



BRICS condemns Pahalgam attack, backs zero tolerance against terrorism

Rejects double standards in counterterrorism, seeks accountability for supporting terrorist activities

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, May 15: Reiterating their unwavering commitment to combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, BRICS foreign ministers on Friday strongly condemned the April 22, 2025, Pahalgam terror attack that claimed the lives of 26 civilians, and called for concerted global action to eliminate the menace of terror.

A statement released at the conclusion of the 2-day BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting hosted in New Delhi, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "The Ministers strongly condemned terrorism, describing such acts as criminal and unjustifiable irrespective of motivation, timing, location or perpetrators."

It said, "Ministers specifically referred to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir in which 26 people were killed and several others injured."

The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to fighting terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including cross-border movement of terrorists, terror financing and safe havens.



"They reiterated that terrorism should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilisation or ethnic group and that all those involved in terrorist activities and their support must be held accountable and brought to justice," the statement said.

The BRICS ministers also called for "zero tolerance" against terrorism and rejected double standards in countering terror activities.

They stressed that global counter-terror efforts must comply with international law, the UN Charter, international humanitarian law and human rights obligations.

The ministers welcomed the activities of the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Working Group and its sub-groups functioning under the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Action Plan.

They also called for the expeditious finalisation and adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism within the United Nations framework and sought concerted action against all UN-designated terrorists and terror entities.

The statement said, "The member countries failed to arrive at a consensus on the Middle East situation,

preventing the issuance of a joint declaration."

"There were differing views among some members as regard to the situation in the West Asia/Middle East region. BRICS members expressed their respective national positions and shared a range of perspectives," it said.

On the situation in West Asia, the ministers expressed concern over the humanitarian crisis and condemned violations of international humanitarian law, including attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure and obstruction of humanitarian aid.

The statement said members highlighted | More on P6

'Op Sindoor' demonstrated effectiveness of integrated air defence: IAF Chief

Modern battlefields shifting toward autonomous warfare: A P Singh

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, May 15: Highlighting the lessons learnt from 'Operation Sindoor,' Indian Air Force Chief A P Singh on Friday said drones and unmanned aerial systems (UAS) are no longer merely "eyes in the sky" but have become "claws in the sky", significantly altering the nature of modern warfare.

Addressing a seminar on unmanned aerial systems and counter-UAS at Subroto Park here, the Air Chief Marshal, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Recent conflicts, including Operation Sindoor, demonstrated the growing offensive role of drones and the need for integrated air defence systems and real-time coordination among the armed forces."

"We have realised during Operation Sindoor that these systems are no more eyes in the sky. They are like claws in the sky now," he said.

Referring to the nearly four-day conflict during Operation Sindoor, Singh said India's success in neutralising incoming drones and weapons systems was possible because of coordination and a centralised command structure.

According to the IAF chief, none of the adversary's drones or weapons systems hit their intended targets during the



operation as Indian forces operated in an integrated manner. Singh said modern battlefields were shifting from concentrated air power to decentralised and autonomous systems, making drones and counter-drone technologies increasingly relevant.

"There is no denying that the battlefield has shifted," he said, adding that the future of warfare lies in manned and unmanned teaming.

"You cannot take man out of the loop completely. Maybe not in the loop, but at least on the loop," he said.

The Air Chief Marshal also underlined the importance of complete domain awareness in aerial warfare and warned against the dangers of friendly fire incidents in the absence

of coordination. "We cannot afford situations where we do not know where our people are and where others are," he said, referring to the recent downing of US F-15E Strike Eagles over Kuwait in an apparent friendly fire incident.

On the challenge posed by low-cost drones, Singh said counter-UAS systems also needed to become affordable and scalable. "We have been hearing about low-cost attacks and high-cost defence. If attacking systems can be scaled up because of their low cost, obviously we need something we can afford," he said.

At the same time, he said the value of the target being protected must also be considered while evaluating defence costs. The IAF chief | More on P6

BJP protests liquor sales in Srinagar, police foil march to CM's residence

Several leaders detained; party demands complete ban on alcohol in Kashmir; NC hits back, cites 2017 excise policy

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, May 15: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday staged a protest in Srinagar against the sale of liquor in Kashmir, demanding a complete ban on alcohol and closure of all wine shops across the Valley.

The protest march began from Ram Munshi Bagh in Sonwar and proceeded towards Gupkar Road, where the residence of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is located.

However, police stopped the march well before it could reach the high-security zone and detained several BJP leaders.

According to details available with news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), security forces were deployed in strength, and the protesters were dispersed peacefully after being halted

near Gupkar Road.

Slogans such as "Sharab noshi band karo" (Stop liquor sale) and "Omar Sarkar hi hi" (Down with Omar government) were raised during the march, with demonstrators accusing the administration of promoting alcohol consumption in the region.

BJP spokesperson Altaf Thakur told reporters at Gupkar that the party in Kashmir is against all kinds of intoxicants. "The National Conference government wants to drown the local youth in liquor," Thakur alleged. He warned that if the government does not act, the BJP will continue its protests. "The BJP will lock down liquor stores. This is a warning," he said.

BJP leader Manzoor Bhat also threatened that the party may launch a hunger strike if its demand is ignored, blaming rising addiction | More on P6

'NEET-UG re-exam on June 21; computer-based test from next year'

PTI

New Delhi, May 15: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Friday announced that the NEET-UG re-examination will be held on June 21, and said the medical entrance exam will be computer-based test from next year onwards as part of reforms in view of allegations of irregularities linked to it.

Addressing a press conference, Pradhan said the government's "topmost priority" remains students and their future. He said strict action is being taken against irregularities found in the conduct of the NEET-UG.

"Our topmost priority is the future of the students. We will not let malpractice happen this time. The government is with you," he said.

NEET-UG held on May 3 was cancelled following allegations of irregularities in the examination process.

He said the issue came to light after objections were



received through the National Testing Agency (NTA) grievance system regarding alleged overlaps with "guess papers", following which an inquiry was initiated.

"The process began on May 8 and continued through May 8, 9, 10 and 11. When we got clarity and were confirmed that questions had gone out. We took the decision on May 12 in the interest of students," he said.

"Immediately, discussions were held, and both the NTA

and the government, along with the Higher Education Department, initiated a preliminary inquiry. The matter was then handed over to the concerned agencies of the Government of India," he said.

The minister said the government had handed over the case to the CBI and expressed confidence in the probe.

"CBI has rightly said... no one will be spared. Whether someone is within the NTA or outside it, no one will be spared," he said.

J&K sets ball rolling for reconstitution of JJBs, CWCs

Justice (Retd.) Puneet Gupta appointed head of selection-cum-oversight panel

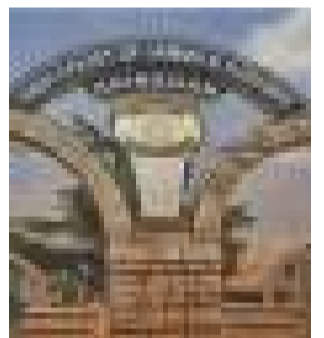
KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, May 15: In a significant move, the Jammu & Kashmir Government has initiated the process for reconstituting Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) and Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) across the Union Territory.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), to begin with, the Department of Social Welfare has constituted a selection-cum-oversight committee to facilitate the appointments.

The panel will be headed by Justice (Retd.) Puneet Gupta, former judge of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

The term of members of JJBs and chairpersons/members of CWCs had recently ended. However, on April 20, 2026, the government granted them a six-month extension from the date of expiry of their term, or until the new boards



and committees are constituted—whichever is earlier.

A Juvenile Justice Board, as per law, comprises a Metropolitan Magistrate or Judicial Magistrate (First Class) and two social workers, of whom at least one must be a woman. The JJBs deal with cases involving children in conflict with law.

Each Child Welfare Committee consists of a chairperson and four members, with at least one woman and another expert in | More on P6

Govt constitutes high-level committee for MSME Health Clinic initiative

Panel to frame SOPs, develop AI-based support system, revive stressed MSME units across J&K

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, May 15: The government has constituted a high-level committee for the implementation of the Jammu and Kashmir MSME Health Clinic initiative to strengthen the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir.

According to Government Order No.912-JK(GAD) of 2026, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), sanction has been accorded to the formation of the committee comprising senior officials, financial experts and institutional representatives to oversee and operationalise the ambitious initiative designed to support and revive MSMEs in the Union Territory.

The committee will be chaired by the Administrative Secretary of the Public Works (R&B) Department, while the Administrative Secretary of

the Industries and Commerce Department has been designated as Member Secretary.

Other members of the committee include the Administrative Secretary of the Labour and Employment Department, Director of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu, Managing Director of Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd., Directors of Industries for Kashmir and Jammu, and the Executive Director of Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI).

The government has entrusted the committee with a wide-ranging mandate to create a comprehensive framework for the identification, diagnosis, intervention and monitoring of MSMEs, particularly those facing financial or operational distress.

As per the order, the committee will formulate Standard Operating | More on P6

India, UAE sign landmark energy, defence pacts during PM Modi's visit

Abu Dhabi pledges USD 5 bn investment

PTI

Abu Dhabi, May 15: India and the UAE on Friday inked a series of landmark pacts spanning strategic petroleum reserves, long-term LPG supply, defence and shipping, with Abu Dhabi pledging investments totalling USD 5 billion in India, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi engaged in high-level talks with President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan amid the escalating West Asia conflict.

One of the six pacts was a strategic collaboration agreement signed between Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company to strengthen India's energy security, including cooperation in petroleum reserves and possible collaboration on liquid natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) storage facilities.

It will enhance the UAE's participation in India's



strategic petroleum reserves to 30 million barrels and set up strategic gas reserves in India, according to an official statement.

A separate pact between Indian Oil Limited Company and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company will facilitate new opportunities in the sale and purchase of LPG, including long term supply of the fuel

and entry into a long-term sale-and-purchase agreement between the two companies.

India and the UAE also signed a framework for a strategic defence partnership which focuses on defence industrial collaboration, technology sharing, innovation and regional security cooperation, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

Under the framework, the two countries are set to explore joint development of military hardware besides boosting cooperation in a number of other crucial areas.

The two sides also signed a separate strategic collaboration pact on LPG, which is supposed to ensure long-term supply of the cooking fuel widely used in India.

The agreements came amid the ongoing conflict in West Asia, which has heightened concerns in India over disruptions to crude oil and gas supplies through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical shipping route for the country's energy imports.

The prime minister described the agreements inked between the two sides as "pivotal" in vital sectors such as energy, defence, infrastructure, shipping and advanced technologies. He said they will provide a "fresh boost" to India-UAE comprehensive strategic partnership.

Modi said his visit to the UAE was "brief, yet extraordinarily fruitful" and he was confident that the outcomes will "further solidify the bonds of friendship between us, and contribute to achieving growth and prosperity."

The UAE announced investments worth USD 5 billion in India - which, Modi said, will "further deepen economic ties."

The MEA said that the USD 5 billion investment commitment | More on P6

Council of Ministers approves Rs 93 crore power infrastructure projects for Srinagar



KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MAY 15: The Council of Ministers, chaired by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, has approved the augmentation of the Grid Sub Station at Zainakote from 450 MVA to 780 MVA at an estimated cost of Rs 67.66 crore.

The Council, as per an official statement, also approved the upgradation of the 132 KV Pampore-Rawalpora and Rawalpora-Bemina transmission lines at a cost of Rs 25.47 crore. The approvals were accorded during the 6th

meeting of the Council of Ministers.

The projects are aimed at significantly strengthening the power infrastructure in Srinagar and adjoining areas by enhancing transmission capacity, reducing power interruptions and ensuring a more reliable and efficient electricity supply to consumers.

The augmentation of the Zainakote Grid Sub Station, along with the transmission line upgrades, is expected to improve overall grid stability and help meet the growing electricity demand in the region, particularly during peak load periods.

Sakeena Itoo visits JVC Hospital Bemina, reviews patient care services, other facilities

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MAY 15: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, visited JVC Hospital Bemina on Friday to inspect the functioning of various healthcare facilities and review patient care services being provided at the hospital.

During the visit, the Minister, as per an official statement, undertook a comprehensive tour of several departments of the hospital and assessed the availability of medical services, infrastructure, healthcare delivery systems and overall patient management.

The Minister also interacted with patients, attendants, doctors, paramedical staff and hospital administration to obtain first-hand feedback regarding the quality of treatment and functioning of the institution. She enquired about the availability of medicines, diagnostic facilities and other essential



healthcare services being extended to the patients.

