



### NCORD meeting; DM Jammu reviews 100-day Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyaan impact

Orders strict action against scheduled drug misuse; Directs de-addiction centres to comply with SO-91



**JAMMU, JUNE 3**  
District Magistrate Jammu Dr Rakesh Mishra today chaired the District Level Narcotics Coordination Centre (NCORD) meeting to review the implementation of anti-drug initiatives in the district. The meeting reviewed the impact of the rigorous 100-day Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyaan. The DM appreciated inter-departmental efforts and discussed course corrections for the rest of the programme. He reviewed "Drug Free Panchayat" declarations and scrutinised administrative and police actions in identified drug hotspots. Emphasising awareness, the DM discussed strategies to

engage school children. He stressed amplifying information dissemination to reach every individual. He also directed regular, rigorous inspections of psychiatric institutions and de-addiction facilities. The meeting was attended by ADCs Anusuya Lal and Vidhu Shekhar, CMO Dr Harbakh Singh, Joint Director Information Deepak Dubey, DSW Prati Sharma and other stakeholders. Earlier, the DM chaired a meeting with psychiatrists, medical officers and managers of private de-addiction centres. He set a strict six-month deadline for these facilities to comply with Statutory

Order (SO) 91 of 2026, warning of severe legal action for non-compliance. While assuring administrative support to those actively working to eradicate the drug menace, he welcomed constructive suggestions from stakeholders. Warning against the misuse of prescription medicines, the DM directed the Assistant Drugs Controller to maintain strict surveillance over the stock and sale of scheduled drugs. "Each pill has to be accounted for," the DM stated categorically, ordering strict legal action against any establishment failing to maintain proper stock and sale records.

### BJP training camps to reinforce ideological commitment, organizational strength in cadre: Sat Sharma, Ashok Koul

**BUDGAM, JUNE 3**

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Jammu & Kashmir led by its President and Rajya Sabha MP Sat Sharma CA, and BJP General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul, along with other senior leaders addressed district-level training workshops in Kashmir under the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Prashikshan Mahabhilyan-2026. Sat Sharma along with BJP General Secretary Anwar Khan, and District President Er. Showkat Gayoor addressed the district-level training workshop organized in Pulwama.



During the session, Sat Sharma spoke on the subject of the BJP's history and development, tracing the party's journey from its ideological roots to becoming the world's largest democratic political organization. Sat Sharma said that the BJP's growth is the result of the dedication, sacrifice, and commitment of countless workers who remained devoted to the principles of nationalism, good governance, and public service. He emphasized that party workers must understand the BJP's historical

evolution and ideological foundations to effectively communicate its vision and achievements among the masses. He stated that the BJP's success lies in its strong organizational culture, disciplined cadre, and unwavering commitment to the welfare of the nation and its people. Meanwhile, BJP General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul addressed two district-level training camps in Kashmir on the topic "Vichar Parivar." The first camp was organized by BJP District Budgam at Charar-e-Sharif, while the second was held by BJP

District Pulwama at Awantipora. Ashok Koul, addressing the participants, elaborated on the concept of Vichar Parivar and its role in strengthening nationalist thought and social transformation. He said that the ideological family associated with the BJP is united by a common commitment to nation-building, cultural values, and service to society. He stressed that party workers should remain connected to the ideological foundations of the organization and work with dedication to take these values to every section of society. He added that ideological awareness,

organizational discipline, and continuous public engagement are essential for strengthening the party and ensuring effective service to the people. J&K Waqf Board Chairperson Dr. Darakhshan Andrabi, Spokesperson Alaf Thakur, J&K BJP Manzoor Bhat, Er. Shihl Bhat, District President Er. Showkat Gayoor, District President Hakeem Ruhullah Ghazi, senior leader Dr. Ali Mohammad Mir, Ghulam Nabi Narmbhai and Mahila Morcha Vice President Dr. Farida Khan also accompanied Ashok Koul.

### Looks Salon Unveils 'Summer Slay Offer' with Massive Discounts on Beauty & Wellness Packages

**JAMMU, JUNE 3**  
Bringing together beauty, wellness and affordability, Looks Salon Beauty & Spa, located at Channi Himmat near Hotel Ritz Manor, Jammu, has launched its much-awaited "Summer Slay Offer," featuring attractive discounts on a range of premium beauty and spa services. Designed to help clients stay refreshed, confident and rejuvenated during the scorching summer months, the special campaign offers comprehensive beauty care packages at significantly reduced prices. As part of the limited-period offer, the salon has introduced two specially curated combo packages that combine some of its most sought-after services. Combo 1, available at ₹7,000 against its original value of ₹11,000, includes Facial, Threading, Full Body Bleach, Full Body Wax, Manicure and Pedicure. Combo 2, priced at just ₹4,000 instead of ₹7,000, offers O3+ Cleanup, Threading, Full Body Bleach, Full Body Wax, Manicure and Pedicure, making professional beauty care more accessible to a wider range of cus-

tomers. The salon said the initiative is aimed at encouraging self-care and wellness while helping clients combat the effects of extreme summer weather. With the tagline "Glow. Relax. Slay. All Summer Long," the campaign emphasizes not only outward beauty but also relaxation, rejuvenation and personal well-being. According to the management, the packages have been thoughtfully designed to provide head-to-toe grooming and skincare solutions that leave customers feeling refreshed, confident and radiant throughout the season. Adding further excitement for beauty enthusiasts, Looks Salon has also announced a Flat 40% Discount on every service as part of its reopening celebrations. The salon has reopened with a refreshed ambience, enhanced facilities and new service additions while continuing its commitment to delivering quality care and customer satisfaction. "Missed us? We missed you, too," reads the salon's cheerful message to its loyal clientele, inviting customers to

experience the upgraded salon experience. Salon representatives said the overwhelming response to the offer reflects the growing demand for professional beauty and wellness services that combine luxury with value. They noted that the special packages are particularly beneficial for individuals preparing for social gatherings, weddings, professional engagements and seasonal skincare needs. The salon believes that investing in self-care contributes significantly to confidence, mental wellness and overall personality enhancement. Advance bookings for the Summer Slay Offer are now open, and customers are encouraged to reserve their appointments early due to the limited duration of the promotion. Interested clients can contact the salon at 9413 99477. With attractive savings, premium treatments and a renewed commitment to customer care, Looks Salon aims to make this summer a season of beauty, relaxation and confidence for its patrons across Jammu.

### St. Mary's Convent High School, Smalpur, successfully conducted Day 7 of the Bhatiya Bhasha Summer Camp.



**JAMMU, JUNE 3**  
St. Mary's Convent High School, Smalpur, successfully conducted Day 7 of the Bhatiya Bhasha Summer Camp. The day was dedicated to Traditional Games, Motivation, and Closure. Students enthusiastically participated in various traditional games that promoted teamwork, physical fitness, and cultural awareness. Motivational activities and inspiring talks encouraged students to develop confidence, discipline, and a positive attitude towards learning. The camp concluded with a closing ceremony where students shared their experiences and learning outcomes. The summer camp provided a valuable platform for promoting Indian languages, culture, and holistic development among students.

### MLAs review development, restoration works in Udhampur

**UDHAMPUR, JUNE 3**  
Members of the Legislative Assembly from District Udhampur today chaired a district-level appraisal and monitoring meeting with officers of various line departments to review the progress of ongoing development projects and restoration works across the district. The meeting was attended by MLA Udhampur West Pawan Kumar Gupta, MLA Chenuani Balwant Singh Manikotia, MLA Udhampur East Ranbir Singh Pathania, MLA Ramnagar Dr. Sunil Bhardwaj, Additional District Development Commissioner Jugal Kishore, Chief Planning Officer Uttam Singh and senior officers from concerned departments. The MLAs conducted a constituency-wise review of developmental and restoration works being executed across the district. They also assessed damages caused by floods and landslides during August-September 2025 and reviewed the status of restoration measures undertaken in the affected areas. The review covered constituency-wise damage assessment, physical and financial progress of works, fund utilisation under SDRE, UT Capex Budget, SASCI and Constituency Development Fund schemes, as well as the current status of ongoing projects and challenges in their execution.

### Hockey League (U-19) 2026 organized by GNN Hockey Club; Bandhu Rakh Hockey Club Registers Emphatic 5-0 Victory in Opening Match

**JAMMU, JUNE 3**  
The GNN Jammu Hockey League (U-19) 2026 commenced on an exciting note with Bandhu Rakh Hockey Club registering a convincing 5-0 victory over MBS Hockey Club Simal in the opening league match played at Jammu. Bandhu Rakh Hockey Club dominated the proceedings from the start, displaying excellent teamwork, disciplined defense, and attacking flair to secure a comprehensive win. The young players showcased impressive skills and sportsmanship, reflecting the growing standard of hockey in the Union Territory. The opening ceremony and match were graced by Sh. Rajeev Sharma, Member, DGPC, S. Jagpal Singh (Member, DGPC), Dr. Taran Singh (General Secretary, Hockey J&K), Sh. Tejinder Singh (Secretary, Hockey J&K), and Ms. Jaswinder Kour (Vice President, Hockey J&K). The dignitaries appreciated the efforts of the organizers in promoting hockey among youth and encouraged the participating players to continue striving for excellence



both on and off the field. The league will continue on 4th June 2026 with two exciting matches scheduled at 4:30 PM and 6:00 PM, promising more competitive hockey action for spectators and enthusiasts. The GNN Jammu Hockey League (U-19) 2026 is being organized to provide a competitive platform for young hockey players and to strengthen the development of grassroots hockey in Jammu & Kashmir.

DGPC, Sh. Swarn Singh (JKAS), S. Ranbir Singh (Member, DGPC), Dr. Taran Singh (General Secretary, Hockey J&K), Sh. Tejinder Singh (Secretary, Hockey J&K), and Ms. Jaswinder Kour (Vice President, Hockey J&K). The dignitaries appreciated the efforts of the organizers in promoting hockey among youth and encouraged the participating players to continue striving for excellence

### A Landmark Achievement for CDOE: First CBCS M.A. Education Batch Passes out

**JAMMU, JUNE 3**  
The Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE), University of Jammu, successfully organized a mark sheet distribution ceremony for the first graduating batch of the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) M.A. Education Programme. The programme was coordinated by Dr. Anuradha Goswami, who described the occasion as a significant milestone in the academic journey of both the students and the institution. She highlighted that this was the first two-year CBCS-based M.A. Education programme offered by CDOE and that the students receiving their mark sheets constituted the department's first passing-out batch. The Director, Prof. Pankaj Srivastava, along with faculty members Prof. Anju Thappa, Dr. Anuradha Rani, Dr. Pooja Sharma, and other staff members, congratulated



the students on their successful completion of the programme and wished them success in their future endeavours. Addressing the gathering, Prof. Pankaj Srivastava reiterated the department's commitment to academic excellence and continuous development. He emphasized the vital role of education in shaping society and encouraged students to effectively utilize their knowledge, skills, and values in both their profes-

sional and personal lives. During the ceremony, mark sheets were formally distributed among the students. The students expressed their gratitude to the Director, Coordinator, faculty members, and staff for their constant guidance, encouragement, and support throughout their academic journey. The programme concluded with a formal vote of thanks, marking the successful completion of the event.

### BJP is rapidly losing its political ground in Jammu: Rattan Lal Gupta



**JAMMU, JUNE 3**  
The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Provincial President Jammu Rattan Lal Gupta said that the BJP is rapidly losing its political ground in Jammu because of its failure to deliver on the promises made to the people. Instead of addressing pressing public issues such as unemployment, inflation, deteriorating infrastructure, shortage of essential services, and the continued denial of Statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, BJP leaders are attempting to divert public attention towards non-issues. While inaugurating Public Langer at Janipur Colony Jammu accompanied by Sheikh Bashir Ahmad Provincial Secretary Jammu, Vijay Lochan Chairman SC Cell, S. Tejinder Pal Singh Provincial President YNC Jammu, Mohinder Singh former Chairman JCCB and Rakesh Singh Raka Vice

President Central Zone. The Public Langer was organized by Sardar Gurnam Singh District Secretary Jammu Urban, Puspsh Jandial and Kewal Sharma. On this occasion Mr. Rattan Lal Gupta said that the people of Jammu are fully aware of the BJP's non-performance during the past several years. Having failed to fulfill its commitments, unable to justify its record before the electorate, local BJP leaders have adopted an apologetic posture before the voters. Their repeated attempts to shift the political discourse away from issues affecting the common people clearly reflect their nervousness and growing disinterest with the public. He emphasized that the BJP's policies have disappointed every section of society, including youth, farmers, traders, employees, and weak- er sections. The people expect

ed development, employment opportunities, economic growth, and restoration of democratic rights, but instead they have witnessed unfulfilled promises and increasing hardships. Mr. Gupta asserted that the growing public dissatisfaction is evident across Jammu province. The BJP leadership is now finding it increasingly difficult to face the electorate, as people are demanding accountability for the party's failures. The desperate attempts to create distractions and raise irrelevant controversies cannot hide the reality of its poor governance and broken promises. He added that the National Conference remains committed to safeguarding the interests of the people, strengthening democratic institutions, and ensuring inclusive development and social justice for all sections of society.

### J&K Congress Protests Price Rise, Unemployment, Paper Leaks

**JAMMU, JUNE 3**  
The Congress protested in Jammu on Wednesday against rising prices, unemployment and repeated paper leak incidents, accusing the government of failing to address the economic hardships faced by common people and the concerns of the youth. Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) working president Raman Bhatta said inflation has emerged as one of the biggest challenges facing ordinary families. He alleged that the continuous rise in the prices of food items, cooking gas, fuel, medicines, electricity and other essential commodities has severely



impacted household budgets, with economically weaker sec-

tions bearing the brunt. Bhatta alleged that increasing fuel prices had triggered a cascading effect on transportation costs, leading to a rise in the prices of food grains, vegetables and other daily-use items. He called for the government to take immediate measures to stabilise prices and provide relief to vulnerable sections of society. He called for a comprehensive strategy to tackle inflation, stressing the need for job generation, greater investment in productive sectors and stronger social welfare initiatives to improve household incomes and restore economic confidence.

## SSP Reasi conducts crime review meeting & inspection of police station Reasi

**REASI, JUNE 3**  
As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen policing standards, improve service delivery, and enhance the quality of investigations, SSP Reasi conducted a comprehensive inspection of Police Station Reasi and subsequently chaired a detailed Crime Review Meeting with officers and investigating staff of the police station and its subordinate units.

During the inspection, the SSP thoroughly reviewed the functioning and upkeep of various sections of the police station, including the CCTNS Room, Women Help Desk, Malkhana, Kot, Lock-up, Barracks, Mess, and Investigation Officers' Chambers. He inspected records, infrastructure, cleanliness, and the overall functioning of these facilities, issuing necessary directions for further improvement wherever required.

Following the inspection, SSP Reasi chaired a Crime Review Meeting attended by the Addl. SP Reasi, Dy.SP Headquarters Reasi, and officers and officials of Police Station Reasi, Police Post Falwara, Police Post Dera Baba, Police Post Jyotirmar, and Police Post Tote Sarhi. The meeting focused on reviewing



crime trends, the progress of investigations, disposal of pending inquests and cases within prescribed timelines, and the implementation of various technological initiatives aimed at modernizing policing. Special emphasis was also laid on tracing missing persons and apprehending absconders on priority.

While reviewing NDPS cases under the ongoing Naxha Mukat Abhiyan, SSP Reasi stressed the need for strict compliance with guidelines relating to cancellation of Driving Licences and Registration of Motor Vehicles, attachment of properties acquired through illicit proceeds, disposal of seized conveyances, cancella-

tion of passports and other measures envisaged in the SOP issued by the Home Department. He further directed all Investigating Officers to identify habitual and repeat drug offenders and initiate appropriate action under the PIT-NDPS Act wherever warranted.

SSP Reasi also emphasized the importance of completing investigations within the prescribed 60-day and 90-day timelines. He directed all Investigating Officers to closely monitor pending investigations and make concerted efforts for their timely disposal while ensuring adherence to the highest standards of professionalism and accountability.

The SSP reviewed the implementation of the e-Sakshya platform, e-Summons system, and the Integrated Road Accident Database (IRAD), directing officers to make effective use of these digital tools to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability in policing. He also instructed all Investigating Officers to ensure timely and accurate filing of all relevant Investigation Information Forms (IIFs) in the CCTNS system.

He further instructed supervisory officers and Investigating Officers to maintain high standards of investigation, strengthen beat policing, enhance public outreach, and ensure effective coordination among all police units. Emphasizing accountability and result-oriented policing, SSP Reasi directed all officers to work with dedication and professionalism in addressing crime, ensuring timely investigations, and delivering efficient public service. He reiterated the commitment of District Police Reasi towards maintaining law and order, providing prompt justice, and leveraging technology-driven initiatives to make policing more effective, transparent, and citizen-centric.

## DAJ inspects Seed Processing Plant, Agriculture Engineering Workshop

**JAMMU, JUNE 3**  
Director Agriculture Jammu (DAJ) Anil Gupta today conducted a comprehensive inspection of the Seed Processing Plant and Agriculture Engineering Workshop.

He reviewed the ongoing projects, infrastructure, machinery and overall functioning of the twin establishments.

The Director was accompanied by Deputy Director (Central) Sanjeev Rai Gupta, Agriculture Research Engineer (ARE) Firdous Ahmad Tak; ASCO (I&P) Sanjeev Mehta and Assistant Agriculture Engineer Bharti Thussoo.

During the visit, the Director took a detailed round of the facilities and interacted with officers, engineers, and technical staff to assess the progress of various agricultural development activities and projects being undertaken at the Seed Processing Plant and the Engineering Workshop.

He reviewed the operational status of seed processing units, storage facilities, workshop machinery, repair and maintenance infrastructure and the availability of technical resources.

The Director emphasized the importance of maintaining high standards of quality, efficiency and transparency in all operations.



He directed the concerned officers to ensure proper upkeep and regular maintenance of machinery and equipment so that services to the farming community are delivered in a timely and effective manner.

