



KASHMIR LITERATURE FESTIVAL

We must erase every trace of colonial mindset: LG Sinha

Urges writers to ensure people abroad don't distort India's history

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, May 30: Asserting that we must erase every trace of the colonial mindset and ensure that people abroad do not distort our history and present to serve their own narratives, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said it is the responsibility of writers to correct such errors and take the



truth to global readers. Addressing writers, researchers, historians, academicians and literary figures during the inaugural session of 2-day Kashmir Literature Festival-2026 here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "We failed to communicate our priceless traditions, culture, knowledge, | [More on P6](#)

Ready for 'Op Sindoor 2.0' if need arises: Army Chief

Sajid Raina

Pune, May 30: Reaffirming the Army's commitment to safeguard nation's security, Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi on Saturday said that the Indian Armed Forces remain fully prepared to launch the next phase of 'Operation Sindoor 2.0' if the need arises.



contingencies.

"There is a temporary cessation of hostilities at present, but all three services are preparing thoroughly for the next phase if the need arises," he said.

Pertinently, the operation was launched by India in May 2025 to avenge the April 22 | [More on P6](#)

Indian Navy maintained strategic pressure on Pak during 'Operation Sindoor': Rajnath



Sajid Raina

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said the Indian Navy maintained strategic pressure on Pakistan during 'Operation Sindoor,' resulting in the neighbouring country's naval forces remaining restricted to their harbours | [More on P6](#)

Statehood Day celebration of Goa Held in Lok Bhavan

KT News Desk

Lok Bhavan Jammu Kashmir on Saturday hosted a special programme to mark the statehood day of Goa. The event was attended by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, senior officials, invited guests from Goa who

are living in Jammu Kashmir and artists. The Lieutenant Governor said that between 1946 and 1961 many brave sons of Mother India laid down their lives in the struggle to liberate Goa. Hundreds were jailed and subjected to brutal hardships, yet the unity and courage of the freedom fighters kept the movement alive. "Today I pay | [More on P6](#)

CM calls crucial meeting of NC MLAs on Wednesday

'Deliberations on matters of collective importance, issues of public welfare'

Umer Maqbool

Srinagar, May 30: In a significant political development, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has called a meeting of National Conference (NC) legislators on Wednesday to deliberate on what he has referred to as



'matters of collective importance' and 'issues concerning public welfare.'

Sources told news agency—Kashmir | [More on P6](#)

Ahead of return flights

J&K Hajj pilgrims decry baggage curbs

Demand restoration of 40 kg allowance; official says remaining baggage to reach by road

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, May 30: As the return phase of Hajj-2026 approaches, the Jammu & Kashmir pilgrims in Mina have voiced resentment over fresh baggage restrictions, demanding restoration of the traditional 40-kilogram luggage allowance. They questioned

the decision to transport baggage separately by road from Ahmedabad to Srinagar.

A video accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) shows pilgrims expressing concern that the reduced baggage allowance could damage or delay their belongings, including gifts and items | [More on P6](#)

Hajj pilgrims' concerns to be thoroughly examined: Itoo

Jahangeer Ganaie

Cabinet Minister Sakeena Itoo on Saturday assured that concerns of Hajj pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir will be thoroughly examined. The minister also launched a | [More on P6](#)

Indian Army nation's 'first hope': GOC Mishra

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, May 30: Describing the Indian Army as the nation's "first hope," General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the elite White Knight Corps, Lieutenant General P. K. Mishra on Saturday said that the Army embodies the trust, confidence and sense of security of the people, standing as a steadfast guardian of the nation in times of need.

Addressing newly recruited

Agniveers at the Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry (JAKLI) Regimental Centre at Rangreth here, GOC Mishra, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "You will carry the hopes and trust of millions of Indians as you begin your journey in the Army."

"The Army of India is not only a force protecting the borders, but also a symbol of trust and security on the people of the country. | [More on P6](#)

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CBC 10801/13/0004/2627

Adopt people-centric approach, ensure improved delivery of public services: Sakeena Itoo to Officers

Convenes grievances redress camp in Pulwama

KT NEWS DESK

PULWAMA, MAY 30: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, on Saturday convened a public grievances redress camp at Circuit House Pulwama.

The event, as per an official statement, was attended by MLA Pampore Justice Hasnain Masoodi, MLA Zainapora Showkat Hussain Ganie, Programme Officer ICDS, Chief Medical Officer Pulwama, Assistant Commissioner Development Pulwama, Executive Engineers of R&B, PHE and other line departments besides officers from the Health, Education and Social Welfare departments.

During the camp, deputations from different villages and urban areas of Pulwama and Shopian, representatives of trade bodies, social organisations, senior citizens and other stakeholders projected a wide range of public issues and development demands and submitted memoranda of demands concerning their respective areas.

The issues raised during the interaction included strengthening of healthcare facilities, improvement of educational infrastructure, augmentation of sports facilities, water supply schemes, development of



public parks, establishment of scientific dumping sites, road connectivity, widening and upgradation of roads, deployment of adequate staff in health and educational institutions besides concerns related to agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry sectors.

The Minister gave a patient hearing to all the deputations and sought on-the-spot feedback from the concerned officers regarding the issues raised. She directed the officers to take immediate measures and ensure timely resolution of genuine public grievances.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Pampore expressed gratitude said that such interactions provide an effective platform

for addressing the genuine concerns of the people. He expressed hope that similar programmes would continue in future to strengthen the public participation in governance and ensure prompt redress of public issues.

MLA Zainapora, while addressing the gathering, said that the visit of the Minister to directly interact with the people and listen to their concerns at their doorstep demonstrates a people-centric approach aimed at ensuring that the voice of every citizen is heard and considered in the decision-making process.

Addressing the gathering, Sakeena Itoo assured the participants that all genuine issues projected during the meeting would

be examined and addressed in a timebound manner. She said that a follow-up review meeting would also be conducted to assess the progress achieved on the issues raised and ensure their effective redressal.

The Minister expressed gratitude to the people from different areas of Pulwama and Shopian, particularly senior citizens, community representatives and members of the civil society, for participating in the interaction and sharing their valuable suggestions for development of the districts.

Sakeena Itoo further directed the officers to adopt a people-centric approach in discharge of their duties and ensure improved delivery of public services. Stressing the

importance of accountability and responsiveness, she called upon all the departments to work in close coordination for welfare and betterment of the people.

Highlighting the significance of the agriculture and horticulture sectors, the Minister said that these sectors form the backbone of the local economy and livelihood of a large section of the population. She directed the concerned officers to ensure the availability of irrigation water and other essential facilities to the farmers and orchardists during the ongoing growing season so that productivity and income generation are not affected.

Sakeena Itoo also instructed the officers to strictly adhere to the prescribed timelines in execution of development and infrastructure projects. She emphasized the need for regular monitoring and supervision of works to ensure quality standards and timely completion. She added that delays in project implementation directly impact the public welfare and must be avoided. She asked the officers to maintain transparency and accountability while executing the development works and delivering public services.

Div Com Kashmir reviews SANJY-2026 arrangements

Interacts with stakeholders in Pahalgam



KT NEWS DESK

ANANTNAG, MAY 30: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Saturday visited Pahalgam and chaired a review meeting at Pahalgam Club to assess the preparedness and arrangements being put in place for the smooth, safe and successful conduct of the forthcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY)-2026.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Deputy Commissioner Anantnag (Yatra Officer Pahalgam Axis), Dr. Bilal Mohuddin Bhat, Chief Engineer, KPDC, CEO PDA, ADC, SP, CPO, SEs Hydraulics, PWD and KPDC, ACD, SDM Pahalgam, CMO, CAHO, DFO, ALC, AD FCS&CA, CEO MCA, EO MC Pahalgam, officers from Beacon, F&ES, Traffic Police, SDRF, representatives of telecom service providers and other concerned officials.

During the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner undertook a comprehensive review of arrangements being put in place along the Pahalgam axis and other locations connected with the Yatra. Detailed discussions were held regarding augmentation of infrastructure, strengthening of essential services and ensuring seamless coordination among all stakeholder departments.

Reviewing the preparedness of the Jal Shakti Department, the Divisional Commissioner directed officers to ensure uninterrupted drinking water supply at all camps, halting stations and along the Yatra route. He stressed the need for installation of adequate water storage facilities and regular monitoring of water quality.

While reviewing the preparedness of KPDC, he directed the department to ensure seamless power supply at all camps, service establishments and locations of importance. He also called for adequate backup arrangements to prevent any disruption during the Yatra period.

The BRO authorities were directed to expedite road maintenance and repair works and ensure that all roads connected with the pilgrimage remain motorable and safe for pilgrims and service vehicles. They were further instructed to explore the possibility of early installation of two

way bridge at Sarbal besides expediting the work on construction of rain shelter sheds at all identified locations along the track towards the Holy Cave.

Reviewing healthcare arrangements, the Divisional Commissioner directed the Health Department to ensure adequate deployment of medical personnel, availability of medicines, emergency response systems including ambulances and fully functional healthcare facilities at designated locations.

The Municipal authorities and Rural Development Department were instructed to ensure robust sanitation measures, effective waste management and cleanliness at all camps and along the Yatra route.

Further, CEO PDA, SDM and EO MC, Pahalgam were asked to devise a proper strategy for full sanitation and cleanliness of main town Pahalgam as well as the adjoining areas.

The Fire and Emergency Services Department was directed to keep adequate firefighting and rescue arrangements in place, while the concerned telecom agencies were asked to ensure the communication facilities remain active throughout the pilgrimage period.

The Divisional Commissioner emphasized the need for close inter-departmental coordination and directed all departments to complete their assigned works within stipulated timelines so that all arrangements are put in place well ahead of the commencement of the Yatra. He further asked the departments to ensure the respective service providers are issued the RFID Cards well in advance for facilitating their mobilisation on the Yatra track.

On the occasion, the Div Com was also briefed about the plans devised for effective transport management, status of essential commodities stocking, on spot registration facilities and other vital aspects of the Yatra.

Earlier, the Divisional Commissioner chaired an interaction meeting with various stakeholders and service providers associated with the annual pilgrimage, including representatives of Pony Walas, Tent Associations, Taxi Operators, Hoteliers and other groups.

Excise Department intensifies drive against illicit poppy cultivation in Shopian

Public urged to report any information regarding illegal cultivation or drug-related activities

KT NEWS DESK

SHOPIAN, MAY 30: In a major crackdown on illegal crop cultivation, a multi-departmental team on Saturday carried out a comprehensive destruction drive against illicit poppy cultivation in Chowan village of Tehsil Keller, District Shopian.

The operation, as per an official statement, was conducted under a well-coordinated and collaborative effort involving the Excise Department Shopian, Jammu & Kashmir Police, Revenue Department, Agriculture Department, and the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL).

During the drive, a significant area under illegal poppy cultivation was identified and destroyed on the spot. The action forms part of the ongoing efforts of the district administration and law enforcement agencies to eradicate the menace of illicit narcotic crop cultivation and curb drug-related activities in the region. Following the successful destruction of the illegal crops,



a First Information Report (FIR) has been registered against the accused under relevant provisions of law.

A thorough legal investigation has been initiated to identify all individuals involved and ensure strict

action against violators.

The district administration and law enforcement agencies have reiterated their commitment to maintaining a zero-tolerance policy towards narcotic cultivation and trafficking.

They emphasized that similar drives will continue across the district with full force to dismantle the infrastructure supporting illicit poppy cultivation and safeguard the community from the harmful effects of narcotic substances.

The public has also been urged to cooperate with authorities and report any information regarding illegal cultivation or drug-related activities to help strengthen the collective fight against the drug menace.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

DISTRICT TUBERCULOSIS CENTRE (DTC) PULWAMA

TENDER NOTICE

Notice No: DTC/PUL/2026/70

Dated: 30-05-2026

For and on behalf of the Governor of Jammu & Kashmir UT, sealed tenders/quotations affixed with revenue stamps are invited from registered and reputed contractors/firms for the **Renovation and Construction of Bathrooms at the District Tuberculosis Centre (DTC) Pulwama**. This project is being undertaken on an urgent basis in the peak interest of patient care and hygiene.

