessary, and, worse than unnecessary, useless.

Schopenhauer links misophonia (noise intolerance, "the hatred of sound") with intellect and creativity: "Certainly there are people, nay, very many, who will smile at [my predicament], because they are not sensitive to noise; it is precisely these people, however, who are not sensitive to argument, thought, poetry, or art, in short, to any kind of intellectual impression: a fact to be assigned to the coarse quality and strong texture of their brain tissues."

For Schopenhauer, genius is precisely this: the ability of the mind to remain focused on a single point and object. But as soon as

a focused mind is interrupted or distracted, it is no better than an ordinary mind. It is, says Schopenhauer, as with a large diamond, which, if shattered, loses most of its value; or as with an army, which, if dispersed, loses most of its power.

It is not merely a matter of genius but also of happiness, because, as every creative person knows, there is no happiness greater than that of the mind at play. Aristotle famously conceived of God, the traditional fount of all reason, as a mind that turns blissfully upon itself. In contrast, people who are too frightened to put two and two together, or

Key points

- Many creative geniuses, not least Schopenhauer and Kant, hated noise.
- Schopenhauer wrote an essay on noise in which he linked noise intolerance with intelligence and creativity.
- For Schopenhauer, genius is nothing but the ability of the mind to concentrate itself on a single point.

too dense to do so, use noise to occupy and numb/dumb their minds.

What Modern Science Says

Was Schopenhauer being fanciful in linking misophonia with intellect and creativity? In recent years, researchers at Northwestern University have found that real-world creativity may be associated with a reduced ability to filter "irrelevant" sensory information. "Leaky" sensory gating may help our brains integrate ideas that are outside the focus of our attention and thereby promote associative and creative thinking. But if these extraneous ideas are, well, noise, they can also cripple us.

The genius mind is like a high-compression engine, which knocks if fuelled with lower-octane gasoline, i.e. nonsense. Even if he might have overstated his case, Schopenhauer, it seems, was on to something.

Neel Burton is author of the newly published *The German Greeks: German Philosophy and the German Philosophers*.

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Source: *Psychology Today*

Ultra-Processed Food: Why The Debate Needs Less Fear And More Clarity

Improving diets requires more than labelling a broad category of foods as harmful. It requires careful consideration of evidence, behaviour and context. The challenge is to produce advice that is scientifically sound, practical to follow and responsive to the real conditions in which people make food choices.

BEVERLEY O'HARA

For many people interested in health and wellbeing, the idea of ultra-processed food, or UPF, has become more than a technical term in nutrition research. In public debate, it often serves as shorthand for wider concerns about modern, industrially produced food.

Those concerns are not baseless. A large body of research has found associations between high UPF intake and poorer health outcomes. But the evidence is not always easy to interpret. Many studies rely on self-reported diets and struggle to separate the effects of processing from nutrient quality, eating patterns and wider social factors. The evidence points to the need for more careful use of the term.

In the US, the Food and Drug Administration and the Department of Agriculture began a formal process in 2025 to develop a uniform federal definition of ultra-processed foods, arguing that no single authoritative definition exists for the US food supply. The central question is: what exactly makes a food "ultra-processed"? Is it the ingredients it contains, the way it is made, the extent to which it has been altered from its original structure, or some combination of these?

This helps explain why the topic has become so divisive. Within nutrition research, there is no consensus on how far the UPF category should guide policy or individual dietary advice. Some researchers see it as an important way of identifying harmful patterns in modern diets. Others argue that it is too broad to serve as a sound basis for dietary guidance on its own.

That distinction is important. A category can be useful for tracking population diets while still being too blunt to tell someone whether a particular product belongs in their shopping basket, especially when it tries to capture ingredients, industrial processes, product formulation, marketing, palatability and dietary patterns within one category.

There are also valid concerns about the role of large food companies in shaping diets and public health. Many highly processed products are designed to be cheap, convenient, heavily marketed and easy to overconsume.



But the political and commercial problems of the food system are not identical to the scientific problem of classification.

A better approach would distinguish more clearly between products that are ultra-processed and nutritionally poor, products that are ultra-processed but may still have a useful place in the diet, and minimally processed foods that people are encouraged to eat more of. This might include some fortified foods, high-fibre breads or medical nutrition products, depending on their composition and use. One way to balance warnings about UPFs

is to give more attention to positive dietary guidance. In the EAT-UP framework, I propose the term "unrefined plant foods", or UPs, to describe plant foods whose natural structure remains largely intact. These include whole fruits, vegetables, beans and grains that have not been heavily broken down or reconstituted.

This is not a replacement for the UPF framework. Its main value may be communicative: it balances advice about what to limit with clearer guidance on what to add. Many dietary guidelines already encourage people to

eat more fruit, vegetables, legumes and whole grains. Naming these foods more precisely may help make that advice clearer.

Like any food category, unrefined plant foods would need careful definition. The phrase "largely intact" is not self-explanatory, and different researchers, policymakers and consumers may draw the boundary differently. But the value of the concept lies in shifting part of the public health message from avoidance to addition.

Advice based only on avoidance can easily become confusing or punitive. Evidence that

higher intakes of whole plant foods are linked with better health also has limitations, including food diaries, self-reporting, cohort studies and the difficulty of separating diet from wider lifestyle factors. Even so, fruit, vegetables, legumes and whole grains are consistently supported across dietary guidelines, public health research and long-standing evidence on diet quality.

These debates also shape how people understand food in everyday life. Dietary advice should avoid creating unnecessary fear around food. When processing is treated as inherently dangerous, the result can be confusion, guilt and anxiety rather than healthier behaviour. In some cases, highly moralised food messaging may even encourage disordered eating patterns, including an unhealthy fixation on foods perceived to be perfectly pure or healthy.