While inspecting the Seed Processing Plant, Anil Gupta stressed the need for expediting the dispatch and distribution of processed seed stocks lying in storage to transmit quality seeds to farmers well before the sowing season. He instructed the concerned officials to prepare a time-bound action plan for the disposal and movement of available seed stocks and avoid unnecessary accumulation in the Warehouses.

He reiterated the Department's emphasis on cleanliness, sanitation and proper housekeeping within the premises of both establishments. He directed the staff to maintain a clean and organized working environment, ensure safe storage of seed and follow all safety protocols to enhance operational efficiency and workplace safety.

At the Agriculture Engineering Workshop, the Director reviewed the status of repair and maintenance of agricultural machinery and equipment. He underscored the need for timely servicing of farm machinery and strengthening technical support systems to facilitate mechanization initiatives across the Jammu division.

The Director further instructed the officers to identify infrastructure gaps, improve resource utilization and adopt innovative practices to enhance the performance of both units. He reiterated the Department's commitment towards strengthening agricultural infrastructure and ensuring the availability of quality inputs and mechanization support for the benefit of farmers.

## BJP OBC Morcha Organises Monthly Organisational Meeting at Mahanpur Mandal; Reviews Party Activities at ground level.

**JAMMU, JUNE 3**  
BJP OBC Morcha organised its monthly organisational meeting at Mahanpur Mandal with the objective of reviewing party activities at the grassroots level and strengthening the organisational structure of the Morcha at ground level.

The meeting witnessed the participation of senior party leaders, office bearers and dedicated workers who deliberated on various organisational and public outreach initiatives. On the occasion, Dharam Chand Malgora, District President, BJP OBC Morcha, Pahari Zilla Basohli-Bani-Billawar, facilitated Neeta Devi, Mandal President, BJP OBC Morcha, Mahanpur Mandal, in recognition of her dedicated efforts towards strengthening the organisation and effectively carrying forward the policies and programmes of the Bharatiya Janata Party among the people.

The meeting witnessed the participation of senior party leaders, office bearers and dedicated workers who deliberated on various organisational and public outreach initiatives. Retd. ZEO Mohan Lal Verma Ji, District Vice President, BJP OBC Morcha, Pahari Zilla Basohli-Bani-Billawar, and Sulekha Sharma Ji, Former District President, BJP Mahila Morcha, Pahari Zilla and BJP District Secretary,



Prabbari, Bati Bachao Beti Padhao Abhiyan were present on the occasion. Both leaders appreciated the efforts of the Morcha workers and stressed the importance of maintaining strong coordination at the booth, mandal and district levels. During the meeting, a detailed review and analysis of BJP's functioning at the mandal level was undertaken.

Discussions focused on strengthening the party's organisational framework, enhancing public outreach programmes, increasing participation in party activities and ensuring the effective implementation of various welfare schemes launched by the Central Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In his message, Brahm Jyot Satti, President, BJP OBC Morcha, Jammu and Kashmir, appreciated the efforts of the Mahanpur Mandal unit for regularly conducting organisational meetings and strengthening the party at the grassroots level.

He stated that BJP OBC Morcha remains committed to the social, educational and economic empowerment of OBC communities and is working tirelessly to ensure that the benefits of government welfare schemes reach every deserving household. He emphasised that a strong organisational structure at the mandal level is essential for taking the party's ideology, achievements and public welfare initiatives to the grassroots. Satti also urged party workers to remain actively engaged with the public, strengthen booth-level committees and work with dedication to further expand the party's reach across all sections of society.

The speakers highlighted the achievements of the BJP-led government and urged party workers to actively engage with the public, address their concerns and spread awareness regarding the developmental initiatives.

## CS reviews preparedness for rollout of VB-G RAM G across J&K

**SRINAGAR, JUNE 3**  
Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the preparedness of the Rural Development Department and district administrations for the smooth rollout of the Viksit Bharat Gramin Rozgar Abhiyan Mission (VB-G RAM G) across Jammu and Kashmir from July 1, 2026.

The Chief Secretary reviewed the progress achieved by the department in transitioning from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) framework to the newly enacted VB-G RAM G, which was notified by the Government of India on May 11, 2026.

He stressed the importance of meticulous planning and coordinated execution, the Chief Secretary directed the officers to adhere strictly to the timelines prescribed for operationalization of the scheme and ensure that all preparatory activities are completed well before its commencement on July 1, 2026.

He called for expediting all prerequisites, including notification of the scheme in consultation with the Law Department, completion of e-KYC of all eligible workers, and advance planning and approval of works to facilitate a smooth and seamless transition to the new framework. The Chief Secretary also directed the Directors of Rural Development, Jammu and Kashmir, to take personal responsibility for capacity building and training of all functionaries associated with the implementation of the scheme.

He emphasized that every employee at the district, block and Gram Panchayat level should be adequately trained and fully conversant with the provisions, procedures and technological platforms under VB-G RAM G before its rollout.

During the meeting, the Secretary Rural Development, Ajiaz Asad apprised that extensive awareness and outreach campaigns have been conducted across all districts, covering all 4,291 Gram Panchayats through special Gram Sabhas, community engagement programmes, social media campaigns and newspaper outreach initiatives. Reviewing the planning process under the Yuktithara platform, the Chief Secretary was informed that all 20 districts, 295 blocks and 4,291 Gram Panchayats have been onboarded with 100 percent login creation. Planning activities have commenced in more than 94 percent Gram Panchayats, while over 82 percent have already submitted their plans. Around 3,849 Gram Sabhas have approved development plans and more than 63,000 works have been identified, providing a robust shelf of projects to cater to anticipated labour demand under the new programme.

The meeting was further informed that Jammu and Kashmir has emerged among the top-performing States and Union Territories in e-KYC coverage and face authentication compliance of MGNREGA workers, with all Gram Panchayats achieving full coverage. The Chief Secretary noted that the adoption of technology-driven governance mechanisms under VB-G RAM G, including face authentication, geofencing, AI-enabled analytics and real-time monitoring dashboard, would further strengthen transparency, accountability and service delivery.

Regarding the operational readiness of the new scheme, the meeting was apprised that the draft notification for implementation of VB-G RAM G has been prepared and submitted for approval, while the rules, dedicated accounts, budgetary provisions and integration of financial management systems are being pursued in accordance with timelines prescribed by the Ministry of Rural Development.

The categorisation of Gram Panchayats and other preparatory activities are also progressing as scheduled.

The Chief Secretary also called for sustained public outreach and close monitoring at all levels so that the objectives of the flagship rural employment development initiative are realized effectively across Jammu and Kashmir from day one of its implementation.



## DC Samba reviews preparations for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026

**SAMBA, JUNE 3**  
Deputy Commissioner Samba Ayushi Sudan today chaired a comprehensive review meeting in the Conference Hall of the District Administrative Complex, Nandani Hills to assess and streamline arrangements for the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the preparedness of all concerned departments regarding facilities and services to be provided to the pilgrims. Detailed discussions were held on the availability of accommodation at lodgement centres, drinking water supply, uninterrupted power supply, sanitation and cleanliness measures, healthcare facilities, strict regulation and overall pilgrim convenience.

The DC also reviewed the arrangements being put in place for RFID Registration and Verification Counters to ensure smooth processing and hassle-free movement of pilgrims.

Emphasizing the significance of inter-departmental coordination, Ayushi Sudan directed all concerned officers to work in close coordination and ensure that all necessary arrangements are completed well in time. She stressed the need for maintaining high standards of service delivery to facilitate a safe, comfortable and seamless pilgrimage experience.

## Wagoora Panchayat wins National Panchayat Award 2025 Ranks 3rd among 2.5 Lakh Panchayats across India

**NEW DELHI, JUNE 3**  
In a landmark achievement for rural Jammu & Kashmir, Wagoora Gram Panchayat in Budgam district has secured the third position at the national level for the prestigious Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar (DDUPSPV) 2025, winning a cash prize of Rs 25 lakh.

The award, conferred under the category 'Socially Secured Panchayat', was presented during the National Panchayat Awards function at the Scope Convention Centre in New Delhi. Union Minister for Panchayati Raj, Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh and Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj, Prof. S. Singh Baghel, handed over the honour to a five-member delegation from Jammu and Kashmir's Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj.

The honour recognises Wagoora's outstanding performance in inclusive governance, social justice, and sustainable rural development. The Gram Panchayat emerged victorious after a rigorous national-level evaluation process that involved thousands of Panchayats from across the country.

Officials credited the achievement to the visionary leadership of Minister for Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Javid Ahmad Dar and the sustained guidance of Secretary,



Rural Development Department & Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Ajiaz Asad.

Under Ajiaz Asad's leadership, the department adopted a focused strategy to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions, improve grassroots governance, and ensure effective implementation of welfare programmes. Regular reviews, handholding of Panchayats, and continuous monitoring were instrumental in enabling Wagoora to achieve this national distinction.

The award reflects the collective efforts of Panchayati Raj Institutions, elected representatives, local communities, and field functionaries in strengthening grassroots democracy across Jammu & Kashmir.

Officials termed the achievement as a testament to the growing strength of participatory planning, social welfare delivery, community-led development,

and effective local governance in the Union Territory.

The Rs 25 lakh prize money is expected to be utilised for further developmental initiatives in the Gram Panchayat, setting a benchmark for others to follow.

Wagoora's achievement is especially significant given the scale of competition and the rigorous evaluation process, which goes far beyond documentation and self-reporting.

Unlike conventional award processes, the DDUPSPV 2025 evaluation involved a dedicated inspection team from the Ministry of Panchayati Raj that physically visited Wagoora Gram Panchayat for an on-ground assessment.

The visiting team conducted a thorough inspection of community assets, infrastructure, and service delivery mechanisms, verifying the actual status of welfare scheme implementation

across multiple line departments.

The MoPR team assessed the functioning of key departments including Health, Education, NRLM and other associated agencies.

They physically verified the condition and operational status of Anganwadis under ICDS, examining their facilities, beneficiary registers, nutrition supplies, and early childhood services. The Sub-Health Centre and Primary Health Centre infrastructure under the National Health Mission (NHM) was also reviewed for service delivery, medicine availability, and staffing.

The team further assessed the NHM-linked Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for financial activity, bank linkages, and livelihood outcomes, along with the MGNREGA website assets and their quality and utility.

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**TENDER NOTICE**  
Tender Notice No. 770-W/01/JAT/JR/2025 09-2026-27-DRM-JAT (to be opened on date 24.06.2026) acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below listed tenders and available on [www.irpsa.gov.in](http://www.irpsa.gov.in) with closing date 24.06.2026 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against these tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through payment modes available on IRPSA portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

Tender Type	Tendering Section	Bidding System
Open	Works	Two Packet System
Date of Uploading Tenders	Bid Starting Date	Bid Closing Date/Time
02.06.2026	10.06.2026	24.06.2026

S.No. 1 | Tender No. 09-2026-27-JAT-DRM-JAT  
Details of Tender: Earthwork for Gess road and other misc. works in the section of SSEW/JAT & SSE/WKTHU under ADE/NJAT.

Advertisement Value (Rs.)	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
7857946.69	60 Days	06 Months

Notes: Contractors are advised to check the IRPSA website for any corrigendum issued against this tender before submitting the bids. 1885-2026  
**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**TENDER NOTICE**  
Sr. DSTE/JAT acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders on [www.irpsa.gov.in](http://www.irpsa.gov.in) against Tender Notice no. 433\_Slg\_38\_25\_26 Coasting Date/Time 24.06.2026 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on IRPSA portal like Net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

**NTT HEADER**

Contract Type	Works
Name of Work	Comprehensive Annual Maintenance contract (AMC) of EI Make MEDHA under the jurisdiction of SR.DSTE/JAT over JAMMU Division for three (3) years
Tender Closing Date/Time	24.06.2026 15:00
Date Time of Uploading Tender	02.06.2026 17:50
Advertisement Value (Rs.)	4236900.00
Bidding Start Date as per IRPSA	10.06.2026
Validity of Offer	36 Months
Completion	
Tender Notice No. 433_Slg_38_25_26 Date: 02.06.2026 Closing Date/Time: 24.06.2026 15:00	1883-2026

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

# Media's role vital in guiding society towards positive change: Governor Gupta

## Unveils coffee table book 'High Flyer', felicitates distinguished achievers

**SHIMLA, JUNE 3**  
The Hon'ble Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Shri Kavinder Gupta today described the media as an integral pillar of the democratic framework, emphasizing that its role extends beyond the dissemination of information to educating society and guiding people towards constructive and positive change. The Governor was addressing a gathering at the launch of High Flyer, a coffee table book published by a leading media group, in Shimla. On the occasion, he felicitated distinguished achievers from diverse fields whose accomplishments have been featured in the publication. Highlighting the growing importance of responsible journalism in the age of rapid information exchange, Shri Kavinder Gupta said that the credibility

of the media rests on its commitment to truth, accuracy and objectivity. He observed that balanced and fact-based reporting strengthens democratic values, promotes transparency and helps create an informed and aware citizenry. The Governor commended the media for its role in shaping public opinion and fostering social awareness. He noted that initiatives such as High Flyer not only recognize excellence but also provide a platform for showcasing inspiring stories of individuals who have made significant contributions to society. Such efforts, he said, motivate others, particularly the youth, to pursue excellence and contribute meaningfully to nation-building. Expressing concern over the growing menace of drug abuse, Shri Kavinder Gupta said that substance abuse has emerged



as one of the most serious challenges confronting society today and poses a grave threat to the future of the youth. He observed that social distortions often arise when individuals

become disconnected from their cultural roots and values. The Governor also linked the rise of such problems to the gradual decline of the joint family system, which traditionally

provided guidance, emotional support and value-based upbringing. He emphasized that government initiatives alone cannot effectively address the chal-

lenge of drug abuse without active public participation. Calling upon society to remain vigilant, he urged people of the state to support awareness campaigns and community-driven efforts to combat the menace. He further stressed that the media has a significant role to play in spreading awareness and mobilizing collective action. The awardees recognized as the "Best of Himachal," the Governor said that the coffee table book is a compilation of inspiring success stories of extraordinary individuals who have dedicated themselves to the progress, prosperity and development of Himachal Pradesh. He observed that the State, renowned for its natural beauty, rich cultural heritage and vibrant traditions, has always

been a land of immense talent and potential. Appreciating the constructive role of media in promoting public awareness and social responsibility, the Governor called upon the people of Himachal Pradesh to contribute their share towards building a stronger society and taking the nation to new heights of progress and development. Earlier, Editor of the newspaper group Shri Bavindra Vashisht, welcomed the Governor and briefed him about the objectives of the coffee table book and the initiative behind recognizing outstanding achievers from across the State. Shri Suresh Shandil, Bureau Chief proposed a vote of thanks. Prominent personalities from various fields, media representatives and distinguished guests were also present on the occasion.

# DIPR Bids emotional farewell to Information Officer Syed Jeelani Qadri

**SRINAGAR, JUNE 3**  
The Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) today accorded a warm and emotional farewell to Information Officer, Syed Jeelani Qadri on his superannuation after rendering dedicated and distinguished service to the department. A grand farewell function was organized by the DIPR in honour of the retiring officer, which was presided over by Director Information, Shreya Singhal, Joint Director Information (Hqrs), Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Raina; Joint Director Information Kashmir, Syed Shah Nawaz Bukhari; Deputy Director Information (PR/AV), Javid Ahmad Rather; Deputy Director (PR) Srinagar, Rafiq Ahmad; Deputy Director (Hqrs) Kashmir, Zubair Ahmad; other officers and officials of DIPR were also present on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, Director Information highlighted the invaluable contribu-



tions, commitment, and professionalism of Syed Jeelani throughout his illustrious

career. She recalled his sincerity, work ethic and amiable personality that earned him wide-

spread respect across the department. Addressing the gathering, Joint Director, Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Raina highlighted Qadri's unwavering dedication and significant role in strengthening the department's communication and public outreach initiatives 24x7. He lauded his exemplary service record and wished him a healthy, happy and fulfilling post-retirement life. Deputy Director Information (PR/AV), Javid Ahmad Rather in his address described him as a dependable and compassionate professional whose guidance and cooperative spirit inspired many during his tenure. In his farewell address, Syed Jeelani Qadri expressed heartfelt thanks to the department's leadership and his colleagues for their support, cooperation, and camaraderie over the years. He described his tenure in DIPR as a rewarding journey filled with learning, growth, and cherished memories.

# JMC ramps up sanitation efforts; Deploys Advanced Cleaning Machines for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra

**JAMMU, JUNE 3**  
The Jammu Municipal Corporation has formulated a comprehensive sanitation plan to maintain cleanliness along major roads, market areas, pilgrimage routes and public spaces during the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026. To strengthen mechanized cleaning operations, a fleet of specialized sanitation vehicles has been deployed across the city. The fleet includes three compact road-sweeping machines that vacuum litter, dust and other waste materials directly from road surfaces. These machines are particularly effective in cleaning narrow stretches and urban roads. In addition, four Italian-made Dulevo 6000 road-sweeping vehicles have been deployed for cleaning major roads and important traffic corridors. Two GVP vehicles equipped with powerful vacuum suction systems have also been pressed into service to collect accumulated waste and debris from roadsides and other public areas. All these vehicles operate primarily during night hours when traffic movement is significantly lower. Since mechanized sweeping vehicles move at a relatively slow speed while carrying out cleaning operations, night deployment allows them to clean roads more efficiently and safely without disrupting the movement of com-

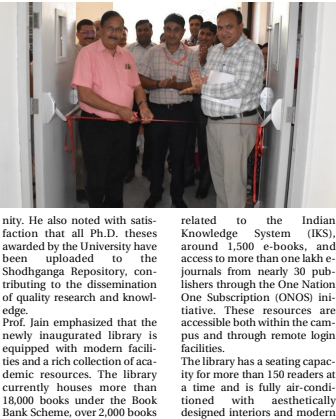


muters. The reactivation of these machines after necessary maintenance and repairs is expected to considerably improve sanitation standards across the city. Providing details about the mechanized sanitation fleet, Chief Transport Officer Zone III Jammu Municipal Corporation Balj Angurama stated that the vehicles have been strategically deployed to maximize their effectiveness and ensure better cleanliness outcomes. He informed that the three compact road-sweeping machines are capable of vacuuming dust and litter directly from road surfaces, while the Dulevo 6000 and GVP vehicles are being utilized for cleaning larger roads and public spaces. He added that all the machines are being operated during night hours to facilitate smooth operations and comprehensive road cleaning with minimal interference from traffic.