Emphasising the Government's commitment towards strengthening public healthcare infrastructure, Sakeena Itoo directed the hospital authorities to ensure efficient patient care, improved sanitation, timely medical attention and smooth functioning of all departments. She stressed upon the medical staff to maintain utmost dedication and compassion while dealing with patients. She reiterated that

the Government remains committed to providing accessible, affordable and quality healthcare facilities to the people and assured that all genuine requirements of the hospital would be addressed on priority.

Principal SKIMS Medical College, Medical Superintendent JVC Hospital Bemina, faculty members of different specialities and other senior officers of health department were also present on the occasion.

DLSA Reasi organise legal awareness camps

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, MAY 15: Under the visionary leadership of Chairman Khalil Choudhary (also Pr. District and Sessions Judge) and the able guidance of Secretary Pooja Gupta, District Legal Services Authority Reasi organised an awareness programme focusing on "Surakshit Bachpan, Surakshit Bhavishya" campaign under JAGRITI Scheme, POCSO Act; menace of Drug Abuse and NDPS Act.

The DLSA team, as per an official statement, consisting of Chief LADC Rashi Baru; Deputy Chief LADC Bhumica Sharma; ALADC Dheeraj Thakur and ALADC Niharika Bamotra coordinated the event.

The Chief LADC sensitized the students to the objectives of the "Surakshit Bachpan, Surakshit Bhavishya" campaign and explained various provisions of the POCSO Act meant for the protection of children from sexual offences. She emphasized the importance of awareness, early reporting and safeguarding child rights.

The speakers also highlighted the need to eradicate the menace of drug abuse and informed the participants about the penalties and legal consequences under the NDPS Act. Students were encouraged to stay away from drugs and adopt a healthy and responsible lifestyle.

Commissioner Secretary School Education visits Vidya Samiksha Kendra Jammu, reviews functioning

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, MAY 15: Commissioner Secretary, School Education, Ram Niwas Sharma, Friday visited the Vidya Samiksha Kendra Jammu to review functioning of the integrated educational monitoring and governance system established under the School Education Department.

During the visit, the Commissioner Secretary, as per an official statement, took a comprehensive review of the real-time monitoring mechanisms being implemented through the VSK platform for improving governance, transparency and efficiency in the education sector across the Union Territory.

The officers and technical teams briefed the Commissioner Secretary regarding various digital dashboards, data analytics tools and monitoring modules being utilized for tracking key educational indicators. These included student attendance, teacher attendance, infrastructure status, learning outcomes and implementation of various schemes under Samagra Shiksha.

The Commissioner Secretary reviewed the school attendance scenario across the UT and assessed the district-wise performance. He directed officers to follow up with low-attendance schools and ensure that attendance is marked daily, on time, and by all teachers without fail.

The Project Director Samagra Shiksha, J&K and technical team Vidya Samiksha Kendra briefed the Commissioner Secretary about the progress achieved highlighting the enhancements in Digital Learning achieved through the VSK. This included the launch of new bots such as Shikshak Sahayak, Digilearn as well as Smart Attendance, Study Buddy Chatbot, including the recently launched J&K Sarvekshan ChatBot.

The Director, Samagra Shiksha also showcased the Data



Monitoring Framework including the Dashboards Platform and the CRM system driven Tele-Calling set up in the VSK.

Ram Niwas Sharma emphasized the importance of technology-driven governance in strengthening the education system. He directed the concerned officers to ensure effective utilization of the platform for evidence-based decision making and timely grievance redressal. Stressing upon data accuracy and regular up-dation, he said that the Vidya Samiksha Kendra would play a pivotal role in enhancing the accountability and improving the quality of education in schools across J&K.

The Commissioner Secretary also interacted with the officials and staff working at the centre and appreciated their efforts in establishing a robust digital monitoring ecosystem for the School Education Department. He asked for further strengthening the

coordination with the field functionaries and ensuring optimum use of technology for monitoring the educational initiatives and flagship programmes in the UT.

While reviewing the progress of the low performing districts, the Commissioner issued strict instructions to the Technical team for regular follow up. He suggested the JK VSK team to utilize the entire manpower of the organization to improve the outreach and engagement at the ground level.

Reviewing the district-wise performance of VSK initiatives, Ram Niwas Sharma directed the VSK team to submit detailed district-wise performance data of all the VSK bots to facilitate closer monitoring and assessment of implementation across the districts.

The Commissioner Secretary further directed the officials to convene a review meeting with all the Chief Education Officers (CEOs) regarding the performance of VSK Bots. He cautioned that the

Chief Education Officers of the low performing districts shall be put to task.

While reviewing the JK Sarvekshan initiative, the Commissioner Secretary instructed the Samagra Shiksha team to create a dedicated WhatsApp group and ensure that all concerned officials are informed to commence survey filling in a timely manner. During the review, feedback was also provided for improved clarity and inclusiveness while implementing this initiative.

Reviewing the performance of the Parent Pulse Bot, the Commissioner Secretary stressed the need to improve the platform's outreach, responsiveness and parent engagement to ensure better utilization and user satisfaction.

While reviewing the Shikshak Sahayak Chatbot, an AI Bot for helping Teachers during their classroom engagements, the Commissioner Secretary instructed the VSK Team to enhance the Digital Tools available on the platform. He appreciated the outreach achieved over the last 2 weeks, where over 50 percent of all School Teachers have registered their presence on this Bot.

Ram Niwas Sharma also emphasized on taking the VSK initiative to each district of the UT in the upcoming phase of implementation this year.

The Commissioner Secretary also visited the 2 Digital Studios established at the VSK J&K to review the set up, which fuels the J&K e-Pathshala TV Channel under Samagra Shiksha, J&K, launched earlier this year. Instructions were issued to involve Teachers from across the UT in creating Interactive Videos in Local Language such as Kashmiri, Urdu, Dogarias well as English and Hindi.

Project Director Samagra Shiksha Bhawani Rakwal and other senior officers of the School Education Department, Samagra Shiksha and technical teams were present during the visit.

Census-2027

DC Srinagar, SMC Commissioner review preparations for self-enumeration

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MAY 15: In connection with Census-2027, the Deputy Commissioner (DC), Srinagar (Principal Census Officer (Rural), Akshay Labroo and Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) (Principal Census Officer (Urban), Faz Lul Haseeb Friday chaired a joint meeting of District and Sectoral Officers of all line Departments at Banquet Hall Conference Complex, Srinagar.



At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner and SMC Commissioner, as per an official statement, assessed the modalities for Self-enumeration and review progress of House listing Operations (HLO) and its updation on Census Management and Monitoring System (CMMS) under Phase-I of Census-2027 operations in the District.

During the meeting, a comprehensive review of the ongoing preparatory activities related to Phase-I of Census-2027 was undertaken, with particular focus on ensuring smooth implementation of self-enumeration procedures, completion of House Listing Operations within stipulated timelines and real-time updation of data on the CMMS portal.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of maintaining accuracy, transparency and coordination during the Census exercise, terming it a vital national exercise that forms the basis for planning and policy formulation. He directed all concerned

Officers to ensure that the House Listing Operations are conducted meticulously and that no household is left uncovered during the enumeration process.

The DC instructed all line departments to strengthen inter-departmental coordination and provide full logistical and technical support to field functionaries for seamless execution of the exercise. He further directed Officers to closely monitor field-level progress on daily basis and ensure timely updation of collected data on the Census Management and Monitoring System to avoid discrepancies and delays.

Highlighting the significance of public participation in the self-enumeration process, the DC called upon Officers to intensify awareness generation activities at the grassroots level so that citizens are properly informed about the process and benefits of accurate Census data. He also stressed the need for capacity building and handholding support for field staff to ensure efficient handling of digital platforms and

census-related procedures.

The duo, while reviewing the urban component of the Census operations, directed all Charge Officers and field teams within Municipal limits to ensure proper verification and timely completion of House Listing Operations in all Municipal wards of the City.

The SMC Commissioner further underscored the importance of the Census exercise and emphasized maintaining data integrity and adhering strictly to the prescribed Census guidelines and timelines. The Duo directed Officers to adopt a proactive and coordinated approach for successful conduct of Census Phase-I and reiterated that all departments must work in close synergy to achieve the targets efficiently and within the notified schedule. On the occasion, Additional Deputy Commissioner/Charge Officer (Rural), Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, briefed the meeting about the action plan and activities undertaken so far in rural areas of the District for smooth conduct of the Census exercise.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Awareness activities under Nasha Mukta Abhiyan continue across Bandipora

KT NEWS DESK

BANDIPORA, MAY 15: Awareness and outreach activities under the ongoing 100-Day Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan continued across Bandipora district on Friday with essay competitions, awareness sessions, pledge ceremonies and community programmes organised at various educational institutions and public platforms.

Essay writing competitions under NMBA were organised under the

mentorship of the Principal GDC Gurez at HS Kanzalwan and HS Koragbal to spread awareness among students regarding the harmful effects of drug abuse.

Under the guidance of Principal Prof. Suresh Kumar Dogra, the NSS Units of GDC Bandipora completed NMBA wall activities including awareness paintings, anti-drug slogans, informative messages and creative illustrations aimed at promoting a drug-free society.

The Youth Club of NSS Units of GDC Bandipora, in collaboration with the

Department of Sociology, also organised an anti-drug awareness programme in which NSS Programme Officer Prof. Irfan Ahmad Wagay highlighted the causes and harmful effects of drug abuse on youth.

Awareness activities under NMBA were also held at GHS Nadihal, PM SHRI GHS Odina, HS Panar and Anganwadi Centre Drawar, while Mahila Samities meetings were organised at Panchayat level by the ICDS Department.

Municipal Committee Sumbal, in collaboration

with New Era School Sumbal Sonawari, organised a major anti-drug awareness programme attended by officers from Education Department, Police, GDC Sumbal and other departments.

A special NMBA awareness session was also organised at Government HSS PTL Gurez Bandipora where SHO Tulail, BDO Tulail and Principal addressed students regarding the harmful effects of narcotics, legal consequences under the NDPS Act and the importance of resisting peer pressure.

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS SOPORE

In the case of: Atiq Begam w/o: Mohd Sultan Bhat R/o: Gulshan Krankshivan Colony.

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

(Registrar of Birth and Death) ...Non Applicant

NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE

Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of Birth event of the applicant's Husband namely Mohd Sultan Bhat S/o: Gh Qadir Bhat as 02-09-2023 at Home

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

Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Sopore

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS SOPORE

In the case of: Shabir Ahmad Dar s/o: Nazir Ahmad Dar R/o: Nowpora Kalan.

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

(Registrar of Birth and Death) ...Non Applicant

NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE

Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of Birth event of the applicant's Son namely Abrar Shabir s/o: Shabir Ahmad Dar as 10-06-2013 at M.C.H Sopore.

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

Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Sopore

Dump near Lidder river sparks health, eco fears

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Anantnag, May 15: Large quantities of waste are being dumped close to the banks of the Lidder River in the Sarbal area of Pahalgam, triggering outrage among residents and environmental activists who warned that the pollution poses a serious threat to the fragile ecosystem and public health downstream.

Resident said that the garbage generated from hotels, restaurants, residential areas and other commercial establishments is being accumulated near the river, posing a serious threat to the fragile ecosystem as well as to the health of people dependent on the river water downstream.

They said that although the government had established a waste management plant at Sarbal Pahalgam for scientific disposal of waste, the situation on the ground remains alarming as the fencing around the facility has been damaged, allowing waste material and contaminated runoff to flow directly towards the Lidder River, particularly during rainfall. "Heaps of garbage can be seen



lying scattered around the plant, and with every spell of rain, dirty water and other pollutants from the waste piles get washed

into the river," said a local. "The location of the dumping site itself is highly inappropriate. The waste and contaminated liquid

directly enter the Lidder River, which is a source of drinking water for dozens of water supply schemes across Anantnag district."

Another resident said the unchecked dumping of waste near the river could lead to severe environmental degradation and increase the risk of water-borne diseases among the population using the river water for drinking and household purposes.

"We are not only talking about pollution of a river but the destruction of an entire ecosystem. Thousands of people depend on this water downstream. If immediate measures are not taken, the consequences could be irreversible," he said. Environmental activists expressed serious concern over the growing waste crisis in the tourist resort and questioned the absence of proper scientific waste disposal mechanisms despite rapid commercial expansion in the area.

"There should be proper facilities and infrastructure for the disposal and treatment of waste. If such facilities are not available, then on what basis are hundreds of hotels, guest houses and other structures being allowed to come up every year in Pahalgam?" an

environmental activist questioned.

He said Pahalgam, being one of Kashmir's prime tourist destinations, is witnessing an increase in tourist footfall. However, waste management systems have failed to keep pace with the expansion.

