



Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana

Young Indians receiving unprecedented recognition globally: PM Modi

Disburses Rs 2,400 cr; J&K gets Rs 26 cr for 1,522 employees, 304 employers

LG Sinha thanks PM for driving inclusive growth, expanding social security coverage in UT

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jun 19: Reaffirming his unwavering faith in India's youth, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that youngsters are receiving unprecedented recognition globally for their talent, skills and potential, and the world is increasingly acknowledging their capabilities.

Addressing a gathering after disbursing incentives amounting to Rs 2,400 crore to more than 15 lakh beneficiaries across the country, under Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana, PM Modi, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "India's youth are receiving unprecedented recognition globally for their talent, skills, and potential. The world is increasingly acknowledging the capabilities of young Indians."

He reiterated that the Government is committed to ensuring that every young person has the opportunity to transform their potential into success.

PM Modi expressed his unwavering faith in India's youth



by extending his heartfelt best wishes.

Describing "Prime Minister Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana" much more than an employment scheme, PM Modi said, "It is an initiative designed to strengthen the aspirations of young people entering their

first jobs while creating a robust bridge between industry and the workforce."

Pertinently as part of Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana, regional programmes were organized simultaneously at 200 locations across | More on P6

70 lakh jobs created under PM-VBRY so far: PM Modi

KT NEWS DESK

New Delhi, Jun 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said that nearly 70 lakh new jobs have been created so far under the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY), with an equal number of first-time employees brought under the ambit of social security. The PM disbursed incentives worth around Rs 2,400 crore to 15 lakh beneficiaries across the country, marking a significant milestone in the government's flagship employment-linked incentive scheme.

Addressing beneficiaries, industry representatives, and stakeholders shortly after returning from his visit to France and Slovakia, the Prime



Minister noted that close to 20 lakh young people have completed six months in their first jobs, while around 10 lakh beneficiaries have already received incentives upon completing this milestone. More than Rs 2,000 crore has been directly transferred to beneficiaries' bank accounts.

"Prime Minister Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana is much more than an employment | More on P6

Army launches 'Op Shiva' for Amarnath Yatra security

Northern Army Commander reviews security preparedness

Army says committed to ensuring safe, secure pilgrimage



Umair Gull Ganie

Srinagar, Jun 19: The Army has launched 'Operation Shiva 2026' to ensure robust security arrangements for the forthcoming Amarnath Yatra, officials said on Friday.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command, visited the forward areas of Kilo Force and Baltal to review the prevailing security situation and assessed the operational preparedness of troops deployed for the annual pilgrimage.

In a statement an Army spokesman said "The Army Commander was briefed on the current security environment

and the measures undertaken to enhance vigilance and operational readiness in the region."

"During the visit, Lieutenant General Sharma, accompanied by General Officer Commanding, 15 Corps, Lieutenant General Balbir Singh, interacted with commanders and troops and stressed the need for sustained alertness, effective coordination and mission-oriented execution to remain prepared for all challenges," the statement said, adding, "He also reviewed the arrangements being put in place to ensure a secure environment for pilgrims during the forthcoming yatra."

In a post on X, the Army's Northern Command said Lt Gen Sharma visited the forward areas of Kilo Force and Baltal to | More on P6

30-50% cancer cases preventable: GMC Sgr

Breast cancer leading among women; lung, oesophageal, stomach common in men

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Jun 19: Amid a growing burden of cancer cases in Jammu and Kashmir, public health experts have called for greater awareness, early screening, and timely medical intervention to reduce mortality and improve patient outcomes. A public awareness initiative by Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar highlights that early detection remains one of the most effective tools in the fight against the disease.

According to data accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) and presented as part of the awareness campaign, cancer incidence in J&K has shown a rising trend over the past decade, mirroring national and global patterns. Health experts warn that changing lifestyles, tobacco use, dietary habits, environmental factors, and delayed diagnosis are contributing to the growing

cancer burden.

The campaign identifies several cancers as particularly prevalent in the region. Among men, lung cancer, oesophageal cancer, stomach cancer, colorectal cancer, prostate cancer, and oral cancer are among the most commonly diagnosed malignancies. Among women, breast cancer remains the leading cancer, followed by cervical cancer, ovarian cancer, colorectal cancer, thyroid cancer, stomach cancer, liver cancer, and endometrial cancer. Breast cancer accounts for the highest relative burden among major cancers, followed by lung, oesophageal, and stomach cancers.

Medical experts urge people to remain vigilant about common warning signs, including persistent changes in bowel or bladder habits, non-healing sores, unusual bleeding or discharge, unexplained lumps, difficulty swallowing, chronic indigestion, | More on P6

India must control security-related needs to stay future-ready: Def Min

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Jun 19: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said India must take control of its security-related necessities and strengthen indigenous manufacturing capabilities to remain future-ready in an increasingly uncertain geopolitical environment.

Addressing a gathering after performing the bhoomi puja for a 10,000-tonne Aluminium Extrusion Press facility at the Ordnance Factory Ambajhari in Nagpur, Singh, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Self-reliance in critical defence technologies and materials was essential for safeguarding national interests."

"A nation capable of meeting its own requirements moves forward with the greatest confidence towards protecting its interests," he said, describing the upcoming facility as a symbol of India's transition from dependence on imports to domestic



production of strategic equipment and materials," he said.

The Defence Minister said modern fighter aircraft, missiles and advanced space programmes require lightweight yet highly durable metals capable of withstanding extreme conditions, adding that the new facility would help meet those requirements through indigenous production.

The proposed extrusion press, to be established by Yantra India Limited (YIL), will manufacture large and complex aluminium alloy profiles used in defence platforms,

aerospace structures, missile systems, railways and other strategic sectors. The project is expected to reduce dependence on imported critical aluminium extrusions and strengthen the domestic supply chain.

Referring to Operation Sindoor, Singh said the success of the operation demonstrated the growing capability of indigenous defence manufacturing and highlighted the need to further expand domestic production of critical hardware.

He said the courage and professionalism | More on P6

Multi-layer security grid in place at Jammu railway station: DG RPF

Yogesh

Director General of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) Sonali Mishra on Friday said a multi-layered security mechanism has been put in place at Jammu Railway Station ahead of the annual Amarnath Yatra to ensure the safe and smooth movement of pilgrims and other passengers. After reviewing security and logistical arrangements at the station, Mishra, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), told reporters that manpower deployment has been strengthened | More on P6



GOC-in-C Northern Command calls on LG Sinha



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jun 19: Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), Northern Command called on Lieutenant

Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday.

He was accompanied by Lt Gen Balbir Singh, GOC Chinar Corps; Lt Gen Rajan Sharawat, GOC 9 Corps and Lt Gen P. K. Mishra, GOC 16 Corps.

Apprehended Pak national sent back

Waris Fayaz

Srinagar, Jun 19: A Pakistani national, who was apprehended by security forces in north Kashmir's Kupwara district after allegedly crossing the Line of Control (LoC), has been sent back, officials said.

Officials told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the individual, identified as Asad Khan, a resident of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), was detained in Simari village of Kupwara on June 12 after crossing into Indian territory.

They said that following the completion of necessary procedures, he was sent back to Pakistan on June 18.

They added that during his stay in India, he was treated in a humane manner in accordance with established norms and procedures. (KNO)

Rain, hailstorm lash J&K parts; MeT issues advisory

Wet spell likely to continue till Jun 26

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Jun 19: Several parts of Jammu and Kashmir witnessed rain and thunderstorms on Friday afternoon as the Meteorological Department forecast more wet weather over the next few days and warned of possible flash floods, mudslides and hailstorms in vulnerable areas.

According to the MeT Centre Srinagar, a spell of rain and thundershowers affected many places across Kashmir division and parts of Jammu division, including Ramban, Doda, Kishtwar, Rajouri, Reasi and Udhampur.

The weather office told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that some areas experienced brief intense

showers accompanied by thunderstorms, hailstorms and gusty winds. Similar conditions were reported along the Sonamarg-Baltal-Holy Cave axis and the Pahalgam-Holy Cave axis, the two routes leading to the annual Amarnath Yatra.

The department cautioned that intense showers in parts of south and central Kashmir and districts such as Ramban, Doda and Kishtwar could trigger flash floods and mudslides in vulnerable locations.

It advised people to remain indoors during thunderstorms and lightning activity, avoid standing near electric poles, wires, old trees and other vulnerable structures, and suspend boating and shikara operations during adverse | More on P6

Lavender farming gains momentum in Valley, Sirhama farm emerges as learning hub for farmers

Farmers say crop offers higher returns, long-term benefits

Umair Gull Ganie

Anantnag, Jun 19: Lavender farming is steadily gaining momentum in Kashmir, with the sprawling Sirhama Lavender Farm in Bijbehara area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district emerging as a major learning hub for farmers interested in cultivating the aromatic and medicinal crop.

Farmers from different parts of the Valley regularly visit the farm to gain firsthand knowledge of cultivation practices, crop management, and the commercial potential of lavender, which is increasingly seen as a viable alternative to conventional farming.

The farm, spread over 620 kanals, has drawn attention for its successful cultivation model,



encouraging growers to explore lavender farming on both agricultural and barren land.

Nazir Ahmad Khatana, a farmer from Nagras Qazigund, told the news agency—Kashmir

News Observer (KNO), said the exposure visit organised by the Agriculture Department helped him understand the vast economic potential of lavender cultivation.

"Farmers can earn two to four times more income from lavender compared to many traditional crops. The biggest advantage is that the crop is planted only once and can continue producing for nearly 15 years," he said.

Khatana said lavender can also be grown in vacant spaces within apple orchards, making better use of available land while helping reduce the presence of rodents and other pests.

He said the crop is particularly suitable for hilly areas because its strong fragrance discourages wild animals. | More on P6

DC Kulgam flags off Farmers' Exposure visit to SKUAST-K



Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of exposure visits and capacity-building programmes in equipping farmers with the latest technological advancements and best management practices. He encouraged the participating farmers to make the most of the opportunity and adopt innovative techniques to enhance productivity and improve their livelihoods.

KT News Desk

KULGAM, JUNE 19: Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, Friday flagged off a group of around 107 farmers from the district for an exposure-cum-capacity building visit to Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), Shalimar.

The programme, as per an official statement, is aimed at enhancing farmers' knowledge and facilitating the dissemination of modern horticultural and agricultural technologies, innovative farming practices, and scientific approaches among the farming community of the district.

The flag-off ceremony was attended by Chief Horticulture Officer, M. Ramzan War; Horticulture Development Officer (HDO) Kulgam, Dr. Mohsin Ahmad Hajam; HDO Devsar; HDO Qaimoh; and other officials of the Horticulture Department.

Speaking on the

occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of exposure visits and capacity-building programmes in equipping farmers with the latest technological advancements and best management practices. He encouraged the participating farmers to make the most of the opportunity and adopt innovative techniques to enhance productivity and improve their livelihoods.

The visit to SKUAST-K, Shalimar, is expected to provide the farmers with firsthand exposure to modern technologies, research findings, and successful models in horticulture and allied sectors, thereby contributing to the overall development of the farming sector in the district. The participating farmers expressed their gratitude to the District Administration and the Horticulture Department for facilitating the exposure visit and providing them with an opportunity to learn from experts and researchers in the field.

Expedite execution of works, ensure timely utilisation of funds: CS Atul Dulloo

Pushes undertaking of disaster reconstruction projects worth RS 3000 Cr across J&K



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JUNE 19: Chief Secretary Atul Dulloo chaired a meeting on Friday of all the concerned to assess the progress achieved in identification, approval and execution of infrastructure restoration and reconstruction projects being undertaken under the Disaster Component of the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) and the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)-based Recovery and Reconstruction package sanctioned by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in the aftermath of the devastating floods and landslides of 2025.

The meeting, as per an official statement, besides the ACS, Finance and ACS, PWD was attended by Principal Secretary, DMRR&R; Commissioner Secretary, YS&S; MD, JKPD; DG, A&T; DG, Resources; DG, Budget and other concerned officers from the relevant Departments.

While reviewing the implementation progress, the Chief Secretary stressed the need for timely completion of all restoration works and directed the departments to significantly expedite execution so that expenditure under SASCI is fully incurred within the prescribed timelines. He

emphasized that all departments must adhere to the sunset provisions of the scheme and ensure completion of works within the stipulated period.

