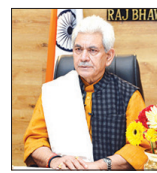


Good Morning Kashmir

17th Year Of Publication

Office of LG J&K @OfficeOfL.G.JandK



The tragic passing of young Mohammad Hanzala from Pulwama is heartbreaking. My thoughts are with grieving family during this time of immense pain. May his soul find everlasting peace, and may his loved ones be granted the strength & comfort they need to endure this profound loss.

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West Asia Crisis

Govt Keeps Fuel Prices Stable, Ramps Up LPG Supply



GMK NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI: Amid the evolving geopolitical situation in West Asia, the Government of India on Friday said it has ensured stability in key sectors including fuel supply, maritime operations and citizen safety, while stepping up coordinated response measures across ministries.

The government maintained that retail prices of petrol, diesel and domestic LPG cylinders remain unchanged despite global volatility. However, oil marketing companies (OMCs) have undertaken calibrated price revisions for select commercial and industrial products in line with international trends.

According to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, there is no shortage of fuel in the country, with all retail outlets functioning normally. Citizens have been advised against panic buying and urged to rely only on official information.

In a significant supply update, around 49.8 lakh domestic LPG cylinders were delivered against bookings of 41.6 lakh, reflecting the government's push to ensure uninterrupted household supply. Authorities said no "dry-outs" have been reported at LPG distributorships, while online bookings surged to 98 percent.

To manage demand, the government has prioritised LPG supply for households and critical sectors such as hospitals, agriculture and pharmaceuticals. Additional measures include increased refinery output, extended booking intervals and promotion of alternative fuels like PNG, kerosene and electric cooking solutions.

Strict enforcement actions are also underway to curb hoarding and black marketing. Over 2,300 raids were conducted nationwide recently, with penalties imposed on P-06

PM Modi Fulfilled Sardar Patel's Dream Of Unified India By Abrogating Art-370: LG

Says India Rediscovered Confidence, Dignity, Progress Under PM Modi

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, by abrogating Article-370 on August 5, 2019, fulfilled the "unfinished dream of Sardar Patel" and strengthened the foundation of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat'.

"By abrogating Article 370 on August 5, 2019, he (PM Modi) fulfilled the unfinished dream of Sardar Patel, strengthening the foundation of Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat," Lieutenant Governor said while speaking at the Foundation Day of Gujarat and Maharashtra at J&K Lok Bhavan, Jammu.

Lieutenant Governor said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has discovered a renewed spirit of confidence, dignity, and progress.

"Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India has discovered a renewed spirit of confidence, dignity, and progress," LG Sinha said. He said over the past 12 years, his guidance has inspired citizens to transform



resolve into action, reshaping the nation's landscape with development and determination and his tenure has marked a historic milestone, making him India's longest-serving elected Head of Government.

"Today, Indian diaspora across the world is radiating with pride, as Hon'ble Prime Minister has restored the nation's timeless prestige. A new sense of self-respect stirs

within every citizen, uniting all sections of society in the shared vision of a developed India by 2047. By abrogating Article 370 on August 5, 2019, he also fulfilled the unfinished dream of Sardar Patel, strengthening the foundation of Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat," he said.

Addressing a gathering, the Lieutenant Governor said that Gujarat and Maharashtra are growth engines of the nation

and besides massive contribution to country's GDP and exports, their social, cultural, and spiritual legacies stand unparalleled.

"Gujarat's soil is renowned for nurturing entrepreneurial spirit, zeal, simplicity, and innate warmth, while Maharashtra commands global respect for its enterprise, valor, and spiritual genius. I view both states as engines propelling India's development trajectory forward," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that Gujarat's history brims with countless sons of Bharat Mata, who elevated the nation's honor. Revered Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi transformed India's destiny through unyielding resolve, selfless dedication, and profound self-belief. He said Mahatma Gandhi gifted the nation the philosophy of truth, non-violence, selfless service, sacrifice, love, and tolerance, turning the freedom struggle into a mass movement. Lieutenant Governor P-06

GUJARAT'S SOIL IS RENOWNED FOR NURTURING ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT, ZEAL, simplicity, and innate warmth, while Maharashtra commands global respect for its enterprise, valor, and spiritual genius. I view both states as engines propelling India's development trajectory forward," the Lieutenant Governor said.

MeT Forecasts Rain, Hailstorm Across J&K Till May 5



SAJID RAJNA

SRINAGAR: The Meteorological Department on Friday said Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness a spell of rain and thundershowers between May 3 and 4, accompanied by gusty winds and possible hailstorms at a few places.

According to the evening weather bulletin accessed, May 1 was generally dry, with a brief spell of light rain at isolated places towards the afternoon. On May 2, light rain or thundershowers may occur at scattered places with gusty winds.

"Generally cloudy conditions with one or two spells of light to moderate rain/thundershowers are expected at most places on May 3 and 4, with thunder, hailstorm and gusty winds (40-50 kmph) at a few locations," the MeT department said.

Light rain or thundershowers are likely at scattered places again on May 5, while largely dry weather is expected from May 6 to 9, though brief isolated showers in the afternoon cannot be ruled out. Similar brief spells are forecast at isolated P-06

Govt To Focus On Employee Welfare, Infrastructure Upgradation: CM

Inaugurates 368 Residential Units For Government Employees In Pampore



GMK NEWS NETWORK

PAMPORE: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Friday inaugurated 368 newly constructed residential quarters for government employees at Sempora in Pampore, developed across 23 blocks at an estimated cost of 90.65 crore.

Constructed by the Estates Department, the project marks the completion of a major residential infrastructure initiative aimed at strengthening government housing facilities in the Kashmir Valley. It forms part of the government's push to

enhance employee welfare by providing modern, well-equipped residential spaces.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Pampore Justice (Retd.) Hasnain Masoodi, Additional Chief Secretary Estates Shaleen Kabra, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama Dr Basharat Qayoom, Director Estates Ashwini Khajuria, along with senior officers, engineers and other concerned officials, were present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister inaugurated the Estates Quarters and inspected P-06

India, China Offer Contrasting Styles In Dealing With Neighbours Amid Oil Crisis

IANIS

NEW DELHI: The energy crisis triggered by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz amid the Middle East conflict has also brought out the contrasting styles in which India and China deal with their neighbours in an hour of need.

When China offers energy, as it did with Taiwan, the offer arrives bundled with a political price tag attached to it. When India supplies fuel to Nepal or Sri Lanka, it does so through existing intergovernmental frameworks, with no conditions on sovereignty or political alignment, according to an article in Daily Mirror Online.

The article highlights that China's response to the crisis was swift and self-serving.

China ordered a suspension of new fuel export contracts and attempted to cancel existing shipments as global fuel markets



tightened due to the Middle Eastern war. As a result countries such as Australia, Bangladesh and the Philippines that had come to depend on fuel imports from China were left in the lurch.

With large crude stockpiles and an extensive renewable energy sector, China is better positioned to weather the energy crisis than its Asian neighbours.

But Beijing calculated that allowing scarcity to spread across the region served its interests better than relieving it, the article said.

It points out that China took advantage of the situation to arm-twist its neighbours and tried to drive hard political bargains. It offered to supply oil to Taiwan if the island nation agreed to peaceful P-06

India-UAE CEPA Driving Strong Trade Growth: Goyal

IANIS

NEW DELHI: The India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) is driving robust trade growth and creating new opportunities for Indian businesses, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday.

Four years after the implementation of CEPA, the economic relationship between India and the United Arab Emirates has witnessed significant growth across multiple sectors.

Highlighting the progress in a post on social media platform X, Goyal said the agreement has created transformational opportunities for Indian farmers, MSMEs, and businesses.

"Four years ago, when the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) came into

force, it created transformational opportunities for Indian farmers, MSMEs, and other businesses," he said.

He noted that bilateral merchandise trade between the two nations has crossed the \$100 billion mark, reflecting strong momentum since the agreement came into effect.

Services trade has also shown steady growth, helping Indian companies access new markets while enhancing value creation.

"Bilateral merchandise trade has grown strongly, crossing \$100 billion, with services trade also rising steadily and opening new markets while creating greater value," Goyal said.

He added that expansion across key sectors such as gems and jewellery, engineering goods, electronics, and agriculture is P-06

Rapid Transformation In Ladakh Since 2019, UT Remains PM's Focus: HM Shah

AGENCIES

LEH: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said Ladakh was a model of rapid transformation since the 2019 bifurcation of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, and listed sweeping political, social and economic changes in the Union territory. J&K Tourism Guide

The region has remained at the centre of Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's development agenda, he said.

Shah said Ladakh had long demanded Union territory status due to lack of development and asserted that the decision had brought visible change across sectors.

His remarks came amid renewed calls by the Leh Apex Body and the Kargil



Democratic Alliance (KDA) for resumption of talks with the Centre on statehood and inclusion under the Sixth Schedule. "Ladakh had an old demand to be made a Union

territory. The basic reason for this demand was that development was not taking place here. Now I want to tell you what has been done after it was made a Union Territory in 2019," Shah said.

He said that Ladakh has now seven districts and 193 panchayats, with five new districts — Sham, Nubra, Changthang, Zaskar and Drass — created and notifications already issued.

Shah said that local languages had also been given administrative recognition. "Earlier only Hindi and English were in use, but now Bhoti, Purgi and Urdu have also been accorded importance".

Highlighting infrastructure growth, he said road length in Ladakh has increased from about 1,799 km before 2019 to 4,040 km now. "The road constructions has almost doubled."

The Centre bifurcated the erstwhile state of J-K into two Union territories — Jammu and P-06

PDP Failed To Support Us In Rs Polls: Dr Farooq



AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Friday said he has never trusted exit polls and expressed hope that they would once again prove inaccurate. GeographicReference

"I have never trusted exit polls. Exit polls have proved wrong in the past and I hope they prove wrong this time," Abdullah told reporters.

On the FIR filed against Itija Mufti, Abdullah said he was not aware of the reasons behind it. "I don't know why it was filed. Itija Mufti must know," he said.

Referring to the increase in Hajj expenses, Abdullah said the cost has risen by around P-06

Qatar Airways Flies 7,750 Indians To India In 25 Flights: Indian Embassy



GMK NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI: The Indian Embassy in Doha informed that Qatar Airways operated 25 flights to India between the 20th and 22nd of this month, carrying around 7,750 Indian nationals. As advised by Qatar Airways earlier, flight ticket bookings can be made through the Qatar Airways website, App or through travel agents.

The advisory issued by the Embassy urged the Indian community to closely follow and abide by the guidelines and advisories issued by the authorities in Qatar. It said that the local authorities have emphasised that

adhering to the instructions of competent authorities and the security and safety teams in workplaces enhances safe behaviour inside buildings.

In view of the decision to gradually resume physical classes in educational institutions, the Indian Embassy requested to adhere to guidelines on emergency response procedures, including shelter-in-place measures within educational facilities. The Embassy also informed that the Ambassador met with a group of parents representing Indian students who are scheduled to appear for the JEE and NEET examinations. It said that it is in close coordination P-06

Crime Branch files chargesheet in job fraud case in Srinagar

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Special Crime Wing of the Crime Branch, Jammu and Kashmir, has filed a chargesheet in a multi-lakh job fraud case before a court here, officials said on Friday.

The chargesheet was presented before the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Srinagar in connection with FIR No. 09/2019 registered under various

sections related to cheating, impersonation, forgery and criminal conspiracy.

Three accused — Fayaz Ahmad Khan of Maloora Shalteng in Srinagar, Showkat Ahmad Shah of Shanzipora Handwara, and Owais Ahmad Rather of Shalteng Khwaja Bagh — have been named in the case, officials said.

The case was registered following a complaint by residents of Pulwama, who

alleged that the accused had collected lakhs of rupees on the promise of securing government jobs for their relatives.

During the investigation, it was found that the accused had allegedly posed as influential officials and issued forged appointment orders in the Forest Department, which were later found to be fake, officials said.

They said the accused

had taken money in cash from victims on the pretext of arranging “backdoor entry” into government service.