Locals alleged that despite repeated complaints and growing public concern, the authorities have failed to take timely and effective measures to address the issue. Residents have now urged the administration to immediately shift the dumping site away from the riverbanks, restore and strengthen the fencing around the waste management facility, ensure scientific disposal of waste and take urgent steps to protect the purity of the Lidder River.

They warned that if the issue continues to be ignored, it could severely impact public health, tourism and the ecological balance of the region. Chief Executive Officer of the Pahalgam Development Authority (PDA), Mir Nasrool Hilal Jeri, said this comes under the municipal committee.

"I will still look into it," the CEO said—(KNO)

CS steers stakeholder consultations for growth of key economic sectors

KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, May 15: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Friday chaired detailed consultations with key stakeholders to devise a comprehensive strategy and institutional platform aimed at accelerating the economic growth of Jammu and Kashmir by strengthening core sectors including Tourism, Agriculture, Handicrafts and Industry.

The high-level consultative meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department; Regional Head of RBI Jammu; Managing Director, J&K Bank; Director, IIM Jammu; Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce; Secretary, Skill Development, Revenue and Employment Departments; besides representatives from BIS-AG-N, RXIL and other official and non-official stakeholders.

During the deliberations, the Chief Secretary underscored that the primary objective of the meeting was to evolve a unified mechanism capable of bringing all stakeholders onto a common platform for giving a major boost to the economy of Jammu and Kashmir. He observed that several initiatives are already underway across different sectors and stressed the need for convergence among them to maximize their impact.

Highlighting the ongoing interventions of the government, the Chief Secretary referred to the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) for Agriculture, MSME Health Clinic and Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) for Industry, Mission YUVA for entrepreneurship promotion and the Homestay initiative for Tourism, besides several Government of India schemes



aimed at supporting these sectors.

He emphasized that the present need is to create a single integrated ecosystem that takes into account the strengths and challenges of all sectors and works in a convergence mode to support economic verticals such as Tourism, Agriculture, Industry and Handicrafts in a coordinated manner.

The Chief Secretary further proposed that the existing Mission YUVA framework, including the Small Business Development Units (SBDUs) functioning at the district level, along with the MSME Health Clinic established under the RAMP programme, could be reoriented and leveraged to provide easier access to credit, expert advisory services, capacity building and

sustained handholding support to aspiring entrepreneurs and enterprises across sectors.

He observed that all these sectors fundamentally operate as economic enterprises with the common objective of achieving growth and profitability, and therefore require a unified institutional mechanism capable of continuously assessing their health and extending timely support for their expansion and sustainability.

Stressing the importance of financial inclusion and institutional support, the Chief Secretary called for optimum utilization of various Government of India schemes and frameworks including the New Credit Linked Guarantee Scheme, Agriculture Infrastructure Fund,

local Industrial Policy initiatives, RBI-sponsored Unified Lending Interface (ULI) and the Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS). He said these initiatives could significantly strengthen support systems for farmers, traders, artisans, industrial unit holders, hoteliers, homestay operators, self-help groups and other farm and non-farm enterprises across Jammu and Kashmir.

To carry the initiative forward in a structured manner, the Chief Secretary directed constitution of a core team of relevant stakeholders to be headed by the Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department, with representation from the Employment Department, RBI, J&K Bank, IIM Jammu and BIS-AG-N for steering the proposed framework towards achieving the desired objectives.

He stressed the need for initiating the process without delay and resolving bottlenecks progressively through collective efforts and institutional coordination. He also noted that a separate committee headed by the Additional Chief Secretary, Finance is currently working on framing the new Industrial Policy for Jammu and Kashmir, adding that the proposed integrated framework would complement these efforts and help economic sectors flourish in accordance with the aspirations of local entrepreneurs and business communities.

Other stakeholders participating in the meeting also shared their suggestions and expressed confidence that the proposed strategy, with coordinated efforts from all concerned departments and institutions, has the potential to emerge as a transformative initiative for the economy of Jammu and Kashmir on its successful implementation on ground.

FICCI FLOJKL expands first-ever programme to Srinagar

KNO

Srinagar, May 15: FICCI FLO Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh (FLO JKL) on Friday said it has completed five years of promoting women's entrepreneurship across the Union Territory and is now expanding its footprint to Srinagar for the first time.

It said to mark the milestone, the organisation will host a two-day programme featuring a free eye camp for artisans and the FLO VERVE pop-up exhibition showcasing women entrepreneurs from across the region.

In a statement, a spokesperson said that as FICCI FLO Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh (FLO JKL) marks five years of championing women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment across the Union Territory, the chapter is taking a landmark step forward by extending its reach to Srinagar for the very first time.

He said that in a fitting tribute to half a decade of impact, FLO JKL is set to host its maiden programme in Srinagar, a two-day series of initiatives that reflect the chapter's founding values of inclusion, collaboration, and community upliftment.

"Ahead of the celebrations, FLO JKL also held a press conference in Srinagar on behalf of Chairperson Varsha Bansal to share its vision and upcoming plans with the media," the spokesperson said.

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

NC resorting to lies to justify Speaker's actions: LoP Sharma

KNO

Jammu, May 15: Leader of Opposition Sunil Kumar Sharma on Friday said that the National Conference was peddling lies to justify the Speaker's unjust and unfair actions. He reminded the ruling party that chairs of committees are decided in accordance with well established parliamentary conventions.

Reacting to National Conference claims that 62.5 percent of committee chairs have been allotted to the ruling party in Parliament and 37.5 percent to the opposition, Sharma said, in a statement.

He said the NC was referring to the appointment of committee heads in 2024 but was twisting facts to shield the Speaker.

"The NC is conveniently hiding the fact that chairmanship of 62.5 percent of department related standing committees was allotted



to the National Democratic Alliance (15 out of 24) and not only to BJP. 37.5 percent chairmanships were allotted to opposition parties (9 out of 24). If the principle of proportionate representation is applied to the J&K Assembly, three committee chairs should go to the BJP, five to the ruling parties, and one to independents if they are treated as a bloc, or to another opposition party," he said.

He said the Speaker has allotted chairmanships of 89 percent of committees of the J&K Assembly to the ruling party and its allies in complete disregard of the representation of parties in the House.

He said the Speaker should go through the process of appointment of heads of such committees in Parliament.

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www.kashmirthunder.in

Satish Sharma pitches for promotion of indigenous products at Flea Market

KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, May 15: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, Satish Sharma on Friday visited "The Flea Market" by Maple and Ivy at Amar Singh Club. He underscored the need for promoting indigenous products, local entrepreneurship and homegrown brands to strengthen the region's economy and cultural identity.

Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, was also present on the occasion.

During his visit, the Minister inspected various stalls showcasing fashion, handicrafts, food products, décor items and lifestyle brands from across the country, with special appreciation for participation of local Kashmiri entrepreneurs and artisans.

Interacting with the exhibitors and visitors, Satish Sharma said that platforms like the flea market provide immense opportunities to local youth, artisans, startups and small businesses to showcase their talent and products before a wider audience. He stressed that indigenous products represent the rich cultural heritage, craftsmanship and entrepreneurial spirit of Jammu and Kashmir and deserve



stronger market visibility and institutional support. The Minister observed that promoting locally-made products not only generates employment opportunities for youth but also contributes towards sustainable economic growth and self-reliance. He said the government remains committed towards encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and market linkages for local businesses and artisans.

Satish Sharma also appreciated the organisers of Maple and Ivy for bringing together local and national brands under one platform and creating a vibrant cultural and commercial space for the people of Srinagar. He noted that such events help foster creativity, community engagement, and economic

activity while offering consumers a unique retail and lifestyle experience.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani also lauded the initiative and highlighted the importance of creating more such platforms for local entrepreneurs, artisans, and startups. He said Jammu and Kashmir possesses immense creative and entrepreneurial potential which must be promoted through collaborative efforts between government and private stakeholders.

The two-day flea market is featuring over 60 brands from across the country and offers curated shopping experiences, gourmet food stalls, handcrafted products, art and décor exhibits, and interactive community spaces.

Woman dies foiling daughter's alleged abduction

NAVEED UL HAQ GANAIEE

Budgam, May 15: A woman was killed while trying to prevent the alleged abduction of her 15-year-old daughter in Kechpuran area of Khansahib, with police solving the blind murder and kidnapping case within 12 hours and rescuing the minor girl safely, officials said.

Officials said that Police Station Khansahib received information during the intervening night about an accident at Chek Sheera, where an unknown vehicle had allegedly run over a woman pedestrian, resulting in her death.

A police official said the deceased woman was shifted to District Hospital Budgam, where doctors declared her brought dead. He said a case, FIR No. 96/2026, under Sections 125A and 281 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) was registered at Police Station Khansahib, and an investigation was taken up.

During the course of the investigation, police found that the minor daughter of the deceased had allegedly been kidnapped, and the woman was killed when she tried to prevent the accused from taking her daughter away. Acting swiftly, a police team headed by SDPO Khansahib launched an intensive investigation, analysing multiple CCTV footages and technical evidence.

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X-ray facility restored at DH Shopian

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Shopian, May 15: The X-ray facility at District Hospital Shopian has been restored, bringing major relief to thousands of people dependent on the hospital for diagnostic services.

The restoration has ended weeks of uncertainty and inconvenience for patients, attendants, and emergency cases who were forced to travel outside the district for basic radiological examinations. An official from the hospital said the X-ray facility has now been made fully operational and is functioning normally. "The machine has been restored, and diagnostic procedures have been conducted successfully on Friday. This will greatly help patients requiring immediate medical attention and reduce unnecessary referrals to hospitals outside the district," he said.

The official added that efforts are being made to ensure uninterrupted healthcare services at the hospital so that patients do not face similar problems in future. The issue had triggered widespread resentment in the district, with residents alleging that the healthcare sector in Shopian continues to face frequent disruptions in essential services.

Patients, including accident victims, elderly citizens, and those suffering from severe pain, had to move from one hospital to another or visit private diagnostic centres, leading to delays in treatment and additional financial burden on already distressed families.

Patients and attendants now expressed relief over the development and hoped that essential healthcare facilities would now remain functional without any further interruption—(KNO)

EDITORIAL

Fruit Growers Need Immediate Help

The recent hailstorm has destroyed the hard work of thousands of fruit growers. Two storms in less than a month have shattered the hopes of a good fruit season this year. Now, the fruit growers have asked Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for immediate help. This is not a demand for free money but a cry for survival. Lakhs of families in Kashmir depend on horticulture. When orchards are

destroyed, it is not just the fruit that is lost. The labourer loses his wages. The farmer loses his income. Children cannot pay school fees. Old people cannot buy medicine. The damage will be felt across the Valley for many months. What makes the situation worse is that there is no insurance for horticulture crops. The government has been talking about a Crop Insurance Scheme for fruit growers for some

time, but it has not been implemented yet. The growers also want the Market Intervention Scheme to be brought back. Without these, even the little fruit that can be saved will not fetch a fair price. The government must act now. First, an immediate relief package should be announced for the affected orchardists. Second, the Crop Insurance Scheme for horticulture should be started without any

more delay. Third, the Market Intervention Scheme should be restored so that growers do not have to sell their fruit at very low prices. Fourth, a warning system should be put in place so that growers can protect their orchards before a hailstorm hits. Horticulture is the backbone of Kashmir's economy. When the backbone is hurt, the whole body suffers. The hailstorm has passed, but the pain of

the growers has not. The Chief Minister has received their petition. Now the government must deliver the relief package. Every day of delay causes more suffering. For a fruit grower, time is measured in harvests. This harvest is already lost. The next one must be protected. The government cannot wait. The growers cannot wait. Help must reach them now.

Why India's Children Need More Than Just Food: The Critical Window Of Brain Development Before Age Five

Early childhood programmes that integrate both nutritional support and developmental stimulation produce outcomes that neither can achieve alone

Dr Sarath Gopalan

A five-year-old girl was brought to my clinic not long ago. She seemed to be behind on her milestones, slower to speak, and less engaged than children her age. Her developmental assessment placed her at the level of a three-year-old. Her mother was concerned. The child had not been ill. There was no diagnosis to point to. But when we spoke about the previous two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, the picture became clearer. Prolonged school closure due to lockdown resulted in spending most of her time at home, screens replacing playtime, and meals being simpler and less varied than before. Her brain, in those quiet years, had not received what it needed to grow. She was not an exception. Across clinics, paediatricians and developmental specialists were seeing the same pattern: healthy children, falling behind, not because of the virus, but because of everything that came after it.

The World Health Organization (WHO) tells us that 90% of brain development occurs before the age of five, making the early years the single greatest opportunity we have to shape a child's cognitive, emotional, and social future. The neural connections formed during this window strengthen learning, language, memory, and resilience for life.