Project Details & Guidelines

Description of Work	Estimated Cost (R&B)	Timeline for Submission
Renovation work and Construction of Bathroom at DTC Pulwama	6.56 Lakhs	Within 7 days from the date of publishing

Terms and Conditions

- **Obtaining Estimate Copies:** The detailed approved technical estimate copy from the Roads & Buildings (R&B) Department can be obtained directly from the Office of the undersigned during standard office working hours. All bidders are strictly required to procure and review the estimate copy before submitting their final quotations.
- **Submission Deadline:** Sealed tenders must reach the office of the undersigned within 7 days from the date of the publication of this notice. Tenders received after the stipulated time and date will not be entertained under any circumstances. The tenders will be opened on the next working day after the last day of closing date of tenders.
- **Documents Required:** The tenders allotted to the firm must be accompanied by a valid registration card, GSTIN number, PAN card, and any other relevant document specified at the time of release of payment.
- **Right to Accept/Reject:** The departmental purchase/allotment committee reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

DIPK-1687/26
DATED: 30-05-2026

Sd/-
District Tuberculosis Centre (DTC),
Pulwama

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

DISTRICT INDUSTRIES CENTRE, SRINAGAR

Near Petrol Pump Baghl Ali Mardan Khan, Srinagar - 190011

PUBLIC NOTICE

Email ID: gmDIC-srinagar@jk.gov.in TEL/FAX: 0194-2427478

Apropos the captioned subject, it is to submit that the unit of M/s Aijaz Enterprises Phase-III I/E Khunmoh Srinagar formally registered under No. 01/003/09538/PMT/MSME dated.31-01-2013 for the activity of "Grinding od Spices" as partnership concern of Gowhar Ahmad Mir and Rowais Ahmad Mir both sons Mohammad Shafi Mir R/o Habak Naseem Bagh Srinagar.

Now the promoters have appointed an attorney holder namely Bashir Ahmad Makroo as per General Power of Attorney dated. 18-02-2020 who has approached this office for transfer the leased hold right to Smt. Dilshada W/o Bashir Ahmad Makroo Rio Rainawari Srinagar

Any person having any objection to the proposed transfer may submit the same in writing to the office of General Manager DIC Srinagar within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice

DIPK-1688/26
DATED: 30-05-2026

General Manager
District Industries Centre
Srinagar

Govt to file review petition in SC for TET review

RIYAZ BHAT

Srinagar, May 30: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Saturday said it will file a review petition in the Supreme Court regarding the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) issue, assuring the protection of teachers' interests.

Education Minister Sakina Itoo said that the review petition has been prepared and will be filed before the apex court in the coming week.

Taking to microblogging site X, Itoo said, "On the TET issue concerning J&K teachers, the Government has always acted responsibly and proactively. We have consistently taken up this matter and, more importantly, followed it up with concrete action."

"In the past as well, we have acted to protect the interests of our teachers. The Government has accorded sanction to file a review petition before the Hon'ble Supreme Court, and the Department of Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs, vide communication



dated 26.05.2026, has directed its Standing Counsel to initiate the necessary legal proceedings," Minister Itoo wrote.

She also said that "The review petition has been prepared and will be filed before the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the coming week. We remain fully committed to safeguarding the interests of our teachers."

Pertinently, in the last week of February, School Education Department had kept its order of TET in abeyance till further orders.

In this regard SED Secretary in an order said, "The Government order regarding the designation of JKBOSE/State School Standards Authority (SSSA) as nodal agency for conducting TET is hereby kept in abeyance, till further orders."

Earlier, in the previous order the department has said that in exercise of the powers vested in the Government and in compliance with the directions of the Supreme Court of India, JKBOSE, State School Standards Authority (SSSA) is designated as Nodal Agency for conducting TET for the Union Territory of

Jammu & Kashmir, with immediate effect.

"The JKBOSE, SSSA shall take immediate necessary steps for operationalization of the TET examination framework in accordance with the Action Plan formulated in the meeting held in October-2025," reads the previous order.

SED had also said that JKBOSE shall develop and notify a detailed schedule for conduct of TET.

"The board shall coordinate with NIC, School Education Department, Higher Education Department, Home Department, and other concerned authorities for logistical, technical and security arrangements," it reads.

Previously, SED while referring to the returned and the findings with advice that was sought from the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, UT of J&K said that if any of such teachers fail to qualify the TET within the time that we have allowed, they shall have to quit service. They may be compulsorily retired; and paid whatever terminal benefits they are entitled to—(KNO)

Kashmir gears up for SANJY-2026 from July-3

High pilgrim turnout expected: Div Com

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Anantnag, May 30: With preparations gathering pace for the annual Shri Amar-nath Ji Yatra, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has intensified efforts to ensure the smooth, safe and successful conduct of the 57-day pilgrimage scheduled to commence on July 3, 2026.

Authorities on Saturday said that registrations from across the country have shown an encouraging trend, indicating a substantial turnout of devotees for one of India's most revered spiritual journeys.

To assess the readiness of various departments and agencies involved in the Yatra, Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Ansul Garg, chaired a high-level review meeting in Pahalgam, the traditional base camp for the pilgrimage. Senior civil and police officers, representatives of security agencies, district administrations, and officials from multiple line

departments responsible for the annual pilgrimage attended the meeting.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Garg expressed satisfaction over the pace of preparations and said that the administration is working on a comprehensive plan to provide a hassle-free and secure pilgrimage experience to devotees. "Registrations for the Yatra were received, and the response has been very encouraging. We expect a significant number of pilgrims this year. Today's review meeting was aimed at assessing preparedness, identifying any gaps and ensuring that all departments work in close coordination to provide the best possible facilities to yatis," he said.

The meeting focused on a wide range of arrangements required for the smooth conduct of the pilgrimage, including accommodation facilities, healthcare services, sanitation measures, traffic regulation, drinking water



supply, electricity, communication networks and disaster response preparedness along both the traditional Pahalgam route and the shorter Baltal route.

The Div Com said that all stakeholders, including hoteliers, ponywalas, and others, who also attended the meeting, provided positive

feedback on the successful conduct of the Yatra, as they have experience and have been part of the pilgrimage in past years as well.

He reviewed the progress of infrastructure development and maintenance works being carried out ahead of the pilgrimage season, and special attention was paid to

ensuring that all facilities are completed and made operational well before the arrival of the first batch of pilgrims. During the meeting, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, presented a detailed briefing on the arrangements being undertaken by the district administration. He outlined the status of ongoing works, preparedness of lodging facilities, sanitation management plans, healthcare infrastructure and the coordination mechanism established among departments to ensure uninterrupted services during the Yatra period.

Div Com Garg said the successful conduct of the pilgrimage depends on seamless inter-departmental coordination and timely execution of assigned responsibilities. He directed all concerned agencies to expedite pending works and maintain strict adherence to deadlines.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Delegations call on LG Sinha



KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, May 30: A delegation led by Gh Hussain Dar, District President, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Baramulla, called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, on Saturday.

Meanwhile, another public delegation headed by Zahoor Ahmed Sheikh, former BDC Chairman from Narbal called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. Subsequently, various

delegations including Shri Ram Mandir Thakurdwara Management Committee, Shopian, led by its Chairman Hakikat Singh; a delegation from Kupwara led by Chowdhary Fareed Bajard, member J&K Wild Life Board; members of Jammu and Kashmir All Departments Clerical Staff Association and Sahil Muzaffar, Sports Coach and Social Worker from Achabal, Anantnag, also called on the Lieutenant Governor.

Dy CM calls for speedy completion of Bagh-e-Bahu Dak Bunglow



KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, May 30: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Saturday reviewed the progress of several ongoing development works in Jammu and conducted surprise inspection of key government offices to assess efficiency, accountability and project implementation.

During his visit to Bagh-e-Bahu, the Deputy Chief Minister inspected the ongoing construction of the Dak Bunglow and reviewed the pace and quality of work being executed at the site. Stressing the importance of timely completion, he directed the concerned officials to expedite the execution while strictly adhering to

the prescribed quality standards so that the facility is completed within the stipulated timeframe and serves the visitors effectively.

The Deputy Chief Minister also undertook a surprise inspection of the offices of the Chief Engineer, PMGSY Jammu and Chief Engineer, Mechanical and Hospital Engineering Department (M&HED), Jammu. During the inspection, he reviewed the staff attendance and functioning of the offices besides taking stock of the status of ongoing projects being executed by the departments.

Emphasizing the need for transparency, accountability and efficiency in public service delivery, the Deputy Chief Minister directed

the officers and officials to maintain punctuality and ensure timely completion of all developmental projects. He said that quality infrastructure and efficient governance remain key priorities of the government and any delay in project execution would be viewed seriously. The Deputy Chief Minister reiterated the government's commitment towards strengthening the public infrastructure and ensuring that development projects are completed in a time-bound manner for the benefit of the people.

Chief Engineer PMGSY, R&B and other senior officers of the concerned departments accompanied the Deputy Chief Minister during the inspections.

Nagranar in Kupwara emerges as tourist hotspot

WARIS FAYAZ

Kupwara, May 30: Once a little-known village tucked away in the forests and meadows of north Kashmir's Kupwara district, Nagranar is rapidly emerging as a tourist hotspot, attracting visitors from across the country.

The scenic pond, surrounded by lush grasslands and mountains, has become a major draw, while a recent Bollywood film shoot for the horror film "Pashaan" at the location has further boosted the destination's profile.

Officials attribute the rise in tourist arrivals to improved infrastructure and growing awareness about the destination's natural beauty.

In-charge Forest Department official Sajad Hussain said several developmental works have recently been completed to enhance the tourist experience.

"We have developed a tourist point, constructed a rain shelter and built a deck overlooking the scenic landscape. These facilities are aimed at making the destination more visitor-friendly while maintaining its natural character," Hussain said.

He said Nagranar, approximately 10 kilometres from Handwara town, now witnesses heavy tourist inflow during Eid celebrations, public holidays and weekends.

"Thousands of people visit the destination during festivals and holidays. On normal days as well, hundreds of tourists come here. We are receiving visitors not only from different parts of Kashmir but also from various states across the country," he said.

The official said the department is preparing additional projects to cater to the increasing footfall. "We are planning to construct a tree house and install benches for visitors. More infrastructure projects are under consideration to improve facilities while ensuring environmental sustainability," he said.

Hussain said preserving the natural ecosystem remains a top priority. "We continuously appeal to visitors not to litter the area and to avoid swimming or bathing in the pond. Residents actively support the department in maintaining cleanliness through regular awareness and cleaning drives," he said.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Satish Sharma calls on Union Railway Minister

Pitches for revival of Jammu-Rajouri-Poonch Rail connectivity project

KT NEWS DESK

New Delhi, May 30: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma on Saturday met Union Minister for Railways, Information and Broadcasting, Electronics & Information Technology, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw and strongly projected the long-pending demand for rail connectivity to the border districts of Rajouri and Poonch.