The chargesheet has been filed before the competent court for judicial determination, they added.

Police have advised the public to remain vigilant against such frauds and report any incidents to the Special Crime Wing, Crime Branch Kashmir.

Transport Fare Hike Triggers Political Face-Off in J&K

SHAMEEM BEIGH

SRINAGAR: A fresh political controversy has erupted in Jammu and Kashmir after the recent hike in transport fares, with Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma launching a strong criticism of the government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

Calling the move “anti-poor” and a setback for the middle class, Sharma said the decision has added to the daily struggles of ordinary people. He pointed out that students, daily wage earners, traders, farmers, and salaried employees—



those who depend most on public transport—are the worst affected.

According to Sharma, the fare hike comes at a time when people are

already dealing with rising prices, making everyday life more difficult. He accused the ruling Jammu and Kashmir National Conference of going back on its promises of providing relief and prioritizing public welfare.

“The government had assured people of better governance and support before elections, but decisions like these tell a different story,” he said, adding that the administration appears out of touch with ground realities.

Sharma also claimed that public dissatisfaction

is growing, with many feeling disappointed by what they see as unfulfilled commitments. He urged the government to reconsider the decision and roll back the fare hike immediately.

Reaffirming his party’s stance, he said the Bharatiya Janata Party will continue to speak out against policies that place additional burden on the public.

The issue has quickly turned into a political flashpoint, with the fare hike now at the center of a broader debate on governance and accountability in the Union Territory.

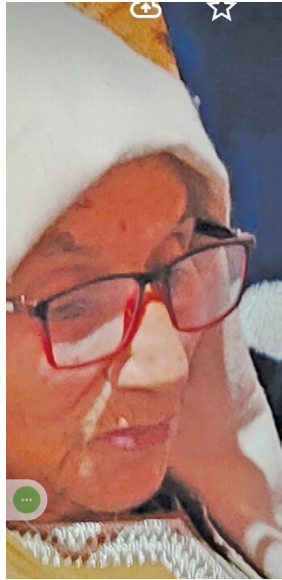
Pattan mourns its ‘mother of empowerment’, Asha Boba

LATEEF BHAT

PATTAN: Asha Begum, widely known in Pattan town of north Kashmir’s Baramulla district as Asha Boba, spiritual figure, and pioneer of the Pashmina handicraft industry, passed away on Thursday.

Family members confirmed that she breathed her last on Thursday at her residence in Pattan. The news of her death has plunged the town into grief, with hundreds of residents, including religious leaders, social activists, and artisans, gathering to visit the bereaved family.

Born into an educated family and married into a well-off household in Pattan, Asha Boba was known for her deep religiosity, bravery, and wisdom. However, it was her transformative work in economic empowerment that set her apart. She is credited with introducing and popularizing Pashmina



spinning in Pattan, a craft she single-handedly taught to thousands of women, enabling them to achieve financial independence.

“She did not just teach us a craft; she gave us dignity and a livelihood. Before her, we had no means to earn.

Today, hundreds of families survive on Pashmina spinning because of her,” said Fatima, a local artisan who trained under Begum.

Beyond her economic contributions, Asha Boba was revered for her religious and social service. She led a life inspired by Hazrat Fatima (RA) and trained women in good conduct and Islamic values. For decades, she performed the ritual washing (ghusl) of deceased women, she considered a sacred honor and trained many others in the practice.

She was also an active servant of the Jamia Masjid of Pattan and remained at the forefront of numerous social welfare activities. Residents recall her melodious voice reciting the poetry of Habba Khatoon and speaking with a divine inspiration drawn from Kashmir’s Sufi poets.

Funeral prayers for Asha Boba were held in Pattan followed by burial at the local graveyard.

Aakash signs MoUs with Army

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL) has signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the Indian Army and central paramilitary forces, including BSF, CRPF, and ITBP, to provide structured scholarships, academic mentoring, and nationwide coaching access to serving personnel, veterans, and their families, officials said.

The collaborations aim to remove financial barriers and enhance academic preparation for students aspiring to appear in competitive entrance examinations for engineering and medical courses, they added.

Under the MoUs, benefits extend to wards of martyrs, gallantry awardees, disabled personnel, and serving or retired personnel across forces.

For Indian Army families, a 100 per cent waiver on all fee components except registration fee has been announced for



wards of personnel who died while in harness. Similarly, 100 per cent tuition fee waiver is provided for wards of gallantry awardees and those with over 20 per cent disability, while serving and retired personnel’s wards will get 20 per cent tuition fee waiver.

In BSF, 100 per cent waiver on tuition and academic charges (registration fee payable) is offered for wards of personnel who lost their lives in service. Wards of gallantry awardees or those with over 20 per cent disability will receive 90 per cent tuition fee waiver, officials said.

CRPF personnel’s wards will get 100 per cent waiver on tuition and academic charges (registration fee payable) if the personnel died on duty. Those with major disability are eligible for 100 per cent tuition fee waiver, while in-service and retired personnel along with gallantry awardees will get 22 per cent tuition fee waiver, which is over and above existing scholarship schemes.

For ITBP, 100 per cent waiver on all course fees (registration and admission fees payable) is extended to wards of martyrs, death-in-harness cases, boarded-out cases, disabled

wards, and orphans. Gallantry award recipients or those with over 20 per cent disability will get 90 per cent tuition fee waiver, while serving and retired personnel’s wards will receive 20 per cent scholarship.

Addressing a function here, AESL Managing Director and CEO Chandra Sekhar Garisa Reddy said, “Anyone who has committed themselves to serving their country should have every available opportunity for their family to grow and succeed. Through these partnerships, we hope to expand access to quality academic resources and support our defence families in achieving educational success.”

Additional support includes academic mentoring, career counselling, national-level scholarship exams like ANTHE, and access to AESL and defence school facilities. The multi-year programs are structured for three to five years to ensure sustained impact. (PR)

UFM Sub Committee meeting on May 4: JKBOSE

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: The Unfair Means (UFM) Sub Committee of J&K BOSE is holding meeting on 4th May, 2026 to examine the nature of irregularities resorted to by certain candidates of Secondary School Examination (Class 10) and Higher Secondary Part-I Examination (Class 11th) Annual/Regular, 2026 of Summer zone areas of Jammu Division to dispose of the cases in accordance with the relevant regulations.

The meeting to be chaired by the Joint Secretary Secy/UFM, JD, the committee shall take up UFM cases of Class 11th and deferred UFM cases of class 10th on 4th May, 2026 at 10:30 am at JKBOSE office Rehari Colony, Jammu as per Schedule notified vide Notification No. F(UFM-B) JD/2026 dated 30-04-2026

The concerned candidates have been informed to attend the proceedings and plead their cases with the committee through evidence. For any query candidates may contact their respective JKBOSESUB/Branch Office or UFM Section at Rehari Colony, Jammu.

JKAACL pays musical tribute to Sarvanand Koul Premi



GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) organized a literary-cum-musical programme Friday here at KL Saigal Hall to commemorate the thirty-sixth death anniversary of noted scholar and poet Sarvanand Koul Premi.

Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants) J&K Dr. Arvind Karwani was the Chief Guest, while eminent historian Dr. Ratan Lal Hangloo presided over the function.

The distinguished gathering also included Padma

Shri awardee B. L. Bhat and Rajinder Premi, who shared the dais.

In his address, Dr. Karwani lauded the sustained efforts of Rajinder Premi in preserving and promoting the rich literary and cultural legacy of Sarvanand Koul Premi. He highlighted Premi’s invaluable contribution to Kashmiri literature and his role in fostering cultural harmony, describing him as a beacon of intellectual and artistic excellence.

Presiding over the function, Dr. Hangloo underscored the enduring relevance of Sarvanand Koul Premi’s works, stating

that his writings continue to inspire generations and reflect the composite cultural ethos of Jammu and Kashmir.

Scholarly papers on the life and legacy of the late litterateur were presented by Dr. Sohan Lal Koul and Er. Vinod Kumar. They offered deep insights into his literary contributions and philosophical outlook.

On the occasion, Piare Hatash, Prof. Rattan Talashi and Bal Mukand Sanyasi were honoured for their significant literary and social contributions.

A musical tribute added a vibrant dimension to the programme, with compositions by Kuldeep Sapru and soulful renditions by artists including Harshita Pandita, Shivani Joshi, Gandharv Kaloo, Shriya Gurtoo, Simran Gurtoo and Akash Kaul. The accompanying musicians included Ashish Gill on tabla, Rakesh Jasotra on flute, Rajeev on dholak, Chandan Kumar on keyboard and Sahil Jasotra on octapad.

Dir Sericulture calls for youth participation in sericulture for sustainable livelihood



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Director Sericulture, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat, Friday facilitated the distribution of silkworm seed to various districts of the Kashmir Valley, marking the commencement of the silkworm rearing season.

The event was organized by the Sericulture Development Department, J&K at the Main Grainage, Srinagar.

On the occasion, Bhat underscored the importance of ensuring the timely distribution of silkworm seed to each and every silkworm rearer. He exhorted all field functionaries to extend necessary technical guidance and

advisory support to rearers so that they do not face any difficulties during the rearing.

The Director further stated that the department has embarked upon a mission to achieve self-sufficiency in silkworm seed production adding that significant progress has already been made in this direction though much remains to be accomplished. He emphasized that the Department of Sericulture is working relentlessly not only to achieve indigenous production of silkworm seed at the local level but also to explore avenues for its export to other States and Union Territories across

the country.

Highlighting the socio-economic potential of the sector, the Director called upon the local youth to actively participate in sericulture activities to secure an honourable livelihood and support their families. He also stressed the need to attract more people towards the sericulture sector noting that it contributes to the preservation of nature, ecology and the environment while simultaneously helping steer youth away from the menace of drug abuse.

The Director was accompanied by senior officers of the department, field functionaries and silkworm rearers.

GMC Srinagar bids farewell to Retiring Employees

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar Friday accorded a warm farewell to four of its employees on the occasion of their superannuation.

On this occasion, Prof. (Dr.) Iffat Hassan Shah, Principal, Government Medical College Srinagar, felicitated the retiring officials viz. Farahat Qadir, Estate Officer; Nazir Ahmad Bhat, Senior Photographer; Syed Showkat Hussain, Lab Attendant and Mohammad Yousuf Thoker, Senior Lab Technician and conveyed her best wishes for their future endeavors. She acknowledged their long-standing and dedicated service, highlighting their significant contributions to institutional development, administrative efficiency, and the maintenance of professional standards. She further remarked that their commitment, integ-

riety, and exemplary work ethic have set a benchmark for others to follow.

Mohammad Ashraf Hakak, Administrator, Associated Hospitals, GMC Srinagar, also appreciated the invaluable services rendered by the retirees. He emphasized their role in strengthening institutional systems and supporting the delivery of quality healthcare services.

The function was attended by Prof. (Dr.) Saleem Itoo, Deputy Academic Registrar; Tahleela Asmat, Chief Accounts Officer; Dr. Nadia Khanday, Accounts Officer, Associated Hospitals; Bashir Ahmad Bhat, Personnel Officer; Shabir Ahmad, Assistant Director Planning, and other officers and officials of GMC Srinagar.

The event concluded with the presentation of mementos as a token of appreciation and gratitude for the dedicated services of the retiring employees.

ACB nabs Head Constable in trap case for taking bribe

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has arrested a Head Constable posted in Srinagar district after he was allegedly caught red-handed accepting a bribe of ₹15,000 from a complainant.

An official said that the ACB received a written complaint alleging that Head Constable Parvaiz Ahmad Rather (EXK No. 992204), posted at District Srinagar, had demanded ₹15,000 to remove the complainant’s name from the list of accused in case FIR No. 09/2026 of Police Station Soura, Srinagar.

During discreet verification by a designated officer of ACB Srinagar, the accused public servant initially

demanding ₹50,000, which was later settled at ₹15,000, the official added.

On the basis of the complaint and verification findings, an offense under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 was found prima facie established against the accused. Accordingly, FIR No. 08/2026 was registered at Police Station ACB Srinagar on May 1, 2026, and investigation was taken up.