Besides mechanized cleaning, the Corporation continues to undertake regular sanitation activities, including door-to-door waste collection, manual sweeping, drain cleaning and public awareness campaigns. Citizens are being urged to cooperate by avoiding littering and disposing of waste only through designated collection systems. Municipal Commissioner Dr. Devansh Yadav stated that Jammu Municipal Corporation is fully committed to ensure a clean, hygienic and welcoming environment ahead of the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026 and the forthcoming Swachh Survekshan. He said that all available resources have been mobilized to strengthen sanitation services across the city and appealed to the public to actively support the cleanliness drive by maintaining civic responsibility and helping keep Jammu clean and green.

# Vice Chancellor Prof. Sanjeev Jain Inaugurates New Building of Maharishi Aurobindo Library at Chanakya Bhawan

**JAMMU, JUNE 3**  
The Central University of Jammu today inaugurated the new building of the Maharishi Aurobindo Library at Chanakya Bhawan. The inauguration was carried out by the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Prof. Sanjeev Jain, in the presence of Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments, faculty members, University Officials, and staff of the library. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Sanjeev Jain highlighted the pivotal role of the library in strengthening teaching, learning, and research activities at the University. He stated that the Maharishi Aurobindo Library provides 24x7 remote access to its digital resources, enabling scholars, students, and faculty members to access academic content anytime and from anywhere. The Vice Chancellor Prof. Jain informed that an E-Library facility will soon be operational in the library, further enhancing digital learning opportunities for the university commu-



nity. He also noted with satisfaction that all Ph.D. theses awarded by the University have been uploaded to the Shodhganga Repository, contributing to the dissemination of quality research and knowledge. Prof. Jain emphasized that the newly inaugurated library is equipped with modern facilities and a rich collection of academic resources. The library currently houses more than 18,000 books under the Book Bank Scheme, over 2,000 books

related to the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), around 1,500 e-books, and access to more than one lakh e-journals through the One Nation One Subscription (ONOS) initiative. These resources are accessible both within the campus and through remote login facilities. The inauguration ceremony concludes that the new library building would emerge as a vibrant hub of knowledge, innovation, and research excellence. The Vice Chancellor appreciated the efforts of the library staff and university administration in developing the state-of-the-art facility and expressed confidence that the new library building would emerge as a vibrant hub of knowledge, innovation, and research excellence. The inauguration ceremony concludes that the new library building would emerge as a vibrant hub of knowledge, innovation, and research excellence.

He further informed that the Book Bank facility is available for students of all departments, under which semester books are issued to students for a period of six months to support their academic pursuits. The Vice Chancellor appreciated the efforts of the library staff and university administration in developing the state-of-the-art facility and expressed confidence that the new library building would emerge as a vibrant hub of knowledge, innovation, and research excellence. The inauguration ceremony concludes that the new library building would emerge as a vibrant hub of knowledge, innovation, and research excellence.

# PTTI vijaypur organizes lecture on cyber security & fraud prevention awareness

**VIJAYPUR, JUNE 3**  
Police Technical Training Institute (PTTI), Vijaypur, organized a lecture on "Cyber Security & Fraud Prevention" for the staff and BRTC trainees of SDRP/Telecommunication. On the occasion, Shri Vikas Rajdhan, Assistant Engineer (AE), SIA Jammu, attended as the Chief Guest and delivered a comprehensive lecture on cyber security, cyber-related offences, digital devices, cyber tools, and preventive measures against digital payment frauds. He highlighted the growing challenges posed by cybercrime and emphasized the importance of awareness, safe digital practices, and the responsible use of technology. Shri



the lecture was to create awareness among police personnel about emerging cyber threats, evolving techniques used by cybercriminals, and the latest trends in digital payment frauds. He further emphasized that such awareness programmes are essential for enhancing the professional competence of police personnel and enabling them to effectively deal with cyber-related offences in the digital age. Among others, Shri Satish Kumar Dy.SP (Indoor), Shri Kushwant Singh Dy.SP (Admin./Outdoor), Ms.Neha Bhatnagar (Sr.PO), Shri Asif Iqbal (Sr.PO), Ms Sonali Kohli-Dy.SP were present on the occasion. He stated that the objective of

the lecture was to create awareness among police personnel about emerging cyber threats, evolving techniques used by cybercriminals, and the latest trends in digital payment frauds. He further emphasized that such awareness programmes are essential for enhancing the professional competence of police personnel and enabling them to effectively deal with cyber-related offences in the digital age. Among others, Shri Satish Kumar Dy.SP (Indoor), Shri Kushwant Singh Dy.SP (Admin./Outdoor), Ms.Neha Bhatnagar (Sr.PO), Shri Asif Iqbal (Sr.PO), Ms Sonali Kohli-Dy.SP were present on the occasion. He stated that the objective of

# NIT Srinagar, UoK, leads national discourse on future healthcare technologies

## MAPCON 2026 inauguration highlights emerging biomedical antenna research

**SRINAGAR, JUNE 3**  
The three-day IEEE Antennas and Propagation Society (AP-S) MGA Workshop - Advanced School of Antennas (ASA) 2026 on "Antennas in Biomedical and Biotelemetry Devices" concluded at the University of Kashmir. It was jointly organized by the IEEE AP-S/CRPD Delhi Chapter and IEEE AP-S/MTS Kolkata Chapter in collaboration with National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar and the University of Kashmir. Dr. Amit Kumar, SMIEEE, NIT Srinagar, and Dr. Javaid Ahmad Sheikh, Associate Professor, UoK, were the conveners of the workshop. The inaugural session was held at UoK. It was graced by the presence of Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia; Registrar UoK; Prof. Naseer Iqbal; Dean Academic Affairs UoK; Prof. Peerzada

Sharief-ud-Din, Dean, School of Engineering, UoK Prof. M. Tariq Bandy, and HoD, Dept. of Electronics & Instrumentation Technology, Dr. Farooq Khanayd. Prof. Omar M. Ramahi, IEEE Fellow, University of Waterloo, Canada, delivered a keynote address. He highlighted the important role of antenna technology in modern healthcare, particularly in wearable health-monitoring systems, implantable medical devices, wireless diagnostics, and new biomedical communication networks. Prof. Ramahi encouraged young researchers to work on interdisciplinary ideas combining communication engineering, electronics and healthcare sciences, calling it one of the most promising areas of research. The second day of the workshop was hosted at NIT Srinagar,



where participants attended a series of advanced technical sessions and interactive discussions. The program was attended by Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia, Dean B&C Prof. Boohie Nazir, Registrar, Prof. Atikur Rehman, Prof. S. Javaid Ahmad Sheikh (Dept. of Electronics & Instrumentation Technology),

and Dr. Amit Kumar (Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering). Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Kanaujia said biomedical antenna technology is rapidly emerging as a key enabler of future healthcare systems. He noted that advancements in wireless communication, sensing technologies, and biomedical devices have immense

potential to transform patient care, remote health monitoring, and precision medicine. "NIT Srinagar remains committed to promoting research excellence, innovation, and global collaborations that contribute to meaningful societal impact. We encourage students, researchers, and young faculty members to actively engage in interdisciplinary research and

make the best use of opportunities offered through professional societies such as IEEE," he said. Dean R&C, Prof. Roohie Naaz Mir, highlighted the importance of research and consultancy activities in driving technological advancement and urged participants to pursue research that addresses real-world challenges. NIT's Registrar, Prof. Atikur Rehman, appreciated the efforts of the organizers and stressed the need to foster a vibrant research ecosystem that encourages innovation, collaboration, and knowledge sharing. A series of technical lectures was delivered by Prof. Omar M. Ramahi, who shared insights from his pioneering research. He discussed advanced biomedical antenna systems and innovative healthcare applications of electromagnetic technologies. His presentation titled "Mammography using Low-

Frequency Electromagnetic Energy: Is it Possible?" attracted considerable attention from participants. The workshop also featured an expert lecture by Dr. Prityanshu Kaurav, Assistant Professor at IIT Roorkee, who spoke on "Antenna Technologies for Terahertz Biomedical Sensing and Biotelemetry Systems." She highlighted the growing significance of terahertz-frequency antennas in non-invasive diagnostics, biomedical sensing, and future wireless medical communication systems. Additional technical sessions were conducted by Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia, and Dr. Vikrant Kaim, who discussed emerging antenna design, wearable communication systems, biomedical telemetry, wireless sensing technologies, and future healthcare communication networks.

## Everyday Ayurvedic habits to stay healthy and energetic in summer

**NEW DELHI:** Summer season can pose multiple health challenges to body and mind due to the harsh summer heat. Staying healthy, active and energetic requires modifications in the daily routine with the focus on hydration, consumption of cooling foods, early sleep routine and other holistic practices. Ayurveda experts say that going to bed early and waking up early can make sure one is well-rested and ready to deal with everyday challenges with fresh energy. It is also important to take breaks and recharge self for managing stress levels better. An ideal summer diet should have the right mix of fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains while cutting back on sugar and saturated fats. Spicy and fried foods are also likely to aggravate Pitta dosha and lead to imbalances. Digestion could be on a weaker side in summer season and incorporating herbs and easily digestible foods in the diet can help reduce issues like acidity, bloating and constipation. It is also important to avoid too much caffeine and alcohol before bedtime in summer to create a relaxing sleep environment.

"In Ayurveda, we view health as a state of balance between mind, body, and spirit. During the summer months, it's important to stay grounded and calm to avoid excess Pitta dosha. Incorporating mindfulness practices, such



as yoga and meditation, can help to reduce stress and promote balance. In addition to these practices, it's important to pay attention to your diet and lifestyle choices during the summer months," says Dr. Abhishek Gupta, Chief Medical Officer, NirogStreet.

**LIFESTYLE CHANGES FOR SUMMER SEASON**  
**EAT FRESH AND SEASONAL FOODS**  
"Aim to eat fresh, seasonal foods that are cooling and hydrating, such as melons, cucumbers, and leafy greens. Avoid spicy, fried, and processed foods, as these can aggravate Pitta dosha and lead to imbalances," says Dr. Gupta.

**FOCUS ON HEALTHY SLEEP**  
"Be mindful of your sleep habits during the summer months. It is also important to pay attention to your daily routine or dinacharya, which can have a significant impact on your overall health. During the summer, try to

wake up early and go to bed early, as longer days can make it easier to stay up later. Aim for 7-8 hours of sleep per night and try to maintain a consistent sleep schedule. By prioritising your sleep, you can support your body's natural healing processes and promote overall well-being," adds Dr. Gupta.

**DAILY MASSAGE**  
"Incorporate a daily self-massage, or abhyanga, using cooling oils such as coconut or sunflower oil to help soothe the skin and promote relaxation, this will help reduce excess Pitta dosha and promote overall balance," says the expert. As per Dr. Khushboo Pandey, Master of Medicine in Ayurveda, being mindful of exposure to environmental toxins during the summer months, such as pollution and chemicals in skincare and cleaning products is important.

**HERBS FOR SUMMER**  
"Opt for natural and non-

toxic alternatives whenever possible to support your overall health and well-being. Remember that every individual is unique, and what works for one person may not work for another. It's essential to listen to your body and seek personalised guidance from a qualified Ayurvedic practitioner to determine the best approach for your specific needs. By incorporating these Ayurvedic principles into your summer routine, you can create a personalized plan for optimal health and well-being that lasts beyond the summer months," says Dr. Khushboo Pandey, Master of Medicine in Ayurveda.

During the summer months, incorporating Ayurvedic herbs into your routine can help support your health and well-being. Dr. Pandey suggests one to incorporate the following Ayurvedic herbs in daily routine:

• Aloe Vera is known for its cooling properties and can be used topically for sunburn and consumed internally for digestive health.

• Brahmi is a powerful adaptogen that helps reduce stress and improve cognitive function.

• Mint is refreshing and helps soothe stomach issues. Along with incorporating these herbs, eating a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables, staying hydrated, and exercising regularly.

## Conflict, climate change, Covid, cost-of-living heighten threats for most vulnerable women, babies: UN report

**NEW DELHI:** An estimated 13.4 million babies were born preterm in 2020, with 45 per cent of them being born in just five countries, including India, China and Pakistan, according to a report released by the United Nations agencies and partners on Wednesday. The report titled 'Born Too Soon: Decade of Action on Preterm Birth' is developed by more than 140 individuals from 46 countries and is produced by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) together with PMNCH - the world's largest alliance for women, children, and adolescents.

The report sounds the alarm on a "silent" emergency of preterm birth which is impeding progress in improving children's health and survival. The global preterm birth rate was 9.9 per cent in 2020, compared to 9.8 per cent in 2010. An estimated 13.4 million babies were born pre-term in 2020, with nearly 1 million dying from preterm complications, which is equivalent to around 1 in 10 babies born early (before 37 weeks of pregnancy) worldwide.

In 2020, Bangladesh had the highest estimated preterm birth rate (16.2 per cent), followed by Malawi (14.5 per cent) and Pakistan (14.4 per cent). Rates are also high in high-income countries, such as Greece (11.6%), and the United States of America (10.0%), the report stated.

"Almost half (45 per cent) of all preterm babies in 2020 were

born in just five countries: India, Pakistan, Nigeria, China and Ethiopia," it said. The report highlighted that preterm birth rates have not changed in the past decade in any region of the world and that "four Cs" - conflict, climate change, COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis - heighten threats for the most vulnerable women and babies in all countries.

For example, air pollution is estimated to contribute to 6 million preterm births each year. Nearly 1 in 10 preterm babies are born in the 10 most fragile countries affected by humanitarian crises, according to a new analysis in the report.

Climate science is increasingly exposing the direct and indirect effects of climate change on pregnant women, stillbirths and preterm birth. According to it, 1.2 million babies are 'born too soon' in the 10 most fragile countries affected by humanitarian crises, where accessing care for women and babies is particularly challenging.

"More investment is needed to specifically mitigate risks and to increase focus on women and babies in policies and programmes addressing the climate emergency," it said.

"Born too soon underlines why we must increase investment and accountability for preterm birth - the world's largest cause of death of children under the age of five.

Progress is flattening for maternal and newborn health, as well as the prevention of

stillbirths, and is now pushed back further through the devastating combination of COVID-19, climate change, expanding conflicts and rising living costs," said Helga Frostgard, Executive Director, PMNCH.

"By working together in partnership - governments, donors, the private sector, civil society, parents, and health professionals - we can sound the alarm about this 'silent emergency', and bring preterm prevention and care efforts to the forefront of national health and development efforts, building human capital by supporting families, societies and economies everywhere," Helga added.

With the report coming at a time when the International Maternal Newborn Health Conference (IMNHC) is being held at Cape Town from May 8, the WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and PMNCH called for increased investments, accelerated implementation of established national policies for maternal and newborn care to improve care for women and newborns and mitigate risks from preterm births. They also called for promoting education through the life cycle; supporting smarter economic investments, with co-financing across sectors; strengthening climate adaptation responses across the life course; and advancing the coordination and resilience of emergency systems, besides investing in locally-led innovation and research to support improvements in quality of care and equity in access.

## Dental hygiene for kids: Tips for protecting your child's teeth from harmful bacteria

**NEW DELHI:** As a parent, ensuring your child's dental health is important. One of the most common dental problems in children is tooth decay, which is caused by harmful bacteria. The mouth as we all know is a haven of



good bacteria both good and bad, the key to good oral health is keeping the balance between them tipped towards the good bacteria. We cannot make our mouth bacteria-free since the oral microbiome is very important to maintain both oral and gut health, but we do have a responsibility to ensure that we keep these bacteria friendly and playing a positive role in our child's dental health. There are some steps you can take to prevent bacteria from entering your child's teeth and keep their smiles healthy. Tips to keep bacteria away from your

child's teeth  
Dr. Diksha Tahilramani Batra, a prosthodontist, implantologist and smile design specialist, shared with HT Lifestyle, some tips and strategies for preventing bacteria from harming your child's teeth.

1. Using fluoride toothpaste  
The common misconception is to use fluoride-free toothpaste for kids but fluoride in low concentrations as found in toothpastes is very beneficial for protecting the teeth from cavities.

It is by limiting the bacterial attack on teeth by bonding with the calcium ions in the enamel and also by raising the pH of saliva. Bacterial activity is limited or impaired in high or neutral pH.

2. Introducing mouthwash or oral rinses at an early age  
Teaching your child to rinse and spit can really help in maintaining hygiene. If there is a high tendency for decay either genetically or based on their dietary and hygiene habits then using mouthwash is a very convenient way of ensuring that the bacterial concentrations especially of decay-causing and gum disease-causing bacteria are kept low.

## Maternal mental health at work: Here's how women can achieve work-life balance during the postpartum period

**NEW DELHI:** Pregnancy is life-altering but it can be overwhelming for many women as they will be unable to cope-up with the challenges that occur during pregnancy and the postpartum period thus, it is the best of the hour that the family members and organisations should support them and makes their life easy.

As per studies, how an organization handles a mother's return to work can have a dramatic impact on her mental health. Organisations control the majority of work-related factors that can help with positive mental health outcomes, which can be in the form of paid maternity leave, total workload and job flexibility for new mothers.