The Chief Secretary directed the departments to immediately finalize and submit all pending permanent restoration projects proposed under the PDNA framework. He also asked the departments to submit additional restoration proposals amounting to approximately Rs 232 Cr to the Finance Department for further consideration.

To ensure transparency and prevent duplication of expenditure, the Chief Secretary instructed all departments to furnish certificates confirming that the projects proposed under SASCI and PDNA are not being funded through any other scheme or source. He made it clear that no financial claims shall be processed without such certification.

The Chief Secretary further directed the Public Works Department, Power Development and Housing & Urban Development Department to expedite submission of additional infrastructure projects for consideration under the SASCI Disaster Component for 2026-27.

During the meeting, the ACS Finance Department, Shailendra Kumar presented a comprehensive

overview of the financial assistance received, departmental allocations, project portfolios and implementation status under both the funding frameworks aimed at rebuilding damaged public infrastructure and enhancing resilience against future disasters.

The ACS divulged that J&K has been allocated an additional assistance of Rs 1,431 Cr under the Disaster Component of SASCI, specifically meant for restoration and reconstruction of infrastructure damaged during natural calamities as well as for undertaking mitigation measures to reduce future disaster risks.

Based on the recommendations of the high level committee constituted here, it was revealed that the highest allocation of Rs 860 Cr was earmarked for the Public Works Department, followed by Rs 315 Cr for the Jal Shakti Department, Rs 173 Cr for the Power Development Department, Rs 51 crore for the Agriculture Production Department and Rs 32 Cr for the Youth Services and Sports Department.

The meeting was further informed that the Sub-Committee of the National Executive Committee (SC-NEC) of the Ministry of Home Affairs has approved Rs 1,579.09

Cr for Recovery and Reconstruction activities based on the PDNA report prepared after the floods and landslides of 2025. Out of the approved assistance, the Central share amounts to Rs 1,421.12 Cr, while the UT share is Rs 157.91 crore.

It was informed that the approved assistance spans multiple sectors including housing, education, health, public infrastructure, roads, drinking water supply, sanitation, power, irrigation, agriculture, tourism, horticulture and environmental restoration. The largest share of assistance has been earmarked for infrastructure sectors, particularly roads, buildings, power systems and water supply networks, which suffered extensive damage during the disasters.

Reviewing the departmental proposals, the Chief Secretary was informed that following reconciliation with the PDNA framework and elimination of overlapping works, project proposals amounting to nearly Rs 1,196 Cr have been finalized under SASCI, while work plans worth more than Rs 1,025 Cr have already been uploaded on the BEAMS platform. The Finance Department has released over Rs 429 Cr to various departments for execution of approved works.

Anti-Drug Awareness

District Admin Bandipora intensifies campaign across educational institutions

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, JUNE 19: As part of the ongoing 100-Day Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBBA), District Administration Bandipora continued its district-wide awareness campaign with pledge and pledge renewal ceremonies held across several educational institutions on Friday.

The activities, as per an official statement, were organized to reinforce the commitment of students and staff towards building a drug-free society and to spread awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse.

Pledge ceremonies and reinforcement programmes were conducted at Government Higher Secondary School Chuntimulla, High School Kesson, Government High School Achoora, Government Higher Secondary School PTL Gurez, Government Higher Secondary

School Gadakhud, Government Higher Secondary School Quilmuqam, Boys Higher Secondary School Aloosa, High School Panar, PM SHRI Government High School Sumbal, Government Higher Secondary School Nowgam and High School Mukdamyari Hajin.

During the programmes, students and teaching staff collectively renewed their commitment to abstain from drugs and actively contribute towards creating a healthy, safe and responsible society. The participants were sensitized about the social, economic and health consequences of drug abuse and were encouraged to serve as ambassadors of change within their communities.

At HSS Quilmuqam, a special pledge renewal and reinforcement programme was held wherein participants reaffirmed their resolve to remain vigilant against substance abuse and promote a healthy lifestyle.

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER Public Works (R&B) DIVISION AWANTIPORA

Email: rb-awantipora@jk.gov.in

NO: T-1/EEA/2184-88 Dated: 19/06/2026

Extension Notice

Subject: -1. Construction of Synthetic Volley Ball Court at HSS Dadsara.

2. Construction of Synthetic Volley Ball Court at GHSS Panzgam.

3. Construction of Synthetic Volley Ball Court at Allo-chibagh (Civil Part).

Reference: - 1. This office e-NIT No. 27/EEA/R&B of 2026 -27/1809-19 Dated: 10-06-2026.

The critical dates for the above noted Work is hereby extended as under:

Sl. No.	Item	Deadline
1	Bid Submission End Date	26-06-2026 up to 4.00 P.M
2	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	27-06-2026 up to 12.00 P.M

All other terms & Conditions shall remain same as per above mentioned NIT s.

Sd/-
Technical officer

DIPK-2347/26
DATED: 19-06-2026

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
R&B Division Awantipora

DC Ganderbal takes stock of preparations for Mata Kheer Bhawani Mela

KT News Desk

GANDERBAL, JUNE 19: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, Friday visited the Mata Kheer Bhawani Temple at Tulmulla to take stock of the arrangements being put in place for the forthcoming annual Mata Kheer Bhawani Mela.

During the visit, the DC, as per an official statement, conducted a comprehensive inspection of the temple premises and reviewed the preparedness of various departments with regard to facilities being provided for the convenience and comfort of devotees expected to participate in the annual mela.

The DC inspected accommodation facilities established for pilgrims, including the Yatri Niwas and temporary tented accommodation being arranged to cater to the anticipated influx of devotees. He directed the concerned departments to ensure that all lodging facilities are clean, well-maintained and equipped with essential amenities for a comfortable stay.

Reviewing arrangements for community kitchens (langars), the DC instructed the concerned agencies to ensure adequate space, proper sanitation and



uninterrupted supply of water and electricity at all designated langar sites. He emphasized that all facilities should be made available in a coordinated manner to facilitate smooth functioning of langars during the mela period.

The DC also inspected healthcare arrangements and reviewed the preparedness of the medical team being deployed at the temple. He directed the Health Department to ensure availability of doctors, paramedical staff, ambulances, emergency

medicines and first-aid facilities so that devotees receive prompt medical assistance whenever required.

Special emphasis was laid on the provision of safe drinking water, uninterrupted power supply, sanitation facilities and cleanliness around the temple premises. The concerned departments were directed to ensure regular maintenance of toilets, proper waste disposal mechanisms and round-the-clock availability of essential services during

the mela.

Later, the DC also visited the Central University of Kashmir campus at Tulmulla to review the accommodation arrangements being made for devotees. During the visit, he inspected lodging facilities, langar sites, parking spaces and other amenities being put in place for the convenience of pilgrims.

He directed the concerned officers to ensure proper cleanliness, adequate drinking water, uninterrupted power supply, sanitation facilities and clear signage within the campus.

Interacting with officers on the spot, the DC stressed that every effort should be made to provide a safe, comfortable and spiritually enriching experience to devotees visiting the shrine. He directed all stakeholder departments to work in close coordination and remain available on the ground to address any issue that may arise during the mela period.

Among others, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, Revenue, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Chief Executive Officer Municipal Council Ganderbal, Executive Engineers of KPDC, Jal Shakti, and PMGSY besides Chief Medical Officer and other officers and officials accompanied the DC during the inspection.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir (UT) OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION PULWAMA

TENDER NOTICE

E-NIT No: 42 /EEP/RNB/of 2026-2027/ 2454-64

Dated: 19/06/2026

Phone:-01933-295302

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT term e-tenders (In Single Cover system) are invited on %age Basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Government for the following work :-

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. Lacs.)	Cost of T/D (Rs.)	Earnest Money (In %age.)	Time of Completion in working Days	Class of Contract	Major Head of Accounts	Administrative Approval No:	Call No:
1	Restoration of Ziyarat Hazrat Shamara Bhat Sahab (RA) at Parigam	11.73	600/-	2% of DV.cost	45 Working days	BEE,AAy	Archeology	DA&M-182 of 2026 Dated.01.06.2026	1st call

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

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	19 -06-2026
2.	Bid downloading Start Date	19 -06-2026 from 10:00 A.M
3.	Bid submission Start Date	19 -06-2026 from 10:00 A.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	06 -07-2026 upto 0 4:00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	07 -07-2026 at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Div.Pulwama
6.	Submission of Performance Security(PS)	Within three (03) days of receipt of LOA. (The First lowest successful bidder has to provide 5% of allotted cost as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG and EMD of 2% shall be released after receipt of 5% Performance security.

Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in the shape of Treasury Challan /Receipt as per Annexure -C (Debited to M.H.0059 PWD) and EMD in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to the Executive Engineer R&B Div. Pulwama (The Date of Treasury Challan and EMD should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date.

1. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Div. Pulwama

2. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.

3. EMD in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of the Executive Engineer R&B Div. Pulwama

4. The Contractors are advised to visit the site and to be aware of the conditions for launching at site of work before quoting the rates.

5. The contractor shall also be responsible for any theft/ damage to any of the component at site and the cost of damage/ theft if any shall be deducted from the work done or CDR of the Contractor till completion of work and handing over.

6. The 1st lowest bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Pulwama within three (03) days after the date of receipt of letter of acceptance and shall be released after successful completion of DLP. The Bank Guarantee should be valid for 45 days beyond DLP

Head Draftsman

Technical Officer

Executive Engineer
R&B Division Pulwama

DIPK-2346/26
DATED: 19-06-2026

CS reviews Mela Kheer Bhawani arrangements at Tulmulla

■ Inspects Shrine premises, CUK Campus

KT News Desk

Ganderbal, June 19: Chief Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir, Atal Dulloo on Friday visited the Mata Kheer Bhawani Temple at Tulmulla and reviewed the arrangements being put in place for the smooth conduct of the annual Mela Kheer Bhawani.

Commissioner Secretary, General Administration Department and Health & Medical Education Department, M. Raju; Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg; Vice Chancellor, Central University of Kashmir, Prof. A. Ravindra Nath; Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore; Director Urban Local Bodies Kashmir; Director Health Services Kashmir; Senior Superintendent of Police Ganderbal, besides senior officers from civil and police administration, Central University of Kashmir, Dharmarth Trust and line departments were present on the occasion.

At the outset, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, briefed the Chief Secretary about the arrangements being put in place for the annual mela. He informed that comprehensive measures have been undertaken to ensure comfortable accommodation for devotees, including lodging facilities within the temple premises including Yatri Niwas and at the Central University of Kashmir campus, besides at other local educational institutions and in tents.

He also apprised the visiting dignitary of the provision of langar facilities, drinking water supply,



uninterrupted power, sanitation, medical assistance, parking management and traffic regulation. He informed that special focus has been laid on cleanliness of the shrine premises, illumination of approach roads, establishment of help desks, public address systems and facilitation measures for elderly and differently-abled devotees.

During the visit, the Chief Secretary inspected various facilities within the shrine complex and took stock of the preparedness of different departments. He reviewed arrangements related to sanitation, drinking water supply, power availability, lighting, public conveniences, medical aid, security, traffic management and other essential

services being provided for devotees. The Chief Secretary also inspected the Medical Aid Centre established at the shrine and directed the Health Department to ensure adequate availability of doctors, paramedical staff, medicines, ambulances and emergency response facilities during the mela period.

Earlier, the Chief Secretary also visited the Main Campus of the Central University of Kashmir (CUK), Tulmulla, where accommodation facilities have been arranged for visiting devotees.

He inspected the tentage area, Science Block, Administrative Block and other designated areas identified for lodging of pilgrims and reviewed the arrangements being made for their

comfortable stay.

During the inspection, he reviewed the availability of accommodation facilities, tents, bedding, sanitation arrangements, drinking water supply, power backup, lighting and toilet facilities. He also inspected the sites earmarked for langar services and directed the concerned agencies to ensure proper hygiene, cleanliness and adequate facilities for devotees.

The Chief Secretary further reviewed the parking plan and movement of vehicles within and around the campus. He emphasized the need for proper traffic regulation, designated parking spaces, clear signages and hassle-free movement of devotees to avoid congestion during peak hours.

Interacting with officers on the occasion, the Chief Secretary stressed the importance of coordinated efforts among all departments to ensure that devotees are provided a safe, comfortable and dignified experience. He directed the concerned officers to complete all remaining works within the stipulated timeframe and maintain round-the-clock monitoring of arrangements.

