



Gen-next embodies nation's dreams, aspirations: LG Sinha

- Says values, knowledge instilled in children will shape India, J&K's future
- Lays foundation stone of Akshaya Patra's centralized kitchen facility at Katra
- Calls for collaboration between govt, social orgs to empower younger generation

Yogesh

Katra, May 21: Asserting that the next generation embodies the nation's dreams and aspirations, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday said that values, knowledge and faith instilled in children today will shape the future of India and Jammu and Kashmir. While addressing a gathering here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "The next generation is not just our future but they are the living expression of the dream and aspiration we wish to build as a nation. Their education, health, and confidence are a shared pledge and a collective responsibility of society. The values, knowledge, and faith we instill in children today will shape J&K and India's decades to come."

LG Sinha laid the foundation



stone of Akshaya Patra's centralized kitchen facility here. Once operational, this facility will provide 5000 nutritious meals to school children every day. He also spoke about Akshaya Patra's future projects in the Union Territory of Jammu Kashmir, including the upcoming kitchen facility in Jammu.

"I urge stronger

collaboration between Government and Social Organisations to empower the younger generation. We must ensure that school children receive balanced, nourishing meals. Every child deserves access to healthy food and we need to make sure no child is left behind," the Lieutenant Governor said.

LG Sinha spoke on legacy in

ordinary life emphasising that it rests on 3 questions - what are we creating, what are we preserving, and what will we hand over to future generations? He said we must add another question to that list: what are we feeding our children? He further observed that nutrition of our young generation will shape our future.

The Lieutenant Governor stated that a hungry child cannot learn, and a school that cannot feed its children cannot honestly create equal opportunities for progress. He said that decades of global research and their outcomes have shown that nutrition and education are not separate things; education rests on the foundation of good nutrition.

"Children who eat balanced, nutritious meals concentrate better, retain information more effectively. | More on P6

Sinha inaugurates newly constructed helipad near Vaishno Devi shrine

**KNO Desk**

Katra, May 21: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday inaugurated a newly constructed helipad at Katra.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the helipad, measuring 100 x 75 metres, has been developed to improve accessibility for pilgrims visiting the revered Vaishno Devi shrine.

The new facility is expected to significantly reduce travel difficulties and provide faster access to the pilgrimage destination.

Construction work on

the project commenced on January 25 and was executed by 69 RCC, 35 BRTF under Project Sampark. The work had been assigned to Project Sampark by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVD).

Apart from the helipad, a 1,100-metre-long connecting road was also constructed as part of the project. The road includes proper drainage systems and protection works to ensure durability and safe connectivity.

The total cost of the project is estimated at around 16.4 crore. Officials stated that the newly | More on P6

LG dedicates new Vaishnavi Bhawan at Mata Vaishno Devi shrine

Facility with 78 rooms to boost pilgrim amenities

**KT News Desk**

Jammu, May 21: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday dedicated the new Vaishnavi Bhawan at the holy shrine Shri Mata Vaishno Devi to the devotees.

The Lieutenant Governor said that the new facility will significantly enhance the pilgrim accommodation capacity at Bhawan, improve overall pilgrim amenities and create a modern, efficient and comfortable infrastructure designed to accommodate the growing influx of devotees.

The project was conceptualized under the comprehensive Master Plan for the Bhawan and its extended areas. Recognizing the need for enhanced infrastructure and creation of modern Yatri Accommodation facilities, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) approved the redevelopment of the Pannishalla area, which was previously used for staff quarters, into Yatri-cum-Staff Accommodation complex.

The New Vaishnavi Bhawan has been constructed over a total area of approximately 45,784 Sq. ft. The facility will provide 78 well-furnished rooms for pilgrims.

The construction work of the building commenced in the month of February 2024 and the building was completed in a time period of two years.

The ground floor houses reception and waiting areas, Manager Office and Staff Mess with Kitchen, ensuring efficient operational management of the facility. A Bhojanalaya is also available on the terrace | More on P6

LG chairs high-level meeting on upcoming International Museum of Goddess at Katra

Plan includes immersive exhibits, artifacts, modern technology to showcase Shakti Peethas

KT News Desk

Jammu, May 21: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday chaired a high-level meeting to discuss the establishment of a state-of-the-art International Museum of Goddess at Katra.

The meeting was attended by members of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board including Mahamandleshwar Swami Vishveshvaranand Giri Maharaj, Baleshwar Rai, Dr. Ashok Bhan, Sudha Murty, Gunjan Rana, Dr. K.K. Talwar, Kulbhushan Ahuja, Lalit Bhasin, and Suresh Kumar Sharma.

Padma Shri Prof. Vishwa

Murti Shastri; Dr. Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice-Chancellor, University of Jammu; Prof. K.S. Chandrasekar, Vice-Chancellor, Cluster University of Jammu; Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB; Alok Maurya, Additional CEO, SMVDSB; and Shruti Awasthi, Regional Director, IGNC, Prof. Satish Kumar Kapoor, Director, Central Sanskrit University, Maharaja Ranbir Singh Campus; Dr. Chander Mouli Raina, Sanskrit Scholar and senior officials also attended the meeting.



During the deliberations, Board members and other stakeholders shared their valuable insights and suggestions for creation of a world-class spiritual and cultural

landmark. The proposed museum aims to offer pilgrims a deeper understanding of Mata Shakti by seamlessly blending immersive storytelling, artifacts, and rich local traditions

with cutting-edge modern technology. The state-of-the-art institution will showcase the sacred iconography of 51 Shakti Peethas alongside the nine divine Swaroops of Maa

Durga.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Shrine Board briefed the meeting on steps taken so far. These include the launch of a dedicated website to invite suggestions from across the globe, study visits by teams to existing premier museums across the country, and the identification of leading domain experts to bring the grand vision to fruition.

The Board approved the creation of a permanent post for a Director General, who will head the International Museum of Goddess alongside a dedicated team of experts and officials. Furthermore, the Board granted | More on P6

Nasha Mukt J&K Abhiyan

Police tighten noose around drug peddlers

Carry out multiple operations

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, May 21: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday said it arrested seven drug peddlers, a terrorist aide and seized several vehicles involved in illegal mining in multiple operations carried out across Kashmir as part of the ongoing "Nasha Mukt Jammu Kashmir Abhiyaan".

A Police official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that huge quantities of contraband substances, including charas powder, heroin and poppy straw, were recovered during separate operations in Baramulla, Anantnag and Kulgam districts.

In Baramulla's Boniyar area, police arrested Sabbir Mumtaz of Trikanjan after recovering a charas-like substance wrapped in polythene during routine patrolling. A case under the NDPS Act has been registered and investigation has been initiated, the official said.

In Anantnag district, police arrested an alleged "most wanted" drug peddler, identified as Nasir Ahmad Dohbi of Sallar, during naka checking at Shalkras in Srigufwara area. Around five kilograms of charas powder-like substance was recovered from his possession, he said.

In another operation in the Achabal area of Anantnag, police arrested Irshad Ahmad Bhat of Magraypora and recovered a | More on P6



Farmers sow saplings in a paddy field in outskirts of Srinagar on Thursday. Pic: Jahangir Shah (KNO/KT)

Constitution not privilege of few cosmopolitans, belongs to every citizen: CJJ

PTI

New Delhi, May 21: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Thursday said the Constitution belongs to all citizens equally and is not a privilege of a few cosmopolitans who can afford cost-bearing processes and engage the best of the brains.

The comments from CJJ came in a speech at the launch of senior advocate Indira Jaising's memoir "The Constitution Is My Home: Conversations on a Life in Law".



The CJJ, who was invited as the chief guest, could not attend the event and sent a video

clip extending his warm greetings for the book launch and expressed his regret for not being present due to an upcoming meeting of BRICS judges.

"The Constitution is truly our shared home. It belongs not to judges alone, nor to lawyers, State or public authorities. It belongs equally to every citizen, be it an urbanite or a ruralite, or the poorest of the poor, or the marginalised, who seek justice within its framework and place faith in its promises.

"The Constitution is not

a privilege of a few cosmopolitans who can afford cost-bearing processes and engage the best of the brains to assert something which our Constitution never intended to offer," the CJJ said.

He said the Constitution is not simply a legal text governing society from a distance but is also a constant presence.

"It accompanies us in courtrooms and chambers, in arguments and deliberations. But its reach extends far beyond formal legal | More on P6

Rare snowfall in upper reaches, rains lash Kashmir plains

Houses damaged, flood-like situation in Bandipora

69 livestock killed in Pahalgam

Thunderstorms to continue for two days

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, May 21: Upper reaches of North Kashmir's Bandipora district, Drass and Zojila areas witnessed fresh snowfall on Thursday.

According to details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) moderate to heavy rainfall lashed several parts of the Valley, disrupting normal life and causing damage to property.

A MeT official told KNO that the snowfall in the remote Tulail Valley near the Line of Control followed a sharp overnight drop in temperatures, covering mountain slopes and residential areas. Similar conditions were reported in Drass and along the Zojila axis. Locals termed the snowfall unusual in the second half of May.

Meanwhile, heavy rains accompanied by thunderstorms affected districts including Srinagar, Bandipora, Ganderbal, Baramulla and Kupwara. While the showers brought relief from rising temperatures, they also led to

waterlogging and temporary disruptions.

HEAVY RAINFALL CREATES FLOOD LIKE SITUATION

In Bandipora, heavy rainfall created flood like situation near Darul Uloom Rahimiya along the Srinagar-Bandipora road, with water and mud entering residential areas and damaging houses.

Two houses belonging to Nazir Ahmad Dar and Reyaz Ahmad Dar of Nusoo village were partially damaged. Two persons, including a minor girl identified as Muskaan, sustained minor injuries. One was discharged after treatment, while the other was undergoing treatment at District Hospital Bandipora.

Residents claimed the flooding was caused by blocked drainage and leaking pipes. "Our repeated requests to authorities for clearance went unaddressed," they said, adding, "A drain under construction had been reduced in size, leading to overflow during heavy rain."

The affected families demanded compensation and urgent repairs, including restoration of the damaged road and strengthening of protection works.

Officials said restoration teams had been deployed, with Tehsildar Bandipora visiting the site to assess the situation.

Rainwater also accumulated in low-lying areas of Srinagar and other towns, briefly affecting vehicular movement. Authorities have advised residents in | More on P6

Govt committed to improving Ease of Doing Business, making vibrant industries in J&K: Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani

Holds interaction with Industrial, Trade Associations of Jammu

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, MAY 21: Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani on Thursday held an interaction with representatives of Industrial and Trade Associations of Jammu province to discuss various issues concerning the industrial sector in Jammu & Kashmir.

During the interaction, as per an official statement, representatives of the Industrial Associations raised several issues pertaining to growth and sustainability of industries in the Union Territory. The industrialists highlighted that, as on date, there is no fiscal package available for industries in J&K and stressed the need for continued policy support to strengthen the industrial ecosystem.

