



Recruitment in terror ranks negligible: LG Manoj Sinha

Says CM Omar doing 'great work'; Kashmir has rejected terrorism

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, May 18: Asserting that recruitment in terror ranks has become "almost negligible," Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said terrorism in the Jammu and Kashmir has been pushed to the margins.

He also praised Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for doing "great work."

In an interview with national television channel, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Our security agencies are working with complete seriousness. Whether it is Telegram, WhatsApp or any other platform, agencies are monitoring every aspect and the situation will remain under



control."

The LG said terror networks and narcotics smuggling operated through the same channels and alleged that drugs were being pushed into Jammu and Kashmir from across the

Line of Control through sectors including Gurez, Tangdhar and Uri, as well as through drones.

"Drugs are directly linked to terror funding and terrorism," he said, adding that the administration had intensified

its anti-drug campaign after receiving repeated complaints about rising addiction among youth.

LG Sinha said people from all sections of society, including religious leaders, students, women and youth groups, had joined the campaign against narcotics.

"In the last 38 days, 766 FIRs have been registered, 856 people arrested and 677 kilograms of drugs seized," he said, adding that measures such as passport verification, Aadhaar tracking, lookout notices and property demolitions were being used to dismantle the drug network.

"Our focus is on two things — breaking the supply chain and creating awareness against drugs," he said. | More on P6

LG conducts on-site inspection of SASB Yatri Niwas at Pantha Chowk

Directs officials to complete pending works before annual pilgrimage

Reviews arrangements for sound & light show dedicated to Baba Barfani



KT News Desk

Srinagar, May 18: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday conducted an on-site inspection and reviewed the ongoing construction | More on P6

Norway stood firmly with India after Pahalgam attack: PM Modi

'Nations supporting India's tough stand sent strong message to terror orchestrators, sponsors'



Sajid Raina

New Delhi, May 18: Expressing gratitude to Norway for standing with India after April 22, 2025, Pahalgam terror attack, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the Nordic nation demonstrated "true friendship" by supporting New Delhi against terrorism during a difficult period.

Addressing a joint press interaction with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre in Oslo, PM Modi, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said his visit to Norway last year had to be postponed because of the

attack in Pahalgam.

"During that difficult time, Norway stood firmly with India against terrorism and demonstrated true friendship. Now that I have come to Norway, I sincerely thank the country for this solidarity," PM Modi said.

The Prime Minister's remarks came amid India's push for greater international cooperation against terrorism following the Pahalgam terror attack, which had triggered widespread condemnation from several countries.

PM Modi said India and Norway shared common views on peace, dialogue and global stability.

'Grand Cross of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit'

PM Modi conferred Norway's Highest Civilian Honour

KT News Desk

New Delhi, May 18: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been conferred the 'Grand Cross of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit', Norway's highest civilian honour bestowed on foreign Heads of Government, in recognition of outstanding service in the interest of Norway and humankind.

The award was presented to Modi by His Majesty King Harald V of Norway at a special ceremony in Oslo.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister expressed deep gratitude to the King and the people of Norway. He dedicated the award to the historic friendship between India and Norway, calling it a tribute to the enduring warmth, trust and affection shared between the people of both nations.

The conferment stands as a symbol of the | More on P6

Hot weather prevails across J&K; Sgr records 31.5 C, Jmu 41.1 C

MeT predicts light rain, thunder storms, gusty winds for 3 days

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, May 18: Jammu and Kashmir continued to witness hot and dry weather on Monday, with several places recording above normal temperatures, while the Meteorological Department forecast rain, thunderstorms and gusty winds from May 19 onwards.

According to the data shared by MeT Department with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 31.5 degrees Celsius, which was 6.1 degrees above normal for this time of the year. Qazigund registered 33 degrees Celsius, 8.6 degrees above normal, while Kokernag recorded 30.8 degrees Celsius, seven degrees above normal.

The tourist resort of Gulmarg recorded a maximum temperature of 23.6 degrees Celsius, 7.3 degrees above normal, while Pahalgam settled at 26.4 degrees Celsius, 4.5 degrees above normal.



In North Kashmir, Kupwara recorded 29.5 degrees Celsius, 3.7 degrees above normal.

Jammu city recorded a maximum temperature of 41.1 degrees Celsius, three degrees above normal, while Katra registered 38.4 degrees Celsius.

Banihal, Batote and Baderwah recorded maximum temperatures of 33.2 degrees Celsius, 31.7 degrees Celsius and 32 degrees Celsius respectively.

The MeT Department said from May 19 to 21 sky will remain partly cloudy with spells of light rain. | More on P6

Thajwas Glacier lost 86% area, 88% volume since Neoglaciation: Study

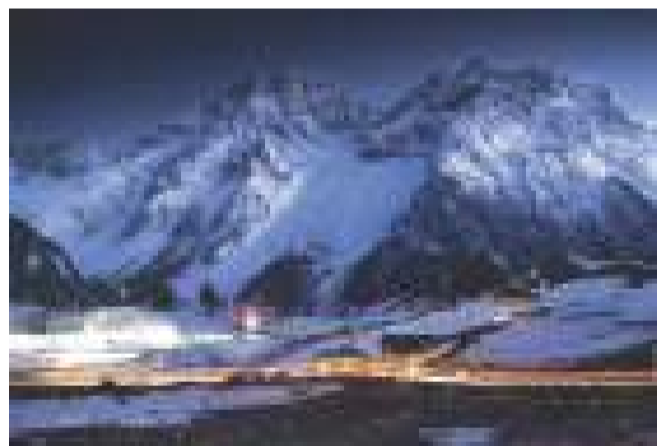
Identifies four major glacial advances over past nearly 21,000 in Kashmir Himalaya

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, May 18: The Thajwas Glacier in the Kashmir Himalaya has lost nearly 86 per cent of its area and close to 88 per cent of its volume since the Neoglaciation period, according to a new scientific study published in the journal *Geoscience Frontiers*, highlighting the long-term impact of rising global temperatures on Himalayan glaciers.

The study, published in the journal *Geoscience Frontiers*, reconstructed the paleo-glacial history of the Thajwas Glacier using cosmogenic Beryllium-10 (10Be) exposure dating and geomorphological mapping, providing one of the few detailed glacial chronologies from the Kashmir Himalaya.

Researchers identified four major glacial advances over the past nearly 21,000 years, corresponding to the global Last Glacial Maximum (gLGM), the Younger Dryas period, the Early Holocene



and the Neoglaciation phase.

According to the study analysed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the glacier witnessed major advances around 20,770 years ago, 11,460 years ago, 9,120 years ago and nearly 4,190 years ago.

The researchers said the glacier has undergone a drastic reduction in both area and volume since the gLGM period. "The

Thajwas Glacier lost around 64 per cent of its area and 73 per cent of its volume from the Last Glacial Maximum to the Neoglaciation stage," the study noted.

It added that glacier retreat accelerated further in more recent times, with the glacier losing around 85.74 per cent of its area and 87.67 per cent of its volume from | More on P6

CM condoles demise of Er Rashid's father

KT News Desk

Srinagar, May 18: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has expressed deep grief and sorrow over the passing away of Khazir Mohammad Sheikh, father of Member of Parliament Er. Rashid and MLA Khurshheed Ahmad Sheikh, who breathed his last at

AIIMS, New Delhi, after a prolonged illness. Khazir Mohammad Sheikh was 85 years old.

The Chief Minister conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul. He also prayed for strength and courage to the family to bear this irreparable loss.

House committee appointments spark Speaker-LoP face-off

KNO Desk

Jammu, May 18: The battle between Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Abdul Rahim Rather and Leader of Opposition Sunil Kumar Sharma intensified on Monday, with the latter questioning the former and asking whether the yardstick of seniority applied only to the BJP and not to the ruling alliance, whose first-time MLAs, he said, have been appointed as heads of non-financial committees.

In a statement issued to the media, as per news

agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Sharma termed the Speaker's claims on the issue of appointing chairpersons of House committees as smacking of an attempt to shield wrongdoing rather than to respond to the reservations of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) over it.

He said the Speaker's discretion to appoint heads of six non-financial House committees cannot be driven by party interests, but must be guided by fairness and well-established conventions.

Responding to | More on P6

Adequate fuel, LPG across J&K, says oil industry

Assures uninterrupted supply

KT News Desk

Srinagar, May 18: The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir continues to enjoy a stable and sufficient supply of fuel, officials from the oil industry said on Monday.

Himanshu Sharma, State Level Coordinator of the Oil Industry, assured residents that the entire fuel supply chain—including terminals, depots, and retail outlets—is functioning smoothly without any disruptions.

In a statement issued here, Sharma informed that Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have confirmed the availability of essential petroleum products, including petrol, diesel, and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), remains normal and uninterrupted across the region. He said fuel stocks are being monitored continuously and replenishment activities are proceeding seamlessly.

Addressing concerns about LPG supplies, | More on P6

World Hypertension Day

'Only 36% women, 31% men in J&K have normal BP'

NFHS Survey-5 reveals 57% of population falls in pre-hypertensive category

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, May 18: Hypertension is emerging as a major public health concern in Jammu and Kashmir, with official figures revealing that only 36 per cent of women and 31 per cent of men in the Union Territory have normal blood pressure levels, according to the National Family Health Survey-5.

The data from the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5), accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), reveals that this growing health challenge is linked to changing lifestyles, stress, poor dietary habits and lack of physical activity.

The survey further reveals that nearly 57 per cent of

the population falls in the pre-hypertensive category, a condition considered an early warning sign before the onset of hypertension.

Health experts say people in this stage are highly vulnerable to developing full-fledged high blood pressure if preventive measures are not adopted in time.

According to the data, around 11 per cent of women and 10 per cent of men aged between 15 and 49 years are already living with hypertension in Jammu and Kashmir.

The figures also highlight a steady rise in hypertension with increasing age. Among adolescents aged 15 to 19 years, only about three per cent are hypertensive. However, the prevalence gradually | More on P6

Hypertension affecting every third or fourth person in Kashmir: Doctors

'Excessive Noon Chai, bakery products major contributors'

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, May 18: Hypertension, commonly known as high blood pressure, is rapidly emerging as one of the biggest public health concerns in Kashmir, with doctors warning that the condition is silently affecting a significant portion of the population, including young adults and even school-going children.

Medical experts described hypertension as a "silent killer" because it often develops without noticeable symptoms, while gradually damaging vital organs and increasing the risk of heart attacks, brain strokes, kidney failure and other life-threatening complications.



Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Dr Mohammad Salim Khan, Head of the Department of Community Medicine at Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, said hypertension has become the most prevalent non-communicable disease and is affecting nearly

every third or fourth person.

"Hypertension is the most prevalent non-communicable disease affecting every third to fourth person. However, being without any symptoms, it affects the end organs and can cause heart attacks, brain strokes and other complications unless diagnosed early

and treated properly," he said. Dr Khan said the growing burden of hypertension is closely linked to drastic lifestyle and dietary changes witnessed in recent years.

"The lifestyle changes, including high consumption of salt, oils and fats, fast foods, sugars, along with sedentary lifestyle, minimal physical activity, stress and addiction to tobacco, alcohol and narcotics, are major risk factors pushing people towards hypertension at an early age," he said.

He warned that hypertension and pre-hypertension are no longer confined to older people, stating that adolescents and even young children are increasingly being diagnosed with | More on P6

Census 2027

Deputy CM completes Self-Enumeration, urges public participation

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MAY 18: In a major push towards promotion of Self-Enumeration under Census 2027, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Monday successfully completed his Self-Enumeration exercise at Civil Secretariat in Srinagar.

The exercise, as per an official statement, was done under the guidance of Amit Sharma, Chief Principal Census Officer and Director Census Operations & Citizen Registration, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

Ministers including Sakeena Itoo, Javid Ahmad Dar and Satish Sharma also undertook the Self-Enumeration for Census-2027.

The Self-Enumeration exercise was also undertaken by several legislators including MLAs including Tanvir Sadiq, Altaf Ahmad Wani, Hasnain Masoodi and Iftikhar Ahmad.

During the exercise, Amit Sharma guided the dignitaries regarding various features of the Self-Enumeration process and assisted them in successfully completing their digital Census submissions through the online platform.

The Deputy Chief Minister appreciated the simple, citizen-friendly and technology-driven nature of the Self-Enumeration system and expressed satisfaction over the ease



and efficiency with which the Census details were submitted digitally. He described the initiative as an important step towards transparent, modern and participatory governance.

The Deputy Chief Minister called upon all citizens and residents of Jammu & Kashmir to actively join in the Self-Enumeration process at se.census.gov.in and complete their Census submission by 31st May 2026. He stated that Census is an exercise of national importance and accurate demographic data plays a crucial role in planning, governance and implementation of welfare and developmental programmes.