This is also why language needs care. Phrases such as "real food" are often used to mean foods that are minimally processed or close to their original form. But the phrase can also carry assumptions about what counts as proper eating and who is getting it wrong. Public health messages need to take account of differences in income, time, access and daily constraints.

Improving diets requires more than labelling a broad category of foods as harmful. It requires careful consideration of evidence, behaviour and context. The challenge is to produce advice that is scientifically sound, practical to follow and responsive to the real conditions in which people make food choices.

The UPF debate has rightly placed industrial diets and food quality at the centre of public health discussion. The next step is not to abandon the framework, but to improve it: to define categories more clearly, distinguish between different kinds of processing, and combine warnings about harmful products with practical advice about the foods people can eat more of. In practice, that means combining processing-based classifications with evidence about nutrient profile, fibre content, additives, marketing and the role a food plays in the overall diet.

Beverley O'Hara is lecturer in Public Health Nutrition, Leeds Beckett University. Source: *The Conversation*

CJI Kant lauds Solicitor General for his new books

'He entered hallowed halls of legal world'

PTI

New Delhi, May 10: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Sunday lauded Solicitor General Tushar Mehta for authoring two books and said he has entered the hallowed halls of the legal world armed with nothing but "sharp quips and a keen eye".

Speaking at the launch of Mehta's two books— 'The Bench, the Bar, and the Bizarre', and 'The Lawful and the Awful' here -- CJI Kant in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah said when Mehta invited him for the event, he was wondering as to what would happen if the world of law takes a vacation to a comedy club.

The CJI said as he flipped through the pages, he found himself struck by a question over and over again as to how did Mehta find the time to pen these charming tomes in the first place?

"As the solicitor general of India, I see him spending his mornings in Court Number 1, his afternoons are probably divided in other courtrooms and government work, and his evenings, I hope, he spends reading thousands of pages of briefs. And yet, we're all here to launch not one, but two books!

"So I tried to solve this mystery! I have two running theories. Either Tushar Bhai has successfully petitioned the Almighty for a 25th hour in the day and kept that



order strictly for himself, or he has discovered that the best time for comedic writing is while Court No. 1 is taking too long to read a file during a hearing. My money's on the latter!" the CJI said to the hall full of an audience comprising family of Shah, judges of top court and high court, and senior lawyers and other members of the legal fraternity.

"Far from being just witty stories, these are revelations about how the humanity of the legal process occasionally peeks through its marble facade. Tushar Bhai is not content with simply tossing jokes at us, he masterfully serves every anecdote as both amusement and illumination," he said. CJI Kant said that Mehta "reminds us gently that the law, for all its seriousness, is still a profoundly human enterprise". At

the end of the day, behind every statute and every ruling are just people— with their own quirks, their own flaws but also occasional bursts of comic brilliance, he said.

The CJI said who could have guessed that dusty case files, legal jargon, and solemn judicial proceedings could turn into fodder for hilarity and yet here "we are, grinning from ear to ear, as if we have just stumbled across a Supreme Court ruling written by Mark Twain".

"Solicitor general has done what so few dare to attempt: he has entered the hallowed halls of the legal world armed with nothing but sharp quips and a keen eye. And he has emerged victorious, carrying a treasure trove of anecdotes that will make even the most stoic jurist crack a

big smile.

"Through hilarious tales, piercing observations, and a comic lens that never misses its mark, these books invite readers to explore legal dilemmas with chuckles instead of headaches," he said.

Recalling several anecdotes from high courts, the CJI said that there are several such stories from courtrooms across the country and unlike these two books, which have collections of stories from other jurisdictions, Mehta should plan a third one.

"For his third Book, I think Tushar Bhai should turn his gaze towards our own judicial system, which I'm sure is feeling left out of the limelight & believe me, there is no dearth of comical tales from our own region. In fact, I'm certain we have enough material in Delhi itself to fill a library! Of course I would be more than happy to contribute to it. Naturally, I would be less tight-lipped post-retirement!" he said.

To the amusement of the gathering, the CJI said, "I think omitting the Indian Bench from his razor-sharp volumes wasn't just editorial discretion, but actually his heightened survival instinct. You see, Tushar Bhai knows that if he wrote about our quirks, his next 'Mentioning' would have been outrightly rejected in Court No. 1 without the scope of a Review Petition."

Speaking about the books, he said what elevates this current collection beyond a mere string of comical incidents, is the artistry with which they are woven into an engaging narrative.

Mehta's books offer rare insights into justice delivery: Attorney general

PTI

New Delhi, May 10: Attorney General R Venkataramani on Sunday praised Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's two newly released books, saying they offer a rare and insightful glimpse into the "hidden dimensions" of justice delivery.

Speaking at the launch of Mehta's books — 'The Bench, the Bar and the Bizarre' and 'The Lawful and the Awful' — at the Bharat Mandapam here, Venkataramani described the works as much more than collections of courtroom anecdotes.

"I wonder how studiously and courageously Tushar Bhai has blended facets deeply relevant for understanding the hidden dimensions of doing justice," the attorney general said.

"He has carefully chronicled stories of law and justice while offering peeks into human nature in both its exalted and ridiculous manifestations," he said. Calling the titles "deceptive", Venkataramani said the

books go far beyond humour or light storytelling and are rooted in Mehta's vast legal experience and sharp understanding of judicial functioning.

Besides Mehta and Venkataramani, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Chief Justice of India Surya Kant also addressed the gathering.

Venkataramani, the country's top law officer, said that every story in the two books is couched in respectful but revealing simple prose, depicting dramatic personalities, happenings and judicial adventures across courtrooms.