The representatives expressed hope that the proposed Logistics Policy and Public Procurement Policy, presently under formulation, would address many of the challenges being faced by industries in the region.

The issue of extension in EM-I registrations for units allotted land at Balole Industrial Estate was also raised during the meeting. The Associations further requested introduction of auto-renewal mechanisms for Green Category Units to facilitate ease of



doing business.

During the interaction, it was also suggested that dedicated routes for promotion of trekking tourism be identified and developed. The Associations further emphasized according priority to local industries and promotion of traditional sectors, particularly the woollen industry in Jammu & Kashmir.

Addressing the participants, the Advisor emphasized the Government's commitment towards improving Ease of Doing Business and making industries in J&K more vibrant and competitive. He stressed that industrial growth must translate into employment generation and called for promotion of localized industries, particularly agro-based and

wool-based sectors.

The Advisor further emphasized the need to support existing industrial units and encouraged industrialists to actively contribute towards sustainable industrial development in Jammu & Kashmir.

The industrial representatives also sought continuation of turnover incentives and urged the Government to take up the matter of pending registrations under New Central Sector Scheme with the Central Government.

The representatives also advocated for extension of benefits under NCSS and highlighted the need for leveraging Artificial Intelligence, promotion of e-commerce, and according special focus to the service sector in the Union

Territory.

The meeting was also attended by Managing Director, J&K SDICO/SICOP, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar, Director, Industries and Commerce Jammu, Dr. Arun Manhas, President, Chamber of Commerce & Industry-Jammu, Arun Gupta, National Chairman, D2C Industry Association, M. A. Alim, Vice President, CII-Sidhant Choudhary, Chairman, ICC-Rahul Sahai, President-ASSOCHAM Sh. Manik Batra, Chairman, President, PHDCI-Rakesh Wazir, Chairman, FICCI FLO- Ms. Varsha Bansal along with other officers from the Department of Industries and Commerce.

Later, several delegations and individuals also called on

Advisor to Chief Minister at Civil Secretariat, Jammu and highlighted their issues before him seeking early intervention for redressal.

A delegation of the Non-Teaching Employees Union, University of Jammu, raised service matters of non-teaching staff. Chairman, All J&K Transport Welfare Association, Karan Singh called on the Advisor, put forth demands of the transport fraternity.

Former President, Jammu Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Rakesh Gupta also met with Advisor and highlighted issues regarding amendment in the Society Act, J&K.

A delegation from Mohalla Welfare Committee, Gujjar Nagar, sought early release of compensation for flood-affected families of last year.

The delegation requested expedite release of relief and rehabilitation assistance.

The Advisor gave a patient hearing to all the deputations and individuals. He assured them that genuine demands would be examined and redressed on priority. He further directed the concerned departments to look into the issues raised and take appropriate action in a time-bound manner.

Javid Dar visits Mawar to condole demise of Baramulla MP Engineer Rashid's father



KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MAY 21: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, on Thursday visited Mawar, Langate, to offer condolences at the residence of Baramulla Member of Parliament Engineer Rashid on the demise of his father, Haji Khazir Mohammad Sheikh.

The Minister, as per an official statement, expressed deep sorrow over the passing away of the deceased and conveyed his heartfelt sympathies with the bereaved

family. He prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and strength to the family to endure the immense loss.

The Minister described Haji Khazir Mohammad Sheikh as a respected and dignified elder whose contributions and values earned him immense regard in the community. He said the demise has created a void not only for the family but also for the people who knew him closely.

MLA, Baramulla, Javid Hassan Beig and MLA Sonawari Hilal Akbar Lone also accompanied the Minister during the condolence visit and offered

DC Srinagar hands over newly procured rescue & relief equipment to SDRF, Tehsildars & Fire & Emergency Deptt

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MAY 21: In order to assess and strengthen the district's emergency response mechanism, the District Administration Srinagar organized a Table-Top Exercise on disaster-related equipment to review fire and flood disaster preparedness at the DC Office premises here. The exercise, as per an official statement, was followed by a comprehensive practical demonstration of emergency response equipment and rescue operations.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, who is also the Chairman of the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), presided over the event.

The programme was attended by Director, Disaster Management J&K Aasish Kumar Additional District Development Commissioner Srinagar Rifat Aftab Qureshi, Additional Deputy Commissioner Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, Additional District Magistrate and Chief Executive Officer DDMA Srinagar Aadil Fareed, Commandant SDRF Masroor Ahmad, Additional CEO Srinagar Smart City Suhail ul Islam, SDM West Irfan Bahadur, SDM East Zubair Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Umar Gulzar, Deputy Director Fire & Emergency, Dr Aaqib, Executive Engineer of R&B, Abdul Qayoom, all Tehsildars and other concerned officers.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC/Chairman DDMA stressed the importance of conducting Table top preparedness exercises to strengthen disaster

response capabilities and ensure prompt action during emergencies. He emphasized that coordinated planning and efficient deployment of resources are essential to minimizing risks and safeguarding lives and property during disasters.

The DC said that disasters often occur without any prior warning and that preparedness in terms of manpower, machinery, and emergency response capacity is the only effective way to minimize losses and respond efficiently during crisis situations. He emphasized that conducting Table-Top Exercises and practical demonstrations is of immense significance in enhancing coordination, strengthening preparedness mechanisms, and building the capacity of departments and field functionaries to deal effectively with disasters and other emergencies.

During the event, the DC/Chairman DDMA handed over disaster-related equipment kits to all Tehsildars of the district to strengthen preparedness at the Tehsil level. In addition, four high-end rescue boats were also placed at the disposal of the District Administration Srinagar and Srinagar Smart City, with two boats allotted to each for emergency rescue operations.

The exercise was also aimed to evaluate preparedness levels, coordination among departments and operational readiness in the event of fire and flood emergencies. During the practical demonstration, teams displayed the functioning and handling of various disaster-response equipment used in rescue and relief operations.

CS reviews afforestation progress, calls for accountability-linked plantation works

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MAY 21: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Thursday reviewed the physical achievements and implementation progress of afforestation and ecological restoration works being undertaken across Jammu and Kashmir under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), emphasizing sustainable restoration of degraded forests, scientific monitoring and enhanced protection of vulnerable forest landscapes across the UT.

The review, as per an official statement, was held during the 27th meeting of the Steering Committee of J&K CAMPA and was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Commissioner Secretary, Forests; PCCF (HoF); Chief Wildlife Warden; CEO, CAMPA and other senior officers of the Forest Department.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary directed the Forest



Department to ensure complete digitization of forest maps and boundary pillars for effective demarcation and protection of forest land. Stressing the need for improving the survival rate of plantations, he called for linking payments to contractors with the survival of planting material and directed the Finance Department to vet future tenders for incorporation of suitable clauses in this regard. He also instructed the department

to ensure greater field presence of staff up to the rank of Rangers for safeguarding forests and enhancing green cover across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed year-wise trends in forest diversion and compensatory afforestation. The presentation revealed that diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes has sharply declined after 2020, while the area treated under

afforestation and ecological restoration programmes has nearly doubled in recent years, reflecting the administration's increasing emphasis on ecological conservation and restoration.

Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shaileendra Kumar stressed upon recreating missing forest records on the pattern of the Revenue Department and advocated staggered payments

linked with survival of planting material in phases of growth for ensuring accountability and better outcomes.

Commissioner Secretary, Forests, Sheetal Nanda highlighted the sustained plantation efforts undertaken by the department over the years and informed the meeting that a robust mechanism of monitoring and multilayer evaluation has been institutionalized to ensure efficient execution of works on the ground.

The meeting was informed that since inception of CAMPA activities in 2010-11, more than 1,06,023 hectares of degraded forest area across Jammu and Kashmir has been treated through afforestation, assisted natural regeneration and ecological restoration measures. During the same period, nearly 746.65 lakh saplings have been planted across different forest divisions, reflecting sustained expansion in plantation activities over the years.

ZONAL HEADQUARTERS POLICE TELECOMMUNICATION KASHMIR

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0194-2452698
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Tariq Ahmad Shah S/O. Mohammad Sultan Shah R/O Vodhpura Handwara Kupwara working as Sgct/Telecom in AK Police Telecommunication under No.3657/PW, (Tel-107574) has represented for correction in his parentage recorded as M. Sultan Shah in the service records instead of Mohammad Sultan Shah.

As such, objections if any, in this regard are invited from general public which should reach to this office within the period of (7) Seven day from the date of this publication of this notice.

Sr. Superintendent of Police
Telecommunication Kashmir

No: Estt/PF-3657/KZ-2026/9024

Dated: 21/05/2026 DIPK-1530/26
DATED: 21-05-2026

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE BLOCK MEDICAL OFFICER TRAL, PULWAMA

Email: bmo.tral@jk.gov.in

TENDER NOTICE

Due to poor response to the earlier tender notices issued vide this office No. BMOTTral/Estt./4010-11 dated 30/03/2026 and BMOTTral/Estt./4010-11 dated 30/03/2026 sealed tenders are hereby again invited from registered diagnostic laboratories/clinics for providing rates for the below-mentioned investigations at uniform rates throughout the contract period which

are presently not available in this hospital and are required for patients under the AB-PMJAY Scheme.

The interested bidders shall submit their rate quotations, along with a valid registration certificate of the laboratory, to this office by or before 30-05-2026 up to 02:00 PM.

The sealed tenders shall be opened on 01/06/2026 at 02:00 PM in the office chamber of the undersigned in presence of the bidders who may wish to attend.

List of Investigations:

1. Histopathology
 - a) Minor Biopsy
 - b) Medium Biopsy
 - c) Major Biopsy
2. Urine Culture & Sensitivity
3. Blood Culture and Sensitivity
4. Pus Culture
5. Lipase
6. Stool for Occult Blood
7. D-Dimer

Note:

- The rates shall be quoted for each investigation both in figures and in words, and must be free from any cutting or overwriting.
- The selected/approved laboratory shall be required to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Hospital Authorities.
- Payments shall be made on a monthly basis, subject to proper verification and authentication of the submitted bills.
- The rate contract shall remain valid for a period of one year.

No: BMO/Tral/Estt./479-80

DIPK-1528/26
DATED: 21-05-2026

Block Medical Officer Tral

Div Com reviews SANJY-2026 preparations

KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, May 21: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg on Thursday chaired a high-level meeting to review the preparedness for the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY-2026).

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Commissioners of Anantnag, Srinagar, Ganderbal and Bandipora, Commissioner SMC, besides Heads of Departments from Rural Sanitation, ULB, Health, FCS&CA, BEACON, KPDCL, PHE, R&B, Animal Husbandry and Labour Departments. Representatives from telecom service providers including BSNL, Jio, Airtel and G-Max were also present.