He further appealed to youth, students, government employees, urban households and digitally aware citizens to come

forward and actively participate in the Self-Enumeration initiative and also motivate their families and communities to undertake the exercise.

The Ministers and legislators also appreciated the efforts of the Directorate of Census Operations, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, for introducing citizen-friendly digital initiatives and carrying out extensive awareness campaigns regarding Census 2027 and Self-Enumeration across Jammu and Kashmir.

While interacting with the participants, Amit Sharma highlighted that Census 2027 is going to be India's first fully digital and paperless Census exercise and will incorporate several technology-driven features including Self-Enumeration, mobile-based digital

data collection, geo-referenced mapping and real-time monitoring systems. He informed that under the Self-Enumeration facility, the citizens can voluntarily submit their Census details online during the notified self-enumeration period before household visits by Enumerators. He stated that the initiative has been introduced to enhance convenience, transparency, citizen participation and accuracy in Census operations.

Sharma also informed the dignitaries that the Self-Enumeration portal has been designed as a secure and user-friendly digital platform with built-in validation systems and multilingual support to facilitate smooth participation by citizens across different regions.

Bihar Legislative Assembly Committee on Minority Welfare calls on Sakina Itoo, Advisor to CM

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MAY 18: The Committee on Minority Welfare of the Bihar Legislative Assembly, led by its Chairman Akhtarul Iman, Monday called on Minister for Health & Medical Education Sakina Itoo and Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani during its visit to Jammu and Kashmir.

During the meeting, as per an official statement, detailed discussions were held on the developmental scenario in Bihar and Jammu and Kashmir, with particular focus on

welfare initiatives, healthcare, education and issues concerning minority communities. Matters of mutual interest, as well as avenues for strengthening cooperation and exchange of experiences between the two regions, were also discussed.

The visiting delegation appreciated the developmental initiatives and governance measures being undertaken in Jammu and Kashmir. Both sides emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts for inclusive growth and welfare of the people.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD(R&B) DIVISION ANANTNAG

NIT 15 OF R&B/Anantnag/2026-27 /E-TENDERING/1662-71, DATED 18-05-2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Union Territory of J&K e-tenders are invited on %age basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc.(in Rs)	Earnest Money (In Rs)	Time of Completion	Major Head of Account	Class of Contractor
1.	Construction of Lane from Farooq Ahmad Khanday to Shabir Ahmad Khanday Bon Mohalla Anchidora Anantnag	1.30 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 1.10 + (18% GST Amount 0.20)	200	2600/-	20 Days	CDF 2025-26	DEE Class & MSME's Only
2.	Construction of Drain form H/O Nasir Ahmad Sheikh to H/O Nazir Ahmad Hafiz, Mushtaq Ahmad Wani Gratbal Anchidora Anantnag.	2.95 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 2.50 + (18% GST Amount 0.45)	200	5900/-	30 Days	CDF 2025-26	DEE Class & MSME's Only
3.	Construction of Lane / Bathroom at Masjid Shareef Batapora Anchidora Anantnag	1.04 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 0.88 + (18% GST Amount 0.16)	200	2080/-	20 Days	CDF 2025-26	DEE Class & MSME's Only
4.	Construction of Road from H/O Waseem Ahmad Mir upto wall of Daughter of Mohammad Ibrahim Mir Gaswatu at Sarnal Bala (Phase Ist)	2.50 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 2.12 + (18% GST Amount 0.38)	200	5000/-	20 Days	CDF 2025-26	DEE Class & MSME's Only
5.	Construction of Lane and Drain form H/O Manzoor Ahmad Beigh to Tahir Ahmad Khan at Sarnal Bala Ward No 13	2.58 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 2.18 + (18% GST Amount 0.40)	200	5160/-	20 Days	CDF 2025-26	DEE Class & MSME's Only
6.	Raising of drain with slab and main hole from H/O Ab Gani Lone to Zahoor Ahmad Beigh at Sarnal Bala ward No 13 Anantnag	2.04 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 1.73 + (18% GST Amount 0.31)	200	4080/-	20 Days	CDF 2025-26	DEE Class & MSME's Only

Project Authority : District Development Commissioner Anantnag.
Position of AAA : Accorded vide Order No. 210 - DDCA of 2026, Dated 12.05.2026.

The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:

S.No.	Particulars	Dated
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	18-05-2026 (04:00 PM)
2	Period of Downloading of bidder documents	From 18-05-2026 To 25-05-2026 (04:00 PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	From 18-05-2026 (04:00 PM)
4	Bid Submission End Date	To 25-05-2026 (04:00 PM)
5	Date and time of opening of bid(online)	26-05-2026 (10:30 AM)

Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of Treasury Challan / receipt (Under MH- 0059 PWD) in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Anantnag [Tender Inviting Authority] (NIT No. Name of Work/Item No. to be mentioned on the Treasury Challan / Receipt) (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date) and EMD (2% of advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag (Tender receiving Authority). (The Date of EMD(CDR/FDR/BG) should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date and validity of EMD at the time of opening of Bids shall be a period of 45 Days beyond Bid Validity of 120 Days). The same EMD should not be used in more than one Tender/Bid.

- All the Bidders have to submit Earnest Money/Bid Security (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG. Non submission of Earnest Money/Bid Security shall render the bidder as Non-responsive.
- The 1st lowest responsive (Successful) Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Anantnag (Tender receiving authority) within 03 Days before fixation of Contract and shall be released 60 days after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work. The date of Performance Security (CDR/FDR/BG) should be after the date of issuance of letter/LOI to deposit the performance security. Failure to produce Performance Security shall render the L1 as non-responsive and case for debarring of the Contractor be forwarded to Higher Authorities for a period of 01 Year.
- The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG of the successful Bidder shall be released after receiving Performance security @5% of the allotted cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG and same shall be released 60 Days after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work.
- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Anantnag
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical Bid

- Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
 - Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on web-site www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.
 - To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.
 - The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No Financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
 - Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.
 - Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with bid.
 - Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents including tender document fee in terms of soft copies with technical bid.

- Note: - Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.
- The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.
 - Scanned copy of cost of tender document in the shape of Treasury Challan / Receipt in favour of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date) and EMD in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag must be uploaded with the documents of the bid. The Original Treasury Challan (Cost of Tender Document), EMD and other relevant bid documents shall be obtained from the lowest bidder before the fixation of the Contract.
 - Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually.
 - Price escalation and taxes: The %age quoted by the bidder entirely in Indian Rupees, shall be deemed to include price escalation upto completion of the work. Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.
 - Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on R&B e-Tendering portal to store such documents as are required.
 - All other terms and conditions are as same as laid in PWD Form 25.

DIPK-1397/26
DATED: 18-05-2026

(Er. Mohammad Waseem)
Executive Engineer,
R&B Division Anantnag

Rana hands over engagement orders to Anganwadi Workers, Helpers in Mendhar, Balakote

KT NEWS DESK

MENDHAR, MAY 18: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana on Monday handed over engagement orders to newly selected Anganwadi Workers and Helpers from Mendhar and Balakote under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme, reaffirming the government's commitment towards strengthening the grassroots welfare and public health services in rural and border areas.

The event, as per an official statement, marked an important step towards enhancing the delivery of early childhood care, nutrition, maternal healthcare and community welfare services in the region.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister underscored the significant contribution of Anganwadi Workers in promoting child welfare, women empowerment and community health awareness.

The Minister said that the government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is firmly committed to fulfil its promises in the sectors of



health, education and social welfare and is taking concrete measures to strengthen grassroots institutions across Jammu and Kashmir. He said the administration is working with dedication to ensure that welfare schemes reach every deserving household, especially in rural and tribal regions.

Highlighting the objectives of the ICDS scheme, the Minister said that Anganwadi centres play a vital role

in improving the nutritional and health status of children, while also creating awareness among mothers regarding healthcare, balanced nutrition, immunisation and child development. He noted that the scheme aims to provide a strong foundation for the psychological, physical and social development of children besides helping reduce malnutrition, morbidity and mortality among women and children.

DC reviews arrangements for Eid-ul-Adha at Kulgam

KT NEWS DESK

KULGAM, MAY 18: Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam Monday convened a meeting of officers to review the arrangements put in place for the upcoming festive occasion of Eid-ul-Adha. During the meeting, the DC, as per an official statement, directed officers of the Jal Shakti Department and KPDC to ensure smooth supply of water and electricity across the district. He also instructed the Jal Shakti Department to keep water tankers available in required areas and ensure that no locality fac-

es any shortage of drinking water. District Sheep Husbandry Officer informed the chair that adequate numbers of sacrificial animals, including sheep and goats, are available in the district. Chief Animal Husbandry Officer informed the meeting that sufficient poultry stock is also available to meet public demand during the festive days.

The DC further directed the concerned authorities to intensify market checking to ensure the quality and availability of essential commodities, including bakery and confectionery items, milk, meat, chicken, vegetables, and other essentials in the markets.

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS SOPORE

In the case of: Masrat Begum S/o: Altaf Rashid Hajam R/o: Botiongo.

Versus
C.E.O Municipal Council Sopore/BDO Sangrama/BDO Sopore
(Registrar of Birth and Death) ...Non Applicant

NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE

Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of Birth event of the applicant's Daughter namely SABIYA Altad D/o: Altaf Rashid Hajam as 19-04-2017 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

CS assesses Mission YUVA progress

KT News Desk

Srinagar, May 18: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Monday chaired the Apex Committee Meeting of Mission YUVA and reviewed the progress achieved under the ambitious initiative aimed at fostering entrepreneurship, generating employment and establishing Jammu & Kashmir as a thriving hub of enterprises and sustainable livelihoods.

The meeting was attended by senior officers from different departments including ACS, Finance; Commissioner Secretary, School Education; Secretary, Labour & Employment; Secretary, RDD; Director, Employment; Executive Director, EDI representatives from J&K Bank and other financial institutions, district administrations and other stakeholders associated with implementation of Mission YUVA.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary took a comprehensive review of the performance recorded under the four foundational pillars of Mission YUVA constituting the creation of Culture, Capital, Capacity and enhancing Connectivity for the ease and welfare of the applicants.

Besides this the Chief Secretary assessed district-wise achievements, institutional preparedness, credit facilitation, entrepreneurship development and implementation bottlenecks. He emphasized the need for coordinated efforts by the departments, financial institutions and district administrations to ensure that Mission YUVA evolves into a transformative movement for youth empowerment and economic growth across the Union Territory.

During the review, special attention was given to pendency at different stages of application processing. The Chief Secretary directed district administrations, SBDUs and banking institutions to expedite clearance of pending cases and strictly adhere to



timelines prescribed under the scheme. He stressed on time-bound verification of applications, DLIC approvals and loan sanctioning to maintain the momentum achieved under the mission.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed progress achieved under the capacity-building component of the mission. It was informed that more than 21,000 applicants had completed hybrid-mode entrepreneurship training, while over 300 training centres and more than 200 trainers had been activated across the UT. Plans are also underway for collaboration with JKEDI to strengthen entrepreneurship and management training for Mission YUVA applicants.

The Chief Secretary underscored the importance of outcome-based monitoring and directed all Deputy Commissioners to focus on improving application conversion, training completion, market linkage and enterprise sustainability.

He reiterated that Mission YUVA should not merely remain a financial assistance programme but must evolve into a comprehensive ecosystem capable of nurturing entrepreneurship culture and creating long-term livelihood opportunities for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir. He added that the

programme seeks to build an entrepreneurship ecosystem through targeted interventions in awareness generation, credit enablement, capacity building, market linkages and business support mechanisms.

The meeting especially reviewed the status of credit facilitation under Mission YUVA. The Secretary informed that over 1.07 lakh applications had been received so far, out of which more than 57,000 applications had been approved by District Level Implementation Committees (DLICs). Banks have sanctioned loans in more than 25,000 cases involving credit support exceeding 1,200 Cr, while loan disbursement of around 1,119 Cr had already been achieved in over 21,000 cases.

The meeting was informed that Mission YUVA has set an ambitious target of establishing 50,000 enterprises during 2026-27, including 44,000 nano enterprises, 4,000 new MSMEs and 2,000 existing MSMEs to be supported for expansion. District-wise targets and performance indicators were also reviewed in detail.

Reviewing the progress under the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) component, the Chief Secretary was apprised that Udyam

Jagriti 4.0 campaign during 2025-26 achieved outreach to nearly 3.4 lakh citizens, while more than 5.3 lakh individuals had been covered cumulatively through various awareness campaigns.