A mother may find it difficult to strike a work-life balance as returning to work from pregnancy can be taxing for a woman where one may start combining her roles as an employee and a mother. In an interview with HT Lifestyle, Dr. Surabhi



Siddhartha, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist at Motherhood Hospital in Kharghar, talked about how to maintain a work-life balance and said, "If there is a conflict between the role of a mother and an employee then it can lead to a negative outcome. Those who've been out of work for a long time with an illness and are coming back to the workplace can have difficulty in re-adjusting them-

selves after a long period of time." She asserted, "It is essential for the organisation to ensure a smooth transition for better productivity and successful results. There are return-to-work programmes to check the employee's capability and adjust their job responsibilities by maintaining a correct balance. There should be a support group created to help women cope with pressure situa-

tions. There should be a structure in place where we can have those conversations and meet those needs.

There should be flexibility while working so that women can easily juggle both duties. New mothers should be allowed to work from home whenever possible." The expert concluded, "A good work environment should be provided to new moms so that they can pay attention to the baby and their work. Avoid overexerting, pamper, and take utmost care of yourself. It is OKAY to take out some time for yourself and relax without feeling guilty, organization handles a mother's return to work can have a dramatic impact on her mental health. Organisations control the majority of work-related factors that can help with positive mental health outcomes, which can be in the form of paid maternity leave, total workload and job flexibility for new mothers. Try to take charge of your health too along with the baby's health."

## Most effective liquids to increase antioxidant content of spinach smoothies: Study

**NEW DELHI:** When it comes to releasing the antioxidant lutein from spinach in smoothies, different market goods have extremely variable results. Only four of the 14 common dairy and plant-based products studied by researchers at Linköping University in Sweden increased lutein liberation. Some drinks had a negative effect on the lutein content of spinach smoothies when compared to water. Most individuals are aware that spinach is beneficial to one's health. Lutein, for example, is a chemical present in spinach and important in eye health. Several experimental studies have shown that lutein can suppress inflammation-related processes, and there is now abundant evidence that chronic low-grade inflammation is an important risk factor in

cardiovascular disease. "Lutein is a bioactive substance. We investigated lutein in the same way that we would investigate a pharmaceutical medication. We looked at lutein liberation from fresh spinach in this study," explains Rosanna Chung, assistant professor at Linköping University's Department of Health, Medicine, and Caring Sciences, who led the study published in Nutrients. As our bodies cannot produce lutein, the researchers behind the study were interested to find out how to optimise lutein intake from foods. The research group previously showed that preparation methods where the spinach is heated break down some of the lutein, whereas mixing it into a smoothie makes more lutein available for absorption.

The type of liquid used in the smoothie can also affect lutein content. As lutein dissolves in fat but not in water, it needs gastric juice and/or other food components to be liberated from the plant material and absorbed by our intestines. The researchers suspected that some components in our food, such as fat, carbohydrates, proteins and fibres, can affect the amount of lutein available for absorption. The effect of products such as yoghurt may also differ due to fermentation. However, products widely available on the market are rarely examined in scientific studies. The researchers have examined the effects of various products available from food shops on the amount of lutein liberated in smoothies. Both dairy and plant-based liquids were tested.

The researchers blended spinach with various products. They then used a method simulating the human digestion in the gastrointestinal tract, by adding digestive enzymes. Finally, the amount of lutein available for the body to absorb in smoothies made with various products was compared to that in smoothies made with just water. "We could see that only 4 of the 14 examined products increased the liberation of lutein from spinach compared to water. Cow's milk with a high-fat content as well as coconut milk improved lutein liberation. Yoghurt, however, which is regarded as comparable to cow's milk and is often used in cafes and similar, did not show particularly good results," says Rosanna Chung.



The fact that yoghurt is not that good at liberating lutein may have to do with the fermentation process. It also turned out that plant-based drinks, often made from nuts, legumes or oats, showed significantly different results. "Plant-based liquids have become increasingly common in smoothies.

We saw that soymilk was actually less effective than water when it comes to liberating lutein in spinach smoothies. In other words, soymilk had a negative effect on lutein liberation in our study," says Jan Neelissen, a doctorate student and one of the researchers behind the study.

The other plant-based products in the study did not affect lutein liberation compared to water. As a general piece of information, smoothies should be consumed as soon as possible, because lutein breaks down quickly. It is important to note that whereas the results from this study indicate

how much lutein is available for the body to absorb, no conclusions can be drawn as to how much lutein is actually absorbed. Therefore, the researchers will be conducting a human study in which they will measure the amount of lutein absorbed from smoothies made with different products.

## EDITORIAL

## Faulty Towers

A five-storey building collapsed in Delhi on Saturday, killing six people and leaving 10 injured. It wasn't old, but poorly built. And the owner was adding another floor to it, for additional rent. It was, plainly, a house of cards, so its falling was no accident. What was it then? Negligence is a ready answer. But it denies culpability. Civic officials, whose job is to keep an eye on construction, groundwater extraction, sewage, power connections, etc somehow didn't notice this 50-ft block. A giant walked through the park unnoticed.

Fact is, it wasn't the only building of its kind in the neighbourhood, and cities across India are full of them now. What's going on isn't negligence but wilful connivance. But why? Why are unplanned neighbourhoods increasingly becoming dense commercial and residential hubs? The answer lies in our failure to plan cities as engines of economic growth. India is a growing economy, and demand for built-up area is rising rapidly. Per a World Bank estimate, urban India will house 60cr people and produce 70% of GDP within a decade. But that can't happen if policies throttle the growth of cities.

This is evident from the horizontal spread of our cities this century. Builders and buyers have been moving to the suburbs - or to unplanned neighbourhoods where officials look the other way - because they are cheaper. Space within cities is costly because it is scarce, but the scarcity is man-made. There are limits on the percentage of a plot that can be covered, and more limits on the number of floors that can be built. Where Singapore allows 2,500 sqft of floor space on a plot of 100 sqft, Delhi allows only up to 350 sqft.

This is an old problem that experts have repeatedly drawn attention to. This year's Economic Survey said, "Cities are expected to deliver growth, productivity, and jobs, yet...Indian urban policy often reverses this logic."

So, many buyers and tenants are pushed towards shabby buildings in seedy areas, where another problem becomes apparent - fragmented governance. Indian civic bodies don't earn enough revenue to meet their expenses, and multiplicity of authorities doesn't allow them to take action even when violations - like the collapsed building - arise in plain sight. If we're serious about fixing Indian cities, let's start with their governance structure, so that authority and accountability are not in doubt.

## The mango that broke a market

RAVIN KAUSHAL

It is peak mango season in India. The Alphonso harvest is at its richest, the Kesar at its most fragrant. Exporters across Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh have prepared their consignments. And Japan, one of the world's most demanding and most lucrative fruit markets, has shut its doors. In March 2026, Japanese quarantine inspectors conducted their routine pre-season visit to India's Vapour Heat Treatment (VHT) facility in Rehmanpur, Uttar Pradesh. Their findings were not routine.

The Yokohama Plant Protection Association subsequently issued a directive rejecting all mango consignments bearing inspection certificates issued on or after 25 March 2026. Imports, it stated, would remain suspended until Japan was satisfied that operational standards had improved. The implications extend well beyond this season's lost revenue. They speak to a structural failure in how India manages the relationship between agricultural ambition and agricultural compliance. The history of Indian mangoes in Japan is a study in the extraordinary difficulty of gaining access to a premium market at the relative ease with which that access can be lost.

Japan first banned Indian mangoes in 1986, citing fears that fruit flies carried within the fruit could devastate Japanese agriculture. Fruit flies are not a minor concern. These insects lay their eggs inside the fruit; after hatching, the larvae feed on the pulp, rotting the fruit from within and causing production to collapse. Countries like Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States maintain some of the world's strictest quarantine systems precisely because a single invasive pest species entering unchecked can destroy entire agricultural sectors. Mediterranean fruit fly outbreaks, for instance, have caused billions of dollars in damage globally. Japan maintains what it describes as a zero-risk approach. Every consignment, every facility, every certification is scrutinised with that standard in mind. After the 1986 ban, India spent the next two decades working to meet it. Large-scale pest surveys were conducted. Scientific field studies and laboratory testing were undertaken.

VHT infrastructure (treatment chambers in which mangoes are exposed to precisely controlled heat and humidity to kill any eggs or larvae inside the fruit, without chemical residue and without compromising freshness) was installed specifically to meet Japanese requirements. Japanese inspection teams were invited. Three years of continuous surveys were completed.

Then Commerce Minister Kamal Nath took up the matter with Japanese authorities. In June 2006, Japan formally lifted the ban. Indian mangoes, specifically varieties including Alphonso, Kesar, Langra, Banganapalli, Chausa, and Malika from approved exporting states including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, entered one of the world's most prestigious fruit markets.

For nearly 20 years, the trade continued without incident. The process that restored Indian mangoes to Japan in 2006 rested on one critical technology: Vapour Heat Treatment. VHT is internationally recognised and accepted by Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States as one of the safest, most effective ways of eliminating fruit flies. But its effectiveness depends entirely on precise execution: correct temperature, correct duration, accurate monitoring, and proper certification.

Even small procedural failures can invalidate the entire treatment. But VHT is only as trustworthy as the facility operating it. Japan does not certify a country. It certifies a system, and if the system fails, so does the certification. When Japanese inspectors visited the Rehmanpur facility in March 2026, they found deficiencies across multiple areas: temperature control, fumigation procedures, disinfection systems, operational standards, and quarantine compliance measures. The precise technical details have not been publicly disclosed, but the implications are clear. What is clear is that Japan considered the shortcomings serious enough to suspend all imports, choosing not to issue a warning or demand corrective action with a defined window, but to act immediately and comprehensively. Some exporters have expressed frustration, arguing that the failure of one or two facilities should not have resulted in an blanket suspension. But Japan's position is equally clear: operational standards are not negotiable, and the zero-risk approach does not permit selective enforcement.

The 2026 suspension is significant not only for what it reveals about one facility in Uttar Pradesh, but for what it reveals about India's approach to sustaining premium export market access. India is the world's largest mango producer, growing over a thousand varieties and producing millions of tonnes annually. Of that, 3,000 to 5,000 metric tonnes are



exported each year, generating approximately USD 40 to 50 million in foreign exchange. Japan represents a smaller share of that volume, but its value per unit is disproportionately high. Japanese consumers pay double or triple the prices obtained in other markets for verified, high-quality fruit. Small volumes do not mean small importance. Yet evidence suggests that the infrastructure required to maintain Japanese market access was not kept to the standard that access demands. The question worth asking is: who was responsible for monitoring compliance between Japanese inspection visits? What internal audit systems existed? Were the deficiencies identified in 2026 new failures, or long-standing ones that had not previously been caught? India's agricultural export frameworks have historically focused on securing market access, less on the negotiation, the protocols, the diplomatic effort.

What tends to receive less sustained attention is the harder, less visible work of maintaining that access: continuous facility upgrades, rigorous internal compliance audits, investment in monitoring technology, and the cultivation of an institutional culture that treats quarantine standards not as an external imposition but as a professional obligation. The timing of the 2026 ban, at the height of the export season, has maximised its immediate economic damage. But the longer-term reputational risk may be more consequential. Agricultural trade is built on trust.

When Japan questions the reliability of India's quarantine systems, other importing countries take notice. They begin asking whether India's treatment protocols are consistently applied, whether its certification systems are robust, whether its inspections are genuinely independent. The concern does not remain contained to mangoes. It extends to every category of fresh fruit and vegetable in which India is attempting to build or expand

export markets. This is precisely why exporters are right to be alarmed, and why the government's response must go beyond quiet diplomacy. Regaining Japanese market access will require more than an apology and a promise.

It will require the kind of sustained, demonstrable effort that preceded the 2006 restoration, this time directed not at market entry, which has already been achieved, but at systemic compliance reform. VHT facilities must be upgraded and their monitoring systems modernised. Internal compliance regimes must be strengthened, with better fumigation procedures and rigorous record-keeping. Japan must be invited to conduct re-inspections and must be able to see corrective actions demonstrated, not simply promised. Digital certification and improved export documentation must reduce the margin for procedural error.

And the engagement with Japanese plant protection authorities must be continuous, not seasonal. Above all, India's agricultural export institutions need to internalise a principle that Japan has always applied: in a zero-risk market, there is no such thing as near enough. The 1986 ban lasted 20 years.

The 2006 restoration required three years of continuous surveys, ministerial engagement, and the installation of new infrastructure. That investment was not a one-time achievement. It was a commitment that required ongoing renewal, and in 2026, that commitment appears to have lapsed. The mangoes are ready. The market is willing. The failure is institutional. And institutional failures, unlike harvests, do not recover in a season.

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## Born Guilty

PAROMITA ROY

On 12 May 2026, Twisha Sharma, 33, was found hanging in her matrimonial home in Bhopal's Katara Hills. The FIR named her husband and mother-in-law on allegations of dowry harassment. Within days the Supreme Court took suo motu cognisance of "alleged institutional bias and procedural discrepancies" in the handling of her unnatural death. AllMS Delhi conducted a second autopsy, and the case was transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation. Six days later in Greater Noida, 25-year-old Deepika Nagar died after allegedly falling from the terrace of her three-storey matrimonial home, seventeen months into her marriage. Her father told police she had telephoned him minutes earlier saying she was being assaulted over dowry demands; the post-mortem found a brain bleed and multiple contusions. Police registered the case under Section 80(2) and Section 85 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Sections 3 and 4 of the Dowry Prohibition Act. The alleged demand was a Toyota Fortuner and around Rs 50 lakh in cash.

Both cases remain under investigation. That caveat matters. A republic governed by law must not covet through grip, television, or public fury. Yet it is also true that these names entered a queue already too long for innocence to be the only national posture. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita defines dowry death as the unnatural death of a woman within seven years of marriage where cruelty or harassment connected with a dowry demand is shown to have occurred soon before her death; the punishment is a minimum of seven years and may extend to life imprisonment. If the statute is precise, the social disease it addresses is older, more elusive, and far more difficult to prosecute. India's tragedy is not that it lacks laws. It is that the law arrives after the daughter has already been culturally priced. The old phrase for this pricing is paraya dhan: another's wealth. It sounds gentle when spoken in a court, almost affectionate, as though a daughter is a guest whose departure must be prepared with tears and jewellery. In truth, it is one of the most efficient phrases patriarchy has invented. It converts a child into a transfer asset.

It tells parents that investment in her education, autonomy, and inheritance is generosity rather than duty. It tells the groom's family that acceptance carries a price. It tells the daughter that her belonging is provisional from birth. This idea did not descend from nowhere. Manusmriti 9.3, in Gangamathi Jha's canonical translation, declares that the father guards her during virginity, the husband guards her in youth, the sons guard her in old age. The woman is never fit for civilisation.

It would be lay to pretend that one version explains a civilisation. India's own traditions contain counter-memories of learned women, ruling women, argumentative women, and saint-poets who refused to be controlled by domestic grammar. But the Manu-like imagination found a durable home in everyday custom because it served power. It made control look like protection. It made exclusion look like honour. That grammar survives in the numbers. The National Family Health Survey-5 put India's sex ratio at birth at 929 girls per 1,000 boys, still below the natural range: Rajasthan stood at 891 and Punjab at 904.

Reuters, citing the United Nations Population Fund, reported in 2022 that India was losing approximately 5.9 lakh girls each year to sex selection. Dowry is not an aberration within this system. It is its invoice. The legal architecture appears formidable. The Dowry Prohibition Act has existed since 1961. Section 85 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita criminalises dowry death. Section 85 punishes cruelty by the husband or his relatives, and Section 86 defines that cruelty to include wilful conduct likely to drive a woman to suicide or cause grave injury, and harassment to unlawful demands for property or valuable security. Yet the National Crime Record Bureau in Crime in India 2023 recorded 6,156 dowry deaths in that year alone, with Uttar Pradesh accounting for 2,122 and Bihar for 1,143.

The provisional figure for 2024, since released, is 5,737. The decline is welcome. Survival is not victory when more

than five thousand women are still dying each year at the intersection of marriage, money, and impunity. And the official count is itself a floor under the NCRR's "principal offence" rule, where an FIR carries multiple charges, only the most heinous is recorded, so dowry deaths are routinely subsumed within murder or abetment. Researchers have argued the true figure is plausibly two to three times the published one. The most frightening part of dowry violence is not always the fatal end.

It is the long normalisation before it: the first "small" demand, the comparison with another bride's wedding gifts, the taint about a cat, the pressure on a daughter to accept a dowry, the suggestion that a daughter must not "adjust" too loudly. By the time a case becomes a crime report, the family has usually passed through months or years of informal arbitration conducted by relatives whose first instinct is not justice but the preservation of marriage at any cost.

This is why the fashionable question - are dowry laws misused? - is too narrow to carry the moral burden placed upon it. Any criminal law can be misused; false implication is real, and due process is not a decorative principle. But the existence of misuse cannot become a solvent for the reality of use. A society that discusses false cases more eagerly than dead daughters has disclosed its priorities. The answer is not weaker law. The answer is better investigation, faster trials, forensic seriousness, protection for complainants, and penalties for both cruelty and fabrication when either is proved.

The discrimination does not end at marriage. It continues into the apparently respectable routines of labour and home. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's Time Use Survey of 2019 found that women who participated in unpaid domestic services spent an average of 299 minutes a day on such work, against 167 minutes for men. The Periodic Labour Force Survey for July 2023 to June 2024 put female labour-force participation in the usual status, for those aged fifteen and above, at 41.7 per cent; the male figure was 78.8 per cent.

The Indian woman is expected to study, earn, bear children, care for elders, preserve family honour, and remain grateful if she is permitted to do any of this with minimal obstruction. The paradox is brutal. The daughter is treated as temporary in her natal home, yet permanently available for service in her marital one. She is paraya dhan before marriage and family labour after it. Her labour is

inmate enough to be demanded, but not economic enough to be counted. Her salary, where she has one, is non-negotiable within the household. Her inheritance is frequently surrendered in the name of affection. Her body becomes the site where lineage, caste, class, and property anxieties settle their accounts.