"The books invite us to ponder how human nature and how its invisible callings, promptings and appeals impact the business of doing justice. Every chapter heading in both the books hides more than what it intends to share, and the witty exteriors of the stories do not end with wit, satire or humour but are laced with simple and straightforward intervening comments," the attorney general said.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

World's dangerous

force but a symbol of people's trust and sacrifice.

He said the entire recruitment process was conducted by the Jammu and Kashmir authorities in a completely transparent, fair and merit-based manner. "All the recruits selected today have come through a transparent and merit-based recruitment process. I believe these young recruits will provide new strength to J&K Police and help further strengthen discipline, professionalism and decency within the force," he said.

LG Sinha said they were becoming part of a force whose glory, sacrifice and professionalism are recognised across the country.

"Today, through this platform, I want to tell all of you that you are becoming part of a force whose glory is known nationwide. Jammu and Kashmir Police is not merely the name of a force, but the name of people's faith and trust," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said the recruits were not merely entering a profession, but were taking the responsibility of carrying forward a proud legacy on their shoulders.

"You are not just joining a profession; you are carrying a legacy on your shoulders. This force has been built on the trust, expectations and confidence of the people," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said the Jammu and Kashmir Police have earned immense respect due to the sacrifices rendered by its brave personnel over the years. He said whenever brave policemen and women step out for duty, they knowingly put their lives at risk so that common people can live safely and peacefully.

"When the brave police personnel of J&K Police leave their homes for duty, they are fully aware of the dangers before them, yet they continue to protect society with courage and dedication," he said.

NATURE OF CRIME AND WARFARE CHANGING

Referring to the changing security environment, Sinha said the nature of crime and warfare has evolved significantly over the years. He said the police force now faces challenges beyond conventional terrorism, including cybercrime, cyber warfare, narco-terrorism and narrative warfare.

"The future policing system will have to deal with cyber threats, digital crimes, narrative warfare and organised terror structures. The new recruits must prepare themselves mentally and technologically for these future challenges," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor extended his best wishes to the newly recruited constables and expressing confidence that their induction would significantly strengthen the operational capability of the Jammu and Kashmir Police.

Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Nalin Prabhakar, DGP J&K; Chandrakant Bhatti, Principal Secretary Home Department; S.J.M. Gillani, Special DG Coordination PHQ; Abdul Ghani Mir, Commandant General Home Guards; M.K Sinha, ADGP Headquarters; senior officials of police and civil administration, and family members of new recruits attended the appointment letters presentation ceremony. (KNO)

J&K Police

have to fight terrorism, narcotics, organised crime and multiple law-and-order challenges simultaneously. "Joining the force is not merely a job but a symbol of sacrifice, dedication and service to the nation."

The DGP said, "Whether it is Pakistani-sponsored terrorism, organised crime, narcotics or law-and-order challenges, J&K Police stand firm in every situation. During disasters, emergencies, pilgrimages or tourist movement, the force remains at the forefront."

He said around 4,000 youth, including more than 600 women, have been selected in what he termed the biggest recruitment exercise conducted by J&K Police in recent years. "These posts were advertised in 2014 and over 5.5 lakh candidates from across J&K had applied. This reflects the eagerness of youth to join the police force," he said.

The DGP said the response also reflects the growing peace, stability and development in Jammu and Kashmir over the last six years.

"To a great extent, under the leadership of LG Sahib, new dimensions of peace, security and progress have been created. This shows that the youth want to move ahead in the national mainstream," he said.

He expressed hope that the newly selected constables would contribute significantly towards nation-building, maintaining peace and strengthening security.

NEW RECRUITS WILL ACT AS FORCE MULTIPLIERS

Giving details about the force, the DGP said the sanctioned strength of constables in J&K Police is around 53,000, while a little over 40,000 personnel are presently posted. "With the joining of these 4,000 recruits, our vacancies will reduce

considerably and our operational capabilities will increase," he said.

He said the recruits would act as "force multipliers" in anti-terror operations being carried out in mountains, forests, ridges and far-flung areas against Pakistani-sponsored terrorists.

The DGP also revealed that the recruitment process for another 6,484 constables has already been initiated following requests made to the government.

"You are becoming members of one of the bravest police forces in the country, serving the nation since 1873. There can be no greater honour," he said.

MANY AMONG SELECTED CANDIDATES ARE GRADUATES, POSTGRADUATES, B.TECH AND M.TECH DEGREE HOLDERS

Highlighting the educational qualifications of the recruits, the DGP said many among the selected candidates are graduates, postgraduates, B.Tech and M.Tech degree holders.

"We will utilise technically qualified youth in specialised areas and make full use of their skills during service," he said.

Calling J&K Police a "technology-driven and citizen-centric force," the DGP said educated youth joining the force reflects deep national devotion and patriotism among the younger generation.

"A police uniform is a symbol of discipline, honesty, loyalty, bravery, passion and sacrifice. Most importantly, it represents service to the nation," he said.

He said the recruits would undergo extensive training in physical fitness, mental strength, Nyaya Sanhita, technology, jungle warfare and modern policing methods.

"J&K Police have to work differently from traditional policing because our challenges are unique. We will prepare you physically, mentally and professionally," he said.

The DGP urged interested recruits to volunteer for elite units like Snow Leopards, Markhor and Special Operations Group (SOG), saying they would be provided advanced training.

"Along with physical fitness, mental fitness is equally important. When the body stops responding, the mind becomes the biggest weapon," he said.

Referring to the sacrifices of the force, the DGP said 1,620 personnel of J&K Police have laid down their lives for the country while fighting bravely.

"This is our golden legacy and you are its inheritors. You have to fight terrorism, eliminate crime and also take on the menace of drugs," he said.