Under the proposed interventions, he gave out that the department is also planning conducting hackathons, entrepreneurship competitions, innovation support systems and application facilitation camps are planned to be organized at institutional and Panchayat levels.

While reviewing institutional strengthening measures, the Chief Secretary was informed that substantial progress had been achieved in recruitment and empanelment under the Institutional Business Support Mechanism (IBSM). More than 900 motivators, over 100 SBDU personnel and a large number of BHD members had already been engaged across districts to provide on-ground support, handholding and enterprise facilitation to aspiring entrepreneurs.

The meeting also discussed several key policy interventions and operational reforms aimed at improving mentorship support, strengthening institutional outreach and enhancing the efficiency of enterprise facilitation systems across the districts here.

Delegation, JDU President call on LG Sinha



KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, May 18: A delegation of volunteers from Vishwagram Trust, a Gujarat-based social organization, led by its Founder Sanjay Bhavsar, called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at Lok Bhavan on Monday.

The delegation briefed the Lieutenant Governor on their ongoing community outreach in the border villages of the Uri sector in Baramulla district. They shared details regarding their engagements with local youth and students, highlighting various creative activities being conducted across border schools. These initiatives include specialized workshops in filmmaking, music, arts and crafts, toy making,

and interactive educational games. The Lieutenant Governor appreciated the volunteers and the Trust for their dedicated efforts and impactful interventions in the border areas.

The Lieutenant Governor shared the transformational journey of Jammu Kashmir across various sectors over the past few years. He also spoke on key developmental milestones and flagship campaigns including the Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan, Vibrant Villages Programme and other ongoing socio-economic initiatives in the Union Territory. In the meantime, GM Shaheen, President, J&K Janta Dal United (JDU) called on Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha, and put forth the issues pertaining to promotion of tourism sector in the region.

Gulmarg operating at peak capacity: GDA CEO

WARIS FAYAZ

Gulmarg, May 18: Gulmarg is currently operating at its peak destination capacity, reflecting the return of tourist confidence in Kashmir after recent setbacks, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Gulmarg Development Authority (GDA), Tariq Hussain Naik, said on Monday.

Naik said the famous tourist destination is once again witnessing strong footfall from across the country, while authorities are also expecting a major increase in foreign tourist arrivals in the coming months.

"Currently, Gulmarg is carrying the best of its destination capacity, and hopefully it will increase further. Domestic tourism is increasing steadily, while we are hopeful of a foreign tourism boom ahead," Naik said.

He said the revival of tourism in Kashmir reflects the coordinated efforts of the administration, tourism department, security agencies and local stakeholders who have worked to restore confidence among visitors after the Pahalgam attack. "We should move forward and not remain stuck in the past. Gulmarg has always remained an all-weather tourist destination, and we are thankful to tourists for putting their trust in us," he added.

Calling tourism the backbone of the region's economy, the GDA CEO said tourists from different parts of the country are arriving in large numbers and enjoying the peaceful atmosphere and pleasant weather in Gulmarg. "People are visiting and experiencing the cool and calm atmosphere here. We are trying our best to ensure tourists feel safe, secure and at home. Confidence among tourists is returning day by day," he added.

On infrastructure development, the CEO said authorities are working to improve tourism facilities while ensuring ecological concerns remain protected. "Infrastructure



development will be carried out in such a manner that it attracts tourists while preserving the natural beauty of Gulmarg. The government is committed to tourist facilitation without compromising ecology," he said.

Naik said the historic golf course in Gulmarg is also being revived, and a major golf tournament will be organised in mid-July as part of efforts to promote sports tourism in the Valley. "We are upgrading facilities and reviving the heritage golf course. The upcoming golf tournament is expected to attract more visitors and boost tourism activity further," he said.

On the issue of illegal constructions, he reiterated that Gulmarg remains a strict no-construction zone and warned of intensified action against violators. "We in no way want Gulmarg to become a concrete jungle. Constructions must remain within legal and environmental norms. Anyone resorting to illegal construction without permission will face strict action," he said.

The CEO said around 13 illegal structures have already been sealed in Gulmarg, and the anti-encroachment drive will be intensified further in the coming days. "Those resorting to unfair means shall be dealt with strictly," he added—(KNO)

DC Sgr reviews arrangements for Eid-ul-Azha celebrations

KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, May 18: In view of the forthcoming Eid-ul-Azha celebrations, a meeting of all Sectoral/Zonal Officers was on Monday held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo at Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex, here to review the preparations made by different Departments for seamless conduct of the auspicious religious festival.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner Rifat Aftab Qureshi, Additional Deputy Commissioner Aadil Fareed, Superintendent of Police Umar Shah, Joint Commissioner SMC Nuzhat Khurshid, Chief Planning Officer Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Superintending Engineer R&B Shabir Ahmad, SDM West Irfan Bahadur, SDM East Zubair Ahmad, besides senior officers from Revenue, Food Safety, PDD, R&B, SMC, PHE, Health Services, FCS&CA, Animal & Sheep Husbandry, Fire & Emergency Services and other Officers.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner undertook a detailed review of the arrangements being made by line departments at major shrines and other prominent places across Srinagar where large congregations of devotees are expected to offer Eid prayers. Stressing the



importance of coordinated efforts among departments, the DC directed all concerned officers to ensure that requisite facilities and basic amenities are put in place well in advance to facilitate smooth conduct of religious gatherings and provide maximum convenience to the devotees.

While reviewing the availability of sacrificial animals and poultry birds, the DC directed the officers of the Animal

and Sheep Husbandry Departments to ensure adequate supply of animals and poultry in markets across the District so that the demand during Eid-ul-Azha is met without inconvenience to the public. With regard to ensuring proper and scientific disposal of hides and fleeces during the festive period, the DC directed the Srinagar Municipal Corporation to establish

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Sacrificial animal rush at Eidgah Srinagar

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, May 18: Activity at Srinagar's famous Eidgah sheep market has started rising as buyers flock to purchase sacrificial animals ahead of Eid-ul-Adha, which will be observed on May 27.

From early morning, buyers from different parts of the city thronged the market, inspecting sheep and negotiating prices.

Livestock sellers from Budgam, Baniptora, Ganderbal and south Kashmir districts have started bringing livestock to Srinagar, hoping for strong sales in the coming days.

"We have just entered the main season. The rush will increase with each passing day till Eid," Nazir Ahmad, a livestock dealer from Budgam said.

Many families said they preferred shopping early to avoid last-minute crowds and expected price hikes. Children accompanying parents added to the festive mood at the market.

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www.kashmirthunder.in

Bakery units in Srinagar penalized over hygiene

KNO

Srinagar, May 18: The Food Safety Department Srinagar on Monday launched an intensive inspection drive across several city areas, booking three bakery units for hygiene violations and warning shopkeepers against exposing food items to direct sunlight and unsafe storage practices.

In a statement, a spokesperson of the department said a team of the Food Safety Department Srinagar, along with Assistant Commissioner Food Safety Srinagar Yameen-ul-Nabi, carried out the drive in Karanagar, Kanikadal, Fateh Kadal, Gojwara and Hawal areas to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act and Rules. During the inspection, three bakery units were found violating provisions of Schedule-4 of the Food Safety and Standards Act on hygiene and sanitary



requirements. Consequently, prosecution under relevant provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Rules and Regulations will be

initiated, and the cases will be submitted before the competent court of law.

The team also observed that

several retail shopkeepers and small wholesalers were exposing food items directly to sunlight and not adhering

to the prescribed storage conditions mentioned on product labels. Such practices, officials said, may adversely affect the quality and safety of food products.

"In this regard, all Food Business Operators (FBOs) are strictly directed not to expose food items to excessive sunlight and to ensure that all food products are stored in cool, dry places or strictly as per the storage instructions mentioned on the label of each product," the spokesperson said.

He said that all FBOs are further directed to follow Good Storage Practices and maintain proper hygienic conditions as mandated under the Food Safety and Standards Act and Regulations. Any violation or non-compliance will invite strict legal action under the relevant provisions of the Act, the spokesperson added—(KNO)

Jailed MP Rashid gets bail to attend father's funeral

WARIS FAYAZ

Srinagar, May 18: Baramulla MP Engineer Rashid was on Monday granted bail to attend the last rites of his father, Haji Khazir Mohammad, who passed away after a brief illness at AIIMS Delhi.

Family members said that Rashid has been allowed to participate in the funeral following his father's death in New Delhi. Rashid has been granted bail till June 02.

Notably, Rashid was earlier granted interim bail on April

28 to meet his ailing father. After spending a few days with his family, he returned to Tihar Jail on May 6.

The last rites of Khazir



Mohammad Sheikh will be held at his native place in Langate in north Kashmir, family sources said—(KNO)

EDITORIAL

Self-Enumerate – Step Forward, Be Counted

The launch of Self-Enumeration for Census 2027 is both a technical upgrade and an invitation to every citizen to become an active participant in nation-building. For the first time in India's census history, households can directly submit their information through a secure online portal. This is a revolutionary shift from being passive subjects of data collection to becoming empowered contributors to national planning. The facility, available from May 17 to May 31, allows residents to fill

in details about housing conditions, household assets, amenities, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, and internet access. This data is not for any intrusive purpose. It is strictly confidential under the Census Act, 1948, and used only for statistical purposes and development planning. Every piece of information feeds into evidence-based governance, targeted welfare delivery, and long-term planning. When you self-enumerate, you are not just filling a form. You are helping the government understand

where roads are needed, where schools should be built, and where healthcare facilities require strengthening. This Census carries special significance for J&K and Ladakh. Urban expansion, migration trends, expanding municipal jurisdictions, and evolving developmental priorities make reliable data more crucial than ever. Without accurate data, planning is guesswork. With accurate data, every rupee spent on development reaches the right place, at the right time, for the right people. The process is simple. Visit

se.census.gov.in, fill in the details, and generate your SE ID. When the enumerator visits your home for the Houselisting and Housing Census from June 1 to June 30, share the ID to complete the process. Those who do not opt for self-enumeration will still be covered through physical house-to-house visits. But self-enumeration is faster, more convenient, and puts control in your hands. Every piece of data submitted brings better planning and governance. The Census is about understanding who we are, where we live, what

we need, and how the nation can serve us better. Citizens must come forward. Do not wait for the enumerator to knock. Do not leave this responsibility to others. Open your laptop or phone. Visit the portal. Fill in your details. Be counted. Because when you count yourself, you ensure that no one forgets you. And when the government has accurate data, it can build a future that truly serves every citizen. Self-enumerate today. It is your right. It is your duty. It is your power.

Can Indian IT Make The Most Of The AI Age?

For more than two decades, India's information technology industry built something genuinely admirable: a world class services engine that became the back office of the global economy.

Pravin Kaushal

For more than two decades, India's information technology industry built something genuinely admirable: a world class services engine that became the back office of the global economy. TCS, Infosys, Wipro, HCL Tech, and Tech Mahindra collectively generated hundreds of billions of dollars in revenue, employed millions of engineers, and powered an entire ecosystem of technical education across the country. Then came the AI revolution – and the industry was caught almost entirely unprepared.

The launch of ChatGPT in November 2022 was not a sudden shock. It was the visible peak of a transformation building since deep learning went mainstream after 2015. But Indian IT firms, locked into low-risk service contracts and investing less than three per cent of revenues in R&D compared to ten to twenty per cent at global technology companies, had neither the incentive nor the institutional culture to see it coming. By the time the alarm was impossible to ignore, the frontier had already been claimed by OpenAI, Google DeepMind, Anthropic, Meta, and a set of well-funded Chinese laboratories.

What followed was a period of genuine reckoning. The traditional pyramid model, in which armies of junior engineers churned out standardised code with revenues scaling directly with headcount, began to crack. AI could now perform many of those base layer tasks: routine code generation, testing, data processing, and documentation. At the same time, the growth of over 2,000 Global Capability Centres meant multinationals that once outsourced wholesale were now building substantial in-house teams in India. The existential question became unavoidable: if Indian IT cannot build the AI, and its traditional clients are increasingly building their own teams, what exactly is the industry's



role? Four structural failures explain why Indian IT missed the frontier AI race entirely. The first is the services trap.

Indian IT thrived on labour arbitrage and client-centric execution. Revenue was built on contracts, not on products or intellectual property. There was little incentive and considerable risk in allocating capital to speculative, long-horizon research. Shareholders were rewarded with consistent cash returns, not with bold technology bets. The second was negligible R&D investment. While global technology companies reinvested ten to twenty per cent of revenues into research, Indian IT averaged below three per cent. The gap was not primarily financial. These were profitable businesses with strong balance sheets. The failure was cultural and strategic, rooted in leadership cadres drawn entirely from delivery backgrounds. The third was a compute deficit. Training large-scale AI models requires enormous concentrations of GPU infrastructure.

