

From crushing terrorism to Article 370...

PM Modi-led regime redefined India's security doctrine: Amit Shah

'Reforms strengthened deterrence, stability; coordinated efforts against terrorism, insurgency improved overall security environment'

KNO Monitoring Desk

New Delhi, Jun 17: Praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi led regime for fundamentally transforming country's national security architecture over the past 12 years, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said that the decisive steps like policy of zero tolerance towards terrorism, cross-border operations, abrogation of Article 370 and sustained efforts to curb insurgency and Naxalism have led to India emerging as a strong and secure nation.

In a statement marking 12 years of the PM Modi led government, Shah, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said India has emerged as a strong and secure nation capable of protecting its citizens and responding firmly to threats against its sovereignty.



government's approach towards terrorism, Shah said India has moved away from what he described as a defensive posture and adopted a strategy of swift and decisive action. He termed surgical strikes, air strikes and Operation Sindoor as examples of India's willingness

to target terrorist infrastructure beyond its borders.

According to Shah, Operation Sindoor marked a significant shift in India's response doctrine, with security forces destroying nine terror camps and eliminating more than 100 terrorists.

He said the operation

reflected the government's policy of zero tolerance towards terrorism and strengthened India's deterrence capabilities.

The Home Minister also cited the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir as a major step in strengthening national integration and internal security. He said the move helped establish a new security paradigm and contributed to greater stability in the region.

Shah said incidents of stone pelting in Jammu and Kashmir had come down significantly, while security measures along the country's borders had been strengthened. He noted that around 93 per cent of the border with Pakistan and nearly 80 per cent of the border with Bangladesh had been fenced to improve surveillance and prevent infiltration.

NAXAL VIOLENCE WITNESSED STEEP DECLINE
Referring to efforts against Left Wing | [More on P6](#)

Amarnath Yatra: MHA team to visit J&K on June 20, 21

High-level meetings to be held in Jammu, Kashmir to review security arrangements

KNO Monitoring Desk

Srinagar, Jun 17: A high-level team of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) led by Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan is likely to visit Jammu and Kashmir regions for two-days on June 20 and 21 to assess preparedness especially security arrangements for forthcoming Amarnath Yatra, slated to commence on July 3.

Sources told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the team will comprise heads of paramilitary forces, CRPF, BSF, SSB, and Intelligence Bureau and other key wings of the MHA. "Officers will review security arrangements for 57-day-long yatra in both Jammu and Kashmir divisions. The MHA meeting in Jammu is expected on June 20 followed by a similar meeting in Kashmir division on June 21," sources added.

Pertinently, on June 12



Union Home Minister Amit Shah chaired a high-level meeting in New Delhi to review security preparedness for the Amarnath Yatra. He directed the top security brass to focus on ensuring a safe and smooth pilgrimage for devotees. "Safety of pilgrims remains the top priority of the PM Modi-led government," Shah said.

The Union Home Minister directed officials to put in place a comprehensive,

multi-layered security grid along the Yatra routes through close coordination between Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), the Jammu and Kashmir Police, and other security agencies.

Shah laid emphasis on integrating modern technology with traditional security mechanisms.

During the meeting officials were directed to ensure extensive deployment of drones, CCTV | [More on P6](#)

NC MPs won't support NDA: Omar

KNO Correspondent

Bandipora, Jun 17: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said National Conference MPs won't support the NDA government at the Centre, amid reports of some Opposition MPs - including those from the Trinamool Congress and Shiv Sena (UBT) - allegedly backing the BJP-led government.

Speaking with reporters on the sidelines of a review meeting in Bandipora, CM Omar,

per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said he could not comment on the reasons behind their shift in support.

"Neither I, nor you can answer this question. By sitting in Bandipora how can I say what will DMK or Shiv Sena MPs do? It is up to them. It is up to their conscience. They will go as far as their conscience allows them to go," he said.

He said, "As far as National Conference MPs are concerned, we | [More on P6](#)



A view of majestic peaks and serene meadows at Sonamarg - a true paradise for nature lovers
Pic: Jahangir Shah (KNO/KT)

LG, CM condole loss of lives in Pahalgam accident

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jun 17: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah have expressed condolence over the loss of lives in a tragic road accident near Aru in Pahalgam that claimed two lives and left six others injured.

In a condolence message, the Lieutenant Governor said, "Pained by the loss of precious lives in the tragic road accident in Pahalgam. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family members in this hour of grief. I have directed the District Administration to provide all necessary assistance to those affected."

CM Abdullah conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and prayed for eternal peace to the departed souls. He prayed for strength and courage to the families to bear the irreparable loss.

Expressing concern over the injured, the Chief Minister directed the concerned authorities to ensure | [More on P6](#)



CM Omar unveils ₹100 crore dev package for Bandipora

18 major projects launched

KT News Desk

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday gave Bandipora district a massive developmental boost by inaugurating and laying the foundation stones for 18 major projects worth approximately 100 crore. These multisectoral projects | [More on P6](#)

J&K Private Universities Act - 2026

HED drafts rules; awaits Finance Dept's concurrence

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Jun 17: The Higher Education Department has drafted the Rules for the Private Universities Act, 2026 and forwarded them to the Finance Department for concurrence.

Sources disclosed to news

agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the department, in consultation with the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, has prepared the draft rules.

"The draft rules have been sent to the Finance Department for its concurrence since they have

financial implications," they said, adding that the rules have been framed to establish a clear framework for the functioning, accountability, and financial management of private universities.

An official further revealed that once the Finance Department | [More on P6](#)

Gross Enrolment Ratio

J&K girls' GER stuck at 46.6%, remains 'deficient'

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Jun 17: With a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 46.6 percent for female students at senior secondary level, Jammu and Kashmir finds itself mired in the 'deficient category,'—raising a question on the efficiency of educational outreach

in the region.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the recent official figures revealing GER of girls at higher secondary level said that, Jammu and Kashmir has a deficient rate of girls' enrolment at the higher secondary level, with its | [More on P6](#)

Govt sacks PDD lineman over terror links in Anantnag

- 3 FIRs, stone-pelting cases cited
- Action taken under Article 311(2) of Constitution

Umairsar Gul Ganaie

Srinagar, Jun 17: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has dismissed a lineman of the Power Development Department (PDD) from service over his involvement in terrorism and anti-national activities in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

According to an official order, a copy of which lies with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Mohammad Shafi Malik, a lineman | [More on P6](#)

J&K's transition into UT ended bloodshed, fear: LoP Sharma

'UT status, MHA control improved security scenario; Centre committed to dev, Pandit rehabilitation'

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jun 17: Stating that the era of violence, fear and bloodshed has largely come to an end in Jammu and Kashmir, Leader of Opposition and senior BJP leader Sunil Sharma on Wednesday said that region has witnessed a significant improvement in the security situation after its transition into a Union Territory.

Talking to reporters on sideline of function in Srinagar, the LoP as per the news



agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that during the previous regimes, law and order | [More on P6](#)

'Statehood BJP's commitment, but security will guide timing'

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jun 17: Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly and senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Sunil Sharma on Wednesday reiterated that restoration of statehood to J&K remains a commitment of the party and the Union Government. | [More on P6](#)

NIA attaches properties of accused in Pak-backed terror conspiracy case

Srinagar, Jun 17: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday attached two properties of a key accused in a Pakistan-backed terror conspiracy case, linked with the terror outfits Hizbul Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT).

In a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer, a NIA spokesman said, "The accused, Shaheen Ahmad Lone, was found by NIA to be involved in smuggling of arms, ammunition and explosives from Pakistan through the LoC. The weapons and explosives were further supplied to terrorists of

the banned HM and Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) terror organisations for unleashing terror activities in the Kashmir Valley."

"The NIA investigations had also found Lone, against whom trial is ongoing in case RC-01/2020/NIA/JMU in the NIA Special Court, Jammu, to be actively involved in receiving and transferring funds to the terrorists," the spokesman said, adding, "The NIA had arrested Lone in September 2020 and chargesheeted him in March 2021 under various provisions of the UA(P) Act."

He said the two properties attached today as part of the action | [More on P6](#)

Rain, thunderstorms, gusty winds lash Kmr parts; temps drop

MeT warns of hailstorms, flash floods at isolated places

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Jun 17: Several parts of Kashmir witnessed rain, thunderstorms and gusty winds on Wednesday, bringing down temperatures across the Valley, while the Meteorological Department warned of brief intense showers, hailstorms and flash floods at isolated places.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that a spell of rain and thundershowers affected many areas of Kashmir during the afternoon, with some places witnessing strong winds and lightning activity. | [More on P6](#)

PM Fasal Bima Yojana

CS stresses enhanced farmer coverage, timely settlement of claims in J&K

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JUNE 17: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo chaired a review meeting of the State Level Coordination Committee on Crop Insurance (SLCCCI) on Wednesday to assess the implementation and progress of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and related crop insurance schemes across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting, as per an official statement, besides ACS, APD was attended by the MD, J&K Bank; Director, Agriculture, Kashmir/Jammu; Convenor, UTLCB and other concerned officers from the Department.

While reviewing the implementation framework of PMFBY, the Chief Secretary emphasized the need to ensure coverage of all eligible farmer beneficiaries reflected on the Kisan Rin (KRIN) Portal in accordance with the guidelines of the Government of India. He directed the concerned departments, banks and other stakeholders to work in close coordination for achieving universal coverage of eligible farmers under the scheme.

Dulloo also called for leveraging the ongoing 'Khet Bachao Abhiyan' as an effective platform for creating



awareness among farmers and motivating them to avail the benefits of crop insurance. He observed that the campaign presents a valuable opportunity to educate farmers about the importance of risk mitigation through insurance and to encourage their enrolment under this farmer-centric welfare scheme. He also directed the banks to outreach their KCC customers for their enrolment under PMFBY here.

To strengthen coordination and address implementation challenges at the grassroots level, the Chief Secretary suggested that the Agriculture Production Department designate district-wise nodal officers for PMFBY. These officers, he said, should work closely with

banks, insurance companies and district administrations to identify and resolve bottlenecks, facilitate seamless enrolment of eligible farmers and ensure smooth implementation of the scheme across all districts of the UT.

Reiterating the Government's commitment towards safeguarding farmers against crop losses arising from natural calamities and adverse weather events, the Chief Secretary stressed the importance of collective efforts by all stakeholders to expand insurance coverage and enhance financial security of the farming community in Jammu and Kashmir.

During the meeting, the ACS, Agriculture Production Department, Dr Ashish Chandra Verma

gave a detailed overview of the scheme's performance since its inception, status of claims under Kharif 2025, coverage achieved during Rabi 2025-26, saturation of loanee farmers under the scheme and the implementation status of the Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS).

He underscored the need for creating greater awareness about the benefits of crop insurance at the grassroots level to enhance farmer participation under PMFBY. He observed that, besides leveraging the media for wider dissemination of information, the Agriculture Production Department will utilize the ongoing 'Khet Bachao Abhiyan' and other Government-sponsored outreach programmes and events

as effective platforms for educating farmers about the scheme and encouraging them to avail its benefits.

The meeting was further informed by Director Agriculture, Kashmir that since the launch of PMFBY in Jammu and Kashmir, more than 12.89 lakh farmers have been covered under the scheme, with over 6.85 lakh farmers benefiting through claim settlements.

He further elaborated that a cumulative area of over 4.05 lakh hectares has been insured under the scheme till Rabi 2025. Against a cumulative premium collection of Rs 463.37 Cr, claims amounting to Rs 220.35 Cr have been settled in favour of farmers, providing crucial financial support against crop losses.

Reviewing the status of Kharif 2025 claims, it was divulged that claims amounting to Rs 53.58 Cr have been submitted covering 1.27 lakh farmers across the Union Territory. Of these, nearly 2.01 lakh farmers were enrolled under PMFBY during Kharif 2025, covering an insured area of more than 75,000 hectares.

The meeting also reviewed localized calamity and post-harvest loss

DC Budgam reviews arrangements for International Yoga Day



KT News Desk

BUDGAM, JUNE 17: In connection with the upcoming International Yoga Day, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, Wednesday chaired a meeting at Conference hall Budgam to review and finalize the arrangements for the district-level celebration of International Yoga Day to be observed on June 21.