He also advised the recruits to maintain respectful relations with the public while dealing with policing challenges.

"There should be no misbehaviour with the public. Mutual respect and public trust are essential in policing," he said.

The DGP said J&K Police has been actively participating in the "Drug-Free J&K" campaign launched by the Lieutenant Governor from April 11.

"You must win the confidence of society and the public. That is only possible through honesty and fair play," he said.

He further said police personnel remain under constant public scrutiny and therefore must maintain discipline, fitness and proper public conduct at all times.

"You are no longer ordinary civilians. We wear our uniform with pride and serve with humility," he added, while congratulating the recruits and their families once again. (KNO)

Create Flood

proactive measures, including the establishment of Flood Crisis Management Teams (FCMTs) across all states. These specialized teams are tasked with ensuring rapid response and effective management during flood emergencies. The Home Minister also called for the development of an integrated flood forecasting system at both the central and state levels, highlighting the importance of early warning mechanisms.

A key part of the strategy involves expanding the scope of early warning systems. Shah proposed that at least 60 lakes be incorporated into a preliminary plan to develop early warning infrastructure for 30 high-risk lakes in vulnerable regions such as Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, and Sikkim. These efforts will be supported by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), with an emphasis on monitoring and predicting flood patterns more accurately.

The Home Minister also stressed the importance of reviewing compliance with existing NDMA guidelines for disaster management, including those related to forest fires and heat waves. He instructed NDMA to conduct a study assessing how effectively states are implementing these directives, aiming to strengthen disaster response at district and municipal levels.

In line with the government's climate adaptation agenda, the Home Minister called for increased focus on water

conservation initiatives. He advocated for the construction of check dams and water storage projects to enhance groundwater levels and mitigate the impacts of heat waves. The utilization of the CAMPA Fund was also emphasized as a means to promote environmental balance and climate resilience.

Amit Shah highlighted the necessity of a master plan to address evolving weather patterns driven by climate change. This plan should adopt a "Whole of Government" and "Whole of Society" approach, integrating efforts across ministries, departments, and local communities. He urged officials to prioritize strengthening existing weather apps and portals, ensuring effective dissemination of forecasts and warnings to grassroots levels.

The Home Minister expressed particular interest in improving monsoon forecasts, advocating for detailed assessments of casualties, forecast accuracy, and agricultural damage during monsoon seasons. He praised ongoing efforts by various ministries and departments, noting significant improvements such as extending rainfall and flood forecast lead times from 3 to 7 days and enhancing heatwave prediction standards.

The meeting was attended by senior officials, including Union Jal Shakti Minister C. R. Patil, the Union Home Secretary, heads of NDMA, NDRF, IMD, and other key departments. Their collective focus is now on translating these directives into actionable plans to safeguard lives and property from natural calamities.

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, these initiatives reflect a resolute push toward disaster preparedness, with the ultimate goal of minimizing casualties and ensuring resilient communities across India.

Golf tourism

The Chief Minister said the government is focusing on encouraging local golfers while simultaneously using the sport to boost tourism in Jammu and Kashmir.

"This tournament is another step towards promoting golf in Kashmir. We want to encourage our local golfers and also inspire a new generation of young players to take up the sport," he said.

Omar said more than 100 golfers, including participants from different parts of the country, took part in the tournament, reflecting Kashmir's growing attraction as a golfing destination.

He said golfers from outside Jammu and Kashmir have increasingly started visiting Srinagar during long weekends specifically to play golf, expressing hope that such sporting activities would further strengthen the tourism sector.

"In North India, whenever there is a long weekend, many golfers are now coming to Srinagar just to play golf. We hope tourism will definitely benefit from this trend," he said.

The Chief Minister further said the government, in coordination with tourism authorities and event organisers, is planning more such events in future to place Kashmir prominently on the national and global golfing map.

"Our aim is to organise as many events as possible so that both local golfers and golfers from outside Kashmir can come together and play here. We want to keep our golf courses at par with the best in the country," he added.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Zaidal Tanvir Sadiq, MLA Gulmarg Pirzada Farooq Ahmed Shah, Secretary Royal Springs Golf Course Haris Ahmad Handoo Director Tourism Kashmir Syed Qamar Sajjad, the organizers and golfers from outside as well as J&K were also present on the occasion.

The tournament is being organised by Innovative Sports Leisure in collaboration with the J&K Tourism Department. The event aims to promote golf tourism and further boost the tourism sector in Jammu & Kashmir.

CM Omar

public amenities, youth facilities, heritage conservation and tourism development.

The Chief Minister began his tour at Beehama, Ganderbal, where he laid the foundation stone for construction of a Library & Reading Room to be established by the Culture Department at an estimated cost of 4.83 crore. The project is envisioned as a modern knowledge and learning space for students and youth of the district.

He also e-launched several key infrastructure projects including upgradation of inner links of Ahan Zazna, Waskura and Khojbagh Kondbal; upgradation and construction of link roads from Gutlibagh to Baba Wayil under NABARD-RIDF; construction of Sindh Riverfront Phase-I at Ganderbal; and widening and upgradation of road from Dursuma Market to Misbagh Baba Mohallah, Checkpora Arhama, involving a cumulative estimated cost of 15.36 crore.

The Chief Minister further e-inaugurated the new Divisional Office building of Sindh Forest Division at Beehama, Ganderbal, constructed at a cost of 1.11 crore, which is expected to improve administrative functioning and public service delivery in the forest sector.

In the cultural heritage sector, the Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for restoration, conservation and development of the historic Masjid Hamam and allied works at Malshahi Masjid, Malshahi Bagh, at an estimated cost of 5.01 crore. The project aims to preserve this architectural and cultural legacy while promoting heritage tourism.