The hyperscale data centres needed for

frontier model development were concentrated in the United States and China. India's data centre buildout, now accelerating, is doing so primarily to serve Western technology companies, not to support indigenous model development. The fourth, and perhaps most consequential, was brain drain. India produces world class AI researchers, but the compensation and research culture available at well-funded global laboratories consistently pulled the country's best minds abroad. Without an AI research culture at home, there was no institutional foundation from which frontier models could emerge. This remains true today. Here is what the frontier AI companies have discovered, and what has opened the door for Indian IT's current strategy: powerful models, when deployed in actual enterprise environments, frequently do not work as expected. This is not a criticism of the models. It is a structural reality. Real enterprises, whether banks, manufacturers, hospitals, or logistics companies, operate in complex environments shaped by

decades of legacy systems, proprietary data formats, regulatory requirements, and organisational habits. A general-purpose, large language model cannot simply be pointed at a company's data and asked to transform its operations. The integration, customisation, governance, and change management work required to make AI function in production is substantial. And frontier AI labs are neither equipped nor inclined to do it. This is the middle layer.

It is where Indian IT is now staking its future. A chief executive of a large non-technology enterprise does not want to build an AI team from scratch, navigate a rapidly shifting landscape of models and tools, or spend two years on a technology project while running a day-to-day business. He wants a trusted partner who will take the complexity off his hands and deliver measurable outcomes. For decades, that trusted partner was an Indian IT firm deploying enterprise software or migrating infrastructure to the cloud. Now, the same relationship is being offered for AI. Each of the five major Indian IT companies has articulated this strategy through a distinct branded platform. TCS has launched WisdomNext, a unified enterprise AI orchestration platform built around multi LLM integration, AI agent deployment, and governance. Its differentiator is an integration first approach that combines cloud and AI delivery under a single contract.

Infosys has built Topaz, the broadest enterprise AI stack among Indian IT firms. With access to over 12,000 pre-trained AI assets, knowledge graphs, and workflow automation tools, it is heavily platformised and oriented toward specific industry verticals. Wipro's ai360 embeds generative AI across every service, platform, tool, and delivery process. It offers multi cloud AI architecture support and a strong emphasis on

responsible AI, including ethical filters and compliance guardrails. HCL Tech's AI Force and AI Foundry platform focuses on agentic AI and workforce automation, featuring a modular AI stack, software engineering automation, and IT operations AI. The strategic emphasis is on engineering led productivity. Tech Mahindra's Project Indus takes a domain led approach, with depth in telecom, banking and financial services, and manufacturing. It reflects the company's view that industry-specific AI deployment will command a premium over horizontal solutions.

There is reason for cautious optimism. Enterprise AI implementation is a genuine, high-value problem, and Indian IT's combination of enterprise relationships, domain knowledge, and delivery capability gives it a credible foundation. But the risks are real. Frontier AI labs are not standing still. If the implementation layer becomes commoditised, the current platform investments may prove insufficient. The window is not unlimited. Enterprise clients are making long-term partnership decisions now.

The firms that establish credibility and deliver measurable results in the next two to three years will be well positioned for the decade ahead. Those merely rebranding existing services with AI labels will be exposed. India will not lead the next generation of AI. That moment has passed. But a nation of skilled implementers, with deep enterprise relationships and a demonstrated ability to deploy complex technology at scale, is not without a future in the AI age. Whether Indian IT makes the most of that future is the question that will define the sector for the next decade.

The writer is director-Mrikal (AI/Data Center) and a young alumni member, Government Liaison Task Force, IIT Kharagpur. He tweets as @pravinkaushal. Courtesy: The Statesman

International Climate Law Needs Teeth

This is a critical moment, not just for the climate but also for the future of international cooperation

Ralph Regenvanu

The International Court of Justice last year delivered a legal opinion on climate change with a clarity of purpose not seen since the 2015 Paris Agreement. It left no doubt that states have a legal obligation to prevent significant harm to the climate system and that failure to do so carries legal consequences.

My own country, Vanuatu, brought this question to the world and to the court. But we were not alone. We built a coalition of countries spanning every region and gained sustained support from youth movements. Ultimately, 132 countries co-sponsored a motion for a UN resolution asking the International Court of Justice to rule on the matter, which then passed by consensus. It was a historic moment and one that did not happen by accident.

Now we are back at the UN General Assembly, presenting a resolution to give the world court's advisory opinion practical effect and calling on the world to support it. It is normal practice for such advisory opinions to go back to the UNGA, where resolutions give member states an opportunity to amplify their political and normative authority. This new resolution not only calls on the UN to endorse the opinion but also urges all member states to uphold the obligations that the court identified. It sets the stage for follow-up action within the UN system, such as a formal request to the secretary-general to find ways to advance compliance.

We believe this new resolution is the best way to ensure that legal obligations to deal with climate change do not just sit on a shelf. They must be reflected in the real world, even if certain states would rather pretend that the ruling did not happen.

We are under no illusions that the ruling will be difficult for some countries to implement. But we cannot ignore the costs of inaction. This is a critical moment, not just for the climate but



also for the future of international cooperation. The entire postwar, postcolonial multilateral order is under significant pressure. Large states are withdrawing from international agreements and withholding funding from multilateral organizations. Bilateral deals are replacing collective frameworks. Many fear that the global architecture of rules, norms, courts and international accountability is crumbling before our eyes.

In this context, reaffirming the role of institutions like the International Court of Justice would be a shot in the arm for multilateralism. What Vanuatu, a country of only about 340,000 people, has accomplished shows that the system can still function. We took a legal question

to the appropriate institution and that institution did its job. The process was slow and we faced plenty of resistance along the way. But justice prevailed. All states had a chance to argue before the court, whether they were for or against the motion, and the outcome was clear.

The ruling gave vulnerable people around the world hope and lent new momentum to multilateral climate action, especially the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change – the process that has organized the international response to climate change for more than 30 years. Everyone participating in the annual UN Climate Change Conferences now knows where the world court stands. The obligation to cooperate on meaningful solutions is not

merely political and moral, but legal.

Following weeks of negotiations, our new resolution has been shaped by input from almost every UN member state and facilitated by a core group of countries from every region of the world. That breadth of engagement is no accident. It shows that the appetite for a truly global response to climate change remains strong, even at this fraught geopolitical moment.

There is no defensible reason for states to vote against the resolution. If we fail here, we will be signaling to current and future generations that we have moved from a system built on cooperation to one governed by power alone. We will be conceding that pressure from vested interests can derail the progress we

have made toward guaranteeing our collective survival.

It is no secret that powerful vested interests want to delay the transition away from fossil fuels. Despite the rapidly falling costs of renewables, they have no problem leveraging their money and influence to frustrate efforts to mitigate climate change. Small island states like Vanuatu are particularly vulnerable to these bad-faith actors.

Still, the world is now witnessing the consequences of relying on a fossil fuel economy. While Vanuatu has long been vulnerable to growing climate-related risks like cyclones and drought, we are currently experiencing a different kind of storm. Those fueling up at gas stations in Port Vila are seeing the same high prices as hundreds of millions of others around the world. We are all learning the hard way what a failure to phase out fossil fuels looks like.

The conflict in the Middle East reminds us that fossil fuels do not just heat the planet; they also inflame conflicts. The sooner all of us move away from such volatility, the better.

We all have a duty to keep fighting for international cooperation, because the alternative – a world that stops trying to solve its hardest problems collectively – would be worse than the current one. Vanuatu and its many like-minded partners will continue to push forward, not only on behalf of our own communities but on behalf of yours, too. Billions of people are already facing, or will soon face, rising seas, intensifying storms, deadly wildfires and the relentless erosion of everything we have built.

The law has spoken. The question confronting every state is simple: We know the rule of law applies to climate change, but do you intend to act on it?

Ralph Regenvanu is Vanuatu's Minister of Climate Change. Courtesy: Project Syndicate

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

Sakeena Itoo reviews proposed interventions for transforming, strengthening ECCE in J&K

'Remove duplicity if any regarding children registered in Anganwadi Centres and schools'

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, MAY 18: Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health & Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, chaired a high-level review meeting on Monday to assess the interventions proposed for transforming and strengthening Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) by the Social Welfare department across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare department, Sarmad Hafeez; Commissioner Secretary Education, Ram Niwas Sharma; Mission Director ICDS, Sajad Hussain Ganai; Project Director Samagra, Bhawani Rakhwal; Director School Education Kashmir, Naseer Ahmad Wani; Director Health Services Kashmir, Director Finance/Director Planning of Health, Social Welfare, School Education and Higher Education departments, other senior officers, while as Director School Education Jammu, Director Health Services Jammu, Director Social Welfare Jammu, representatives of BISAG-N and other concerned officers attended the meeting through virtual mode.

During the meeting, the



Minister undertook a comprehensive review of the ongoing Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) initiatives, infrastructural preparedness, teacher training modules, learning outcomes, enrolment trends and convergence mechanisms aimed at ensuring quality foundational learning for children in the age group of 3 to 6 years.

Addressing the officers, Sakeena Itoo underscored the critical importance of ECCE in shaping the cognitive, emotional and social development of children. She stated that ECCE forms the bedrock of the education system and plays a pivotal role in nurturing young minds during

their most formative years.

Stressing on the proper implementation of ECCE framework in coordination with School Education department, the Minister directed all concerned departments to work in close synergy to achieve measurable improvements in nutrition, school readiness and foundational learning outcomes.

She also directed the officers to remove duplicity if any regarding children registered in Anganwadi Centres and schools.

The Minister emphasized that the government is committed to building an inclusive, equitable and child-friendly ECCE framework. She directed the

concerned authorities to ensure effective implementation of play-based and activity-oriented learning methodologies across all pre-primary institutions and Anganwadi centres.

Sakeena Itoo stressed the need for strengthening coordination between the School Education department and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) to ensure seamless delivery of early learning and nutrition support. She further called for enhanced parental awareness and community participation to create a supportive ecosystem for young learners.

Highlighting the importance of trained educators, the

Minister asked the concerned officers to intensify capacity-building programmes for ECCE teachers and Anganwadi workers to equip them with contemporary teaching techniques and child psychology-based learning approaches.

Reaffirming the government's commitment towards quality education and child welfare, Sakeena Itoo said that sustained efforts are being made to strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy while ensuring that every child in Jammu and Kashmir receives a nurturing, stimulating and safe learning environment.

The Minister also directed the concerned officers to strengthen Anameia checkups in AWCs so that maximum beneficiaries are covered.

During the meeting, Commissioner Secretary Social Welfare, Sarmad Hafeez gave a detailed on proposed interventions regarding ECCE. He informed that innovative mentorship models are being implemented to bridge Anganwadis and primary schools, with mentor teachers providing pedagogical support and on-site guidance. He also said that that internship collaborations are being rolled out to strengthen service delivery at the grassroots.

Committees on Govt Assurances from Bihar, Jharkhand call on Speaker JKLA



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, MAY 18: The delegates of Committee on Government Assurances of Legislative Council Bihar, Minority Welfare Committee of Committee of Legislative Assembly Bihar and Committee on Government Assurances of the Legislative Assembly Jharkhand, Monday visited the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly and called on the Speaker, J&K Legislative Assembly Abdul Rahim Rather.

The Speaker, as per an official statement, welcomed the committee members and highlighted the important role of the Committee on Government Assurances in ensuring accountability and transparency in governance.

He stated that engaging with the committees from other states is essential to understand the diverse legislative landscapes across our country. It is through this collaborative spirit that all assemblies can work together to uphold and

strengthen the democratic values of the nation.

The high-level visit was focused on a bilateral exchange of knowledge, aiming to deepen the mutual understanding of legislative work cultures and the specific procedural functions of their respective committees.

The visit also marks a significant step in fostering interstate cooperation between the legislative bodies.

During the interaction, the delegates shared best practices and discussed the evolving mechanisms used to ensure government accountability through the assurance process.

By studying the work culture and functioning of their counterparts, the committees aim to implement more robust frameworks for tracking and fulfilling government promises made on the floor of the House.

The visiting delegations appreciated the functioning of the J&K Legislative Assembly and expressed satisfaction over the exchange of knowledge and best practices during the visit.

Jammu, Srinagar mark International Museum Day



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, MAY 18: The J&K Department of Archives, Archaeology & Museums Monday celebrated the International Museum Day under the theme "Museums Uniting a Divided World" in conjunction with Mission Gyan Bharatam.