Describing Mela Kheer Bhawani as a significant religious occasion and an enduring symbol of Kashmir's rich composite culture, the Chief Secretary called upon all stakeholders to work with dedication and a spirit of public service to ensure the successful and peaceful conduct of the annual mela.

MP Khatana, MLA Nagrota call on LG Sinha



KT News Desk

Srinagar, June 19: Er. Gulam Ali Khatana, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday.

In the meantime, Devyani Rana, Member of Legislative Assembly from Nagrota called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

NEET Re-Exam.....

Classwork to remain suspended in 60 Hr Sec Schools today

Coaching centres in Kashmir to remain closed on Sunday: DSEK

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Jun 19: School Education Department (SED) on Friday ordered suspension of classwork on Saturday in 60 higher secondaries designated as NEET examination centres in Kashmir division.

Director of School Education (DSEK) in an order said, "In view of upcoming NEET examination scheduled on 21-06-2026 (Sunday), the classwork in schools designated as centres for NEET Examination shall remain suspended on 20-06-2026

(Saturday)." The directorate warns that any deviation of the order shall invite strict action under law against the defaulter institute.

Meanwhile, the directorate ordered closure of all private coaching centres on Sunday.

DSEK in a separate order said, "In view of the upcoming NEET examination scheduled on 21-06-2026 (Sunday) all the coaching centres of Kashmir Division shall remain closed on 21-06-2026 (Sunday)."

The directorate said that the orders have been issued with the approval of competent authority—(KNO)

Those cultivating land for decades cannot be dispossessed: Sakeena Itoo

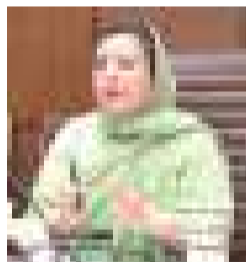
Says Govt stands with cultivators

Jahangeer Ganaie

Pulwama, Jun 19: Minister Sakeena Itoo on Friday said the government is committed to safeguarding the interests of farmers, assuring that cultivators who have been working on agricultural land for decades would not be deprived of their legitimate rights.

The minister made these remarks while addressing a public grievance redressal camp (Awami Darbar) in the Koil area of Pulwama district, where a large number of residents participated and highlighted various civic, developmental, and welfare-related issues before the government.

During the interaction, locals raised concerns regarding infrastructure, public services, development projects, and land-related matters. Listening to the grievances, Itoo assured the gathering that the government remains committed to addressing public concerns and accelerating development works across the region. She directed the concerned departments to take prompt and serious



measures to resolve the issues raised by the people.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the event, the minister strongly defended the government's position on the ongoing concerns regarding the identification and retrieval of certain land parcels. Referring specifically to farmers who have been cultivating land for generations, she said the government would not allow injustice to be done to those whose livelihoods depend on such lands.

"We stand with the farmers whose land is being identified for retrieval. Those who have been cultivating these fields for the last several decades to support their families will not be deprived of their rights," she said.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Jammu state demand limited to handful BJP individuals: Minister Sharma

Waris Fayaz

Kupwara, Jun 19: Minister Satish Sharma on Friday said the demand for a separate state for Jammu does not reflect the aspirations of the people and is confined to a handful of individuals, mostly from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Speaking to reporters here, Sharma said the people of Jammu and Kashmir are seeking restoration of statehood and not further division of the erstwhile state. "We were once a state and are now a Union Territory. Statehood was promised to the people, and we will continue to raise the demand as it is our right," he said.

The minister said businesses in Jammu, particularly in Kathua, Samba and Jammu districts, have suffered considerably over the years, while economic activity was adversely affected and inflation and hardships increased in the aftermath of the prevailing situation.

Referring to the ongoing campaign for restoration of statehood, Sharma said all political leaders, including MP Agha Ruhullah, should participate in the movement. "Those who have reached their positions through the National Conference should stand with the party on this issue," he said.

Reaffirming the National Conference government's commitment to its promises, the minister said all commitments made in the party manifest would be fulfilled during its tenure. He said the government would present its report card to



the people after completing five years in office.

Calling for the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, Sharma said the people of the region have made immense sacrifices for the country and deserve to have their democratic rights restored. He criticised attempts to oppose the elected government, saying the verdict of the people must be respected.

On tourism, the minister said the return of visitors to Kashmir is a major achievement and a strong response to forces trying to destabilise the region. "A year ago, it seemed difficult to imagine such a large influx of tourists. Today, tourism is back on track, and it is a positive message for the entire country," he said.

The minister announced that major sports events and film festivals would be organised in Jammu and Kashmir in the coming months to boost tourism and create employment opportunities

for youth. He said the government was also working towards hosting an IPL match in the region in the near future.

Highlighting developmental initiatives, Sharma said two IT Parks are being established in Srinagar and Jammu, which would generate employment opportunities for educated youth. He added that the government is also working on major infrastructure and water-related projects.

Commenting on governance and administrative functioning, Sharma said the working environment has changed over the years. He remarked that, unlike earlier times when senior officials would stand in attention for ministers, today officials function strictly according to protocol and institutional responsibilities.

The minister praised former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh for the development witnessed during his tenure and credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for completing the railway project that was initiated during Dr Singh's government. "Improved rail connectivity has significantly boosted tourism and economic prospects across Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Calling former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee a "visionary leader", Sharma said the country today needs leadership marked by the statesmanship, wisdom and inclusive approach associated with both Vajpayee and Dr Manmohan Singh. "We are servants of the people and remain committed to fulfilling their aspirations," Sharma added—(KNO)

Safai Karamcharis meet CM's Advisor at Raabita

KT News Desk

Srinagar, June 19: A delegation of Safai Karamcharis of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) met Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani at Chief Minister's Raabita Office regarding their demands for regularisation of Casual Safai Karamcharis working in different ULBs.

The Union apprised Advisor of its various demands, including regularisation of Casual Safai Karamcharis who have been working for several years in different ULBs. The Advisor informed the delegation about the steps being taken by the Government and assured to address all genuine demands of the ULB employees in a time bound manner.

The issue of pending promotions in the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) of Kashmir Division also came up for discussion during the meeting. It was decided that all ULBs in the Division shall furnish complete



promotion cases to the concerned directorate on an urgent basis to facilitate the timely convening of the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) and expedite the promotion process.

Following the assurance extended

by the Advisor, the Safai Karamchari Union of the ULBs agreed to call off its strike and assured its full cooperation for ensuring proper sanitation arrangements during the forthcoming Shri Amarnathji Yatra.

A separate delegation of Safai

Karamchari Union of Jammu Municipal Corporation also met Nasir Aslam Wani and raised their issues relating to their promotion and regularization. The Advisor stated that with the notification of Recruitment Rules for both Gazetted and Sub-ordinate Services of the JMC, decks have been cleared for promotion of the eligible employees as well as filling up of vacant posts and also assured that further modifications shall be considered in the Recruitment Rules to facilitate promotion of existing employees wherever required. He also issued directions to the Commissioner, JMC, to take consequential action for effective implementation of notified recruitment rules.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the representatives of Safai Karamchari Union thanked the Advisor, Commissioner Secretary, HUDD

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

MLA Kangan secures Rs 5 Cr indoor stadium for Arigoripora

KNO

Kangan, June 19: In a major boost to sports infrastructure in Kangan constituency, MLA Kangan Mian Mehar Ali has secured the sanction of an Indoor Sports Stadium at Arigoripora at an estimated cost of Rs 5 crore. In a significant push for indoor athletics, MLA Kangan Mian Mehar Ali has secured the sanction a Rs 5 crore indoor sports stadium for Arigoripora.

The project is expected to provide modern sports facilities and create more opportunities for young athletes to participate in indoor games and other recreational activities. Speaking on



the occasion, Mehar Ali expressed gratitude to the Youth Services and Sports Department and the Jammu and Kashmir Government for approving the project.

He said the stadium reflects his commitment to strengthening sports

infrastructure and promoting youth development across the constituency.

The MLA said providing better facilities for young people remains one of his key priorities and assured

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

EDITORIAL

Banning Single-Use Plastic Need Of The Hour

The Committee on Environment's proposal to ban single-use plastic in Jammu and Kashmir is a welcome and long-overdue step. Plastic pollution has become a visible and toxic scar on the Valley's pristine landscape. It chokes rivers, blocks drains, and kills aquatic life. It is an eyesore and a public health crisis. A comprehensive ban is the need of the hour. Plastic is everywhere. It wraps our food, carries

our groceries, and clogs our water bodies. The convenience of plastic is an illusion. Its real cost is paid by the environment, by animals that ingest it, and by communities that drink water contaminated by its toxic breakdown. Single-use plastic, in particular, is the worst offender. It is used for minutes but persists for centuries. It breaks down into microplastics that enter the food chain and eventually our bodies.

The health consequences are still being studied, but the evidence is already alarming. Jammu and Kashmir, with its fragile ecosystem and dependence on tourism, cannot afford to ignore this crisis. Tourists come to see the natural beauty, not mountains of plastic. Religious shrines and tourist destinations are particularly vulnerable. A ban on single-use plastic, strictly enforced, would send a powerful message

that the Valley is serious about protecting its environment. The Committee has rightly called for stringent measures and intensified enforcement. The J&K Pollution Control Committee must act immediately. Fines must be imposed. Alternatives like cloth bags, paper packaging, and biodegradable materials must be promoted. The ban must not remain a piece of paper; it must be implemented on the ground. This

is not just about cleaner streets. It is about protecting the future. It is about preserving the Valley's beauty for generations to come. The government must issue the Executive Order without delay. The environment cannot wait. The people cannot wait. Let us make Jammu and Kashmir a model of sustainability, not a dumping ground for plastic. The Committee has shown the way. Now it is time to act.

A Decade Of Nari Shakti – The Ascent Of Viksit Bharat

Walk into any village, hamlet or far-flung corner of the country today and look closely at the kitchen. The smoke is gone. The bucket carried from a distant handpump has been replaced by a Har Ghar Jal tap. The open field is no longer her only option; a Swachh Bharat toilet stands in the courtyard. The pucca roof above her is registered in her own name. This is not an imaginary picture printed on a poster. It is a truth of women's empowerment over twelve years of the Modi government.

Annpurna Devi

Walk into any village, hamlet or far-flung corner of the country today and look closely at the kitchen. The smoke is gone. Where a chulha once stung the eyes of a young bride, an Ujjwala flame now burns clean and blue. The bucket that her mother-in-law carried from a distant handpump has been replaced by a Har Ghar Jal tap. The open field behind the house is no longer her only option; a Swachh Bharat toilet stands in the courtyard. The pucca roof above her is registered in her own name. In her purse sits a Jan Dhan passbook, in her phone a UPI app, and on her wrist, sometimes, the watch of a Lakhpati Didi who now earns more than her husband.

This is not an imaginary picture printed on a poster. It is a truth of women's empowerment over twelve years of the Modi government – one that crores of Indian women are living every single day. This is the story of an era in which, guided by the vision of Women-Led Development, the Indian woman is becoming the architect of a Viksit Bharat.

Contrast this with the decade that preceded 2014. In 2007-09, India's Maternal Mortality Ratio stood at 212 deaths per lakh live births. The nation's anguish over a tragedy like Nirbhaya spilled onto the streets, yet the system betrayed a deficit of policy will and sensitivity. The Women's Reservation Bill, first introduced in 1996, was allowed to lapse four times. No decisive action was taken on Triple Talaq for decades. The chulha kept burning. The handpump kept squeaking. And the woman kept waiting.

Begin with the most sacred indicator: the right of an Indian woman to survive childbirth.



India's Maternal Mortality Ratio has fallen sharply, from 212 to 88. According to the UN-MMEIG, while the global decline in maternal mortality was a mere 48 per cent, India recorded a historic fall of 86 per cent. Institutional deliveries have risen from 38.7 per cent to 90.6 per cent. Nearly nine in ten Indian women now deliver in a hospital, attended by trained hands. The Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana has transferred over 20,000 crore directly into the bank accounts of more than four crore mothers. A first pregnancy in India today is no longer a coin toss with mortality.

More than 12 crore household toilets built across the country have given women dignity. Over 10.5 crore Ujjwala connections have freed them from smoke. Today, tap water has reached more than 16 crore homes – against a mere 17 per cent of households in 2014. Of the nearly 4 crore homes built under the

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, 73 per cent stand in the names of women. For the first time in the history of independent India, the names of our mothers and sisters are recorded with pride in government records.