Getting nutrition right in this period is one of the most powerful investments we can make. Micronutrients such as iron, zinc, and selenium, often described as the neuro-nutrients, are essential for healthy brain development and function. Yet the data tells us a troubling story. Iron deficiency alone affects



approximately 50% of children under five in India (NFHS-5). Anaemia was recorded in 67.1% of children aged under five, up from the previous survey. Recent evidence, including nationally representative analysis of children aged 12-59 months, found that over 60% had micronutrient deficiencies with or without anaemia. This points to a far wider nutritional gap than haemoglobin counts alone reveal.

Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), an omega-3 fatty acid, supports brain architecture, memory formation, and visual development. Choline, another essential nutrient, is now considered essential for brain development. When mothers consume choline during

pregnancy, it supports healthy gene activity and cell structure, and growth of key brain regions - including the areas responsible for memory and thinking. These nutrients are not optional additions to a child's diet; they are foundational to their potential.

The most important nutritional intervention in a child's life begins before birth. Brain development starts in the foetal stage, and a mother's nutritional status directly shapes the neural foundation her child carries into the world. DHA supports neural connectivity in utero; iron and folic acid supplementation during pregnancy reduces the risk of low birth weight and developmental delay. Yet only 44% of pregnant women in India

consumed iron-folic acid supplements for the recommended 180 or more days (NFHS-5), a gap that represents an enormous and addressable opportunity.

This is why investing in adolescent girls is an investment in the next generation. A well-nourished girl becomes a well-nourished mother, and a well-nourished mother gives her child the best possible start. With 59% of adolescent girls in India anaemic (NFHS-5), prioritising this group through schools, community programmes, and targeted supplementation is one of the effective interventions in the entire continuum of care.

Although nutrition is important, brain development requires two parallel inputs: nutritional adequacy and emotional-social stimulation. The pandemic illustrated this powerfully. UNICEF estimates that one in seven children globally experienced significant developmental or learning loss during COVID-19, not primarily from illness, but from the withdrawal of peer interaction, conversation, and play. Screens replaced human connection, and language, motor, and social development suffered.

Responsive caregiving, verbal interaction, tactile engagement, and a stimulating environment are neurologically formative and are essential to healthy brain architecture. Early childhood programmes that integrate both nutritional support and developmental stimulation produce outcomes that neither can achieve alone. India's programme architecture is well-placed to act on it.

Programmes like POSHAN Abhiyaan and PM POSHAN already reach millions of mothers and young children across the country.

Initiatives like POSHAN Pakhwada demonstrate the power of sustained, community-level mobilisation around nutrition. The delivery architecture, which is the anganwadi network, the frontline workforce, and the community-level reach, is in place. The opportunity now is to deepen what that architecture delivers.

With the right training and support, they can expand their role from tracking physical growth to also guiding parents on early stimulation, responsive caregiving, and child development practices. Integrating the WHO and UNICEF Nurturing Care Framework, which connects nutrition, health, safety, early learning, and caregiving into a coherent whole, offers a clear and scientific roadmap for this evolution. It moves the goal from simply feeding children to helping them truly thrive.

Nutrition in early childhood is among the highest-return investments a nation can make. When children receive what their developing brains need: the right micronutrients, the right caregiving environment, and the right stimulation, the dividends are lifelong - stronger learners, more productive workers, and a more resilient society.

India has the ambition of Viksit Bharat. It has the systems. It has the science. What this moment calls for is a shared commitment to treating early childhood nutrition not as a welfare line item, but as the foundation on which everything else is built.

The writer is a Senior Consultant, Pediatric Gastroenterology at Madhukar Rainbow Children's Hospital, New Delhi, and President, Nutrition Society of India (NSI)

Is Your Idea Of Well-Being Too Small?

Why flourishing depends on more than personal happiness

Andy Tix

When you think of well-being, what comes to mind? For many of us, it's something personal: our happiness, habits, goals, or mental health. But that understanding may be too small. What if well-being isn't just about feeling better ourselves, but about participating in something larger: our families, communities, natural environments, and maybe even something sacred?

For most of my life, I've thought about well-being in a more limited way, too. Self-help books, wellness culture, and even psychology often reinforced my focus on my individual self. In many ways, that helped me. Over time, however, I began to wonder whether there's something more to a life of well-being, whether deeper meaning comes when intentionally connecting to broader forms of flourishing.

When Well-Being Becomes Too Small
An emerging understanding of well-being science supports this broader view. Researchers in Wales recently summarized several criticisms of the psychology of well-being literature, suggesting that this body of knowledge generally:

Focuses too much on the individual, overlooking other domains of well-being, and failing to recognize how one area of well-being impacts others

Leaves out factors emphasized in other fields of study, such as important health behaviors

Overestimates individual control, neglecting the role of biological influences and broader societal factors (such as social isolation and inequality) and ecological factors (such as environmental degradation and climate change)

A More Holistic Model of Well-Being
In their GENIAL model, the Welsh researchers expand the topic of well-being to three interrelated domains of focus:

The individual. This is where psychology has generally put its emphasis. It includes the critical role of positive psychological



experiences such as gratitude and mindfulness. This new model also adds the critical role of health behaviors such as exercise, diet, and sleep.

The community. This reflects the importance of social ties, social identity, and social support in fostering well-being. The Welsh researchers note this domain has become more challenging and critically important to consider, deteriorating over time with generational shifts toward isolation and loneliness.

The environment. This refers to various elements of people's environments, but particularly highlights the importance of the natural environment. Similar to downward shifts in social connection, environmental changes increasingly threaten this element of well-being.

I've argued elsewhere that well-being science often overlooks another dimension:

The sacred. This dimension often overlaps with community and nature, but for many people, transcendence plays a distinct, yet deeply interconnected, role. Taken together, this broader way of thinking moves us closer to a more holistic understanding of well-being, one that acknowledges interrelationships among personal, social, ecological, and spiritual well-being. It's at the intersection of these forms of well-being that a deeper, holistic well-being emerges.

Beyond Self-Improvement
To better understand these different ways of thinking, let's compare two people trying to live the good life of high well-being.

The first person writes in a gratitude journal or practices mindfulness activities by themselves 30 minutes per day, four times per week. The second person spends the same amount of time but in ways that integrate personal well-being with

other dimensions. For example, they mindfully work the soil in a community garden, collecting food for a meal they prepare that begins with a shared prayer. Or perhaps they work with a small group from their spiritual community on environmental justice. Or maybe they go on a hike with a group of kindred spirits, taking time to savor the beauty they witness together.

This isn't to say the first person wouldn't benefit significantly. Based on previous research, we know they probably would, and that this also likely would motivate them in other prosocial ways as well. However, the second person's lifestyle is more integrated and whole, as they explicitly connect personal practices with multiple dimensions of flourishing.

Furthermore, the second person doesn't just benefit themselves from their behavior. A holistic understanding of well-being

expands what it means to care about well-being. It's not only about improving our own lives, but about contributing to the social and environmental conditions that support the thriving of individuals, communities, and the ecological world more broadly.

Interestingly enough, by looking beyond themselves, the second person - paradoxically - may experience a stronger personal well-being boost. For instance, Martin Seligman once said that volunteering is the "single most reliable way to increase one's well-being momentarily." Experiences of awe similarly may boost well-being because they take people outside of themselves and their current frame of reference. In fact, a recent research review by the Welsh researchers found that the higher well-being increases occurred with interventions that combined physical and psychological components, such as awe walks or meditation walks.

From Personal Happiness to Shared Flourishing

Maybe the question isn't simply, "How can I improve my well-being?" A deeper question may be: "How can I live in ways that contribute to the well-being of both myself and the world around me?"

I'm not going to stop my efforts to be grateful or my routine of mindfulness practice anytime soon. However, thinking about well-being more holistically does expand how I think about my lifestyle. It helps me better appreciate how various elements of my life fit together, and how social, ecological, and spiritual connection all play a vital role in living a good life.

In this broader sense, well-being becomes more than personal happiness. It becomes a way of living that ripples outward - connecting self-care with care for others, our communities, and the natural world we all depend on - helping both ourselves and the larger world flourish.

Andy Tix, Ph.D., is a teacher and writer specializing in the psychology of well-being, religion, and spirituality. Source: Psychology Today

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Govt committed to expand access to quality education in remote areas of J&K: Sakeena Itoo

KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR (MAJALTA), May 15: Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, on Friday inaugurated newly constructed building of Government Degree College (GDC) Majalta in Udhampur district amid great applause and enthusiasm from the students and locals of the area.

MLA Udhampur East, Ranbir Singh Pathania; Commissioner Secretary, Higher Education, Ram Niwas Sharma; Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Minga Sherpa; Director School Education Jammu, Director Colleges, Director Health Services Jammu, Principal of the college, faculty members, large number of students and locals were also present on the occasion.

In her address, Sakeena Itoo, as per an official statement, congratulated the college fraternity and local community on the successful completion of the permanent campus building. She highlighted the Government's commitment towards expanding access to quality education and ensuring better educational opportunities for students living in far-flung areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister laid special emphasis on the urgent need for building a drug-free society and



called upon educational institutions to play a proactive role in spreading awareness against substance abuse. She stressed that the youth are the backbone of the nation and must be guided towards constructive, creative and socially responsible pursuits.

She urged students to stay away from drugs and harmful addictions, stating that substance abuse not only destroys individual lives but also adversely affects families and society at large. She further emphasized the importance of counselling, awareness campaigns, sports activities and community participation in combating the menace of drug addiction.

The Minister further said that educational institutions as centres of moral guidance and

discipline, have significant role for making young minds to remain focused on education, character-building and nation-building.

She highlighted that the inauguration of this permanent college building marks a significant chapter in the growth and development of Government Degree College Majalta and stands as a testament to the collective commitment of Government towards strengthening higher education in remote areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing the gathering, MLA Udhampur East, Ranbir Singh Pathania lauded the efforts of the college administration and reiterated his commitment towards educational upliftment in the constituency. Speaking on the occasion,

Commissioner Secretary Higher Education emphasized on the importance of quality higher education, youth empowerment and infrastructural development in rural institutions.

In her welcome address, Principal Dr. Shalini Sharma presented a detailed and momentous report highlighting the achievements, academic progress and developmental journey of Government Degree College Majalta. She expressed gratitude to the Government and the Higher Education department for their unwavering support in strengthening educational infrastructure in the region.

She stated that the newly inaugurated building would provide a modern academic environment and greatly benefit students from remote and rural areas.

The Minister, on the occasion, also released the college newsletter.

Earlier, Sakeena Itoo also planted a sapling in the college premises, symbolizing the commitment towards environmental conservation and a greener future. She also inspected the campus and appreciated the infrastructural facilities created for the students of the college.

During the programme, students of the college presented theme-based cultural performances and Nukkad Natak on the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan.

Speaker Legislative Assembly inaugurates advanced healthcare facilities at CHC Kremshore

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, MAY 15: In a significant step towards strengthening the healthcare infrastructure and enhancing patient care services, Speaker Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, Friday inaugurated the newly established healthcare facilities at Community Health Centre (CHC) Kremshore.

The facilities included a dedicated Hotline Service, an Ultrasonography (USG) Machine and a modern Dental Chair, all aimed at improving the accessibility, diagnostic capabilities and quality healthcare delivery for the local population.

Speaking on the occasion, the Speaker, as per an official statement, emphasized the government's commitment towards strengthening the healthcare services at the grassroots level. He stated that upgrading the medical infrastructure in rural areas remains a priority to ensure timely diagnosis, better treatment facilities and reduced dependence on tertiary healthcare institutions. He highlighted that the addition of advanced diagnostic and dental facilities at CHC Kremshore would significantly benefit the patients from Kremshore and adjoining areas.

The Hotline Service inaugurated on the occasion will facilitate better healthcare facilities and patients care. The installation of the Ultrasonography



Machine is expected to greatly enhance the diagnostic services, particularly benefiting the pregnant women, elderly patients and individuals requiring immediate imaging support. Similarly, the newly installed Dental Chair will strengthen oral healthcare services, enabling specialized dental treatment locally and reducing the need for patients to travel long distances.

During the programme, the health officials briefed the dignitaries about the functioning of the health institution and ongoing initiatives aimed at improving the healthcare outreach, preventive care and patient satisfaction.

The Speaker appreciated the efforts of the Health Department and medical staff for their dedication in delivering quality healthcare services despite various challenges.

Rather also interacted with the doctors, paramedical staff and the

public, encouraging the healthcare professionals to continue serving with compassion and professionalism while ensuring patient-friendly services. The inauguration marks another milestone in the ongoing efforts to improve the healthcare infrastructure and ensure accessible, affordable and quality medical services for all sections of the society.