Reviewing the registration process of service providers, the Divisional Commissioner emphasized on expediting registrations to meet the target of 28,000 service providers besides ponies. He directed concerned authorities to ensure timely generation of RFID cards for all registered service providers by May 30. The Divisional Commissioner also reviewed the development of pony stands and was informed that essential infrastructure works including fencing and development of sheds has already been completed. He further instructed officials to conduct health check-ups of ponies and ensure



adequate availability of fodder along the yatra routes.

Taking stock of telecom connectivity and bandwidth availability at base camps and along the yatra axes up to the

Holy Cave, the Divisional Commissioner directed telecom companies to ensure uninterrupted and efficient network services during the pilgrimage period. Chief Engineer KPDCL

was asked to provide uninterrupted power supply to telecom installations.

The meeting also reviewed snow clearance operations, construction of gabion and breast walls, and ongoing repair works along the yatra tracks. Deputy Commissioners were directed to personally inspect the repair and maintenance works being undertaken along the axes.

To facilitate smooth movement and convenience of pilgrims, the Divisional Commissioner called for augmentation of staff at yatri registration counters. He also instructed rationalization of registration counters across the three districts in view of the direct railway connectivity to Srinagar.

Regarding the installation of tents at base camps, the Divisional Commissioner reviewed the allotment process and directed concerned committees to conduct mandatory fire safety audits.

Besides, he reviewed the progress of developmental works being executed by the PHE, KPDCL, R&B, I&FC, SDA, PDA, Tourism Department, ULB and other allied agencies.

Preparations related to SDRF, Information Department, Health Services, Transport Department, FCS&CA, sanitation and other essential services were also comprehensively reviewed during the meeting.

All arrangements finalised for Eid-ul-Adha: DC Srinagar



KNO

Srinagar, May 21: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Thursday said all necessary arrangements for smooth celebration of Eid-ul-Adha across

the city have been finalised, while fencing work on Budshah Bridge and Cement Kadal will also commence shortly.

Speaking to reporters here, the DC said a detailed meeting has been held with all departments, including electricity, water supply, roads, sanitation, food safety and revenue authorities. "Preparations have been finalised in a way so that citizens across Srinagar do not face any kind of difficulty before or after Eid celebrations," he said.

Labroo extended Eid greetings to the people and wished them a joyful and peaceful festival. He said the administration recently inspected Budshah Bridge and Cement Kadal and completed the estimation process for the proposed fencing works.

"We visited Budshah Bridge and Cement Kadal around a week ago. The estimation has been completed and the work will be approved soon under the district CAPEX. We will start the work very soon," the DC said—(KNO)

Only fit sacrificial animals allowed in Sopore markets

WARIS FAYAZ

Sopore, May 21: Ahead of Eid ul Adha, the Sopore administration for the first time has made veterinary screening mandatory for all sacrificial animals to ensure that only medically fit livestock is allowed for sale and sacrifice in markets across the sub district.

The administration has directed that every animal brought to livestock mandis and sale points in the sub-division will now undergo ante mortem medical inspection by certified veterinary teams before being cleared for sale.

To implement the directions, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Sopore, S A Raina said dedicated teams comprising

Veterinary Assistant Surgeons and other officials have been deployed at major livestock markets and town centres. The teams have been tasked with examining animals for diseases, infections and overall fitness to safeguard public health and ensure quality livestock for consumers.

The administration has also constituted joint enforcement squads comprising Revenue officials, Food Safety Officers, Police personnel and representatives from Municipal Council Sopore and Municipal Committee Watergam to monitor the process and ensure strict compliance.

The administration appealed to the public to purchase sacrificial animals only from authorised locations where veterinary screening teams are present—(KNO)

Disaster response strengthened with rescue boats, SDRF equipment: Akshay Labroo

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, May 21: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar Akshay Labroo on Thursday said the administration is strengthening Srinagar's disaster response mechanism with the addition of new rescue boats, SDRF machinery, firefighting equipment and Tehsil-level rescue kits to ensure faster and coordinated relief during floods and fire incidents.

Speaking to reporters here, the DC said rising water levels and frequent fire incidents, particularly during winters, remain among the major disaster vulnerabilities in Srinagar.

"As water levels have risen a lot and incidents of fire continue to occur frequently in the city, especially during winters, we decided to conduct a special tabletop exercise focused on these two major vulnerabilities," he said.

Labroo said that before organising the exercise, the administration, along with the Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (DMRRR), carried out extensive work to strengthen rescue, relief and rehabilitation capacities across the district.

"Last year we realised that there was a need to improve our capacities in rescue, relief and rehabilitation operations. Since January this year, we have funded different proposals through SDRF and several proposals were also taken up and approved by the DMRRR department," he said.

The DC said special rescue capacity-building kits have been provided to rescue teams at the Tehsil level to strengthen local emergency response. "These kits include ropes, torchlights, special boots, protective attires, rope cutters,

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Sajad Lone never met me on public issues: Dy CM



WARIS FAYAZ

Handwara, May 21: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Thursday accused MLA Handwara Sajad Gani Lone of failing to pursue developmental issues concerning Rajwar and other areas of the constituency.

Addressing a public gathering in a village in Handwara, the Deputy Chief Minister said Sajad Lone had "never met him even for an hour" during the last one and a half years to discuss issues related to roads, development works and public welfare in Handwara.

"In the last one and a half years, the MLA of this constituency never visited

my office even for an hour to discuss roads or other issues of Rajwar people," Choudhary said, adding that instead of following up developmental matters, Lone remained busy making political statements and questioning his position as Deputy Chief Minister.

Launching a sharp political attack, he alleged that people had "mistakenly" elected Sajad Lone as their representative and termed him "incompetent". The constituency had suffered due to lack of attention from its elected representative.

Referring to political differences, Choudhary said Lone comes from a politically influential family but maintained that he himself

hails from a middle-class family and is the son of a soldier.

He said he was proud of his background and asserted that unlike "arrogant politicians", he would continue to listen to poor people and address their grievances.

He accused Lone of ignoring developmental works during his tenure in government. He referred to a bridge inaugurated at Drugmulla earlier in the day and said the project had remained incomplete for 14 years despite the foundation stone having been laid during the government led by Omar Abdullah. He said the bridge remained pending during subsequent governments when Sajad Lone was a minister. "After 14 years, this bridge has finally been made functional and thrown open to the public. This is what the Omar-led government has done," Choudhary said.

He stated that since the formation of the present government, more than six PMGSY road projects from the Handwara constituency had been forwarded to the Centre and five among them had already received sanction. He said work on these projects would begin soon and credited MP Choudhary Mohammad Ramzan for pursuing them vigorously—(KNO)

Elected Govt disappointing J&K people: MP Ruhullah



WARIS FAYAZ

Handwara, May 21: Member Parliament (MP), Srinagar, Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi on Thursday said people of Jammu and Kashmir were getting disappointed with the elected government "one way or another".

Speaking to reporters here, Ruhullah criticised the government over the demolition drive at Sidra and said the elected dispensation must take responsibility instead of remaining silent.

"The government is disappointing people one way or the other. If they cannot stop this, then at least they should tell the people who is behind it so that

we will fight against them if they do not want to," he said. "Otherwise, it is the government which should do it. They are elected representatives and an elected government."

Mehdi, a National Conference (NC) leader, said an elected government was expected to stand with the people and address their concerns.

Reacting to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's remarks on restoration of statehood, the MP said larger questions linked to the developments of 2019 still remained unanswered. "Time will speak on statehood restoration. But what about the atrocity beyond statehood in 2019? When

will the sentiments of the people of Jammu and Kashmir be respected?" he asked.

Meanwhile, the Member Parliament appealed to his colleague, Engineer Rashid not to withdraw from politics after the Baramulla MP recently hinted at stepping away from electoral politics during his father's funeral gathering.

"I heard his speech. It is his personal choice whether to remain away from politics or not," Ruhullah told reporters.

He said faith teaches people to remain determined and steadfast on the chosen path despite difficulties and pressure. "Allah asks us to stay steadfast and determined on the track," he said.

Without naming anyone, Ruhullah said, "People often leave only after greed or when they come under someone's power. But Er Rashid has seen challenges, family issues and difficult circumstances. Despite that, he continued his work with dignity."

The MP said he could relate to Er Rashid's struggles and understood what the Baramulla MP may be going through emotionally and politically after years in jail.

"I want him not to quit and remain determined," he added—(KNO)

Cold storage units supports Kashmir growers amid quality issues

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, May 21: Controlled Atmosphere (CA) cold storage units continue to play a crucial role in sustaining Kashmir's horticulture economy, with nearly 15 per cent of apple produce still stored across various cold storage facilities in the Valley as growers wait for favourable market conditions.

Fruit growers said that despite fluctuations in rates over the past few months, the decision to store apples instead of selling them during the peak harvest season has largely proved beneficial. However, they expressed concern over the unusually high percentage of B and C grade apples this year, which affected their overall returns.

According to growers, nearly 30 per cent of this season's apple produce fell under B and C grade categories, reducing profit margins for orchardists. While A-grade apples continue to fetch encouraging prices in outside markets,



lower-grade fruit has not generated the returns growers had expected.

Many orchardists said that during the harvesting season, market demand remained weak and prices were low, forcing them to shift their produce to cold storage units in the hope of securing better returns later.

A grower from Shopian said that A-grade apples are still receiving good prices in wholesale markets, but growers holding lower-grade

fruit are struggling to recover production and storage costs. "The quality issue this year has impacted many orchardists. Premium fruit is doing well, but B and C grade apples are not fetching satisfactory rates," he said.

Another orchardist from Pulwama said the availability of CA storage facilities has nevertheless protected growers from distress sales. "Had there been no cold storage units, many growers would have suffered huge losses during the peak

season when markets were flooded," he said. "At least now we have the flexibility to release produce gradually."

President of the Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers and Dealers Union, Bashir Ahmad Basheer, said several factors contributed to the higher percentage of lower-grade apples this season.

"There are multiple reasons behind the increase in B and C grade apples this year," Basheer said. "During the peak season, rates were very low, and growers rushed to cold storage facilities without properly sorting or checking their produce."

He said that heavy pressure on storage infrastructure also created operational difficulties. "Vehicles carrying fruit had to wait for two to three days for unloading at several places. Besides that, many orchards were harvested earlier than the normal picking time, which affected fruit quality, and labourers were less in a few cold storage units," he added.

Basheer further said that negligence by some

storage operators also played a role. "A few cold storage owners accepted produce beyond their actual capacity, which affected proper management inside the units. There were also electricity-related issues at some facilities that impacted storage conditions," he said.

Despite the challenges, growers believe CA storage facilities remain a lifeline for Kashmir's apple industry by helping regulate market supply and preventing panic selling during the harvest period.

Experts from the horticulture sector said cold storage units have transformed the way growers market their produce. Instead of selling immediately after harvest at low prices, orchardists can now wait for demand to improve and sell their apples in phases.