A trap team was subsequently constituted. The Head Constable was caught red-handed while demanding and accepting the bribe — ₹5,000 in cash and ₹10,000 through a cheque — near District Police Lines Srinagar. The amount was recovered on the spot, the official said. Further investigation into the matter is underway he added.

DC Kulgam presides over training programme for Krishi Udyamis

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM: Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam presided over a day-long training programme for Krishi Udyamis of District Kulgam.

The programme was organized with the objective of enhancing entrepreneurial skills, promoting modern agricultural practices, and strengthening value addition in the farm sector.

Experts from the Agriculture and allied departments, banking sector, CSC Coordinator, and KVK Kulgam delivered comprehensive sessions on key topics including introduction of Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs), reporting, monitoring, accountability,

farmer mobilization, CSC operations, service delivery, and various government schemes supporting agri-startups.

Addressing the gathering, the DC emphasized innovation, transparency in daily reporting, and collective efforts to make agriculture a profitable enterprise. He urged Krishi Udyamis to work independently while ensuring accountability in KKG operations so that the benefits of schemes reach the last farmer.

In his address, District Agriculture Officer Kulgam, Mohammad Amin Sheikh, highlighted the pivotal role of Krishi Udyamis in operationalizing Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs) as self-sustaining farmer service hubs.

International Labour Day

JK Hotliers club Calls for Dignity, Justice, and Welfare of Workers

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: On the occasion of International Labour Day, Mushtaq chaya chairman JandK Hotliers club JKHC extended his heartfelt greetings to the hardworking labour community and acknowledged their invaluable contribution to society.

Chaya said that Labour Day serves as a powerful reminder of the dignity of labour and the relentless efforts of workers

who form the backbone of our economy. Chaya emphasized that every worker whether engaged in construction, agriculture, industry, or the service sector plays a vital role in nation-building.

Chaya stressed the urgent need to protect workers’ rights by ensuring fair wages, safe working conditions, and access to social security. “Respect, dignity, and justice for every worker must remain our collective priority,”

Chays further urged society to recognize and appreciate the dedication and resilience of labourers, especially those working under challenging conditions to support their families and contribute to overall development.

On this significant day, he called upon all stakeholders to renew their commitment to the welfare and empowerment of workers, ensuring inclusive growth and equal opportunities for all.

.....'No Order to Drop Urdu'

Omar Accuses PDP of Diverting Attention From Rajya Sabha Role

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah on Friday firmly rejected allegations that Urdu was being removed from official use, terming the charge by the Peoples Democratic Party as "propaganda" and "misleading."

Addressing reporters, Abdullah said there was no government order to drop Urdu, asserting that claims to the contrary were unfounded. He clarified that the administration had only invited public comments on a proposal, and no decision had been taken.

"We asked them to produce any order where Urdu



has been dropped. There is none. We had merely sought public feedback on a proposal," he said, adding that even if such a proposal had emerged, it had neither been approved nor would it be allowed to proceed. Sharpening his attack, Abdullah accused the PDP of raising "immaterial

issues" to deflect attention from its political conduct, particularly its stance during the Rajya Sabha process.

"They have no substantive issues. After helping the BJP in the Rajya Sabha, they are now attempting to divert attention by manufacturing a controversy

over Urdu," he said.

He further alleged that the PDP had historically facilitated the Bharatiya Janata Party's political foothold in Kashmir, even as it continued to position itself in opposition.

"They are the ones who enabled the BJP's entry into Kashmir, yet continue to claim they are resisting them," Abdullah said.

On international developments, Abdullah pointed to the ongoing tensions between the United States and Iran, warning of broader economic repercussions.

"Such conflicts inevitably impact global markets. Prices of fuel, transport, and essential commodities are likely to rise," he said. [KNT]

Dy CM reaffirms govt's commitment to workers' welfare, social security

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Commemorating the Labour Day observance, Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, Friday described the working class as the backbone of the economy. He reiterated the government's firm commitment to ensure their economic welfare and social security across Jammu and Kashmir.

In his message, the Deputy Chief Minister emphasized that workers are the driving force behind development and progress. The government remains steadfast in safeguarding their rights through effective implementation of labour laws and welfare schemes.

"Our workers are the foundation of economic growth. The government is committed towards ensuring safe working conditions, fair wages, social security and dignity of labour for every worker



across the Union Territory," he said.

Highlighting the key labour reforms, the Deputy Chief Minister referred to the introduction of reforms as comprehensive frameworks covering wages, industrial relations, occupational safety and social security.

Describing these as landmark reforms, he said, "The new Labour Codes simplify the compliance while strengthening

the protection and welfare of workers. They aim to ensure universal minimum wages, improved workplace safety, enhanced social security and robust mechanisms for dispute resolution."

"The Labour Department is actively working towards effective implementation of these reforms in Jammu and Kashmir to build a fair, transparent and worker-friendly labour ecosystem," he added.

Stressing the importance of awareness and outreach, the Deputy Chief Minister called for extensive campaigns to ensure registration of all eligible workers so they can benefit from various Central and UT-level welfare schemes.

"Maximum outreach of labour welfare schemes is essential to strengthen the economic security and improve the living standards of workers," he said.

Lt Gen Balbir Singh assumes command of Chinar Corps



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant General Balbir Singh on Friday assumed charge as the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the strategically crucial XV Corps (Chinar Corps) of Army.

On assuming the command, Chinar Corps Commander Lt Gen Balbir Singh extended his warm greetings to the 'Awaam of Kashmir'.

Chinar Corps Commander reaffirmed his commitment to work in close synergy with the Civil Administration and the Awaam to advance lasting stability and inclusive growth in the region.

He reassured his

resolve to maintain robust and coordinated partnership with civil administration, security forces and populace to further strengthen the foundation of peace, progress and prosperity across the Kashmir Valley.

"As the mantle of leadership transitions, the Chinar Corps remains an enduring emblem of unity, resilience and unwavering commitment—steadfast in its mission to ensure lasting peace, stability, nurturing rich cultural heritage and meet the aspirations of the Kashmiri youth for a brighter future & 'Viksit Kashmir'," the 15 Corps said in a post on its X handle.

CM inspects last year's flood breach site at Shalina, inspects restoration works

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Friday visited Shalina near Lasjan to inspect the site that had developed a breach during the floods in September last year.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by his

the breach site. He directed the concerned departments to ensure strengthening of embankments to prevent recurrence of such incidents.

Emphasizing the need for durable and long-term solutions, the Chief Minister instructed officials to expedite the process and



Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Pampore Justice (Retd.) Hasnain Masoodi and other concerned officers.

During the visit, the Chief Minister reviewed the ongoing repair and flood mitigation works at

ensure that permanent restoration works are completed at the earliest.

He also stressed the importance of adopting robust flood management measures to safeguard vulnerable areas and protect public infrastructure.

Gulzar Ahmad Bhat Appointed Administrator of Associated Hospitals Srinagar

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has appointed Gulzar Ahmad Bhat as the new Administrator of Associated Hospitals Srinagar.

Bhat, a JKAS officer who was previously serving as a Member of the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board, assumes charge following his transfer order issued by the General Administration Department on April 30, 2026.

He replaces Mohammad Ashraf Hakak, who has been posted as Director, Estates, Kashmir, as part of the wider bureaucratic reshuffle involving several officers across departments.

As Administrator, Bhat will oversee the functioning of Associated Hospitals linked with Government Medical College Srinagar, including major healthcare facilities such as SMHS Hospital, Lal Ded Hospital, and GB Pant Hospital Srinagar.

The role carries significant responsibility, as these hospitals form the backbone of tertiary healthcare services in the Kashmir Valley, catering to thousands of patients daily.

The appointment comes amid a broader effort by the administration to streamline governance and improve efficiency across key public service sectors, particularly healthcare.

Sakeena Itoo felicitates top performers of ALOHA GAT-2025



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo Friday felicitated the top performers and achievers of ALOHA GAT-2025 at SCERT Bemina here, organized to recognize and celebrate academic excellence and competitive spirit among students.

Director School Education Kashmir, Naseer Ahmad Wani; Director, Centre for Good Governance, IUST, Dr. G.N Itoo; Joint Director School Education (Central), CEO Srinagar, senior management of ALOHA Srinagar, large number of students and parents were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister said that this unique test is not only about intelligence but it also depicts various instincts of a student's life.

"This exam does not only show your capabilities, but it sheds light on various extents of a child or student. It strengthens mental arithmetic, analytical thinking, concentration and overall cognitive devel-

opment among students," the Minister stated.

The Minister further said that there is a lot of talent in Jammu and Kashmir among children. "For one and a half years, I am looking after education department and I would not hesitate to say that the level of talent in our children is unprecedented. They need to be given a chance and way to move forward, they will create opportunities", she said.

Congratulating the achievers, the Minister emphasized on the importance of such competitive platforms in nurturing talent at an early stage and preparing students for future academic challenges. "Activities like ALOHA GAT not only enhance numerical ability but also instil confidence, speed and accuracy, which are prime qualities essential for success in modern education systems," she said.

The Minister further said that students who in one way or other remain little behind in these kind of exams need to equally felicitated like toppers, as it is also an achievement to be able to attend an exam

and be part of it.

Sakeena Itoo reiterated the government's commitment to promoting innovative learning methods and co-curricular activities that complement formal education. She noted that the integration of skill-based assessments aligned with national and international competitive standards plays a crucial role in shaping well-rounded individuals.

The Minister further said that Government is working to make better future for our students. "There is a lot of effort from government level so that the way in which the children move forward, we can make it easier for them", she stated.

The Minister also appreciated the role of teachers, trainer and parents in guiding and motivating students to achieve excellence. She encouraged students to continue striving for higher goals and make productive use of such platforms to sharpen their abilities.

During the event, the Minister distributed certificates and mementos among meritorious students for their achievements.

Sharma calls for Youth-Led Transformation, Reiterates Commitment to Nasha Mukht J&K

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, IT, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, Friday emphasized the pivotal role of youth in shaping a progressive and prosperous Jammu & Kashmir, calling for collective action to build a drug-free society, accelerate digital growth, and position the region as one of India's premier sports destinations.

Addressing a gathering of students at the India's International Movement to Unite Nations (IIMUN) Jammu Conference, the Minister underscored that the future of Jammu & Kashmir lies in the energy, discipline, and vision of its young population. He highlighted that youth engagement remains central to the government's policy framework, with focused investments in skill development, digital empowerment, and entrepreneurship.

Reiterating the government's firm resolve to make Jammu & Kashmir Nasha Mukht, Satish Sharma said that drug abuse poses a serious threat to the social fabric and aspirations of the younger generation. He noted that while enforcement and policy measures are being strengthened, the real change must come from



within society.

"Every young individual who chooses to stay away from drugs and guides others towards a healthier path is contributing to nation-building," he said, urging students to act as ambassadors of a drug-free movement.

The Minister further outlined a comprehensive strategy involving awareness campaigns, improved access to counselling, strengthening rehabilitation infrastructure, and coordinated action with law enforcement agencies to curb drug supply chains across Jammu and Kashmir.

Highlighting the role of technology in shaping a modern Jammu & Kashmir, the Minister said the government is actively working to build a robust digital ecosystem across the region. He noted that investments are being made in IT infrastructure, innovation hubs,

and startup incubation centres to empower youth with future-ready skills.

Emphasizing digital inclusion, he said efforts are underway to expand internet connectivity, promote e-governance, and create employment opportunities in emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and data analytics. "Our aim is to make Jammu & Kashmir not just a consumer of technology, but a creator of innovation," he added.

Highlighting Jammu & Kashmir's immense sporting potential, Satish Sharma reiterated the government's vision to transform the region into a premier sports destination of the country. He said that with its unique geography and climate, J&K is ideally positioned to emerge as a hub for both winter and adventure sports, alongside nurturing excellence in mainstream disciplines.

"We are committed to

developing world-class sports infrastructure, promoting grassroots participation, and creating pathways for our youth to compete at national and international levels," he added. The Minister also stressed the importance of integrating rural and border areas into the sports development framework to ensure inclusive growth.