Specially curated exhibitions of artifacts and rare manuscript collections were organized at the Dogra Art Museum, Jammu and the SPS Museum, Lalmandi, Srinagar, with free entry for all the visitors.

At the Dogra Art Museum Jammu, the exhibition was inaugurated by Yudhvir Sethi, MLA, Jammu East.

At the SPS Museum, Srinagar, the event, as per an official statement, was inaugurated by Brij Mohan Sharma, Principal Secretary, Department of Culture in presence of Kuldeep Krishan Sidha, Director, Archives, Archaeology & Museums and Parvez Ahmad,

Special Secretary, Department of Culture.

The exhibitions featured unique manuscripts and artifacts, including the 5th-century Gilgit Manuscript on birch bark, Tafseer-i-Kabeer, Shah Nama-i-Firdousi, a bronze sculpture of Bodhisattva Padmapani, 3rd-century terracotta tiles, Shah Jahan's gold-plated bow, the Royal Armoury, Basohli paintings, Sudhama paintings and gold coins from the Kushan period.

To make the event inclusive and accessible, refreshments and gifts were arranged for over 1,000 visitors across both the museums, including students, ex-servicemen, scholars, authors and tourists.

On the occasion, wheelchairs and helpers were also provided for the persons with disabilities.

The visitors expressed appreciation for the department's initiative, calling it a first-of-its-kind, well-facilitated exhibition.

Satish Sharma calls for stronger digital infrastructure, greater youth engagement through sports

'Sports play a crucial role in shaping the personality of youth'

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, MAY 18: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, Monday highlighted government's initiatives towards strengthening the digital infrastructure, promoting technological innovation and encouraging youth participation in sports and recreational activities across Jammu & Kashmir.

The Minister, as per an official statement, was speaking during a one day seminar organised by the Institution of Engineers (India), Jammu & Kashmir State Centre (IEI-JKSC) in observance of World Telecommunication & Information Society Day 2026 on the theme "Digital Lifelines - Strengthening Resilience in a Connected World."

The seminar was attended by the engineers, policymakers, telecom professionals, experts and public representatives to deliberate upon the growing importance of resilient digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, broadband connectivity and inclusive technological development in an increasingly interconnected world.

Addressing the gathering, Satish Sharma said that robust digital connectivity has become the backbone of modern governance and socio-economic development. He stated that the Government is focused on ensuring equitable access to digital services and strengthening communication infrastructure across Jammu & Kashmir to bridge the digital divide.

The Minister emphasised the



importance of adopting modern technologies and building secure and resilient digital systems capable of meeting future challenges. He appreciated the role of professional institutions like IEI-JKSC in promoting technical awareness, innovation and constructive dialogue on emerging technological issues.

Later, Satish Sharma also appreciated the successful organisation of an Indoor Games Competition by the Red Team aimed at promoting sportsmanship, youth engagement and healthy recreational activities among youngsters.

The competition witnessed enthusiastic participation from youth and sports lovers who took part in various indoor games including carrom, chess, table tennis, badminton and other recreational activities. The participants displayed remarkable talent, discipline and team spirit throughout the event.

The Minister said that sports play a crucial role in shaping the personality of youth by promoting discipline, confidence, leadership and teamwork. He stressed that both indoor and outdoor sports activities provide constructive avenues for youth engagement and

contribute towards physical as well as mental well-being.

The Indoor Games Competition concluded with a prize distribution ceremony in which the winners and outstanding performers were felicitated for their achievements. The organisers thanked all participants, officials and supporters for making the event successful and memorable.

The programme commenced with a formal introduction by Er. Irfan Ahmad Reshi, MIE, Honorary Secretary, IEI-JKSC, who highlighted the significance of the occasion. He emphasised the transformative role of communication technologies in governance, education, healthcare, public service delivery and economic development.

Engineer Ferdous Ahad Bhat, FIE, Chairman, IEI-JKSC, underlined the importance of building resilient and inclusive digital ecosystems capable of supporting societies during emergencies and technological disruptions. He stressed the need for strengthening cybersecurity frameworks and expanding broadband accessibility, particularly in remote and underserved areas.

Census 2027

Javid Dar completes Self-Enumeration

Calls it a milestone in digital governance



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, MAY 18: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, Monday completed the Self-Enumeration process for Census 2027, marking participation in what is being described as India's first fully digital and paperless Census exercise.

The Minister, as per an official statement, termed the initiative a significant milestone in the country's digital governance framework. He stated that the Census integrates advanced digital technologies, mobile-based data collection systems and self-enumeration mechanisms to ensure greater efficiency, transparency, accuracy and real-time monitoring of operations.

Javid Dar said that the digital Census exercise reflects the government of India's commitment towards leveraging the technology for improved

governance and data-driven policy planning. He urged the citizens to actively participate in the self-enumeration process within the stipulated timeline to facilitate comprehensive and accurate data collection.

The Self-Enumeration phase, being conducted from May 17 to May 31, 2026, will gather information on several critical aspects relating to housing and building conditions. The questionnaire covers key parameters including housing conditions, household assets, amenities and facilities, access to sanitation and drinking water, type of construction, communication and transport facilities as well as the availability of electricity and internet connectivity.

The Minister observed that reliable census data is essential for effective planning and implementation of developmental schemes, enabling the governments to formulate targeted policies for socio-economic progress and public welfare.

National Commission for Women to hold Mahila Jan Sunwai in Srinagar under 'Rashtriya Mahila Aayog Aapke Dwar' initiative

Commission to hold an open interaction programme for Srinagar women at Banquet Hall

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR MAY 18: The National Commission for Women is conducting series of Mahila Jan Sunwai sessions at Srinagar on May 19, 2026, at Banquet Hall M A Road Srinagar as part of its flagship outreach programme "Rashtriya Mahila Aayog Aapke Dwar" aimed at hearing women's grievances and ensuring their prompt redressal.

The initiative, as per an official statement, is being organized under the nationwide Mahila Jan Sunwai programme to provide a direct platform for women of Srinagar District to voice their concerns and seek resolution of issues related to their rights, welfare and safety.

The programme aimed to strengthen outreach mechanisms and facilitate direct interaction between women and the Commission so that grievances can be addressed in an effective and time-bound manner. The initiative also aims to enhance awareness among women regarding their legal rights and the

institutional support available for redressal of complaints.

Through the "Rashtriya Mahila Aayog Aapke Dwar" initiative, the Commission is reaching out to women at the grassroots level to ensure their voices are heard and their concerns are addressed through coordinated institutional intervention.

Women from Srinagar District can attend the session at the Banquet Hall Conference Complex on May 19, 2026 at 9:30 AM and directly interact with the Chairperson of the Women Commission to raise issues concerning their welfare, safety, and rights.

DC Budgam chairs interdepartmental meeting on mining, mineral extraction

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, MAY 18: An Inter-Departmental District Level meeting was Monday convened under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan to review, assess, and strengthen the regulatory and monitoring mechanisms for mineral extraction and transportation in the district.

During the meeting, as per an official statement, a review of the existing enforcement framework was undertaken and the functioning of various departments involved in mineral regulation was assessed in detail.

The DC directed the Irrigation and Flood Control Department,



Budgam, to maintain strict vigil over Nallah Sukhnga, Doodhganga, and Shaliganga and other nallahs of the District to ensure that no illegal extraction of minerals takes place from these water bodies.

The District Mineral Officer (DMO), Budgam, was directed to further strengthen the vigilance and ensure real-time monitoring across district.

a zero-tolerance policy shall be adopted against all violators.

All Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) were directed to closely monitor incidents of illegal mining within their jurisdictions and ensure prompt legal action against offenders.

The R&B Department was directed to closely monitor road infrastructure affected by the movement of overloaded vehicles and to ensure the installation of proper checkpoints and barricades at vulnerable locations.

The department was further instructed to coordinate with enforcement agencies to prevent damage to public infrastructure caused by illegal mineral transportation.

NCW Chairperson, Vishwagram Trust, KCCI delegations call on LG Sinha



KT News Desk

Srinagar, May 18: Vijaya K. Rahatkar, Chairperson, National Commission for Women (NCW), Government of India, called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at Lok Bhavan on Monday. She was accompanied by Chairpersons of the Commission for Women from various States and senior officials.

A delegation of volunteers from Vishwagram Trust, a

Gujarat-based social organization, led by its founder Sanjay Bhavsar, also called on the Lieutenant Governor. The delegation briefed him on their ongoing community outreach in border villages of the Uri sector in Baramulla district, sharing details regarding their engagements with local youth and students, including special-ized workshops in filmmaking, music, arts and crafts, toy making, and interactive educational games.

The Lieutenant Governor appreciated the volunteers and the Trust for their dedicated efforts and impactful interventions in border areas. He also shared the transformational journey of Jammu and Kashmir across various sectors over the past few years, and spoke on key developmental milestones and flagship campaigns including the Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan, Vibrant Villages Programme, and other ongoing socio-economic

initiatives. Javid Ahmad Tenga, President of the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), called on the Lieutenant Governor. He was accompanied by Bashir Ahmad Naik, President of the J&K Fruits and Vegetables Processing and Integrated Cold Chain Association.

Subsequently, a delegation of Badal Hockey Club Kashmir led by its President S. Harmeet Singh Sasan also called on the Lieutenant Governor.

KCFL football trials expand across Kashmir

North East United FC selections draw huge response in Srinagar

KT News Desk

Srinagar, May 18: Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council continued its Valley-wide football talent identification drive under the Kashmir Champions Football League (KCFL) with successful trials conducted in Kupwara and Baramulla, while the NorthEast United FC open selection trials, in collaboration with J&K Sports Council generated massive excitement at the TRC Synthetic Turf Ground, Srinagar.

The KCFL initiative, emerging as one of the largest grassroots football movements ever undertaken in Jammu & Kashmir, aims to create a structured pathway for young footballers from local grounds to competitive professional football.

At Kupwara, football trials were conducted at Playground Kulangam, where aspiring

players from different parts of the district turned up in large numbers to showcase their talent before selectors.

Simultaneously, the trials at the Synthetic Turf Football Stadium, Azad Gunj, Baramulla witnessed tremendous enthusiasm and participation from local youth. The event was graced by MLA Baramulla Javid Hassan Baig, who interacted with players and appreciated the efforts being made to strengthen grassroots football and provide sporting opportunities to the youth of the region.

Meanwhile, Srinagar remained the focal point of football activity as NorthEast United FC, conducted open selection trials in collaboration with the Sports Council, the first time an Indian Super League club has organised such trials in Jammu & Kashmir.

Present during the Srinagar event was Naushad Moosa, Technical Director of NorthEast United FC and Head Coach of the India U-23 National Football Team, whose presence added major national significance to the initiative.

The KCFL is not merely a tournament but a long-term developmental platform designed to nurture talent, promote youth engagement, and strengthen grassroots football culture across Jammu & Kashmir. The initiative also forms part of the Government's larger youth outreach and anti-drug awareness efforts through sports-based engagement.

The next phase of football trials under the KCFL is scheduled for May 19 in Anantnag, Kulgam, and Pulwama, as the Valley-wide talent hunt continues to expand across South Kashmir.

MP Jugal Kishore chairs DISHA meeting at Jammu

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, May 18: Member of Parliament Jugal Kishore Sharma on Monday chaired the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) meeting here at the District Headquarters, Jammu, to review the implementation and progress of the Centrally Sponsored Schemes and flagship programmes being executed in the district.

Member of Rajya Sabha Sat Paul Sharma, who is Co-Chairperson of the DISHA

the deliberations and offered valuable inputs on the occasion.

The meeting was attended by Members of Legislative Assembly from the district, who actively raised developmental issues and concerns pertaining to their respective constituencies, along with senior district officers and representatives of concerned departments.

District Development Commissioner Jammu, Dr. Rakesh Minhas gave a detailed presentation highlighting the status, achievements and progress under various Centrally Sponsored

across the district. A comprehensive review was undertaken of major programmes including PMAY, Jal Jeevan Mission, MGNREGA, PMGSY, Swachh Bharat Mission, PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, PM KUSUM, PM SHRI Schools, Health, Education, Power, Rural Development and Social Welfare schemes, covering both physical and financial progress.

The meeting witnessed threadbare deliberations on the ground-level implementation of these schemes. The Chair underlined that timely and planned execution of projects is of para-

effective grassroots delivery and stressed the need for transparency, accountability and quality standards across all executing agencies.

Reviewing the overall progress, MP Jugal Kishore issued directions, covering a wide range of ongoing developmental works across the district. He emphasised that completed schemes be operationalised without delay so that public benefit is not held up and that works stalled for any reason be brought back on track through appropriate remedial measures.

expediting pending works and ensuring that fresh works are commenced in accordance with approved plans and timelines.