At District Hospital Ganderbal, the Chief Minister inaugurated Bone Dexa Scan and Fibro Scan machines procured under CSR support from HDFC Bank at a cost of 1.16 crore. The advanced diagnostic equipment is expected to significantly improve healthcare services and facilitate early diagnosis and treatment for patients in the district.

Later, at Gadoora, Ganderbal, the Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for construction of a Youth Hostel at Government College of Physical Education, Ganderbal, to be executed by the Public Works Department at a cost of 15.26 crore.

During his visit to the college premises, the Chief Minister also inspected an exhibition showcasing modern sports science and training equipment, including magnetic gait analysis systems, force plates, body stat analysis tools, basic life support demonstration units, skiing equipment, bowling machines and coaching analysis software. He appreciated the college administration for equipping students with modern training and coaching facilities and promoting scientific approaches in sports education.

The Chief Minister also visited the work site of Guzhama Bridge where he reviewed the status of this long-pending project and directed the concerned departments to ensure timely execution while maintaining quality standards.

He was informed that the technical evaluation process has been completed and the bridge design is presently under progress. Stressing the importance of timely completion, the Chief Minister instructed the officers to ensure that the project is completed within the approved cost and stipulated timeframe so that the bridge is dedicated to the public at the earliest.

A large gathering of local residents expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister for taking up the bridge project, which had remained stalled for more than a decade. Interacting with the locals, the Chief Minister assured them that the government is fully aware of the hardships faced by the people due to the absence of the bridge and reiterated his commitment to completing the project within the stipulated timeframe.

During the tour and inauguration and foundation laying ceremonies, the Chief Minister was accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Minister for Health & Medical Education Sakina Itoo, Minister for Forests Javed Ahmed Rana, Minister for Youth Services & Sports Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani and MLA Zaidal Tanvir Sadiq.

Commissioner Secretary Housing & Urban Development Department, Commissioner Secretary Youth Services & Sports, Commissioner Secretary Culture, Chief Conservator of Forests J&K, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, SSP Ganderbal, Chief Engineer Public Works (R&B), Medical Superintendent District Hospital Ganderbal and other senior officers also accompanied the Chief Minister during the visit.

Omar dedicates

inaugurated advanced medical equipment under Corporate Social Responsibility by HDFC Bank including an ERCP Endoscopy Machine, Ultra/Doppler Sound Machine, Tissue Processor for Histo Pathology and Laser Urology equipment, procured at a total cost of 2.25 crore.

During his visit, the Chief Minister toured the newly inaugurated facilities, including the Department of Pathology, Department of Laboratory, Immunology Section, Biochemistry Section and USG Room, among others. He also interacted with doctors, technicians and paramedical staff at the hospital.

Appreciating the dedication and commitment of the healthcare workers, the Chief Minister lauded the staff for providing quality healthcare services to the people throughout the year.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Minister for Health & Medical Education Sakina Itoo, MLA Zaidal Tanvir Sadiq, Medical Superintendent JLN Hospital, representatives of HDFC Bank, senior doctors and other officials.

Amid US tariff challenge India got EU market opened for seafood through active talks: Goyal



PTI

Mumbai, May 10: India actively negotiated with the European Union to open its market for seafood exports, helping the country overcome challenges arising from steep US tariffs, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday.

Addressing reporters here, he said the government anticipated disruptions and acted swiftly to secure alternative markets for Indian exporters.

"Our government works 24 hours. Often, even before a problem arises, we begin planning and action," he said.

Goyal said the US decision to impose 50 per cent tariff on Indian seafood had dealt a major blow to exports and caused distress among fishermen.

"When America imposed a 50 per cent tariff on Indian seafood, our exports suffered a big setback. Fishermen were very worried. The Centre responded by engaging with the European Union and addressing regulatory bottlenecks that had earlier restricted Indian shipments," he pointed out.

Several Indian fishing establishments had been delisted by the EU in the past, but India used

quality control orders and standards to push for their restoration, he said.

"We took a firm approach and used quality control mechanisms. Today, more than 125 Indian fishery establishments have been registered," he said, adding that this helped India regain access to a large and stable market.

The minister said the strategic move yielded results, with seafood exports recording a growth of around 12-14 per cent last year despite global uncertainties. He stressed that opening up the EU market was crucial given its massive import demand and importance in global trade.

Highlighting the broader approach, Goyal said India was focusing on securing long-term trade opportunities through free trade agreements and global partnerships.

"If India has to become a developed nation, our international agreements must lay the foundation for the next 20-25 years. Expanding exports, boosting manufacturing and creating employment opportunities remain key priorities, and gaining access to major global markets is essential to achieve these goals," the senior BJP leader asserted.

Bar and Bench complementary, not competing institutions in constitutional democracy: ex-CJI Gavai



PTI

New Delhi, May 10: Former Chief Justice of India B R Gavai on Sunday said the Bar and the Bench are two wheels of the golden chariot on which the State's accountability rests and if one falters, the entire structure begins to lose balance.

Speaking at the 52nd Annual Convocation of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka, the ex-top judge stated that an independent judiciary does not operate in isolation and that the Bar and the Bench together sustain the promise of constitutional democracy.

"The Bar and the Bench are not two distinct or competing institutions in a constitutional democracy. They are complementary. They are, as I often said in my speeches in India, the two wheels of the golden chariot on which the accountability of the State rests. If one falters, the entire structure begins to lose balance," he said. Justice Gavai also said lawyers shape

a society's moral and political imagination, and the Indian freedom movement was shaped in significant measure by individuals trained in law, like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and B R Ambedkar.