The local representatives and community members expressed gratitude to the government for upgrading the healthcare facilities in the area, stating that the new services would greatly ease the burden on patients and strengthen confidence in public healthcare institutions.

The event was attended by CMO Budgam, SE PDD, Executive Engineer PDD Budgam, BMO Khanshab, officers of the Health Department, district administration officials, medical staff, and prominent citizens of the area.

DC DODA reviews PM-SYM Scheme implementation

Directs officers to intensify registration drive

KT News Desk

DODA, MAY 15: Deputy Commissioner Doda Krishan Lal Friday chaired a meeting in the Conference Hall of the DC Office Complex to review the implementation and progress of the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) Scheme. The meeting focused on enhancing registration under the scheme and ensuring wider outreach among eligible beneficiaries across the district.

The DC, as per an official statement, reviewed the registration progress, awareness activities, departmental coordination, monitoring mechanisms and data collection related to the scheme. He directed the concerned officers to intensify awareness campaigns at the Panchayat, Block and Tehsil levels to enroll maximum eligible beneficiaries including labourers, street vendors, drivers, artisans, agricultural workers, construction workers and other unorganised sector employees under the scheme. He further instructed the Labour Department to ensure proper collection and verification of domestic labour data as well as construction workers' records, while directing the Agriculture Department to provide detailed data of agricultural labourers for

effective registration under the scheme.

The Deputy Commissioner further directed Executive Officer MC and other departments to facilitate enrollment of civic workers and eligible temporary employees to register under the PM-SYM Scheme. He emphasized close coordination with Common Service Centres (CSCs), field functionaries and departmental officers to facilitate smooth implementation of the scheme. The DC instructed officers to organise special awareness and registration camps in rural and far-flung areas to facilitate enrolment. He further stressed the need for regular monitoring, target-based implementation, timely submission of progress reports and maintaining accurate beneficiary data. Detailed discussions were also held regarding departmental targets and registration parameters.

The meeting was attended by ACR Ashraf Pervaz; ACD Din Mohammad Afaq; District Horticulture Officer and representatives from other departments, while Additional Deputy Commissioner Anil Kumar Thakur; ADC Bhdererwh Sunil Bhutyal; PO ICDS Akhtar Hussain Qazi, SE Hydraulic Circle, ACP Mushraf Haff and other officers attended the meeting virtually.

Textiles export push gets major fillip in Kashmir

J&K charts roadmap for global textile leadership at mega SKICC consultation

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, MAY 15: In a major initiative aimed at aligning Jammu & Kashmir's traditional strengths with India's ambitious textile export vision, the Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir, under the Industries & Commerce Department, in collaboration with the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, organized a mega two-day Consultative Workshop on "Textiles for Global Markets: Strategy for Achieving USD 100 Billion Exports by 2030" at SKICC, Srinagar.

The workshop, as per an official statement, brought together policymakers, exporters, industry leaders, artisans, entrepreneurs, Export Promotion Councils (EPCs), DGFT representatives and sectoral stakeholders to deliberate on strategies for enhancing exports, strengthening value chains and positioning local products in global markets under the broader "Local to Global" framework.

On Day-2, Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce attended the consultative session and interacted extensively with participating stakeholders. He held detailed deliberations on issues concerning export promotion, market



access, value chain strengthening and opportunities for enhancing Jammu & Kashmir's presence in global textile markets. During the interaction, he highlighted the immense potential of the region's handicrafts and handloom sector and emphasized focused interventions in branding, quality enhancement and export competitiveness.

The two-day programme was structured around focused policy consultations under export planning frameworks. Day-1 featured discussions under the District Export Action Plan (DEAP) framework with emphasis on identifying district-specific export strengths and sectoral opportunities. Day-2 focused on the State/UT Export Action Plan (SEAP) through wider consultations on policy interventions and export-oriented growth strategies for the textile sector.

During the deliberations, it was highlighted that the Ministry of Textiles has designated Budgam and Baramulla as Aspirational Districts,

while Srinagar has been identified as a Champion District, recognizing the significant textile and handicraft potential of these districts and paving the way for focused interventions, infrastructure support and export promotion initiatives.

Participants held detailed discussions on major themes including export competitiveness, Foreign Trade Policy 2023, District Export Hub initiatives, Free Trade Agreements, sustainability and ESG frameworks, cluster development models and strengthening linkages between artisans, producers and international markets.

Officials informed that recommendations emerging from the consultations would feed into the National Consultative Summit scheduled in June 2026, where inputs from States and Union Territories shall contribute towards formulation of a comprehensive national strategy and roadmap for achieving the target of USD 100 Billion textile exports by 2030.

KTA seeks uniform enforcement of E-way bill for timber transit

Rana assures delegations of priority redress of grievances

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, APRIL 15: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology, Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmad Rana, Friday received several delegations representing various public interests, who called on him to seek his intervention on a range of issues pertaining to their respective areas.

A delegation of Kashmir Timber Association (KTA), as per an official statement, submitted a memorandum seeking his intervention in uniform implementation of the E-Way Bill system for transit of timber across Jammu and Kashmir.

The delegation, apprised the Minister that while the traditional docket system for timber transit has officially been replaced by the E-Way Bill in accordance with the prevailing rules, certain authorities continue to insist upon docket-like documents during transit. The Association stated that this inconsistency has created confusion among the traders and transporters, causing unnecessary delays and significant operational hardships for the industry.

They urged the Minister to

issue clear directions to the concerned authorities to ensure uniform acceptance of the E-Way Bill in place of the docket system so as to facilitate smooth functioning of the timber trade across the region.

The Minister heard the delegation attentively and assured prompt intervention in the matter, directing the concerned officials to ensure that the E-Way Bill is uniformly enforced at all transit checkpoints without ambiguity.

Likewise, a delegation from Mendhar called on the Minister and sought upgradation of water supply facilities and other infrastructure development works in the area, urging early attention to the developmental needs of the region.

Another delegation also met the Minister and projected several local issues, requesting their early and sympathetic redress.

The Minister heard all delegations attentively and assured them that the government is fully committed to the welfare of the people. He stated that all genuine issues projected by the delegations will be taken up and addressed on priority.

Commissioner Secretary Planning visits Bobiya, reviews Vibrant Village Programme-II in border villages

KT News Desk

KATHUA, MAY 15: Commissioner Secretary, Planning, Information, Development & Monitoring Department, R. Alice Vaz, who has been assigned the twin border villages of Bobiya and Gajnal under Vibrant Village Programme-II (VVP-II), Friday visited Bobiya village and convened a public outreach programme to interact with the stakeholders and get a first-hand appraisal of the developmental needs and aspirations of these border villages.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner Secretary, as per an official statement, said that the objective of the Vibrant Villages Programme is to ensure holistic and sustainable development of border villages. She said the programme aims to bridge the development gaps by strengthening the infrastructure and identifying critical gaps in sectors such as connectivity, health, education, livelihoods and digital access.

Commissioner Secretary emphasized that convergence and saturation of ongoing Centrally



Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and UT/State Sponsored Schemes is an equally important aspect of the programme and appealed to the local residents to extend full cooperation to the district administration for smooth execution of the planned works.

The Commissioner Secretary also laid special focus on saturation of individual beneficiary schemes and called for ensuring effective convergence of Centrally Sponsored and State

Sponsored Schemes with special emphasis on HADP and Mission YUVA for maximizing benefits to the people.

Earlier, former PRI members of village Bobiya appreciated the district administration for conducting an inclusive and participatory planning exercise while formulating the development plan for the villages.

On the occasion, Nodal Officer for Vibrant Village Bobiya and BDO Marheen, Javed Iqbal and

Nodal Officer for Vibrant Village Gajnal and Tehsildar Marheen, Lekh Raj, read out the proposed development plans in public, for Bobiya and Gajnal villages.

Later, the Commissioner Secretary convened a meeting with the concerned district and sectoral officers to review the proposed works. She also enquired about the status of existing schemes being implemented by JPDCL, JAKEDA, RDD, Social Welfare, Agriculture, JJM and PMGSY to identify gaps and ensure saturation in these villages.

Commissioner Secretary also highlighted the need to organize awareness camps for welfare schemes and skill development opportunities so that maximum benefits reach the eligible beneficiaries in these remote border areas.

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma, briefed the Commissioner Secretary that Kathua district has a total of 216 border villages, of which, six villages near the zero line including Bobiya, Gajnal, Rathua, Karol Krishna, Kadyala and Gujar Chak are being taken up under the Vibrant Village Programme-II.

DC Bandipora reviews preparedness for implementation of Solid Waste Management Rules 2026

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, MAY 15: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, chaired a meeting to review Solid Waste Management and preparedness for implementation of the Solid Waste Management Rules 2026 in the district.

During the meeting, as per an official statement, detailed deliberations were held regarding the effective implementation of the Solid Waste Management Rules in compliance with the directions issued by the Supreme Court. The meeting discussed various measures aimed at strengthening waste management mechanisms across urban and rural areas of the district.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed strict adherence to the Supreme Court directions regarding segregation of waste at source and directed all Block Development Officers and Executive Officers to ensure effective implementation of the same in their respective



jurisdictions.

The meeting also discussed issues related to bulk waste generators, awareness campaigns, timely waste collection, and establishment and functioning of Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs). Emphasis was laid on ensuring proper transportation, management, and scientific disposal of solid waste.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned officers to intensify awareness activities among the general public regarding source segregation, responsible waste disposal, and reduction in use of non-biodegradable materials. She further stressed the importance of coordinated efforts among all

stakeholders for achieving sustainable waste management practices in the district.

The meeting also reviewed directions issued by the Supreme Court regarding constitution of Special Cells for monitoring implementation of the Solid Waste Management Rules, conduct of inspections, preparation of periodic progress reports, and strengthening enforcement mechanisms. Among others, Additional District Development Commissioner Bandipora, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, CEO MC Bandipora, EO MC Hajin, Block Development Officer Bandipora, and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

J&KCEGA welcomes Jal Shakti dept reorganisation, calls it major reform

Agenceis

Srinagar, May 15: The Jammu & Kashmir Chief Engineers Gazetted Association (J&KCEGA) on Friday welcomed the reorganisation of the Jal Shakti Department, terming it a practical and balanced reform aimed at strengthening the department and improving public service delivery across the Union Territory.

In a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a spokesperson said the Jammu & Kashmir Chief Engineers Gazetted Association (J&KCEGA) has expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Jammu & Kashmir for the landmark reorganisation of the Jal Shakti Department, terming it a progressive, balanced and institutionally sound reform aimed at strengthening the departmental structure and improving public service delivery across the Union Territory.

ensuring that the restructuring exercise was carried out in a rational, practical and professionally balanced manner without disturbing the existing top administrative order and institutional hierarchy.

"J&KCEGA has observed that the reorganisation addresses several long-pending structural and functional requirements of the department and reflects the Government's serious commitment towards strengthening the engineering and technical framework of the Jal Shakti sector," he said.

The Association has particularly welcomed the creation of the post of Secretary Technical in the Jal Shakti Department, which is expected to significantly improve technical coordination, policy execution and administrative efficiency within the department.

It also appreciated the establishment of a separate Design, Inspection & Quality (DIQ) wing in the department, describing it as a major step towards ensuring quality assurance, technical scrutiny and improved monitoring of public infrastructure works.

The creation of the offices of Superintending Engineer, Hydraulic Circle Jammu-II and Superintending Engineer,

Hydraulic Circle Bandipora has been termed by the Association as a timely and much-needed decision in view of the increasing operational and administrative workload in these regions.

Similarly, the creation of six new divisions, including Hydraulic Division Gandoh, Hydraulic Division Gurez, Hydraulic Division Tangdar, PHE Division Mendhar, and two Water Quality & Monitoring Divisions for the provinces of Jammu and Kashmir, has been widely appreciated by the Association, which stated that these measures would considerably improve field-level implementation, operational efficiency and monitoring mechanisms, particularly in remote and geographically challenging areas.

The spokesperson said the Association has further welcomed the restructuring of Mechanical Sub-Divisions and the creation of 43 posts through corresponding reduction and rationalisation of existing 62 posts, terming it an example of efficient cadre management and resource optimisation without any unnecessary financial burden on the Government.

The encadrement of 10 posts and re-assignment of 137 posts within the cadre structure

has also been appreciated as a pragmatic and well-considered approach towards addressing administrative bottlenecks and strengthening institutional functionality.

J&KCEGA has additionally noted with satisfaction the rational revision in Deputation Reserve and Leave Reserve provisions at various levels including Chief Engineers, Superintending Engineers, Executive Engineers and Assistant Executive Engineers, stating that such measures would provide greater administrative flexibility, improve manpower planning and facilitate smoother departmental functioning.