During the meeting, Satish Sharma urged the Union Railway Minister to accord priority to the proposed Jammu-Akhnoor-Dori Dager-Sunderbani-Nowshera-Rajouri-Poonch rail corridor. He described it as a project of immense strategic, economic and social significance for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly those residing in the border districts. The Minister highlighted that a survey for the proposed rail alignment had been conducted in the past and stressed the need for its revival and early execution. He underscored that Rajouri and Poonch remain among the few major regions in the country without rail connectivity despite their strategic importance and



substantial population. Satish Sharma informed the Union Minister that the twin border districts frequently face connectivity challenges due to adverse weather conditions, road disruptions and difficult terrain, which adversely impact the movement of people, essential commodities and emergency services. He maintained that rail connectivity would provide a reliable, all-weather transportation network, significantly improving the accessibility, boosting economic activity and enhancing the

overall quality of life of the people. Emphasizing the national security dimension of the project, Sharma noted that Rajouri and Poonch share a sensitive international border and have historically played a crucial role in safeguarding the nation's interests. He said that a rail corridor to these districts would not only strengthen the civilian connectivity but also enhance logistical capabilities and facilitate faster movement of personnel and resources, whenever required.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

EDITORIAL

Time To Wake Up To Digital Trap

The advisory issued by the Jammu and Kashmir Cyber Crime Department is a timely warning. But it is also a sad reminder that in our rush to embrace the digital world, we have left our guards down. Fake calls, phishing links, OTP fraud, and impersonation scams are not new. Yet, every day, unsuspecting citizens continue to fall into these traps, losing hard-earned money and sensitive personal information. The problem

is not just the sophistication of fraudsters. It is our own carelessness. Let us be honest. How many of us actually enable two-step verification on WhatsApp? How many of us verify a caller before sharing an OTP? How many of us click on suspicious links without a second thought? The answer is: too many. Fraudsters are not geniuses. They exploit our laziness, our trust, and our lack of basic digital hygiene. A bank will never ask for your OTP. A

government official will never demand money over a phone call. A relative will not message you from an unknown number asking for an urgent transfer. These are basic facts, yet people keep falling for them. The Cyber Crime Department has done its part. It has issued an advisory. It has reminded citizens to avoid unknown links, refrain from sharing OTPs, and enable two-step verification on messaging apps. It has urged early reporting

through the helpline number 1930 and the National Cyber Crime Portal. But advisories alone will not stop fraud. What will stop fraud is a change in mindset. Every family must have a conversation about digital safety. Every school must teach students how to recognise phishing attempts. Every bank must warn customers repeatedly about OTP fraud. Every media outlet must run awareness campaigns. This is not a one-time effort. It is a continuous

battle. The government must also do more. Telecom companies must be held accountable for spoofed calls. Banks must make fraud reporting easier and faster. The cyber helpline must be adequately staffed to handle complaints promptly. And the legal system must ensure that caught fraudsters receive punishment that serves as a real deterrent. The digital world is here to stay. We cannot escape it. But we can learn to navigate it safely.

PM SVANidhi: From Survival To Self-Reliance

Press Information Bureau

PM SVANidhi has emerged as a major initiative supporting vendors working across India's informal urban economy. Beyond providing collateral-free loans, the scheme has encouraged digital adoption, improved access to institutional credit and expanded social security coverage. Since its launch in 2020, more than 1.12 crore loans have already been disbursed. The initiative has benefited over 75 lakh beneficiaries across cities and towns. Loans worth over 17,800 crore have been provided under the scheme. Its impact is visible not only in official numbers but also in the everyday journey of vendors building stronger and more sustainable livelihoods.

The Changing Story of India's Street Vendors

The vegetable seller at a crowded market and the tea vendor outside a busy office are familiar sights in Indian cities. The fruit cart owner navigating lanes and the cobbler repairing shoes on a roadside pavement are equally essential to everyday urban life. Together, these millions of street vendors keep India's urban economy moving every single day. They provide affordable goods and essential services while sustaining local markets and neighbourhood supply chains. However, they had limited access to formal credit, forcing many vendors to depend on informal credit at very high interest rates. Addressing their challenges, the Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme was launched in June 2020 as a first-of-its-kind micro-credit initiative focused on street vendors with government-backed credit guarantee support. The scheme sought to provide "Swarozgar, Svavlamban and Swabhimaan" to the street vendors. Today, PM SVANidhi has evolved far beyond a simple loan programme to a nationwide movement advancing financial empowerment, digital inclusion and social security for millions working in India's informal economy.

Over the past years, the scheme has witnessed remarkable growth across cities and towns nationwide. More than 75.5 lakh beneficiaries have availed over 1.12 crore loans amounting to more than 17,800 crore. Over 55 lakh beneficiaries have been onboarded digitally under the scheme. Together, they have carried out over 841 crore digital transactions worth nearly 8.96 lakh crore. Beneficiaries under PM SVANidhi have also received nearly 800 crore through digital cashback incentives and interest subsidies. Building on the strong achievements and measurable impact, the scheme has been



extended until March 2030.

Key Features of the PM SVANidhi Scheme Working Capital Loan: Collateral-free loans of 15,000, 25,000, and 50,000 are provided in three progressive tranches with interest subsidy and credit guarantee support.

UPI-linked RuPay Credit Cards: Vendors successfully repaying the second tranche are eligible for UPI-linked RuPay Credit Cards with limits up to 30,000.

Digital Adoption: Cashback incentives of up to 1,600 are provided to street vendors for retail/wholesale digital transactions to encourage digital adoption and financial literacy. SVANidhi se Samridhi (SSS): Socio-economic profiling of beneficiaries and their families is undertaken to link them with eight selected Central welfare schemes and create a holistic social security net.

Capacity Building & Entrepreneurship Development: Vendors are provided with training in financial literacy, digital literacy, and food safety & hygiene in collaboration with FSSAI.

Impact of the PM SVANidhi Scheme Independent impact assessments of PM SVANidhi were conducted in 2023 and 2025. The studies highlighted the following

significant improvements:

Economic Empowerment The scheme has strengthened business sustainability and improved earnings for vendors across the country. Nearly 95% of beneficiaries accessed formal institutional credit for the first time under PM SVANidhi. Around 30% later accessed additional credit beyond SVANidhi loans, reflecting improved creditworthiness and financial inclusion. Beneficiary incomes also recorded an average annual increase of nearly 20%.

Improvement in Household Welfare The economic gains under PM SVANidhi contributed significantly to improving beneficiaries' living standards. The scheme supported greater housing stability and improved access to nutritious food, healthcare and education.

PM SVANidhi has also strengthened social inclusion among vulnerable urban communities. Nearly 46% of beneficiaries under the scheme are women, reflecting strong gender inclusion. Around 70% belong to marginalised communities, highlighting the scheme's inclusive outreach.

Voices of Resilience and Empowerment Behind the numbers and loan disbursements are stories of perseverance, courage and

renewed aspiration. For many vendors, PM SVANidhi has opened doors to stability, growth and opportunities once considered out of reach. These experiences from different parts of the country highlight how timely facilitation is helping small businesses recover, adapt and move forward with greater confidence.

From a small stall to a shop Babita Sharma from Nandgram, Ghaziabad, runs a small shop selling puja items near a local temple. Every day, devotees visit her stall to buy incense sticks, diyas, flowers, coconuts, and other items needed for puja. While the business helped support her family, limited funds often made it difficult for her to expand and meet customer demand. In July 2020, Babita learned about the PM SVANidhi Scheme through officials of the Urban Local Body (ULB). Seeing it as an opportunity to improve her livelihood, she applied for the loan under the scheme. After receiving the first PM SVANidhi loan, Babita invested the money in purchasing additional stock and introducing more products at her stall. The wider variety attracted more customers and helped increase her daily sales and income. Encouraged by the improvement in her business, she repaid the loan on time and became eligible for the second tranche. She used this loan to purchase a cart and improve her vending setup.

Expanding Horizons Through Enterprise For over a decade, Santhi R from Thiruvananthapuram has been the primary breadwinner of her family through her dry fish business. Before PM SVANidhi, she depended on high-interest microfinance loans with difficult weekly repayments. These financial pressures limited her business growth and affected daily operations. PM SVANidhi helped Santhi gradually strengthen her operations through accessible institutional credit. As her business stabilised, she expanded beyond street vending into dry fish packing and local shop supplies. Santhi received the first tranche of 10,000 and later progressed to the third loan tranche of 50,000 under the scheme. This improved cash flow and helped her manage inventory more efficiently. She also received a SVANidhi Credit Card in January 2026, which further strengthened her growing business operations. Santhi R's experience highlights how PM SVANidhi is helping women entrepreneurs diversify businesses and create sustainable livelihoods.

Turning Challenge into Opportunity In the bustling streets of Noonmati, Guwahati, Sewali Kalita once ran a modest pan stall to make ends meet for her family of four. During difficult times, she even borrowed money from neighbours just to

survive. An interaction with officials from the Guwahati Municipal Corporation introduced Sewali to PM SVANidhi. With a loan of 10,000, Sewali tapped into her entrepreneurial spirit. She recognised the rising demand for organic vegetables during the pandemic. She began sourcing fresh produce locally and selling it alongside her pan stall. As business improved, Sewali enrolled her children back in school and gradually expanded her enterprise. She further secured additional loans of 20,000 and 50,000, respectively. The financial support enabled her to clear debts, increase stock and open a dedicated vegetable stall. Today, Sewali runs a flourishing business alongside her husband in Guwahati. She now earns nearly 8,000 in monthly profits from her growing business. Her progress stands as a powerful example of perseverance and opportunity.

Small Loan, Big Change: The Transformation of a Street Vendor's Life

Yograj Mali, a 30-year-old B. Com. student, ran a street food business selling Cholephali in Gandhinagar. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic severely affected his business. However, hope arrived in the form of a loan under the PM SVANidhi scheme. The loan not only reignited his business but also brought immense happiness to him and his family, as they no longer struggled financially. With the loan, Yograj embraced digital payments, benefiting from cashback rewards. Additionally, he leveraged other government schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima, and Shramyogi Man Dhan Yojana. Grateful for the support, Yograj acknowledges that the government stands as a pillar of support during difficult times, especially for those who might otherwise feel overlooked.

Beyond Credit: A Changing Urban Landscape

From crowded marketplaces to narrow roadside lanes, PM SVANidhi has quietly transformed countless everyday journeys across the country. The scheme has enabled vendors to return to work and expand small businesses. It has encouraged digital transactions and promoted safer, more organised business practices. It has also widened access to institutional support for underserved communities.

The scheme's expanding reach reflects a larger shift in development and inclusion. For millions working in the informal economy, PM SVANidhi has created pathways to opportunity that were once difficult to access. In many ways, the initiative reflects a changing vision of urban governance. Small vendors are no longer seen as part of the margins. Instead, they are increasingly recognised as contributors to India's economic growth story.

India Building Afresh With New-Age Fibre

India's relationship with fibre is civilisational, 5,000 years deep, woven into our villages, our traditions, and our collective identity. From the legendary muslins of Mohenjodaro, celebrated as "woven air", to the craftsmanship that travelled across continents, fibre has always been the lifeblood of our rural economy.

Giriraj Singh

India's relationship with fibre is civilisational, 5,000 years deep, woven into our villages, our traditions, and our collective identity. From the legendary muslins of Mohenjodaro, celebrated as "woven air", to the craftsmanship that travelled across continents, fibre has always been the lifeblood of our rural economy. Today, at the cusp of a global sustainability revolution, that ancient knowledge is our greatest competitive advantage. For decades, the banana pseudo-stem was discarded as waste. Today, that same biomass is premium fibre, feeding export markets, sustaining rural livelihoods, and turning agricultural residue into national revenue.

From waste to wealth, from local abundance to global opportunity: this is the essence of India's New Age Fibre movement, paving the way for India's path to global leadership in green materials and future-ready textiles. New Age Fibres are sustainable, plant-based materials that blend India's traditional knowledge with modern innovation. Fibres like Bamboo, Hemp, Banana, PALF, Flax, Ramie, Sisal, Milkweed, and Kapok have existed for centuries, but are now being rediscovered for high-value uses

in textiles, defence, biodegradable composites, and premium products.

They are expanding India's natural fibre basket for a greener future. Rising incomes, global sustainability mandates, and traceable sourcing requirements are fundamentally rewiring global supply chains and driving a new fibre economy. Consumers are seeking comfort, breathability, and sustainability in everything they wear. This structural shift is why India's fibre consumption is set to surge from 15 MMT today to 23 MMT by 2030. The world is increasingly seeking exactly what India can offer: ethical, sustainable, and high-performance natural fibres backed by centuries of expertise.