He further noted that initiatives under Youth Services & Sports are being aligned with broader goals of health, discipline, and social cohesion, enabling young people to channel their energies into constructive and nation-building pursuits.

Calling upon students to take a pledge for a healthier and more purposeful life, Satish Sharma said that the government will continue to act as an enabler, providing opportunities, platforms, and support systems for the youth to realize their full potential.

Fake Appointments: Crime Branch filed chargesheet against accused

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Special Crime Wing of the Crime Branch Jammu and Kashmir has filed a chargesheet in a case involving alleged fraud in the name of government jobs, naming three accused in connection with the scheme.

The chargesheet, filed before the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Srinagar, relates to FIR No. 09/2019 registered under multiple sections of the Ranbir Penal Code, including cheating, forgery, and criminal conspiracy.

Those named in the case are Fayaz Ahmad Khan of Maloora Shalteng Srinagar, Showkat Ahmad Shah of Shanzipora Handwara, and Owais Ahmad Rather of Shalteng Khwaja Bagh Srinagar.

The case traces back to a complaint by residents of Pulwama who said they were asked to pay money on the promise that government jobs would be arranged for their children and relatives.

According to the investigation, the accused allegedly presented themselves as having influence within official circles and issued appointment orders claimed to be from the Forest Department. The documents were later found to be fake during verification.

Investigators said money was taken in cash, with assurances of entry into government service through unofficial means.

With the filing of the chargesheet, the matter will now proceed before the court for further hearing and examination of evidence. [KNT]

KPDCL announces Power Shutdown

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Engineer, Distribution, KPDCL has informed that the Shutdown of 132/33 KV, 100 MVA GIS Khanyar will be observed due to which power supply to Nowshera, Raja Colony, Industrial Estate BAMK, Zaidal, Hawal, Botakadal, BSNL, Gilkadal, Kathi Darwaza, Rainawari Psychiatric Hospital, PHE, Central Jail, Saida Kadal and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 04 PM on 02 MAY 2026.

Furthermore, the Shutdown of 33 kV Shamsipora Tapline has been rescheduled and is now approved for 02 MAY from 09 AM to 3:30 PM.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information to the general public that I ISHA WANI intends to correct the name in my CBSE Senior School Examination certificate bearing roll no 2729595 and serial no. SSCE/2013/0225830 from ISHA D/o Tariq Ahmad Wani to ISHA WANI D/o Tariq Ahmad Wani as per my aadhar card bearing no. 667354970021. In this regard if anybody have any kind of objection he/she may file the same with CBSE (Delhi Public School Athwajan Srinagar) within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained afterward

Good Morning Kashmir

EDITORIAL

Politics On Urdu

The latest controversy over Urdu in Jammu and Kashmir says more about our politics than about any real policy change. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has made it clear: there is no decision to remove Urdu. What exists is only a proposal on which public feedback has been invited. Yet, the issue has quickly been turned into a political flashpoint. There is a simple distinction that is being blurred, seeking opinion is not the same as taking a decision. Governments often float ideas to hear what people think before making a final call. That is how a healthy democracy works. But when such steps are presented as final decisions, it creates unnecessary fear and confusion among people. The opposition, especially the Peoples Democratic Party, has every right to question the government. But raising alarm without clear evidence does little service to the public. It risks turning a routine administrative process into an emotional issue, particularly when it involves a language like Urdu that holds deep cultural significance in the region. Figures like Iltija Mufti have added to the debate, but the tone of the discussion shows how quickly such matters can be politicised. Instead of clarity, the public is left navigating claims and counterclaims. Urdu is not just a language in Jammu and Kashmir, it is part of the region's identity and heritage. That is precisely why it deserves careful, honest discussion, not political exaggeration. Using it to score points only shifts focus away from real issues that need attention. At a time when information spreads rapidly, responsibility lies on all sides. Politicians must speak with accuracy, and the public must be cautious about what they believe and share. In the end, this issue calls for restraint and clarity. The conversation around Urdu should bring people together through dialogue—not divide them through doubt.

PhD: Not A Degree, But A Journey Of Knowledge Creation



DR. PRIYANKA SAURABH

There are many misconceptions prevalent in society today about the PhD (Doctor of Philosophy). Some consider it merely a "degree," some consider it a means to obtain a job, while others consider it a symbol of prestige. Articles and comments periodically appear on social media, debating the usefulness, difficulty, and true meaning of a PhD. In reality, a PhD is not merely a certificate, but a continuous intellectual journey to push the boundaries of knowledge. It is not a process that ends with the writing of a thesis, but rather a continuous pursuit of research, reflection, analysis, and socially useful contributions.

The primary purpose of a PhD is not to reiterate established knowledge in a subject, but to add to it. At the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, students typically study, understand, and validate existing knowledge through examinations. However, the PhD goes beyond that point, where the researcher formulates questions, identifies problems, chooses methods, gathers evidence, and presents conclusions. In this sense, the PhD is more about "creating something new" than "learning."

Many people think that a PhD simply means submitting a lengthy thesis. This thinking is incomplete. A thesis is a written document of a long journey, completed over many years of study, fieldwork, experimentation, data analysis, critical reflection, and revision. A good thesis is not just about word count, but about originality of ideas, integrity of research, and usefulness of findings. Only if the researcher has deeply understood the problem, employed appropriate methodology, and produced unbiased conclusions is their research considered meaningful.

A PhD teaches researchers patience. Research often doesn't yield immediate results. Sometimes months of effort are thwarted, but the researcher keeps starting over. Experiments in a science lab may fail, surveys in the social sciences may not yield the expected results, and literature may be incomplete. Yet, the researcher never gives up. This persistence is what transforms them from ordinary students into researchers.

It's also true that a PhD is not just a personal achievement, but also a social



responsibility. When someone conducts research on topics related to education, agriculture, health, economics, language, environment, technology, or policy, their findings can guide society. For example, research on rural education can improve the condition of government schools; research on water conservation can help in policymaking; research on Indian languages can preserve cultural heritage. Therefore, the value of a PhD is not limited to the university campus.

However, it must also be acknowledged that the research world is currently beset by numerous challenges. In some places, the quality of research is being questioned. In some places, there is a lack of guidance, in others, a lack of resources, in others, unnecessary administrative burdens on researchers, and in others, a tendency to simply fulfill formalities. Some people consider a PhD merely a qualification for promotion or employment. This affects the essence of research. When the objective is not knowledge but only profit, research becomes superficial.

The solution to this problem lies not in criticizing PhDs, but in improving their quality. Universities must strengthen research infrastructure, providing laboratories, libraries, digital databases, financial support, and competent mentors. Researchers must receive appropriate training in writing, research methodology, ethics, and publication. Furthermore, research should be evaluated not just on page counts or formal presentations, but on actual contributions.

The role of a supervisor in a PhD is crucial. A good mentor encourages independent thinking, points out errors, provides direction, and provides mental

support. However, if guidance is weak, even a talented student can be misled. Therefore, the system for mentor selection and accountability must be strong.

In today's digital age, the nature of research is also changing. Artificial intelligence, big data, interdisciplinary studies, open access journals, online databases, and global collaboration have opened up new possibilities for PhDs. Research is no longer confined to library shelves. Indian researchers can access world-class content and communicate internationally. This is an opportunity, but it also poses the challenge of maintaining quality and originality in the face of a glut of information.

The greatest virtue of a PhD is critical thinking. The researcher questions every fact. They don't simply accept, they examine. They don't simply repeat tradition, they demand reason. This perspective is invaluable to society. Democracy, policymaking, education reform, and social discourse require trained minds that think with evidence, not emotion.

People often ask, "What does a PhD entail?" The answer goes beyond salary, position, or degree. A PhD imparts discipline, patience, writing ability, presentation skills, problem-solving abilities, and deep intellectual maturity. They learn to approach complex questions systematically. This ability is useful in every aspect of life.

Strengthening a research culture is crucial in a young country like India. If we remain mere consumers and don't generate new knowledge, we will fall behind in global competition. Indigenously research is essential in every field—technology, health, agriculture, defense, environment, language, and social policy. Therefore, making PhDs

At the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, students typically study, understand, and validate existing knowledge through examinations. However, the PhD goes beyond that point, where the researcher formulates questions, identifies problems, chooses methods, gathers evidence, and presents conclusions.

respectable, qualitative, and useful is a national imperative.

Society must also move beyond the two extremes of either honoring PhD holders by simply calling them "doctor" or ridiculing them. Not every PhD is excellent, but not every PhD is useless either. The correct approach is to evaluate research based on its contribution, integrity, and quality.

Ultimately, a PhD is a journey beyond the thesis. It begins with curiosity and doesn't end with knowledge creation, but rather a journey that continues. The thesis is not the destination, but the milestone. A true researcher never stops asking questions even after receiving the degree. They read, write, think, and contribute to improving society.

So the next time someone asks what a PhD is, the answer should be—it's not just a degree, but a test of thought; not just a thesis, but a quest for truth; not just a title, but a long-term responsibility to society and knowledge.

(Dr. Priyanka Saurabh, PhD (Political Science), is a poet and social thinker.)

Nasha Mukht Abhiyan - A Collective Duty

AZHAR NASEER

Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan is a national mission to reduce drug use and protect the future of young people. Hon'ble LG Manoj Sinha Sahib has given this mission strong direction in Jammu and Kashmir through focused campaigns and strict action. Drug abuse is not a small issue. It affects health, weakens families, and damages society. You see its impact in rising crime, poor education outcomes, and broken households. This demands clear action at every level.

You must understand how addiction starts. Many young people begin with curiosity, peer pressure, or stress. Some use substances to escape personal problems. This early stage is critical. If you act here, you can prevent long term damage. Schools and colleges play a key role. Teachers must talk openly about risks. Awareness sessions should be regular and practical. Students should learn real consequences, not just theory. Community programs must reach rural areas where awareness is often limited.

Data shows the scale of the problem. Surveys indicate millions of adolescents are exposed to substance use at an early age. This creates a cycle that continues into adulthood. You must break this cycle with early education and strong family support. Parents need to stay alert. Watch behavior changes. Notice signs like isolation, aggression, or loss of focus. Act quickly. Seek help without delay.

Government efforts under this campaign focus on prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation. More de-addiction centers are being established. Hospitals provide counselling and medical support. Trained professionals guide patients through recovery. This support system is essential. Addiction is not solved by punishment alone. It needs care, structure, and follow up. You must



encourage affected individuals to seek help without fear or shame.

Nawa e Kalam has also stepped forward to support this mission. The organization promotes awareness at the grassroots level. It engages youth, schools, and local communities. This approach is effective because real change starts from the ground. Awareness drives, counselling sessions, and direct interaction create impact. You must support such efforts in your area.

A strong network is already working. Government bodies, police, civil administration, and non government organizations are involved. Volunteers visit villages and urban areas to spread awareness. They explain the dangers of drug use and guide people toward help centers. Over 8000 youth volunteers have taken part in such efforts across India. This shows that collective action works. You can also contribute. Even small efforts can influence lives.

Rehabilitation is a key part of this mission. Identifying addicted individuals is the first step. After that, proper treatment must follow. Rehabilitation centers provide medical care and counselling. They help patients rebuild confidence and return to normal life. You

must treat recovering individuals with respect. Social support improves recovery rates. Isolation can push them back into addiction.

Technology also supports this mission. Government platforms provide information about treatment centers and support services. Geo location tools help identify affected areas. This allows quick response and better planning. You can use these tools to find help for someone in need. Access to correct information reduces delay and confusion.

Prevention remains the most effective strategy. You must focus on awareness and education. Schools should include life skills training. Students must learn how to handle stress, peer pressure, and failure. Sports and creative activities can keep youth engaged. Productive use of time reduces risk. Communities should organize events that promote healthy lifestyles.

Law enforcement also plays a role. Strict action against drug suppliers is necessary. Breaking supply chains reduces availability. This protects vulnerable groups. However, enforcement alone is not enough. It must work with awareness and rehabilitation. A balanced approach gives better results.

This early stage is critical. If you act here, you can prevent long term damage. Schools and colleges play a key role. Teachers must talk openly about risks.