Growers have also demanded expansion and modernization of cold storage infrastructure in remote fruit-growing areas, saying better facilities would reduce post-harvest losses and improve quality management.

EDITORIAL

Friday Special: Hajj – A Journey Of Equality In A Divided World

The annual pilgrimage of Hajj stands as the most profound expression of Islamic faith and human unity. In a world increasingly fractured by race, nationality, wealth, and power, Hajj delivers a timeless message: before God, all humans are equal. The significance of this pilgrimage is not confined to the 5th pillar of Islam; its relevance echoes loudly in the contemporary global landscape, offering solutions to some of humanity's most persistent problems. The Quran commands

those who are able to undertake this journey: "And proclaim to the people the Hajj; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass" (Quran 22:27). This divine proclamation was a revolutionary social announcement. It declared that the worth of a person is not in their lineage or bank balance but in their devotion. The central ritual of Hajj is standing at Arafat, where the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) delivered his final sermon. In that

address, he dismantled the very foundations of racial superiority and class hierarchy, declaring: "There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor of a non-Arab over an Arab, nor of a white over a black, nor of a black over a white, except by piety." In an era where cultures clash, Hajj serves as a living, breathing demonstration of interfaith and intercultural harmony, as millions of diverse skin colours and languages coexist in peace. Hajj is a powerful school of discipline and patience.

The rigorous rituals—circumambulating the Kaaba, running between Safa and Marwa, and stoning the devil—demand physical endurance and mental fortitude. These acts strip away arrogance and cultivate humility, reminding the pilgrim that life is a test of submission to the Divine will. In today's consumerist world, where materialism often overshadows spirituality, Hajj re-centres the believer's purpose. It is a stark reminder that the ultimate destination is not a corporate boardroom

or a luxurious home, but the Hereafter. By donning the simple two-piece white cloth (Ihram), the pilgrim symbolically sheds worldly attachments, signifying that death is the great equaliser. Thus, Hajj is not merely an ancient ritual. It is a dynamic, living call to action for humanity to abandon prejudice, embrace equality, and prioritise spiritual wealth over material accumulation. It is the ultimate antidote to the hatred and division plaguing our modern world.

Sacred Rituals Of Hajj

It is a journey into self-reflection, personality development, and the living experience of human brotherhood and sisterhood

Complete the pilgrimages, major and minor, for the sake of God (Al-Qur'an: 2:196).

"Whoever performs Hajj and does not commit sin, nor disputes unjustly (during Hajj), then he returns from Hajj as pure and free from sins as on the day on which his mother gave birth to him" (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

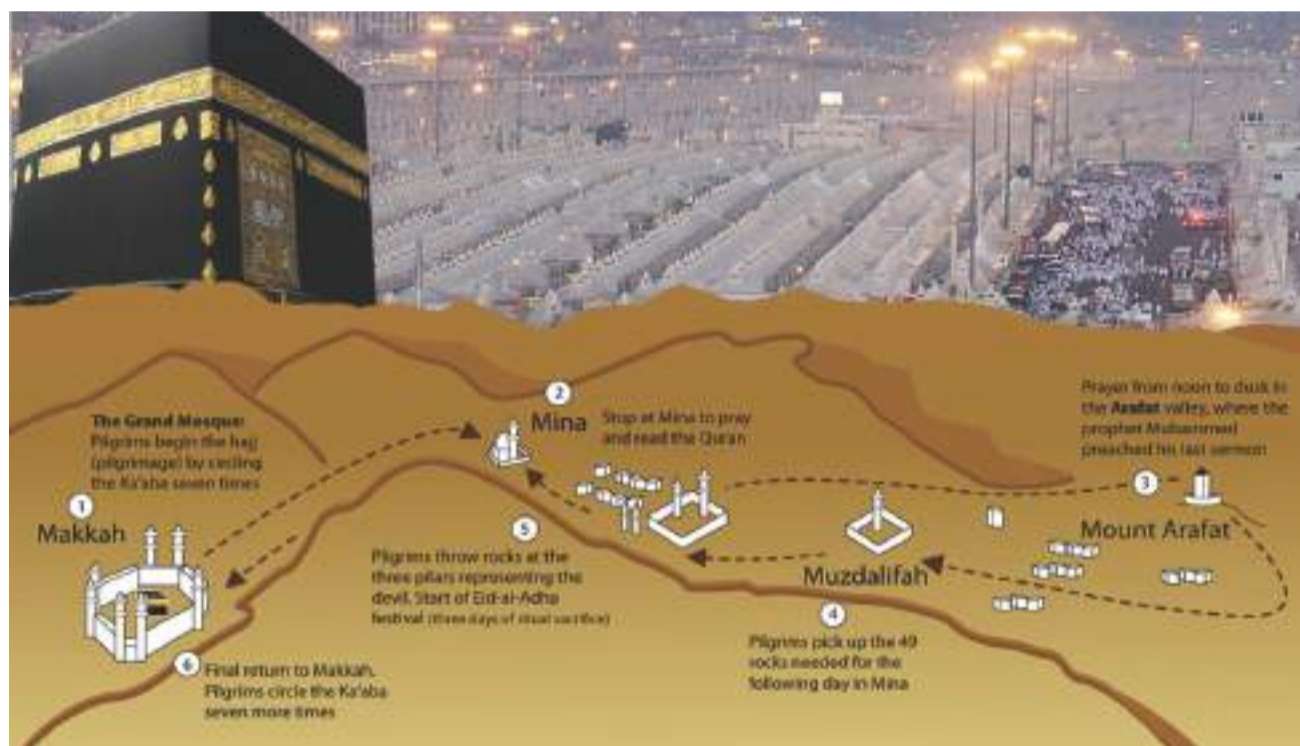
Hajj, or pilgrimage, is one of the five pillars of Islam and represents a significant spiritual journey for Muslims. It is an obligatory act of worship that every Muslim who is physically and financially able must perform at least once in their lifetime. The pilgrimage takes place annually during the Islamic month of Dhul-Hijjah in the holy city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Key aspects of Hajj include:

1. **Obligation and Timing:** Hajj is a once-in-a-lifetime obligation for Muslims who meet the necessary physical and financial criteria. The pilgrimage occurs during specific days of the month of Dhul-Hijjah, culminating in the Day of Arafah, which is considered the most important day of the Hajj rituals.

2. **Rituals and Practices:** The Hajj consists of a series of rituals that are performed over several days. These include:

- **Ihram:** Pilgrims enter a state of spiritual purity and wear simple white garments, symbolizing equality and unity among all participants, regardless of social status or nationality.
- **Tawaf:** Pilgrims circumambulate the Kaaba, the sacred structure in the Masjid al-Haram, seven times in a counter-clockwise direction.
- **Sa'i:** Pilgrims perform the Sa'i, which involves walking seven times between the



hills of Safa and Marwah, commemorating Hagar's search for water for her son Ishmael.

- **Standing at Arafat:** On the Day of Arafah, pilgrims gather at the plain of Arafah to pray and seek forgiveness, reflecting on the Day of Judgment.

- **Muzdalifah and Mina:** After Arafah, pilgrims spend the night at Muzdalifah and then return to Mina, where they perform the ritual of stoning the devil by throwing pebbles at three pillars, symbolizing the

rejection of evil.

- **Eid al-Adha:** The pilgrimage concludes with the celebration of Eid al-Adha, where pilgrims sacrifice an animal, commemorating the willingness of Prophet Abraham to sacrifice his son in obedience to God.

3. **Spiritual Significance:** Hajj is not only a physical journey but also a profound spiritual experience. It serves as an opportunity for Muslims to seek forgiveness for their sins, renew their faith, and develop a deeper connection with God.

The pilgrimage is believed to bring about a transformation, allowing individuals to return home "as a newly born baby" free of sins.

4. **Unity and Diversity:** Hajj brings together millions of Muslims from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and nationalities, fostering a sense of unity and brotherhood among the global Muslim community. This gathering emphasizes the equality of all believers before God, as they stand together in worship.

Hajj is a fundamental act of worship in Islam that encompasses a series of rituals aimed at fostering spiritual growth, community, and a deeper understanding of one's faith. It is a unique opportunity for Muslims to fulfill their religious obligations while experiencing the profound significance of their beliefs.

Some Hajj Facts

Hajj is one of the largest religious gatherings in the world.

Two to five million people from around the globe convene to affirm their commitment to God and commemorate the example and sacrifice of Prophet Abraham.

Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam. Most Muslims perform it at least once in their lives. However, Hajj is not mandatory unlike the other four pillars, because of the hardships of the ritual. So, Islam has taken into consideration both the financial and physical ability of the individual, regarding the performance of Hajj.

The rites of Hajj are performed from the 8th to the 12th of Dul Hijjah.

Eid Al-Adha falls on the 10th day of the month of Due Hijjah.

All male pilgrims wear the same simple attire, which consists of two white clothes that cover the body called Ihram. Women wear a simple abaya; but they have their heads covered with their faces showing. The simple dress is a symbol of purity and equality.

Hajj is a journey into self-reflection and personality development. It's an experience that allows the person to live the brotherhood and sisterhood of humanity. It is a journey for learning the art of sacrifice; allowing pilgrims to connect with the divine.

The Family In Islam: A Pillar Of Strength And Unity

The family is not merely a social unit but a divine blessing and a source of spiritual fulfillment—a sanctuary of support and guidance for individuals

Kanz Ul Huda

In the tapestry of Islamic teachings, the family holds a sacred and central position.

Rooted in the Quranic injunctions and exemplified in the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) the institution of family in Islam is not merely a social construct but a divine framework that nurtures love, compassion, and stability.

At its core, the family unit serves as a sanctuary of support, guidance, and spiritual growth for individuals. Let us delve into the profound significance of the family in Islam and the values it espouses. "Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us an example for the righteous." (Quran 25:74)

Foundation of Love and Mercy:

In Islam, marriage is not merely a contract but a covenant infused with love and mercy. The Quran describes spouses as garments for each other, symbolizing the intimate bond and protection they provide. Mutual respect, kindness, and compassion are the cornerstones of marital relations, fostering an environment of harmony and tranquility within the family.

Responsibilities and Duties:



The Islamic family structure delineates clear roles and responsibilities for each member. The husband is tasked with the provision and protection of the family, while the wife is entrusted with the nurturing of children and the management of the household. Children are obligated to honor and obey their parents, fostering mutual respect and cohesion within the family unit.

Education and Upbringing:

Islam places great emphasis on the upbringing and education of children. Parents are enjoined to imbue Islamic values, ethics, and principles in their offspring, guiding them towards righteousness and piety. The family serves as the primary institution for moral and spiritual development,

instilling a sense of purpose and identity in the younger generation.

Support and Solidarity:

In times of joy and adversity, the family stands as a bastion of support and solidarity. Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of mutual assistance, compassion, and empathy among family members. Through collective prayers, counsel, and encouragement, individuals find solace and strength in the embrace of their loved ones.

