



Nasha Mukht Abhiyan

J&K no more safe haven for those profiting from people's sufferings: LG Sinha

Leads massive padyatra in Bandipora to galvanize support for cause

Reaffirms pledge to root out every narco-terrorist, drug smuggler



Sajid Raina

Bandipora, May 25: Asserting that Jammu and Kashmir is no more a safe haven for perpetrators who profit from other people's sufferings, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, on Monday reaffirmed his pledge to root out every narco-terrorist and drug smuggler from this soil.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), LG Sinha led a massive Padyatra in North Kashmir's Bandipora Town this morning to galvanize support for the cause.

Addressing the gathering LG Sinha said, "We have sent a clear message that Jammu

Kashmir will not be a safe haven for those who profit from other people's sufferings. I am determined that we will root out every narco-terrorist and drug smuggler from this soil. Those who tried to destroy our families will have their existence erased from this land. The law is now being applied firmly. Narco-terrorists are being punished, youth are being protected, families are being supported, and renewed hope is returning to the society."

He said "45 days ago, I pledged not only to dismantle smugglers and narco-terrorists ecosystem, but also to spark a movement that uplifts youth and restores dignity to families scarred by addiction."

The Lieutenant Governor said that Jammu Kashmir is united, strong in resolve and clear in purpose and fully committed to freeing our society from drugs once and for all.

"The action against narco-terrorists and drug smugglers will continue. It will not stop until every drug smuggler is eliminated from the sacred soil of Jammu Kashmir. Our agencies have launched an unprecedented drive to dismantle narco-terrorists and their hidden network. No drug smuggler, drug peddler, or anyone seeking to poison our society is beyond reach. The entire narco-terror ecosystem is being pursued," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant | More on P6

Police, Army rescue 320 tourists safely after Gulmarg Gondola technical snag

DGP lauds Armed Police Mountain rescue, Snow Leopard, SDRF, NDRF teams

HM Shah hails India's disaster response forces

LG Sinha, CM Omar praise rescue teams

Sajid Raina/Waris Fayaz

Gulmarg, May 25: Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat on Monday said nearly 320 people were safely rescued after Gulmarg Gondola developed a technical snag, leaving several cabins with tourists stranded.

Talking to reporters, the DGP, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Police received information in the afternoon that the Gondola had developed a technical fault, causing cabins carrying tourists to get stuck mid-air."

He said the first responder was the Station House Officer (SHO) Gulmarg, who immediately rushed to the spot along with personnel from the



local police station and Special Operations Group (SOG) to initiate rescue efforts.

"Soon after, 14 teams of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) were | More on P6

Nation salutes disaster response forces: LG Sinha

DGP Prabhat announces commendation awards for police, rescue personnel

Waris Fayaz

Srinagar/Gulmarg, May 25: Soon after security forces rescued 320 tourists stranded mid-air following a technical snag in the Gulmarg Gondola, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha hailed the courage and swift response of the rescue teams, while Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat announced commendation awards for police and rescue personnel involved in the successful operation.

LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) wrote on X: "The nation stands united in applauding extraordinary | More on P6

Gondola to remain closed for two days

Waris Fayaz

The Gulmarg Gondola service in North Kashmir's Baramulla district will remain closed on May 26 and 27 for technical maintenance

following Monday's major disruption that left hundreds of tourists stranded mid-air for several hours. An officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that all tickets booked for | More on P6

Fresh snowfall in Minamarg, Drass

Kashmir plains receive rain, hail

Sgr records below-normal temps

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, May 25: Fresh snowfall was reported from Minamarg and the Drass sector near the strategic Zoji La

axis on Monday, while rainfall and hailstorm lashed several parts of Kashmir.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the heavy snowfall covered the upper reaches of Minamarg and areas around Drass, reviving cold conditions in the region.

The fresh spell of snow led to a sharp dip in temperature in higher | More on P6

Budgam minor rape-murder

Police arrest accused within 36 hours; SIT continues probe

'Our focus now on preparing strong case file'

Naveed Ul Haq Ganaiee

Budgam, May 25: Police on Monday arrested one of the accused in the rape and murder case of a minor girl in central Kashmir's Budgam district within 36 hours, while efforts are underway to nab other persons involved in the crime.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Budgam, Hari Prasad K K told reporters, as per the news agency—Kashmir

News Observer (KNO), that during the course of the investigation, police collected substantial digital, biological, serological, and material evidence related to the case. Several suspects were rounded up and questioned continuously over the last 36 hours.

"Based on the available evidence, it became apparent that the involvement of a local individual was the most probable scenario in this | More on P6

LG visits Hazratbal Shrine to review Eid preparations

Calls for ensuring seamless arrangements

KT News Desk

Srinagar, May 25: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday visited the sacred Hazratbal Shrine to review the preparations for the upcoming auspicious festival of Eid ul-Adha.

He was accompanied by Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi, Chairperson, J&K Waqf Board; Mufti Reyaz ul Haq, Chief Imam Hazratbal Shrine; Anshul Garg, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Rajiv Omprakash, DIG CKR; Dr GV Sundeep Chakravarthy, SSP Srinagar; Akshay Labroo, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar; Faz Lul Haseeb, Municipal Commissioner Srinagar and officials from all line



departments. During his visit, the Lieutenant Governor took an appraisal of the water supply, sanitation, electricity and other

facilities being put in place for smooth conduct of the festival. He instructed the senior officers to ensure that every arrangement is | More on P6

CM hands over compassionate appointment letters to 52 beneficiaries under SRO-43, RAS

'We're repaying moral obligation, not distributing favours'

KT News Desk

Srinagar, May 25: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday handed over appointment orders to beneficiaries under SRO-43 and the J&K Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme (RAS) at the Civil Secretariat here, reaffirming

the government's commitment towards supporting families who have suffered irreparable personal loss.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Satish Sharma, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar | More on P6

Regularisation orders handed over to CPWs of SED

KT News Desk

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday handed over regularisation orders to Contingent Paid Workers (CPWs) of the School Education Department at Civil Secretariat function here. Minister for School Education Sakina Itoo was present on the occasion. Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Special Secretary School Education Ghulam Rasool Mir, Director School Education | More on P6

'If neighbours cannot be trusted, then who can?'

Naveed Ul Haq Ganaiee

Budgam, May 25: The arrest of a local in the rape and murder case of a 12-year-old girl in central Kashmir's Galwanpora area in Budgam district has left residents shaken, with many saying | More on P6

Eid-ul-Azha! Markets wear festive look across Kashmir

Shoppers flock busy bazaars in Srinagar, major towns

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, May 25: Markets across Kashmir, especially in Srinagar, wore a festive look on Monday as thousands of shoppers thronged major business hubs ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

According to the details available with the news agency Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the Valley witnessed hectic buying of clothes, footwear, bakery items, sacrificial animals and other items.

The famous Lal Chowk markets, Goni Khan, Maharaja Bazar, Residency Road, Jamia Market, Maisuma and Bohri Kadal remained abuzz with activity throughout the day as families, youth and children rushed to complete Eid shopping.



The historic markets around Jamia Masjid and Pather Masjid areas, also witnessed good footfall, with shoppers purchasing traditional wear, spices, bakery items, perfumes and prayer essentials. Despite intermittent rainfall

in the afternoon, markets continued to remain crowded, with the cool weather adding to the festive atmosphere as shopkeepers extended business hours amid growing customer rush. Traders said business picked

up during the past few days. Shops dealing in readymade garments, footwear, cosmetics, bakery products and more witnessed brisk sales.

Mehendi stalls set up in several markets attracted large numbers of women and young girls, especially during evening hours. Popular beauty parlours and salons also reported heavy bookings ahead of Eid celebrations.

Meanwhile, reports of good shopping rush were also received from other districts including Baramulla, Anantnag, Kupwara, Pulwama, Budgam, Shopian, Bandipora and Ganderbal, where markets remained busy till late evening.

In south Kashmir, markets in Anantnag, Pulwama and Shopian | More on P6

Jel terror funding probe

NIA raids 3 J&K locations, seizes key evidence

Srinagar, May 25: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday carried out searches at three locations in Srinagar and Shopian as part of its ongoing investigation into the banned Jamaat-e-Islami (J&K) terror funding case, officials said.

During the raids, officials seized electronic gadgets and financial documents allegedly linked to separatist and terror-related activities in Kashmir.

In a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a spokesperson said the NIA conducted searches at three locations in Jammu and Kashmir in connection with a terror funding case linked to the banned Jamaat-e-Islami (Jel) organisation.

The spokesperson said the searches in Srinagar and



Shopian districts led to the recovery of several incriminating financial documents and electronic gadgets suspected to be linked to the activities of Jel and its various trusts and associations in J&K.

"The NIA has been probing the separatist and secessionist activities of Jel, declared an unlawful association under the

UA(P) Act, as part of its investigation in the case RC-03/2021/NIA/DLI," the statement said.

According to the spokesperson, NIA investigations have revealed that Jel was actively involved in collecting terror funds and fuelling terrorism in the Valley and other parts of India. The organisation allegedly collected funds domestically and internationally in the name of charity and welfare activities such as health and education, and diverted them towards violent and secessionist activities.

The spokesperson further said the funds were also channelled to proscribed terrorist organisations, including Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), through well-organised networks of cadres.

"The Jel | More on P6

DC Srinagar visits B&J Hospital Barzulla

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR MAY 25: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Monday conducted a comprehensive visit to Bone and Joint (B&J) Hospital and the Sunner Kul Bund Road behind Super Speciality Hospital Shreen Bagh to inspect ongoing traffic decongestion measures and infrastructure upgradation works around key healthcare facilities in Srinagar district. The visit, as per an official statement, aimed at assessing the progress of ongoing interventions undertaken to streamline vehicular movement and improve accessibility for patients, attendants and staff visiting the hospitals.

At Bone & Joint Hospital, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the development of an alternate entry gate to the Bone & Joint Hospital, construction of ramps and small Link Road connecting the main road with the Parking facilities through the Bund side along Bone and Joint Hospital Barzulla aimed at reducing congestion at the main gate and ensuring smooth passage for ambulances and other emergency vehicles. While taking an on-site assessment of the new parking facility developed to address space constraints around the hospital, the DC was informed that the parking space for attendants and hospital staff is almost completed and will be made functional by June 15, 2026.

The DC also reviewed the progress on improvement works of alternate hospital entry gate to minimize bottlenecks to reduce roadside congestion, particularly during peak hours. He was informed that this part of the project is also nearing completion. On the occasion, the DC directed all concerned departments to work in close coordination and ensure early completion of the works to facilitate smooth movement of ambulances and vehicles carrying patients, while reducing traffic interruptions in the larger public interest.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner inspected the progress of the Sunner Kul Bund Road development behind the Super Speciality Hospital as part of traffic decongestion and management measures in the critical medical zone surrounding the SMHS Hospital, Super Speciality Hospital and Dental College.

DG NCC calls on Minister Sakeena Itoo at Srinagar

Highlights role of NCC in shaping youth through discipline, leadership, patriotism and community service



KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: Director General of the National Cadet Corps (NCC), Lt. General Virendra Vats on Monday called on Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, and apprised her of the activities and outreach programmes being undertaken by the NCC across Jammu and Kashmir.

During the meeting, the Director General, as per an official statement, highlighted the role of the NCC in shaping youth through discipline, leadership, patriotism and community service. He informed the Minister about various initiatives being carried out to encourage greater

participation of students in NCC activities, especially in remote and border areas of the Union Territory.

Lt. General Virendra Vats also briefed the Minister about the ongoing training programmes, adventure activities, awareness campaigns and social service initiatives being conducted by NCC units in J&K. He underscored the organisation's efforts towards youth empowerment and nation-building by engaging cadets in constructive and character-building activities.

He also briefed the Minister about the participation of J&K Youth in NCC, especially the girls/women folk.

The Minister appreciated the contribution of the NCC

in nurturing discipline, confidence and a spirit of service among the youth. She lauded the organisation for providing young students with opportunities for personality development, leadership training and national integration.

The Minister also assured the Director General of all possible support from the Government for carrying out various activities across J&K for the welfare of youth.

Sakeena Itoo reiterated the Government's commitment towards supporting initiatives aimed at empowering the youth and promoting their holistic development.

ADG, NCC, Major General, Anupinder Bevli was also present.