An independent Bar resists pressures, challenges excesses, maintains a culture of constitutional argument and speaks for those who may otherwise have no voice, he added.

Justice Gavai stated that the Bar is not a professional privilege but a constitutional necessity and if the judiciary is the guardian of the Constitution, the Bar is its vigilant ally.

"Experience of both India and Sri Lanka demonstrates that the strength of constitutional democracy depends not only upon constitutional text or institutional design. It depends equally upon the presence of an independent, vigilant, and engaged Bar," he said.

Bengal poll verdict gave 'unimaginable sense of relief' to entire nation, drew global attention: PM

PTI

Jamnagar, May 10: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said people across the country felt a sense of relief after the BJP's sweeping victory in the West Bengal assembly elections, asserting that the poll outcome had drawn global attention.

The BJP put up a stunning performance in the West Bengal polls, results of which were announced on May 4, winning 207 seats in the 294-member assembly, in the process ending the 15-year rule of the Trinamool Congress under Mamata Banerjee. The TMC ended up with just 80 seats.

Modi arrived in Jamnagar on Sunday night as part of his two-day visit to Gujarat and was accorded a grand welcome at Lal Bangla Circle by party MLAs, MPs and workers.

Addressing a public gathering at the venue after his arrival, Modi said the West Bengal poll results had emotionally connected people across India unlike any other election he had witnessed.

"We have fought many elections and won many elections. Victory and defeat keep happening. But for the first time, I have seen that the Bengal elections felt



like they belonged to the whole country," he said.

"Even a person sitting thousands of miles away felt a sense of relief when change came to Bengal. Imagine how terrifying the pain of the people there must have been, that a person in Gujarat feels relieved (following BJP's victory and TMC's defeat)," he added.

The prime minister said the reaction to the election result showed the unity of the country and the emotional connection people across states shared with Bengal.

"Every corner of Gujarat felt the agony of 'what has happened to our Bengal?' And then, an unimaginable sense of relief is

felt, as if people have been freed from massive shackles. That is the emotion we see. The tears of joy in people's eyes are not drying up," said the PM.

Modi said BJP workers had made immense sacrifices in Bengal and recalled that more than 300 party workers had lost their lives there.

"I have seen many election results, but such an impact from an election result... perhaps I am experiencing this for the first time in my political life," he said.

He expressed confidence that the BJP government in Bengal would help revive the state through governance and welfare initiatives.

"The BJP will definitely fill the

50-year-old ditch that Bengal has fallen into and make Bengal run again," Modi said.

The prime minister also said the Bengal election results were being discussed globally and asserted that the victory reflected the changing aspirations of India's youth.

"The results of the Bengal assembly elections are being discussed all over the world; eminent people globally are taking note," he said.

Attacking opposition parties, Modi said those engaged only in negativity and abuse have lost touch with the country's younger generation.

"It seems that many political parties and leaders in the country are completely unaware of the aspirations of today's youth," he added.

Referring to the BJP's recent electoral success in the local body polls in Gujarat, the PM said people had created history by breaking decades-old records.

Highlighting Gujarat's long-standing support for the BJP, Modi said the state had consistently blessed the party for generations.

Gujarat's development journey over the past two decades has transformed its global image, he said. "There was a time when,

apart from salt production, we weren't doing much else," he said.

Gujarat is now manufacturing semiconductor chips, metro coaches and modern railway engines, while also preparing to build aircraft, he pointed out.

He also cited Gujarat's initiatives in climate action and renewable energy, saying the state was among the first governments globally to create a dedicated climate department.

Gujarat has emerged as a major hub for solar and renewable energy and played a key role in the country's development revolution, the PM said.

Referring to his scheduled visit to the Somnath Temple on Monday, Modi said the event would mark 75 years since the re-consecration of the revered place of worship after Independence.

The prime minister said the anniversary was linked to the vision of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and recalled that India's first President Dr Rajendra Prasad had attended the ceremony at the time despite opposition from several quarters.

After the Somnath event, the prime minister will travel to Vadodra, where he is scheduled to inaugurate a hostel complex developed by the Sardar Dham Trust.

In our country, every day is dedicated to mothers: Amit Shah



PTI

New Delhi, May 10: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said every day in India is dedicated to mothers while recalling a personal note that he used to touch his mother's feet every day and continues to light a lamp before her picture even after her death.

Addressing a gathering at the launch of two books authored by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, The Bench, the Bar and the Bizarre and The Lawful and the Awful, Shah said, "I used to touch my mother's feet every day, and even after she

is no more, I light a lamp before her picture every day."

"In our country, every day is dedicated to mothers," he said.

Amit Shah appreciated Tushar Mehta for dedicating the books to his mother and launching them on Mother's Day.

The home minister described Mehta as not only the solicitor general of India and a knowledgeable lawyer, but also his friend.

Shah also said that the Constitution and the judiciary have made significant contributions in strengthening and deepening the roots of India's democracy.

Assam Guv appoints Himanta as CM, swearing in on May 12



PTI

Guwahati, May 10: Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya on Sunday appointed BJP leader Himanta Biswa Sarma as the chief minister of Assam, paving the way for the NDA's third consecutive government in the state.

After being unanimously elected leader of the BJP-led NDA's legislature party, Sarma, along with alliance leaders, met the governor at Lok Bhavan and formally stated claim to form the government.

"In exercise of the powers vested in him under clause (1) of Article 164 of the Constitution of India, the Governor of Assam is pleased to appoint Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma

as the Chief Minister of Assam," said a notification signed by Chief Secretary Ravi Kota.

Sarma will be sworn in at 11.40 am on May 12 at Veterinary College Field, Khanapara, it added.