The Association also expressed satisfaction over the continued regularisation process in the Jal Shakti Department. At the same time, it noted that a similar regularisation process is missing in the R&B Department and expressed hope that the Government will address this issue on similar lines.

President, J&KCEGA, Er. Farooq, stated: "This historic reorganisation demonstrates the Government's deep understanding of the genuine structural and operational requirements of the Jal Shakti Department. The reforms have

been carried out in an extremely balanced and practical manner without disturbing the existing administrative hierarchy at the top level. We are sincerely thankful to the Chief Minister, Minister for Jal Shakti and the worthy Additional Chief Secretary for their statesmanship, vision and responsiveness towards the concerns of the engineering fraternity."

Chief Patron, J&KCEGA, Er. Nasir Amin, remarked: "The creation of new circles, divisions, technical institutions and cadre rationalisation measures will significantly strengthen the department at both administrative and field levels. These reforms will improve efficiency, accountability and technical supervision while also boosting the morale of engineers working across Jammu & Kashmir. The Association wholeheartedly welcomes this progressive initiative of the Government."

The Association expressed hope that the Government will continue to take similar progressive measures for institutional strengthening, professional empowerment and improved public infrastructure management in the larger interest of the people of Jammu & Kashmir—(KNO)

Secy RDD calls for strict enforcement of SC directions on SWM Rules, 2026

Districts asked to ensure D2D waste collection, identify Bulk Waste Generators



JAMMU: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad on Friday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess implementation of the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2026 and directed all districts and field officers to ensure strict and time-bound compliance with Supreme Court directions on solid waste management.

The meeting was attended by Director General Rural Sanitation Anoo Malhotra, Director Finance Umar Khan, Superintending Engineers REW, Deputy Directors Rural Sanitation, Assistant Commissioners Panchayat and other concerned officers.

The Secretary emphasized that the Supreme Court, through its various orders especially dated February 19, April 29 and May 5, 2026, has issued comprehensive directions to States, UTs, District Collectors and Pollution Control Boards for effective implementation of the SWM Rules, 2026.

He directed all districts to submit comprehensive plans for door-to-door waste collection across rural areas and submit the same within given timelines for strengthening waste collection systems.

Aijaz Asad stressed constitution of Village and Block Sanitation Committees under overall supervision of District Sanitation Committees (headed by DCs), wherever pending to improve coordination, monitoring and implementation of sanitation initiatives.

He also directed wide dissemination of the SWM Rules,

2026, including translation into regional languages, and called for awareness workshops at UT, district and block/panchayat levels to educate communities on scientific waste management practices.

The Secretary informed that UT-level action plans had already been submitted in compliance with earlier Supreme Court directions and stressed that the focus must now shift to effective ground implementation and submission of compliance reports as per indicated timelines.

He reiterated mandatory four-stream waste segregation — wet, dry, sanitary and special care waste — across all rural local bodies without exception.

Aijaz Asad further directed districts to identify and register all Bulk Waste Generators (BWGs), operationalise Special Cells under Deputy Commissioners for close monitoring of SWM implementation, and ensure scientific management of legacy dumpsites through biomining and bioremediation.

He stressed effective use of the mWater portal for monitoring sanitation assets and directed that all assets be made fully functional within stipulated timelines. He also warned against open burning of waste, stating that zero-tolerance enforcement would be adopted.

During the meeting, Director General Rural Sanitation presented a detailed overview of the SWM Rules, 2026, including roles and responsibilities of departments, Panchayati Raj Institutions and implementing agencies.

KPDCL issues power shutdown

KT News Desk

Srinagar, May 15: Chief Engineer, Distribution, KPDCL has informed that the Shutdown of 132/33 kV GSS Amargarh will be observed due to which power supply to Panzipora, Tarzoo, Hygam, Shair Colony, Arampora, Mahrajpora, Bugoo, Police Station, ADC Watlab, Hathlangoo, Warpora, Douru, Shiva, Tujjar, Sharief Shrine, Nowpora, Mazbugh, Reban, Achabal, Doabgah, Ferozpora, Panzulla, Shutloo, Chakloo, Ladoora, Nadihal, Gurseer, Pethseer, PHE, Fruit Mandi Sopore, LIS Ladoora, Dangiawacha, Hachipora, Hadipora, watrigam, Safalpora, Ganapora, Nowpora, Seelu, Bomai, seer, Chakloo, Ruhama and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 04 PM on 17 May 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 KV Arampora Handwara Town line, 33 KV Arampora Handwara Old line and 33 KV Arampora Kupwara Old line will be observed due to which power supply to Marathgam, Chogal, Handwara Town, Kulangam, Zachaldara, Changimulla, Rajpora, Wadipora, Hangah, Haril, Batagund, Whole Lolab, Machil Valley and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 03 PM on 18 May 2026.

Likewise, shutdown of 33 KV Nehalpora Pattan-Amargarh line will be observed due to which

power supply to Pattan, Palhalan, Nehalpora, Hanjiwera, Trama, Hamray, Tapper, Wanigam, Lolipora, Cold Store, Hyderabad, Flour Mill, North End Hospital, Railway, Hamray and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 03 PM on 17 May 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 KV Nehalpora HMT line will be observed due to which power supply to Kalsari, Singhpora, Duslipora, SKUAST, SSM, Mirgund, Ramilgarh, Shadipora and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 03 PM on 18, 20 & 25 May 2026

Further, shutdown of 33 KV Delina Wagoora line will be observed due to which power supply to Wagoora, Kawcheck, Mangam, Watergam, Kreeri, Saloosa, Hospital, Sangrama, Nowpora, Boosu, Cold Store and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 03 PM on 19 & 21 May 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 KV Delina Kreeri Tapline will be observed due to which power supply to Kreeri, Saloosa, Hospital and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 03 PM on 21 & 25 May 2026. Likewise, 33 KV Alasteng Power House Line will be observed due to which power supply to Beehama, Arampora, Arch, Nunner, Manigam, Duderhama, Malshaibagh, Wayil, Gultibagh and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 03:30 PM on 17 May 2026.

Baramulla fully prepared for India's first Digital Census 2027

Self-Enumeration begins May 17

KT News Desk

Baramulla, May 15: Principal Census Officer (Deputy Commissioner), Baramulla, S.F Hamid on Friday addressed a press conference regarding the preparations for Census 2027 and informed that the district is fully prepared for the successful conduct of India's first fully digital Census.

Addressing media persons, the Principal Census Officer stated that Census is the foundation of evidence-based planning, governance, and welfare delivery, playing a vital role in shaping future development policies and public services.

He informed that Census 2027 will be conducted through the Census Management and Monitoring System (CMMS) using mobile-based digital enumeration supported by GIS mapping and advanced monitoring systems.

As part of the Housing and Census phase, Digital Self-Enumeration for residents of Baramulla will remain open from 17 May 2026 to 31 May 2026 through the



official portal se.census.gov.in. Citizens can voluntarily submit their household information online using mobile phones, tablets, or computers.

Thereafter, House-to-House Survey operations will be conducted from 1 June to 30 June 2026 by trained Census Enumerators. The Population Enumeration phase will follow subsequently in a staggered manner across Jammu & Kashmir, including snow-bound areas.

The Principal Census Officer further informed that Baramulla district has finalized 25 Census Charges, including 18 Rural and 7 Urban Charges, besides 122 Special Charges for institutions and special establishments. A dedicated

workforce of 2,367 personnel, including Enumerators, Supervisors, and Trainers, has been trained for the exercise.

Emphasizing transparency and public trust, he stated that all Census officials will carry QR-coded identity cards and clarified that Census personnel will never ask for OTPs, bank details, passwords, or financial information.

Appealing for public participation, the Principal Census Officer urged citizens, media organizations, educational institutions, civil society members, and community leaders to actively participate in Census 2027 and ensure that every household and every individual in Baramulla is counted accurately and inclusively.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

BRICS condemns

the need for dialogue and diplomacy, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, protection of civilian lives and ensuring safe maritime commerce through international waterways.

The ministers also called for an immediate, permanent and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza and urged unhindered humanitarian assistance to civilians.

The BRICS grouping currently comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, United Arab Emirates and Indonesia. (KNO)

'Op Sindoor' demonstrated

stressed the need for faster innovation in military technology and cautioned against delays in defence research and development.

"It is better to have 85 to 90 per cent capability in time than wait for 100 per cent capability after it loses relevance," he said.

The seminar was co-hosted by the Centre for Aerospace Power and Strategic Studies and Indian Military Review. (KNO)

'NEET-UG re-exam

"CBT (computer-based test) mode of exam is comparatively better than OMR. It is a bit protected. Cybercrime has become a big world in itself. There are challenges, however, we will have to trust the system of our country," the minister said.

The press conference comes after a high-level meeting was held late on Thursday evening at the Pradhan's residence to review preparations for conducting the exam afresh.

BJP protests liquor

among youth on the availability of alcohol. Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), in a post on social media platform X (formerly Twitter), defended its position while questioning previous policy

decisions. "We fully respect the sentiments of these 20 BJP workers. But one must ask: which government was in power in J&K when the 2017 Excise Policy made Municipal Wards and Tehsils the basis for identifying unreserved areas? And which government was in office in 2022 when liquor sales were permitted in grocery shops?" the NC statement read. (KNO)

J&K sets ball

child-related matters.

CWCs are meant for children in need of care and protection (CNCP), ensuring their safety, rehabilitation, and reintegration into society. (KNO)

India, UAE sign

included plans by Abu Dhabi Investment Authority and India's National Infrastructure and Investment Fund to explore investments of up to USD 1 billion in India's infrastructure sector.

According to the ministry, Emirates NBD will invest USD 3 billion in RBL Bank, while UAE-based International Holding Company will invest USD 1 billion in Sammaan Capital of India. It said the investment commitment is aimed at creating stronger markets and generating jobs, describing it as a reflection of the UAE's "sustained commitment to India's development and growth story".

"In the field of investment, the UAE has traditionally been a significant investor in India. It is cumulatively the seventh-largest investor in India over the course of the last 25 years," India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said.

Misri further said: "This visit is a reflection of the exceptional trust and confidence that marks this very, very important relationship between India and the United Arab Emirates," said Misri, highlighting the energy sector which he said "has always been a very important part" of India-UAE relationship. The talks between Modi and Al Nahyan took

place during the prime minister's stopover in Abu Dhabi in the first leg of his five-nation tour that will also take him to the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy.

"The two sides have agreed on deepening defence industrial collaboration and cooperation on innovation and advanced technology, training, exercises, maritime security, cyber defence, secure communications and information exchange," the official statement said.

Other agreements included setting up a ship repair centre at Vadinar in Gujarat, cooperation on ports and coastal infrastructure, and an arrangement on skill development in ship repair. An agreement was also signed between Cochin Shipyard Limited and Drydocks World of Dubai.

The two sides also signed a term sheet for setting up a super-computing cluster, aimed at strengthening India's artificial intelligence and high-performance computing capabilities. "This will add to India's AI mission and the infrastructure involved with that," said Misri.

The MEA said the two leaders also welcomed the operationalisation of a virtual trade corridor linking customs and port authorities of both countries to streamline cargo movement, reduce logistics costs and cut transit time.

The operationalisation of the digital trade corridor is expected to further deepen commercial integration between the two countries by improving customs coordination and cargo efficiency. It is also expected to help the two countries in "building supply chain resilience in a world that is seeing increasing disruption in supply chains", said Misri.

The two sides also exchanged views on the West Asia crisis.

"We condemn the attacks on the UAE," Modi said in his opening remarks, adding that "the way UAE has been targeted is not acceptable".

The UAE, which hosts a major US military base, has also faced Iranian strikes since the conflict began on February 28.

Praising the Emirati leadership for handling the situation "with restraint", Modi said India was ready to extend "all possible support" to bring peace in West Asia.

Earlier in the day, Al Nahyan personally received Modi at the airport in Abu Dhabi, where the Indian prime minister was accorded a ceremonial guard of honour. In a special gesture, Modi's aircraft was escorted by UAE military jets.

This was Modi's eighth visit to the Gulf country in 12 years, the MEA said.

"Concluding a short but highly productive visit to the UAE," Modi said before leaving. "Held extensive discussions with my brother, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, on ways to further deepen the India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership."

Modi later departed for the Netherlands following his brief visit to Abu Dhabi.

The visit came amid widening differences among Gulf powers over oil production policies, the Strait of Hormuz blockade and regional alignments involving Israel and Iran — developments that have added complexity to India's strategic calculations in West Asia.

Govt constitutes

Procedures (SOPs) for identifying stressed and sick MSMEs and establish coordination mechanisms among government departments, financial institutions, industry bodies and knowledge partners.