CS led SEC clears UNDP collaboration, advanced disaster response measures for J&K

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Monday chaired the meeting of the State Executive Committee (SEC) of the Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRR&R) to review and approve a series of significant initiatives aimed at strengthening disaster mitigation, preparedness and response mechanisms across Jammu and Kashmir. The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Principal Secretary, DMRR&R; Commandant General, SDRF; Commissioner Secretary, Law; Secretary, Revenue; besides other senior officers of the DMRR&R.

During the meeting, the SEC deliberated upon several key agenda items concerning disaster preparedness and resilience-building measures in the UT and accorded approval to a number of important decisions aimed at enhancing the institutional and operational capacity of the administration to effectively



deal with natural disasters and emergencies.

Among the major decisions taken was the formal approval for entering into partnership with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for implementation of disaster mitigation measures in various districts of Jammu and Kashmir. The Committee also approved constitution of a Project Steering Committee to oversee coordination and effective implementation of the programme. The committee will be headed by the Principal Secretary, DMRR&R and co-chaired by UNDP along with several other members from concerned Departments.

In order to strengthen technological preparedness

and scientific assessment capabilities, the SEC also approved procurement of Digital Terrain Models (DTMs) for vulnerable districts to facilitate simulation, prediction and mitigation of natural disasters. The Committee further gave nod for procurement of satellite phones for high-risk subdivisions and tehsils across all districts to ensure seamless communication during emergency situations and disaster events.

The meeting also discussed the constitution of hazard-specific task forces for disasters such as earthquakes, floods, Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) and landslides. These task forces would comprise experts and members drawn from reputed national and local

institutions including IITs, universities and other technical organizations to provide specialised inputs for disaster risk reduction and preparedness planning.

In another significant decision, the SEC revalidated funds amounting to Rs 10.69Cr for procurement of rescue and emergency response equipment to ensure safe, secure and efficient conduct of the annual Shri Amarnathji Yatra in Jammu and Kashmir. The Chief Secretary emphasized the need for robust preparedness, coordinated response mechanisms and adoption of modern technology-driven systems to minimize risks and strengthen resilience against disasters across the Union Territory.

Govt promotes Incharge IOs, AIOs as Information Officers

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: The J&K government on Monday ordered the regularisation and promotion of 3 Incharge Information Officers and 14 Assistant Information Officers as Information Officers and equivalent in the Information Department.

According to a Government Order, as per an official statement, issued here by the Information Department, the promoted officers included Showket Ahmad Khan, Riyaz Ahmad Fazili, Parshotam Dass, Rajinder Paul Singh, Gulshan Sumbria, Majeed Ahmad Ganai, Gulshan

Ara, Ashok Kumar Sharma, Sayed Gulam Jeelani Qadiri, Shabir Ahmed Bhat, Gurpreet Singh, Liyaqat Ali Mir, Mohammad Owais Gurkoo, Natyapal Singh, Parvaiz Ahmad Lone, Sajad Ahmad Shah and Hardeep Singh Choudhary.

Showket Ahmad Khan, Riyaz Ahmad Fazili and Parshotam Dass have been regularised with effect from September 5, 2018, while the promotions of the remaining officers will take effect prospectively, according to the order.

The officers shall continue to work at their present places of posting until further orders.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir Directorate of Floriculture, Gardens & Parks, Kashmir Emporium Garden, Srinagar

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Subject: CANCELLATION OF e-TENDER NOTICE

In view of poor response, the Tender Notice invited vide e-NIT No. 02 of 2026 dated: 28.02.2026 issued under endorsement No. DOFK-GS0TNDR/3/2026/E-7862853 dated: 28.02.2026 having Tender Id No.2026_FLOD_304883_1 with regard to "Outsourcing of Hiring out for plying of (05) No. paddle boats in Mini Lake at NMBG Cheshmashahi Srinagar" is hereby cancelled ab-initio.

Sd/
Accounts Officer,
(Member Secretary)
Floriculture Deptt. Kmr.

DIPK-1588/26
DATED: 25-05-2026

No: DOFK- GS0TNDR/3/2026/E-7862853

Dated: 22 /05/2026

Government of Jammu and Kashmir Directorate of Floriculture, Gardens & Parks, Kashmir Emporium Garden, Srinagar

Tele fax: - 0194-2482032, 474234 Email. kash.flori@jk.gov.in

Sub: CANCELLATION OF e-TENDER

In view of poor response despite issuance of three (03) extension notices, the e-Tender Notice invited vide e-NIT No. 04 of 2026 dated: 12.03.2026 with regard to "Outsourcing of Hiring out of Parking lot at Nehru Memorial Botanical Garden Cheshmashahi Srinagar" issued under endorsement No. DOFK-GS0prov/2026/E-7870151 dated: 22.04.2026 having Tender Id No. 2026_FLOD_306048_1 is hereby cancelled ab-initio.

Sd/
Accounts Officer,
(Member Secretary)

DIPK-1585/26
DATED: 25-05-2026

No: DOFK-GS0prov/2026/E-7870151

Dated: 22 /05/2026

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

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

e-NIT No: 21/1995-2004/2026-27/RnB/Bla Dated 25.05.2026

For and on behalf of the President of India, e-tenders are being invited on percentage age basis (as applicable) from approved and eligible Contractors registered with the J&K Government, CPWD, Railways, and other State/Central Governments for the following works. The Contractors should mandatorily be registered on JKPWDOMS for making online payment to the agency as per Govt. Order No.: 186-PW(R&B) of 2023 dated 08-05-2023:

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs) incl. cost of Tar & all taxes	Earnest Money	Cost of T/ Doc.	Time of Completion	M.H of Account	Class of Contractor
1	2	3	4	5	7	6	7
1.	Upgradation of Wagoora Inner links	39.84	Rs 79680/-	Rs 1100/-	15Days	MH-5054-C&T	A&B

Position of AAA: Accorded

Position of funds Available

1. The bidding documents, which would include qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications/drawings, a bill of quantities (B.O.Q), a set of contract terms and conditions, and other details, can be viewed/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in on the dates listed below: -

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	25.05.2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	26.05.2026 to 04.06.2026 (4:00PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	26.05.2026
4	Bid Submission End Date	04.06.2026 (4:00PM)
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	05.06.2026 (11:00AM)

2. Bids must be accompanied by a Treasury Challan (dated between the bid start date and the Bid Submission End date) deposited in M.H. 0059 in the name of Executive Engineer R&B Division Baramulla (tender inviting authority) as the cost of the tender document.

3. At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR/BG (dated between the bid start date and the Bid Submission End date) pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Baramulla. Besides that, the successful bidder will have to provide Performance Security at the time of contract award in the form of CDR/FDR/BG (The Bank Guarantee should be valid for 28 days beyond DLP), strictly in accordance with the Government's circular instructions from time to time. The earnest money/bid security of 2% will be released to the successful bidder only after the submission of a Performance Security which is 5% of contract value, and will be released after successful completion of the DLP/Maintenance Period

Un Balanced Bid:- In case bid of the lowest bidder is found unbalanced the bidder shall have to produce additional performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG within a week's time before issuance of contract allotment as per Circular instructions issued by the Govt. vide No: FD-Code/441.2021-02-158 dated: 08.08.2025-

4. The date and time of bid opening shall be notified on the Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and automatically communicated to bidders via an e-mail message sent to their e-mail address. Responsive bidders' bids will be opened online on the same Web Site in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Baramulla (tender receiving authority).

5. Bids for the work shall be valid for 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids.

6. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

1.1 Bidders are advised to download the bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as the "Bidders Manual Kit" option on the website www.jktenders.gov to familiarize themselves with the bid submission process.

1.2 In order to participate in the bidding process, bidders must obtain a 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' under the Information Technology Act of 2000. Any approved Vendor can provide bidders with a digital certificate.

1.3 Bidders must submit their bids in electronic format with a digital signature online. No physical bids will be accepted.

1.4 Bids will be opened online in accordance with the time schedule specified in Para-1.

1.5 Bidders must upload scanned copy of all required documents (within the document upload limits) with their technical bid.

Note: - Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.

No: 1995-2004

Dated: 25.05.2026

DIPK-1609/26
DATED: 25-05-2026

Executive Engineer
R&B Division Baramulla

Eid-ul-Adha

'Kashmir receives 80-90 trucks of sheep daily'



REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, May 25: Around 80 to 90 trucks carrying sheep arrive in the Valley daily during the final week ahead of Eid-ul-Adha.

The Kashmir Mutton Dealers Association (KMDA) said each

truck is carrying more than 150 sheep to meet the growing demand for sacrificial animals across the Valley.

Mehraj-ud-Din, General Secretary of KMDA, said the supply has increased steadily over the past few days as Eid markets begin witnessing heavy

public footfall, especially during evening hours.

"Nearly 80 to 90 trucks loaded with sheep are entering Kashmir daily in the last week before Eid. Every truck carries over 150 sheep," he said.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

SMC mobilises 186 drivers, hopper vehicles, tippers for waste collection

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, May 25: As part of Eid-ul-Azha sanitation preparedness exercise, the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) on Monday said they have mobilised an extensive network of men, machinery and transport vehicles across all 35 municipal wards to ensure swift collection and disposal of sacrificial animal waste across the city.

An official of SMC said that at least 186 drivers and operators, along with a large fleet of hopper vehicles, tippers and waste carriers, will be deployed ward-wise for the Eid sanitation drive.

He said the special operation will begin on second day of Eid-ul-Azha—May 28. The field staff

and transport wings have been directed to remain on high alert to avoid the accumulation of animal waste in public places.

The official said dedicated hopper services and mobile collection units will operate across major city areas, including Downtown Srinagar, Lal Chowk, Hazratbal, Batamalo, Bemina, Chanapora, Pantha Chowk, Khanyar, Nowshera, Safa Kadal, Eidgah outskirts and uptown localities.

He said the corporation has already put "men and machinery on toes" and all departments concerned have been instructed to ensure zero-delay response during Eid days.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Delegations call on LG Sinha



KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, May 25: Dr. Farooq Ahmad Dar, Vice President, Sewa Bharti J&K UT and Fayaz Ahmad Mir, Kashmir Prabhari, Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of India, called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday.

They projected various important matters pertaining to strengthening of grassroots-level outreach programmes under Nasha Mukti J&K Campaign, and other issues of public importance.

Minister Sharma urges youth to embrace education, sports



KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, May 25: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, IT, Youth Services & Sports, Transport and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma Monday called upon young people to embrace education, discipline and sports as the pillars of personal growth and nation-building.

The Minister was addressing the Education Expo Jammu 2026 organised by The Times of India at Country Inn, Jammu.

Stressing the need for holistic development of youth, the Minister

underscored the importance of nurturing values, character and resilience alongside academic excellence to shape a stronger and progressive society.

Addressing the students, educators, parents and dignitaries present on the occasion, the Minister described education as a transformative force that extends far beyond academic achievement. He emphasized that education must nurture character, discipline, integrity and social responsibility alongside intellectual growth.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Soaring prices, financial strain dampen rush across Kashmir

Traders hope for last-day surge

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, May 25: The festive buzz that traditionally engulfs markets across Kashmir ahead of Eid-ul-Adha is noticeably absent this year, with traders, shopkeepers and livestock dealers from several districts reporting dull business activity and weak customer response amid growing financial strain on households.

From the bustling markets of Srinagar and Baramulla to the town centres of Pulwama, Shopian and Anantnag, traders say markets are witnessing significantly less footfall compared to previous years, while livestock dealers are struggling with poor sales of sacrificial animals.

In south Kashmir districts, markets that usually remain overcrowded in the days leading to Eid are witnessing sparse movement, with most families restricting purchases to essentials only.

Mohammad Sultan Kumar, owner of

a kitchenware shop in Pulwama, said the sharp increase in prices of household goods has badly affected consumer spending this season.

"People are avoiding unnecessary purchases because everything has become expensive. Customers are buying only essential items and postponing other spending due to financial uncertainty," Kumar said.

He added that Eid seasons in previous years used to bring brisk business, but this year, markets are comparatively silent. Livestock markets across south Kashmir are also witnessing a major slump.

Aafaq Ahmad, a livestock dealer from Pulwama, said sales of sacrificial animals have dropped drastically compared to previous years. "People visit the markets, check the rates and leave without buying. Affordability has become a major issue this year. Traders are struggling to recover transportation and feeding costs," he

said. Another cattle dealer from Anantnag said many traders who brought animals from outside districts are facing losses due to weak demand. "Business has remained far below expectations. Buyers are delaying purchases till the last moment, while many families are simply unable to afford sacrificial animals this year," he said.