From dignity came ownership, and ownership gave the confidence to decide. This widening of economic participation ran from the bank account to entrepreneurship. Of nearly 56 crore Jan Dhan accounts, 56 per cent are in the names of women. The World Bank acknowledges that India has brought the gender gap in account ownership to zero within a decade – a feat without precedent in global financial inclusion. Of more than 52 crore collateral-free Mudra loans, 68 per cent have gone to women. Stand-Up India has extended over 43,000 crore to women entrepreneurs, and 91 lakh Self Help Groups under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods

Mission (DAY-NRLM) have mobilised 12 lakh crore in capital. Ahead of schedule, 3 crore sisters have already become Lakhpati Didis.

This change is just as clear in education and employment. The Female Labour Force Participation Rate has risen from 23.3 per cent in 2017-18 to 41.7 per cent in 2023-24, while in rural areas it has reached 47.6 per cent. Under the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, over 3.33 lakh crore now stands deposited across 4.53 crore accounts. In higher education, our Gender Parity Index has crossed one, and with daughters making up 43 per cent of enrolment in STEM education, India stands among the first in the world.

This change shows not only in lived experience but in the record itself – the SRS, NFHS, PLFS, the World Bank and the UN all point the same way: for the Indian woman, access has widened and self-reliance has arrived.

This same economic and social awakening is now visible in political and democratic participation. In the 2019 general elections, for the first time, women voted in a higher proportion than men. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, 31.2 crore women exercised their franchise – the largest by women anywhere in the world. It was in this spirit that the long-pending Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam was passed in Parliament with historic unanimity. Today, more than 14.5 lakh elected women representatives lead our Panchayats. Women fly Rafales. Women command warships. Women cadets pass out of the National Defence Academy.

The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019 placed an effective check on Triple Talaq, bringing such cases down by 82 per cent. At 973 One Stop Centres nationwide, women in distress now receive medical care, legal aid and counselling under one roof. The Women Helpline 181 has assisted over one crore women. Mission Shakti, Mission Vatsalya and Saksham Anganwadi form the spine of a Naari-led Bharat.

There are, of course, still challenges, and the government is working on them with full commitment. The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam itself awaits the coming delimitation.

For the first time in the history of our Republic, the Indian woman is – at the table of policymaking – no longer merely a beneficiary but its active co-creator. She is no longer a spectator to the work of nation-building. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, she is its participant, its co-builder, and its very author.

The author is Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Government of India

From Chicago To Hooghly – The Journey Of Yoga's Global Recognition And Return To Its Spiritual Home

Throughout history, certain ideas have travelled beyond boundaries and transformed societies. Yoga is one of India's oldest traditions, whose journey has moved from ancient scriptures to global recognition. Today, yoga returns to the banks of the Hooghly – reinvigorated, re-recognised, and re-established.

Prataprao Jadhav

Throughout history, certain ideas have travelled beyond boundaries and transformed societies. And Yoga is one of the India's oldest traditions, whose journey has moved from ancient scriptures to global recognition.

The word Yoga – derived from the Sanskrit root yuj, meaning 'to yoke' or 'to unite' – encapsulates a comprehensive system of philosophical inquiry and practical discipline aimed at the union of the individual self (jivatman) with the Universal Consciousness (Paramatman).

The earliest seeds of Yoga are found in the Rig Veda (c. 1500-1200 BCE), where the concept of tapas (austerity) and dhyana (meditation) are referenced. These ideas were further developed in the Upanishads, which articulated many of the philosophical foundations of Yoga. It was, however, the Yoga Sutras of Maharishi Patanjali (c. 200 BCE – 400 CE) that gave Yoga its most systematic framework – the classical ashtanga yoga or eight-limbed path – comprising Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi.

Beyond Patanjali, the Bhagavad Gita presents Yoga as a dynamic philosophy for living. Set against the backdrop of the battlefield of Kurukshetra, the dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna offers profound insights into human duty, purpose, and

spiritual growth. Among the various paths described in the Bhagavad Gita, Karma Yoga (path of selfless action), Jnana Yoga (path of knowledge), and Bhakti Yoga (path of devotion) are the three great roads to liberation. India, therefore, is not merely the birthplace of yoga – it is the living civilisation from which yoga grew organically, over millennia, as part of its spiritual, cultural, and philosophical fabric.

However, during the period of colonial influence sections of educated Indian society increasingly came under the influence of Western intellectual frameworks, and traditional systems of knowledge, including Yoga, were often viewed as less relevant in the changing modern world. At this important time, Swami Vivekananda emerged as a powerful voice who helped people rediscover the value of yoga.

Through his teachings and his historic speech at the World's Parliament of Religions, he brought global attention to India's spiritual heritage and inspired a new confidence in the timeless wisdom of yoga. He shared the ideas of Vedanta and yoga with people from different parts of the world and showed that yoga was not only a religious practice but also a path for personal growth, inner peace, and self-development. The respect and appreciation he received abroad helped Indians regain confidence and pride in their own ancient traditions and culture.

His lectures in Chicago – and subsequently across the United States and Europe

– introduced the West to the concept of Raja Yoga (the royal yoga of mind-control), Jnana Yoga (the yoga of intellectual discrimination), Karma Yoga (yoga of selfless service), and Bhakti Yoga (yoga of devotion). His book Raja Yoga (1896), based on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, became one of the earliest and most influential introductions of yogic philosophy to Western audiences.

In his lectures on Raja Yoga, Swami Vivekananda presented Yoga as a systematic and experiential discipline for exploring the inner dimensions of human consciousness. For Vivekananda, India's greatest contribution to humanity lay in its spiritual wisdom, with Yoga representing one of its most profound and enduring expressions. His ideas attracted the attention of prominent intellectuals and thinkers of the period, contributing to a broader Western engagement with Indian philosophy.

What is perhaps less celebrated – but equally significant – is the manner in which Vivekananda's work in the West catalysed a renaissance of yoga within India itself. When Swami Vivekananda returned to India in 1897, he did not come back empty-handed. He brought with him a renewed self-confidence – a reconstituted sense of pride in India's spiritual inheritance – that had been galvanised by his reception in the West.

After returning to India in 1897, Vivekananda delivered lectures across the country, inspiring people to rediscover Indian spiritual traditions. On 1 May 1897, Swami

Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission in Belur Math, Howrah – situated on the western bank of the Hooghly river, just a short distance from where Ramakrishna had passed his final years at Dakshineswar. This institution, built on the Hooghly riverbank in Bengal, became the global headquarters of a movement that propagated the ideals of Vedanta, service as worship (Iva jñane j va sev), and the practical application of yoga philosophy.

Despite being the land of spiritual pioneers like Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda, the public visibility of yoga in Bengal gradually reduced with changing times. Yoga gradually moved away from the centre of public life due to changing lifestyles, modern priorities, and social shifts. Yet, its roots remained alive through spiritual institutions and dedicated practitioners.

On 11 September 1893, beginning with the immortal greeting, "Sisters and Brothers of America, Swami Vivekananda introduced the world to India's spiritual wisdom through his historic speech at the World's Parliament of Religions. Now "Sisters and Brothers of West Bengal, in your own home, witness the homecoming of yoga—from Chicago's global stage to the banks of the Hooghly."—these words carry a deep emotional connection, reminding us of the historic moment when Swami Vivekananda introduced India's spiritual wisdom to the world. His message travelled from India to the world, spreading the

values of yoga, harmony, and inner peace.

What returns to the banks of the Hooghly today is not Yoga itself—which never ceased to exist in India—but the renewed global recognition and appreciation of Yoga that began with India's ancient sages and found renewed expression through Vivekananda's message to the world.

It has returned – reinvigorated, re-recognised, and re-established – to the Hooghly riverbank in Bengal, where Belur Math stands to this day as a living monument to that journey. Today, as yoga is practised globally, and as the world recognises yoga as an intangible Cultural Heritage – it is essential to remember that yoga's global journey has its axis in Swami Vivekananda's historic mission.

Today, with the celebration of International Day of Yoga in Kolkata, it feels like a beautiful homecoming of yoga to the land from where its message began its journey to the global stage. The banks of the Hooghly once again witness people coming together to celebrate a tradition that crossed oceans and returned with greater recognition and respect.

This journey from "Chicago to Hooghly" is not merely the journey of a practice; it is the journey of an idea – and indeed an emotion – that continues to connect humanity through balance, compassion, and self-awareness and the pursuit of inner harmony.

The author is Union Minister of State (IC) for Ayush and Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare

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

New Legislative Assembly building symbol of democratic governance: Deputy CM

Inspects new project in Jammu, directs concerned officers, executing agencies to expedite pace of work

KT News Desk

JAMMU, JUNE 19: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary Friday inspected the ongoing construction work of the new Legislative Assembly building in Jammu and reviewed the progress achieved on the prestigious project.

During the inspection, the Deputy Chief Minister, as per an official statement, assessed various components of the construction work and emphasized the importance of maintaining the highest standards of quality while ensuring adherence to the prescribed timelines.

He directed the concerned officers and executing agencies to expedite the pace of work so that the project is completed within the stipulated timeframe.

The Deputy Chief Minister underscored that the new Legislative Assembly building is a vital public infrastructure project and a symbol of democratic governance. He stressed



that there should be no compromise on quality and called for regular monitoring to ensure smooth and efficient execution of the work.

Later, the Deputy Chief Minister visited Bajalta, Jammu, to express his heartfelt condolences to former District Development Council (DDC) Member, Shameema Begum, on the demise of her husband.

He conveyed his sympathies to the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul. He shared the grief of the family and prayed for strength and courage for them to bear the irreparable loss.

Several officers, engineers and local representatives accompanied the Deputy Chief Minister during the visit.

Zero tolerance towards teacher attachments from far-flung areas to cities: Sakeena Itoo

Asks Director School Education, CEO for immediate repatriation of all such teachers to their original place of postings in villages

KT News Desk

JAMMU, JUNE 19: Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo distributed regularisation orders among 261 Contingency Paid Workers (CPWs) of education department and also virtually laid foundation stone of various educational infrastructure projects across multiple schools of the Jammu division at Abhinav Theatre here on Friday.

Project Director Samagra Shiksha, Bhawani Rakhwal; Director School Education Jammu, Dr Naseem Javid Choudhary; Joint Director SCERT, senior officers of school education department, CEO Jammu, Principals, Lecturers, educationists and officers of district administration were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister reiterated the Government's commitment to providing quality education, strengthening school infrastructure, and ensuring the welfare of employees associated with the education sector. She emphasized that



education remains the cornerstone of social and economic development of society adding that various initiatives are being undertaken to transform the educational landscape of Jammu & Kashmir.

While congratulating the regularised CPWs, the Minister appreciated their contribution towards the functioning of the education department. She added that regularization of CPWs has been a long pending demand and the present Government has fulfilled its commitment under the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to provide social

security and dignity to these workers who have been serving the department for years.

The Minister, as per an official statement, on the occasion, also called for zero tolerance towards teacher attachments from far-flung areas to cities. She asked the Director School Education and CEO Jammu for immediate repatriation of all such teachers to their original place of postings in villages. "The shortage of teachers is manufactured because teachers avoid far-flung postings. Need of the hour is to send them back so that children in villages do not

suffer," she asserted.

The Minister also said that a transparent transfer policy for School Education Department is under process, on the lines of the policy already framed for Higher Education department.

The Minister, on the occasion, also virtually laid the foundation stone for various infrastructure development works of School Education Department in Jammu Division like Elementary Hostel at Government Middle School Hiranagar, upgradation and modernization of Government Higher Secondary School Nagrota Gujror, and construction of additional classrooms at Government Higher Secondary School Pallan. These initiatives are expected to significantly enhance educational facilities and create a more conducive learning environment for students in these areas.

She also released several educational publications prepared by SCERT Jammu & Kashmir, aimed at enriching teaching-learning processes and supporting the implementation of contemporary educational reforms.

DDAC Bandipora urges early action against drug abuse



KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, JUNE 19: As part of the ongoing 100-Day J&K Nasha Mukta Abhiyan, District De-Addiction Centre (DDAC) Bandipora (Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt of India) in collaboration with District Administration Bandipora Friday organized a District-Level Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Programme at Govt High School Mukdamyari, Hajin, aimed at strengthening awareness among students and educators regarding the dangers of substance abuse and the importance of early intervention.