During the meeting, the DC, as per an official statement, directed all concerned officers to ensure comprehensive arrangements for the smooth and successful conduct of the event across the district. Stressing the importance of Yoga in promoting physical, mental and

emotional well-being, the DC emphasised the need for maximum public participation and awareness. He directed that International Yoga Day be celebrated in all Government and Private Schools, Colleges, and all Ayushman Arogya Mandirs across Budgam district to ensure the message of healthy living reaches every section of society.

The DC further instructed all Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) to actively coordinate and supervise Yoga Day celebrations at their respective subdivision headquarters in collaboration with line departments, educational institutions and local stakeholders to ensure enthusiastic participation at the grassroots level.

Ram Niwas Sharma visits border villages of Uri, reviews progress on VVP Phase-II

KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, JUNE 17: Commissioner Secretary Education Department, Ram Niwas Sharma, who is also Nodal Officer for Vibrant Villages Maidanan and Salasan, Wednesday visited the two border villages in Uri Sub-Division and reviewed the progress of developmental activities being undertaken under the Vibrant Village Programme (VVP) -Phase II.

He was accompanied by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate Uri, Joint Director School Education North Kashmir, Deputy Chief Education Officer Baramulla and other concerned officers of line departments.

During the visit, the Commissioner Secretary, as per an official statement, held extensive interaction with the residents, community representatives and local stakeholders at both Maidanan and Salasan villages. He listened to their concerns, developmental aspirations and suggestions regarding improvement in basic amenities and public



services. The residents highlighted various issues and demands related to infrastructure, connectivity, education, healthcare, drinking water supply and livelihood generation.

Assuring the people of the government's commitment towards the welfare and development of border communities, Ram Niwas Sharma stated that the Vibrant Village Programme aims to transform remote villages into self-reliant and vibrant settlements

through focused developmental interventions and improved public service delivery. He emphasized that sustained efforts are being made to strengthen the infrastructure and create better socio-economic opportunities for the residents living in border areas.

The Commissioner Secretary also conducted a comprehensive review of the developmental works and government schemes being implemented in the two villages. He was

briefed about the status of ongoing projects, achievements made so far, challenges being faced and the future plans envisaged under the programme.

He stressed the need for timely completion of projects, effective coordination among the departments and regular monitoring to ensure that developmental benefits reach the people in a tangible manner.

Ram Niwas Sharma directed the concerned officers to maintain close engagement with the local communities and adopt a proactive approach in addressing the public grievances and developmental needs. He further underscored the importance of ensuring transparency, accountability and quality in execution of works being carried out under the programme.

The visit provided an opportunity for on-the-ground assessment of developmental requirements and helped reinforce the administration's commitment towards accelerating the pace of development in border villages.

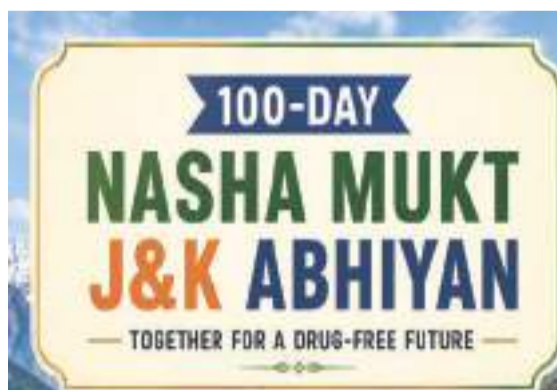
Nasha Mukat J&K Abhiyan

ANTF Crime Branch J&K commences 2-day capacity building programme for investigating officers

KT News Desk

JAMMU, JUNE 17: As part of the 100-Day 'Nasha Mukat J&K Abhiyan' launched on 11th April 2026, the Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) Crime Branch J&K Wednesday commenced a two-day specialised training programme for Investigating Officers at the Police Auditorium, Gulshan Ground, Jammu.

The programme, as per an official statement, was inaugurated by Inspector General of Police Jammu Zone Bhim Sen Tuti, who attended as Chief Guest. In his address, the IGP stated that the fight against the drug menace requires a multi-dimensional approach encompassing enforcement, quality investigation, effective prosecution, rehabilitation of victims and community participation. He noted that well-trained Investigating Officers form the



backbone of the criminal justice system and play a decisive role in dismantling drug trafficking networks and securing convictions.

A total of 120 Investigating Officers drawn from the Jammu-Kathua-Samba (JKS) Range and Udhampur-Reasi (UR) Range are participating. The programme aims to enhance the professional competence of field investigators handling NDPS cases and

strengthen institutional capacity to tackle narcotics trafficking. The 100-Day Abhiyan seeks to combine enforcement, prevention, awareness, rehabilitation and community engagement to disrupt supply chains, identify drug hotspots and sensitise vulnerable sections of society.

The two-day schedule includes sessions on the drug trafficking scenario in Jammu & Kashmir and the national perspective,

legal provisions of the NDPS Act, investigation and prosecution of NDPS cases, recent technological advancements, forensic and fingerprint applications, utilisation of NAFIS and case studies covering investigation from registration of FIR to filing of the Final Report. Sessions are being conducted by subject experts from the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), senior police officers, forensic specialists and legal practitioners.

Officers of ANTF stated that enhanced investigative skills, meticulous evidence collection and effective use of technology are essential for ensuring successful prosecution and deterrence against drug traffickers.

The programme will conclude on 18th June 2026 with practical evaluation exercises, feedback sessions and distribution of certificates to participants.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOOD & DRUGS ADMINISTRATION DRUG & FOOD CONTROL ORGANIZATION, J&K NEW LABORATORY COMPLEX, DALGATE SRINAGAR

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Subject: Prohibition on manufacture, storage, transportation, distribution, and sale of food products containing tobacco and/or nicotine as ingredients, including gutkha, pan masala, and products sold separately but intended for mixing, in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir for a period of one year with effect from 06-2026.

Order No: 157-FDA of 2026

Dated: 16.06.2026

Whereas, Regulation 2.3.4 of the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on sales) Regulations, 2011 prohibits the use of tobacco and nicotine as ingredients in any food products, as they are injurious to health; and Whereas, food is defined in section 3 (1) (j) of Food Safety and Standards Act 2006; as any substance, whether processed, partially processed or unprocessed, which is intended for human consumption and includes primarily food to the extent defined in clause (zk),

genetically modified or engineered food or food containing such ingredients, infant foods, packaged drinking water, alcoholic drink, chewing gum, and any substance, including water used to into the food during its manufacture, preparation or treatment but does not include any animal feed, live animals unless they are prepared or processed for placing on the market for human consumption, plants, prior to harvesting, drugs and medicinal products, cosmetics, narcotic or psychotropic substances: and

Whereas, food products containing tobacco and/or nicotine as ingredients, including Gutkha, Pan Masala and other chewable food products by whatever name called, are widely available in the market and their consumption poses serious health risks to the general public, particularly school-going children, adolescents, young adults and labourers, the continued manufacture, storage, transportation, distribution and sale of such products is prejudicial to public health and is likely to adversely affect the well-being of present and future generations, thereby necessitating prohibition thereof in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir in the interest of public health; and Whereas, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, in Central Arecanut Marketing Corporation & Ors. v. Union of India (Transfer Case (Civil) No. 1. of 2010), vide order dated 23.09.2016, observed that manufacturers, in order to circumvent the ban on Gutkha, were selling pan masala (without tobacco) along with flavoured chewing tobacco in separate sachets, often conjointly and through the same vendors, thereby enabling consumers to mix and consume the same as Gutkha; Whereas, the Hon'ble Supreme Court, taking note of such practices, directed all concerned statutory authorities to ensure strict compliance with Regulation 2.3.4 of the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2011, and further directed the Secretaries of Health Departments of all States/Union Territories to ensure effective enforcement of the ban on manufacture and sale of Gutkha and pan masala containing tobacco and/or nicotine;

Whereas, in compliance with the aforesaid directions, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), vide communications dated 05.10.2016 and 09.10.2017 (File No. 13(25)/2017/Tobacco Issues/RCD/FSSAI), and the Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, vide D.O. letter No. 16019/21/2014-P1-1-1-1 dated 05.12.2016, reiterated the prohibition under Regulation 2.3.4, which inter alia prohibits manufacture, storage, transport, distribution or sale of all food products, whether chewable or otherwise, which are flavoured, scented or mixed with tobacco and/or nicotine, including products sold in separate packages but intended for mixing by the consumer;

Whereas, it has been specifically clarified that such prohibition extends to all products, by whatever name called, whether packaged or unpackaged, and whether sold as a single product or as separate components facilitating easy mixing for consumption;

Whereas, it has further been observed by the Government of India, vide D.O. letter dated 24.10.2025 issued by the Additional Secretary, that several States/UTs have not been issuing or renewing the requisite orders/notifications under Section 30(2) (a) of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 on an annual basis, thereby adversely affecting effective enforcement of the said prohibition;

Whereas, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has again emphasized upon all Commissioners of Food Safety of States/UTs to ensure strict compliance with the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court dated 23.09.2016 and to issue/renew appropriate orders under Section 30(2)(a) of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, on an annual basis, prohibiting the manufacture, storage, distribution and sale of Gutkha and pan masala containing tobacco and/or nicotine, including products marketed separately but intended to be consumed together;

Whereas, the Commissioner of Food Safety, after recording the reasons herein, is satisfied that in the interest of public health, it is necessary to prohibit the manufacture, storage,

transportation, distribution, and sale of all food products containing tobacco and/or nicotine as ingredients, including gutkha, pan masala, and any products sold separately but intended to be mixed for consumption;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred under clauses (a) and (b) of sub-section (2) of Section 30 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (34 of 2006), I, Khalid Jahangir, Commissioner of Food Safety, Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, do hereby prohibit and order that no person shall manufacture, store, transport, distribute, or sell any food product that contains tobacco and/or nicotine as an ingredient. This prohibition applies to, but is not limited to:

- Gutkha containing tobacco/nicotine;
- Pan masala containing tobacco/nicotine;
- Any chewable or flavoured food product containing tobacco/nicotine;
- Any chewable or flavoured food product containing tobacco/nicotine, whether sold as a single product or in separate packages intended to be mixed for consumption.

This order shall remain in force throughout the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir for a period of one year from June 2026.

The Food Safety Officers and other authorities under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, shall ensure strict compliance with this order. Any violation shall be liable for penal action under the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

Khalid Jahangir JKAS
Commissioner Food & Drugs Administration J&K.

DIPK-2249/26

DATED: 17-06-2026

No: FADA-Tech/38/2025-05

Dated: 16.06.2026

'Peer pressure fuels drug abuse in Srinagar schools'

***DIET research reveals tobacco as most commonly abused substance**

***68% boys aware of drug abuse causes
*Less than 50% girls aware**

***Science students more aware than humanities, commerce**

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Jun 17 : A comprehensive research study conducted by the District Institute of Educational Research and Training (DIET) Srinagar has highlighted alarming trends related to drug and substance abuse among secondary and higher secondary school students in the district, underscoring the urgent need for stronger prevention and intervention measures within educational institutions.

The study, titled "Drug and Substance Abuse in Secondary and Higher Secondary School Students of District Srinagar – An Empirical Study for Prevention and Intervention", examined the awareness, causes, prevalence, and impact of drug abuse among adolescents and proposed school-based strategies to tackle the growing menace.

Researchers noted that drug and substance abuse has emerged as one of the most serious social challenges globally and that Kashmir has not remained untouched by this disturbing trend. Despite efforts by parents, teachers, religious leaders, and community stakeholders, the problem continues to pose significant risks to the younger generation.

The research was conducted among students of Classes 9th to 12th across 10 secondary schools and 10 higher secondary



THE RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED AMONG STUDENTS OF CLASSES 9TH TO 12TH ACROSS 10 SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND 10 HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS in Srinagar, equally representing boys' and girls' institutions. Out of a total student population of 7,552, a sample of 3,100 students was selected through random sampling. Data was gathered through structured questionnaires administered to students, teachers, and Heads of Institutions (HOIs), and subsequently analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

schools in Srinagar, equally representing boys' and girls' institutions. Out of a total student population of 7,552, a sample of 3,100 students was selected through random sampling. Data was gathered through structured questionnaires administered to students, teachers, and

Heads of Institutions (HOIs), and subsequently analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The findings revealed notable disparities in awareness levels between boys and girls. Less than half of the female students surveyed

were aware of the causes and consequences of drug abuse, whereas around 68 per cent of boys demonstrated awareness regarding the issue.