Legacy of Prophetic Tradition:

The exemplary conduct of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) towards his family serves as a guiding light for Muslims. His affection towards his wives, compassion towards his children, and respect for his relatives underscore the noble values enshrined in Islamic teachings.

Following the Prophetic model, Muslims strive to emulate virtues of patience, forgiveness, and generosity within their families. "Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire." (Quran 2:201)

In conclusion, the family in Islam is not merely a social unit but a divine blessing and a source of spiritual fulfillment.

Grounded in love, compassion, and mutual respect, it serves as a sanctuary of support and guidance for individuals. By upholding the values of faith, unity, and righteousness, Muslim families strive to emulate the Prophetic legacy and cultivate a harmonious society rooted in the teachings of Islam.

About Kanz ul Huda

Originating in Birmingham, UK, Kanz ul Huda stands as a beacon of support for Muslims seeking harmony in their dual cultural identity. With a global presence, including countries such as Australia, France, Holland, India, Pakistan, UAE, and the USA, the organization is committed to serving Allah Almighty and the diverse creation. Kanz ul Huda's multifaceted approach serves as a guide for Muslims navigating the delicate balance between faith and the Western way of life.

By collectively addressing these issues with foresight, organizations like Kanz ul Huda and the Muslim community pave the way for a brighter and more harmonious future. This collaborative effort ensures that faith and values not only endure but thrive alongside our diverse Western counterparts, contributing to the creation of a more inclusive and promising society.

Courtesy: IslamiCity

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

Deputy CM tours Handwara, inaugurates Drugmulla-Hatmulla Bridge project

KT News Desk

HANDWARA, MAY 21: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary conducted an extensive tour of Handwara in Kupwara district on Thursday to review developmental works, assess public facilities and hold public outreach programmes at multiple locations.

The Deputy Chief Minister, as per an official statement, was accompanied by Member of Parliament Chowdhury Mohammad Ramzan and MLA Uri Dr. Sajjad Shafi.

During an extensive tour, the Deputy Chief Minister also inaugurated the 110-meter-long Drugmulla-Hatmulla Bridge over Nallah Apurpur.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy CM said that the long-awaited bridge project will significantly improve connectivity, mobility and ease of transportation for the people of Drugmulla and adjoining areas.

"This bridge which was pending for a long time will enhance access to essential services and create better opportunities for local residents," he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister also visited the Bus Stand and Main Market in Handwara and addressed large gatherings of local transport and trader associations.

The Deputy Chief Minister assured that the Government is committed to welfare of



transporters and traders and assured all genuine issues shall be addressed on priority.

He underscored that the present Government has undertaken several long-pending developmental works in Handwara to complete on a fast-track basis.

He informed that work on various vital road and bridge projects, five roads under PMGSY have also been approved for Handwara and work on these projects will commence soon.

Referring to the Drugmulla Bridge, he said the project had remained pending for a long time but was completed within two years by the present Government.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed the concerned authorities to identify suitable land for construction of a Labour Sarai facility at Handwara for the convenience of workers and commuters.

He also reviewed macadamization works and other ongoing developmental projects and instructed officers to ensure strict adherence to quality standards and timely completion of all works.

During the daylong tour, the Deputy Chief Minister also conducted public outreach programmes at Rajwar in Bungus and other locations, where he interacted with public delegations and reiterated the

Government's commitment towards robust development, improved public services and responsive governance across Kupwara district

While addressing the gathering, he said the picturesque Rajwar Bungus is blessed with immense natural beauty and tourism potential.

He stated that the Government is committed towards welfare, development and upliftment of local population through improved infrastructure, public services and sustainable growth initiatives.

He also visited Government Medical College (GMC) Handwara to assess the

healthcare facilities being provided to the public.

During inspection the Deputy Chief Minister held detailed discussion with the Principal, doctors and other staff members and reviewed the availability of infrastructure, medical equipment and other essential facilities.

He emphasized the need for strengthening healthcare services and ensuring quality patient care for the people.

MP Chowdhury Mohammad Ramzan and MLA Dr Sajjad Shafi also addressed the gatherings during public outreach programmes.

Earlier, the Deputy Chief Minister also visited the residence of MP Er. Sheikh Abdul Rashid and MLA Sheikh Khurshid at Mawar, Langate, to offer condolences on the demise of their father and expressed sympathies with them.

Later, the Deputy Chief Minister also inspected the ongoing construction work of the Rs 12.5 Cr, 3x18m span Bakhiaker Bridge project in Handwara and directed officials to ensure its completion within the next three months to improve connectivity and mobility for the local population.

Senior officers from PMGSY, R&B, Mining, DICQ, Labour and Employment and officers from the district administration also accompanied the Deputy Chief Minister.

Sakeena Itoo inaugurates PGRP Conclave-2026 at GDC Srinagar



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, MAY 21: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo Thursday inaugurated the Post Graduate Research Programme (PGRP) Conclave-2026 at Government Dental College (GDC) Srinagar.

Addressing a large gathering of doctors, academicians, researchers and students on the occasion, the Minister, as per an official statement, underscored the importance of research and innovation in strengthening the healthcare sector and improving patient care. She said that platforms like the PGRP conclave provide an opportunity for young medical professionals and scholars to showcase their research work, exchange ideas and contribute towards advancements in medical science.

Sakeena Itoo lauded the efforts of the faculty, students and organisers for conducting the conclave and encouraging a culture of scientific inquiry and academic excellence. She said that research-based learning is essential for addressing

emerging health challenges and ensuring quality healthcare services for the people.

"Doctors play a pivotal role in society and the profession of medicine is one of the noblest professions meant to serve humanity with dedication, compassion and commitment," the Minister said.

The Minister urged young doctors and researchers to remain committed to ethical medical practices and continue striving for excellence in patient care and scientific research. She also highlighted the government's commitment towards strengthening healthcare infrastructure, promoting medical education and encouraging research activities across the Union Territory.

Speaking on the occasion, Principal GDC Srinagar, presented the brief outline about the objectives of the conclave.

During the event, the Minister also interacted with students and faculty members and appreciated their contribution towards academic and healthcare excellence. She also released the Newsletter on Research Conclave-2026.

2-day National Conclave on Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0 concludes in New Delhi

KT News Desk

NEW DELHI, MAY 21: A two-day National Review Meeting and Conclave on Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0 concluded in New Delhi, bringing together Ministers, senior officers and representatives from various States and Union Territories to deliberate on the progress and future roadmap of urban sanitation and waste management initiatives across the country.

Jammu & Kashmir participated in the conclave with a delegation led by Minister for Rural Development, Agriculture Production, Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmed Dar.

The delegation, as per an official statement, also included Commissioner Secretary HUDD, Mandeep Kaur and Director Swachh Bharat Mission Urban, Dr. Devansh Yadav.

During the two-day deliberations, extensive discussions were held on key aspects of Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0, including bioremediation of legacy waste, operationalisation of waste processing plants, ensuring visible cleanliness in urban areas and

transforming the mission into a mass movement through the concept of "Jan Abhiyaan".

Ministers from different States, Secretaries from various Ministries and senior officials presented best practices and shared successful models being implemented in their respective regions. The conclave also focused on addressing challenges being faced in implementation and evolving practical solutions for strengthening urban sanitation systems across the country.

The proposed Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026 were also discussed in detail during the sessions. Deliberations were held on strategies for effective implementation of the rules in compliance with the directions of the Supreme Court, and a comprehensive action plan was framed up for their execution at the national and state levels.

The conclave reaffirmed the collective commitment of all States and Union Territories towards achieving the vision of clean, sustainable, and garbage-free urban India under Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0.

CS inaugurates CGG&PA at IUST, lauds University's academic, research initiatives

KT News Desk

AWANTIPORA, MAY 21: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Thursday visited Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) and inaugurated the Centre for Good Governance & Policy Analysis (CGG&PA) during a series of engagements aimed at strengthening policy research, governance innovation and institutional collaboration.

During the visit, the Chief Secretary, as per an official statement, toured Campus I and Campus III of the university and inspected various laboratories and academic facilities. He also interacted with officers and faculty members.

Atal Dulloo appreciated the efforts of the faculty and staff in the growth and academic advancement of the university, particularly its introduction of high-end and emerging programmes in frontier sciences and artificial intelligence in line with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. He also lauded the university's initiatives in strengthening industry linkages, promoting research, and fostering innovation-driven academic collaborations.

Congratulating Prof. Shakil A Romshoo Vice Chancellor IUST



and his team for the achievements made by IUST, he expressed confidence that the Centre for Good Governance & Policy Analysis would further strengthen the university's contribution towards policy research and institutional development. He remarked that IUST possesses immense potential to contribute towards improving ease of living for the people through meaningful collaborations with the government and national-level institutions.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Shakil A. Romshoo highlighted the university's achievements and outlined its vision for academic excellence, innovation, and public engagement. He stated that IUST has emerged as an active contributor to several flagship national missions through its work in sustainability, emerging

technologies, entrepreneurship, healthcare, and community development. He also thanked the Government for its continued support, which, he said, has enabled the university to strengthen its academic and research ecosystem and expand its engagement with society and industry.

Earlier, Director, CGG&PA, Dr. G. N. Itoo, while welcoming the dignitaries, said that the Centre would serve as an important platform for promoting evidence-based policymaking, interdisciplinary research, and meaningful collaboration between academia, government institutions, and society to address contemporary governance and developmental challenges. A documentary showcasing the university's academic, research, innovation, and outreach initiatives was also screened.

Principal Secretary DMRRR reviews ration distribution, extension of welfare schemes for migrants

KT News Desk

JAMMU, MAY 21: Principal Secretary Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRRR) Chandraker Bharti Thursday reviewed the progress on implementation of the ration distribution in terms of the Special Relief Ration Scheme for Kashmiri/Jammu Migrants as well as extension of benefits of social sector/welfare schemes to eligible migrants, after integration of their ration cards on the national database.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Director Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) Jammu, R.K. Shavan; Relief & Rehabilitation Commissioner (M), J&K, Dr. Arvind Karwani and senior officers from DMRRR, FCS&CA, Social Welfare Departments and National Informatics Centre.

During the meeting, the Principal Secretary directed the concerned departments to take proactive steps to reach out to all households and ensure ration supply to all migrant beneficiaries who have enrolled for integration on the NFSA

database, even if e-KYC formalities are pending/ in process. He asked the FCS&CA Department to provide free ration of April and May as a one-time exception during the transition period into the NFSA database to all such beneficiaries from the FPS dealers indicated by them in the NFSA application, and issue necessary order on same.

The Principal Secretary also asked the officers of the Relief Organization to reach out to all such households that have still not lifted the ration despite the completion of e-KYC formalities and facilitate them. He asked the FCS&CA Department to explore the possibility of establishing a Ration ATM at Mini-Township Jagti, which houses more than 5,000 migrant families and Relief Organization shall identify and provide suitable space for the purpose.