The constitutional answer is not ambiguous. Equality before law, non-discrimination on grounds of sex, and the right to life with dignity. The fundamental promises to be recited on national days. Her are instructions. But constitutional morality cannot survive as courtroom language alone. It has to enter the kitchen where a daughter is told not to study too far from home. It has to enter the marriage negotiation where "gifts" are itemised with plausible deniability. It has to enter the police station where a complaint is softened into compromise. It has to enter the family WhatsApp group where a son's entitlement is still mistaken for parental duty. The work ahead is therefore both administrative and intimate. Anti-dowry cells need trained investigators, not clerical desks. Deaths within seven years of marriage must be treated with forensic discipline, not local influence. Protection officers and women's help desks must be resourced in practice, not merely announced. Daughters must inherit vitality. Schools must teach boys that household labour is better investigation, faster trials, forensic seriousness, protection for complainants, and penalties for both cruelty and fabrication when either is proved.

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(The writer has professional experience in human resource consulting and advisory services)

# Govt's infra push doesn't match the hype

LATE last year, Rajesh's manager told him, "The job market is very bad. So, listen to me. Work much harder, spend more time at work." That night, Rajesh broke the news to his wife, Madhu, who always complained about the long hours he kept. "We have to get a car," Rajesh said. "That will save an hour off my commute."

"I'll ask Savita to stop coming," Madhu said. "As it is, she only does one hour of dusting and takes Rs 6,000. I will do it myself, and we can use that money for our car EMI." She wasn't entirely unhappy. Doing a little more housework was a small price to pay for the car she had wanted for a long time.

Redirecting spending from consumption to investment — what Rajesh and Madhu were planning — is exactly what companies do when they invest a larger part of their profits in machines and equipment, or increase their office and factory space.

Governments do that too, to boost economic growth. They invest in building railroads, highways, ports and airports. They invest in human capital, by spending on education and health, or even by giving subsidies to improve the lives of the poorest among the working people.

An economy grows faster when all three — households, private companies and the government — invest more for the future. And the opposite — falling overall investments — makes economic growth falter.

Most mainstream economists want developing countries, like ours, to invest a larger proportion of national income every year. And within that, they prefer that the private sector invest the lion's share. This is because higher investment is needed to keep growing fast, and the private sector is believed to be less wasteful in deploying its hard-earned profits.

Whether one agrees with this view is irrelevant here. What matters is that successive governments in India have organised their economic policies within this neoliberal framework. Have these policies succeeded in increasing capital investment, especially from the private sector?

The answer, unfortunately, is no. In 2011-12, the year many economists identify as the beginning of the moderation in our growth trajectory, capital investments — captured in a



measure called Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) — stood at 34% of our GDP. In 2025-26, it dropped to 30%. (I have used the old GDP series to make a consistent comparison.) What is worse is that the share of private firms in this has dropped sharply over the years. Ten years ago, in 2015-16, for instance, private investment accounted for 41% of the overall capital investments in the economy. In 2024-25, the last year for which we have data, this had dropped to just 32%.

Data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), India's premier private data agency, suggests this has deteriorated further in 2025-26. Interestingly, the government

sector's share hasn't risen either. In fact, it fell marginally, from 26% ten years ago to 25% in 2024-25. The heavy lifting is being done by households and self-employed people. They have invested in building homes and in buying transport equipment and other small machinery. These are also counted as investment — or, to be precise, 'capital formation' — when a country's GDP is calculated. Ten years ago, they accounted for 33% of overall investments. That has shot up to 43% now. If we look at the productive assets built, ten years ago 'dwellings, buildings and structures' — factories, offices, houses, roads, bridges and so on — accounted for 53% of all assets.

In 2024-25, that rose to 58%. Machinery, which made up 34% of all new assets, has dropped to 31% in the same period. This confirms the thesis that much of India's capital investment over the past decade has been in building infrastructure. In fact, even the machinery being produced is oriented towards the infrastructure sector. This is a crucial indicator of the direction in which our economy is headed. The data confirms what some of us have been arguing for some time — that India's growth is overwhelmingly being driven by government expenditure on infrastructure.

You might ask: what is wrong with that? For the past two decades, we

have been told that when a country invests in infrastructure, it sets the ball rolling for sustained economic growth.

The first thing it supposedly does is generate direct jobs for engineers, project managers, supervisors and thousands of construction workers. Then it boosts demand for goods needed for building infrastructure — steel, cement, concrete slabs, heavy equipment, cranes, and so on. These industries, in turn, hire more people to meet this increased demand. All these newly employed people now have more money in their hands, generating new demand for consumer goods and services. And all this happens while a proper

network of roads, highways, waterways and ports is created for accelerated industrialisation and the faster movement of goods and labour. But none of that has actually happened. If we compare 2019-20 — the year before Covid-19 — with the present, the combined expenditure on infrastructure by the Central and state governments has grown at a whopping 15% per year. In the same period, the CMIE's employment surveys show, employment in real estate and construction has risen at a measly 1% annually. What is more alarming is that, in the key feeder industry of cement, tiles and construction materials, employment has actually fallen.

# Keep the altar and the Assembly apart

THERE is a question the Punjab government did not ask before convening a special session of the Vidhan Sabha on April 13 to pass — unanimously and in evident haste — the Jaagat Sri Guru Granth Sahib Saktar (Amendment) Act, 2026. Can the State legislate faith without eventually violating it? The answer, delivered within weeks by the Akal Takht, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) and the internal logic of the Act itself, is that it cannot and that the altar and the Assembly must never meet.

When political authority begins to police religious belief through punitive law, religion is subordinated and transformed into an administrative category, with devotion becoming susceptible to surveillance. The legislation was framed by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann as a "historic correction" and presented as the AAP government's answer to a decade of unresolved sacrilege cases that had caused profound anguish to the Sikh community. The Bargari desecrations, the police firing at Behal Kalan, the saroop stolen from Burj Jawahar Singh Wala (all in 2015) and the Golden Temple incident (2021), whose perpetrators were never publicly identified, are grievances that are not politically fabricated. They are open wounds. Any government seeking Sikh electoral support had reasons to address them, with the Act prescribing imprisonment of not less than seven years, extendable to 20, with a fine up to Rs 10 lakh. In cases involving conspiracy to disturb communal harmony, life imprisonment can be awarded. The Act expands the definition of sacrilege to cover spoken, written, symbolic and electronic expression that intentionally hurts Sikh religious feelings, and it notifies all offences as cognisable, non-bailable and non-compoundable.

The Akal Takht's response, and it is the most telling fact in this entire episode, was not to celebrate but to object. Within weeks of the law receiving the Punjab Governor's assent on April 17, the Akal Takht's officiating Jathedar, Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargaj, and SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhami met

Governor Gulab Chand Kataria to submit a list of objections and demand a review. CM Mann ruled out a review; instead, he launched a statewide "Shukrana Yatra" to celebrate the Act's passage. The irony of the state government thanking itself for a law that it claimed would protect the sanctity of Sikh religion appears to have been lost on him.

To understand what the Akal Takht was objecting to, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between two institutions that the 2026 Act has fatally conflated. The Akal Takht is historically conceived as the sovereign, spiritual and temporal authority of the Sikh Panth, a seat independent of political power. The SGPC was created through a colonial-era legislation, the Sikh Gurdwara Act of 1925, as a statutory body for the management of gurdwaras, and answerable for elections and party politics.

Over the decades, the two became institutionally entangled through the dominance of the Shiromani Akali Dal, which has historically controlled both. The result is that an elected statutory management body, deeply enmeshed in Punjab's factional politics, has come to take on the role of spiritual authority. The 2026 Act gives that conflation the force of criminal law.

What the Act actually does, beyond its penalty clauses, is assign the SGPC a sweeping quasi-regulatory role over the physical existence of the Guru Granth Sahib itself. The SGPC must maintain a central register of all saroops in Punjab, assign each a unique identification number and record details of printing, storage, distribution, location and custodianship. Statutory duties are imposed on "custodians" — a category that in practice encompasses gurdwaras, gurdwara management committees and ordinary devotees — to ensure safe custody, observe the Sikh Rehat Maryada, prevent misuse or damage and report any suspected sacrilege to both the police authorities and management bodies.

The Rehat Maryada, Sikhism's code of religious conduct, has thus been incorporated by legislative reference



into a criminal statute. Failure to observe it, or to report a suspected breach, is no longer a matter of religious discipline; it becomes a police matter.

Every religion develops norms and codes in order to sustain itself. Religious norms must emerge organically within the spiritual community, not through coercive State legislation backed by imprisonment. An elected political-religious institution cannot become the legal custodian of faith. The distinction that the Act obliterates is the one between moral authority, institutional guidance and criminal coercion. The first two are the proper domain of a religious community. The third belongs to the State. Once they are fused, the State does not merely administer religion. It replaces the latter. Legislation,

indeed, must stay within limits. It is the concern that the law criminalises ordinary religious life rather than targeting desecrators that has spurred resistance from within the Sikh establishment itself. Voices associated with the Akal Takht have warned that the terminology of "custodian" may expose grantis, devotees and gurdwara committees to criminal prosecution for lapses that are accidental or matters of legitimate internal theological disagreement. The law thus may invite systematic police intrusion into the daily conduct of religious life. Moreover, the Panth was not adequately consulted before a statute purporting to codify the terms of its most sacred obligations was passed in a hurried two-day special session. That the SGPC and the Akal Takht

initially welcomed the legislation, then rapidly reversed course, is itself a measure of how poorly thought through the Act was. Faith cannot be reduced to obedience enforced by legislation. The Guru Granth Sahib is not a text that has survived by sheltering behind State power. It has survived because its authority rests not on coercion but on devotion freely given. To convert that scripture into a protected zone whose boundaries are patrolled by the police and enforced by a sessions court is not to honour the tradition but rather to betray it. The Akal Takht understood this. It is an irony that the legislature did not. India's constitutional framework anticipated precisely this danger. The secular republic was not designed as a State hostile to religion,

but as one that maintained principled distance from all faiths, preventing both the capture of religion by political authority and vice versa. The 2026 Act violates that distance in both directions. It allows the State to enter theological territory that it has no competence to adjudicate, while handing a politically entangled religious institution the coercive power it has no democratic mandate to wield. The legal challenges have already begun. A petition before the Punjab and Haryana High Court seeks to quash the Act on constitutional grounds, arguing that a penal framework which singles out one religion's scripture for special protection, while leaving all others unaddressed, fails the most basic test of equality before law (Article 14).

## Are you marrying for love or for likes? The real cost of India's Instagram shaadi culture



There was a time when an Indian wedding meant chaos in the best way. Cousins sleeping four to a room. Someone's maasi crying before the ceremony even started. Phupha ji breaking into naagin dance too quick. The halwai working since three in the morning. Nobody asked whether the marigolds photographed well. The flowers just had to smell right.

That world has not disappeared. But something else has grown alongside it, loud and expensive and hungry for attention. A \$130 billion industry built on a single day. India's wedding industry is now worth close to \$130 billion. Let that number breathe for a second. One hundred and thirty billion dollars. Spent on flowers, outfits, venues, drone operators, photographers, and the guy whose entire job is making sure the couple looks good from thirty feet in the air. The industry has grown faster than most sectors in the country, and analysts expect it to keep climbing. Weddings here are not just ceremonies anymore. They are economic events.

A big part of what is driving that growth is Instagram.

The platform changed how couples imagine their wedding before a single booking is made. You open the app, you scroll for twenty minutes, and suddenly you have strong opinions about draping styles, lighting setups, and whether your first dance needs a fog machine. You did not know you wanted a fog machine. Now you feel incomplete without one. This is not accidental. The algorithm rewards visual spectacle. High production value gets shared, saved, reposted. A wedding that looks cinematic travels further than one that was simply warm and real. So naturally, more weddings start being designed with that reach in mind. When celebrity weddings became the benchmark. Celebrity weddings poured fuel on this particular fire.

When Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma got married in Tuscany in 2017, the pictures circled the internet for days. The

detail was clean, curated, quietly flawless. When Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh had their Lake Como ceremony, it looked less like a wedding and more like a fashion editorial that happened to include vows. Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal, Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani, Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor. Each one arriving with its own visual identity, its own hashtag, its own set of reference images that would later show up in wedding planners' offices across the country.

The problem is not that these weddings happened. The problem is that they became a benchmark. Nobody said out loud that your wedding should look like Deepika's. Nobody had to. The comparison was already living inside every mood board on every couple's phone. Plenty of families, working with a fraction of that budget, started trying to recreate the feeling. The backdrop. The lighting. The particular way joy was presented rather than simply felt.

What the Instagram wedding actually costs

So what does the Instagram wedding actually cost? A mid-range wedding aimed at looking good online now runs between Rs 25 lakh and Rs 50 lakh in many Indian cities. That is not the luxury tier. That is the tier trying to look like the luxury tier. Within that budget, the venue alone can swallow a significant portion, particularly if it has a garden, a view, or any quality that reads as aesthetic on camera. Floral arrangements designed for photography cost more than ones designed for fragrance. A bridal makeup team with a social following charges a premium. So does a photographer who shoots in a certain style that has become trendy. Videographers now offer cinematic reels as a base package, not an add-on. And none of this accounts for the outfits. Multiple outfit changes have become expected in certain circles. Designer lehengas. Customised sherwanis. The idea that you wear one thing for the ceremony and something entirely different for the reception, and possibly a third

thing for the sangeet, is no longer reserved for film families.

At the top end, numbers get genuinely dizzying. Weddings at premium heritage properties, with international performers and flown-in florals, routinely cross the crore mark. The KPMG-backed research firm Wazir Advisors noted that the average per-wedding spend in India has risen sharply over the last decade, with urban weddings seeing the sharpest increase.

The part nobody puts in the wedding budget

Here is the part that does not fit neatly into a wedding brochure. All of this pressure lands somewhere. It lands on the couple. It lands on the families. It lands specifically on the people who cannot really afford any of it but feel like they cannot afford to skip it either. A 2023 survey by financial planning platform Fisdom found that a significant number of Indian families go into debt for weddings, sometimes borrowing amounts they take years to repay. The wedding ends. The loan does not.

Beyond money, there is something quieter happening. Couples who spend months planning a photogenic wedding sometimes arrive at the actual day and find themselves managing it like a production. The timeline is not about what feels good. It is about the light. The photographer needs the couple at the Mandap entrance by five-thirty because that is golden hour. The guests need to be seated before the drone flyover. The first dance needs to happen before the caterer moves the tables.

You have planned this day for fourteen months and you are essentially a location coordinator for your own marriage. The guests are not off the hook either. Indian weddings have always had an element of performance. That is not new. But the audience has expanded beyond the people in the room. When someone at your wedding posts a reel before they have even had dinner, your event is now live on the internet. This creates a strange incentive. Guests want something worth posting. Couples want something worth posting.

## Revenge bedtime procrastination: Gen Z is losing 332 hours of sleep a year on purpose; research says it's not working

It's midnight. You're tired. You know you have to be up in six hours. Yet here you are, watching a video you don't even fully care about, scrolling through content you've already forgotten. You're not doing this because you're enjoying yourself. You're doing it because the day wasn't yours, and this is the only time that is. This is revenge bedtime procrastination. And it's becoming one of the defining habits of a generation. What it actually means

The term sounds dramatic, but the definition is simple. Revenge bedtime procrastination is the deliberate delay of sleep to get personal time back, despite knowing the consequences. No external force is keeping you up. No deadline, no emergency. Just the quiet refusal to end the day. Advertisement

The Sleep Foundation defines it as "the decision to sacrifice sleep for leisure time that is driven by a daily schedule lacking in free time." The word revenge matters here. It isn't passive. It's a response. The day took something from you, and you're taking it back at 1am with a phone in your hand.

The concept got its name from a Chinese phrase that went viral during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was picked up by journalist Daphne K. Lee in a 2020 tweet that spread globally, partly because millions of people read it and thought: that's exactly what I do.

The numbers are stark. This isn't a niche problem. A 2023 survey of 1,000 Americans found that 51 percent engage in revenge bedtime procrastination. More than half of respondents said their daily routine does not leave enough time for leisure. A separate study of 2,000 Americans found that 96 percent admitted to intentionally staying up late even when they knew it would hurt their sleep. On average, people do this 3.5 nights per week, staying up roughly 110 minutes past their intended bedtime each time. That adds up to around 332 lost hours of sleep per year.

The concept got its name from a Chinese phrase that went viral during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was picked up by journalist Daphne K. Lee in a 2020 tweet that spread globally, partly because millions of people read it and thought: that's exactly what I do.

Why it happens: The psychology. The obvious answer is poor self-control. And there's truth in that. A 2014 study by Kroese et al., published in Frontiers in Psychology, found a clear link between difficulty with self-regulation and bedtime procrastination. By evening, self-control is already depleted. The brain has spent hours making decisions, filtering distractions, and meeting demands. When bedtime comes, there's simply not much resistance left.

But that explanation has critics. Reducing the whole thing to a willpower failure misses the larger picture. A 2024 qualitative study found that people who procrastinate at bedtime often describe feeling a lack of control, satisfaction, or enjoyment during the day. They felt they had "lost" hours to work and needed them back. A 2018 study by Kamphorst et al. found that people who resisted more desires during the day had greater bedtime procrastination. The mental resources used for self-control all day left nothing in reserve for getting to bed on time.

Research published in ScienceDirect frames it this way: when people lack control over their daytime life, they delay sleep to regain a sense of control late at night. It's not laziness. There's also the intention-behaviour gap to consider. The American Association of Sleep Technologists notes that people who engage in bedtime procrastination generally know they're doing it and want to sleep more. The intention is there. The follow-through isn't. That gap is what separates this from simply being a night owl.

It's not just a Gen Z problem. Every generation procrastinates at bedtime to some degree. But the conditions shaping Gen Z's relationship with it are specific.

They entered adulthood during or immediately after a pandemic that blurred every boundary between work, school, rest, and recreation. Remote learning meant the bedroom became a classroom. The workday had no clear endpoint. Personal time stopped being protected by geography or routine.

The economic reality stacks on top of that. Many Gen Z workers are juggling multiple income streams just to cover basics. A 2024 study on new careers starters found that job dissatisfaction and lack of workplace autonomy were directly linked to higher rates of bedtime procrastination. When the job feels like something done to you rather than by you, the hours after work become precious and hard to surrender.