The Chair gave particular attention to key flagship schemes, directing that targets under housing, rural electrification, road connectivity, sanitation and school infrastructure programmes be pursued with renewed urgency. He stressed that the benefits of these schemes reach all eligible beneficiaries and that awareness among the public be actively promoted with the involvement of elected representatives.

redressal of issues relating to power supply and drinking water, with emphasis on ensuring that infrastructure in one sector does not hamper delivery in another.

Specific directions were also issued on certain local infrastructure matters of importance to the district, including road connectivity and bridge projects, for which the Chair called for expeditious resolution of pending issues.

Member of Rajya Sabha Sat Paul Sharma, while addressing the meeting, stressed that Jammu and Kashmir must accelerate its performance across

that maximum benefit reaches the public. He laid special emphasis on sanitation targets and urged that more avenues be explored to enable departments to deliver public benefits effectively through Government of India schemes.

Others present at the meeting included Additional District Development Commissioner Sher Singh, Additional Deputy Commissioner Vidhu Shekhar, Sub-Divisional Magistrates of respective sub-divisions, Chief Planning Officer Ajaypal Singh, Superintending Engineers and other concerned sectoral officers.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Recruitment in terror

The LG said nearly 90 percent of the police force was engaged in anti-drug operations and claimed that public cooperation had increased significantly, with residents voluntarily sharing information about alleged drug peddlers.

"Some people have problems with our fight against drugs, but I want to assure that no innocent person has been touched. Those found guilty will be punished," he said.

He also said rehabilitation and treatment facilities were being strengthened through government hospitals and rehabilitation centres run by the health department.

Referring to the April 22, 2025 Pahalgam terror attack, LG Sinha said people across Jammu and Kashmir had come out on the streets to condemn terrorism and support peace.

"People of Kashmir now believe that their future lies with India and people are against terrorism," he said.

The LG claimed that infiltration attempts and terrorist activities were being dealt with firmly by security forces. "None of their top commanders have survived. Infiltration attempts will also face the same fate," he said, while praising the Army and the CRPF for carrying out "precise operations" after the Pahalgam terror attack.

"Our neighbouring country carried out the Pahalgam attack, but we punished them," he added.

On the political process in Jammu and Kashmir, LG Sinha said the Centre had fulfilled its commitments made after the abrogation of Article 370 by conducting delimitation and peaceful elections.

"After Article 370's abrogation, delimitation and peaceful elections were completed without violence or repolls. Statehood will also be restored as assured by the Prime Minister and the Home Minister," he said.

Asked about Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, LG Sinha said he was "doing great work." (KNO)

LG conducts on-site

works and pilgrim facilities at Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) Yatri Niwas at Pantha Chowk, Srinagar.

The Lieutenant Governor interacted with the officials and directed them to expedite the progress and ensure completion of pending works well before commencement of Shri Amarnathji yatra. He reviewed the arrangements for sound and light show dedicated to Baba Barfani.

The Lieutenant Governor was accompanied by Dr. Manddeep K. Bhandari, CEO, SASB; Mukesh Garg, Member, Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board; Rajiv Pandey, DIG CKR; Dr. GV Sundeep Chakravarthy, SSP Srinagar; Akshay Labroo, Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar and other senior officers.

Norway stood

and asserted that cooperation among nations was essential to tackle challenges such as terrorism, wars and economic uncertainty.

He said the world was witnessing instability due to conflicts in regions such as Ukraine and West Asia, but added that India and Europe were simultaneously entering a "new golden

era" of ties.

Highlighting the growing India-Europe partnership, PM Modi referred to the India-European Free Trade Association pact and said it would strengthen economic cooperation between India and Norway. He said the agreement was expected to bring investments worth USD 100 billion and create one million jobs in India over the next 15 years.

The Prime Minister also underlined the importance of the India-Norway Green Strategic Partnership, saying it would benefit the global community. He said Norway was joining the Indo-Pacific initiative and both countries would work together to strengthen maritime security, marine economies and capacity building.

The Norwegian Prime Minister said both countries believed in cooperation and dialogue to address global challenges. He announced that India and Norway were signing a memorandum of understanding to expand collaboration in high-quality health services, digital health, artificial intelligence, research and health technology.

He also cautioned against the "weaponisation" of diplomacy, trade and technology and said discussions were held on key global issues, including the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East.

India has been engaging with several countries to strengthen counter-terror cooperation and seek international support against cross-border terrorism following the Pahalgam attack. (KNO)

PM Modi conferred

deep bonds of goodwill between India and Norway and will guide their journey of friendship and collaboration into the future, Modi added.

Hot weather prevails

thundershowers, gusty winds and hailstorms at scattered to many places, mainly during afternoon and evening hours.

It said generally dry weather is expected from May 22 to 25 during the forenoon, although brief showers may occur at isolated to scattered places later in the day.

Dry weather conditions are likely to prevail again between May 26 and 28, the department added.

The MeT office has issued an advisory warning of thundershowers, lightning and gusty winds with speeds of 40-50 kmph at a few places in Kashmir and Jammu divisions between May 19 and 21.

Authorities have also advised people to suspend boating and shikara rides during afternoon and late afternoon hours due to the possibility of gusty winds over water bodies.

The department urged people, particularly in the plains of Jammu division, to take precautions against hot and dry weather conditions. (KNO)

Thajwas Glacier lost

the Neoglaciation period to the present day. The scientists said the findings indicate a strong connection between global temperature rise and glacier melt in the Himalaya.

The study also examined changes in the glacier's Equilibrium Line Altitude (ELA), the point on a glacier where accumulation and melting

remain balanced. Researchers found that the ELA fluctuated significantly, from around 3,365 metres above sea level during the global Last Glacial Maximum to nearly 4,238 metres at present.

The lower ELA during the glGM suggested colder climatic conditions and positive glacier mass balance, while rising temperatures over thousands of years led to sustained glacier retreat and ice loss, the researchers said.

They noted that quantitative records of past glaciations remain limited across the Himalaya, especially in Kashmir, making the study important for understanding long-term climatic changes in the region.

The researchers said reconstructing the glacial history of Kashmir's Himalayan region could help bridge major gaps in understanding regional climate evolution and glacier response to changing temperatures.

Scientists have repeatedly warned that rapid glacier retreat in the Himalaya could have serious implications for water availability, river systems and ecological stability across South Asia, where millions depend on glacier-fed rivers for drinking water, agriculture and hydropower.

The Himalaya, often referred to as the "Third Pole", contains one of the world's largest reserves of ice outside the polar regions and remains highly vulnerable to climate change. (KNO)

House committee

the Speaker's claims, Sharma said that an attempt has been made to portray him as if he was oblivious to the process of constituting three financial committees.

He said that he had clearly mentioned in his handout issued to the media on Friday that the opposition has been ignored while appointing heads of six non-financial committees.

He said the Speaker's claim that the post of chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has been given to the Bharatiya Janata Party is not a favour to the party, but a well-established convention across the country. "The post of PAC chairman has always been held by the opposition, whether it is in Parliament, states, or Union Territories with legislatures," he said.

He said the Speaker's assertion that senior BJP members were adjusted in financial committees and couldn't be appointed as heads of other committees was questionable, asking why the same yardstick was not applied to the ruling alliance whose first-time MLAs have been appointed as heads of House committees.

"There are several second-time MLAs of BJP who are not part of financial committees, but the Speaker has chosen first-timers from the ruling alliance as heads of non-financial committees," he said.

Sharma said the Speaker has exclusive powers to nominate chairpersons and members of non-financial committees, but discretion cannot be guided by party interests and should be exercised on the basis of well-established conventions and the principle of proportionate representation.

"The chairpersons of committees are appointed on the basis of the principle of proportionate representation," he said. (KNO)

Adequate fuel,

Sharma said that domestic LPG deliveries are being prioritized and maintained at regular levels across Jammu and Kashmir. Necessary measures are in place to ensure that all consumers receive their supplies without interruption.

"The oil industry is working closely with logistics providers and retail outlets to coordinate stock movement and ensure seamless availability of fuel throughout the region," he said.

Sharma urged citizens to avoid panic buying and to continue their normal fuel consumption patterns. He advised the public to rely solely on official communications from OMCs for accurate and verified updates regarding fuel availability, emphasizing that there is no cause for concern.

'Only 36% women

increases across age groups, reaching four per cent among people aged 20-24 years, seven per cent in the 25-29 age group, 8.5 per cent among those aged 30-34 years, 14 per cent in the 35-39 age bracket, and nearly 20 per cent among people aged 40-45 years. The rate further climbs to 24 per cent among individuals aged 45-49 years.

At the same time, the percentage of people with normal blood pressure declines sharply with age. While nearly 60 per cent of teenagers in the 15-19 age group have normal blood pressure, the figure drops to just 17 per cent among people aged 45-49 years.

The survey also points towards a rise in pre-hypertension with age. Around 40 per cent of adolescents fall in the pre-hypertensive category, while the percentage increases to nearly 62 per cent in older adults aged 45-49 years.

Urban areas in Jammu and Kashmir reported slightly higher cases of hypertension compared to rural regions. Among women, nearly 10.3 per cent in urban areas were found to be hypertensive compared to 9.7 per cent in rural areas. A similar trend was observed among men as well.

The data further categorises hypertension severity levels. Among women, around seven per cent suffer from Stage-1 hypertension, one per cent from Stage-2 hypertension and less than one per cent from Stage-3 hypertension. A small proportion of women were also found to be taking medication despite recording normal blood pressure levels during screening.

Among men, eight per cent were found to have Stage-1 hypertension, one per cent Stage-2 hypertension and 0.2 per cent Stage-3 hypertension. Some men were also on anti-hypertensive medication despite having controlled blood pressure readings.

Medical experts describe hypertension as a "silent killer" because it often develops without noticeable symptoms but significantly increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney failure and other life-threatening complications.

Doctors attribute the growing burden of hypertension to unhealthy eating habits, excessive salt intake, obesity, lack of exercise, smoking, alcohol consumption, mental stress and sedentary lifestyles.

Health experts stressed the need for greater public awareness, routine blood pressure monitoring and timely medical consultation. They advised people to adopt healthier lifestyles, including balanced diets, regular exercise, stress

management and avoiding tobacco and alcohol to reduce the risk of hypertension and related diseases. (KNO)

Hypertension affecting

the condition. Doctors expressed concern that a majority of patients remain unaware that they are suffering from high blood pressure until serious complications develop.

"The majority of hypertensive patients are unaware of their condition, which can eventually lead to cardiovascular events such as heart attacks and strokes. Even among diagnosed patients, many fail to take medicines regularly," Dr Khan said.

Highlighting Kashmir-specific dietary habits, Dr Khan said excessive consumption of traditional salted tea and bakery products is also contributing significantly to the problem.

"Noon Chai consumption by Kashmiris is one of the major contributors to hypertension in the Kashmiri population. Further, the local bakery products, particularly kandur tchoot, also contain considerable amounts of salt," he said.

Doctors said while the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a daily salt intake of less than five grams, many Kashmiris consume nearly double or even triple that amount through traditional foods and eating habits.

Dr Aabid Hussain from the Directorate of Health Services Kashmir (DHSK), posted in south Kashmir, said hypertension continues to remain largely undetected because it usually does not produce obvious symptoms.

"Every third or fourth adult in our area has hypertension, but almost half of them are unaware of their condition, as hypertension often shows no symptoms during its course apart from vague complaints that are often attributed to other illnesses," he said.

He added that poor control of blood pressure among diagnosed patients is another major concern. "Unfortunately, four out of five hypertensive patients do not keep their blood pressure under control, which can lead to severe consequences including heart attacks, strokes and kidney failure," Dr Aabid said.

According to doctors, increasing screen time, lack of outdoor activities, unhealthy eating patterns and mounting stress levels are accelerating the rise in hypertension among younger generations.

They stressed the need for mass awareness programmes in schools, colleges and workplaces to educate people about healthy lifestyle choices and preventive measures. They advised that all adults should get their blood pressure checked at least once every year, while people above 30 years of age should undergo regular screening even if they do not experience symptoms.

The doctors recommended regular physical exercise such as walking, jogging, swimming and outdoor sports, alongside reducing salt, sugar and oil intake, avoiding smoking, alcohol and narcotics, maintaining a healthy body weight and managing stress effectively.

They also called for the inclusion of annual blood pressure screening in school health programmes to detect hypertension early among children and adolescents. (KNO)

PM Modi calls for peaceful resolution of conflicts in West Asia, Ukraine

PTI

Oslo, May 18: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday called for a resolution of the West Asia crisis and the Ukraine conflict through dialogue and diplomacy, asserting that military action alone cannot achieve lasting peace.