The programme, as per an official statement, witnessed the participation of students from Classes 8th to 10th and members of the teaching and non-teaching faculty.

Project Coordinator, DDAC Bandipora, served as the Resource Person for the awareness session and delivered an informative lecture on the theme "Nasha Se Azadi - Choice Aapki, Zindagi Aapki." During his address, the Project Coordinator introduced the innovative "SHARE Code" to help students, teachers and parents identify early warning signs of substance abuse. He explained that S stands for Sleep Disturbance, H for Poor Hygiene, A for Anger/Irritability, R for Result Decline in Academics, and E for Evasive Eyes/Behaviour can often indicate the onset of drug dependence. He further clarified the distinction between observable signs noticed by others and symptoms experienced by the affected individual, emphasizing that addiction is a medical condition requiring treatment and support rather than stigma or judgment.

Highlighting the critical role of teachers and parents in prevention, he described them as the "first line of defence" against substance abuse. He urged teachers to remain vigilant regarding absenteeism, sudden behavioural changes and declining academic performance, while encouraging

parents to maintain open communication with their children and be alert to signs such as secrecy, unexplained demands for money and social withdrawal.

"Don't judge, don't delay—report early to save a life," he remarked while stressing the importance of timely intervention.

The session also provided detailed information about the services available at DDAC Bandipora, located in the Old District Hospital Bandipora. Participants were informed that the Centre offers free and confidential treatment services, including Outpatient (OPD) and Inpatient (IPD) care, medical detoxification, psychological counselling, rehabilitation and follow-up support for individuals struggling with substance use disorders.

The DDAC Supervisor also shared the Centre's 24x7 Helpline Number: 9596022376, assuring participants that all services are provided free of cost and that patient confidentiality is strictly maintained.

The programme concluded with a collective anti-drug pledge by students, teachers and resource persons, reaffirming their commitment not to consume drugs, not to encourage others to use drugs, and to work collectively towards making Bandipora a drug-free district.

The school administration appreciated the efforts of DDAC Bandipora and observed that such awareness initiatives play a vital role in creating a protective and informed environment for young people and the wider community. IEC material carrying key awareness messages and helpline information was also distributed among participants.

The programme forms part of DDAC Bandipora's sustained outreach efforts under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan, aimed at building a healthier, safer and drug-free society through awareness, prevention, treatment and community participation.

Welfare of farmers central to Govt's development agenda: Javed Rana

Conducts on-the-spot inspection of irrigation facilities across Ganderbal

KT News Desk

GANDERBAL, JUNE 19: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology and Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, along with Minister for Agriculture Production Department and Rural Development Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, Friday conducted an extensive on-the-spot inspection of various areas of Ganderbal district to assess the availability of irrigation water and review the functioning of irrigation facilities across the district.

The objective, as per an official statement, of the visit was to ensure adequate water supply to the agricultural lands and addressing the concerns of farmers, particularly in tail-end areas. The areas covered during the inspection included Warpora, Waqura, Nowbugh, Tulumullah, Waskura, Safapora, Shuhama, Buserbugh and several other localities across the district.

During the inspection, the Ministers interacted with the farmers and local residents to obtain first-hand feedback regarding irrigation facilities and water availability. Accompanied by the Chief Engineer and other senior officers of the Jal Shakti and other allied departments, they reviewed the ground situation and directed the concerned officials to immediately address all bottlenecks affecting the smooth supply of irrigation water.

Interacting with the farmers, Javed Rana emphasized that agriculture remains the backbone of Jammu and Kashmir's economy and the primary source of livelihood for a vast section of the population. "Agriculture is the mainstay of the people across the Kashmir Valley and the welfare of our



farmers remains of utmost importance for the government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. Safeguarding farmers' interests and ensuring the timely availability of irrigation water are among our foremost priorities and are committed to extend every possible support to the farming community," Rana assured.

The Minister instructed the officers to remain in the field, intensify monitoring and ensure prompt resolution of all irrigation-related issues. He emphasized that any complaint regarding water scarcity or irrigation facilities should be brought directly to his office for immediate redressal.

Rana stressed the need to optimize water-use efficiency through improved irrigation management, enhanced monitoring of irrigation infrastructure and timely maintenance of canals and water channels. He added that while Jammu and Kashmir has immense agricultural potential, realizing higher productivity requires a coordinated approach involving efficient water management, better infrastructure and responsive governance. He called upon the concerned officers to remain proactive in addressing the field-level issues.

Javid Ahmad Dar, during his interaction with the farmers, observed that water is the most critical resource for agriculture

and that its efficient management is essential for sustaining farm productivity and ensuring long-term agricultural growth. He assured the farming community that the government is closely monitoring the situation and that all necessary measures will be taken to ensure uninterrupted irrigation facilities and address genuine grievances without delay.

The Ministers reiterated that the welfare of farmers remains central to the government's development agenda and affirmed that all possible steps would be taken to strengthen irrigation infrastructure, improve water-use efficiency and support sustainable agricultural growth across the Valley.

Later, the Ministers also held a review meeting with the officers of the Jal Shakti, Forest department, Agriculture Production Department and other allied departments at the DFO Office, Ganderbal.

During the meeting, they took stock of the ongoing works and schemes being implemented by the departments in the district and directed the officers to ensure timely completion of all pending projects. They emphasized the need for better coordination between the departments for effective implementation of developmental works and instructed the officers to address field-level issues on priority.

Speaker expresses grief over fire incident at Darul Uloom in Pakherpora

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, JUNE 19: Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather has expressed deep grief over the fire incident occurred at Darul Uloom in Pakherpora.

Conveying his sympathies to the Intizamia Committee, the Speaker, as per an official statement, thanked the Almighty that all the students were safe.

He asked the district administration to immediately assess the damage caused by the fire. He directed the concerned authorities to provide prompt relief and all possible assistance to the affected, enabling them to overcome the difficulties arising from the incident.

The Speaker prayed for everyone's well-being and hoped for swift restoration of normalcy at the institution.

12th International Day of Yoga 2026

District AYUSH offices of Shopian, Pulwama organise "Run for Yoga"

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN/PULWAMA, JUNE 19: In the run-up to the celebration of the 12th International Day of Yoga, scheduled to be observed on 21st June 2026, the District AYUSH Offices of Shopian and Pulwama organized a "Run for Yoga" event to promote awareness about the importance of yoga and encourage healthy lifestyles among the public at two District Headquarters.

The events, as per an official statement, witnessed enthusiastic participation from officers and officials of the AYUSH Department, health-care staff, students, youth volunteers, and members of the general public. The run aimed to spread the message of holistic health and well-being and to create awareness about the significance of incorporating yoga into daily life.

Speaking on the occasion, the organizers emphasized that yoga is a powerful tool for achieving physical, mental,

and emotional well-being and plays a vital role in fostering harmony and healthy living. Participants carried placards and banners highlighting the theme of the International Day of Yoga and spreading the message of "Yoga for One Earth, One Health."

The events forms part of a series of activities being organized by the District AYUSH Offices of Shopian and Pulwama in the run-up to the grand celebration of the 12th International Day of Yoga on 21st June 2026 at District Headquarters. These initiatives are aimed at mobilizing community participation and reinforcing the importance of yoga as a way of life.

The District AYUSH authorities expressed gratitude to all participants and stakeholders for their active involvement and called upon the public to join the celebrations of the International Day of Yoga and embrace yoga for a healthier and happier society.

SKUAST-K scholar bags international grant for endangered Kashmir Fish Research

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JUNE 19: In a significant achievement for Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), Misba Rehman, a PhD scholar in the Faculty of Fisheries, has secured an international research grant of US\$6,500 from the US-based Wild Animal Initiative.

The grant, as per an official statement, will support the project, "Assessing Behavioural and Physiological Welfare Indicators for the Kashmir Loach (Triphlophysa kashmirensis)," led by Dr Syed Talia Mushtaq as Principal



Investigator, with Misba Rehman as lead applicant.

The study focuses on generating scientific evidence on

the welfare indicators of the critically endangered Kashmir Loach, an endemic fish species of Kashmir, to support

science-based conservation and management strategies.

Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai congratulated Misba Rehman and Dr Syed Talia Mushtaq, stating that the achievement reflects the growing global recognition of research at SKUAST-K and strengthens the university's commitment to impactful research and biodiversity conservation.

Dean, Faculty of Fisheries, Prof. Farooz Ahmad Bhat, described the grant as a major accomplishment, noting that the project addresses an important yet understudied area of fish welfare and conservation. Head Division of Fisheries

Resource Management, Dr Tasaduq Hussain Shah, said that the international funding reflects the scientific merit and growing relevance of the research being undertaken by the Division.

Expressing gratitude, Misba Rehman acknowledged the support of the university and her supervisor, stating that the grant will enable innovative research to better understand the conservation and welfare needs of the Kashmir Loach.

The award further underscores SKUAST-K's growing international recognition in biodiversity conservation and sustainable aquatic resource research.

Minister Sharma calls for collective fight against drug abuse

Visits Handwara, holds public interaction programme

KT News Desk

Handwara, Jun 19: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, on Friday conducted an extensive visit to Handwara, where he chaired a public interaction programme aimed at strengthening the grassroots governance and ensuring direct engagement with the people. Raja Sabha Member Chowdhary Mohammad Ramzan accompanied the Minister during the visit.

The interaction witnessed enthusiastic participation from the residents, public representatives, youth, members of civil society, trade bodies and local stakeholders, who apprised the Minister of various developmental needs and public service-related issues concerning the area.

During the programme, several deputations and individuals highlighted a range of demands, including installation of solar lighting at the Higher Secondary



School (HSS) Handwara playground, augmentation of public transport services through introduction of additional bus routes, improvement of road connectivity, strengthening of civic infrastructure, better sports facilities for youth and enhancement of other essential public amenities.

Responding to the issues raised by every deputation, Satish Sharma reiterated the government's unwavering commitment towards transparent, accountable and people-centric governance. He said that direct interaction with the citizens

enables the administration to better understand public aspirations and ensures timely resolution of issues affecting day-to-day life.

The Minister assured the gathering that all genuine demands projected during the interaction programme would be taken up with the concerned departments and addressed on priority. He directed the officers present to maintain close coordination with local representatives and ensure prompt follow-up on issues requiring immediate attention.

Addressing the gathering,

Satish Sharma expressed deep concern over the increasing menace of drug abuse (Nasha), describing it as one of the most serious social challenges confronting society today. He observed that substance abuse poses a grave threat to the future of the younger generation and adversely impacts families, communities and overall social harmony.

The Minister called upon the parents, teachers, religious leaders, civil society organisations and youth to join hands in building a drug-free society. He stressed that the fight against drug abuse cannot be won by the government alone and requires sustained public participation, awareness and community vigilance.

Highlighting the transformative role of sports, education and skill development in shaping the future of young people, the Minister urged the youth to channelise their energy towards constructive activities that contribute to their personal growth and nation-building.

Satish Sharma reiterated that every region of Jammu and Kashmir deserves equitable

development and assured the people that their aspirations would continue to receive focused attention.

Later, the Minister visited Drugmulla, where he chaired a public darbar and interacted with the people from the area.

The residents projected various issues relating to infrastructure development, public utilities, road connectivity, transport services and other local concerns.

The Minister assured the people that all genuine issues would be resolved in a transparent and time-bound manner through close coordination with the concerned departments.

He also urged the officers to remain accessible to the public, adopt a proactive approach in addressing grievances and ensure that government schemes and welfare programmes reach every deserving beneficiary without delay.

Senior officers from the civil administration and line departments besides public representatives and local leaders were present during both programmes.

Govt stands firmly with fire-hit families: Rana

Assures compensation, immediate relief to Buffliaz shopkeepers

KT News Desk

Surankote, Jun 19: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana on Friday visited Buffliaz area of Surankote and interacted with the shopkeepers whose establishments were gutted in a devastating fire incident that occurred a few days ago.

Expressing solidarity with the affected families, the Minister assured them of all possible assistance from the government for their rehabilitation and restoration of livelihoods.

"Our government stands firmly with the affected families and will ensure all possible support to help them rebuild their lives and resume their livelihoods at the earliest," Rana stated.

It is pertinent to mention that at least 13 shops were gutted in a massive fire incident that broke out at the Main Chowk market in the Buffliaz area of Surankote, earlier this month.