The Principal Secretary also called for conducting an extensive IEC campaign through print, electronic, and social media to make migrants aware that the integration of migrant ration cards into the NFSA database is purely a welfare-oriented governance reform aimed at inclusion of migrants

into the mainstream welfare architecture, extension of social security benefits, digitization and modernization of records, transparency, and accountability in beneficiary management. He highlighted that the continuation and protection of all the existing relief provisions/guidelines/ entitlements available to Kashmiri/ Jammu Migrants is ensured.

He also directed the officers of Social Welfare department to organise special camps in coordination with the Relief Organization in at migrant camps and prominent non-camp areas at Jammu to reach out to potential migrant beneficiaries of social sector/welfare schemes and facilitate them in filling various online applications for availing benefits of different social sector schemes like Old Age Pension, Widow Pension, Disability Pension, Marriage Assistance, Ayushman Bharat and various scholarships. He also asked them to organise a camp at Reasi for Jammu Migrants.

During the meeting, it was informed that about 21,000 migrant ration cards have already been punched into the NFSA

database, and the process of integrating about 5,000 migrant ration cards is in progress and around 50% of families have lifted ration so far under the new scheme. It was apprised that those who could not lift ration in the month of April are being provided two months' free ration (April & May 2026) and those who received less ration due to any glitch in April or May will also be provided the remaining portion by the FCS&CA Department.

The Government, in terms of various Government Orders and notifications, has repeatedly clarified that the earlier scale of ration distribution to the migrants registered under the relief category shall continue and that all relief ration card holders shall continue to receive 11 Kg free ration per person per month and 1 Kg sugar as per the extant scale of ration distribution. Besides, those registered with the Relief Organisation under the non-relief category (Pensioners, etc.) and categorized into the NPHH category will also receive 5 Kg ration on the Government-approved rates as per their entitlement under NFSA on cost basis.

Startup India, DPIIT, JKEDI, Admin collaborate to organize TEJAS Workshop in Baramulla

KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, MAY 21: In a significant initiative aimed at strengthening the startup and entrepreneurial ecosystem in the district, the TEJAS (Transforming Entrepreneurial Journeys Across States and Districts) Workshop was organised Thursday at Dak Bungalow Baramulla by Startup India, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Govt. of India in collaboration with JKEDI and District Administration Baramulla.

The event, as per an official statement, was inaugurated by the Director JKEDI, Mohd Younis Malik in the presence of Additional Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Syed Altaf Hussain Musvi, Chief Planning Officer Baramulla, Nisar Ahmad, General Manager DIC Baramulla and resource persons from Startup India and several other officers.

The workshop also brought together aspiring entrepreneurs, innovators, students, startup founders, industry experts and government representatives on a common platform to promote innovation-driven



entrepreneurship and economic growth in the district.

Speaking on the occasion, Director JKEDI, Mohd Younis Malik, highlighted the immense entrepreneurial potential of the youth of Baramulla and stressed the need to create a robust ecosystem that supports innovation, enterprise creation and sustainable livelihoods.

He further said that the government is committed to creating an enabling environment for startups and innovators and through Startup India and JKEDI initiatives so that the youth can become job creators rather than job seekers.

Later in the day, the DC

Baramulla also visited the workshop and assured full support from the District Administration to aspiring entrepreneurs and innovators and said every possible assistance would be extended to help youth transform their ideas into commercially viable ventures capable of generating employment and contributing to the local economy.

The DC further congratulated JKEDI for creating this culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, highlighting that such platforms help in nurturing ideas, refining innovations and ultimately commercialising them to bring them into the market.

India's Chandrayaan-3 mission gets Goddard Astronautics Award from AIAA

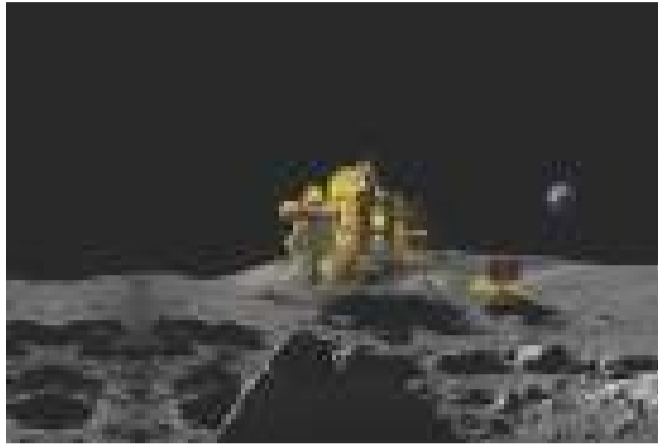
PTI

Washington, May 21: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) was on Thursday honoured with the Goddard Astronautics Award for 2026 by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) for the Chandrayaan-3 mission.

India's Ambassador to the US Vinay Mohan Kwatra received the award at the ASCEND conference of the AIAA.

According to the citation, ISRO received the award "for the groundbreaking landing of the ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 near the lunar south pole region, to deepen our understanding of the moon and beyond."

"Congratulations to @isro and Chandrayaan 3 team on winning the prestigious 2026 Goddard Astronautics Award from The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics @



aiaa," Kwatra said in a post on X.

"Honoured to accept the award on behalf of ISRO and to highlight Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Space Vision 2047 and the upcoming deep space exploration and human spaceflight missions, and growing commercial space

ecosystem in India," Kwatra said.

The previous recipients of the award are Jeff Bezos of Blue Origin, Michael Hawes, a NASA engineer who contributed to the design, manufacturing and operations of the human spaceflight programmes, among others.

Secy RDD stresses 'quality jobs' for rural youth under DDU-GKY 2.0

Over 1,600 rural youth trained; placement process underway

KT News Desk

Srinagar, May 21: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD), and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, on Thursday chaired a review meeting of Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) under the HIMAYAT Scheme (DDU-GKY 2.0) to assess the implementation and progress of the programme across Jammu & Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Chief Operating Officer, Himayat, Rajneesh Gupta, State Project Manager, Sajad Choudary, officers of the Himayat Mission Management Unit (HMMU), and representatives of various Project Implementing Agencies.

During the meeting, the performance of each PIA engaged under the first phase of DDU-GKY 2.0 (HIMAYAT 2.0) was reviewed in detail, with particular focus on training completion, placement performance, retention, and the quality of



employment opportunities being offered to rural youth.

The Secretary observed that while most PIAs had substantially achieved their training targets, the immediate priority now remains achieving the mandated placement targets under the scheme.

The meeting was informed that under DDU-GKY 2.0, a total target of 2,248 candidates has been sanctioned for the financial year 2025-26, against which 1,615 candidates have already been trained, while 650 candidates have been placed so far.

Emphasizing that HIMAYAT is fundamentally a placement-linked programme aimed at generating sustainable livelihoods, the Secretary directed all PIAs to make focused and result-oriented efforts toward ensuring quality placements for trained candidates.

While appreciating the efforts of agencies in commencing training programmes and generating placements, he stressed the need to further improve training quality and ensure sustainable employment outcomes.

Aijaz Asad emphasized that placement should not be limited to the issuance of appointment letters, but should ensure that candidates remain employed, perform effectively, and sustain

their livelihoods over time.

Highlighting the importance of reducing attrition among placed candidates, he directed agencies to provide proper counselling, continued support, and conducive facilities to trainees.

Calling for greater accountability, the Secretary stated that the credibility and reputation of implementing agencies would ultimately depend on the successful completion of training programmes and the long-term success of candidates in the workforce.

Aijaz Asad further urged agencies to maintain high standards in hostel facilities, training infrastructure, and overall trainee welfare.

The Secretary directed all agencies to work in close coordination with the Himayat Mission Management Unit (HMMU) and ensure timely achievement of targets with a sustained focus on quality skilling, placement retention, and youth empowerment across Jammu & Kashmir.

India, Egypt resolve to enhance anti-terror cooperation

PTI

New Delhi, May 21: India and Egypt called for concerted global efforts against all UN-designated terrorist entities and their affiliates, proxy groups, supporters, sponsors and financiers.

Both sides reviewed a wide range of traditional and emerging threats and challenges such as terrorist recruitment, abuse of technology for terrorist purposes and financing of terrorism during a high-level meeting held in New Delhi on Wednesday.

The two sides also agreed to bolster bilateral cooperation in combating the threat of terrorism.

"India and Egypt underscored the importance of bilateral cooperation in countering terrorism, reflecting the spirit of India-Egypt Strategic Partnership," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in the India-Egypt Joint Working Group meeting on Counter-Terrorism.

It said the two sides unequivocally and strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms, including cross-border terrorism, while reaffirming the principle of zero tolerance towards the menace.

India and Egypt reiterated that terrorism should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilisation or ethnic

group, the MEA said.

The two sides also strongly condemned the Pahalgalam terrorist attack as well as the terrorist incident near the Red Fort in November last year.

India and Egypt stressed that all those involved in terrorist activities and their supporters must be held accountable and brought to justice, the MEA said.

"Egypt reaffirmed its solidarity with India against all forms of terrorism aimed at undermining the country's security and stability," it said.

The MEA said the two sides called for "concerted actions against all UN-designated terrorists and terrorist entities and their affiliates, proxy groups, supporters, sponsors, financiers and backers."

It said both sides reviewed a wide range of traditional and emerging threats and challenges such as terrorist recruitment, abuse of technology for terrorist purposes and financing of terrorism.

"They expressed concerns over the increasing use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), drones and AI for terrorist purposes," it said.

"The two sides discussed ways to strengthen cooperation in areas of training and capacity building, cyber security, judicial cooperation, exchange of best practices and information sharing," the MEA added.

Nepal PM's continued absence from Parl draws strong protests from opp

PTI

Kathmandu, May 21: Lawmakers from multiple opposition parties on Thursday raised slogans to protest the continued absence of Nepal Prime Minister Balendra Shah 'Balen' in Parliament to respond to their questions, leading to an adjournment as proceedings were disrupted.

This is the third time since the session started last week that the opposition parties have obstructed the proceedings in the House of Representatives and boycotted the Parliament meetings to oppose Shah's absence.

"Down with the autocratic ruler," "Prime Minister is responsible to (answer) Parliament," "Address the demands of the Opposition," "Make the Prime Minister accountable to Parliament," and "Implement Parliament's regulation" were the various slogans shouted in the House by members of almost all the opposition parties, including Nepali Congress, CPN-UML - the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), Shram Sanskriti Party and Rastriya Prajatantra Party.

"Is the prime minister part of this Parliament or not? I do not know," KC said. "He seems more like the emperor of some separate island rather than an integral part of this Parliament." Speaker D P Aryal adjourned the House for half an hour as the opposition lawmakers disrupted the proceedings. He also promised the House that he would talk to the prime minister and ask him to appear to respond to the questions raised by the lawmakers.