Continued on
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Two killed in Pahalgam road accident

Jahangeer Ganaie

Pahalgam, June 17: Two persons, including a woman, lost their lives in a road accident in the Aru area of Pahalgam in South Kashmir's Anantnag district on Wednesday after a vehicle they were travelling in skidded off the road and plunged into a deep gorge near Gudkhoom.

An official said that the accident occurred on the scenic Aru-Pahalgam route when a driver of an Alto vehicle (bearing no. JK03C-6737) lost control near Gudkhoom and veered off the road, falling into a deep gorge.

The vehicle was being driven by Imran Hussain Ganie (27), son of Ghulam Qadir Ganie, a resident of Pethugh Dialgam in Anantnag district. He was travelling from Pahalgam towards Aru Valley with a woman passenger when the mishap occurred.

Officials said that upon reaching Gudkhoom, the driver lost control of the vehicle, causing it to plunge into the gorge. Both occupants sustained critical injuries and succumbed to their injuries on the spot.

Following the accident, rescue teams and local authorities rushed to the spot and shifted the bodies to the New Type Primary Health Centre (NTPHC), Pahalgam, where medico-legal formalities were conducted and bodies were handed over to legal heirs.

Police have taken cognizance of the incident and initiated an investigation to ascertain the exact circumstances that led to the accident—(KNO)

Chief Secy reviews implementation of POSH Act

KT News Desk

Srinagar, June 17: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Wednesday chaired a high-level meeting to review the implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act) across J&K, emphasizing the need for ensuring safe, secure and conducive work environments for women in both public and private sectors.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, Home Department; Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir; Commissioner Secretary, Law Department; Secretary, Rural Development Department; Secretary, Transport Department; Managing Director, Mission Shakti; Joint Director, Information Department, besides other concerned officers. During the meeting, the Chief Secretary underscored the importance of implementing the provisions of the POSH Act and the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in their true letter and spirit.

He directed the Social Welfare Department to devise a comprehensive implementation framework clearly delineating responsibilities at various levels to ensure that all workplaces are compliant with the provisions of the Act and remain safe and supportive spaces for women employees. Stressing the need



for widespread awareness, Dulloo called for intensified outreach among women working in government departments, public institutions and private establishments regarding their rights, safeguards and grievance redressal mechanisms available under the Act.

He also emphasized the need for regular capacity-building programmes for all stakeholders, including District Nodal Officers, members of Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs) and other functionaries responsible for enforcing the Act.

The Chief Secretary advised the Law Department to facilitate training programmes through the Legal Services Authorities and strengthen awareness and legal literacy initiatives related to the Act.

He further directed Mission Shakti to ensure that districts regularly organize 'Mahila Jan Sunwai'

programmes on a monthly basis under the supervision of District Magistrates, Senior Superintendents of Police and District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs), providing a dedicated platform for women to raise their grievances and seek timely redressal.

He also instructed the department to undertake extensive dissemination of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material related to the POSH Act, Women Helpline-181 and the SH-Box portal at workplaces and through departmental websites to enhance awareness and accessibility of grievance redressal mechanisms.

Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Sarmad Hafeez, highlighted the key provisions of the

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Vishesh Mahajan reviews transport preparedness for SANJY-2026

KT News Desk

Ganderbal, June 17: Transport Commissioner, Vishesh Mahajan on Wednesday visited Sonamarg and Batal to review the transport preparedness and arrangements being put in place for the smooth conduct of the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY) 2026.

He was accompanied by RTO Kashmir, Qazi Irfan; ARTO Ganderbal, Anis Ahmed and other officers of the Transport Department.

The meeting reviewed the preparedness of various departments and discussed measures required to ensure safe, efficient and hassle-free transportation facilities for the pilgrims.

He emphasized that drivers engaged for the Yatra must possess the requisite driving skills, valid credentials and be well acquainted with the Yatra route, traffic regulations, safety protocols and emergency response measures.

Taking serious note of complaints regarding overcharging by transport operators, the Transport Commissioner directed strict adherence to the notified fare structure and warned that any instance of overcharging would invite stringent action under the relevant provisions of law.

The Transport Commissioner also

reviewed the availability of vehicles for the Yatra and directed transport operators to ensure adequate deployment of vehicles to cater to the anticipated demand of pilgrims. He stressed the need for maintaining sufficient reserve capacity to address any surge in passenger traffic during the Yatra period.

As part of the visit, the Transport Commissioner inspected the Motor Vehicles Department Enforcement Post at Sonamarg and reviewed the enforcement and facilitation measures being undertaken by the department. He directed the field officers to maintain effective surveillance and ensure strict compliance with all safety and regulatory requirements.

The issue of parking management was also discussed in detail. Directions were issued for earmarking adequate parking slots in consultation with the Traffic Police and other concerned agencies. The Transport Commissioner reviewed the proposed technology-based parking management system and emphasized the effective use of the dedicated mobile application for allocation, monitoring and management of parking slots to ensure orderly movement of vehicles and minimize congestion in the Yatra area.

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Div Com reviews prep for Int Yoga Day celebrations



KT News Desk

Srinagar, June 17: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Wednesday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess and finalize arrangements for the observance of International Yoga Day across the Kashmir Division.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners, Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Director AYUSH, Director SKICC, and senior officers from various departments, including Health,

School Education, Sports Council, Fire & Emergency Services, Traffic Police and other stakeholder agencies.

The flagship event is scheduled to be held at the SKICC on June 21 from 6:00 AM to 8:00 AM.

Reviewing the preparations, the Divisional Commissioner directed the Director AYUSH to ensure the timely distribution of yoga mats and T-shirts among participants.

He further instructed the Additional Deputy

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Army Chief receives Rahul Pandit's book on information warfare, digital conflict

KT News Desk

New Delhi, June 17: In a notable recognition of emerging strategic thought and contemporary national security discourse, Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi was presented with Information Warfare: Battleground of the Digital Age, authored by Rahul Pandit, during a special interaction showcasing influential publications on military excellence, leadership and evolving security challenges.

The event, highlighted by the Public Information Directorate of the Indian Army (ADG PI), underscored the growing relevance of intellectual engagement in addressing the changing nature of warfare and national security.

According to the Indian Army's official communication, Information Warfare: Battleground of the Digital Age examines how warfare is increasingly shifting into the digital domain, focusing on challenges posed by



misinformation, cyber threats, psychological operations and the expanding role of information ecosystems in modern conflict.

The book explores information as a strategic instrument of national power and analyses its influence on military operations, public opinion, geopolitical competition and national security decision-making. It further examines emerging challenges including

cyber warfare, disinformation campaigns, social media manipulation, cognitive warfare, artificial intelligence and information operations carried out by both state and non-state actors.

The publication was featured alongside several notable works, including The Sports Legends of Defence Services & CAPF (Vol I & II) by Smt Vaneeta Vaid, India's Water Security – Threats, Strategies and Solutions by Major General

Akash Kaushik, Echoes From Academy Lines by Lieutenant Colonel Herald Ford Mochari and Defence Reimagined: 33 Domains to Revolutionize National Security by Shivam Arya.

The presentation reflected the increasing emphasis on strategic scholarship and informed policy discussions to address complex and evolving security concerns. Collectively, the

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NC's statehood protest as per schedule: MP Mian Altaf



Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, June 17: National Conference (NC) Member Parliament (MP), Mian Altaf Ahmad on Wednesday said the party's proposed protest for restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir will be held as per schedule during the upcoming Monsoon Session of Parliament.

Speaking to reporters, Altaf said the protest was the party's responsibility and would take place at the designated time. "The Chief Minister has also made it clear that the protest will be held as scheduled. We

are fulfilling our duty, and it is a good step," he said.

Commenting on reports of defections and political developments in various parties across the country, the MP said such trends were detrimental to democratic values. "India is known across the world for its democracy, secularism, independent judiciary and free media. It is unfortunate that these institutions are becoming weaker," he said.

Reacting to claims by political opponents about instability

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EDITORIAL

Prescription For Healthier, Safer India

The Union Health Ministry's decision to amend the Drugs Rules, 1945, making it mandatory to produce a doctor's prescription for purchasing all syrups, is a welcome and long-overdue step. For years, cough syrups, fever syrups, and other liquid formulations have been available over the counter, often without any medical consultation. This practice has encouraged self-medication, delayed proper diagnosis, and contributed to the growing menace of antibiotic resistance. The misuse of cough syrups

containing codeine and other potentially addictive ingredients has been a particular concern. Young people, in particular, have been known to abuse these syrups for their sedative or euphoric effects. By removing syrups from the exempted list under Schedule K of the Drugs Rules, the government has closed a dangerous loophole. What was once freely available is now properly regulated. Health experts have long warned about the dangers of uncontrolled access to medicines. Antibiotic resistance, a global health

crisis, is fuelled by the indiscriminate use of antibiotics without prescription. Patients often self-prescribe syrups for symptoms like cough or fever, masking underlying conditions that require proper diagnosis. This amendment encourages patients to consult doctors, ensuring that treatment is appropriate, timely, and safe. The decision also brings greater accountability to the pharmacy sector. Pharmacists can no longer sell syrups without verifying a prescription. This will help monitor medicine sales and

promote responsible dispensing practices. The amendment, notified through the Drugs (Fifth Amendment) Rules, 2026, follows a public consultation process, showing that the government has considered stakeholder feedback before implementing this important change. Some may argue that this causes inconvenience, especially for those in remote areas where access to doctors is limited. But the long-term benefits of curbing self-medication and preventing drug misuse far outweigh the short-term

difficulties. The government must now ensure that the rule is properly enforced and that pharmacists are trained to comply with the new provisions. This is a significant step toward patient safety and rational medicine use. It reflects a mature understanding that medicines are not ordinary consumer goods. They must be used with care, under medical supervision. The Health Ministry deserves praise for taking this firm and necessary stand. It is a prescription for a healthier, safer India.

The Arithmetic Of Aspiration: Why India's Employment Question Now Turns On Permanence

The question before policymakers is not one of whether enough jobs exist, but whether the economy can generate employment that is sufficient in number, formal in character, and durable enough to carry a young worker into a lifetime of rising productivity and security.

Dr. V. Anantha Nageswaran

When Sir Arthur Lewis set out in 1954 to explain how poor economies grow rich, he located the central drama of development not in the accumulation of capital, but in the migration of workers out of subsistence agriculture into the more remunerative occupations of industry and services, a transition he rightly anticipated would govern the prospects of every late-industrialising nation. India stands precisely at that crossing today, and the question before policymakers is not one of whether enough jobs exist, but the more demanding one of whether the economy can generate employment that is sufficient in number, formal in character, and durable enough to carry a young worker into a lifetime of rising productivity and security.

The scale of the task can be stated with some precision, for the Economic Survey 2023-24, drawing on the Periodic Labour Force Survey and demographic projections, estimated that the economy must generate nearly 78.5 lakh non-farm jobs every year through the remainder of this decade, a figure flowing from two compounding pressures, the steady rise in the workforce as participation deepens, and the labour that structural transformation must draw out of agriculture, whose share in employment, still close to 46 per cent, is expected to fall towards a quarter by 2047.

The Pradhan Mantri Viksit



Bharat Rozgar Yojana, approved by the Union Cabinet in July 2025 and operational from the following month, is the most considered attempt yet to attack that deficit, deploying 99,446 crore through the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation to catalyse more than 3.5 crore formal jobs in the two years to July 2027. A worker joining an EPFO-registered establishment

for the first time, and earning below 1 lakh a month, becomes eligible for up to 15,000 paid in two instalments, the second conditional on a financial literacy course and held in savings, while employers who expand their payroll beyond an established baseline receive up to 3,000 a month for each new worker, on terms calibrated so that even small firms are drawn in rather

than crowded out. What elevates the scheme above the familiar and disappointing genre of hiring subsidies is its requirement of six months of continuous employment before the first benefit is released, since hiring a first-timer pays off only if the worker stays to become productive, and the condition converts the initial hiring into a genuine commitment, assuring the employer

of tenure enough to repay the cost of training while giving the worker the months within which real skills and a credible record are built. Thus, it rewards not hiring, but the harder discipline of retention, and what it leaves behind is a portable employability track record for the worker.