Similar scenes are unfolding in Srinagar, where major market hubs including Lal Chowk, Nowhatta and Maharaj Gunj are witnessing comparatively thin crowds despite Eid approaching fast.

Bakery owners across the Valley have also expressed concern over declining sales. Fayaz Ahmad, who runs a bakery in Baramulla, said the demand for traditional bakery items has remained weaker than in previous years.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

J&K nomads bear brunt of unusual climate

SAJID RAINA

Srinagar, May 25: Every summer, long serpentine caravans of sheep, goats and horses begin climbing the rugged mountain tracks of Jammu and Kashmir as the nomadic Gujjar and Bakarwal communities undertake their centuries-old transhumance migration towards the high-altitude Himalayan meadows.

But this year, the journey has turned harsh and uncertain. Unusual snowfall, repeated hailstorms and incessant rain over the past several weeks have disrupted the traditional migration routes, leaving thousands of nomadic families struggling to protect their livestock — their only source of livelihood.

From Gurez to Sonamarg and the upper reaches near Zoji La, fresh snowfall has continued well into late May, while evening hailstorms have become a near-daily phenomenon across several parts of Kashmir.

The mountains, which usually open into green grazing pastures by this time of the year, still remain partially buried under snow.

"We have never seen weather like this in recent years. Every evening there is hailstorm or heavy rain. Our animals are weak, the routes are slippery and many families are stuck midway," said Mohammad Yousuf, a Bakarwal herder moving towards



the upper reaches of Sonamarg with nearly 300 sheep.

Wrapped in a traditional pheran and standing beside drenched livestock near a temporary roadside camp, Yousuf said the changing weather has increased fear among nomadic families.

"We spend nights in the open mountains. The children are shivering and the animals have no proper grass to graze because the meadows are still under snow," he added.

The worsening weather recently triggered a major tragedy in south Kashmir's Pahalgam area where more than 69 livestock animals were killed after lightning struck a pasture during heavy rain and thunderstorm.

For many nomadic families, such losses are devastating. "One animal feeds an entire household. Losing dozens of sheep means losing a year's income," said 55-year-old

tribal elder Abdul Rashid near Baltal. "The weather has become completely unpredictable now."

The annual migration, locally known as Baharwal, is a vital seasonal movement in which Gujjar and Bakarwal tribes travel hundreds of kilometres from the plains of Jammu towards the alpine dhoks of Kashmir in search of fresh grasslands for grazing.

Traditionally, the migration follows a predictable rhythm shaped by weather and mountain conditions. However, tribal communities say climate patterns have changed drastically in recent years. "Earlier snowfall would end by April in many places, but this year even late May looks like winter in the mountains," said Shabir Ahmed, another shepherd from Rajouri district. "Every evening dark clouds gather suddenly and hail starts

falling," he said.

The harsh weather has also slowed the movement of caravans along steep mountain passes, forcing many families to halt for days along highways and forest routes.

At several makeshift camps near Sonamarg, smoke rose from damp firewood as women prepared meals inside temporary tarpaulin shelters while children huddled beside livestock to escape the cold winds. Officials from the Meteorological Department have predicted more rain, thunderstorms and hailstorm activity in the coming days, while fresh snowfall continues in higher reaches.

For Kashmir's nomadic tribes, the changing weather is no longer just a seasonal inconvenience — it is becoming a growing threat to a way of life carried through generations across the Himalayas—(KNO)

Mehbooba urges political unity across J&K like Ladakh leadership

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, May 25: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti on Monday termed the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 a "disaster", saying there can be no solution without dialogue. She urged the Government of India (GoI) to initiate sustained engagement with the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the lines of discussions held with the leadership of Ladakh.

Addressing the press conference here, Mehbooba said the Centre had tried to make some corrections after the decisions taken in August 2019 by engaging with the leadership in Ladakh.

"The destruction that was done in 2019 and the way constitutional rights of Jammu and Kashmir were snatched, the Government of India perhaps tried to make some correction beginning from Ladakh," she said.

Mufti said the leadership of Leh and Kargil rose above regional and religious considerations and held nearly "20 to 22 rounds" of talks with New Delhi, eventually securing assurances on issues including jobs, land and reservations.

"They deserve appreciation because, despite setbacks, they continued dialogue and achieved something. They remained united and negotiated collectively," she said.

The former chief minister said the same approach should now be adopted for Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that roads, electricity and water could be provided by any government, but healing the wounds in people's hearts requires engagement and confidence-building.

She said her party has always maintained that dialogue is the only way forward for resolving issues in Jammu and Kashmir. The PDP chief further referred



to initiatives during the tenure of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and later under Manmohan Singh when, she said, efforts were made to engage with different stakeholders in Jammu and Kashmir.

She recalled attempts made during the tenure of late Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and later during her own government to continue the process of engagement despite challenging security situations.

"When my government was formed in 2016, militancy was at its peak. Police stations and army camps were being attacked, but even then, we sought engagement and delegations from Delhi visited Jammu and Kashmir," she said.

Mehbooba said interlocutors were appointed during her tenure, and dialogue was encouraged despite resistance from separatist groups at that time. "Today, unfortunately, the BJP's approach is similar to what separatists once adopted against dialogue," she alleged.

The former CM said she had also attempted to bring together political parties under the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) after 2019 to seek restoration of constitutional guarantees enjoyed by Jammu and Kashmir before August 5, 2019.

"We tried to bring together all parties except the BJP to collectively seek restoration of our constitutional rights and restart engagement with Delhi," she said.

Referring to the recent Assembly elections, Mufti said people participated in large numbers with hopes that their "lost dignity and rights" would be restored.

"Many people who had never voted earlier participated in elections this time because they believed a government would come that would protect their rights," she said, adding that there has still been no serious effort to engage with the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

She said the youth, in particular, were feeling deeply alienated. "Whenever alienation grows, separatism also grows. Today, the youth here feel the most alienated," she said.

Urging the Centre to initiate confidence-building measures, Mehbooba said New Delhi should begin the same process of dialogue in Jammu and Kashmir that it started in Ladakh. "Pakistan is a separate issue, but at least engage with the people of Jammu and Kashmir," she said.

The PDP chief also alleged that people in Jammu and Kashmir were feeling suffocated because of PSA detentions, NIA raids, property seizures and dismissal of employees.

She said several detainees were not even allowed to visit families during deaths in their households. "There are many prisoners whose parents died, but they were not allowed to attend funerals. The government should open the doors of jails and show some compassion towards the people of Jammu and Kashmir," she said.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

EDITORIAL

A Stain On Humanity: Justice Must Be Swift And Exemplary

The brutal rape and murder of a 12-year-old girl in Budgam is a stain on humanity. It is an assault on the innocence of childhood. It is a betrayal of the most fundamental duty of any society: to protect its children. The outrage and grief sweeping across Kashmir are a cry for justice that cannot and must not be ignored. This was not an accident. This was not a moment of rage. This was a calculated, heinous act of depravity against

a child who had barely begun to live. The fact that her body was found barely 200 metres from her home makes it even more chilling. It tells us that evil can lurk closer than we dare to imagine. It tells us that no parent can feel safe until the perpetrators are caught and punished in a manner that serves as a deterrent for generations. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has assured that this heinous crime will not go unpunished. Chief Minister Omar

Abdullah has vowed exemplary punishment for the culprits. These assurances are necessary, but they are not enough. The people of Budgam, of Kashmir, and of India will judge the system not by its promises but by its actions. A Special Investigation Team has been constituted. The police have stated that prima facie it is a case of rape and murder. Now, the investigation must be swift, transparent, and relentless. Every possible angle must be

examined. Every suspect must be questioned. And when the guilty are identified, they must be prosecuted in a fast-track court. There must be no delays, no technical loopholes, and no mercy for the merciless. The punishment must be exemplary, not because of public pressure, but because the crime demands it. This incident is also a moment of painful introspection for society. The police have also rightly warned against sharing the victim's

identity on social media. The law prohibits it, and the dignity of the deceased demands it. Let us also pray for the innocent soul. May she rest in peace. And may her family find the strength to endure this unbearable loss. But prayers alone are not justice. The system must deliver. The culprits must be caught. Kashmir will not tolerate such barbarism. We are watching. And we will not rest until justice is served.

Hajj: Reaching Toward Allah

Remember that only the sincere and righteous will be in the assembly of truthful and in the presence of the sovereign omnipotent

The season of Hajj is upon us. The honorable month of Zul-Hijjah is approaching. The land of Makkah is tranquil and peaceful. Instead of fear, hatred, and war, the desert is blessed with security and peace. There is a feeling in the air, a desire to be the guest of Almighty God, a yearning to worship Him in His own house.

Do you not hear Allah's command to His Prophet to declare: And call upon the people for Hajj. They will come to you on their bare feet or riding any weak camel and they come to you from every far desert. (Quran 22:27) You! who has been created from mud, search for the spirit of Allah! Accept his invitation; leave your home in order to "see" Him. He is waiting for You!

Human existence is frivolous unless one's aim is to approach the spirit of Allah. Separate yourself from all those needs and greed which distract you from Allah. Join the eternal human migration of Hajj. "See" Almighty Allah!

Before departing to perform Hajj, all of your debts should be paid. Your hates and angers toward relatives or friends must disappear. A will must be drawn. All of these gestures are an exercise in the preparation for death (which will overtake everyone some day). These acts guarantee your personal and financial clearance. The last moments of farewell and the future of man are symbolized.

Now you are free to join eternity. On the day of resurrection, you will be able to do nothing in Allah's court. Your eyes, ears, and heart will be a witness of what you have done.

You and every organ of your body are responsible for your deeds. While you are in this "house of correction" get ready for the "house of justice". Exercise death before you die-go to Hajj!



.. for every act of hearing, or of seeing or of (feeling in) the heart will be enquired into on the Day of Reckoning. (Quran 17:36) Hajj represents your return to Allah, the absolute, who has no limitations and none is like Him. To return to Him signifies a definite movement toward perfection,

goodness, beauty, power knowledge, value, and facts. On your way toward the eternal, you will never approach Allah by yourself but if you sincerely desire His pleasure, He will guide you in the right direction!

It is not enough to live "in the name of Allah", and die "for the sake of Allah", you

must strive to approach Almighty God.

To Allah we belong and to Him is our return. All affairs tend toward Allah. Our goal is not to "perish", but to "bloom". This is done not "for Allah" but rather to bring us "toward Him". Allah is not so far away from you; therefore, try to reach Him! Allah is

closer to you than yourself!

.. "To Allah We belong, and to Him is our return". (Quran 2:156) The Way of Allah, to Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth. Behold (how) all affairs tend towards Allah. (Quran 42:53) .. We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. (Quran 5:16) On the other hand, everyone beside Allah is too far to be reached! Oh man, all the angels prostrated to you; yet, through the passage of time and societal influence you have changed greatly. You have not abided by your promise to worship none but Almighty Allah. Instead, you have become a slave to idols, some of which are man-made.

Remember that only the sincere and righteous will be in the assembly of truthful and in the presence of the sovereign omnipotent.

As to the Righteous, they will be in the midst of Gardens and Rivers. (Quran 54:54) Your nature is characterized by loyalty to other individuals, self devotion, cruelty, ignorance, a lack of direction, fearfulness, and greediness! This life has caused you to acquire animalistic traits. You have reduced yourself to the likeness of an animal like a "wolf", "fox", "rodent", or a "sheep".

Oh man! return to your origin. Go to Hajj and reignite your friendship with your creator who created you as the best of creation. He is waiting to see you! Leave the palaces of power, the treasures of wealth and the misleading temples. Detach yourself from the flock of those animals whose shepherd is the wolf. Join the flock of those who are going to see the house of Allah built for His guests.

Adapted from a section of the book "Hajj" by Dr. Ali Shariati. Translated by Dr. Ali A. Behzadnia. Courtesy: IslamicCity

IPL 2026: Time To Rebalance The Game

The sanctity associated with the game has been shaken. The twenty-over blitz, with new twists and turns, has overrun the 22-yard philosophy. There is a new fantasy frontier being unveiled in every match.