The affected shopkeepers apprised the Minister of the extensive losses suffered due to the fire. They sought adequate compensation and

financial assistance for reconstruction of their shops damaged in the fire incident. They urged the government to provide immediate relief so that the affected families, whose livelihoods largely depended upon these establishments, could resume their economic activities at the earliest.

The Minister also listened to the grievances of the residents who projected several developmental demands, including relocation of the Block Development Office (BDO), Buffliaz, to a more centrally located and accessible site.

They also raised the demand for construction of a Guest House to cater to the needs of the visitors and travellers, given Buffliaz's strategic importance as a vital link connecting the Jammu and Kashmir divisions.

Rana patiently listened to the grievances and demands raised by the affected shopkeepers and local residents. He assured that the process for providing compensation would be expedited at the administrative level in accordance with the assessment reports submitted by the concerned departments.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Young Indians

the country today. The main programme was held at Vignyan Bhavan, New Delhi. It was attended by Union Minister of Labour & Employment and Youth Affairs & Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya; Minister of State for Labour & Employment, Sushri Shobha Karandlaje, senior officials, employer representatives, employee beneficiaries and other distinguished guests.

Meanwhile, Labour & Employment, organized a special programme at Convention Centre, Jammu and Bari Brahmamana Industrial Association, Samba as part of the national event for disbursing benefits under the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PMVBRY).

In the Union Territory of J&K, 1,522 employees received incentives worth Rs 74 lakh, while about Rs 25.42 crore were directly transferred into the bank accounts of 304 employers, marking a meaningful step towards strengthening formal employment and expanding social security coverage.

LG SINHA EXPRESSES GRATITUDE TO PM MODI

At the UT-level event, through virtual mode, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha expressed gratitude to the PM Modi for driving inclusive growth & expanding social security coverage in Jammu Kashmir, and for bringing transformative changes in the Union Territory's employment landscape, enabling thousands of youths to access secure and dignified opportunities. "This historic occasion is not merely a program for distributing financial benefits under a government scheme but it is also a celebration of Jammu & Kashmir's transformative journey. It is a celebration of the dreams, aspirations, and opportunities that are giving a new direction to the lives of our youth today."

"Prior to August 2019, workers in Jammu & Kashmir were deprived of the comprehensive social security protections. Following the implementation of the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 in the Union Territory in November 2019, lakhs of regional workers were integrated into the national social security fold for the first time," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted that under the leadership of PM Modi, the Government of India has made continuous efforts to strengthen job creation and social security and 'Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana' stands as a historic example in this endeavor. "The 'Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana' embodies the resolve to build a Viksit Bharat. It envisions an India where formal employment becomes the norm, social security reaches every citizen, and every young person gets the opportunity to realize their dreams."

"The employment linked incentive scheme operates on two key pillars. The first pillar is dedicated to employees; providing direct financial incentives to young individuals entering the formal economy for the first time, encouraging them to remain within the organized sector. The second pillar is aimed at employers and support institutions and industries that expand their workforce and create new jobs," he said, adding, "When industries grow, employment opportunities increase and society prospers. It is estimated that through these two components, more than 3.5 crore employment opportunities across the country will be incentivized over the next two years. This is a sign of the positive transformation occurring in the lives of millions of families across India."

The Lieutenant Governor stated that Jammu & Kashmir has capitalized on this opportunity exceptionally well. Today, over 3,300 local establishments are registered under the scheme, bringing more than 22,500 youths into the formal employment system for the first time and over 31,000 job openings have qualified for incentives, driving a direct positive transformation in the lives of more than 53,000 citizens.

The Lieutenant Governor commended the Employees Provident Fund Organisation for implementing significant reforms that align with the national visions of 'Ease of Doing Business' and 'Ease of Living.'

He lauded the participating employers for becoming the vital partners in nation-building and also urged the remaining enterprises in the UT to register under the scheme.

Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY) is a flagship Employment-Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme of the Government of India aimed at promoting formal employment, supporting first-time entrants into the organised workforce, and incentivising employers to create additional jobs. Under the Scheme, eligible first-time employees receive one month's wage, up to Rs 15,000, while employers are provided with incentives for a period of two years for generating additional employment. The manufacturing sector is eligible for extended support for an additional two years, thereby encouraging sustained job creation in labour-intensive industries.

The main event was broadcasted at different locations in Jammu Kashmir including Lok Bhavan Srinagar, Convention Centre Jammu, NIFT College SIDCO Industrial Complex, Ompora Budgam, and Bari Brahmamana Industrial Association, Samba.

At Convention Centre Jammu, the programme was attended by Jugal Kishore Sharma, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha; Sat Sharma, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha and by more than 600 participants, including around 400 beneficiaries, more than 200 employers, industry association representatives, public representatives, senior State Government officials, and EPFO officers and staff.

Twenty employment letters were distributed by employers to newly employed members during the programme at Convention Centre, Jammu and six employment letters were distributed by employers to newly employed members at Bari Brahmamana Industrial Association, Samba.

The employer representative expressed gratitude for being given the opportunity to represent employers on the occasion of the disbursement of benefits and thanked the Prime Minister and Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India for providing a platform to speak on behalf of employers receiving Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) directly into their bank accounts.

He highlighted the positive impact of the scheme on industries and businesses and appealed to all eligible establishments to register under the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY) to avail themselves of the benefits.

The employee representative shared his experience regarding the benefits received under the scheme and appreciated the Government's efforts to support workers through direct financial assistance.

Charandeep Singh, Labour Commissioner, J&K; Sumeet Singh, Regional Provident Fund Commissioner-I; beneficiaries, employers, industry association representatives, public representatives, senior officials, EPFO officers and staff also attended the programme at different venues in Jammu Kashmir. (KNO)

70 lakh jobs

scheme. It is an initiative designed to strengthen the aspirations of young people entering their first jobs while creating a robust bridge between industry and the workforce." Modi remarked, noting that while many schemes focus either on employees or employers, this programme simultaneously supports both.

Modi further said that India's youth will be at the forefront of driving global growth, innovation and entrepreneurship in the years to come.

In the 21st century, opportunities will belong to nations that nurture skilled talent,

foster innovation and uphold the highest standards of quality, he said, adding that India has unprecedented capability in these three areas.

Under PM-VBRY, the government has provided an outlay of Rs 99,446 crore and targeted 3.5 crore job creation in two years.

Under the scheme, up to Rs 15,000 is provided for first-time employees. Employers get up to Rs 3,000 per month per new employee under the scheme.

To boost employment in the manufacturing sector, extended benefits are being provided for up to four years under the scheme.

Army launches

review the security situation and evaluate the operational preparedness of troops deployed for Operation Shiva 2026.

The post said the Army Commander was briefed on measures being taken to strengthen vigilance and operational readiness, and underscored the importance of sustained alertness, effective coordination and mission-focused execution while interacting with troops and field commanders.

The Army reiterated its commitment to providing a safe and secure atmosphere for pilgrims undertaking the Amarnath Yatra in close coordination and synergy with all stakeholders.

Meanwhile, authorities have declared the entire Amarnath Yatra route, including both the Pahalgam and Baltal axes, a 'No Flying Zone' from July 1 till the conclusion of the pilgrimage. Consequently, helicopter services for pilgrims will remain unavailable during the yatra. Devotees can reach the Holy Cave Shrine on foot or avail pony and palki services throughout the pilgrimage.

The 57-day pilgrimage is scheduled to commence on July 3 through the twin routes of Pahalgam and Baltal. (KNO)

Multi-layer security

and advanced technical gadgets and modern security equipment are being extensively used as part of the security grid.

"We have reviewed all arrangements and are further strengthening the system. The work is being carried out in close coordination with all agencies and stakeholders," she said.

Mishra said detailed discussions were held on security preparedness and coordination among various agencies to ensure seamless implementation of measures during the pilgrimage.

She said multiple layers of security involving the RPF, Government Railway Police (GRP), local police, Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), district police and railway departments have been established.

She said all agencies are working in coordination to ensure foolproof arrangements for pilgrims undertaking the annual pilgrimage to the cave shrine in south Kashmir as well as tourists travelling to the Valley.

The DG RPF said efforts are being made to provide a safe, secure and hassle-free experience to passengers while maintaining robust security measures throughout the Yatra period.

She expressed confidence that the coordinated efforts of all stakeholders would ensure the smooth conduct of the pilgrimage. (KNO)

India must control

of India's armed forces must be complemented by a strong domestic industrial base capable of supplying advanced equipment and components.

"Thousands of crucial components constitute the real strength of major defence platforms. This facility will contribute significantly towards self-reliance in a critical area," he said.

Singh said the nature of warfare may be evolving, but conventional military capabilities and industrial preparedness would remain relevant for decades. He stressed that a strong military-industrial ecosystem would continue to be a strategic necessity for the country.

Highlighting progress in defence manufacturing, the minister said India's defence production had increased from Rs 46,000 crore in 2014 to a record Rs 1.78 lakh crore in the 2025-26 financial year. Defence exports, which were below Rs 1,000 crore in 2014, had risen to Rs 38,424 crore.

He expressed confidence that India would achieve its targets of Rs 3 lakh crore in defence production and Rs 50,000 crore in defence exports ahead of schedule.

Singh also cited the performance of the erstwhile Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) after its corporatisation. He said production had increased from Rs 12,755 crore in 2019-20, before corporatisation, to Rs 26,282 crore in 2025-26.

Defence exports from the entities formed after corporatisation rose from Rs 81 crore to Rs 4,561 crore during the same period, with YIL contributing Rs 397 crore, he added.

The minister described research and development and capital infusion as key drivers of industrial growth, stressing the need for public sector defence enterprises to invest in modern machinery, advanced technologies and innovation to remain globally competitive.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, who was present at the event, said the new facility would strengthen India's self-reliance in defence manufacturing and help position Nagpur as an important hub in the sector. (KNO)

30-50% cancer

noticeable changes in moles or warts, and persistent cough or hoarseness. "Any symptom that persists for several weeks should be evaluated by a healthcare professional. Early consultation can make a critical difference in treatment outcomes," the campaign notes.

The campaign highlights that approximately one in nine men and one in twelve women in India are likely to develop cancer during their lifetime, but nearly 30 to 50 per cent of cancers can be prevented through lifestyle modifications, including avoiding tobacco, limiting alcohol, maintaining a healthy weight, adopting a nutritious diet, regular physical activity, and receiving recommended vaccinations.

Women are encouraged to perform regular breast self-examinations and follow mammography recommendations based on age and risk factors. HPV vaccination for girls aged 9 to 14 is strongly recommended for cervical cancer prevention, with women aged 30 to 65 urged to undergo periodic screening through Pap smear, VIA, or HPV DNA testing. Annual oral examinations are advised for early detection of oral cancer, particularly among tobacco users.

The campaign points out that a large number of cancer patients in J&K continue to seek medical attention only after the disease has advanced due to lack of awareness, fear and social stigma, reliance on self-medication and home remedies, financial constraints, transportation difficulties in remote areas, inadequate screening facilities, and shortages of specialists. Public health experts advocate a streamlined referral pathway from Health and Wellness Centres to Regional Cancer Centres.

The campaign calls for a three-pronged approach to cancer control: prevention, early detection, and quality treatment. Experts estimate nearly one-third of cancers can be prevented and another one-third successfully treated if diagnosed early. For patients with advanced disease, palliative care remains critical for pain relief, symptom management, and psychological support.

"Every cancer patient deserves dignity, comfort and compassion, regardless of the stage of illness," the awareness message states. The campaign concludes with: "Be aware, get screened, live healthy, support patients and spread hope. Early detection saves lives." People seeking information and support can contact the National Cancer Helpline at

1800-11-2299. (KNO)

Lavender farming

such as monkeys and bears, from entering orchards and damaging crops.

Calling for better marketing facilities, Khatana urged the government to establish a dedicated collection and marketing centre for lavender produce to help farmers access larger domestic and international markets.

Farm In-charge Kamal Bhat said the department provides complete training and technical guidance to farmers before they take up lavender cultivation. He said the crop requires minimal inputs and is largely grown using organic manure, reducing dependence on chemical fertilisers and pesticides.

"We regularly organise lavender festivals and awareness programmes to educate farmers about the crop and its economic value," Bhat said. He said around 3.5 lakh lavender saplings were distributed free of cost among farmers under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) last year.