And then there is the device problem. Millennials got smartphones as adults. Gen Z grew up with tablets and touchscreens. The algorithm-driven content on TikTok and YouTube is not designed to let you stop. Research confirms this: participants who procrastinated on sleep reported shorter sleep duration, lower quality rest, and greater fatigue the next day, regardless of whether they were natural night owls or early risers. The problem isn't chronotype. It's the decision-making environment at midnight when a feed keeps refreshing itself.

What it does to the body and brain. The effects compound quickly. Poor sleep one night makes the next night harder. Research shows that people who sleep poorly are less likely to exercise the following day (28 percent), more likely to eat poorly (29 percent), and more likely to have another bad night of sleep (28 percent).

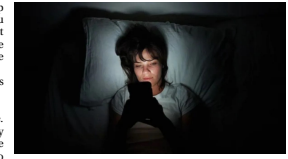
A study by Carlson et al. (2023) found that bedtime procrastination consistently predicted shorter sleep duration, lower sleep quality, higher daytime fatigue. Over time chronic sleep debt affects memory, mood regulation, concentration, immune function.

For students, the cost shows up academically. A cross-sectional study on undergraduate medical students found a statistically significant negative correlation between sleep procrastination and academic performance. The more students delayed sleep for leisure, the lower their academic results. The correlation coefficient was -0.324.

The cultural problem behind the personal habit. Revenge bedtime procrastination exists because modern life doesn't protect personal time. The workday expands. Notifications don't stop. The idea that rest must be earned before it's taken is deeply embedded in how people work, especially younger people who grew up watching the hustle culture of the 2010s and are now quickly rejecting it.

The behaviour itself is a symptom. The deeper issue is structural. When 56 percent of Americans say their routine doesn't allow enough personal time, individual solutions only go so far. Sleep hygiene tips and screen time limits don't fix a system that keeps claiming people's hours.

At the same time, the awareness is growing. A 2026 survey found that 73 percent of respondents said they were actively trying to improve their sleep this year, including cutting back on revenge procrastination nights. That number suggests people know the cost. The question is whether the conditions that drive the behaviour will change enough to make it easier to stop.



## EXPLORING THE WINTER HEART ATTACK PHENOMENON

While the winter season brings a message of freshness and enthusiasm, it also poses a serious challenge for heart-related diseases. According to scientific studies conducted worldwide, cases of heart attacks increase significantly during the winter months as compared to warmer seasons.

The Scientific Connection Between Cold and the Heart

When temperatures drop the body constricts blood vessels (a process known as vasoconstriction) to maintain internal warmth. This leads to a decrease in the diameter of blood vessels causing an increase in blood pressure. Individuals who already suffer from high blood pressure or cholesterol issues experience increased stress on their hearts due to this condition.

In cold weather the blood viscosity also increases resulting in making the blood thicker and thereby reducing the oxygen delivery. This condition raises the risk of blood clots formation which can block the coronary arter-

ies and result in a heart attack (myocardial infarction).

Hormonal and Metabolic Changes in Winter

During the winter seasons hormones such as adrenaline and norepinephrine are released in higher amounts. These hormones increase the heart rate and blood pressure. As a result individuals with pre-existing conditions like atherosclerosis face a significantly heightened risk of heart attacks. Additionally, the metabolic rate of the body also increases in colder weather leading to a greater demand for oxygen. If the coronary arteries are already narrowed, this increased demand cannot be met, resulting in a lack of oxygen for the heart muscle.

Other Factors Contributing to Increased Heart Attacks

1. Morning Cold and Stress. Cases of heart attacks are most common between 4 AM and 10 AM due to hormonal changes that occur during this time.

2. Sedentary Lifestyle:

People tend to go out less during winter, leading to reduced physical activity, increased obesity and higher cholesterol levels.

3. Smoking and Alcohol Consumption:

Both the habits tend to increase in winter, further constricting the coronary arteries.

Precautions for Heart Health in Winter

1. Warm Clothing:

Keep the body temperature stable to reduce the constriction of blood vessels.

2. Warm-Up Before Morning Exercise:

Always perform light warm-ups before exercising in cold weather and avoid strenuous activities in extreme cold.

3. Regular Monitoring of Blood Pressure and Diabetes:

This is essential especially for the elderly and those with high blood pressure.

4. Balanced Diet:

Consume low-fat foods, fresh fruits, vegetables and meals rich in omega-3 fatty acids.

5. Avoid Smoking and Alcohol:

Both substances are particularly harmful to heart health during winter.

### HEART PROBLEMS DURING WINTER

#### Understanding the Cold Weather Effect

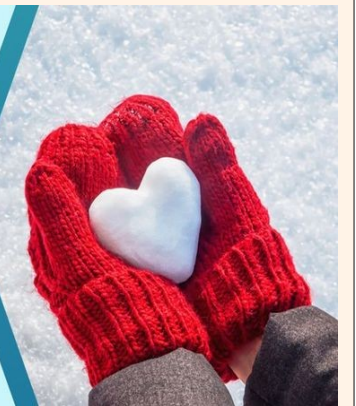
6. Regular Medication for Heart Conditions: Individuals with pre-existing heart issues should consistently take their prescribed medications. Need for Social Awareness

There is a need for awareness campaigns about heart diseases during winter. Health centers, schools and colleges should organize camps related to the risks of heart diseases. Medical departments should also

be prepared with special emergency measures for cold weather.

The cold season poses a tough test for the heart. The drop in temperature directly affects blood flow, hormonal balance and heart function.

However, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, proper diet, regular check-ups and precautions can help protect the heart during winter. Science confirms that winter is not just a time of cold but also a time for caution.



## South Africa Minister meets Dr Jitendra, seeks to scale up bilateral cooperation

**NEW DELHI:** India and South Africa today agreed to scale up bilateral cooperation in future technologies, with Artificial Intelligence, Digital Infrastructure and Advanced Manufacturing emerging as key priorities for the next phase of bilateral engagement.

During talks with South Africa Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Dr Nomaungelo Gina, who called on him accompanied by a high-level delegation, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh called for taking the relationship beyond traditional research cooperation towards innovation-driven partnerships capable of delivering economic and societal impact at scale.

Holding bilateral talks with Dr. Nomaungelo Gina, Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation of South Africa, Dr Jitendra Singh said that the next phase of India-South Africa engagement must be shaped by emerging technologies, innovation ecosystems, startup partnerships and industry-linked research. He said the two countries possess complementary strengths that can be leveraged to create affordable, scalable and inclusive technological solutions for the developing world.

The Minister said India and South Africa share a unique partnership forged through a common history, democratic values and a shared commitment to inclusive growth. He noted that as influential voices of the Global South, both countries are increasingly contributing to shaping international conversations on science, technology and innovation through platforms such as BRICS, IBSA, G20 and IORA, while also advancing bilateral cooperation across multiple strate-



gic sectors.

The meeting was held at the Kartavya Bhawan in New Delhi. The Indian delegation included Dr. Rajesh S. Gokhale, Secretary, DST, senior officials of the Department and representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs. The South African delegation was led by Deputy Minister Dr. Nomaungelo Gina and comprised senior officials from the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation and the South African High Commission.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said India has emerged as one of the world's fastest-growing innovation ecosystems, supported by major national initiatives in Artificial Intelligence, Quantum Technologies, Cyber-Physical Systems, Digital Public Infrastructure and startup partnerships with South Africa. Emphasising that science must increasingly translate into solutions that improve lives, generate employment and strengthen economies, the Minister called for deeper engagement among research institutions, innovation agencies, startups and industry from both countries. He said future cooperation should focus not only on scientific excel-

lence but also on technology deployment, commercialization and societal outcomes.

A key outcome of the discussions was the decision to intensify collaboration in Advanced Materials and Manufacturing, Geospatial Technologies and Digital Infrastructure, priority areas identified under the India-South Africa Joint Committee mechanism.

Both sides agreed to accelerate interactions among scientists, institutions and technical experts to transform these focus areas into concrete collaborative programmes and outcomes.

The discussions also highlighted substantial opportunities in biotechnology, genomics, vaccine development, health technologies and pandemic preparedness. Dr. Jitendra Singh said recent global experiences have reinforced the importance of resilient healthcare systems and scientific partnerships, adding that India's strengths in biotechnology, affordable healthcare innovation and vaccine manufacturing offer significant scope for collaboration with South Africa.

South Africa expressed strong interest in expanding research in areas such as high-performance computing, artificial intelligence, renewable energy, biotechnology, water resources, precision agriculture and materials science.

Dr. Gina said

## 'Emotional occasion': CM Revanth Reddy shares greetings on Telangana statehood day

**HYDERABAD:** Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on Tuesday extended greetings to the people on the occasion of statehood day, remembering people's sacrifices for the separate state movement and looking forward towards the future.

In a post on X, Revanth Reddy said, "Every year, remembering yesterday's sacrifices, reviewing tomorrow's goals. An emotional occasion... June 2. Heartfelt wishes to all people on the Telangana State Formation Day celebration."

Meanwhile, President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday extended greetings to the people on the occasion of Telangana statehood day.

In a post on X, President Murmu celebrated the state's rich cultural heritage and credited its innovation and development over the years. "Warm greetings to the people of Telangana Statehood Day! Telangana is blessed with a rich cultural heritage and hard-working people. The State has made significant strides in innovation and development over the years. I wish the people of Telangana continued progress and well-being," President Murmu said.

PM Modi also extended greetings to the people of the state, highlighting



Telangana's creativity and business acumen. PM Modi said that the Central Government is committed to cooperating in the development of the state to realise the goal of 'Viksit Bharat'.

"Greetings to the people of Telangana on the special occasion of Telangana Statehood Day. The people of Telangana are known for their spirit of innovation and enterprise. The State is known for its glorious culture and history...one of courage and determination. The Central Government is committed to supporting Telangana's growth trajectory in realising our dream of a Viksit Bharat. Praying for the good health and success of the people of the State," PM Modi said.

Telangana Statehood Day is observed every year on June 2. The day commemorates the aspirations and struggles of the Telangana movement for separate statehood. After years of protests, negotiations, and parliamentary approval, the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, paved the way for its formation.

## Teen rescued as UP Police busts child trafficking gang in Hapur; 4 arrested

**lucknow:** Uttar Pradesh police on Monday rescued a 17-year-old child who had been missing a few days ago and there by busted a gang allegedly involved in child trafficking in Uttar Pradesh's Hapur, the police said.

Speaking with ANI, DSP Varun Mishra said that four accused have been arrested.

He further said that the gang was busted during an investigation launched to trace the missing child.

"A 14-15-year-old boy had gone missing a few days ago and was being searched for. The investigation

revealed that a gang involved in child trafficking is active, and the incident was carried out by them, 4 accused have been arrested. A 17-year-old child was rescued from their possession. These people would try to find children of all kinds. All four are residents of different districts," he stated.

Further investigation is underway.

Earlier on Wednesday, two individuals accused of kidnapping a one-and-a-half-year-old child sustained injuries during an encounter with the Uttar Pradesh police on

Wednesday in the Husli Phatak area of Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly, officials said.

The minor boy was also rescued and returned to the family.

The arrested accused have been identified as Yogesh and Pawan SP. South Anshika Verma informed that the police received information regarding the abduction of a minor boy from Manauva village. A case was registered under the relevant sections. Subsequently, five police teams were formed to locate the child.

With CCTV surveillance and other technical inputs, the police teams pursued the investigation.

"On May 24, 2026, information was received regarding the abduction of a one-and-a-half-year-old child from the village of Manauva, located within the jurisdiction of the Aonla Police Station. Based on this, a case was registered under the relevant sections of the law. In furtherance of the investigation, five police teams were constituted. These teams utilised CCTV footage, surveillance, and other technical inputs to pursue the case," she said.

## HC upholds direction for entrusting census duties to employees of LIC

**PRAYAGRAJ:** Upholding the directions issued by the authorities concerned for entrusting census duties to the employees of LIC, the Allahabad High Court dismissed a writ petition filed by North Central Zone Insurance Employees, saying that the authority/zonal office did not commit any error or illegality. The petitioner had sought quashing of the decision to engage employees of LIC for census work.

Dismissing the writ petition, Justice Dinesh Pathak said, "This court is of the considered opinion that the authorised authority/zonal office has not committed any error or illegality in issuing orders in exercise of delegated power directing the employees of the LIC to discharge duties as enumerators/supervisors to facilitate the work of census operations."

"Further, the writ petition contains only a vague prayer seeking quashing of the decision to engage employees of the LIC for census work and no specific



challenge has been made to any particular order." During the course of hearing, the counsel for the petitioner submitted that under section 4-A of the census Act, 1948, only employees of local authorities can be requisitioned for performing census duties as enumerators/supervisors.

He further submitted that the employees of LIC do not fall within the definition of "local authorities" as defined under section 3 of the General Clauses Act, 1897. Therefore, entrustment of census duties to them is "wholly unsustainable" in the

## Fourty five litre tank, Fifty two Litre petrol pumped: Kanpur car owner's shocking allegations on fuel pump

**KANPUR:** Video of a car owner in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur purportedly making allegations on a petrol pump of inflated bill, has gone viral on social media, prompting even the district administration to reportedly order an immediate investigation.

According to the vehicle owner, Chauran Singh, he took his new Volkswagen Virtus — which he said has a capacity of 45 litres of fuel — to petrol station in Harsh Nagar with the fuel indicator showing a near-empty tank.

He alleged in a video that the petrol pump attendants initially pumped in around 41 litres of fuel, making him question the pump in the filling process. The attendants allegedly told him that large volumes of fuel are filled in two instalments and were not to fill the tank up.

To his shock, Singh was later handed a bill that mentioned a total quantity of 52 litres of petrol — something he says was not possible as his car's tank has a total capacity of 45 litres. Questioning the pump staff,



Singh said he immediately called the car manufacturing company and asked a representative to come to the petrol pump. The company official arrived and confirmed that the vehicle's tank could not hold more than 45 litres under any circumstances. Singh claimed in the video going viral on social media and cited in reports.

Singh reportedly lodged a formal complaint alleging a systemic fraud racket operating with the collusion of local

weights and measures officials. Fuel company official inspects. An official of the fuel pump later addressed media and said the complaint regarding a 45-litre fuel tank allegedly accommodating over 52 litres of fuel was being investigated in the presence of oil company inspectors. The vehicle manufacturer as well as other relevant departments. According to the official, the measurements conducted during the inspection were found to be in order, and the verification was being

carried out as per the prescribed guidelines.

"A complaint was received that the vehicle's fuel tank capacity is 45 litres, but around 52-54 litres of fuel was filled into it. Following this complaint, inspectors from the oil company, the Weights and Measures team, and representatives from the OEM have been called for an investigation. I am also present here along with our officials," the official said at the petrol pump.

"The matter is being examined, and measurements are being carried out, as you can see. So far, everything has been found to be correct. We have the relevant guidelines with us. We will show those guidelines and conduct the verification accordingly," he said.

Later at a press interaction, the OEM has been called for an investigation. I am also present here along with our officials," the official said at the petrol pump.

## SC junks plea seeking new legislation for hate speech

**new delhi:** The Supreme Court on Wednesday reminded public figures of their duty to exercise restraint in public discourse, holding that hate speech is antithetical to the constitutional value of fraternity and strikes at the moral fabric of our Republic.

Dismissing a petition filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay seeking separate offences for hate speech and rumour-mongering, a bench of justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta said: "In a constitutional democracy, public discourse carries with it a corresponding duty of restraint and responsibility. Individuals, public figures, and institutions alike must remain mindful that words have consequences, particularly in a society as diverse as ours."

The court held that existing penal laws adequately address hate speech and rumour-mongering, and the petition as "misconceived" in assuming that the field of hate

speech remains "legislatively unoccupied".

At the same time, the bench said it would be open to the Union of India and competent legislative authorities to consider whether further legal or policy measures were needed in light of evolving societal challenges. It also asked the Centre and states to consider suitable amendments suggested by the Law Commission in its March 2017 report on hate speech.

"Hate speech is not merely a deviation from acceptable discourse; it is fundamentally antithetical to the constitutional value of fraternity and strikes at the moral fabric of our Republic," the bench said.

The judgment added that such speech runs counter to India's civilisational ethos, referring to the ancient maxim *vaśudhaiva kutumbakam* — the idea that the world is one family.

It said it was "irreconcilable" that in such a country citizens should be classified or discrimi-



nated against on grounds such as caste, colour, creed, gender or any other marker rooted in an "us versus them" mindset.

"Hate speech, in this sense, is not merely an exercise of free expression but a distortion of it, one that undermines the constitutional promise of an inclusive and cohesive society by fostering hostility and discrimination against identifiable groups," it added.

The 125-page judgment, authored by Justice Nath, said the idea of belonging to one nation cannot be made contingent upon selective inclusion or exclusion, but requires a collective commitment to shared constitutional values. "Fraternity, therefore, demands that every

citizen recognise and respect the equal dignity of others, irrespective of differences, and consciously eschew conduct that undermines social harmony," it said.

The court added that once this constitutional ideal is internalised, "the very impulse to engage in hate speech would stand diminished".

The judgment disposed of a batch of 13 connected petitions filed by public figures and consciously eschew conduct that undermines social harmony," it said.

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direct registration of FIRs. The judgment clarified that while considering such complaints, a magistrate need not seek prior sanction under Sections 196 or 197 of the CrPC at the FIR stage, as sanction is required only when cognisance of charges is taken.

This issue arose in one of the petitions filed by CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat challenging a 2022 Delhi High Court ruling that granted relief to BJP leaders Anurag Thakur and Praveesh Verma. The Supreme Court partly set aside the High Court's finding on prior sanction, but did not disturb its ultimate conclusion that the speeches in question did not disclose a cognisable offence.

The court directed that a copy of the judgment to be circulated to all high courts, leaving it open to them to issue practice guidelines for implementing.

Several lawyers sought continued monitoring by the court, arguing that hate speech often

goes unpunished despite existing law. The bench declined.