Chaitanya K Prasad

The IPL's strength lies in this very ability to reinvent attention around cricket. The task ahead, therefore, is to ensure that spectacle does not overpower skill, entertainment does not erase emotion, and commercial success nurtures cricket

Since its inception, every edition of IPL has brought a new wave of enthusiasm and expectation among cricket followers, passionate fans and key stakeholders. Each IPL season has brought with it a new kind of aggression, overdrive and unfiltered innovation in how cricket is played, packaged and understood in this new format.

Nonetheless, in 2026, something new seems to be missing in the IPL season. The flavour and variety are still there, yet the contrasts and the winning matrix seem to be missing in the overall IPL architecture. The general feeling among enthusiasts is that a kind of 'cricket fatigue' has entered the IPL domain, and the perception is that the IPL needs to detox to fully energise the minds and hearts of sports lovers once again.

Cricket over the years, has reconfigured itself, keeping in mind the changing taste of audiences. A gentleman's game, as it was popularly called in the yesteryears, has now become part of the "Masala Cricket" bandwagon. Has the game reached a litmus testing point in the 2026 edition?

There is no doubt that the emotional connect of the format is still wired to the audiences. The outreach tools, sporting traits, ideas and entertainment touchpoints still dominate the ecosystem. Nonetheless, there is growing scepticism around IPL as a

brand and an idea, with concerns that it may be overstretched, over-expanded or even over-optimised.

The fear among followers of the game is that the design quotient, or the novel experimentation of the IPL format, is beginning to dry up for want of fresh ideas, over-monetisation and over-extension of cricket as a game vis-à-vis entertainment, skills and unpredictability.

The thrill factor of IPL, which acted as a catalyst in previous editions, is waning. The craze and idol worship of foreign players has perhaps outlived its utility. What was unique in the past is now the new normal. Consistency in viewing the IPL matches still commands TV advertisement, but audience attention has been divided into several segments. There is what we may call 'viewing' or 'audience burnout'. The uproar and support for franchise teams has also slid, at times due to the cricketing crossroads syndrome between the old and new generation. The connect of audiences with both the old and the new would need to be worked out for future editions.

A point to ponder for all cricket lovers: has IPL taken the wind out of the sails? This year's edition has perhaps challenged the cricket legacy, professionalism and nitty-gritties associated with the game. Twenty overs have seen skyrocketing scores, and sixes are being hit almost as casually as in gully cricket. Bowlers are thrashed, pitches are flat and masala cricket is blooming. Stadiums are full, advertising is going over the top and moolah is filling the coffers. Somewhere, brand cricket, once called the gentleman's game, is losing. Like an infodemic, the social media splurge around cricket in IPL has weakened the nerve

of support for the system and the vision to take the spirit forward.

In this tug of war to gain prominence, the IPL mix is becoming worse than instant coffee. The sanctity associated with the game has been shaken. The twenty-over blitz, with new twists and turns, has overrun the 22-yard philosophy. There is a new fantasy frontier being unveiled in every match. Bowlers are praying for wickets on flat pitches, and each batsman is firing new weapons for quick-fire scores. Add to this the tournament being played in scorching heat. Ambition has overtaken skill, reputation and professional management of the game. How the game plays out, one will have to wait and watch. Brand IPL is dipping in perception. The craze is being lured through new formats of interaction for audiences and spectators, adding fuzzi and buzz to the game. In hindsight, the game is surely suffering.

One hopes that multiple formats do not lead to a steep decline of the real foundations of the game where talent is nurtured. At the end of the day, will masala cricket triumph over traditional cricket? Look at the real-life heroes of the winning T20 World Cup team crumbling, clueless and wayward in thought and action. Bumrah searching for answers, batters firing wrong shots and crumbling. The craze for overseas stars is surely on the decline. IPL has new danger signs to tackle now.

The challenge for future editions will be to invoke a fresh thought in presenting franchise teams, players and different narratives representing legacy and continuity. A homogenous balance would need to be laid out for building perception, visibility and

advertising. Extreme commercialisation has taken IPL to a point where its identity risks being lost in the attention-span ecosystem. While the advertising kitty has improved and more corporates have joined the bandwagon, the problem today for Brand IPL and brand cricket is the overcrowding of the cricketing ecosystem. The challenge still remains to ensure the legacy, freshness and continuity of cricket as a sport. IPL must and should remain the nursery and talent pool for future cricketing generations. Overexposed cricket is not the solution to this idea. A reworked social media ecosystem for IPL needs to be re-engineered through fresh minds, fresh thought and new parameters and verticals of cricketing content consumption, ideas and patterns.

"Cricket extortion" should not become the IPL mantra. The sport must not be sacrificed at the altar of the money mantra, nor become a victim of showbiz, charisma, 24x7 digital engagement and consistent spectacle without sporting depth.

Despite these concerns, it would be unfair to dismiss the IPL's larger contribution to Indian and global cricket. The league has transformed the cricketing economy, created a powerful platform for young domestic talent, strengthened India's sporting brand and given players exposure to pressure, scale and international competition at a very early stage. It has also expanded cricket's cultural vocabulary by taking the game beyond stadiums into homes, digital platforms, fan communities and everyday conversations. The IPL's strength lies in this very ability to reinvent attention around cricket. The task ahead, therefore, is not to dilute the IPL, but

to refine it, to ensure that spectacle does not overpower skill, entertainment does not erase emotion, and commercial success continues to serve the deeper purpose of nurturing cricket.

The 2026 IPL edition has to be a learning curve for the IPL strategists. While the brand identity remains unsurpassed, hugely massive and emotionally connected, there are a few takeaways for future editions.

The IPL does not need to lose its colour, glamour or energy; that has always been part of its appeal. What it needs now is a thoughtful recalibration that protects the soul of cricket while embracing the possibilities of a modern sporting spectacle. If future editions can restore the balance between bat and ball, give greater meaning to team legacies, create fresher fan narratives and continue to nurture young Indian talent, the league can enter an even stronger phase of its journey. The IPL still has the scale, imagination and emotional pull to renew itself. With the right course correction, it can remain not just cricket's biggest entertainment product, but also its most exciting nursery of talent, innovation and hope for the next generation.

The sanctity associated with the game has been shaken. The twenty-over blitz, with new twists and turns, has overrun the 22-yard philosophy. There is a new fantasy frontier being unveiled in every match

The author is a Commentator and Writer on Cinema, Branding, Media Management and Geo-Strategic Communication. Inputs provided by Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavie Srinivasan; Views presented are personal. Courtesy: The Pioneer

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

Govt developing off-beat tourist destinations, promoting adventure tourism activities in J&K: Sakeena Itoo

Inaugurates Tourism Capacity Building Camp at Panchanpatri Kulgam

KT NEWS DESK

KULGAM, MAY 25: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, Monday inaugurated a Tourism Capacity Building Camp at Panchanpatri Kulgam and also flagged off an All-Terrain Rally (ATR), trekkers' expedition, cycle rally and other tourism promotion activities.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister, as per an official statement, said that the Government is committed to strengthening the tourism sector in Jammu & Kashmir by developing offbeat destinations and promoting adventure tourism activities across



Jammu and Kashmir. She said that such programmes provide a valuable platform to inform and aware youth about various government schemes and programmes related to tourism, employment generation and

self-employment opportunities. The Minister emphasized that the promotion of unexplored tourist destinations will not only attract visitors but also create sustainable livelihood opportunities for local communities. She

highlighted the importance of involving youth and local stakeholders in tourism-related initiatives for the overall economic development of the region.

The programme was organized with an aim to promote tourism awareness, adventure tourism and enhance the participation of youth in the tourism sector across the district.

Tourism stakeholders, tour and travel operators, local representatives, district officers and large number of youth participated in the camp. They appreciated the efforts being made to boost tourism infrastructure and adventure activities in the area.

Arrival of Hujjaj: Additional Commissioner Kashmir reviews arrangements

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: Additional Commissioner Kashmir, Akramullah Tak, on Monday reviewed the arrangements being put in place for the arrival of Hujjaj, scheduled to commence from June 2 at Srinagar Airport.

During the meeting, a detailed review was conducted regarding the reception of pilgrims by dignitaries upon their arrival, issuance of passes to officers, deployment of adequate manpower for unloading and sorting of luggage, smooth movement of pilgrims and attendants, parking facilities for attendants, and distribution of ZamZam water.

The Additional Commissioner stressed the need for close coordination among all concerned agencies, including the Airlines, Airport Authority, CISF, BCAS, Air Force,



and CRPF, to ensure smooth, efficient, and hassle-free Hajj arrival operations at Srinagar Airport.

He directed the concerned departments and agencies to extend full cooperation and

provide all necessary assistance for the convenience and comfort of the returning pilgrims.

The meeting was attended by ADC Srinagar, ADC Budgam, officers of Airport Authority, Police, Health, R&B and Hajj Officer.

Inter-School District Level Girls U-19 Volleyball Tournament organized in Shopian

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, MAY 25: Under the banner of Nasha Mukta Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan, the Department of Youth Services and Sports, District Shopian, organized an Inter-School District Level Girls U-19 Volleyball Tournament on Monday.

The tournament was inaugurated by DYSSO Shopian, Mohammad Ayoub Bhat.

The final match was contested between HSS Imamsahib and HSS Keegam, where players demonstrated exceptional sportsmanship, discipline and competitive spirit.

A large number of students and officials witnessed the thrilling encounter. After the successful completion of the tournament, trophies were distributed among the winners and runners-up teams by the chief guest.

On the occasion, DYSSO Shopian also administered the Nasha Mukta pledge to all

participants and officials, encouraging youth to stay away from drug abuse and embrace a healthy lifestyle through sports and physical activities.

Alongside the district-level tournament, various sports activities were conducted across different zones of District Shopian under the ongoing awareness campaign. Zone Shopian organized a Yoga session to promote physical and mental well-being among students. Zone Imamsahib held a Volleyball match with enthusiastic participation, while Vehl Zone hosted a Girls Chess Competition to encourage indoor sports and intellectual development among young girls.

All events concluded successfully with active involvement from students, teachers and field staff.

The sports activities aimed to strengthen sports culture, fitness, discipline and awareness against drug abuse among the youth of the district.

District Admin Srinagar's Rolling Trophy Inter College Cricket Tournament 2026 concludes

DC presides over valedictory function, felicitates winners, runner up teams with Trophies, Medals of appreciation

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR MAY 25: District Administration Srinagar's Rolling Trophy Inter College Cricket Tournament 2026, organized under the Youth Empowerment and Engagement Programme concluded on Monday with a valedictory function held at SP College Srinagar, marking the successful culmination of the Inter-College sporting event.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar Akshay Labroo, as per an official statement, presided over the valedictory ceremony as the Chief Guest and formally felicitated the winning and runner-up teams with trophies, medals, and certificates of appreciation.

The event was also attended by Chief Planning Officer Srinagar, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Nodal Principal, Kashmir Division Colleges, Seema Naaz, IAS Probationer Alfred Thomas, Principal SP College, Dr. Haris Izhaz Tantray, Principal Gandhi Memorial College, Masood Ahmad, District youth Services & Sports Officer, Ghulam Hassan, besides enthusiastic participants from students and faculty members of various City Colleges.

During the valedictory address, the DC emphasized that initiatives under the Youth Empowerment and Engagement Programme are designed to provide constructive avenues for young people, encouraging them to actively participate in academic, cultural, and sports-related activities. He reiterated that such platforms play a crucial role in channelizing youth energy in a positive direction and strengthening community



engagement at the grassroots level.

The DC emphasized that the District Administration Srinagar will provide similar platforms to students to showcase their talent by organizing events including cultural feast, entrepreneur feast, science & technology events under 12 month long under the Youth Empowerment and Engagement Programme to nurture sporting talent and build a strong sports culture within the district. The DC commended the efforts of the organizing committee, Nodal Principal Colleges Kashmir, SP College and sports coordinators for ensuring the smooth conduct of the tournament by involving youth in constructive and healthy pursuits. He stated that the event also play a key role in promoting sportsmanship, youth engagement, physical well-being and awareness against social evils through constructive extracurricular activities under the broader framework of the Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan.

While highlighting the ill effects of the drug menace, the DC also underlined the counselling, treatment, and rehabilitation

facilities available in Srinagar District for individuals affected by drug addiction and substance abuse, particularly at IMHAANS and through the Tele-MANAS platform. The DC said these facilities are playing a vital role in providing psychological support, medical assistance, counselling services, and rehabilitation to victims of drug abuse, while also helping families cope with the social and emotional impact of addiction.