Its most deliberate tilt is towards manufacturing, where the employer incentive runs for four years rather than two, a doubling that acknowledges the longer gestation of industrial capacity and weights the manufacturer's calculus towards expanding the workforce rather than substituting labour prematurely with automation. Importantly, it is a stance that the government has recognised as essential to the country's realisable aspiration to become a global manufacturing centre. Through the EPFO, every worker on-boarded acquires a Universal Account Number and a first taste of social security few informal workers have known, and the early returns are encouraging, with some 60 lakh first-time employees enrolled since the launch, the bulk of them under thirty and over 18 lakh of them women, while nearly 1.77 lakh establishments, many of them small firms where informality has long concentrated, have generated upward of 66 lakh opportunities.

It would be imprudent, however, to mistake an encouraging beginning for an accomplished transformation, and the scheme's safeguards, its exclusion of fraud-tainted establishments, its

six-monthly electronic returns confirming that employment is sustained rather than merely declared, and its automated disbursement, reflect a welcome awareness that schemes of this kind must guard against rewarding hiring that would have occurred anyway. Its true measure will lie not in the first year's enrolment figures but in whether the jobs outlast the incentive that created them, and whether the demand it stimulates meets a supply of employable young people, which is why its fortunes are inseparable from parallel investment in skilling.

It is worth remembering that joblessness penalises far more than income, eroding skills, self-respect, and one's place in society, and Voltaire had said as much when he let Candide conclude that labour keeps three great evils at bay, namely boredom, vice, and want. A scheme of this kind is finally to be valued because it grasps that fuller meaning of employment, treating the formal job not as a statistic to be tallied but as the first secure rung of a working life, and the task now, as India sets its course towards a developed economy by 2047, is to hold to the patience the scheme embodies and to ensure that meaningful employment for the young, which the Prime Minister has placed at the centre of the national project, is realised not in a single season of incentives but across a generation of durable, productive, and dignified work.

The author is the Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of India

Beyond The Wage: Building A Workforce For Viksit Bharat

Dr R Balasubramaniam

Ravi, a young worker in Coimbatore, six months into his first formal job at a small manufacturing unit, recently received a credit of Rs 7,500 in his bank account, separate from his monthly salary. The amount was disbursed automatically following completion of six months of continuous employment. His family had previously been engaged only in informal work, without contracts, provident fund contributions or any documented record of employment, and this was the first occasion on which his employment had been formally recorded and accompanied by a benefit of this kind.

The payment he received is his first instalment under Part A of the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY), introduced in the Union Budget 2024-25 as part of the Prime Minister's Package for Employment and Skilling. Under this provision, first time employees joining (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) EPFO-registered establishments with monthly earnings below Rs 1 lakh receive a cash incentive of up to Rs 15,000, disbursed in two instalments, the first after six months of continuous employment and the second after twelve months, conditional on completion of a financial literacy course through the EPFO portal, and deposited into a savings instrument to build a financial cushion for the worker. For Ravi,

these six months were not merely a qualifying period. They were the months in which he gained familiarity with his workplace, acquired the basic skills of his trade and began to build an employment record where none had existed before.

This period mattered for his employer too, a small manufacturing unit that had taken him on as part of its expansion. Part B of PM-VBRY provides that employers who create employment above their existing baseline receive a government contribution of up to Rs 3,000 per additional employee per month, over two years across sectors and over four years in manufacturing. The contribution offsets part of the cost that a firm bears in the early months of a new hire, when onboarding and training are underway and a worker without prior formal experience is still becoming productive. By easing this initial cost, the provision extends the scheme's reach to small businesses of the kind that employed Ravi. For manufacturing units such as his, the four-year window, twice the standard period, makes a case for firms to expand their workforce alongside investments in automation.

For a country with India's demographic profile, a young and growing workforce presents an opportunity to drive economic growth through employment-led development toward a Viksit Bharat by 2047. The extent to which new entrants enter formal employment, with access to social security and institutional protections, will influence



how the benefits of growth are experienced across households and communities. PM-VBRY, aims to strengthen the bridge from Swatantra Bharat to Samridhdha Bharat, and seeks to incentivise the creation of more than 3.5 crore formal jobs over two years.

Since becoming operational, 60 lakh first time employees have joined the formal workforce through the scheme. Of these,

43.26 lakh, nearly 71 per cent, are in the 18 to 30 age group, and 18.04 lakh, close to 30 per cent, are women entering formal employment for the first time. These workers span expert services, engineering, trading, construction, education, healthcare, textiles and hospitality, reflecting uptake across a wide spread of formal establishments. Beyond the incentive itself, what Ravi

has gained through PM-VBRY is an EPFO account and a Universal Account Number, bringing him into a system that provides provident fund contributions, insurance protections and statutory employment benefits. For many first-time formal workers like him, this represents an entry into social security coverage and a structured employment relationship. The six-month continuous employment condition is intended to ensure that jobs created under the scheme translate into genuine career foundations. Sustained formal employment builds transferable skills, instils professional norms and strengthens future employability, generating benefits that extend beyond the period of support provided under the scheme.

The creation of employment opportunities is an important policy objective. Equally important is ensuring that workers like Ravi are able to establish a sustained presence within the formal economy, where employment is accompanied by social security coverage and institutional protections. As more workers complete six months, a year, and beyond in formal jobs, a larger share of the workforce enters the social security net, and small establishments build the habit of formal hiring. With more than 3.5 crore jobs projected under the scheme, this gradual widening of the formal economy is the change PM-VBRY is designed to accelerate.

The author is a member of NITI Aayog

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Access to quality judicial infrastructure essential component of effective justice delivery: Justice Sanjeev Kumar

Inaugurates New Court Complex in Bhandarwah

KT News Desk

BHADERWAH, JUNE 17: A significant milestone towards strengthening judicial infrastructure in the Doda district was achieved Wednesday with the inauguration of the newly constructed Court Complex at Bhandarwah by Justice Sanjeev Kumar Shukla, Acting Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

The inaugural ceremony was graced by the presence of Justice Sindhu Sharma and Justice Rahul Bharti, Administrative Judge for District Doda, along with Judicial Officers, members of the Bar, civil administration officers and prominent citizens of the region.

The programme, as per an official statement, commenced with the ceremonial inauguration of the Court Complex by the Justice Sanjeev Kumar, followed by an inspection of the newly established judicial infrastructure and facilities created for the litigants, advocates, judicial officers, and court staff.

In his presidential address, Justice Sanjeev Kumar Shukla, Acting Chief Justice of the High



Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, described the inauguration of the new Court Complex as a landmark development for the people of Bhandarwah and the entire district. He emphasized that access to quality judicial infrastructure is an essential component of effective justice delivery and reaffirmed the High Court's commitment to strengthening the judicial system through continuous infrastructural and technological

advancements.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar appreciated the collective efforts of all agencies and stakeholders involved in successful completion of the project and expressed confidence that the new Court Complex would serve as a beacon of justice for the region.

Balbir Lal Jaswal, Principal District and Sessions Judge, Doda, in his address, highlighted the importance of modern

judicial infrastructure in ensuring efficient and accessible justice delivery. He expressed gratitude to the High Court for its continued support in strengthening the judicial system in the district.

Addressing the gathering, Justice Sindhu Sharma underscored the pivotal role of robust judicial infrastructure in enhancing the quality and accessibility of justice. She emphasized the need for a litigant-friendly environment and appreciated the efforts made in establishing the new Court Complex, which would significantly benefit the legal fraternity and the public at large.

Rahul Bharti, Administrative Judge for District Doda, in his special address, congratulated all the stakeholders on the completion of the project. He highlighted the importance of modern court facilities in improving judicial efficiency and public confidence in the justice delivery system. He reiterated the commitment of the High Court towards ensuring better infrastructure and administrative support for courts across the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

Custodian General reviews DILRMP progress in Anantnag

KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, JUNE 17: Custodian General J&K, Tassaduq Hussain Mir, recently designated by the Government as District Mentor, Digital India Land Records Modernization Program (DILRMP) for Anantnag, chaired a comprehensive meeting of the concerned officers Wednesday at Dak Bunglalow, Khanabal, to review the progress made by the district on the flagship initiative so far.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by ACR, SDMs, Tehsildars, Naib Tehsildars, digitisation centres' staff and other officials of the revenue department.

At the outset, the ACR delivered a detailed presentation on digitisation of land records and Massavies, uploading of backlog mutations, SVAMITVA and other aspects of DILRMP. He briefed the Custodian General that Jambandies of all 394 Revenue Villages have been digitised and 100 percent uploading of backlog mutations has been achieved. He further informed the chair that out of 394, a total of 391 Massavies (Cadastral Maps), stand digitised till date and the same have been sent for



uploading on the designated portal.

Moreover, sub parcelisation has been completed in respect of 127 Cadastral Maps and under SWAMITVA, drone survey has been conducted in 372 revenue villages till date.

Addressing the meeting, the Custodian General said that quality of land records digitisation will be highly beneficial for the citizens in future. He lauded the officials for making appreciable achievements in digitisation and stressed on its time bound completion without compromising on data accuracy.

Tassaduq Hussain emphasized that digitization initiative is aimed at enhancing transparency and ensuring that citizens have easy access to vital land-related

information. He said that conducting digitisation in a meticulous way is essential to streamline revenue-related services, adding that appropriate course of action be adopted by the officials associated with the task.

Calling digitisation of revenue records a crucial reform to enhance transparency and public service delivery, the Custodian General impressed upon the officers to continue the efforts for achieving desired targets within the stipulated timeframe. He instructed them to follow the due process while capturing revenue data adding that correct information be compiled for any reference or record purpose.

On the occasion, the officials put forth their valuable suggestions and raised certain issues for improving the implementation of DILRMP in the district. The Custodian General assured them that the suggestions and issues will be duly brought to the notice of concerned higher authorities.

Concluding the review, the Custodian General emphasised the need of transparency and accuracy in digitisation procedures to ensure reliability of land records for public convenience and efficient service delivery.

DC Pulwama reviews NEET (UG) Examination preparations



KT News Desk

PULWAMA, JUNE 17: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom Wednesday chaired a comprehensive meeting at the Circuit House Pulwama to review the arrangements for the forthcoming NEET (UG) Examination.

At the outset, the Additional Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, briefed the chair on the overall preparedness, including identification of examination centres, deployment of staff, implementation of SOPs, transportation plans, videography arrangements, security arrangements, and other logistical requirements.

The DC also sought detailed inputs from Centre Superintendents regarding preparedness at their respective centres, including adherence to prescribed SOPs and arrangements put in place for smooth conduct of the examination.

The DC directed all concerned Centre Superintendents to ensure foolproof arrangements for the smooth and fair conduct of the examination.

He stressed the importance of maintaining strict adherence to the guidelines issued by the National Testing Agency (NTA) and ensuring proper coordination among all stakeholders.

Emphasizing the sensitivity of the examination, the DC directed for adequate deployment of magistrates and security personnel at all examination centres. Dr. Qayoom further instructed the concerned departments to facilitate seamless transportation, ensure uninterrupted power and water supply, and provide all essential services on the day of the examination.

Highlighting the need for effective inter-departmental coordination, the Deputy Commissioner called for a collaborative approach to create a conducive environment for the candidates.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Tral, Assistant Commissioner Development, Pulwama, Centre Superintendents of all designated centres, City Coordinator/Nodal Officer NTA (District Pulwama), and officers from Police and Civil Administration.

Amit Sharma reviews Census-2027 Operations in Pulwama

KT News Desk

PULWAMA, JUNE 17: Chief Principal Census Officer (CPCO) and Director Census Operations (DCO), Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Amit Sharma Wednesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting at Circuit House Pulwama to assess the progress of the ongoing House Listing and Housing Census Operations (HLO).

At the outset, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, who is also the Principal Census Officer, highlighted the efforts of the district administration towards ensuring the smooth, accurate and timely conduct of Census-2027.

During the meeting, Additional Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, as per an official statement, presented a detailed presentation highlighting the district's progress under Census-2027. The presentation covered the progress under the self-enumeration phase and HLO, awareness and IEC campaigns undertaken across the district, training imparted to census functionaries, creation and demarcation of House Listing Blocks (HLBs), status of field operations, arrangements for the inclusion of migratory populations, measures adopted for snow-bound and remote areas, and monitoring mechanisms put in place to ensure quality data collection and comprehensive household coverage.