Modi made the remarks after holding wide-ranging talks with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store that focused on boosting the overall trajectory of bilateral relations. "India and Norway, both, believe in a rules-based order, dialogue, and diplomacy. We agree that no issue can be resolved through military conflict alone," Modi said in his televised statement to the media.

"Be it Ukraine or West Asia, we will continue to support every effort for the early end of the conflict and for peace," he said.

Modi met Store hours after he landed in Oslo from Sweden as part of his four-nation European tour.

In his remarks, the prime minister also underlined the need for reform of the global institutions.

"We also agree on this point that reforming global institutions is essential for addressing the



growing global challenges."

"And eradicating terrorism in every form from its roots is our shared commitment," he noted.

Modi also complimented Norway for its support to India following last year's Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people, mostly tourists. "I was supposed to visit Norway last year, but had to postpone that trip due to the terrorist attack in Pahalgam. During that difficult time, Norway stood

firmly with India against terrorism, demonstrating true friendship," he said. "Today, as I visit Norway, I express my heartfelt gratitude for that solidarity," he said.

Modi also hailed Norway's decision to join the India-led Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative.

"As two major maritime nations, we will work together to strengthen cooperation in the marine economy, maritime security, and capacity building," he said.

Safety push: Amit Shah flags off 400 emergency response vehicles, 32 forensic vans in Chhattisgarh

PTI

Raipur, May 18: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday flagged off 400 new vehicles for the 'CG Dial 112' emergency response service for integrated emergency assistance and 32 mobile forensic science laboratory vans in Chhattisgarh.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai described the initiative as a significant step towards strengthening public safety and rapid emergency response systems in the state.

Apart from CM Sai, Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma, state assembly speaker Raman Singh and Director General of Police Arun Dev Gautam were present at the event held at the parade ground of the Police Training School (PTS) at Mana camp in Raipur.

The 400 newly inducted vehicles are equipped with smartphones, GPS, wireless radio systems, PTZ (pan-tilt-zoom) cameras, dash cameras, mobile network video recorders and solar backup facilities, enabling live monitoring, real-time tracking and rapid communication, a government official said. The service will



operate round the clock and use technologies such as GIS-based monitoring, advanced vehicle tracking, SIP trunk technology and automatic caller location identification. People will also be able to seek help through voice calls, SMS, email, web portals, WhatsApp, chatbots and the SOS-112 India mobile application, he said.

The upgraded arrangement is expected to improve crime control, women and child safety, road accident response, medical assistance and overall emergency management, he added.

The 'CG Dial 112' service, currently operational in 16 of

the state's 33 districts, will be expanded across the state from Monday, officials said.

In a post on X, CM Sai said, "Union Minister of Home Affairs and Cooperation Amit Shah today flagged off over 400 state-of-the-art vehicles from Raipur under the 'Next Gen CG Dial-112' service. This marks a significant step towards further strengthening public safety and the system for providing rapid emergency assistance in Chhattisgarh."

Previously operational in 16 districts, the service has now been expanded to cover all 33 districts of the state, thereby ensuring that people receive

prompt, safe, and effective assistance during various emergencies, including road accidents, medical emergencies, and matters concerning the safety of women and children, he said.

"It is the clear resolve of our government that every citizen receives swift, reliable and superior assistance during times of crisis. 'Next Gen CG Dial-112' is a strong initiative towards building a safe, sensitive and empowered Chhattisgarh," the CM said.

According to officials, it is a technology-driven governance initiative integrating police assistance, fire services, medical emergency response, women's helpline, child helpline, disaster management support and highway emergency services on a single platform. The Dial 112 service, operational in the state since 2018, has already assisted lakhs of people during emergencies, they said.

The mobile forensic vans, one for each of the 32 out of 33 districts in the state, launched under the theme 'Science on Wheels - Towards Faster Justice', are aimed at strengthening scientific investigation at crime scenes, an official said.

West Asia crisis

Indian markets capable of absorbing different types of shocks: SEBI chief



PTI

Bhubaneswar, May 18: Volatility has shot up in the financial markets due to the ongoing West Asia conflict, but the Indian bourses have the capacity to "absorb different types of shocks", Sebi Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on Monday.

When there is a crisis in one part of the world, it also impacts the rest of the globe, Pandey told reporters here on the sidelines of the Regional Investors Seminar for Awareness.

"Due to the prevailing conflict in West Asia, the oil supply chain and its prices got affected in the rest of the world. All the economies have been affected by this and obviously, there are inflationary risks. Besides, spillover effect and second-order effect will also come in," he said.

"However, the advantages of a resilient Indian market are that it is able

to absorb different types of shocks, and when these end, the market again resumes its normal trajectory," Pandey said.

He also admitted that there have been some foreign portfolio investment outflows since September 2024, but domestic investors have "retained their confidence".

Asked how SEBI is addressing threats from AI tools, Pandey said, "Most of the recent concerns around such tools are related to cybersecurity. As you know, markets rely heavily on software systems, and if cybersecurity is threatened or vulnerabilities are found in the software, there is a risk of attacks. If such attacks are successful, they can pose a serious threat to market integrity."

"Therefore, we have to proactively ensure that all the software we deploy, including those provided by third-party vendors, is well protected.

Vandalism in name of religion will not be tolerated: Bengal CM

PTI

Kolkata, May 18: West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Monday issued what he called a "last warning" against attacks on police personnel and vandalism during protests, a day after violence erupted in Kolkata's Park Circus-Tiljala area during demonstrations against a bulldozer drive targeting alleged illegal structures.

The unrest left six police personnel and two CRPF jawans injured, while 40 people have been arrested so far, Adhikari said, adding that the investigation was being monitored directly by the Kolkata Police commissioner.

After visiting the Park Circus Deputy Commissioner's office and meeting injured personnel, Adhikari, who also holds the home portfolio, projected a hardline law-and-order stance and asserted that police would no longer function with "tied hands and feet".

"I am giving a clear message that there will be zero tolerance towards this kind of unrest, hooliganism and anti-national, anti-social activities. We will not allow such things to continue," he asserted.

The chief minister praised the conduct of police and central forces, saying they acted with restraint despite provocation.

"I came to see the injured police personnel and CRPF jawans, and understand the extent of their injuries. Yesterday, our entire force maintained



law and order, prevented a major tragedy and protected people. I came here to tell them that the government stands firmly with them," he said.

Seeking to reassure the force of political backing, Adhikari repeatedly stressed that police personnel should function fearlessly under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

"I have told them that their home minister and chief minister are with them. The entire department, under the leadership of the police commissioner, stands with them. You all have done a good job," he said.

In remarks carrying political overtones, the chief minister said the police force would no longer operate under past constraints.

"Do not think old rules still apply. If anyone believes the police force will continue to function with tied hands and feet, they are mistaken," he said.

Referring to allegations of

until conviction.

"If a policeman is touched, this government will apply the law to its fullest extent. Our responsibility does not end with arrests. We will closely monitor the process to ensure conviction," he said.

Adhikari further directed police personnel to act strictly according to law without considering political or religious affiliations.

"Police should not have to think five times before taking action. Do not think who belongs to which party, religion or community. Act according to law," Adhikari said.

Invoking Prime Minister Narendra Modi's emphasis on governance through trust rather than fear, Adhikari said police must function with confidence and assured institutional support for the force.

The chief minister also announced plans for modernisation and logistical support for police within six months and said he would request the Centre to retain 40 companies of central paramilitary forces in West Bengal for a longer period.

Appealing for grievances to be addressed through official channels rather than street protests, he said: "If there is a complaint against a police officer, approach the OC or IC; if against them, meet the DC; if against the commissioner, write to 'Nabanna' (state secretariat). But, taking up stones and creating trouble in the name of religious slogans will no longer continue in West Bengal," he added.

Pacts signed with UAE, Netherlands, Sweden to boost Indian economy with FDI: BJP

PTI

New Delhi, May 18: The BJP on Monday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the UAE, the Netherlands and Sweden has proved to be "unprecedented" from strategic, economic and cultural perspectives as the pacts signed with these countries will strengthen India's energy security and boost its economy with foreign investment.

Speaking to reporters at the BJP headquarters here, BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi also hailed the bestowing of the 'Royal Order of the Polar Star, Degree Commander Grand Cross', one of Sweden's highest civilian honours, on Prime Minister Modi, calling it a "moment of pride" for every Indian.

This is not merely an honour for Modi as an individual, it stands as a symbol that the PM is establishing the potential and excellence of 1.40 crore Indians on the global stage, he said.

With this, the prime minister has been conferred with 31 international awards during his tenure so far, Trivedi said.

Prime Minister Modi was in Norway on Monday and held talks with his Norwegian counterpart Jonas Gahr Store on trade and investment, green technology, blue economy, and other key areas.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi is on an extremely important foreign tour to protect the interests of the people of India. His foreign tour has so far proved to be unprecedented and historic from strategic, economic and cultural perspectives," Trivedi said.

Highlighting the key takeaways from Modi's visit to the three countries, the BJP Rajya Sabha MP said the pacts signed with these countries will help India strengthen its energy security and boost its economy with foreign direct investment (FDI).

Gold flat at Rs 1.62 lakh/10g; silver edges higher on import curbs

PTI

New Delhi, May 18: Gold prices remained flat at Rs 1.62 lakh per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday, while silver rates edged higher to Rs 2.76 lakh per kilogram amid fresh restrictions on imports of the white metal and weakness in the rupee.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal appreciated by Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,76,000 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) from Friday's closing level of Rs 2,75,000 per kg.

Gold of 99.9 per cent purity was unchanged at Rs 1,62,800 per 10 grams in the bullion market, according to the association.

Analysts said domestic bullion prices remained relatively resilient despite weakness in global markets.

Gold prices in the domestic market traded flat on Monday, following a sharp sell-off in the previous session, tracking weakness in the international bullion market, Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

However, losses in local prices remained limited as the Indian rupee weakened further to a record low of about 96.37 against the US dollar. The weaker rupee continued to cushion the decline in domestic gold prices, he added.

Physical activity & mood go hand-in-hand, finds study

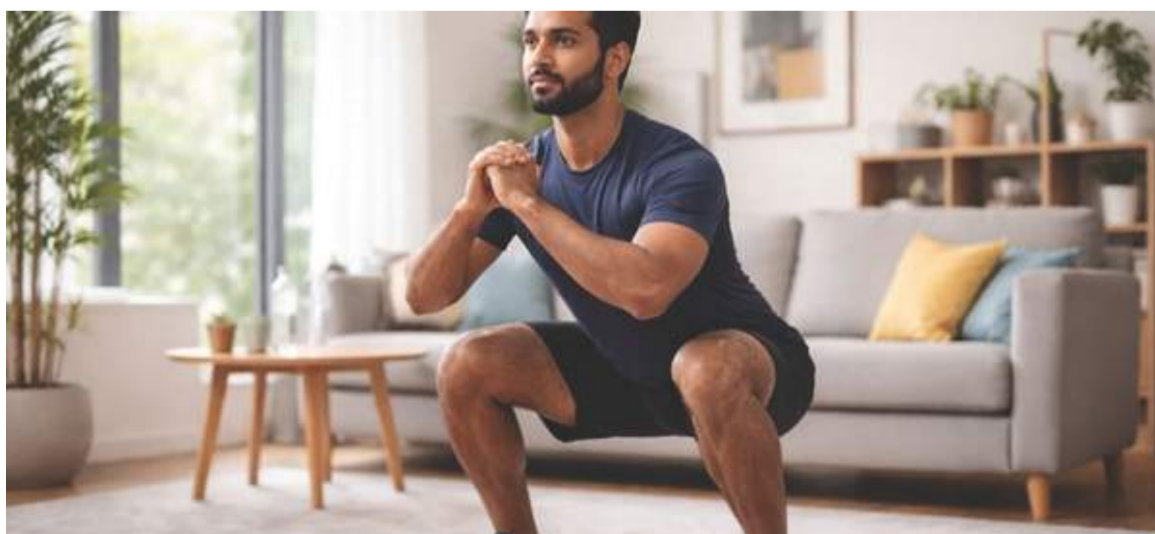
PTI

New Delhi, May 18: An international study that analysed data from 67 research groups worldwide, involving over three lakh real-time mood reports, on how physical activity is related to good mood and positive emotions has found that for most people, mood improves with everyday movement.

The findings, published in the journal Nature Human Behaviour, also show that people are more physically active when they are feeling better. Researchers, including those from Ruhr University Bochum in Germany and other institutes in Europe and the US, examined data from more than 8,000 participants collected through smartphones and wearable devices.