During the valedictory function, the Deputy Commissioner felicitated the winning and runner-up teams with trophies, medals and certificates of appreciation. He also felicitated the best performers of the event.

The tournament witnessed enthusiastic participation from different Government Degree Colleges across District Srinagar, bringing together talented young cricketers in both men's and women's categories.

In men's Category Gandhi College lifted the title whereas Amar Singh College won the Runner Up Trophy. Mozaan from Gandhi College was declared as the Player of the Match while Fahem from Gandhi College as Player of the Series.

RAMP Initiative JKEDI Srinagar concludes Management Development Programme -9

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), Srinagar, successfully concluded the 9th Management Development Programme (MDP-9) under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Initiative at its District Office, Srinagar.

The programme, as per an official statement, focused on building entrepreneurial and managerial capacity among 22 women entrepreneurs from Srinagar. Through structured training modules, participants were equipped with essential skills in business planning, financial management, marketing, and regulatory compliance to establish sustainable and growth-oriented enterprises.

The valedictory ceremony was graced by Shabir Hussain Shah, District Nodal Officer,

JKEDI Srinagar, and Syed Miftah Andrabi, Manager, JKEDI.

Addressing the participants, Shabir Hussain Shah appreciated their active involvement and enthusiasm throughout the programme. He urged the trainees to leverage the knowledge and skills gained to build scalable businesses and contribute to local economic development. He further emphasized that such capacity-building initiatives under RAMP are crucial for promoting grassroots entrepreneurship and empowering women.

Participants expressed deep gratitude to JKEDI for its guidance and for creating a platform that strengthens women-led enterprises in the region.

The RAMP initiative, supported by the Ministry of MSME, Govt. of India, and the World Bank, aims to enhance the performance and competitiveness of MSMEs across J&K.

Drive against illicit poppy cultivation conducted in Saidapora Bala Shopian

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, MAY 25: In a major crackdown on illegal crop cultivation, a multi-departmental team carried out a comprehensive destruction drive against illicit poppy cultivation in Saidapora Bala village of Shopian on Monday. The high-impact operation was executed through a well-coordinated collaboration between the Excise Team Shopian, Shopian Police, Revenue Department, Agriculture Department and the Forensic Science Laboratory

(FSL) Department.

Following the successful destruction of the illegal crops on-site, a First Information Report (FIR) has been registered against the accused under the relevant sections of the law. A rigorous legal investigation has been officially initiated.

The district administration and law enforcement agencies have reiterated that similar drives will continue with full force across the district to dismantle the infrastructure supporting illicit poppy cultivation in the district.

CS reviews implementation of PM's reform agenda

Calls for integrated governance, process simplification and full digitization of services across J&K

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, on Monday chaired a high-level review meeting with Administrative Secretaries of all departments to assess the Action Taken Reports (ATRs) on implementation of actionable points emerging from the Prime Minister's interaction with Secretaries to the Government of India, with special emphasis on strengthening the "Whole of Government" approach, enhancing Ease of Living through end-to-end digitization of public services and undertaking comprehensive process reforms across the country.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary, as per an official statement, reiterated that the core objective of these reforms is to establish integrated governance, citizen-centric administration and technology-driven systems aimed at ensuring efficient, transparent and accountable delivery of services. He emphasized that departments must move beyond conventional silo-based functioning and work in close coordination to achieve larger developmental goals envisioned under Viksit Bharat @2047.



A detailed presentation on the Action Taken Reports pertaining to various reform initiatives was given by the Planning Development & Monitoring Department. The meeting was informed that several departments including Finance, School Education, Skill Development, Health & Medical Education, Housing & Urban Development, Agriculture Production, Social Welfare, Public Works, Tourism and Higher Education Departments have already adopted convergence-based governance models involving inter-departmental coordination, digital integration and collaborative implementation mechanisms.

Regarding the points of School Education Department

it was revealed that vocational education has been expanded to more than 1,350 schools across Jammu & Kashmir with enrolment of over 1.41 lakh students, besides integration of digital platforms, ICT laboratories and smart classrooms under the framework of NEP-2020.

Similarly with respect to the Skill Development Department it was highlighted that flagship initiatives including Mission YUVA and PM Vishwakarma are being implemented through coordinated institutional mechanisms involving multiple departments, financial institutions and academic organisations.

The Health & Medical Education Department proposed integrated planning

with allied departments for convergence of health, sanitation, nutrition, education and livelihood initiatives, while the Housing & Urban Development Department highlighted its focus on technology-driven governance, sustainable urban planning and citizen-centric reforms for improving urban living standards.

The meeting was further informed that departments including Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, ARI & Trainings, Disaster Management, Labour & Employment and Information Department have introduced integrated digital governance systems, interoperable platforms and real-time monitoring mechanisms aimed at improving transparency,

accountability and ease of access to public services.

Reviewing reforms aimed at enhancing Ease of Living, the meeting was apprised that under the J&K Jan Vishwas reforms, around 32 criminal provisions across 20 Acts have been decriminalized to reduce compliance burden and improve citizen convenience, while 19 obsolete laws have been repealed for simplification of the statutory framework and promotion of ease of doing business.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the proposal for achieving 100 percent end-to-end digitization of Government-to-Citizen (G2C) services across the Union Territory. The meeting was informed that 1,548 G2C services have already been digitized under the E-Unnat platform, while nearly 300 additional services are presently under development.

The meeting was informed that in the first phase, 302 services across key departments including Agriculture, Higher Education, Housing & Urban Development, Revenue, Health and Power Development Departments have been identified for elimination of off-line processes and full digital transformation.

Market checking intensified across Kupwara on Eid-ul-Adha



KT News Desk

KUPWARA, MAY 25: On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, market checking drive was conducted across Kupwara ahead of Eid ul-Adha to ensure the availability of essential commodities at government approved rates and to curb hoarding, black marketing and profiteering. The district administration has constituted special inspection teams to monitor market activities across various areas of the district.

The inspection teams comprising officers from the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), Revenue, Food Safety, Municipality, Legal Metrology, Sheep Husbandry and Police departments are conducting regular market inspections in their respective jurisdictions. The teams are checking the availability, quality and pricing of essential commodities to safeguard consumer interests

ahead of the festive occasion.

A joint market checking team headed by the Assistant Director FCS&CA Kupwara on Monday inspected various markets of Kupwara town including Bypass Road Market, Jamia Market, Iqbal Market, Hajaj Market, Dar Gali, Old Chowk and Reigpora. During the inspection, several shopkeepers were penalised for violations and a fine amounting to Rs 2400 was realised from the erring traders. The team also directed the shopkeepers to strictly follow the government approved rates and maintain quality standards.

Similar market checking drives were also carried out in Handwara, Karnah, Sogam and other tehsil headquarters of the district. The administration reiterated its commitment to ensuring smooth supply of essential commodities and protecting consumers from overpricing and unfair trade practices during the Eid-ul-Adha period.

=== 100-day anti-drug campaign ===

DC Sgr, SSP review impact, call for continued enforcement efforts

'84 FIRs registered, 117 arrested, 100 driving licences, 46 RCs, 17 chemist licences suspended, illegal properties worth Rs 40 crore linked to drug peddlers attached or demolished in Srinagar'

KT News Desk

Srinagar May 25: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Monday chaired a meeting of the District Level NCORD Committee to review the impact and progress achieved under the ongoing 100-day anti-drug campaign being implemented across the district.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Dr. Sundep Chakravarty was also present in the meeting.

The meeting was attended by Regional Transport Officer Kashmir, Qazi Irfan; Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar,

Aadil Fareed; SP Headquarter, Umar Shah; IAS Probationer, Alfred Thomas; SDM West, Irfan Bahadur; SDM East, Zubair Ahmad; and Officers from Excise, Drug Control Organisation, DYS&S, heads of ATF's and Officers of other concerned departments.

At the outset, the meeting held a comprehensive review of the district's anti-drug strategy, enforcement actions and preventive interventions undertaken during the ongoing 100-days anti-drug Jammu and Kashmir Nasha Mukht Abhiyan.

During the meeting, it was informed that intensified enforcement operations and

coordinated action against drug peddling networks have yielded significant results across Srinagar district.

Giving detailed figures, the meeting was informed that 84 FIRs have been registered under NDPS cases and 117 persons have been arrested during the ongoing campaign. It was further reported that 100 driving licences and 46 vehicle Registration Certificates (RCs) linked to NDPS-related violations have been suspended to date, as part of sustained and strict enforcement measures aimed at disrupting drug networks and deterring drug-related activities in the district.

The meeting was further informed that licences of 17 chemists were suspended for violations related to drug regulations and unauthorised handling of controlled substances. In addition, red entries have been recorded in revenue records against identified drug peddlers to strengthen legal and administrative action against repeat offenders.

Additionally, illegal properties worth nearly Rs 40 crore linked to drug peddlers have been attached or demolished in Srinagar as part of the intensified crackdown on narcotics networks and illegal assets generated through drug trafficking.

The Deputy Commissioner and SSP appreciated the coordinated efforts of all departments and agencies involved in the campaign and emphasised the need to sustain the momentum through continued enforcement, public participation and preventive outreach initiatives.

On the occasion, the DC directed all concerned departments to further strengthen inter-departmental coordination and intensify action against drug peddlers and trafficking networks to ensure a drug-free and safer environment in the District. He emphasised renewed focus and coordinated

efforts to curb drug abuse and dismantle the ecosystem supporting narcotics trafficking in Srinagar District.

The DC further stressed the importance of a multi-pronged strategy combining strict law enforcement with awareness generation, counselling and rehabilitation measures to effectively tackle the menace of drug abuse, particularly among youth.

The SSP Srinagar reiterated the commitment of the Police in collaboration with civil authorities towards sustained action against narcotics-related activities and called for active support from the public in

identifying and reporting drug-related offences.

The meeting also reviewed measures related to intensified surveillance of identified hotspots and vulnerable areas, close monitoring of repeat offenders, strict regulation of pharmaceutical outlets, and effective implementation of awareness programmes across the district.

It further deliberated on strengthening counselling support and rehabilitation initiatives for affected individuals, with a focus on ensuring a coordinated, sustained, and outcome-oriented response to the drug menace.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

J&K no more

Governor stated that several drug supply networks that until now remained hidden for various reasons are being traced and dismantled. He said Drug cartels that thrived for decades are being wiped out.

The Lieutenant Governor said that very soon, the administration will come out with a comprehensive rehabilitation policy which will ensure that every young person trapped by addiction gets a chance to rejoin the mainstream.

"Our aim is that not a single young person is left behind. We will provide jobs, opportunities, and the means for them to live with dignity. I strongly believe the success of a Drug-free Jammu Kashmir will not be measured only by the number of drug smugglers arrested but by the number of lives we can rebuild. It will be measured by the homes that can be restored and the young people who can fulfil their dreams. I promise you that we will not rest until their dreams are realised," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that the government cannot win this fight alone and in this battle against drugs, administration needs support of families, teachers, religious leaders, and every responsible citizen.

"I envision a Jammu Kashmir where every child grows up free from the shadow of addiction. A Jammu Kashmir where families are not torn apart by drugs. A Jammu Kashmir where society moves forward with security, dignity, and trust. This is not merely a dream. It is our mission and together we will fulfill it. We need the vigilance, awareness, and commitment of every resident of Jammu Kashmir. I believe that when people stand united, no narco-terror network or drug cartel can infiltrate them. When the public stands together, no terror can defeat them. I urge, we must unite to bury narco-terror once and for all," the Lieutenant Governor said.

INAUGURATES WAQAR KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor inaugurated Waqar Knowledge Centre - Engaging Youth Against Drug Abuse.

Under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, District Bandipora has established the Waqar Knowledge Centre (WKC), completing the anti-drug intervention cycle by providing recovering addiction cases with a constructive platform for rehabilitation, engagement, and reintegration. The initiative reinforces the message that individuals seeking to leave the path of substance abuse behind have access to a range of government-supported opportunities and support systems.

The Centre offers a sports corner, badminton court, reading library, and an information desk providing guidance on government schemes, education, employment, and skill development opportunities. The Administration envisions establishing one Waqar Knowledge Centre in each block of the district. The Centre provides a constructive space that empowers youth and strengthens community resilience against addiction. (KNO)

Police, Army rescue

mobilised, while another team joined later. Armed Police Mountain rescue teams and Snow Leopard personnel of J&K Police also reached the site, following which a massive rescue operation was launched," he said.