Your role matters. This campaign is not limited to the government. It needs support from every citizen. Parents, teachers, leaders, and youth must act together. You can start by spreading awareness in your circle. Talk openly about the issue. Guide someone who needs help. Support local initiatives. Stay informed and alert.

Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan aims to create a healthy and safe society. It focuses on building a future where young people grow without addiction. This goal is achievable with consistent effort. You must replace silence with action. You must replace ignorance with awareness.

A drug free India is possible. It requires discipline, unity, and commitment. Every step counts. Every effort matters. You have a role in this mission. Act now. Protect your community. Secure the future.

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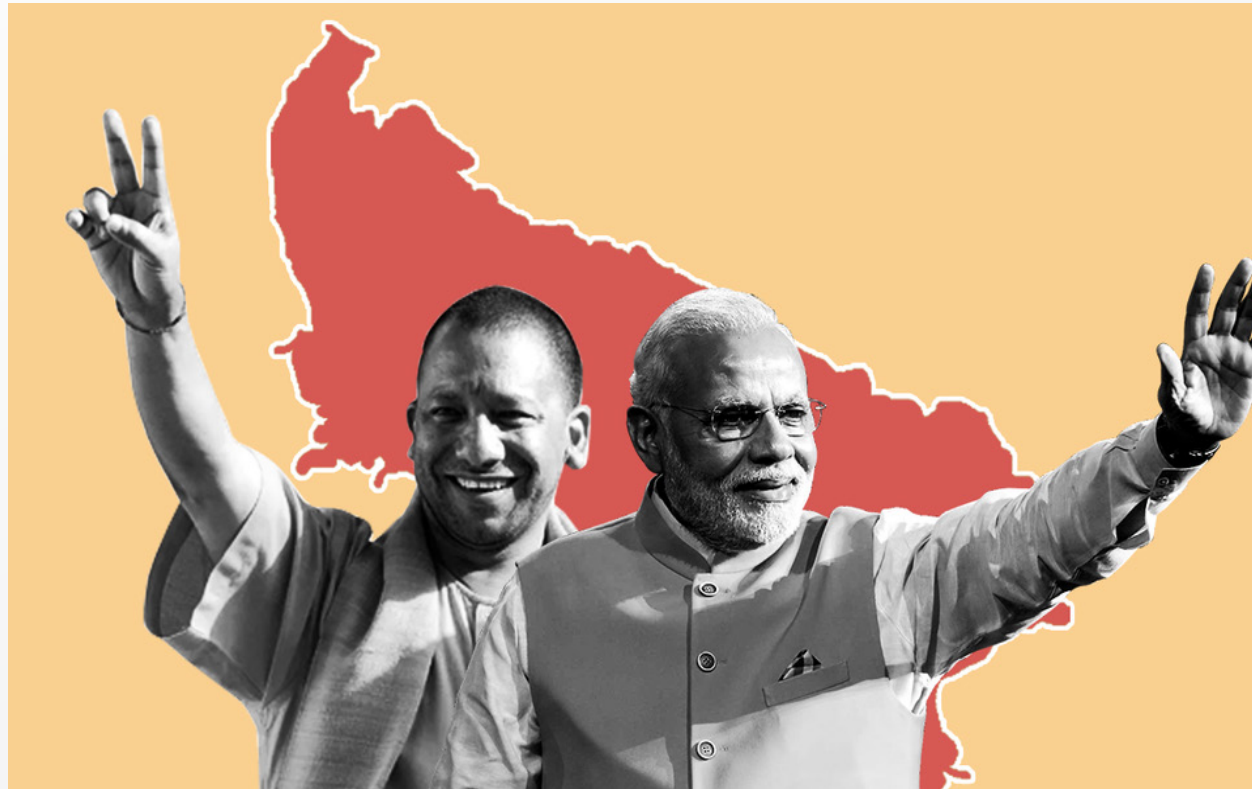
Modi's Three-Tier Strategy To Conquer Uttar Pradesh In 2027



AJAY KUMAR

After the assembly elections in five states, the BJP high command has shifted its focus to Uttar Pradesh. On one hand, while the final phase of voting in West Bengal was underway, while on the other, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was, at the same time, setting the agenda for the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections from his parliamentary constituency, Varanasi. This time, the BJP aims to win Uttar Pradesh through Hindutva, women's reservation, and development, while also highlighting strong law and order and the establishment of a fear-free society. A glimpse of this was seen in Varanasi when, on April 28, PM Modi visited the Kashi Vishwanath Temple to offer prayers to Baba Vishwanath. A day earlier, he interacted with 50,000 women on the issue of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (Women's Reservation). By blaming Congress and the Samajwadi Party for the delay in implementing women's reservation, the BJP signaled its strong reliance on the state's female population. On the same day, April 28, the Prime Minister also inaugurated a nearly 600-kilometer-long expressway from Prayagraj to Meerut from Hardoi and dedicated it to the public. This indicates that the BJP is trying to appeal to followers of Sanatan Dharma through temples, attract youth and the people of western Uttar Pradesh through expressways, and win over women by emphasizing reservation.

A notable aspect of the Prime Minister's visit was that while Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was naturally present alongside him, the presence of BJP's national president Nitin Naveen with Modi in Varanasi also drew attention. A deeper analysis of these developments clearly shows that the BJP will enter the political battlefield of Uttar Pradesh armed with religious faith, symbols of development, and women's empowerment. In fact, PM Modi's visit to the Kashi Vishwanath Temple was not merely a religious trip, but a reflection of the BJP's core strategy. The party has always considered Kashi its stronghold. Modi's massive victories from Varanasi in the 2014



and 2019 Lok Sabha elections stand as proof. After the redevelopment of the temple, it has become a center of Hindu nationalism. During the two-day visit, through offering prayers to Baba Vishwanath, the Prime Minister conveyed a message to followers of Sanatan Dharma that the BJP alone will protect their faith. One may recall that the inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya was also part of this strategy, which significantly benefited the party in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

In Uttar Pradesh, where the number of Hindu voters is substantial, the temple issue has always been influential. Opposition parties like the Samajwadi Party and Congress attempt to dismiss it as communal, but public sentiment cannot be ignored. Through this visit, the BJP once again demonstrated that it is the custodian of Sanatan culture. Especially in eastern Uttar Pradesh, where lakhs of Ram and Shiva devotees reside, this visit has effectively sounded the bugle for the 2027 elections. The presence of Yogi Adityanath further strengthened this message. Yogi, established as a Sanatan saint himself, has consistently centered his politics around religious issues from Gorakhpur to Varanasi. This time, the presence of the BJP president alongside Modi signaled organizational unity, conveying that both the central and state leadership are aligned.

The second major highlight of

the Prime Minister's visit was his interaction with 50,000 women on the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam. He described the women's reservation bill passed in Parliament as a historic step toward women's empowerment. However, he clearly stated that its delay in implementation is due to Congress and the Samajwadi Party. Although the promise of reserving one-third seats for women in Parliament and state assemblies has now become law, it cannot be implemented without caste census and delimitation. Modi accused opposition parties of deliberately stalling it to deny women their rights. This is a tactically sharp move, but Modi has consistently asserted that he will ensure its implementation.

Women constitute nearly half of the voters in Uttar Pradesh. In the 2022 Assembly elections, women significantly supported the BJP, especially in cities like Lucknow, Kanpur, and Saharanpur. Now, in 2027, the party is directly targeting this demographic. The presence of 50,000 women at the Nari Shakti Vandan event is evidence of this strategy. Modi appealed to women to teach the opposition a lesson. This issue gains traction as the Samajwadi Party is often accused of dynastic politics, while Congress is perceived as indifferent to women's concerns. The BJP has already built trust among women through initiatives like the Ujjwala Yojana, Beti

Bachao Beti Padhao, and the abolition of triple talaq. Now, it aims to further consolidate this support through women's reservation. The Yogi government's initiatives such as women's helplines and Sakhi centers also contribute in this direction. In the presence of the BJP president, Modi indicated that the organization would be mobilized through the Mahila Morcha. Overall, this marks the starting point of the BJP's women-centric strategy.

Meanwhile, by inaugurating the expressway from Prayagraj to Meerut, Modi is strongly projecting development as a key electoral issue in Uttar Pradesh. This expressway, approximately 600 kilometers long, passes through Hardoi, Shahjahanpur, Bareilly, Moradabad, and Bijnor before reaching Meerut. While inaugurating it, the Prime Minister said it would bring employment opportunities for youth and better market access for farmers. Western Uttar Pradesh has always been a challenging region for the BJP, where Jat, Muslim, and Dalit voters play a decisive role. Although the party faced setbacks here in the 2022 elections, it made a recovery in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. The expressway is expected to strengthen connectivity in this region. It will also connect with the Delhi-Meerut Expressway, facilitating faster movement of trucks and cargo. For the youth seeking jobs and business

During the two-day visit, through offering prayers to Baba Vishwanath, the Prime Minister conveyed a message to followers of Sanatan Dharma that the BJP alone will protect their faith. One may recall that the inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya was also part of this strategy, which significantly benefited the party in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

opportunities, this presents a golden opportunity. The BJP understands that tangible symbols of development bring votes. The Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor, Ganga Expressway, and now this expressway are all steps toward making Uttar Pradesh a development hub. The opposition may call it rhetoric, but the work is visible on the ground. The choice of Hardoi for the inauguration is significant, as it has been considered a stronghold of Akhilesh Yadav. By sending a message from here, the BJP is directly challenging the Samajwadi Party. During the inauguration, Yogi Adityanath stated that under Modi's leadership, Uttar Pradesh is progressing rapidly. On this occasion, Governor Anandiben Patel, BJP state president Pankaj Chaudhary, Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak, among other leaders, were also present. This expressway will not only attract western Uttar Pradesh but also serve as a model of development for the entire state.

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Book Review

From Nothingness To Divine Reality

SHAHNAWAZ NAZIR

In an age where the boundaries between science and spirituality are often seen as distant or even conflicting, this remarkable work emerges as a deeply thoughtful and visionary attempt to unite them. Spanning a wide range of themes, from the origins of the universe to the depths of human consciousness, the book presents a rich and immersive exploration of existence, guided by a powerful central metaphor: the onion, symbolizing the layered nature of reality.

From its very beginning, the book invites the reader into a profound contemplation of "nothingness." Rather than treating nothingness as mere emptiness, the author presents it as a fertile, living potential, the unseen origin from which all existence unfolds. This perspective is both philosophically engaging and spiritually resonant, echoing timeless insights found in mystical traditions while offering a fresh interpretive voice. The transition from nothingness to creation is described with a sense of wonder, encouraging readers to rethink the very foundations of reality.

One of the most compelling aspects of the book is its seamless movement between scientific insight and spiritual reflection. The early chapters explore the formation of the universe, touching upon nucleosynthesis, the birth of stars, and the emergence of galaxies. These discussions are presented in a way that is both accessible and meaningful, allowing readers from diverse backgrounds to engage with complex ideas. Rather than overwhelming the reader with technicalities, the author uses science as a doorway into deeper philosophical inquiry, transforming



facts into reflections.

At the heart of the book lies the "onion analogy," a beautifully sustained metaphor that gives structure and depth to the entire narrative. Each layer represents a different dimension of existence, physical, emotional, intellectual, intuitive, and ultimately spiritual. As the reader metaphorically "peels" these layers, a powerful realization emerges: that the essence of existence is not found on the surface, but within. This idea is handled with remarkable sensitivity and insight, making it one of the most memorable contributions of the work.

The inclusion of poetic verses and references to revered spiritual figures such as Abdul Wahab Khaar and Qadir Sahib Kehni adds a unique richness to the text. These elements ground the book in a living spiritual tradition, particularly within the Sufi heritage

of Kashmir, and provide moments of deep emotional resonance. The poetry does not merely decorate the narrative; it deepens it, offering glimpses into truths that transcend ordinary language.