This vision is supported by a clear institutional and policy framework. Under the Mission for Cotton Productivity, with a total outlay of Rs 5,664 crore for 2026-2031, a dedicated Rs 300 crore New Age Fibres component has been kept. Complementing this effort, the National Fibre Mission announced in the Union Budget 2026-27 provides the broader strategic framework, resting on four pillars: KRISHI-SUTRA for cultivation and raw material development, INFINITY for research and innovation, GRAM-SETU for infrastructure and enterprise creation, and GMPS

for branding and market development.

The strength of this policy framework lies in decades of scientific research already delivering results. Milkweed (Aak/Madar), traditionally offered to Lord Shiva, has emerged as a breakthrough after 18 years of research at the Northern India Textile Research Association (NITRA), evolving into defence applications such as sleeping bags for soldiers operating at -20°C. These are 10 per cent lighter than polyester alternatives, warmer than wool, and CLO/Cell certified. Grown on 55 million hectares of wasteland without fertiliser, it can generate Rs 1.5-2 lakh per acre annually for farmers. Banana fibre offers an estimated 1.8 million tonnes annual production potential and additional farmer income from agricultural residue, while Bamboo can yield up to 60 tonnes of biomass per hectare, creating major opportunities for the Northeast. Hemp is also emerging as a promising global market, with cultivation already permitted in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

Along with Flax, Sisal, Ramie, PALF, Nettle, and Kapok, these fibres are steadily expanding India's sustainable fibre base. Building on this scientific momentum, the National Seminar on New Age Fibres became a platform where science, policy, and enterprise could converge.

It brought together researchers, scientists, entrepreneurs, farmer organisations, industry leaders, and policymakers under one roof. Three Task Force reports covering all ten priority fibres were released, translating field science directly into scheme design and investment priorities. The seminar also openly identified gaps in standards, processing infrastructure, and institutional financing, reflecting a mission focused on real execution.

Key priorities emerged: scaling production from 10,000 MT to 10 lakh MT in five years, developing quality standards, promoting machinery indigenisation, reducing dependence on imported processing technology, and building cluster-based fibre ecosystems from cultivation to value addition. Together, these steps position New Age Fibres as a whole-of-government mission for rural prosperity and sustainable growth. Perhaps the most transformative frontier is fibre blending. India's real strength lies not in a single fibre, but in combining them intelligently, such as milkweed for thermal lightness, wool for warmth, bamboo for breathability, and cotton for softness. A blended fabric is not a compromise; it is a performance upgrade creating fabrics that are stronger, smarter, and more sustainable,

with better comfort, moisture management, durability, and versatility across fashion, lifestyle, and technical textiles.

The benefits cascade across the entire value chain. Consumers get better comfort and functionality, manufacturers gain premium and differentiated products, and farmers benefit from diversified demand and more resilient incomes. For India, blending is more than a technical innovation; it is the bridge from raw fibre supply to globally competitive, value-added brands rooted in Indian identity. At its core, the New Age Fibre movement is about transforming lives, creating opportunities for farmers, strengthening rural livelihoods, empowering women, and enabling entrepreneurs to build global enterprises from local resources. Anchored in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 5F Vision: Farm to Fibre to Fabric to Fashion to Foreign, India's Green Fibre Revolution is not a distant promise. The strategy is set. The institutions are engaged. The science is proven. The entrepreneurs are ready. What India is now doing, fibre by fibre, blend by blend, region by region, farm by farm, is writing the next great chapter of its textile story.

The writer is the Union Minister of Textiles

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

Human-Wildlife Conflict Victims

DLSA Ganderbal conducts awareness programme on NALSA Scheme

KT News Desk

GANDERBAL, MAY 30: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Ganderbal, in collaboration with the Sind Forest Division Ganderbal, organized an awareness programme on the NALSA Scheme for Access to Justice for Victims of Human-Wildlife Conflict, 2025 at the Conference Hall of the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Sind Forest Division Ganderbal.

The programme, as per an official statement, was conducted under the Supervision of Abdul Nasir, Chairman, DLSA Ganderbal and under the guidance of Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary, DLSA Ganderbal.

The programme was organized with the objective of sensitizing participants about the provisions and benefits of the NALSA Scheme for Access to Justice for Victims of Human-Wildlife Conflict, 2025, which aims to provide legal assistance, facilitate access to compensation and rehabilitation measures, and ensure effective legal support to affected persons and their families.

The programme commenced with an inaugural address by Iqbal Rasool, Divisional Forest



Officer, Sind Forest Division Ganderbal, who highlighted the increasing incidents of human-wildlife conflict and emphasized the importance of forest conservation, protection of wildlife habitats, and public awareness to minimize such conflicts. He observed that destruction of forests and natural habitats often compels wild animals to move towards human habitations, resulting in increased human-wildlife interactions. He appreciated the initiative of DLSA Ganderbal in creating awareness regarding the legal rights and remedies available to victims.

Tanveer Ashraf and Shaheena Ali, Assistant Legal Aid Defence Counsels, informed the participants about the NALSA Scheme for Access to Justice for Victims

of Human-Wildlife Conflict, 2025 and explained the procedure for seeking compensation and legal assistance.

They highlighted the ex-gratia relief available in cases of death, permanent incapacitation, grievous injuries, and minor injuries resulting from human-wildlife conflict. The participants were also informed about the documents required for compensation claims, including medical records, postmortem reports, FIRs, photographs, and other relevant records.

Awareness material was distributed among the participants. They further highlighted the role of DLSA in providing free legal aid, facilitating access to compensation and rehabilitation measures, and assisting

victims and their families in availing the benefits of various welfare schemes.

The participants were also informed about the mandate of the Legal Services Authorities under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, and various welfare schemes implemented by NALSA for vulnerable and marginalized sections of society.

The participants appreciated the joint initiative of DLSA Ganderbal and Sind Forest Division Ganderbal and observed that such awareness programmes are highly beneficial for the public as they create awareness about legal rights, compensation mechanisms, and the remedies available to victims of human-wildlife conflict.

The programme concluded with a collective resolve to strengthen awareness, environmental conservation, and legal empowerment of communities affected by human-wildlife conflict, thereby ensuring greater access to justice and welfare benefits.

Among others present on the occasion were Range Officers of Sind Forest Division Ganderbal, along with officials of the Forest Department and members of the public.

DC Shopian presides over monthly NCORD meeting



KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, MAY 30: The District Level Narco Coordination (NCORD) committee meeting was held Saturday here at Mini-Secretariat Shopian chaired by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta.

During meeting, the DC, as per an official statement, conducted a comprehensive review of the ongoing enforcement, monitoring and preventive initiatives being implemented by the concerned departments. Stressing the need for a coordinated and proactive approach, the DC directed all stakeholders to intensify efforts for effective control of drug abuse.

While speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner took department-wise action taken reports and laid stress on creating awareness against the drug and substance abuse.

The concerned departments informed the chair

about their activities against the ongoing fight on drugs. It was apprised that strict enforcement is being done against the illicit crop (poppy) cultivation in the district.

Directions were issued to strengthen the fight against drug abuse, keeping close vigil on the cultivation of poppy across the district and informing the police about illegal crop cultivation.

The Deputy Commissioner also emphasized the importance of keeping strict vigil on poppy cultivation across the district to raise awareness about drug abuse.

Besides, various other issues including continuous inspections of pharmacies, Drug Free Panchayats, intensifying illicit crop cultivation destruction drives, enforcement of COTPA, role of village level functionaries was discussed and future action plan devised.

SSP, Shopian, Mushtaq Ahmed Choudhary; ACR, Shakoor Ahmad Dar; SDM, Bilal Ahmad, Tehsildars,

Central Kashmir Excise Range destroys poppy cultivation

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, MAY 30: Central Kashmir Excise Range intensified its crackdown against the illicit cultivation of Narcotic crops (Poppy) under the Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan and destroyed illegal poppy cultivation at multiple locations across the Srinagar-Budgam-Ganderbal Excise Range.

The drive, as per an official statement, was conducted in collaboration with Police, Revenue and Agriculture Department and the FIR was lodged under the relevant sections of NDPS Act at the concerned Police Stations.

All legal formalities including seizure, Sampling and destruction were reportedly completed on spot and Case FIR No. 16/2026 and U/S 8/18 NDPS Act has been registered at Police Station Lar Ganderbal and investigation has been taken up.

The enforcement action exemplifies the commitment of the Excise Department to curbing illegal activities and upholding the rule of law under the supervision of the Excise Commissioner and the Deputy Excise Commissioner (Executive), Kashmir.

Commissioner JMC inspects encroachment situation in City Chowk, Malhotra Mohalla



KT News Desk

JAMMU, MAY 30: Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) Dr. Devansh Yadav on Saturday conducted an on-site inspection of Ward No. 11, covering City Chowk and Malhotra Mohalla areas, to assess the issue of encroachments on public footpaths and roads.

The visit, as per an official statement, was undertaken following repeated representations and requests from locals, who highlighted the difficulties being faced by pedestrians due to the widespread encroachment of footpaths by vendors and shopkeepers. During the inspection, Dr. Yadav observed that several vendors and traders had occupied pedestrian pathways by displaying and selling goods on the footpaths, leaving little or no space for public movement.

Acting on the spot, the Commissioner directed the concerned vendors and shopkeepers to immediately remove the encroachments and ensure that footpaths remain accessible to pedestrians. He emphasized that public spaces are meant for the convenience and safety of citizens

and cannot be allowed to be obstructed.

Speaking during the visit, Dr. Devansh Yadav stated that the Jammu Municipal Corporation is committed to finding a sustainable and practical solution to the issue. He informed that a meeting will soon be convened involving traders and business representatives from the affected areas, along with the local MLA and other stakeholders to discuss measures for regulating commercial activities while safeguarding public convenience.

The Commissioner further noted that unchecked encroachments not only create hardships for pedestrians but also contribute significantly to traffic congestion in the city. He stressed that effective management of roadside vending and the commercial activities are essential to prevent traffic bottlenecks and ensure smooth vehicular movement across Jammu city.

Dr. Yadav appealed to all traders, vendors and citizens to cooperate with the Jammu Municipal Corporation in maintaining orderly public spaces and keeping roads and footpaths free from encroachments in the larger interest of the public.

NCORD

DM Bandipora stresses stronger enforcement, awareness against drug abuse

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, MAY 30: District Magistrate (DM) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib along with Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Bandipora, Ajaz Ahmad Zargar Saturday chaired a meeting of the District Level NCORD Committee to review the implementation of anti-drug measures and illicit drug trafficking in the district.

During the meeting, the SSP, as per an official statement, presented a detailed review of cases registered under the NDPS/PIT NDPS Act across different police stations in the district. He also briefed the meeting regarding attachment and freezing of properties of drug peddlers, demolition of illegal structures and action taken in commercial quantity cases.

The Deputy Director Prosecution apprised the meeting about the status of NDPS cases, acquittals, bail applications and challenges filed before courts. Stress was laid on ensuring effective prosecution.

Reviewing enforcement measures, the DM stressed strict action against drug peddlers and directed the concerned authorities to expedite cancellation/suspension of DL, Passport, contractor cards, Arms Licences and other documents of accused involved in narcotics-related offences. She also emphasized enhanced coordination among departments for sustained enforcement.

The meeting was informed that CCTV surveillance had been strengthened in various educational institutions and hotspots areas. The DM directed the Education Department and Principals of Government Degree Colleges to ensure installation of CCTV cameras in all schools, colleges and coaching centres, particularly in



vulnerable and shadow areas.

The Education Department and Government Degree Colleges apprised the meeting about awareness and outreach programmes conducted under NMBA, including debates, seminars, essay competitions and student interaction programmes aimed at sensitizing youth against drug abuse.

The Rural Development Department (RDD) was directed to further intensify awareness activities at the grassroots level by conducting regular anti-drug programmes in wards and Panchayats across the district.