The DGP said personnel from the Army and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) also joined the operation, while a rescue team from the Gulmarg Gondola Corporation actively participated in evacuating the stranded tourists.

He said the coordinated efforts of all agencies ensured the safe rescue of nearly 320 people.

"No one sustained any injuries during the incident," he said, lauding the swift response and seamless coordination among all teams involved in the operation.

DGP Prabhat lauded the unwavering commitment of the brave personnel of the security forces and said that they averted a major crisis.

Senior police officers, including ADGP Law and Order V. K. Birdi, reached Gulmarg and monitored the rescue efforts on the ground. Army officials, including Punit Doval, Manoj Dattatrey Joshi, M. B. Singh and S. K. Yadav, also supervised the operation along with civil administration officials.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah also praised the rescue teams for carrying out the operation successfully.

"Applause to India's disaster response forces

for safely rescuing 300 tourists stranded mid-air in cable cars in Gulmarg, Kashmir. The nation salutes the forces for their valour and skill," Shah said in a statement.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha hailed the efforts of the rescue agencies and appreciated the coordinated response by Police, Army, SDRF, NDRF and civil administration teams in ensuring the safe evacuation of all stranded tourists.

On the directions of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary visited Gulmarg to personally oversee the rescue operation following the disruption in the gondola service.

MLA Gulmarg Pirzada Farooq Ahmed Shah and senior administrative and police officers also remained present at the site to coordinate rescue measures.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister appreciated the efforts of all agencies, rescue teams and personnel involved in the successful evacuation of tourists stranded after the Gulmarg Gondola developed a technical fault. He commended the swift response, coordination and professionalism displayed during the rescue operation, which ensured the safe evacuation of all tourists.

The Chief Minister stated that the incident will be thoroughly examined and an enquiry conducted. Responsibility for any lapses will be fixed and appropriate action taken.

Officials said the majority of stranded cabins were cleared within hours and all tourists were evacuated safely without any injuries or loss of life. The administration maintained that the situation remained under control throughout the operation and urged people not to panic.

INDIAN ARMY, SDRF LEAD COORDINATED RESCUE OPERATION

Meanwhile, in a statement issued to KNO an Army spokesman said, "The Indian Army and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) led a coordinated rescue and evacuation operation at Gulmarg Gondola after a technical fault in the Gondola cable car system caused a sudden suspension of services between the Base Station and Phase-1 (Kongdori) on Monday, leaving multiple tourists stranded amid adverse weather conditions."

"Following a distress call received from the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Gondola Management Authority regarding the safety and evacuation of stranded tourists, the Indian Army swiftly swung into action and mobilised rescue teams towards the affected area.

Troops from Butapathri Battalion side-stepped three Casualty Assistance Teams (CATs) between the Gondola Base Station and Phase-1, while the Army also staged forward its own All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) to facilitate evacuation efforts in the challenging terrain and prevailing inclement weather conditions," the statement said, adding, "The SDRF, Jammu and Kashmir Police and other civil agencies also pitched in to support the rescue operation, while additional ATVs were coordinated through the Gulmarg ATV Association to augment evacuation efforts, as restoration of the Gondola system was expected to take time." (KNO)

Nation salutes

bravery of disaster response teams, who safely rescued 300 tourists stranded mid-air in Gulmarg's cable cars. Army, JKP, SDRF, NDRF, DC, SSPs moved promptly & after a 6-hour operation, rescued all passengers from 65 cable cars. All tourists are safe."

"I spoke with senior officials and directed them to ensure every necessary support is provided. The nation salutes the disaster response forces, Army, JKP and district administration for their valor and remarkable skill," he added.

Meanwhile, Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat announced commendation awards for police and rescue personnel involved in the successful rescue operation.

Addressing the rescue teams at Gulmarg Gondola, the DGP, per KNO praised the personnel for carrying out the difficult operation in harsh weather and mountainous terrain.

He said the rescue mission was completed despite major challenges, including rocky terrain, bad weather and the complexity of evacuating people from suspended cable cars.

"Today all of you have made J&K Police proud," the DGP said while commending the efforts of personnel from police, SOG, J&K Armed Police and SDRF.

He announced that all personnel involved in the operation would be nominated for awards. The DGP said those who have not yet received

the DGP Commendation Disc will be awarded the honour, while personnel who have already received it will be considered for other commendation awards.

The DGP said the successful operation reflected the bravery, dedication and professionalism of the rescue teams, who continued the mission despite exhaustion and difficult conditions.

He also congratulated the officers and personnel for safely rescuing stranded tourists and completing the operation successfully late at night. (KNO)

Gondola to remain

May 25, 26 and 27 will be refunded in full. Authorities also expressed regret over the inconvenience caused to tourists and visitors.

The announcement came hours after a massive rescue operation involving the Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police, SDRF, NDRF and civil administration safely evacuated around 400 tourists after a technical fault halted the cable car service around 1:20 PM.

Officials said the maintenance work has been initiated as a precautionary measure to inspect and rectify the technical issue before operations resume.

The Gulmarg Gondola, one of Kashmir's major tourist attractions, witnesses heavy tourist footfall during the summer season. Monday's incident triggered panic among tourists, though all stranded passengers were rescued safely without injuries.

Authorities said the service will resume only after all safety checks and technical inspections are completed. (KNO)

CM hands over

and other senior officers were present during the distribution event. The outstation minister, officers and beneficiaries participated in the event through video conferencing.

A total of 52 appointees hailing from different districts of Jammu and Kashmir received appointment orders under SRO-43 and RAS during simultaneous events held in Srinagar and Jammu.

Addressing the newly-appointed beneficiaries, the Chief Minister said that the government was only fulfilling its responsibility and not extending any favour.

"The first thing I would like to say is that the government that has given you these orders here and in Jammu is not doing you a favour; it is our duty. While fulfilling this duty, we also realise that you have had to make a huge sacrifice to get these government orders," the Chief Minister said.

Drawing a distinction between ordinary recruitment process and the circumstances under which the beneficiaries had become eligible for compassionate appointment, the Chief Minister said that unlike regular aspirants who secure jobs through examinations and interviews, the appointees under these schemes have endured profound personal tragedies.

"To get a government job, we usually ask our children to pass examinations and interviews. But the test you have faced has been far more difficult because you had to lose someone dear to you to reach this stage. That is why I say we are not distributing these orders as a favour, but rather repaying a moral obligation," he added.

The Chief Minister observed that the government functions as one collective family and emphasized the importance of standing together in times of grief and hardship.

"We want this government and all of us working within it, whether in the Secretariat or outside, to function as one larger family. We must not only share each other's pain but also support one another during difficult circumstances. This initiative is a small step in that direction so that your families can move forward and not suffer any further hardship," he said.

Urging the appointees to discharge their duties with sincerity and dedication, the Chief Minister said public service should always remain centred on helping people and contributing positively to society.

"Our only expectation from you is that wherever you are posted, you serve the people of Jammu and Kashmir with honesty, commitment and dedication. Whatever role we hold in government, our purpose remains the same—that when we return home in the evening, we should feel satisfied that our day's work has benefited someone. If you perform your duties honestly, that itself will be the greatest tribute to those whose memories brought you here today," he said.

The Chief Minister also reiterated the

government's resolve to ensure that eligible beneficiaries are not made to run from office to office for compassionate appointments.

"We are committed to ensuring that you do not have to move from pillar to post to obtain your appointment orders. That would be a grave injustice to all of you. We will ensure that the process is expedited and all remaining cases are cleared at the earliest," he assured.

The beneficiaries expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister and the administration for facilitating timely appointments and extending support to families during difficult times.

Fresh snowfall in

reaches, while several parts of Kashmir plains received rain and hailstorm during the day.

According to the Meteorological Department, Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 23.3 degrees Celsius, which was 2.1 degrees below normal, while the minimum settled at 13.0 degrees Celsius.

Qazigund recorded a maximum of 21.6 degrees Celsius, Pahalgam 20.2 degrees Celsius, Kupwara 24.1 degrees Celsius, Kokernag 21.9 degrees Celsius and Gulmarg 13.6 degrees Celsius.

In Jammu division, Jammu city recorded a maximum temperature of 40.3 degrees Celsius, 1.9 degrees above normal, while Katra recorded 37.8 degrees Celsius and Batote 28.1 degrees Celsius.

The MeT department said Srinagar received 1.4 mm rainfall during the past 24 hours, while Pahalgam recorded 2.4 mm, Kupwara 3.1 mm and Gulmarg 2.0 mm rainfall.

The weather office has forecast generally dry weather during the forenoon on May 25, with the possibility of brief showers, gusty winds and hailstorm at scattered places towards afternoon or late afternoon hours.

It said weather is likely to remain generally hot and dry on May 26 and 27, while generally cloudy conditions with one or two spells of rain, thundershower, hailstorm and gusty winds are expected at scattered to fairly widespread places on May 28 and 29.

The MeT department has also issued an advisory warning of thunder, lightning, hailstorm and gusty winds with speeds of 40-50 kmph at a few places during Monday afternoon and again on May 28 and 29.

It further said heatwave conditions are likely at a few places in Jammu division during May 26 and 27 due to hot and dry weather. (KNO)

Regularisation orders

Kashmir Naseer Ahmed Wani and other senior officers of the concerned department were also present during the programme.

The Chief Minister individually handed over the regularisation orders to the CPWs from Ganderbal and Bandipora districts and extended his best wishes to them for their future service. He expressed hope that the employees would continue to work with sincerity, commitment and dedication towards strengthening the School Education Department and improving public service delivery. The beneficiaries expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister and the government for addressing their long-pending issue and providing them regularisation orders.

LG visits Hazratbal
carried out with diligence.

"The festival reminds us of the virtues of humility and charity, inspiring us to dedicate ourselves to the greater good of humanity. We will ensure that the celebration is not only well-organised but also truly grand, marked by devotion and festive fervour," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Spiritual leaders, Waqf officials, senior officers of the police and Civil administration and prominent citizens were also present.

Police arrest accused

case," the SSP said.

The officer said that during sustained interrogation, one of the suspects made disclosures that closely matched the evidence collected by investigators. "Upon further questioning, the suspect admitted his involvement in the crime. Based on his confession, additional material evidence has also been seized," he added.

Police identified the arrested accused as Mudasar, saying he was arrested within 36 hours of the incident.

The SSP said the investigation into other aspects of the case, including the motive behind the crime and the exact sequence of events, is

still underway. "Our work does not stop here. Our mission is to conduct a robust investigation, prepare a strong case file, and ensure a comprehensive charge sheet so that conviction is secured," he said.

The officer termed the crime as an "offence against the State" and said the entire police machinery remained focused on solving the case. He appealed to the people of Galwanpora and the general public to cooperate with the investigation and maintain trust in the police.

"We understood the gravity of our responsibility, and that is why we were able to make headway in cracking this case within 36 hours," the SSP said.

A 12-year-old girl from Galwanpora area of Budgam had gone missing on the evening of May 23 and was found dead in a field near her village the next morning, triggering widespread outrage and protests across Kashmir.

Police had earlier said that prima facie the case appeared to be one of rape and murder, following which a Special Investigation Team (SIT) was constituted to probe the incident.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, political parties, and civil society groups have condemned the incident and demanded strict punishment for those involved. (KNO)

'If neighbours

the incident has destroyed the sense of trust and safety within the locality.

The accused, according to residents, was residing in the neighbourhood, a revelation that intensified anger and grief across the area after police announced his arrest and claimed he had confessed to the crime.

Several residents, who spoke to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), termed the development as deeply disturbing, saying the fact that the accused belonged to the same neighbourhood has created more fear among families, particularly parents of young children.

"We are unable to process that someone living so close could commit such a horrific act," a resident said. "People are now asking who can really be trusted?"

Another neighbour said, "We never imagined something like this could happen from someone living among us. If neighbours cannot be trusted, then who can?"

Women in the area said the incident has left parents terrified about the safety of their daughters, even within their own surroundings.

"Children used to move freely in the locality. Now every parent is scared. The fear is not from strangers anymore," said a mother of two.

Locals described the incident as not just a heinous crime but also a deep social wound that has shaken the sense of security in the entire area.

After the arrest was announced, emotionally charged scenes were witnessed, with large crowds gathering in the locality and raising slogans demanding strict punishment for the accused.