The panel has also been tasked with designing a robust diagnostic architecture to identify stress factors affecting MSMEs and developing standardised tools for root cause analysis covering financial, operational, technological, regulatory and market-related issues.

To streamline monitoring and support, the committee will create a classification framework categorising MSMEs as stable, vulnerable, stressed or sick based on measurable indicators. It will also work on creating an indigenous

platform for systematic data collection and integration, including GST, Udyam registration and banking data.

The order further states that the committee will identify operational gaps and weaknesses in MSMEs through data-driven insights and develop a real-time monitoring system for effective decision-making.

In a major technology-oriented component of the initiative, the committee has been asked to conceptualise and develop an AI and Large Language Model (LLM)-based interactive chatbot for MSMEs, especially stressed and sick units. The chatbot is expected to provide real-time guidance and advisory support, assist in problem identification and preliminary diagnosis, and offer information regarding schemes, compliance requirements and best practices.

The committee will also recommend sector-specific and enterprise-specific solutions, including financial interventions such as credit restructuring and incentives, as well as non-financial measures like technology adoption, skill development and market linkages.

The committee has also been directed to develop escalation and support mechanisms for high-risk sick MSME units and integrate experts from Small Business Development Units (SBDUs) established under Mission YUVA into the MSME Health Clinic framework.

The government order further mandates the committee to document and validate success stories of revived MSMEs, design dissemination strategies through dedicated portals and outreach channels, promote peer learning and best practice replication, and establish key performance indicators (KPIs) along with periodic review and impact assessment mechanisms.

The committee will identify systemic bottlenecks and suggest policy reforms to strengthen the MSME ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir while ensuring continuous refinement of tools, processes and interventions based on evolving needs and stakeholder feedback. (KNO)

Unemployed 'youngsters like cockroaches' become media, activists; attack system: CJI



PTI

New Delhi, May 15: Likening some unemployed youngsters to cockroaches, Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant on Friday said they go on to "become" media, social media and RTI activists and start attacking the system.

The comments came while a bench of CJI Kant and Justice Joydip Bagchi was pulling up a lawyer for "pursuing" a senior advocate designation. It said there were already "parasites" in society who attack the system and asked the petitioner whether he wanted to join hands with them.

"The entire world may be eligible to become senior (advocate), but at least you are not entitled," the bench told the petitioner lawyer.

A visibly anguished CJI observed that if the Delhi High Court would confer senior advocate designation upon the petitioner, the apex court would set that aside seeing his professional conduct.

The CJI also referred to the kind of language used by the petitioner on Facebook. "There

are already parasites of society who attack the system and you want to join hands with them?" he said. "There are youngsters like cockroaches, who don't get any employment or have any place in profession. Some of them become media, some of them become social media, RTI activists and other activists and they start attacking everyone," he said.

The bench also asked the petitioner whether he did not have any other litigation.

"Is this the conduct of a person who seeks to be designated as a senior advocate?" the bench asked.

It said senior advocate designation is something that is conferred on a person and is not to be pursued.

"You are pursuing it. Does it look proper?" the top court said, asking whether a senior advocate designation was a status symbol to be kept ornamentally.

It also observed that it wanted to ask the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to verify the degrees of many of those who were wearing black robes as there were serious doubts over the genuineness of their degrees. It said the Bar Council of India would never do anything on this issue as they "need their votes".

The petitioner apologised to the bench and sought permission to withdraw the petition. The bench allowed the withdrawal of the petition.

India's exports in April up 13.78 pc to USD 43.56 bn

PTI

New Delhi, May 15: The country's exports in April rose by 13.78 per cent to USD 43.56 billion despite global challenges, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said on Friday.

Imports grew 10 per cent year-on-year to USD 71.94 billion in April. Trade deficit during the month stood at USD 28.38 billion.

Agrawal said India's exports to West Asia declined 28 per cent to USD 4.16 billion last month as against USD 5.78 billion in April 2025.

Imports from the region dipped 31.64 per cent to USD 10.47 billion in April from USD 15.32 billion in the year-ago period.

India eyes \$1 trillion exports in FY27 backed by FTAs, export push

ANS

New Delhi, May 15 (ANS) India is banking on the proposed export promotion mission and a new wave of free trade agreements (FTAs) to push the country's exports towards the ambitious \$1 trillion milestone in FY27, a top government official said on Friday.

Speaking to NDTV Profit, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said the government expects export growth in the current financial year to surpass last year's pace, with efforts aimed at achieving expansion well beyond the 10-15 per cent range required to meet the target.

Agrawal said the proposed Export Promotion Mission is expected to become a major pillar of India's trade strategy by supporting exporters, improving access to overseas markets and helping domestic businesses tap into emerging global opportunities.

"The implementation of recently concluded FTAs in the coming months is likely to provide an additional boost to outbound shipments," he mentioned.

According to the commerce secretary, India is also well-positioned to benefit from ongoing shifts in global supply chains, as multinational companies increasingly look to diversify manufacturing and sourcing operations beyond traditional hubs.

"India is steadily emerging as a reliable and trusted partner in the changing global trade ecosystem," Agrawal stated. Earlier, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal had urged exporters to aggressively explore fresh opportunities created through trade agreements, while emphasising that India should aim to cross the \$1 trillion exports mark in FY27.

India ready to extend all possible support for peace in West Asia: PM Modi in UAE



PTI

Abu Dhabi, May 15: India is ready to extend all possible support to bring peace in West Asia, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday during his talks with UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The Modi-Al Nahyan meeting took place shortly after the prime minister landed in the Gulf nation in the first leg of his five-nation tour that also includes four European countries.

We condemned the attacks on the UAE, Modi said in his opening remarks in the meeting with the

UAE leader.

The UAE, which hosts a prominent US military base, has been at the receiving end of Iranian strikes during the ongoing US-Israeli war on Iran.

Modi further said, "The way UAE has been targeted is not acceptable" but "the way UAE has handled the current situation with restraint is praiseworthy."

The prime minister highlighted how the impact of the West Asian conflict is being felt globally, adding: "India is ready to extend all possible support to bring peace in West Asia."

The prime minister

was received at the airport by the UAE President, reflecting the importance attached by the country to Modi's visit. The Indian leader was also accorded a guard of honour.

I extend my thanks to my brother Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan for his "gracious gesture" in receiving me at Abu Dhabi Airport, Modi said on social media.

"And I look forward to our discussions aimed at strengthening the ties between India and the UAE across key sectors, such as energy, investment, supply chains, and more," he said.

NEET paper leak Delhi court sends Lokhande to 6-day CBI custody

PTI

New Delhi, May 15: A Delhi court on Thursday sent NEET paper leak case accused Dhananjay Lokhande to six days' CBI custody. Special CBI judge Ajay Gupta allowed the agency's plea seeking six days' custodial interrogation of Lokhande, who had been arrested from Ahilyanagar in Maharashtra, and brought to the court on a transit remand.

During the proceedings, the CBI

submitted that Lokhande gave the leaked paper to co-accused Shubham, which he had received from another accused, Manisha Bagmare. The central probe agency said the larger conspiracy needs to be unearthed, and that the investigation was still in its early stages, and at a crucial juncture.

Lokhande's lawyer said he was not given the grounds of arrest, and he was made to give his signature on plain paper. Earlier in the day, the court sent five other accused to seven days' CBI custody.

Sugar export ban will trigger price crash, hurt factories, say industry experts

PTI

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar May 15: Sugar industry experts have slammed the Centre's sudden decision to ban sugar exports, warning that the move will trigger a domestic price crash, inflate debts of factories, and impact cultivators.

India has announced a ban on sugar export till September 30 this year to enhance domestic availability and contain prices. Banning exports of a commodity helps prevent price rise amid inflation concerns and uncertainty caused by the West Asia conflict.

Bhairavnath Thombre, president of the West Indian Sugar Mills Association, warned that domestic prices have already begun to slide, and the sugar factories will find it difficult to clear their Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) dues.

"When the government's sudden ban on exports till September 30 will tarnish the image of Indian sugar factories in the global market," he said.

He said that India exports sugar to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nepal and Arab countries, and the ban will endanger businesses that have already negotiated deals with these countries.

"Factories in Maharashtra have a Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) debt of nearly Rs

1,550 crore, while the dues are around Rs 12,000 crore nationally. The area under sugarcane cultivation may not decrease, but cultivators will not earn enough from their yield," Thombre said.

He noted that if the government has banned sugar exports, it should increase the procurement of sugar-based ethanol.

The government should increase ethanol use in petrol to 30 per cent from the current 20 per cent. This will increase



ethanol procurement from the sugar factories, he said.

Jayprakash Dadegaonkar, former president of the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories Limited (NFCFSF), alleged that the government has no fixed policy for the sugar industry.

"Sugar-related associations have been demanding higher rates for sugar for four years. But instead, the government increased the FRP four times. This has already significantly impacted the sugar industry.

This will further weaken the financial condition of the sugar factories."

Petrol, diesel prices hiked by Rs 3 per litre each

PTI

New Delhi, May 15: Petrol and diesel prices were increased on Friday by Rs 3 per litre after state-owned oil firms ended a four-year record hiatus in rate revision.

Petrol price was hiked to Rs 97.77 per litre from Rs 94.77 in the national capital. Diesel now costs Rs 90.67 as against Rs 87.67 per litre previously, according to industry sources.

The increase is a 10th of the desired hike needed to account for the surge in global energy rates since the start of the West Asia conflict.

State-owned oil firms had kept fuel price unchanged for 11 weeks despite a surge in input cost, but passed on part of the increase once operations became financially unsustainable, the sources said.

Prices have remained on freeze since April



2022, but had a one-off reduction of Rs 2 a litre each on petrol and diesel in March 2024 just before the Lok Sabha elections.

State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) had abandoned the daily price revision in April 2022 to insulate domestic consumers from a steep price increase that was warranted because of international oil prices shooting through the roof post Russia's

invasion of Ukraine. They incurred heavy losses in the first half of the 2022-23 fiscal year, which they recouped when rates fell in subsequent months.

But the war in West Asia has again sent international oil prices soaring by over 50 per cent.

The basket of crude oil that India imports averaged USD 69 per barrel in February before the war in West Asia broke out. It averaged USD 113-114 per barrel in subsequent months.

Fuel price hike unavoidable due to global energy crisis: Union Min

PTI

Hyderabad, May 15: Union Minister G Kishan Reddy on Friday said the fuel price hike was unavoidable due to the global energy crisis and urged people to understand the circumstances behind the increase.

Responding to the fuel price hike by state-owned oil companies, he also alleged that opposition parties were trying to "provoke people."

"The government led by PM Narendra Modi ji took this step under unavoidable circumstances. No domestic issue is responsible for this. Countries and people across the world have been affected by the energy crisis," Union Minister of Coal and Mines told reporters here.

He alleged that some parties were trying to incite people and spread misinformation about the issue.

Reddy appealed to the public to understand the inevitability of the price hike.

Although it was expected that the West Asia conflict would ease and fuel

transportation would improve, crude oil shipments are still not reaching the country smoothly, he said.

Reddy claimed that fuel prices had increased by as much as 40 per cent in countries such as the US.

He further said that implementing welfare programmes would become difficult if government revenue declined.

Referring to PM Modi's leadership during the Covid-19 crisis, he said the Centre would continue to engage with the public and explain the situation during the current energy crisis, regardless of whether opposition parties cooperated.

Petrol and diesel prices were hiked by Rs 3 per litre each on Friday—the first increase in more than four years—amid mounting losses faced by fuel retailers due to surging global crude oil prices following the West Asia conflict.

The hike comes just weeks after the Assembly elections in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry concluded.

SC bats for rationalisation of airfares, asks Centre to provide relief to people

PTI

New Delhi, May 15: The Supreme Court on Friday said there should be some rationalisation of airfares and asked the Centre to provide relief to flyers.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta flagged that on the same day, one airline flying in the same sector charges a particular airfare while other charges a different airfare.

"Try to give some relief to the people because of the discrepancy. On the same day, flights to the same sector, one airline charges Rs 8000 while the other airline charges Rs 18000 for the economy class," the bench told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, Justice Mehta said, "There should be some rationalisation (of airfares)" after the solicitor general said that a new enactment of 2024 has come into effect and the corresponding rules are in the process of consultation.

Mehta said the government was not disputing the problem and is treating the issue as non-adversarial and considering all aspects.

The bench was hearing a plea filed by social activist S Laxminarayana, who sought a robust and independent



regulator that ensures transparency and passenger protection across the civil aviation sector and regulatory guidelines to control the "unpredictable fluctuations" in airfare and ancillary charges imposed by private airlines in India. Senior advocate Ravindra Srivastava, appearing for Laxminarayana submitted that rules are already there under the Aircraft Act of 1937 but the problem is that they were not followed.