The Excise Departments informed the meeting about measures taken against illicit poppy cultivation and destruction drives conducted in different areas of the district.

The Assistant Drug Controller apprised the meeting regarding inspections conducted across medical shops and action taken against violations. The DM stressed strict implementation of computerized billing systems and installation of CCTV cameras in pharmacies and medical establishments to check misuse of scheduled drugs.

The DM directed the ARTO and Assistant Labour Commissioner (ALC) to further intensify awareness

programmes and strengthen enforcement measures in their respective sectors to support the anti-drug campaign.

The meeting also reviewed implementation of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA). The DM directed concerned departments to conduct zonal-level meetings for effective implementation of COTPA and ensure strict monitoring around educational institutions and public places.

During the meeting, departments presented progress reports regarding the 100-day NMBA campaign, including awareness drives, mega rallies, "Dosti Discussions", and IEC activities conducted across the district.

The DM stressed coordinated efforts, continuous monitoring and proactive public participation to effectively combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking in the district.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Deputy District Election Officer Bandipora; ACP Bandipora; CMO Bandipora; CAO Bandipora; MS DH Bandipora; Chairperson Child Welfare Committee Bandipora; Tehsildar Bandipora; Medical Officer ATF Bandipora, besides other concerned officers, while other officers joined the meeting virtually.

Awareness programmes, yoga sessions, enforcement drives in Budgam

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, MAY 30: As part of the ongoing Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA), a series of awareness, wellness and enforcement activities were conducted across various educational institutions and locations in Budgam district to strengthen the fight against drug abuse and promote a healthy, drug-free society.

An awareness drive was organized at GDC Magam, where students were sensitized about the harmful effects of substance abuse and encouraged to act as ambassadors of change in their communities. Similarly, GDC Beerwah conducted a pledge-taking ceremony against drug abuse, with students and faculty reaffirming their commitment to a drug-free future.

To promote physical and mental well-being as an effective safeguard against addiction, a Yoga session was organized at Government Higher Secondary School Wathoor. Students actively participated

in various yoga practices and were encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyle choices.

Meanwhile, HSS Dragger also organized awareness activities under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, educating students about the dangers of drug abuse and the importance of staying away from intoxicants.

In a parallel enforcement initiative, the Excise Department Budgam conducted inspections of pharmacies at Aripathan, Kandhama, Gampoora, Ichkoot, Ichgam, Kremshore and Drygam to ensure compliance with regulations governing the sale and distribution of medicines. The inspections were aimed at preventing the misuse of pharmaceutical drugs and strengthening measures against substance abuse.

These coordinated efforts reflect the District administration's continued commitment towards creating awareness, promoting healthy living and ensuring strict enforcement of regulations to achieve the objectives of a Nasha Mukht Budgam.

Review meeting of Legal Aid Defence Counsels held in Jammu

KT News Desk

JAMMU, MAY 30: A review meeting of Legal Aid Defence Counsels (LADCs) was held on Saturday at the Office of Secretary, DLSA Jammu, chaired by Maleeka Sharma, Sub-Judge/Secretary, DLSA Jammu.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by LADCs under DLSA Jammu.

The Secretary reviewed their performance, focusing on the quality of legal representation provided to beneficiaries,

timely submission of reports and the status of pending cases. She emphasized the importance of dedicated legal support and maintaining effective communication with clients to ensure justice is served.

Directions were issued to LADCs to ensure prompt appearance in courts, adherence to case timelines, maintain detailed records of cases handled for effective case management and sensitize beneficiaries about their rights and the legal aid process.

GM NHPC Uri-I Stage-II issues rebuttal to concerns being circulated on social media

KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, MAY 30: General Manager (Civil), Uri-I Stage-II Hydroelectric Project of NHPC Limited, has issued a rebuttal to concerns being circulated on various social media platforms regarding the safety of construction activities associated with the Uri-I Stage-II Hydroelectric Project.

In a communication, NHPC, as per an official statement, clarified that the project has secured all major statutory clearances, including environmental, forest, defence and other requisite approvals, besides obtaining no-objection certificates from the concerned ministries and departments.



The GM stated that the proposed tunnel is located approximately 400 metres inside the mountain cover, with an additional lateral cover ranging between 300 and 500 metres, thereby ensuring the safety of the construction activities.

It was further informed that any blasting required for project execution will be carried out through controlled methods under the supervision of experts from NHPC and government-approved national-level technical institutions.

Describing the project as one of national importance, NHPC emphasized that the safety and security of local residents and establishments had been accorded due consideration during the preparation of the Detailed Project Report (DPR).

The organization reiterated its commitment to adhering to all prescribed safety standards and regulatory requirements during the execution of the project.

NMBA: Quiz competitions, awareness programmes held across Bandipora

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, MAY 30: Various educational institutions across district Bandipora on Saturday organised quiz competitions, pledge ceremonies and awareness programmes under the ongoing Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) to spread awareness against drug abuse and promote healthy lifestyles among students.

Pledge taking ceremonies, as per an official statement, under NMBA were organised at High School Panar and Government High School Nadihal, while a special morning assembly focusing on awareness against substance abuse was held at HSS Gadakhud.

Health Awareness Quiz programmes were organised at



PM SHRI Government High School Odina, HSS Gadakhud, HSS Nowgam, High School Ahamsharif, H/S Ketson, HS Koragal and HSS Quilmuqam. Students participated enthusiastically in the quiz competitions and awareness activities focusing on health, well-being and prevention of drug abuse.

At HSS Quilmuqam, students

and staff also participated in a Nasha Mukht pledge ceremony reaffirming their commitment towards a healthy and drug-free society, while winning teams in the quiz competition were awarded prizes.

Meanwhile, Government Degree College Sumbal organised a "Dosti Discussion" under the guidance of Principal Prof.

(Dr.) Shabeena Iqbal Shawl, where students held interactive discussions on substance abuse, peer pressure, mental well-being and the importance of healthy lifestyles.

HKM Degree College Bandipora also organised a Student Awareness Programme on Drug Abuse under the banner of NMBA through its NSS Youth Club and Red Ribbon Youth Club. Convener NCORD, Prof. Irfan Ahmad Wagay highlighted the harmful effects of drug abuse and emphasized the need for collective efforts to protect youth from addiction. The College also organized an interactive awareness session on the drug menace for 4th Semester students under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan.

Kashmir's Eid-ul-Adha livestock trade hits Rs 384 crore: KMDA 'Nearly 1.92 lakh sheep brought to Valley in 1,200 trucks in last 15 days'

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, May 30: Kashmir Valley witnessed a good influx of sacrificial animals during the Eid-ul-Adha this year, with nearly 1,200 trucks carrying sheep entering the Valley during the last 15 days, the Kashmir Mutton Dealers Association (KMDA) said on Saturday. Talking to the news

agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Association General Secretary Mehraj-ud-Din said each truck carried more than 160 sheep on average, taking the total number of livestock brought into Kashmir to nearly 1.92 lakh sheep ahead of the festival.

"About 1,200 trucks carrying sheep entered the Valley during the last 15 days till May 27.



Every truck was carrying over 160 sheep," he said.

He said the average price of a sheep this season remained around Rs 20,000, pushing the overall Eid-ul-Adha livestock trade in Kashmir to nearly Rs 384 crore.

Mehraj-ud-Din said the majority of the sheep brought to Kashmir were imported from outside Jammu and Kashmir to

meet the festive demand in the Valley.

He added that besides the outside imports, additional livestock supply from Rajouri, Jammu and other parts also continued to arrive in Kashmir, although the exact figures of the inbound local supply were not immediately known.

Markets across Srinagar, especially the Eidgah livestock

mandi, and several district-level animal markets witnessed good public rush in the run-up to Eid-ul-Adha as families thronged markets to purchase sacrificial animals for Qurbani.

However, Mehraj-ud-Din said that despite the huge inflow of livestock and large-scale trade, sales this year remained comparatively lower than in previous years.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

We must erase

and sciences and that's why many people to claim that certain things came from other places or introduced by the invaders. These assertions are baseless."

"We must repeatedly remind the world that when the Vedas were composed some 6,000 years ago, India was the center of the world's economy, education, culture, and philosophy. For centuries, India was the engine of global civilization and culture. It laid the foundations for socio economic advancement across the world through its gift in science, mathematics, astronomy, and medicine," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He stated that there is an urgent need to restore history and convey its true form to every section of society so that India's narrative is properly shaped. The Lieutenant Governor observed that our ancestors, since the Vedic age, recorded facts and transmitted knowledge with great accuracy, but for various reasons modern times saw India lose the habit of writing its own history.

The Lieutenant Governor said that foreign historians have, sometimes deliberately, omitted India's ancient discoveries and achievements in science, literature, art, and architecture.

"When India stood at the peak of scientific achievement, many countries showed almost no mention of science. The earliest references to science, mathematics, and astronomy in Persia and other places appear only in the eighth century, and even those owe much to India. Europe's first Renaissance in the 12th century drew on India's treasury of knowledge, science, culture, and art. Centuries before any other countries discovered invention and innovations, India had already established itself as a scientific civilization," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that India's modernity has often led the world, with scientific contributions unmatched in history. He also said that writers should present creation of our nation's great talents in simple, accessible language.

He said writers, poets and scholars play a greater role in shaping civilizations than institutions. "India's literary world is still like Hanuman Ji before realising his own strength. Just as Hanuman was reminded of his powers before crossing Lanka, our literary and intellectual community too must realise the depth of India's civilizational strength and present it to the world," he said.

Calling writers immortal through their creations, LG Sinha said great poets, authors and creators never die because their works continue to inspire generations. "Great poets, writers and creative minds become immortal through their knowledge and work. The human body is mortal, but creation becomes the symbol of immortality," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said he had witnessed many occasions where institutions spent crores of rupees but failed to create the impact that a single novel or literary work could create. "Literature has the power to influence minds and generations in ways institutions often cannot," he said.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech from the Red Fort, LG Sinha said the time had come to completely erase the colonial mindset and reclaim India's true historical narrative. "Some time ago, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, from the Red Fort, said that the time has come to remove the colonial mindset. We must ensure that our history is not presented in a distorted manner," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said one of the greatest failures of modern India was that it forgot to write and preserve its own history properly. "In modern times, India forgot to write its own history correctly."

LG Sinha said several researchers and scholars across the world had acknowledged India's contribution to medicine, mathematics and scientific thought.

"Indian medicinal systems, mathematics and scientific learning influenced scholars and civilizations across continents," he said.

Referring to Europe's intellectual awakening, the Lieutenant Governor said many western scholars themselves accepted that India possessed deep-rooted traditions of knowledge and scientific understanding.

"I want to say that the roots of our knowledge systems have always been extremely deep. Colonialism damaged confidence in our own civilization and knowledge traditions," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said whenever discussions on history and science take place, names like Newton and the theory of gravity are remembered, but India's scientific capabilities and maritime strength existed centuries earlier.

"People often mention Newton and the theory of gravity, but India too possessed deep scientific understanding and advanced capabilities long before many western developments," he said.

Referring to the historical friendship

between Alexander and King Porus, LG Sinha said ancient India was globally respected for its steel and metallurgy.

"There are historical references showing that Alexander gifted special Indian steel associated with King Porus, which reflected the advanced metallurgical traditions of ancient India," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said not only India's past but also its present achievements must reach the people.

"We must take not just our past but also our present achievements to the people. India has risen strongly and today we have become the world's fourth-largest economy," he said.

Expressing confidence in India's future, LG Sinha said the country would achieve the dream of a developed India by 2047.

"By 2047, India will achieve the vision of a developed nation. A new emotional awakening has started in society and people are increasingly understanding their responsibility towards the nation," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said writers and thinkers stand above nations in shaping public consciousness and civilization.

"Always remember that writers are greater than nations because they shape the thinking and direction of societies and civilizations," he said.