The atmosphere remained tense throughout, as police and district administration officials maintained heavy deployment in the area to manage the crowds and maintain law and order.

Locals demanded speedy justice in the case and called for exemplary punishment to ensure deterrence against crimes involving children. (KNO)

NIA raids 3 J&K

terror conspiracy further involved radicalisation and recruitment of impressionable Kashmiri youth as new members (Rukuns) for carrying out secessionist activities," the spokesperson said.

The NIA is continuing its investigation in a bid to end the outfit's secessionist activities and dismantle the terror network operating in J&K. (KNO)

Eid-ul-Azha Markets

witnessed significant rush at garment stores and bakeries, while in north Kashmir, Baramulla and Kupwara markets saw increased activity as people purchased Eid essentials.

Meanwhile, livestock markets across the Valley also witnessed a steady flow of buyers as people continued purchasing sacrificial animals for Eid-ul-Azha.

Shopkeepers and traders expressed hope for better business in for the final day of tomorrow as the as Eid will be celebrated on Wednesday across Jammu and Kashmir. (KNO)

UCC Bill introduced in Assam Assembly

Seeks to ban polygamy, register live-in relationships

PTI

Guwahati, May 25: The Assam government on Monday tabled a Bill on the Uniform Civil Code, seeking to ban polygamy and make registration of live-in relationships compulsory.

The Bill, however, said that it will not be applicable to any of the Scheduled Tribes residing in Assam.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Atul Bora tabled 'The Uniform Civil Code, Assam, 2026 Bill' in the assembly on behalf of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

The opposition parties, including Congress, Rajpor Dal and Trinamooli Congress, opposed the move and demanded wider consultation with all the stakeholders before its introduction.

"The Bill aims to consolidate and simplify laws governing marriage, divorce, succession, and live-in relationships," Sarma said in the 'Statement of Object and Reasons' in the Bill.

For marriage, the Bill sets 21 years and 18 years as minimum age for men and women respectively, and prohibits polygamy, he added. "Importantly, it protects Assam's cultural diversity by allowing marriages to be performed according to existing religious and customary rites," Sarma said. To safeguard legal rights,



the Bill proposes to make marriage and divorce registration compulsory, which will be vital for securing maintenance, inheritance and other legal protection for spouses.

"For the first time, the Bill provides a legal framework for live-in relationships. By requiring registration, the law ensures that the rights of partners -- and any children born from such unions -- are formally recognised and protected," the CM said in the Bill.

He further said that UCC aims to modernise succession laws to ensure a fair and equal distribution of property.

"It introduces uniform rules for inheritance, ensuring that the transfer of assets is handled justly for all residents of the state,"

Sarma stated. It also proposed to establish necessary administrative machinery, including the appointment of registrars, to implement the reforms. "This ensures that the code is not just a policy but a practical tool for social justice and equality in Assam," Sarma said.

"The Constitution, under Article 44, directs the state to strive for a Uniform Civil Code for its citizens. This Bill seeks to implement this principle within Assam to ensure a common legal framework for all residents, regardless of their religion," Sarma said.

By creating a uniform system, the code ensures legal clarity and protects the fundamental rights of every individual, he added.

President confers Padma Awards; Dharmendra, violinist N Rajam honoured

PTI

New Delhi, May 25: President Droupadi Murmu on Monday conferred the Padma Bhushan on Bollywood actor Dharmendra posthumously and classical musician and violinist N Rajam at a Civil Investiture Ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here.

Dharmendra's award for exceptional and distinguished service in the field of art was received by his wife and MP Hema Malini.

Rajam was honoured for her pioneering contribution to Indian classical music, especially for revolutionising violin performance through the 'Gayaki Ang' style that replicates vocal music on the instrument.

Murmu conferred the Padma Bhushan on Bhagat Singh Koshyari, former Uttarakhand chief minister; Shatavadhani R Ganesh, acclaimed polymath who revived the challenging classical Indian art form 'Avadhana'; Uday Suresh Kumar Kotak, founder of Kotak Mahindra Bank; and gastroenterologist Kallipatti Ramasamy Palaniswamy.

She also conferred the award posthumously on ad guru Piyush Pandey and former parliamentarian Vijay Kumar Malhotra. Pandey's wife and Malhotra's son,



respectively, received the awards.

Indian women's cricket team captain Harmanpreet Kaur Bhullar, actor Prosenjit Chatterjee, para athlete Praveen Kumar and former Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) director general K Vijay Kumar received the Padma Shri.

The ceremony, which was held in the Gantantra Mandap of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, began with an instrumental rendition of the national song, "Vande Mataram", followed by the national anthem, "Jana Gana Mana". It was attended by Vice President C P Radhakrishnan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, among others.

West Asia Crisis

FM says unimaginable jump in global fertiliser prices, seeks focus on '3Fs'

PTI

Mumbai, May 25: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said that there has been an unimaginable jump in the global fertiliser prices after the West Asia crisis.

Echoing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's austerity call, she asked people to focus on '3Fs' -- fuel, fertiliser and forex -- in the current scenario.

Speaking at the 37th foundation day event of Sidbi here, the finance minister said the West Asia crisis is not just a diplomatic or geopolitical issue, but it is also leading to a far-reaching impact on the common people and small businesses, and also becoming a challenge for countries, including India.

The crisis, which started



with the US-Israel joint attack on Iran in late February, has continued for 80-90 days and led to an impact on commodity prices, she said. The crude

prices have been high and fluctuating for nearly three months since the conflict began, while the fertiliser prices are also elevated. There has been an

"unimaginable increase" in the fertiliser prices, she said.

The minister said that gold prices have also gone high, and explained that purchasing the precious metal leads to a reduction in the country's foreign exchange reserves.

This makes it very important to focus on the 3Fs of fuel, fertiliser, and forex in the current context, she said.

"The West Asia crisis is not only a diplomatic or geopolitical issue. For businesses and common people, it can mean higher fuel costs, delayed cargo, costlier shipping, shortage of inputs, pressure on working capital and uncertainty in export orders," the FM said, adding that so many uncertainties are leading to challenges in business planning for small enterprises.

Elevated energy prices to weigh on near-term credit conditions of Indian corporates: Moody's



PTI

New Delhi, May 25: Moody's Ratings on Monday said elevated energy prices will weigh on the near-term credit conditions of Indian corporates, despite robust balance sheets and favourable long-term growth prospects.

Stating that Indian corporates are currently in a better financial position to absorb external shocks, supported by deleveraging, healthy liquidity and supportive policy frameworks, Moody's said persistently high energy prices and structural shifts in key service industries could test credit strength over the coming quarters.

"Elevated energy prices weigh on near-term credit conditions for Indian corporates, despite strong fundamentals," it said in a statement.

The conflict in the Middle East will weigh on near-term earnings and cash flows for energy-intensive and fuel-dependent sectors, it added.

"India's heavy reliance on imported crude oil, liquefied natural gas and certain petroleum products exposes corporates to higher input costs, currency volatility and supply chain disruptions.

"State-owned oil marketing companies

and downstream fuel retailers face acute margin pressure as elevated costs are only partially passed through to consumers, while fuel-intensive sectors such as cement, chemicals, fertilisers and aviation are seeing rising cost burdens," Moody's Ratings managing director Vikash Halan said.

Moody's Ratings India affiliate ICRA expects the operating environment for corporate India in FY2026-27 to be shaped by heightened geopolitical risks, particularly the ongoing tensions in the Middle East and evolving trade tariff developments with the US.

Against this backdrop, ICRA has revised the outlook to negative for aviation, fertilisers, and the refining and marketing segment within oil and gas.

Noting that not all sectors face headwinds, ICRA said that sustained improvement in order books has driven a positive outlook for capital goods and defence, while healthcare maintains a favourable position as demand for medical treatments and preventive services continues to rise.

Weather-related risks present an additional layer of uncertainty. El Niño-like conditions could disrupt monsoon distribution, weighing on rural incomes and discretionary spending, it added.

"While government support measures and minimum support price interventions could partially mitigate income risks, a weaker agricultural outcome could temper rural discretionary consumption.

"Accordingly, there could be downward pressure on demand in sectors like tractors, two-wheelers, FMCGs and construction materials linked to rural housing," ICRA, EVP and Chief Ratings Officer, K Ravichandran said.

SC declines urgent hearing on plea seeking probe into Cockroach Janta Party

PTI

New Delhi, May 25: "Don't take it so sentimentally," the Supreme Court on Monday remarked while refusing to grant an urgent hearing on a plea seeking a probe into allegations regarding fake advocates and activities associated with the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), a satirical digital outfit that recently took social media by storm.

A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joydip Goswami asked advocate N K Goswami, appearing for the petitioner, not to take the issue "so sentimentally".

Goswami submitted that despite the CJ's clarification, a distorted and malicious narrative was continuing.

"Don't take it so sentimentally," the CJ said.

Another advocate submitted that they were seeking a CBI probe into the issue of fake law degrees and said courtroom exchanges cannot be used for commercial purposes.

The CJ replied, "There is no such grave urgency. We will see."

The petition has also sought action against those involved in the alleged commercial exploitation of oral observations made during court proceedings. It sought an investigation into alleged fake advocates practising law using fraudulent degrees.

Petrol, diesel prices raised by Rs 2.61-2.71

Hikes top Rs 7.5/litre within two weeks

PTI

New Delhi, May 25: Petrol and diesel prices were raised by Rs 2.61-2.71 per litre on Monday, marking the fourth increase in less than two weeks as state-owned fuel retailers continued to pass on rising international oil prices to consumers.

With the latest revision, cumulative increases in petrol and diesel prices have nearly touched Rs 7.5 per litre since fuel price revisions resumed on May 15 after a prolonged freeze, stoking concerns over inflationary pressures and higher transportation costs across the economy.

The latest revision pushed petrol prices higher by Rs 2.61 per litre and diesel by Rs 2.71, according to industry sources.

Petrol prices were raised to Rs 102.12 a litre in Delhi from Rs 99.51 previously, while diesel rates were increased to Rs 95.20 per litre from Rs 92.49.

The back-to-back increases follow a prolonged freeze in retail fuel prices and come amid elevated crude oil prices in the global market, tightening refining margins, and a weaker rupee, which have sharply raised the cost of imports.

Petrol and diesel prices were increased on May 15 by Rs 3 per litre each, and on May 19 by 90 paise a litre. This was followed by



an 87-paise per litre increase in petrol and a 91-paise hike in diesel rates on May 23.

After Monday's increase, petrol at PSU pumps in Mumbai now costs Rs 111.21 per litre and diesel Rs 97.83, while prices in Kolkata rose to Rs 113.51 and Rs 99.82, respectively. In Chennai, petrol is priced at Rs 107.77 and diesel at Rs 99.55.

Prices vary across states due to local taxes.

State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum

Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) together control 90 per cent of India's fuel market.

The back-to-back increases come after global crude oil prices surged more than 50 per cent since late February following US-Israeli strikes on Iran and disruptions to shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global oil transit route.

Fuel retailers had in the first two-and-a-half-months of the conflict kept pump prices low despite

rising input costs, a move the government said was aimed at shielding consumers from inflation. Opposition parties, however, accused the government of delaying price revisions until after key state elections.

The May 15 increase came after the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) expanded its electoral footprint by winning three of five state and UT elections, including West Bengal.

Every time state-owned firms raised prices, private fuel retailers such as Nayara Energy swiftly matched them, raising petrol and diesel rates by a similar quantum.

These came on top of hikes effected earlier by private retailers ahead of the first state-run fuel price revision on May 15. Nayara Energy had raised petrol and diesel prices by Rs 5 and Rs 3 per litre, respectively, in March, while Shell increased petrol prices by Rs 7.41 a litre and diesel by as much as Rs 25 per litre from April 1.

Jio-BP, the fuel retailing joint venture of Reliance Industries Ltd and BP Plc, has, however, moved rates at its pumps in tandem with PSUs.

Petrol and diesel prices are now at their highest levels since May 2022.

Rates had remained frozen since April 2022 except for a Rs 2-per-litre cut in March 2024 ahead of national elections.

Sensex jumps 1,073 points, Nifty surges 312 points

Crude oil drops below \$100 per barrel

PTI

Mumbai, May 25: Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty surged over 1 per cent on Monday, driven by a sharp correction in crude oil prices and a rally in global markets amid improving sentiment surrounding the US-Iran negotiations.