Addressing the meeting, the CPCO appreciated the efforts of census functionaries and congratulated the district administration for its outstanding performance during the self-enumeration phase. He directed the census staff to maintain the same momentum during the ongoing House Listing and Housing Census operations while ensuring the highest standards of accuracy, transparency and confidentiality.

He emphasized that the Census is one of the most important national exercises and serves as the foundation for future planning, policy formulation, infrastructure development, welfare programmes and equitable allocation of resources. To enhance public confidence and awareness regarding the census exercise, Sharma directed supervisors and enumerators to properly identify themselves during field visits and proactively educate people about the significance of Census-2027.

Reviewing the progress of the ongoing House Listing and Housing Census operations, the Director expressed satisfaction over the progress achieved so

far and called upon all concerned officers to ensure complete coverage of households. He stressed the need for maintaining data quality and directed Charge Officers to undertake regular field inspections while ensuring uniform quality checks by supervisors. He also called for intensified monitoring and strict adherence to census guidelines and operational instructions.

Emphasising inclusive coverage, he directed officials to ensure the proper enumeration of migratory populations and tribal communities so that no household or individual is left out of the census exercise.

On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama informed the meeting that the district administration is conducting the census exercise with a zero-error approach and has put in place robust monitoring mechanisms to ensure the accuracy and completeness of data collection. He directed all field functionaries to work in close coordination, maintain professionalism and adhere strictly to prescribed protocols.

He further assured full

3-day workshop on SQAAF begins in JKBOSE

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JUNE 17: Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE), which has been designated as the State School Standards Authority (SSSA) for the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, organized a three-day workshop titled "SQAAF in J&K: Implementation and Way Forward" from Wednesday.

Twenty eminent educational experts, administrators and other stakeholders are participating in the programme for the effective contextualization and implementation of the School Quality Assessment and Assurance Framework (SQAAF) in Jammu & Kashmir.

The workshop seeks to develop a comprehensive roadmap for implementing SQAAF in Jammu & Kashmir, including institutional mechanisms, capacity-building strategies, monitoring frameworks and school support systems required for successful operationalization of the framework. The participants shall undertake a detailed analysis and review of the SQAAF Portal developed by JKBOSE for the Union Territory, as a digital platform to facilitate self-assessment for Government and private schools.

The portal on operation will be instrumental in data collection, quality monitoring, evidence-based evaluation and continuous school improvement. Technical sessions are being conducted to ensure the portal's functionality, usability and

alignment with the objectives of the School Quality Assessment and Assurance Framework.

The workshop also aims to contextualize and adapt the key quality indicators prescribed under SQAAF (published by PARAKH, NCERT) to the uniquely diverse educational and geographical realities of Jammu & Kashmir. Special emphasis is being placed on ensuring that the indicators adequately reflect the geographical, socio-cultural, linguistic and infrastructural diversity of the Union Territory while maintaining alignment with national school quality standards.

Addressing the inaugural session, Gh Hassan Sheikh, Secretary, JKBOSE, highlighted the Board's evolving role as the State School Standards Authority and reiterated its commitment to establishing a robust, transparent and evidence-based system for assessing and enhancing school quality across the Union Territory. He said the framework will serve as an instrument in bolstering the educational landscape of Jammu & Kashmir, adding that the data collection will prove handy in future policy and technological interventions for improvement in the educational system.

Dr Parveen Singh, Director Academics, JKBOSE, expressed confidence that the outcomes of the workshop will contribute significantly to strengthening the quality ecosystem of school education in J&K and support the creation of a sustainable framework for educational excellence, accountability and continuous improvement.

Chief Secretary delineates framework for reducing multidimensional poverty in J&K

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JUNE 17: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Wednesday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the current status of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) in Jammu and Kashmir and deliberated upon targeted interventions required for further reducing poverty levels across the UT.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Power Development Department; Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department; Commissioner Secretary, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs; Commissioner Secretary, Planning, Development and Monitoring Department; Commissioner Secretary, Health and Medical Education; Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department; Secretary, Rural Development Department and senior officers of the Planning Department. Deputy Commissioners of all districts

participated through video conferencing.

Reviewing the incidence of multidimensional poverty in Jammu and Kashmir and the indicators defining deprivation across the three broad dimensions of Health, Education and Standard of Living, the Chief Secretary underscored the need for identification of vulnerable households in each district, initially laying focus on Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families, to facilitate outcome-oriented interventions.

He directed the Planning Department to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the updated data emerging from the forthcoming NFHS-6 survey and develop district-specific action plans aimed at improving individual indicators and accelerating poverty reduction over time.

The Chief Secretary observed that several Centrally Sponsored Schemes already provide effective instruments for addressing various dimensions of poverty. He highlighted flagship programmes such as the National



Food Security Act, Ayushman Bharat, National Education Policy-2020 initiatives, housing schemes, Ujjwala Yojana and financial inclusion programmes as critical tools for improving living standards and reducing deprivation. He emphasized the need for convergence of these schemes and augmentation through capital expenditure wherever required.

He further instructed the Planning Department to devise a standardized survey format for district-level assessment of vulnerable households and work closely with district administrations to identify gaps and priority areas requiring focused

interventions. Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar, advised the districts to incorporate poverty reduction initiatives into their annual development plans and stressed the importance of focusing on AAY households for more targeted and actionable interventions.

During the meeting, Commissioner Secretary, Planning, Development and Monitoring Department, R. Alice Vaz, highlighted that the Multidimensional Poverty Index captures poverty beyond income and reflects deprivations experienced by households across multiple dimensions, thereby

serving as an important policy tool for poverty eradication.

She informed that the current baseline MPI estimates are based on NFHS-5 data and were released in July 2023, while NFHS-6 data is presently under finalization and is expected to provide updated insights into multidimensional poverty across the country.

The meeting was informed that the MPI framework comprises twelve indicators distributed across three dimensions of Health, Education and Standard of Living. Health includes three indicators, Education two indicators and Standard of Living seven indicators, with equal

weight assigned to each dimension. The estimates are derived from household-level data collected through the National Family Health Survey (NFHS).

Highlighting the J&K specific insights, the meeting was informed that the Multidimensional Poverty Head Count Ratio declined sharply from 12.56 percent in 2015-16 to 4.80 percent during 2019-21. During the same period, more than 10.45 lakh people moved out of multidimensional poverty, reflecting the positive impact of sustained welfare and development interventions undertaken across the Union Territory.

It was further informed that Jammu and Kashmir is well on course to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of 1.2, which envisages reducing multidimensional poverty by at least half before 2030. All twelve indicators used for measuring multidimensional poverty have registered improvements, demonstrating the growing effectiveness of government initiatives at the grassroots level.

Among the districts, it was

revealed that Doda, Ramban, Rajouri, Poonch and Udhampur recorded the steepest declines in multidimensional poverty over the assessment period. Rural areas witnessed particularly notable improvement, with the proportion of multidimensionally poor population declining from 16.37 percent to 6.10 percent, while urban poverty reduced from 3.51 percent to 1.09 percent.

The intensity of poverty, which measures the average level of deprivation experienced by multidimensionally poor households, also improved significantly, declining from 44.17 percent to 42.11 percent, indicating sustained gains in living standards and access to essential services.

Presenting district-wise analysis, the meeting was informed that as per NFHS-5 based estimates for 2019-21, nearly 6.39 lakh persons belonging to around 1.28 lakh families in Jammu and Kashmir were identified as living in multidimensional poverty. While the overall poverty headcount ratio stood at 4.80 percent for the UT.

Sanskritik Yatra-Sindhu Darshan festival celebrates India's cultural diversity

JKAACL, NZCC, J&K Christian Sabha unite culture, faith & youth for drug-free society in Srinagar

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jun 17: The Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL), in collaboration with the North Zone Cultural Centre (NZCC), Patiala and All J&K Christian Sabha, organized the vibrant Sanskritik Yatra 2026-Sindhu Darshan Festival at Tagore Hall, Srinagar.

MLA Lal Chowk, Sheikh Ahsan Ahmed Pardesi, graced the occasion as the chief guest while MLA Ramnagar, Dr. Sunil Bhardwaj, attended as the guest of honour. Principal Secretary, Culture, Brij Mohan Sharma, was the special guest on the occasion. The programme was attended by the artists, religious leaders, students, cultural enthusiasts and citizens in a unique celebration of India's rich cultural heritage

and collective commitment towards a drug-free society.

Secretary JKAACL Harvinder Kour highlighted the importance of cultural exchange programmes in strengthening the national integration and preserving India's rich artistic traditions. She said that such initiatives provide an ideal platform for the artists from different regions to interact, learn from one another and celebrate the spirit of "Unity in Diversity."

Addressing the gathering, Sheikh Ahsan Ahmed Pardesi lauded JKAACL, NZCC and All J&K Christian Sabha for organizing a programme that combined cultural celebration with a powerful social message. He observed that art, culture and languages are invaluable assets of every society and serve as bridges



connecting people across regions, faiths and communities. He said that in an era marked by social and ideological divisions, cultural initiatives have an important role in promoting mutual respect, harmony and national integration.

Referring to the theme of the

programme, Pardesi expressed concern over the growing menace of drug abuse among the youth and emphasized that society must collectively address this challenge. He urged the young people to channel their energies towards education, sports, creativity and

community service.

Stressing that the future of the nation rests in the hands of its youth, he said that every stakeholder including parents, teachers, religious institutions and civil society organizations must work together to protect young minds from the dangers

of addiction. He described drug abuse as a social challenge that can only be overcome through awareness, compassion, guidance and sustained community participation.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Ramnagar Dr. Sunil Bhardwaj, described the programme as a meaningful initiative that successfully integrated cultural exchange with social awareness. He said that the theme "Unity of Religions Against Drug Abuse" carries immense significance in the present times and demonstrates how cultural and religious institutions can contribute positively towards nation-building. Referring to the ongoing 100-Day Nasha Mukta Abhiyan in Jammu and Kashmir, he said that the campaign reflects the government's commitment to

eliminate the scourge of drugs and creating a healthier society.

Dr. Bhardwaj emphasized that art and culture are powerful mediums for educating and sensitizing youth about social issues. He stated that the vision of a Viksit Bharat can only be realised through a healthy, educated and empowered youth population.

Various interfaith leaders, including representatives of different religious communities, also addressed the gathering and emphasized the collective responsibility of society in combating the drug abuse. They highlighted the crucial role of parents and families in sensitizing the children about the harmful consequences of addiction and promoting ethical and moral values from an early age.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

PM Modi-led regime

Extremism, Shah said Naxal violence had witnessed a steep decline under the Modi government.

He said hundreds of districts that were once affected by Naxal influence had witnessed considerable improvement, while thousands of insurgents had surrendered. The government, he added, had allocated substantial funds for security operations, training and rehabilitation in affected regions.

The Union Home Minister also highlighted steps taken in the Northeast, saying more than a dozen peace accords signed over the years had contributed to a decline in insurgency and improved stability across the region. He said violence in the Northeast had reduced considerably, enabling greater focus on development and connectivity.

FROM RS 46000 CR DEFENCE PRODUCTION HAS INCREASED TO RS 1.5 LAKH CRORE

On defence preparedness, Shah said the government's push for Aatmanirbhar Bharat had significantly boosted domestic defence manufacturing. He said defence production had increased from about Rs 46,000 crore in 2014 to nearly Rs 1.5 lakh crore, supported by policy reforms and a focus on indigenous production.

He said thousands of defence-related items had been identified for indigenisation, while investments in military modernisation, border infrastructure, defence satellites and indigenous weapons systems had strengthened India's strategic capabilities.

Shah said the achievements of the past 12 years reflected the government's commitment to safeguarding national interests and ensuring security across the country. He asserted that India's response to security challenges now serves as an example of decisive governance and national resolve. (KNO)

Amarnath Yatra

surveillance, and advanced monitoring systems to further strengthen situational awareness and threat response capabilities.

The Home Minister also instructed that senior officers from CAPFs and the Jammu and Kashmir Police be deployed at key camp locations to maintain continuous oversight of arrangements on the ground throughout the duration of the Yatra.

Apart from the Yatra routes, HM Shah asked officials to ensure enhanced security arrangements at other major tourist locations across Jammu and Kashmir so that visiting pilgrims can travel safely and without disruption.