Rejecting the notion that reading culture was declining, LG Sinha said the world today was reading more than ever before.

"Today the world is not reading less, but more. Research in 2025 suggested that more than 40 lakh books were published globally," he said.

He said digital platforms and open-access communication had created opportunities to build positive narratives globally.

"The doors have opened. We must use these platforms and mediums to build strong and positive narratives," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also remembered freedom fighters, saints, scholars and workers who protected India's civilization and identity during difficult times.

"Our freedom fighters, saints, scholars and workers always came forward whenever the nation faced difficult times. Intellectuals and writers have always protected the spirit and identity of this country," he said.

The two-day Kashmir Literature Festival at SKICC would feature literary discussions, poetry sessions, historical debates and interactions involving writers, historians, researchers and academicians from across the country. (KNO)

Statehood Day celebration

homage to Bala Raya Mapari of the Azad Gomantak Dal, the first martyr of Goa's freedom struggle. Great figures such as Luis de Menezes Braganza, Mohan Ranade, Tristao Braganza da Cunha, Purushottam Kakodkar, Prabhakar Vaidya, Nana Kajrekar and Sudhir Phadke kept the spirit of satyagraha alive across Goa, Daman, Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Today we salute their dreams and resolve, the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that the enduring ideals of service to humanity, commitment to national prosperity, and the preservation of culture have long shaped the Goan contribution to modern India.

"I strongly believe that Goa's ancient arts and vibrant heritage have enriched the vision of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat.'" As the Konkani proverb wisely reminds us, "Ekvatantakad, rashtrantpragati"—unity is the bedrock of a nation's progress," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also observed that the bond between Jammu Kashmir and Goa goes back centuries.

"Seen through that ancient bond, a priceless and enduring connection unites Goa's golden shores with the majestic mountains of Jammu & Kashmir. Today's celebration in Goa is also a moment to weave together the timeless philosophies and values nurtured along the banks of the Tawi and Terekhol rivers with the principles that continue to guide our lives today," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Ready for

Pahalgam terror attack that left 26 people dead. Indian armed forces struck deep inside Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and destroyed nine terrorist camps. The strikes led to skirmishes between the two countries that last for four days. Hostilities ended after Pakistan Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) approached his Indian counterpart and requested for a ceasefire.

General Dwivedi said the nature of warfare is changing rapidly and future conflicts would increasingly extend beyond traditional battlefields. "Modern warfare is no longer confined to land, sea and air. Space, cyber and cognitive domains are becoming equally significant," he said.

Referring to technological advancements and surveillance capabilities, the Army chief said battlefields have become highly transparent, making operational planning more challenging.

"Today, almost every movement can be observed by the adversary. This requires greater caution in deployment, employment of forces and protection of troops as well as civilians living in border areas," he said.

The Army Chief also underlined the growing role of artificial intelligence and automation in military operations, saying faster decision-making has become essential in contemporary conflicts.

Speaking to the newly commissioned officers, he said future military leaders must adapt to evolving security challenges and technological changes shaping modern warfare.

On the government's plan for integrated theatre commands, General Dwivedi said progress was being made and discussions were underway at different levels.

He said a detailed report on theatrisation has already been submitted to the Defence Minister and is under consideration.

Under the proposed structure, the Army, Navy and Air Force chiefs would continue to oversee force preparedness and capability development, while theatre commanders would be responsible for conducting joint operations.

Expressing confidence in the process, General Dwivedi said integrated theatre commands could become operational within the next two to three years if consensus is achieved among the services.

The Army Chief also referred to the force's ongoing modernisation efforts under the "Decade of Transformation" initiative, aimed at making the Army more agile, technology-driven and future-ready.

He said several new organisational structures are being developed using existing resources and emphasised the role of young officers in leading the transformation process.

The NDA passing-out parade marked the graduation of 355 cadets. The ceremony included military displays, aerial demonstrations and participation by personnel from the three

Indian Navy maintained

throughout the military engagement.

Speaking after inaugurating the Nausena Shaurya Vatika, an open-air naval museum in Lucknow, Singh, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said the Navy played a key role in India's military response following the April 2025 terror attack in Pahalgam.

"The Navy remained deployed with full operational readiness in the Arabian Sea and exerted continuous pressure on the adversary," Singh said. "As a consequence, Pakistan's naval assets largely remained confined to their ports."

Pertinently, 'Operation Sindoor' was launched on May 7 last year in response to the Pahalgam terror attack that left 26 civilians dead. To avenge the attack Indian armed forces carried out strikes on terrorist camps deep inside Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Singh said the coordinated actions of the armed forces demonstrated India's preparedness and ability to respond to threats against national security.

The Defence Minister was joined at the inauguration by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi.

Developed jointly by the Indian Navy and the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department, the museum seeks to showcase the history, achievements and operational capabilities of the naval force.

Singh said the facility would help increase public awareness about maritime security and inspire younger generations to learn about the role of the Navy.

Explaining the choice of Lucknow for the project, despite the city being far from the coastline, Singh said maritime security has a direct bearing on the country's economy, trade and energy interests.

"The security of the oceans is linked to the prosperity of every citizen. Sailors who protect India's maritime interests come from all parts of the country, including inland regions," he said.

One of the main attractions at the museum is INS Gomati, a warship decommissioned in 2022. Components of the vessel, including its anchor, mast and propeller, have been preserved and displayed for visitors.

Singh noted the symbolic connection between the ship and the Gomti river that flows through Lucknow, saying the vessel had brought distinction to the city during its years of service.

The museum also houses naval equipment and exhibits aimed at familiarising visitors with maritime operations and naval technology. The Defence Minister said efforts are underway to add a submarine exhibit in the future.

Highlighting progress in the defence sector, Singh said India's indigenous defence manufacturing capabilities have expanded significantly over the past decade.

He said defence exports, which were below Rs 1,000 crore before 2014, have increased

substantially and are now reaching several countries across the world.

The minister also praised Uttar Pradesh's development trajectory and said the state had witnessed considerable growth in recent years. (KNO)

CM calls crucial

News Observer (KNO) that the Chief Minister has personally invited all party MLAs to attend the meeting.

According to sources, Omar Abdullah has written to the legislators that the meeting will deliberate on matters of collective importance and public welfare.

The meeting is scheduled to take place at the Chief Minister's Gupkar residence on June 3 at 10:00 AM.

The meeting assumes significance as Omar Abdullah had earlier hinted at making a major political statement after Eid. Speaking at a function in Tangmarg on May 6, the Chief Minister said he wanted to "burst like a cloud-burst" but added that he would speak openly at a public gathering after Eid.

While the specific agenda of the meeting is not known, the mention of "matters of collective importance" in the invitation suggests that broader issues such as J&K's statehood could be discussed.

CM Omar Abdullah had also met Union Home Minister Amit Shah on May 11 and discussed issues related to the restoration of statehood, transaction of business rules, rationalisation of reservation, and other key matters connected to public welfare, well-being, and governance. (KNO)

J&K Hajj pilgrims

purchased for their families during the pilgrimage.

The pilgrims said Hajj travellers had historically been allowed to carry 40 kilograms of luggage and questioned why the policy had changed this year.

"We have been preparing for months and bought gifts and essentials for our families back home. Now, suddenly, we are being told that most of our luggage will come separately by road. We are worried our belongings may get damaged or delayed," said one of the pilgrims.

Another pilgrim said that for years, Hajis were allowed to carry 40 kilograms of baggage. "Every year, the policy changes, and this creates confusion and stress for elderly pilgrims. We request authorities to restore the previous allowance or ensure the luggage reaches safely and quickly," he said.

Responding to the concerns, J&K Haj Committee Chief Executive Officer Dr Shujaat Ahmad Qureshi told KNO that the restrictions were linked to the ongoing runway maintenance work at Srinagar International Airport.

"As per our Hajj guidelines and the training provided to pilgrims, the normal allowance is 40 kilograms of check-in baggage plus 7 kilograms of hand baggage. However, due to the runway maintenance at Srinagar Airport and the NOTAM issued from April till October, operational limitations were imposed this year," Dr Qureshi said.

He said that during the outbound Hajj flights, pilgrims from Srinagar embarkation were allowed to carry 25 kilograms of check-in baggage along with 7 kilograms of hand baggage.

"We allowed 25 kilograms plus 7 kilograms during departure, but when we reviewed the average luggage carried by pilgrims, it was only around 18 kilograms," he said.

Dr Qureshi said the return flights of Hajj pilgrims to Jammu & Kashmir are scheduled to begin from June 2.

"Akasa Airlines is operating Hajj flights for four embarkation points, including Srinagar, Ahmedabad, Cochin and Bangalore. Across all these embarkations, the airline has now reduced baggage carriage to 35 kilograms plus 7 kilograms due to technical and operational issues," he said.

The CEO, however, said Srinagar embarkation faces additional limitations because aircraft cannot land with a heavy load while the runway maintenance work continues.

"Because of the ongoing repairs, aircraft operating to Srinagar will not be able to carry the full baggage load. Therefore, 30 kilograms of luggage belonging to each pilgrim will be transported separately by road from Ahmedabad to Srinagar," he added.

The Haj Committee CEO said pilgrims returning to Srinagar will only be permitted to carry 5 kilograms of check-in baggage and 7 kilograms of hand baggage on board the flight, while the remaining baggage will reach Kashmir separately within a few days.

"Zamzam water has already arrived in Srinagar, and it will be distributed to pilgrims at the airport after arrival," he said.

Dr Qureshi acknowledged the concerns of pilgrims who have purchased gifts and other items for their families and said efforts would be made to ensure the luggage reaches Srinagar within three to four days.

"Pilgrims requested that the baggage should remain with them, but they still have

a 12-kilogram allowance on the flight. If they are carrying any perishable or important items, they should keep those with them while travelling to Srinagar," he said. (KNO)

Hajj pilgrims' concerns

sharp attack on the People's Democratic Party (PDP), blaming it for the political developments that unfolded in Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, 2019.

Speaking to reporters after the Awami Darbar at Circuit House Pulwama in south Kashmir, Itoo said the government is aware of the issues being faced by some pilgrims and their relatives. "Whatever concerns have been brought to our notice regarding Hajj pilgrims will be carefully looked into. We understand the sentiments attached to the pilgrimage, and every issue will be examined in detail," she assured.

Launching a sharp attack on the PDP, the minister blamed the party for the August 5, 2019 developments. "What happened in Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, 2019, is because of the PDP. Driven by their lust for power, they allowed the BJP to rule here. As a consequence, the people of Jammu and Kashmir lost their identity, land rights, job protections and many other safeguards," Itoo alleged.

She further accused the PDP of engaging in criticism for political gains while ignoring the role it played in shaping the present situation. "They are still thirsty for the chair and are not willing to acknowledge the work this government has done during the last eighteen months despite operating with limited powers," she said.

Earlier, scores of people from Pulwama and Shopian districts gathered at the Awami Darbar to highlight issues concerning healthcare, education, road connectivity, drinking water supply, power infrastructure, employment opportunities and other developmental needs.

The minister was accompanied by MLA Pampore Hasnain Masoodi, MLA Zainapora Shaikat Hussain Ganie, senior officials from various departments, and National Conference leaders.

Itoo assured participants that the Omar Abdullah-led government remains committed to addressing people's concerns. "Every genuine issue raised by the public will be taken up with the concerned departments, and efforts will be made to ensure their timely resolution," she said.

Highlighting the achievements of the present administration, the minister said the government has focused on addressing public issues, strengthening essential services and accelerating development works across the Union Territory. "Our government will continue to work tirelessly for the welfare of the people. Despite limitations, we will continue to serve the people with dedication and sincerity," she added. (KNO)

Indian Army

Whether it is a war, terrorist attack or natural disasters, peace and security are all important," he said.