The NDA, comprising the BJP, Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and Bodoland People's Front (BPF), secured a sweeping mandate in the assembly polls, winning a record 102 seats in the 126-member House. The BJP bagged 82 seats, while AGP and BPF won 10 seats each.

Sarma, who first became chief minister in 2021, is the first non-Congress leader in Assam to serve two consecutive terms as CM.

CM Vijay begins implementing assurances, more challenges in store



PTI

Chennai, May 10: C Joseph Vijay, popular among his admirers as 'Thalapathi' (Commander), has assumed office as the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, overcoming hurdles. However, bigger challenges now await him in implementing his party's poll promises.

Immediately after assuming office on Sunday, Vijay made three announcements towards implementing his poll promises, with the first one being on providing 200 units of free electricity to domestic consumers for every bill, but with a rider. Only those who consume up to 500 units during a two-month billing cycle can avail this concession.

Following this announcement, criticism has emerged on social media, saying that he promised 200 units of free electricity to everyone, but now is introducing restrictions to avail the benefit.

He also announced the setting up of anti-narcotic task force units --65 units-- across the state for tough action against drugs. In another

announcement, he said that the setting up of a special task force for women's safety, called 'Singa Pen Sirappu Athiradi Padai' was ordered. He said that this force would ensure expeditious action over complaints related to women's safety.

However, he has a slew of other promises to fulfil against the background of a heavy debt burden, as he described it.

Vijay said, "I have to tell you about the current status of the Tamil Nadu government. The state has been burdened with a debt exceeding Rs 10 lakh crore, and the treasury has been completely emptied, leaving an unbearable burden."

He said his party-led government was taking over the responsibility only under such a situation.

Vijay's assurances in the party manifesto include Rs 2,500 monthly assistance for women below 60 years, 8 gm gold (22 Ct valued at around Rs 1.13 lakh) for marriage and six free cooking gas cylinders a year, per family.

He has also promised a gold ring for every baby born in Tamil Nadu under the (Thai Maman

Thanga Mothiram Thittam--Maternal uncle gold ring scheme) as the government's blessing, along with a "Baby Welcome Kit," comprising products offering nutritional support and baby dresses.

The actor-turned-politician also assured a quality silk saree in addition to gold for indigent brides and interest-free loans up to Rs 5 lakh for women-run SHGs. He assured corruption-free good governance if voted to power in his maiden electoral fight.

The manifesto also laid importance on education. To prevent school dropouts, mothers or guardians of children studying in government and state-aided schools will receive Rs 15,000 annually.

Vijay promised 100 special residential schools named after iconic leader K Kamaraj, credited with revolutionising education in the state, and higher education loans of up to Rs 20 lakh. The TVK founder also assured the AI Ministry, AI University and AI City.

The manifesto placed a strong emphasis on agrarian welfare, too.

PM congratulates CM Vijay over phone

PTI

New Delhi, May 10: Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephonic conversation with the new chief minister of Tamil Nadu, C Joseph Vijay, and congratulated him on taking the oath of office on Sunday.

The TVK chief was sworn in as the Tamil Nadu chief minister earlier in the day.

The prime minister and the new chief minister of Tamil Nadu spoke over the phone, and, during the conversation, Modi congratulated Vijay on taking oath as the chief minister of the state, sources said.

Earlier, in a post on 'X', Modi, while congratulating Vijay, said the central government will keep working with the state government to improve the lives of people.

"Congratulations to Thiru C. Joseph Vijay on taking oath as Tamil Nadu Chief Minister. Best wishes for his tenure ahead. The Central Government will keep working with the Tamil Nadu Government to improve the lives of people," Modi said.

The Sunday swearing-in ushered in the first non-DMK, non-AIADMK government in Tamil Nadu, the Dravidian heartland, in about 60 years.

Iran responds to ceasefire proposal as drones target Gulf nations

AP

Dubai, May 10: Iran has sent its response to the latest US ceasefire proposal via Pakistani mediators and wants negotiations to focus on permanently ending the war, Iran's state-run media said Sunday. Pakistan confirmed receiving it.

Iran seeks to end the war on all fronts, including in Lebanon, where Israel fights the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group, and to ensure the security of shipping, its state TV said.

Washington's latest proposal addressed a deal to end the war, reopen the Strait of Hormuz and roll back Iran's nuclear program, an issue that Tehran would rather discuss later.

The White House had no immediate comment about Iran's reply. President Donald Trump is giving diplomacy "every chance we possibly can before going back to hostilities," the US ambassador to the United Nations, Mike Waltz, told ABC. Iran's new supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, who has not been seen or heard publicly since the war began, "issued new and decisive directives for the continuation of operations and the powerful confrontation with the enemies" while meeting with the head of the joint military command, the state broadcaster reported, with no details.

Ceasefire is tested by drones
Meanwhile, the fragile ceasefire was tested when a drone ignited a small fire on a ship off Qatar and the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait reported drones entering their airspace. The UAE blamed Iran. No casualties were reported, and no one immediately claimed responsibility.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry called it a "dangerous and unacceptable escalation that threatens the security and safety of maritime trade routes and



Iran warns against French-British effort in Strait of Hormuz

AP

Dubai, May 10: Iran's deputy foreign minister warned against a planned French-British effort that aims to support maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz after hostilities are over. "The presence of French and British vessels, or those of any other country, for any possible cooperation with illegal US actions in the Strait of Hormuz that violate international law will be met with a decisive and immediate response from the armed forces," Kazem Gharibabadi said on social media.

French President Emmanuel Macron responded by saying it won't be a military deployment but an international mission to secure shipping once conditions allow.

Several attacks against ships in the Persian Gulf have occurred over the past week, and a US effort to "guide" ships through the strait was quickly paused.

vital supplies in the region."