As the book progresses, it expands its scope to include the inner dimensions of human experience. Chapters on consciousness, intuition, and the "pregnant emptiness" invite the reader into a more introspective space. Here, the writing becomes almost meditative, encouraging not just intellectual understanding but personal reflection. The concept of the human being as a "mirror of the universe" is especially powerful, suggesting that the journey outward into the cosmos is inseparable from the journey inward into the self.

The later sections of the book are particularly valuable for read-

ers seeking practical transformation. By introducing concepts such as non-resistance, shadow work, and conscious living, the author moves from theory to lived experience. The inclusion of reflective practices like "Observing Emergence" and "Sacred Ordinary" provides readers with tools to engage with the ideas on a personal level. These practices gently guide the reader toward a more mindful and integrated way of living, making the book not just a philosophical text but a companion for inner growth.

One of the standout features of the work is its ability to reinterpret traditional concepts in a way that feels both respectful and innovative. The exploration of symbolic ideas, such as the movement beyond cycles of limitation and the awakening of higher consciousness, reflects a deep engagement with spiritual teachings while

opening new avenues for understanding. This interpretive courage gives the book a distinctive voice, one that honors tradition while speaking to the present moment.

Stylistically, the writing flows between clarity and poetic depth. The author demonstrates an impressive ability to articulate complex ideas in language that is both evocative and accessible. At times, the prose takes on a lyrical quality, inviting the reader to pause and reflect rather than rush forward. This rhythm enhances the reading experience, making it not just informative but contemplative.

What ultimately sets this book apart is its unifying vision. It does not treat science, philosophy, and spirituality as separate domains, but as interconnected expressions of a single reality. The universe is presented not as a cold, mechanical system, but as a living, unfolding mystery, one that is intimately connected to human awareness. The idea that creation is a continuous unveiling, rather than a finished event, offers a deeply hopeful and dynamic perspective on existence.

In conclusion, this book stands as a significant and inspiring contribution to contemporary spiritual literature. It challenges the reader to think deeply, feel profoundly, and explore courageously. With its rich blend of scientific curiosity, philosophical depth, and spiritual wisdom, it offers a journey that is as enlightening as it is transformative. For those willing to engage with its layers, the book reveals not only the nature of the universe but also the hidden dimensions of the self.

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Kashmiri Pandit Community celebrates Ganesh Chaturthi in Sogam

GMK NEWS NETWORK

Kupwara: Kashmiri Pandit community celebrated Ganesh Chaturthi in Sogam, Lolab Valley, after more than 35 years marking a significant step in the restoration of religious and cultural practices in the region. The programme was organized by Sanatan Sabha Sogam with active support

from the District Administration, Kupwara and Kupwara Police. Several hundred devotees visited temple complex Sogam and performed puja with deep devotion and sanctity, creating a spiritually charged and festive atmosphere. Sub-divisional Administration headed by SDM Lolab ensured adequate

arrangements for Ganesh Chaturthi. Local residents supported the event by assisting in arrangements, reflecting a renewed sense of communal harmony. Deputy Commissioner Kupwara termed the revival of the Ganesh Chaturthi Mela an important step. He visited Sogam Temple and interacted with the community. Necessary steps being

taken by administration to improve sanitation and renovation of temple area. Members of the Pandit community described the occasion as emotional and symbolic of reconnecting with their ancestral roots and expressed appreciation for support given by Administration and police for smooth conduct of Ganesh Chaturthi Mela.

8th CPC to visit Srinagar from June 1-4

GMK NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar: The 8th Central Pay Commission (CPC) is scheduled to visit Srinagar Jammu & Kashmir, from June 1 to June 4, 2026 (Monday to Thursday). A notice issued by Director 8th CPC in this regard reads, "Concerned stakeholders including Organizations/Institutions of Central Government

as well as Jammu & Kashmir (UT) and Unions/Associations desirous of interacting with the Commission at Srinagar may kindly submit memorandum at Commission's website (https://8cpc.gov.in) and thereafter, submit their request seeking an appointment vide https://nicforms.nic.in/enRhYmxINjlmMzRlYzYlMjkYNTIwMjYwNDMwODE=, on or before 16th May, 2026,

along with 'unique memo Id' generated after submitting memorandum". The Notice adds that details regarding the venue and meeting schedule will be communicated to the applicants at a later stage. It is further reads that the Commission will hold similar meetings in other cities across various States and Union Territories in due course.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Govt Keeps Fuel

hundreds of LPG distributors and several suspensions ordered. On the natural gas front, the government reported full supply to domestic PNG and transport CNG segments, alongside accelerated expansion of PNG infrastructure. Since March, over 5.8 lakh new PNG connections have been activated as part of efforts to shift consumers toward cleaner energy. Providing relief to consumers amid rising crude prices, the Centre has reduced excise duty on petrol and diesel by 10 per litre and lowered export levies on diesel and aviation turbine fuel. The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways said maritime operations remain unaffected, with no incidents involving Indian-flagged vessels reported in the past 24 hours. The DG Shipping control room has handled 8,268 calls and over 17,694 emails since activation, assisting seafarers and their families. So far, more than 2,892 Indian seafarers have been safely repatriated. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) continues to monitor the situation closely, maintaining round-the-clock helplines and coordinating with Indian missions abroad. In Iran, the Indian Embassy in Tehran has facilitated the evacuation of 2,490 Indian nationals via land border routes, as authorities advised citizens to avoid travel to the country and encouraged those present to leave using available options. Flight operations across parts of the Gulf are gradually stabilising, with limited services resuming from countries such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain. The government reiterated that ensuring the safety of Indian nationals and maintaining energy security remain top priorities as the West Asia situation continues to evolve.

PM Modi Fulfilled

also observed that Gandhiji's life inspires us to stand firm by our principles amid any adversity. The Lieutenant Governor stated that India's pride as the world's largest democracy is deeply rooted in the vision and ideals of Sardar Patel. "His unwavering belief in unity amidst diversity stands as our greatest achievement, a testament to his resolute commitment to 'Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat.'" The strength we draw from weaving together our traditions, cultures, and heritage into the fabric of progress is a living reflection of Sardar Patel's steadfast determination and enduring legacy," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor said Maharashtra is the land of industries, spirituality, selfless-service and sacrifice. He said icons like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Peshwa Bajirao, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar devoted themselves to Mother India and for the cause of national unity. "At every sacred pilgrimage across India, the name of Ahilyabai Holkar resounds. Her vision and devotion breathed new life into the nation's spiritual traditions and carried them forward with renewed strength," the Lieutenant Governor said, adding that today, Indian diaspora across the world is radiating with pride, as Hon'ble Prime Minister has restored the nation's timeless prestige. A new sense of self-respect stirs within every citizen, uniting all sections of society in the shared vision of a developed India by 2047.

MeT Forecasts Rain,

places on May 10 and 11. The MeT has issued an advisory asking farmers to suspend farm oper-

ations between May 3 and 5 due to the likelihood of adverse weather. Meanwhile, temperatures across the Union Territory showed a mixed trend. Srinagar recorded a maximum of 25.7°C, 3 degrees above normal, while the minimum settled at 10.2°C. Qazigund registered a high of 25.0°C and a low of 9.1°C. Pahalgam recorded 19.6°C as the day temperature and 5.4°C at night, while Kupwara saw a high of 24.4°C and a low of 8.5°C. Gulmarg remained cooler at 14.4°C maximum and 3.0°C minimum. In the Jammu division, the winter capital recorded a maximum of 34.5°C, slightly below normal, and a minimum of 20.7°C. Katra registered 30.5°C and 18.0°C, while Banihal recorded 24.8°C and 9.6°C. Baderwah saw temperatures of 25.0°C and 6.8°C, the data showed. Rainfall remained negligible at most stations during the day, with some areas like Pahalgam receiving light precipitation in the past 24 hours—(KNO)

Govt To Focus On

the newly constructed residential flats, including 2BHK and 3BHK units. He also visited the canteen and mess facilities and was briefed by senior officers of the Estates Department on upcoming and proposed housing projects. With its completion, the quarters are expected to significantly enhance the availability of accommodation for government employees and help ease long-standing shortage. The project assumes added significance in view of the restoration of the annual Darbar Move by the present government, which has revived the need for adequate residential facilities for employees relocating between Jammu and Srinagar. The residential quarters will particularly benefit a large section of Darbar Move employees, many of whom have faced persistent challenges in securing suitable accommodation for their families over the years. The availability of these units is expected to reduce dependence on private housing and improve overall working conditions by ensuring stability and convenience. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister reiterated his government's commitment to providing suitable family accommodation to employees. He said that strengthening employee welfare remains a key governance priority, and that efforts are underway to further augment residential infrastructure in a phased manner across Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized that residential accommodation plays a crucial role in enhancing productivity and morale among government employees, adding that the government will continue to invest in infrastructure that directly impacts their well-being. Highlighting the importance of efficient project management, the Chief Minister stressed the need for timely execution of public infrastructure works. He directed the concerned departments to ensure optimal utilization and proper maintenance of the newly created facilities so that they continue to serve employees effectively in years to come.

India, China Offer

reunification, with mainland China. However, Taiwan rejected the proposal straightaway. The article highlights that India's behaviour under the same circumstances was markedly different. Rather than pulling back, India supplied around 38,000 metric tonnes of fuel to Sri Lanka, addressing a significant portion of its immediate require-

ment. Fuel deliveries to Nepal and Bhutan, both of which are entirely dependent on India, continued without interruption. Similarly, additional diesel shipments were delivered to Bangladesh, with more supplies assured through the cross-border pipeline route. "These were not isolated gestures made for political optics. They reflected a consistent pattern of supply rooted in India's broader 'Neighbourhood First' doctrine, which was now being tested under genuine crisis conditions," the article noted.

India-UAE CEPA

delivering tangible gains. He also noted that rising foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows from the UAE, along with increased overseas investments by Indian firms, reflect deepening economic ties. According to the minister, these gains are translating into real benefits for exporters and entrepreneurs, strengthening India's position in global trade. Earlier in the day, Goyal also held a virtual meeting with UK Secretary of State for Business and Trade, Peter Kyle, to further strengthen bilateral trade and investment ties. Both sides explored ways to enhance economic cooperation while leveraging the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), the minister said.

Rapid Transformation

Kashmir and Ladakh – on August 5, 2019, when it also abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution that gave special status to the erstwhile state. Shah said that the number of bridges has risen from 19 to 72 increasing the number by three times. Spelling out development in other sectors, he said that mobile towers have increased from 344 to 653, while helipads have gone up from seven to 41, he said. "Snow-clearing machines, crucial for the region, have increased from 60 to 215." On power infrastructure, Shah said grid-related works have increased from 145 to 184, while distribution transformers have gone up from 1,182 to 3,153. "I am giving these figures on this scale because after becoming a Union Territory, it (Ladakh) has remained the focus of the Narendra Modi government, the focus of the prime minister of the country, and so many development works have taken place together," the minister said. He said the impact of better infrastructure was visible in road connectivity, with the Zojila Pass, which earlier remained shut for 127 days, remaining closed for only 19 days this year. "The Kargil-Leh road, which earlier remained closed for nearly 175 days, was shut for only 11 days." Shah said work on the Zojila tunnel is in progress, construction of the Shinkun La tunnel has started and a new civil airport is also coming up. He said that VSAT connectivity has been extended to all panchayats and major work has been undertaken to upgrade telecom towers. In the education sector, Shah said Sindh Central University has been established, 174 ICT labs set up, 130 smart classrooms created, 40 science laboratories built and 24 Atal Tinkering Labs established. He said Ladakh became a fully literate administrative unit in 2024 and claimed there was no illiterate person left in the region. "Nearly 98 per cent households have been provided tap water connections under the Har Ghar Jal scheme, while substantial work has also been carried out in agriculture and horticul-

ture," he said. Shah said Ladakh's budget has risen from Rs 1,000 crore when it was part of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state to Rs 6,000 crore now. He also announced the formation of the Sindh Infrastructure Development Corporation, saying it would play an important role in promoting industrial growth in the coming years. "We want this border region to become self-reliant," Shah said. He asserted that development in the UT is because of the vision of the prime minister.(PTI)

PDP Failed To Support

Rs 10,000 due to rising fuel prices amid the ongoing global crisis. "Haji Saheb is very worried. Because of the crisis, fuel prices have increased and so has the cost. There is nothing we can do about it," he said. He said people are praying for peace as rising costs continue to affect pilgrims. "We have asked God to bring peace so that we can get rid of these problems," he added. On India-Pakistan relations, Abdullah reiterated that dialogue is necessary for peace but declined to comment further in view of the evolving situation. "This is about both countries. We have to think about both. I cannot say anything more," he said. On the Rajya Sabha elections, he said the Peoples Democratic Party did not support his party. "They did not vote for us. Ask them who they voted for. Only God knows," he said. Reacting to reports regarding Urdu in the revenue department, Abdullah dismissed them as incorrect. "Nothing has been decided. People have been asked for their opinion. Urdu is our language and it will not end in Jammu and Kashmir," he said. Jammu-Kashmir travel Hitting out at opposition parties, Abdullah accused them of being responsible for the region's past problems. "They have nothing else to say. They are responsible for the destruction here. Those shedding tears today should not be forgotten," he said. (KNS)

Qatar Airways Flies

with the National Testing Agency in India and will keep all concerned informed about further developments and updates. The Embassy continues to operate its Control Room along with helplines, email and WhatsApp services to address queries and concerns of the Indian community members.