Lt Gen Mishra urged the recruits to uphold the force's glorious legacy with bravery, determination and perseverance. "India's first hope is the Army of India. From today, you will not only have a rank on your shoulders, but also the hopes and trust of millions of Indians. Your bravery, determination and perseverance will be an inspiration for future generations," he said.

He said the recruits were set to become part of the prestigious JAKLI Regiment after completing 24 weeks of difficult training.

"You are going to be a part of the JAKLI Regiment after the difficult training of the Agniveers for 24 weeks. Our Regiment's motto is not only to sacrifice our lives, but to live our lives," he said.

The White Knight Corps Commander said the recruits were fortunate to join an Army whose legacy of bravery, sacrifice and patriotism was "written in golden words."

Expressing confidence in the Agniveers, the Army commander said they would take the Army's glorious legacy to "new heights." "I am confident that all of you will take this glorious legacy to new heights," he said.

Lt Gen Mishra also congratulated and thanked the families of the recruits for supporting and encouraging them to join the Indian Army as Agniveers. "I would also like to congratulate and thank your family for supporting the Army of India and encouraging you to recruit as Agniveers," he said.

Lt Gen Mishra further prayed for the bright future, good health and successful military journey of the recruits. "I would like to pray to God, Allah, Waheguru and Buddha that your future, your health and your journey in the Army of India will be unparalleled. Once again, best wishes to all of you," he said.

Notably, the Attestation-cum-passing-out parade of the 7th batch of Agniveers comprising 538 recruits was conducted with full military tradition and grandeur at the JAKLI Regimental Centre in Srinagar on Saturday. (KNO)

US secy of war Pete Hegseth: 'India is powerful and modernising its military'

AP

India is "powerful" and "modernising" its military with heavy industrial and logistics capacity to sustain "high-end military operations", US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth said on Saturday.

Hegseth made these remarks while talking to the delegates at the Shangri-La Dialogue on Saturday in Singapore.

"India is powerful and modernising its military," he said and also highlighted that it is maintaining a balance of power, particularly in the Indian Ocean.

Speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue, he noted that India was also "building a heavy industrial and logistics capacity to sustain high-end military operations." "We've also committed to pursuing co-production with India to advance capabilities," said Hegseth, adding that America was undergoing a national manufacturing globalisation of its defence.

He also assessed defence-related relations with Japan, South Korea, ASEAN and Australia.

Hegseth highlighted several points on the US' defence strategy



in the region, noting that the Asia-Pacific was the most consequential region in the world, that the security of the region rested "disproportionately" on the US military power and called on nations to invest seriously in their own defence.

He pointed out that the US and China relations are better than they have been in many years under President Donald Trump, but also that "no state, including China, can

impose hegemony and hold the security of our nation and allies in question."

Hegseth expressed Washington's stand amidst global tension and the ongoing conflicts in West Asia and Europe, as well as growing uncertainty over the United States' long-term strategic priorities in the Indo-Pacific.

The Shangri-La Dialogue, into its second day, brings together top officials from 44 nations this year.

From Gandhi to Modi: India's biggest brand ambassador now is PM, says Shekhawat

PTI

New Delhi, May 30: Till 10-15 years ago, India's identity abroad was primarily linked with Mahatma Gandhi but that has changed and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is now the country's "biggest brand ambassador", says Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.

The culture of India - its heritage, festivals and cuisine - is the country's identity too, the Union culture and tourism minister said in an interview with PTI Videos.

The way India was perceived in the world had been "somewhat lacking", he said.

"Till 10-15 years ago, if you went to any country in the world and if you asked a person, based on his appearance, whether he was an Indian, he would hesitate in calling himself an Indian. He would introduce himself as an Asian.

"Then, if you asked him, where in Asia he was from, he would say that I am an Indian," the minister told PTI earlier this week.

Moreover, if a visitor would tell anyone abroad that he or she was an India, the answer



would be, "India! Oh, Mr Gandhi", Shekhawat said, adding that the image and identity of India remained "stuck with Gandhiji".

"But today, and I say it with confidence, you can go to any country in the world... from the smallest Caribbean island to America, and from South Asia to West Asia, you can go anywhere, and if you tell someone that 'I am from India', you will see a bright smile on his face, and an exclamation, 'India! Oh, Mr Modi!'"

The minister was asked what was India's bigger brand ambassador -- culture and tourism or Bollywood.

"Nowadays, the biggest brand ambassador we have

is our prime minister," he replied.

"Otherwise also, this is not a political reply. I am saying this as a layman. Like we just said, till 10-15 years ago, Gandhiji was the brand ambassador of India for decades. And now Modi is the brand ambassador of India. But the culture of India is the brand ambassador of India. And the culture of India is the identity of India in itself," Shekhawat said.

While culture and heritage will remain the essence of a country and its identity, the image of a leader changes the image of a country abroad, he said.

And when the image of a country changes, it inevitably

impacts the country's tourism, and the attraction towards that country gets augmented, the tourism minister argued.

The change that has taken place gives India leverage and gives the confidence and conviction that foreign tourist arrivals in India will grow from 10 crore at present to 100 crore by 2047, Shekhawat added.

If there is any beneficiary sector in India's anticipated economic prosperity and the way world class facilities are being developed, it will be tourism.

Should tourism be treated as a strategically important sector, just like the IT sector is?

"If I compare, I feel that it has not got that much strategic importance, but the prime minister has worked at a very swift pace in this direction," Shekhawat replied.

All the missions of India have been told that one of the parameters for assessing their performance will be the number of tourists coming to India from that country. So, now the missions are also on the job, and everyone is on their toes, he said.

CUET-UG delayed at some centres due to technical glitch, afternoon timing revised: NTA

PTI

New Delhi, May 30: The CUET-UG 2026 for admissions into undergraduate degree programmes across India was delayed at some centres on Saturday due to a technical glitch, the National Testing Agency said.

The issue has since been resolved and the examination is being conducted with full compensatory time so that no candidate is disadvantaged, the National Testing Agency (NTA) said.

"TCS has reported that a technical glitch at their end delayed the commencement of CUET UG 2026 at some centres on Saturday. The issue has since been resolved, and the exam is being conducted with full compensatory time so that no candidate is disadvantaged," the NTA said on X.

"Afternoon session timing (revised): Reporting/entry from 2:30 pm; examination begins at 4:00 pm instead of 3:00 pm," the NTA said.

Morning session candidates are being given the full duration of the paper and are allowed to exit only after completion of the test.

"NTA sincerely regrets the



inconvenience caused to students and parents," the agency said.

The NTA has also provided a helpline number - +91-11-40759000 - and email support - cuet-ug@nta.ac.in - for assistance.

Introduced in 2022, the Common University Entrance Test-Undergraduate, or CUET-UG, is a standardised, national-level entrance exam conducted by the NTA for admissions into undergraduate degree programmes across central, state, and select private universities.

Replacing multiple entrance tests, CUET-UG aims to provide a uniform assessment platform. It evaluates candidates on language skills, domain-specific subjects, and general aptitude, aligning with the National Education Policy 2020 to promote inclusivity and equal opportunities.

Fund transfers to women under 'Annapurna Yojana' to begin June 3: Bengal CM

PTI

Kolkata, May 30: West Bengal Chief Minister Suvenudh Adhikari on Saturday said the first phase of fund transfers under the 'Annapurna Yojana' would begin from June 3, with eligible women beneficiaries receiving Rs 3,000 directly in their bank accounts.

Adhikari said beneficiaries need not be worried as state government officials would visit households to help them fill the application forms for the scheme, in order to ensure that the assistance reaches only genuine recipients.

The 12-page application form, which requires women to provide detailed information about every family member, has drawn criticism from several quarters, with some alleging that excessive documentation could exclude genuine beneficiaries.

"There is no need to be worried. Our officials will go



door-to-door and help women fill the forms. Do not pay heed to any rumours. We want only genuine beneficiaries to receive the benefits of the scheme," Adhikari said, addressing a programme of the health department in Kolkata.

The chief minister said his government was committed to maintaining transparency

and financial discipline while implementing welfare programmes.

"We don't want the funds to be credited to the accounts of any non-Indian, or men to receive benefits meant for women beneficiaries," Adhikari said.

Several men have already been arrested for allegedly receiving benefits intended for women beneficiaries, he said. Adhikari asserted that the state government would fulfil all promises outlined in its 'Sankalpa Patra' (poll manifesto).

The CM said that starting June 1, women will be able to travel free of cost in buses operated by the West Bengal government, materialising one of the BJP's poll promises.

Adhikari also said the state budget would be presented on June 22, and expressed hope that it would meet the aspirations of the people of West Bengal.

Latest govt survey shows improved menstrual hygiene among Indian women

PTI

New Delhi, May 30: Use of hygienic methods of menstrual protection among women aged 15-24 years increased from 77.6 per cent in 2019-21 to 79.2 per cent in 2023-24, according to the National Family Health Survey-6 (NFHS-6) released on Friday.

The increase in use of hygienic methods of menstrual protection has been supported by initiatives such as the Menstrual Hygiene Scheme (MHS) within the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) and the affordable sanitary products under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana.

The survey also showed that the percentage of women who have used the internet at least once has nearly doubled from 33.3 per cent during the 2019-2021 period to 64.3 per cent in 2023-24. The NFHS-5 for the 2019-2021 period had

recorded that 33.3 per cent Indian women had used the internet at least once. This figure has doubled over the interim two-year period, suggesting a paradigm shift in digital accessibility among women.

Women with banking or savings accounts have increased from 78.6 per cent in 2019-2021 (NFHS-5) to 89 per cent in 2023-24 (NFHS-6), while women having a personal mobile phone rose from 53.9 per cent in 2019-2021 to 63.6 per cent in 2023-24, the data showed.

The NFHS-6 records continued advancement in women's digital inclusion and financial empowerment, the Union health ministry said.

According to the health survey, the use of hygienic methods of menstrual protection among women in 15-24 age group has increased from 77.6 per cent in 2019-2021 to 79.2 per cent in 2023-24.

Half of newborns in India breastfed within 1st hour of birth: NFHS-6

PTI

New Delhi, May 30: The percentage of children under three years of age who were breastfed within an hour of birth increased by nearly 10 percentage points, rising from 41.8 per cent in 2019-2021 (NFHS-5) to 50.1 per cent in 2023-24, according to the National Family Health Survey-6 released on Friday.

The new data reveals that 95.6 per cent of children under six months of age were breastfed during the survey period.

The Union Health Ministry stated that NFHS-6 indicates encouraging progress in child nutrition outcomes, showing a positive trajectory toward achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

However, exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months declined from 63.7 per cent in NFHS-5 to 55.8 per cent in NFHS-6, as reported in the data.

Moreover, the prevalence of stunting (low height for age) among children under five years has significantly decreased from 35.5 per cent to 29.3 per cent, reflecting improvements in long-term nutritional outcomes. The significant reduction in stunting prevalence provides

strong evidence of progress in long-term nutritional transition and child health outcomes in India, according to the Health Ministry.

Severe wasting (being too thin for one's height) also declined sharply from 7.7 per cent to 5.2 per cent, while the prevalence of underweight children under five experienced a slight decrease from 32.1 per cent to 31.8 per cent. Additionally, improvements were observed in infant and young child feeding practices.

The percentage of children aged 6-8 months receiving solid or semi-solid food along with breast milk increased from 45.9 per cent to 59.5 per cent.

These gains are attributed to collaborative efforts across various ministries through flagship initiatives such as POSHAN Abhiyaan, Saksham Anganwadi, and POSHAN 2.0, alongside strengthened service delivery under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS). Complementary interventions under the National Health Mission (NHM), including maternal and child health services, Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs), Mother's Absolute Affection (MAA), Infant and Young Child Feeding, Iron and folic acid supplementation and growth monitoring, have further contributed to improved outcomes, the ministry noted.

Defence min, UP CM inaugurate 'Nausena Shaurya Vatika' in Lucknow



PTI

Lucknow, May 30: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday inaugurated 'Nausena Shaurya Vatika', an open-air museum and interpretation centre dedicated to the bravery, valour and technological excellence of the Navy in Lucknow.