Iran and armed allied groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon have used drones to carry out hundreds of strikes since the war began with US and Israeli attacks on February 28.

Iran says it's on full readiness' to protect nuclear sites

Trump has reiterated threats to resume full-scale bombing if Iran does not accept an agreement to reopen the strait and roll back its nuclear program. Iran has largely blocked the strategic waterway that's key to the global flow of oil, natural gas and fertilizer since the war

began, rattling world markets.

The US in turn has blockaded Iranian ports and on Friday struck two Iranian oil tankers it said were trying to breach the blockade. Iran's Revolutionary Guard navy says any attack on Iranian oil tankers or commercial vessels would be met with a "heavy assault" on one of the US bases in the region and enemy ships.

The American military said Sunday that it has turned back 61 commercial vessels and disabled four since the blockade began April 13.

Another sticking point in

negotiations is Iran's highly enriched uranium. The UN nuclear agency says Iran has more than 440 kilograms (970 pounds) of uranium that is enriched up to 60 per cent purity, a short, technical step from weapons-grade levels.

In an interview with state media posted late Saturday, an Iranian military spokesman said its forces were on "full readiness" to protect nuclear sites where uranium is stored.

"We considered it possible that they might intend to steal it through infiltration operations or heli-borne operations," Brig. Gen. Akrami Nia told the IRNA news agency.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in an excerpt of an interview with CBS scheduled to air later Sunday said the war isn't over because the enriched uranium needs to be taken out of Iran. "Trump has said to me, I want to go in there, and I think it can be done physically," he said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Saturday that Moscow's proposal to take enriched uranium from Iran to help negotiate a settlement remains on the table.

The majority of Iran's highly enriched uranium is likely at its Isfahan nuclear complex, the International Atomic Energy Agency director-general told The Associated Press last month. The facility was bombed by US-Israeli airstrikes in the 12-day war last year and faced less intense attacks this year.

Pakistan oversaw face-to-face talks between the U.S. and Iran last month and continues to pursue mediation. In rare public comments, army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir said Islamabad remains committed to helping end the conflict. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif spoke by phone with his Qatari counterpart.

Krunal, Bhuvneshwar fire RCB to top of IPL points table with nervy win

Mumbai Indians knocked out

PTI

Raipur, May 10: Krunal Pandya's gritty 73 and Bhuvneshwar Kumar's all-round heroics (4/23, 7 not out) powered Royal Challengers Bengaluru to a nervy two-wicket victory and knocked Mumbai Indians out of the race for IPL playoffs here on Sunday.

The win took RCB to the top of the Indian Premier League table with 14 points from 11 matches.

In a low-scoring attritional contest, fortunes swung from one side to the other but RCB got over the line in the final ball, scoring two off it.

The defending champions made the required 15 runs off the final over bowled by Raj Bawa, including a six from Bhuvneshwar while also losing the last recognised batter in the form of Romario Shepherd (4).

RCB kept fighting from being reduced to 39 for three, and eventually finished with 167 for eight in reply to MI's 166/7.

Pandya battled cramps towards



the end but produced a sensational 73 off 46 balls with five sixes and four fours, doing the bulk of scoring for his side.

A pivotal moment came in the 18th over when Naman Dhir and Tilak Varma came close from midwicket and long-on to a top edge which had carried all the way towards them. While Dhir collected the ball, he parried it to Tilak poorly and the chance was missed. Pandya made the most of it, hammering two sixes off AM

Ghazanfar to take RCB closer, but on the final ball, Tilak completed a bunny hop catch to remove the biggest threat.

Trying to impose himself on the game early on, Virat Kohli (0) smacked one straight to mid-off where Bawa took a fine low catch off Deepak Chahar (2/33).

Chahar struck again in the third over when he found an outside edge off Devdutt Padikkal's (12) bat, who had struck a four and a six to make a confident start.

Indian U-15 boys enter 6 finals, 7 boxers win bronze medals

PTI

Tashkent (Uzbekistan), May 10: India's U-15 boys delivered a strong showing in the semifinals of the Asian Boxing U15 Championships, with six pugilists advancing to the finals and seven others settling for bronze medals here on Sunday.

In the 33kg category, Yash Kumar registered a dominant 5:0 victory over Kiyon Iqbal of UAE to advance to the final. Sastha Vasanth Ashok Kumar (37kg) also secured a win against Aziretali Sanzharbekov of Kyrgyzstan.

In the 43kg category, Samir Bohra delivered a composed performance to defeat Adizbek Ilkhombekov of Uzbekistan 4:1. Sudarsan Vasudeva Chandak (52kg) impressed with an RSC (Referee Stopped Contest) win against Amirmahdi Shad of Iran.

In 58kg, Mohd Yasser recorded a convincing



5:0 win over Seyyedariyomhammad Mousa of Iran. Ronak Parag Lokhande (67kg) rounded off the winning performances with an RSC victory against Mukhammadali Berdikulov of Kyrgyzstan.

"Movies Schedule"

Monday, 11th May



BHOOTH BANGLA (U/A16+)

Hindi - 10:45 AM, 05:30 PM



Michael (U/A 13+)

English with English Subtitles
02:00 PM



The Devil Wears Prada 2 (A)

English with English Subtitles
03:00 PM



Dhurandhar: The Revenge (A)

HINDI - 11:00 AM



THE SHEEP DETECTIVES (UA 7+)

ENGLISH - 04:45 PM



DAADI KI SHADI (U)

HINDI - 07:05 PM



MORTAL KOMBAT II (A)

ENGLISH ATMOS WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
06:00 PM
Hindi - 12:30 PM



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