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Bengal BJP candidates welcome re-polling, urge EC to include more booths

IAN S

KOLKATA: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidates on Friday welcomed the Election Commission's decision to conduct re-polling at 15 polling booths in two Assembly constituencies, Magrahat (Paschim) and Diamond Harbour, both in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal.

Following complaints of "tampering" of the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) button besides the name and symbol of the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate from Falta, the Election Commission of India had ordered a thorough investigation into the matter.

Hailing the move, BJP candidate from Bhabanipur and Nandigram constituencies, Suvendu Adhikari said: "The decision for Magrahat West is welcome, but in Diamond Harbour, it should happen in more booths."

"There, it's only happening in four booths. Repolls should be held in the entire Falta segment, or it should happen in at least 60 booths," he told reporters.

On being asked that the repolling order has not come for the Falta constituency, Adhikari said:



"They (Election Commission) must be thinking something. There are some procedures, such as CCTV footage, observer's report, and presiding officer's handbook."

"There are certain systems, and they are doing according to them. We fully respect the Election Commission. We do not talk like the way (Chief Minister) Mamata Banerjee does," he said.

BJP candidate from Noapara Assembly constituency, Arjun Singh,

also asserted that the re-polling decision is correct. "The way EVM tampering was done and if even a single person is unable to cast his or her vote, it is the Election Commission's responsibility to conduct voting again," he said.

However, Trinamool Congress leader Kunal Ghosh disapproved of the re-polling and alleged that the process is being demanded "forcefully".

He said, "Whatever they want to do, it's not right. There was peaceful voting.

They are demanding a repoll forcefully."

Ghosh claimed that in whichever booth re-polling will take place, "Trinamool Congress will win with a big majority".

Of the 15 polling booths where re-polling will be held on Saturday, 11 are in Magrahat (Paschim), and four are in Diamond Harbour. Polling in both these Assembly constituencies was conducted in the second phase of the two-phase Assembly elections in West Bengal on April 29.

Over 49.8 lakh LPG cylinders delivered in a day, fresh bookings at 41.6 lakh

IAN S

NEW DELHI: More than 49.8 lakh domestic Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinders were delivered on April 30, while fresh bookings were recorded for 41.6 lakh cylinders, as the supply of cooking gas remains normal in the country, with no dry-outs reported at retail distributors despite the supply chain disruption due to the Middle East conflict.

Online domestic Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinder bookings have increased to 98 per cent, while authentication code-based deliveries to the registered mobile number of the consumer have increased to around 93 per cent to prevent diversion at the distributor level.

Retail prices of petrol and diesel remain unchanged despite the global spike in oil prices, and adequate stocks of both fuels are available at all petrol pumps across the country.

However, oil marketing companies are undertaking calibrated price revisions aligned with prevailing international trends for a small set of products catering primarily to commercial and industrial segments, such as jet fuel and commercial Liquefied Petroleum Gas, the statement said.



Meanwhile, enforcement actions continue across the country to curb hoarding and black marketing of Liquefied Petroleum Gas. More than 2,300 raids were conducted across the country on Thursday.

Public sector oil companies have strengthened and continued surprise inspections, imposing penalties on 342 Liquefied Petroleum Gas distributors, and 73 have been suspended so far.

Show-cause notices were issued to 46 Liquefied Petroleum Gas distributors on Thursday, and penalties were imposed on six distributors, while one was suspended.

The supply of cooking gas remains normal, with no dry-outs reported at retail distributors.

Over 43,200 Piped Natural Gas consumers have surrendered their Liquefied Petroleum Gas connections via MYPNGD on the website till Thursday, helping ease pressure on Liquefied Petroleum Gas demand.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas further stated that it is taking steps to ensure the uninterrupted availability of petroleum products and Liquefied Petroleum Gas across the country, in the context of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Citizens are advised to avoid panic buying of petrol, diesel, and Liquefied Petroleum Gas, and to beware of rumours and rely on official sources for accurate information. Liquefied Petroleum Gas consumers are requested to use digital booking platforms and avoid visiting distributors.

All refineries are operating at high capacity with adequate crude inventories, while sufficient stocks of petrol and diesel are being maintained. Local Liquefied Petroleum Gas production from refineries has been increased to support domestic consumption, the statement added.

'Technology reshaping justice', says CJI as Sikkim becomes India's first paperless judiciary

IAN S

GANGTOK: Sikkim on Friday officially declared the country's first paperless judiciary, marking a major milestone in India's judicial digitalisation drive. The formal declaration was made by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant during a conclave in Gangtok, attended by judges, legal experts, advocates, and policymakers from across the country.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Justice of India said access to justice in remote and difficult terrains was undergoing a fundamental transformation through technology. He noted that for litigants in the past, distance was measured not in kilometres but in days of travel, uncertainty, and hardship.

With the rise of digital systems, citizens are now directly connected to judicial forums, reducing procedural delays and reliance on physical paperwork.

The two-day conclave, organised by the High Court of Sikkim and the Sikkim Judicial Academy, is centred on the theme "Technology and Judicial Education". Discussions are focusing on the future of digital courts, capacity building, and modernisation of judicial institutions.

Speaking at the event, Supreme Court Judge J.K.



Maheshwari described the declaration as a remarkable achievement. He said a paperless judiciary does not replace human judgment but removes barriers such as misplaced files, physical distance, and procedural inconvenience.

According to him, the true purpose of technology in justice delivery is to eliminate obstacles between citizens and the courts.

President of the Bar Association of Sikkim, Tashi Rapden Barphungpa, termed the development a landmark moment for the Himalayan state. He said it was historic that a small state like Sikkim had set an example for the rest of the country by becoming the first to adopt a paperless judiciary.

He recalled that there had been initial hesitation among members of the Bar when the electronic court system was introduced. However, as lawyers gradually adapted to the new system and experienced

improved efficiency, most concerns subsided.

Barphungpa said the initiative would significantly enhance transparency and accessibility, especially in a state like Sikkim, where travel is often disrupted by landslides and adverse weather during the monsoon.

Digital filing and virtual appearances, he said, would allow lawyers and litigants to participate in proceedings from their homes or offices.

Senior Advocate of the High Court of Sikkim, Jorgay Namka, said the recognition was a matter of pride and an opportunity for the state. He credited the achievement to sustained cooperation among the judiciary, advocates, and the state government.

US Navy's blockade of Iran hits China's cheap oil deals: Report

IAN S

NEW DELHI: The US Navy's blockade of Iran has built economic pressure on Tehran that continues even though the ceasefire has led to a temporary pause in fighting, according to a new report.

The blockade has also hit China's purchases of Iran's oil, at discounted prices, deals for which were being carried out through a covert financial system and a fleet of ghost tankers.

According to an article in Sky News Australia, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has sustained itself through shell companies, rotating ship identities, and shadow banking corridors that kept oil revenue flowing outside the formal financial system.

The article highlights that earlier, the US kept targeting individual aspects of this covert system put in place by China and Iran to circumvent western sanctions. However, this time around, the US is aiming to dismantle the entire network that in the past has managed to survive the limited action.

It points out that earlier, this clandestine ecosystem survived as China built the infrastructure to sustain it. This included a shadow banking network which concealed the origin of Iranian crude oil, rotating ship identities, and layering pay-



ments through third-country intermediaries.

China's "teapot refinery" sector, comprising small coastal refineries, processed most of Iran's oil exports, while carrying out these deals through the US financial system in dollars and providing the IRGC the hard currency which was required to finance missiles, drones, and weapons transfers to regional proxies such as Hezbollah, Hamas and the Houthis rebels.

The article also states that China was also using Iran as "a rehearsal space," so that it could use these evasion methods on a much wider scale for itself if required to evade US sanctions.

The IRGC operated a rotating fleet of tankers under falsified identities to conceal Iranian crude shipments to Chinese buyers, while Hengli Petrochemical, China's second-largest

independent refinery, received more than five million barrels of IRGC-affiliated crude through that same network, the article points out.

"The arrangement served Beijing on both ends, with Chinese refiners purchasing Iranian crude at steep discounts unavailable on open markets, while every successful evasion transaction simultaneously stress-tested the financial infrastructure Xi intended to activate over Taiwan," the article observes.

However, there has been a big setback to this entire network as in the latest action, the US has sanctioned 35 entities and individuals running Iran's shadow banking system, hitting 19 shadow fleet vessels simultaneously, and putting every company paying IRGC tolls for Strait of Hormuz passage on notice, the article added.

India's power consumption rises by modest 4 pc in April

IAN S

NEW DELHI: India's power consumption witnessed a modest 4.04 per cent growth to 153.99 billion units (BU) in April compared to the same month of the previous year, while demand for power remained low during the first half of the month as unseasonal rains cooled down temperature, according to official data.

The country's total power consumption was 148.01 BU in April 2025.

India's peak power demand soared to a record high of 256.11 GW on April 25 as the heat wave intensified across the country, which forced both domestic and commercial consumers to step up the use of air conditioners and other cooling devices, data compiled by the power ministry showed.

Experts expect the peak power demand to rise even further with the power ministry estimating it at 270 GW for this summer season. A sustained rise in temperatures since mid-April led to a steep increase in electricity consumption.

Temperatures in several regions have risen by as much as been significantly above 5 degrees Celsius or more above normal, indicating a developing heat stress scenario across parts of the country, according to the India Meteorological

Department. Last summer, the peak power demand was 242.77 GW, recorded in June 2025, but stayed below the government's estimate of 277 GW.

Experts said that power demand and consumption will further increase from May onwards, as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has projected a harsh summer this year. Solar energy is rapidly emerging as a central pillar of India's power mix, helping the country meet rising electricity demand while reducing dependence on fossil fuels.

As per the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, India crossed 150.26 GW of installed solar capacity as of March 31, 2026, marking one of the fastest expansions in the energy space. This surge has been driven by record annual additions in FY 2025-26, positioning solar as the country's fastest-growing power source.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a warning of an intense heatwave across India from April to June 2026, with above-normal heatwave days expected in the northern Indo-Gangetic plains, central India, and eastern coastal states. Temperatures could exceed 45 degree Celsius in several regions, with high humidity compounding the risk to life.

India and Armenia discuss current geostrategic situation, expanding military engagement

IAN S

NEW DELHI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Upendra Dwivedi held a meeting with Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Armenia, Lieutenant General Edvard Asryan in New Delhi on Friday, with talks focused on the current geostrategic situation, strengthening defence cooperation, expanding military engagement and advancing collaboration in areas of mutual interest.

"Lieutenant General Edvard Asryan, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of

the Republic of Armenia, called on General Upendra Dwivedi, COAS. The interaction focused on the current geostrategic situation, strengthening India-Armenia Defence Cooperation, expanding military engagement and advancing collaboration in areas of mutual interest," Indian Army's Additional Directorate General of Public Information (ADGPI) stated on X.