The annual Amarnath Yatra, which draws thousands of devotees each year to the Himalayan shrine, is set to commence on July 3, with authorities working to ensure tight security and smooth management amid challenging terrain and weather conditions. (KNO)

LG, CM condole

that they receive the best possible medical treatment without any delay. He instructed the administration to extend all necessary assistance and support to the affected families.

NC MPs won't

will never support such a move".

Commenting about the review meeting in Bandipora, he said his government would address the developmental concerns raised by public representatives and make every possible effort to resolve pending issues in the district.

Omar Abdullah, accompanied by advisor Nasir Aslam Wani, deputy chief minister Surinder Choudhary, cabinet ministers and senior officials, chaired a review meeting in Bandipora to assess the implementation of development programmes and examine the status of various projects across the district.

The chief minister said he reviewed the performance of works undertaken under last year's development plan and identified areas requiring attention.

He said legislators representing Bandipora, Sonawari and Gurez highlighted local issues and demands during the meeting and sought intervention in sectors requiring improvement.

"The concerns and expectations of the people were conveyed by their representatives. We have assured them that whatever is possible from our side will be done," he said.

Among the issues discussed was the upgradation of district hospital Bandipora, which has been functioning from a new building for several years but is yet to be formally upgraded.

CM Omar said the matter was taken up during the review and added that Health Minister Sakina Itoo, who joined the meeting virtually, assured that pending requirements related to

the facility would be addressed by her department. (KNO)

J&K girls' GER

performance being only marginally better than the states with the lowest enrolment in other states of the country.

"Meghalaya with 46.5 percent GER, Jammu & Kashmir with 46.6 percent, and Madhya Pradesh 46.9 percent perform only marginally better and, Assam with 47.4 percent and Gujarat 49.7 percent also fall into the deficient category," it reads.

Although these States have improved compared to the extremely low levels recorded in 2014-15, their current GER for girls in higher secondary education remains low. The marginal gains achieved are insufficient, leaving them far behind national goals of equitable access.

The documents further reveal that only a limited set of States and UTs report strong participation of girls in higher secondary education.

It include Chandigarh with 122.8 percent, Puduchery with 104.9 percent, and Goa (102.6 percent).

"Relatively higher levels are also evident in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands with 97.9 percent, Dadra and Nagar Haveli with 94.8 percent, Daman and Diu 94.8 percent, and Kerala with 91.7 percent.

Earlier this week KNO reported that Jammu and Kashmir has recorded its sharpest decline in student progression from secondary to higher secondary in a decade, with the transition rate falling more than 20% between 2014 and 2024.

The official figures in this regard reveal that J&K has recorded the second highest decline in the transition rate across the country during this period.

"The steepest declines in transition from secondary to higher secondary between the years 2014 and 2024 were recorded in Arunachal Pradesh with 81.8 percent to 60.7 percent and Jammu & Kashmir with 93.38 percent to 72.9 percent."

The documents further said that despite notable improvements, persistent challenges remain in ensuring retention through the higher secondary stage. (KNO)

HED drafts rules

gives its approval, the rules will be formally notified.

In the 2026-27 budget session, the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly passed the Jammu & Kashmir Private Universities Act-2026. The Act provides a legal framework for establishing and regulating private universities in Jammu & Kashmir.

As per the law, private universities can be set up by registered societies and trusts. Sponsoring bodies must demonstrate financial stability, adequate land and infrastructure, and a clear educational vision.

The law also provides for the establishment of the J&K Private Universities Regulatory Authority, mandated to oversee compliance, conduct inspections, and monitor standards.

The Act further allows foreign higher educational institutions to establish campuses in J&K, subject to approval by the University Grants Commission (UGC). (KNO)

CM Omar unveils

span higher education, roads, bridges, clean drinking water, urban development, and agriculture infrastructure, aiming to directly address the key needs of the local population.

Major initiatives include the construction of the Government Degree College at Ajas (14 crore), a footbridge over the River Jhelum at Tundipora-Hakbara (10.62 crore), a female student hostel at Government Degree College Bandipora (10 crore), and a school building at Kaloosa (3.71 crore). Other works include the Markundal-Hajin road upgrade (7.13 crore), a water supply augmentation scheme (6.66 crore), a multi-storey car parking facility (3.74 crore), and residential apartments for Panchayat Raj Institution members.

During his visit, the Chief Minister chaired a high-level review meeting to evaluate the developmental scenario, public service delivery and the progress of various schemes. The review meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, Ministers Sakina Itoo (through virtual mode), Javed Rana, Javid Ahmad Dar and Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Gurez Nazir Ahmad Khan, MLA Bandipora Nizamuddin Bhat, MLA Sonawari Hilal Akbar Lone, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief

Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Indu Kanwal Chib, senior officers; Heads of Departments; and district officers.

Noting Bandipora's progress in the last financial year, Chief Minister Abdullah urged all departments to maintain their developmental momentum. He emphasised that the government has cleared administrative and financial approvals well in advance this year. This proactive step ensures that departments in Bandipora can utilise the working season fully and execute projects timely, rather than rushing at the end of the financial year. The Chief Minister added that this step is vital for the district due to challenging geographical and climatological conditions.

Highlighting Bandipora's rich natural wealth, the Chief Minister called for the scientific cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants. He directed that the possibility of setting up a specialised industrial estate for medicinal herbs be explored. This initiative is expected to enhance local entrepreneurship, create fresh jobs for the youth and add significant value to the district's natural resources.

Local lawmakers also raised constituency-specific demands regarding developmental aspects which the Chief Minister promised would be swiftly reviewed and resolved.

Earlier in the day, the Chief Minister distributed vehicles to beneficiaries under the UMEED initiative and inspected stalls set up by local self-help groups. He also met with the public delegations from Gurez, Tulail, and Sonawari, assuring them of timely and equitable redressal of their developmental concerns.

A special highlight of the visit was an open interaction between the Chief Minister and the students of Government Degree College, Bandipora. The session was hosted by a female student, followed by a lively interaction session where students asked candid questions about governance, jobs, and public policy. Praising the confidence of the students, the Chief Minister encouraged the young generation to actively participate in democracy and nation-building.

Govt sacks PDD

and resident of Eidgah Mohalla, Bijbehara, was removed from service under Article 311(2) (b) of the Constitution of India.

The order states that Malik was associated with the banned terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) since 2016 and was facing trial in multiple criminal cases.

It stated that three FIRs were registered against him in connection with anti-national activities, while two additional stone-pelting cases were also pending against him at Police Station Bijbehara.

As per the order, security agencies had said that LeT terrorists were found hiding at his residential house in Arwani, Bijbehara, in June 2017, which led to an encounter in which three terrorists were killed.

The government said the material provided by the Home Department and other agencies established sufficient grounds to invoke provisions of Article 311(2)(b), dispensing with a departmental inquiry in the interest of public service and security.

The order, issued by Financial Commissioner (Additional Chief Secretary), Power Development Department, Ashwani Kumar, said the nature and gravity of the allegations warranted dismissal from service. (KNO)

J&K's transition

was under the control of the elected government, yet incidents of violence, civilian killings and unrest were frequent.

He said in the past, "blood used to flow on roads and bullets were fired at youth and even school-going children," while strict laws such as the Public Safety Act (PSA) and other provisions were used against people.

The LoP said after the reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir and the transfer of law and order responsibilities to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the situation has changed considerably. "Today the roads of Jammu and Kashmir are not witnessing the kind of violence seen earlier. The youth have come out of the atmosphere of fear and are no longer living under the shadow of bullets, PSA or UAPA," Sharma said.

Questioning demands for restoration of greater administrative control, Sharma said the youth of Kashmir would have to decide whether they wanted to return to the circumstances that existed in the past.

The LoP further said PM Narendra Modi-led government has been extending financial support to Jammu and Kashmir without any discrimination.

"The Government of India is providing funds with an open heart for development and infrastructure projects across the Union Territory," he said, adding development activities are progressing steadily under the present dispensation.

Referring to the return of Kashmiri Pandits, Sharma called the community as an inseparable part of Jammu and Kashmir's identity.

"Kashmiri Pandits are an integral part of Kashmir's heritage and identity. Without them, Jammu and Kashmir remains incomplete," he said.

He said the Centre has created an atmosphere where members of the displaced community are increasingly asserting claims over their properties and lands in the Valley. Sharma said, the Union Government is working towards facilitating their rehabilitation and resettlement.

"The Home Ministry is actively working on measures to ensure that those reclaiming their properties and lands are eventually re-established in Kashmir," he added.

Sharma further said that the security environment in Jammu and Kashmir has undergone a transformation, adding that incidents targeting tourists and security personnel have reduced significantly under the current government.

Earlier in the day, the BJP leader also took a swipe at the National Conference-led government, describing it as politically unstable and predicting that it would "collapse on its own" due to internal contradictions.

Sharma reiterated the BJP's position that the Centre would take a decision only after being fully satisfied that peace, stability and normalcy have been firmly established in Jammu and Kashmir. (KNO)

'Statehood BJP's

He, however, said the process would be guided by the prevailing security situation in the region.

Addressing a press conference here, LoP Sharma, as reported by the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the Centre has consistently maintained its commitment to statehood, while emphasising that the restoration process must be viewed in the larger context of security and normalcy.

"Statehood is our commitment, and it will be fulfilled. The Government of India wants violence and public disorder to become things of the past. Sustainable peace and stability are essential priorities," he said.

Sharma alleged that the ruling alliance lacks cohesion and is facing growing internal challenges. He said contradictions within the coalition were becoming increasingly visible and could eventually weaken the government's ability to function effectively.

"The ruling coalition is unstable and does not have the cohesion required to govern effectively. It will collapse because of its own weaknesses. The BJP will neither topple it nor seek to form an alternative government," he said.

The LoP said the BJP would continue to play the role of a constructive opposition while allowing the elected government to function according to its mandate.

He said the Chief Minister should demonstrate greater maturity and responsibility while commenting on sensitive political issues. "Certain statements made by the Chief Minister are not expected from someone holding such a responsible position. He should act with maturity and responsibility," he said.

Referring to the recent meeting of National Conference legislators at Dachigam, Sharma alleged that the gathering itself reflected concerns within the ruling party regarding internal unity and political support.

He said the meeting indicated that the National Conference leadership was attempting to address dissatisfaction and strengthen coordination among its legislators. "The very fact that such a meeting was convened reflects concerns within the party regarding its unity and support base," he said.

LoP Sharma further said when the BJP came to power in 2014, the country was grappling with corruption scandals, policy paralysis and economic challenges. He contrasted the present government's performance with that of the previous UPA regime, claiming that the NDA government had ensured transparent governance and strengthened India's global standing.

"For the last twelve years, no corruption charge has been established against the central government. This itself is a major achievement," he said.

Enumerating achievements of the Union

Government, the BJP leader highlighted major improvements in road, railway and aviation infrastructure across the country. He said India had witnessed unprecedented expansion in road connectivity and transport networks over the past decade.

Referring specifically to Jammu and Kashmir, Sharma said the completion of the rail link connecting Kashmir with the rest of the country was a historic milestone.

"Today, Kashmir is connected with the rest of India through railways. The arrival of Vande Bharat trains in Jammu and Kashmir marks a new chapter in connectivity and development," he said.

The LoP said the number of airports in the country had increased significantly over the past twelve years, enhancing regional connectivity and boosting economic growth. He highlighted welfare schemes launched by the Modi government, particularly those aimed at improving the lives of economically weaker sections.

Sharma further referred to the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme and said families across Jammu and Kashmir were benefiting from health coverage worth up to Rs 5 lakh per beneficiary. "The poor no longer have to sell land or livestock for medical treatment. Health insurance coverage has provided relief and security to lakhs of families," he said.

The BJP leader said free ration distribution under the Pradhan Mantri Kalyan Anna Yojana, saying nearly 81 crore people across the country have benefited from the scheme since the Covid-19 pandemic.

He further said that India's international stature had risen considerably under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

"Indians today enjoy greater respect globally, and the country has emerged as a stronger economic and strategic power on the world stage," LoP Sharma said. "Every Indian feels proud today. The country's image and the respect commanded by Indians abroad have increased significantly," he said. (KNO)

NIA attaches

carried out under Section 33 (1) of UA (P) Act, pursuant to the orders of the NIA Special Court, Jammu, are located in Kanispora village of Baramulla district. They include a residential house built on land measuring 7.5 marlas and a piece of land measuring 6 marlas, on which a shed had been constructed. (KNO)

Rain, thunderstorms,

Rain was also reported along the Sonamarg-Baltal-Holy Cave axis and the Pahalgam-Holy Cave route.