"The Speaker reportedly held talks with the prime minister visiting the PM's



Hour in the House.

KC expressed dissatisfaction over the prime minister's absence from the House at a time when the government should be taking serious issues such as disaster management. KC also pointed out that Shah is currently handling the responsibilities of the Home Ministry.

"Is the prime minister part of this Parliament or not? I do not know," KC said. "He seems more like the emperor of some separate island rather than an integral part of this Parliament." Speaker D P Aryal adjourned the House for half an hour as the opposition lawmakers disrupted the proceedings. He also promised the House that he would talk to the prime minister and ask him to appear to respond to the questions raised by the lawmakers.

"The Speaker reportedly held talks with the prime minister visiting the PM's

Office at Singhdurbar during the adjournment. But as he failed to bring Shah before the Parliament, the opposition resumed obstructing the House," said Reena Uprety, a lawmaker from the Nepali Congress.

Meanwhile, the Shram Sanskriti Party, led by Harka Raj Rai, boycotted the meeting. This is not the first time that the opposition lawmakers lodged a protest demanding PM Shah to appear in person to respond to the questions.

On May 14 and 19 too they had obstructed the Parliament proceedings and boycotted the Parliament meetings to oppose the PM's absence in the House.

Despite the boycott by the Shram Sanskriti and slogan-eering by the Opposition, the Speaker announced that a finance related bill tabled by Finance Minister Swornim Wagley on Wednesday has been endorsed.

India great partner, ready to expand energy cooperation: Rubio

PTI

Washington, May 21: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Thursday that the US was in talks with India to expand energy cooperation, an issue that would feature in his discussions during a visit to New Delhi.

"Well, we want to sell them as much energy as they'll buy. And obviously, you've seen I think we're at historic levels of US production, and US export," Rubio told reporters in Miami as he embarked on the trip to Sweden and India. Rubio will be in India from May 23-26 and will visit Kolkata, Agra, Jaipur and New Delhi.

"We want to be able to do more. We were already in talks with them to do more. We want them to be a bigger part of their portfolio. We also think there are opportunities with Venezuelan oil," Rubio said.

He was responding to a question about India being affected by high energy prices due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Rubio described India as a "great partner" and said his visit to New Delhi was important as it would also give him an opportunity to meet with ministers from the Quad



nations.

"They are a great ally, a great partner. We do a lot of good work with them. And so it is an important trip. I'm glad we're able to do it because I think there'll be a lot for us to talk about," Rubio said.

"We'll also meet with Quad there, which is important. I think my first meeting as Secretary of State was with the Quad. I'm glad we are able to do it now in India and we're going to do one later in the year as well," Rubio said.

Rubio said the acting President of Venezuela Delcy Rodriguez was also scheduled to visit India next week and there will be many opportunities to work with New Delhi.

"In fact, it's my understanding that the interim president of Venezuela will be travelling to India next week as well. So, there's opportunities. There's a lot to work on with India," Rubio said.

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and participate more actively in class. Protein, vitamins, and a balanced diet supply the basic energy for thinking and understanding of a child. I want every school in Jammu Kashmir to remember, when we provide nutritious meals in schools, we are not merely filling stomachs but we are shaping future thinking." He said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor applauded self-less service of Akshay Patra, which is among the world's largest NGOs in the school meal sector, currently serving over 20 lakh children across 16 states and 3 UTs.

The Lieutenant Governor also served the meal to the school students. Bharatarshabha Dasa, National President & Trustee, The Akshaya Patra Foundation; Baldev Raj Sharma, Member of Legislative Assembly, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi; Kuldeep Raj Dubey, Member of Legislative Assembly from Reasi; Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Ram Niwas Sharma, Commissioner/Secretary School Education Department; Bhim Sen Tuti, IGP Jammu; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Shiv Kumar Sharma, DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range; Kumar Abhishek, Deputy Commissioner, Reasi; Uday C. Rege from Savita Oil Technologies; senior officials, members of Akshaya Patra Foundation and students in large number attended the ceremony. (KNO) **Sinha inaugurates**

developed infrastructure will enhance convenience for pilgrims and strengthen tourism and religious connectivity in the region.

Speaking on the occasion, dignitaries appreciated the efforts of BRO, Project Sampark and SMVD authorities in completing the project aimed at improving facilities for devotees visiting the holy shrine.

Along with Katra Helipad, Shiv khori Helipad was also inaugurated.

Shiv khori helipad was upgraded to 35 x 35 meter size and other works including approach

road, Pre-Fab structure and a 27 meter steel bridge at Shri Shivkhori Shrine Bhawan was also inaugurated by Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor Jammu and Kashmir Shri Manoj Sinha in presence of shiv khori shrine board, Reasi District officials and Bro officials 21/05/2026.

The total cost of the project is Rs. 5.91 lakhs. The construction work is being getting executed by SSKSB through Bro 69 RCC, 35 BRTF, Project Sampark (GREF). The heli service shall start from Katra to Shri Shivkhori to facilitate the pilgrims coming from all over the country.

LG dedicates new

for catering to pilgrims and staff.

To ensure accessibility and convenience, the building is equipped with five lifts, including three passenger lifts of 26 person capacity, one service lift and one connecting lift linking the facility with Parvati Bhawan.

The Lieutenant Governor also paid obeisance at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi ji Shrine. He prayed for peace and prosperity of J&K UT and well-being of one and all.

Members of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board - Mahamandleshwar Swami Vishveshvaranand Giriji Maharaj, Dr. Ashok Bhan; Suresh Kumar Sharma; Lalit Bhasin, Kulbushan Ahuja; Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Bhim Sen Tuti, IGP Jammu; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB; Shiv Kumar Sharma, DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range; Kumar Abhishek, Deputy Commissioner, Reasi; Alok Maurya, Additional CEO SMVDSB, senior officials of the Shrine Board, police and District Administration attended the inaugural ceremony. (KNO) **LG chairs high-level**

approval for a dedicated corpus of funds to seamlessly drive the conceptualization, development, and operations of the prestigious project.

The Lieutenant Governor suggested deputing

a team of experts to visit the various sacred Shaktipeeths to be featured in the museum. The Board also resolved to appoint a specialized consultant to spearhead detailed research and architectural conceptualization.

The Museum shall serve as a spiritual sanctuary and a premier center of knowledge. With an integrated library and research center, it will play a pivotal role in awakening the young generation to the rich cultural, traditional, and spiritual values of our Shaktipeeths and the region.

Rare snowfall

flood-prone and vulnerable areas to remain cautious.

MET FORECASTS LIGHT RAIN, THUNDERSTORMS, GUSTY WINDS

The Meteorological Department has predicted light rain, thunderstorms and gusty winds across several parts over the next two days, while warning of possible lightning and hailstorm activity in both Kashmir and Jammu divisions.

According to the MeT department, the weather is expected to remain partly to generally cloudy on May 22, with one or two spells of light rain, thundershower and gusty winds at many places.

The department said there is a possibility of thunder, lightning, hailstorm and gusty winds with speeds of 40-50 kmph, gusting to more than 60 kmph, at a few places in the Kashmir and Jammu divisions during the period.

From May 23 to 25, the weather is likely to remain mainly dry during the forenoon, with brief showers expected at isolated to scattered places towards late afternoon hours, it said.

The MeT department has forecast generally hot and dry weather from May 26 to 28, while partly to generally cloudy conditions with light rain or thundershower at isolated places are expected between May 29 and 31.

Officials also warned of hot and humid conditions at a few places in the Jammu division on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, several places in Kashmir recorded rainfall during the past 24 hours. Pahalgalam received 14.2 mm rainfall, Gulmarg 13.4 mm, Kupwara 11.4 mm, Qazigund 6.8 mm and Srinagar 5.4 mm, according to the MeT data.

Jammu recorded a maximum temperature of 41.5 degrees Celsius, over three degrees above normal, while Srinagar settled at 23.9 degrees Celsius.

69 LIVESTOCK ANIMALS KILLED IN LIGHTNING STRIKE

More than 69 livestock animals were killed after lightning struck a pasture in the Pahalgalam area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district during heavy rain and thunderstorm.

According to officials, a herd of sheep and goats was caught in the open when lightning hit the area amid intense weather activity.

At least 69 livestock animals perished in the incident, the officials said. The sudden loss has caused concern among local herders, as livestock rearing remains a major source of livelihood in the area. (KNO) **Constitution not**

spaces and its influence is ultimately measured in the lives of citizens and in the character of our democracy," he said.

Observing that constitutionalism is concerned with preserving coherence between authority and principle, the CJ said public institutions function best when power and responsibility are exercised in a spirit of balance, accountability, transparency and fidelity to foundational values.

"It is this continuing commitment that allows a democratic society to respond to changing circumstances while preserving the ethos and ideals that sustain it," he said.

Police tighten

heroin-like substance from him, the official added.

Meanwhile, Police in Kulgam also made multiple arrests during naka checking operations.

Bilal Ahmad Hajam of Larkipora was arrested at Chowgam Bridge and around 4.5 kilograms of charas powder was recovered from a nylon bag in his possession, police said.

Another accused, Sameer Ahmad Sheikh of Bangedar, Anantnag, was arrested with 157 grams of charas-like substance concealed in a polythene bag, police said.

In a separate operation near Sopat in Kulgam, Nazir Ahmad Rather was arrested after he allegedly tried to flee on noticing a police party. Around 2.6 kilograms of poppy straw-like substance was recovered from him, police added.

Police said all the accused were arrested and cases under relevant sections of the NDPS Act were registered at respective police stations.

In a separate operation, police along with Army's 34 Rashtriya Rifles and CRPF arrested a terrorist associate in Mohammadpura area of Kulgam.

The accused, identified as Aadil Hussain Lone of Mohammadpura, was intercepted during a joint operation and two hand grenades along with incriminating posters were recovered from his possession, police said.

A case has been registered and further investigation is underway, officials said, adding that more arrests and recoveries were expected.

In Pulwama district, police registered a case under the Essential Commodities Act after a huge quantity of urea fertiliser was allegedly found stored illegally in a godown at Parigam area. The owner failed to produce valid documents or licence for storage of the fertiliser, officials said.

Meanwhile, police conducted anti-drug awareness rallies, road races, village-level meetings and checking drives across Budgam, Baramulla, Awantipora and Pulwama districts under the anti-drug campaign.

Police said poppy plants cultivated illegally in the Rajpora area of Pulwama were destroyed, medical shops were checked in Kakapora and raids were conducted at several locations linked to narcotics activities. (KNO)

How different were Trump, Putin's visits to China

AP

Beijing, May 21: On the surface, Chinese leader Xi Jinping's back-to-back summits with US President Donald Trump and Russia's Vladimir Putin looked pretty similar, with formal handshakes in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, enthusiastic greetings from flower-waving children, and marching columns of soldiers branching gleaming bayonets.

But the visits also revealed how different China's relationship is with the two countries.