Currently on an official visit to India, Lieutenant General Asryan had called on Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh in the capital earlier, discussing issues related to defence cooperation.

"During his official visit to India, First Deputy Minister



of Defence of the Republic of Armenia, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Edvard Asryan

met with the Defence Secretary of India Rajesh Kumar Singh," Armenia's Ministry of Defence posted on X.

"Issues related to Armenia-India cooperation in the defence sector were discussed," it added.

On Tuesday, Lieutenant General Asryan held a meeting with Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal, A P Singh, with discussions focused on enhancing operational cooperation, interoperability and strengthening bilateral air power ties.

"Lt Gen Edvard Asryan, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Armenia on an official visit to India, called on Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, Chief of the Air Staff, Indian Air Force. Discussions focused on enhanc-

ing operational cooperation, interoperability and strengthening bilateral air power ties," Indian Air Force - Media Coordination Centre posted on X.

According to the statement released by Armenia's Ministry of Defence, the two officials discussed issues related to bilateral cooperation in the defence sector.

Lieutenant General Edvard Asryan also met Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan and discussed ways to have joint ventures in the development of military hardware.

"General Anil Chauhan CDS held discussions with

Lt General Edvard Asryan, Chief of the General Staff of Armenia, during his official visit to India. The General officer was received by the CDS and was accorded a Guard of Honour," Headquarters of Integrated Defence Staff posted on X.

"The engagement reflected the steady advancement of India-Armenia Defence Relations. Both sides also explored avenues for joint ventures in the development of military hardware, reaffirming their shared commitment to a robust, future-oriented and mutually beneficial strategic partnership," it added.

Thomas & Uber Cup: India pack off Chinese Taipei to reach semis, assured of a medal

IAN S

HORSENS: Former champions India outplayed higher-ranked Chinese Taipei to storm into the semifinals and also assure themselves of a medal in the Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2026 in Horsens, Denmark, on Friday.

The 2022 champions defeated a strong Taipei outfit 3-0 in the men's quarterfinals and will now face the winner of the match between Japan and France for a spot in the final. Lakshya Sen, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy/Chirag Shetty, and Ayush Shetty won their respective ties to clinch victory for India in the quarterfinal clash.

World no. 6 Lakshya Sen set the ball rolling and gave India the winning start as he saved two match points in the second game to beat Chou Tien Chen 18-21, 22-20, 21-17 in an hour and 28 minutes.

The opening match between Sen and Chou, who had a 4-4 head-to-head record before this clash, was a topsy-turvy affair as both players overcame a sizeable deficit in the first two games to take the match to a decider.

While Chou fought back from 10-15 in the first, Sen trailed 14-17 in the second before saving two match points. Sen, the two-time All-England finalist, then kept his nose ahead in the third with a strong attacking play to hand India the first point.

The former Asian champions Rankireddy and Shetty then made it 2-0 for India with a clinical showing in the decider.

The Indian combination had saved two game points to take the opening game against Chiu Hsiang Chieh



and Wang Chi-Lin. Though they lost the close second game, Satwik and Chirag raised their levels in the decider and registered their third straight win over the Taipei pair.

This meant that Asian championships silver medalist Ayush Shetty had a chance to wrap up the quarterfinal for India, and the 20-year-old delivered the final blow.

Shetty, who had remained unbeaten throughout the group stage, outmuscled reigning All England champion Lin Chun-Yi 21-16, 21-17 in 48 minutes to kick off celebrations in the Indian camp. Shetty had overturned a 10-12 deficit in the opening game by bagging seven straight points and never looked back from there on. He always looked in control in the second game, underlining his development as a top-class shuttler in the last few months.

India will meet the winner of the match between France and Japan in the semifinals, which will take place on Saturday, before the tournament cul-

minates with the final the following day.

In 2022, India made it to the Thomas Cup semifinal for the first time in 43 years. Previously, Indian men had reached the Thomas Cup semi-final in 1952, 1955, and 1979.

Sen pulled off a stunning come-from-behind victory against Chou Tien Chen, handing India a vital lead in their Thomas Cup knockout tie.

The match appeared to be slipping away from the Indian ace as he faced three match points in the second game, but he held the nerve to save all three, forcing the match into a decider.

The third game saw a complete shift in momentum. Sen outmanoeuvred Chen, mixing deceptive net play with cross-court smashes. He raced to a commanding lead early in the set, leaving Chen struggling to find answers to his pace. Despite a late surge from the Chinese Taipei star to narrow the gap, Sen closed out the match to secure a win.

In the second tie, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty overcame

an 18-20 deficit to take the opening game 23-21. The second game remained tight, with both pairs locked at 8-8 in the early exchanges. The Indians appeared to be in a prime position to wrap up the match in straight games, holding a comfortable 14-11 lead, but the Taipei refused to buckle under the pressure and clawed their way back into the contest by taking the second game and taking the match into a decider.

In the deciding game, the Indian pair raced to an early 9-3 lead and maintained a commanding six-point cushion at the mid-game interval. After the break, Satwik-Chirag surged ahead to 13-6 and quickly extended the gap to 15-7 before sealing the match and extending India's lead to 2-0.

Result:
Men: India bt Chinese Taipei 3-0 (Lakshya Sen bt Chou Tien Chen 18-21, 22-20, 21-17; Satwiksairaj Rankireddy/Chirag Shetty bt Chiu Hsiang Chieh/Wang Chi-Lin 23-21, 19-21, 21-12; Ayush Shetty vs Lin Chun-Yi 21-16, 21-17)

Two head-to-head duels could decide Champions League qualification in Bundesliga

IAN S

BERLIN: Though Bayern Munich has secured the Bundesliga title, the race for a UEFA Champions League spot from Germany remains wide-open, with four teams staying in contention.

This weekend's direct duels, pitting sixth-ranked Leverkusen against third-placed Leipzig, and fourth-ranked Stuttgart against fifth-placed Hoffenheim, heighten the tension. Stuttgart have reached the 2026 German Cup final against Bayern on May 23 and qualified for next season's Europa League, but coach Sebastian Hoernes has a higher target. "We are currently fourth, and it's clear that we want to push through to the Champions League," Hoernes said ahead of Saturday's game against Hoffenheim.

Hoernes regarded the Champions League as an additional source of motivation. "Two years ago, we experienced how exciting it is to play in Europe's best arenas and to challenge the



best clubs," he said.

Stuttgart are facing the possible departure of several key players. The media reported that German internationals, including Angelo Stiller, Deniz Undav, and Jamie Leweling, have attracted the attention of leading European clubs.

Leverkusen is trying to catch up, and coach Kasper Hjulmand is reported to possibly lose his job if the team fails to qualify for the

Champions League.

For them, the outcomes of the duels against Leipzig and Stuttgart seem like the last chances to turn things around.

Bayern Munich still believe they can reach the UEFA Champions League final after a dramatic 5-4 defeat to Paris Saint-Germain in the semifinal first leg, chairman Jan-Christian Dreesen said.

Speaking at a late-night team function in Paris,

Dreesen recalled the tension of the match, in which Bayern trailed 5-2 before mounting a late fightback. "If you are down 2-5, you are initially dead. You sit in the stands and think: Oh dear, how is this going to end?" he said. "But what happened after that was historic and unique." Dreesen praised the team's resilience, saying the comeback had kept Bayern's hopes alive ahead of the second leg in Munich on May 6.

IPL 2026: 'It is a total we can defend', says Jurel after RR post 225/6 vs DC

IAN S

JAIPUR: Dhruv Jurel expressed satisfaction with Rajasthan Royals' strong finish with the bat, backing their total of 225/6 against Delhi Capitals as defendable while highlighting the collective effort and a crucial rebuilding partnership with Riyan Parag after early setbacks in their Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 clash in Jaipur on Friday.

"Everyone is really happy. The way we finished, even in the last match, everyone is contributing, which is good for the team. It is a total we can defend," Jurel told the broadcasters during the mid-innings break.

Rajasthan Royals captain Riyan Parag led with a gritty and commanding knock of 90. However, a late burst



from Mitchell Starc helped Delhi Capitals regain crucial momentum as RR posted a competitive total of 225/6 in 20 overs at Sawai Mansingh Stadium following early setbacks.

Jurel, who himself played a knock of 42 runs, added 102 runs in 59 deliveries with the skipper after the early loss of wickets.

"Like you said, it is a long tournament. You need to assess the conditions and play according to that. We did that, Riyan and I had a chat about how we can go about it, after losing two early wickets. We wanted to take the team into a position where the middle order can finish the innings," said Jurel.

RR's innings got a late lift from Donovan Ferreira, who produced a remarkable cameo. After struggling against Kuldeep, Ferreira turned the tide, scoring 47 off just 14 balls. His assault included several sixes off near-perfect yorkers, as RR raced to 226/5.

Big stage, brave hearts: Indian women's football team ready for U17 Asian Cup return against Australia



IAN S

SUZHOU (CHINA): Saturday will mark another landmark moment of the year for Indian women's football as the U17 national team kicks off their AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup China 2026 campaign against Australia.

It will be India's first appearance at the U17 Women's Asian Cup since 2005, marking the end of a 21-year wait at this level. More significantly, it completes a rare and historic sequence in 2026, with India's third women's Asian Cup appearance following the senior team and the U20 side.

Head coach Pamela Conti underlined the mood in the camp as the team stands on the cusp of their opening match. "I think everyone is excited and really eager for it to start," she said. "We've been working for a long time, for many months. But it's always a great feeling to play in important international tournaments, especially representing a big, big country like India. So yes, we are ready for it," she was quoted as saying by the All India Football Federation (AIFF).

India's journey to this stage saw a structured and continuous build-up. Since January, the Young Tigresses have been in camp for over three months, primarily based in Bengaluru, focusing on physical, technical, and tactical development.

They arrive in China after a series of competitive tours – winning the SAFF U19 Women's Championship in February, securing two victories against fellow Asian Cup qualifying side Myanmar in Yangon in March, and testing themselves in the three friendly games against Russia in Sochi in April. "For the first few days, it rained a lot, and it got cold," Conti said about their arrival in Suzhou. "But now the sun is out. I think the players just needed to make some final adjustments, because we have already done a lot of work in India and in Russia. Now we are ready," she said.

The focus, lately, has been on the details, explained the Italian coach, who previously led Venezuela to the FIFA U20 Women's World Cup. "We've mostly been working on the tactical side,

because the physical work had already been done earlier. We didn't want to push too hard physically in these last few days, so that the players don't feel too heavy."

The tournament in Suzhou has brought all 12 participating teams together in a single environment, housed at the Taipei Xiangguli Hotel and training and playing at the Suzhou Taihu Football Sports Centre – a facility with eight pitches (three match pitches and five training grounds) – located just a stone's throw away.

"Honestly, it's been perfect," she said. "Today, it's beautiful with plenty of sunshine. Hopefully, tomorrow has the same temperature, because it's ideal for playing," Conti said on the eve of the opener.

For the players, this tournament represents both a first experience and a defining opportunity. The journey didn't just begin in January, but covered a better part of 2025 when the majority of this batch of players showcased excellent performances in the Asian Cup qualifiers, SAFF U17 Women's Championship, and also the IWL 2 with the Indian Arrows Women Juniors.

Reflecting on everything, defender Abhista Basnett said, "We are finally here after preparing for so many months. We are just one day away from our first game. "The feeling is very good. We are excited, and we will give our all. We have trained a lot over the past few months and worked very hard, so we are going to give our all out," she added.

Movies Schedule

Saturday, 2 May



Raja Shivaji (U/A16+)
Hindi - 10:45 AM, 06:15 PM



BHOOTH BANGLA (U/A16+)
Hindi - 03:00 PM



Ek Din (U/A13+)
Hindi - 01:35 PM, 04:10 PM, 06:45 PM



Michael (U/A 13+)
English with English Subtitles 05:00 PM

The Devil Wears Prada 2 (A)
English with English Subtitles
11:05 AM, 02:30 PM, 07:40 PM

Dhurandhar: The Revenge (A)
Hindi - 10:35 AM

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