The weather department said brief intense showers accompanied by thunderstorms, hailstorms and gusty winds were recorded at a few locations, particularly in north Kashmir districts and parts of south Kashmir.

According to the MeT Centre Srinagar, temperatures remained below normal at most places following the wet weather conditions.

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 29.4 degrees Celsius, one degree above normal, while the minimum settled at 15.6 degrees Celsius. Qazigund registered a maximum of 28.2 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 13.8 degrees Celsius, while Pahalgam recorded 24.0 degrees Celsius as the day's maximum and 12.2 degrees Celsius as the minimum.

Kupwara recorded a maximum temperature of 27.6 degrees Celsius, and Gulmarg 19.8 degrees Celsius.

In the Jammu division, Jammu city recorded a maximum temperature of 32.6 degrees Celsius, which was 5.5 degrees below normal for the season. Katra registered 32 degrees Celsius, while Banihal recorded 26.3 degrees Celsius.

The MeT department said generally cloudy conditions prevailed across Jammu and Kashmir during the day, with intermittent rain and thunderstorms reported from several areas.

It advised people to remain indoors during thunderstorms and stay away from electric poles, overhead wires, loose structures and old trees. Boating and Shikara operations on water bodies, including Dal Lake, were also advised to be suspended during periods of strong winds and lightning activity.

The department said there was a possibility of hailstorms at isolated places and warned that intense showers could trigger flash floods and mudslides in vulnerable areas.

Officials said the wet weather is expected to continue over the next several days, with intermittent spells of rain and thundershowers likely at many places across Jammu and Kashmir. (KNO)

Modi raises with Trump seafarers' safety; both leaders review ties in trade, energy, defence sectors

PTI

Evian-Les-Bains (France), Jun 17: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday raised the issue of seafarers' safety with US President Donald Trump, urging that their protection be given the highest priority during the implementation of Washington's peace deal with Iran, even as the two leaders focused on taking steps to repair bilateral ties that witnessed severe strain over the past year.

The meeting between the two leaders on the margins of the G7 summit in the French commune came amid increasing outrage in India over the killing of three Indian crew members of a merchant ship in American military strikes in the Gulf of Oman.

Trump, describing New Delhi as a key partner, said the US will defend India if anyone attacks it. The US president, without giving any timeline, said both sides are close to finalising the proposed trade deal.

Following the meeting, Modi said he and Trump "reviewed the sustained progress" in bilateral cooperation in trade,



energy, defence, technology and people-to-people ties.

"Conveyed India's appreciation on the progress in the efforts for restoring peace and stability in West Asia. Keeping the Strait of Hormuz open is vital for the global economy. Reiterated the importance of ensuring the safety and security of civilians, including seafarers," he said. In his televised comments, Modi brought up the issue of the safety of hundreds of thousands of Indian seafarers operating in key maritime zones.

"I commend you for your leadership on the progress

that has been made in the efforts to restore peace in West Asia. Thanks to your efforts, Mr President, new hope for peace and stability in the region has been kindled and we hope that this will lead to a long-standing peace in the region," Modi said.

"You and I agree that keeping the Strait of Hormuz open is vital for the global economy. India has consistently emphasised the importance of ensuring freedom of navigation and we should work together and place a particular emphasis on that," he said.

The prime minister hoped

confident that this agreement will ensure the security of seafarers and this issue will receive the highest priority," he said.

In his remarks, Trump described the meeting as "great" and heaped praise on Modi. The US president, without giving any timeline, said he will travel to India.

Trump was also effusive in his praise for Modi.

"I just want to say he's been my friend for a long time now and we've always had a great relationship and it's great to be with you," he said.

The US president also said that New Delhi and Washington are "very close" to the trade deal.

"He's a very tough negotiator, one of the toughest, actually. So you look at this man, I'll give you a lesson. He's the most beautiful looking man. He looks so nice, he's like an angel. But actually, he's tough," Trump said.

"People say he is such a nice man. I said he's very very tough. He's a tough negotiator and he loves the Indian people, but he also loves the US," he added.

The US president also described India as a major global player.

Amit Shah pitches for national-level call centre for Cyber Crime Helpline 1930

PTI

New Delhi, Jun 17: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday directed for the establishment of a national level call centre for Cyber Crime Helpline 1930 to handle complaints unattended at the state level.

Shah emphasised that every citizen seeking assistance through the National Cyber Crime Helpline 1930 should receive timely support and that no complaint should remain unattended or pending.

He directed for the establishment of a national-level 1930 call centre, equipped with adequate manpower and call-handling capacity, according to a government statement. "This national call centre will handle calls that remain unanswered at the state level and ensure that every victim receives timely assistance and prompt registration of complaints," the statement said.

Chairing a high-level review meeting, Shah said the helpline should be overhauled, modernised and upgraded through the adoption of advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence



(AI), to further improve its efficiency, response capabilities and service delivery.

He said all state-level 1930 call centres should be upgraded in terms of technology and infrastructure with robust interactive voice response (IVR) systems to ensure efficient call management and seamless forwarding of calls to the appropriate levels.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) will provide the necessary support for hardware and technological upgrades, while the states and Union territories will be requested to ensure adequate manpower at these centres to facilitate the timely disposal of complaints, the home minister said.

Cyber criminals 'parasites', have to be very harsh with them: SC



PTI

New Delhi, Jun 17: Cyber criminals are "parasites" who take money from innocent investors to dupe them and we have to be very harsh with them, the Supreme Court on Wednesday said.

The observations came from a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice V Mohana which was

hearing a plea filed by a man seeking clubbing of some FIRs lodged against him in different states.

"You people (cyber criminals) are parasites and you take money from innocent investors and dupe them. For cyber criminals, we have to be very harsh," the CJI observed.

The CJI said victims of such crimes were always pan-India.

"You cheat someone in Tamil Nadu, then you go to Jammu and Kashmir and then to the North-East," the CJI said, adding it would be in the society's interest that cyber criminals are kept behind the bars.

The top court refused to entertain the plea for clubbing of some FIRs lodged against the petitioner in different states.

The bench said the petitioner may approach the jurisdictional high court to seek relief.

BJP chief Nitin Nabin moves in official residence in Delhi

Amit Shah, other leaders pay visit



PTI

New Delhi, Jun 17: BJP president Nitin Nabin on Wednesday moved into his official residence on the Motilal Nehru Marg here.

A 'griha pravesh' (housewarming) ceremony was held at his new residence, a Type-8 bungalow, in the presence of his close family members, among others.

The VVIP bungalow

-- 1, Motilal Nehru Marg -- was earlier allotted to former Jharkhand chief minister Shibu Soren.

Home Minister Amit Shah and scores of other BJP leaders including Union ministers Dharmendra Pradhan, Arjun Ram Meghwal, Kiren Rijju and G Kishan Reddy visited Nabin on the occasion.

Scores of other BJP leaders, including MPs and Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary, also visited Nabin's official residence on the occasion.

NDA allies, including JD(U) national working president Sanjay Jha, LJP(Ram Vilas) chief and Union minister Chirag Paswan, and Rashtriya Lok Morcha president and Rajya Sabha MP Upendra Kushwaha paid a visit to the BJP chief's new residence to greet him on the occasion.

Nabin became the BJP's 12th national president replacing Union minister J P Nadda on January 20 after he was elected unopposed to the top post. A former minister in Bihar, he was elected to the Rajya Sabha from the state later in March.

Indian Muslims should look to Indonesia's cultural ideals, not to those of Pak: RSS leader



PTI

Pune, Jun 17: Stating that the Hindu-Muslim conflict should end as "everyone shares the same DNA", a senior Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leader on Wednesday said Indian Muslims should look to Indonesia for "cultural ideals" and not to Pakistan.

Speaking to reporters at the Pune Union of Working Journalists here, the RSS's publicity chief Sunil Ambekar also asserted that the Sangh is a legally recognised organisation, and all its financial transactions take place through the banking system.

On relations between the RSS and the Muslim community, Ambekar said the Hindu-Muslim conflict predated the formation of the organisation.

"Unfortunately, a belief was

created among Muslims that changing one's religion also changes one's nation and history. This separatist mindset eventually led to Partition. This conflict should now end. Everyone shares the same DNA," he said.

"Positive initiatives for social reform are now emerging from within the Muslim community as well. Indian Muslims should look not towards Pakistan but should look towards Indonesia's cultural ideals," Ambekar added.

Indonesia, notably, has the world's largest Muslim population and is also known for Hindu-Buddhist cultural influences.

On RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat advocating a three-child policy for Hindu families, Ambekar stressed the need for maintaining demographic balance rather than focusing on population control.

"Europe and China have reversed their population policies. In India's context, maintaining population balance is more important," he said.

Demographic changes contributed to the country's Partition in 1947, and demographic imbalance in future could affect the country's identity and culture, the RSS leader said.

"There is no compulsion or directive from the RSS leadership on family size. Each family should take decisions based on its own circumstances and needs. This is the organisation's cultural position," he added.

On questions about the RSS's registration status, Ambekar said there was no legal dispute regarding the organisation, and confusion was being created for political gains.

"The RSS is a legally recognised social organisation. Governments over the years have sought its cooperation at various levels. RSS route marches receive police permission and local branches are allowed to open bank accounts. All financial transactions of the RSS are conducted through banks," he said.

Karnataka Home Minister Priyank Kharge had recently sought an explanation from the RSS chief about the organisation's legal status and sources of donations, contributions and income.

President Murmu on five-day visit of Madhya Pradesh, Odisha from today

PTI

New Delhi, Jun 17: President Droupadi Murmu will be on a five-day visit of Madhya Pradesh and Odisha from Thursday, her office has said.

The president will grace a function 'Empowerment of Tribal Society by Spiritual Awakening', organised by Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya, at Betul, Madhya Pradesh on Thursday. On June 19, Murmu will attend the International Sickle Cell Day celebrations at Omkareshwar, Madhya Pradesh.

On the same day, at Rairangpur, Odisha, the president will inaugurate a medical camp organised by AIIMS Bhubaneswar, mega



integrated rural piped water supply to the mining affected villages under Kusumi block, Matrushakti Bhavan of Brahma Kumaris, special circuit house and police district, Rairangpur, a statement issued on Wednesday by the Rashtrapati Bhavan said.

On her birthday on June 20, President Murmu and Prime

Minister Narendra Modi will visit various locations in Pahadpur village of Mayurbhanj district, including a school and a skill centre, and interact with beneficiaries and children. Murmu was born on June 20, 1958, to a Santhal tribal family in Uparbeda in the remote Mayurbhanj district of Odisha.

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS SOPORE

In the case of: Bilal Ahmad Wani w/o: Mohd Akbar wani R/o: Reban.

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

(Registrar of Birth and Death) ...Non Applicant
NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE

Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of Birth event of the applicant's Son namely Basit Bilal Wani D/o: Bilal Ahmad Wani as 09-04-2020 at H.S.S Hospital zagbogh.

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

Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Sopore

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS SOPORE

In the case of: Arshida Bano D/o: Muhammad Khalil Najar R/o: Sangrama Sopore.

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

(Registrar of Birth and Death) ...Non Applicant
NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE

Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of Birth event of the applicant's Self namely Arshida Bano D/o: Muhammad Khalil Najar as 03-03-1972 at Home Sangrama Sopore.

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

Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Sopore

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS SOPORE

In the case of: Gh Hassan Chopan w/o: Ab Rahim Chopan R/o: Sangrama.

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

(Registrar of Birth and Death) ...Non Applicant
NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE

Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of Birth event of the applicant's Self namely Gh Hassan Chopan D/o: Ab Rahim Chopan as 01-01-1965 at Home.

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

Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Sopore

Trump threatens 'dropping bombs' if Iran doesn't 'behave'

AFP

Tehran, Jun 17: US President Donald Trump on Wednesday warned Iran he was ready to resume military action if Tehran did not abide by its obligations, two days ahead of the signing of an accord to end the war between the foes.