"To assume a role of continuous supervisory oversight over executive or investigative functions, particularly in anticipation of possible default, would not only blur constitutional boundaries but also amount to an impermissible expansion of judicial power beyond its legitimate limits," it said.

The court also dealt with contempt petitions alleging police inaction in registering hate speech cases. While several were dismissed, some matters in which responses were awaited were listed for further hearing.

# CONTRIBUTION

# HELPLINE

## HM Amit Shah to Review Amarnath Yatra Security Preparedness on June 8

arrangements. Officials are also expected to brief the Home Minister on the prevailing security situation in Jammu and Kashmir and the steps being taken to safeguard pilgrims throughout the pilgrimage period. Special attention is likely to be given to intelligence coordination among various agencies, surveillance measures along the Yatra routes, and contingency plans to tackle any unforeseen challenges or security threats. The review meeting forms part of the Centre's broader strategy to ensure robust security coverage and efficient facilities for thousands of devotees expected to participate in this year's Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra.

## CM Omar Abdullah flags off Cyothon on World Bicycle Day, launches Jammu Cyothon campaign

for Youth Services & Sports Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Commissioner Secretary Youth Services & Sports Shabbid Iqbal Choudhary, Secretary RSGC Haris Ahmed Handoo, Secretary J&K Sports Council Nuzhat Gul and other senior officers were present on the occasion.

The cycling awareness ride commenced from RSGC and proceeded towards Duck Park in the Ashmore Road, covering a distance of approximately 20 kilometres. A large number of participants from different age groups took part in the event, which passed through designated routes in the city.

## J&K Govt Orders Placement of 12 Engineers as In-charge Assistant Executive Engineers

places them in the higher in-charge cadre in their own pay and grade. The order has been issued under reference to earlier directions, including Government Order No. 34-JK (DMRRR) of 2022.

The engineers covered under the order are Sandeep Saxena, Gopal Krishan Dass, Neetu Koul, Mayor Bhat, Nishal Bhan, Amit Raina (I), Amit Raina (II), Sami Pandita, Vickey Kaw, Ajaz Ahmad, Sunaina Raina and Rocky Pandey.

The government has clarified that the arrangement is purely interim and temporary, and shall not confer any right for substantive promotion, regularisation or confirmation. Final consideration will be made strictly in accordance with Recruitment Rules through the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) or the JK Public Service Commission.

It further stated that the placements will remain subject to the outcome of any pending court proceedings and may be reversed without notice in case of adverse reports or if any superior claim from eligible engineers is established later.

In a parallel order, the administration has sanctioned the creation of 12 supernumerary posts of Assistant Executive Engineer in Pay Level-10A (Rs 56,600-Rs 1,79,800) in the personal capacity of the concerned engineers to facilitate the arrangement, with the posts to be abolished subsequently upon consideration of regularisation by the DPC or JK PSC.

The order also directs that the officers shall continue at their present places of posting until further instructions.

## Cabinet approves Scheme for support to NCRPB for replacement of old trucks and buses in Delhi-NCR area

and buses account for 30% of the emissions with only 3% of the total fleet. It is estimated that single Pre-B5 heavy-duty vehicle emits as much as 14 BS-VI compliant vehicles. Even a BS-VI vehicle emits 2.7 times more than a BS-VI counterpart. Hence, the newer fleet is expected to reduce the vehicular pollution substantially.

The scheme will benefit approximately 2,07 lakh (1.91 lakh trucks and 16.32 lakh buses) owners in Delhi-NCR (comprising Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh).

For BS-III or older vehicles, scrapping at Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facilities is mandatory, while BS-VI vehicles may either be scrapped or sold outside NCR in non-NCR areas.

Owners must then purchase and register a BS-VI or stricter norms compliant or electric vehicle within NCR. However, in Delhi, Light Goods Vehicles purchased under the scheme must be electric, while buses must be BS-VI CNG or electric only. Government vehicles are excluded from the scheme.

Benefits under the scheme: The Centre will provide 5% interest subvention on loans for five years, monthly fuel vouchers worth up to Rs.4,800 depending on vehicle category, and lump-sum benefits for EV purchases or Certificate of Deposit trading.

State governments will waive registration fees and grant up to 100% motor vehicle tax concessions for new vehicles and 50% for used vehicles for 10 years. State Government will also waive of pending liabilities on the old vehicles participating in the scheme.

Participating Auto OEMs will offer 8% discounts on ex-showroom prices. Implementation will be fully digital through an integrated portal, which will enable real-time eligibility checks, automated interest subvention claims, monthly fuel voucher credits, and monitoring of pollution reduction outcomes.

The benefits of central government will continue for 5 years from the date of registration of the new vehicle, ensuring sustained impact beyond the two-year rollout window.

The scheme will be monitored by an Empowered Committee, chaired by Cabinet Secretary with CEO, Niti Aayog, Secretaries of MoHUA, MoRTH, MoPNG, DFS, Chief Secretaries of states in Delhi NCR as members, and Member Secretary of NCRPB being the member convener. At the district level, District Collectors/ District Magistrates will be implementing and monitoring the scheme.

## Anti-terror 'Operation Sheruwalli' enters its twelfth day in Rajouri

constant surveillance. Security agencies are using all available resources to track the movement of the suspected terrorists and eliminate any threat posed by their presence in the region. The entire area remains under heightened security, with access to certain locations being closely monitored. Officials said search operations would continue until the area is fully sanitised and all security concerns are addressed.

## NC Says Its MLAs Will Protest In Delhi For J&K Statehood

stating that the chief minister patiently heard threadbare discussions on critical issues facing the region, including development, drug abuse, alcohol ban and the local economy. The high-stakes meeting, which discussed governance progress, public welfare, and regional development across Jammu, Kashmir, Pir Panjal, and Chenab, was marked by a surprise change of scenery.

While the chief minister had originally invited legislators to his official residence, the MLAs were immediately boarded onto mini-buses and driven away from the media glare for an off-site at the Dachignam National Park.

The meeting came in the backdrop of claims by the Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma that the National Conference government can fall anytime and that several ruling party MLAs were on the verge of jumping ship. "Their MLAs are unhappy and are fighting with ministers

every day. The ship can sink anytime," he said. Sharing pictures of the MLAs on a bus ride on the social media platform X, Abdullah, however, sought to downplay any speculation of secrecy or panic. "We are to offer an off-site to spend the day taking stock of the last 19 months - the good, the not so good and everything in between," Abdullah posted.

He later said that the move was entirely intentional. "I'm sorry to disappoint you but it has NOT been shifted at the last moment." It was always my intention to conduct this meeting off-site and all arrangements have been made, days in advance... The meeting was seen as a display of unity with MLAs, MPs of both Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha as well as CPM leader Mohammed Yusuf Tarigami and the four independent legislators present.

The NC's Lok Sabha MP Aqa Sved Rullah Mehdi, who has been critical of the party on the issue of restoration of special status, was not invited for the meeting.

To a question about claims made by Sharma, Sadiq was emphatic in his reply: "We told you about our meeting and our decision. We are with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and our decision is in the interest of the people of Jammu and Kashmir." When questioned by reporters about a potential expansion of the state cabinet, Sadiq remained guarded. "That is the prerogative of the chief minister. He will do it when he thinks it is right," he said.

## Gulmarg Gondola to remain closed till June 8 after mid-air incident

incident triggered panic and prompted a major rescue operation that lasted several hours, after which all passengers were safely evacuated.

Authorities subsequently halted services and launched a comprehensive technical review. Engineers are inspecting critical components and carrying out repair and maintenance work to ensure passenger safety.

"Due to technical maintenance, the Gondola shall remain closed. All tickets from May 25 to June 8 will be refunded in full," the advisory stated.

Officials added that operations will resume only after maintenance is completed and safety clearances are obtained, stressing that the decision has been taken in the interest of public safety.

## IGP Jammu mentors PSIs-2024 batch on Discipline, Ethics and Modern Policing

to provide investigators, good listeners and legally aware police officers. He highlighted the growing importance of technology, innovation and leadership in modern policing and stressed the need to remain focused on departmental objectives while also looking after the welfare of subordinates and retired police personnel.

During Jammu-Samba Kathua Range, Sh. Shridhar Patil, IPS, also addressed the young officers and advised them to remain true to the oath taken at the time of passing out. He stressed the importance of honesty, integrity and hard work, cautioning them against shortcuts that could lead to future disciplinary or legal complications.

He further exhorted the young officers to uphold the proud legacy of J&K Police and its motto, "The Saga of Sacrifice."

The IGP concluded the session by encouraging the officers to make effective use of the Karmyogi Portal and undertake regular self-learning to enhance their professional competence. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by SSP Jammu, Sh. Joginder Singh, JKAS, who expressed gratitude to the IGP for his valuable guidance and sought more such interactions in future. Among others present were Sh. Rajinder Singh, SO to IGP Jammu; Sh. Vivek Shekhar, JKPS, SP North Jammu; Ms. Anuja Sinha, HP SP Headquarters Jammu; Sh. Ravinder Singh, JKPS, SP Rural Jammu; Sh. Dheeraj Singh Katoch, JKAS, DYP SAR, DPL Jammu and others.

## Jammu Kashmir: PWD Assigns Temporary Charge of Assistant Engineers in Civil Wing

(Civil, degree holder), who has been given temporary responsibility as Assistant Engineer (Civil) in her own pay and grade.

## Chief Secy fixes accountability for completion and utilization of hostel buildings across J&K

level by making the respective Chief Education Officers (CEOs) responsible for ensuring completion and operationalization of hostel projects falling within their jurisdiction. He further directed that a dedicated mentoring officer be designated for each hostel to closely monitor progress and facilitate timely resolution of issues hindering their completion and functioning.

Underscoring the need for efficient utilization of public resources, the Chief Secretary urged the departmental heads and Directors to focus on making all completed hostel buildings functional without further delay. He observed that considerable public funds had been invested in the creation of these assets and, therefore, they should not be allowed to remain idle or unutilized.

He also called upon the departments to undertake a detailed assessment of all hostel structures that may not be suitable for their originally intended purpose and explore alternative strategies for their productive utilization in the larger public interest. He stressed that every public asset should contribute meaningfully towards social welfare and human development.

The Chief Secretary further directed all concerned departments to furnish comprehensive details regarding the sanctioned capacity, present occupancy and enrollment status of each hostel established under their respective schemes so that informed decisions could be taken regarding their effective utilization and future management.

During the meeting, the Commissioner, School and Higher Education Department, Ram Niwas Sharma presented a detailed overview of hostel infrastructure under the sector, including functional and non-functional hostels as well as those presently under construction. He informed the meeting that hostels had been established across districts under Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyaya (KGBV) and other schemes, including boys' and girls' hostels catering to students in schools and higher educational institutions across Jammu and Kashmir.

Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Sarmad Hafeez, also presented a detailed assessment of hostels facilities developed for students belonging to Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Scheduled Castes (SCs) and the Pahari community, outlining their current status and measures being undertaken to improve their utilization.

The representatives of the Tribal Affairs Department apprised the meeting about the availability, occupancy status and operational readiness of hostels established by the department for tribal students. He also provided details of hostels presently under construction and those awaiting operationalization.

The departments assured the meeting that concerted efforts are being made to make all such facilities functional at the earliest in accordance with the directions issued by the Chief Secretary today.

## LG Saxena lays foundation for Ladakh's first Model Border Village at Chumur

villages in India, will focus on four key pillars of development - Infrastructure, Employment and Livelihood Creation, All-Weather Functionality, and Civilian-Defence Integration. The project has been conceived to develop Chumur as a self-reliant, climate-resilient, tourism-enabled and economically vibrant border settlement.

The foundation-laying event witnessed jubilant celebrations from hundreds of locals, including youth and senior citizens, that reflected the spirit, aspirations and whole-hearted support for this new initiative. A large number of school children from nearby villages were specially brought in by the district administration to witness and experience the concept of Vibrant Village, which essentially aims at fostering inclusivity and connecting the people with the mainstream of development.

Under the programme, families in these villages will be provided with climate-resilient, south-facing passive solar houses, designed to maximise solar heat gain and protect them from harsh winters, when the temperatures drop to -35 degrees, during the peak winter months. Each household will receive a residential unit with an attached bathroom, an additional room suitable for homestay activities, a kitchen garden space, livestock sheds and dedicated fodder storage facilities. These houses are expected to be completed by September this year, subject to weather conditions.

The project is aimed at significantly boosting local economic activities by developing Chumur as a tourism destination on the Korzok - Hanle circuit. As part of it, tourism infrastructure, including a community-run café, promotion of handicrafts, Pashmina-based livelihoods and value-added Pashmina products, will be facilitated to create new income-generation opportunities for local residents. This primarily aims at infusing self-reliance among the villagers and reversing migration from the border regions.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, L-G Shri Saxena underscored the project as a transformative initiative that goes beyond conventional development, and seeks to enhance the security, stability and resilience of the nation by strengthening border settlements. He stated that Chumur, owing to its strategic location along the India-China border, holds immense potential as Ladakh's first Model Border Village, under the Vibrant Village Programme, a dream project of Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, who has consistently emphasised that border villages are not the "last villages" but the "first villages" of India. He noted that the initiative aims to improve living standards, create sustainable livelihood opportunities and ensure long-term prosperity for residents of remote border areas.

To strengthen food security and livelihoods, a 90 x 27 feet commercial greenhouse will be established with the support of the High Altitude Research (DHAR), a central service core comprising a school, Primary Health Centre (PHC), community hall, parks, community café and Tourist Interpretation Centre (TIC) will provide essential services and strengthen social and economic life in the village.

L-G Shri Saxena highlighted the crucial role of the Indian Army, ITBP, local residents, and youth in ensuring the initiative's success and thanked the security forces for their unwavering service in the region.

Envisioned as a self-reliant, climate-resilient, tourism-enabled and economically vibrant border settlement, the Chumur Model Border Village is expected to emerge as a benchmark for sustainable development in high-altitude frontier regions and a model for border villages across the country.

The Key Highlights of Chumur Model Border Village include the following: Chumur - Ladakh's First Model Border Village

- \* First village of its kind in Ladakh and among the pioneering model border villages in India.
- \* Shopped under the Vibrant Village Programme as a sustainable resilient border settlement.
- \* Aims at improving the quality of life while strengthening border habitation.

- \* Settlement Stabilisation
- \* Transition from a purely nomadic lifestyle to a secure and permanent settlement.
- \* South-facing passive solar houses designed for maximum sunlight and protection from cold wind during harsh winters.

- \* Each family is to receive
- \* Residential house with attached bathroom.
- \* Additional room suitable for homestay/tourism activities.
- \* Kitchen garden space for household cultivation.
- \* Individual goat/sheep shed.
- \* Dedicated fodder storage for year-round livestock support.

- \* Local Economy Activation
- \* Chumur to be developed as a tourism destination on the Korzok-Hanle circuit.
- \* Plans for a community-run café to promote local entrepreneurship.
- \* Skill building and skill development in Pashmina production and value addition.
- \* Promotion of locally made value-added Pashmina products.

- \* Establishment of a 90 x 27 ft commercial greenhouse with support from DHAR.
- \* Fresh vegetable production to generate income and meet local and defence requirements.
- \* All-Weather Functionality
- \* Reliable year-round water supply system.
- \* Resilient and sustainable power supply through maximum solar energy utilisation.
- \* Improved sanitation and wastewater management infrastructure.
- \* Enhanced habitability during harsh winters.
- \* Civil-Defence Integration
- \* Vegetable production from greenhouses to supply nearby defence establishments.
- \* Creation of a sustainable local market for villagers.
- \* Greater civil-defence cooperation and mutual support.
- \* Opportunities for local employment through engagement with the defence forces.

- \* Cluster-based neighbourhoods with 8-10 housing units per cluster.
- \* Houses oriented southward for solar gain and wind protection.
- \* Dedicated greenhouse belt integrated into village planning.
- \* Livestock infrastructure designed according to Changthang's geography and climatic conditions.
- \* Central Service Core comprising:
- \* School
- \* Primary Health Centre
- \* Community Hall
- \* Parks
- \* Community Café
- \* Tourist Interpretation Centre (TIC)

POLICE STATIONS	
Bagh-e-Bahu	2459777
Bakshi Nagar	2580102
Bus Stand	2575151
City	2543688
Gandhi Nagar	2430258
Gangyal	2482019
Nowbad	2571332
Pacca Danga	2548610
Railway Station	2472870
Sainik Colony	2462212
Satwari	2430364
Channi Himmat	2465164
Transport Nagar	2475444
Trikutu Nagar	2475133
Gandhi Nagar	2459660
SSP City	2561578
SP City North	2547038
SP South	2433778

Public Utility Services	
INDIAN AIR LINES	
City Office	2542735
Air Port	2430449
Jet Air Ways	2453999
City Office	2573399

RAILWAYS	
Railway Enquiry	131, 132, 2476407
Booking	2470318
Reservation	2470315

Public Health Engineering Stations	
Bakshi Nagar	2543557
Gandhi Nagar	2430786
Company Bagh	2542582
New Plot	2573429
Panjtirth	2547537

Telecommunication Department	
Directory Enquiry	197
Fault Repair	198
Trunk Booking	180
Billing Complaint	2543896

JAMMU MUNICIPALITY	
Jn. Lines	2578503
Administration Officer	2542192
Health Officer	2547440

POSTAL SERVICES	
Head Post Office City	2543606
Gandhi Nagar	2435863

FIRE SERVICES	
Control Room	101, 132, 2476407
City	2544263
Gandhi Nagar	2547705
Canal	2554064
Gangyal	2480026

COOKING GAS DEALERS	
Chenab Gas	2547633
Gulmour Gas	2430835
JAKFED	2548297
HP Gas	2578456
Shivangi Gas	2577020
Tawi Gas	2548455

POWER HOUSES	
Gandhi Nagar	2430180
Canal Road	2554147
Janipur	2533828
Nanak Nagar	2430776
Parade	2542289
Satwari Cantt.	2452813

HOSPITALS	
GMC Hospital	2584290
S.M.G.S. Hospital	2547635
C.D. Hospital	2577064
Dental Hospital	2544670
Gandhi Nagar Hospital	2430041
Sarwal Hospital	2579402
G.B. Pant Cantt. Hospital	2433500
Ayurvedic College	2543661
C.R.P. Hospital	2591105
Acharya Shri Chander	2662536
Mental Hospital	2577444
Swami Vivekanand	2547418
Blood Bank	2547637
Ambulances	2584225, 2575364
Ambulances (Red Cross)	2543739

NURSING HOMES	
Maddan Hospital	2466727
Medicare	2435070
Triveni Nursing Home	2452664
Suvidha Nursing Home	2555965
Al. Firdous Nursing Home	2545050
Astha Nursing Home	2576707
Bee Enn Charitable Trust	2505310
Chopra Nursing Home	2573580
Harbans Singh Mem Hsp.	2541952
Jeevan Jyoti	2576985
Yudhvir Nursing Home	2547821
Mediast Nursing Home	2466744
Sita Nursing Home	2435007
Vibhuti Nursing Home	2547969



## Afghanistan to host India before Asian Games: Report

**NEW DELHI:** Afghanistan are set to host India in an international cricket series for the first time, with Delhi likely to stage three T20s in September in what could become a significant bilateral window before the Asian Games. The series is expected to be played at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, with September 13, 16 and 19 being discussed as tentative match dates. An official announcement has not yet been made, but the arrangement is understood to have moved forward after the Afghanistan Cricket Board approached the BCCI for a return tour.