An appreciating rupee against the US dollar and intense buying in banking and financial stocks also bolstered sentiment, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,073.61 points, or 1.42 per cent, to settle at 76,488.96. During the day, it soared 1,143.72 points, or 1.51 per cent, to 76,559.07.

A total of 2,785 stocks advanced, while 1,535 declined and 211 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The 50-share NSE Nifty surged 312.40 points, or 1.32 per cent, to end at 24,031.70. "Sentiment was primarily driven by optimism surrounding a potential US-Iran peace agreement, which triggered a sharp correction in crude oil prices.



Brent crude slipped below the USD 100 per barrel mark for the first time in over two weeks and gradually inched toward the USD 95 level.

"Additionally, the outperformance of private banking majors, supportive earnings announcements, and the rupee's further strengthening against the US dollar aided the recovery," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. From the 30-Sensex firms, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, HDFC Bank, Eternal, Bajaj Finserv, and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the biggest winners.

In contrast, Infosys, Tata

Consultancy Services, Sun Pharma and Hindustan Unilever were the laggards.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, tanked 5.52 per cent to USD 97.82 per barrel.

The rupee appreciated 35 paise to close at 95.25 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, registering the third straight session of gain. The US has made significant progress in negotiations with Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, but President Donald Trump is maintaining a cautious approach and will not accept a bad deal, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Monday.

Iran, US play down hopes for imminent breakthrough in war

REUTERS

New Delhi/Dubai: Iran and the United States played down hopes for an imminent breakthrough in efforts to end their three-month-old war on Monday, with the top US diplomat saying Washington will either get a good agreement or deal with the country in "another way." US Secretary of State Marco Rubio told reporters in New Delhi that the US would give diplomacy every chance to succeed before exploring "alternatives," after President Donald Trump said on Sunday he had told his representatives not to rush into any Iran deal.

There was a "pretty solid thing on the table in terms of their ability to open up the strait, get the strait (of Hormuz) open, enter into a very real, significant, time-limited negotiation on the nuclear matter, and hopefully we can pull it off," Rubio said.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said in a weekly briefing on Monday that a conclusion had been reached on many topics, but that does not mean that "we're close to signing an agreement."

The potential memorandum of understanding contains 14 points and is focused on ending the war and the US naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, in exchange for Iran taking steps to ensure safe transit through the strategic waterway, he said.



At present the talks are not on the nuclear issue, which will be negotiated over a 60-day period if the framework accord is agreed, Baghaei said.

Trump has said his key aim in the war is to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon with its highly enriched uranium. Tehran has consistently denied it has any plans to do so.

A day earlier, Trump wrote on Truth Social that the US blockade on Iranian ships in the Strait of Hormuz would "remain in full force and effect until an agreement is reached, certified, and signed."

Sticking points Trump raised expectations of an imminent deal on Saturday when he said

Washington and Tehran had "largely negotiated" a memorandum of understanding on a peace agreement that would reopen the strait.

Baghaei said the potential accord contained no specific details on management of the strait, through which about a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied gas flows.

Iran will not charge tolls for ships to pass through the strait, Baghaei said. However, he added there would be a cost for services that will be offered, such as navigation and steps to protect the environment, under a protocol to be agreed with Oman, which shares the opposite shore of the waterway.

The strait has been effectively

closed since the start of the war on February 28 with only a trickle of vessels passing through compared with about 125 to 140 daily before the conflict. Its closure has caused a spike in oil prices and triggered an energy crisis, which has driven up costs of fuel, fertilizer and food. Oil prices fell 5 percent to two-week lows on Monday, as optimism grew that the US and Iran were moving closer to a peace deal.

The two sides remain at odds on several difficult issues, such as Iran's nuclear ambitions, Israel's war in Lebanon with the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militia and Tehran's demands for the lifting of sanctions and the release of tens of billions of

dollars of Iranian oil revenues frozen in foreign banks.

Iranian sources had told Reuters that in future stages, "feasible formulas" could be found to resolve the dispute over its highly enriched uranium stockpile, including diluting the material under the supervision of the UN nuclear watchdog.

Tenuous ceasefire

Trump, whose approval ratings have been hit by the war's impact on US energy prices, and who has faced congressional efforts to curb his war powers, has repeatedly played up the prospect of a deal to end the conflict started by the US and Israel. A tenuous ceasefire has held since early April.

The president hit back at critics of his handling of the negotiations and his willingness to compromise with Iran.

"If I make a deal with Iran, it will be a good and proper one... So don't listen to the losers, who are critical about something they know nothing about," Trump posted on Sunday.

The US-Israeli bombing of Iran killed thousands of people in Iran before it was suspended in early April.

Israel has also killed thousands more and driven hundreds of thousands from their homes in Lebanon, which it invaded in pursuit of militant group Hezbollah. Iranian strikes on Israel and neighboring Gulf states have killed dozens.

Pope calls for robust regulation of AI in manifesto that ponders future of humanity



AP

Vatican City, May 25: Pope Leo XIV called Monday for robust regulation of artificial intelligence and for its developers to work for the common good rather than profit, issuing a sweeping manifesto on safeguarding humankind as the technology impacts everything from work to war.

"Magnifica Humanitas" (Magnificent Humanity), Leo's first encyclical, has been eagerly awaited ever since history's first US-born pope announced days after his election that he considered AI to be the biggest challenge facing humanity today.

In the text, Leo denounced the "culture of power" driving the AI race, especially in developing ever more sophisticated methods of remote warfare. He declared that it was "not permissible" to entrust irreversible, lethal decisions to AI systems, setting up another flash point between the American pope and the Trump administration, which has worked aggressively to deregulate AI development.

Experts in the tech industry, academia and Catholic morality said the document will likely become a benchmark in the debate over AI, a point of reference for policymakers, researchers and ordinary folk alike. It comes as the near-daily developments in the technology trigger concerns rise over AI replacing human jobs and even human intelligence.

"It lends itself to people who are at the forefront of these tools and able to see the incredible things that they're able to do, to have questions about their own 'What does it mean to be human?'" said Taylor Black, a Microsoft AI executive and director of

Catholic University of America's AI institute.

Pope calls out AI companies even as he hosts Anthropic

The pope was to present the text at a Vatican launch Monday that featured the co-founder of Anthropic, which is currently locked in a legal battle with the Trump administration over access to its AI technology. The Vatican decided to involve Anthropic as part of its decade-long effort to engage Silicon Valley in dialogue over the human cost of AI.

And yet in his text, Leo repeatedly blasted the concentration of power and data in the hands of so few people in the private sector as a danger, especially to children and the most vulnerable, and called for external regulation of their work.

"It is not enough to invoke ethics in the abstract; robust legal frameworks, independent oversight, informed users and a political system that does not abdicate its responsibility are required," he wrote. "A more moral AI is not enough if that morality is determined by a few."

Leo appealed several times to AI developers and political leaders responsible for regulating them to just slow down and reflect on what they are doing. He urged them to use ethical and spiritual guidelines to make the choice to work not for their own profit or power, but the betterment of humanity.

AI competitors OpenAI and Anthropic are the second- and third-most valuable US private companies, each valued at hundreds of billions of dollars, more than the GDP of many nations.

Experts say the text will become a benchmark

Messi suffers thigh injury scare in final club match ahead of World Cup



REUTERS, AP

Miami, May 25: Lionel Messi exited Inter Miami's final club match before the World Cup with muscular fatigue. The 73rd-minute substitution sparked an injury scare, but coach Guillermo Hoyos stated it was purely a precautionary measure after playing on a heavy pitch.

The eight-times Ballon d'Or winner was substituted after clutching the back of his thigh in the wake of one of his trademark free kicks during Inter's 6-4 win over the Philadelphia Union in Miami.

"We don't have a medical report on that yet, but we will have one shortly," Hoyos told reporters when asked why the talismanic forward was taken off.

"He was genuinely

suffering from fatigue in that regard; it is indeed fatigue. He was tired, the pitch was heavy and when in doubt, the standard approach is always to ensure you don't take any risks."

No preliminary diagnosis of any issue for Messi was immediately announced. Messi has dealt with hamstring issues at least two other times during his three-year stint with Inter Miami.

Messi had two assists and Germán Berterame scored twice during a record-setting first half for Inter Miami. But Messi basically took himself out of play and reached toward his left hamstring at least once, then didn't even venture toward the Inter Miami bench when he could be subbed out.

Messi was replaced by

Mateo Silveti, then left immediately through the tunnel connecting the field with the team's locker room. Messi was walking under his own power, albeit slowly, and without any team medical personnel with him.

Heavy rain began falling early in the second half, causing some players to seem to slip on the turf. It wasn't clear if Messi's departure was precautionary or not, and it didn't seem like he took any major missteps during the worst of the rain.

Messi has said in the past that he would only play in the World Cup if healthy. Argentina starts group stage play on June 16.

Major League Soccer is now taking a mid-season break for the World Cup, which will be co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico from June 11 to July 19.

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni announced a 55-man squad, including Messi, on May 11. He will need to reduce it to 26 before FIFA's June 12 deadline.

Messi was highly influential as Argentina won the World Cup for a third time in Qatar four years ago. They open their title defence against Algeria in Kansas City on June 16.

Australia's Foreign Minister to visit India to attend Quad meet

PTI

Canberra, May 25: Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong is set to travel to India on Monday to attend the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting and deliberate on "shared interests", including maritime security and critical minerals.

India is hosting the meeting in its capacity as the current chair of the coalition on Tuesday.

"In these uncertain times, the Quad is a vital partnership - four nations working together to shape a peaceful, stable and prosperous future for the Indo-Pacific region," Wong was quoted as saying in a press

release issued on Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs' website.

Wong said that Australia, India, Japan and the United States are "delivering concrete outcomes on shared interests including maritime security, critical minerals supply, infrastructure development and disaster relief."

She said that she will also hold the 17th Australia-India Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue with the Minister for External Affairs S Jaishankar while in India.

Wong asserted that Australia and India's partnership has "never been more consequential."

Gill-Sudharsan finest batting pair in history IPL: Raina

PTI

New Delhi, May 25: Former India cricketer Suresh Raina has rated Gujarat Titans openers Shubman Gill and Sai Sudharsan as the finest batting pair in the history of IPL and lauded the duo's "remarkable" consistency.

Gill and Sudharsan have formed one of IPL's most prolific opening partnerships.

After a stellar last season, Gill and Sudharsan continued their record-breaking run in IPL 2026. The GT opening pair entered an elite list in T20 cricket history registering their 10th century stand together, equalling the all-time record jointly held by the legendary pairs of Chris Gayle-Virat Kohli, Babar Azam-Mohammad Rizwan and AB de Villiers-Kohli.

"Shubman Gill and Sai Sudharsan are the finest batting pair in the history of TATA IPL. In 46 innings together, they have put up 21 partnerships of 50 runs or more," Raina said on JioHotstar's 'Champions Waali Commentary'.

"The next best pair is Chris Gayle and Virat Kohli, followed by AB de Villiers and Kohli in third place. This shows the quality of Gill and Sai. They complement each other's game very well. What stands out is that they have reached 21 fifty-plus stands in just 46 innings - the fastest in IPL history. Gayle and Kohli took 59 innings to get there, while ABD and Kohli needed 76 innings."

Hailing the duo's consistency upfront, Raina said what stands out is their game awareness.

"The consistency of Gill and Sudharsan as an opening pair is remarkable. They take time to build their innings, keep dot balls to a minimum, and complement each other's game perfectly. They pick the right bowler to target. One uses the pace of the bowler, while the other uses the angle to create room for his shots."

"Both are extremely fit, and their game awareness stands out. They know which shots to play and when to attack."

Movies SCHEDULE

TUESDAY, 26TH MAY

	BHOOTH BANGLA (U/A15+) Hindi - 02:40 PM, 06:00 PM
	PATI PATNI AUR WOH DO (U/A16+) Hindi - 03:00 PM
	STAR WARS: MANDALORIAN AND GROGU (U/A16+) 3D ENGLISH ATMOS - 11:00AM
	CHAND MERA DIL (U/A16+) HINDI ATMOS - 02:00 PM, 04:45 PM, 07:30 PM HINDI - 12:00 PM
	DHURANDHAR THE REVENGE HINDI - 10:15 AM
	Drishyam 3 (U/A16+) Malayalam with English Subtitles - 05:45 PM

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