Indian Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, and Deputy Chief Ministers Brajesh Pathak and Keshav Prasad Maurya were also present during the event.

Developed in the CG City area through a joint effort of the Navy and the

Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department, the facility is expected to emerge as a major military tourism attraction in the state capital. According to a press statement, the vatika is a tribute to the brave personnel of the Navy and will serve as a source of inspiration for future generations.

"The museum would help strengthen the spirit of patriotism and military pride among the youth while giving visitors an opportunity to learn about the dedication and courage displayed by naval personnel," it said.

A key attraction at the site is the retired Navy warship INS Gomati, which was decommissioned on May 28, 2022. Other

exhibits include an anchor, CET-53M submarine obstacle equipment, the ship's main mast and its propeller.

The statement said Nausena Shaurya Vatika is expected to emerge as a prominent destination on Lucknow's tourism map and, in the years ahead, as one of the country's leading military tourism destinations.

Visitors would be able to gain insights into the history of the Navy, maritime security, naval operations and technological capabilities. The facility is also expected to encourage interest in defence services among children and young people, the statement said.

Several TMC lawmakers in touch, but no induction right now: Bengal BJP chief

PTI

Kolkata, May 30: Asserting that the door is now shut for several sitting TMC MPs and MLAs who are "keen to join the BJP" after its victory in West Bengal, state party president Samik Bhattacharya said in politics, "two plus two is not always four", keeping the possibility of future entry for taint-free leaders open.

In an interview with PTI, Bhattacharya said after securing a decisive mandate on its own, the party was under no compulsion to induct leaders from rival camps, and rejected any distinction between a "good TMC" and a "bad TMC".

He asserted that the party had learnt from its experience of large-scale defections ahead of the 2021 assembly polls and would keep those lessons in mind in future.

At the same time, signalling what he described as a changed political reality in Bengal, Bhattacharya said Muslims should recognise that governments could be formed without depending on minority votes, arguing that the BJP's two-thirds majority had altered the state's electoral arithmetic. Without



naming any leader or disclosing any number, Bhattacharya said. "Several TMC MPs and MLAs are willing to join us, but I don't want to comment on figures."

He insisted that the BJP had little need for political imports. "Right now, the door is closed. We don't need any TMC leader to win elections anymore. We have won on our own," the state BJP chief said.

Asked whether the party's position could change in the future, Bhattacharya struck a guarded note.

"In politics, two plus two is not always four; we won't open our door for any tainted leader...this decision would be a collective decision and not of an individual," he said. Even if the party eventually

considers fresh entrants, those tainted by allegations of corruption, involvement in recruitment scams or links with the TMC's alleged syndicate network would not be welcome, he asserted.

Seeking to clarify his stand on the TMC rank and file, Bhattacharya categorically rejected suggestions that he had ever classified sections of the ruling party as either a "good TMC" or a "bad TMC".

"I have never said there is a good TMC or a bad TMC. TMC and corruption have become synonymous," he said.

He, however, maintained that a section of TMC supporters and workers had remained untouched by corruption and had backed the BJP in the election.

Pentagon chief says US ready to restart strikes on Iran if no deal

REUTERS

Singapore, May 30: The US is ready to restart attacks on Iran if a deal cannot be reached, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said on Saturday, as negotiators from Washington and Tehran worked to bridge major differences blocking an agreement.

"Our ability to recommence if necessary...we are more than capable," Hegseth said in Singapore.

"Our stockpiles are more than suited for that, both there and around the globe, so we're in a very good place," he added.

Hegseth, speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Asia's premier forum for defense leaders, military and diplomats, said the US has not turned its back on the Asia-Pacific region despite being engaged in conflict with Iran.

"We can do two things at one time. We're super-charging our defense industrial base so that we're building 2X, 3X, 4X the munitions very soon to ensure that all of our (operations) plans are properly funded throughout the world," he said.

The Pentagon chief said President Donald Trump was



"patient" and wants to make a "great deal" that ensures Iran does not get a nuclear weapon.

On Friday, Trump said he would meet in a secure White House room to make a "final determination" on a proposal to end the Iran war, which would extend an early-April truce for another 60 days, giving negotiators time to forge a permanent end to the conflict.

The war launched by the US and Israel on February 28 has killed thousands of people, mainly in Iran and Lebanon, and caused global economic pain by pushing up energy prices due to Iran's effective closure of the

Strait of Hormuz.

Hegseth urges Asian allies to boost defence spending to counter China

Hegseth on Saturday urged Asian allies to ramp up military spending to counter China's growing power and prevent its dominance in the region, warning of "rightful alarm" over its rapid military buildup.

He said a stronger, more self-reliant network of allies is essential to deter aggression and preserve the balance of power.

"There is rightful alarm regarding China's historic military buildup and the expansion of its military activities in the

region and beyond," he said.

"A Pacific dominated by any hegemon would unravel the regional balance of power," Hegseth said. "No state, including China, can impose its hegemony and hold the security or prosperity of our nation and our allies in question."

"No freeloading"

Hegseth echoed President Donald Trump's long-standing demand that allies shoulder more of their own defense costs. Trump has pointedly said European and NATO partners should reduce reliance on Washington.

"The era of the United States subsidizing the defense of wealthy nations is over," Hegseth said. "We need partners, not protectorates," he added. "We don't have a strong alliance unless everyone has skin in the game. No freeloading."

Hegseth praised contributions from allies including South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, and said Japan was taking concrete steps to bolster its defenses.

Tokyo and Washington "must each pull our weight to strengthen the US-Japan alliance," he said.

US sanctions Iranian buyers of military technology

AFP

Washington, May 30: The United States has announced that it is "dismantling a sophisticated Iranian network" used to obtain sensitive military technology. The network "impersonated and defrauded" dozens of American technology companies out of millions of dollars to "acquire advanced equipment — including spectrum analyzers and security detection devices — for Iran's defense sector," State Department Tommy Pigott said in a statement.

The statement did not name the technology companies who were lured into doing business through fake websites that "mimicked real American

companies, using intermediaries in Dubai to receive shipments, and then smuggling the technology into Iran in violation of US sanctions." The network was led by Iran-based Ali Majd Sepehr, the State Department spokesman said.

On Thursday, the State Department announced a \$15 million reward for any information "leading to the disruption of the financial mechanisms of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its various branches." On Friday the White House said US

President Donald Trump will only sign

an agreement to end the war with Iran if it meets all his demands, amid



uncertainty over the outcome of talks between Tehran and Washington.

Trump's physician says president in 'excellent health', 'fully fit' to serve

AP

Washington, May 30: Donald Trump's physician says the president is in "excellent health" and is "fully fit" to serve as commander in chief after a medical exam Tuesday at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

A report from Dr. Sean Barababella, released late Friday, says Trump underwent a CT scan and other heart imaging, along with cancer screenings and other preventative assessments carried out by 22 specialists.

Trump, 79, said after the three-hour visit Tuesday that everything checked out "PERFECTLY."

The president weighed in at 238 pounds (108 kilograms), up 14 pounds (6 kg) from a medical exam in April 2025. His doctors gave him guidance on his diet, physical activity and weight loss, but concluded his "cognitive and physical performance are excellent."

With his 6-foot, 3-inch (1.9-meter) frame, Trump has a body mass index of 29.7. An index of 30 is considered by doctors to be obese.

The report also documented bruising on Trump's hands, explained as "minor



soft tissue irritation related to frequent handshaking," and said it was "a common and benign effect of aspirin therapy." Among the recommendations was a switch to low-dose aspirin.

Last year the White House said Trump was diagnosed with chronic venous insufficiency, a fairly common condition for older adults that causes blood to pool in the president's legs. The report from his latest exam noted "slight lower leg swelling" but said there was "improvement from last year."

His doctor reported nothing abnormal, saying Trump demonstrated strong cardiac, pulmonary, neurological and overall health.

"His demanding daily schedule, including multiple

high-level meetings, public engagements, and regular physical activity, continues to support his overall well-being," Barababella wrote.

Trump was again given the Montreal Cognitive Assessment, which is used to screen for dementia and cognitive impairment. Trump's doctors reported he scored 30 out of 30, the same that was reported last year and in 2018.

His cholesterol levels have improved significantly with the help of medication. Trump's total cholesterol came in at 143, down from 223 in 2018. It had been down to 140 last April. He takes rosuvastatin to help lower his bad cholesterol, known as LDL, and to raise his good cholesterol, or HDL. He also takes ezetimibe to help lower his LDL.

'Shubman Gill's batting has just been phenomenal'

PTI

Mullanpur, May 30: Gujarat Titans director of cricket Vikram Solanki has been blown away by the form and consistency his captain Shubman Gill has shown in the Indian Premier League.

Gill has totalled 722 runs this season, scoring the bulk of the runs for his team alongside opening partner Sai Sudharsan (710). Both are operating at a healthy strike rate of



160. Gill gave a batting masterclass in his team's chase of 215 on Friday, steering the Titans to their third final in five

seasons. Gill, the Test and ODI captain for India, was dropped from the T20 side ahead of the World Cup earlier this year.

He is more than ready, says Sanga on potential India call up for Sooryavanshi

PTI

Mullanpur, May 30: Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's performance against world class bowlers in the IPL is an indicator that he is more than ready to play for India, said Sri Lankan legend and Rajasthan Royals head coach Kumar Sangakkara.

The 15-year-old had a phenomenal first full season in the IPL as he aggregated 776 runs at a staggering strike rate of 237.31. He could well end up as the leading run getter of the tournament if Shubman Gill or Sai Sudharsan don't surpass him in the final on Sunday.

Having taken the likes of Jasprit Bumrah, Kagiso Rabada and Pat Cummins to the cleaners over the course of the two month long competition, Sooryavanshi has reinforced the popular belief that he is rarest of rare who would serve India for long.

After endorsements from former cricketers including the legendary Sunil Gavaskar, Sangakkara too indicated that the left-hander is ready for the highest level.

"You never know if anyone's ready until they play. And with everything Vaibhav's shown against some of the best bowlers in the world, I think he's more than ready to take on any challenge that you throw at him. And I'm sure that he'll get that call-up very, very soon," said the Sri Lankan after Royals' exit



from the IPL.

"He's batted with a lot of maturity, he has shouldered the responsibility of that opening partnership so well for us this season," he added.

India's next T20 assignment is in Ireland late June and there is a strong likelihood of Sooryavanshi making his international debut in that series.

After a 29-ball 97 in Eliminator, the teenager switched gears for 96 off 47 balls on Friday night, showing he can adapt if the situation demands.

"Yeah, I thought he batted brilliantly. It was a much tougher batting innings with wickets falling around him and he held his nerve and really got us to a defensible

total. The guy, for 15 years old, is very mature, he reads the game really well, he reads situations well and he's got no fear.

"I think we are very, very proud of the season that he's had and we just want to make sure that he keeps going, keeps that intent, keeps that no-fear attitude and keeps growing. I think he's going to be even better as the years go by," said Sangakkara.

How do Royals plan to look after Sooryavanshi in between IPL seasons?

"We all will have a plan for all our players, individually, fielding, fitness work, any skill work that we think they need. So for Vaibhav, it won't be different.

Show TIMINGS

SUNDAY, 31ST MAY

BHOOTH BANGLA (U/A16+) Hindi	01:50 PM 07:10 PM
PATI PATNI AUR WOH DO (U/A16+) Hindi	04:25 PM
CHAND MERA DIL (U/A16+) Hindi	10:55 AM 01:30 PM 06:55 PM
OBSESSION (A) English	12:10 PM
THE GREAT GRAND SUPERHERO ALIENS KA AAGMAN (U) Hindi	11:05 AM 05:05 PM
DHURANDHAR: THE REVENGE (A) Hindi	02:30 PM
TATA IPL FINAL 2026 (U) English	07:30 PM

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