A BCCI source told TOI that the two boards have reached an understanding over the series, which would give Afghanistan a rare chance to act as the host side against India, even though the matches will be played on Indian soil.

"BCCI and ACB share a good relationship. BCCI has been helping other boards like Ireland, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe by sending Indian teams to play a series there to boost the finances of those board. An understanding has been reached between BCCI and ACB in this regard. An official announcement will be made after a few modalities are completed," said the BCCI source.

The venue arrangement is also being worked out through the Delhi and District Cricket Association, with the Arun Jaitley Stadium likely to serve as Afghanistan's home base for the series. Afghanistan have previously played matches in India and the UAE as home grounds because of the security and logistical challenges of hosting international cricket in their own country.

"The BCCI mediated an understanding between ACB, the Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) for availability to be the home base for Afghanistan for the series. The DDCA is also scheduling its Delhi Premier League T20 accordingly." The timing of the proposed series adds another layer of importance. India's selectors are expected to pick a 15-member T20 squad for the Asian Games, where the cricket event is scheduled to begin on September 23.

## Serena Williams stuns tennis world with comeback announcement nearly four years after retirement

**NEW DELHI:** Serena Williams is set to make her highly anticipated competitive comeback to tennis at the age of 44. She will be in action at Queen's Club in London this month as a wildcard entry into the doubles draw, the club confirmed in a statement. She last played on the WTA Tour in September 2022 and retired from professional tennis after a third-round defeat at the US Open.

"Queen's Club feels like the perfect place to begin this next chapter. Grass has given me some of the most meaningful moments of my career, and I'm excited to be back competing on one of the sport's most iconic stages," she said.

Meanwhile, Valeria Camillo, WTA chairperson, welcomed her return. In a statement, she said, "Serena is one of the greatest athletes of all-time, with a legacy that extends far beyond the court... I cannot wait to see her face a new generation of top players."

"We are thrilled to welcome her back to the WTA Tour at this hugely exciting moment for women's tennis."

Retired after a disappointing loss last year, Serena re-entered the anti-doping pool last year, which triggered rumours of a comeback. She also dodged those questions during an interview. She was ranked the world No. 1 in women's singles by the WTA for 319 weeks (third-most of all time) and finished as the year-end No. 1 five times. Her glittering career consists of 73 WTA Tour-level singles titles, including 23 Grand Slams (singles titles). She is also the only player to manage a career Grand Slam in both singles and doubles. Serena also won 23 WTA Tour-level doubles titles, including 14 women's doubles Grand Slams, all with her sister Venus.

Earlier at Indian Wells, Novak Djokovic also hinted at her comeback. "I think she's coming back. I don't know, I haven't spoken to her, but I guess the sentiment is that she's coming back," he said.

# Relentless Aryna Sabalenka beats Naomi Osaka to reach French Open quarters

**NEW DELHI:** Aryna Sabalenka passed one of her sternest tests yet in her pursuit of a maiden French Open crown on Monday, overpowering Naomi Osaka 7-5 6-3 in a pulsating duel to power into the quarter-finals of the claycourt Grand Slam.

Playing in the first women's night-session match at Roland Garros in three years, the Belarusian recovered from a ragged opening to extend her remarkable consistency at majors, where she has reached at least the quarter-finals in her last 14 appearances.

"She is such a great player, she plays super aggressive tennis," Sabalenka said on court before delighting the crowd by showing off a playful moonwalk. "I'm happy with how I was able to put back the pressure on her. It's amazing to play the night session in front of all of you guys. "I'm super happy with my serve. I'm super pleased overall with the performance today."

Osaka, playing in the fourth round of the French Open for the first time, exploded out of the blocks and raced into a 2-0 lead after a Sabalenka double fault.

Osaka's number one responded immediately, hammering her way back into the contest with the kind of relentless power that has made



her the dominant force in women's tennis this season.

At 5-5 in the opening set, Sabalenka landed the first major blow, crushing a vicious return at Osaka's feet to snatch the break as the Japanese player dumped a backhand into the net.

In the second set, Sabalenka's weight of shot gradually suffocated Osaka. After surviving a grinding service game to level at 3-3, she produced a feather-soft half-volley winner at the end of a punishing rally to break for 4-3 and seize complete control.

She next takes on Russia's Diana Shnaider, who shrugged off a sec-

ond set blip to overcome American Madison Keys 3-6 3-6 6-0 in another stunning upset of a major champion at the claycourt Grand Slam this year. Anna Kalinskaya also continued her journey into a maiden French Open quarter-final with a 4-6 2-6 7-6(7) win over 28th seed Anastasia Potapova, marking only the second time that the Russian has entered that stage of a Grand Slam.

**MISSED OPPORTUNITIES** "I was definitely nervous," she said. "I meant like some moments when after losing my serve, at 5-5 in the third set, being 40-love up and then losing the game. I was frustrated

because I wanted to win that game and to be up in the score and have a bit of advantage to finish the match.

"When it didn't work, I was upset. But it was a very fast changeover, so I had to reset and continue to play."

Potapova missed several missed opportunities during what the Russian-born 25-year-old described as a "mental" match to kick off the day's action on Court Suzanne Lenglen.

"She played great and she held her nerve better than me in some moments," Potapova said.

"I know what I need to work on to make sure that it's not going to happen again."

The error-prone Potapova was not the only one paying a costly price, as Paraguayan Adolfo Daniel Vallejo was fined \$65,000 after suggesting female umpires lacked the courage to control rowdy crowds following his defeat on Friday.

Diane Parry, the last Frenchwoman standing at Roland Garros, was defeated 6-3 6-2 by Polish qualifier Maja Chwalaska.

Local fans had some reason to celebrate though, as Paris St Germain players Ousmane Dembele and Bradley Barcola presented their two Champions League trophies to the crowd on Monday, two days after

winning Europe's premier club competition for the second successive season with victory over Arsenal.

While Roland Garros received an injection of star power thanks to the presence of the duo, the tennis world got its own boost with news that Serena Williams will return to action next week, shifting some of the spotlight beyond Paris.

The 44-year-old American will play in the June 8-14 Queen's Club Championships after getting a doubles wildcard, with media reports in Britain saying she will partner Canadian teenager Victoria Mboko. With world number one Janik Sinner knocked out, Flavio Cobolli ensured Italian presence in the last eight by beating American Zachary Svajda 6-2 6-3 6-7(3) 7-6(5), before Mario Berrettini dined Juan Manuel Cerundolo 6-3 7-6(2) 7-6(6).

Both were joined by compatriot Matteo Arnaldi, who survived another marathon, by beating American 19th seed Frances Tiafoe 7-6(5) 6-7(5) 3-6 7-6(3) 6-4 after five hours and 26 minutes.

Canadian fourth seed Felix Auger-Aliassime dismissed Chilean Alejandro Tablo 6-3 7-5 6-1 and completed his set of Grand Slam quarter-final appearances.

## Vaibhav Sooryavanshi 'wonder kid', selectors will do 'what's in his best interest' for upcoming UK tour: BCCI secretary

**NEW DELHI:** And after two months of intense action, the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 concluded with Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) winning the tournament for the second year in a row. As in recent editions, there was no shortage of drama. Midway through the tournament, Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Devajit Saikia stepped in to issue fresh guidelines after several unwarranted incidents were reported during the 19th edition.

It all started with Rajasthan Royals manager Romi Bhinder using a mobile phone during a dugout during a match against RCB in Guwahati. A few days later, Royals captain Ryan Parag was found vaping in the dressing room. Both individuals were penalised, but Saikia went a step further, issuing an eight-page guideline document warning franchises about non-tie, honey-trapping concerns.

Workload management also became a major talking point, with several pundits debating whether players should continue representing their franchises in all 14 league-stage matches even after their teams had been eliminated from playoff contention. Yet amid all the noise, no player captured the public imagination quite like Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, who finished with the Orange Cap after amassing 776 runs.

As the dust settles on the 19th edition of the T20 tournament, Hindustan Times caught up with the BCCI secretary to discuss Sooryavanshi's rise and the challenges involved in hosting IPL 2026. The tournament got underway on schedule despite the geopolitical tensions in



West Asia arising from the conflict involving the United States, Israel and Iran. Saikia also explained why the new guidelines were introduced and answered a burning question: Is social media getting out of hand, and is real culture something to be worried about? Excerpts:

**How do you see the IPL 2026 season as a whole? There was a lot of social media chatter about the television ratings dropping and whatnot. Were you and the board concerned at any point?**

The whole tournament went off seamlessly, without any issues, unlike last year, when the tournament was suspended due to the Pahalgam attack. But this year, although at the initial stage, there was some apprehension about the ongoing Middle East crisis affecting the IPL. But that did not happen. Everything went off well. And all these social media issues are minor and have no impact on the overall IPL activities. So we are happy that the year finished.

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analysed once we get all the facts and figures. I don't think that has any impact. But that nothing to do with the IPL's overall viewership and popularity. And I'm very happy that everything went off so nicely, especially till the last day, the last league stage match. Nobody knew which teams would make the playoffs. Three teams were standing in a queue to fill up the fourth slot, but till the last match was over, nobody was sure what would happen. So that shows the competitiveness of IPL, and I'm very happy that there are very minor differences among the teams, except for one or two at the bottom of the table.

Otherwise, it was a very competitive IPL, and everyone, especially the fans, is very happy with the just-finished IPL. If you look at the crowd at the prize distribution ceremony, till yesterday, everybody was in the stadium, it was full throughout the match and the ceremony, which happened about 45 minutes after the match ended.

It shows that the intensity of the tournament, as well as the participation of the fans, either in the stands or on the television set, on various platforms, people are engaged with IPL. And that shows that IPL is growing day by day and every year it is crossing the records of the previous

year. You, as the BCCI secretary, issued an eight-page document to all the IPL franchises, warning them about the threat of honey trapping and other concerns. At what point did you realise there was a need to issue guidelines?

When our anti-corruption team found many small issues that could have blown into a major controversy later, they said we had to do something at the very beginning. We have to nip it in the bud. Therefore, once we received the status or brief report on the various violations of the IPL protocols, we issued advisories to ensure and pre-empt any foul play in the IPL movement.

So that is why we issued that, and all the teams have responded very well. Yesterday I spoke to our anti-corruption people, and they were also delighted with how that advisory acted, and it was a great addition in the overall running of the tournament, ensuring a conducive, well-structured tournament and adherence to all IPL protocols.

There were also concerns about the social media content and the prevailing reels culture during the IPL 2026 season. Were you concerned at any point? Personally, I'm not bothered because you have to go with the technology and the things that are becoming popular on various platforms over time. Nobody thought about social media or any of these things when IPL started in 2008 or thereafter for the next 12, 13 years. But now this is the trend. So we have to adjust ourselves to the trend. But that does not allow anyone to intrude into team meetings or team activities, or onto buses or into areas

## Sunil Gavaskar exposes scouting trap of IPL that burned crores of the franchisees: 'Sold them a dummy'



**NEW DELHI:** Sunil Gavaskar has warned IPL franchisees against being carried away by performance in state or city leagues, arguing that several big hitters from those competitions were exposed once they faced the highest standard of bowling in the IPL.

The former India captain said the gap between smaller T20 leagues and the IPL remains significant and franchises risk wasting money if their scouting systems are influenced by hype, agents, and isolated performances rather than repeatable skills.

"A lot of the big hitters in the various State and city leagues that have sprouted up were exposed when faced with the international quality of bowling in the IPL," Gavaskar wrote in his Sportstar column.

His criticism was aimed at the growing auction trend of franchises investing heavily in players who dominate local T20 circuits but are not always ready for the intensity, pace, variation and tactical scrutiny of the IPL. "Scouts and advisers have sold them a dummy," Gavaskar said.

GavaskarSunil Gavaskar said the standard of batting and bowling in state and city leagues is "nowhere near as good" as the IPL, and franchises must ensure their talent spotters are not swayed by players' agents or inflated performances.

"In the State and city leagues, the standard of both batting and bowling is nowhere near as good, and unless the scouts

have a discerning eye and don't get swayed by player agents, the franchises will keep picking players based on these performances and find they have wasted their money," he wrote. The sharpest part of Gavaskar's critique came when he questioned franchisees that spend crores on players but barely use them during the season. According to him, such cases reveal a deeper flaw in scouting and squad planning.

"When a franchise picks a player for crores and then doesn't play him in more than a couple of games, it's a waste of money. The franchises that spend crores on players but barely use them during the season. According to him, such cases reveal a deeper flaw in scouting and squad planning.

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## Satwik injury forces India's star doubles pair out of Indonesia Open

India's challenge in the men's doubles at the Indonesia Open suffered a setback on Wednesday as Satwiksaij Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty were forced to retire from their opening-round match due to Satwik's shoulder injury.

The world No. 4 pair were trailing 6-11 in the opening game against Malaysia's Kang Khai Xing and Aaron Tai when Satwik, who has been dealing with a recurring right shoulder problem, signalled discomfort and decided not to continue. The Indian duo subsequently conceded the match.

"The injury has troubled Satwik for some time and had also forced the pair to withdraw from the Badminton Asia Championships earlier this year.

Confirming the development, the Badminton Association of India (BAI) said, "Satwiksaij Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have withdrawn from the Indonesia Open 2026 due to the former's injury. The pair will now focus on recovery and rehabilitation as they prepare for the impor-



tant tournaments ahead. We wish Satwik a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing the duo back on court soon."

The withdrawal comes just days after Satwik and Chirag created history by becoming the first Indian men's doubles to win the Singapore Open. The duo had fought back from a game down to defeat Indonesia's Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Shohibul Fikri 18-21, 21-17, 21-18 in the final. There was better news for India in mixed doubles, where Rohan Kapoor and Rutvikga Gadde pro-

gressed to the second round with a straight-games win over world No. 20 pair Yang Po-Hsuan and Hu Ling Fang of Chinese Taipei. Earlier in the tournament, Lakshya Sen's campaign ended in the first round after the world No. 10 Indian men's doubles to win the Singapore Open. The duo had fought back from a game down to defeat Indonesia's Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Shohibul Fikri 18-21, 21-17, 21-18 in the final. There was better news for India in mixed doubles, where Rohan Kapoor and Rutvikga Gadde pro-

## United State Yoga team heads to India for first World Yogasana Championship in Ahmedabad

**NEW DELHI:** A team of Yoga athletes from the United States is heading to India to participate in the maiden World Yogasana Championship to be held in Ahmedabad from June 4 to 8. The United States Yogasana Sports Federation, in collaboration with the United States Yoga Association and World Yogasana, has announced the official Team USA delegation for the championship, according to a press release issued by Yoga Association USA.

Yoga Association USA and USNSF founder and president Balvinder Singh will lead the 11-member US contingent at the event, it said. The team, heading to India, was selected following quarterfinal trials held in Coimbatore in April. Athletes in the delegation will compete in youth and senior categories, with participants ranging in age from 10 to 65 years and above. Ahead of their departure, members of the US Yogasana team visited the Consulate General of



India in New York last week and Deputy Consul General Vishal Harsh. The Consulate wished the athletes success at the championship. The event is expected to bring together athletes, officials, and representatives from over 60 countries,

"advancing Yogasana as a globally recognised competitive sport while fostering international unity, wellness, and cultural exchange", the release said. Competitors will participate in seven official Yogasana cate-

gories, including artistic and rhythmic yoga divisions, where participants will be assessed on strength, flexibility, balance, endurance and precision under global standardised judging criteria.

The USNSF and USYA, affiliated with World Yogasana, work to promote Yogasana as a competitive sport through athlete development, national competitions, education, and international representation. The release said.

Priit Dharwal, a certified yoga instructor and member of the official USNSF delegation, said yoga is more than physical exercise.

"It is about finding peace within yourself and creating happiness from within," she said. Dharwal has spent more than two decades helping senior citizens in Bergen County, New Jersey, improve their physical, mental and emotional well-being through yoga, meditation and laughter yoga.

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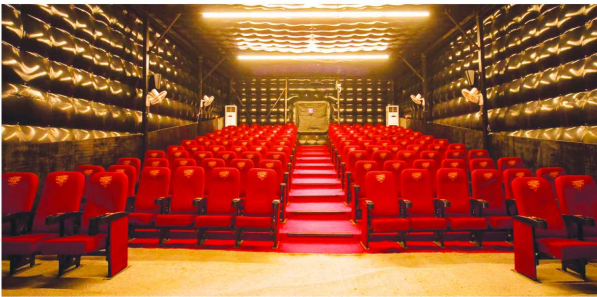




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