Bhat said the farm has previously exported 45 boxes of lavender, each weighing 10 kilograms, to Dehradun for tea-making purposes.

Describing lavender as a drought-resistant crop, he said one kanal can yield nearly one quintal of flowers, while lavender oil fetches around Rs 12,000 per litre in the market. He said lavender has wide applications in cosmetics, aromatherapy, herbal teas, repellents and medicinal products.

Bhat further said a distillation unit has now been established at the Sirhama farm, enabling farmers to process lavender oil locally without depending on facilities outside the district.

Chief Agriculture Officer (CAO) Anantnag, Shah Nawaz Ahmad Shah, told KNO that the district has two Medicinal and Aromatic Plant (MAP) clusters, each spread over 20 hectares, where medicinal plants are distributed free of cost among farmers along with technical training. He said farmers can apply under HADP to avail free medicinal plant seedlings from the department.

Shah said the department also maintains a 600-kanal gene bank of medicinal and aromatic plants at Verinag.

"Medicinal and aromatic plants are emerging as a reliable source of income for farmers. Lavender is a perennial crop that can be cultivated even on barren land and requires comparatively less irrigation," he said.

The CAO said Anantnag district currently has two distillation units for the extraction of essential oils from aromatic crops. He said lavender cultivation is also contributing to the growth of agri-tourism, with tourists and farmers visiting the Sirhama farm regularly.

"Sirhama is the largest lavender farm in the Kashmir Valley and has become an important centre for awareness, training and promotion of lavender cultivation," Shah added. (KNO)

Rain, hailstorm

weather conditions. For the coming days, the MeT Department has forecast generally cloudy weather with intermittent spells of light rain, brief intense showers, thunderstorms, lightning, hailstorms and gusty winds at many places across Jammu and Kashmir from June 20 to June 22.

From June 23 to June 26, weather conditions are expected to remain partly to generally cloudy, with light rain, brief showers, thunderstorms and gusty winds likely at isolated to scattered places, it said. The department has also warned of the possibility of hailstorms at isolated locations during the next four days and advised residents to stay away from streams and nullahs due to the risk of sudden water level rise following intense rainfall.

Farmers have been advised to undertake orchard spraying during the early morning hours when weather conditions remain relatively stable, the MeT office said. (KNO)

SC refuses to accord urgent hearing on pleas related to NEET-UG 2026

PTI

New Delhi, Jun 19: The Supreme Court on Friday refused to accord urgent hearing on two separate pleas related to the NEET-UG 2026 re-test which is scheduled for June 21.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice V Mohana said these petitions would be heard by a bench headed by Justice P S Narasimha in July when the apex court will resume normal functioning after the partial court working days.

"All NEET matters will go before Justice Narasimha's bench," the CJ said when one of the lawyers mentioned the matter for urgent listing.

On May 12, the National Testing Agency (NTA) had cancelled the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate), or NEET-UG, held on May 3 for medical admissions amid allegations of paper leak.

The CBI is currently investigating the matter, and a re-test is scheduled for June 21.

Advocate Adeel Ahmed mentioned a separate petition filed by students and NEET-UG aspirants before the bench and sought urgent listing.

The top court said the plea would be heard by Justice Narasimha-led bench, which is already seized of petitions related to the exam.

The plea has sought a direction to the Centre and others to reconsider the feasibility of conducting the examination on June 21 after taking into account the representations of aspirants. It said the petitioners have collected and placed



on record a compilation of representations received from aspirants belonging to multiple states and Union Territories across the country.

"The representations disclose a remarkable uniformity of concerns, including mental trauma, severe anxiety, uncertainty arising from cancellation of the original examination, inadequate preparation time, apprehensions concerning examination

integrity, clashes with other examinations, logistical difficulties and adverse effects on mental health," the plea said.

It said the decision to conduct a fresh examination was not under challenge and the grievance of petitioners was confined to the "arbitrary and unreasonable fixation" of the re-test date without affording adequate preparation time to candidates. The plea said abrupt cancellation of the original examination

and the subsequent announcement of the re-test date resulted in widespread uncertainty and psychological distress amongst candidates.

It said the "atmosphere surrounding the re-examination has been marked by repeated circulation of alleged paper leak claims, purported leaked question papers, social media rumours and widespread misinformation, requiring repeated responses and clarifications from the authorities themselves".

"Public reports have highlighted serious mental-health consequences amongst NEET aspirants following the cancellation and controversy surrounding the examination process, including reports of suicides by aspirants," the plea said.

It has also sought a direction to the authorities to postpone and reschedule the re-NEET-UG 2026 examination after providing a reasonable preparation period to all affected candidates.

While hearing a batch of separate pleas related to NEET-UG 2026, the top court on May 29 stressed that the real problem relating to the medical entrance examination would not stop till "actual accountability arises".

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta had then told the apex court that the government was seriously concerned about the concerns of the youths and Prime Minister Narendra Modi was personally supervising the situation so that "there is no lacunae".

Mehta had also said that some new mechanisms have been put in place for the NEET-UG re-test scheduled for June 21.

'Highly productive': BJP hails PM Modi's visit to France, Slovakia



PTI

New Delhi, Jun 19: The BJP on Friday hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent foreign visit as "highly productive" and said its "positive and far-reaching outcomes" will be visible in India in the coming days.

Prime Minister Modi has returned after concluding his two-nation visit to France and Slovakia from June 13 to 18, during which he attended the G7 Summit and held bilateral meetings with several world leaders.

Describing the prime minister's foreign tour as

"very fruitful", BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said it has added a new dimension to India's economic progress as well as advancements in technology, space and skill development sectors in the country. "Establishment of a significant relationship with a country like Slovakia in eastern Europe is a multi-dimensional achievement that India has attained today during the prime minister's foreign tour," he told reporters at the BJP headquarters here.

It was a highly productive visit of the prime minister, Trivedi said.

Calcutta HC disposes Yoga Day plea after Bengal clarifies attendance not mandatory

PTI

Kolkata, Jun 19: The Calcutta High Court on Friday disposed of a petition challenging a West Bengal government order on participation in International Day of Yoga celebrations after the state clarified that attendance at the event is voluntary and not mandatory for public servants.

The petition was filed by the State Coordination Committee of West Bengal Government Employees, a Left-leaning organisation, which alleged that a memo issued by the chief secretary made participation in the June 21 Yoga Day celebrations compulsory for all government employees. The

organisation also questioned the chief secretary's authority to issue such a directive.

During the hearing, the state government, represented by Additional Advocate General Billwadal Bhattacharya, informed the court that the communication was only an appeal to public servants and did not mandate attendance.

After taking note of the government's clarification, Justice Amrita Sinha verbally observed, "This litigation was not required."

The court recorded that the written instruction issued by the state government states that the chief secretary's order "is a general appeal to all public servants to participate in the official

function on the occasion of International Day of Yoga."

It further noted that the order is "not mandatory in nature and no punitive or coercive action was contemplated or incorporated in case of failure to attend due to personal reasons."

Disposing of the petition, the court said that in view of the instruction forwarded by the state government, there was no need to proceed with the matter any further.

The International Day of Yoga will be celebrated across West Bengal on June 21, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi scheduled to attend the main programme at Red Road in central Kolkata.

Markets snap 5-day rally amid geopolitical uncertainty, selloff in IT stocks

PTI

Mumbai, Jun 19: Stock market benchmark indices ended lower on Friday, snapping a five-day rally, with the Sensex declining 607 points and the Nifty falling to the 24,013.10 level, dragged by heavy selling in IT firms after global tech giant Accenture trimmed its full-year revenue growth guidance.

Renewed geopolitical uncertainty over postponement of talks to finalise US-Iran peace deal in Switzerland also dampened investor sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 607.08 points, or 0.78 per cent, to settle at 76,802.90. During the day, it tanked 940.26 points, or 1.21 per cent, to 76,469.72.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 154.90 points, or 0.64 per cent, to end at 24,013.10. The Sensex had

jumped 3,577.43 points, or 4.84 per cent, in the last five trading sessions, and the Nifty climbed 1,006.4 points, or 4.34 per cent. Among the 30-share Sensex constituents, IT firms were the major losers. The BSE IT index dropped 3.57 per cent.

Infosys dived 6.69 per cent, Tata Consultancy Services dropped 3.53 per cent, HCL Tech 2.74 per cent, and Tech Mahindra ended 2.45 per cent lower. HDFC Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, Reliance Industries and Hindustan Unilever were also among the laggards.

However, Eterna, Bharti Airtel, Power Grid and NTPC were among the winners.

US Vice President JD Vance has postponed his visit to Switzerland to meet Iranian negotiators, with the White House citing logistical issues.

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS SOPORE

In the case of: Meema Bagam w/o: Mohd Haneef Kawa R/o: Shercolony.

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 Faizan Ahmad Kawa D/o: Mohd Haneef Kawa as 22-07-2021 at M.C.H Sopore.

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

Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Sopore

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS SOPORE

In the case of: Meema Bagam w/o: Mohd Haneef Kawa R/o: Shercolony.

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

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

Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of Birth event of the applicant's Daughter namely Mehvish Haneef D/o: Mohd Haneef Kawa as 08-03-2009 at M.C.H Sopore.

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

Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Sopore

Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) DIVISION ANANTNAG.

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

NIT 37 OF R&B/Anantnag/2026-27 /E-TENDERING/2928-37, DATED 19-06-2026

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

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (in Rs)	Earnest Money (In Rs)	Time of Completion	Major Head of Account	Class of Contractor
1.	Construction of ACR (02) at Govt. Middle School Sursuna Anantnag.	35.98 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 30.49 + (18% GST Amount 5.49)	1100	71960/-	180 Days	PAB Samagra Shiksha	AAV & BEE Class Only

Project Authority : Directorate of Samagra Shiksha, J&K.

Position of AAA : Accorded vide Society Order No. 593 Chirag of 2026, Dated 20.05.2026.

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

S No.	Particulars	Dated
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	19-06-2026
2	Period of Downloading of bidder documents	From 19-06-2026 (03:00 PM) To 25-06-2026 (04:00 PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	From 19-06-2026 (03:00 PM)
4	Bid Submission End Date	To 25-06-2026 (04:00 PM)
5	Date and time of opening of bid(online)	26-06-2026 (10:30 AM)

In the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag.

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

All the Bidders have to submit Earnest Money/Bid Security (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG. Non submission of Earnest Money/Bid Security shall render the bidder as No-responsive.

The 1st lowest responsive (Successful) Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Anantnag (Tender receiving authority) within 03 Days before fixation of Contract and shall be released 60 Days after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work. The date of Performance Security (CDR/FDR/BG) should be after the date of issuance of letter/LOI to deposit the performance security. Failure to produce Performance Security shall render the LI as non-responsive and case for debarring of the Contractor for a period of 01 Year be forwarded to Higher Authorities.

3. The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG of the successful Bidder shall be released after receiving Performance security @5% of the allotted cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG and same shall be released 60 Days after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work.

The rates quoted in the BOQ are exclusive of GST. GST @18 Percent shall be added to the contract value by the allotting authority at the time of issuance of allotment.

7. The date and time of opening of Bid shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag.

8. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of Opening of Technical bids.

9. The Earnest Money/Performance Security shall be forfeited if:

a) Any bidder/tenderer with draw his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modification in the terms and conditions of the bid.

Failure of successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within specified time period before issuance of letter of intent.

b) Successful Bidder fails to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

c) If at any stage of work, the Bidder backup from the contract, again the Performance security/ EMD as well as work done claim will be forfeited.

10. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

a. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.

b. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.

c. The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No Financial bid will be accepted in physical form.

d. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.

e. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with bid. Note:- Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.

DIPK-2363/26

DATED: 19-06-2026

Sd/-
(Er Mohammad Waseem) Executive Engineer,
R&B Division Anantnag

Iran's chief negotiator says US talks bound by Tehran's 'red lines'

AFP

Tehran, Jun 19: Iran's chief negotiator Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf said on Friday that talks with the United States would remain bound by Tehran's "red lines."

"As we have shown in the past path of negotiations, we are steadfast in fulfilling the conditions and red lines set, and in achieving the interests of the Iranian nation," Qalibaf said in remarks published by the official IRNA news agency.

"If the enemy seeks to be excessive, we have proven that our fingers are on the trigger and we have no hesitation in giving a crushing response to the enemy."