Mehta agreed that old rules are in place but new ones being formulated under the Bharatiya Vayayan Adhiniyam of 2024 that came into effect in January, 2025.

Srivastava said till the new rules are framed, the old rules will continue and it says that if the DGCA is satisfied that in a particular situation, the

airlines are indulging in charging predatory or excessive fares, it will issue directions.

"They are not issuing any directions. The rules are there, the power is there but it is a case of non-exercise of powers," he submitted. The bench asked Srivastava to reply to the counter-affidavit filed by the Centre and recorded the solicitor general's submission that consultation process for formulation of rules under the new regime is going on. The bench posted the matter for hearing on July 13.

On April 30, the top court pulled up the Centre for not filing its affidavit on a petition which sought regulatory guidelines to control the "unpredictable fluctuations" in airfare and ancillary charges imposed by private airlines in India. It had

asked the Centre to file an affidavit giving reasons for why the affidavit has not been filed and why further time was sought for it. On November 17 last year, the top court sought responses from the Centre and others on Laxminarayana's plea seeking sought a robust and independent regulator that ensures transparency and passenger protection across the civil aviation sector.

On February 23, the Centre told the apex court that the Ministry of Civil Aviation was actively considering the issues raised in the plea.

While hearing the matter on January 19, the top court said it would interfere with the "unpredictable fluctuations" in airfares and flagged the exorbitant rise during festivals.

The top court had termed the exorbitant rise of airfares by the airlines as "exploitation" and asked the Centre and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to file their replies on the plea. The plea claimed that all private airlines have, without any credible justification, reduced the free check-in baggage allowance for economy class passengers from 25 kg to 15 kg, "thereby converting what was earlier part of the ticketed service into a new revenue stream."

Trump, Xi conclude 'very successful' talks but no deals announced

Beijing, May 15: Chinese President Xi Jinping and his US counterpart Donald Trump on Friday hailed their talks as "historic" and "landmark", as the American leader wrapped up his three-day visit on a high note, but no deals on any contentious issues were announced.



Both Presidents, who held several rounds of talks covering a range of global issues, including the Iran war and bilateral trade frictions, concluded their discussions with a private meeting at Zhongnanhai, the well-guarded compound in Beijing where top leaders reside.

Trump and Xi walked and talked at the well-curated compound, occasionally stopping to admire the trees and flowers in the garden.

Trump described the trip as "very successful, world-renowned, and unforgettable," according to the Chinese account.

Calling Xi "an old friend of mine," the US president said he had "great respect" for his Chinese counterpart and expressed a willingness to maintain "sincere and in-depth communication."

Trump said he looked forward to welcoming Xi to the White House.

Noting that Trump's visit was a "historic" and "landmark" one, Xi said the two sides had set a "new vision" of building a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability.

"We had reached important common understandings on

maintaining stable economic and trade ties, expanding practical cooperation in various fields, and properly addressing each other's concerns," Xi said.

The two sides also agreed to strengthen communication and coordination on international and regional issues, Xi said.

The visit is conducive to enhancing mutual understanding, deepening mutual trust and improving the well-being of the two peoples, Xi said.

"While President Trump hopes to make America great again, I am dedicated to leading the Chinese people toward national rejuvenation," Xi said, stressing that the two countries can advance their respective development and revitalisation by strengthening cooperation, official media reported.

China and the US should implement the important common understandings that have been reached, cherish the hard-won positive momentum, keep to the right

direction, steer clear of disruptions, he said.

Xi said the leaders had established "a new positioning for the constructive, strategic and stable relationship" between the world's two largest economies.

He stressed that both sides should work to implement the "important consensus" reached during their discussions, signalling a desire to deepen cooperation despite longstanding areas of tension.

Both leaders also held talks on Thursday, during which Xi warned Trump that mishandling the Taiwan issue could trigger "clashes and even conflicts" between the two countries, the Chinese state media reported.

According to a readout of their meeting issued by the White House, Trump invited Xi and his wife to the White House on September 24, as both leaders agreed that the Strait of Hormuz must remain open to support the free

flow of energy. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun, in his daily briefing to the media, parried questions about details of the common understanding reached by the leaders on contentious issues.

To questions about Xi-Trump understanding or agreement on ending the Iran war or agreement to purchase US oil in the future during the China-US leaders' summit, Guo said China is willing to work with all parties to jointly safeguard global energy security and the stability of industrial and supply chains.

He added that the urgent priority is to promote the restoration of peace and stability in the Gulf and the Middle East.

Asked about any understanding reached between the two leaders on China supplying the precious rare-earth metals to the US, Guo said China has always been committed to maintaining the stability and security of global industrial supply chains.

China has restricted the export of the rare-earth metals needed to manufacture everything from phones to aircraft in retaliation for the high tariffs imposed by Trump on Chinese goods.

Asked if any agreement was reached on the US permitting export of semiconductor chips to China, he said Beijing has repeatedly stated its principled position.

This is the first visit to China by a US president in nine years. Trump himself was the last US president to visit China in 2017.

India's Olympic bid comes up for discussion during Ministry's CWG review meeting

New Delhi, May 15: It was a meeting to review India's Commonwealth Games preparations but a discussion on how to take the country's 2036 Olympic bid forward also took place as Gujarat's Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi joined online for a stock-taking session by Union Sports Minister Manu Singh Mandaviya here.



The meeting took place on Thursday and was attended in person by top officials of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA). Sanghavi, who is also Gujarat's Sports, Youth Affairs and Cultural Activities Minister, was flanked by some state government representatives during the discussion.

"They were there to mainly discuss the 2026 CWG closing ceremony during which the baton would be passed to Ahmedabad as the host of the 2030 edition. But during the course of the discussion, the Olympic bid also came up and there was a discussion on how to take the bid forward once the process restarts," an IOA source told PTI.

"No big decision was taken but just a conversation on how the process will proceed."

The International

Olympic Committee (IOC) had frozen the host selection process last year to reconsider its criteria but it is expected to pick up pace by the end of this year or early next year.

India were in the "Continuous Dialogue" phase of the halted bidding process, after submitting the 'Expression of Interest' to host the Games in Ahmedabad in October 2024.

Apart from this, Mandaviya reviewed the preparations for the Commonwealth Games to be held in Glasgow in July-August.

"The meeting focused on ensuring seamless coordination among all stakeholders and strengthening support

system for Indian athletes preparing for CWG 2026," read a media statement from the Sports Ministry.

An India House is expected to be set up during the Games to support the athletes.

The meeting also reviewed the progress of inter-ministerial coordination efforts being undertaken by the Secretary (Sports) with representatives of various Ministries and departments regarding the "operational and logistical preparations" for Glasgow 2026.

"Coordination with Ministry of External Affairs, departments of culture and tourism are all a significant part of the effort to ensure smooth operations for athletes," said a source.

Shastri backs Samson for future India T20I captaincy

Dubai, May 15: India's T20 World Cup title-winning star Sanju Samson would be a strong contender for national team captaincy in the shortest format in the next two-three years, says former head coach Ravi Shastri.



Suryakumar Yadav led India to the ICC Men's T20 World Cup title at home two months ago, where the 31-year-old Samson was named Player of the Tournament.

Shastri said India may have to look beyond Suryakumar by the time the next T20 World Cup comes around in 2028, when the current skipper will be 37. "India, come the next (T20) World Cup (in 2028), might be looking for a new captain, depending on how Surya goes over the next couple of years," Shastri was quoted as saying by 'The ICC Review'.

"But Sanju Samson has put himself there for a leadership role because he's done that in the past for Rajasthan (Royals). "And he's a

certainty in the side, at the top of the order, extremely destructive. So I see him, this is just the start of something more you'll see from Sanju over the next two or three years," said the former India all-rounder.

Samson had led Rajasthan Royals in the IPL for five seasons, including in 2022, when they finished runners-up.

Samson was in the form of his life in the T20 World Cup, scoring three successive half-centuries to help

them clinch a record third title.

"But my word this season, the way he's played after his performance in the T20 World Cup where single-handedly he almost won India games, the big games, the quarter-finals (West Indies, Super 8), semi-finals, the final, and the way he stepped up and the maturity he's showing now in the IPL, makes him a clear case as far as I'm concerned for leadership in the future."

Bihar CM gives Rs 1 cr to Ishan Kishan for T20 WC heroics

Patna, May 15: Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary on Friday handed over a cheque of Rs 1 crore to cricketer Ishan Kishan for his contribution in winning the 2026 T20 World Cup.

Kishan, who has his roots in Nawada district of the state and had spent his early childhood in Patna, called on the chief minister at his office.

The 27-year-old wicket-keeper batsman received a warm welcome from Choudhary, who placed a stole around Kishan's neck and presented him with a memento before handing over the cheque.

"Member of the Indian cricket team which won the ICC T20 World Cup 2026, the brilliant batsman, the son of Bihar, Shri @ishankishan51 Ji, was honoured by the state government with a cash prize of Rs 1 crore for his crucial contribution in winning the World Cup," Choudhary said in a post on X.

Top officials, including Chief Secretary Pratyay Amrit and close relatives of Kishan, were also present on the occasion.

New Ebola outbreak confirmed in remote Congo province; 65 deaths recorded



Kinshasa, May 15: Africa CDC, the continent's top public health body, on Friday confirmed a new Ebola outbreak in Congo's remote Ituri province, with 246 suspected cases and 65 deaths recorded so far.

The deaths and suspected cases have been recorded mainly in the Mongwalu and Rwampara health zones, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention said in a statement.

The Ebola virus is highly contagious and can be contracted through bodily fluids such as vomit, blood, or semen. The disease it causes is rare, but severe and often fatal. "Four deaths have been reported among laboratory-confirmed cases. Suspected cases have also been reported in Bunia, pending confirmation," the agency said, referring to the capital of Ituri province, near the border with Uganda.

It said preliminary laboratory results have detected the Ebola virus in 13 of 20 samples tested.

The latest outbreak comes around five months after Congo's last Ebola outbreak was declared over after 43 deaths. Ituri is in a remote eastern part of Congo characterised by poor road networks, and is more than 1,000 kilometres from the nation's capital of Kinshasa.

Africa CDC said it is concerned about the risk of further spread due to intense population movement, mining-related mobility in Mongwalu, insecurity in affected areas, gaps in contact listing and control challenges.

Norway defends decision to cancel missile system sale to Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), May 15: Norway's foreign ministry affirmed Friday it has revoked export licenses tied to a naval missile system for Malaysia, saying sales of its most sensitive defence technologies are now restricted to allies and closest partners.



The move blocked delivery of the Naval Strike Missile system and launcher components intended for Malaysia's littoral combat ship programme, prompting sharp protests from Kuala Lumpur. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim warned it could damage confidence in European defence suppliers.

Norway's foreign ministry said in reply to Associated Press queries that the government has strengthened oversight on defence technology in response to major shifts in the security landscape in Europe and globally in recent years.

"Exports of some of the most sensitive Norwegian-developed defence technologies will be

limited to our allies and closest partners," it said. "It is regrettable that this affects Malaysia."

Malaysia inked a deal for the NSM anti-ship missile system in 2018 with Norway's Kongsberg Defence and Aerospace AS. The missiles were intended to arm Malaysia's new class of littoral combat ships under a broader naval modernisation program.

Anwar said Thursday he

raised Malaysia's strong protest during a phone call with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre. He said Oslo's move would hurt Malaysia's operational readiness and cast doubt on the reliability of European defence partners if signed agreements could be reversed unilaterally. Contracts are "not confetti to be scattered in so capricious a manner," Anwar said. "If European defence suppliers reserve

the right to renege with impunity, their value as strategic partners flies out the window." The Norway foreign ministry said Støre had explained Norway's decision to Anwar during their call. Despite the curbs, it said Norway "greatly values its relationship with Malaysia" and looked forward to continued cooperation and constructive dialogue with Malaysian authorities.

Movies Schedule

Saturday, 16th May

BHOOTH BANGLA (U/A16+) Hindi - 04:05 PM	Michael (U/A 13+) English with English Subtitles 01:15 PM	Dhurandhar: The Revenge (A) Hindi - 02:50 PM	AAKHRI SAWAL (UA 16+) Hindi - 10:45 AM, 07:15 PM
WAR OF SHERA (U/A 16+) PUNJABI WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES 07:30 PM	PATI PATNI AUR WOHO DO (UA16+) Hindi Atmos - 11:15 AM, 01:45 PM, 04:15 PM, 06:45 PM Hindi - 12:20 PM	SHER	AAKHRI SAWAL

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