"It's a memorandum of understanding. And if I don't like it, we'll go back to shooting at them, dropping bombs on their head. If I don't like it, if they don't behave, we'll go right back to dropping bombs right smack in the middle of their head, OK?" Trump said at the G7 summit alongside Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

Trump said the Iran memorandum of understanding did not include immediate sanctions relief for Iran, while adding he would talk about this matter later.

The United States and Iran are to launch talks on a final settlement to their conflict on Friday in Switzerland, officials said, as news that the Strait of Hormuz will reopen sent world oil prices tumbling.

Negotiations over a final deal are to start immediately after a deal signing ceremony and continue during a 60-day window, leading to decisions on the fate of Iran's nuclear program and a plan for the lifting of international economic sanctions.

Optimism that the war triggered by the February 28 US-Israeli strikes on Tehran might be coming to an end was dented, however, by fresh Israeli strikes on south Lebanon.

Iran's central military command, Khatam Al-Anbiya, warned that Israel should "await a harsh response" to the strikes, which Lebanon's state news agency said targeted two vehicles in the town



of Mayfadoun and another in nearby Shukein, near the town of Nabatieh in southern Lebanon, killing four.

The Israeli military said it conducted a strike after it "identified a suspicious vehicle" near where its soldiers were operating and that its forces intercepted several rockets and carried out an air strike against a launcher.

Iran says deal to end war requires Israel to withdraw from Lebanon

Iran's top diplomat said Tuesday that the tentative deal to end the war would require Israel to withdraw from Lebanon — a condition Israel has already rejected and that could sink the agreement, leading to the resumption of all-out war.

The deal has not been made public, and officials have sometimes offered contradictory interpretations of what is in it. While Israel is not party to the agreement, it is part of the war after joining the US in launching strikes on Iran on Feb. 28. Israel has also fought the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon and seized large swaths of

that country. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Israel's continued occupation of southern Lebanon would violate the deal.

"Without the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the territories they occupied during this war, the war has not fully come to an end," Araghchi said.

A US official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss outlines of the agreement, has said the deal does not call for an Israeli withdrawal. And Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday that Israel would remain in Lebanon "as long as necessary."

Swiss signing Friday's signing ceremony will take place at Switzerland's mountainous Burgenstock resort, perched high above Lake Lucerne, the Swiss foreign ministry said.

According to a senior US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, the framework agreement has already been signed electronically by US President Donald Trump, Vice President JD Vance, Iran's deputy foreign minister Majid

Takht-Ravanchi and top negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf.

"Likely on Friday... a new round of negotiations between Iran and the United States to reach a final agreement will begin," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said. "In the final agreement, decisions will be made on the nuclear issues and the lifting of sanctions."

Ghalibaf will attend the signing and the US side will be represented by Vance, who said Trump might also attend.

The developments came after Trump said an Iranian blockade on the crucial Hormuz strait oil and gas route would be fully lifted by Friday, in a major boost to the global economy.

"Ships are starting to move, many loaded up with Oil, out of the Strait of Hormuz," Trump said Monday.

Optimism over the reopening of Hormuz has sent the price of the international benchmark Brent North Sea crude tumbling under \$79 a barrel, a three-month low. The main US oil contract, West Texas Intermediate, fell 5.9 percent to under \$76 a barrel.

The US had, in retaliation for Iran's action, imposed its own blockade on Iranian ports. But Iranian state television said Iranian tankers had resumed shipping following the deal, as Takht-Ravanchi said the US blockade "has been lifted prior to the formal signing."

Sporadic episodes of violence since an April ceasefire had threatened a deal, but weeks of indirect negotiations mediated by Pakistan and Qatar built momentum for an interim deal. Yet a comprehensive agreement on Iran's nuclear ambitions and Western sanctions remains elusive.

'Broken commitments'

The US and Israel are pressing to strip Iran of its stockpile of highly enriched uranium, said to have been buried by US strikes last year, while Iran has insisted on its right to enrichment.

The agreed framework has however paved the way for talks on those key disputes.

Asked at the G7 in France when the text would be released, Trump said: "It's a very powerful document, and I want it to be released. So probably pretty soon."

Iran's ultraconservative newspaper Vatan-e Emrooz praised the agreement as a "Trump surrender document."

But Araghchi struck a more cautious note.

"We have a history of broken commitments... we have a history of agreements being torn up. All of this is present in our minds," he said.

In a flurry of interviews to talk up the deal, Vance said no US taxpayer money would go to Iran under the deal, as Iranian media reported \$12 billion of frozen assets would be released.

Vance told NBC that nuclear inspectors would also be allowed to enter Iran.

Analysts have warned that the parallel conflict in Lebanon between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah presents the biggest threat to the diplomatic thaw.

Lebanon was pulled into the war in March when Hezbollah launched rockets at Israel after the killing of Iran's supreme leader, prompting Israeli strikes and a ground invasion.

That theater of the conflict could be "the biggest ultimate spoiler" of the coming negotiations, said Ross Harrison, a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute.

G7 leaders demand ceasefire in Lebanon, welcome Iran deal



REUTERS

Evian-Les-Bains, France/Dubai, Jun 17: Leaders of the G7 countries demanded a ceasefire in Lebanon on Wednesday and said they will diversify energy supply routes to reduce dependence on the Strait of Hormuz in response to the war in Iran, as they welcomed an interim deal to end the conflict. The leaders met for a summit in the French town of Evian-les-Bains on Lake Geneva, while details of the US-Iran ceasefire agreement trickled out of Washington and Tehran ahead of its formal unveiling, expected on Friday across the nearby Swiss border.

The US-Iran agreement is expected to launch negotiations toward a final settlement to end the war, which has killed more than 7,000 people, mostly in Iran and Lebanon.

"We underline the need for the negotiation ... to address the threats posed by Iran in the region and beyond and ensure that they never obtain a nuclear weapon," the leaders said in a statement.

The summit gave US President Donald Trump a chance to present his deal with Iran to major allies Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan.

They mostly share Washington's concerns about Iran's nuclear program and other issues, but never endorsed his decision to go to war and worry that Tehran gained leverage by withstanding the superpower onslaught and asserting control over the strait.

The leaders said they were ready to contribute to the implementation of the accord, with a coalition led by Britain and France set to help secure shipping once the Strait of Hormuz reopens as expected on Friday. The memorandum of understanding signed by

Washington and Tehran this week, though yet to be made public, extends a ceasefire announced in April by another 60 days to allow the warring countries to negotiate a permanent truce.

The US president appears to have achieved little of what he said he wanted at the outset of the war. Iran's theocratic government remains in place, its stockpile of highly enriched uranium has not been surrendered, its ballistic missile capabilities have not been destroyed and it has not ended its support for anti-Israeli militias like Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Trump said the agreement states that Iran will not have a nuclear weapon — a restatement of Iran's official position since the 1970s — and US officials say further discussions will lead to the removal or destruction of its enriched uranium stockpile.

But ending the war on such terms could still expose Trump to criticism, including from hawks within his own Republican party, ahead of midterm elections in November.

Truce in Lebanon? One of the biggest questions still hanging over the truce is the fate of Lebanon, which Israel invaded in March to root out Hezbollah after the militant group fired across the border in solidarity with Tehran following US-Israeli strikes on Iran.

Israeli forces still occupy a swathe of southern Lebanon, where more than a million people have been driven from their homes, while Hezbollah remains undefeated. Iran says the ceasefire must also end hostilities in Lebanon, and that a permanent deal must lead to an Israeli withdrawal.

Israel, which was excluded from the US-Iran peace negotiations, says it will not withdraw and reserves the right to use military force.

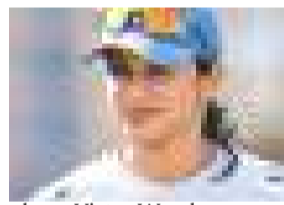
Smriti Mandhana only Indian among TIME magazine's 100 most influential sportspersons

PTI

New York, Jun 17: Cricketer Smriti Mandhana has been named by TIME magazine among this year's 100 most influential people in sports, the only Indian to be featured on the list.

TIME's list of the 100 Most Influential People in Sports 2026 features athletes, coaches, advocates and investors who are "people shaping sports today."

The list, headlined by American basketball legend LeBron James, includes superstars from the world of sports such as football icon Lionel Messi, Chinese-American skier Eileen Gu, tennis star Carlos Alcaraz, basketball



player Victor Wembanyama, legendary golfer Rory McIlroy among others. The other big names in the list include another football icon Cristiano Ronaldo, South African cricket captain Temba Bavuma, who last year led his team to a historic Test series win in India as well as victory in the World Test Championship (WTC), basketball player for the New York Knicks Jalen Brunson and FIFA president Gianni Infantino.

UN food aid agency gets \$800 million grant from US after funding cuts

REUTERS

Rome, Jun 17: The United Nations World Food Programme said on Wednesday it welcomed an \$800 million contribution from the United States, following previous funding cuts from President Donald Trump's administration.

The funds will help scale up assistance and respond rapidly to emerging crises at a time when global hunger is at record levels and the number of people facing acute hunger is expected to rise this year, WFP said.

The US is the WFP's biggest donor, but its



contribution more than halved from 2024 to around \$2 billion in 2025. WFP said the new funding would allow it to pre-position food supplies, expand cash assistance programs and

maintain supply chains in crisis-hit areas such as Lebanon, Haiti and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The US has long been the world's largest humanitarian donor, though its

Gill, Kishan star as India outclass Afghanistan to seal ODI series

PTI

Lucknow, Jun 17: Captain Shubman Gill battled intense heat and cramps to produce a masterful 154, while the increasingly confident Ishan Kishan scored a statement century as India recorded a dominant 170-run win over Afghanistan in the second ODI here on Wednesday to seal the series.

India have taken a 2-0 unassailable lead in the three-match series.

Afghanistan's decision to bowl first under the scorching afternoon sun backfired as Gill and Kishan, who scored his second ODI hundred in his comeback series, helped India put up a formidable 402. The conditions were very demanding throughout the game with several players struggling with cramps while Gill also battled with an ice collar. In fact, the Indian skipper didn't return to the field once he got out. Gill and Kishan put the visiting bowlers to the sword with a blistering 224-run stand for the third wicket off just 141 deliveries, completely taking the game away from the opposition.

Chasing more than 400 was always going to be a daunting task for Afghanistan, who were not only fighting to stay alive in the series but were also seeking their first-ever win over India in any format. However, they were bowled out for 232 in 44.3 overs despite Rahmat Shah's fighting 79.

None of the Afghan batters showed the urgency required for such a chase. While



several top and middle-order batters got starts, they failed to convert them into substantial scores.

Opensers Rahmanullah Gurbaz (41) and Ibrahim Zadran (21) were unable to provide the flying start Afghanistan needed.

Last match's centurion Gurbaz briefly enjoyed a slice of luck when he miscued a pull shot straight to mid-on, where Arshdeep Singh completed a simple catch.

However, debutant Prince Yadav had overstepped and the wicket was overturned, denying him his maiden international scalp.

The reprieve did not last long as Gurnoor Brar had Gurbaz caught 11 deliveries later. Darwish Rasooli, who had been stretched off during India's innings,

came out to bat but soon retired hurt because of the hamstring injury.

Prince (2/56) eventually claimed his maiden ODI wicket when he rattled Nangeyalia Kharote's stumps before ending the game with Rahmat's scalp

Arshdeep (3/45) picked up three wickets. Brar (3/60) also continued to impress while Kuldeep Yadav went wicketless.

Earlier, continuing with their experimentation ahead of next year's World Cup, India brought in Yashasvi Jaiswal (4) to open alongside Rohit Sharma (48), with Gill dropping down to No. 3.

However, the young left-hander failed to make the most of the opportunity and departed in the second over.

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15 HAI JAWANI TOH ISHQ HONA HAI (HINDI ATMOS) (U/A)-I
12:00 PM, 07:35 PM

18 DISCLOSURE DAY (ENGLISH) (U/A)-I
11:00 AM

20 OBSESSION (ENGLISH) (A)
10:35 AM, 02:50 PM, 05:50 PM

21 BACKROOMS (ENGLISH) (A)
05:10 PM

25 MAIN VAAPAS AAUNGA (HINDI ATMOS) (U/A)-I
12:50 PM, 02:15 PM, 07:00 PM

30 HAUNTED ECHOES OF THE PAST (3D HINDI) (A)
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