During Trump's visit, China sought to stabilize ties with the United States, while Putin's trip served to deepen its strategic partnership with Russia.

Xi emphasised ceremonial hospitality during Trump's visit, including a rare tour of Zhongnanhai, the former imperial gardens that now serve as the headquarters for China's government. Beijing understood Trump valued highly visible displays of respect, said George Chen, partner for Greater China practice for The Asia Group.

"Xi knows this is what Trump values: being treated like a VIP, respected in front of the cameras."

With Putin, Chen said, Xi switched to substance. "Reaffirming the friendship treaty, signing new energy deals, and re-emphasising their no limits' partnership," he added.

The differences between Trump and Putin's visits began with their length: the US president stayed in China for three



days, while Putin's visit lasted two.

Both leaders were welcomed at Tiananmen Square with ceremonial guards, a military band and children waving Chinese and national flags.

Both also held closed-door meetings with Xi at the Great Hall of the People, next to the square.

But while Trump's visit did not include a public agreement-signing ceremony, Putin and Xi witnessed the signing of bilateral agreements and memorandums of understanding.

Trump also received a private tour of the Temple of Heaven and walked through the imperial gardens of Zhongnanhai.

Putin, instead, spent much of his time with Xi inside the Great Hall of the People, where the two presidents toured a photo

exhibition on China-Russia relations and later had tea.

Last week's trip was Trump's second visit to China as president. For Putin, it was his 25th visit to the country.

The main contrast between the two summits was in their messaging.

With Trump, Xi focused on the need to maintain a relatively stable relationship after months of tensions and a trade war between the world's two largest economies. He urged the US president to see China as a partner rather than a rival, and both leaders agreed to work toward what they described as "a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability".

With Putin, Xi sought to reinforce and deepen a longstanding partnership that is both strategic

and economically important for the two countries.

While the US and China are still trying to stabilise their trade ties, Moscow and Beijing reaffirmed their relationship as essential partners. Putin said the "driving force" of the relationship was the energy sector, particularly oil and gas.

The two sides signed more than 40 cooperation agreements covering areas including trade, technology and media exchanges. The two leaders also signed a joint declaration describing Russia and China as "important centres of power in a multipolar world".

Trump and Xi, by contrast, did not sign a joint declaration or oversee the signing of any agreements during the visit. It was only after the US president left Beijing that the two countries announced the details of several accords, with Washington saying China had agreed to buy US agricultural products at an annualised rate of USD 17 billion and purchase 200 Boeing jets.

"China and Russia reached more agreements, and with China and the US, what are the agreements? Even that is not very clear," said Claus Soong, an analyst at the Mercator Institute for China Studies in Berlin.

But Lyle Morris, senior fellow on Chinese national security and foreign policy at Asia Society Policy Institute's Centre for China Analysis, said the biggest surprise from the Xi-Putin meetings was that it appears no formal deal was signed for the Power of Siberia 2

gas pipeline plan, which could send gas from Russia to China through Mongolia.

"This is a huge setback for Russia and Putin," he said.

Moscow is closely aligned with Beijing on the issue of Taiwan, the island democracy China claims as its own. Meanwhile, the US maintains an intentionally ambiguous stance on the island and serves as its main informal backer and arms provider.

Xi made it clear to Trump that Taiwan is the most important issue in the bilateral relationship and warned that mishandling US ties with the self-governing island could lead to confrontation between the two countries.

Trump did not publicly address Taiwan during the visit. But on his way back to the United States, he described arms sales to Taiwan as a "very good negotiating chip" with China, comments that stirred anxieties on the island, which Beijing claims as its own territory.

With Putin, there was no sign of disagreement over the issue.

In the joint declaration signed by Xi and Putin, Russia reiterated its opposition to Taiwanese independence "in any form" and voiced support for what it described as China's efforts to defend its sovereignty and achieve "national unification".

According to the Chinese Foreign Ministry, both sides also raised concerns over what they called "accelerated remilitarisation" of Japan, against the backdrop of strained China-Japan ties over Taiwan.

'Trump, Netanyahu had tense phone call on future of Iran war'



PTI

Washington, May 21: US President Donald Trump and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had a tense phone call over the future course of the war on Iran as Washington appeared to be in favour of a deal instead of the resumption of strikes, US media reported.

After the Tuesday phone call with Trump, Netanyahu's "hair was on fire", US media outlet Axios reported on Wednesday, adding that the Israeli Prime Minister was keen on the resumption of strikes to further degrade Iran's military capabilities and weaken the regime by destroying its critical infrastructure.

Trump on Sunday said he had put-off strikes on Iran, planned for Tuesday, following a request from Arab nations including Qatar and the UAE.

A revised peace memo was drafted by Qatar and Pakistan with input from the other regional mediators to try to bridge the gaps between the US and Iran, Axios reported, quoting sources.

Netanyahu is highly sceptical about the negotiations and wants to resume the war to further degrade Iran's military capabilities and weaken the regime by destroying its critical infrastructure.

Trump continues to say he thinks a deal can be reached, but that he's ready to resume the war if it isn't.

"The only question is, do we go and finish it up, or are they gonna be signing a document. Let's see what happens," he said on Wednesday at the Coast

Guard Academy. Later on Wednesday, he said the US and Iran were "right on the borderline" between getting a deal and resuming the war.

"It's right on the borderline, believe me. If we don't get the right answers, it goes very quickly. We're all ready to go. We have to get the right answers — it would have to be a complete 100 per cent good answers," Trump told reporters after he returned to Washington from the Coast Guard Academy in Connecticut.

There is a strong desire in the upper echelons of the Israeli government for renewed military action, CNN reported, quoting an Israeli source, and mounting frustration that Trump is continuing to allow what they say is Iran's diplomatic foot-dragging.

Trump also said Netanyahu "will do whatever I want him to do" on Iran, though he also said they had a good relationship.

Iran has confirmed it's reviewing an updated proposal, but has not yet shown any signs of flexibility.

Iran's foreign ministry said Wednesday that negotiations were ongoing "based on Iran's 14-point proposal," and that Pakistan's interior minister was in Tehran to help the mediation. Trump told Netanyahu that the mediators were working on a "letter of intent" that both the US and Iran would sign to formally end the war and launch a 30-day period of negotiations on issues like Iran's nuclear program and opening of the Strait of Hormuz, a US source briefed on the call told Axios.

Commonwealth Games Day to be celebrated across India on May 24

PTI

New Delhi, May 21: Shooter Anjum Modgil and badminton player Trupti Murgunde will be among the sporting stars in attendance when the country celebrates the Commonwealth Games Day on May 24 across 8,000 locations with the main event in Ahmedabad. The 75th edition of Fit India Sundays on Cycle will be organised in Ahmedabad on May 24 "in the spirit of the Commonwealth Games movement, celebrating sportsmanship, unity, fitness and national pride", the sports ministry

stated on Thursday.

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, along with Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi, will lead the event in Ahmedabad. "The theme for this edition, 'A New Icon for a Fitter India - Pedalling to 2030', reflects the vision of preparing India for CWG 2030 through fitness, unity and sporting spirit." A special CWG-themed exhibition will also be inaugurated during the event, showcasing India's sporting achievements over the last 12 years, alongside flagship schemes such as the Khelo India Mission and Sports Goods Manufacturing initiatives.

Energy shock from Iran war to weigh on Europe's growth, boost inflation

AP

Frankfurt, May 21: The European Union's executive commission cut its growth outlook and predicted higher inflation due to sharply higher energy prices from the war in Iran — but said the economy will avoid an outright recession.

"As a net energy importer, the EU's economy is highly susceptible to the energy shock caused by the conflict in the Middle East," the commission said in a statement Thursday.

The rising cost of fuel "means higher household bills and surging business costs that reduce profits for many industries".

The commission's spring forecast lowered the outlook for growth in the 21 countries that use the

euro to 0.9% for this year, from 1.2% in its autumn forecast, and to 1.2% from 1.4% for 2027. Inflation is now expected to reach 3.0% for 2026, up from the earlier forecast of 1.9%.

The new inflation figure exceeds the inflation goal of 2% set by the European Central Bank, and higher inflation expectations have led to predictions the ECB will raise its interest rate benchmarks this year to combat inflation.

Oil prices rose sharply after risk of Iranian drone and speedboat attacks closed off most ship traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, the sea passage for about a fifth of the world's oil and natural gas. On top of that, news of the war has shaken consumer confidence, which fell to a 40-month low amid mounting fears of job losses and higher inflation.

Anti-Doping Act set to be amended; Ministry for five-yr jail for suppliers



PTI

New Delhi, May 21: The recently-amended National Anti Doping Act will be modified once again to criminalise trafficking and distribution of prohibited substances to athletes with a jail term of up to five years for suppliers, targeting even medical practitioners if they knowingly prescribe banned drugs.

The proposed amendments have been uploaded on the Sports Ministry's website for requisite feedback from the public with the deadline for submission being June 18.

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said the amended bill will be tabled during the upcoming monsoon session of the Parliament after taking the feedback into consideration.

"Whoever administers or applies to an athlete, for the purpose of or in connection with doping in sport...shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to (five) years, or with fine which may extend up to (two lakh) rupees, or both," the proposed

amendment states.

Mandaviya, who has long advocated for aggressive awareness campaigns to tackle the menace, said criminalising organised supply of banned drugs is a necessity.

"Doping is no longer just a sporting violation; it has evolved into an organised ecosystem exploiting athletes," Mandaviya said in an interaction with the media here. "We only punish those who are consuming but suppliers need to be targeted as well. So whether it is a coach, a manager, a fellow athlete or anyone who has direct access to an athlete, those found guilty of being part of the supply chain will be prosecuted if these amendments go through," he added.

Criminalisation of doping was a major talking point at the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) Global Anti-Doping Intelligence and Investigations Network (GAIIN) Final Conference and Mandaviya had announced the government's plan to bring in penal provisions to tackle the menace. India,

which has topped the WADA's global list of dope offenders for the past three years, is aspiring to become an Olympic host in 2036 and has bagged the 2030 Commonwealth Games already but the country's poor doping record could become a major hindrance to that plan.

The new amendment is similar to the one that was proposed back in 2018. At that time, a jail term of four years and a fine of Rs two lakh was sought for organised crime syndicates and anyone who was found guilty of supplying banned substances to athletes. However, the landmark provisions were scrapped from the bill that was eventually passed in 2022 and amended last year as the government sided with the idea of a "preventive legislation, rather than a criminal legislation." The new amendments, however, seek to even target those who prescribe banned drugs, which means a medical practitioner would also be liable if he is a willing participant in the doping offence.

"Whoever, for the purpose of or in connection with doping in sport, traffics in, sells, dispenses or otherwise places on the market without trafficking, or makes out a prescription for, any prohibited substance or prohibited method, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to [five] years, or with fine which may extend up to [two lakh] rupees, or both," the amendment states.

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