Tehran and Washington signed a memorandum of understanding this week ending a regional war that erupted on February 28 with US-Israeli strikes on Iran.

Switzerland said US talks with Iranian negotiators on a pact to end the Middle East conflict would not take place on Friday, as Vice President JD Vance dropped plans to travel to Geneva, adding to uncertainty whether a lasting truce can be found.

"The logistics of these negotiations have never been simple or predictable," the White House spokesperson said in a statement on Thursday night. Vance and the US delegation had been ready to depart as soon as plans were finalized. The White House blamed logistical issues, but the announcement came after a report from Al-Mayadeen, a pan-Arab satellite channel that is politically allied to Hezbollah, that Iran was delaying sending its delegation to Switzerland over Israel's ongoing military campaign in Lebanon. "A senior American



official told me that one of the reasons for postponing the trip might be Iranian claims regarding the situation in Lebanon," Axios reporter Barak Ravid posted on social media.

Qalibaf's remarks came after Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei said he had approved the US-Iran deal despite having a "different view" on the matter, without elaborating. In a message read out on state television, Khamenei said that direct talks with the United States "will not mean accepting the enemy's point of view."

In response to Khamenei's message, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said the country's foreign policy apparatus "will be used to secure the sublime interests of Iran" and "protect the rights of the noble Iranian nation."

President Masoud Pezeshkian, who signed the deal on behalf of his country, issued a similar statement promising to adhere to Iran's red lines and defend its "dignity, honor and authority."

The US-Iran deal, which US President Donald Trump also signed, lays the groundwork for detailed 60-day negotiations on Iran's nuclear program and sanctions relief.

It remains unclear when talks for a final settlement would start after a first meeting in Switzerland slated for Friday was postponed.

Hezbollah lawmaker says Iran told group talks with US hinge on comprehensive ceasefire

Lebanese Hezbollah lawmaker Hassan Fadlallah told Reuters that Iran had informed the group that talks with the United States could not continue without the implementation of a comprehensive ceasefire.

He called on the Lebanese government to reject any direct negotiations with Israel while Israeli attacks on Lebanon continue, and said Washington bore responsibility for ensuring Israel halted its attacks and implemented the terms of the agreement.

Iran says it will waive fees for Hormuz during 60-day negotiation period

AFP/REUTERS

Dubai, Jun 19: Iran's Strait of Hormuz body said on Friday it would waive planned fees to use the strait during a 60-day negotiation period under the memorandum of understanding signed with the United States this week.

Ships seeking passage through the strait while the interim agreement is in force must submit transit requests at least 48 hours before arrival, Iran's Arabian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA) said in a notice.

Iran would waive fees for security, safety, environmental services and related insurance during the period, while requiring vessels to coordinate routes and transit times in advance due to areas affected by mines and to ensure safe navigation.

A total of 25 commercial vessels crossed the newly-reopened Strait of Hormuz on Thursday, the



highest number since mid-April, according to data from maritime tracking firm AXSMarine published on Friday.

The spike came after Iran and the United States agreed to reopen the crucial route under an agreement to end the war, but before the cancellation of talks between the sides in Switzerland that had been planned under that deal.

On June 18 "we observed 25 verified commercial vessel crossings through

the Strait of Hormuz — the highest single-day count since 18 April and more than five times the average daily level recorded during the first ten days of June," AXSMarine said in a news release.

Iranian forces effectively closed off the strait after US and Israeli strikes sparked the war on February 28. Maritime authorities reported dozens of attacks on ships in the area.

Iran later briefly reopened the global trade artery to

commercial traffic, prompting a short spike in crossings on April 18.

Before the war, about 120 vessels a day had passed through the strait, according to leading shipping journal Lloyd's List.

A fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas exports passed through the strait in peacetime, according to economists.

AXSMarine said crossings averaged 7.6 a day from the start of March.

The number of crossings on Thursday may be higher, as some ships turn off or manipulate their AIS transponder signals to avoid detection while passing through the strait.

Thursday's "spike came amid the largest AIS signal disruption event we have observed in the Arabian Gulf since the conflict began, with more than 200 commercial vessels affected simultaneously by spoofing or abnormal AIS behavior," it said.

Israeli military says it struck southern Lebanon

AP

Jerusalem, Jun 19: Israel's military struck targets throughout southern Lebanon overnight into Friday and Hezbollah reported intense fighting in the area, threatening the nascent agreement between Iran and the United States to end their war.

Lebanese media reported at least 18 people killed in the strikes, and Israel said four soldiers died.

The conflict between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah is the most precarious part of the Iran deal. Neither Israel nor the militant group signed the agreement — but it is supposed to end their fighting, and Iran has signaled its willingness to risk renewed war in the region for the sake of its interests in Lebanon and its most important regional ally.

Iranian officials didn't travel as planned to Switzerland for talks on Friday with the United States, in part over the fighting, a regional official said. U.S. Vice President JD Vance also called off his trip, and mediators are now scrambling to reschedule the meetings, which were supposed to begin addressing how to restrict Iran's nuclear program — the core issue over which Israel and the U.S. went

to war on Feb. 28. The talks are also supposed to bring about a permanent end to the conflict. The interim deal has already reopened the Strait of Hormuz to international shipping, after Iranian attacks and threats all but stopped the flow of oil and natural gas through the waterway. That caused energy prices to skyrocket far beyond the region, and President Donald Trump said he signed the agreement to avoid "economic catastrophe" in the U.S.

The fighting in Lebanon could unravel the deal. The Israeli military said strikes were ongoing on Friday after four of its soldiers, including a lieutenant colonel, were killed in an attack on a tank in a village near the southern Lebanese city of Nabatiyeh. An explosive drone attack wounded another five, it added.

Israel then launched multiple strikes against "Hezbollah infrastructure sites" in Nabatiyeh and other areas, according to a military statement, which accused the militant group of "blatant ceasefire violations."

Later, the military said it also struck targets in the Beqaa Valley in eastern Lebanon, with Lebanese media saying the village of Douris should hit.

Women's T20 WC: Heavyweights Australia aim to extend their dominance against Netherlands



IANIS

Southampton, June 19: Pre-tournament favorites Australia will look to continue their winning streak when they face newcomers the Netherlands in a 2026 ICC Women's T20 World Cup Group A clash at The Rose Bowl on Saturday.

It's the first time Australia will take on Netherlands in a Women's T20 World Cup game after having played against them in Women's ODI World Cups, with the former winning on all five occasions. A clinical victory for Australia will take them closer to clinching the semi-finals slot and replace India as the Group A toppers.

Australia, the six-time champions, enter the fixture after dismantling South Africa and Bangladesh in their previous games. Australia's formidable lineup could be further strengthened by the return of star off-spin bowler all-rounder Ashleigh Gardner from an ankle sprain, though explosive batter Phoebe Litchfield remains sidelined due to a quad strain.

If Ashleigh is fit for Saturday's clash, it gives selectors a luxury dilemma — whether to leave out the big-hitting Grace Harris or drop a frontline bowler to stack their batting. For the Netherlands, their maiden T20 World Cup campaign is now at the point of them being at the ultimate test of survival.

'India to send 125-130 athletes to CWG'

PTI

New Delhi, Jun 19: India will be represented by 125 to 130 athletes covering eight able-bodied and four para sports at the scaled-down Glasgow Commonwealth Games in July-August, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) CEO Raghuram Iyer said on Friday while asserting that the body would steer clear of any selection disputes.

The 2026 CWG -- scheduled from July 23 to August 2 -- will feature just 10 able-bodied and six para sports to ensure a cost-effective event. Glasgow stepped in as the host city after the Australian state of Victoria pulled out due to escalating costs.

"We will have a total of 125-130 participants, athletes. One third of the number of athletes will be the support staff," IOA CEO Raghuram Iyer told PTI.

"We will compete in eight able-bodied and four para sports," he said on the sidelines of the second edition of the IOA Athletes Forum here.

The sports programme for the Glasgow CWG comprises athletics and para athletics, swimming and para swimming, 3x3 basketball and wheelchair 3x3 basketball, bowls and para bowls, boxing, track cycling and para track cycling, gymnastics, judo, netball, and weightlifting and para powerlifting.

The 2022 CWG in Birmingham had featured 19 able-bodied and eight para sports, and India had sent 208 athletes, winning 61 medals (22 gold, 16 silver, 23 bronze) to finish fourth in the final standings.

The IOA is expected to announce the full contingent after June 23 which is the deadline for sending the list of participants to the Glasgow Games organisers.

"The teams have been selected. All the NSFs have sent us the names. The uniforms and the ceremonial dress for the contingent members are being planned. All the logistics are being planned," Iyer said. "We have had three meetings with various NSFs about their plans, about the pre-Commonwealth Games training programmes."

As the host country of the 2030 CWG, India will receive the flag of the Commonwealth Sport during the closing ceremony in Glasgow on August 2. Ahmedabad will host the centenary edition of the CWG in 2030.

"There will be something special planned and that is actually the prerogative of the host city, Ahmedabad. Whether it is art, culture or any other kind of entertainment that we want to put forth is going to be decided. But there is work happening and you will see a very interesting show, interesting vignette that will be put together," said Iyer. He said IOA is also simultaneously planning for the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan in September-October, which will be of much bigger scale than the CWG. India will also be sending a much bigger contingent of more than 700 to the Asian Games. "There are 44 sports in the Asian Games and happening immediately post the CWG. There is a lot of work happening on that front as well. We are hoping for a strong show in the Asian Games."

Roadmap for 2027 World Cup is ongoing process: BCCI secretary Saikia



New Delhi, Jun 19 (PTI) The deliberations on India's roadmap for the 2027 World Cup are "not meant for public consumption", BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said in an interview to PTI, refusing to be drawn into any discussion on individual players and their much-speculated future in the team.

Veterans Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli dominate the chatter whenever there is any talk around the Indian team's 2027 global campaign but Saikia is categorical that "strategic discussions in the board room" are best left inside.

While both former skipper are determined to play the mega-event, chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar and head coach Gautam Gambhir have been non-committal on whether the squad will have space for the white-ball legends.

Asked if the BCCI has had any internal conversations on the matter, Saikia said all stakeholders are aligned in their views in what is essentially an ongoing process.

"We have a very well-knit team and a lot of experts. All stakeholders are taken on board," Saikia told PTI during an exclusive interaction.

"Whatever decisions that are made involve the cricket committee, the selectors and all other stakeholders, including the support staff, the head coach and the players concerned."

"There are regular conversations taking place. For that reason, we do not need any special session of interaction. This is an ongoing process," the secretary said, keeping all his cards close to his chest.

He maintained that he would not divulge any board room information.

"I do not think I should disclose

anything before the media or the public because these are strategic discussions. I am not authorised to speak about them before the media."

"Secondly, these are matters that should remain within the boardroom."

BCCI to follow government dictate on Bangladesh

The Indian cricket team had postponed its white-ball tour of Bangladesh last year due to unrest in the neighbouring nation.

India's eastern neighbours now have an elected government in place.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board too has a new president in former skipper Tamim Iqbal, who is keen on resumption of bilateral cricketing ties with India.

Asked if the BCCI's stance would now change, Saikia replied: "The BCCI is a cricketing controlling board, and we have nothing to do with what is going on politically in other countries."

"As the BCCI, we follow whatever policy the Government of India has in place regarding participation in bilateral and multinational sporting events. Whatever regulations and policies the central government frames, we follow them, just like any other sports federation, whether it is football, athletics or any other sport," he explained.

Saikia made it clear that it doesn't concern the BCCI as to which party is running the government in Bangladesh.

"We are not concerned with who is running the government in a particular country, whether it is democratically elected, undemocratically elected or an autocratic government. That is none of our business."

"Our job is to run cricket. Whenever there is a scheduled tour to a foreign country for

Movies List

Saturday, 20th June

	HAI JAWANI TOH ISHQ HONA HAI (HINDI ATMOS) (UA16+)	11:10 AM
	OBSESSION (ENGLISH) (A)	05:20 PM
	MAIN VAAPAS AUNGA (HINDI) (UA16+)	02:00 PM 07:40 PM
	COCKTAIL 2 (HINDI) (UA16+)	10:30 AM 01:30 PM 07:30 PM
	TOY STORY 5 (3D ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES)	04:45 PM
	TOY STORY 5 (II) (ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES)	10:00 AM

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