The tools allowed the researchers to capture how people felt and moved throughout their daily routines -- from walking and climbing stairs to household activities, they said.

"Within persons, PA (physical activity) displays a positive association with energetic arousal, positive affective states and valence, yet a negative relation to calmness," the



authors wrote.

"The practical effect sizes are comparable to other daily life activities, with energetic arousal evincing the strongest relation to PA," they said.

For most individuals, mood was found to improve following everyday physical activity, and conversely,

people were found more likely to move when already feeling positive.

Energy levels showed the strongest relationship, with more than 95 per cent of the participants reporting an increased energy around periods of activity.

Individuals with a lower well-being

to begin with experienced the greatest benefits from physical activity, the study found.

"This study reflects the growing importance of understanding health behaviors in real-world settings," co-author Amanda Staiano, of Pennington Biomedical Research Center,

Louisiana State University, US, said. "By incorporating data from diverse populations from around the world -- including participants studied here at Pennington Biomedical -- we're gaining a clearer picture of how even small amounts of daily movement can meaningfully impact how people feel," Staiano said.

Evidence from the study confirms a strong link between physical activity and well-being, previously shown in controlled, laboratory settings and cross-sectional (short-term) studies, the researchers said.

The study examines physical activity and well-being under natural, everyday conditions made possible by smartphones and wearables, and helped the researchers distinguish between how activity affects individuals over time and how people compare to one another.

The researchers noted that more work is needed to determine causality and to understand why some individuals respond differently to exercise. Future studies will aim to identify the personal and environmental factors that shape these responses, they said.

UN General Assembly to take up climate change 'obligations' resolution

AFP

United Nations, May 18: The UN General Assembly on Wednesday will weigh a draft resolution underlining states' obligations to combat climate change, a long-awaited move that has been scaled back under pressure from major greenhouse gas emitters.

In 2024, the small Pacific island nation of Vanuatu spearheaded the General Assembly's request for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the responsibility of states to fulfill their climate commitments.

The world's top court last year ruled that states were obliged to tackle climate change under international law, and failing to do so would pave the way for "reparations" to vulnerable countries.

The decision exceeded climate advocates' expectations, and Vanuatu in January proposed a new draft resolution to implement the ICJ ruling, which is non-binding but can be drawn on by courts around the world.

"For Vanuatu and for many climate-vulnerable states, this is ultimately about survival, but it is also about something wider: whether multilateralism can still respond to reality with unity," said Ralph Regenvanu, Vanuatu's climate minister and



a proponent of the cause for several years.

But the text was altered significantly after negotiations among states, with climate change taking a back seat to national security or industrial interests in many countries.

The resolution welcomes the ICJ opinion "as an authoritative contribution to the clarification of existing international law" and calls on states to "comply with their respective obligations" to protect the global climate.

It also emphasizes the measures needed to keep global warming limited to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, particularly "transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems" in keeping with a goal adopted by nearly 200 countries during a global climate meeting in Dubai

in 2023.

However, the creation of an "International Register of Damage" to compile evidence of "damage, loss or injury attributable to climate change" has vanished from the current text, an initial draft of which was viewed by AFP.

PERSERVERANCE

The register idea sparked backlash from the United States, China, the European Union, Japan and multiple oil-producing nations that argued it went beyond the ICJ opinion, diplomatic sources told AFP.

The countries most responsible for greenhouse gas emissions also regularly oppose any mechanism that could require them to pay reparations to nations at greatest risk of devastating impacts from climate change. Vanuatu insists that the

resolution avoids this.

"Let me also be clear about what the resolution does not do. It does not create new legal obligations. It does not adjudicate disputes. It does not attribute responsibility to any state," Regenvanu said, describing the text as "a careful and balanced response to the Court's guidance."

Despite the watered-down draft, the resolution is unlikely to be adopted by the consensus seen in 2024, according to diplomatic sources, who expect at least one state to call for a vote on the matter.

Joie Chowdhury, a senior attorney at the Center for International Environmental Law, said the current version of the resolution was "still a strong text, and it really matters that it passes."

"This text represents perseverance in the pursuit of climate justice, even in the face of enormous political pressure," she told AFP.

Climate advocates hope that the concept of a damage registry can be brought to the table in the future via the UN secretary-general, as the draft resolution calls on the UN chief to submit a report the General Assembly "containing ways to advance compliance with all obligations" from the ICJ ruling.

WHO kicks off annual assembly amid hantavirus, Ebola crises

AFP

Geneva, May 18: World Health Organization member states gather for their annual meeting in Geneva Monday amid concern over deadly hantavirus and Ebola outbreaks and uncertainty over announced US and Argentine withdrawals.

While the rare hantavirus outbreak on a cruise ship that has gripped global attention is not officially on the agenda, it is expected to feature prominently in the discussions, as is the fresh Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

A diplomatic source, who asked not to be identified, said it would be interesting to see how such outbreaks are used by WHO "to promote other things," including "to pressure (the United States and Argentina) not to go."

The meeting of the WHO's annual decision-making assembly, which runs through Saturday, comes after a difficult year for the organization. It has been weakened by the announced US withdrawal and by funding cuts that have forced it to slash its budget and staff numbers.

"We are stable now and moving forward," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus insisted at the end of April.

Diplomats and observers agreed.

The situation is "still fragile, but they've been successful in mobilizing most of



the funds" required for the next two years, Surie Moon, co-director of the Global Health Center at the Geneva Graduate Institute, told AFP.

And the hantavirus crisis provided "a clear illustration of why the world needs an effective, trusted, impartial, reliably-funded WHO," she added.

UN, Argentina withdrawals But significant divisions persist.

Continued disagreement between wealthy and developing nations has for instance blocked progress on the key missing piece of the WHO's landmark 2025 pandemic treaty, with negotiations now expected to be extended for another year.

It also remains unclear what, if anything, would be decided on the US and Argentinian announced withdrawals.

US President Donald Trump, on his first day back in office in January 2025, handed the WHO his country's one-year withdrawal

notice, with Argentina soon following suit.

The WHO, whose constitution does not include a withdrawal clause, has not confirmed either withdrawal.

The United States reserved the right to withdraw when it joined the WHO in 1948 — on condition of giving one year's notice and meeting its financial obligations in full for that fiscal year.

While the notice period has expired, Washington has still not paid its 2024 or 2025 dues, owing around \$260 million.

When WHO's executive board met in January, Israel submitted a resolution to approve Argentina's withdrawal — something countries are expected to discuss during the assembly — but not a word was said about the US leaving.

Diplomats and observers indicated there was broad agreement that it would be better to maintain a grey zone around whether the US was effectively out.

BCCI not 'public authority', not subject to RTI Act: CIC overturns 2018 order

PTI

New Delhi, May 18: The BCCI is not a public authority under the Right to Information Act, thus it is not liable to answer any queries under the transparency law, the Central Information Commission held on Monday, overturning its own 2018 order in this regard.

Information Commissioner P R Ramesh said that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), despite performing important public functions relating to cricket administration and India's representation in international tournaments, cannot be treated as a public authority as it is neither owned, controlled, nor substantially financed by the government.

"The BCCI cannot be classified as a 'public authority' within the meaning of Section 2(h) of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, and the provisions of the Act are therefore inapplicable to it in the facts and circumstances of the present case," Ramesh said in the order, dismissing an appeal seeking information about the provisions and authority under which



the BCCI represents India and selects players for national and international tournaments.

The ruling marked a reversal of a 2018 order of the then-information commissioner and a noted law professor, M Sridhar Acharyulu, who held BCCI to be a public authority and directed its president, secretary and committee of administrators to designate central public information officers, assistant public information officers and first appellate authorities under the RTI Act.

The Central Information Commission (CIC) had also directed the BCCI to proactively disclose information under Section 4 of the

law and furnish point-wise replies to the RTI applicant.

The BCCI, however, had challenged the 2018 order before the Madras High Court, which, in September 2025, remitted the matter back to the CIC for reconsideration in light of the Supreme Court's observations in the BCCI vs Cricket Association of Bihar case and said the Commission should pass fresh orders after re-examining the legal position. Revisiting the issue, the CIC said that the BCCI is a private autonomous body registered under the Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act, which was not established by the Constitution, Parliament, a state legislature or through a government notification.

It said the cricket body functions independently through revenue generated from media rights, sponsorship deals, ticket sales, broadcasting agreements and commercial cricket operations. "There exists no control of the government over the functions, finance, administration, management and affairs of the BCCI. Thus, the status of public authority cannot be given to the BCCI," the Commission said.

Selection for Afghan series: Bumrah's workload, Rohit's fitness in focus

PTI

Guwahati, May 18: Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah's workload management will be debated alongside the match fitness of Rohit Sharma when the national selectors pick India's squads for next month's one-off Test and three ODIs against Afghanistan, here on Tuesday.

There is a short turnaround between the IPL and the one off Test which begins in Mullanpur (New Chandigarh) from June 6. The IPL final is scheduled on May 31 in Ahmedabad. The ODI games will take place in Dharamsala, Lucknow and Chennai on June 14, 17 and 20.

It is unlikely that Bumrah would be picked for both formats because there is no immediate rush for him to feature in ODIs. The 50-over World Cup is still a long way off (October-November, 2027).

Rohit had missed a chunk of Mumbai Indians' matches earlier in the IPL due to a hamstring injury and in the



last game against Punjab Kings, he only came out to bat as an impact player. The selectors will include him in the side only if he is fully fit for 100 overs of an ODI game. Superstar Virat Kohli, who like Rohit is now a one format player, has shown sublime form in the IPL and is expected to feature in all three ODIs against Afghanistan.

The one-off Test holds more significance considering India's troubles in the traditional format especially at home. The batters need to

find a way to tackle spin-friendly conditions. It is an aspect that has bothered them for a while now and was thoroughly exposed by South Africa in the home series last November.

India have also not been able to find a stable number three since Cheteshwar Pujara left the scene.

Sai Sudharsan got his chances but could not deliver. And now Devdutt Padikkal is expected to be given a decent run from the start of the home season. Architect of Jammu

and Kashmir's historic Ranji Trophy triumph, Aquib Nabi, is also likely to be a part of selectors' discussion for the Test team. He took 60 wickets in a stellar campaign.

Prince Yadav for ODIs? Prince Yadav, who has impressed with his pace and accuracy in the ongoing IPL, can be tried in the ODI series.

If Bumrah is not part of the side, Mohammed Siraj will be the leader of the attack with Prasidh Krishna too likely to feature in it.

Hantavirus-hit cruise ship arrives at Rotterdam port as final destination

REUTERS

Rotterdam, May 18: A luxury liner at the center of an outbreak of hantavirus reached the Dutch port of Rotterdam on Monday, marine tracking sites said, where authorities prepared quarantine arrangements for the 23 crew and two medical staff remaining on board.

The Dutch-flagged MV Hondius had been carrying around 150 passengers and crew from 23 countries when a cluster of severe respiratory illnesses was first reported to the World Health Organization on May 2.

Three people — a Dutch couple and a German national — have died since the start of the outbreak.

The vessel, operated by Oceanwide Expeditions, had been stranded off Cape Verde, its intended final destination, earlier this month after authorities barred passengers from going ashore due to the outbreak. The WHO and the EU asked Spain to manage the evacuation at the Canary Islands, after which the

ship departed for Rotterdam with a skeleton crew and two additional medical staff.

Local port authorities said quarantine facilities had been set up for some of the non-Dutch crew, though it was unclear if they would stay there for the full recommended 42-day quarantine period. The vessel itself was to undergo disinfection. Hantavirus is primarily spread by rodents but can be transmitted between people in rare cases and after prolonged, close contact. Incubation can last about six weeks.

Crew, passengers who already left the ship and people in contact with them have been quarantined in several countries around the world.

The current outbreak involves the so-called Andes virus, which has circulated in Argentina and Chile for decades. Ship samples show no meaningful variation in the virus, the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control has said.

On Friday, the WHO revised its case count to 10 from 11 after an inconclusive US case tested negative.

Movie Timings

Tuesday, 19th May

BHOOTH BANGLA (U/A16+)	Hindi - 10:45 AM, 02:30 PM
Michael (U/A 13+)	English with English Subtitles 11:45 AM, 06:25 PM
Dhurandhar: The Revenge (A)	Hindi - 02:00 PM
WAR OF SHERA (U/A 16+)	PUNJABI WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES 06:00 PM
PATI PATNI AUR WOH DO (UA16+)	Hindi Atmos - 11:15 AM, 01:45 PM, 04:15 PM, 06:45 PM

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